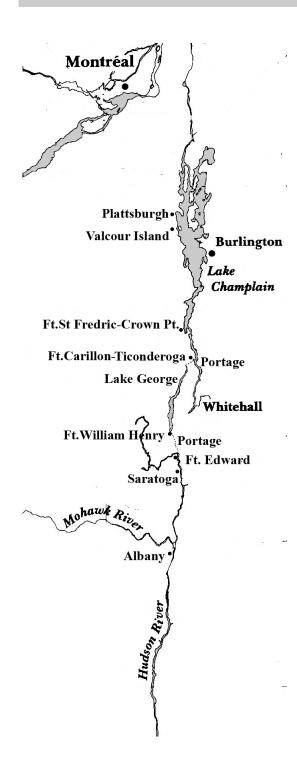


JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WWW.thejeffersonhistoricalsociety.org

January 2024



Champlain—Lake George—Hudson River "The Great Warpath"

By Bob Glas

Twenty-thousand years ago a mile-high glacier ground its way south gouging a trench down to the Atlantic. When it slowly receded the Atlantic followed, creating an inland sea that eventually pinched off as the earth rebounded from the weight. Lakes George and Champlain eventually drained north into the St. Lawrence River while the Hudson River drained south to the Atlantic.

As the climate warmed various Indian cultures moved north into the valleys. Algonquin speaking tribes settling on the lands west and north of Champlain, and Iroquoian speakers to the west and south, led to competition for hunting grounds and then, later, for trapping, a conflict that was exacerbated by the European hunger for furs. The portage connecting Lake Champlain and Lake George is only four miles long whereas the Lake George portage to the Hudson is fifteen miles. For hundreds of years raids followed the water route back and forth even to the Mohawk River giving it the name "Athawominee — The Great War Path."

In 1609 in a bid to befriend the Algonquin tribes around Quebec the French explorer/colonizer Samuel de Champlain accompanied them on a retaliatory raid against the Iroquois. Finding them near Crown Point Champlain and a companion fired their matchlock arquebus (a primitive musket) killing two chieftains. The Iroquois fled in terror never having experienced modern arms. The lake retained his name thereafter.

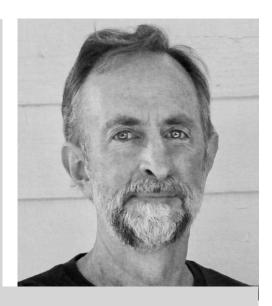
The French were the first to control the waterway with a fort built on Isle Le Motte (northern Champlain) in 1666. The British built a palisaded fort at Chimney Pt. (across from Crown Pt.) in 1731. The French responded by building Fort St. Fredric, a large stone structure, on Crown Pt., the foundations of which can be seen today.

Continued on pg. 3

President's Report

By Kevin Berner

We are excited to look back on all that was accomplished by the Jefferson Historical Society in 2023 and to look forward to 2024. In October, we devoted our entire trustees' meeting to prioritizing our goals for the upcoming year. I presented a list of over forty ideas that previously had been suggested and described each one. Each of the attendees independently identified their top five items. We pooled everyone's list and ranked the activities in groups from highest to lowest levels of support. That list will be used to focus our efforts on planning future activities. It also identified areas where we would like to seek out grants.



Having a regular lecture series was a top priority of the trustees and we plan to increase the number of talks offered. Continuing the music series was also strongly supported and, despite the fact that there is more competition for limited grant money to support the music series, we are determined to find a way to continue this popular offering.

The Nicholas J. Juried Museum of Jefferson History was open this past summer on a regular schedule for the first time. It was well received but we believe that it is critical that it offer fresh, new exhibits for visitors to enjoy. This winter we plan to add a variety of new exhibits including some interactive displays. Our Facebook page has a new posting every day and is up to date with our activities. In contrast, our website has not received the attention it deserves, so this year a priority is to update the site and make it more dynamic as well.

Other areas viewed as being important were cataloging our collection, adding educational signage to our nature trail behind the Fuller District schoolhouse, and creating a digital record of the town board minutes.

