



Warrensburgh Thurman Historical Society Quarterly

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WINTER 2024 / SPRING 2025

A HISTORY OF THE MCKINNEY'S STORES

by Harold McKinney / Edited by Paul Gilchrist

On a now-vacant lot across the street from Curtis Lumber was a prominent store that operated for half a century up until 1963. Today that lot is 192 River Street, but it was 111 River Street back in those days, and we will herein refer to it by that street number.

It was typical for small towns to be served by small stores, even if there were early chain grocery stores in town. Small "mom and pop" stores were conveniently located in various neighborhoods around town and many of their customers could just walk to the store to buy a few items at a time. Another benefit - no long lines checking out at the cash register - convenience.

Florence McKinney and her husband, Wilmer, had operated stores in Glens Falls for many years: on Crandall Street from 1927, then Bay Street in 1930, and Murdock Avenue in 1931. They sold again in 1945 and moved to Warrensburg, pur-

chasing a farm at the far end of Alden Avenue Extension, 5½ miles up from River Street. They proceeded to set up shop in Warrensburg.

Florence operated a store at 132 River Street in the building now owned by the American Legion, while Wilmer operated a grocery store at 72 River Street on the corner of South Avenue. Wilmer retired in 1947 and continued to live at the farm on Alden Avenue Extension where he died in 1948. Charles, their son worked for International Paper in Corinth before purchasing a trucking business in 1950. He and his family lived at 70 River Street.

After Wilmer's death, Florence sold the farm, moved out of the store at 132 River Street in 1949 and into the store she bought at 111 River Street run by Dudley Cameron since 1925 and before that by Freeman Cameron since before 1916. She lived in the south end of the building and had more bedrooms and a kitchen in the rear.



The store sold sandwich meats and cheese, fresh bread, cold drinks, ice cream bars, and a full line of grocery items. The staff of Pasco's Hardware Store were prime lunchtime customers.

Stores—continued on page 5

ALL ROADS LEAD TO DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

by Roy W. Urrico

"The automobile changed the vacation habits of the American people. Where there had been hundreds of visitors in towns such as Caldwell and Bolton, there came now thousands every summer..." — from **Warren County: From Past to Present**

Automobiles arrived in the North Country at a slower pace than in larger communities, but once they arrived, they brought with them more people and better roads. Louis V. Emerson of Warrensburg is credited as the first person to travel the plank road in a "horseless carriage." He went through the gates so fast (a brisk 15 miles per hour) that the Glens Falls gatekeeper could not get to him in time. Eventually he paid the two-horse rate but that Glenwood Ave. site would be the last toll-house when the privately financed plank road was abandoned in 1904.



Plank Road Bridge on the right with horse & buggy; trolley bridge on the left. Photo courtesy of Warrensburgh Heritage Trail.

Tourism—continued on page 3

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SOCIETY SPOT

BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT: Laura Moore
VICE PRESIDENT: Paul Gilchrist
TREASURER: Yvonne West
SECRETARY: Manu Davidson
 Mark Brown—Dave Nabozny
 Kelley Baker—Shelby Burkhardt
 Harold McKinney—Myra Volpeus
 Linda Hall—April Fiorentino
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

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We welcome comments, corrections, articles, pictures, letters, and reminiscences. Email to Sandi or mail to

*WTHS - PO Box 441
 Warrensburg, NY 12885*

Upcoming Events

June 29th

Joseph W. Zarzynski Author Visit
 Museum 12—2:00 PM
 Bingo Event—Masonic Lodge

July 12

Beautification Ticket Sales Summer
 Garden Tour Open 9am-2pm

August 17

Sticky Wicket

August 24

Bingo—Masonic Lodge

October 11

Spooks & Spirits

November 9

Bingo

December 6 & 7

Christmas in Warrensburgh

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Paul Gilchrist, Sandi Parisi, Laura Moore, Sharon Stone, Keith Rouleau, Roy W. Urrico, Harold McKinney

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 Historical Society
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PLEASE UPDATE YOUR EMAIL

The WTHS is exploring the possibility of providing more digital content to our members.

In order to move forward with this, we need to have a more accurate contact information on file.

If you are interested in receiving updates and other digital content, please email us at whs7396@yahoo.com with your current email address and or cell phone number.

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 of WCS, your year of graduation

Online Enrollment Available

www.whs12885.org

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 -Thurman Historical Society, and its of Board of Directors, or members shall not be held liable for the accuracy, or authenticity of the material herein.

