



Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

Volume 18 Issue 3

Fall 2013

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

The Early Mining Industry Around Warrensburgh

by John T. Hastings

Some of the first mining to occur in the Warrensburgh area took place on "The Commons" just north of the village, where the search for graphite took place just prior to the Civil War. This continued as various companies such as Dixon Crucible and American Graphite staked their claims in search for future veins and profits. Later mining on Hackensack Mountain and near the County Home provided granite for the construction of the Burhans Mansion, Richards Library and numerous other buildings around town. The discovery of gold was often reported but seldom substantiated. Explorations locally often followed regional or national

discoveries.

Graphite

In the 16th century, a large deposit of pure, solid graphite was discovered in Borrowdale, England. This was the first time in recorded history that high quality, solid graphite had been found. When metallurgists first encountered this substance, they thought it was some sort of black lead, rather than a form of carbon. Thus, they called it "plumbago", which is derived from "plumbum", which is Latin for "lead".

Unfortunately, sticks of pure graphite are fairly brittle, so people started embedding it in various things such as hollowed out pieces of wood and also simply wrapped tightly in sheep skin. Thus, the pencil was officially born with a core of solid graphite, which was known then as black lead. The tradition of calling sticks of graphite "lead" has endured to this day.

The first mass production of pencils in the U. S. occurred around 1812 and saw a boom in production during the mid to late 1800s. Mass production of lead pencils began in the U.S. after the Civil War when the American Lead Pencil Co. and

the Joseph Dixon Crucible Co. started making lead pencils in 1865 and 1872, respectively. Discoveries of graphite at Pyramid and Rock Lake in Essex County, spurred explorations throughout the area.

Locally, in 1902 Lewis



John Farrar next to an old boiler at the Rock Pond site.

Thomson and Albert Thomas decided to open the old lead mine located on their property in "the commons." The lead mine is located somewhere near Lot # 2 of Subdivision 47 of the Hyde Township. This mine was first opened by the American Graphite Company (AGC) sometime in the late 1850s, and contained a thirty foot shaft. Due to the difficulty in mining the ore, along with the expense of getting the mineral to market (the product had to be hauled to Moreau, site of the nearest railroad station), the works were aban-

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Calendar of Events

September 14th - Antique Farm Equipment show at Tom Davis property on Lamb Hill Road. 10:00 am



September 19th - Stephen Foster's Civil War and other Music ; Bill Maher, 7:00 PM at the St. Cecelia's Catholic Church.

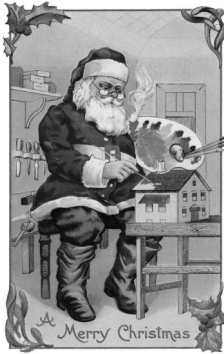
October 18 & 25 Graveyard Walks Refreshments: October 18 at the Cornerstone B & B and October 25 TBA

October 27 Dinner with the Dead

December 7 & 8 Christmas in Warrensburg; New Museum Exhibit "Dollhouses and Room Boxes"

December ?
Holliday
Social

For more events and details go to: www.warrensburghhistorian.org or call 623-2207.



Masthead Photo

This photo is a view of the skyline in Warrensburg at sunrise. from the Editor's post card collection.

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

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Board of Directors

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The Board of Directors meets at the Senior Center, 3847 Main Street, at 7:00 pm on the **FIRST** Wednesday of each month. Call Gary to confirm at 240-6013 .

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Barbara Moore
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CURRENT MEMBERSHIP: 225

Warrensburgh Historical Society

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Elizabeth Miner
Dee Bekman
Michelle Moore Family
Grist Mill on the Schroom
Viele's Automotive
Warrensburgh Chiropractic

Museum Hours

Wednesdays, Noon to 4 pm
Saturdays, 11 am to 3 pm (through September)
Sundays, 1 to 3 pm
We would like to be open more hours but need more volunteers to staff them. If you are interested in volunteering for as little as two hours a month, please check the schedule on the Society's website (Museum page) or call the director, Steve Parisi at 623-2207. No great knowledge of Warrensburg or experience is necessary, just a friendly, welcoming personality.

