



Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

Volume 19 Issue 3

Fall 2014

Civil War History John Cameron Bennett of Warrensburg, New York

By Prescott E. Nead III

As the great grandson of Warrensburg resident, John Cameron Bennett, I thought it would be of interest to fellow members of the Warrensburg Historical Society to read about the Warrensburg men who volunteered to participate in the Civil War, in particular John, a Private in the United States Army; Company I – 96th Regiment; New York State Volunteers; Warrensburg, New York. I began my research into John's activities when my mother, Clara Alden Nead, gave me her grandfather's mustering out documents. In the early 80's I went to the New York State Library and discovered the following information:

John Cameron Bennett was born in Warrensburg, New York, in 1840,

where he grew up on a farm. On November 11, 1861, at the age of 21, John volunteered for service in the United States Army, in Warrensburg, New York. He was mustered into service as a private in Company I of Col. James Fairman's 96th Regiment of Infantry, New York Volunteers, on December 6, 1861, in Plattsburgh, New York, for three years. Major Charles K. Burhans, of Warrensburg, NY, organized the company and was its first commander.

John's regiment left New York State on March 11, 1862, and served in Brigadier General Henry M. Naglee's 1st Brigade of Brigadier General Silas Casey's 3rd Division (March 1862 to June 1862) and then Brigadier General Henry W. Wessell's 2nd Brigade of the 3rd Division (June 1862 to September 1862) of Major General Erasmus D. Keyes' IV Corps, Army of the Potomac, until September 1862. During this time, John's Regiment participated in several engagements of Major General George B. McClellan's "**PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN.**" The first was the **SIEGE OF YORKTOWN**, VA, from April 17 to May 14, 1862, followed by the battle of: **WILLIAMSBURG**, VA on May 5; **BOTTOM'S BRIDGE**, VA

on the Chickahominy River on May 21-22, 1862; and **SEVEN PINES-FAIR OAKS**, VA on May 29-June 1, 1862.

On June 26, 1862, the great "**SEVEN DAYS' BATTLE**" began. John's Regiment was involved at **LONGBRIDGE** on the Chickahominy River on June 28-29, 1862; **WHITE OAK SWAMP** on June 30, 1862; **MALVERN HILL** on July 1, 1862; and **CARTER'S HILL** on July 2, 1862. After the "Seven Days' Battle" the 96th NY Regiment stayed at Harrison's Landing, VA until August 16, 1862, then moved to Fortress Monroe, VA from August 16-23, 1862.

On September 18, 1862, John's 96th NY Volunteers crossed the James River into Suffolk, VA becoming a part of Brigadier General Henry W. Wessells' Brigade, of Major General John James Peck's Division at Suffolk, IV Army Corps, Department of Virginia, where they remained until December 1862. At that time John's regiment became part of Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Cass Hunt's 1st Brigade of Wessells' 1st Division of Major General John Gray Foster's XVIII Corps, Department of North Carolina in the District of Albemarle, NC. While in North Carolina, John

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The Society's Historic Preservation Committee, chaired by John Franchini, is devising plans for the "Warren Tannery" property that the Society owns across the river from the Grist Mill Restaurant. You'll recall that the Society acquired this historic property by gift from Richard Emerson in December 2012. It runs for 1,200 feet along the river and was the site of a large tannery better known as having been owned by Col. Burhans. The Society hopes to construct walking/hiking trails and historic markers so citizens can enjoy it for recreation.

The town's first electricity generating plant (at the end of Electric Avenue) and a sawmill owned by John Smith were also on the property, using power from the same dam that powered the grist mill, a sawmill, and shirt factory on the River Street side. Three of those buildings still exist today and house excellent restaurants, fitness, and other businesses.

The Society's "circa plaque" program is making 10" oval-shaped plaques available at half-price for historic properties around town. This year's quota sold quickly and a waiting list for next year has formed. The response is gratifying, as it demonstrates a great interest by our townsfolk in historical aspects of Warrensburgh. Much research was

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Masthead Photo

This photo is a view looking north-westerly with the Union School on the right and Richards Library on the left, near the Elm Street and (current) Stewart Farrar Street intersection.

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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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Steve Parisi - Museum Director

Note Change

The Board of Directors meets at the Senior Center (May-October) or at Richards Library (November - April) at 6:30 pm on the **FIRST Wednesday** of each month. Call Paul to confirm at 623-3162.

Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

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CURRENT MEMBERSHIP: 270**Warrensburgh Historical Society**

Website: www.whs12885.org

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Welcome New Members:

Warrensburgh Central School, The Pasaro Family, Jack & Laddie Toney, Barbara Noble, Virginia Dutcher, Lizzy Keays Restaurant, Glen Hudson Campsite, Doreen K. Gilmer, Adirondack Real Estate LLC, Ashes Hotel, Upstate Agency LLC, Bob Griffin & Sons, Merrill Magee Inn

Calendar of Events

September 13; Antique Farm Machinery show at Tom Davis' located on 121 Lamb Hill Road in Bolton, 10:00 am until 4:00 pm

October 17; Graveyard Walk with Gourmet Dessert Buffet (Cornerstone Victorian B&B)

October 24; Graveyard Walk with homemade dessert buffet (Senior Center) (Both Walks start at Warrensburgh Cemetery promptly at 7 pm. Reservations required.)

October 26; Dinner With the Dead, Lizzie Keays Restaurant, 6 pm. Reservations required.

December 6-7; Christmas in Warrensburgh and opening of Holiday Show at Museum: "My Collection."

December ? Society Holiday Dinner: Date and location to be announced.

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, Warrensburgh, 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) Civil War

participated in an expedition, referred to as "**FOSTER'S EXPEDITION**," from New Bern, NC to Goldsboro, NC from December 11-20, 1862, to wreck the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad, a vital supply line for General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. There were three engagements on the way to Goldsboro: **KINSTON**, NC on December 14, 1862; **WHITEHALL BRIDGE** (now Seven Pines, NC) on December 16, 1862; and **GOLDSBORO**, NC on December 17, 1862. On December 14, 1862, at Kinston, NC, John was shot through the earlobe while drinking water at the Neuse River. The wound was not serious and he was able to continue with his regiment. Upon completion of this expedition the 96th Regiment returned to their base in New Bern, N.C.

John remained in North Carolina throughout most of 1863. On March 14 John's regiment was involved in a defensive skirmish at Fort Anderson, New Bern, NC known as the **BATTLE OF DEEP GULLY**. Sometime between March 14 and April 7 John's Regiment moved from New Bern to Plymouth, NC where the 1st Brigade became part of the 4th Division of the XVIII Corps. While at Plymouth the 96th built and finished a fort that they named Fort Gray in honor of Colonel Charles Osborn Gray, of Warrensburg, who was killed in the Battle of Kinston (Fort Gray was captured by the Confederate Army on April 19, 1864 and recaptured by US Army on October 31, 1864). There followed three other skirmishes that year: **BLOUNT'S CREEK**, NC on April 9, 1863; **GARDINIER'S BRIDGE** and **WILLIAMSTON**, NC on July 6,

1863; and near **INDIANTOWN**, NC on October 13, 1863. In December the 96th New York Volunteers returned to Virginian soil in the District of Currituck becoming part of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina in the 1st Brigade, Charles Adam Heckman's Division of the XVIII Corps. No battles were fought there.

Then in April 1864, the 96th NY



John Cameron Bennett at 45 years of age

Volunteers, under the leadership of Colonel Edgar M. Cullen, were reassigned to Brigadier General Gilman Marston's 1st Brigade of Brigadier General William T. Brook's 1st Division of Major General William F. "Baldy" Smith's XVIII Corps of the Army of the James, under the command of Major General Benjamin F. Butler. This was the last year of the Civil War and John was involved in many of the operations against Petersburg and Richmond, VA. The first action was to occupy **BERMUDA HUNDRED** and **CITY**

POINT, VA on May 5, 1864. The first skirmish was at **SWIFT CREEK**, VA on May 9-10, 1864, followed by a skirmish at **PROCTOR'S CREEK**, VA and **FORT DARLING**, VA on May 12-13, 1864; a battle at **DREWRY'S BLUFF**, VA on May 14-16, 1864; and a battle at **BERMUDA HUNDRED**, VA on May 18-26, 1864.

