



Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

Volume 9 Issue 4

Winter 2004-2005

Architecture Of A Small Town

By Delbert Chambers

“Crandall, Baker and Dickinson Business Blocks Burned; Loss Is Over \$200,000; Contents Of All Structures Prey to Flames”

This was the headline of an extensive

report issued February 10, 1927. The quote continues: “...seven stores and seven apartments in buildings; blaze spreads rapidly but Herculean efforts of local firemen stop its rush...”. (Additional quotes in this article are from that newspaper.)

Three businesses in the downtown section of the village were totally

Graveyard Walk Characters

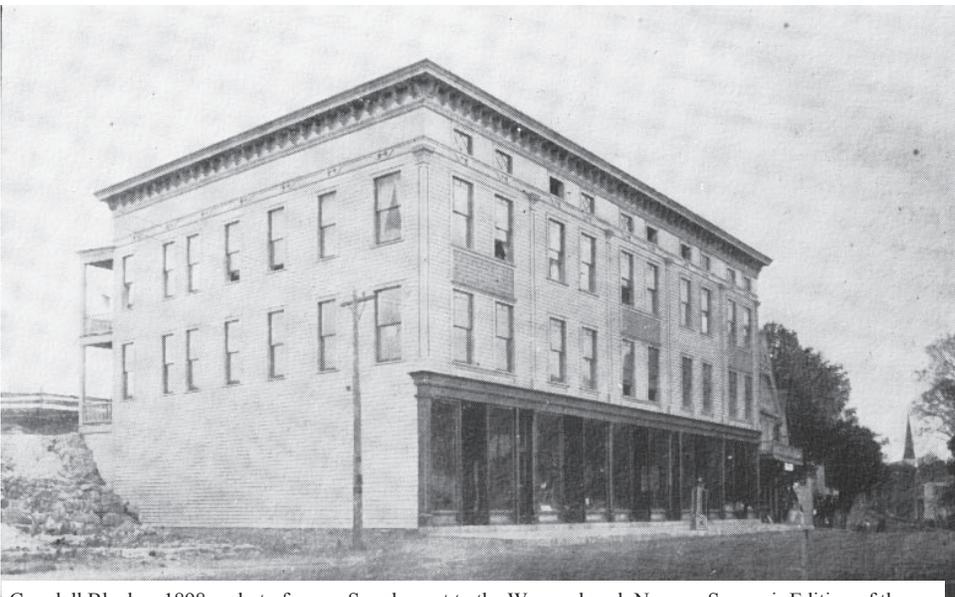
The Annual Festival of Scarecrows includes a Graveyard Walk, highlighting some of Warrensburgh’s former residents and business people. Below is a brief summary of this years “ghosts.”

Minerva Richards King

Researched and portrayed by Jackie Hazlett

Minerva Richards King was born in the town of North Caldwell in 1817, the 4th of 7 children. She was the daughter of an early settler and prominent businessman in Warrensburgh, Peletiah Richards [1786-1870], and his first wife, Sarah [Sally] Wheeler Richards [1791-1829]. Minerva attended school in Warrensburgh, and graduated in 1840 with high honors from the Albany Female Academy. She was also the aunt of Mary and Clara Richards, who founded The Richards Library.

While attending the academy in Albany, Minerva met Wisconsin native, Hesdon



Crandall Block c. 1898 – photo from a Supplement to the Warrensburgh News, a Souvenir Edition of the 1898 Warrensburgh News



Minerva King – portrayed by Jackie Hazlett

King, a prosperous merchant from Mount Morris. They married in 1843 and moved to Brooklyn in 1858, and
Graveyard Walk

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destroyed by a fire that began shortly after ten o’clock in the evening on February 9, 1927. (A ‘block’ was the term used to identify a single, but substantial, building.) The fire started in the Crandall block to the south and quickly worked its way north through the Dickinson block. These buildings were located where today are Posies and several more store fronts to the north. (A foundation wall of the Crandall block existed until recently when it

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President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

Sandi and I are only partly to blame for the tardiness of this Quarterly. Had you flooded our mailbox with letters and articles it would have been difficult to keep shuffling it to the bottom of the "to-do" pile. In addition, much of the free time left over from operating our B&B has been spent working on THE MUSEUM. (There is great news about that elsewhere in this issue!) Thanks to Delbert Chambers for his extensive research on this issue's feature article on the Crandall Block fire.

