



# Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

Volume 17 Issue 1

Spring 2012

## "From the Sheep to the Man"

By John T. Hastings

The first woolen mill in Warrensburgh was built in 1873 by R. G. Herrick at a cost of \$3,650. Four years after this, Richard J. Whitby came to Warrensburg and took charge of the woolen mill establishment and eventually became superintendent. He was noted for his abilities to produce a high quality wool product and would be involved with the production of this fabric at the woolen mill for much of the next twenty years.

In the spring of 1885 the company was purchased by R. J. Whitby, L. W. Emerson and T. J. Eldridge and established in a building owned by A. C. Emerson &

Company (History of Warren County by H.P. Smith). Around 1886 most of the mill was destroyed by fire, as the Warrensburgh News (Oct. 21, 1886) reported that "A Woolen Mill to Rise Phoenix-like from Its Ashes." At some point Richard Whitby had left as superintendent and then returned, as the Warrensburgh News (Oct. 21, 1886) again notes that "Every well-wisher of Warrensburgh's welfare will be glad to learn that R. J. Whitby has finally decided to return to this village to again carry on the manufacture of his celebrated cloth."

Ground was broken for the new woolen mill on October 18, 1886. The new mill was to be 44 feet wide by 120 feet long. The main building was to be one story high. A wing, 26 feet by 40 feet, was to be erected on the east side. A wool house was also to be erected

nearby. The building was expected to be ready by the following spring and employ 40 to 60 people in the woolen mill proper and the adjacent knitting mill. Although this is normally referred to as the Warrensburgh Woolen Mill, in actuality it was the Whitby & Company Woolen Mill. Articles of incorporation were filed in February of 1891 by Whitby & Company, manufacturers, with a capital of \$10,000. R. J. Whitby, L. W. Emerson and F. B. Hull were the trustees. One of the prime outlets for the woolen mill cloth was the Dutchess Manufacturing Company, owned by Mr. Frank Hull of Poughkeepsie, who used the material in the manufacture of the Dutchess trousers. The slogan at this time was "From the sheep to the man."

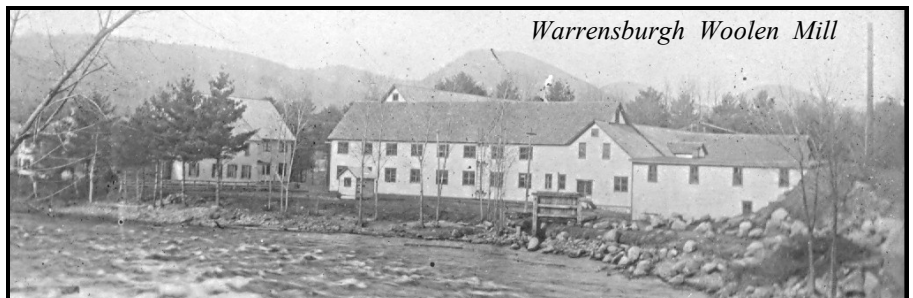
In early 1893, J. T. Betts,

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Our Spring issue herewith summarizes Society activities over the past three months. Our Winter issue was perhaps a misnomer, as winter, so far, has avoided us, except for the November snowfall.

The Society's Holiday Dinner was held at Lizzie Keays Restaurant on December 7<sup>th</sup>. The affair was very well attended, and it would be a great understatement to say that everyone was thoroughly delighted with the *hors d'oeuvres*, the dinner, and the service.

The high school's environmental science class, taught by John Burns, completed ten "then-and-now" research projects and made presentations on December 15<sup>th</sup>. The projects this year were on commercial, business, or manufacturing sites around Warrensburg, for which the ten student teams were given old photographs of sites, such as the woolen mill, tannery, grist mill, or coal tipple. They then researched the history of each place and took or acquired current photographs.

Adults who grew up in Warrensburg comment that they wish someone had made such a special effort to teach them more about the history of the town when they were kids growing up many years ago. We were exceptionally fortunate this year to have Morgan Crandall accompany the student team that visited the Grist Mill during their project. Chris Lambeth was very kind to open the Grist Mill so the students could tour it. As you may know, the Grist Mill has become a museum in its own right, thanks to the efforts of previous owner Shane Newell. Morg worked at the mill for 38 years from 1947 and explained how its operation worked, including the grain elevator across the road by the railroad end-of-track. (The information provided by Morg just might be grist for a future Quarterly article.)

