

Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

Volume 14 Issue 2

Summer 2009

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED BY

by Paul Gilchrist

Jean Hadden's "Turning Back the Pages" column in the Adirondack Journal of December 27, 2008, contained the following item, from 100 years earlier in The Warrensburgh News, December 1908:

New Thurman-to-Warrensburgh roadway Dec. 1908
 Clarence Russell, who resides on Henry Griffing's farm a short distance above the Thurman railroad station, has broken out a road from his place across the river to a point near the residence of Ben Glynn (now Warrensburg Fish Hatchery) where it joins the road passing over the hill and by the west end of Bond's Pond (now Echo Lake), coming out on Hudson Street above the cemetery. This makes a short cut and after it is traveled over a little more the road will be much better than the regular route.

Shortly after the column was published, Jean asked whether yours truly could find out anything more about this mystery road. As it turns out, the "new" road already had a history dating back more than a hundred years before 1908, to wit:

The following text is from a book titled *Stephen Griffing, His Ancestry and Descendants*, compiled by Edith West and published by Henry Griffing in 1911 (available in The Richards Library), which tells on page 27 about Stephen Griffing ("the ensign") moving to the farm he bought from John Backus and building a house there in 1804. The farm of 240 acres was located directly across what is now the Thurman Bridge (it's the "N. Griffin" residence¹ on

the 1858 map on page 3). The passage indicates that the road and ford were already used at that time to cross the Hudson River a short distance above the mouth of the Schroon. (The first edition of the Thurman Bridge was built in 1836, according to the text on page 29 of the Griffing book.)

It was about the first of May, 1800, when the Griffing family took possession of the farm, and settled in the log hut which stood on the farm, to wait until a house could be built. This was not until 1804, when the homestead was built, which, in a different form, still stands on the site where Stephen Griffing placed it.

The dwelling originally stood with its side to the river, facing and back eighteen rods from a road which no longer exists, but which then ran from the fording place across the river a short distance above the junction of the Scarron River, past the Thurman homestead and toward the mountain. At one side of the house rose the height of Sugarloaf Mountain, at the other lay wide, fertile flats, and beyond them flowed the noble Hudson. The house faced northeast.

So the first Griffing homestead was built about three hundred feet back from a road which, in 1911, no longer existed, but which, in 1804, ran from the fording place a short distance above (north of) the mouth of the Schroon, past the homestead and toward the mountain (Sugarloaf). Please notice that the residence of Clarence Russell was on the "W. Griffin" farm on the 1858 map, adjacent to the original Griffing homestead and closest to the fording place. This farm, also of 240 acres, had been bought in 1815 by Stephen Griffing, who gave it to his son, William. Henry Griffing bought it in 1884 from William's son, Duncan (*ibid*, p. 29).

1858.

Although the fording road may not have existed in 1911, it shows up clearly on the Warrensburgh/Thurman portion of the Warren County Map of 1858, on page three, fording the Hudson just north of the mouth of the Schroon. Notice that the road (see arrow) re-forded the Hudson farther north, connecting to what is now Buyce Road on the west side of the river.

1876 and 1893.

The 1876 Warren County Atlas does not show the road

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

We've had a couple of good programs this past quarter. Dr. David Palmer gave us an evening of true stories of Victorian Period Crimes in our region. He ended his presentation with the challenge for us to follow-up on several crimes in Warrensburg. Date 1884- "A MINISTER CHARGED WITH BEING TOO ATTENTIVE TO LADIES". Date 1903- "EMERSON'S (Lewis W.) SECRET MARRIAGE". Date 1906- "HUSBAND BURNED WITH ACID", "*Mrs. Jeannie Cosgrove of Warrensburg is under arrest...*". ca. 1900- "MURDERED BY HIS FATHER", "*...It is reported that Franklin Colts and his son Charles...*". Date 1884- "NUMEROUS SHOTS EXCHANGED - SAVAGE FIGHT BETWEEN WARRENSBURG RESIDENTS AND SOME SHOWMEN." Date 1909- "STOPS RUNAWAY DAUGHTER", "...an attempted elopement...of Miss Hatti Horn".

Recognize any names?

