



OFFICERS

President

Cheryl Gerrish

Co-Vice Presidents

Roland Christy Jr.

Martha Denio

Secretary

Marie Adams

Treasurer

Richard Olson

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Linda Cohen

Mary Farmer

Harry Kellogg

June Kiefer

Lee Minnie

Reed Proper

Dawn Timm

DIRECTOR

Gail Murray

ANNUAL MEETING

Our Annual Meeting was held on May 17, 2005. At that time, Trustees Martha Denio, Reed Proper, and Dawn Timm were re-elected for three-year terms.

The following Trustees left the board: Christine Cardner, Michael Cunningham and James Ulrich. Our thanks go to Christine Cardner, former President, for her many years of dedication and service holding various position at the Town of Webb Historical Association. We also owe much thanks to Michael Cunningham for his assistance in grant writing, help with the Stakeholder meetings and words of encouragement pushing us forward. We are also grateful to have had James Ulrich on our board as a Trustee and member of the Architectural Preservation Committee helping to make the Hemmer Cottage Project a reality and keeping us on track at meetings with 'Roberts Rules of Order'.

We are pleased to announce that Cheryl Gerrish, a descendent of one of our founding fathers was elected President at the regular meeting immediately following the Annual Meeting. Co-Vice Presidents for the next year are Roland Christy, Jr. and Martha Denio. Our Secretary will be Marie Adams and Treasurer, Richard Olson.

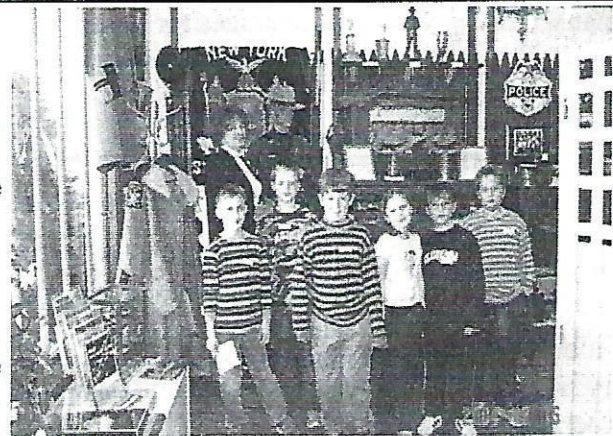
We are looking forward to a very productive year with a great group of hard-working, dedicated volunteers leading the way.

Benefit Auction—Saturday, June 18, 2005—See page 5

EDUCATION

Efforts to expand our educational outreach has had good results. We are pleased to report that the Goodsell Memorial Museum had visits from the Town of Webb Schools 3rd Grade class of Miss Marie Adams in December and the Inlet School classes of Mrs. Daiker and Mrs. Holt recently. Scheduled for May is a visit from Mrs. Diane Gaige's Fourth Grade class from WEBB.

A local Tiger Cub Scout group also paid us a visit.



Miss Marie Adams & her 3rd Grade Class

Education Coordinator Joan Armstrong and the Historical staff are collaborating on new activity sheets and gathering items for hands-on treasure trunks to have available to younger visitors and school children. Louise Watson will also be helping with developing programs for older children.

Coming Events

June 8, 2005—*Roundtable Remembrance*—2 PM
Our first of many get-togethers of people just wanting to share stories, photos and information. Discussions will be led by Cheryl Gerrish, President.

June 18, 2005—*Benefit Auction Preview* 9-11 AM
Bidding starts promptly at 11 AM. Antiques, vintage, Adirondack, new and nearly new items—**something for everyone**. Donation items accepted year-round.

Friday Mornings July & August—History's Mysteries of the Fulton Chain—Shuttle Bus Tours—
Contact us for more information.

July 20, 2005—*Victorian Party on the Porch* - appetizers 4PM, light buffet dinner 5 PM, dessert Fundraiser-social event, limited seating, \$15 per person Call Now for Reservations.

August 6, 2005—*Postcard, Paper and Bottle Show and Sale*—183 Park Avenue, Municipal Building, Old Forge, 10 AM—3 PM. Invitational exhibitor displaying a collection of White's of Utica, NY Advertising Pottery. Admission

August 7, 2005—*Taste of the Fulton Chain Benefit Cruise*—6-8 PM. Cruise the Fulton Chain of Lakes, enjoy signature dishes from the area's fine restaurants aboard the Clearwater II. Proceeds to benefit the Architectural Preservation Committee for Hemmer Cottage. Reservations required \$25. Call 369-3838.