In addition to the Museum, a lot has happened since my last letter. We have gotten into the book publishing business with an immediate success. (See my book review elsewhere in this issue.)

Membership has grown. We added 20 new members during 2004 and already have an additional 18 new members since our membership appeal went out in early December. That nearly 40% growth since December 2003 reflects a growing interest in the history of our town.

In October we held our first "Museum Photo Identification" meeting. Serious detective work mixed with friendly reminiscing over lunch among the 25 attendees. We'll do it again, perhaps at the museum next time! November's Artifacts Night at the Merrill Magee House again proved a popular event, with about 40 in attendance. Our Holiday Dinner in December drew a record crowd for an enjoyable evening, with Holiday music by Richie and Elaine Henzler of Courtly Music Unlimited.

I regret to report the resignation of Sherri Lamy from the board. Personal commitments dictated her decision. I look forward to the time when Sherri can volunteer her talents in helping us develop exhibits for the museum.

We have filled several vacated seats on the Board. Frank Bennett, Warrensburg native (of many generations) and Rosemary Maher, a more recent transplant, both bring enthusiasm, direction and much-needed skills to the table. I am very grateful for the active participation of all board members, making my job much easier.

Steve

Contributors to this issue:

Delbert Chambers
Robin Croissant
Sarah Farrar
Don Hazlett
Jackie Hazlett
Steve Parisi

Warrensburg Town Historian
Warrensburg Museum of
Local History

Sandi Parisi, Quarterly Editor

We welcome comments, corrections, articles, pictures, reminiscences, and letters to the editor. Send to :

Warrensburg Historical Society
c/o Sandi Parisi
115 Hickory Hill Rd,
Warrensburg, NY 12885
or parisibb@netheaven.com

*The next Quarterly Deadline is
March. 1*

New Members

John Austin, Ellen Barber,
Linda Bennett, Frank K. Bennett, Sr.,
Phyllis Bogle, Golda Combs,
Edward & Alice Damp, Paul Farrar,
David Frulla, Kyle M. Graves,
John S. Hall, Abbie Hastings,
Donald Hastings, Roscoe Hastings,
Tom Havens, Louella Irish,
William C. Ketcham,
Harvey & Wendy Lambeth,
Rosemary & William Maher,
Cynthia Needham, John H. O'Connor,
Gene & Lee Sciavi,
Doug & Gail Strodel, Jennie Taylor,
Donna & Dana Westcott,
Joseph Wulfken

Board of Directors

Steve Parisi- President
(Vacant) - Vice President
Jackie Leonbruno - Treasurer
Melissa Morgan - Secretary
Frank Bennett
Rita Ferraro
Jean Hadden
John Hastings
Rosemary Maher

The Board of Directors meets at the Senior Center, 3847 Main Street, at 7 PM on the second Tuesday of each month. Society members welcome. Call Steve to confirm at 623-2207.

COMING EVENTS

February 8, 2005 – 7:00 PM
Board of Directors

February 10, 2005 – 6:30 PM
Annual Meeting at the Merrill Magee House followed by a talk by local historian Captain Bill Gates

March 8, 2005 – 7:00 PM
Board of Directors

April 12, 2005 7:00 PM
Board of Directors

Watch for Spring Artifacts Night

Sticky Wicket – August 14, 2005
Warrensburg Historical Society Quarterly

Wanted: 100% cotton sheets for protecting clothing at museum. Call Steve at 623-2207 for pick-up.

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Membership Information

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|
| Individual..... | \$12.00 | Student | \$ 8.00 |
| Family..... | \$25.00 | Senior (62+) | \$ 8.00 |
| Contributing..... | \$ 50.00 | Corporate..... | \$ 75.00 |
| Institutional..... | \$100.00 | Life* | \$250.00 |

*Individual Only

Membership is on a calendar year basis.

