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**From the Director's Desk**

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

## Mapping Our Adirondack Wilderness Historic Pathway to the Settlement of the Town of Webb

November 23, 2012 - October 31, 2013

Over 200 years ago the vast, mostly unsettled region of New York, now known as the Adirondack Park, offered opportunities for development, industry and leisure. The state and private investors needed more information on this unexplored territory and initiated an assessment of the area. An extensive survey was undertaken by Verplanck Colvin that led to a greater understanding of the land and its natural resources. By 1874, tourists could rely on *The Adirondacks: Illustrated*, an early guide book with map of the Adirondacks, created and published by Seneca Ray Stoddard. Our history is documented through these early maps. The names of our towns, lakes and developments are in the lines and India ink of maps and surveys. Today, tourists clutch a GPS to locate their Adirondack destinations. Mapping our Adirondack Wilderness: a tale of adventure, an interesting frontier story.

Seventh Report.

VERPLANCK COLVIN, Superintendent.

Plate No 19.



Drawn by Verplanck Colvin.

Lith. by Wenz, Parsons & Co.

EXPLORATION.  
Middle Western Division.

## Hemmer Cottage

10th Anniversary donations before and after the July 21st celebration have partially funded projects at Hemmer Cottage. Original windows have been re-glazed and painted and new energy efficient windows have been installed in the garage storage area beneath the conference room (former Bernard Hemmer Art Studio). The front porch benches have been replaced. Funds are still needed for future projects. Additional contributions will be greatly appreciated.

Hemmer Cottage continues to be informally open to the public thanks to CAP-21 who occupies offices on the second floor. Visitors are welcome to take a self-guided tour of the first floor displays maintained by the Historical Association relating to Adirondack Guides, waterfront transportation, businesses and the Hemmer family. Visits by appointment at other times may be made by calling the Historical Association at 315-369-3838.



## 2012-2013 Coming Events

**November 23**—*Mapping Our Adirondack Wilderness, Historic Pathway to the Settlement of the Town of Webb* exhibit opens and will continue through October 2013.

**November 25**—*Reindeer Run* begins at the Goodsell Museum, exhibits will be open Noon-3 PM

**December 2**—Holiday Open House—Noon-3 PM. Enjoy refreshments and conversation with friends and neighbors.

**July 6**—*Benefit Auction* 10 AM preview, 11 AM bidding begins. Antiques, collectibles, new and nearly new items—something for everyone. Under a tent, bring a chair, cash or check. Refreshments available for purchase.

**July TBA**—Moss Lake Walking Tour

**August TBA**—Moss Lake Walking Tour

Visit our website at [www.webbhistory.org](http://www.webbhistory.org) for additional programs and events as dates are planned or visit [ILOVEOLDFORGE.com](http://ILOVEOLDFORGE.com) Community Calendar.

## TOWHA

is now on Facebook. Like us!  
View our PICTURE OF THE WEEK.



### OUR MISSION

To preserve, protect, restore, and exhibit objects and properties of historic, natural and antiquarian interest from the Town of Webb for the education and enjoyment of the public.



## A Very Special Thank You:

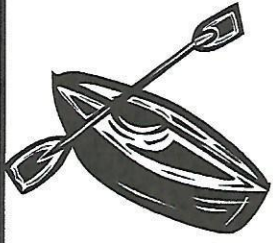
As some of you know, TOWHA Director, Gail Murray, announced her resignation as of November 1, 2012. Gail led our organization for 10 plus years and served on the board prior to that. During her role as director, she was successful in implementing many positive changes that increased membership (an all-time high in the last few years), fundraising and acquisitions. Gail brought the Historical Association into the digital age. She improved museum attendance with bigger and better exhibits and made the Goodsell Museum a tourist destination. She worked hard to increase awareness of our local history. We cannot thank her enough for the long hours and dedication!

We wish Gail all the best!