Business Members

We are pleased to announce the following Business memberships as of May 20, 2005. Let it be noted that in this area of many family run businesses, several businesses choose to be recognized as Households or other levels of membership. This fall, we plan to run a complete list of all members in our newsletter.

BUSINESS GOLD

Adirondack Homes & Real Estate
Enchanted Forest/Water Safari
George Villiere, Esq.
Helmer's Fuel and Trucking
Old Forge Hardware
Wilderness Interiors

BUSINESS SPONSOR

19th Green Motel
Adirondack Bank
Adirondack River Outfitters
Artworks
Bob's Painting & Staining
Camp Danmark, Inc.
Candy Cottage
Community Bank, NA
Mark Hannah Contracting
Moore & Hart CPA's
Northeastern Loggers Association
Old Forge Cruise Line, Inc.
Old Forge Department Store (ACE)
Steak House
Sunset Nursing Home
Timm Associates, Inc.
Waldheim
Water's Edge Inn & Conference Center

Memorials

The Town of Webb Historical Association is grateful to the many members and non-members who choose to remember the lives of loved ones with memorials to our organization. The names below reflect donations from January 1—April 30, 2005

Geraldine Brodock for William Brodock; Rosemary Coffey for Robert Coffey; Elizabeth Gray for David V. Gray; Philip Hardy for Larry Payne and Laurel Johnston; John and Margaret Hopsicker for Betty Spears; Herbert and Ann LeFevre for Frank Teich; Theresa Winslow for Helen Michael; Fred and Judy Ehrensbeck for Kit Ehrensbeck; Eileen Chaffee-Schultz for Jack and John Chaffee; Marilyn Hafner for Frances Hafner; Marianne McDonough for Jamie McDonough; Edgar VanderVeer for Marie VanderVeer; Dick and Roxanne Bird for Marion Bird and Don Bird; Jane Eyre for Hank Kashiwa; Mr. & Mrs. W. Robert Christie for Robert N. Lindsay, Jr.; David and Paula Weal for Eunice and Brate Huguenin; Muriel Marvin for Laurel, Arthur and Harry Marvin II; Dick and Jean Williams for Barbara W. Roberts; Tim and Jody Gross for George Gross; Mary B. Evans for James Evans; Dorothea Una Deis for LeRoy W. Deis; Janet B. Fedder for Robert P. Fedder; Mrs. Robert T. Searing Jr. for Robert T. Searing, Jr.; Robert and Terry Lehnen for LeRoy W. Deis and A. Richard Cohen; Virginia R. Gross for Dot and Ken Rivette; Marty and Don Lawson for Robert Lindsay and Jean Liddle; Mary Ellen LaFleche for the LaFleche/White/LeBlanc Families.

History's Mysteries - Nellie Had A Date With Death!

By Peg Masters, Town of Webb Historian

Nearly a century ago, the sensational trial of Chester Gillette for the murder on Big Moose Lake of Grace Brown got underway in the Herkimer County courthouse. Widespread attention will again focus on Gillette-Brown story in 2006, the 100th anniversary of the event. Ceil Buckley of Thendara recalls another tragic tale in the history of our township - the 1899 axe-murder of Nellie Widrig at the Fulton Chain Bridgeman lumber mill boarding house.

On September 2, 1899, Helen "Nellie" Widrig and her lover Horace Norton arrived at Fulton Chain to work at Henry Bridgeman's new mill, located just south of the George Deis & Son planing mill along the Moose River. Henry had advanced Horace money to go get his "wife" in Camden, NY and had agreed to pay him one-dollar a day for labor and two dollars a week for Nellie to wait tables at the house where the Bridgemans lived and boarded employees. Henry Bridgeman, a seasoned lumberman, was born in Greig, Lewis County in 1827 and had secured a contract with the Beckwith Piano Company to produce sounding boards.