Once again, Nick Juried has supported another of our grant requests supporting work at each of the three buildings we either own or manage. We will have an accessible ramp added to the front of the Maple Museum. Inside that building we will have the old tin ceiling painted for the first time in decades. While the ceiling work is being done, we will replace all the spotlights with long-lasting LED bulbs. At Judd Hall we will replace rotten portions of the sill in the front of the building, repair siding problems above the porch on that same side of the building and add track lighting to the museum. The interior walls and ceiling of the Fuller District schoolhouse will also be repainted.

We realize that not everyone has free time or is in Jefferson when we have events or when the museum is open. We often give personal tours to individuals or groups. We would be delighted to welcome you for a personal tour; just let me know if you are interested and we can fix select a date. Email me at: bernerkl@gmail.com

For the most up-to-date information on the historical society's activities, please follow our us on:

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/The-Jefferson-Historical-Society-309739662479973

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvUkiAnAt v3Vrzkz9gvBjg

Continued from pg. 1

French and Indian war—In 1755 the English built Fort Edward at the "Great Carrying Place" on the Hudson which protected the portage with Lake George. 1755 also had the French building Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga) to protect the portage to Lake George. That year a large French and Indian force led by Baron de Dieskau attempted to take control of Lake George. They were repulsed by a British and militia force under William Johnson. Dieskau was wounded and captured. The English then built Fort William Henry on the southern shore protecting the route to Ft. Edward. In late July of 1757, the Marquis de Montcalm descended to Lake George with 6,000 troops and 2,000 Native Americans for an attack on Fort William Henry, near present-day Lake George Village. After a siege the fort surrendered. Given safe passage to Ft. Edward the English were mostly massacred by the Indians on their way.

In 1758 a British force 16,000 strong advanced north along Lake George attacking Ft. Carillon but they were defeated. Under new leadership a second expedition was able to threaten the fort with artillery placed on a mountain top. The French, seeing their position threatened retreated north blowing up both Carillon and Fort St. Fredric. The British took over what remained naming it Ticonderoga as well as building a new fort at Crown Pt. The Great Warpath was now in the hands of the British for the rest of the war.

Revolutionary War —In 1775 Benedict Arnold and Ethan Allen took control of Ft. Ticonderoga and Crown Pt. from the British, thereby securing control of Lake Champlain. That same year patriot General Richard Montgomery invaded Canada via Champlain and took Montreal. He then marched east to meet up with a force led by Benedict Arnold that had marched up through the Maine wilderness to attempt to take Quebec. The siege failed, Montgomery was killed and

Arnold led a retreat back to Montreal then down the lake to Crown Pt.

1776 Canadian Governor General Guy Carleton attempted to split the colonies by invading down Champlain and crossing into the Hudson. Benedict Arnold however foiled his plan at the Battle of Valcour Island. Assembling a "mosquito" fleet of small gunboats that formed a line in a protected bay of the island. The British making use of a northerly wind were surprised and had to turn upwind to engage

giving the advantage to the Colonials. However superior ships and armament carried the day until nightfall. Although Arnold technically loses the battle, his fleet escaped that night. After giving chase Carleton realized that it was too late in the season and turned back to Canada.

In 1777 British General John Burgoyne, attempting the same strategy, invaded up the lake with over 9,000 troops. Crown Pt. and Ticonderoga fell without a fight. His march to Albany was hampered by long supply lines, lack of wagons and horses. This led to his defeat at Saratoga. Seeing this, the French became U.S. allies which changed the course of the war.

War of 1812-- In 1814, intending to once again split New England from the states, General Sir George Prevost invaded from Canada with 10,000 troops and a fleet of ships. With more roads available his army was able to march south while his fleet maintained control of the lake and carried supplies. Land and sea battles took place at Plattsburgh. American naval Lieutenant Thomas MacDonough had a small fleet constructed in Vermont. He anchored his ships fore and aft so that he could fire a broadside then rotate and bring a freshly loaded line of cannon to bear.

