

Warrensburgh Thurman Historical Society Quarterly

VOLUME 28 ISSUE 1

Spring 2023

THE STORY OF EM – PART I

An historical fiction compiled from stories told to Gary Martin as a child

Living back in the woods in a single room log cabin, the nearest neighbor three miles away as the crow flies, Em as she was called was all alone except her three little girls ages seven, five and three. Her husband had been out on the trap line for going on six weeks and wasn't expected home for at least another couple of weeks. Together they worked on building a home and farm for their family, Em was expecting a fourth child anytime soon. Her belly bulged with this new life, she had been hoping for a son, but she, like her husband, just wanted a healthy child. Practical in her dress, wearing pants rather than dresses she was looked at with disapproval from other women. She could care less what they thought and besides her husband approved, she would catch him looking at her, her shapely

Em—continued on page 4

IN THIS ISSUE

The Story of Em	1,4,5
Warren/Essex Societies Meet	1,3
Coming Attraction	1,3
Society Spot	2
President's Column	2,3
Museum Volunteer Lunch	3
Chicken BBQ Info	5
Thurman News	6
Floyd Bennett Memorial Ceremony	6
Mystery Photos From Last Issue	7
Upcoming Events	7
Membership Application	7
Mystery Photos	8

WARREN/ESSEX SOCIETIES MEET By Sharon Stone



In March of 2023 an invitation was extended to area Historical Societies and Museums from the Chestertown Historical Society to meet as a collaborative group to discuss working together to promote each entities museums and events.

The group met on April 15th at the Chestertown Museum. Thirty-two representatives from Chestertown, Warrensburg, Minerva, Horicon, Newcomb and, Luzerne were present. WTHS President Gary Bivona and his wife Charlene, Town Historian Sandi Parisi and Museum Director Laura Moore attended the event.

The meeting began with a tour of the museum and the current photo exhibit which showcases the photography of Itsuzo Sumy. The photographs were broken down by decade and fill the entire Chestertown Community Building. Sumy did stunning work, if you have not had a chance to see the exhibit please take time to check it out.

COMING ATTRACTION NOTABLE DESCENDANT TO

EXCERPT STEPHEN GRIFFING'S DIARY

By Paul Gilchrist

Our Spring 2022 Quarterly had a Mystery Photo of the 1804 Stephen Griffing homestead across the road from Thurman Station; another was the 1830 homestead of a son, William Griffing. In our Summer 2022 issue was a feature article about Stephen Griffing's life and how he settled with his family in Thurman after the Revolutionary War. The book from which the information for the article was taken, *Stephen Griffing, His Ancestry and Descendants,* published in 1911, also has a printed version of the diary Stephen kept during his service in the War.

Our Summer 2022 issue disclosed the identity of the two Mystery Photos from the Spring issue and named our readers who had correctly identified the photos, two of whom were Liz Sebald of Warrens-

burg and her cousin, Keith Rouleau, of Fairfax, Virginia, both of whom are descendants of Stephen Griffing. Keith is also a descendant of Fred King, whose grandfather, Peletiah Richards, was a Revolutionary War soldier, as well. Keith is, therefore,



Keith Rouleau

SOCIETY SPOT

BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT: Gary Bivona VICE PRESIDENT: Paul Gilchrist TREASURER: Yvonne West SECRETARY: Manu Davidson Mark Brown Dave Nabozny Gary Martin Miles Martin Shelby Burkhardt Evelyn Wood Harold McKinney Myra Volpeus

MUSEUM DIRECTOR: Laura Moore TOWN HISTORIAN: Sandi Parisi

BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Directors will meet in the Town Historian's Office at 6:30 PM on the FIRST Wednesday of each month in the Shirt Factory Building at 89 River Street.

Thurman dates to be determined

QUARTERLY INFORMATION

EDITORS Sharon Stone dennae@frontiernet.net

Senior Editor Sandi Parisi sandi.parisi@gmail.com

We welcome comments, corrections, articles, pictures, letters, and reminiscences. Email to Sandi or mail to WHS - PO Box 441 Warrensburg, NY 12885

Become a Contríbutor

A friendly call to writers, photographers and local history admirers alike: Send us copies of Warrensburg artifacts, photographs and writings of Yesteryear.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Paul Gilchrist, Sharon Stone, Gary Martin, Gary Bivona, Laura Moore

Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly Copyright 2023. All rights reserved.

