



Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

Volume 6 Issue 3

Fall 2001

ARCHITECTURE OF A SMALL TOWN

by Delbert Chambers

ADIRONDACK HOUSE / COLONIAL ARMS -AN HISTORIC SITE

If we can accept a bit of lore, not necessarily a fabrication, but no longer provable, we can claim the southeast corner of Adirondack Avenue and Main Street is the site of what seems to have been the most longstanding type of business in Warrensburgh, a business that endured for some two hundred years, a business that probably began before Warrensburgh was Warrensburgh, a business that didn't end until 1994. It was a business that catered to the comforts of humanity; offering libation, sustenance and rest.

It is understood that at the earliest on this site was a log tavern. This at about the turn from the 18th century. Warrensburgh was not an incorporated town until 1813, although the area was being settled in the 1780's. An anecdote - Warrensburgh, known before 1813 as "The Bridge", was situate on a significant route of Indian travel. It's easy to visualize that Indians probably were included as patrons of these early taverns. In fact, a census recorded in 1876 notes that, even then, there were three Indians among the citizenry of Warrensburgh.

Records indicate that in 1825 the "Adirondack House" opened on the site. What is not known is what happened to the log structure. Perhaps it

for the new construction, perhaps it met its fate by fire or, perhaps, it was removed to another site - as was somewhat common practice in the early development of a community. My references indicate that construction began on the Adirondack House by Alton Nelson and John McClaren but that it was completed by Edmund Richards (brother to Peletiah Richards) who subsequently ran the establishment for several years until it was taken over by Alton Nelson and Joseph Woodward. After that, McClaren ran it for a very brief time and was succeeded by Bradford Tubbs. In 1838 Stephen Griffing acquired title and kept it until 1847.

1847 - it was owned by Lewis Persons and renamed "Persons Hotel".

1867 - it was acquired by Royal C. Smith and again renamed. It was

then that it became the "Adirondack Hotel".

1888 - the property was sold to Fred O. Hammond and Adolphus Brown for nine thousand dollars. A few months later Brown sold his interest to Fred Hammond's father.

This first photograph was probably taken late 1880's. (Why that date in a moment.) There is argument that this building, in part, was the structure built in 1825. That argument suggests that the original construction was a three storey, flat roofed building that did not have any significant porch. Certainly it is easy to visualize the building without the pitched roof and without the porches, and as such, the fenestration and proportion

(continued on page 3)



Adirondack Hotel (circa 1886)

was simply demolished to make way

From the President

My original letter for this column was about what a wonderful day the Society and guests had at the 5th Annual Sticky Wicket. However, due to recent tragic events in New York City, I find it hard to revel about fun times we had in August. The day of the terrorist attack I was at work in the County's Emergency Communications center, and we there, like a lot of the world, heard of this event just after the first plane struck. As the day's events unfolded, I thought of and experienced some of the same feelings that I imagine most of you had. "I hope those people get out of there, I hope that they can get to them in time" but I also thought that I should call home. I did, for no other reason than to just hear from my wife that everything was OK. That day I will remember as being very busy, many a call was placed to us from people from all over the county, wanting to know where to give blood, or where they could go to help, and in some cases, if we could help contact their loved ones, who were in Manhattan, working in the World Trade Center. I also will remember the overwhelming despair that I felt as I watched and heard of the casualty figures rising hourly.

So I apologize for not giving the Sticky Wicket its due, it was a wonderful day for all that attended. I just can't right now.

President Bush has indicated we are at War, and as well we should be. We as Americans must rise up and put an end to all who think of this great country and its citizens as fair game. Their time is coming....

God Bless America

Anthony M. Fidd
President, WHS

Board of Directors

Anthony Fidd, Jr. - President
John Cleveland - Vice President
Eldon Hall - Treasurer
Delbert Chambers
Brenda Cleveland
Jean Hadden
Joyce Harvey
LeeAnn Rafferty

Committee Chairpersons

Acquisitions-John Cleveland
Grants - Theresa Whalen
Membership - Brenda Cleveland
Programs - John Cleveland
Quarterly - Sandi Parisi
Scholarship - Delbert Chambers

The Board of Directors will meet at the Glens Falls National Bank meeting room at 7 PM on the following dates. Members welcome.

