

Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

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CROONING PINES

By Alice M. Spivey

Prologue: Alice Spivey, now 93 years young, was not yet born when in 1926 her father, Fred Mason and his partner, Kent Glenn Lee, created Crooning Pines. This was a . . . [but I'll let her describe it] . . . built on property running from Hudson Street to Echo Lake, on both sides of what is now Orton Drive. Alice Mason married Joel Spivey, and their son, Bill contacted us in 2017 to tell us of his mother's experiences at Crooning Pines. He offered to send us photos and memorabilia, some of which is pictured here. I asked if she could write down her memories, and here, three years later, is her wonderful tale. -Steve Parisi

As a little kid traveling north of Glens Falls, I could begin to smell the fragrance of the pines and began to get excited because I was going to camp - Crooning Pines - for the summer! I knew it wouldn't be long until we were there.

Driving through Warrensburg, we'd pass Hall's Restaurant, The Colonial Arms Hotel and the town bandstand, then veering left, we continued down a sandy road running thru meadows of wild flowers and weeds. Finally, we see

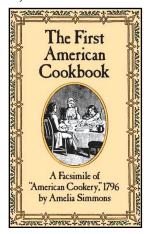
Spivey (continued on page 3)

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THE MUSEUM'S COOKBOOKS

By Sandi Parisi

Cookbooks: "A collection of recipes, instructions, and information about the preparation and serving of foods. At its best, a cookbook is also a chronicle and treasury of the fine art of cooking, an art whose masterpieces – created only to be consumed — would otherwise be lost." (Encyclopedia Britannica)



Up until the 18th century cookbooks were used by the wealthy only. Their servants were not supposed to know how to read a cookbook, so the mistress of the household would read the directions as the servant prepared the meal. Later, cookbooks were written with the middle class in mind and they began turning up in more homes.

A woman who called herself an American orphan, Amelia Simmons published the first actual American Parisi (continued on page 3)

A DECADE OF PROGRESS AT WARRENSBURG CENTRAL SCHOOL 1937-1947

By Mark K. Brown

Nathan Gifford, Supervising Principle, prepared a 31 page report to the Warrensburg Central School Board of Education for the school years September 1937 to June 1947. Sixteen common and one Union Free School were centralized in June 1938. A new five-man School Board was immediately elected, three members came from the Union Free School: Walter Pasco, Howard Hull and Dr. Arthur Cunningham. Two members were elected from outside districts: Don Cameron and Ralph Brown (my grandfather).

Following is a brief summary of some of the highlights of the decade:

Transportation—The four Mack buses purchased in the summer of 1938 had given the district good service. One thousand one hundred and twelve pupils were transported 1652 days or 3,158,624 pupil days without injury.

School Building—The Warrensburg Central School Building was planned in the closing days before Pearl Harbor. The contracts were let and the foundation was poured. Then came Pearl Harbor. The following years of construction were a nightmare in the procurement of construction supplies, instructional equipment and in clearing government war regulations.

Brown (continued on page 6)

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

We have heard it a hundred times in the past month and a half: as we experience this pandemic we are watching history unfold. That is so true. Suddenly we have before us an opportunity to connect with what people experienced during historical events like the Black Plague and the Spanish Flu in ways we've never had before.

When I think of Warrensburg during the Spanish Flu (just a little over 100 years ago), I marvel at how different an experience it was from what I am facing today. All six of the grand hotels that were in operation in town at the time were converted into wards for the sick. An extra 25 acres were purchased for the cemetery because plots were quickly running out. As frightening and uncertain as life has been in the past couple of weeks, our immediate area has been relatively quiet compared to then.

But I have also found myself thinking of how people in history so often accepted danger and the risk of death in ways we don't often experience today in our modern lives. Four hundred years ago this year the Mayflower sailed to the New World. It's easy to form a mental picture of the Mayflower with its sails unfurled, filled with pilgrims in their clean and starched costumes. But that picture is very far from the truth. Of the 102 passengers only 53 survived until spring. They faced disease, starvation, and harsh conditions all for the promise of a new life.

