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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

Goodsell Museum

Local Adirondack History

WEBB: WIRED TO WIRELESS

Technology Comes to Town

In 1948, author David Beetle noted in his popular book Up Old Forge Way that a new road was being built through the wilderness between Big Moose and Stillwater. He called it a little "Alcan Highway." The roadway gave motorists a beeline from the Thousand Islands to the Fulton Chain. It also gave utilities a new route for wires so that "it will take three falling trees to cut Old Forge off from the world instead of two."

The **Webb: Wired to Wireless** exhibit at the Goodsell Museum chronicles the on-going challenges that local officials and private entrepreneurs have had to overcome to prevent one falling tree from disconnecting the Town of Webb from all the modern technological inventions that have occurred during the last century.



Along with a touchable display and vintage photographs, the **Wired to Wireless** exhibit includes a timeline that illustrates the technological changes brought to the area. Electric dynamos replaced acetylene gas plants; telegraph and telephone operators were displaced by dial-up switchboards. These early systems were soon made obsolete by microwave & satellite systems. By 1950, a half-dozen televisions in Webb households soon led to the demise of cozy evenings by the fire listening to the radio or playing records on a gramophone. The exhibit also illustrates dramatic technological changes in the business world. The days of essential office typists and stenographers eventually gave way to desktop computers and fax machines. Today, online websites are used to promote recreation and special events, as well as allow visitors to reserve accommodations in the area.

The exhibit will trigger nostalgia for those folks who have lived through this amazing era of technological changes but should also appeal to youngsters born in the 21st Century digital age. Living in a splendid wilderness community but connected to anywhere in the world: libraries of data, face time with friends, distance learning and even telecommuting to good paying jobs may inspire our young people to look for ways to remain in our township and contribute to the quality of life that residents and visitors have enjoyed for the past century of permanent settlement.

**LOOK FOR US IN THE
WEEKLY ADIRONDACK**

A Hike Through
HISTORY
 FROM THE
GOODSELL MUSEUM
 HOME OF THE TOWN OF WEBB HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

~ FUN FACT ~
 The Brown's Trest Guides' Association reintroduced several animals that had been hunted almost to extinction. Moose, Elk and Beaver were all brought to the TOW and released.

~ TEST YOUR HISTORY I.Q. ~
 Which animal was a true success story?
 Answer: Beaver

GOODSELL MUSEUM 2022 State Rte. 28 • P.O. Box 409, Forge, NY • 12420
 (a mile from the post office) • www.webbhistory.org • Open Tues-Sat 10am-3pm

► NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES ◀

We are in the process of converting our web page and our email accounts to another provider. As a first step, we have set up two alternate email addresses.

To reach Kate:

towhadirector@gmail.com

To reach Kristy and the business office:

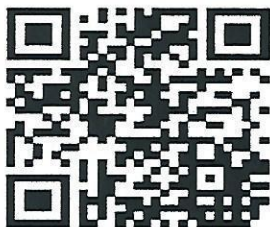
towebbhistorical@gmail.com

We've made it easier to donate:

find PayPal on our website

www.webbhistory.org

facebook.com/GoodsellMuseum



2013 Coming Events

Sunday
December 1, 2013

Reindeer Run
1pm

Sunday
December 8, 2013

Holiday
Open House
Noon-3 pm

**TO OUR SUMMER GUEST
LECTURERS:**

- Peg Masters
- Peter Nelson
- Jeremy Davis
- Ted Comstock
- Geof Longstaff
- Tom Gates
- Roy Reehil

**THANK YOU
FOR MAKING THIS NEW SERIES A
SUCCESS!!**



MAKE THE MOST OF HISTORY MONTH

November is a great time to visit a historical landmark, museum or even share your family history with your grandkids!!

