

# WARRENSBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 1

SPRING 2018

## A SHARED HISTORY

By Beth Kinghorn

My history was set in motion when my mother, in labor with me, walked into the waiting room of Dr. Lawrence's office (in his home at 32 Elm Street). She said there was an audible moan from the other patients because with her appearance they knew the doctor would no longer be available for appointments. Lucky for me, they were right!

*Kinghorn (continued on page 7)*



DR. LAWRENCE'S OFFICE

## A STEPHEN GRIFFING CHAIR

By Liz (Osborne) Sebald

I would like to share a bit of provenance regarding this interesting chair. Edith Willoughby West compiled the Griffing genealogy, Stephen Griffing, his Ancestry and Descendants. It was published in 1911.

In a letter written to my aunt, Helen Osborne, on January 28, 1965, Edith West, at the age of 90, writes about some of her memories of her last visit to Warrensburg.



STEPHEHN GRIFFING CHAIR

"Do you know, yours is the only branch of the family of which I have any knowledge now? Of course I remember the members of our special branch, who lived long ago, very well - our great grandfather Stephen [Griffin - some of the Griffing family dropped the "g" from their name], and

*Sebald (continued on page 3)*

## HISTORIAN'S CORNER

By Sandi Parisi

A photo in the January 14, 1960 Warrensburg News was printed under the title "Oscar and Binder Combine Art and Commerce," with the following article.

Among the "scenic wonders" of Warrensburg is the highly mobile Black Angus steer which rides atop of Oscar's truck. The steer was created by Jack Binder, local artist, from a combination of lightweight and water proof materials developed in his own studio.

Binder says it is absolutely according to the model, scaled down to a third natural size.

Oscar chose this symbol of his business because he specializes in steaks, roasts, and beef from Black Angus steers. An oil of a herd of Black Angus cattle, painted by Binder, adorns the front of Oscar's Smoke House on Main Street.

Binder's studio at the old race track was visited by a den of Cub Scouts. The artist showed the boys a group of African jungle figures he is creating for Storytown in Lake George.



AWAITING CAPTION

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

This column gives update of the an Society's activities since mid-March, 2018.

At the March meeting of the board, officers for the current year were elected. They and other board members are listed in the middle column on this page.

Also at the March meeting, the board began considering the proposal to change the name of the museum to "Discover Warrensburgh!" and create a logo based on the geographical shape of the town. This has all now come to fruition. It was inspired by the museum in Blue Mountain Lake changing its name to "Adirondack Experience." Very exciting.

We conducted our fourth-grade after-school Enrichment program for the 4th year: glacial landforms and stream erosion and dynamics from February into early April, followed by architectural history. We were very fortunate to have two sessions conducted by graduate student of architectural heritage and preservation Ali Turner from Old Forge. Donne- Lynne Winslow conducted the third session in which the students constructed models of what they have learned (see photo page 4). The Heritage Trail website created by Sandi Parisi provided numerous photos shown in the architectural presentations.

Board members attended the elementary school's meeting at Echo Lake Lodge on June 6 to learn about plans for the "In the Zone" program for the coming school year and to see how our after-school Enrichment Program can relate. It appears we might be able to have the use of a school bus to offer field trips to augment our glacial landforms and architectural sessions. This will be of great benefit to the students. We may also do our programs in autumn rather than winter in order to take field trips in better weather.

All three sections of the fourth grade class visited the museum on Friday, June 15. This has become an annual event intended to start a process of teaching our children about the heritage of their hometown. Locals who grew up

*President (continued on page 3)*

## SOCIETY PAGE

### QUARTERLY EDITORS

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Paul Gilchrist – President  
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Liz Sebald      Dot Langworthy  
Donne-Lynn Winslow  
Sandi Parisi – Town Historian  
Steve Parisi – Museum Director

### BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Directors meets at the museum at 6:30 pm on the FIRST Wednesday of each month. Call Paul to confirm at 518-623-3162

### 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.

### 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 to:

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

### CONTRIBUTORS TO ISSUE:

Mark K. Brown, Beth Kinghorn,  
Sandi Parisi, Steve Parisi,  
Liz (Osborne) Sebald

