

# Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

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Summer 2017

## The Sword Swallower By Paul Gurney

As I recall the old days, a small circus sometimes came to Warrensburg, but they generally appeared amateurish and were not very well received.

They could not compete with the big circuses that came to Glens Falls. Here was real show business that could bring a strong desire to join up and run away from home.

At one time an aunt took the boy to watch the "101 Wild West Ranch" de-train at a railroad siding in Glens Falls at about 4:30 one Adirondack summer morning.

*(continued on page 6—Gurney)*

## Historian's Corner By Sandi Parisi

### How would you like to be a guest at a New Year's Dinner that cost \$162,666.67?

In 1913 George F. Underwood entertained his relatives at a \$6,000 New Year's Eve dinner. It was at the Warren House at 1:00 in the afternoon. (This building sat approximately where Direct Deposit is, but it burned to the ground in April of 1921.) The landlord, Maurice O'Connor was instructed to spare no effort or expense in its preparation. [Unfortunately the menu was not included.]

There were 16 guests, from Horicon, Chestertown, Hudson Falls and Glens Falls, including six of his first cousins. During the dinner, the cousins were each presented with an envelope containing a registered bond bearing interest at 5 per cent. The only guest that was not a relative or related by marriage was the Honorable Louis W. Emerson, an intimate friend of Mr. Underwood.

Mr. Underwood was for many years a lumberman and was known throughout this area. Some years before the dinner, he was made superintendent of the woodlands for the International Paper Company and later became vice-president of the company. He had

lived in Fort Edward, but his duties called him to New York City. He had a camp at Underwood (at I-87 at Exit 30), where he entertained lavishly during the season. He became very wealthy, but to his friends he was the same George Underwood he was in days of yore.

Information above was found in a 1913 article from the Warrensburgh News.

\*The American Institute for our Cost of Living Calculator, also known as the COLA Calculator, calculates the cost of living in the past and in the future based on their research. Hence \$6,000 in 1913 is the equivalent of \$162,666.67 in 2017.

Speaking of Calculating prices, in 1915 there were 65 cars belonging to residents of Warrensburg.

In a 1915 article in the Warrensburgh News, it was estimated that the values of those cars ranged from \$500 to \$7,500. [In today's economy those figures would be \$12,200 to \$183,000.]

The discussion was held at Kid Manzer's Barber Shop in the Music Hall Building. The men sitting around figured that the average of the 65 cars would be about \$1,000 [current value \$26,840].

It was noted that in a country town of about 3,000 population,

*(continued on page 3—Historian)*

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## Society Page

### PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

June 14, Flag Day, was also Pride Day at Warrensburg Elementary School, which is the occasion for your Historical Society to present certificates and t-shirts to the fourth grade students who have participated in the Historical Enrichment programs we conduct each year during the spring semester. These programs teach about the glacial landforms found in Warrensburg, the town's historical architecture, and its museum and artifacts. We've been fortunate to receive a \$500 grant from Stewart's each of the past two years. The Society again went halves with Glens Falls National Bank to donate \$300 to the Warrensburg High School Scholarship Fund to be awarded to a graduating senior who has an interest in studying history in college.

The Society participated again in GFNB's Community Day on June 15, where we sold tickets for our annual raffle of two kayaks, which we again acquired from F.R. Smith Marina in Bolton Landing.

The 4th grade class of 54 students visited the Museum on June 19. This has become an annual event. (Photos on page 5)

We co-sponsored with and at the library a program on June 20 by archaeologist Joe Zarzynski on the 300 British bateaux and radeau destroyed in 1757 on the southern shore of Lake George as the result of a French raid.

*(Continued on page 3 - President)*

### Quarterly Editor

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

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John Franchini      Bob Knowles

Peggy Knowles      Dot Langworthy

Kim LeCount      Susan Miller

Margaret McMahon

Sandi Parisi: Town Historian

Steve Parisi: Museum Director

### Board Meetings

The Board of Directors meets at the Senior Center (May-October) or at Richards Library (November-April) at 7:00 pm on the FIRST Wednesday of each month. Call Paul to confirm at 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,  
Warrensburg, N.Y. 12885

### Contributors to this issue

Sandi Parisi, Paul Gilchrist, Sharon Stone

### MEMBERSHIP

Current: 229

### Upcoming Events

Tools and Toys Exhibit    Opens Dec. 2,

### Donation Wanted

Small refrigerator to replace the old one at the museum that recently stopped working. A table-top or under-the-counter would be perfect.

### IN MEMORIAM

### 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

**Email:** 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**

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*(Continued from page 1—Historian)*

that was a lot of cars and money. At that time there were two garages, one selling Ford, Overland and Reo cars, the other selling Maxwell and Saxon cars.

