



# Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

Volume 15 Issue 3

Fall 2010

## Motoring in Warrensburgh

by John T. Hastings

"Believe me, Warrensburgh is some automobile town!" exclaimed "Kid" Manzer. It was 1915 and the "Kid" was in deep discussion in his up-town barber shop located in the Music Hall block. "How many machines are there in Warrensburgh, anyhow, and how much is their aggregate values?" queried one of the sitters in a statistical turn of mind. They then began to count up all the autos which were owned by residents of the town, and ended with a list of sixty-five. Some of that list includes the following: Sen. James Emerson - Stearns Cadillac & Ford; Hon. L.W. Emerson - Mora; J.M. Somerville - Pratt Stanley Steamer; Charles Burhans - Michigan; Mrs. Charles Burhans - Ford;

Miss Clara Richards - Pierce Arrow; Frank W. Smith - Cadillac; Lewis Crandall - Stearns; Scot B. Smith - Maxwell; Bertram Murray - Overland; John G. Hunt-Reo; G. W. Dickinson - Buick; William McElroy - Ford; Louis Reoux - Ford and J.K. Heffron - Buick.

The selling price of these cars ranged from \$500 to \$7,500. If one estimates an average cost of \$1,000 per car, the total value of automobiles in the town was around \$65,000. When including other costs such as maintenance and fuel, this was a considerable amount of money tied up in automobiles for a country town of 3,000 in the early 1900's.

At this time there were two garages in town. The first was the Adirondack Garage, located uptown, which was run by (Timothy) Lynch and (Charles) Wheeler. They sold Ford, Overland and Reo cars. The other garage/filling station was the Warrensburgh Garage located near the Warren House and managed by Edson Granger. Maxwell and Saxson cars were sold here (The above information is from the January 17, 1915 Warrensburgh News).

## More on the Bear Waller Hunting Club

(The following two articles were taken from the 11-2-1916 and 11-18-1915 Warrensburgh News)

### BEAR WALLER CLUB'S HUNT

To Take the Trail Saturday for Sawyer's Clearing on the Sacandaga

The Bear Waller Hunting Club composed of Warrensburgh and vicinity sportsmen, will take the trail Saturday morning for Sawyer's Clearing on the Sacandaga River, where they will go into camp for their ninth annual hunt. As in years past, "Uncle Andrew" and "Aunt Mary" Wescott will be in charge of the camp, which assures the hunters the best of grub and motherly care. They will remain in the woods until November 16.

Clarence Russell of Thurman will be chief of the hunt this year, and Orlin Magee will be sub chief. Other members of the club who will go on the hunt are: Lewis E. Crandall, Dr. J. E. Goodman, Dr. W. F. Wilkinson, Charles Green, E.

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

So much to report - so little space! Only brief mention of each item is possible.

Rosemary Maher has been leading our efforts to acquaint school children with their local history. On May 18<sup>th</sup>, John Burns and Michele Gildersleeve organized fifty 7<sup>th</sup> graders into two groups - one group climbed Hackensack while the other toured the museum, watched a logging film with Dick Nason, took a guided bus tour of the historic mill district, picnicked at the Farmers Market Park, then had the good fortune to see a DEC helicopter at the fish hatchery as it lifted off to stock trout in remote ponds. The groups switched roles after lunch.

The 4<sup>th</sup> graders visited the museum on June 17<sup>th</sup>, and on July 12<sup>th</sup>, the Warren County Youth History Campers spent the morn at the museum, took a walking tour of the historic mill district, and ate lunch at the Farmers Market Park. We also conducted a history writing contest among 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders this spring, and the high school technology class has been creating audio narratives to accompany exhibits at the museum.

We were much honored to receive the Citizen of the Year Award presented by the Chamber of Commerce at a dinner at Grace's on June 18<sup>th</sup> in recognition of all the accomplishments and work done by so many of the Society's members.

This spring the museum featured an exhibit of school sports memorabilia, including many photographs, trophies, record books, and uniforms. Many old sports came by. Many younger sports recognized their parents or grandparents in the photos. We hope to acquire the old basketball scoreboard before long.

