



# Warrensburgh Historical Society

## WARRENSBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

### VOLUMN 4 ISSUE 1

### SPRING 1999

#### *The Warrensburgh Academy*

by Jean Hadden

The curtain is slowly coming down upon the turbulent twentieth century and the forty-two hundred, give or take a few, souls who live in the little town of Warrensburgh, all live and exist in their own space and time.

Shakespeare wrote, "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." I have always been intrigued with the thought of who occupied our space before us. Stuffy historians can name, by heart, men and women who shaped the town's history in the 186 years it has been in existence. The people who interest me are the ones that came, left their mark, and moved on.

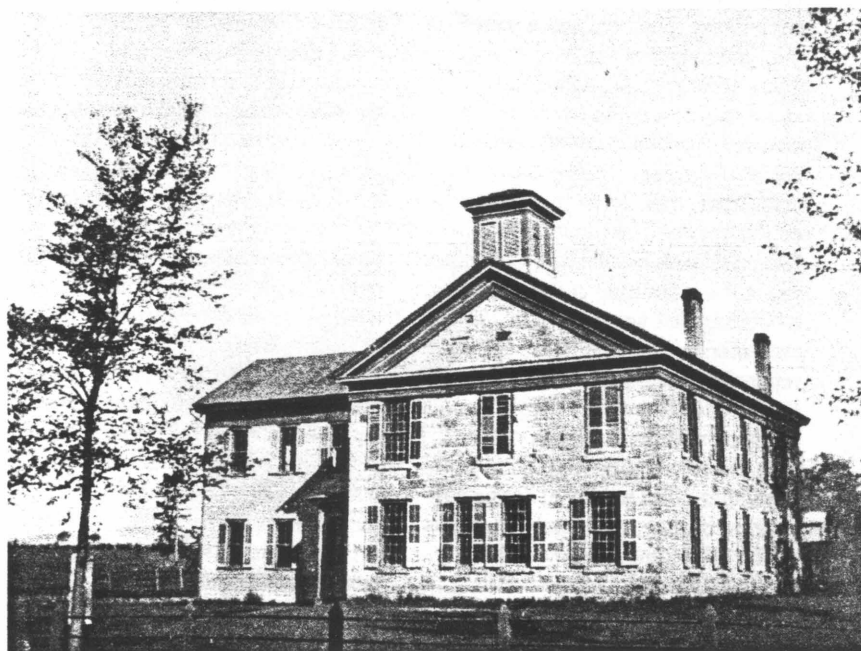
The biggest turnover, by far, has been in the school system. In her book, *Legacy to Warrensburgh*, Margaret Louise Tubbs wrote, "In every community there is a silent parade of men and women who represent the past. It is they who have blazed the trail for their successors in whatever line of endeavor it may be. It is they who, by some deed or action, whether they know it or not, have shaped the teachers who have served one year or twenty." One man who fits neatly into this category comes to my mind and his name was Alson B. Abbott. Although he is today only a dusty name in old town records, he was once a dynamic part of our community.

Alson B. Abbott was born at Greenfield, New Hampshire in 1844. John Tyler was president of the country that year. Abbott "fitted for college" at Philips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts and entered Dartmouth in 1862 while the country was locked into a bitter Civil War. The following summer he served three months in the Fifth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry but returned to college and graduated in 1866. The country was still reeling from

the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln and President Andrew Johnson, the first American president to ever be impeached, was struggling to hold the Union together.

After college Abbott moved to the little town of Warrensburgh in the wild, untamed Adirondack mountains of New York state. He became principal of the twelve year old Warrensburgh Academy.

Let us try to imagine what Warrensburgh was like in 1866. The town had a sparse population and Abial Burdick was supervisor. Big old elm trees lined the dirt streets and horses provided the only transportation available. Living was hard but a determined bunch of important men were seeing to it that the town was steadily growing. The plank road linked Warrensburgh to the rest of the world



*Warrensburgh Academy  
courtesy of Richards Library.*

and there was a wooden bridge, built in 1836, over the Hudson that allowed easy travel to Thurman.