The cars that were in Warrensburg and the dates of their manufacture were: Reo (1905-1975), Stearns (1898-1929), Stanley Steamer (1902-1924), Pierce Arrow (1901-1938), Stevens-Duryea (1901-1915), Maxwell (1904-1925), Metz (1909-1911), Saxon (1913-1923), Flanders (1910-1913), EMF, (also known jokingly as “Every Mechanics Friend”) (1908-1921), Abbott (1909-1919) Sears Roebuck (1908-?) Cars that were here and currently still being produced are Cadillac, Ford, and Buick. Ford the most popular car in Warrensburg in 1915.

Finally, it seems that we are getting gas at a bargain these days. In 1915 it was 15 cents a gallon which would be \$3.66 a gallon today.

**For more fascinating information on the cost of living 100 years ago please visit: <https://money.usnews.com/money/personal-finance/articles/2015/01/02/a-glimpse-at-your-expenses-100-years-ago>**

*(continued from page 2—President)*

We also raffled on July 21 a beautiful quilt donated by Jane LeCount and themed on the hot air balloon festival. The raffle benefitted the Historical Society and the Church of the Holy Cross. Each organization sold tickets. (Photos on page 5)

Sandi Parisi and Terry Jamison completed another Heritage Trail brochure and Tour #3 was conducted on July 23rd by AARCH (Adirondack Architectural Heritage). The project is supported by the occupancy tax and a “Healthy Places to Live” grant from Glens Falls Hospital. Three more brochures are scheduled in this labor intensive project. There will be 6 tours when the project is complete, with each tour having its own brochure.

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*The Warren House, as rebuilt in 1892*



Our 21st Sticky Wicket Croquet Games and Picnic took place on August 6 at the Warren County Fish Hatchery. We greatly appreciate the support given by so many are businesses. (Please see page 4)

The Society joined with Richards Library on August 31 to sponsor an Adirondack Attic artifacts program presented by Andy Flynn (Photo on page 5)

A special luncheon program was held at the museum on September 21 for the greeters in order to schedule all the time slots through the end of the year. It was very successful. The Museum’s World War I display will be up until after November 11. The next display will feature artifacts related to winters of the past. Please see page

The Society again had a booth at the World’s Largest Garage Sale and sold more tickets for the two Old Town kayaks. The winning ticket was held by Joe and Pat Nelson from Thurman and Peekskill (Photo on page 5).

The Graveyard Walks had to be cancelled at the 11th hour due to sudden occurrences that prevented two actors from participating. You can find sketches of the four characters from World War I who were to be portrayed this year on page 7 of this quarterly.

**The museum wants to borrow some artifacts for a new exhibit:**

***Tools and Toys for Winter Activities***

Skis, skip jacks, skates, sleds, ice fishing, trapping, and more.

Exhibit to run Dec.2 thru Jan.28

Call Steve at 518-232-7349 to lend us your stuff. Need by Nov. 15.

***Discover Warrenburgh!***



Thank You

Warrensburgh Historical Society's  
21st Annual

# STICKY WICKET

## Croquet Competition & Picnic

*At the Fish Hatchery Sunday, August 06, 2017*

*Another success, thanks to a good crowd, great weather,  
Croquetmaster Brendan Hanley and Super Chef Colin Hagadorn!*

**First Place Winner: Karen Hanley**

***Our thanks to the following sponsors:***

***Croquetmaster's Circle:***

**Cronin's Golf Resort**

***Premier Wicket Membership Level:***

- Adirondack Real Estate \* Alexander Funeral Home \* Alynn's Butterfly Inn
- Bob Griffin & Sons \* Boralex Operations \* Brunetto's Restaurant
- Champlain Stone Ltd. \* Deadwood Mountain Trading Co.
- Deli & Meat Store of the North \* F.R. Smith & Sons Inc.
- George Henry's \* Glen Hudson Campsite \* Glens Falls National Bank
- Hometown Oil \* Law Office of Julie Garcia \* Krystal Chrysler Jeep Dodge
- Merrill-Magee Inn \* Miller Antiques and More
- Nemec's Sports Shop and Farm & Garden Center
- New Way Lunch of Warrensburg \* Oscar's Smoked Meats
- Ray's Liquor Store \* Ridin-Hi Ranch & Resort \* Riverside Gallery
- Seasons Bed and Breakfast \* Stephenson Lumber \* Stewart's Shops
- Town of Warrensburg \* Upstate Insurance Agency \* Warren Ford
- Warrensburgh Chamber of Commerce \* Warrensburg Volunteer Fire Co.