While we're talking about that neighborhood, I should mention that this column made special note of the rôle of fire engine #354 in fighting the coal tipple fire last summer. Engine #354 was located in a particularly good position right behind the old shirt factory to be instrumental in helping to prevent the fire from destroying that historic structure and the businesses that now occupy it. The engine was manned by Rick Hull and Justin Hull, who directed an incredible torrent of water onto the blaze.

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## Quarterly Editor

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

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The Board of Directors meets at the Senior Center, 3847 Main Street, at 6:30 pm on the **FIRST** Tuesday of each month. Call Paul to confirm at 623-3162.

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## Membership Information

Students \$5.00 Individual \$15.00 Family \$25.00 Senior (62+) \$10.00  
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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: **Warrensburg Historical Society, P.O. Box 441, Warrensburg, N.Y. 12885**

## NOTICE

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

## Upcoming Events

### August Sticky Wicket

**CURRENT MEMBERSHIP:  
215**

### Warrensburg Historical Society

**Website:** [www.whs12885.org](http://www.whs12885.org)

**Email:** [whs7396@yahoo.com](mailto:whs7396@yahoo.com)

### Additions to our Website

Now a membership application can be found on our website.

[www.whs12885.org](http://www.whs12885.org)

Click on the link to Membership, then double-click on "Membership Application."

You can also find the Book Nook Order Form, at the bottom of the Museum page.

Simply print the form and send it with your payment. At this time neither form can be

(Continued from page 1) From Sheep to the Man

**CASH, CASH, CASH !**  
 PAID FOR  
**WOOL**  
 Highest market prices paid in  
 Cash for Wool at  
**Woolen Mill, Warrensburgh.**  
 It costs money to send around a  
 team to pick up Wool. Bring your  
 Wool in and save money. Pants,  
 Skirts, Flannel Cloth and Remnants  
 sold at bargain prices.  
**Cash Paid for Wool !**

photographer, was commissioned to take a series of views of the woolen mill, to be placed in the exhibition case of the mill products at the World's Fair. A large sized portrait of R. J. Whitby, the managing partner, was also taken to accompany the mill views. The World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893, was the last and the greatest of the nineteenth century's World's Fairs. Nominally a celebration of Columbus' voyages 400 years prior, the Exposition was actually a reflection and celebration of American culture and society.

At this same time, an addition was built to make room for additional spinning machinery. In April, a "spinning mule" was purchased in Clinton, Massachusetts, which doubled the production of the mill. The next year, the race way below the water wheel was enlarged and a steam engine installed to increase the power for the mill.

On November 8, 1894 construction of a 32 by 100 foot addition was started on the south side of the building. Three weeks later,

John Burt began painting the new addition. When completed, this addition would hold nine new looms, to add to the five looms already present. The capacity of the mill was to be doubled through this addition and was the result of the increased demand for the "superior goods" manufactured at the mill. A new dam was also needed due to the increased production. These changes came on the heels of "extensive improvements to the water power" by W. J. Valentine. A canal, 14 to 20 feet wide and 300 feet long, was dug to the river in back of the mill, to increase the power to the wheel. This power increased so much that the mill turned out the largest weave ever made; 1,100 yards.

Eighteen ninety-five was a busy year for the woolen mill area. Percy Whitby rented a section of the peg factory building and used it to start a pants factory. Also, it was this year that a new iron bridge was installed where the former woolen mill bridge was located. John Alden was appointed to "take charge" for the stone work for the new bridge. The woolen mill also received lighting supplied by the Warrensburgh Electric Light works.

