



Warrensburgh—Thurman Historical Society Quarterly

VOLUME 27 ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2022

GRIFFING HOMESTEADS

By Paul Gilchrist

With our change of name to the Warrens-
burgh-Thurman Historical Society and the
addition of several Thurman individuals to
our Board of Directors, it seemed apropos
to celebrate the “historical reunification”
of the two towns that separated 209½
years ago by focusing our Mystery Photos
in the last issue on two of its most historic
houses that one encounters after passing
over the bridge into that land across the
Hudson. Reference for most of the infor-
mation in this article is *Stephen Griffing,
His Ancestry and Descendants*, compiled
by Edith W. West and published in War-
rensburgh by Henry Griffing in 1911, pag-
es 1-31 and 75-76, available in Richards
Library

Stephen Griffing was born in 1754 in
Suffolk County NY to a farming family. He
apparently had a good education for
those times. In June 1776 he enlisted in a
New York militia regiment, and when his
first term expired, he re-enlisted for three
months in a Connecticut regiment in Oc-

Griffing—continued on page 6

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HISTORIAN’S CORNER

By Sandi Parisi

Did you know there were Overall Clubs in
Warren County?

From the Warrensburgh News 4/22/1920

“Overall Clubs are organizing Everywhere
to Thwart Attack of Old General Hicosta
Clothing on the Pocketbooks of Masses

Members are bound to stick to Denim
garb until Price of New Duds Comes Down
– Glens Falls Has the Craze but Warrens-
burgh is awaiting move of Barney Ham-
mond.”

“Nothing will be done in Warensburgh
until Barney Hammond makes up his
mind as to just what he wants to do. want
If Barney, who is the village Beau Brum-
mel, springs forth in blue jeans it is a for-
gone conclusion that the rest of the town
will follow.”



headquarters of the protest. The Alabama
protestors established the National

Overalls - continued on page 3

HERE A MOUNTING BLOCK, THERE A MOUNTING BLOCK

by Paul Gilchrist



“Horse” block on 1st Avenue

We have mentioned in previous Quarter-
lies our plans to help fund the restoration
of the 19th century mounting block be-
side George Henry’s Restaurant, the pur-
pose of which was to assist people to
more easily step into a horse-drawn car-
riage or mount a horse. We believed it to
be the only remaining mounting block in
Warrensburgh. However, our editor, Sha-
ron Stone, has drawn attention to an arti-
cle written by Delbert Chambers in the
Summer 1998 Quarterly in which he not-
ed he had been informed by Mr. George
Remington of the existence of a stone
mounting block in front of his family’s
house at 11 First Avenue.

While the mounting “block” at George
Henry’s is actually a more elaborate struc-
ture made of concrete, with steps, quite
large in surface area, and suitable for the
busy use it would be given at a hotel, the
Remington block is simply a very heavy
stone block, likely granite (maybe anor-
thosite?), probably quarried from Hack-
ensack Mountain, as many blocks had

Mounting Block- continued on page 3

SOCIETY SPOT

BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT: Gary Bivona
VICE PRESIDENT: Paul Gilchrist
TREASURER: Yvonne West
SECRETARY: Manu Davidson
 Dot Langworthy Mark Brown
 Dave Nabozny Gary Martin
 Miles Martin Shelby Burkhardt
 Evelyn Wood Harold McKinney
 Myra Volpeus

MUSEUM DIRECTOR: Laura Moore
TOWN HISTORIAN: Sandi Parisi

BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Directors will meet in the Town Historian's Office at 6:30pm on the FIRST Wednesday of each month in the Shirt Factory Building at 89 River Street.

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We welcome comments, corrections, articles, pictures, letters, and reminiscences. Email to above or mail to
 WHS - PO Box 441
 Warrensburg, NY 12885

Please Update Your Email

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Renew or join on line at the following address:

<https://bit.ly/3LVWGBM>

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, and if a graduate year of graduation

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

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		

Warrensburgh Historical Society

Website: www.whs12885.org

Email: whs7396@yahoo.com

SAVE THE DATE

OCT. 7, 2022

- 13TH ANNUAL -

GARLIC FESTIVAL

- AT THE -

WARRENSBURGH RIVERFRONT FARMERS' MARKET

**For more information contact:
 Teresa Whalen, Market Manager
 by phone: (518) 466-5497
 or email: taawhalen@yahoo.com**

