



Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

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Fall 2002

OUR ADIRONDACK HOTEL 1923-1936

Joyce O'Connor Woznica – daughter of
John and Sara O'Connor

In the fall of 1923 I lived as a new baby in the Adirondack Hotel, owned by my father, John H. O'Connor and his younger brother, Edward J. O'Connor. I



Author, Joyce O'Connor Woznica – age 4 mos.,
with mother, Sara O'Connor in 1924 on one of the
side spindled porches. Note hanging laundry.
Photo courtesy Mrs. Woznica

have always been told that my mother, father and I resided in the third floor tower apartment of the old-fashioned hotel, and I as the only young child was a great favorite of the staff and hotel guests.

Before my second sister arrived, we left the hotel and moved a few blocks away toward Hackensack Mountain to a large cottage. I was eventually to have three sisters and a little brother.

When my mother, Sara Bowyer O'Connor, died in 1989, I received many newspaper clippings and her diary, 1931-1934. I would like to print one newspaper clipping here in full, as it explains in good detail the remodeling of the Adirondack Hotel in 1927.

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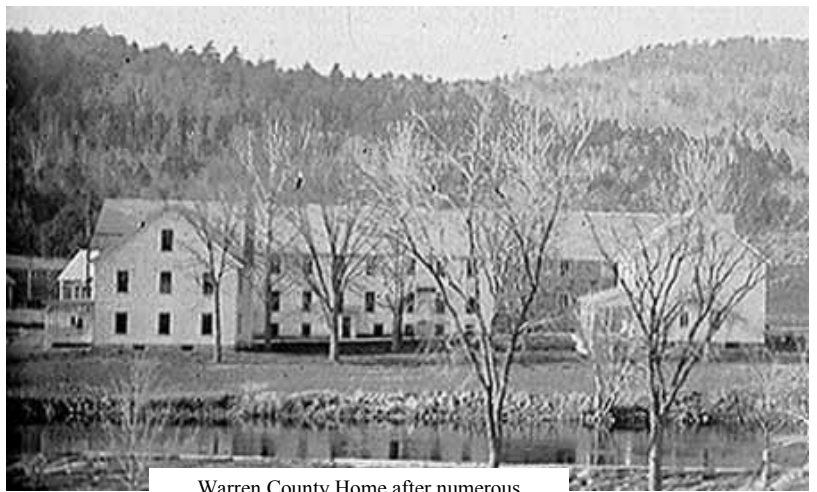
1857 INVESTIGATION: Warren County Poor House *From Warren County Archives Website*

The Warren Country Poor House is a wooden structure, two stories high, 26 x 60 feet, and fifty years old, and is in a very dilapidated condition. This house is ventilated through the cracks and crevices, and cannot be kept warm and comfortable in severe weather. There is no provision for bathing. Connected with the house is a farm of 200 acres yielding an annual revenue of \$800. Six rooms are appropriated to the use of the paupers, in each of which from four to fourteen are placed. The number of inmates found in the house was thirty-four, seventeen male and seventeen females, and one-half foreign and one-half native born, including eight children, all under the care of one keeper, who, assisted by his wife and aided by the paupers, provide for the family and manage the farm. The average number supported in the house is fifty-four, at a weekly expense of 90 cents each. The fare consists of plain, wholesome food, provided so far as not produced on the farm by purchase by the superintendent of the poor, who also prescribes rules regarding the diet, binds out the children on arriving at a suitable age,

and exercises the power of discharging lunatics when they are dismissed from the house.

The house is annually visited by the board of supervisors, and is supplied with Bibles, but enjoys no other means of religious instruction. The children either attend the district school or are taught in the house. A physician is employed, who visits the house once a week, at a salary of \$75 a year.

There have been two births and eight deaths, two are blind, occasioned by disease, one twelve years old. Of the inmates three are lunatics, two males and one female, and all are paupers; three have been admitted during the year.



Warren County Home after numerous

They have no special attendants, or special medical attention. One has improved during the year. Confinement in cells is the only form of restraint practiced. There is one idiot, a boy fourteen years old.

Two-thirds of the inmates come to re-

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From the President

The time has come for my final President Letter. I must admit, it seemed to fly by. I was really pleased to see everyone at the Sticky Wicket this year, it was a huge success for the society and the people that attended. The silent auction was fun. The weather was perfect, and as usual Brian Engle did a great job cooking. Mr. Ray Whalen won the coveted Wicket trophy this year, and what a hard fought game he played. I enjoyed playing croquet with Ray very much. John Cleveland and Brenda hosted and pulled off one of the best Halloween programs yet, at Richards Library, many great comments were heard.