Nellie Widrig, not unlike Grace Brown who journeyed with her lover to the Adirondacks, was born in New York to parents of humble means, and like Grace, exchanged love letters with Horace Norton, later found in his trunk at the boarding house. On the evening of her violent death, September 21st, 1899, Henry and Miranda Bridgeman heard Nellie and Horace quarreling in the kitchen after supper. Nellie told Mrs. Bridgeman that *"He is so jealous, that I can't do anything. He has accused me of flirting and waving my hand at the men. He has killed one wife, sent another to an asylum, and is now trying to kill me."* As the rest of the household settled in for the night, the couple's argument continued outside on the porch. Mr. Bridgeman heard a noise like a chair being dragged across the floor in the lower room and another noise as if something had fallen down the steps.

They found Nellie's bludgeoned body lying at the foot of the porch steps and summoned Coroner Richards from Frankfort and Dr. Stuart Nelson from Old Forge. Three wounds penetrated the head and neck of the victim including one that severed her ear and fractured her skull. A bloody axe near the body was the weapon that caused her death, according to the Doctors' trial testimonies.

Fear reigned in the hearts of local citizens. Search parties were sent out to look for Norton and a warrant was offered for his arrest. Three weeks later, nearly half-starved, he was captured in a barn near Turin, NY where he was born some 42 years before. On October 6th, a throng of spectators gathered at the Fulton Chain Station. Horace was arraigned before Justice Charles VanAuken and charged with first-degree murder. His four-week trial took place in February and March of 1900 in the Herkimer County Court house before capacity filled crowds.

Like Chester Gillette at his murder trial, Horace Norton appeared clean-cut in a tidy suit, hair neatly combed, showed an intense interest in the proceedings, and had a healthy appetite according to his jailers. He chatted amicably with family members throughout the trial. His face remained emotionless as Mrs. Sarah A. Widrig of Camden, Nellie's widowed mother, burst into tears when asked to identify her daughter's love letters to Norton. The Hon. A. B. Steele of Herkimer - a Fourth Lake summer resident, was appointed the defense attorney. In his closing arguments he asked the jurors, *"Do you want to say to Horace Norton, no human being saw you commit this crime, but you were the last living person seen with the victim, and therefore you will have to suffer."*

In 1908, when Chester Gillette was executed in the electric chair at Auburn State Prison for the murder of Grace Brown, Horace Norton was working as a nurse in the Auburn prison hospital. By some twist of fate, he had escaped the death penalty for the axe murder of Nellie Widrig. The gruesome Widrig murder prompted the township's governing fathers to purchase two jail cells for the Fulton Chain townhall, currently on display at the Town of Webb Historical Association. The boarding house, scene of the tragedy, still exists in the tranquil hamlet of Thendara according to Ceil Buckley. For nearly one hundred years, strangers have placed flowers at the grave of Grace Brown in DeRuyter, NY. The location of Nellie Widrig's grave remains a mystery.

We would like to thank some of our volunteers

Jeff Joseph for hanging our door bell and helping out at Hemmer Cottage. **Supt. Kenneth Perlman, Geroge Martin, Robert (Butch) Zelazowski, and the mid-state Community Service Crew #1** for making the move of furniture from CAP-21 to the Goodsell Museum and from the Museum to the Hemmer Cottage on one of the coldest days of this winter. **Dick Olson** for his help with photography. **Ed Girtler** for all his help hanging bulletin boards, cabinets, window shades, changing hardware. **Annette Eyre** for her work on our photo collection. **Loretta Gaudin** for her research on the Knotty Pine Restaurant. **Alexis Russell** for her help with many office duties. **Dan Tickner** for his many hours helping with the computers. **Ron DeBree** for his work archiving newspaper articles and assembly of the shelving units. **Tina Olson** for her work on membership. **Mike Wilcox** for snowblowing a path to the door from the driveway. **Don Norton and Mike Wilcox** for plowing the drive. **Barb Proper** for her work on Fulton Chain ephemera from the town hall . . . to name a few.