The Spring Artifacts Tea was well received. Finger sandwiches and various teas were enjoyed while we were entertained with artifacts and stories that included family ephemera, photographs of architectural curiosities, a well researched study locating the many early schools of Warrensburgh, very early metal maple sugaring tubing and spouts and a device used to break up blocks of maple sugar, a family cow bell, a calling horn, a hand operated bread dough maker and other items and stories of historic interest.

Our Web Site should be up soon. Society member Barbara Whitford has taken over its development. Ms. Whitford has been with The Richards Library for some twelve years. She works under the title of 'Information Specialist', although she notes that some of her dearest friends have other names for her! Still, I know her as a special and capable lady and we have great expectations from her efforts.

DO NOT forget the 2009 "STICKY WICKET Croquet Games and Picnic". The date is August 9. The day officially begins at eleven o'clock with a picnic of barbeque chicken and the fixin's brought by many of you all. The tournament begins at twelve-thirty. If you plan to be in the competition please reserve your place early.

In Your Service,

Delbert Chambers

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

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Board of Directors

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

Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly
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UPCOMING EVENTS

July 11 & 12: Reopening of the Museum of Local History

August 9: Sticky Wicket Croquet Tournament @ Warren County Fish Hatchery 11:00 a.m.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Morgan Crandall
 Warrensburg 50+ Club
 Dr. Hollis A. Palmer

*The next
 Quarterly Deadline
 Is August 1st*

WEBSITE

The Society has recently obtained a website. Type the following into the internet address and hit "Enter".

<http://www.whs12885.org>

Membership Information

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

Membership is on a calendar year basis.

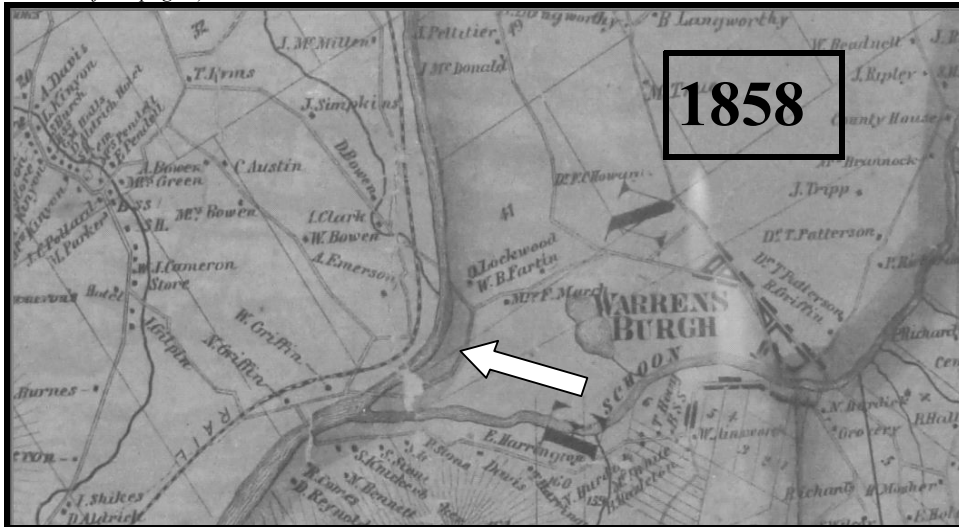
If you would like to join and receive the Quarterly by mail, please send check for the amount of the membership classification, with name, address and phone number to:

Warrensburgh Historical Society, PO Box 441, Warrensburg, NY 12885.

NOTICE

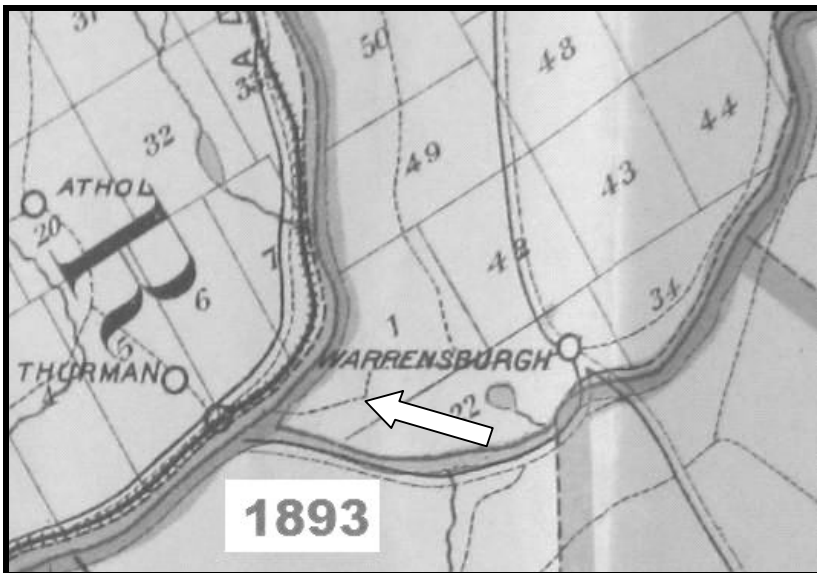
*The recording of history is an interpretive and ever changing study. Therefore, the Warrensburgh Historical Society or its Board of Directors or members shall not be held liable for the accuracy or authenticity of the material herein. **We welcome and encourage corrections, comments and additional information.***