In January of 1897 Ed Had-den accepted a position as night watchman at the woolen mill. Unfortunately for Ed, by late February the woolen mill had suspended operations for an indefinite period, which turned out to be nearly three years. It was October of 1899 before Hon. T. J. Eldridge, D. S. Mackey, James A. Emerson and the Hon. L. W. Emerson formed a company to take over management and operation of the woolen mill. Milton Eldridge was to act as general manager and Mr. Edward A. Wall,

an expert woolen maker from Fort Ann, was hired as superintendent of the mechanical department. It was expected to begin operations in mid November of 1899. The Whitby & Company Woolen Mill was officially dissolved on January 31, 1900 and shortly after this, the Warrensburgh Woolen Company was making preparations to start a new industry for the manufacturing of men's woolen pants. J. B. Twaddle of Malone was hired to be superintendent of the Woolen Mill company's Pants Factory.

In May of 1900 a 35 by 52 foot addition to the woolen Mill building was started. It was expected that 50 new jobs would be added to the 60 already employed in the Woolen Mill and Pants Factory. It was noted that the traveling salesmen were sending in large orders daily. When the mill opened in February, 250 pairs of pants were being made every two weeks. For the two weeks ending on August 25 of the same year, 2,614 pairs were produced. The company had the

(Continued on page 4)

**Your Pants Will Fit**  
 —IF CUT BY—  
**PERCY J. WHITBY,**  
**CUSTOM CUTTER.**  
 Pants cut for - 35c  
 Suits " " - \$1.50  
 —APPLY AT—  
**WHITBY & CO'S WOOLEN MILL**  
**Warrensburgh, N. Y.**

*(Continued from page 3) From Sheep to Man*

advantage over many competitors due to its ability to manufacture all of its own cloth (1,100 yards per week). Future expansion was expected.

On November 19, 1900 the cylinder flume, which conveys water from the woolen mill dam to the wheel near the mill, burst and carried away about 80 feet of the flume. C. J. Hall was in charge of replacing the old 3.5 foot diameter flume with new cylinders measuring five feet in diameter. Work was expected to be completed that week.

In June of 1903, extensive changes and improvements were being made at the Woolen Mill and Pants Factory. The second story of the new wing was being ceiled and one half of it (20 by 100 feet) was to be used as a cutting room, while the remaining area was to be used for a drying room. The room formally occupied by the cutting tables was to be replaced with new sewing machines, which would enable the company to increase its output of pants considerably.

By 1905, fourteen salesmen were engaged throughout the United States obtaining contracts for the Woolen Mill and Pants Factory. Output was now about 100,000 pairs of pants per year and 200,000 pounds of wool was required. Ninety workers were now employed and an additional sixty men and women were to be hired to keep up with the demand, which would require running the mill night and day. The company was

planning a new two-story frame building of 40 by 120 feet in size, which was to be constructed for the Pants Factory, with the lower floor for the stitching room and office, and the upper floor for the cutting room. The vacated space was to be used for additional looms to more than double output. The addition was completed by the end of 1905. By this time T. J. Eldridge had transferred his interest to his son, Milton who had been the General Manager of the business since it was established. Mr. Wall was still in charge of the Woolen Mill with Fred Danforth foreman of the carding room and Marshall Shaw fore-

man most of this time, production was at about half of its normal output. But by late November the company had resumed operations on a full time basis in all departments of the plant. Another shut-down of about 6 weeks occurred in the late summer of 1909, during which time the dam was rebuilt.

During August of 1911 the cylinder head of the steam engine at the woolen mill plant blew out, just after the machinery had been started for the day. The part was hurled with terrific force through the partition of the dye room. Fortunately, there was no one in its