Our Veterans Room exhibit in the

*(Continued on page 8)*

**Quarterly Editor**

John T. Hastings

jthastings@roadrunner.com

or 518-798-0248

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

Quarterly Editor

Warrensburgh Historical Society

PO Box 441

Warrensburg, NY 12885

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The Board of Directors meets at the Senior Center, 3847 Main Street, at 6:30 pm on the **FIRST** Tuesday of each month. Call Paul to confirm at 744-7568.

*Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly*

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**Contributors to this issue:**

**John Hastings**

**Sandi Parisi**

**Delbert Chambers**

**Barbara Whitford**

**Upcoming Events**

**October 22 & 29:** Graveyard Walks

**October 23:** Warren County History Day in Warrensburg

**October 24:** Dinner With the Dead

**CURRENT MEMBERSHIP:**

**221**

**Warrensburgh Historical Society****Website:**

www.whs12885.org

**Email:**

whs7396@yahoo.com

**NEW MEMBERS:**

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Robert Heeren

Griffin House B & B

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Martha B. Remington

Tom Remington

**Membership Information**

Students \$5.00 Individual \$15.00 Family \$25.00 Senior (62+) \$10.00 Senior Family \$18 Contributing \$55.00 Business \$50.00 Life (Individual only) \$300 (membership is on a calendar year basis)

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**

**NOTICE**

The recording of history is an interpretive and ever changing study. Therefore, the Warrensburg 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) *Motoring*

## Adirondack Garage

The New Adirondack Garage was constructed and in operation by April of 1915. The proprietors were Timothy Lynch and Charles Wheeler (His son, Frank, was a NYS forest Ranger; see Spring 2006 issue of the Quarterly). The garage, upon completion was to be able to compete with the most modern "auto hospitals" and be one of the finest in Warren County.

The structure was to be near fire proof and include a steel ceiling. Also, a tire vault would be located in the cellar, where tires can be preserved so as to lengthen their time of service. The building would be heated by steam and be one of the most modern and up to date garages.

Cars to be sold were Overland and Ford. The artistic signs on the exterior of the building were done by "Sign painter" Burt (March 11, 1915 Warrensburgh News).

Nearly sixteen years later, Milford Baker purchased the Adirondack Garage for the firm of R. D. Baker and Son. Mr. Baker leased the garage for some time from Mrs. Bertram Murray and her brother, Charles Wheeler. The garage was originally leased for five years by the late Bert J. Smith and his brother Frank W. Smith. Mr. Baker purchased the lease from the Smith's several years previously and ran the garage in connection with the adjoining large sales rooms (The Post Star, 1931).

## Warrensburgh Garage

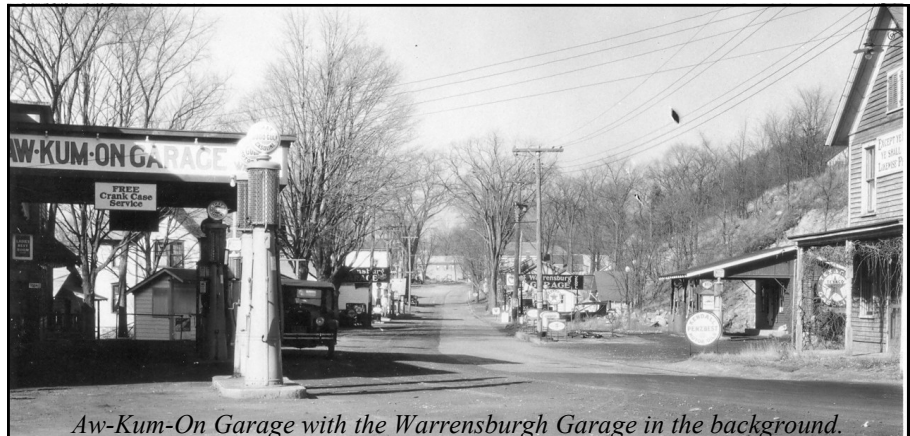
The Warrensburgh Garage was first located near the Warren House. An ad in the 1912 Warrensburgh News, notes that Wm. Baker was managing the business. Other managers

in this location included Ed Granger, (Unknown) Hall and William Hastings. Services included auto and carriage repair, horse shoeing, and the sale of parts and tires.