(Continued from page 1)



Photograph of the 1858 Warren County map, located in the Holden Room at Crandall Library; photo taken 1/23/09.

fording the river, although the road is shown extending southward for a ways from the current site of the fish hatchery. The road and ford do appear on the 1893 “Map of the Adirondack Forest and Adjoining Territory,” be-



low, compiled by the NY State Forest Commission (available at the archives of the Warren County Clerk). Hudson Street lies beneath the word “Warrensburgh.” Echo Lake is erroneously shown with an outlet to the Schroom River and slightly misplaced just under the third “R” of “Warrensburgh;” today’s fish hatchery is beneath the “AR.” The arrow points to the road that fords the Hudson from Thurman and ends at Hudson Street. The 1908 and 1909 editions of this map show neither the road nor the ford, nor does the 1911 Warren County Map, which suggests that, by the twentieth century, the cartographers had forgotten and were not aware of, or else not

interested in, the road and ford that Clarence Russell had rediscovered.

Today one can walk the old road, which still exists as a track going through forest that seems primeval and is also laced by old stream channels. It’s used in winter by people on snowmobiles, snowshoes, and cross-country skis. It can be found going off to the left (south) immediately at the bottom of the hill of the road to the fish hatchery (Echo Lake Road). It is blocked to cars by large rocks. By walking the distance to where the Thurman Bridge is visible, one can see that the river could quite easily be

forded at this location during those times of year when the water is low, e.g., late summer into fall. Whether the “new” road could ever be better than the regular route (which is now Route 418), as the 1908 article suggested, is perhaps a stretch, but it did reduce the distance to be travelled to reach uptown Warrens Burgh and was certainly a more adventuresome route. If one goes to Google Maps for Warrensburg NY, clicks on “satellite” and zooms in, one can see how shallow the river is at the ford.

It’s interesting that a short distance above the two fords, i.e., about one-half mile above the fish hatchery, a ferry service was also available for many years. It was mentioned a number of times by Cora Whittemore in her diary of 1906, the year she moved with her family to the “West Farm” where the golf course is now. The ferry is shown at that location on the 1897 USGS topographic map and on the 1911 Warren County Map. So there were for a time three non-bridge crossings of the Hudson in a stretch of two miles north of the mouth of the Schroom. These crossings were more practical and useful in the years before the automobile, and they faded away at the beginning of the automobile age.

Footnote.

¹ The spelling of the Griffing name had begun to morph by the mid-19th century, as some descendants or branches of the family dropped the final “g.” Henry Griffing, who in 1911 published the book about Stephen Griffing and his descendants, consistently used the original spelling, i.e., with the final “g,” even for those members of the family who had already dropped it, such as Stephen Griffin 2nd. One might conjecture about the psychology of changing one’s name from an active verb to a sedentary noun.

ESKER UPDATE By Paul Gilchrist

The article about eskers in the last Quarterly (Spring 2009) described three or four of them in Warrensburg, noted their locations, and assured our readers that if any more eskers were sighted, they would be sited and cited in future issues of the Quarterly. The spring issue had been on the streets only a few days before word of such a sighting poured in. The site is in Pack Forest, and we cite alert reader Gail Epstein of The Glen for the report. We'll call this esker "E3" on the topographic map below (eskers called "E1" and "E2" between Rt. 28 and the Hudson River were described in the previous issue).

The esker can be seen across the stream along the left (southwest) side of the road as one approaches the former manager's residence. The esker can be accessed by the nature trail that runs alongside the stream. There is parking in the lot by the large barn on the northeast side of the road.