Likewise, what we now know as the Oregon Trail – the start of which is now almost 200 years ago – was travelled by people full of hope. Of the estimated 400,000 people who took up the challenge, 20,000 of them died along the way, mostly due to diseases like Cholera.

And what of the brave men and women who settled in the Adiron-dacks? It was an area that even the Native people considered uninhabitable for the long-term. Early settlers faced harsh winters and the very real possibility of starvation. Establishing areas for agriculture in order to sustain themselves was brutally difficult. There were animal attacks, Indian raids, disease, and

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IN MEMORIUM: Stay Safe & Healthy!

accidents from the dangerous work they had to do to settle the land. And talk about isolation! It was often an arduous trip of several days to reach the nearest settlement.

In many ways I think this pandemic has come as such a shock to our way of life because we have been allowed to distance ourselves from the many dangers people have faced for centuries. Perhaps one small silver lining is that we now have a better perspective for the experiences of people who have gone before us.

The museum closed its doors the week of March 16th in response to Covid-19. It remains closed, but our Director Steve Parisi has been hard at work throughout this time to get our collection online and to make exciting improvements to the museum as we move forward. We will open as soon as that is deemed wise, and we look forward to that day.

All of the Historical Society's events are on hold for now, but the Board continues to be in touch! We welcome 2 new board members: John Gable and Dave Nabozny. Please take a look at their profiles in this issue. Welcome John and Dave!

We miss our visitors! It is our deepest hope that you will stay well so that we can welcome you back to the museum as soon as possible.

Beth Kinghorn

SOCIETY PAGE

CONTRIBUTORS TO ISSUE:

Mark K. Brown, Paul Glichrist, Beth Kinghorn, Sandi Parisi, Steve Parisi, Alice M. Spivey

BECOME A CONTRIBUTOR

Please email Serena with new submissions at, *serrie@zoho.com*! Be sure to send copies to Beth too at, *elizabethlkinghorn@gmail.com*!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Due to the Pandemic all events are on hold until further notice. Keep an eye out for updates on our Facebook page and local newspapers. Thank you for your interest and support.

BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Directors meets in the Town Historian's Office at 6:30pm on the FIRST Wednesday of each month in the Shirt Factory Building at 100 River Street. Email Beth to confirm: whs7396@yahoo.com

Warrensburgh Historical Society

Website: www.whs12885.org Email: whs7396@yahoo.com Phone: 804-232-7347

Membership Rates			
Students	\$5.00	Contributing	\$55.00
Individual	\$15.00	Business	\$50.00
Family	\$25.00	Institutional	\$100.00
Senior (62+)	\$10.00	Life (Individual only)	\$300.00
Senior Family	\$18.00		

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

For the duration of the Pandemic: <u>FREE</u> new memberships in 2020 with full benefits thru 2021! If you would like to join and receive the Quarterly by mail, please send your membership classification with name, address, and phone number to:

Warrensburgh Historical Society P.O. Box 441 Warrensburg, N.Y. 12885

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Parisi (continued from page 1) cookbook in 1796 in Hartford, Connecticut. It was reprinted and revised over the next thirty-five years and was written for the primary cooking source at the time, the fireplace. The book was an American original and the first listed ingredient was cornmeal. By the 1820s other cookbooks followed, "Virginia Housewife" among them, but these cookbooks were different from what we know today. They gave no mention of the size of the dishes used in baking, the number of portions the recipe made, the temperature at which to cook the dish, or even about the addition of flour. It was recognized by all cooks at that time that one added as much flour as needed until the "feel" was correct.

It was not until the 1850s that cookbooks were designed for cook stoves, and even then, no temperatures were given since the stoves of that time had no thermometers. With the advent of gas ranges, cookbook recipes took on a more definite form and when the first all-electric kitchen was unveiled at the 1893 World Fair in Chicago, the cookbook became even more precise.

Changes in cooking followed rapidly. In the early 1920s, there was more accuracy with the precise measuring of cups and spoons advocated by Fannie Farmer, a name most of us think of as being more fictional than factual. The ongoing changes in the kitchen included the invention of the electric refrigerator in 1916, and from there the freezer. These, of course, helped prevent spoilage having to do with climate-related menus.