If you would like to join and receive the Quarterly by mail, please send check for the amount of the membership classification, with name, address and phone number to:

Warrensburg Historical Society, PO Box 441, Warrensburg, NY 12885.

NOTICE

The recording of history is an interpretive and ever changing study. Therefore, the Warrensburg Historical Society or its Board of Directors or members shall not be held liable for the accuracy or authenticity of the material herein. We welcome and encourage corrections, comments and additional information.

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later to a farm in Wisconsin. They had 6 sons: George, Horace, Frederick, Hesdon Prior, Samuel, and Charles.

When her husband died in 1866, Minerva moved back to her hometown of Warrensburgh with four of her sons. Her father gave her one of his finest



Another character – Grace Noyes, portrayed by Shirley McFerson. (See previous Quarterly issues for Grace's diary).

houses, this one on Main Street [where the Tops store is now] and fashioned after Jefferson's Monticello. It later became known as The King House.

Minerva hired her father's black free servant, **Grace Noyes** [1825-1881], who helped her keep the house and cook while Minerva managed the farm, which extended behind the house to the base of Hackensack Mountain. They had 36 acres, with cattle, pigs, and chickens, and grew wheat, potatoes, and corn. Minerva kept a watchful eye on the business ventures left to her by her father, among them shares of the Glens Falls National Bank, Glens Falls Insurance Company, the tannery, Glens Falls and Lake George Plank and Road Company, and the Warren County Railroad.

Minerva was a prominent member of the First Presbyterian Church in Warrensburgh, founded in 1804. A commemorative stained glass window is featured in the church today in memory of her father, Peletiah.

Minerva King lived in The King House until her death in 1895. She is buried with her husband, Hesdon, in the Warrensburgh Cemetery on Hudson Street, near her father and his two wives.

Her son, Fred, continued to live in the house until his death in 1940. The King

House burned to the ground in 1976.

Robert F. Hall

Portrayed by Tom O'Dea

Factual information from the New York Department of Education website

Robert F. Hall purchased The Warrensburg News from Paul Bosse in 1957 and was its publisher and editor until 1970. While living in Warrensburg (in the handsome stone building on Alden Avenue, just up from River Street) he also acquired the Lake George Mirror and the Hamilton County News. He responded to the times, taking the Warrensburg News from a local newspaper to cover more of the region, and, indeed, with selected commentary on social issues of the day. During his ownership the paper was renamed The Warrensburg-Lake George News. In 1962 he created a quarterly supplement to the Warrensburg News called Adirondack Life Magazine.

Hall was active in the Warrensburg community, being involved in the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, American Legion Post 446, and the local Republican Party. It is this last affiliation which is most surprising, considering his early life.

Robert Hall had been a member of the Communist Party from the early 1930s until 1956 when he became disillusioned by revelations of atrocities committed by Josef Stalin. He served on the editorial staff of the infamous Communist newspaper, The Daily Worker, for eleven years. In 1956 he moved his family to Elizabethtown, near Lake Placid, joined the Republican Party and worked for Denton Publishing before purchasing The Warrensburg News. (Ironically, Denton Publications now owns the Adirondack Journal, successor to The Warrensburg Lake George News.)

In 1970 Hall was appointed to the editorship of the Department of Environmental Conservation's magazine, The Conservationist. He sold all his newspapers. This was during the administration of Governor Nelson

Rockefeller, who asked Hall to serve on the Temporary Study Commission On The Future of the Adirondacks that was established to study the effects of land development upon the environment of the Adirondack Park. This led to the formation of the Adirondack Park Agency.

Robert F. Hall was born in 1906 in Pascagoula, Mississippi and received his early and undergraduate education in Alabama. He then studied economics, history and politics at Columbia University, graduating in 1932. Having witnessed the effects of the Great Depression, Hall found an alternative to Capitalism in Communism.