Both sides of esker E3 are steep, but sections of the west side are especially steep. The easiest way to climb the esker is from the south end (in the area of the star). The south end is lower and the top of the ridge is about 7 feet wide. Most of the esker is much higher and the top is unusually broad – in the range of 35 to 50 feet across. One can circum-perambulate the larger portion (E3) of the esker by making the circuit of the nature trail. The manager's house was built on an end of the esker (see map); then there is a gap, through which the road and stream pass. Across the road in the woods north of the Woodward homestead and northwest of the large barn and sheds is a less prominent continuation of the esker (E3).

Clarification. In the last issue, the description of the Horicon Avenue es-

ker stated that a northern extension of it started right across the road from the Schroon River Animal Hospital, ran northerly behind the pond, and ended at Pennock Road. We should note, however, that the esker doesn't end there. Pennock Road goes through a gap in the esker; the esker actually continues on to the north for several hundred more feet.

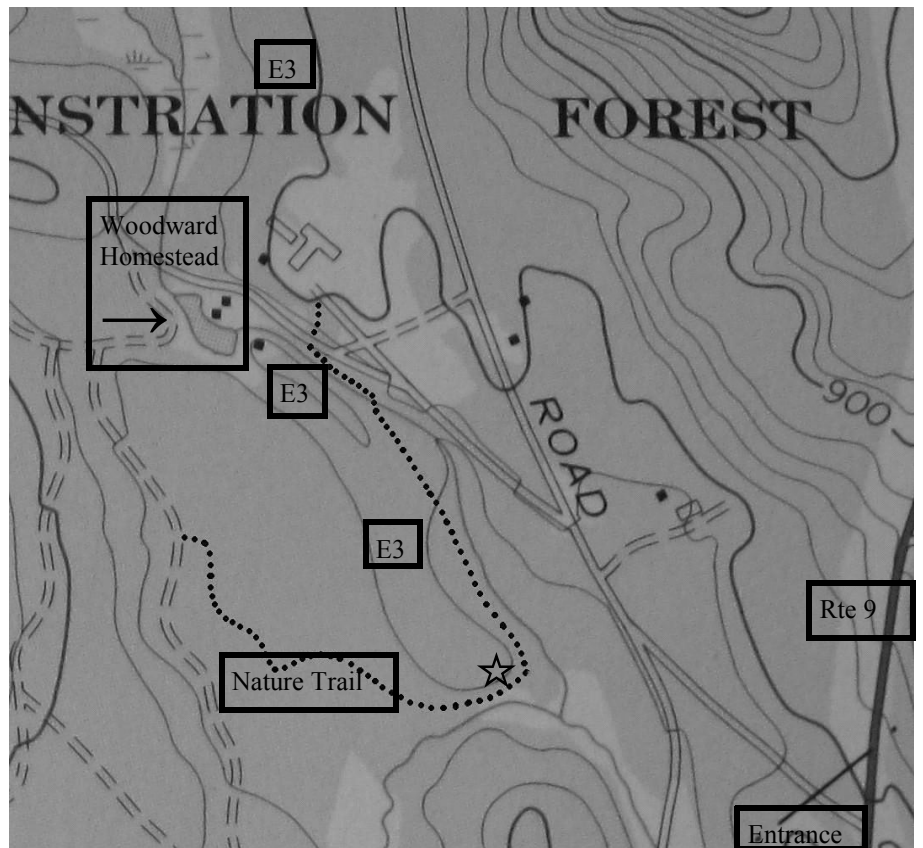
Early view of the Woodward Homestead in Pack Forest



KETTLES

By Paul Gilchrist

Kettles are another landform feature of glacial origin in our series on glacial artifacts in the landscape of the Warrensburg area. They are depressions – irregular, circular, or oval in shape – that form when of a large piece of ice becomes separated from the rest of the receding glacier, is buried or partially buried in the debris washing out from the end of the glacier, thus being temporarily preserved from melting.



(From the March 19, 1903
Warrensburgh News)

TO BUILD A NEW CHURCH

METHODIST CHURCH SOCIETY TO ERECT A MODERN EDIFICE

**The new building to stand on site
of old church—To cost \$6,000 or
over— Sum of \$3,150 pledged
Sunday—A splendid starter**

The Methodist Episcopal Church Society, of this village, will build a new church edifice. There is now practically no doubt about it and a handsome building it will be too.