TOWHA Board of Trustees

We are saying goodbye to our longtime Director, Gail Murray. It has been my privilege to work along side Gail for the past 5 years. Her friendship and guidance have made my time at the Historical Association and Goodsell Museum **FUN**. We shared a passion for history and enjoyed discovering bits and pieces of life here in the Town of Webb. Because of Gail's passion to uncover and preserve our regional heritage, the Historical Association has grown by leaps and bounds. I look forward to continuing our mission and ask for your continued support!

*Kate Lewis*



Congratulations to  
Kim Firsching  
of Old Forge  
winner of this years  
Kayak Raffle

### THANK YOU!!

Our museum is known for its changing exhibits, learning opportunities and entertainment. We provide a service: as a repository of information concerning the people, businesses, events, and places within the Town of Webb.

Thank you for your membership renewals, your donations, participation at our events, attendance at our programs and sharing our passion to reach our mission "to preserve, protect, restore, and exhibit objects and properties of historic natural and antiquarian interest from the Town of Webb for the education and enjoyment of the public".

Thank you for a gift of "time". Many volunteers make it possible to maintain our buildings and property whether it be by raking, pulling weeds or painting and staining. Friends sell raffle tickets, work at our events and fundraisers, help mount new exhibits, identify photographs, drop off bottles and cans (every nickel is important), and much more.

**We cannot do it without you!**

### COME VISIT!

Share your stories, memories and history, learn about this part of the Adirondacks.

## Business Members

We are pleased to acknowledge the following Business memberships

### BUSINESS GOLD

Brooker's True Value Hardware and Lumber  
Enchanted Forest/Water Safari  
Helmer's Fuel and Trucking  
Kleinschmidt Foundation  
Old Forge Hardware  
Otter Lake Veterinary Clinic  
Wilderness Interiors

### BUSINESS SPONSOR

Adirondack Bank  
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Camp Mark Seven  
Candy Cottage  
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Moose River Trading Co.  
19th Green Motel  
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Touch of Ritz  
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Weekly Adirondack  
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Wrap City 'N Glue, LLC

**ILVEOLDFORGE.COM**

Where To See What's Going On

## Robert Fulton's Elusive 1811 Survey Report

By Peg Masters, Town of Webb Historian



For nearly two centuries, the first eight lakes of the Middle Branch of the Moose River have been called the Fulton Chain of Lakes. Historic references attribute the name to steamboat entrepreneur Robert Fulton (1765–1815) who reportedly made a survey of the region in 1811 as a member of the NYS Canal Commission. The commissioners were appointed to study the feasibility of establishing an inland waterway route from Albany westward to the Great Lakes. Professor Ebenezer Emmons references the Fulton Chain of Lakes in his 1836–1842 Geological

Survey reports to the State. Fulton's name appears on Johnston's 1865 map of Herkimer County (right). Eminent surveyor Verplanck Colvin's visits to the "Fulton Chain" are well documented in his reports to the State Legislature in the 1870s–1890s. Adirondack historian Alfred Donaldson wrote in 1921 that Robert Fulton *"visited and explored the remarkable chain of lakes that crosses Brown's Tract and waxed enthusiastic in speech and pamphlet over their wonderful possibilities."*

Robert Fulton was not appointed to the Canal Commission until April 1811, two months after the first canal report was sent to the State Legislature recommending a route from Albany to Lake Erie. A canal route to Oswego and Lake Ontario was dismissed for fear of sharing profits with Canada by driving trade down the St. Lawrence River to Montreal rather than New York City. John Brown's favorite grandson, John Brown Francis, spent a week in the Tract in September 1811 with his uncle Charles Frederick Herreshoff. Francis, who had inherited four of the Tract's eight townships, described his grandfather's old road from Remsen as *"inaccessible, large trees have blown over, bushes & branches have grown up, causeways gone to decay & bridges swept away or broken down."* No documentation has surfaced in the Brown archives at Providence, RI confirming Fulton's trip into John Brown's Tract.