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

Warrensburgh-Thurman Historical Society

Website: www.whs12885.org

Email: whs7396@yahoo.com

PRESIDENTS COLUMN

The Society's Annual Meeting was held on February 24 at the old Shirt Factory (photos page 5). A week later, officers of the Board of Directors were elected at the March meeting to serve for 12 months: President Laura Moore, Vice-President Paul Gilchrist; Treasurer Yvonne West; Corporate Secretary Manu Davidson.

On April 24, two dozen elementary school students visited the Museum in the late afternoon as part of the school's In-The-Zone program. They were guided around the exhibits in small groups by half-a-dozen board members. See photos on page 6.

The Society had a good turnout for its first Bingo Games of the year on Sunday, April 27 at the Masonic Lodge. Other Bingo Games are scheduled for June 29, August 24, and November 9. Five happy winners are pictured on page 5. Bingo is a significant fundraiser for the Society.

Our third Annual Floyd Bennett Day ceremony at the Bandstand was cancelled due to rain. We look forward to hosting the event again next year on May 9th. This event was originated by Town Historian Sandi Parisi.

Former Board member John Franchini has been named Warrensburg Citizen of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce. John has been a full-time Landscape Architect for NYSDOT Region 1 for 32 years. He has devoted his time and talents to our community during those years in numerous ways, first by designing the streetscape for DOT's Route 9/Main Street Corridor Project in the early 1990s. He designed and built the new landscape for St. Cecilia's Church 18 years ago and has maintained it for many years. He designed the landscape in front of the Town Hall, the Entrance Garden in front of the Elementary School, the Bicentennial Garden at the Marcus Bruce Park on Hudson Street, the planting beds on Main Street, and the Entrance Garden and Roadside Beds at the Farmers' Market Park. He still helps maintain the Town planting beds. John was an active director of the WHS for eight years and chaired our Preservation Committee. He has been a Town Planning Board member for 12 years, lending his expertise to various projects. He's been the photographer for the annual

Automobile dealers appeared soon after. The first was Wallace T. Dickinson at the Corner of Hunter and Bay Street, recalled Howard C. Mason in his 1964 memoir *Backward Glances*. Dickinson sold one-cylinder Cadillacs and started the first taxicab business in Glens Falls with those same Cadillacs. The Miller brothers, said Mason, entered about the same time with Buicks. They built the first large commercial garage in Glens Falls and held the first automobile show in their new building in 1908.

Dan Cowles and Frank Starbuck bought the Joubert and White buckboard factory and began selling Model-R Fords about 1906, which was quickly followed by the Model-S and then the low-priced, highly efficient Model-T in 1908, which said Mason “became most everyone’s first car.” Still automobile travel was difficult. “Roads were bad by today’s standards and in mid-summer the dust was terrible,” chronicled Mason. The only stretch of hard surface near Glens Falls in 1906 was an eight-foot-wide macadam strip from South Glens Falls to Saratoga. “Tires blew out frequently and drivers had to carry a flock of those little dry cell batteries to replace the one in the ignition that ran down.”

By 1915, more automobiles and paved roads started to bring rapid growth to Warren County’s summer resort business. In 1917, the Empire Automobile Company at 45 Warren Street sold 840 Model Ts at \$378 apiece.

Many of those cars undoubtedly made the trip to Lake George. “Although there wasn’t a road for automobiles for the entire length of the lake in 1914, there was a good thoroughfare from Glens Falls to Bolton Landing,” said Russell P. Bellico in *Chronicles of Lake George: Journeys in War and Peace*.

As more Americans owned cars the demand for publicly funded roads increased. Rural areas, with their “Get the farmers out of the mud” slogan, joined the battle cry. The Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916 made funds available to state highway agencies to assist in road improvements. However, before the program could get off the ground, the United States entered World War I.

The car-boom was in full throttle by the Roaring Twenties. “In the 1920s America truly surrendered itself to the horseless carriage. Improved roads, cheap gasoline,

and widespread ownership...encouraged what quickly became the American love affair with the automobile,” wrote Philip G. Terrie, writing in *Contested Terrain* (1997).

The increased mobility of the car over more paved highways and the scenic roadsides made the Adirondacks an even more popular destination for vacationing families.

