



THE JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

www.thejeffersonhistoricalsociety.org

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VISIT THE JHS SCHOOLHOUSE AND EXPLORE THE SCHOOLHOUSE TRAIL

Be sure to visit a delightful gem in Jefferson — the spruced up one-room schoolhouse on N. Harpersfield Rd, just east of the Jefferson Town Hall. Beginning May 30, the schoolhouse will be open between 12:00 and 3:00pm the first and third Sundays of each month until Labor Day Sunday.

New signs beckon you to the saucy-red exterior of the

schoolhouse built in 1837 and used until 1930. Enter into a bright, airy interior where you can explore a room filled with period desks facing the teacher's desk and a wood-burning stove used to heat the room. Books, teacher's small belongings, clocks, and a globe are placed around the room. Of special interest is a beautiful, large map newly restored by JHS member Clara Clack and framed by Tom Nershi. [See related article].

Then wander onto The Schoolhouse Trail that begins directly behind the schoolhouse. Follow the trail as it winds down a slight hill and explore the ruins of an old mill. This mill, built by the brothers Nathan and Levi Mann, had a substantial stone foundation and replaced an earlier mill that burned down



in 1900. The town purchased this mill site in 1958.

Walk further along the trail and turn right onto a small bridge over a stream that once sourced the mill. Or turn left and walk the trail through woods and brush for about one-half mile as you listen for birds and enjoy the trees and vegetation. This trail connects to the snowmobile trail that goes behind the Town Hall. The new trails were built by Ben and Chase Buck working with Barb Palmer and support of the Schoharie County Soil and Water District. Both trails are easy walking and open to the public year round.

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**SCHOOLHOUSE
1854
WALL MAP
OF
NORTH AMERICA
BY
JACOB MONK**

Cartographer Jacob Monk (c. 1850 - c. 1860) was a Baltimore based American publisher of wall, pocket, and case format maps active in the mid-19th century. August Hoen and Company (c. 1840 - 1981) was a Baltimore based engraving and lithography firm active in the middle part of the 19th century.



Published in 1854 by Jacob Monk, this large and beautiful wall map that now hangs in the Jefferson Schoolhouse displays much of North America from the southern border of Canada to Central America, the West Indies, and the northwestern parts of South America. It details the United States in full as well as parts of modern day Canada, and shows North America during an important period of territorial and cultural expansion following the Mexican American War and during height of the California Gold Rush.

Interestingly, the California Gold Region around Sacramento, nestled between

the Sierra Nevada's and the Coastal Ranges, remains surprisingly inaccurate. The map also shows the western territories as they existed at the time with New Mexico extending from California to Texas, Utah reaching from California to Kansas, and Washington and Oregon extending eastward to Nebraska Territory. Nebraska Territory itself is shown at its fullest extent from Kansas to the border with British America (Canada). Oklahoma is divided up among three American Indian Nations, the Chah-Lah-Kee, the Muscogee, and the Chah-Ta. Additionally, the map depicts several wagon routes and proposed railroads, as well

as springs, mountain passes, forests, swamps, and deserts. Attempts to illustrate the shipping lanes along both the east and west coasts are indicated with numerous vignettes showing sailing ships. A large inset map in the lower left quadrant shows the world on a Mercator Projection, and to the right of this is a chart detailing the towns and counties of the United States. All surrounded by an elaborate decorative border with a floral, almost baroque motif.

MAJOR GEORGE C. GIBBS A CIVIL WAR SOLDIER

By Stephanie Ruquet

Summit Town and Stamford Village Historian Karen Cuccinello recently shared a Civil War era photograph of George C. Gibbs with JHS. George served in the 3rd New York Cavalry for over four years, one of twenty soldiers in that regiment from the town of Jefferson. He was a cousin of Cyrenus Gibbs Tyler who served in the 134th Infantry and whose name is on the Jefferson Civil War monument.

Three of George's ancestors were veterans of the French and Indian War, and Caleb Gibbs, George's great-grandfather, was a veteran of the American Revolution.