Sometime around 1915 or 1916 the business was relocated to

Hastings obtained an interest in the garage is unknown.

Sometime in the late 1920's, Jim Hastings began work with McElroy and Reirden, along with Hollis Ovitt. Lenore Smith remembers her Uncle Bill (McElroy) always coming home



*Aw-Kum-On Garage with the Warrensburgh Garage in the background.*

lower Main Street near the Riverside Hotel. How exactly this came about is unknown. However, we do know the following. The property was purchased in 1906 by Helen and Delbert Everts. The Sanborn insurance maps show a combination house/garage at the location in 1912. In June of 1914 Delbert and Helen sold the property to Henry Griffing for \$1764. Exactly one year later, Henry sold it back to Helen for the exact same price. It was during this time that Helen and Delbert got a divorce. In 1916, William Hastings assigned his interest in the garage to (William) McElroy and (Erle) Reirden, who would run the business for the next fourteen years. How William

with greasy, dirty hands from working at the garage.

In October of 1930, Helen (Everts) Baker sold the property to Reirden and McElroy. However, it was not long after this (following spring) that (Hollis) Ovitt and (James) Hastings signed an agreement to rent the garage (west side) and filling station (east side) from R. S. Supply Inc, a wholesale gasoline and oil supply company, for \$30 per month. How R.S. Supply became involved is unknown. However, in 1936 Reirden and McElroy sold the property to Ovitt and Hastings.

On January 29th, 1935, Hollis

Ovitt was repairing a leak in the water pump of his own car, when alcohol escaped from the pump and splashed against the hot engine and burst into



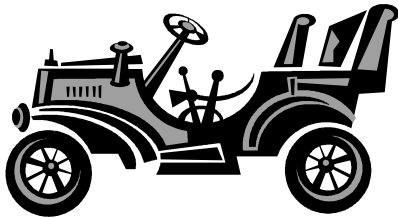
*Brothers Willis and Jim Hastings inside the Warrensburgh Garage, circa 1927*

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(Continued from page 3) *Motoring*

flames. The radiator exploded and sent the blazing liquid throughout the building. Mr. Ovitt was badly burned on his hands, face and head.

The interior of the garage, along with its tool's, equipment and part of its stacks were destroyed. Seven automobiles stored there were badly damaged. The loss was near \$20,000, which was partially covered by insurance. The article in the January 2nd, 1936 Warrensburgh News reported that the garage was owned by Erle Reirden and William McElroy and was valued at \$12,000. The equipment