A macadam road was completed from Hague to Ticonderoga in 1925 and over Tongue Mountain in 1928. Steamboats carried a limited number of automobiles between landings on the lake. Bellico’s book reprinted Seneca Ray Stoddard’s suggested travel route:

“Motorists bound north should take steamer here at Bolton Landing for Sabbath Day Point, Hague, or Rogers Rock landing. Fare to Sabbath Day Point \$2.50 to \$3.50, according to rating of car. Driver free. The drive over Hague Mountain is difficult and should not be undertaken except by the surest of hill climbers”

Meanwhile in Queensbury, the advent of the automobile age created opportunity. H. Russell Harris in his *History of Harrisena* described opening a Ridge Road garage in the 1920s:

“Ridge Road was a dirt road at that time (a concrete road was built in 1928-29) and no electric power was available. I bought a 32-volt generator and a bank of batteries. This gave a minimum of power for light on the gas pump. Tools were scarce but autos did not require too many special tools. The service was good enough that it brought many customers. The charge for service was average at that time: mechanics were \$1.50 per hour, tire change was 50 cents, lubrication (called a grease job) was 50 cents. A complete motor overhaul with new piston rings was about \$25.00. Good motor oil was 25 cents per quart; gas was 15 cents a gallon or seven gallons for a dollar.”

The Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) was authorized by the Federal Highway Act of 1921 to encourage and help states construct two-lane interstate highways. In 1926, a national road system was approved and designated with the familiar black and white shields that still mark many American roads. Of those, Route 9 became the favorite route to and from Lake George and the Adirondacks.

After World War II, the nation’s roads were in disrepair, and congestion had become a problem in major cities and even the North Country.

“Increasing auto-tourism and the proliferation of destinations led to efforts to attract even more automobiles to the Adirondacks,” said Terrie. However, the Adirondack’s popularity created problems for travelers and communities.

“The lines of traffic coming out of the Adirondacks on a Sunday would be endless,” recalled Don Metivier in his book *Metivier On*. “Glens Falls police would shut off the traffic lights in downtown and just let the cars roll through the city...the traffic was nearly as heavy each Friday as persons leaving New York City and every place in between there and Saratoga, moved north for the weekend.”

It was not unusual for travelers, added Metivier, to experience an eight- to-nine-hour ride as they passed through countless communities, lights, intersections and stop signs.

“The automobile age created in the twentieth century a need for roads of a new dimension,” writes Robert Caro in *The Power Broker*. This need was manifested in creation of the federal interstate highway system. In 1944, legislation was passed authorizing a network of rural and urban express highways called the National System of Interstate Highways. However, it lacked federal funding.

Nevertheless, the 1950s “was an era of extensive highway construction across the nation,” said Terrie, especially of high-speed, limited-access roads. The 1956 passage of the Federal-Aid Highway and Highway Revenue Acts ushered in creation of federally funded superhighways across the U.S.

To lock up federal highway funds, New York voters approved a New York State Constitution amendment in 1959 permitting the separation of some 300 acres of the Forest Preserve for a super highway – the Adirondack Northway – running north from Albany to the Canadian border, wrote Terrie.

The Northway, designed to carry cars and trucks from New York City to Montreal, was to start near New York Thruway Exit 24 and connect with Canadian Highway 15.

Before settling on the current Northway direction, planners considered a number of routes in the Warren County region

HISTORY OF STEWART'S PROPERTY RECOGNIZED

by Paul Gilchrist



Paul Gilchrist & John Farrar

Photo Courtesy of Barbara Whitford

In April, John Farrar and Paul put up historical signage beside the Stewart's Shop to recognize and commemorate the significance of this site in the advancement of education in Warrensburgh and surrounding areas. The Warrensburgh Academy and then the Union Free School brought high school level instruction to the local region that eventually became the Warrensburgh Central School District. The school on James Street opened in 1943 and the last of the dozens of one-room schools closed in 1960. The Historical Society wishes to thank Mr. Charles Marshall and the Stewart's Corporation for permission to place the signs. We note that Stewart's has given financial support for several years to our after-school Enrichment Programs at the Elementary School.



