

Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

Volume 13 Issue 4

Winter 2008

Stephen Waters and The Trimble Hotel

By John Hastings

In the spring of 1904 Stephen Waters purchased the Riverside Hotel located just north of the High Rock in Warrensburg. On June 1st the business opened with a new name of the Trimble Hotel. Stephen, along with his wife Huldah, would continue to own and run the hotel until May of 1909.



Waters family in front of the Trimble Hotel

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ARCHITECTURE OF A SMALL TOWN Peletiah Richard's House and Greek Revival Architecture

by Delbert Chambers

Built by Peletiah Richards in c.1832 and later known as the "King House" and then as "Gilchrist Manor" the house was located at the northwest corner of what is now the Grand Union parking lot.

The house was a very nice example of Greek Revival style architecture, the style of prominence from about 1820 to 1860. "History states that Mr. (Peletiah) Richards made a business trip to Virginia, was greatly impressed with Thomas Jefferson's home at Monticello, and, upon his return to Warrensburg, sent a local builder to see and copy this style." (*A Sketch Book of Warrensburg by Marie Fisher.*) The home was later purchased by Hesden King, Peletiah's son-in-law.

Of particular note are the two-story porch columns of classical Doric style surmounting distinct pedestals. Of even greater importance is the entablature, a detail one can expect to find on every Greek Revival house whether or not it has columns. There are

many examples of Greek Revival architecture in Warrensburg but two story columns are not the norm for such homes in this region. Exceptions are the "Emerson house" at 3826 Main Street and "The Pillars" (first known as "The Elms") at 3785 Main Street, which are significantly different from the Richards house in that they have square columns. The round columns of the Richards house accurately represent the true style as developed from ancient Greek temples. The "Colonial Arms" also had round two story columns but did not have much other Greek Revival detail, it was not of Greek Revival style.

Even though the columns of the Richards house were conceptually correct of the 'Revival' style they were inconsistent with the pure Classical Orders in that although the capitals and the entablature are representative of the Doric Order the tall, slender columns were representative of the Corinthian

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Getting personal... what do you know about some of the individuals of our Board?

* Rosemary has recently returned from Ireland where she had been visiting her relatives. * Steve says "Sandi and I just returned from a history-themed vacation, visiting Gettysburg, Williamsburg, and the fabulous Biltmore Estate in Ashville, NC." They own Country Lodge B&B. * Sandi is our Town Historian. * Peter has recently been inducted into the Glens Falls area Baseball Hall of Fame. * Marilyn retired as Warrensburg School nurse. * Dennis is manager of the Warrensburg branch of the Glens Falls National Bank, and by default caretaker of the historic Emerson National Bank building which was erected in 1926. * John is the author of a book of regional history. * Lenore is recognized as the most influential restorer of Warrensburgh houses. * Paul was Professor of Research at UNC School of Medicine at Chapel Hill * And I study and have lectured on building structure and architectural style.

Are you aware that our Constitution mandates that this Society "discovers and disseminates" the history of Warrensburg(h). To that end we publish this Quarterly and also develop and present appropriate programs. Among the most recent programs are the 2008 "Graveyard Walks" and "Dinner With the Dead" through which we shared the influence of five of our community's ancestors (see back page). Recently, As we approached the 'season of darkness' we sponsored "Ghost Stories" presented by David Pitkin. The house was packed and we were well rewarded. If you have the opportunity to attend his presentation try to do so. I'm sure you won't be disappointed. His schedule is posted at www.afterworld.info. And if you have your own curiosities Mr. Pitkin would like to hear from you at pitkinaurora@aol.com.

In your service-
Delbert Chambers

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

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The Board of Directors meets at the Senior Center, 3847 Main Street, at 6:30 PM on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. Society members welcome. Call Delbert to confirm at 623-3514.

Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 17 Holiday Social & Dinner
7:00 pm Griffin House
Call 623-2449 for reservations.