Dr. Thomas Pattison, who lived on Horicon Avenue, was a town physician, but he died in 1867. Dr. Daniel B. Howard was serving his first year in practice with his father, Dr. E. W. Howard at their home on Main Street. The Church of the Holy Cross was one year old and everything was complete except the tower and the porch. Rev. R. F. Crary was rector. George Richards, from one of the town's leading families, was a practicing attorney. Rev. Caleb Smith was pastor at the Baptist Church. Benjamin Peck Burhans owned the Grist Mill.

The Warren House, on lower Main Street, passed into the hands of

*(Continued page 6)*

## ***From the President***

I have noted some architectural changes in Warrensburgh, some are not for the better, but some are of a very positive bent. Sadly, the community has lost more trees. Large old trees exist as a window to the soul of a community. They exude the perception of strength and stability of a community. Their existence represents the forethought of our forefathers. Their arbitrary removal exhibits shortsightedness into our future. It creates a disconnection of today's society from the special piece of connection with the earth. Architecture on the upside! The Glens Falls National Bank has done an exemplary job in the renovating of their building, a building that was erected in 1926 as the Emerson National Bank. They have responsibly brought their facilities to the 21st century while maintaining a harmony with its history as well as with the community. Across the street is another effort worthy of noting as positive change, previously known as the Hull building, we now find the renamed Frank C. Mineo Building. The new owners have reclaimed a building injured by fire. The facade has been cleaned and painted. The job not really noticeable because it was done well. With the addition of the new awnings, an otherwise, large, flat, boring surface is broken up and actually makes the building a simple pleasure to the eye. Both of these projects stand out as examples of responsible progress! And of firehydrants, take note that they have been repainted to the historical colors of red and black. Kudos to our town leaders. A recent highway accident demolished the two stone pillars at the sidewalk entry of the Episcopal Church. They were built many years ago with stone quarried from Hackensack Mountain. Owing to their longevity and appropriateness of design. The iron light fixtures are being rebuilt as original to be refitted atop the pillars.

The building known for many years as Maltbys, an auto dealership is now Hollywood Limousines. This is

worthy of mention because the owner has managed to landscape a cold storefront and hot macadam. The importance of landscaping is historically proven. Consider that the seven great wonders of the ancient world includes the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Now occupied by Perfect Grinds, this building too, has seen a great deal of Main Street history. This is another storefront that has been reclaimed for progress while maintaining a facade that is comfortable to its environment and therefore, to its intended patronage.

Once at the hub of the "lower borough", there remains a house of Victorian style. Including less obvious maintenance it has recently received new paint. The appropriate color scheme allows the building to continue to enhance the corner of Main Street and Water Street. Approaching this intersection from the South, one views this building and is somehow drawn deeper into town. I've noted only public architecture, but I hasten to add that there is ever increasing pride being taken in the private sector as well. Many homes have been cleaned up and painted. A significant number of folks have put in gardens or planted window boxes. What a lovely welcome to sidewalk strollers. Some folks have even planted trees. Are they the visionaries intent on making Warrensburgh a good place for our great-grandchildren?!

### ***Board of Directors***

***Delbert D. Chambers, President***  
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***Quarterly Editor..Linda Denner***

### ***New Members***

Ralph Underwood  
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 Dorothy Wright  
 Bob Heunemann

Denise Lamphier  
 Jack Toney  
 Tony Trapasso  
 Hazelton Belden  
 Gene & Lee Schiavi  
 Colin Hagadorn  
 John Rumble  
 Rita Ackley

### ***Calendar of Events***

***March 11 Adirondack/Celtic Songs, Colleen Cleveland 7pm Richards Library ( This program has been made possible by the new York State Council of the Arts Decentralization Program and Warren County, New York. Administered locally by LARAC.***

