

Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

Volume 16 Issue 2

Summer 2011

The Rist Boot Shop

Ernest G. Rist, Proprietor -

by Nancy Brown

(granddaughter of Ernest G. Rist)

As a young man, Ernest G. Rist, youngest son of Jonathan Rist and Samantha Reynolds, worked at age 15 as yarn spooler, then weaver in the Warrensburg Woolen Mill. By the time he was 22, he and his future wife, Maude Austin, had each completed training at the Albany Business college in Albany. In 1910 they were married. Maude was trained as a bookkeeper, having been employed first by an Albany publishing company and then by the Empire Shirt Factory in Warrensburg. They were set for opening a business, but needed to work a few years to save up some capital.

In February of 1913 Ernest, now 27, rented a store previously occupied by A.H. Sherman, who sold wallpaper and bicycles in the Pasko Block, located uptown south of the bandstand. Ernest opened a shoe store there the following month, carrying a line of Regal shoes for men and Mayfair shoes for women and children. He put Herman Fuller in charge of a shoe repair department. Regal Shoes claimed twenty years of quality workmanship and sold for between \$3.50 and \$6.00 a pair.

By the fall of 1913, Ernest was an authorized Regal agent, but he also sold Buster Brown shoes "for little folks." In August of 1914, "Rist, The Shoe Man" carried Regal and Endwell shoes for men and Regal and Virginia Temple for the Ladies, Buster Brown for boys and girls, and "Comfort Shoes for the Old People." In addition, he was selling silk and lisle hosiery. Ernest soon hired Maude's cousin, Wallace Austin, who assisted him in the store for many years.

The *Warrensburg News* reported in July of 1913, that Ernest Rist, E.C. Austin and Berry Woodward "have organized themselves

Written in Stone

By John T. Hastings

The Lewisville section of the May 22, 1890 *Warrensburgh News* (the News) notes that "Albert Alden went to Raquette Lake Wednesday to confer with W. W. Durant regarding a job of mason work." As many residents know, Albert and his sons were stone masons and were responsible for the construction of many buildings in Warrensburg. But few know the extent or the reputation that they had within the Adirondacks and across the eastern United States.

Albert was the son of Samuel Alden and a descendent of John Alden of Plymouth Rock fame. (See the Fall 2008 Quarterly). He was born in 1835 in Whitehall and married Cynthia Stone. Albert had three sons; Seth(1863), John(1864), and William(1885). Locally, Albert was known for his work in the construction of the Church of the Holy Cross, the Burhans Mansion and the Woodward block. In the building of the Church of the Holy Cross, he was assisted by brother-in-law Norman Stone. Peter Boule, who mar-

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

We will try to summarize here the numerous activities of your Society over the past 3 months. Officers were elected on March 1st at the regular board meeting and are listed on this page.

The Society wrote a letter in support of the Town's application for a grant from DEC to plan enhancements of the southern "gateway" into town and for Main Street all the way to 4th Ave. We hope that tree planting would be a major part of such plans. We note that Society members planted two more donated disease-resistant elms in front of the Presbyterian Manse on Arbor Day.

While we're on the subject, we've learned of another large elm tree that qualifies as a National Historic Elm. It's located on the north side of the Glen Lodge near the back of the lodge. We are preparing the documentation to get it certified.

Sandi Parisi continues progress on the major book and calendar for the Town's Bicentennial in 2013. Peggy Knowles will be representing the Society on the Bicentennial Committee.

Roscoe Hastings held the interest of a large audience on April 28th at Grace's as he detailed his research into the life of his great-great-grand-mother, Mary Sage, and her family from 200 years ago. Roscoe needed all of his renowned wrestling skills to grapple with the problems he encountered and finally pin down the facts. A bit of luck helped, too.

Mark Brown, Dennis Martinez, and Sandi are developing a scholarship program that will entail a monetary prize for a student historical essay contest and a gift for the WCS Scholarship Fund.

A new book of recollections about the Shirt Factory by Abbie Hastings and Elda Monroe will be published this June. It will be available at the Museum or via our book nook order form.

On June 1st, 65 students of John Burns' WCS 7th grade environmental science class will spend the day visiting the

(Continued on page 8)

Quarterly Editor

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

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Warrensburgh Historical Society
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Board of Directors

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Dennis Martinez, Vice President
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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 623-3162.