IMPORTANT DATES

Infamous Women of the 19th Century June 16, 2023 Jim Allen's Famous Chicken BBQ July 14, 2023 Sticky Wicket August, 2023 Graveyard Walks September 17—19, 2023 Thurman Historical Photo Slideshow Autumn—Date TBD Floyd Bennett Day May, 2024 r details will be sent out via Social Media, Website, Fl

Further details will be sent out via Social Media, Website, Emails and, Quarterly as the dates for each event moves closer.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

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, and if a graduate year of graduation

Please see membership application on page 7

Membership Rates				
Students	\$5.00	Contributing	\$60.00	
Individual	\$15.00	Business	\$55.00	
Family	\$25.00	Institutional	\$100.00	
Sr. (62+)	\$12.00	Life (Individual only)	\$350.00	
Sr. Family	\$20.00			

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.

Please Update Your Email

If your email has changed, please update the Society at: whs7396@yahoo.com

Warrensburgh Historical Society Website: www.whs12885.org Email: whs7396@yahoo.com

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The constitution of the Warrensburg-Thurman Historical Society states, in part, that its purpose is to bring together those people interested in history more specifically, the history of the town of Warrensburg.

The constitution also calls for us to discover and collect any artifact which may help the Society to establish or illustrate the history of our area. The preservation of and accessibility to the collected artifacts is also central to the Society's mission. The Warrensburgh-Thurman Museum of Local History allows the Society not only to share this ongoing work but to educate community members on Warrensburg's rich history.

The Society's mission also calls for us to undertake the preservation of historic buildings, monuments and other matters relating to Warrensburg's History. Most recently, we have contributed to the restoration and preservation of the mounting block located in George Henry's parking lot as well as the steps at the First United Methodist Church. One of our ongoing projects is to create a park on the Tannery Park property located off Electric Ave, behind the Riverside Gallery, bordered on the other side by the Elementary School. We are working with the Town Board and Warrensburg Beautification to create a space for residents and visitors to spend time. We have plans for parking, benches, picnic tables and historical signage relating to the history of the Tannery once operated at this site.

The Society's Board is focused on these issues and its committee's work and plan activities to accomplish our stated purpose. Our Preservation Committee is responsible for identifying potential preservation projects and keeping the Board informed of ongoing projects. Thank you to Rich Larkin for bringing in his equipment to cut and chip some trees and brush to clear the overlook site

The Society has recently committed funds over the next three-year period to exclusively promote the preservation of historical sites in Warrensburg and Thurman. This activity will be in form of preservation of sites, buildings and the creation of

President—continued from page 2

markers to identify and describe the historical significance of the sites. The Society will keep you updated on the progress of preservation progress through our website, Social Media sites and of course our Quarterly publication.

The Society has been successful in its mission due to the ongoing support of our community. To this end, we are asking all of you to please continue your support of the Society through your membership and if possible, encourage others to become Members to insure we can continue to have a positive impact on our community and continue our Mission of Preservation. There is a membership form on page seven of this Quarterly which can be used to sign up and become a member. Forms can also be downloaded from our website at www.whs12885.org. We are a 501c3 Not-For-Profit, donations are eligible as a tax deduction.

I cannot emphasize enough how the dedication and hard work of our Board members, committee members and volunteers have contributed to the success of our Society and Museum. Please pay us a visit at the museum, you will not be disappointed.

The museum officially opened on Saturday May 27th and is open every Saturday and Sunday from 12:00 -2:00 until Columbus Day weekend as well as during Christmas in Warrensburg weekend.

Thank you for being a Member

Gary Bivona—President



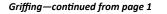
Kelley Baker, Gary Bivona, Sandi Parisi, Char Bivona, Liz Sebald, Laura Moore, Harold McKinney, Danielle Robichaud

The museum held its Welcome Back Volunteers day on May 15 with a tour and a small lunch. Thank you to all of our volunteers, we could not be as successful as we are without your time and dedication.