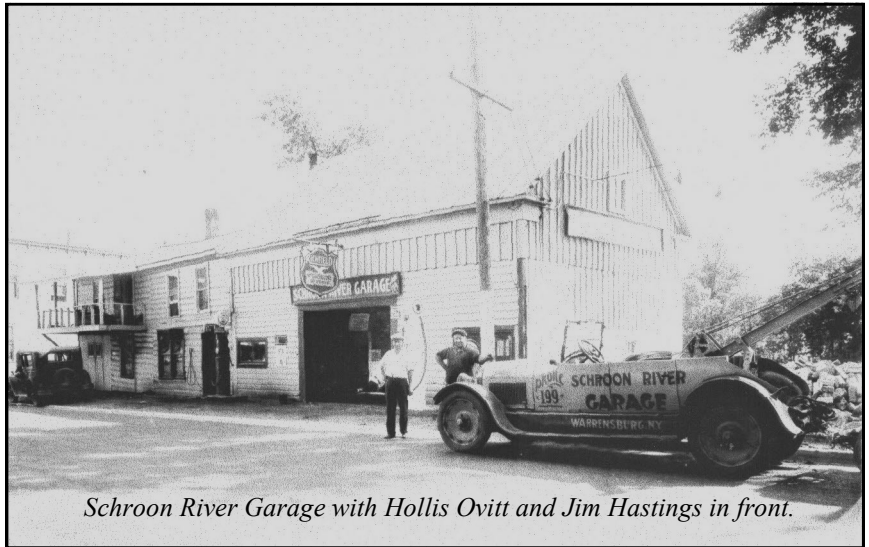


destroyed was said to be worth \$5,000. Nothing was saved except the cash register, which Mr. Ovitt carried out as he left from the blazing building. Three weeks later, Reirden and McElroy sold the business to Ovitt and Hastings. Later that year in December, a certificate of Assumed Name was filed with the Warren County Clerk's Office stating that the business was named the Warrensburgh Garage. This certificate was signed by Hollis Ovitt and James Hastings.



Ovitt and Hastings would continue to run the garage until 1946.

At this time, the business/property was sold to Walter Pasco. Sometime near the end of ownership by Ovitt and Hastings the name of the garage was changed to the Schroon River Garage.



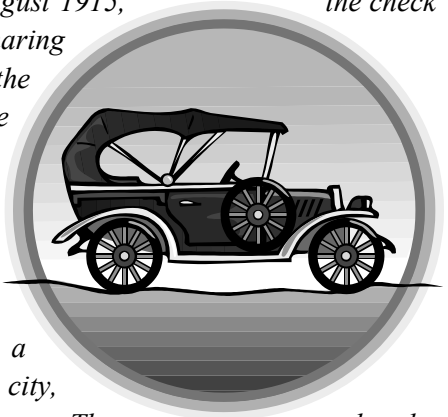
*Schroon River Garage with Hollis Ovitt and Jim Hastings in front.*

(The following article appeared in the September 2, 1915 Warrensburgh News)

**PROFIT SPLIT WITH BUYER**

**First Ford Rebate Check Received in Warrensburgh by Rev. G. H. Purdy**

*"The Reverend Guy H. Purdy, rector of Holy Cross church was the first of the local Ford owners to receive the fifty dollar rebate check being distributed among the 300,000 Ford owners who purchased their cars between August 1914 and August 1915, the check being a part of the Ford profit sharing plan. The check was received at the Adirondack garage the first of the week. A large and distinct organization has been arranged to send out the checks which are being mailed at a rate of about 30,000 a day. In all, about \$15,000,000 will be distributed by the Ford people, a vast sum which will go to every city, hamlet and rural district in the country. The checks are being mailed, so far as possible, in the same chronological order in which the cars were sold, a special corps of stenographers and clerks being employed in the Ford administration building at Detroit to accomplish the task."*



## The DAY WARRENSBURGH DISAPPEARED

### US Government mandates abolition of Warrensburgh.

By Delbert Chambers

So just what did happen to the “h”?

The following is in part copied from a web site ( [http://www.usps.com/postalhistory/\\_pdf/PONames.pdf](http://www.usps.com/postalhistory/_pdf/PONames.pdf) ) brought to my attention by Town Historian Sandi Parisi.

Between 1850 and 1890 the number of Post Offices more than tripled, from 18,417 in 1850 to 62,401 in 1890. Inconsistent geographic name usage and spelling was deemed "a serious and growing evil in the publications of the Government." On September 4, 1890, President Benjamin Harrison created the United States Board on Geographic Names to resolve unsettled questions regarding place names and thus gradually induce uniformity. In its first annual report, the Board singled out the Post Office Department as one of many sources of confusion and cited the "thousands of cases where the name of the post-office does not conform to the local name of the place in which it is situated." The Board wanted to hurry along the trend towards simplifying place names and outlined the following guiding principles:

1. That spelling and pronunciation which is sanctioned by local usage should in general be adopted.
2. Where names have been changed or corrupted, and such changes or corruptions have become established by local usage, it is not in general advisable to attempt to restore the original form.
3. In cases where what was evidently originally the same word appears with various spellings sanctioned by local usage, when applied to different features, these various spellings should be regarded as in effect different names, and as a rule it is inadvisable to attempt to produce uniformity.
4. Where a choice is offered between two or more names for the same place or locality, all sanctioned by local usage, that which is most appropriate and euphonious should be adopted.
5. The possessive form should be avoided whenever it can be done without destroying the euphony of the name, or changing its descriptive application.
- 6. In names ending in "burgh," the final "h" should be dropped.**
7. Names ending in "borough" should be abbreviated to "boro."
8. The word "center," as a part of a name, should be spelled as above and not "centre."
9. The use of hyphens in connecting parts of names should be discontinued.
10. The letters "C. H." (Court House) appended to the names of county seats should be omitted.
11. In the case of names consisting of more than one word, it is desirable to combine them into one word.
12. It is desirable to avoid the use of diacritic characters.
13. It is desirable to avoid the use of the words city and town, as parts of names.

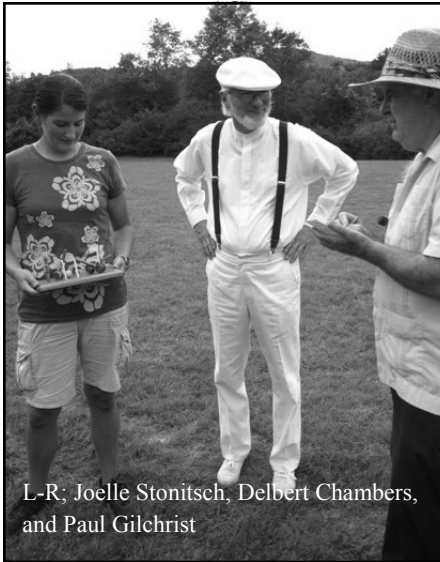
Soon after the creation of the United States Board on Geographic Names, Postmaster General John Wanamaker ordered that its decisions be followed whenever possible. He and his successor issued a series of orders in the 1890s relating to Post Office names.

Some communities opted to retain, or regain, their original spellings and not acquiesce to 'Federal guidelines' or Post Office decisions, cities including Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Marlborough, Massachusetts were among them. How did Warrensburgh Town Fathers react to being told to change the name of the community they represented? Was it a well considered decision to remove the “h”? Was it a mandate that was allowed to just happen? It may be that we'll never know. There was a fire that destroyed Town records of the late 1800's so whatever was officially recorded was lost. What we do know is the name was changed May 9, 1894. Then Post Master was Robert Murray who served in the position from August 8, 1889 to June 8, 1894. On June 9, 1894 Emerson S. Crandall became the postmaster. The query remains, who got the H... out of Warrensburgh?

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# STICKY WICKET 2010

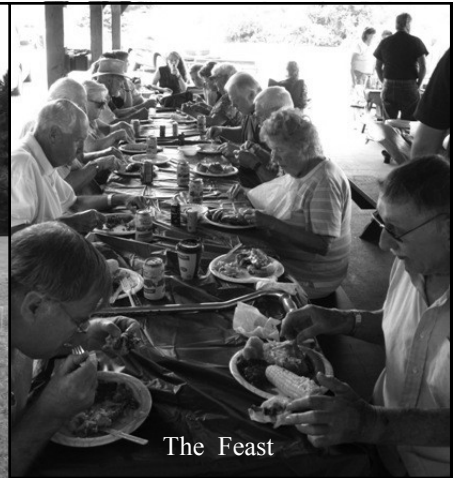
Photos by Barbara Whitford



L-R; Joelle Stonitsch, Delbert Chambers, and Paul Gilchrist



Delbert goes over the rules



The Feast



**2010  
Winner  
Joelle  
Stonitsch**



The competition



**Radisson Canoe Raffle**

To make a short story long, Gail Epstein sold the winning ticket to Rosemary Maher last year, Rosemary donated the canoe to the WHS Museum.

On Wednesday night (8/4) Dr. Kudish pulled the winning ticket in the middle of his talk (It was very well attended, and thanks to Rita for helping with the refreshments). We sold a total of 737 tickets.

Dr. Kudish pulled the winning ticket, and guess who won?