Two interesting websites for your perusal:

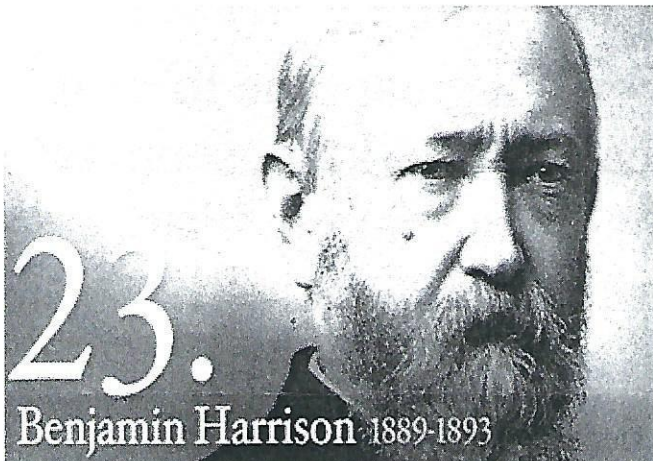
Adirondack Almanack and The New York State History Blog

Now in its seventh year, *Adirondack Almanack* serves more than 7,500 daily subscribers and has been recognized for journalistic achievement by the Adirondack Mountain Club. The *Adirondack Almanack's* nearly thirty contributors include veteran local writers, historians, naturalists, and outdoor enthusiasts from around the Adirondack region. The *Adirondack Almanack* is the online news magazine of *Adirondack Explorer*. Both are nonprofits supported by contributors, readers and advertisers, and are devoted to exploring, protecting and unifying the Adirondack Park.

In its fifth year, *The New York History Blog* offers history lovers and history professionals a connecting point. Targeted at those interested in New York's history, it is an informal but informative site whose aim is to foster a sense of shared mission and purpose among historians of every level. With twenty contributors, it is a way to join with others seeking the same information, make connections and keep up with what others in and around the state are doing.

Many thanks to John Warren, creator of both sites, for all of his hard and tireless work trying to make our lives a little easier and better informed. John founded *Adirondack Almanack* in 2005 and oversees the day-to-day operations of the site. He also edits the *The New York History Blog*. He has worked in media for 25 years as a print journalist, a documentary television producer, and now in new media. He is on the staff of the New York State Writers Institute and is the author of two books of regional history. John also teaches media production, documentary studies and new media at Burlington College. His weekly Adirondack Outdoor Conditions report airs across the Adirondack North Country Region on WNBZ, WSLP, ROCK105 and the North Country Public Radio network.

NEW EXHIBITS COMING IN 2014



125th Anniversary

2014 marks the 125th anniversary of the inauguration of Benjamin Harrison as President of the United States.

To celebrate, we will have on display family photos and objects from Berkeley Lodge, his summer home on Second Lake.

OLD FORGE LIBRARY CELEBRATES ITS'S 100TH YEAR



On February 12, 1914, five people met and voted to establish a free library for the use of inhabitants of the Town of Webb and to be the first trustees of said library. Those first trustees were Walter D. Marks, Jr., C. Ella Lindsay, Maurice Callahan, Alexander T. Claffee and Benjamin B. Knapp. Little did that group know how their efforts would impact the lives of thousands of Town of Webb residents and visitors.

Along with a timeline of library events we will display photos, ephemera and artifacts.

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.

Fulton Chain Telephone Company

by Peg Masters, Town of Webb Historian

“TAKE OFF YOUR HAT, SIR,” thundered Dr. William Seward Webb. In September 1899, the **Fulton Chain Telephone Company**’s chief technician and lineman Frank Sperry was summoned to Forest Lodge at Nehasane Park to repair a cantankerous phone system that was essential for keeping Dr. Webb in touch with the outside world. According to a newspaper report -- Webb’s tone of voice *“aroused Mr. Sperry and he replied using words that are not usually printed in newspapers to the effect that he was an American citizen and he didn’t have to remove his hat and furthermore he assured Dr. Webb that he would not remove his hat.”* *“Pay him off,”* said Dr. Webb to his servant, *“and get somebody else to do the work.”*

The first telephone service in the North Woods occurred several years before Dr. Webb completed his railroad through the region in October 1892. By December of 1887, G. H. P. Gould had established a 7 mile line to his logging camp along the Moose River. This was just 11 years after Alexander Graham Bell secured the first patent for a telephone. In April 1888, the original **Fulton Chain Telephone Company** was established by three partners: Mortimer Alger and Walter W. Roberts of Rome and Frank A. Barrett of Boonville. Frank operated a stagecoach between Boonville and the Forge House on Old Forge Pond, a distance of 26 miles. His father James Barrett and brother Charlie Barrett had a lease to operate the Forge House during this time period. New owners of the Forge House, Samuel Garmon and Dr. Alexander Crosby, had a telephone room built inside the hotel during a remodel of the facility in 1891-1892. Coincidentally Mortimer D. Alger and his sporting buddy from Boonville, George B. Kitts, had the lease to manage the Forge House in 1891. Another milestone in technology occurred during the winter of 1895 when George W. Pulver and Walter S. Fairchild of Syracuse installed electrical apparatus at the Forge House, making it the first hotel in the region to be illuminated by electric lamps.