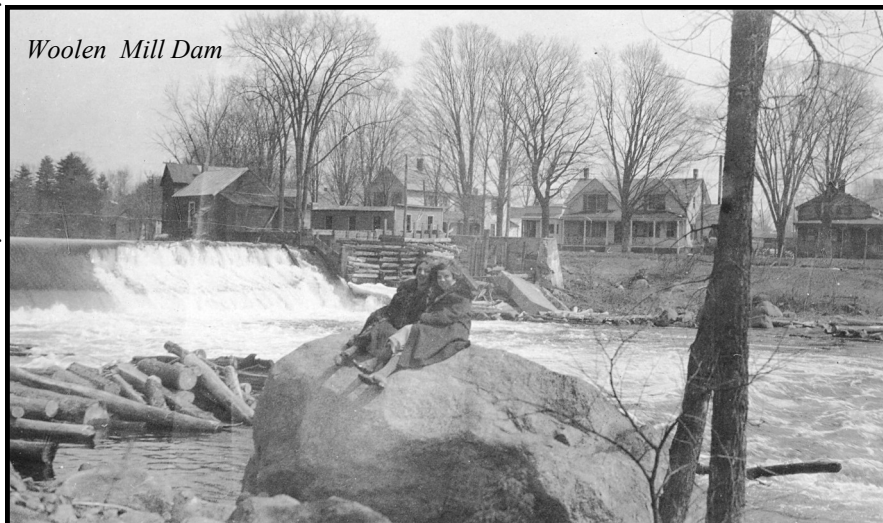
path. The engine was temporarily repaired and operations were resumed the following day. Numerous other improvements were in progress for the woolen mill, one of which was the replacement of the smoke stack. The new stack was 72 feet high and weighed nearly a ton. The old stack

was removed and the new one installed by Daniel J. March in a day and a half which was a remarkably fast time since the original stack took three days just to install.

In 1914 Walter Lillibridge succeeded S. E. Johnson as superintendent of the pants factory. John B. Twaddle had been the (first) superintendent before Mr. Johnson.

As a comparison, the woolen mill employed 45 people in 1900 and had a pay roll of \$13, 634. By 1913 they employed 132 people and the pay roll was \$52, 947. This amounts to a near

*(Continued on page 5)*



man of the weaving room. Patrick Haley was in charge of the wool and its sorting. J. B. Twaddle was in charge of the Pants Factory. The office staff consisted of Miss Mammie Ryan, head bookkeeper, Miss Nellie Ryan, assistant bookkeeper, and Lee Stockton, shipping clerk. Lee Stockton eventually worked up to salesman and then later became treasurer. Following this he became superintendent and maintained this position until the mill closed in 1939.

During much of 1908, the woolen mill was closed. Although the pants factory continued opera-

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tripling of workers and a quadrupling of the payroll in a period of 13 years.

In April of 1926, the bulkhead of the Woolen Company's dam was wiped out due to flooding which was due to warm weather and rain, that melted much of the snow in the north country. This did not affect the pants factory since it was electrified. An electric motor was installed at the woolen mill in case operations could be resumed before the dam was repaired. The flume leading to the woolen mill was not badly damaged. Also during 1926, Milton Eldridge, long time manager of the mill, passed away and Albert L. Emerson succeeded L. W. Emerson as president.

After being closed for over a year, the woolen mill and pants factory resumed operations in the fall of 1933. Albert L. Emerson, president, announced that George C. Bower of Unionville, CT. would be superintendent. This would provide employment to 25 - 30 people. The company continued the manufacture of the famous Warrensburgh pants

and other garments, as well as making its own material for these products. The goods were to be sold to H. O. Wilson Company in New York City. By December a large number of electric motors were installed by Loran Davis so that most of the woolen mill was now electrified. The mill was in operation until sometime after March of 1934.

However by June of 1935, Eugene Karr of New York City had leased the woolen mill and was expected to open in 3 - 4 weeks and be known as the Warrensburgh Woolen Mills, Inc. The mill was to manufacture women's wear fabrics and "all wool pants cloths" to be used in their pants factory. It is unclear how long the mills were open and in production by Mr. Karr. However, by 1939 the mill had suspended operations again.

In late 1941 Albert L. Emerson, in conjunction with Roy Hoag, Robert Miller, and Edward Kearney, incorporated to form the Warrensburgh Woolen Fabrics, Inc. Robert Miller took over the mill and ran it as the Warrensburgh Woolen Fabrics Company until the mill closed in 1950. In 1956 the property was purchased by Marcus Bruce and John Arehart.