For today's cook, the problem many times is not how to make an unfamiliar dish but which cookbook or website to find it in.

Warrensburgh Museum has over 20 Cookbooks! The oldest are the Presidential Cookbook − 1895 with a drawing of Mrs. McKinley, and the White House Cookbook − 1905 by Edith Roosevelt. Others include Church Cookbooks, Rebekah's, Hayes Family, Merrill Magee and books for specific items, such as Jello, Rumford, etc. ◆

S.E. PROSSER, BOOT AND SHOE DEALER

By Mark K. Brown

As I continue to work on Brown Family genealogy I came across a receipt from 1884 from S.E. Prosser store in Warrensburg. The good news is that payment was received in full for all the items. Most of the items bought were shoes, socks and firewood. I do know Brown's Shoe Store (owned by my father) never sold shoes from \$1.25 to \$2.50 or boots for \$3.50. How about a chord of wood for \$3.50? Who was Sheridan Prosser? The Warrensburgh Historical Society publication 200 Years People, Places and Events answers the question. Sheridan was born on January 20, 1852. Around 1879 he started a small store, known as Sheridan Prosser Store on lower Main Street next to the Schroon River. Around 1883 he moved the business across the street to an enlarged store and greenhouse. He also rented rowboats on the Schroon River. S.E Prosser was a boot and shoe dealer but according to the receipt also a dealer of sheepskin moccasins, rubbers, slippers, cork insoles, gloves, mittens, tobacco, cigars, oysters, crackers, cakes, canned goods, nuts, confectionery, oranges, lemons, and fruits of all kinds, notions (sewing supplies) and more.

In 1903 Sheridan bought 40 acres on Horicon Avenue where he built a new 10,000 square foot greenhouse as well as a new residence. After running the business for many years he retired, and sold it to George Street in 1922.

Sheridan was one of the first members of the Warrensburgh Odd Fellows Lodge #488 and the Odd Fellows Canton of Glens Falls. *See receipts on pages* 4.



Spivey (continued from page 1) the street past houses 'til we got to the entrance to the race track. Shortly after that we'd see the big sign saying Crooning Pines and the WW1 Gatling gun that was at the entrance. We drive

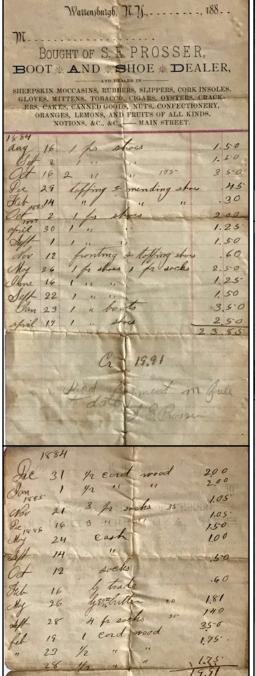
a fence made of silvery branches of trees that had been dragged out of the lake when Kent Glenn Lee and my father, Fred Mason, started the camp. These fences were a special part of the camp where a lot of chipmunks lived. Past the driftwood fence on the right was the handball court. Behind that were the tennis courts which were clav courts that had to be relined every morning. My understanding was they were the best courts in the Adirondacks at the time. A young fellow did that every morning before he went to the kitchen and became the dish washer. On the other side of the road were some of the dormitory buildings for the sleeping accommodations along with some tents. The tents were army surplus from WW1. On the right again was the large social hall with a stage and dance floor and seating. Dances were held every night except Thursday which was the orchestra's night off. That evening for the guests they would have a treasure hunt. Clues were placed all over the camp and people in small groups followed the clues and hopefully would get to the finish before anyone else and so win a prize.