Warrensburgh Historical Society Quarterly

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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, Warrensburgh, N.Y. 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.**

Contributors to this issue:

Mark Brown
Nancy Brown

Upcoming Events

July 3 Open House at the Museum "Quilts From the Collection"

August 14: Sticky Wicket Croquet Tournament & Picnic at the Fish Hatchery 11-4:00

October 8: Hauntings in Warrensburgh Trolley Tour (Details to follow)

Late October: Graveyard Walks & Dinner with the Dead

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP:

218

Warrensburgh Historical Society

Website: www.whs12885.org

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WELCOME**NEW MEMBERS:**

David Pitkin
Mrs. John F. Maxam

(Continued from page 1) Rist Boot Shop

into a Civic association on a small scale and have shown already how something may be done to improve the appearance of the village. With a few dollars contributed by themselves and other citizens they have cleaned up Pasko's park, set out a flower bed, and made it a place of beauty and an ornament to Park Square."

A year later, on September 17, 1914, the newspaper referenced "Ernest G. Rist, the progressive Park Square shoe man..." His name was becoming known. In 1919, the *News* reported that he had leased the annex of Harry Levine's store in downtown Warrensburg, where he established a branch of his uptown shoe repair shop.

The Pasko Block (or Park Square) became known as the Rist Block after Ernest Rist purchased the building from Emerald Pasko early in the summer of 1922. The following November the *Warrensburg News* reported that "Ernest Rist has begun the work of remodeling his store building in Park Square, which he recently purchased from Emerald Pasko. James Glynn and Amos Austin are working on the job with Mr. Rist and his clerk, Wallace Austin, assisting as other duties permit."

After a few months of extensive remodeling, Ernest was able to move his shoe store into the first part of the newly renovated quarters in February of 1923. By Memorial Day, the first floor of the building had been divided into three stores: Ernest's shoe store, shoe shine stand and shoe repair shop in the rear occupying the space closest to downtown, with F.J. Mahoney of Glens Falls leasing the middle store for a jewelry store and watch repair shop, and Jack Lynn opening a coffee room and restaurant in the end facing the present day Floyd Bennett Memorial Bandstand Park. All these businesses were in place by June 1st of 1923. Years later, a Mr. Hall opened a restaurant and soda fountain on the street floor, probably taking over Jack Lynn's business.

In March of 1923, the Warren County Farm and Home Bureau Association leased the rooms on the second floor of the Rist block and announced plans to remodel their new quarters, making large private offices and a space big enough for committee meetings and small gatherings of the organization. "A fine veranda on two sides of the offices is an added attraction of the quarters." Later, one or two living

apartments were made upstairs in the building.



Advertisements in the *Warrensburg News* showed the store rounding out its line of merchandise, offering in December of 1925 (above) slippers, boots, mittens, gloves, and even jackets and sweaters. It was still known as Ernest Rist's shoe store, but an advertisement that ran in the *Warrensburg News* in April of 1930 (below), made it clear that the store had now changed its name to Rist's Boot Shop in the Rist block.

Not only did he sell first quality shoes, but the Rist Boot Shop would resole or repair them when necessary. "Electric shoe repairing" probably meant he had a heavy duty electric sewing machine.



There was a fluoroscope machine that the customer would step into



Rist Block and Bandstand

(Continued from page 3) Rist Boot Shop

and, through the use of x-rays, it would show how well the shoe fit his foot. Everyone needs shoes. The store generated enough income for Ernest to raise his two daughters and send them to Skidmore College in the late 1930s. My mother, Ernest's daughter, says that she was not aware of any sacrifices that had to be made to feed and clothe the family during the years of the Great Depression.

One day in the spring of 1935, customers in the Rist Boot Shop were treated to a little excitement. A large hole had appeared in the pavement outside the shop, due to a leaky water main. Several truckloads of rock and dirt were needed to fill the cavity.

At the age of 62, after 35 years in the business, Ernest decided to retire and put his shoe business up for sale in January of 1948. One of his daughter's classmates, Arthur Brown, purchased it and, together with his wife, Arthur continued in the shoe business at that location for some years.

Ernest G. Rist died in the spring of 1960, and his widow sold the Rist Block to Arthur Brown and Delbert Pasco in the fall of 1963. At that time, the building housed the Brown Shoe Store, Jim the Florist and Preston G. Evans, Optometrist, plus three residential apartments on the second floor.