Feb. 19 Annual Meeting 7:00 pm
Griffin House

WELCOME
NEW MEMBERS

John & Diane Gable
Marilyn O'Connor
Larry & Crystal Collier

*The next
Quarterly Deadline
Is February 1st*

NEW E-MAIL

The Society has recently obtained an email address. If you want to contact us directly, send your email to:

whs7396@yahoo.com

Membership Information

Student \$8.00 Individual \$12.00 Family \$25.00 Senior (62+) \$8.00
Contributing \$50.00 Business \$50.00 Institutional \$100.00
Life (Individual only) \$250

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, Warrensburg, NY 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.***

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Stephen R. Waters was born in Horicon on June 25, 1851. His father was Starling Waters who was born (May 30, 1825) in Warrensburg but lived most of his life on the 124 acre family farm in Horicon. Starling married (Sep. 24 1850) Elizabeth Cardle and they had second son George (Jan. 02, 1854) and a daughter Cora (Sep. 08, 1852). Starling served both as Commissioner of Highways and as a Justice of the Peace. The 1850 Census lists Starling as an "inn keeper." This may have been the beginning of a long history of "inn keeping" by the Waters's family.

Smith's *History of Warren County* (1885) states that Stephen is "in Dakota." Two years later, he is back home and has married Huldah Barber of Bolton. For a short time they lived in Peekskill but came north around Christmas time and moved in with Stephen's father early in 1888. It was here that their first daughter, Minnie, was born. They would have four more daughters (Sarah, Margery, Elizabeth and Rachel) over the next four years. Later in 1888, Stephen and Huldah moved back to Bolton and purchased the Tripp Store located in Mrs. Brown's building.

In 1890, Stephen built a house on the Sagamore Road, near the bridge.

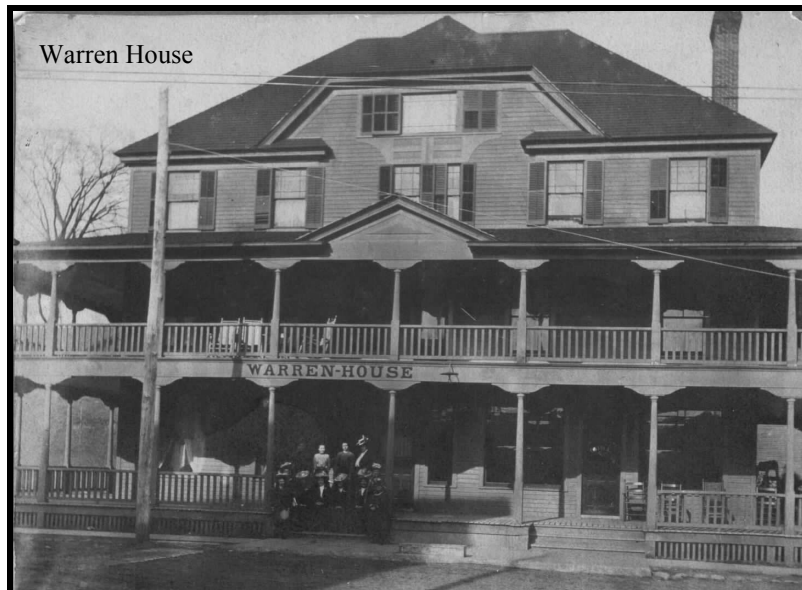


Interior at Trimble Hotel

Stephen and Huldah would live here summers and spend the winter with Stephen's father. During the fall of 1900 and spring of 1901, Huldah was quite sick, spending most of this time in the Albany Hospital. They sold the Sagamore Road property in April of 1901 to E. Burgess Warren of Philadelphia who would eventually build Wapanak (see Old Bolton on Lake George by Wm. Gates, page 64). The 1900 Census lists Stephen as a "Hotel Keeper". Whether this was at the above place or at another place in Bolton is unknown.



Trimble Hotel



Warren House

In May of 1901 they moved to Warrensburg. It was at this time that Stephen and his brother George purchased the Warren House in Warrensburg

from Ashley Kellogg. They would run the Warren House until November of 1903 at which time they sold it back to Ashley Kellogg. There must have been some problems concerning this, since the Warrensburg News of June 2, 1904 states; "S. R. Waters of this village has brought an action against his brother, George C. Waters, of Sandy Hill, to enforce an accounting of the partnership transaction while proprietors of the Warren House in this place. A hearing was held in Glens

Falls on Tuesday and Wednesday before Hon. Lyman Jenkins as referee." George had purchased the Clark House in Sandy Hill earlier in 1904. He would run it until 1907 when he leased the Brant Lake House.

In early 1904, the heirs of Powell Brace assigned the "real property and contract" to Stephen Waters. Powell Brace had purchased the property in 1899, but was shot and killed at the hotel in 1902. Stephen renamed it the Trimble Hotel and opened for business on June 1st.