George's grandfather, Cyrenus Gibbs, moved to Harpersfield from Connecticut in 1787, and was active in local government, serving terms as judge and town supervisor. George's great-aunt, Statira Gibbs, was the wife of Colonel Stephen Judd, founding father and benefactor of the town of Jefferson.

Born in Harpersfield in 1832, George C. Gibbs was the eldest son of John Wesley Gibbs and Dortha Louisa Merriam. In about 1840, John & Dortha Gibbs and their family moved to Jefferson, settling on property on the south side of Mount Jefferson, on what is now Higgins Road, near the source of the west branch of the Delaware River. George's youngest siblings were born in Jefferson.

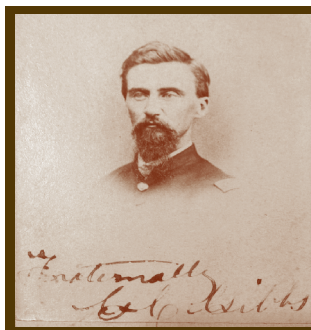
In the mid-1850's, George married Ophelia Selina Stewart, daughter of Elijah and Abigail (not Abigail) Stewart of Jefferson. Ophelia died young, only twenty-two years old. She is buried in the Stewart Cemetery in Whiting Hollow. Both the cemetery and the house Ophelia grew up in are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In those early years, George taught school in winter and farmed in summer.

At the age of twenty-one, George was elected the town's Superintendent of Schools.

By 1860, he was working as a carpenter.

On August 19, 1861, four months after the start of the Civil War, George and his brother Charles enlisted in the 3rd Cavalry. George was mustered in on the 22nd with the rank of sergeant and assigned the job of quartermaster of Company E. He was commissioned first lieutenant in 1863. Charles was the bugler of Company E.

During the Battle of Goldsboro Bridge in North Carolina on December 17, 1862, George was slightly wounded when he was hit by a musket ball. He escaped serious injury because the shot hit a packet of papers in his coat pocket. After four years and three months of service, George was mustered out on November 29, 1865, with the rank of captain, a reputation for bravery, and a distinguished service record.



GEORGE C. GIBBS

On May 18, 1866, New York State Governor Reuben Fenton commissioned George a brevet-major of the New York Volunteers for "gallant and meritorious services in the late war." George C. Gibbs proudly used the rank with his name for the rest of his life.

George's post-Civil War life was also distinguished. He served a term in the New York State Assembly and was later a Harpersfield supervisor and town justice. He was active in the Delaware County Masons and the Grand Army of the Republic veterans' organization. George designed and constructed the first two fire towers on Mt. Utsayantha, several homes in Stamford Village, the Rexmere Hotel, the Episcopal Church on the eastern end of the village, the kitchen and dining room of the Stamford Presbyterian Church, and many other buildings in Delaware County including the county jail in Delhi.

In 1871, George married Laura Lockwood of Ohio and they lived in a home George built on West Main Street, Stamford. They had one son, Ransom Lockwood Gibbs who was a lawyer in Stamford before moving to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where he became a judge. In 1906, George and Laura retired to Laura's hometown of Franklin. Major George C. Gibbs died in 1914.