As I stated in the beginning of this letter, I do not plan on continuing as President of the Society after January. I have only one thing to blame for this, Time, or more exactly, lack of time. I have enjoyed every minute of my tenure as President, and I leave the Historical Society in sound, capable hands with my current board of Directors. I hope, in the future I can serve again. I would like to thank Eldon Hall (LD) for his work as Treasurer, with his sound financial advice, the society is in great shape. I would also like to thank John Cleveland, who has helped with every aspect of the Society, not just as Vice President. The work of Brenda Cleveland, like that of all secretaries, often went unheralded, but with her 110% effort, the Society runs smoothly. I would also like to thank Jean Hadden, Millie Fish, Joyce Harvey and LeeAnn Rafferty for making my job very enjoyable. Their input has brought more history to light than any 10 books I could name. I would also like to thank Sandi Parisi, our beloved editor of the Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly. Her efforts, not only in organizing and proof reading, but also her amazing ability to extract articles from a not-so-willing group of people, are without equal.

I hope to see everyone at the Christmas Social on December 12th.

Thank you.

Tony Fidd, President

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

January 7, 2003
February 4, 2003
March 4, 2004

Holiday Dinner Social
Thursday, December 12, 2002
Merrill Magee House – 6 PM
\$21 pp. Choice of Chicken,
Salmon or Prime Rib
To reserve call Brenda
at 623-9450

Society Information, call

Tony Fidd - 668-3004
John Cleveland – 623-9450

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Warren County Archives
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Sandi Parisi,
Quarterly Editor

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

Send submissions to :

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or e-mail
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Quarterly Deadlines

February 1

May 1

August 1

November 1

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Quarterly
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Membership Information

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Individual	\$12.00
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Senior	\$ 8.00
Contributing	\$ 50.00
Corporate	\$ 75.00
Institutional	\$100.00
Life*	\$250.00

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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:

Warrensburgh Historical Society
PO Box 441, Warrensburgh, NY 12885

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1857 Investigation

(continued from page 1)

ceive public charity consequent upon habits of Intemperance.

The following was an addition to the website by Thomas John Lynch: "When we were researching the poor house records at Warren County, we found that our earliest admission book was 1875. We know there must have been an earlier one, but what happened to it is unknown. We did find a number of documents relating to the poor house, including the original deed to the Warren Co. poor house from 1826. I did a census of the poor house cemetery. The minutes of the Board of Supervisors stated that they authorized the purchasing of gravestones in 1896. Burials before that time are unmarked.

Our poor house was located in Warrensburg and the cemetery across the Schroon river in the town of Bolton. One discovery I made was that many Catholic poor were buried in the local Catholic cemetery, not the poor house cemetery. In the "potters field" of the Catholic cemetery along the south fence, I found the county authorized grave stones, identical to those of the poor house cemetery. The only explanation I was able to come up with was at the time Catholics were suppose to be buried in consecrated ground."



OUR ADIRONDACK HOTEL

(continued from page 1)

"APRIL 7, 1927: Operations were started Tuesday by the Schermerhorn Construction of Lake George, on remodeling the first floor of the New Adirondack Hotel. By June 15, the hostelry will present an entirely new appearance and have additional facilities that will make it the finest in Northern New York. Most of the work will be done on the first floor, which will be entirely changed. The present parlor is to be converted into a dining room and restaurant. In addition to the large room, more space will be provided by enclosing the present porch on the front and south sides, and extending the front a distance of five feet into the roadway. The present office, hall and

large room to the rear will be converted into the lobby, making it more than three times the size of the present one. A Colonial style stairway will lead to the second floor. In the north end, now occupied by the Emerson National Bank, six bedrooms, with bath for each, will be built. The entire front of the hotel will be changed as the result of the alterations. Four large pillars are to be erected. All of the changes represent an expenditure of nearly \$15,000."

(During the above work, remodeling was also done on the front second floor, with modern bedrooms and connecting bathrooms.)

1927 was still in the Roaring Twenties, and the Adirondack Hotel's activities were conducted accordingly. In the summertime there were extra chefs, pastry chefs, kitchen helpers, waitresses, and chambermaids. The garage, remodeled from the front of an old big barn, was almost always full of the new automobiles moneyed people drove, and sometimes

sine and huge pots of flowers were always fresh. To store and age the shipments of meat, my father had installed a big basement room under the back bar entrance, with a walk-in freezer. He had the only key, and a few times he took my next sister and I with him to explain the necessary rules. There were two heavy door stops to place after opening the freezer door, and a thorough inspection had to be made before shutting the door. It was cold enough in there to freeze an unwary person to death!

During the busy summers we children only visited the hotel for occasional family dinners, but always on Friday evenings for the band concert, sometimes combined with a church bazaar. We would enter the cool, slate-floored lobby with its long leather, back-to-back couches and gleaming wood front desk, with mail slots and key holders behind. We would always be dressed in identical, no-sleeve summer dresses, short white socks, and black patent leather shoes. Our mother would introduce us to



The post card is of the front, main restaurant. Post card courtesy Joyce O'Connor Woznica

families from the cities would arrive to stay for two weeks or more. They could climb the wide north path to the top of Hackensack Mountain, swim in Echo Lake, play golf further up the dirt road, or take trips to glamorous Lake George, famed Mount Marcy, or the Saratoga races.