John, the 96th NY Volunteers, and the XVIII Corps crossed to the north side of the James River to join with Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant, Commander in Chief of The United States Army at **COLD HARBOR**, VA. There ensued a battle and stand-off that began on June 1, 1864 and ended on June 12, 1864, a 13 daylong impasse. The 96th NY Volunteers were at the center of this particularly bloody battle and the 1st Brigade they were a part of was decimated. On June 13, 1864 the XVIII Corps was ordered to cross the North bank of the James River to attack **PETERSBURG**, VA. The assault took place on June 9-13, 1864. The failure to take Petersburg resulted in the long **SIEGE OF PETERSBURG**, VA, which lasted until April 2, 1865, one week before the surrender of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, at Appomattox Courthouse, VA, on April 9, 1865.

However, John and his regiment did not stay at Petersburg for the duration of the siege. On July 5, 1864, the 96th NY Volunteers, led by Colonel Cullen, became a part of the 2nd Brigade of Brigadier General George J. Stannard's 1st Division of Major General Edward O. C. Ord and later Major General Godfrey Weitzel's XVIII Corps. On July 30, 1864 the XVIII Corp stood in reserve for the US colored troops at the **Battle of the CRATOR**. On August 26, 1864 the 96th NY Volunteers returned to Bermuda Hundred and a month later crossed to

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the north bank of the James River. The Regiment was involved in the attacks at **CHAFFIN'S FARM (FORT HARRISON)**, VA on September 29, 1864 through October 1, and the **SECOND BATTLE OF FAIR OAKS**, VA on October 27-29, 1864. This was John's last hostile engagement of the Civil War.

On December 3, 1864, the 96th NY Volunteers under the leadership of Colonel Edgar M. Cullen left the disbanded XVIII Corps, to help form the new 2nd Brigade (Colonel Joseph H. Potter), 3rd Division (Brigadier General Charles Devens, Jr.), and XXIV Corps (Major General John Gibbon), in the Army of the James. John did not stay long, however, as he was mustered out of the United States Army at the end of his three year term, on December 15, 1864, at Chaffin's Farm ("Camp-in-the-Field"). He returned to Warrensburgh, New York, where he learned to be a carpenter and brick mason. The 96th New York Volunteers continued to serve in the US Army till discharged and mustered out, under Colonel Stephen Moffitt, February 6, 1866, at City Point, Virginia.

While most of Company I was made up of men from Warrensburgh and the surrounding towns, many others came from Plattsburgh, Lewis and Pottersville, NY.

During its service the 96th NY Volunteers Regiment lost by death - killed in action, 7 officers, 41 enlisted men; of wounds received in action, 3 officers, 19 enlisted men; of disease and other causes, 2 officers, 158 enlisted men; total 12 officers, 218 enlisted men; aggregate, 230; of whom 36 enlisted men died in the hands of the enemy.



Architecture of a Small Town

Carpenter Gothic style architecture and the 'Burhans Mansion' Guesthouse.

by Delbert Chambers

John Hastings, editor of this publication and a Warrensburgh historian, recently published in the Winter 2013 issue of the Quarterly, a particular picture that immediately caught my attention. Seen again here it is of the Burhans Mansion 'Guesthouse' ca.1865. The house was built in the Carpenter Gothic style which was developed ca.1840's as a residential response to Gothic Revival style.

Gothic Revival style was developed in England ca.1740's as some architects sought to revive medieval Gothic architecture in contrast to the neoclassical styles prevalent at the time.

The style was traditionally used for ecclesiastical buildings. In Warrensburgh our Episcopal Church, the Catholic Church and the Presbyte-

rian Church are small town examples, the latter two in wood and as seen today (see next page) both have been dramatically altered from their original look.

Initially, most striking of this building style is how high it looks and indeed many aspects lead to such an illusion. Of course a spire that disappears into the heavens takes with it our eye. Face walls extend into the gables which themselves are proportionately very steep. Even the pointy top windows, called lancet windows, encourages ones eye to continue upward. Roof adornment such as pinnacles, or finials, and cresting add to the illusion.

In metropolitan areas Gothic Revival was generally on a grandiose scale and typically constructed of stone, usually not a viable undertaking for the rural builder who was predominantly familiar with working with wood. This did not deter an attempt to emulate this most impressive architecture and so was developed Carpenter Gothic.

