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An Invitation to our 4th Annual Holiday Open House—A Celebration of our 25th Anniversary Sunday, December 1st—1-3 PM

Please join us at our Open House on Sunday, December 1st from 1–3 PM at the Goodsell Memorial Museum. We open our house to thank you, our members, for the support you give us each year. We hope you will have a chance to enjoy delicious refreshments served by our Board of Trustees and view our new exhibits.

The Town of Webb Historical Association will also be taking this opportunity to celebrate our 25th Anniversary marking the first 25 years since receiving our Absolute Charter from the University of the State of New York Education Department on September 30, 1977. Although the process of preserving local history started several years before that date thanks to Betty Cole, George Sponable, J Perry (Pitt) Smith and many other interested people, we feel the date in 1977 is a significant beginning.



New Exhibits—

The Front Room of the Goodsell Home has been transformed from the “God’s Country” exhibit to a display of Goodsell Family possessions, photographs, memorabilia and history. The exhibit will include items and photos from the personal collection of Christine Cardner, Town of Webb Historical Association President and Great Niece of Robert Goodsell. Also located in the Front Room will be a history of the Town of Webb Historical Association itself, for a year long celebration of our 25th Anniversary.

Letter from the Director

It has been an interesting first six months on the job. I have met many wonderful people, history buffs, genealogy seekers, information gatherers, visitors and tourists. It is obvious that the Town of Webb Historical Association provides a service and is an important part of Old Forge.

We have accomplished many tasks in a short time. Our audit was completed in July and all proper forms have been submitted to the government. This has paved the way for us to apply for grants to operate and grow. Our Herkimer County Youth Service student employee, Eileen Fay, completed her projects this summer and plans to volunteer as time permits. Other volunteers scraped, sanded, and painted, identified photos, filed, arranged, cleaned and so on. All our volunteers are truly appreciated.

Our staff has been reduced by one with the resignation of Joan Armstrong. Joan had been working as my assistant and I am grateful that she was able to help me through the busy summer. The good news is she still plans to volunteer choosing the days she can help out. If you are in the area, please stop in to see what is new in history.

Gail Murray

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Visit our Website

www.webbhistory.org

email

director@webbhistory.org

From the Director's Desk

TOWN OF WEBB HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
 PO BOX 513, OLD FORGE, NY 13420
 PHONE: 315 369-3838

Archival News

Thanks to the generosity of many, several items of historical value and significance have been received, accessioned (numbered), and displayed or stored for future use. Many photographs and negatives have also been received and are schedule for processing.

Our postcard collection numbering over 1800 cards, has been entered into a database on the computer and physically filed in numeric order. This work provides a searchable index which will quickly locate particular postcards.

Most artifacts on display in the six rooms of the museum have been labeled to help visitors understand the exhibits and recognize the donors who chose to share their items with the public.

Sharing our Heritage

The Historical Association took mini displays 'on the road' to a Xi Gamma Iota Sorority celebration at VanAuken's Inn in May and to the Old Forge Library's Storytelling Festival at McCauley Mountain in September.

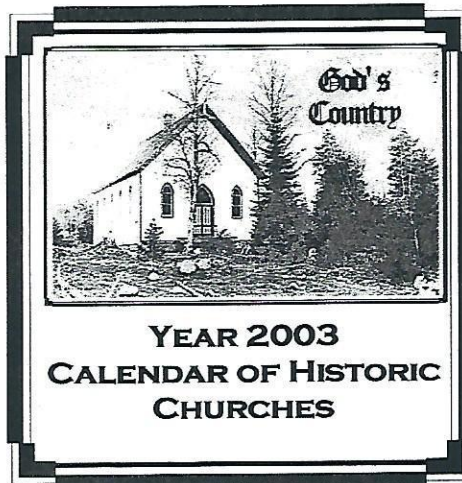
Among the many projects our Town Historian, Peg Masters, accomplished these past few months, she held eight walking tours of the Old Forge Cemetery, "Brooklyn", and Waterfront during July and August resulting in several new memberships and additional donations for the organization. Peg also led a tour of Thendara for a group visiting on September 28, 2002 from Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH).