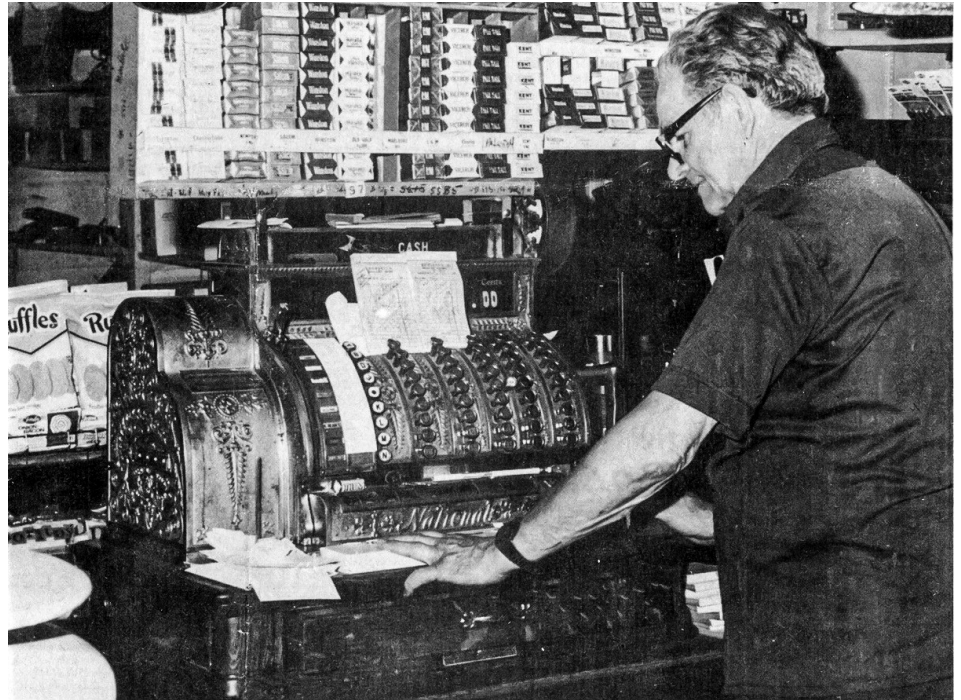
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT — MEMORIES SHARED

By Bonnie Dailey

Back in the '50's and '60's, Harold Hewlett lived at the four corners where Main Street meets Summit Street, the busiest corner in town where a Stop sign was installed. He couldn't help notice that people weren't always stopping at the Stop sign. Especially new drivers – like high school boys. He finally became so irritated that he called the police and asked them to monitor his corner for traffic violators.

Word spread (we all know how it is in a small town), and the boys at JCS heard about the traffic 'trap.' They decided to have some fun with it. So when school was out that day, the boys with cars got together and made a plan. They drove up and down Main Street, dutifully stopping at the corner, looking both ways (maybe two or three times) and then going ahead, only to turn around and come back the other way and do the same thing all over again. It must have been a busy corner! Only one person got a ticket that day, and guess who it was – Harold Hewlett!!!

Jefferson memories live in the memories of its senior citizens. The Harold Hewlett story is just one. Since our mission includes preserving the history of Jefferson, JHS is recording memories of earlier days from some of our citizens. Diane Ericson, Bonnie Dailey, and Michaela Lynch (a high



Harold Hewlett is proud of many of his possessions, but few are dearer than this register built in 1913 that he purchased in 1947, the year he took over his father's store.

HAROLD HEWLETT

school student from Stamford) recorded six oral-history interviews over the past few months, and plan to record many more. The videos will be on view at Judd Hall once the museum opens, and segments may be used in videos about Jefferson that JHS is putting together.

The interviews have been great fun, and reveal some wonderful stories! We heard about the Halloween prank that ended in a full-size sleigh sitting on top of a church roof, an Easter egg hunt that left sulphurous eggs lurking in a field the following summer(!), Maple Festival eggs hard-boiled in maple sap, family farms handed down through generations, and the etiquette of living with a party-line telephone.

We would love to hear your story! If you have memories of Jefferson in the old days and would like to participate in our oral history project, please let us know. Send an email to The Jefferson Historical Society at historicalsocietyjefferson@gmail.com. Or contact Diane Ericson 607 222 6125 ericsonjd4@gmail.com

JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY EVENTS - SPRING/SUMMER 2021