Similar to the Battle of Valcour, 38 years earlier, the British, sailing south had to turn upwind to engage. The American fleet won the day forcing the British to withdraw. Although the British was actually winning the land battle, once they saw the fleet retreat they also withdrew knowing they had no naval support. Thus ended the final invasion of the United States.



Lieutenant Thomas MacDonough

With the building of the Erie/Champlain canal The Great Warpath emerged as an important peaceful artery feeding commerce to the northeast. One can trace The Great Warpath taking Rt. 4 from Schuylerville to Ft. Edward and then heading to Lake George on Rt. 9N, following this road all the way to Westport on Champlain then north on Rt.22 to the Canadian border.

Sources:

Valiant Ambition by Nathaniel Philbrick, Saratoga by John Luzader, Valcour by Jack Kelly,

Final Invasion by Col. David Fitz-Enz,

Guns Over The Champlain Valley by Howard Coffin, Will Curtis, and Jane

The Jefferson Presbyterian Congregation's First Church Building Was Destroyed by Fire: An Eyewitness Account

By Stephanie Ruquet

The first church built by the Presbyterians in Jefferson was located on the southwest corner of the town green—actually on the green. It was built in the early 1830s but didn't last long. At the end of the 1836 spring term the Jefferson Academy, located on the eastern end of the green where the Methodist Church is today, held its examinations of pupils in the Presbyterian Church. It was during this occasion on Wednesday, May 11, 1836, that a fire broke out and the building was completely destroyed. Joseph Albert Lintner (1822-1898) was a student at the Jefferson Academy from 1833 to 1836. An eyewitness who survived the event, Lintner wrote the following account in his diary that night:

We had quite a large audience to day [sic], to exhibit ourselves before.... Very little was accomplished this evening, as our exhibition was brought to a very abrupt termination, in the following manner. Whilst the attention of the audience

was . . . directed to a very interesting dialogue . . . a dull and somewhat heavy sound was heard by a few; in a minute or two after, a smell of gunpowder pervaded the church, but neither of these two things attracted much attention, as they were generally supposed to be incidental to the dialogue. A half minute had elapsed, when we were all startled by that portion of the audience in the neighborhood of the stage, suddenly rushing to their feet, when upon looking to ascertain the cause, smoke was seen issuing from the crevices in the floor. All was then apparentDrawn by Katharine Clay

A drawing of the Jefferson Academy that was located where the current Methodist Church sits today

JEFFERSON ACADEMY Bouton, who attended district

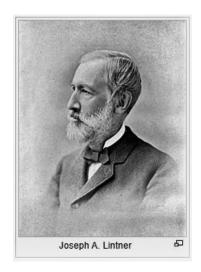
there had been an explosion of gunpowder, and the building was on fire. Immediately, all was uproar and confusion—the building resounded with the shrieks of those who thought they were rushing to the doors for their life, as was the case with myself, for not having had time to think where the fire was, I had placed it overhead supposing that the sound heard, was the fall of rafters, and that in a moment more, the roof would be burying us beneath its fall. Although sitting on a corner of the stage, the first recollection of myself was that I was half way down the middle aisle, struggling and pushing as I though [sic] for my life, and so thankful was I upon reaching the open air, that I refused an act of gallantry, to return after a lady's shawl, although there would have been abundant time to have saved it. The building was emptied in an extremely short time, without any material injury to any in it—a few received some cuts from preferring a dash through a window, to the longer route of the door. Upon sizing the situation of the fire, we at once

> saw that there was scarcly [sic] any hopes of saving the building. It had caught in the dry shavings beneath the church, where it was impossible to get at it without the aid of engines; as soon as practicable, a line was formed down to the creek, upon which we tugged at the buckets and pails valiantly for a while, but to no avail, for by ascended the belfry, when of course all was gone. All having been removed from the interior, that it was possible to save, we had nothing further to do but to gaze upon the conflagration, and admire its awful sublimity.

An Eyewitness Account cont.