**Gail Epstein! !!!!!!!!!!!!!**

(Continued from page 1) Bear Waller

C. Manzer, Herbert C. Smith, Marshall Burt, Clyde Ross, T. J. Lynch, Robert Wall, Charles E. Wheeler, and Bertram E. Murray.

The club is governed by a constitution and by-laws which have recently been printed in a neat pamphlet of vest pocket size.

The membership is limited to twelve regular members, with such a number of honorary members, not exceeding five, as may be chosen for one year. Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Wescott have been made honorary members for life, without payment of dues, fees or assessments.

## BEAR WALLER HUNT

### Club Humorist Relates Amusing Incidents of Sojourn in the Woods

The Bear Waller Club, a Warrensburgh aggregation of "Mighty Nimrods" returned Tuesday from their annual hunt and the club humorist furnishes The News the following story of their sojourn in the woods:

Since October 30 a portion of the Bear Wallers have been in the camp at Sawyer's clearing, on the Sacandaga river, tenderly cared for by Uncle Andrew and Aunt Mary Wescott.

The advance guard however, had little or no luck till the main forces appeared on election day. On Wednesday, Marshall Burt killed a nice buck; and while three who had been on watch were going up to help in caring for the remains Crandall fell out of an old windfall on top of a nice buck, on which Wall and Wilkinson opened up and he was down, (the buck) inside of 10 rods. Rob proved to be the artist.

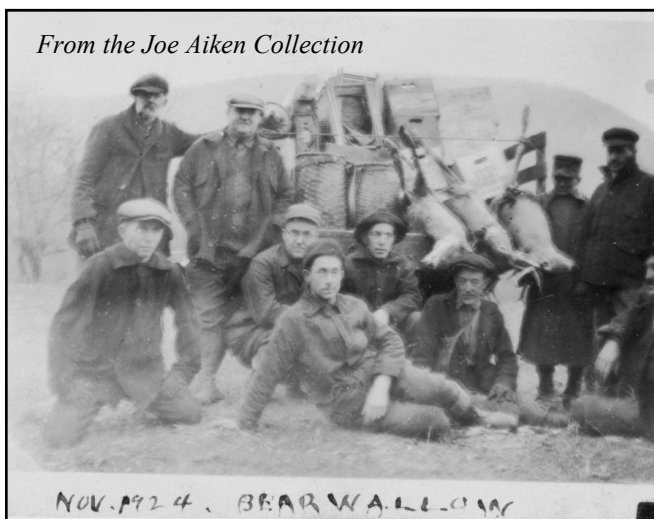
The following day, Clarence Russell thought it time the Bear Wallers made good respecting their name, and at twenty rods, with one shot through the head, killed the first bear ever seen on the party's annual hunt. Then Clyde Ross and Rob Wall, while enjoying a little visit, espied a neat one. Wall trimmed off his nose and then his tail, when Clyde took a hand and broke his back.

Sunday was spent in camp, but Monday the largest buck of the club's hunt, while watching the drivers trailing a wounded deer, thought he would go to the safest point of egress, and tried to pass Wilkinson. After knocking all the stilts from under him, Doc got close enough to finish the job. It proved to be a nine point buck, one of the largest the party ever killed.

Considerable complaint was made by other parties at the sudden rise of the river. It seems that Pop Hessner, while crossing the Sacandaga, fell in, and before the boys could get him out, the river was "damned" for several miles, filling in all the setbacks. On all new maps, this will be shown as "Pop Hessner's Ford."

Pop got even next day by killing a nice little fellow weighing 130 pounds. In all, the party killed eight bucks, one bear, several grouse, and one weasel. Only one fox and one big buck escaped.