The schedule for the week at camp was as follows:

- Guests arrived on Saturday with a get together dance and the social activity director tried to get everyone involved so they would get to know each other.
- Sunday they had a song fest, hymn sing and then the orchestra played for dancing.
- Monday there was a half day hike up Hackensack Mt. for anyone who wanted to go. Again, there was dancing in the evening. Along with regularly scheduled activities, you could swim in the lake, sunbath on the beach, take out a canoe or rowboat, play baseball, handball or tennis. So many activities! Or you could go to the sitting room next to the dining room and play old Victrola records, read, sit by a fire in the fireplace or play pool.
- On Wednesday, they always scheduled a day long hike to Crane Mt. or Prospect Mt, (Lake George). They also usually had a motorboat ride on Lake George during the week depending on the weather.

Spivey (continued on page 7)

SEE THE ARTICLE
'S.E. PROSSER, BOOT
AND SHOE DEALER'
ON PAGE 3





Front View of Warrensburg Central School, Sept., 1943



The buses after morning delivery of pupils.

JUNE 16^{TH} 1938—Warrensburg Central School District formed by a vote of 610 to 289. JULY 7^{TH} 1963—Rick Hull wins \$10 in a contest naming the "Smoke Eaters Jamboree." JULY 19^{TH} 1906—Soldiers from Plattsburgh marched through Warrensburg and camped at the Fairgrounds behind what is now Ashe's Hotel.

AUGUST 11TH 1949 — Two new cases of polio brought the Tri-County total to 74.

Welcome to Gur Newest Board Members!



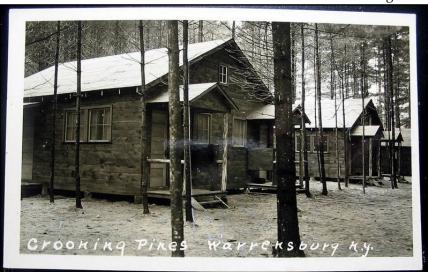
Dave Nabozny is a newcomer to this area, having moved here with his fiancée in August. They are enjoying both the people and the small town atmosphere of Warrensburg. Dave has 3 grown children, 5 grandchildren, and is retired from a career with the NYS Department of Corrections. In his retirement he enjoys working on projects around the

house and reading history. During his time on the Historical Society board, Dave looks forward to learning more about this community and its residents. Welcome 'aboard', Dave!



John Gable has been a resident of Warrensburg since 1998 and a member of the Historical Society for over 20 years. As a financial advisor with Edward Jones, he is deeply committed to our local economy with plans (temporarily delayed due to the current health crisis) to open an office in Warrensburg later this year. He is also an active member of the Warrensburg Chamber of Commerce. John believes that the work of

the Historical Society is an important part of the fabric of our community and he's excited to contribute as a board member. One of John's passions is acting - he is a member of Our Town Theatre Group and a familiar face as a historical reenactor at our Graveyard Walks. He and his wife Diane have 5 children and 4 grandchildren. Welcome John!◆





Crooning Pines

Alice Spivey and her father pictured in the water near the canoes.







HISTORIAN'S CORNER

By Sandi Parisi New Museum Acquisition

I not only record Warrensburg's history as the Historian, I also record all acquisitions in the computer program at the Museum. Recently we received a Weymann Banjo from Benedict Gurney, the son of Walter "Tink" Gurney and Armine Gurney. Ben says it was purchased around 1922. The following is a letter that Ben sent with the Banjo.



"In the Warrensburg Bicentennial book, page 66, there is a photo of three musicians playing stringed instruments and the person in the center of the photo is correctly identified as Paul Gurney. Though I can't confirm it, I have always felt the person on the left in the photo is my father and that the banjo I am shipping to the Warrensburg Museum herewith is the one he was playing.



Walter "Tink" on left, Paul in center, unknown on right.

During their college years at Cornell University Tink and Paul played in several dance bands and college fraternities and hangouts, and both Tink and Paul spent one summer as part of the entertainment on a cruise ship that toured Europe. If only this banjo could talk . . .

The banjo originally had a carrying case, but, as the story went, when Tink went off to serve in the

Army during the Second World War, at the age of 37, his beloved Boston Terrier, "Spark", chewed the case beyond recognition as a form of protest.