***March 17-Warren County Historical Society Bd. of Directors Meeting***  
***March 25-Warrensburgh Historical Society Board of Directors Meeting***  
***March 27-Annual Warren County's Historical Societies Forum***

***April 22-Warrensburgh Historical Society Board of Directors Meeting***  
***Vote on Two proposed By-Law amendments***

***May 1-deadline for WHS Quarterly***  
***May 27 Warrensburgh Historical Society Board of Directors Meeting***  
***May 31-Memorial Day Parade float entry***

***June 1-Summer Edition of WHSQuarterly***  
***August 22-Annual fundraiser-Sticky Wicket Croquet Games & Picni***

### ***Contributors to This Issue:***

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

## *Antique Soup* by Caron Akeley *Hall Racks*

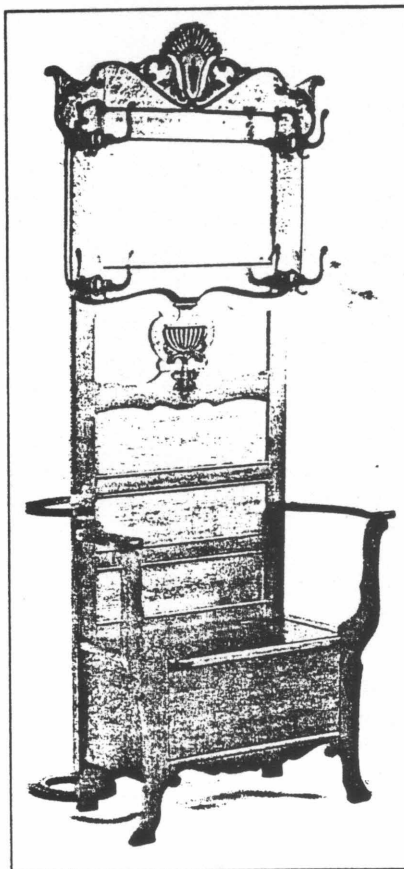
All during the second half of the nineteenth century and well into the early part of the twentieth, homes of any import had a foyer and/or front hall. This gave guests a place to remove and leave hats, coats, gloves, boots, umbrellas and all the necessary paraphernalia of getting about. Here was located a piece of furniture called a hall rack, or sometimes a hall stand.

The largest and most ornate of these hall racks had many brass or iron hooks for hanging coats and hats, usually arranged around a mirror in the upper portion. Down below, there was a seat for resting or removing one's overshoes. Frequently this seat lifted up to reveal a storage compartment for boots, gloves, etc. To the side of the hall rack was an umbrella holder consisting of a circular piece to keep the umbrella standing upright while the tip of it sat in an iron or brass "drip-pan" on the base beneath to catch the raindrops.

Small, lighter hall racks incorporated many of the same features, but not necessarily all. However, the one thing they all had was the hooks for hanging garments. The hall racks were often fastened to the wall with screws or bolts so the weight of the garments would not cause them to fall over frontways.

There were also smaller pieces called hat racks that were simple back boards mounted on the wall with hooks along them for hanging hats and coats. Hall trees, also in popular use, were just tall poles that sat on the floor with hooks branching off it for the same purpose. These two pieces were more commonly found inside the back or side door and were primarily for the use of the family.

Many hall racks are truly beautiful pieces of furniture, using woods such as oak, mahogany or walnut. The use of brass, marble and beveled mirrors added a lovely touch and there is a renewed interest in incorporating these versatile pieces into today's decorating schemes in many different areas of the home.



*Pat's Column*

### *Off to the Fair*

Edward Noble, Maud Drake Noble and their son Charles owned and operated "The Birches" at the top of Fish Hatchery Hill on Echo Lake Road. This was a "Summer" boarding house and hired local girls to wait on tables, do laundry and chambermaid. Several people in the past have told me they worked for the Nobles, two of them being Daisy Ackley Weeks and Bealauh Rounds Vaughn. Hazel Sprague met Charlie while working there and married him the next summer.