***Wicket Sponsors . . .***

- Brown's Tree Farm \* Warrensburg Chiropractic Health & Wellness Center
- Ryan's Country Farm

***Plus these generous supporters . . .***

- Bill's Restaurant \* Circle B Ranch \* Cornerstone Victorian B & B
- Curtis Lumber \* Juniper Swamps Sugarworks \* Lizzie Keays Restaurant
- New Beginnings Hair Salon \* Miller's Antiques and More \* Stork Road Farm
- Top's Market \* Willows Bistro

***These local businesses support our efforts to preserve  
Warrensburgh's history. Please tell them how much you  
appreciate it when you shop there!***

**Warrensburgh Historical Society**





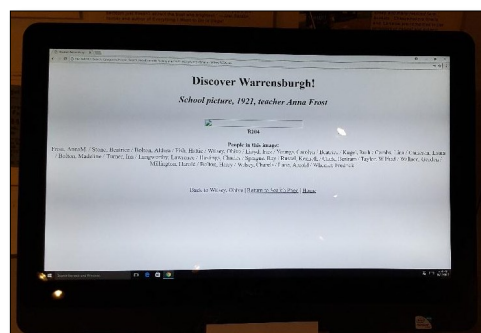


Andy Flynn gave an historical artifacts presentation based on his books and his Adirondack Attic North Country Public Radio program. The event was held at Richards Library

The winners of our 2017 raffle of two Old Town kayaks were Joe and Pat Nelson of Thurman and Peekskill, members since 2006.



President Paul Gilchrist and Board Member Bob Bradley selling kayak raffle tickets and signing up new members. The Society set up a booth during the Adirondack River Festival, the Glens Falls Community Day as well as during the Warrensburg Farmer's market and annual garage sale

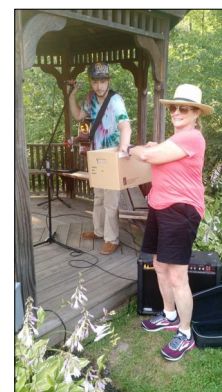


The museum has recently installed a new touch screen which will allow for visitors to search the collections. It is currently in Beta phase and will be released to the public upon completion



### "On the Wings of the Wind" Quilt Raffle Results

Board member Sue Miller holds the box containing many hundreds of quilt raffle tickets as the musician at the Farmers Market on Friday, July 21, draws the winning ticket, which was purchased by Michele Hammond of Warrensburg. The beautiful quilt, titled "On the Wings of the Wind," was commissioned by Jane LeCount in 1983 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Man in Flight and the Glens Falls Hot Air Balloon Festival. It's 66" x 87" and was designed and created by Ellen Ellis, Mary Lou Smith, and Susan Johnson of Maranatha Quilters in Lake Luzerne. Jane donated it to be raffled off to benefit the Warrensburgh Historical Society and the Church of the Holy Cross. It was on



The museum hosted three groups of Fourth Grade students on June 19, 2017. Students learned about the mural painted on the side of the building and about the clothing industry in Warrensburg from Steve Parisi and Elaine Cowin. Mark Brown covered logging and Rita Ferraro talked about historic buildings with the children. The tour ended with a slide show of interesting places around town.



(Continued from page 1—Gurney)

As the day dawned, an exhilarating entourage of elephants, camels, horses, cowboys, Indians and caged animals were shunted about and river to the site on West St.

Roust-a-bouts team 'worked the great confusion into an operable entity that opened as advertised on the splash of posters that had plastered the countryside for weeks.

The boys spent the afternoon in the side shows because the "Big Top" was best appreciated at night. He was completely taken-in by the performance of the sword swallower, who thrust glistening blades all the way down the esophagus and with a great flourish breathed real fire from his lips.

The act was topped off by firing a .22 rifle anchored to a spindle thrust in his throat. By gosh, these astounding achievements simply had to be explored at home!

A set of short, blunt nosed scissors and a short length of metal rod were greased with Vaseline. Oh! Back goes

the head, the mouth and throat are aligned am behold, it wasn't so difficult, after all.

A flourishing bow from the waist as he stood in front of the mirror convinced the boy that he had a promising future, like Prof. Zimbo.

Next came a long shiny button hook. (Some shoes were styled with button fastenings in those days). The darned hook got caught on the boy's palate, he got scared and yanked it out, tearing a bit of soft palate.

A hurried but voiceless trip to Dr. Goodman's office stopped the bleeding. "Rashness attendeth youth. "

The abject shame of being exposed to such an unexplainable predicament was hard enough to endure, but how did the news get to be so generally known to others?