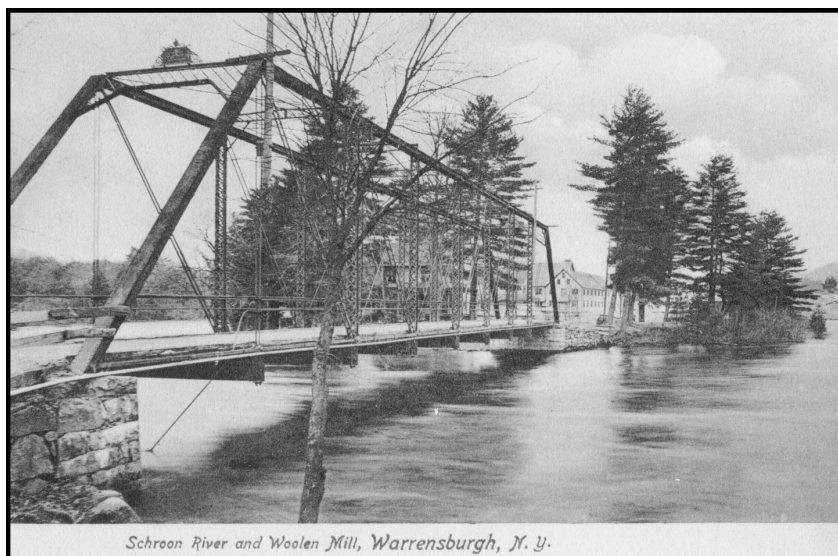
## **"If it Wasn't for Bad Luck, He'd Have No Luck at All"**

**(The following information was taken  
from the Warrensburgh News)**

It was in May of 1908 that George Bunker broke his left arm just above the wrist. He was descending on the freight elevator at the Woolen Mill, from the second floor to the first floor, when he stepped from the platform and stumbled against a pile of cloth and fell to the floor with such force, as to cause the fracture. Young Bunker, who was about 16, has had more than his share of accidents. Two years previously he lost control of his bicycle going down Osborne Hill and ran into a tree and broke his left arm in the same place as the last fracture. The previous fall he had been hunting on Hackensack Mountain and shot himself in the leg with a revolver.

Three months later (August 1908), the Warrensburgh News reported that George Bunker, who was living with his uncle, Harlon Harrington, was riding home on his bicycle. As he reached the foot of Langworthy Hill, going at a pretty good speed, he turned out to pass a rig driven by Jerry McCarthy, when the chain on his wheel slipped off and the bicycle stopped suddenly. Young Bunker took "a header over the side" with his left hand striking the ground first. Unfortunately, this part of his anatomy was least able to bear the strain and the bone snapped again in the same place as the last break. He was taken to a physician who "reduced the fracture."

George would go on to enlist in the Army in 1911 and serve in the Third Field Artillery for a 3 year and then a 7 year enlistment.



*Schreón River and Woolen Mill, Warrensburgh, N. Y.*

## The Whitby Family of Warrensburg

By John T. Hastings

Most people are familiar with the common names in Warrensburg's history such as Emerson or Woodward, but few would recognize the Whitby name. However, Richard J. Whitby and his family had much to do with Warrensburg and its history.

Richard J. Whitby was born in Yeovil, England in 1845. His father was a prominent glove manufacturer, but Richard decided to go into the wool manufacturing business there. In 1868 he married Louisa Lockwood. Four years later he came to the United States, with his wife and two sons (Percy and Eustice), and became employed by A. T. Stewart & Co. of Leeds, New York, a prominent manufacturer of woollens. He continued this work in Salem, Washington County before coming to Warrensburg to become superintendent of the woolen mill. Richard had three sons and three daughters; Richard Augustus, Percy, Eustice, Kate, Anna (Mrs. L. T. Stewart) and Eloise (Mrs. Frank Chapman).

Mr. Whitby first became employed at the Warrensburgh Woolen Mill in 1876. At some point he left the woolen mill and then returned to run the mill after the fire in 1886. As the Warrensburgh News (Oct. 21, 1886) reported "Every well-wisher of Warrensburgh's welfare will be glad to

learn that R. J. Whitby has finally decided to return to this village to again carry on the manufacture of his celebrated cloth. He will be gladly welcomed, and A. C. Emerson, who has induced Mr. Whitby's return to this town should be the recipient of deserved gratitude."