When completely wrapt in flames, it called forth from many lips the exclamations, "how grand" "how awfully grand [sic]. Timothy Lasell and myself observed it with much feelings, for a length of time, until the sight was destroyed by the frame falling in. The wind being extremely favorable, no other buildings caught, although serious fears were at one time entertained for the Academy, but by keeping the roof constantly wet, it fortunately escaped. In less than 3 hours, what had been the scene of life and animation, was now a smoking pile. It is a heavy loss to the congregation, the edifice which was quite a pretty one, had been erected some three years since, with a debt then accrued, still remaining unpaid. It was no doubt, an incendiary act powder had been premeditately [sic] placed beneath the building and ignited by a slow match. Perhaps the author had not expected it to have gone any further than to kick up a little hubbub by an explosion merely, but I am inclined to think that such a construction would be . . . too charitable. As to whom the author of the act was, we could find no clue by which suspicion could be attached to any men so at present, it rests in darkness, but not without active investigations having been set on foot.

Lintner did not record much about the aftermath of the fire nor if anyone was identified as the perpetrator. The next day in his diary he wrote, "Jefferson indeed looks gloomy this morning. The loss of their fine building will come pretty heavy upon its citizens, but as they are pretty spirited in such matters it will undoubtedly be soon replaced by a much better edifice." Lintner's assessment was correct. The following year, the Presbyterians of Jefferson inaugurated their replacement church which was built across the road from the ashes of their first. That building still stands and is known today as the Maple Museum. The morning after the fire Lintner left for his home in the village of Schoharie and did not return to the Jefferson Academy for the next school term—this phase of his education was completed at the newly established Schoharie Academy.



Joseph Albert Lintner's diary of April 1-May 24, 1836, is in the collection of the New York State Library in Albany. The diary is the only document that is known to exist that gives a glimpse into the lives of students studying at the Jefferson Academy, Several years ago, Mark Sullivan, an indefatigable researcher and prolific author of topics about Schoharie County history, obtained a digital copy of the diary from the state library. His transcription was published in the Spring-Summer 2021 issue of the Schoharie County Historical Review. Mark, a member and enthusiastic supporter of the Jefferson Historical Society, subsequently donated that digital copy to JHS. Mark Sullivan passed away in late 2022 at far too young an age.



Unfortunately we do not know of an image of the Presbyterian Church's first building that burned in Jefferson. However, there is a drawing of the Academy (see previous page) and a reconstruction (left) that can be seen in the Maple Museum lobby when that building opens again in the spring.

JHS EVENTS.....August-December



<u>Above:</u> Historic House and Barn

JHS fundraiser

tour was hosted

by Tom and Joan

Clayton.



Above: Real Time Dixieland band performs in town green Gazebo

<u>Above</u>: Jefferson community choir practicing Xmas carols



<u>Above</u>: JAR Christmas decorations created at Judd Hall

Right: Titus Lake talk by Lesley Mason Vaitekunas and Don Mason at Judd Hall







<u>Above center:</u> Sara Henry decorating JHS tree for town green Christmas celebration

Above right: Annette Aguilar performing in Maple Museum

<u>Far left:</u> Lecture in Judd Hall by Jeff O'Connor of Schoharie County Arts

Center: JHS folks offer candy for Halloween

Below: old photo of Blumberg farm alongside new photo from same perspective taken by John Papp, licensed drone operator.







JHS EVENTS Continued



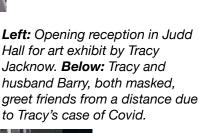


Above: Bonnie Dailey describes how to research local ancestors.

Left: Our outstanding, sixday, indoor lawn sale in the Maple Museum was organized by Stephanie Ruquet.



Left: Kevin Berner stands in for Carol Bodnar, our successful grant writer for our Music & More series. Unable to attend the Arts Council ceremony at the George Lands Arboretum in the fall, Kevin accepts the certificate for Carol's CREATE grant.





Above: Upper Catskill String Quartet at Methodist Church, supported by JHS.