"Special Dance at the Trimble Hotel"

"Mirth, music and dancing will be held joyous sway at the Trimble Hotel next Wednesday night, and

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HISTORY OF THE ORIGINS OF THE DECORATED CHRISTMAS TREE

by Rita Ferraro

It's that time of year again folks and as a popular old Christmas song goes, "Haul out the holly, put up the tree....." and fa la la la la. Have you ever wondered where the tradition of putting up a Christmas tree came from? Like most of us, you probably follow the old English Victorian Christmas tree custom of decorating a huge pine tree that needs the top cut off to fit into the living room, followed by patiently untangling set after set of twinkle lights that probably won't even light up after you get them all strung on the tree. That's the time to settle down instead to a mug of hot chocolate, or as I prefer, after all this frustration, a hot toddy!

Anticipation of the foregoing prompted me to take some time out and investigate the origin of the decorated Christmas tree and perhaps soothe some of the impending frustration at this time of the year. In my research I was reminded that Christmas is a time for tradition, sacred and secular. It is a time for the reunion of friends, gathering of families, for stockings hung by the fireside, the sound of hymns and carols and of course for telling again the wonderful story of a birth that occurred the night that a star appeared in the East more than two thousand years ago.

I found "volumes" of information on the decorated Christmas tree subject available to the inquisitive, but due to the confines of space in this publication, I will try to be as brief as possible in sharing with you the earliest history which is most interesting, and hopefully to

venture into and ending with today's modern traditions. Here goes!

Why do we have a decorated Christmas Tree? The story about the first Christmas tree is a combination of facts, legends and customs all starting in the Baltic Countries and what is now Northern Germany. In the 8th century a monk (St. Boniface) from Crediton, Devonshire, England went to that area to teach the Word of God. Known as the "Apostle of Germany," he spent much time in Thuringia, an area which was to become the cradle of the Christmas Decoration Industry. Legend has it that he came upon some men about to cut a huge oak tree as a stake for human sacrifice to their pagan god. With one mighty blow, he



felled the massive oak and as the tree split, a beautiful young fir tree sprang from its center. He told the people that this evergreen with its branches pointing to heaven was indeed a holy tree, a symbol of God's promise of eternal life. He instructed them to carry the evergreen from the wilderness into their homes and to surround it with gifts, symbols of love and kindness. The converted people began to revere the fir tree as God's Tree, as they had previously revered the oak. By the 12th century it was being hung upside-down from ceilings at Christmastime in Central Europe, as a symbol of Christianity. St. Boniface received the name Winfrid at his baptism but took the name Boniface before he was ordained to the priesthood. He was martyred at the age of 75.

The first decorated tree was at

Riga, Latvia in 1510. The Riga Tree as it came to be called, appears to be the first documented use of a tree in a Christmas/Winter Celebration. This merry making became extensive, since it began on Christmas Day and extended into the new year. The celebration included a combination of Pagan and Christian rituals and a tree carried indoors and decorated using paper roses and dried fruits.

Twenty years later in the early 16th century, Martin Luther is said to have been walking in the woods one Christmas Eve and was deeply impressed by the beauty of the pine trees against the twinkling of the star-filled sky. He cut a small pine tree and took it home to his family. He decorated its branches with lighted candles which he said symbolized the starry sky over the town of Bethlehem when Christ was born. His example was quickly imitated in Germany and throughout northern Europe and soon Christmas markets were set up in towns to provide everything from gifts, food and more practical things such as a knife grinder to sharpen the knife to carve the Christmas Goose! At these fairs bakers made shaped gingerbreads and waxed ornaments for people to buy as souvenirs of the fair and take home to hang on their trees.

In 1601 the custom of decorating the Paradise Tree developed in Strasbourg, Germany. Interestingly a tree was decorated with wafers and golden sugar twists and paper flowers of all colors. Biblically, they were symbolic of the Paradise Tree in the Garden of Eden. At first they were only set up in churches, eventually in private homes. The many sweet food items were symbols of Plenty and represented the sweetness of redemption; the flowers, originally only red, represented Knowledge; and the color white, Innocence.

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the proprietor, S. R. Waters, extends a cordial invitation to his friends to participate in the festivities incident to the occasion. The new bowling alley building, which has just been finished, will be used as a ballroom. Holcomb's orchestra will furnish music. The reception committee is A. L. Soper and W. W. Bowyer. Jere W. Moynihan will act as floor manager, when the beaming host announces "on with the dance." "Steve" will also insist at this, the opening ball, that "joy be unconfined." Supper will be served at the midnight hour." (From the Warrensburg News, October 6, 1904)

(1910–1916), Kelley Inn (1917), and the AU-KUM-ON Inn (1921-1926). It was gutted by fire on Sunday October 24th, 1926.