In later years Charles, Hazel and their son Stanley bought Uncle Sid Noble's house on the lake and ran that as a summer boarding house called, "Nobles on Echo Lake." They continued the business till the mid 1960's.

The lake property was sold to the Dominic Schiappa family and later to Camp Echo Lake.

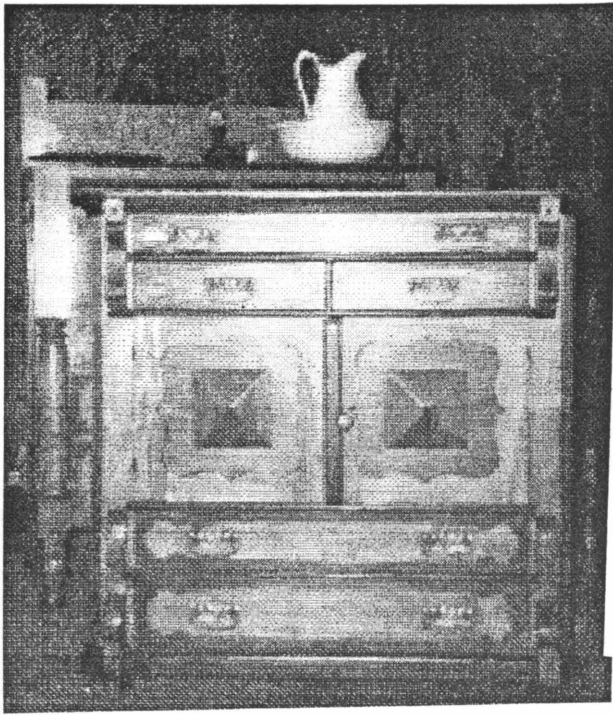
When Charles Noble was five years old his parents made arrangements

to go to the fair at Ashland Park. Ashland Park was located behind Ashes Hotel, the fairground was located between the hotel and the racetrack, the latter being on the crest above Bonds Pond (Echo Lake).

Remembering the roads were dirt and rain had fallen for three days, heavy mud filled the wheel tracks. Even though the fairground was only across the pond from their home, the road had to be followed.

Dressed in their best clothes, walking in the grass in the center of the road, a horse and buggy came into sight. The parents jumped to opposite sides of the road, each yelling, "Come here, Charlie". Charlie being a five year old, jumped from one side to the other, falling several times. The little suit that was so white only a few minutes earlier was a mess!

The family returned home,



*Adirondack Tramp Art Chest of Drawers  
Courtesy of Ed Kreinheder*

### ***Attic Treasures and Adirondack Tramp Art*** *by Ed Kreinheder*

About 35 years ago we received a call from Rita, Mrs. Harry Reoux at the large house corner of Main Street and south side of Hackensack saying she had some things to sell. I went over right away, a pleasant, gracious woman. She was selling her husbands sectional bookcases which he had at one time used in his law offices. I bought them, they were mahogany open shelf cases about ten tiers of them and are still using them in our bookshop. Also I bought a small collection of his books. At that time he was confined to bed with a terminal illness. He was a very well educated and interesting man to talk to and I was glad to get the books, a nice collection.

Mrs. Reoux had been collecting antiques for years and she gradually sold me things. At that time she sold me a fine astral lamp of the 1840-50 period, with a frosted cut shade with six prisms and a tall fluted brass column and square base.