Robert F. Hall died in 1993, leaving behind his wife, Euphemia, two daughters and three sons. One son, Anthony, now lives in Bolton Landing and, with his wife, Lisa, publishes the Lake George Mirror.

David R. Culver

Researched and portrayed by Don Hazlett

David "Davey" Culver was born in Wells, Vermont in 1911. When he was about 5 years old he and his family moved to Warrensburg. Dave attended school through the 8th grade. In his youth, he ran away with the circus and performed in vaudeville, touring the



Dave Culver portrayed by Don Hazlett on left. A young Davey on right. Photos courtesy of Jackie Hazlett and Yvonne Miller.

Crandall Block, continued from page 1 was demolished and removed to allow for a parking lot.)

Continued on page 7



The Glenwood Food shop was relocated to the Mixer Blacksmith Shop shown above. Photo courtesy Delbert Chambers.

located at the intersection of what today is Main Street and Richards Avenue, first known as New Street. She then moved into the home of Mrs. Lila Dickinson on Water Street. On the day of the fire she had just moved into the apartment in the Crandall block.)

“Of all the stores and living quarters that were destroyed, only the Baker firm was able to save anything, most of their

River, at the foot of Herrick Avenue and had a large hole cut in the ice by the time the truck arrived. It took but a moment or two to couple the suction hose, at the same time hose lines were being stretched to the (Crandall) block, two in the rear and one in the front.” “Chief William “Bill” M. Ticknor ordered that water be shut off in all sections of the village except in the vicinity of the fire, which was done, and this resulted in a good pressure from the hydrants...” When the firefighting efforts began electric power was shut off as a safeguard to the firefighters. Trolley wires were torn down for a considerable distance when the burning structures fell.

Across the street from the fire was the Joseph Lavine building. The

In the Crandall block were located James

H. Cunningham’s drug store, the Glenwood Food Shop, Mrs. Dora Kugel’s dry goods store, the New York Candy Kitchen and Patrick O’Connell’s ‘Quality Grocery’. (“Mrs. Kugel was a heavy loser. The large stock in her store was recently inventoried at more than \$18,000. Her home upstairs was handsomely furnished. Included in Mrs. Kugel’s losses were wedding gifts of her mother’s, brought from her own country and bedding imported from Europe...”)

The second floor apartments were fully occupied and the third floor was in use for storage as well as a large hall.

R.D. Baker & Son had their electrical business and a music store on the ground floor of their block and the apartments above were occupied as well. Dickinson and Bertrand’s Rexall drug store occupied the Dickinson block and also had an occupied apartment above. Other buildings were considerably damaged though none was destroyed.

No lives were lost and although there were several narrow escapes, no one was even injured. The displaced occupants of the apartments included Mrs. Kugel and her daughter, Patrick O’Connell and family, Xenaphon Lazarus, K. Lillian Ross and her mother, Mr. & Mrs. Edward H. O’Connor, Emer Marcellus and Henry O. Fassett and family. Most of these folks were not at their homes at the time of the fire.

(It seems that “Lilly” Ross had lived in a small house which burned on September 19, 1926. I’m told that house was



Librarian Sarah Farrar tells me that ‘Lilly’ Ross made her mother, Mary Guiles Farrar’s, wedding dress in 1942, shown here. Photo courtesy Sarah Farrar.

stock being carried to the Warren House site.” (See photo on next page.)

At the height of the conflagration Glens Falls was summoned for assistance but before they arrived Warrensburgh Firemen had stopped the blaze. Their successful efforts saved from seemingly certain destruction G. H. Dickinson’s market, the next building to the north.

To the south of the fire was the home of Mr. & Mrs. Walter Pasco. “So great was the heat from the blaze that the residence caught fire once near the gables, but was quickly extinguished before it could make any headway. The north side of the house was badly scorched and considerable repairs were necessary.”