To any banjoists who might examine or try to play this banjo, it's evident that some rather hasty repairs have been made to it, some by my father's friend, Jim Johnson, who lived on Library Avenue. Tink insisted on tuning the banjo in a non-standard way, to the musical notes G-C-E-G, and in order to achieve this tuning, at least one of the strings on the instrument had to be a violin string rather than a banjo string. This tuning renders a C-Major chord if the strings are strummed "open", and major chords COULD be formed by simply barring across with the first finger, all the way up the fretboard. However, Tink NEVER played the instrument that way, having devised his own finger formations for all chord inversions, in anv kev.

During my youth in the 1950's, Tink continued to play the banjo as a hobby, in concert with his wife Armine on the piano, and myself on guitar. By this time the tuning pegs had so worn that the instrument fell out-of-tune continuously and he spent more time re-tuning and cussing at it than he did actually playing it.



Paul, Armine, Tink.

When Tink passed away in 1987, this banjo was about the only keepsake that made its way to my home in Phoenix, Arizona, and has been a decoration on a shelf in our condo ever since. I have often felt that the banjo's greatest value would be to the Warrensburgh Museum, and in an e-mail exchange last winter, Steve Parisi agreed and gave me instructions for delivery.

So, here's hoping it will survive the trip and that it will find a new home in Warrensburg!

A brief history of the Gurneys:

Walter H. "Tink" Gurney was born in 1905, attended Warrensburg High School but graduated from St. Mary's Academy. He went on to Cornell University, from which he graduated. He served in WWII, was employed by Glens Falls Indemnity Co. and Warren County Dept. of Highways. He married Armine Foster in June 1933. She was a math and French teacher in Warrensburg for 38 years. They had one son, Benedict R. Gurney, named after his grandfather, Benedict C. Gurney.

Paul B. Gurney was born in 1904, graduated from Warrensburg High School and Cornell University. He was chief architect and engineer for Montgomery Ward from 1934 until retiring in 1969. He drew up the plans for our Bandstand and the Floyd Bennett Memorial flagpole and the bronze plaque for the base. He also wrote several items for the Warrensburg News with cartoons depicting the stories. When he died, he left money to the town for the maintenance of the Bandstand.

was despera

Brown (continued from page 1) The building was completed in the summer of 1943 in time for the June Commencement exercises in the new auditorium-gymnasium. Included in this building was a cafeteria and kitchen designed to care for approximately 350 pupils in a school had already has grown to 450.

How We Grew-New Courses of Study:

Music-Started to teach instructional music from grades 4 through grade 8 in addition to grade 9 through 12. A school band was started and by 1947 it received the second highest rating of all bands

Brown (continued on page 7)

Brown (continued from page 6) competing in the New York State Capital District Festival.

ASSEMBLIES – In the new building • Miss Evelyn Brown (my aunt) with more space the school's assembly programs were expanded. The • Mrs. Kathleen Baker school assemblies were interesting and successful. They helped in building school spirit and morale.

SHOP—In addition to the Industrial • Mrs. Helen Trainer Sprague Industrial Arts Woodworking Program, instructional materials and courses of • Mr. B. Frank Cameron study were developed for teaching • Mr. Raymond Price General Electricity, General Metal, • Miss M. Louise Tubbs Auto Mechanics and Farm Mechanics. • Mrs. Ada B. Guiles

ART AND HOME ECONOMICS—In the fall of 1939 two new departments • Mr. Robert Fralick were added. The first was Art. A spe- • Mrs. Ruth MacRae cial Art class instruction in grades 1 thru • Miss Grace Hastings 8 was added. The high school curricu- • Mrs. Clare Pasco Sullivan lum now included Mechanical Draw • Mr. Nathan Gifford-Principal ing I and II, Representation I and II, Design I and II and some advanced Central School played a big part in courses in Advanced Art. The Home many of our lives. After graduating Economics Department was training future homemakers especially in from UVM and had a 35 year career the fields of cooking, sewing, clothing, child care, home life, repair, remodeling and care of home furnishings and personal grooming.