Thanks, Steve

Membership Information

Students \$5.00 Individual \$15.00 Family \$25.00 Senior (62+) \$10.00
Senior Family \$18 Contributing \$55.00 Business \$50.00 Life (Individual only) \$300 (membership is on a calendar year basis)

If you would like to join and receive the Quarterly by mail, please send a check for the amount of the membership classification, with name, address, and phone number to: **Warrensburgh Historical Society, P.O. Box 441, Warrensburg, N.Y. 12885**

NOTICE

The recording of history is an interpretive and ever changing study. Therefore, the Warrensburgh 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.**

(Continued from page 1) Rock & Hard Place

done during the 1860s. However, before ceasing operations, the American Graphite company removed a solid block of graphite weighting 700 pounds, which was sent to the Paris Exposition of 1867 and took the premium of the best and largest single specimen of black lead ever exposed. William Hooper of Ticonderoga was in charge of the mine at that time.

The original mineral rights were purchased by the American Graphite Company in 1863. As a result of financial difficulties by AGC these rights were purchased by Joseph Dixon Crucible in 1891, who then traded them to John and Scott Barden for lots nearer their mines in Graphite. The following year these lots were purchased by Thomson and Thomas of Warrensburgh for their timber value. Thompson and Thomas had gone into partnership in 1891 to procure pulpwood for the Schroon River Pulp and Paper Company.

The possibility of a prosperous industry in graphite mining prompted Thomson and Thomas to reopen the mine. A siphon was used to drain the water from the old shaft, which had been nearly filled by waste material. By November (1902), the work of cleaning out the old lead (graphite) mine was completed and the mining of the mineral was to begin at once. Mr. John Davis of Glens Falls, who was in charge of the Pyramid Lake operation, was put in charge of the Warrensburgh mine. In December the operation was suspended until the following spring. In October of 1903 Verplanck Colvin, noted Adirondack surveyor, visited the mine and "pronounced it a rich site." No further mention of the mining at this site was found. Numerous attempts to locate this mine have

been made, but without success. Do any of our readers know where this mine is? If so, please contact me.

Other area graphite mines included one on the Fitzsimmons farm (1902) owned by Henry Fitzsimmons (brother-in-law to Thomas O'Connor) which was about a mile from the county home in the town of Bolton. The (James) Hammond Mine was also located near the county home. Preliminary work was being done by Silas Wilcox and Will Hastings in the spring of 1905 which resulted in a 50 foot tunnel with about an eight foot diameter entrance. Mr. John H. Davis of Glens Falls had the contract for opening the shaft.

Another graphite mine was located off Route 28 in Pack Demonstration Forest. It is unclear when this mine was opened and in operation. Marble rock was also mined in Pack Forest for the lime content



*Entrance to Pack Forest
graphite mine*

which was processed at a nearby limekiln. Part of this kiln is still present and is located in back of what used to be the Resource Conservation and Development office.

Granite (Cut Stone)

The primary sources for cut stone in the Warrensburgh area came from either Hackensack Mountain or the James Hammond quarries. These were likely just the removal of surface blocks of granite and not what we would normally think of large depressions/excavations.

It is well documented that the construction of the Burhans Mansion was made of cut stone from a ledge on Hackensack Mountain. Albert Alden was the stone mason who, along with the help of tannery workers, built the mansion in the summer of 1865. The stone in the Church of the Holy Cross, Alden's home on Alden Avenue, and the Woodward Block also came from Hackensack Mountain.

In 1898 David Brown and Sons opened a marble quarry on the James Hammond farm opposite the county home. The stone was a grayish color, beautifully streaked and mottled with green. Although the stone was considered of superior quality, with an increasing demand, the main drawback was the distance to transport the material to the railroad. In late 1901 the Lake George Stone and Marble Company took over operations at the quarry. A steam sawmill was put in the quarry for working the stone. Two years later, the lease, machinery, tools, cars, derricks, steam drills, engines, etc. of the Brown Stone Quarry were sold at a public auction to Nicholas Boyle for \$1,500 as a result of the dissolution of the business of James Brown and the D. H. Cowles & Company of Glens Falls. The quarry reopened the following spring. It is known that stone from this quarry was used in the construction of Richards Library in 1901.

A 1908 article in the Warrensburgh News also notes a quarry which was opened on Upper Main Street, which was owned by Mrs. I. L. Prouty of Chestertown. Stone from

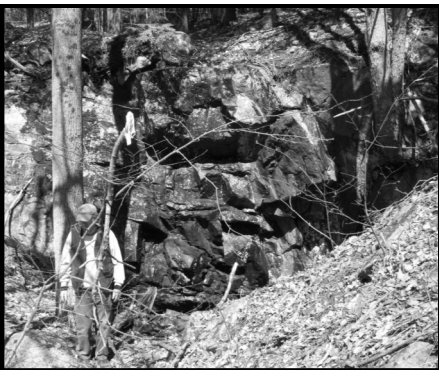
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this quarry was being used for the cellar walls and foundations of Orson Wilsey's new home at the junction of First, Second and Main Streets.

