



WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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WINTER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXIV #4

President's Letter—Winter 2024—A Year In Review

This year, the Washington County Historical Society has been in the process of changing and evolving. We have longtime board members departing and new board members coming in to replace them. The Society continues to move forward in the areas of preservation, building, publishing, programming, and internal development. We have applied for and received grants that will help us reach out to the membership. The Bylaws Committee has revised and streamlined the 2005 bylaws documentation. WCHS is leading the way on the Washington County 250th Committee by becoming the Washington County 250th fiduciary sponsor and several of our board members are also serving on the 250th Committee.

2024 has also been a transitional year with the departure of longtime board members such as Kay Tomasi, who served on the Washington County Historical Society Board since 1997, serving as president for one term as well as 20+ years as Finance Chair. Keith Truesdale, a 20+ plus year member of the board who has served as WCHS Treasurer, Nomination Committee Chair, and twice as WCHS President has also retired from the WCHS board. Former Executive Director Jen LaRock has left to pursue other opportunities. She was in the process of streamlining procedures and incorporating a greater use of computer software to help run the Society. Susan Lynch resigned her position as Vice-President, Chair of the Preservation Committee and member of the Nomination Committee. All these individuals will be difficult to replace.

The Society is fortunate to welcome the following individuals to the WCHS board: Cheryl Putorti, Alec McMorris, Michelle Bromley, and Paul Lundberg. We also welcome back to the board as a trustee Jeanne LaPoint Wood, rejoining after serving as Treasurer for the past year.

Cheryl Putorti, who is currently serving as President of the Whitehall Chamber of Commerce, agreed to take on the position of Vice-President after Susan Lynch left to devote more time due to her business expansion.

Alec McMorris, a retired Army Officer with a lifelong love of history, has served what was left of a one-year term and will take on a three-year term.

Michelle Bromley, Argyle and former Granville history teacher and the Argyle Town Historian, has taken a one-year term.

Paul Lundberg, a member of the Fair Farm Museum, has agreed to serve a three-year term.

Jeanne LaPoint Wood has stepped down from the WCHS Treasurer's position to serve another three-year term on the board.

Melanie Bock has come on to the board to become the Finance Chair for the Society. Melanie was a career math teacher and will put those skills to use in her new role.

Tom Ruffing, new Washington County Historian, will be advising the WCHS Board on Washington County history matters.

These seven people should be commended for agreeing to serve the Washington County history community.

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Washington County Historical Society Mission Statement

*The Washington County
Historical Society is an
educational organization
dedicated to engaging diverse
audiences in the study and
application of the collective
heritage of Washington County,
New York, and its environs.*

- Rev. October 2005

WCHS has a constantly growing
collection of information,
original documents, and other
items of interest about
Washington County and its
inhabitants, past and present.

If you would like to find out more
about volunteering to help with the
Heritage Research Library or other
opportunities, please contact the
Historical Society and let us know
what interests you!

Heritage Research Library

Library and Bookshop Hours:

Now open Tuesdays and Wednesdays
9:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Visits may be scheduled by appointment
(contact us)

Inquiries and appointment requests
can be emailed to library@wchs-ny.org
or made by phone.

Newsletter Editor:
Kelly Mead

How To Contact Us:



Phone: (518) 747-9108



Address: 167 Broadway,
Fort Edward, NY 12828

Web: www.wchs-ny.org



E-mail address:
info@wchs-ny.org

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A Year In Review...Continued from page 1

With the departure of Jen LaRock, several WCHS board members including Jane Hartnett, Sarah Hall, Kathy Huntington, Kelly Mead and Jeanne LaPoint Wood have stepped up to keep the Society running. These board members have spent a great deal of time learning the computer programs that help run the financial and membership aspects of the Society. Along with President Pat Niles, these women have been able to get out the fall *WCHS Newsletter*, annual appeal letters, put together the annual meeting, and soon will mail the *WCHS 2024 Annual Journal*.