### MEMBERSHIP

Current: 225

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ 7.23.2018 – 6:30pm Black New Yorkers Caught in the Slave Trade at the Museum
- ◆ 8.23.2018 – 7:00pm Antiques and Their History at Richards Library
- ◆ 9.19.2018 – Graveyards Walks with Warrensburg Central School
- ◆ 9.21.2018 – 7:00pm Graveyard Walks followed by desserts at the Museum
- ◆ 9.22.2018 – 2:00pm Graveyard Walks followed by appetizer platters at the Museum
- ◆ 9.23.2018 – Dinner with the Dead, (venue and time TBA)
- ◆ 9.23.2018 – Jim Lieberum program at the Museum, (time TBA)

### IN MEMORIAM

Herb Smith

### Please Update Your Email

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

### Warrensburgh Historical Society

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

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

### 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		

We welcome and encourage corrections, comments, and additional information as well as articles from our readers

Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly  
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## CURIOSITIES IS THEME OF MUSEUM EXHIBIT

By Steve Parisi

"Curiosities in the Collection" is the new exhibit at Discover Warrensburg - the Museum of Local History. It will be on display from July 1 through September.

Drawing on its storehouse of artifacts accumulated over the past 44 years, many never-before viewed by the public, this exhibit will reveal several century-old domestic labor-saving devices as well some bizarre relics of a fraternal organization's rituals. A hand-operated wooden clothes washer advertised in turn-of-the-20th century Sears Roebuck catalogs actually offers a spin cycle (although museum staff has not tested its effectiveness). There is also a 1930s vintage wringer washer that gently tumbles the clothes in a wooden barrel (also not tested).

The original basketball scoreboard from the 1943 Warrensburg Central School gymnasium (now the elementary school) has also not been tested (for loudness). Several lengths of metal maple sap tubing and fittings awaiting permanent installation in the syruping exhibit will finally see the light, along with a set of Braille dominos. There's also an assortment of wooden doll-house furniture handmade by former Warrensburg resident, Junius Cornell, husband of the museum's founder. Several unique articles of clothing, including an embroidered silk Japanese kimono, will also be exhibited, along with dozens of other items, large and small.

*Sebald (continued from page 1)*

your grandparents, your father and Kate [Osborne]. I was only 9 years old when I was last in Warrensburg, and yet everything is perfectly clear in my memory. I think I could furnish most of the rooms in my mind now." She is referring to her great grandfather's home - the present day Merrill Magee Inn.

She goes on to write about a few of the things she has from the house.

Lastly she writes - "The other thing from the old house is a chair, and I think you have one like it, for I remember your mother showing it to me. Yours is, (or was) painted light green, and that was the original color. There were six of them, and they stood primly against the wall in the upper hall. Mine was somehow painted black, after it came to us. I took a photograph of it down to the Metropolitan Museum, and they said it was 'an unusual Windsor', dated 1811. It has a 'stepped back' and very slim spindles bent backward and is excruciatingly uncomfortable. Have you got it yet?"

Aunt Helen did indeed have the chair, which I inherited, and it now belongs to the Warrensburg Museum.

(Editor's Note: The chair was, indeed given to the museum by the author, and it now sits in the "parlor" display under the watchful eyes of Stephen Griffin 2nd and Maria Coman Griffin, Grace Magee's grandparents.)

*President (continued from page 2)*

in Warrensburg often remark that they wish there had been similar efforts to teach them more about the town during their childhood years.

The Society again teamed up with the Glens Falls National Bank to award a scholarship of \$300 to a graduating senior who will be attending college and will be taking courses in history. The awards are announced at the graduation ceremony at the high school.

We have again acquired two kayaks from F. R. Smith Marina in Bolton Landing to raffle off on Sunday of the World's Largest Garage Sale weekend. This is our major fund-raiser and we are grateful to Scott Anderson for his support of our Society. We'll be selling the raffle tickets all summer. Members will find five tickets included with this Quarterly.