15th Annual
 Warrensburg

LOCAL HARVEST DINNER

OCTOBER 10, 2020

- Date: Monday, October 10,
- Event: Warrensburg Beautification Inc. presents the 15th annual Local Harvest Dinner
- Host: Lizzie Keays Restaurant
 - in the historic Shirt Factory building on River Street.
- Cost: \$45.00 per person (tax and gratuity included).
 - A four course Farm to Table Dinner
 - served family style
 - paired with wine, beer and distilled spirits
 - features ingredients from local farms and producers.
- By reservation only. Seating at 6 p.m. and is limited. For further information and to make reservations please call 518-504-4043.

Sponsored by Warrensburg Beautification Inc. in

RELICS OF THE OLD FAIRGROUNDS by Paul Gilchrist

On page 7 of the Spring Quarterly is a photo of a small white building that's the last remaining building of the old Fairgrounds that used to occupy the area behind Ashe's Hotel. In correspondence with Ben Gurney (WCS '63) he pointed out that there is yet another "structure" that still remains, namely an "arc of pines" that was just outside the south-west curve of the race-track. He provided this photo showing one end of the arc at the end of Lake Avenue and Orton Drive, whence it curves southeasterly into trees beyond the end of Woodward Avenue. One can just visually discern the shadow of the curved path of the racetrack (eg, under the "W" of Woodward). In our correspondence, we discovered that both of us learned to drive in the 1950s on that dirt track outside the embankment. Ben says he was a fanatic about the stock car races in the 1950s and 1960s.



Aerial view of the Arc of Pines as it is today between the ends of Lake Ave. and Woodward Ave.

Mounting Block- continued from page 1
been that used to exist around town, along with thousands of building stones. It so happens that Martha Betsy Remington of Bolton MA and her brother Tom of Saratoga are both members of our Society who grew up in that house in the 1950s and 1960s. Recently contacted, they both said the block, now moved a few feet back onto the lawn, was once closer to the street. They knew what it was and the family referred to it as the "horse block." From the photo, one might wonder if perhaps it originally lay on its side, as it seems a rather high step the way it is. Anyway, we're now happy to report that there are two 19th century mounting blocks in Warrensburg.



The Arc of Pines lies under the yellow curve at the southwest end of the Fairgrounds race track.

Overalls - continued from page 1
League of Overalls Clubs, adopting as its the official emblem of a pair of scissors. The local club had more than 5,000 members including judges, elected officials, lawyers, bankers, doctors and businessmen. Men routinely appeared in court and places of business wearing overalls.

Before long women joined the movement, pledging to wear calico or gingham dresses, the kind of clothing worn by the wives of those who wore overalls by necessity and not choice. A few took the protest even farther with "Brogan clubs" whose supporters wore old shoes instead of new ones that cost four or five times the pre war price.

U.S. Representative William Upshaw, a Georgia Democrat, started a branch in Congress. Members and their staff soon began appearing in the Capitol building in their newly purchased overalls. The Post Office issued an order allowing mail men to make their appointed rounds in the symbol of the protest. The delegates to the Kansas state Democratic convention agreed to make overalls the "official uniform" of the gathering. Kansas Supreme Court Justice Silas Porter wore a pair to a session of the high court. In Lawrence the chancellor of the University of Kansas urged male students to follow his sartorial example and his wife urged co-eds to start wearing aprons over their clothes. Other state governments including Texas, Missouri and Oklahoma soon saw their capitols and courtrooms flooded with overalls.

At its height the Overall Clubs and their offshoots counted hundreds of thousands of members. Fueled by newspaper reports, the protest spread to Canada, England and Argentina. By the end of summer, however, the novelty began to wear off. Worse, the movement, as some had predicted, backfired. As the demand for overalls increased the average price for a pair jumped from \$2 to \$6. The price for cotton rose as well, leading textile manufacturers in the north to allege that the movement was a southern conspiracy of cotton growers. The movement did cut demand for new clothing and shoes which did decrease the prices modestly. Above all the fad had just run its course, and the public moved on to the next one, very much as it does today.

ENRICHMENT

On June 16, all three classes of 4th graders visited the Museum. Museum Director Laura Moore had prepared a slide show of several exhibits which was shown to the classes prior to their visit.