A number of people noticed the fire, almost simultaneously. Mr. Bertrand, who was in his drug store, sent in the alarm. “Within a few moments the firemen were on hand. Second Assistant Chief Arthur Irish did not wait for the motor pumper, but rushed to the Schroon



William M. Ticknor, c. 1926. Chief of the Warrensburgh Fire Company from 1922 to 1936. Photo Courtesy Richard’s Library

Adirondack Power and Light Corporation occupied the first floor. Four times this building caught fire. It was always extinguished, although there was considerable damage, particularly to



The Walter Pasco home exists on the corner of Main Street and Water Street. Photo courtesy Delbert Chambers



The Warren House was located about where Stewart's Shop is today. Photo from a Souvenir Edition of the Warrensburgh News, 1898.

the huge glass windows which were broken by the heat.

Firefighting efforts continued for more than fourteen hours. Most of the firemen declined any opportunity to break. They were highly praised for their efforts.

This was the third of three big fires in Warrensburgh within six months. On September 19, 1926, The Baker, Wood and Swan blocks, two residences and two barns were razed by fire. The buildings were but 160 feet to the north of the fire here written about.

The second of the fires was on October 24, 1926, when the Au-Cum-On Inn was gutted.

"The Crandall block was one of the

oldest and largest structures in Warrensburgh. It was built by the late Emerson Crandall in 1893." "Since the early [18]60's the site has been in the possession of the Crandall family. The first building was a wooden frame structure, and this was later replaced by a two-story brick building. This was destroyed by lightning and shortly afterward Mr. Crandall erected the block that stood for thirty-seven (sic) years."



The Au-Cum-On Inn was formerly known as Riverside House and was located across Main Street and just north of the Judd Bridge. The Crandall Block is visible in the background. - Photo courtesy Richard's Library

One week later, the paper reported on the fire. Following are excerpts from that article:

"Adjust Losses in Last Week's Fire"

"Policy holders who lost everything have been paid in full, and those whose property was damaged have received satisfactory adjustments."

"With seven business places wiped out by the fire, there has been a general clamor for new locations."

"Henry S. Bertrand on Monday purchased of D.E. Pasco his interest in the Music Hall block." "Mr. Bertrand will take possession on June 1. He plans ... to have a most modern drug store."

"R.D. Baker & Son, whose three story block was totally destroyed; while their stock of electrical goods, radios and musical instruments was badly damaged, are to erect a building for their own use." "The fire last week destroyed their third business block in five months. On September 19th, the large store building, north of Fairyland theatre, which they occupied and the Swan block, which they had taken over some time before, were both burned."

"Miss Mary S. Crandall, owner of the building in which five of the stores were located, has not yet given up the idea of rebuilding, nor has she decided not to."

"Walter H. Pasco, who owns the big lot between the Lavine building and the Warren House site, is making plans for a business block."

"With the large number of business places wiped out in the two fires, and desirable quarters not available, places must be provided because several if not all of the enterprises are needed here and failure of the proprietors to re-establish in Warrensburgh would be a severe blow to the town."

wrapping the museum's documents, artifacts and clothing, Town employees have been very busy working on the building.

Accumulated debris has been removed from the top floor and new heat-efficient windows have been installed. (The top floor will be used initially for storage until appropriate access can be developed.) At the same time a plumbing contractor has been restoring the heating system, with the installation of a new boiler and all new piping to the existing radiators on both floors. Next



will be bringing the electrical wiring up to code.

Once the top floor is ready we will move most of the collection there so the main

floor can be renovated.

We are very grateful to Warrensburg's Supervisor Jerry Quintal and the members of the Town Council for making good on their promise to bring the museum's building up to standards necessary for such a facility. In case you are wondering where all the money is coming from, you can thank the tourists! This is part of the recently enacted occupancy, or "bed," tax which is collected by Warren County from all accommodations and distributed to each town for tourism promotional purposes. There is little doubt that our museum can become a major attraction in Warrensburg.

Organizing the Museum's collection is a tall order. Once everything is entered into the computer we will be able to locate items related to a particular topic for exhibition. We are looking forward to developing exhibits on the numerous aspects of life in Warrensburgh, from early times to the present.

The logging and tanning industries played a large part in Warrensburg's early development, as did water power, the railroad and trolley, tourism and, most importantly, an industrious labor force.