Meeting—continued from page 1

After the tour, Bernie McCann from Chestertown chaired the group meeting. The discussion was energetic and interesting. Topics covered were

- The creation of a brochure with the locations, times open and contact information for all of our museums. Laura Moore has volunteered to help with this project.
- Working towards getting historic homes on the Historic Registry. Sandi Parisi spoke to the success of this program in Warrensburg.
- Sharing of upcoming event dates.
- Passports and Letterboxing for Essex County
- Challenges for societies and museums were discussed. For this group some of those challenges are
 - ⇒ Not having a shared calendar or way of sharing information to help with promotion and avoiding overlapping dates
 - ⇒ Museums that do not have a Museum Director. The idea of sharing a director was discussed.
 - ⇒ Our museums and societies cover more than one county which could impact funding for collaborative projects.
- Everyone at the meeting was thrilled to have the opportunity to share their successes and challenges and so willing to work together to help all groups be more successful. It was easily decided to continue with future meetings. The Minerva Historical Society has agreed to host the next meeting which will be held in September.



twice-qualified as a member of Sons of the American Revolution.

Fred King was the last of his family to live in the Greek Revival house built by Peletiah in 1832 that stood where the Grand Union is now. It was a copy of a Virginia plantation house Peletiah had once visited and was the home from which his 39acre "plantation" was managed. After 1905, the 39 acres became the King's Addition subdivision of King Street, Oak Street, and Warren Street. The house burned in 1976.

Keith visited here in May, staying with his cousin Liz, and did some genealogical research at the Town Historian's office with Sandi Parisi. He also met with myself to tour the Thurman homestead sites, the 18th-19th century ford of the Hudson River there, the Hudson ferry site, and other points of interest in Warrensburg related to the King family.

Keith has a copy of the Griffing book and has volunteered to submit excerpts from Stephen's diary for publication in our Quarterly. Most of Stephen's wartime service was in New York State. He participated in the 1777 Battles of Saratoga and was present at Burgoyne's surrender. A Hessian soldier gave him his musket, which became a family heirloom. He was promoted to ensign (2nd lieutenant) in 1778. His company participated in Sullivan's Raid in 1779 to punish Iroquois who had devastated Cherry Valley. In 1780 his brigade was ordered to West Point following Benedict Arnold's treason. He was assigned to guard Joshua Smith, the man who had arranged the meeting between Arnold and Major André. Smith was acquitted, but André was hanged.

The diary should be exceedingly interesting and we look forward to printing it.



Town Historian Sandi Parisi and Board president Gary Bivona enjoying the camaraderie at the Chestertown meeting.



body filling out these pants was most becoming to her husband. The fur they would get would go a long way in getting store bought things needed for their homestead.

Unlike a lot of people they did have a milk cow, pigs and chickens, a mule, and a jack (male donkey) who just happened to be called Jack. He was big and strong and could be a handful. It took a steady hand to control him, something Em had no problem with. She could handle old Jack better than her husband, who often times would just as soon put a rifle to his stubborn head. The old sow had just had a litter of piglets; ten in all and these would be sold off, further helping the families' income.

All the work on this hard scrabble farm fell to Em. The two oldest children helped and were quickly learning the skills needed to survive. The only heat for the cabin was a stone fireplace that she and her husband had built out of river rock. From her cabin door she looked out towards the river, still locked in ice in places and would soon breakup and go out.

As a wedding gift they had been given cast-iron cook wear, a Dutch oven, a large spider (hand held drain) and frying pans from which Em cooked and baked wholesome foods on her fireplace. Learning to cook at a very early age, her family loved her meals.

A sturdy log barn had been built fairly close to the cabin, well stocked with hay cut last summer on the river flats and beaver meadows. Acorns that she and the girls had gathered while her husband was cutting their firewood, which would help feed the hogs, the corn crib was still half full. The barn logs were fitted tightly and a heavy door would keep any bears or mountain lions from killing any livestock. The family dog, always on guard, quick to fight off any animal looking for a chicken dinner.