The Society is working with the accounting firm of Levy Breaks in Greenwich to increase the accuracy of our bookkeeping. Levy Breaks will take over the bookkeeping until the Society hires a permanent administrator. The system being developed will make for a much easier transition for the next WCHS administrator. Jane and Sarah have also continued the goal of the Library allowing access to the library's research materials. For a time we reduced our open hours to appointment only, while continuing to fulfill inquiries or requests either in person, by email or by phone. Our hats are off to these dedicated board members/volunteers. As of December, we are able to resume open hours at the Wing-Northup House on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

The Building Committee continues to keep the Wing-Northup House up and running. Chair Eric Huntington has completed grant applications for evaluation of structure of the 1815 Wing-Northup House. Eric has also continued to submit grants to complete projects on the house such as window replacement and repair, front step repair, and work on the cellar. Eric has over the past several years maintained the property personally. This year he has made sure that the Society has lawn care reinstated, and snowplowing and shoveling contracted out as well. Eric is stepping down from the board and will be dearly missed.

On the publishing front, Matt Rozell, the current editor of the Annual Journal, with the help of reviewer Jane Hartnett, has put together another wonderful journal. The *Washington County Historical Society Journal* is one of the major features of the Society. Since Matt has taken over in the past three or four years, the journal has been on time and provided our members with history of the county and region.



Matt, with the help of Jeanie Mullen, Keith Truesdale, and Jen LaRock, published *A History of Easton, NY* in 2024. This book costs \$22.95. This, as well as many other titles, can be purchased in the Wing-Northup House Bookstore during open hours or online by visiting our website and click the "Shop" link. We will have special holiday hours for shopping in the bookshop this December.

We hope you will attend one of our programs, visit the Bookstore to explore our selection of books and items, or just stop in and say hello.

Wishing you and your families Happy Holidays, see you in 2025.

Pat Niles
WCHS President

WCHS Preservation Committee 2024

The Preservation Committee had another wonderful year. Susan Lynch led a tour in Salem on renovations of historic structures. The tour went to the Salem Shirt Factory, now known as New Collar Goods, where the tourists learned about the adapting of the factory into a modern furniture factory today. The architectural elements of the factory were kept. The tour moved on to the St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Salem. The walls of the church had been bowing out, and a contractor from North Carolina has come in to gradually straighten and reinforce the walls of the church which takes a great deal of time. The last stop on the tour was the Salem Courthouse. The courthouse has been undergoing renovations for the past 20 years. The Salem Courthouse Preservation Association has been applying for grants and fundraising to keep the architectural component intact while creating a community building to be used for education, social gatherings and community meetings. Susan Lynch also presented a talk on 19th architecture in Washington County.

Finally, the committee chose the New Collar Goods factory in Salem as their Preservation Award winner for 2024. Jon and Deana Ketchum were recognized for their efforts to renovate a factory that sat idle for decades, turning it into a functioning business and successful historic renovation. The award was given in the category for Adaptive Rescue and is a clear example of preservation in action.

Photos below show the award recipients receiving the award plaque from President Pat Niles.



WCHS Announcements

WCHS Special Holiday Hours! The WCHS Bookstore (at the Society headquarters, 167 Broadway, Fort Edward, NY) will be open from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on December 24 and December 31 for holiday shopping. WCHS members receive a 10% discount on all purchases made at the Wing-Northup House Bookstore as a membership perk. History books make excellent gifts!

The WCHS Local History Book Club will hold its next meeting on Wednesday, January 8, 2025. The meeting will be at the Society headquarters, 167 Broadway, Fort Edward. The featured book is Benjamin Franklin and Canada by William Renwick Riddell. It includes Franklin's passage through Wings Falls and Fort George on his 1776 assignment.

This will be the first book club session at the new time of Wednesday, 12:30 p.m. For additional information, email Connie Harris Farrington at connieandlee@roadrunner.com.