Artifacts Night at the Merrill Magee House November 16, 2004



Chuck Bederian, who collects thermometers, showing a prize find, a promotional thermometer from the Warrensburg Woolen Co. It reads:

"Warrensburg Trousers Are All Wool, Well Made And Fit."



John Hastings chats with his mother, author Abbie Hastings.

Museum Photo Identification Luncheon – October 17, 2004



Taking a lunch break during the photo identification program.



Society members and friends reviewing photographs.

*Graveyard Walk
Continued from page 3*

country.

He was a veteran of World War II, serving as an Army Sergeant, fixing airplanes in California.

He played the banjo in many local bands. In later years, he was well known as having collected bottles and cans from his route of “clients.” If he wasn’t doing that he was walking around town with his metal detector finding “treasures”, and was known as the “Weary River Kid.” He’d ride his scooter to Stony Creek, with his banjo on his back.

All who knew him said he had a keen and inventive mind. Some of his jobs included being a mechanic, electrician, carpenter, tour boat pilot and steeplejack. In fact he was hired, more than once, to paint the flagpole at the Floyd Bennett Bandstand.

Davey died in 1993 in the Albany Veteran’s Administration Hospital after a short illness.

Christian Moon Stewart

Portrayed by her great, great granddaughter, Sarah Farrar

Christian Moon Stewart was born in February, 1784 to Alexander Moon and his wife Margery Stewart in Rindow, a farmstead near Blaer-Athol, Perthshire, Scotland, the 7th of 12 children. She became a spinster. Daniel Stewart was born in November, 1784 to Charles Stewart and Margery Stewart in Cnocknagary farmstead, the 6th of 10 children. Daniel became a gamekeeper.

In 1808 they left for America, on the Clarendon, landing in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada, arriving in September of that year. By 1810 they settled in Thurman near relatives. (In 1813 that section of Thurman became Warrensburgh.) They had 6 children, 3 living to grow up.

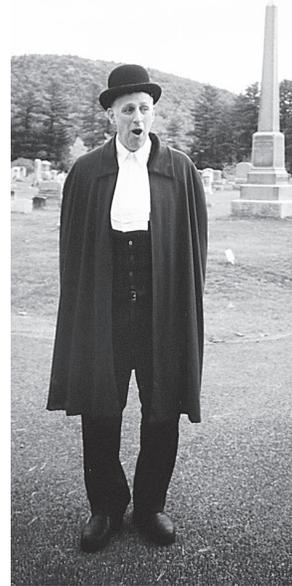
In 1857 Daniel and Christian left Warrensburgh with James and Alexander for Woodward’s Bluff, Prophetstown, Whiteside County, Illinois. Charles and his family remained in Caldwell. Daniel died in 1864. Christian died in 1878. They have descendants in Warrensburg and around the country from their two sons, James and Charles.



Sarah Farrar as Christian Moon Stewart
Photo courtesy Jackie Hazlett



Christian Moon Stewart
Photo courtesy Sarah Farrar



Cemetery Caretaker Ebenezer (Doug Goettsche).
Photo courtesy Jackie Hazlett



Ebenezer’s wife (Rita Ferraro).
Photo courtesy Jackie Hazlett

This year there were two evening graveyard walks, one “Dinner with the Dead” and one “Lunch with the Dead“. In addition, the Warrensburg Central School 4th and 5th graders were treated to the performance at the cemetery. The two guides were: Ebenezer and his wife, portrayed by Doug Goettsche and Rita Ferraro.



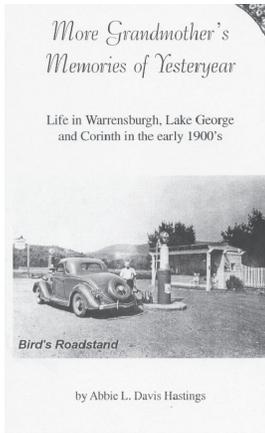
The Festival is always looking for characters for the Graveyard Walk. Please let us know if you have a suggestion of someone that you think might make a good character. It can be serious, funny, or sad. We are also looking for people who would be willing to portray a character. It’s lots of fun.