Items Available in our Gift Shop

Books

- OLD FORGE – GATEWAY TO THE ADIRONDACKS - \$19.99
- ADIRONDACK LAKES - \$26.99
- BREAKING TRAIL—\$19.49
- ADIRONDACK FIRE TOWERS - \$20.00
- NIGHT OF DISASTER The New York Central Gulf Curve Wreck - \$11.95
- HERKIMER COUNTY AT 200 - \$25.00
- THE TROOPERS ARE COMING - NEW YORK STATE TROOPERS 1917-1943 - \$17..95

Other Items

- 2004 Collector Ornament—The Strand \$10.00
- 2005 Collector Ornament—TOW School (available soon) \$10.00
- Poster—The Narrows by Bernard Hemmer—\$50.00

All items are subject to sales tax—shipping available

Roundtable Remembrance

On June 8th at 2 PM our first of hopefully many get-togethers (Roundtable Remembrance) will be held. The purpose of this get-together is for conversation, collecting stories and sharing information. The public is invited to share photos and ephemera (paper such as maps, menus, and advertisements). No reservations are necessary, just stop in at the Goodsell Memorial Museum. Future Roundtables will be announced as the schedule is developed. The topic for our first roundtable will be 'Early Experiences in the Town of Webb.'

VOLUNTEERS

The Historical Association has many opportunities available for volunteers. If you like to talk to people, love the history of our area, like to work with your hands, type, research or organize closets, we may be able to use your help for a few hours here or there.

Building and Grounds Update

Steps to obtain a "Conditions Report" of the Goodsell Home, Ice House and Carriage Barn are progressing. Partial funding for this professional report has been secured from the John E. Strugg fund of the National Trust. Bids are being requested from preservation architects. Additional funding sources are being reviewed. Estimated cost of this report could be in the \$5,000 to \$9,500 range. This report is needed to help us determine priorities for restoration, maintenance and repairs to our buildings. Known areas in need of attention are the Carriage Barn foundation, the 2nd floor walls of the Carriage Barn that are spreading, the need to address some kind of foundation for the icehouse and additional insulation or ventilation for the museum attic to name a few.

It is important that careful decisions are made when prioritizing work to be done and methods of repair, restoration and maintenance as the Town of Webb Historical Association will be applying for the status of National Register of Historic Places and New York State in the near future. This report will help us make those decisions.

BENEFIT AUCTION - June 18, 2005

Our staff and volunteers are getting ready for our third annual BENEFIT AUCTION to be held on June 18, 2005 on the grounds of the Goodsell Memorial Museum, 2993 State Route 28 in Old Forge.

Donations of antiques, new, nearly new and Adirondack style items are being collected. Preview of items starts at 9 AM. Bidding starts promptly at 11 AM. Items will be randomly selected.

Some of the items already collected are: a 1970 Chrysler Wood Outboard 15' Pleasure Boat, rocking chairs, vintage kerosene heater, wood stove, vintage kitchen items, glassware, frames, lamps, wicker, canoe and other antiques, furniture, vintage items and collectibles.

We hope you can attend and help make this event a successful fundraiser. Please bring a lawn chair for your comfort. Volunteers will be registering buyers beginning at 10 AM. Refreshments and a light lunch will be available for purchase.

ROUNDTABLE REMEMBRANCE

June 8, 2005 2 PM

Share your memories and/or photos

Topic: Your Early Experiences
in the Town of Webb

Visit our Website

www.webbhistory.org

email

director@webbhistory.org

Museum Committee

The Museum Committee has been busy the past several months gathering information and artifacts for an exhibit at the Arts Center/Old Forge that will be in place May 13– June 5, 2005. We hope you will be able to stop there and see “Things with Wings” a brief glimpse of airplanes, floatplanes, insects, birds and also the expected and the unexpected things with wings.

The Committee has made changes and additions to the displays at Hemmer Cottage on Park Avenue. Some of the changes include additions of Bernard Hemmer’s artist smock, his forge said to have been used to forge some of his iron work, and samples of his sculpture and artwork. The guide and waterfront exhibits include photos reproduced from originals that tell a brief photo story of the waterfront at Old Forge Pond and a sampling of some well-known guides. Call the Historical Association for dates and times that the exhibits can be viewed.

In addition, look for our traveling displays at the Antique and Classic Boat Show at the Old Forge Pond on July 9th, and the Story Telling Festival at McCauley Mountain on September 10th.

If you haven’t seen our **“Law Enforcement in the Rural North Country”** exhibit yet, please stop in at the Goodsell Memorial Museum before October 31, 2005 to see the jail cell used from 1905—1980’s in the Town of Webb, crowd control devices, uniforms, awards, photos, etc. from the different law enforcement agencies in Webb over the years.