On June 16, 1893, the Whitbys celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. Over 400 citizens showed up to join in the celebration, as well as the 20-piece Citizens Band. G. W. Farrar made his debut

Morning Post. In 1912 he moved to Minneapolis, Minn. to live with his son Percy. He died there on November 11, 1917.

Family members were heavily involved with the operation of the woolen mill in Warrensburg. His son Percy, who was a custom cutter and helped manage the mill, opened a pants factory which leased space in the peg factory building around 1895. His son Eustice was one of the salesmen for the mill while daughter Kate was a stitcher



as trombone soloist and played a beautiful aria in faultless style.

When the woolen mill closed in 1897, Richard J. Whitby found employment with "one of the largest American manufacturers of a special line of woolen mill supplies." He became a foreign representative to organize agencies for the sale of their goods in England, Scotland, Ireland, France and Germany. His salary was \$2,000 plus a commission on sales. It appears he was quite successful in this work. The Whitby & Company Woolen Mill, a stock company, was officially dissolved on January 31, 1900. For a number of years afterwards, Richard was cashier and bookkeeper in the office of The

and son Richard a button hole maker. As skilled as family members were in making woolen cloth and pants, where they really excelled was the world of music.

In 1895, The GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) Band and the Citizens Band ended an ongoing competition by merging as the Warrensburgh Band. Among the members were Percy (Musical Director and clarinet), Richard J. (coronet), Eustice (saxophone), and Richard A. (baritone horn).

The entire family was talented, but young Richard showed the aptitude, desire and dedication

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*(Continued from page 6) Whitby Family*

to become a professional player. Besides the baritone horn, he played the euphonium and the trombone. Through his teenage years he performed at dozens of graduations, church events, and village celebrations, routinely accompanied by his mother on piano. During the summer of 1895, the trio of Richard and his parents, were the star attraction at the Leland House in Schroon Lake. In 1896 he was hired by Scribner and Smith's Circus to play slide trombone for the summer. In 1899 he signed with a traveling comedy and music act, followed by a number of years as trombonist for the Broad Street Theater in Richmond, Virginia. By 1910 "Dick" Whitby was the trombone soloist for Carl Edouarde's 60-piece band, a top act in Philadelphia and New York City.

It was October 11, 1911 that Dick married Bertha Lancaster of Peekskill and then moved to New York City. All this time his fame continued to grow. After outstanding performances in Edouarde's Band during 1913, a stunning announcement was made; Dick had been offered the second chair in John Philip Sousa's band with a promise of first chair upon the lead trombone player's imminent retirement. However, Richard was still under contract with Edouarde's concert band and Edouarde had no intentions of releasing him from his prominent run at New York's Palace Theater. But two years later in 1915 when his contract was fulfilled, Richard joined Sousa's band.

The following time with Sousa's band included playing in San Francisco (World's Fair), Tacoma, Pittsburg, and then returning to New York to play at the Hippodrome. When his contract expired at the end of the year, Richard returned to open

a Warrensburgh concert by students of the famed Oscar Seagle. His slide trombone solo of "Patriot Polka" was a tribute to his friend, former instructor and author of the tune, Arthur Pryor.

For the next several years Richard did stints along the east coast including Atlantic City's Boardwalk, Palace Theater in New York, and Paramount Symphony Orchestra. In upstate new York, Richard played with Noller's Band of Troy and the Schenectady Symphony Orchestra. He lived in Albany for many years and was one of the region's most sought after musicians. He was widely acknowledged as one of the greatest trombone players in the country. He died in Albany in 1952.

Sources: Warrensburgh News and Adirondack & North Country Gold by Lawrence Gooley, 2011

## **Accidents at the Woolen Mill**

**By John T. Hastings**

Early mills, whether they were producing lumber or fabrics, were anything but safe. Although precautions were taken, accidents were common in these pre-OSHA days. The following, taken from the Warrensburgh News, are some of the many accidents which occurred at the woolen mills or pants factory during the early 20th Century.