The members of the society are highly gratified at the splendid response made to the call for funds at the morning service Sunday. The sum of \$3,150 was then pledged.



It can now be said with almost a certainty that a new church will be built during the coming summer, and work will begun as soon as \$5,000 has been signed. The church officials are confident that this amount will be readily acquired.

The new church is to be erected on

the site of the old structure, which will be moved back and used as a place of worship while the new edifice is going up. The old building will be torn down, or sold, as soon as the new house of worship is completed.

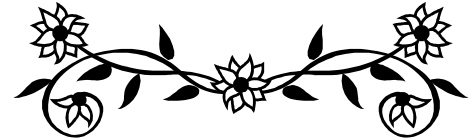
The members of the Methodist Society are talking of a modern structure that will cost \$6,000 at the lowest figure, and a place of worship that will be in every way a credit to the first church organization formed in this town, as it dates its origin back to Christmas 1784. In 1790, this region was embraced to the Albany circuit. Lorenzo Dow, the eccentric and eloquent Methodist clergyman, whose parish extended from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, was an early "exhorter."

The first church edifice was built in 1802. Judge Kitchel Bishop gave the land whereon the building stood – a tract embracing the present

plot and considerable[y] more.

In 1840 the old edifice was removed bodily to the place now owned by J. E. Johnson, west of Hunt's hardware store, and is now a tenant house. The present structure was built on the old site by the late Hon. Joseph Woodward and his brother, John Woodward.

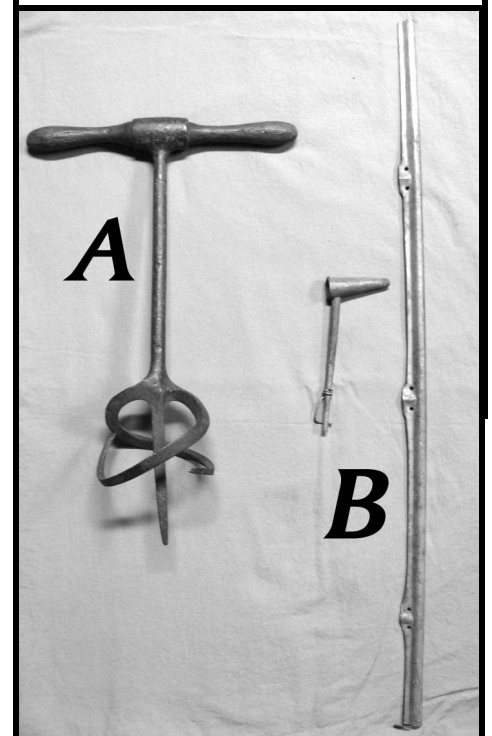
That the members of the Methodist Society will erect a house of worship which will take the place of God's temple, which has done duty for sixty-three years, is a matter which pleases them as well as their friends.



Artifacts Tea April 26th

If you were unable to make the Artifacts Tea on Sunday April 26th, here is a couple of interesting artifacts you missed, as well as the table full of "goodies."

Can you guess what these are? Or What they were used for? (Note: The two items on the right go together.) Call John (798-0248) for info.



Warrensburgh In the Early 1800's

Below are three synopses of the town according to gazetteers which appeared in the 50 year period after the town was formed in 1813. Spafford's New York State Gazetteer of 1813 does not mention Warrens-
burgh, probably due to its recent establishment. This provides some insight into what the town was like in its early years. —Editor

From Spafford's 1824 Gazetteer of New York (Page 543)

Warrensburgh or *Warrensburgh*, a Township of Warren County, 7 miles NW of Caldwell, bounded N by Chester, E. by *Caldwell* and Bolton, S. by Luzerne, W. by Athol. It was erected Feb. 12, 1813 from the E. part of Thurman, now Athol, and is a broken tract of country, with little to demand detail. It embraces the north branch of the Hudson, and the Sacandaga [Schroon] River, and has the *Thurman Post Office*. Travelers who want see the face of mother earth in a most terrific garb, would do well to see this country in the depth of winter. Yet there is some good land; and these forests, and the ores in the bowels of the earth may by and by be put in requisition by the wonders of our system of internal navigation, and the rapid advances of the arts. Iron ore abounds in all these mountains, and may be worked to great advantage. Population, 956: 250 farmers, 6 traders, 17 mechanics: taxable property, \$84,984: 7 schools, 6 months in 12: \$141.03; 340; 394; 186 electors, 7,642 acres improved land, 1,363 cattle, 104 horses, 1,388 sheep: 5,510 yards of cloth: 1 grist mill, 5 saw mills, 2 carding machines, 1 distillery, 1 ashery.