BOOKS

More Grandmother's Memories of Yesteryear

by Abbie Davis Hastings

Published by Warrensburgh Historical Society. 28 pages with 27 photos. Plus 2 genealogical charts of the Davis & Hastings lines.



Price: \$6.50 (plus sales tax and \$1.00 postage.)

In her first book Abbie Hastings tells of her birth in 1914 as "a tiny baby girl born prematurely..." and quotes the doctor as saying, "Lay it aside, it won't

amount to anything." At the age of 90, with the publication of her second memoir, Abbie has demonstrated how wrong that doctor was!

These books are charming little "reads" intended for Abbie's grandchildren but they give us a first-hand look at local family life in the era when marginal subsistence farming was being supplanted by factory work. Abbie takes us through two world wars and the Great Depression but her books paint an enviable picture of close relationships between family members and friends and of simple pleasures and recreation.



Abbie and Elda on the farm on Harrington Hill.

Following are several excerpts from her latest book.

"The house was a one and one-half story frame house, with a living room, dining room, kitchen and three bedrooms, one downstairs and two upstairs. There was a porch across the front of the house with a well to the left and at the end of the porch. There were cupboards built between the kitchen and dining room, which were accessible from both sides. A stairway was built in one end of the kitchen. At the foot of the stairs was a door which went into a back room which was probably built for a summer kitchen. We used it for a wash room and storage. There was a window that opened to the back and the people who lived there before us, threw their tin cans out the window into George Bennett's pasture.

One day Dad was working on the car fixing the speedometer, and of course his buddy, brother Bob, was there with him to help. Dad went around and got inside of the car to check to see if it was working. Brother Bob, about 5 years old at the time, decided to help and got his finger caught between a big and little cogwheel. By the time Dad got to him, it had done a job on his finger.

But that didn't stop Bob. I guess he was a born mechanic since he was always fixing and tinkering on cars. In World War II he was in the Third Armored Division. Once, when General Eisenhower's jeep broke down, they came and got Bob to fix it.

"After mother went to work in the factory, we had more store bought food because Mom didn't have the time to bake. They bought cookies, like Mary Ann's and Johnny's, and ginger snaps that came in a barrel shaped box with a big red rose on the side. Then there was peanut butter which sometimes came in a tray and sometimes in a pail. When you took the cover off, there was a good 1 1/2 inches of oil on top which you had to mix into the butter. It was the kind that stuck to the roof of your mouth."

More Grandmother's Memories of Yesteryear by Abbie Davis Hastings

is available by mail from the Society or at numerous locations in Warrensburg, The Lake George Library, Corinth Museum or Ess Jays in Corinth, Lyrical Ballad in Saratoga Springs, Backwoods Charm or The Harness Shop in Chestertown, Stone's Pharmacy in Lake Luzerne or The Chapman Museum in Glens Falls.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY CONTEST

Warrensburgh News – March 9, 1905
"THE NOBLE HUDSON"

In the March issue of Harper's magazine Marie Van Vorst has an interesting article on the noble Hudson and the country which the river traverses. The authoress refers to the fact that originally it was called the _____ river which is Indian for river beyond the peaks."

The first person to call Sandi at 623-5153 (leave a message on my machine) and fill in the blank correctly will receive a copy of the Society's new publication: *More Grandmother's Memories of Yesteryear* by Abbie Davis Hastings.

From the Files of the Town Historian

Sandi Parisi

BUT DID YOU KNOW

Charles Reed Bishop was a businessman and government official in Hawaii during the 1800s. He was the husband of Bernice Pauahi Bishop, late heir to the Hawaiian throne and one of the first trustees of the Kamehameha Schools, and the founder of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum. **But, did you know** that around 1836 until 1842 he was a clerk for Nelson J. Warren, the largest business in Warrensburgh? He learned bartering, bookkeeping, taking inventory, maintenance and janitorial duties.