William Cowles had his arm badly hurt when it came in contact with a pulley which mangled the flesh in the upper part of his arm. (July 1906)

Willis Shaw, while riding

the freight elevator from one floor to another, caught his foot between the elevator and the floor and was compelled to stand and endure the pain of the great pressure for three-quarters of an hour while fellow workers cut away a post to release him. A man in the upper floor noticed the belt slipping on the pulley when the elevator stopped and promptly shut off the power, thus saving Shaw from more serious injury. Dr. Griffin found the foot severely bruised but no bones were broken. (February 1909)

Patrick Haley was struck in the eye by a stick while assisting with repairs to the woolen mill dam. Fortunately the lid closed before the blow landed and the eyeball was not injured. A slit was cut in the eye lid, making a painful, but not serious wound. (October 1910)

Earl French, while running the carding machine in the mill, caught his right hand in the pickers and the member was horribly lacerated. He was taken to Dr. Goodman's who applied a temporary dressing before he was taken to the Glens Falls Hospital. It was feared that amputation of some, if not all of the fingers would be necessary. French was 23 and married less than one year. (October 1912)

Earl Mattison's shirt sleeve caught in the cog wheels of the loom and his arm was drawn into the machine. His bicep muscles were completely torn out and part of his forearm was severely lacerated. He was taken to the Glens Falls Hospital where, although in serious condition, he was reported as improving. (June 1923)





### Bill's Restaurant Update

As you recall in our last Quarterly Chuck Wheeler remembered going into the restaurant with his (Forest Ranger) father (Frank) to obtain sandwiches and drinks for volunteers fighting a forest fire. This was in the late 50s or early 60s. His memory recalls that his father called the man behind the counter "Bill." Also, Chuck remembered that the "Bill" behind the counter opened a restaurant near the intersection of Route 9 & 28, north of Warrensburg.

Since then, your editor has found that the Brook Trout diner opened near the Rte 9 & 28 intersection in September of 1966. It was open for just a short while and its owner was Bill Faulkner.

Did this Bill work at Bill's Restaurant? Is this the Bill that the restaurant was named after? Do any of our members remember Bill Faulkner? Give me a call at 798-0248 if you can shed any light on this mystery.

### Cover Photo

The Masthead photo is the Warrensburg Highway Crew on Main Street just south of the bandstand.

Much credit also goes to several firefighters who stood on the exposed side of the building, dousing it with water from hand-held hoses. Chris McGuirk has given the museum many digital photos of the fire, now on display as a continuous slide show, including also the remarkable Lake George tower truck.

Sandi Parisi reports that the calendar for 2013, Warrensburgh's Bicentennial Year, is just about completed. She, John and Brittany Hastings, and Mike Sullivan are much involved in writing and editing a special bicentennial book about 200 people, places, and events in the past 200 years.

The Society held a mid-winter reception at the museum on Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup>. The Annual Membership Meeting was held on Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at Lizzie Keays Restaurant. Our membership continues to increase steadily. We hereby remind those few who have not renewed that this is a good time to do so. If you know of any birthdays coming up, consider giving a gift membership in the Society or perhaps one of the books from our Book Nook at the museum.

We remind you that the Historical Society is one of the local organizations to which you can have your deposit money designated if you take your returnable bottles and cans to Dean Ackley's Direct Deposit business on north Main Street. We understand this business may relocate soon to the old Stewart's building near the museum.

*Until next time, keep looking backwards.*

*Paul Gilchrist*

### Mystery Photo Places in Warrensburg's History

Can you identify the building at the left? Or where it was located? Or any of the previous owners? Contact John at 798-0248 with your answer or email at [jthastings@roadrunner.com](mailto:jthastings@roadrunner.com). The picture in the last Quarterly was The Pines, which was located on Third Street or what is now Fourth Avenue. The house is still present. The Pines was built by Henry L. Smith in 1896-97 and adjacent to his residence. It opened for business later in 1897. He and his wife ran the boarding house/hotel until 1924 when it was purchased by Lauren Davis, who had previously to this, run the Cameron Lodge in Thurman. Henry married Minnie Hill (Father - Ira Hill.) of Warrensburgh on October 21, 1890. They had a son Leo (b. 1892) who served in the 303rd Infantry during WWI.



*The Pines, then and now.*