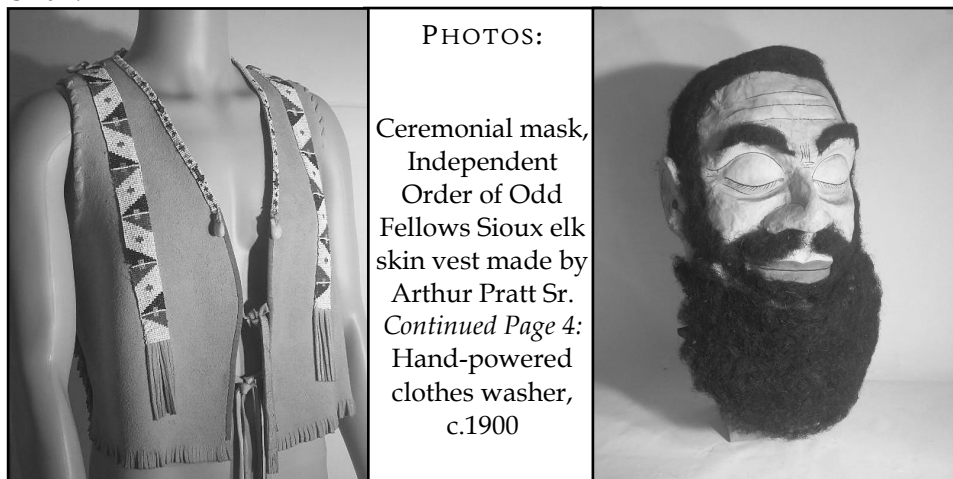
Our 22nd Annual Sticky Wicket Picnic and Croquet Tournament will be held once again at the Warren County Fish Hatchery Sunday August 5th. See ad on page 8 for details. Peggy Knowles has chaired this project for many years. Although she has retired from the board, she has continued to help us make the transition towards new leadership in this vital Society fundraiser. Thank you, Peggy.

The Society is sponsoring three programs in the coming months. David Fiske will present Kidnapped: Black New Yorkers Caught in the Slave Trade on July 17th at 6:30 at the museum, er...I mean Discover Warrensburg! co-sponsored with Richards Library. See p.8.

We are also co-sponsoring at the library on August 23rd a presentation by Andy Flynn on Antiques and Their History. See page 8.

Jim Lieberum will present at the museum on September 23rd at 3:00. More details soon. Our Graveyard Walks will be on September 21st & 22nd. Dinner with the Dead will be Sunday September 23rd. More details soon. Graveyard Walks for the 5th grade along with high school seniors will be conducted on Wednesday Sept. 19th.

Until next time, keep looking backwards. Paul Gilchrist





AWAITING CAPTION



AWAITING CAPTION



AWAITING CAPTION



*Curiosities in the Collection*  
Hand-powered clothes  
washer, c.1900



AWAITING CAPTION



### MYSTERY PHOTO

Can you identify the photo below? If so, contact Paul by phone: 518-623-3162, or online at [prg12824@yahoo.com](mailto:prg12824@yahoo.com).

**LAST ISSUE'S ANSWER:** The Mystery Photo in the last Quarterly featured the Glen Road Inn, located on Route 28 about a mile north of its intersection with Route 9 north of the Warrensburg hamlet. The car parked in front of it was a 1953 Buick. The Inn had a well-earned reputation as a rough and tumble establishment - in a league all by itself when compared to other bars and taverns. Frequented by loggers, lumbermen, and individuals looking for some excitement, it was noted for its brawls that sometimes required the intervention of the entire State Police barracks, which at that time was located in Warrensburg.

Jack Toney (who can attest to the above description) was the only person to correctly identify both the building and the car, which was identified correctly by two other people: Harvey Lambeth of Camaro Island, Washington, and Jean Hadden, who also identified it as a Buick "Special V-8" (her husband, Merv, was a used car salesman). Shelley Gilchrist (my cousin) from Evanston, Illinois, came close, guessing it was a '54 Buick. Diane France Simpson made a good try on both the building and the car. We are very pleased when people give it a try, even if they err.

## HOME REMEDIES

By Mark K. Brown

I was going through some old family letters and came across these remedies from Charles Wrenn (Warrensburgh) dated October 1914.

Please do not try these at home since we have no information if they actually worked on men or horses.

My grandfather Ralph's work horses did live over 20 years but I still do not know if he used any of the following.

### RHEUMOBASON:

A cream that is good for muscle pains, heavy work, relaxes the muscles, mosquito bites, flu and colds.

- 1 pint spirits turpentine
- 2 oz camphor
- 2 oz Amomonid( unknown substance maybe ammonia)
- 1 oz oil sassafras

This is good for both man and horses.