WOODWARD FAMILY HOME HISTORY RECOGNIZED

by Paul Gilchrist

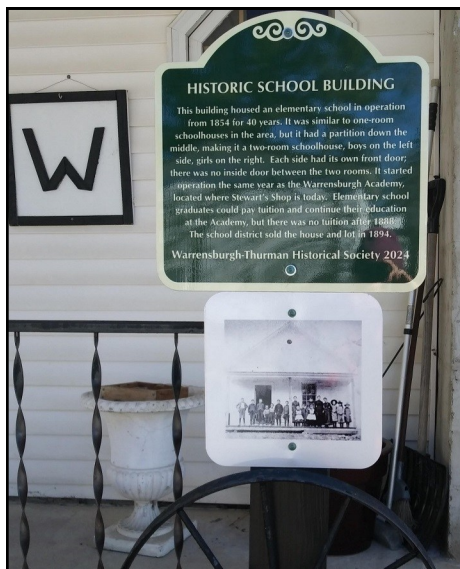


Photo Courtesy of Paul Gilchrist

Last fall the Historical Society placed a historical sign at the home of the Woodward family at 8 Second Avenue that was built in 1854 as School #2 in the Warrensburgh School District. As the sign says, there was a partition through the middle of the house so that it was a two-room school, rather than a one-room school. Mrs. Woodward provided a photograph taken about 150 years ago of students and teachers on the front porch of the school. The Society last April had a sign made with that picture on it, and it was placed beneath the text sign, which was moved to the middle pillar of the porch and to a lower position so it would be easier for passersby's to read it. The Woodwards said several people had stopped to read and photograph the earlier sign since it was put up last fall

LARGEST BASSWOOD TREE IN WARREN COUNTY

Photographs courtesy of Paul Gilchrist

John Farrar recently pointed out an unusually large basswood tree on Elm Street next door to the library. He and Paul took measurements, and a sign was planted recently in recognition of its remarkable size. It will soon be in bloom and produce its distinctive heart-shaped leaves.

SHOE PEG FACTORY & SASH & BLIND FACTORY RECOGNIZED

by Paul Gilchrist



Photo Courtesy of Paul Gilchrist

The Farmers Market Park was the site of two factories in the late 1800s, both powered by a dam that also supplied power to the woolen mill on Milton Avenue. The concrete remains of the dam can be seen behind the gazebo. The Historical Society made signs to commemorate the Shoe Peg Factory and the Sash & Blind Factory, and the Town recently put them up (thank you, Kevin Geraghty). After 1902, two 300' penstocks carried water the length of the park from the dam to an electricity generating dynamo that powered the trolley all the way to Queensbury (see the roadside historical marker the Society put up several years ago across the street from Curtis Lumber).



Christmas in Warrensburg event for twenty years. His award and recognition are well-deserved.

The Society has been busy with its historic site signage project since winter departed. A photo sign of the Second Avenue two-room school house was put up under the text sign showing students and teachers on the front porch. Our signs for the 19th century Shoe Peg Factory and the Sash & Blind Factory were installed by the Town at the Farmers market Park. We planted signs beside the mailbox on Stewart Farrar Street (formerly School Street) to commemorate the 19th century Warrensburgh Academy and the Union Free School that once occupied that property. We planted a sign recognizing the unusually large basswood tree pointed out by John Farrar on the corner of the lot next to the library. We have installed "Museum of Local History" signs on the front and back of the VFW building, along with a 1926 "cornerstone" plaque for the date of its construction.

We have signs prepared for the 1837 William Griffing Homestead in Thurman, for the 1890 stone Mixer Blacksmith Shop on lower Main Street (now a barber shop), for the historic Miller Building across the street, and for the trolley passenger waiting room and freight depot at the upstreet laundromat building. We are planning many more signs.

As of this writing, we look forward in June to a visit by Keith Rouleau, the author of the six-part series on the Revolutionary War Diary of Ensign Stephen Griffing, his ancestor.

Keep in mind that the further back in history you can look, the further into the future you'll be able to see. So until next time, keep looking backwards.

Kerosene was measured and sold from a hand-cranked pump in the north (right) end of the building. The building was heated by several wood stoves until converted to kerosene, except Florence's kitchen stove which always had homemade soup simmering on top.

The store had a considerable credit system with its customers - another convenience not available in the big chain groceries. Florence's grandchildren would help find customers' credit slips when they made purchases. She also let the children write the prices on items in the store using her black marker pen.



Charles helped by running the store after his day job and on weekends. After Florence's death in 1958, he sold his trucking business and ran the store 7 days a week until 1963 with the help of his children, who already had quite a bit of training from their grandmother.

The expansion of the bigger supermarkets (Grand Union, A&P, and even Toney's IGA) on Main Street was too much competition for the smaller stores. After closing the store, Charles won a contract from Warren County to deliver Government surplus food to the eleven towns and the City of Glens Falls. He delivered 40 tons a month for distribution to the people who qualified for the food benefit. He used the building at 111 River

Street for an office and a storage warehouse. Later in his career he worked at Jack Toney's grocery and also for the United Baking Company. He went into semi-retirement in 1979.