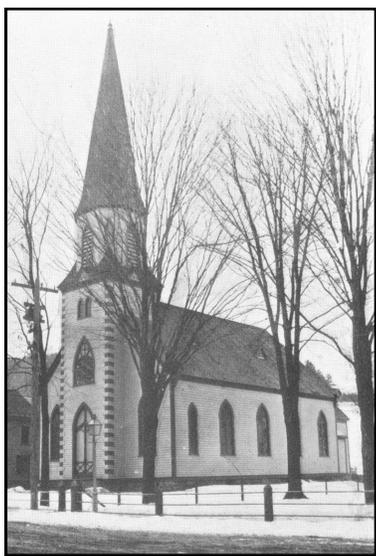
Based on afore noted features of the Gothic Revival the Carpenter Gothic may feature such detail as vertical siding that extends without a break

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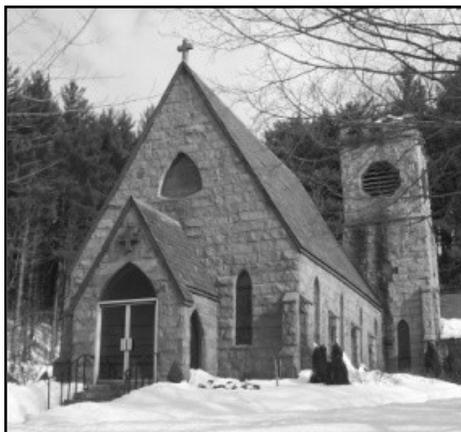
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into the gables of steeply pitched roofs. Lancet windows were not practical but the concept is suggested by the use of prominent window head moldings. The windows themselves are proportionately narrower and taller than those of earlier architectural styles. An exception to the expensive use of radius cut window glass is often found in a second floor window centered over the front door. Pinnacles and cresting may surmount the roof. And, possibly most interesting, is the elaborately scrolled bargeboards aka vergeboards (a board which hangs from the projecting end of a roof, covering the gables) the purpose of which was to represent the intricate tracery of the Gothic style. While there would always be individual as well as vernacular interpretations, details were widely promoted in various publications of the time.

The house shown, located at 19 Elm Street, is unique to Warrensburg's very diverse architecture in that it is perhaps the only such building in Warrensburg's history.



Catholic Church, 3802 Main St.



Episcopal Church, 3764 Main St., photo 2009



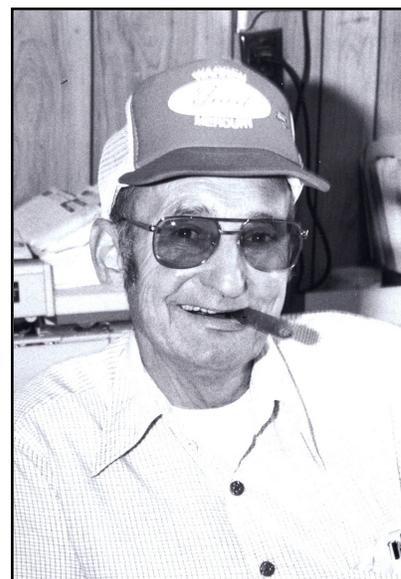
Presbyterian Church, 2 Stewart Farrar St. photo 2009

The following remembrance of Charles Bederian was written by his son, Steve Bederian in 1999.

A Tribute to Charles Bederian by his son, Steve

My dad volunteered with the Warrensburg fire department and emergency squad. He made his living providing plumbing and heating service locally. He had volunteered for the parachute infantry and been station in Italy at the end of WW-II. It seemed he was always going off to serve other people in one way or another. The phone would ring and he would go out in the middle of the night to service someone's furnace, or the fire whistle would blow and he would rush off to a chimney fire or car accident.

My older brother and I had been instrumental in getting my dad into the fire company. We lived in an apartment near the river at the bottom of Elm Street hill. The fire house was at the top. It wasn't hard to make the connection between the broken win-



dow and the guilty looking neighborhood kids. My dad's offer to repair the damage led to his membership.

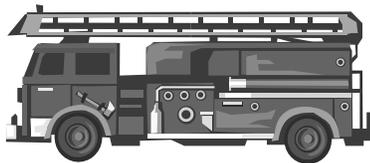
In the North Country the volunteer fire department and emergency squad provide a needed service. They also double as a rural men's club (a time before women entered). My dad faced his obligations willingly. I remember asking if the accident scenes bothered him. He was stoic, although my mom mentioned a seaplane accident and recovery on Lake George

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(Continued from page 5) Bederian

in which a young child had drowned as affecting him greatly.