The gang that gathered about the Music Hall block after supper each evening to socialize or to start a game of "run-sheep-run" was fully informed and the boy underwent a terrific "kidding."

He also decided to forego the possibility of becoming an exponent of the fine art of sword swallowing, as outlined in Prof. Zimbo's pamphlet of instructions that cost an extra 25 cents over and above the price of admission.

Thus, "the experienced person is one who has gained knowledge as the result of actual participation in some field of activity" - so says the dictionary. Amen.

## What this Grandma Does Recall

Hand in hand skipping down Main Street  
A small boy so darn sweet  
Singing  
"Don't step on the cracks  
Or you break mama's back"

Sometimes fast, sometimes slow  
To the library we go  
Yes, Miss Jennie there to read  
Quiet we should be  
At times hard to bear

Later in October  
We are at the farm in Bolton  
Halloween Certain is a bit scary  
Do you really want to go?  
That tunnel is dark so

A tiny hand so tight  
My what a fright  
A Skelton clumps from a coffin "Who is that screaming"  
We are out in the day-light  
Now the little kid is grinning

Many other stories to share  
Even to Saratoga Fair  
Brother Phil bust recall  
A shot here, one there  
A win for all, with that darn ball.

These memories of Roger's I hold in my heart

Love, good luck always as you depart  
To the U.S. Army  
Which seem to be a family trait  
For you Rogers from Grandma

*Submitted by Jane LeCount, written for her grandson Rodger just before he left for Basic Training. Phil is Roger's older brother by 11 years. Roger, his brother Phil and their dad all answered the call of service for their country.*





## Graveyard Walks Biographies

### Joseph Anselmo

Born in Sicily in 1896, Joseph moved from NYC to Warrensburg in 1911 where he met and married Orpha Wilsey. Orpha's family had resided in Warrensburg from the middle of the 19th century. Joseph was employed by the Highway Department of Warren County for more than 40 years.



Joe Anselmo

He served in WWI in Italy and France. He was a charter member of the Warrensburg Fire Company, Emergency Squad and the American Legion Post 446. He was a 57-year member of the Warrensburg chapter 325, Royal Arch Masons. The Fire Company elected Joseph as Assistant Fire Chief in April of 1947. He was instrumental in helping with the War Memorial in the Warrensburg Cemetery and was a member of the Bear Waller Hunting Club. Joe died in 1982 at his home on Third Avenue where he was known for his abundant vegetable gardens.

### Joseph A. Aiken

Born in 1889, son of Lester and Josephine (Wemsley) Aiken, Joe became a professional drummer and member of the Adirondack Pipes & Drums (still existing today). He served in World War \* in Italy and France as an ambulance driver from 1918 to 1919 and



Joe Aiken with his drums and percussion device. Joe played along with pianist, for the silent movies at the Fairyland Theatre.

during that time kept a daily diary, which can be seen at the Warrensburg Museum of Local History. Joe married Ruth Porter in 1924 (his second wife), they had a daughter Josephine and a son Lester. Les was a talented and popular athlete. He had been married but two weeks to Kitty Langworthy when he was killed in a automobile accident on his way to a summer job in Lake George in 1948. Joe Aiken died in 1968 at the age of 79.

### Lee R. Orton

Born in 1894, the son of William Clark Orton and Ella Wheeler Orton, Lee worked for Berry Woodward in the undertaking business before partnering with Cassius McCloskey. They purchased their late employer's funeral home and renamed it Orton and McCloskey Funeral Home. Orton played for the Maplewood's baseball team in the early 20th century and had a brief career in professional baseball. He served as Town Clerk from 1928 to 1944, when he was elected Town Supervisor. He remained in that position until 1964. In 1958 he was

named Chairman of the Warren County Board of Supervisors, serving in that post through 1961. Married to Sara Kilday of Madison, Pennsylvania, they had a son William Clark and a daughter Saralee. Lee Orton died in 1966. Orton Drive, through the subdivision of the former Crooning Pines property, was named in his honor.



Supervisor Lee R. Orton

### Geneva Kenyon

Miss Kenyon was a teacher in Warrensburg District No 3 school. Historical records show that 6 certificates were issued for satisfactory completion of two terms of 4th, 5th and 6th graders between 1906 and 1909. These certificates were signed by the school commissioner and teachers. F. Geneva Kenyon is listed as one of the teachers. Geneva was also a member of the Hackensack Rebekah Lodge 442



Geneva Kenyon seated front left

organized on May 5 1910. Geneva was heavily involved in the Home Defense. Her sweetheart Harold Bowen was stationed in Germany during WW I