The old building at 111 River Street became unused and was acquired by Gib Potter in 1973, then by the Town later that year and was demolished in 1974.

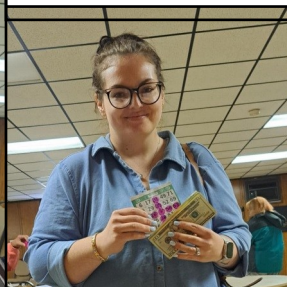
The saga of McKinney's stores, however, was not quite finished. In 1983 Charles and his wife, Betty, opened a small grocery store in the lower level of their home about two miles up Alden Avenue to serve a clientele of about 50 neighbors in their immediate area and anyone else in Warrensburg. They had a unique plan by which customers could shop from home by telephone using a catalog. But the new enterprise was short-lived, as Charles died in 1986 and Betty did not continue it.

The Warrensburgh-Thurman Historical Society has placed a roadside historical marker at the vacant lot on River Street where stood the most memorable of the several McKinney's stores. The sign recognizes the site for its particular significance among so many other legacy sites in the rich history of Warrensburg and its people.



Delbert Chambers and Teresa Whalen at Annual Dinner

Thank you to everyone who came out and attended our Bingo event on April 27. Congratulations to our winners Edith Bartlett, Taylor Burkwood, Martha Smith and Karin Reed, Jodi Curtis



MUSEUM AND SOCIETY NEWS

The first few months of 2025 have been busy at the museum, with plenty of exciting updates and plans in motion

Membership and Software:

Our membership numbers are on the rise! As of March, we have 171 members, up from 141 at the beginning of the year. We've been working hard to verify memberships using Past Perfect and QuickBooks, while also preparing to upgrade to the web-based version of Past Perfect to streamline our work.

Photo and Media Updates:

Photograph uploads to the museum website continue, enhancing our digital archive. Our collaborative video project — a short, four-minute promotional video — is well underway, with plans for a spring release. Special thanks to Laura Moore, Justin LaRose, Teresa Whalen, Sandi Parisi and Ed Larkin from Lake George TV for their creative efforts.

Meetings and Committee Work

Monthly Historical Society Board meetings were held on January 8, February 5, March 5, April 2 and May 7. Annual events included the Warren County Historical Society's Annual Meeting and Luncheon on January 25, where John Strough received the John Austin Award — an inspiring highlight.

Committees:

Bicentennial Book Committee: Work is progressing toward updating and republishing the Bicentennial Book by December 2025 for 2026 sales.

Museum Guides and Publications:

A supply of surplus books from the Warren County Historical Society will soon be available for sale at our museum.

Education Programs:

25 students from the Elementary School's "In the Zone" after-school program visited the Museum on April 24. They were guided through the Warrensburg and Thurman exhibits by board members Harold McKinney, Mark Brown, Barb Whitford, Paul Gilchrist, Yvonne West & Dave Nabozny.

Historic Collections:

Accession work continues with significant additions such as Sarah Farrar's family albums and Harold McKinney's 1965 Class D Sectional Champs memorabilia. Deaccession efforts are also underway, as we

partner with the Town to responsibly handle unclaimed items.

Grants and Fundraising

Research is ongoing for grant opportunities, particularly to support installation of split-unit heating and cooling systems — an important infrastructure upgrade. Quotes are being finalized for upcoming applications.

Our fundraising efforts will also include BBQ dinners, BINGO games, and special event book sales to support museum programming throughout the year. A schedule of events is include on page 2.

The first quarter of 2025 has been filled with steady momentum, careful planning, and community engagement. As we move into the busier spring and summer seasons, we are excited for all the new opportunities ahead. Thank you to everyone who continues to support the museum's mission to preserve, celebrate, and share our local history.



Museum Volunteer Barbara Whitford and Board Members Yvonne West & Mark Brown guide WCS students through the museum.



Board Member David Nabozny discussing the "Warrensburg Clothes the Nation" exhibit

including one to Lake George Village then further west toward Riparius and North Creek, and another through southern Warren County bearing east to Washington County to the northeast corner of the Lake through Whitehall and Ticonderoga.

Disputes also developed over the Hudson River crossing from Saratoga to Warren County. "The Glens Falls by-pass...was fought bitterly, as merchants said it would empty out the town. 'The cars will go right on by, they won't ever stop in Glens Falls,' was the cry. It was pointed out that the unending stream of traffic passing through at 50 miles an hour...didn't stop either, but the controversy delayed the continuation of the Northway for a few years," chronicled Metvier.