Gold

One of the most noted mines in the area was the Lyman Starks mine located about a mile north of Warrensburgh on the "Chester Road." A few years before 1893 there was considerable excitement over the alleged discovery of gold and silver on several farms in this location. Supposedly, Mr. Starks discovered a mine about 200 feet long which contained "large nuggets of almost pure gold" along the entire floor of the cave. By the spring of 1893 his plans were to "resolve the nuggets into pure gold by boiling them in a kettle of acid in about the same way that maple sugar is made." Seven years later another article appeared in the Warrensburgh News where Mr. Starks



John Farrar near the entrance to the old Stark's Mine

claimed that there were gold, silver, lead and iron in his cave. His latest discovery was an immense deposit of diamonds, which could be "scooped up by the shovel full from the floor of the cave." Obviously, Mr. Stark had not yet learned that

"all that glitters is not gold."

Another report of gold was made by John Gillingham of Thurman who staked a claim in 1896 which showed an assay report of \$3.50 from a pound of rock. The find was located in the Town of Warrensburgh, approximately three miles below Thurman Station. This would be in the Ferguson Creek vicinity. No further information was found on Mr. Gillingham's claim.

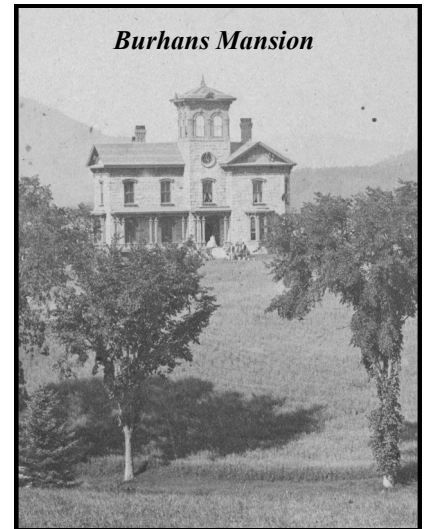
Also, John D. Nutting of Glens Falls arrived in Warrensburgh in August of 1897 with a new pickaxe which he planned to use to prospect for gold and silver on the John Davis farm located on Lamb Hill. Mr. Nutting believed that extensive deposits were present similar to those found in the Klondike region.

For the last six months of 1897 over 4,000 claims for the discovery of precious metals were filed with the Secretary of State from the northern counties of New York. Even George Hooper, who was superintendent of the American Graphite Company, decided to move his family to California in order to go into gold mining. Gold fever had struck!

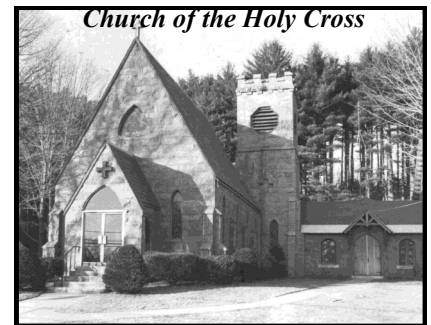
Mica

Around 1900, spurred by a new process that created large sheets of mica out of many small pieces and an increase in demand for its use in electric appliances, old abandon mica mines began to re-open throughout Warren County, as well as the whole country. In North Warrensburgh, near Darrowsville, Wilson Brown leased his mica mine to Banon Brothers of Utica in 1903. Eight men were at work and a steam drill

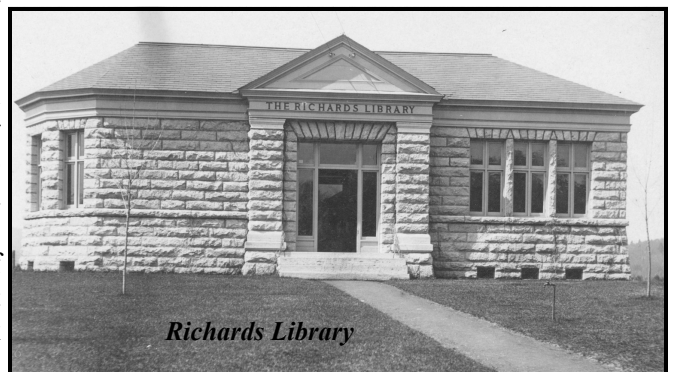
had been ordered. Mica in blocks of up to 8 inches square were being taken out. In 1913, Mr. ? Williams of Syracuse, who was developing the mica beds in Darrowsville, moved to Warrensburgh. The Wilson Brown farm would eventually be sold and become part of Forest Lake Camp in 1926.