The Historical Association will be working with The Arts Center/Old Forge on their Adirondack Theme exhibit titled: "Connections—Past to Present" held May 24—July 6, 2003 at the Arts Center.

Postcard Book

The Historical Association is pleased to announce their involvement and support in the publication of a book titled "Old Forge, Gateway to the Adirondacks". It is a selection of early postcards pooled from our own vast collection as well as contributions from Charlie Kiefer, "Doc" Jones, Standard Supply of Otter Lake and a few others.

Hundreds of postcards have been reviewed with the final selection narrowed down to about 180. These have been grouped and categorized informative captions added. Delivery of this exciting new book about our heritage in picture form is scheduled for release in May of 2003 and will go on sale for \$19.99. Call now to reserve your copy of this limited edition.



The 2003 collector calendar "God's Country" is still available for purchase. Please help us reach our goal of selling them all. The cost is just **\$10** and we will be happy to mail one to you for an additional postage fee of \$2 (\$12 Total). This calendar contains historic pictures and descriptions of our local churches and chapels from Otter Lake to Raquette Lake to Big Moose Lake.

A great stocking stuffer!

Coming Events

December 1, 2002—Open House—1-3 PM Goodsell Museum
Everyone is invited! Refreshments served.

Help us celebrate of 25th Anniversary. Check out the new exhibits.

May 20, 2003—Annual Meeting—7 PM Goodsell Museum

May 24, 2003—1st Annual Auction Goodsell Museum Grounds
Time to be announced. We are seeking a wide variety of good quality items, antiques and Adirondack items are especially sought. Pick-up is available. Call 315-369-3838.

July and August, 2003—Historic Walking Tours—dates, time, and location to be announced.

August 2, 2003—Postcard, Paper, and Bottle Show and Sale
183 Park Avenue, Municipal Bldg, Old Forge 10 AM-4 PM

September 13, 2003—Adirondack Storytelling Festival—
10AM-4PM Look for our mini exhibit in the McCauley Mountain Chalet during this event organized by the Old Forge Library.

Goodsell Memorial Museum
2993 Main Street—Old Forge
OPEN: Tuesday—Thursday—Saturday 9 AM—2 PM

Traces of the Past – Presidential Connection – Benjamin Harrison

Early in 1892 Dr. William Seward Webb wired his Chief Engineer Roberts to build a temporary railroad spur to the Loon Lake Hotel north of Paul Smith's so that President Benjamin Harrison could take his ailing wife to the resort. Roberts' men worked all night grading and laying the one-mile track which was ready when the Presidential special train arrived the next day. Carrie Scott Harrison had tuberculosis and was weakened by coughing spasms and a lung hemorrhage. All summer President Harrison declined public appearances despite his bid for re-election. In September, he arranged for a special railcar equipped with a hospital bed for the 500 mile trip back to Washington. The newspapers described the President as "much afflicted, and his eyes were red from weeping with dark rings under them." At the White House, family vigils continued for another month until the morning of October 25, 1892 when Carrie died. Benjamin and Carrie had been married thirty-nine years.



Harrison lost his bid for re-election to Grover Cleveland in November. He left the White House in March of 1893 and returned to his home in Indianapolis to resume his law practice. Many requests poured in for lectures and for his legal services. What circumstances brought him back to the Adirondacks in the last years of his life are uncertain. When inaugurated as the 23rd and Centennial President of the United States March 4, 1889, he took the oath of office with his hand on a bible opened to the 121st Psalm which begins, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." As President he set aside over 13 million acres in national forest preserves and parks. Certainly the vast wilderness of the Adirondacks appealed to Harrison.

"Harrison had far more than mere intellectual brilliance – he had character."