Board Member Paul Gilchrist points to "Trolley Exhibit"



Board Member Yvonne West and students taking a smile break from their tour



Board Member Mark Brown helping students find the answers to their scavenger sheet



Fourth grade girls in the military exhibit room.



Board Member Harold McKinney guiding students through the museum.



Board Member Mark Brown speaking to students during their museum visit.



4th graders arrive at the Museum, June 16th.



A class of 4th graders at the Museum.



Museum docent Danielle Robichaud guides a group of Academy students.



Learning about the trolley



Warrensburg Academy summer school students visited the Museum on August 4.

SUMMER ENRICHMENT

Our Enrichment Program this spring featured Dean Moore from Warren County Soil & Water Conservation District conducting hands-on demonstrations using the agency's stream erosion table to teach basic principles of soil conservation. After-school sessions were held on May 17 and June 3 at the Elementary School. Participation by the students was enthusiastic.



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.

AUTHOR READING — DEIDRE SINNOTT THE THIRD MRS. GALWAY

Discover Warrensburg! Museum of Local History is looking at the Underground Railroad through New York. Recently the Museum hosted an author reading by Deidre Sinnott. Her book *The Third Mrs. Galway* is a fictional Underground Railroad story set in Utica, NY. Thank you to Ms. Sinnott for her presentation and to those who attended the presentation.

From the Author
Thank you so much for that wonderful event. You brought together an engaged audience of 22 people who listened closely. Thanks again! It was a pleasure and the museum was truly interesting.

Best,
Deirdre



Author Deirdre Sinnott reading excerpt from her book *The Third Mrs. Galway*.



Thank you to all who attended the author reading by author Deidre Sinnott.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Welcome Volunteers and Members to this addition of the Quarterly.

Our merger with the Thurman Historical Society is fully underway. Myra Volpeus, the Thurman Town Historian, has joined our Board. Myra is working with the Preservation Committee, chaired by Paul Gilchrist and Mark Brown, to identify historical sites in the Town of Thurman. Once identified by the committee, a plan will be put in place to be certain that their place in the town's history will live on.

Another step in the merger is underway as we have engaged a law firm to change our name to the Warrensburgh-Thurman Historical Society. The name change also requires notifying the New York State Department of Education and seeking their permission to the name change.

Our Facebook and website digital name changes will be done in the near future.

Gary Bivona

President

Warrensburgh Historical Society

Become a Contributor

A friendly call to writers, photographers and local history admirers alike:

Send us copies of Warrensburg artifacts, photographs and writings of Yesteryear.

SAVE THE DATES

Dec. TBD:

WTHS Holiday Dinner

Dec. 3rd & 4th:

Christmas in Warrensburg
The Museum will be open for Postage Cancellation and other events

November

Bicentennial Book Update

Contact Laura Moore

518.623.2928

If you are interested



Stephen Griffing homestead today, front facing the river and wings added by Nathaniel Griffing in 1850. Log cabin close by.



1830s homestead of William Griffing as it looks today on the Carpenter property.

tober 1776. Then he re-enlisted again, this time as a soldier in the Continental Line under the command of General Washington. His regiment was part of the army sent north to Stillwater and Bemis Heights where he took part in the two Battles of Saratoga in 1777 and was present at Burgoyne's surrender. A Hessian soldier gave him a musket which remained a treasured family heirloom. He received a commission as an ensign (2nd lieutenant) in the Continental Army, dated January 1, 1778. In that year his company participated in the expedition known as Sullivan's Raid against the Iroquois and Tories in central and western New York. In 1780 his brigade was ordered to West Point following the treason of Benedict Arnold. He was assigned to guard Joshua Smith, the man who had arranged the meeting between Arnold and British Major André. André was hung, but Smith was acquitted.

In 1781 he married Elizabeth Uhl from Staatsburg (10 miles north of Poughkeepsie) whom he had met two years earlier while on a military trip between Albany and New York. After farming at that location for many years, he heard there was fertile land available in the Adirondacks. He purchased a 240-acre farm from John Backus, an ardent Tory who did not want to live in a republic. The farm was in the Town of Thurman on the west side of the Hudson River, a few hundred feet downstream from where the Scarron (Schroon) flows into the Hudson. It included part of Sugarloaf Mountain. Griffing took possession of the farm in May 1800 and lived for a year in a log cabin near the river, then in another log cabin close to where he built his homestead in 1804. That is likely the log cabin that is beside the house today in the above photo.