Em was a handsome woman, her mother was Scotch Irish and her Dad a French Canadian, Em wore her jet black hair short, her skin a tawny color, her green eyes snapped with an intensity as she looked out onto her world, softening as she saw her children playing in the door yard by the cabin door. Working with her arms bare, the sinew in her fore arms stood out from the hard physical work she did. She liked the feeling of the exertion of her muscles as she went about her work. She had met her husband at a trading post that her parents ran, tall and rugged, he saw her and she him, well the rest is history.

Using a salve of deer tallow and herbs she rubbed her swollen belly and breasts, the baby kicking her, at times stopping her to catch her breath, telling her that this baby was healthy. About once a week the neighbors came by to make sure all was well with her while her husband was away, the wife would later come and help with the delivery of the baby.

The ford to the river was north of them so there was very little if any wagon travel as most used the river road. Em hoped that her husband would be here for the birth, but this was out of her control, so she just kept busy as there was always plenty to do.

The chores done up and the barn door firmly fixed for the night, in the fading light the girls and Em went to the cabin to have their own supper. The cabin door was shut and barred for the night, the only light came from the fireplace and the kerosene lamp on the big harvest table. The girls set the table while Em got the food that was left warming in the fireplace. It felt good to be off her feet and she and her girls sat to eat together.

All at once Em heard the terrifying squeal of her sow, the ripping and smashing of the wood out at the barn. Opening the cabin door, the dog by her side, the deep low growl from his throat told Em that danger had visited them. She saw the bear coming out of the barn, a squealing piglet in its deadly jaws about to die, the livestock screaming in terror by this invader. Em screamed at the top of her lungs in an attempt to get the bear to drop the piglet. The bear reared up its eyes focused on Em standing in the doorway, dropping on all fours and much to Em's disbelief the bear charged her. She yelled for the kids to move to the back of the cabin, as she reached for her rifle hanging on the pegs of the fireplace mantle. The dog ran straight for the bear, he was slapped out of the way and lay bleeding and limp in the yard.

Em had her rifle resting easy in her shoulder, the sights already, with one fluid motion lined up and pulled the hammer back. Em knew that this was a fight to the death and she could not falter for she had only one shot and it had to count or surely the bear would kill them all. Her girls were up on the bed as far back as they could get screaming in terror at the top of their lungs. In a rage the huge bear charged thru the door, holding the sites just below his chin, Em's rifle bucked in her hands, the loud noise inside the cabin was deafening, the flash of the muzzle was like a streak of lightening. Her aim was deadly, the rifle ball hitting the bear's chest. The momentum of the charging bear slammed into the big harvest table, hitting Em in her stomach and throwing her backwards. As she fell her head hit the stone hearth, knocking her out. As quick as a wink the oldest girl grabbed the kerosene lamp before it fell to the floor, her two sisters were at their mothers side. The oldest girl grabbed up the fallen rifle reloading quickly she pointed at the bear; a pool of blood was forming staining the wood floor. Sure that her mother had killed the bear, she rushed to see to her, who was coming around. Groggy she slowly sat up, the girls helping her into a chair. Em's hair was blood-soaked, worse vet there was a lot of blood on the front of her pants. The girls got a cloth and wet it with cold water and put it on their mothers head. Wanting to lay down Em asked her girls to help her over to the bed, saying to the two oldest, go hitch up old jack. She instructed the two girls to take her deer tallow she used and pack Jack's nose so he couldn't smell the bear, and to put a feed sack over his head. The two girls headed for the barn to harness up Jack, passing their faithful dog, they felt sure that he had been killed in this fight, but there was no time for that now.