Date	Time	Event
Fri. 5/14	7:00pm	Dave Ruch Concert Of Catskills Music On Jhs Facebook Page
Sun. 5/16	3:00pm	Video Premier - Judd Hall, Jefferson Town Green (Zoom)
Sun 5/23	3:00pm	Paul Trotta - Native American Tools (Zoom)
Fri. 5/28-Sun 5/30	9am-2pm	Spring Yard Sale - Maple Museum
Sun. 5/30	8am	Andy Mason - Bird Walk From Fuller District Schoolhouse
Sun. 5/30	12-3pm	Fuller District Schoolhouse Open
Sat. 6/5	11am	Kevin Berner - Historic Main St. Business Walk Meet At Maple Museum
Sun. 6/6	12-3pm	Fuller District Schoolhouse Open
Sun. 6/20	12-3pm	Fuller District Schoolhouse Open
Sun. 6/20	1-2pm	Trail Walk From Fuller District Schoolhouse
Fri. 7/2	7pm	Upper Catskill String Quartet
Sun. 7/4	12-3pm	Fuller District Schoolhouse Open
Sat. 7/10	11am	Kevin Berner - Old Jefferson Cemetery Walk Meet At Maple Museum
Sun. 7/18	12-3pm	Fuller District Schoolhouse Open
Sun. 7/18	1-2pm	Trail Walk From Fuller District Schoolhouse
Sun. 8/1	12-3pm	Fuller District Schoolhouse Open
Sat. 8/7???	11am	Kevin Berner - Old Jefferson Cemetery Walk Meet At Maple Museum
Sun. 8/15	12-3pm	Fuller District Schoolhouse Open
Fri. 8/27-Sun 8/29	9am-2pm	Summer Yard Sale - Judd Hall
Fri. 9/3-Sun 9/5	9am-2pm	Summer Yard Sale - Judd Hall
Tba June		Celebration Of Strings - Live

Some of these events are made possible with funds from the Decentralization Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and administered in Schoharie County by the Greene County Council on the Arts dba CREATE Council for Resources to Enrich the Arts, Technology & Education, and Humanities New York.

Make Your Mark on Jefferson Consider 'THE FUND FOR THE FUTURE'

The Jefferson Historical Society could not have accomplished all it has without the support of its members, donors, and grant-funding organizations and foundations. To plan for the future financial well-being of the organization, JHS has established the "Fund for the Future." Contributions to this dedicated account will help JHS continue its vibrant role in the community, researching, preserving, and celebrating the history and culture of the town for many tomorrows. As always, donations to this special fund are tax-exempt as allowed by law. For further information, please contact Mark Sisk, 607 652-2167.

Amazon-Smile A New Way To Support the JHS

You can now support the Jefferson Historical Society when you make purchases on amazon.com. Amazon will donate 0.5% of all your eligible purchases to the JHS when you select it to be the beneficiary of the donation. Before beginning your next shopping on Amazon, visit smile.amazon.com and select Jefferson Historical Society as the organization to receive the donations from the Amazon Foundation. But be careful, there are many different Jefferson historical societies. Be sure to choose the one that says "Jefferson, NY!" Then always do your shopping through the smile.amazon.com portal. The selection and prices are the same as the regular Amazon.com website and JHS will get a donation!!

More Trees For The Green

The Green is looking so much better with the trees planted last year and we are grateful to everyone who donated to make this possible. Three more Sugar Maple trees will be planted on the Town Green in early June, filling spaces where non-viable trees had to be removed. JHS also will care for the older, remaining trees by mulching and selective pruning of dead branches. And, pavers for sponsors who donated in the fall will be installed. If you are interested in sponsoring on-going work on the trees, please contact 607 652-7209/ gailrentsch@gmail.com.

THE GREAT JHS SPRINGTIME INDOOR YARD SALE

Memorial Day Weekend
Friday - Sunday
May 28, 29, & 30
Hours 9 - 2
In the Maple Museum
221 Creamery Road, Jefferson
Lots & lots of great stuff!

THE 4TH ANNUAL JHS INDOOR & OUTDOOR YARD SALE

Two big weekends
Friday - Sunday
August 27 - 29
&
Labor Day Weekend
September 3 - 5
Hours 9 - 2
Judd Hall, 163 Main Street, Jefferson
More great stuff including a porch full of boxes to rummage through!

Rise To New Heights!

Getting to the second floor of Judd Hall, where Jefferson's history will be housed and displayed, has never been an easy climb. Steep, narrow stairs are the only way up — a not-so-friendly access for people with bad knees and hips, and a violation of federal laws requiring handicap accessibility. To provide easy access to this floor, **public elevator in Jefferson** is being installed in time for the Grand Opening of the Nicholas J. Juried Family Foundation Jefferson Historical Museum.