### LINAMENT

- ½ pint of alcohol
- 3 oz chloroform

This again is good for man and horses.

### LINAMENT

- 1 oz chloroform
- 3 oz olive oil

Mainly used on horses.

### WHITE LINAMENT

- ½ pint vinegar
- ½ pint turpentine
- 3 whole eggs

I would use this only on horses.

### STOMACH REMEDY

This remedy has been passed down through the family. I don't remember this being tried on me when I was young. This could be used on humans.

- 1 tsp powdered rhubarb
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp ginger
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 tsp peppermint
- Take 1 tsp ½ hour before meals.

## HERBERT T. SMITH

(1932-2018)

By Steve Parisi

A longtime supporter of our Society, Herb died on May 28th after a battle with cancer. Herb was a 1950 graduate of Warrensburg Central School and Sienna College in 1954. Following a stint in the Navy, he pursued a career in sales and marketing at Becton Dickinson, a global medical technologies company. He is the grandson of Herbert Curtis Smith who served as Warrensburg town clerk for 12 years, Warren County sheriff and Warrensburg postmaster.

A resident of Reinbeck, NY at the time of his death, Herb was a frequent visitor to Warrensburg, attending many Society functions. He did several illustrated talks recalling a "walk" up Main Street, with amusing anecdotes about life and people in the 1940s and '50s.

His wife, Marilyn, predeceased him (2003). He is survived by his sister, Helen, brother Bob, son Tom and daughter Jean, plus two grandchildren.

Herb will be sorely missed, but never forgotten.

## THE MUSEUM LIGHTING

GRANT MATCH

By Steve Parisi, Museum Director

We asked you for \$1,000. You donated two and a half times that amount! The rapid and generous response to our request last fall to match a \$1,000 grant from the Glens Falls Foundation reflects a very real support for the work of the Society and, presumably, concern for the Town of Warrensburg. We received donations from as far away as California and as near as next door.

The original proposal was for track lighting in our Community Services Room. With your support we were able to replace (and add to) fluorescent lighting in our office, two photo archive rooms and the large artifact storage and workroom with LED fixtures. This means not only significant savings in our electric bill but elimination of ultra-violet radiation found in the older types of lighting. We are also grateful for the significant installation work performed by the Town's Parks and Recreation Department employees.



TRACK LIGHTING

*Kinghorn (continued from page 1)*

When I think of that story, I am struck by the fact that fifty years ago I was living a part of what is now Warrensburg history. What other details do I remember that now only exist in the town history books?

I remember classes for Miss LaPointe's dance school in the Odd Fellows Hall - exactly where the museum exists today. Next door was Potter's Diner and Stewart's. Across the street I saw everything from Disney movies to *Gone with the Wind* in the Warren Theater, back when every movie started with a cartoon short. The Fruit Stand and the Bluebird Bakery were a few doors down to the left of the theater; Engle's Department Store was to the right. I remember buying a neon yellow bikini there as a teenager. I could have gotten a cowboy hat there too, if I had been in the market.

At the center of town a tall picket fence obscured the view of the Merrill Magee House, then just an empty old house. What a mystery it was! I walked by it to and from school every day. Business boomed across the way with the IGA sandwiched between two drugstores - Bakers (with a soda fountain) and Boulette's. The now empty shops next to the bandstand housed a florist and Brown's Shoe Repair.

It's hard to imagine now how the Colonial Arms (currently a Rite Aid, see photo on page 5), commanded attention where it stood at the center of town, three times as big as it is now. My mother, doing what she could to help supplement my father's income, worked there for a little while cleaning rooms. The morning after it burned she wondered out loud if maybe she had left a cleaning rag in a place that could have started the fire.

My siblings and I used to run laps and pick wild flowers on the old race track between Ashes Hotel, and Echo Lake. Or we would walk to Gray's Store (next to Bill's Diner) for a full range of penny candy, then to the next corner where Western Auto, with its

smell of bicycle tires and display of handlebar streamers made for wonderful childhood "window shopping."

My first real job was at the Chalet Swiss, where I bussed tables at night and helped clean rooms in the mornings. Every guest room had a bed with a tall European carved wood head board and a feather down comforter. Sometimes my job would be to sit at the mangle and pass clean linen napkins, pillowcases, sheets and tablecloths through two heated rollers.