Unlike many who travel during the day to the manufacturing areas near Glens Falls or further afield, my dad made his living in and around town. When the call went out, the whistle blew; he was often one to answer. He had helped deliver almost as many babies as the local health center. He often joked that he was always invited to the birth but not to the conception. (My mother who bore him nine children would probably disagree.)



Late one winter evening a call came for a car accident on Route 28. Route 28 is the north-south connector for Wevertown and North Creek to Warrensburg and beyond. Lumbermen, ski tourists and locals travel it. It is a two-lane mountain road, narrow and winding, with only a few spots to pass. In winter it is icy with snow banks pushed high on each side.

When the ambulance got to the scene there was carnage. It had been a head-on collision. A young mother was dead. Her three-year-old toddler was dead. An older man had been in the other car. He too had died in the crash.

There was the strong smell of anti-freeze and alcohol. The coroner was called. Debris was everywhere; the contents of cars, lives and bodies; glass, blood, 8-track tapes, tissues, disposable diapers and beer bottles.

While waiting for the coroner, the ambulance crew helped the police to clear the accident scene. My father was bothered as he collected the broken pieces. This young mother under the tarp would never complete a promising life; an innocent child would never have any life at all. The drunken driver who had killed them had paid with his life. It was too senseless, too tragic.

Beyond that something still made no sense. It could have been the nightmare scene that haunted him or was he missing something? He continued to pick up loose diapers. The dead child wore diapers, but these he was picking up were too small . . .

The crew went back to the crumpled car to search what had been searched already. **Jammed far underneath what had once been the front seat was a baby.** She was broken, cold, but alive. The crew extricated the baby from this twisted metal womb; a rebirth in the midst of ice and death . . .

On a February morning of 1991 the squad was called to my parents' home. My dad had long ignored the classic signs of heart disease. He was transported to the hospital in Glens Falls where he died that afternoon.

His picture and obituary were on the front-page of the Warrensburg-Lake George News. He was buried in his fire company uniform and the company's antique truck was used as caisson to transport his casket to the cemetery. As his funeral ended the fire whistle sounded one last time.

Steve Bederian November 1999

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done to try to ascertain ages of the historic buildings on these properties.

The Society sponsored a series of four programs on the importance and economic benefits of preserving the built historic heritage of a community. Speakers included Steven Engelhart from Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH) in Keeseville; Paula Dennis, who is helping the Society apply for preservation funds; and Sloane Bullough of NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historical Preservation who explained how owners of historic residences and commercial properties can get substantial tax benefits by restoring historic buildings.

The Town Board is cooperating with efforts by the Society and Warrensburg Beautification, Inc. to apply for grants that could lead to the restoration of the Miles Thomas house, aka the Senior Center.

Preservation accords with the concept of the whole town as a museum and with section B.4 of the town's Comprehensive Plan, which recommends recognition and protection of the town's historical resources. It's crucial to have good local government involved in preservation efforts. We have in Warrensburg the largest historic district in the Adirondacks.

Other Society-sponsored programs have included a talk by Mike Prescott on May 8th about dams on the Upper Hudson River that did **not** get built; two programs for school children at the Museum to acquaint them with the town's history and architecture (51 students of the 4th grade came on June 17th!); and an open rehearsal in Warrensburg by classical

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musicians from the Lake George Music Festival on August 13th.

Our fabled Sticky Wicket Croquet Tournament and Picnic at the fish hatchery was held on Sunday, August 10th. Long-time Croquet Master Delbert Chambers (now emeritus) has retired, replaced by perennial champion Brendan Hanley, thereby improving everyone else's chances of winning. This year's winner was Katherine Chambers, Delbert's daughter.

The Society is again raffling off two Old Town kayaks this year. The drawing will be held on Sunday October 5th during the World's Largest Garage Sale weekend.



Katherine Chambers goes through the last two wickets en route to winning the first game at the Society's 18th Annual Sticky Wicket Croquet Tournament. Paul Gilchrist watches while present and past Croquetmasters and former champions Brendan Hanley and Delbert Chambers observe from a distance. Karen Hanley came in second, while three tied for third. Only 2 points separated the five.