Sources

1. Waters Family Bible
2. Stephen Waters Family Chronology. Unpublished, by Huldah Waters
3. The Warrensburg News
4. A Summer Paradise 1904 through 1926, by D & H RR
5. Waters Family Documents
6. *History of Warren County* by HP Smith 1885.
7. Census Records 1850, 1900
8. Warren County Deed Records



Huldah and Stephen Waters at Fairmont Park

From A Summer Paradise 1908 for the Trimble Hotel:

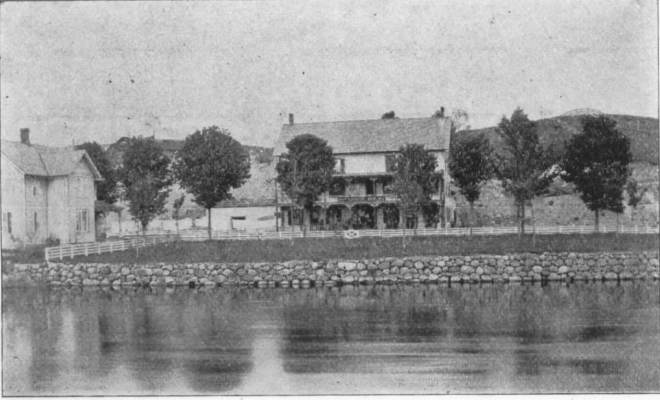
" 1/4 mile by bus. Accommodates 35. Terms \$7 to \$12 per week, transient \$1.50 per day; Special rates for families. Modern improvements; bowling, hunting and fishing, livery. Open all year."

Stephen assigned his interests to Huldah in 1906, which she eventually sold to Wm. L. R. Durkee in May of 1909. Later that year Stephen and Huldah moved to Elm Street in Glens Falls and opened and ran a boarding house until 1915. In 1918 Stephen was operated on for cancer, but survived and lived until 1930. Huldah passed away in 1951 at the age of 81.

The Trimble Hotel was originally built by Halsey Chambers who owned the property from 1896-1898. It was located just north of the High Rock and across from the Judd Bridge. Other owners/operators included Al Brown, John R. Durkee, Michael Dolan Jr, J. H. Pasco, Harry Bolton, Powell (Pet) Brace, W. H. Kelley and Julia Klemm, It was operated as (with known dates of operation in parenthesis) the Riverside Hotel (1898-1904), The Trimble Hotel (1904-1909), The Bolton House



Letterhead for the Trimble Hotel



**Trimble
Hotel,**

⌘

S. R. WATERS,
Proprietor.

⌘

Near Schroon River. Trolley Cars From Lake George and Glens Falls Stop at Door.

Warrensburgh, N. Y., Sept. 21, 1904/1900

(Continued from page 4)

Today, in parts of Bavaria, fir branches and little trees decorated with lights, apples and shiny tinsel are still called "Paradeis." (Tinsel was invented in Germany around 1610. At that time real silver was used and machines were invented which pulled the silver out into the wafer thin strips for tinsel. Silver was durable, but tarnished quickly especially with candlelight. Attempts were made to use a mixture of lead and tin, but this was heavy and would break under its own weight, therefore silver continued to be used right up to the mid 20th century.)

A Viking Story (Legend) tells us that when Christianity first came to Northern Europe, three personages representing the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, were sent from Heaven to place lights on the original Christmas Tree. Their search was long for they were required to find a tree that was as high as hope, as great as love, as sweet as charity; and one that had the sign of the cross on every bough. Their search ended in the Northern forest where they found the Fir tree.

The first use of decorated English trees came with the Georgian Kings who came from Germany. At that time German merchants in England decorated their homes with a Christmas tree. The British were not fond of the German monarchy and did not copy the fashions at court which is why the Christmas tree did not establish in Britain at that time. Probably due to the influence of their German neighbors however, some Britains did have a Christmas tree.

As early as 1747 Christmas trees were introduced into America by the Hessian soldiers. The Pennsylvania German settlements did have community trees. They were not recorded in any particular quantity and therefore did not immediately take off at that time.