October 9, 2001
November 13, 2001
December 11, 2001

New Members

Cal Engle
Janet Combs

Calendar of Events

Festival of Scarecrows

Ghost Stories

Sponsored by WHS

Thursday, October 25, 2001,
Richards Library 7:00 PM

Holiday Dinner Social to be held Thursday, December 13, 2001, time and place to be announced.

Society Information, call
Tony Fidd - 668-3004
Delbert Chambers - 623-3514
John Cleveland - 623-9450

Contributors to this issue:

Delbert Chambers
Brenda Cleveland
Sarah Farrar
Sandi Parisi,
Quarterly Editor

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

Send submissions to :

Warrensburgh Historical Society
Post Office Box 441
Warrensburgh, NY 12885
or e-mail
parisibb@netheaven.com

Quarterly Deadlines

February 1

May 1

August 1

November 1

Warrensburgh Historical Society
Quarterly
Copyright 2001. All rights reserved

Membership Information

Membership Classifications

Individual	\$10.00
Student	\$ 5.00
Junior	\$3.00
Family	\$20.00
Senior	\$ 5.00
Contributing	\$ 50.00
Corporate	\$ 50.00
Institutional	\$ 50.00
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 amount of membership classification, with name, address and phone number to:

Warrensburgh 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.

are comfortable to view. This would have been a common type of construction for this size and use of building in 1825. BUT - exception to this argument can be made based on a map dated 1876. The then existing hotel is shown having extensive additions to the rear of the building. Those additions are clearly not existent in this photograph.

Now, why is late 1880 a telling date? It is because of the architectural style of the roof; including the steep pitch, the hipped configuration, the central cross gable with wood shingle siding and the ornate, arched gable detailing. And because of the extensive porches that incorporate turned posts, detailed bracketry and pendants. These details are of the mid-Victorian period, very early Queen Anne style architecture and such was not developed until circa 1880. A particularly interesting note about this photograph is the word "ADIRONDACK" in the arch of the front gable.

On the back of the photograph is noted "*this hotel burned 1889*". The following is attributed to a newspaper account and dated January 31, 1889. (I have not been successful in locating that issue).

"The Adirondack House was destroyed by fire, originating from a

defective flue. It caught fire in the attic over the bar room, from a defective chimney, and was burned to the ground. The blaze was first discovered about 10 a.m. The alarm was promptly sounded by ringing the bell in the Methodist Episcopal Church tower. The citizens turned out in large numbers and a line of hose was strung from the hydrant near John Will's store (today, 4 Hudson Street). This availed but little as the hose lacked 30 or 40 feet of reaching the burning building and it was found impossible to get an effective stream on the flames."

I have not found any information about the hotel built subsequent to the 1889 fire but this photograph shows what remained after a fire in 1896 (or perhaps '95). In it we see the height of the chimneys which suggests that it was a two storey building. Shown also is a brick vault. Emerson & Co., Bankers, moved the business into the hotel in 1891.

Adding to the confusion of the actual number of times the hotel was rebuilt is a map dated 1891 that shows the hotel as being one and the same as in the first photograph. I can only assume that the information for the map was prepared before the fire. (A notion that the hotel shown on the map is the same one as the fire pho-

tograph cannot be supported because, if for no other reason, the chimneys seen in the fire photograph do not exist in the earlier photograph of the hotel.)

Now, let's backtrack a bit. The 1889 account continues: "... The southerly portion of the house was built sixty years ago, and in 1869 an addition was erected on the north."

So let's analyze this. First a date, 1829 (1889, the date of the account, less the noted sixty years). Being just four years from 1825, when it is recorded that the "Adirondack House" opened, it is plausible that the "sixty years" is just stated generally rather than exactly.

Refer to the top photo on page 4. This view of the Adirondack Hotel is somewhat earlier than the photo on page 1. Again, visually remove the porches and the pitched roof. Now, remove the northerly three ranks (the equal wall sections that include fenestration, or windows) and see what is left is a three storey, flat roofed, two ranked building. The first level includes a door to the very north end of the street façade. There is also a door within the southern façade. (A second storey door in the south wall suggests this original structure included a porch below, incorporating a balcony at this level. Certainly it was not the porch seen in the following photograph.)