Warrensburg District School 3

By Mark Brown

I recently found minutes of the annual meetings of Warrensburg District #3 School which was located on the Schroon River Road. The following is some highlights and issues addressed at these annual meetings from 1927-1934.

May 3, 1927 Trustee: Walter Davis, Chairman: Nellie Baker, Clerk: Mammie Brown, and Tax Collector: Harry Bolton. Walter Davis won the bid for 5 cords of hardwood for the school house at \$4.50 per cord. Richard Baker received the bid to supply kindling wood of 1.5 cords for \$5.00. Ethline Baker was appointed to teach at the District School. It was voted to start school at 8:00 am.

May 2, 1928 It was voted to send high school students from the District to the Warrensburg High School. Trustees had the authority to raise \$1,000, by tax if necessary, to fund the school.

May 3, 1930 Harry Bolton won the bid for 6 cords of wood at \$5.00 per cord. If the Electric Light Company extends the line on Schroon River Road past the school house, it was voted that the District School would be wired for electricity.

May 5, 1931 Trustees were given the power to make a contract with

the Union Free School of Warrensburg for instruction of pupils in the district, with proper compensation for transportation.

May 3, 1932 Trustees were given the authority to raise \$500 by, taxes, to fund the school. The bid was won by Walter Davis for 6 cords of dry hardwood, split and piled in shed, for \$4.00 per cord.

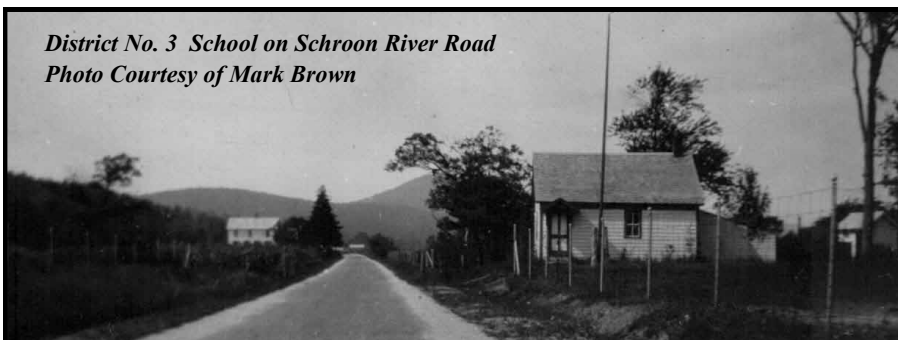
May 2, 1933 It was determined by Clerk and Trustees, that estimated annual expenses of the District School were \$1,550. It was voted for the District trustees to be empowered to purchase books which are to be the same as used in the Warrensburg Union Free School.

May 1, 1934 It was voted to charge any student who resides outside the district, \$15 per year.

District #3 Financial Report for May 1, 1934

Money on hand August 1, 1933

In colt. hand.....	\$316.03
In Supervisors Hand.....	\$213.21
Collected by tax.....	\$420.93
Received public money.....	\$609.48
Total on hand.....	\$1559.65
What I have paid out.....	\$1168.26
(Balance).....	\$391.39
Teacher wages.....	\$729.60
Transportation.....	\$240.00
Janitor work.....	\$26.00
Text books.....	\$30.15
Wood.....	\$20.06
Tax receipts.....	\$1.50
Repairs to school house.....	\$15.50
Library.....	\$30.00
Play ground equipment.....	\$10.50
Medical inspection.....	\$15.00
Insurance.....	\$12.15
Creative Educational Society..	\$37.80
Total.....	\$1,168.26



*District No. 3 School on Schroon River Road
Photo Courtesy of Mark Brown*

(Continued from page 1) *Written In Stone*

ried Albert's sister Harriet, built the first floor of the Woodward block and was also known for building the stone poor house.

As reported in the News, Albert went to Limerick, Maine in the summer of 1890. Two years later (1892), he was in Michigan laying the foundation for a large tannery owned by McConnell & Shaw, sole leather merchants.