Robert Fulton was extraordinarily busy during 1811 battling various rivals in court who challenged the State contract he and his financial backer Robert Livingston had secured from the Legislature for exclusive rights to steam navigation on all NYS waterways. Fulton's entire spring was devoted to improving his designs for a warfare submarine and torpedoes that he demonstrated to Naval officials later that fall. He was in the midst of negotiating coal contracts in Ohio and steamboat navigation on the Mississippi. Plans for the canal system were suspended in any event with the start of the War of 1812.

While returning from testifying in a New Jersey ferry boat case in Trenton, NJ, Robert Fulton caught a severe cold that led to his death two weeks later on February 23, 1815. He was just 50 years old and at the peak of his career. Shops and businesses in NYC closed the following day in his honor and minute guns were fired along the waterfront during the entire funeral procession through the city. His widow, Harriet Livingston Fulton and her four young children were left with a mound of debts and unsettled legal claims. Many of Fulton's letters, manuscripts, artwork, and other memorabilia were subsequently sold at auction. In March of 1917, a large illustrated manuscript in Robert Fulton's own handwriting – dated 1811, was purchased for \$3,000 by a Dr. Charles B. Forsythe of Alexandria Bay. It was formerly owned by the late Judge Ogden for whom Ogdensburg was named. Ogden had once turned down an offer of \$10,000 for the volume. Dr. Forsythe died in 1922 and presumably his widow Leta inherited the valuable manuscript that may hold clues to the whereabouts of Robert Fulton in 1811 and if in fact he did conduct a survey of Brown's Tract. Our new exhibit pays tribute to an intrepid group of early surveyors and mapmakers who helped define the evolution of boundaries and place names of our township. Research continues to locate witnesses or documents, perhaps even the elusive Robert Fulton 1811 survey report, that will definitively solve this 200 year old mystery.



## Memorials and Gifts in Honor

The Town of Webb Historical Association is grateful to the many members and non-members who chose to remember or honor the lives of loved ones and friends with donations to our organization.

The following donations have been received in Honor of:

Wayne and Bernice Coston in honor of Ceil Buckley

The following Memorials have been received since May, 2012:

In Memory of Jack Ball: Lance and Joanne Maly, Shirley Lindsay, Faith Norton, Robert and Ann Marie Zgorski, Ed and Heather Stafford, Dave and Paula Peck, Bob and Ann Hall, Albert and Isabella Worthen, Edward and Pamela Righter, Bob and Linda Kennerknecht, Doc and Judy Foley, Mike and Kelly Hunkins, Martin and Martha Phillips, Lisa Loughney, Bernard and Gaile Lepper, Christopher and Linda Kurtzman, Richard and Jane Knight, Jean Burke, Robert and Margaret Brussel, Lois Murphy, Ron and Jill Hollister, Jack and Margo Boylan, Scott and Donna Kurtzman, Stephen and Laurie Montanye, Linda Cohen, Sarah Cohen; June and Charlie Kiefer in memory of Mary Evans, Red Ritz, Bill Martin, Mike Burke; Jim and Laura Marleau in memory of Arthur Germer; John and Deb Munyan in memory of Red Ritz; Ron Christensen in memory of Alfred Starkweather; Tim and Jody Gross in memory of Dot and Ken Rivette, George and Virginia Gross; John and Margaret Hopsicker in memory of Marge Briant; Betty Rannels in memory of Richard Turpin, Mark Barlow, Marge Bonnett and Marge Briant, Ruth Lindsay, Major Bowes, Patricia Spenger, Patricia Mastroianni, Dorothy Leach; John Briant in memory of Marge Briant and Ruth Timm; Carol Craft in memory of Alvin "Red" Ritz; Linda Cohen in memory of Dave Hollister and Mark Barlow; Martha Denio in memory of Shawn Farmer; Doc and Judy Foley in memory of Bill Calli; Pat and Carol McCann in memory of Dorothy Leach; Wayne and Bernice Coston in memory of Fred and Frida Kreiner and Elmer and Alice Coston, Frank Lesure in memory of John Dart Lesure.



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