HEALTH WORK - In September 1943 a Health Department and a full-time nurse were added.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION—Both a boys and girls Physical Education department were added in the fall of 1943. Besides teaching fundamental skills of the major sports, third and fourth grade programs were expanded to include junior varsity activities.

DRAMATICS AND PUBLIC SPEAKING -Both of these subjects were added in September 1944.

COMMERCIAL SUBJECTS — Shorthand I and II, Transcription, Secretarial Practice, Salesmanship and Business Management classes were added to the standard courses in Typing, Bookkeeping, Introduction to Business and Business Management.

LANGUAGE - In 1945 Spanish was added to the high school curriculum. Because the teacher left to join her soldier husband in Germany Spanish

was suspended but again offered for 1947-48.

Who was on the WCS staff in 1937?

- Miss Kathleen Goodman
- Miss Hannah Carney
- Mrs. Regina Orton
- Miss Faustine Bennett
- Mrs. Anna Frost

- Mr. Robert Swan

Final Thoughts: Warrensburg from WCS, receiving a MS degree with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. I can attribute much of my success to the education I received at WCS. I will be forever grateful to the teachers and staff that worked at the school while I was a student there. See images on page 4.◆

WARRENSBURGH MUSEUM Collection is Now ONLINE!

Almost every artifact in our collection can now be viewed online at:

www.whs12885.pastperfect online.com

You can search using keywords or by names of people, places or objects.

Just follow the instructions on the opening page. Please check it out and give us feedback.

Spivey (continued from page 3)

• Friday night was show night. The social director would try to involve as many guests as she could find who could entertain, early in the week. Sometimes she was lucky to find guests who could sing, dance of tell jokes. If not, it was up to the staff to do the show. They always hired a soprano and a tenor. The tenor also had to be adept at life saving because he was also working as life guard on the beach. Of course the orchestra was always included and other staff members had skills, too.

The show usually consisted of the following: a kick chorus; a one act play; miscellaneous acts like duets, etc..; a part of a show like Roman Life, Rio Rita, The Mikado, etc.

When I was 13, I began on stage as a kind of stage prop, dressing like a gypsy, just to sit on stage. The next summer I began dancing in the Kick Chorus and singing and the social director started my singing lessons. My mother Clara was the costume designer! She had a huge trunk with all kinds of costumes so she could outfit people for their performances. I can remember making a cherry tree for the Mikado. We made crepe paper cherry blossoms and wired them to a small tree that had been chopped down.

They served three meals a day at camp with the orchestra boys being waiters and when I was 14 I also waited tables. They had oil cloth table covers that were easy to keep clean. All the meals were good and especially the pies Mrs. Montena (Monte) made. She was a great pie baker - her strawberry pie was excellent.

Tony, the maitre'd, was there as long as I can remember, but the chefs seemed to change every year. Somehow, even during the war years, the meals were produced with the help of the guests ration cards. There was always a relish dish with olives, celery and carrots on the table for dinner and always a fresh salad at each place. Most of the produce was grown locally I believe.

See images on page 5.◆



LAST ISSUE'S MYSTERY PHOTO ANSWERS



Jack Toney was first to call and identified the building on the left in the Bonus Mystery Photo as having recently been Marco Polo's. On the right is the ice cream sign on his father's store. All the

trees to the north were taken down when Main Street was widened about 70 years ago. Ben Gurney from Arizona correctly identified the Mystery Photo as currently The Pillars, formerly The Elms. He recalled the 1950s businesses in the building on the left in the Bonus Photo uptown scene as Riley's Law Office,

the A&P, and Livingston's. Both photos were also correctly identified by Sarah Farrar and by Doug and Louise Goettsche.





BONUS MYSTERY PHOTO

Can you identify this photo? If so, please email Paul at: prg12824@yahoo.com or leave voicemail at 518-623-3162.



MYSTERY PHOTO

Professor David Harpp (WCS '55) contributed this 1931 photo of a building in Warrensburg. If you can identify it, please email Paul at: prg12824@yahoo.com or leave voicemail at 518-623-3162. Can you identify the car?