Gazetteer of the State of New York by Thomas Gordon 1836 (Page 749)

Warrensburgh, taken from Thurman or Athol, 12th February, 1813; N. from Albany 68; and from Caldwell, N. W. 6 miles; is a mountainous and wild district, covered with wood, and abounding with iron ore. The main branch of the Hudson flows on the W. boundary, and the Schroon branch, on the E. and S. uniting with the former in the S. W. In the valleys of these streams, are some productive alluvial soils, on which the population is increasing. *Warrensburgh*, post village, 6 miles N. of Caldwell, lies on the S. boundary, upon the Schroon branch, and contains 1 Methodist, 1 Presbyterian, churches, 2 taverns, 5 stores, a large tannery, a grist mill, 2 saw mills, carding and cloth dressing works, and about 50 dwellings, most of them new and commodious.

Charts list the following:

Population: 1820-956, 1825-1130, 1830-1191, 1835-1290.
Militia; 104
Voters; 280
Aliens; 16
Married females under [over?] 45 years of age; 158
Married females between 16 & 45; 92
Unmarried females under 16 years; 325
Marriages; 10
Births; Males-39, Females-20
Deaths; Males-11, Females 7
Area in acres; 41,745
Area improved; 6384 acres
Assessed value real estate; 66,137
Assessed value pers. estate: 416
Cattle; 1270
Horses; 326
Sheep; 2307
Swine; 515

Fulled yards; 1,900
Woolens unfulled; 23,191
Cottens & linens; 1,477
Town tax; \$201.90
County tax; \$332.76

Number of school districts: 10
Number of scholars: 297

Mill	No.	Product	Material
		Value	Value
Grist	1	30,807	29,190
Sawmill	11	123,246	75,717
Fulling	1	16,408	12,936
Carding			
Machine	1	17,450	14,700
Tanneries	4	63,426	50,257

From B. Lossing's "The Hudson" 1866



Gazetteer of the State of New York by J. H. French 1860 (Page 676)

Warrensburgh - was formed from Thurman, Feb. 12, 1813. It lies between the two branches of the Hudson, near the center of the co., and upon the ridges s. of the junction. The peninsular portion is a rolling plateau 600 to 1000 feet above the river. The s. w. part is occupied by an immense mountain mass with several summits 2,400 to 3,000 feet above tide. Nearly two-thirds of the land in the town is arable. The soil is light, sandy loam among the hills, and upon the river it is nearly the same, mixed with some clay. Warrensburgh (p.v.) [postt village] is on (the)

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

Schroon River, 3 miles from its junction with the Hudson. Pop. 700. Across the Hudson, below the mouth of the Schroon River, is a long bridge, connecting the town with Thurman. The first settlement was made a few years after the close of the Revolution.* A.M.E. church, the first in town, was organized in 1796; and the Rev. Henry Hayes was the first minister. There are four churches in town.**

*Wm. Bond, Joseph Hutchinson, Wm. Lee, Josiah Woodward, _____ Varnum, Richardson Thurman, and Wm. Johnson were some of the first settlers. The first death was that of Wm. Johnson.

** 2 M.E., Wes.Meth., and Presb.

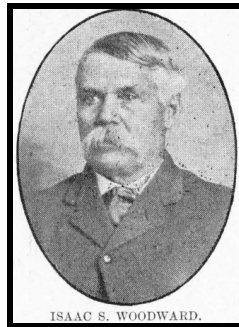
Charts list the following:

1860 Population: Males; 987
 Females; 959
 Area improved; 10,845 acres
 Area unimproved; 20,010 acres
 Assessed value real estate; 172,485
 Assessed value pers. estate; 13,150
 Number of dwellings; 334
 Number of families; 365
 Freeholders; 238
 Cows; 604
 Oxen & calves; 703
 Horses; 260
 Sheep; 1819
 Swine; 503
 Grain; Winter 352 bushels
 Grain; Spring 16,483 bushels
 Hay; 1961 tons
 Potatoes; 12,935 bushels
 Apples; 2,102 bushels
 Butter; 36,885 lbs.
 Cheese; 2,440 lbs.
 Domestic cloth; 574 yds.