The **Fulton Chain Telephone Company** underwent a complete reorganization in the spring of 1895. It was incorporated in Boonville with capital of \$4,000. The Directors included: Dwight Bacon Sperry, David Franklin “Frank” Sperry of Old Forge, James and Francena (Sperry) Higby of Big Moose, Dennis Cannon of Chase’s Lake, Daisy (Sperry) Glenn of Petries Corners, and Clarence R. Sperry of Boonville. Over the next several years, the Sperry group expanded service to the Adirondack League Club, Eagle Bay and to the head of Fourth Lake. In 1896, service was also completed to Big Moose, Beaver River as well as to Lowville and Watson in Lewis County. The headquarters for their company was established in May 1896 in a new office on Main Street in Old Forge.

Back to our telephone story from 1899. Known as one of the best guides in the Adirondacks, **David Franklin “Frank” Sperry**, personally took care of former President Benjamin Harrison during his first visit to the Fulton Chain in the summer of 1895 and throughout the construction of Harrison’s camp on Second Lake the following year. Frank Sperry was not known to have a pugnacious disposition by any means nor was he intimidated in the presence of wealth and notoriety. In spite of his dismissal, he demanded and was given a fee of \$15 on his original visit to Webb’s Nehasane estate in 1899. The servants frantically spent the next several days searching the Fulton Chain without success for anyone to repair Webb’s phone line. They informed their boss that Frank Sperry was the only person to make the necessary repairs and a humbled Dr. Webb was obliged to summon Sperry back to Nehasane. Frank agreed with one condition -- that he be allowed to wear his headgear at all times. No hat – no repairs. Frank’s request was granted and telephone service was promptly restored at Forest Lodge.



David Franklin Sperry

1856-1922

Perfect Gifts for every occasion!

Giving gifts that truly benefit the needs of others can be a wonderful way to pay tribute to special people in your life. Gifts given in honor of family and friends at Mother's Day, Father's Day, birthday, anniversary, birth of a child or grandchild or other notable occasions, are significant and lasting ways to show you care.

Consider the choices

There are several ways to make gifts in honor or in memory of others:

Gifts of cash: These are the most popular vehicles for honoring family and friends. They are convenient and can be tax-deductible.

Other property: Memorial and honorary gifts can also be funded with assets such as stocks, bonds and mutual funds that have increased in value. Gifts of assets, other than cash, often provide tax savings and may also help reduce or eliminate capital gains tax on assets.

Leave a legacy:

- ◇ A gift included in your **will** or **living trust** can be the foundation of a lasting legacy.
- ◇ A gift of excess **retirement funds, pension plans** or **IRA's** may enable you to give more while eliminating taxes that could largely deplete these assets.
- ◇ Gifts of **life insurance** that are no longer needed may offer excellent tax benefits and also be a wonderful way to honor someone.

Because the Town of Webb Historical Association is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit corporation, charitable gifts to us often provide significant tax benefits and considerable options for philanthropic involvement.

We are thankful to Robert Goodsell for making *his* home *our* home.

We are also grateful to Millie Wark and Edie Morcy for their legacy gifts that keep giving, year after year.

WE REMEMBER

Saul and Judy Finer in memory of Dr. William Rotton, Theresa Winslow in memory of Charles B. Winslow Sr. and Helen Michel, Tom Gates in memory of Katherine O'Bryne, Ash and Lynda Kellogg in memory of Jack Ball, Dave Hollister and Betty Helmer-Norris,

In memory of Robert Lowenberg: Dave and Carol Clark, Skip and Marion Oswald, Doc and Judy Foley, Jerry and Terry Olsen, Albert and Izzie Worthen, Don and Marty Lawson, Joe and Val Sullivan, Richard and Barbara Hart, Dan and Sheila Rivet

In memory of Ceil Buckley: Peg Masters, Tammy Huckabone, Wende Carr.