Hilton U. Brown, Board Chairman of the Arthur Jordan Foundation

Benjamin Harrison was born in 1833 into a family steeped in patriotism. His father was a U. S. Senator, his grandfather, William Henry, the 9th American President, and his great-grandfather Benjamin, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Yet Benjamin's parents struggled to raise nine children on their farm in Ohio. The family suffered at times from illnesses such as cholera, smallpox, influenza, typhoid, dysentery, and scarlet fever. His favorite brother Irwin, who fought with him in the Civil War, died of tuberculosis in 1870 at the age of thirty-eight. That year

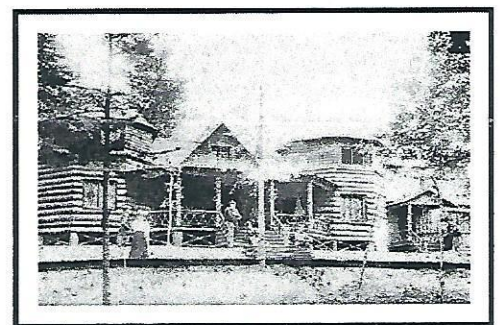
Benjamin bought himself a rowing machine for \$36. Annual hunting and fishing trips were among the few indulgences he allowed himself.

After the White House years according to Harry J. Sievers, a Harrison biographer, "Only with the advent of a summer vacation in the Adirondacks could he claim immunity from the press and its reporters." In 1895 he rented a primitive board shanty camp on the Fulton Chain from Samuel Dodd of St. Louis. There he managed to write articles, hunt and fish, and relax with family and friends. Benjamin wrote to a friend August 1, 1895, "Old Forge, NY is a beautiful and delightful region" and added "we have not had a hot day or night since we have been here." He so loved the outdoor life that in October he bought a 37-acre peninsula of land on the south shore of the Fulton Chain between First and Second Lakes from Dr. Webb.

Harrison hired Charles E. Cronk, a Herkimer, New York architect to design and build a camp he decided to call Berkeley Lodge after his family's ancestral Virginia plantation. The Lodge living room was flanked by twin octagonal towers at either end. The exterior of Berkeley was sheathed with spruce logs at the bottom and shingles below the eaves. Attached to Berkeley was a cottage containing a kitchen, dining room, and office. The camp also had a house for guides and a boathouse. A guest book at his presidential library in Indianapolis lists guests signatures, incidents, impressions, and images of the visitors from July 23, 1896 to September 7, 1909, the year the property was sold. The Lodge, although altered, and several other buildings survive to this day.

Harrison astonished his family in 1896 by marrying thirty-eight year old Mary Lord Dimmick, the daughter of his wife's sister. Mary spent many holidays with the Harrisons and in 1892 attended her Aunt Carrie at Loon Lake and at the White House during the last month of her life. The wedding took place in April of 1896 in New York City and Berkeley Lodge served as a honeymoon retreat that summer. The following February a daughter they named Elizabeth was born.

By all accounts, the Harrisons enjoyed their privacy but mingled at times (without benefit of the secret service or sniffing dogs) with the local residents. Benjamin Harrison good-naturedly spoke at the dedication of the newly remodeled Forge House in 1896, attended services at the Presbyterian Church, and was known to favor the chicken and biscuit dinners at the Bald Mountain House on Third Lake. The first place in the United States where mail was delivered by boat occurred on the Fulton Chain of Lakes due to the intervention of the former President. The mailboat service on the lakes continues to this day. Berkeley photos that have survived include one of President Harrison on the "grocery boat" that stopped at his dock; of the family buying goods from a Native American woman who came to Berkeley in a canoe; and a photo of Elizabeth swimming in Second Lake. Harrison's guideboat and bathtub are on display at our Historical Association. His new life was cut short in 1901 when he died of pneumonia at his home in Indianapolis. Additional information on Benjamin Harrison, his family, and his presidency can be obtained by visiting our website at: www.webbhistory.org.