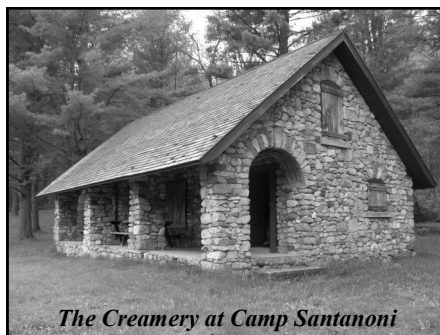
On March 2nd, 1893 the News reported that John Alden had left for Mohican (Mohegan) Lake, in the Adirondacks, where he was to be employed for about 3 months building the stone work on a new summer residence for W. W. Durant. Seth had been working at Forked Lake for several months, returning home in September of 1893 only to leave again for Raquette Lake, where he was to be employed by W. W. Durant for several months, returning in late February of 1894. The above work was likely for Camp Uncas and was built on a point of land on Mohegan Lake between 1893 and 1895. Durant spent most of these summers at this camp supervising the work. Uncas was noted for large fireplaces and placement of buildings on raised stone basements and was named for the young Indian chief in the novel by James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*. In 1896 the camp and 1,500 acres were sold to J. Pierpont Morgan.

In May of 1898 Seth left for Raquette Lake to do masonry work. The News further notes in February of 1899 that Seth had returned home after spending the past two years employed at Raquette Lake. Most likely Seth was working on foundations and other stone work at the Sagamore Lodge or some of the many buildings in this

complex for William W. Durant. These buildings were under construction from 1897 through 1899. Later in the spring of 1899 Seth was working in Newcomb for two months. In this case he was working on the construction of Mossy Camp on Arbutus Lake, again for W. W. Durant. A feature of Mossy Camp was the stone work which utilized smooth round stones. This was much different than the quarried stone in Camp Pine Knot and Uncas.

In May of 1898 the News reported that a flagstone walk, eight feet wide with a substantial stone curb was being laid in front of B. P. Burhans & Sons office. Albert Alden and Pat Burke (Seth's brother-in-law) were doing the job. Later, in 1912, Seth Alden was in charge of the construction for the foundation of the garage on the Burhans Estate.

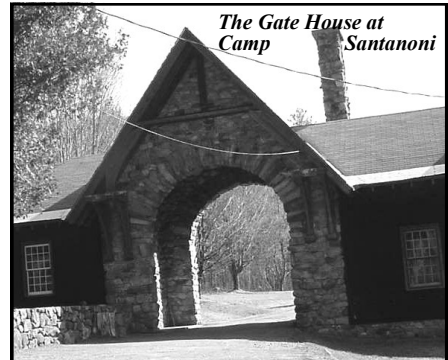
After several months of work for William W. Durant at Eagle Lake, Seth returned home in November of 1900. It was at this time that the Eagle's Nest Country



Club was being built. This was a 9 hole golf course and buildings between Eagle Lake and Blue Mt. Lake

In 1904 and again in 1906, Seth was working in Newcomb where he was in charge of the masonry work at Camp Santanoni for Mr. Robert Pruyn. His cousin, Fred Stone, was helping him in 1904. It

is not clear what Seth was working on but some of the buildings which were constructed at this time were the Creamery (1904), which was uncut fieldstone, the Studio (1904), which was noted for its stone arch, and the Gate Lodge (1905). Also, much of the new farm complex at Santanoni was built between 1902 and 1908.



In April of 1908 Seth again was working at Raquette Lake. This time it was for Charles H. Bennett at The Antlers, which was built on Constable Point around 1887.

From November 1916 through 1918 Seth was working at Kamp Kill Kare near Raquette Lake in the Adirondacks. Helping Seth was his son Albert, plus other Warrensburgh workmen: Charles Fuller, Neil Rhodes, Perry Wall, Ralph & Fred Stone (cousins to Seth), Clarence Farrar (brother to Seth's brother-in-law), Joseph Hebert and E. S. Labrum. Kamp Kill Kare was built by (Lt. Governor) Timothy Woodruff, and his wife Cora, after purchasing the property from W. W. Durant in 1897. Cora died in 1904 and Timothy in 1913. Kill Kare was deeded to Alfred Vanderbilt who conveyed it to Mr. and Mrs. Francis Garvan in December of 1914. Shortly thereafter, in 1915, it was destroyed by fire. Construction of the new Kamp Kill Kare was undertaken by

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(Continued from page 5) *Written in Stone*



Cyclopedean construction, named for the large stone size, at Kamp Kill Kare from *Durant*

one of the foremost architects of the day, John Russell Pope. This included not only rebuilding but an extensive expansion with many added buildings of the "cyclopedean mode of construction." This consisted of huge native stones giving the appearance of being held together without mortar. There were eight stone buildings, including a horse stable. Obviously, Seth was involved with much of the masonry construction in rebuilding and expanding the camp.