To the side of the garage was the large vegetable, potato and flower garden supervised by Denny Combs. Table cui-

the assembled guests and start to chat with them. We, on our best behavior, would wait patiently to climb the inside stairs to the covered porch, with its many dark green rocking chairs in perfect view and hearing of the band starting to tune up straight across Main Street. If some of the guest families in the lobby had included children about our age, we invited them to be our guests on the porch. However, we always chose

straight, bentwood chairs near a table, for at intermission the best treat was to come.

When the band members left the bandstand, one of the younger waitresses, in her black uniform and starched white apron, would come to take all the children's orders. We had been told to order ice cream in a small dish but often got away with spillage-prone cones and plenty of napkins! And at the end of the concert the handsome bell hop in his jaunty red pill box cap would arrive with



Adirondack Hotel prior to 1927. Postcard courtesy of Steve

a message from our mother to meet her and the younger children in the front restaurant for the tired walk home.

Every summer the bell hop was a young college boy, and my mother often made friends with some of them. Here is the entry in her diary dated Dec. 28, 1931:

"Home (our cottage) all day. Paul Martineau (Bell Boy) here all afternoon. Sunny all day." One of her young men had paid us an after Christmas visit, it seems.

Some time after the remodeling our father had added a very elaborate miniature golf course on the property to the right back of the hotel. There were many winding pebble paths, miniature rivers and lakes, crossed by bridges, and nine putting greens. I seem to remember a rather loud bell which rang when your ball entered the hole on each green and a tower at the end you had to climb to find your score. We spent many a joyful hour here, sometimes in the early evenings, as it was lighted.

By the time I was seven I was quite often sent over before our dinner with a large, tightly covered tin pail to the hotel

kitchen's back entrance. A delightfully breezy porch had been added for the staffs meals, and someone would fill the pail with delicious breaded fish and tartar sauce, or sliced beef with loads of gravy, or just a packed container of vanilla ice cream. The Adirondack Hotel was noted for its fine cuisine and even as children we truly appreciated it.

The Stock Market Crash was in 1929, but surprisingly, the hotel's business was not affected until around 1932. My mother's diary was started in 1931, and at first it seemed the world of we children was not changed by the Depression. We regularly had some of our clothes ordered from Best & Co.'s catalog, and often had special days to take our Warrensburgh friends or young cousins to a day's outing on a Lake George steamboat, or trips to the Glens Falls Ringling Circus. Afterwards, a children's supper party at the Weary River Tea Room was added. And as a special treat, our Chestertown relatives would drive us to Lake

George to see the Show Boat pull out, with its blazing lights, horns blowing, couples in their Twenties best, and name band tuning up.

However, later in 1932 I can reason from the diary that hard times were beginning to come to the Adirondack Hotel. While Prohibition was in effect (1920-1933), it seems that the Main Street entrance restaurant - called the Grill Room was shut up without heat from sometime in September to May 1 of each year. However, the Dining Room, right behind the Grill Room, was used for Fall and Winter private parties, and Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations. The Dining Room was beautifully decorated with authentic mountain scenery on the wall panels and 1920s wall lights above.

My mother's diary entry for October 11, 1932: "Kiwanis Banquet at Hotel."

Entry for December 29, 1933: "Dreadful day but we (children with mother) got out. Power & Light Party in evening."

Much of the county, even the rural areas were electrified, and the Power & Light Co. was very successful. I can remember a brand new building, with offices and a showroom on first floor and apartments above, just a short distance south of the hotel. Showroom featured the new refrigerators, electric stoves and fans, regular irons, waffle and curling irons, and electric room heaters. [Current site of new Warrensburg Laundromat.]

Entry for December 31, 1932: "Hair done in A.M. Visited library and Helen's. New Years Party. Lots of planning and work, but we took a bad licking."

My mother's entry for December 30, 1933: "50 below at Howard Hull's. Children played out but not for long. Moderated toward night. New Years Party at Hotel. Worked and worked and it was successful!"

Sadly, hard times got even worse in the years to come, and 1937 was called the "Roosevelt Depression". That fall of 1937, to save money, our cottage was rented and the whole family moved to an apartment on the old-fashioned, back side of the second floor of the hotel. We five children had a wonderful time living with the excitement of the Adirondack



Adirondack Hotel after 1927. Postcard courtesy of Steve Parisi.

Hotel. But that is a different story, which we five siblings will narrate in the very near future.

Editor's Note: From Mrs. Woznica's letter: "The Hotel was first called - New Adirondack Hotel, but by the 1930's when we remember it, it was the Adirondack Hotel, with O'Connor Bros. in smaller print underneath on the stationery." She promises more to come.