The Griffings came by wagon from Staats-

burg in the winter, arriving at "The Bridge" in March, 1800 (the name "Warrensburgh" was adopted in 1813 when the town was created by separation from Thurman a few weeks before Warren County was carved out of Washington County). They stayed at the inn run by Jasper Duell (a nephew of Stephen's wife), located where New Way Lunch is today. That connection likely explains how they knew of the availability of the Backus farm. Waiting for the spring thaw, they stayed in a cabin near Stone school (roughly half a mile past the Papermill Park, see yellow oval on aerial view below), then in another cabin near the Combs burying ground. One might wonder how the large family with possessions crossed the Hudson in spring with the water high, swift, and very cold. Given the location of their cabin, it seems likely they did not cross by way of the ford about a thousand feet farther north. Perhaps they had use of a boat, or else forded the river using as stepping stones the islands west of the Combs cemetery and just northeast of the current bridge.

The homestead "dwelling originally stood with its side to the river, facing and back eighteen rods [288'] 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 [Maj. Richardson] 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" (page 27 of the Griffing book). So the road at that time was between the homestead and Sugarloaf, not on the river side of the house as today. Richardson Thurman was a nephew of John Thurman and his home was where

the Carpenter house is today. He had settled there in 1783. In 1815 Stephen bought this 240-acre farm adjacent to his own and gave it to his son William, who built his own homestead there in 1830 - the house in the second Mystery Photo, almost unchanged in appearance.

In 1821, Stephen gave the northern half of his farm to his son Henry and the southern half nearest the river to another son, Nathaniel. Henry sold his 120 acres to his brother William and moved away. Stephen and his wife Elizabeth stayed at the homestead with Nathaniel, who farmed his 120 acres. Stephen was awarded a pension in 1831 for his wartime service and died in 1841. His wife lived there with Nathaniel until her death in 1856. In 1850 Nathaniel made major alterations. The book (*ibid*, p. 31) says Nathaniel cut the house in two, "turning it to face the river" and adding two wings on the front part, utilizing the back part for a kitchen and wood shed.

However, as noted above, the book says the front of the house originally faced northeast, one gable end of the house toward the river and the other gable end toward the mountain. The front was actually along the length of the house with the front door in the middle, according to the picture of the original house, below. The house today clearly still has the gable end facing the river, a porch and two wings having been added, with a "new" front door built into the gable end. The evidence is plain to see. Moreover, one has to wonder or marvel at the idea of a substantial house, probably with a cellar, being rotated 90° in the mid-1800s (easy today, not so much in 1850). It appears that Nathaniel simply made the gable end into the front, rather than actually rotating the whole structure, and what had been the front of the house became the

Griffing—continued from page 6

side, but still faced northeast. Having the door at the gable end of a house means that rain, snow, and ice falling off the roof will not fall in front of the door [an advantage also of Greek-revival architecture]. He must also have constructed a new fireplace/chimney

The Griffing family was remarkable for longevity. Stephen lived to age 87, his wife Elizabeth to 93. Of their 10 children, three lived to 98, 95, and 94; three others to 89, 86, and 82; and three others to 76, 75, and 68. Only the eldest son, John, did not survive to the allotted span of life, dying at 46. Their progeny spread out all over the country, but many kept in touch.

Two of Stephen's sons (William and Stephen) who did not move away became colonels of the 23rd and 122nd regiments of the NY Militia, respectively. William was an Assemblyman in the 1830s. Stephen was twice elected supervisor of Warrensburgh (1836, 1859) and sheriff in 1840. A son of John (another Stephen) was thrice supervisor of Warrensburgh and then elected to the NY Assembly in 1875. The only general gathering ever held by Stephen's descendants was a reunion in August 1903 at the homestead. By mid-1800, some branches of the family had dropped the final "g" from their name, such as the Griffin family in Warrensburg in the past and present century.



Aerial view of Stephen and William Griffing homesteads and the surrounding area



Mystery Photo Answers from last Quarterly

(Please see the two photos at the top of page 6 and the associated Griffing article.)