As noted, in 1869 an addition was added to the north side. This would have been the other three ranks. The addition included a large door centered in the new street façade and a door to the far north end of the same wall.

One more interesting detail in support of the foregoing is a chimney within the foot print of the south section and another within the north section.

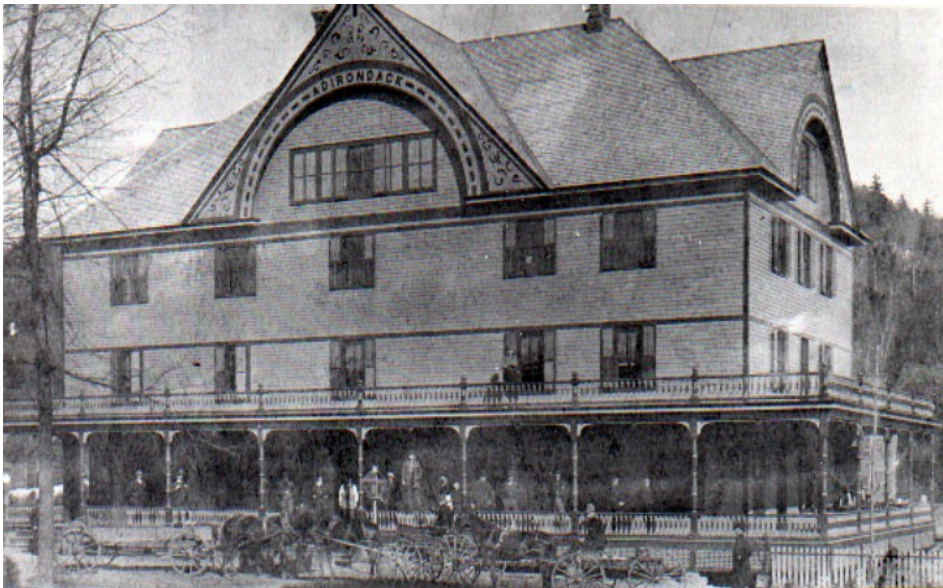
With a bit of conjecture on my part, what we have so far is a three storey, two ranked hotel built in 1825. A three storey, three ranked addition



The Vault – (circa 1896)

was added in 1869. To this now five ranked building was added an impressive roof structure and porches in early to mid 1880s. A fire razed

style architecture. Features worthy of note include: the octagonal tower and its 'candle snuffer' roof with finial; the hipped main roof and a



Adirondack Hotel – (circa 1880)

this building in 1889. A second and smaller hotel was built that also was razed by fire, in 1896.

In the late 1890s the hotel was again rebuilt. It was a grand building as evidenced by the photograph below. It had three storeys, a seven ranked front and side fenestration at four. It is said to have had fifty rooms. The detailing is full blown Queen Anne

lower, significant front 'cross gable'; extensive, wrap around porches; turned porch columns, detailed bracketry and turned spindle work; wood shingled gables; and simple door and window surrounds with the window sash having a single pane of glass. The roof was slate, which was locally typical of upscale buildings at that time. I note also that in



New Adirondack Hotel – (circa 1900)

the original of this photograph can be seen lettering on the first storey front windows at the northerly end of the building. It reads: "Emerson & Co., Bankers". (This business moved out of the hotel in 1927. It was by then known as Emerson National Bank. So, apparently, the photograph predates 1927. Actually, I would suppose that it was taken very near the turn from the nineteenth century.)

In 1899 brothers Michael and Thomas (or possibly John) O'Connor took over management of the hotel. In 1921 Michael died and his interest was assumed by his son, John.

In 1939 the property was purchased by Albert L. Emerson and the hotel was renamed Colonial Arms. It was then that five double cottages were constructed behind the hotel. (Albert L. was the grandson of Albert C. through James. It was Albert C. Emerson's bank that was previously mentioned.)