Burhans Mansion



Church of the Holy Cross



Richards Library

CLIMATE CHANGE IN WARRENSBURGH

A history of climate warming and cooling

Part 2 of a series by
Paul Gilchrist, PhD

Part 1 in our series on Warrensburgh's climate history covered the millennial-scale climate cycle that lasted from 850 AD to 1850 as well as the 160+ years from 1850 to the present. We saw shorter decades-long cycles "porpoise" within centuries-long cycles. The **Modern Period** of the last 160+ years has alternated between warming and cooling trends, each lasting several decades, ending with our current 16 years of slightly cooler trend. Prior to 1850, the 500-year **Little Ice Age** featured four multi-decade periods of significantly cooler climate separated by comparatively warmer intervals. Before that, the **Medieval Climate Optimum** was a significantly warmer 500-year period from about 850-1350 AD, which, in turn,

had its shorter cool trends, too.

We discussed the rôle of sun spots as determinants of climate (fewer spots correlating with cooler temperatures; more spots, warmer temperatures). We noted proxy methods science has developed to measure past climates and solar activity, such as analyzing various isotopes in sediments, stalagmites, ice cores, and organic material, studying fossils, or examining ocean floor debris dropped from melting glacial icebergs. These can tell us much about climate in addition to what we know from the human record, and can take us far into the distant past. We noted that carbon dioxide has never been a determinant of climate, temperature, or climate change, and that changes in CO₂ follow changes in temperature, not the other way around.

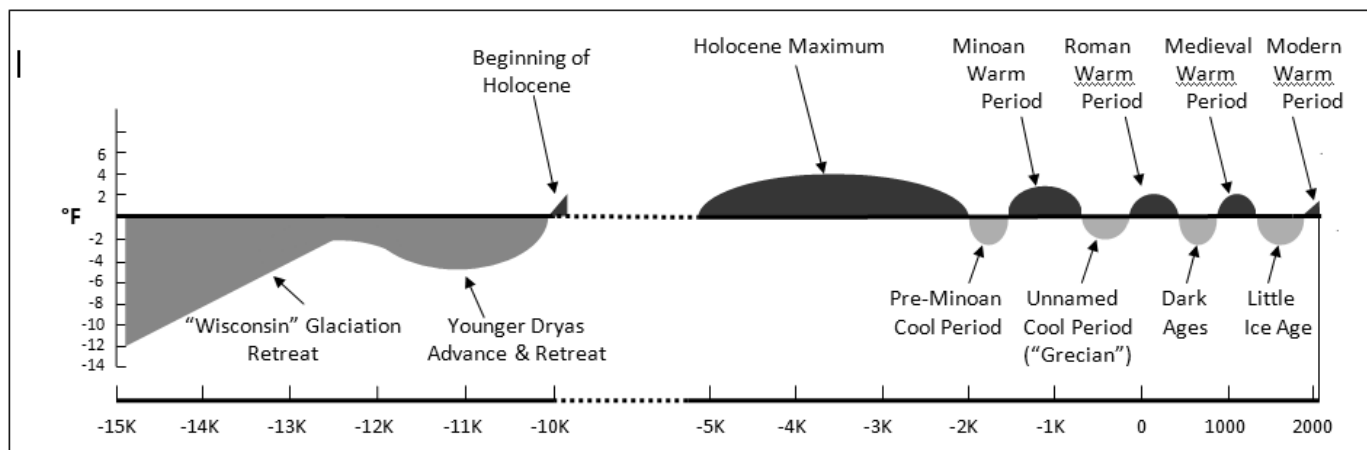
Based upon all of these methods, we know that the millennial-scale cycle that preceded the Medieval Optimum consisted of the **Roman Warm Period** (about 200 BC into the 5th century) and the cooler **Dark Ages** until

about 850 AD. The millennial-scale cycle before the Roman Period was comprised of an (unnamed) 500-year cooler climate in the time of the Greek Empire (with a decades-long warmer period during the "Golden Age" around 450 BC) plus the preceding **Minoan Warm Period**, during which Minoan civilization thrived. Going back one more multi-century cool period takes us to the **Holocene Maximum**, 2000-5500 BC. These are shown schematically in the graph below. Although these four millennial-scale climatic oscillations have European names, research from many locations has found they were global in extent, as were the multi-decadal cycles comprising them.