In 1846 Queen Victoria was a very popular royal unlike the previous royal family, so what was done at court immediately became fashionable, not only in Britain, but with the fashion con-

scious East Coast American Society. An illustration in the London News showed the Queen, with her husband, Prince Albert and their family standing around a decorated Christmas tree and instantly

the
Eng-
lish



Christmas tree had arrived! Not only in Britain, but in America as well!

American Christmas trees were introduced in several ways... German Hessian Soldiers in the 18th century; in 19th century Texas, cattle barons from Britain brought their customs, and the East Coast Society copied the English court Christmas tree customs. Settlers from all over Europe took their customs into the 19th century. Decorations were not easy to find in the undeveloped towns in the West so people made their own decorations. Tin was pierced to create lights and lanterns to hold candles which could shine through the holes.

After the death of Queen Victoria in January of 1901, Britain went into mourning and the tree died with her for a while in many homes. Many opted for the more convenient table top tree. These were available in many sizes and the artificial tree, particularly the Goose Feather tree became popular. Originally invented in the 1880's in Germany, they were used widely to combat some of the damage being done to fir trees in the name of Christmas.

In the late 19th to the early 20th centuries, similar feather trees could be found in numerous Warrensburg homes and businesses. The first feather Christmas trees reached the shores of the United States with German immigrants. America began manufacturing them.

They were made mostly from dried goose feathers but also from turkey, ostrich and swan. The trees ranged in size from just a few inches to six feet or more. They were produced until after World War II. Feather trees were popular in the Adirondacks since not everyone was able to go into the woods and cut a live tree or could afford to buy one, so the convenience and cost factor of having a tree you could store from year to year made sense. Even in those days there were environmentally conscious people who felt it wasteful to cut down a live tree every year for only a few days' pleasure.

Also in America, the Addis Brush Company created the first brush trees, using the same machinery which made their toilet brushes! These had an advantage over the feather tree in that they would hold heavier decorations.

By the 1930's there was a revival of Dickensian nostalgia in Britain. (Not until forty years later did Americans copy this revival.) In Britain Christmas trees became large and real again and were decorated with many bells, glass balls and tinsel, and with a beautiful golden haired angel at the top.

The mid 1950's saw another change in America. A new world was on the horizon and modernist ideas were everywhere. Silver aluminum trees were made in America and exported to other countries. The Silver Pine Tree was designed to have a revolving light source under it with colored gelatin windows allowing light to shine in different shades as it revolved under the tree. Obviously no decorations were needed for **this** tree.

In the 1970's America made a return to Victorian nostalgia. At first it was a refreshing look and manufacturers realizing the potential created more and more fantastic decorations. Live Christmas trees were

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Order. This did not lessen the validity of the 'Revival' style.

Other telling details of this architectural style are low pitched roofs, six over six double sash windows with generally simple surrounds and main entry doors with surrounds that are anything but simple. A typical door surround will have pilasters on each side supporting an entablature that matches that of the main roof. It would also be common in larger houses to have narrow, multi-paned lights between the sides of the door and the pilasters as well as multi-paned lights over the door beneath the entablature. This design feature has a very distinct and intended purpose of being the focal point of the façade and thereby drawing one's attention, one's person, into



the house - a very different concept of more recent construction where one might even have to search for the entry.

About the title building, in 1941 it was purchased from the King estate by Paul and Helen Gilchrist. Their son Paul offers the following:

"We have copies of the Sanford Fire Insurance maps from 1901, 1912, and a later year (1920-something) for Warrensburgh which show the King house and

outbuildings. I've been working with those maps for the museum.

"My parents sold the house and we moved over to the lake in the summer of 1968. The house fell victim to one of those mysterious mid-winter fires in 1976 and had to be burned the rest of the way by the fire department. I was in North Carolina at the time, so the details of the demise are fuzzy, but there was an article about it in the Warrensburg News. Sometime between 1968 and the fire, a gas explosion blew off the back south wing of the house where there was an apartment.

"I recall that there was a large fireplace in the cellar for cooking, with a dumbwaiter that went up to the dining room on the northeast corner of the first floor. I remember three original fireplaces on the first floor, and another built by my folks in a refurbished room at the back.

"For years during the 1950s/early '60s, student teachers assigned to WCS stayed in the large upstairs front room."