I do not know just when the hotel underwent the very significant redesign of the front façade. The redesign included enclosing the front porch, actually rebuilding it as an extension or addition to the interior space. Not the entire front porch but one third on both ends and with that, the inclusion of new windows. The center third of the front had the second storey porch removed and was rebuilt as a colonnaded, two storey porch. The existing third storey porch remained intact, including the original Victorian period posts, spindles and bracketry. What remained of the first storey porches and the portion of second storey porches directly above them also retained their original architectural detailing. The colonnaded porch now sported two center columns, of round, fluted, Doric style and two square end columns of compatible proportion and style. The concept of the square columns, in a lesser scale, was carried through to the second storey porches that were rebuilt over the new additions

below. These columns and the two storey porch is loosely an affectation of Greek Revival style and, due to

added to the property. Just one year later there was another fire at the hotel, apparently not terribly destruc-



Hotel Adirondack prior to name change to Colonial Arms (circa. 1939)

the general time of this major façade change, appropriately identifies it as Colonial Revival. OK, so now we understand the name change. And one might assume that Emerson made the changes as it was he who renamed the establishment Colonial Arms. But why then, as seen in this picture of a postcard that reveals all the noted changes to the building, does it also clearly indicate that the name of the hotel has not yet been changed. I will guess that the changes were made in the late 1930's.

This story now moves into times that more of you readers remember.

1958 - the property was purchased by Marcus Bruce.

1961 – purchased by Jack Casey.

1966 - Casey died and, as the only bidder on the foreclosure sale, Bruce bought back the property for one hundred thousand dollars. (More than ten times the sell price in 1888, only seventy eight years earlier.)

1969 - Valdale Motels purchased the property.

In January 1971 a fire destroyed a building housing bowling alleys, a swimming pool and lounge. It is not clear when these amenities were

tive. In November of 1972 a rather serious fire broke out on the upper floors. And again, in December of 1972, there was yet another serious fire on the upper floors.

In the fall of 1974 much improvements were made both inside the hotel and on the grounds. The upper floors of the hotel remained closed.

On February 10, 1977 a fire in the waiter's dressing room was quickly extinguished. But the next day, February 11, 1977, was "the big one" that many today remember.

"In the early hours of the morning alarms were again sounded and the fire company went out again to the building only to find it engulfed in flames on the upper levels. Five other companies responded to the multiple alarm blaze and were on the scene for many hours. They continued on a watch for most of the day and early evening. A few days later rebuilding plans (were announced) that included tearing off the top two floors, rebuilding the kitchen and dining rooms and repairing and enlarging the cocktail lounge." This work completed, the building structure remained the same until 1994.

Guests of this long enduring establishment have included; Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, H.S. Firestone, John Burroughs, Theodore Roosevelt, Robert & Ethel Kennedy and many other historically familiar names to be sure.

In 1989 the property came into the ownership of Carmen Maciariello, Garry Grant and Joe Grady. They made significant interior decorative changes and refurbished the grand horseshoe bar. This bar was created by Albert L. Emerson about 1939.

In 1994 the property was purchased by a developer who subsequently leveled it and erected a 10,400 square foot building to contain a modern retail store and pharmacy. The wonderful horseshoe bar was put in storage and today is in use at Casey's North in North Creek.

It was only through the involvement of certain community citizens, including and especially this writer, that the new building exists as it does rather than the stereotypical, one storey, unadorned, brick and block box. In early 1994 the developer had wanted to put this "box" on available property at the northwest corner of Stewart Farrar Avenue and Main Street, that being the site of the historic Cunningham House. (See *WHSQ, Winter 2000*.) This was dis-



Colonial Arms – (circa 1977)

couraged by an effort of the Architectural Heritage Committee in Warrensburgh citing the proximity to churches, the school and the library as inappropriate for the selling of beer and other items generally deemed as having a negative influence on the well being and betterment of the noted establishments.

In 1994, the developer, Contact Construction Co., Inc. President Gary Carstens, a 'hometown boy', formally approached the Warrensburgh Planning Board with his proposal to purchase the property at the corner of Adirondack Avenue and Main Street and to construct a building that would be leased to Rite Aid Corporation. I happened to be at that meeting and publicly suggested to Mr. Carstens that, given the historical significance of the site, it might be more appropriate to consider re-designing the building façade. Mr. Carstens invited me to meet with him to expand on my comment and with that I spent the next few months working with him to develop the existing design and to ensure that it was carried out.