The Pleistocene Glacial Period

Given that solar irradiance is such an important determinant of climate, it's no surprise, as we continue back in time from the Holocene, that solar irradiance was the primary determinant of the four Pleistocene glacial periods in the past 1.6 million years. Early in the 20th century, a Serbian professor named Milutin Milank-

CHANGES IN MID-LATITUDE MEAN CLIMATIC TEMPERATURES OVER PAST 17,000 YEARS



The graph shows four millennial-scale cycles going back to the Holocene Maximum. Each cycle consists of a multi-century cool period and a multi-century warm period. The shorter multi-decade cycles within the millennial-scale cycles are too small to be shown on the graph. From the Holocene Maximum, the graph then skips back to the last five millennia of the last (Wisconsin) glacial period.

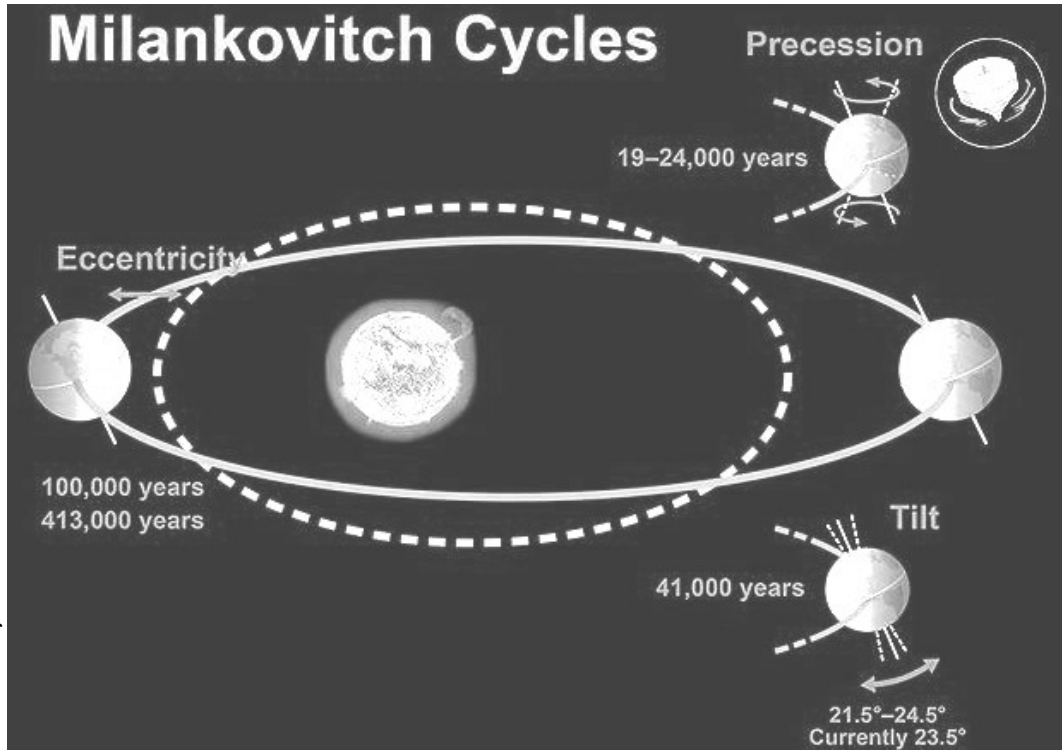
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ovitch calculated the effects of three known cycles on the amount of solar irradiance received at various latitudes on Earth and showed that those three cycles together provide an explanation of the onset and retreat of the Pleistocene glaciers.

The three cycles on which Milankovitch's theory is based are: the degree of tilt of Earth's axis in a cycle of 41,000 years; the "wobble" of the axis between

pointing toward the North Star (Polaris) or Vega, a cycle of 23,000 years; and percent of eccentricity of the Earth's elliptical orbit around the sun in a cycle of 100,000 years. The shorter cycles "porpoise" on the longer cycles and over thousands or tens of thousands of years the cycles have additive effects or offset each other's effects, resulting in climate changes large enough to cause continental ice sheets to form and advance, or melt and retreat. They are causative of the four glacial advances and retreats over Warrensburgh during the last 1.6 million years. The last glacier retreated 10,000 years ago, and, if the 20,000-year length of prior inter-glacial periods is a guide, we'll be safe for a few thousand more years before the next one comes.