The Society wrote a letter supporting the Town's application for funding of a Streetscape and Sidewalk Project.

The Museum's current special exhibit is "Public Safety: Fire, Police, and EMS Services." Also at the Museum, one can purchase the Society's bicentennial book, *Warrensburg, New York, 200 Years of People, Places, and Events.* This book has been "selling like hot-cakes" and is in its second printing of 500 copies.

The Society and Warrensburgh Beautification, Inc. donated and planted a 12-foot elm tree at the library in celebration of Earth Day and Arbor Day. There are now two elm trees on Elm Street. In addition, sixteen other elms have been planted around town in the past five years that are resistant to Dutch Elm Disease. However, it may be that a disease called "elm yellows" has appeared in town. More about this in the future.

A team of two ghost busters was at the Senior Center on August 6th to explain their methods, equipment, and findings. Which reminds me -



Katherine Chambers receives the winner's trophy from last year's champion and current Croquetmaster Brendan Hanley at the 18th Annual Sticky Wicket Croquet Tournament at the fish hatchery.

be on the lookout for announcements coming soon about the schedule for this year's Graveyard Walks and Dinner with the Dead. Igor will see you there.

Until next time, keep looking backwards.

Paul Gilchrist

Help WHS

Bring your returnables into **Direct Deposit** on Main Street and have the refunds designated for the Historical Society **Dean Ackley** will pass the money on to WHS based on the containers returned.

Thanks Dean & Contributing Members!!

**Warrensburgh Historical Society's
18th Annual STICKY WICKET Croquet Competition & Picnic**

At the Fish Hatchery Sunday, August 10, 2014

Another success, thanks to a good crowd, good weather,
Croquetmaster Brendan Hanley and Super Chef Brian Engle!

First Place Winner: Katherine Chambers

Our thank you to these sponsors:

Croquetmaster's Circle:

Cronin's Golf Resort

Premier Wicket Membership Level:

Adirondack Real Estate * Adirondack Rustic Interiors * Alexander Funeral Home * Alyn's Butterfly Inn *
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Syrup * Marco Polo Pizza * Nettle Meadow Goat Farm * New Beginnings Hair Salon * Smith's Garage *
Stork Road Farm * Tops * Warrensburgh Chiropractic * Willows Bistro

"Public Safety: Fire, EMS and Police."

The major summer/fall 2014 exhibit at the **Warrensburgh Museum of Local History** will remain in place through October 12. It tells the stories of the Warrensburgh Volunteer Fire Company, Warrensburgh Emergency Medical Service, and local policing efforts, including the role Warrensburgh citizens played as Warren County sheriffs.

The exhibit was developed by the Warrensburgh Historical Society with the support of the Warrensburgh Fire Company, Warrensburgh EMS, the Warren County Sheriff's Department, plus resources of the Town Historian and the Warrensburgh Museum and Historical Society collections.

The Warrensburgh Museum, located at 3754 Main Street (VFW Building), is operated by the Warrensburgh Historical Society for the Town of Warrensburgh. Parking and entrance are at the rear of the building. Admission is always free. The museum is fully accessible. Regular hours are Wednesdays, noon to 4 pm, Saturdays 11 am to 3 pm, and Sundays 1 to 3 pm. Visit the Society's website at <http://www.whs12885.org> or call 623-2207 for more information.

Summer Quarterly Mystery Photo

Special thanks to **Shirley and Marie Fisher** for helping to identify many of the individuals in last week's baseball photo. According to Shirley, the photo was taken about 1939 or 1940. The team members are as follows; **Back Row:** L-R; 1. Unknown 2. Myron Cameron, 3. Donald Cameron 4. Unknown 5. Bill Varnum 6. Bob Swan, Coach, **Second Row:** L-R; 1. Bob Fisher, 2. Ben Guiles 3. Lawrence Cleveland 4. Dan Hewitt 5. Art Brown ? 6. John Fisher 7. Eva Grinnell **Front Row:** L-R; Guy McElroy 2. Howard Combs 3. Walt Grinnell 4. Unknown 5. Unknown 6. Leeward Stockwell (Killed in WW II). Shirley's husband was Bob Fisher who had four brothers; Mike, John, Bill and Louis. Marie was married to Louis.