There came a time a few years later, after her husband had died that she again gave me a call. At that time her mother, Mrs. Kettenbach

was living with her and who was then about 100 years old, a very well preserved woman, who seemed to have no infirmities. Mrs. Reoux told me she might have some things in the attic most of which were left by a former occupant. So up we went, up a steep stairway. Her mother full of curiosity, had to have a look too, so up she went on hands and knees. There were quite a few things up there, but all I remember now are the old postcard albums and a box of cabinet size photo of the late 19th century. There was one of the old drug store since burned down with a large gold painted mortar and pestle sign surmounted by a spread winged eagle. I told Bill Boulette the druggist at that time, I would give him \$500 or more if he could find it stored in attic or cellar, but no luck. Another was taken right after the first Colonial Arms hotel had burned down. All that was left was a large steel vault that had been used by the Emerson for their banking activities. Another showing the shopkeepers by the business block shoveling out after the blizzard of '88, also a photo of the first antique dealer of Warrensburg seated on his horse drawn wagon with a large umbrella over the seat. These with the postcards and quite a few other photos were given to the Warrensburg Museum by me along with some early letters obtained elsewhere. Mrs.



*William and Mary Highboy  
19th Century  
courtesy Ed Kreinheder*

Kettenbach had an interesting time and we helped her down the stairs. She outlived her daughter, Mrs. Reoux and lived to be well over 100 years of age. A grand old lady, no wheel chair for her.

Mrs. Reoux told me that many years ago her father had a rather large store in Chestertown, clothing and sundry items I believe. Her father went to New York City every Fall and Spring to pick up merchandise for the coming season and have it shipped back by rail. One fall when she was a young girl her father took her along for the trip. After making the seasons purchases the merchant told Rita she could pick out something in the store as a present for herself. Rita was delighted and picked out the finest outfit in the store. When her father found what she had picked out he was

*(continued next page)*



very embarrassed and said she could not keep all that. The merchant laughed and said she was a smart girl and insisted she keep the whole outfit. Evidently Kettenbach was a very good customer and the merchant a good business man, so everything worked out alright.

In a sequel to this story a number of years later a rather large chest of drawers was brought in by somebody to sell. It had been found in the dump. It was so grimy and black with age I almost refused to buy it. However, after cleaning, refinishing and some small repairs, it turned out quite well. Evidently an amateur piece, but very well made of native woods, walnut, cherry, ash butternut, figured maple with two doors in the center and drawers above and below. The doors had curlyque shaped panels with large walnut pyramid shaped bosses in center. Drawers, three above and two below, were maple framed in cherry with cut out designs. Side posts of curly maple with s shaped bolsters top and bottom in cherrywood. A very showy piece and absolutely unique. The entire interior and secondary wood was of packing crates marked "Kettenbach Store Chestertown", with a New York shipping point painted on. I called it Adirondack tramp art, a one of a kind piece, as seen in the photograph.

Another rare piece we found when first locating in Warrensburg was a William and Mary highboy shown in the photo. From the S.O. Turner estate and originally from Washington County. An American piece of small size about 36" wide, with all original brasses and grained finish probably applied in the 19th Century. The style and double arch molding around the drawers would indicate a date of around 1720. Made of poplar wood and all in fine condition. The cost then was about \$300. Those were the good old days!



*Society Members Enjoy the February Program at the Richards Library  
(L-R) John Cleveland, Pat Terrell, LeeAnn Rafferty and Brenda Cleveland*



*Postcard Show of Warrensburgh was the Featured Program  
(L-R) LeeAnn Rafferty, Linda Denner, Steve Parisi, Caron Akeley*

*(The Academy continued)*

Joseph Russell and Henry Chapman after it had been in the James Warren family for sixty-two years. Nelson J. Warren, son of James Warren, for whom the town had been named, was a leading businessman and the hotel had only been sold after the death of his mother, Milinda Beach Warren who had carried on the business since her husband's death in 1811.

Captain Myron Nelson Dickinson, who served in the 118th Regiment and came home a hero from the Civil War, was a pioneer dealer in hardware. For many years he was postmaster. James Herrick began to keep a general store. J. W. Wills had been a wagonmaker and blacksmith since 1860 in the stone building on Hudson Street. Royal C. Smith bought the Adirondack House (later Colonial Arms) from Lewis Persons in 1867, and he could accommodate forty guests. Business was thriving after the great war between the states.