An excellent 3-minute video showing an animated version of the Milankovitch cycles is better than a written explanation and can be found by Googling "Milankovitch Cycles" and clicking on the following website:

Milankovitch Cycles - YouTube
www.youtube.com/watch?v=6IbJrvtxWNE
Jun 30, 2012 - Uploaded by Rob Gamesby
How Milankovitch cycles can theoretically change Earth's current orbit and result in cycles of glaciation and ...

Part 3 of this series, planned for the next Quarterly, will deal further with factors involved in climate change, such as cosmic rays and oceanic oscillations and currents; and will look at other indicators and evidence, such as isotopes, polar ice, and sea levels; and discuss prediction of future climate of Warrensburgh.

P.S. In Part 1, the prospect was mentioned that vineyards and winemaking could become an important part of Warrensburgh's economy. The article about vineyards and wineries in northern New York in the August 17 issue of the Adirondack Journal indicates that this could very well happen. A nice glass of Pinot Schroono, anyone?

Warrensburg Historical Society's 17th Annual

STICKY WICKET

Croquet Competition & Picnic

At the Fish Hatchery Sunday, August 11, 2013

***Another success, thanks to a good crowd, great weather,
Croquetmaster Delbert Chambers and Super Chef Brian Engle!***

First Place Winner: Brendan Hanley

Our thank you to these sponsors:

Croquetmaster's Circle: Cronin's Golf Resort

Premier Wicket Membership Level:

Adirondack Rustic Interiors * Alexander Funeral Home * Alynn's Butterfly Inn * Boralex Operations
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George Henry's * Glens Falls National Bank * Grist Mill on the Schroon * Jacobs & Toney
Krystal Chrysler Jeep Dodge * Luck-E-Star Café * Nemeč's Farm & Garden Center * New Way Lunch
Oscar's Smoked Meats * The Patriot of Lake George * Ray's Liquor Store * Ridin-Hy Guest Ranch
Rounds Paving & Trucking * Stephenson Lumber * Stewart's Shops * Town of Warrensburg
Treasure Shoppe Market * Viele's Automotive * Warren Ford * Warrensburg 50+ Club
Warrensburg Chamber of Commerce * Warrensburg Chiropractic
Warrensburg Laundry/Dry Cleaning * Warrensburg Volunteer Fire Co.

Wicket Sponsors . . .

Bob Griffin and Sons * Cornerstone Victorian B & B * Curtis Lumber - Maynard D. Baker Funeral Home
Riverside Gallery

Plus these generous supporters . . .

Bill's Restaurant * Hastings Maple Syrup * Heaven on Earth Retreat Marco Polo Pizza * New Beginnings Hair Salon
Smith's Garage * Stork Road Farm * Tops * Willows Bistro



Brendan Hanley accepts the 2013 Sticky Wicket Trophy from Croquetmaster, Delbert Chambers.





*Above is a photo of workers at the pulp and paper mill taken in the early 1900s, which was submitted by **Mark Brown**. Special thanks to **Barbara (Farrar) Moore** for the following information. The photo was taken around 1917 at the Schroon River Paper Mill. The workers are as follows: Standing Rear, (L - R); William Osgood, Archibald Woodward, Lewis Olden, Schuyler Rhodes, Gordon Winslow, George Sprague Sr., Robert Knipe, Emen Marcellus, Ottest Fuller, Raymond V. Stone, and Edward Wood. Seated, (L - R); Hial Hall, James Keayes Sr., George Fenn, Charles Brown (?), Amos Austin, Benjamin Shaw, Stewart Farrar, and Charles Keayes. Standing in front, (L - R); Peter Derey and William Quinlan, Supt.*

**CARON LINDSAY
AKELEY**

1948 – 2013

Caron was a lover of nature, in part perhaps due to her pride in her family heritage. This too, no doubt, was cause for her interest and support of museums and Warrensburgh Historical Society. Her extensive private collection of Warrensburgh paraphernalia has been donated to the Warrensburgh Museum.

She was actively involved in the reorganization of the WHS in 1996 and became a Life Member. Subsequently she served on the Board of Directors for several years. She

was a challenger in the annual Sticky Wicket Croquet Tournament for as long as she was physically able. Caron wrote for the WHS Quarterly under the heading “Antiques Soup”.

Caron was an antiques dealer in Warrensburg for many years; her business name was ‘Cleverdale Antiques’. She was well respected within that community. For years she daily held court at “Potter’s Breakfast Club”, an impromptu gathering of antiques dealers.

Caron loved her cats.

Delbert Chambers