Included on the grounds of Kamp Kill Kare, a reproduction of the Norman Chapel was constructed and completed in 1921. Stones used in the exterior construction were allegedly picked one by one so that the moss would show when the structure was finished. Schuyler Kathan, a mason, was the builder and was assisted by George Starbuck, Frank Flynn and SETH ALLEN. I suspect that this is a miss print and was actually Seth Alden since the News reported that both Seth and his son Albert were employed as stone masons at Kamp Kill Kare .

Other regional work in which

the Alden's were known to be involved were:

1. Mason work at the Calf Pen on Lake George by Albert in 1894.
2. Building a stone foundation for a bridge near Bowman's Hotel in Athol by Seth in 1895.
3. Replacing the tannery smokestack in Chestertown by Albert in 1896.
4. Doing stone work at King's Station on the Adirondack Railroad by Seth in 1907.

5. Building a stone fireplace for Frank Hooper in North River by Seth in 1909.
6. Building a foundation for Dr. Nordstrom's place on Wall Street in Bolton by Seth in 1911.
7. Stone work for an addition to McPhillips Hotel by Seth in 1922.
8. Overseeing the replacement of the abutments for the Thurman Bridge by Seth in 1924.
9. Construction of a new bridge in Stony Creek by Seth in 1931.
10. Other stone work by Seth took place in Whitehall, Johnsbury, Minerva (North Woods Club), Mayfield, Bolton Landing, and Smith's Basin.

Other stone work in Warrensburg undertaken by the Aldens include;

1. Building a barn foundation for the Herrick Brothers on River Street by Albert in 1893.
2. Building a foundation for Ira Hill on River Street by Seth in 1894.
3. Building a cellar for Frank Packard's residence on Elm & School Streets by Albert in 1895.
4. Building a stone boiler house for



Seth Alden's stone mason tools John Farrar Collection

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6) *Written in Stone*

the Empire Shirt Factory by Albert in 1895.

5. Building a foundation for Jesse(?) Stone on Ridge Street by Seth in 1897.

6. Building cellar walls for Patrick McGann on upper Main Street by Seth in 1903.

7. Building cellar walls for John J. Archer near Richards Library by Seth in 1905.

8. Building the foundation for E. G. Woodward's house on upper Main Street by Seth in 1906.

9. Building an 18 by 24 foot concrete block building for holding electric converting machinery for the Hudson Valley Railway opposite the big rock on lower Main Street by Seth & Charles Davis in 1914.

10. Building a cobble stone fireplace for Scott Smith on Elm Street by Seth in 1920.

11. Remodeling the foundation for Dr. A. J. Young's house on Library Street by Seth in 1926.

Albert died in a fatal accident on November 9 of 1904, and Seth passed away on November 24th of 1931, as a result of a cold contracted while working on the bridge in Stony Creek. Seth's obituary states " While a youth, Mr Alden worked with his father, the late Albert H. Alden, and an uncle, Peter Boule, and learned thoroughly the trade of stone mason, at which he became widely known as one of the most expert workmen in this section. He built a number of stone houses and specialized for many years in cobblestone fireplaces, of which he built hundreds in Adirondack camps."

Sources:

1. *Durant* by Craig Gilborn, 1981, North Country Books

2. *Raquette Lake* by Ruth Timms, 1989, North Country Books

3. *Santanoni* by Robert Engel, Howard Kirschenbaum, Paul Malo, 2000, Adirondack Architectural Heritage

4. *The Warrensburgh News*

William West Durant (1850 – 1934) was a designer and developer of camps in the Adirondack Great Camp style, including Camp Uncas, Camp Pine Knot and Sagamore Camp which are National Historic Landmarks. He was the son of Thomas C. Durant, financier and railroad promoter.