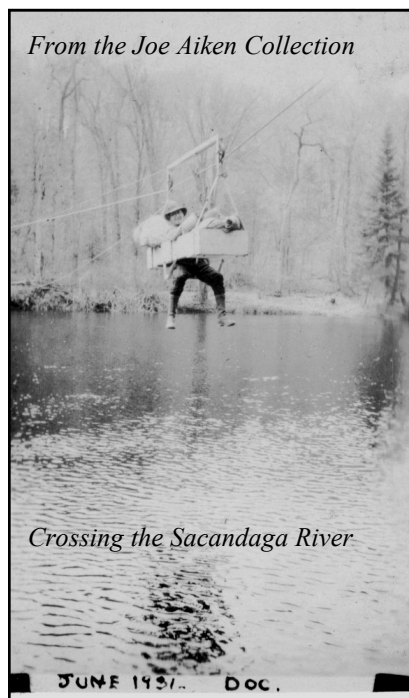
Lynch and Wheeler's truck met the boys Tuesday, the 16th, and as it was somewhat crowded with the



boys and the deer, Tim rode out on the hood. This balanced the vehicle nicely, and good times was made on the outbound trip.

(For more information on the Bear Waller Club see the Winter/Spring 2003 issue of the Quarterly.)

FINAL NOTE; An article in the 1929 Post Star states that the Bear Waller Club is moving to a new location on the Marion River near Blue Mountain Lake.





### **Mystery Photo**

#### **Places in Warrensburg's History**

Can you identify the above building? Or where it was located? Or any of the previous owners? Contact John at 798-0248 with your answer or email at [jthastings@roadrunner.com](mailto:jthastings@roadrunner.com). The photo in the last Quarterly was taken at the Warrensburgh Fairgrounds near the entrance. Sarah Farrar correctly identified the photograph. The nineteen people in the 1914 Fairgrounds photo are: L-R: Roscoe Stone, Thomas Woodward, James Cunningham, Unknown, Thomas Brown, Unknown, Emma Young, Jean Kenyon, Fred Hayes, Henry Griffing, Thomas Smith, Charlotte Brailey, Lillian McGann, John Archer, James McGann, Edwin Robinson, Unknown, Lawrence Pratt, Orley Hazelton.

### **Warrensburgh Museum of Local History**

**3754 Main Street (VFW Building)**

**Entrance at rear, fully handicap accessible**

**Hours: Wed., Sat. & Sun. 1-4 PM**

**Free admission.**

#### **MUSEUM GUIDES NEEDED**

**No experience necessary.**

**Call Steve Parisi at 623-2207**

**for information**

*(Continued from page 2) President's Column*

front room of the museum has been taking shape nicely. If anyone has items to contribute, they would be appreciated.

On August 4<sup>th</sup> Dr. Michael Kudish gave a presentation on the 3.4 mile branch of the railroad that served Warrensburg for 75 years. He also discussed the trolley line from Lake George to Warrensburg.

Our Sticky Wicket Croquet Tournament and Picnic on August 8<sup>th</sup> was blessed by fine weather, and a good crowd turned out. Joelle Stonitsch from Ticonderoga won the competition for the second year in a row. Brendan Hanley from North Creek shared second place with Bobby Brady from Queensbury (Brendan and Joelle tied for first place last year, and she won the shoot off).

The canoe raffle August 4th was won by Gail Epstein, a member of LASAR (Lower Adirondack Search & Rescue).

The young elm trees we planted at the Senior Center have grown about three feet since April 30<sup>th</sup>. We've managed to control the Japanese beetles so far, although they've roughed up the leaves of the young elms on the library lawn.

Although the Milton Avenue Bridge is gone, we were able to acquire, thanks to Bill Lamy, the two large heavy plaques that were attached to the structure at each end above the roadway. One is to be a permanent fixture at the Farmers Market Park, while the other probably will be at the museum. On the plaques are the names of the 3 commissioners who were responsible for acquiring the old trolley bridge and erecting it in 1895.

The Society held a training workshop in the spring for those who would like to be guides (aka docents) at the museum. It paid off well, and we now have half a dozen more guides, who have helped us handle the museum's expanded summer hours. It is gratifying to see the interest so many have in cultivating, explaining, and sharing our history with the public.

Rita Ferraro has researched information on several notable cemetery residents in preparation for our October graveyard walks and Dinner with the Dead. Actors will practice in September under the tutelage of Filomena Riviello in our annual acting workshop.

*Paul Gilchrist, President*