A Look Back At Our 2024 Calendar

One of the more successful elements for the Society in 2024 was its programming. The Society teamed up with the Washington County 250th Committee to sponsor several great programs on Washington County history. Programming Chair Debi Craig and the 250th Co-Chair Pat Niles worked together on several events this year:

- Salem Historian Al Cormier spoke on John Williams' participation in the American Revolution.
- Author Gary Shattuck researched and presented a talk on Philip Skene in the American Revolution, the materials were from his book The Rebel and the Tory.
- Well-known area archaeologist Joseph Zarzynski presented stories of Fort William Henry from his book Fort William Henry's Moments in Time.
- Robert Mowatt, Director of Skenesborough Museum, presented a talk on Whitehall during the American Revolution.
- Washington County Board member Sarah Hall presented original research on Revolutionary Soldiers buried in Washington County.
- President Pat Niles delivered a talk on the British in Washington County in 1777.
- A very interesting program about the Lime Kilns of Bald Mountain was presented by Sandy McReynolds, Ken Perry, and KC Scott.
- Steven Matte's presentation at Slate Valley Museum on area postmarks was fascinating.
- WCHS member and Greenwich Town Historian Sandy McReynolds led a very successful tour of the Greenwich Cemetery with well over 100 people in attendance.
- On Sunday, November 10, 2024 at 2:00 p.m., the Town of Hebron and the Hebron Preservation Society held a special re-dedication ceremony at the Town Barn on the corner of Bogtown and Chamberlin Mills Roads.
- Hebron historian Debi Craig has been working with Washington County Historical Society board member Sarah Hall to restore the Samuel Nelson historic marker, which was placed in the 1990s. Samuel Nelson was born in Hebron on November 10, 1792. Nelson, who grew up in Hebron, served 27 years on the Supreme Court of the United States.

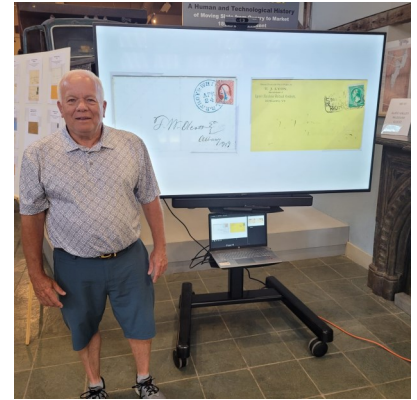




Sarah Hall at her presentation about American Revolutionary War soldiers in Washington County.



Pat Niles (middle) talking with participants at the Skenesborough Harbor in Whitehall on the Washington County Rev War Road Trip event.



Presenter Stephen Matte shared postal history from Washington County.

Other highlights of events this year:

We participated in the Washington County 250th Living History weekend in May with a booth stationed by Sarah Hall, and Deb Craig helped to organize local historical organizations coming to the event.

New fundraisers for WCHS proved successful. For the first time, our organization held a yard sale, which raised \$1,000. The Board members and other guests participated in a Benefit Night at Cooper's Cave Ale Company, which raised another \$200. We intend to expand on these activities in 2025. We would love to have the membership participate in these activities. If any members have any fundraising ideas, we would consider other events.

Finally, the Washington County Historical Society participated in the Peer to Peer Veterans Day ceremonies at SUNY Adirondack on Veterans Day. The ceremony honored Warren and Washington County Veterans. The speakers for the day were Assemblyman Matt Simpson, Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner, and New York State Senator Dan Stec. The featured speaker was Fort Ann Supervisor and Vice-Chair of the Washington County Supervisors, Sam Hall. WCHS put together a display on the county's veterans during the American Revolution. The display and table were manned by WCHS President Pat Niles and Washington County Historian Tom Ruffing.

The Washington County Historical Society continues to provide assistance to the people of Washington County even in the midst of the transition in which we now find ourselves. The work of preservation, research, providing education through our programming and the literature we publish, as well as assistance given to our patrons continues. Thank you to all who supported our events and we look forward to 2025.

NOTICE TO WCHS MEMBERS:

The revised By-Laws will be presented and voted on at the regular WCHS Board of Trustees meeting to be held on January 20, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. at the Wing-Northup House, 167 Broadway, Fort Edward, NY 12828.

2024 Annual Membership Meeting Held

The Washington County Historical Society held our 84th Annual Membership Meeting and Historic Preservation Awards Ceremony on October 26, 2024 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Canal Street Marketplace in Fort Edward, NY. The annual business meeting opened at 1 p.m. with business conducted until 2:10 p.m. After the meeting, awards were presented.