Number of school districts: 11
 Number of scholars: 722

From the files of the Warrensburgh News Circa 1900

Isaac Woodward



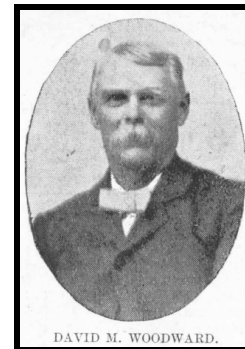
ISAAC S. WOODWARD.

Isaac S. Woodward is with some exception the oldest business man in Warrensburgh, having been since 1859 continuously a partner in the firm of A. C. Emerson & Co., lumber manufacturers.

A. T. Pasko is the only man alive who was in business here previous to that date. Mr. Woodward was born in Warrensburgh October 4, 1834, and has been a life long resident of this town, as was his father – John Woodward – before him. He was educated in the district schools and at an early age became a teacher. In 1859 he began his business career as a member of the firm of Woodward and Emerson, purchasing the interest of his uncle, Joseph Woodward. A few years later, the firm enlarged their operations by purchasing the Horicon Tannery and later a tannery at North Hudson. Other men were admitted to the firm and the name was changed to A. C. Emerson and Co. Mr. Woodward was married in 1866 to Miss Cordelia Sentenne. They had four sons, Clarence, Ernest, Rolland, and Archibald, of this village. Mrs. Woodward died in 1893. Mr. Woodward has been a member of the board of education since the second year of its existence and has been its president about twelve years. The new building was erected under his supervision. He has given liberally of his time and ability and has been an important factor in the success of the school. Though past threescore and ten he still (is) a healthy, vigorous man, and apparently has many years of usefulness before him.

David Woodward

David M. Woodward is a life long resident of Warrensburgh and one of her best citizens. He was born in this town June 12, 1840, on the Woodward homestead near the



DAVID M. WOODWARD.

Chester toll-gate. He is the son of John Woodward and a brother of I.S. Woodward. During his boyhood, Mr. Woodward attended the district

school near his home and received the best education its facilities afforded. His life was uneventful until he enlisted in the Union Army on August 11, 1862, and went to the front to join the mighty host which was fighting for the preservation of our country. He was assigned to Company G, One Hundred and Eighteenth N.Y. Volunteers and served three years, participating in the siege of Petersburg and other great battles. He is one of the few veterans, if not the only one in Warrensburgh, who has never applied for or received a pension. In 1878 he became a member of the firm A. C. Emerson and Co., lumber manufacturers, and has since been identified with its interest. Mr. Woodward was a member of the board of education of the Union Free School district from its organization in 1888 until 1892. He was married September 5, 1868 to Miss Rebecca Edwards, of this village. They have one daughter, Miss Ella Woodward.

Mystery Photo

Places in Warrensburg's History

Can you identify this house? Where it is or was located?

Who were the previous owners?

Note: These photos may be unidentified photos in the WHS archives or may be known places in or around the village.

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

The photo in the last quarterly was an unknown photo.

Can anyone identify the house in the photo below?



Warrensburgh Historical Society 2009 Calendar.

Additional copies
may be obtained
from the Society
or at one of the
following

Warrensburgh locations:
Glens Falls National Bank
Nemec's
Richard's Library
Cronin's Golf course

HELP WANTED

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

Warrensburg Central School Annual Alumni Banquet Saturday August 1st



**Conference Center at
Fort William Henry Hotel
5:00 P.M. Social Hour
6:00 P.M. Dinner**

**For Reservations or More Info:
Phone Ed Binder @ 623-2174**

**(Note: 1959 Class Reunion is 8.8.09
For info contact Chuck Wheeler 668-5810)**

At Last!

After five years and thousands of hours of work by a number of Historical Society members the Warrensburgh Museum of Local history will re-open on Saturday, July 11. The museum, located in the VFW Building at 3754 Main Street, has been totally reorganized and renovated, including access for the handicapped. Members will receive detailed information about the Opening ceremonies in a subsequent mailing.