The building design loosely mimics some of the characteristics of the Adirondack Hotel and of the Colonial Arms. Indeed, the two fluted columns, the three half-circle glass window heads, the double hung circle top window at the upper level

and the porch hanging lamp were salvaged and reconditioned for incorporation into the new building. A large stone from the earliest parts of the oldest foundations was set at the street corner of the property with the intent that a plaque would be attached commemorating the historical

Please, if you have insight into this story, whether provable fact, photographs or even folklore, contact me either directly or through the Society.

And speaking of "folklore", there are many stories that can be told of the Colonial Arms, some of a gentle



Rite Aid – 2001

site. And, no less an aspect of architecture, the larger maple tree at the street corner was allowed to remain and the parking lot was designed around it. Its presence, with the addition of the added landscaping, adds a great deal of ambience and integrity to the site.

I end this article with a request.

nature and some of a rather risqué nature. It would be a great sport to publish some of them. Of course, identities would be changed! Again, contact me.

(Many thanks to Caron Akeley, Jean Hadden, Sarah Farrar, the Richard's Library and the Warrensburgh Museum of Local History for their photographs and assistance in research)



Colonial Arms – (circa 1994)



Diary of Grace Noyes

(18 January 1825 –
5 January 1881)

Transcribed by Sarah Farrar exactly as Grace wrote it, spelling, punctuation, etc. The notes in parenthesis are Sarah's notes explaining who and what Grace was talking about.

Continued from previous Quarterly

Thursday, August 1, 1878 Rainy all day Marie & Biddie Cleaning up stairs Mrs King sewing

Friday 2 Rainy Marie & Biddie Ironing Mrs King went to the Falls and got my interest went with Emerson

Saturday 3 Plesent Bakeing & all sorts of work Marie & Biddie here I let Mrs King have Ten dollars for Biddie Mac Beth went to Lake this AM

Sunday 4 verry Plesent Barcly(?) Thomas preached Mac Beth at Lake George a hard Showr in PM Eliza Rawlins, Mary Purse, Jim Purse here (a James H. Pierce was a Captain in Company C 118th New York Regiment under Mrs. King's brother Col. Samuel T. Richards)

Monday 5 verry Plesent in the AM Biddie Washing I went to Mrs Person & spent the day rainy at night Austin started fore Chester this AM Boys all at Foster Place

Tuesday 6 Fearfull rainy Mrs King & Marie sewing The Boys all at home

Wednesday 7 rainy Miss Benson this PM went to Fred Burhans to tea But was here at Mrs Ray came to tea I washed and iron'd Mary G. Merrell (Merrill) and her mother (Maria Coman Griffing--Mrs. Stephen 2nd) called this Evening Austin not home

Thursday 8 Rainy I made cake The men went to Foster Place. Anna Webber here all night Mac Beth came home to day

Friday 9 Rainy verry Rainy Marie Ironing Starch Clothin I felt real Bad my self I went down to West

River to ride (Hudson River)

Saturday 10 Clear in the AM But rained at Eve Boys at Foster Place Miss Benson went to the Bake (back?) to Ride. The Hunts were her in the Eve had Ice Cream Austin came to night

Sunday 11 rained in the AM I did not go out to Church Went with Saml up the river in P.M. Mac Beth Preach'd to day Austin here

Monday 12 Plesent Biddie wash'd Boys haying Mrs King Mrs Ray & Miss Benson went to the Falls I went up street Mrs Sweet & daughter came to tea

Tuesday 13 Plesent Mrs King all most sick Mrs Ray sick Boys haying Eldad Goodman buried to day at Lake George

Wednesday 14 Plesent Boys haying Prayer meeting to night

Thursday 15 Plesent Boys went to Foster Place Austin left for Horicon this AM and Clarence (Clarence) Woodard went up with him

Friday 16 Plesent Men haying Jim went to the Falls Mrs Ray sick Mrs King with her I went out and made some calls & felt real mean

Saturday 17 Plesent Hesden came up to night Mrs King & Biddie went fore berries Mrs Ray sick Mrs Sweet went to Dr Chrette (Charette) to tea Pegey & Egg? or Ogg? came to tea & dinner Austin did not come home

Sunday 18 Plesent I did not go to church Boarders here and I felt real mean Hesden here Austin did not come home tonight

Monday 19 Plesent Boys haying Chas went to the Falls with Hesden Mrs Sweet left this AM fore Bolton Biddie Washing Marie not here Callie & Minnie called in the Eve