Doing as their mother had told them they led Jack over to the cabin, backing him up they hooked a chain around the leg of the bear. Jack dragged him out into the door yard, for once in his life old Jack did as he was asked to do without a fuss. Getting Jack back into his stall the girls closed the door as best as they could, the bear had ripped it up pretty good. They rushed back inside the cabin shutting and barring the door. Getting over to the bed where

Em — Continued from page 4

Em lay, their little sister was holding the cloth on her Mom's hurt head. No one was crying, that would come later. Holding her girls close to her Em told them that we need help, something is wrong with the baby. The two oldest girls fixed the fire up, and put on warm clothing. Going back to their Mom she told them they must go to the neighbors and they must hurry. By now it was dark out, the neighbors were three miles away thru the woods and across the river. Stepping outside in the cold they made sure their little sister had gotten the door closed and barred. As fleet footed as young deer the girls ran, holding hands, their feet knowing every inch of this dim path to the woods as they went for help.

Inside the cabin the fire in the fireplace cast eerie shadows on the log walls and ceiling timbers, the oil lamp burned with a steady even light. All was silent as Em and her youngest lay together on the bed, the stench from the bear hung heavy, Em was so sleepy but didn't dare close her eyes, her little one was tight against her side her small arm stretched across her mother. Em could feel her silently sobbing, her face buried against her Mother, as if she couldn't get close enough. In too much pain to think Em and her little one lay silent; praying that her two girls would make it safely and help would soon be on its way.

The girls holding each other's hand raced towards the woods. The silhouette of the trees at the edge of their field were black and menacing, a big pine marked where the woods trail began, this was a lot quicker than taking the woods road. By now it was very dark out with no promise of a moon to help the girls keep to the trail. Reaching the woods they ran, their breaths bellowing steam in the coldness, they were both of a single mild to run as fast as they could to get help for their Mother.

Pitch black under the trees the girls lifted their eyes up where a thin vale of light penetrated the forest canopy could be seen, telling them where the path was. On and on they ran their lungs screaming for release, but determined and knowing they could not stop, they pushed forward at break-neck speed. Busting out of the woods to the river bank they saw the river ford just ahead, white water intermixed with ice chunks from the spring break up. In the summer time barely ankle deep, now the depth unknown. This mattered little for help lay on the other side, still a mile or more away.

Gripping each other's hand tightly they waded in, the ice water burned and stung like a thousand needles. The water was up to their knees as they fought the strong currant trying to sweep their feet out from under them. At mid-stream the currant was very strong and waist high. Fighting together

and keeping their eyes on the far shore, they slowly inched forward, the cobble rocks on the river bed worn smooth made walking hard, their feet slipping from one rock to the next. Suddenly one of the girls lost her footing and fell, her sister held her tightly as she the other struggled to regain her footing, soaked from head to foot, they fought together to make it to the far shore.

The forest path had intersected the woods road at this ford, so running was made easy. Getting out of the water they ran with even more determination, safety was so close now. The only sounds in the woods were the sound of small feet pounding on the hard packed dirt, and the raggedness of their breath as they struggled to gulp air into their lungs. Onward they raced, when down this tunnel of darkness they saw light, they knew they were close to the neighbor's field, the light getting bigger and bigger. At long last they burst out into the field, in the distance they could make out the dark shadows of the farm buildings. Reaching the house they pounded on the door with their small fists. Finally the door opened and they could feel the warmth as it escaped past them. In the door way stood a large bulking man, rifle in hand. Looking down he saw the girls and with a big paw of a hand he swept them both inside and closed the door, hollering for his wife, who was already there along with their boys.

THE STORY OF EM – PART II To appear in the Summer, 2023 issue





On Tuesday, May 9th, members of the Warrensburgh-Thurman Historical Society met at the Floyd Bennett Bandstand in honor of Floyd Bennett.

Town Historian Sandi Parisi read a brief statement outlining Bennett's accomplishments and Museum Director Laura Moore placed a wreath in his memory. Dennis West, husband of Board Member Yvonne West's husband conducted an honorary flyover.



Dennis West completing honorary flyover during Floyd Bennett memorial service.



Mark Brown, Yvonne West, Sharon Stone, Laura Moore, Sandi Parisi, Harold McKinney



Town Historian Sandi Parisi sharing facts about Floyd Bennet.



Board member Harold McKinney

THURMAN NEWS From Myra Volpeus

Thurman Town Historian Myra Volpeus presented a Historical Slide show at the Thurman Town Hall on May 27. The intent of the presentation was to display historical photographs that are in the town's archives and to get help from community members in identifying the people and places in the photographs. The presentation was well attended and much information was gathered. Thank you to all who came.