JHS recently completed the heavy work of renovating the upper floor of Judd Hall. New walls, new ceiling tiles, new lights, plank floors sanded, and a separate archive room to preserve, store, and organize our historic resources means that the dream of a museum to house Jefferson's history will soon be realized. The temperature-controlled upper story of Judd Hall, where once secret meetings of Jefferson's Masons were held, will be open for the public to view special exhibitions, artifacts, videos of earlier times, and recorded interviews with Jefferson's residents who have contributed first-person remembrances of the way Jefferson used to be.

Judd Flood and Mud

Since JHS purchased Judd Hall in December 2017, quite a **bit** restoration in the dirt-floored basement has been done. The north wall of the foundation was replaced and heavy plastic was put on the floor to minimize moisture entering the area. The walls were covered with spray-foam insulation, a new furnace was installed, and a heat duct into the kitchen was added. And, then, on March 11, 2021, we discovered more than a foot of water in the basement! The culprit: a frozen water meter. The Jefferson Fire Department came to our rescue pumping out the water, for which they have our grateful appreciation.

A big problem as the result of the flooding was that the almost brand-new furnace needed to be replaced. Our insurance company covered \$2500 of the \$3000 replacement costs and all the expenses of a restoration company's efforts to dry the basement. Judd Hall is back in business.

AUTOGRAPH BOOKS

By Stephanie Ruquet

Many of us of the older generation remember having autograph books in which we collected autographs of friends, teachers and family at graduation time. I remember having one with a white cover and pastel colored pages when I graduated from 8th grade. I also remember packing it among my treasures each time I moved when I was younger. I haven't seen it in years and suspect it is either in a forgotten box in my attic or moldering in a landfill somewhere.



According to articles on the internet, the tradition of collecting autographs originated in Germany nearly five hundred years ago. The custom came to America with our early German settlers. Today this old custom has all but disappeared, at least in this form. Students still collect autographs, but in school yearbooks rather than autograph books.

On a recent visit to Catnap Books in Cobleskill, I chanced upon two little autograph books in a plastic bin of Schoharie County ephemera. They had belonged to Lizzie M. Rowe of Jefferson and the autographs are dated from 1888 to 1895. Born in 1875, Lizzie was the daughter of Augustus and Amanda Rowe. She had a brother named Arthur and sisters Lillian, Millie, and Jennie, all of whom signed her autograph books. So did

friends, her teacher, neighbors, her mother, and other relatives.

And even silliness:

Nearly all the autographs were accompanied by rhymes, such as:

***If ever this book should
chance to roam
Box its ears and send it
home.***

***Remember me early
Remember me late
Remember forever
Your old school-mate***

But I think my favorite is this one which was written in each of Lizzie's two autograph books by two different boys:

Or words of wisdom:

***Life is full of shadows
Keep in the sunshine***

***Remember me when
far far off
Where the woodchucks die
with the whooping cough***

Or wishes for future happiness:

***May your life be as
happy and free
As the waves of the
dark blue sea***

Two of Lizzie M. Rowe's autograph books are now back in Jefferson, in the collection of the JHS.

**WITH OUR THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING
FOR 2020 DONATIONS IN SUPPORT OF JHS**

Kay Ackerman
Edward & Jacqueline Atkins
Jim Avena & Janet Henry
Joyce & David Barber
Daniel & Kathleen Becce
Harriet Berard
George C. Bergleitner Jr
Kevin Berner
William & Christine Bivona
Christopher Botha
Bunny Brightly-Bjercke
Wesley R. Brown
Barbara Busharis
Carol & John Campbell
Linda Carmosino & Matthew Roberts
Thomas & Clara Courtenay-Clack
Roger M. Cohn
James P. & Annemarie Coiley
Elaine Cooper
Bonnie C. Dailey
Sue & Dan Dayton
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Nicholas J. Juried Family Foundation
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Schoharie County Soil & Water
Conservation District
Ed & Betty Lou Schwarz
Elisabeth Searles & Richard Friedberg
Seward Sand & Gravel Inc.
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Frank H. Skidmore Jr.
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Jim & Marie-Louise Sullivan
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Randy & Ruth Treadwell
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Patty Tully & Frank Davilla
David & Sallie Verner
Bert Vilato
Lynne Ward
Glenna Weber
Dolores Wenzel
Steve Whitesell
Andrew B. & Jenny Worsnopp
Ingrid Zeman
Cosmo & Lynda Zingaropoli

And a big "Thank You!" to those members and friends who generously donated goods, services and/or their time to make a very challenging year a successful one for the Jefferson Historical Society.