Below: Judd Hall became a new site for exercise classes to help with flexibility, balance, and strength. The classes are held on a regular basis every Wednesday and Friday at 9:45am, led by 88-year-old John Steitz of Summit.



Above: The Fly Birds drove all the way from Winchester, VA to perform a Friday evening concert of bluegrass-style music in the Maple Museum.



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We are grateful to all who supported us

News about the Trees on the Green

The Schoharie Soil & Water Council granted JHS \$6000 to prune older trees on the Jefferson Green as part of the Town Green Restoration Project we have worked on for several years in conjunction with the Town of Jefferson and guidance from retired DEC forester Paul Trotta.

As outlined in our previous newsletter, time has not been kind to the originally planted maple trees. In the grant application written by JHS Vice-President Carol Bodnar, Trotta is quoted saying, "only a few things can be done to save older trees, and among these things are pruning, fertilizing and watering during times of drought....One never knows whether a tree will stand or fall, despite all efforts to preserve them, but those who wish to see

old landscape trees preserved think the effort is worth it."

JHS will continue to seek donations for fertilization of the old and new trees and acquisition of replacement trees. Sweet Meadows Country Home and Garden, which donated one oak tree to the cause, tells us that its 25-gallon salt-resistant species cost \$350 apiece. The Schoharie Soil & Water Council requested that we select non-invasive tree species for replacement and we will try to honor that request. We expect that work on the older trees can commence once the trees have completely leafed out in the spring. Planting of new trees can begin once the five dying trees on the green have been removed by the town highway department.

What Grants & Donations to JHS Have Meant to Jefferson

The money from grants and donations that were given to the Jefferson Historical Society, almost all from personal Family Foundations or local residents, have had an enormous impact on our community. Every person who put a dollar in a JHS donation jar at an event as well as someone like Nick Juried who appreciates a community where many people work to make a difference — ALL HAVE MADE A BIG DIFFERENCE.

So many local workers benefitted from these donations that we thought you'd like to see a list of some of those who worked to help restore Judd Hall, the Maple Museum, and the Fuller District Schoolhouse. We are happy for them all.

Chimney — Bob Troidl
Waste removal— Tom Barker never charges us a fee
Videographer — Michaela Lynch, Olivia Eppich
Video production — Alex Berner
Video transfers — What's Happenin' Productions
Glass shelves — Cobleskill Glass

Archival Room shelving, paint & many supplies — Railroad Ave. Supply Co (Ace Hardware)

Map frame — Tom Nershi Map & frame — a gal in Delhi Flipboard base — John Jackson Display lighting fixtures — Drogen's Windows — Curtis Lumber

Electrician- Double B Electric (2 guys Howes Cave) — Amos Grey Flooring, sheetrock, painting, siding — Larry Gribben and crew (2 others) Plumbing — Dan Minalga

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Plumbing — Dan Minalga

Hvac (splits) — Daniel Okeefe + helper

Concrete — Veley Construction

Landscaping — Ben Buck

Porch floor — Emily Wilson

Floor refinish — Ryan Tinkle

Flooring — Endwell Rug

Gutters — R&D Smith (family of three)
Painting — Rick Mickle
Windows — Paige Washington

Tony Dianich who painted & repaired the MM Walls, interior sparkling & painting, ceiling, floor —Jefferson Joel Schulz Volunteer building managers — Bob Glas, David Savattori, Diane Ericson

Lend or donate your antique toy and it may "star" in the next museum exhibit

To update exhibits in the Jefferson History Museum, Clara Courtenay-Clack, Barb Palmer, and Stephanie Ruquet are planning a new exhibit about old toys that will be part of a display about "Jefferson Childhoods Past." This will open in the spring and will replace the 2022 "Woman's Work" exhibit.

If you have old or antique toys that were played with in our area, please contact us as we may be interested in exhibiting them.

Email:theclackfamily@msn.com

JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION FORM

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Thank you for your support!		

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The Jefferson Historical Society P.O. Box 143 Jefferson NY 12093



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