Berkeley Lodge – Second Lake, Fulton Chain

Dollars and Sense

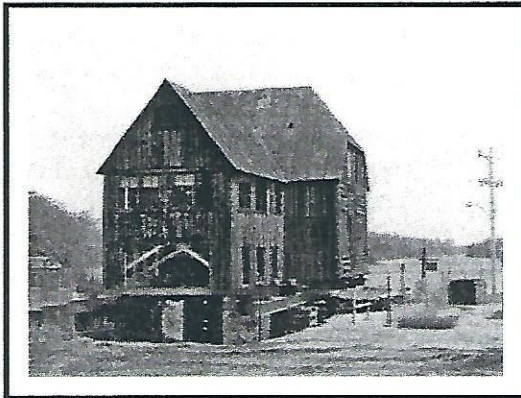
We are grateful more than half of our Charter (Lifetime) Members continue to give on an annual basis.

While researching the past policies of the Town of Webb Historical Association, I have come to understand our past membership category of Lifetime Members. At one time (when things didn't cost so much) a Lifetime Membership was offered for a contribution of \$100, an Individual Membership was \$3 and a Family Membership was \$5. At some point it was determined that annual contributions were needed to get us through each year financially. The category of Lifetime Member was dropped and current "Lifetime" members were re-named Charter Members. They remain active members, receiving all newsletters and benefits of membership for a lifetime, but will be referred to as Charter Members. A name change only.

At this time, our annual membership drive each Spring includes four levels of membership, a Donation category, and an opportunity for persons to donate additional monies as Memorials. However, donations separate from memberships are critical to maintain the operation of the buildings, preserve the contents, continue to increase our collections, assist with researches, and continue to educate persons interested in our history.

We appreciate and need every dollar we receive from all sources.

Hemmer Update



In 2002, the Hemmer Cottage Preservation Team, an ad hoc committee of the TOWHA, met the challenge to save the cottage from destruction and saw it safely moved to the waterfront on May 31, 2002. This effort was a result of public/private partnership highlighted by moving funds from Sen. Raymond Meier's office coupled with the generous donation of land from Sarah and Linda Cohen. Since then TOWHA Board Members and the Hemmer Team have worked hard to locate additional funding and support for "Phase II".

We are pleased to announce that through this partnership, the TOWHA was one of four entities in Herkimer County to be awarded a grant from the Adirondack North Country Community Enhancement Program (ANCCEP) in the amount of \$25,000. These monies will be used for external beautification of the Hemmer Cottage building and property—specifically, landscaping, parking, signage and painting of the metal roof—and for improvements to the Goodsell Museum through replacement of deteriorating sidewalks. Volunteers will work throughout the winter to locate funding for professionals to complete the final plans for these efforts and to complete the required bidding process for each aspect of this enhancement effort. Our goal is to complete all work before July 4, 2003.

The Hemmer Team is still accepting donations to meet foundation, excavating and other operating expenses incurred this year. Donations for either 2002 or 2003 may be sent to the Hemmer Cottage Preservation Team at the Business Office in CAP-21, PO Box 642, Old Forge, NY 13420 or directly to the TOWHA. The Hemmer Team meets the first Thursday of each month at 7:30 AM in Walt's Diner in Old Forge. All volunteers and interested parties are welcome.

Benefit Auction

The Town of Webb Historical Association is planning to hold a fund raising AUCTION on Memorial Day Weekend, May 24, 2003. We are currently seeking a wide variety of good quality items to be donated from our members and the public to be used in this benefit auction.

Antiques and Adirondack items are especially sought, but we will accept most anything in good condition. Please take a look and see what you may have to donate. Call for a pick-up or bring in your item to the Goodsell Memorial Museum.

If an item is determined to be of significant historical importance to our community, we reserve the right to keep such item in our archives for historical preservation and not