**NICHOLAS J. JURIED
FAMILY FOUNDATION**

"Making a Difference"

We recently received a very substantial donation from the Nicholas J. Juried Family Foundation. Nick Juried through the foundation has been our greatest financial supporter during the entire existence of the Jefferson Historical Society. He contributed half of the costs of the original purchase of Judd Hall from the Masons. Soon thereafter he paid for the entire cost of replacing the badly deteriorated roof on the building. Since that time, his support along with several grants secured by Carol Bodnar have allowed us to make great progress in restoring Judd Hall.

Nick grew up in Gilboa and although he now lives in Austin, TX still has a great love for this area and its history. He has been an incredibly significant patron for many local historical and community groups.

JEFFERSON HISTORY ON VIDEO



Alex Berner

The first video in a projected series that will offer narrated documentaries of specific areas of Jefferson history was launched last fall. This video focuses on the recently renamed Judd Hall, the former Masonic Hall, located on Main Street. This majestic building has a long and varied history and the video especially documents the building from 2017 when it was acquired by JHS and extensively restored to the present. Alex Berner, the talented son of Kevin Berner, produced the video and composed an original soundtrack. The video can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/twvL2s87hsA>

The second video, currently in the works, will focus on Jefferson's extraordinary Town Green, describing its history, its uses from its beginning to the present day,

and the special events that have taken place there. Also produced and composed by Alex Berner and narrated by JHS member Bob Glas, the video includes numerous historic and recent images of the Green throughout its history. JHS plans to present this and the Judd Hall video

together online on Sunday, May 16 at 3pm. Contact the historicalsocietyjefferson@gmail.com to get the Zoom link. Updates will be shown on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/The-Jefferson-Historical-Society-309739662479973>



Jefferson Town Green

JHS MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Membership Categories

_____ Individual yearly \$15 _____ Couple/family yearly \$25
 _____ Individual lifetime \$100 _____ Couple lifetime \$150

Memberships qualify for a 10% discount on JHS merchandise and **may vote** at JHS monthly meetings, held the first Tuesday of each month.

Donation Opportunities

Judd Hall restoration \$ _____ School House \$ _____ Town Green \$ _____
 Fund For The Future \$ _____ Other (please specify) _____ \$ _____
 My donation is in memory of/in honor of _____

Please make your check out to the **“Jefferson Historical Society”** and mail it together with this form to P.O. Box 143, Jefferson, New York 12093.

The Jefferson Historical Society is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Thank you for your support!

JHS BOOKS AND T-SHIRTS

Book Orders	Unit Price	#Books/T-shirt/color	10% Member Discount	Cost
Schools of Jefferson	\$25			
Jefferson Then and Now - Volume 1	\$20			
Jefferson Then and Now -Volume 2	\$20			
Jefferson Then and Now -Volume 3	\$20			
Maple Festival - The Jefferson Years	\$20			
Willard Rising Stewart 1933 Diary	\$20			
History of Jefferson – Sesquicentennial 1953	\$5			
Generations Remembered – Jefferson	\$20			
Generations Remembered - Harpersfield	\$20			
Jefferson L.A.S. Cookbook, 1924	\$10			
History of the Jefferson United Methodist Church	\$5			
Slougher’s Hilariously Illustrated History of Schoharie County	\$10			
JHS Tee shirt: sizes M, L, XL & 2X in navy.	\$15			
Postage & Handling per each item	\$5			
Total				

JHS Members receive a 10% discount.
 Please make your check out to the “Jefferson Historical Society” and mail it together with this form to P.O. Box 143, Jefferson, New York 12093

Jefferson Historical Society
P.O. Box 143
Jefferson, N.Y. 12093