While working to complete the eastern half of the First Transcontinental Railroad in 1869 as vice-president of the Union Pacific, Dr. Thomas C. Durant formed the Adirondack Company in 1863. His goal was to cross the Adirondacks to Canada and the Saint Lawrence River. By 1871, tracks had been laid from Saratoga to North Creek, New York, at which point, financial problems caused the project to stall.



W W Durant at Camp Pine Knot

In 1876, Durant built a rustic compound on Long Point in Raquette Lake in the center of the Adirondacks to entertain potential investors in the railroad and in his land development schemes. William had first seen Raquette Lake the summer before. The group of simple cabins would become Camp Pine Knot, which would be

hugely influential in the development of the Great Camp style. William had a hand in its development from the start, but especially after 1879, when tourism to the area exploded. William opened a stage-coach line from North Creek to Raquette Lake, dammed the Marion River to allow steamboat travel from Blue Mountain Lake through to Eagle and Utowana Lakes, and built steamboats *Killoquah* and *Toowahloondah* on Raquette and Blue Mountain Lakes, respectively.

Dr. Durant became ill in 1883, and died. William took control of the family finances, although not without discord with his elder sister, Ella. William promptly set out to raise capital by selling land and timber, and sought a buyer for the Adirondack Railway, finally succeeding in 1899 with a sale to the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company. He also started work on a new camp, Camp Uncas. At about this time, William befriended industrialist Collis P. Huntington, who would prove instrumental in advancing William's fortunes. In 1895, William sold Pine Knot to Huntington and J.P. Morgan bought Uncas.

William started work on a new camp complex on Shedd Lake, renamed *Sagamore*. It was to be the largest and most expensive of Durant's camps, centered on a three-story main lodge, with a raised stone cellar adding to the height, and verandahs on three levels. No sooner was the work completed on Sagamore Camp than he was forced sell it to Alfred G. Vanderbilt, in 1900. As with each of William's great camps, there was little or no profit.

William West Durant died at Mount Sinai Hospital on June 1, 1934, age 83.



Mystery Photo

Places in Warrensburg's History

Can you identify the building above? 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. The picture in the last Quarterly was a previous location of the Warrensburg News on Elm Street, just west of the Bandstand. Congratulations to **Patti Roberts** for correctly identifying this building.

15th Annual Sticky Wicket Croquet Tournament and Picnic

To be held at the **Fish Hatchery** on Echo Lake Road Sunday **August 14**, 11-4:00 pm. **Free picnic**, thanks to our generous sponsors. We supply barbecued chicken, picnic basics and cold drinks. You're welcome to bring a dish to share. Play for the coveted Sticky Wicket Trophy. \$5.00 entry fee. Registration from 11:00 am. Maximum participants is 24. WHS Rules of Play available.

Canoe Raffle The Historical Society is once again raffling off a Radisson Canoe. All proceeds to go to benefit the WHS and Museum. Drawing to take place August 14 at the Sticky Wicket Tournament. Tickets \$3 or 2 for \$5.00

UPDATE

Winter 2011 Mystery Photo

The photo of the house at 183 Main Street was owned by Alphonso and Anna (Fowden) Young (b. 3.30.1863; d. 2.18.1949). They had one daughter, Emma (b.1.27.1886; d. 7.27.1966) and a son Edward (1883-1956). Edward married Julia McCarthy and they had a daughter Gertrude. Alphonse died around 1893. The house was used for boarding from at least 1908-1911 and probably longer and was run by Anna and Emma. Emma served as a tax collector from 1935-40, was the clerk at the Colonial Arms from 1943-58, and was the organist at the Church of the Holy Cross. Gertrude worked at the bank.

Special Thanks to Alice Ackery for providing much of the above information.

(Continued from page 2) President's Column

museum and touring by bus numerous glacial landforms and other historical sites in Warrensburg. At the museum, they will see the exhibits and be given a presentation on logging and forestry by John Hastings.

Our Sticky Wicket Croquet Tournament will be held this summer on Sunday August 14. It will be named in honor of Cal Engle, who was a long-time supporter of the Historical Society.

Several members of the Society's Board of Directors have been participating in the meetings to prepare a Comprehensive Plan for the Town that will update the previous one done in 1987.

Paul Gilchrist

Aurelie Massimine and Delbert Chambers discuss his architectural exhibit during the well-attended opening reception at the Museum of Local History on Sunday, May 15th.