Balance of fenestration (windows and doors) in the façade' (the plane of an exterior wall) is imperative as is, theoretically anyway, Proportion, or the relationship of the width of the building to its length and height. Admittedly the "Revival" style has deviated from the proportion mandate, especially with regard to the height dimension. Two reasons for this deviation are the beginnings of designing a building from the inside out rather than from the outside in and economics. A clarification of the first is to say that the function, or use, of the building was beginning to take precedence over the appearance of the building. Secondly, about economics, the increasing availability of dimension lumber allowed for more readily constructed one story, one and half story and two story buildings, especially domestic buildings. One story being the easiest to build. One and half story doubles the usable floor area without doubling the cost of either materials or labor. A full two stories not only affords the same

advantages as the story and half, and then some, but also adds a grandeur to the appearance of the building.

It is my opinion that, with regard to the development of design 'from the inside out', a significant injustice was thrust upon society. Buildings of politics such as town halls and of finance such as banks should instill confidence and trust. Non-descript or over busy façades and entryways that are not the focus of the façade will always lead to a complacency of the public as they do not stand as a sense of strength in a community.

Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, a Roman architect and engineer of the first century B.C. wrote *The Ten Books on Architecture*. It is considered to be "the oldest and most influential work on architecture in existence." The writings detail far more than I have described in this article; far more than the three (principle) Orders of Architecture, specifically; Doric, Ionic and Corinthian; far more than proportion and balance. With enthusiasm I suggest the book as a 'must read' for anyone more than casually interested in this article and Greek Revival style architecture.

Definitions:

CAPITAL – the cap or crowning feature of a column.

ENTABLATURE – a horizontal band consisting of three parts that are supported by columns of the same order. It will always be found at the roof/wall juncture and supported by corner pilasters. It will also be found over the front door supported by pilasters on each side of the door. The three parts are called the Cornice which is at the roof edge, the Freize below the cornice and in grander building may incorporate fancy carving or other decoration and the Architrave which surmounts the columns or pilasters.

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1956-1970

F.K.Wheeler, Warrensburg
Negative File "Guess Who"

Call John at 798-0248 with your answers or e-mail jthastings@roadrunner.com



34. _____ 35. _____ 36. _____

The photos in the last Quarterly were:
31. Harry Combs 32. Howard Savasge 33. John Burt

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popular, but many housewives preferred the convenience of the authentic looking artificial trees being manufactured. If your room was large enough, you could have a 14 foot artificial Spruce without a single dropped needle - and so good that it fooled everyone at first glance. There were even pine scented sprays to put on the tree for that "real tree smell."

The late 1990's American Christmas tree has taken the Victorian idea, but with new themes and conceptual designs: The Starry Starry Night Tree; The Twilight Tree; The Snow Queen Tree.

And here we are now in the year 2008. Soon the family car will be seen riding down the Northway with the bundled up, deliciously smelling pine tree atop. What will you be choosing? This year, I think I'll look for the Fir tree, keeping in mind the story of the beautiful young Fir with its branches pointing upward that sprang from the massive Oak felled by St. Boniface in the 8th century. Maybe I won't even bother

with the tangled lights....I'll just have a hot toddy!

The author credits the following resources in writing this article:

1) Warrensburgh Historical Society "Events Book - 1996"

Christmas Ornaments of the Past And Feather Christmas Tree by Caron Akeley

2) Internet - "The Christmas Archives"

HELP WANTED

Persons interested in helping to organize and preserve the collection in the museum. All skills are useful but training can be provided. Rewards: personal satisfaction and camaraderie with like-minded people. Contact Steve (623-2207) or visit the museum at 3754 Main Street on Wednesdays 10-4 pm.

**Warrensburgh
Historical Society
2009 Calendar.**

Additional copies may be obtained from the Society or at one of the following Warrensburg locations:
Glens Falls National Bank
Jack Toney's
Nemec's
Richard's Library
Cronin's Golf course

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FAÇADE' – the face of a wall of a building as viewed.

FENESTRATION – the windows and doors and their disposition in the façade.

LIGHT – the areas in windows that can admit light, usually containing glass.

PILASTER – as the column it copies but protrudes minimally from a wall.

PEDESTAL – the base supporting a column.

Do you recognize these folks that we were able to coax back from beyond?



*The 2008 Graveyard Walks players:
Standing L. to R. – CAPT. SAMUEL MOSES aka Peter Wood, HARRY A. REOUX aka Tom O'Dea, COLONEL SAMUEL T. RICHARDS aka Dennis Martinez, graveyard guide aka Donna Wood. Seated L. to R.- ADELIA H. THOMAS REOUX aka Maggie Bammert, VIRGINIA BLEEKER MacALISTER McDONNELL aka Valerie Forsythe. Missing- DIGGER aka Doug Gottsche.*