Construction on the Northway began in 1957, and the last segments opened in 1967. It is a toll-free, controlled access, divided, multi-lane expressway, and consists of 176 mainline miles and 123 miles of connecting and access roads and ramps.

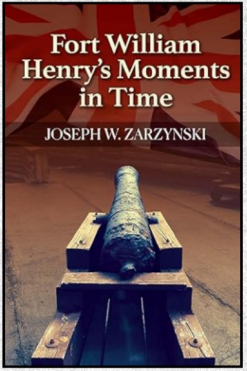
The Northway has received a number of awards including Parade Magazine's Scenic Highway Award, naming a 23-mile section of the Northway between Lake George and Pottersville in 1967.

While the Northway's location effect on Glens Falls commerce continues to be debated, its influence on Queensbury growth and Warren County tourism is hard to dispute. Queensbury's housing and commercial development explosion, for example, is rooted in the Northway's arrival. The annual average daily traffic between Exit 19 of I-87 and the Route 9 Aviation/Quaker Road intersection today surpasses 34,000 vehicles, according to the New York State Department of Transportation.



Yvonne West and Paul Gilchrist— Displaying recent preservation signs at Annual Dinner

The Demise of the 1909 Half Moon - Replica Ship in Cohoes, NY



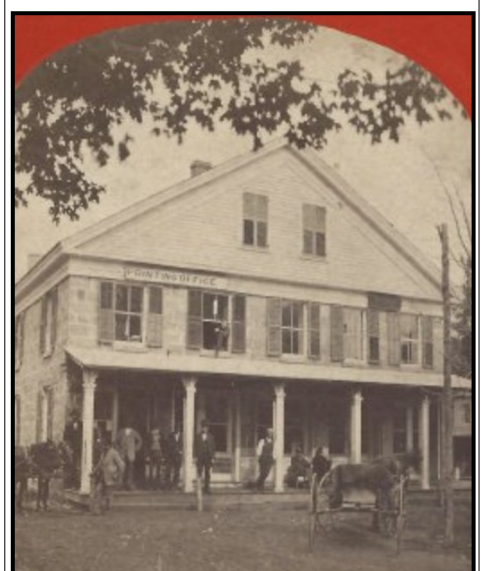
The Warrensburgh Museum will host Author
Joseph W. Zarzynski,
Sunday June 29th, 2025
Presentation begins at 12pm
Warrensburgh Museum - 3754 Main Street
Warrensburgh NY 12885
Event is Free-limited seating

MYSTERY PHOTOS FROM LAST ISSUE By Paul Gilchrist

The first Mystery Photo was the Woodward Block built in 1840 of Mt. Hackensack stone as a 1½ story building by Joseph Woodward. The second story was constructed later and housed the Masonic Lodge, and then James Emerson added a third story for a social club. The Post Office was once on the first floor, then moved around the corner to the Woodward-Ashe Block (where Marco Polo's Pizza once was) before moving downtown after 1932 to a building where the Health Center is now.

The second photo was the Pasko Block just south of where the bandstand is now. It once housed the Post Office before it moved to the Woodward Block. The little sign on the corner says "5¢ & 10¢ store." After Emerald Pasko sold it in 1922, it became the Rist Block. He had a shoe business (left edge of photo) that he sold to Art & Vera brown in 1948. Cal Engel had a diner in the corner on Elm Street. Rist's widow sold the block to Brown & Del Pasco in 1963.

Sarah Farrar, Ben Gurney, and Jack Toney knew both pictures. Harrison Rafferty thought the first photo looked like the town Post Office and the other photo looked similar to the Miller Antique Store.



GC 38-102-213-09131

BC 52-211-499-09088

Warrensburgh-Thurman
Historical Society
Presents

Bingo Night

Date: June, 29, 2025
Time: 2:00 - 4:00 PM
Place: Masonic Lodge #425
3893 Main Street
Warrensburgh, NY



Doors open at 1:00 for card sales

CASH PRIZES for all games



Warrensburgh Riverfront Farmers' Market

Since 1998... "Bringing the Farm to You"

~Twenty-Seventh Season~

Every Friday from 3-6 p.m., May 30th thru October 10th
in the heart of the Warrensburgh Mills Historic District

on the banks of the scenic Schroon River. **Festival Location:** Recreation Field Pavilion



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-Thurman Historical Society
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Warrensburgh, NY 12851

Member Address