A small school, one of several in town, had been built as early as 1832 on the northeast corner of Elm Street and School Street (now Stewart Farrar Avenue). Inside the building were seats arranged around the side walls with a rostrum in the center, according to the fashion of the day. In the years 1851 and 1852, leading citizens, led by Pelatiah Richards, pushed an effort to build an academy on that lot of land. There was considerable opposition to the plan. Finally a contract was made with stonemason Peter Buell (Bewel) who had built the County Home and the stone building in the heart of town near the bandstand. The Warrensburgh Academy was erected in 1853 and Buell held a mortgage because sufficient money could not be raised. This was taken care of by Thomas Cunningham in 1859 by selling stock in the new school building for \$12.50 per share. Many famous men graduated from the old Academy which started them on the road to prosperity.

The first principal was the Rev. Robert C. Clapp of Chestertown. He was versed in the Hebrew

language and was assisted by his wife. In 1866 Professor Abbott succeeded Frank Shepherd as principal. It was in the year 1888 that the Union School, born in the time of the famous blizzard, started its life in the building that had originally housed the old Academy, with a faculty of four. An addition was built on that year but by 1897 the building had become too small. In May 1898 the Academy building closed its doors forever. When the fall of the year came around the new school had not yet been built after the old one had been demolished and the children were scattered in several locations around town to accommodate classes. The new school built on the location of the old Academy was opened in March 1900. This school was abandoned in 1943 and later a post office was built on the site. Today that same building houses the business offices of the Warrensburg Medical Center.

Professor Alson B. Abbott left Warrensburgh in 1868, when he assumed the principalship of the Glens Falls academy. He stayed there for four years and then left to read law in the office of Judge Brown. He later attended Albany Law School and became a member of the bar in 1872. Abbott married Mrs. Sarah Morgan Reynolds in

1874, widow of Dr. J.H. Reynolds and daughter of James Morgan. She had a son, J. B. Reynolds and they had a son, Alson M. Abbott. The couple lived in a big house on Glen Street and Abbott went on to fame and fortune. In 1878 he served in the legislature as assemblyman from Warren County.

On August 26, 1894 Abbott was in his library while the family was eating breakfast. They were startled to hear the report of a gun go off. He was found lying dead upon the floor. He had taken his son's breech-loading shotgun, which his son had planned to use that day on a hunting trip, into a small room adjoining his library for the purpose of cleaning it. He put in a shell to test it and it accidentally went off. The bullet entered the left side of his neck, severing the jugular vein and passed through the unfortunate man's head. Death was instantaneous.

Alson B. Abbott was described as "a ripe scholar, a profound thinker, a loving husband and father and a kind friend". For three short years his star shone here brightly and today he is a man that no one remembers. I will never again drive down Stewart Farrar Avenue that I will not, for just an instant, think of him and the wonderful old Academy where he taught his eager students. I hope you do also.

## WARRENSBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### INVITES YOU TO ATTEND

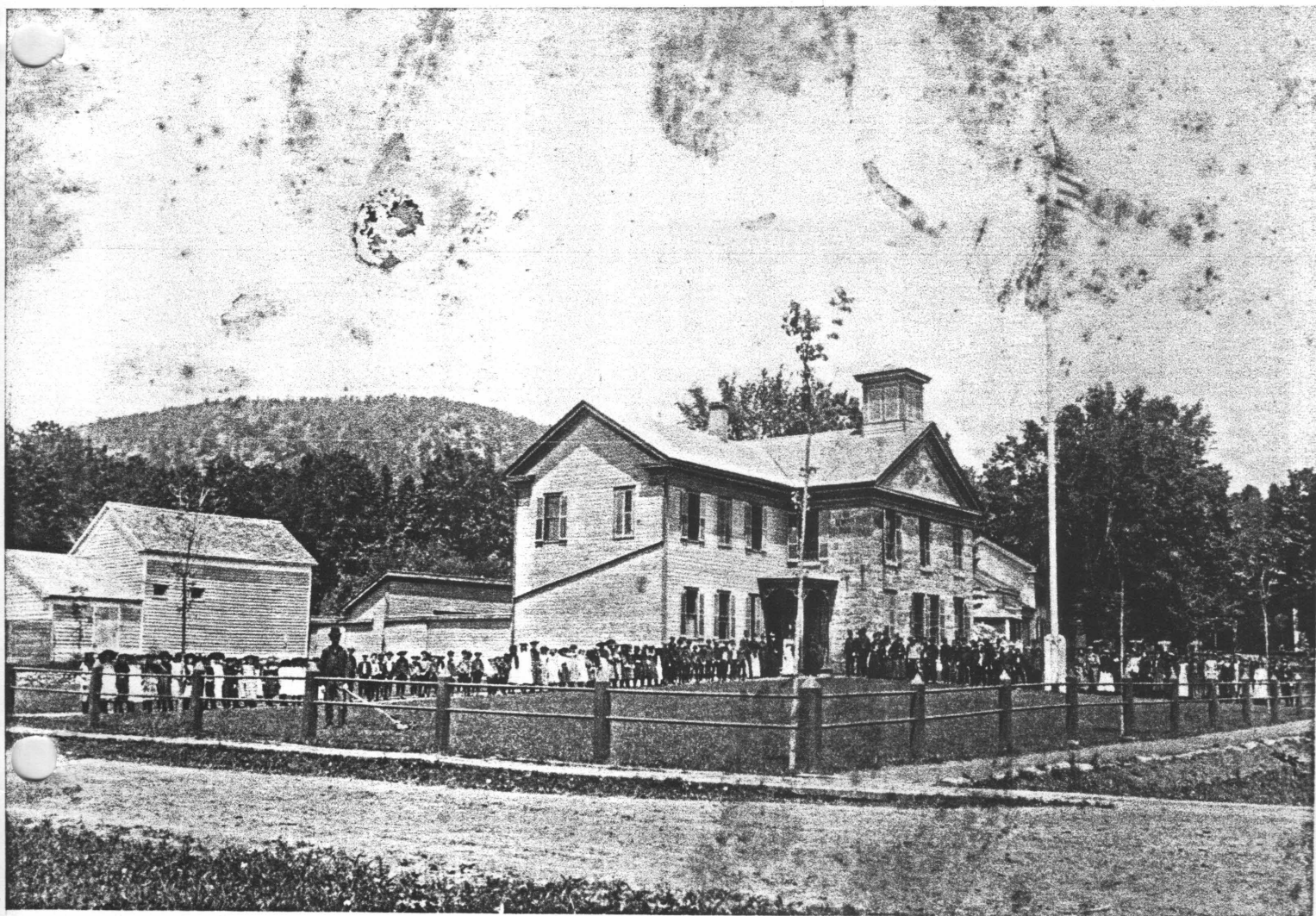
### A SPECIAL PROGRAM

*At the Richards Library 7 P.M. March 11*

*Celtic Songs, and Stories with*

*Colleen Cleveland*

*refreshments will be served*



Warrensburg Union Free School and Academy 1855-1898 ..Courtesy of Richard Library

### *School Days*

by Pat Terrell

James H. Terrell (Tyrrell) and Pauline Porter Terrell owned two farms on Harrington Hill; the home they lived in was at the top of the mountain and is now owned by Herbert Hoeger. Dr. Smith and his family now own Jim's "upper place." It is known as Willow Farm and years earlier, the Harrington Place.

Jim's father, George Terrell, and step-mother Grace Fuller Terrell and his half brother and sister, George Edward (Eddie) and Orpha Delilah lived in the upper place. While there, Dennis LeRoy was born.