James R. Cronkhite Award

This award recognizes service to the Washington County history community.

The Cronkhite Committee Chair, R. Paul McCarty, announced this year's recipient as D. Keith Truesdale. He shared Keith's accomplishments with other projects and organizations he has been a part of, and the many contributions Keith has made to WCHS over the years. We are grateful to Keith for his inspiring dedication and his commitment to local history.



Historic Preservation Award

The Historic Preservation Award is given to a person or organization for outstanding efforts for preservation of a building or buildings in Washington County.

This year's award was presented by Susan Lynch to our recipients, Jon and Deana Ketchum. They were recognized for their work renovating the Salem Shirt Factory into the New Collar Goods furniture factory.

WCHS President's Awards



These awards are given for outstanding service to the Society. President Pat Niles recognized the following individuals:

- Jane Hartnett—for her work with the Publications Committee and taking on administrative duties for the Society.
- Eric Huntington—for his leadership with the WCHS by-laws revisions and his work as Chair of the Building Committee.
- Sarah Hall—for her work with the Historic Markers Committee and taking on administrative duties for the Society.

Marker Restoration Project

Sarah Hall has taken on the project of repainting and refurbishing historic markers around the county over the past year, restoring many markers, returning them to like-new condition (some are shown below).

If there are markers needing restoration in your local Washington County area, please contact the Historical Society to let us know, get details on how you can help restore them, or to work together with our members to bring them back to fine condition. A few of the photos show volunteers helping Sarah—you can get involved too!



Debi Craig pitching in to help in Greenwich.



Brian Neilson, David Devries, and Sarah Hall in Argyle.



Before, and after—newly painted marker in Granville.



Jeanie Mullen (left) working on a marker for the Quaker Meeting House, and the finished result (right) shows the newly painted marker in Easton.

WCHS 2024 Board of Trustees

OFFICERS

| | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| President | Patrick Niles |
| Vice President | Cheryl Putorti |
| Treasurer | Jeanne Lapoint Wood |
| Secretary | Kelly Mead |

INTERIM ADMINISTRATOR/ LIBRARIAN

Sarah Hall

TRUSTEES—2026

Jane Hartnett

Sarah Hall

TRUSTEES — 2025

Debi Craig

Gary Hart

John A. Mead

TRUSTEES—2024

Alec McMorris

Nancy Jo Davidsen

Eric Huntington

Kathy Huntington

STANDING COMMITTEES:

Building — Eric Huntington

Finance — Melanie Bock

Nominations — John A. Mead

TRUSTEE EMERITA

Joan Handy

WCHS HISTORIAN

John A. Mead

The Washington County Historical Society would like to thank Casella Waste Systems, Inc. for their generous donation of service for the Wing-Northup House. Thank you!



ESTABLISHED 1975



WASHINGTON COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY EST. 1940

167 Broadway, Fort Edward NY 12828-1709

Telephone (518) 747-9108

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Winter 2024 Newsletter

Full Name (please print)

☐ NEW MEMBER

☐ RENEWAL

Address

City/State

Zip

E-Mail

Phone No.

Please note WCHS membership year runs January 1st thru December 31. New memberships received after October 1st will be honored for the following year. Annual memberships and donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Membership Categories:

- ☐ Benefactor \$500
☐ Sustaining \$150
☐ Contributing \$75

- ☐ Patron \$50
☐ Individual/Family \$35
☐ Senior/Senior Couple/Student \$25

*Sign Up Online
at www.wchs-ny.org*

I would like to include an additional gift of \$ _____

☐ Check Enclosed (Payable to: Washington County Historical Society)

OR

Name on Credit Card

Card Number

Exp. Date

CSV Code

Questions (please answer) :

1. I would like to receive my newsletter by email
2. I would like to be contacted about volunteering

☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Yes ☐ No

mail completed form to: Washington County Historical Society, 167 Broadway, Fort Edward, NY 12828 Question? info@wchs-ny.org or 518-747-9108