Tuesday 20 Plesent Miss Benson and her children went to the Lake Boys finished haying to day Mrs Goodsell & Mrs W from Chester here to day Austin came to night

Wednesday 21 very warm & plesent

Miss Benson left to day fore home I took tea at Mrs Julia Pattersons The Band were out in the Eve Baker and family were at Emersons Austin here

Thursday 22 Verry plesent Austin left fore Luzerna Fred went with me on Prospect Mountain We had a nice time Boys cuting oats

Friday 23 Plesent & warm Boys geting in oats Jim on the road at work Marie & Mrs King sewing

Saturday 24 Plesent & warm Mrs King & Marie sewing geting Charlie ready Jim went to Fort Ann in PM Austin came home to night from Luzerne

Sunday 25 Sunday to Wet I could not go out this AM. Benj Hall died this AM. I went to ride in the PM with Samuel

Monday 26 Plesent & warm Charlie left this AM fore Hanover (Dartmouth College) Austin here Jim on the Road

Tuesday 27 Plesent & warm Jim drawing gravel on the Road Mrs King & Saml went on Prospect Mountain with Mr Hunts folk Benj Hall Buried to day

Wednesday 28 Plesent & Warm Jim on the Road Mrs King & Marie sewing

Thursday 29 Mr Austin went away this AM North Jim on the road Purse came to night a letter from Charlie to day Mrs Ray was sick

Friday 30 It rained this PM Austin did not come to night Jim drawing on the Road Saml & Fred geting ready to go

Saturday 31 Plesent Fred at Bolton Jim & Saml geting in hay Austin came to Breakfast this AM Miss Rose(?) came at night

(to be continued)



Sticky Wicket August 26, 2001 Warrensburg Fish Hatchery



Wicket Sponsors

ABLE Energy
Adirondack Journal
A Little Touch of Country
Bill's Restaurant
Caron L. Akeley
Champlain Stone, Ltd
Cornerstone Victorian B&B
Country Road Lodge B&B
Cronin's Golf Resort
C & C Sweets
Discoveries
Friends Lake Inn
Grist Mill on the Schroon
Glens Falls National Bank
H.L. Fisk, General Contracting
Hoolihan's
Jacobs & Toney, Meats
LD's Pharmacy
Marco Polo's Pizza, Subs & Pasta
Mountain Country Restaurant
Nemec's Sport, Farm & Garden Center
Oscar's Smoke House
Radio Shack
Riverside Gallery
Stewart's Shops
Suzanne's Queensbury Flowers
The Treasure Shoppe
Town of Warrensburg
Warren Ford-Mercury
Warrensburg Chamber of Commerce
Warrensburg Volunteer Fire Co.
Witz End Tavern

Other Sponsors

Clen's Collectibles ♦ Courtly Music
Unlimited ♦ Curtis Lumber ♦ Delbert
Chambers ♦ Donegal Manor ♦
Evergreen Bank ♦ Heck of a Pizza ♦
Lazy River Farms ♦ Miller Art &
Frame ♦ Museum of Local History ♦
OJ's Appliances ♦ Posies ♦ Stone
House Antiques ♦ This, That & In
Between♦



Historical Society Vice President John Cleveland ready for a round of croquet.

Please acknowledge and support the sponsors as they, through their sponsorship of this event and the Society, encourage the well being of our community through efforts to maintain its historical integrity.



Hat Review winner Nat Menshausen

Recipe Corner

By Brenda Cleveland

Corn Relish

Enough corn on the cob to make 10 cups of corn off the cob. Drop ears of corn in boiling water. Boil 5 min. Drain and dip in cold water. Cut corn from cob and measure



10 cups corn cut off cob
1 cup chopped green pepper
1 cup chopped red pepper
1 cup chopped onion
1 cup copped celery
1 ½ cups sugar
2 ½ Tbs mustard seed
½ tsp turmeric
2 ½ cups white vinegar
2 cups water

Combine everything together. Bring to a boil for about 15 minutes. Pack in clean jars, seal



Some of the contestants with the 2001 winner, Delbert Chambers, in the center with white hat and suspenders.



Ghost Stories
October 25th at
Richard's
Library
Sponsored by
WHS