Orpha and Eddie attended school at Caldwell, this meant a three

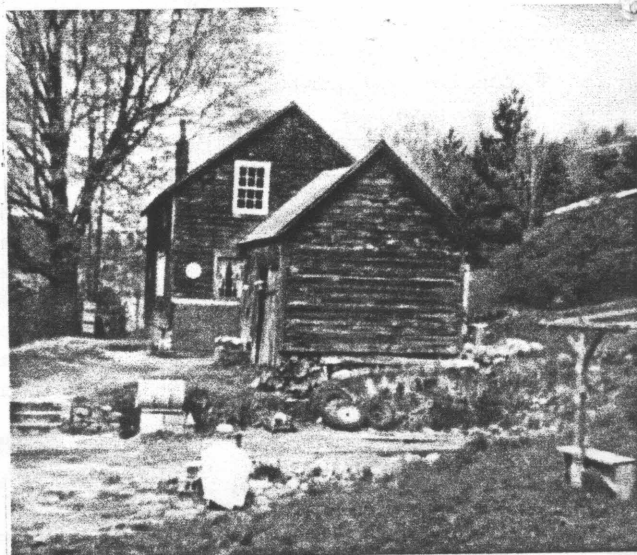
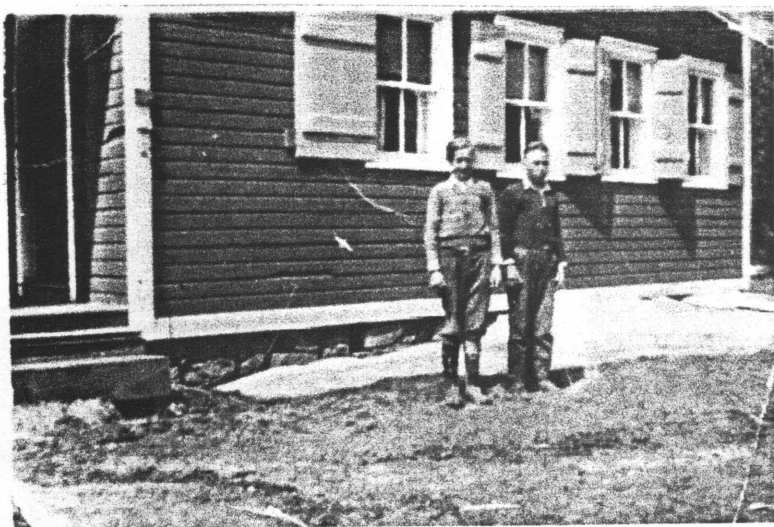
and one half mile hike each way, down Harrington Hill to Bakers Crossing and again down to cross Route 9 and over to Caldwell to school. Every afternoon the trip was reversed and of course *up hill* all the way.

Dennis turned nine years old in April of 1935 and his parents were forced to send him to school. Because of the hard walk down and again up the mountain, the family decided to move back to their own farm on the other side of *up hill*; from there the trek was only one and one half miles to the District #6 school on Putney Hill (Upper Alden Avenue). The school is still there but as time goes it is now a summer residence.

When Dennis started fifth grade a car from Warrensburg driven by Walter Weaver transported Floyd (Bud) Holcomb, Ruth Holcomb (later Gillingham) and Dennis to the "big school" on Steward Farrar Avenue.

The farm on Putney Hill still belongs to Dennis Terrell and his wife, this writer! I would like to add a tid-bit, the farm was purchased by Grace Fuller Terrell's mother Delilah Bennett Fuller with money from her husband's mustering-out pay from the Civil War. Today the original Civil War discharge of Edward Steinrod Fuller has a place of honor on our dining room wall..





*Floyd (Bud) Holcomb and Dennis Terrell 1938 in front of District School #6 Putney Hill...Terrell Farm on Putney Hill circa 1835  
later photographs including snow scene taken in the 1960's  
Courtesy of Pat Terrell*

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