Another slide show presentation is planned for fall. This one will have a theme which is yet to be determined.

Myra is also putting together a presentation entitled "Infamous Women of the 19th Century" which well be held at the Thurman Town Hall on June 16th at 6:30.

On the table as well is a Thurman themed cookbook. Myra is looking for photos and recipes of Thurman past and present for this project. You can contact Myra at myravolpeus@icloud.com or mail to Thurman Town Historian, 311 Athol Rd, Athol NY 12810 if you have something to share.

If you are interested in helping the Thurman Beautification Committee plant flowers please contact Myra as well.



Thurman Town Historian Myra Volpeus presenting historic images to the community.



Answers to Winter 2022 Mystery Photos.

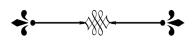
The first photo is Wilsey's Garage at the corner of 1st and Main. It was a Pontiac dealership and Gulf gas station, with residence in the adjacent house. In 1940 it became Maltbie's Chevrolet, which relocated 3 doors down the street in 1946. It's an empty lot now.



The other photo is Karl Duell's ESSO Service Station and Oldsmobile Salesroom built in 1940 at the corner of Horicon and Main a year after fire destroyed his first location on north Main St. It's now the Dragon Lee Restaurant.



We had quite a few responses. Those who got both photos correct were Tom Remington, Jack Toney, Frank Bennett, and Alice Maltbie (from North Caro-Ennis Geraghty (from lina). Montana), Mary Esther Woodward, and Ben Gurney (from Arizona) got Wilsey's right, but not the other, although Ben was close, guessing it was Prespare's Garage next door to Duell's. Miles Martin guessed the Wilsey photo was between 1st and 2nd avenues. Kevin Geraghty guessed Duell's ESSO correctly, but not Wilsey's. Robin Hansen gets an A for trying. It's good to hear from everyone, so please keep playing.



Discover!

Warrensburg Thurman Historical Society & Museum



Mark Your Calendar

Infamous Women of the 19th Century 6/16

Thurman Town Hall: 6:30 PM

Chicken BBQ 7/14

Chicken BBQ Friday July 14th 3pm-6pm-3754 Main Street Warrensburg NY. Benefits Warrensburg Museum and VFW Post 4821 Tickets available for pre-order at museum or online. 518-623-2928 www.whs12885.org

Sticky Wicket 8/19

Sticky Wicket -Saturday August 19th 12pm. Best Old Fashion Game Ever of Croquet at the Warren County Fish Hatchery Starting at 12pm Bring your own lunch, we will have desserts and beverages. \$5 Register in advance or day of event at museum or online. 518-623-2928 www.whs12885.org

Thurman Historical Photo Slideshow

Thurman Town Hall: Autumn - Date TBD

Graveyard Walks 9/17,18,19

Friday Sept 17th evening, Saturday Sept 18th afternoon, Sunday Sept 19th Dinner with the Dead. Volunteer Characters needed. Register in advance at museum or online. 518-623-2928 www.whs12885.org

Looking Forward to Meeting You!



Check out our video on https://tinyurl.com/wths12885

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
Warrensburgh-Thurman Historical Society PO Box 441, Warrensburg, NY 12885
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP
Date
Enclosed is my check for \$
Name(s)
Mailing Address
 City
State Zip
Phone(s)
·
Email
Please make checks payable to:
Warrensburg-Thurman
Historical Society
Memberships expire December 31 [#] of each year and are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.
Historical Society Dues
\$5 Student
\$12 Senior
\$15 Individual
\$20 Senior Couple
\$25 Family
\$55 Business
\$60 Contributing
\$350 Lifetime
\$ Donation (Tax Deductible)
Annual Membership runs from January 1 through December 31.
(If you join after August I st your membership is paid through following calendar year.)



Mystery Photos

If you can identify these photos and their locations, please email Paul at prg12885@aol.com or leave a voicemail at 518-623-3162.

Warrensburgh Historical Society P.O. Box 441 Warrensburg, NY 12885

Member Address