I grew up in a time when the Warrensburg "Mill District" was still full of mills - like the water-powered saw mill, the shirt factory, and the paper mill. I remember Sit 'N Bull Ranch when it was in full swing. I learned to ski on Blister Hill. I remember when you started kindergarten at one end of the Central School and graduated once you worked your way around to the other side of the building. And the swings in the old playground at the circle in the front of school will forever be for me how every swing set should be.

It's strange to think that I am old enough to be a Warrensburg old timer. It was a special town then as it is now. I'm honored to share a common history.

## HOMEOWNER ARTIFACT

By Sandi Parisi

Sadly, homeowners have discarded many ordinary artifacts though the years without a thought of preserving them for the sake of history. Today's humdrum items, or yesteryear's outdated objects are tomorrow's historical treasures. Land deeds, school memorabilia, local advertising giveaways, household gadgets, toys, laces, linens, and all other indications of daily life here in Warrensburg that would have served as visual examples of the past are all gone. To prevent this from happening any longer, the Town Historian, and the Warrensburgh Museum have a firm secure protocol in place to preserve, document and protect those items.

It is important for us not to throw out papers or objects that would serve to display life as it was to those who will follow in years to come.

Whenever clearing out an estate, or downsizing your own possessions, check out that bottom kitchen drawer, or the one in the nightstand or dresser. If you think you have such an item such as a ledger, kitchen or workshop tool with a Warrensburg business name on it, advertising promotional materials, photos, (please name people and date, if known), or any personal item that is unique to Warrensburg's history, please consider gifting it to the historian, or museum. Or if you have treasured family items and no one to preserve them, this is an acceptable alternative. Every family name must be mentioned in the annals of this historic town and your name is important to that goal. Please be assured that your gifts will be documented and protected forevermore.

The Historian currently has over 27,000 surnames and hundreds of files on businesses, organizations, schools, churches, events, wars, cemeteries, etc., here in Warrensburg. The Museum has a huge collection of artifacts, photographs, tools, clothing, quilts, ledgers, diaries, you name it.

21ST ANNUAL

# Sticky Wicket

Croquet Games &amp; Picnic

Sunday, August 5th 2018

11:00AM AT THE WARREN COUNTY FISH HATCHERY

**\$5.00 Admission Charge***Includes picnic and tournament play***Play for the Coveted & Prestigious  
STICKY WICKET TROPHY**Sign-up starts at 11:00am or  
call 518-555-0123 for advance sign-up

WHS Rules of Play available

ALL DONATIONS BENEFIT THE ENDEAVORS OF THE

**WARRENSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY***and the***WARRENSBURG MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY**

For further information, or

sponsorship opportunity:

518-555-0123

whs7396@yahoo.com

## “KIDNAPPED: BLACK NEW YORKERS CAUGHT IN THE SLAVE TRADE”

PRESENTATION BY  
DAVID FISKE**JULY 11<sup>TH</sup> 2018 AT 6:30PM**AT THE WARRENSBURG  
MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY

Stop in, or call 518-623-3011 to reserve a seat.

**As always, walk-ins welcome.**

Refreshments to be Provided

SPONSORED BY RICHARDS LIBRARY

*and the*

WARRENSBURG MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY

## “ANTIQUES AND THEIR HISTORY”

PRESENTATION BY  
ANDY FLYNN**AUGUST 23<sup>RD</sup> 2018 AT 7:00PM**

AT RICHARDS LIBRARY

BRING YOUR OWN ATTIC TREASURES  
TO SHARE WITH ANDY.

Stop in, or call 518-623-3011 to reserve a seat.

**As always, walk-ins welcome.**

Refreshments to be Provided

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*and the*

WARRENSBURG MUSEUM OF LOCAL HISTORY

WIN TWO

## Old Town Kayaks

(Heron 9xT 9')

Total Value \$1,000

Tickets \$3.00 each

2 for \$5.00 or 5 for \$10.00

Benefit: Warrensburg Historical Society  
Tickets available at Warrensburgh Museum**Drawing Sunday**

September 30th at 2:00pm

(During the World's Largest Garage Sale)