The first house is in Thurman across the street from Thurman Station. The second house is 1,500 feet to the east-northeast. They are, respectively, the 1804 homestead of Stephen Griffing (now owned by Rohe) and the 1830 homestead of his son, William Griffing (now owned by Carpenter).

Liz Osborne Sebald identified the homestead of Stephen Griffing. She is a descendant of Stephen through her father, Herrick Osborne, and his grandmother, née Ann Griffing. Jesse Lanfear knew the second house - his grandfather lived there in the 1930s and '40s. Sarah Farrar identified both houses as well as their historical significance. Ben Gurney in Arizona said he had an intuition about the location of the first house (but not its history), confirmed it with Google street view, then persisted to search with street view until he found the second house. Keith Rouleau in Virginia identified Stephen's homestead. He's cousin to Liz, and also a descendant of Stephen. Moreover, Keith is a great grandson of Fred King of Warrensburg, whose grandfather was a veteran of the Revolutionary War, as was Stephen Griffing, so Keith is a doubly-qualified member of Sons of the American Revolution. Tom Remington of Saratoga identified the house now owned by Ann & Al Rohe, formerly owned by Ann's mother, Hannah Delila Walter (a most remarkable woman; an interesting biosketch can be found in the February 22, 2021 Post-Star, written after she had survived covid-19 at the age of 106).



Stephen Griffing's homestead, ibid, page 25

Thurman Fall Farm Tour

Oct. 8 10 am to 4 pm
**Self-guide to farms, sugar houses
and quilt show.**

**Demonstrations, shopping and
hands on activities for everyone:**

- Kids' fun and activities
- Pony rides, Bee keeping
- Baked goods, Maple products, Meats,
- Cheese and Farm produce
- Mushroom propagation
- Homesteading ways of life
- Wagon rides, Cider press
- Saw Mill, Black Smithing
- Artisan Market



See <https://www.visitthurman.com/fall-farm-tour/> for details
Made possible by Warren Co. occupancy tax dollars

The Thurman Fall Farm Tour, just 20 minutes from Lake George Village, will showcase Adirondack farms—some over 200 years old.

Make your first stop the quilt show at the Town Hall, open at 9:30, and pick up a directory with a map to guide you to each of our farms (or download at <https://www.visitthurman.com/fall-farm-tour/>).

Enjoy free open houses at all of the unique farms and sugarhouses with ag-citing activities for all ages. Shop for cheese products, jams, jellies, baked goods, artisans' wares and organically raised veggies, beef, pork and poultry. There are plenty of kids' activities; take wagon rides, pet animals, taste maple, cheese and menu items. Explore a goat and sheep dairy farm, learn about homesteading, sugaring, mushrooms, medicinal plants, and experience country friendliness at its best. Visit an artisan market with demos and unique wares.

See specifics and updates at <https://www.visitthurman.com/fall-farm-tour/>.

This event is hosted by Thurman Community Association.

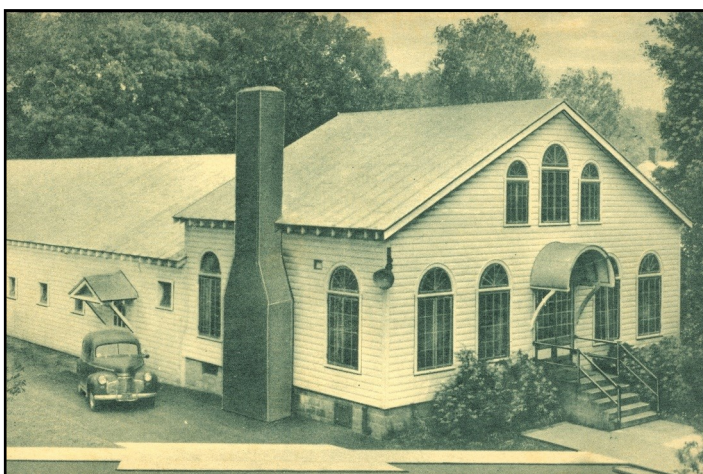
Warrensburgh Historical Society
P.O. Box 441
Warrensburg, NY 12885

Member Address



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.



BONUS MYSTERY PHOTO

Can you identify this building? If so, please email Paul at prg12885@aol.com or leave a voicemail at 518-623-3162. For extra credit, can you identify the automobile? We thank Ben Gurney in Arizona for sending this photo. His mother was our high school mathematics teacher for many years.