



WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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SUMMER 2025 NEWSLETTER

Volume XXXV #2

President's Letter Summer 2025

The Society continues to push forward in a day and age when small non-profits are struggling. We have found new and effective ways to share our presence out to the community of Washington County and the greater history community of the region. New uses of various computer applications and programs, while being a learning experience for our staff and volunteers, has also allowed us to increase our outreach, efficiency and productivity. With a grant we received this year, WCHS is excited to begin making use of videography so our members and followers will be able to view our programs online (read more on page 2).

The Wing-Northup House is a beehive of activity these days! Our interactions with visitors and research requests both in-person and online have increased. Since hiring our new administrator, Sarah Hall, we have welcomed several new great volunteers who assist in various ways: answering historical inquiries from researchers; writing historical articles for our quarterly newsletter; developing a new membership application; clerical duties and records management; and working with our American Revolutionary Soldiers project, to name just a few. Passing through Fort Edward, you might also notice that the house has been decorated with a patriotic theme with bunting hung on the picket fence, flowers planted in the yard and a new wreath on the front door. The filing room has taken on the appearance of efficiency. The bookstore inventory is being reorganized and made easier to access. All of this is due to the volunteers under the direction of Sarah Hall. We welcome suggestions for any books on Washington County or regional history that you think would be of interest to our members so we can add them to our inventory. We have seen an increase in researchers online and in-person at the Wing-Northup House. We also continue to reach out to the Washington County history community to join and volunteer, and our programs have been well-attended. Please come visit us on Tuesdays and Wednesdays (open hours 9:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.) — it is a very positive atmosphere.



The Wing-Northup House (located 167 Broadway, Fort Edward)

WCHS representatives will again be stationed at the Washington County Farm Museum at this year's County Fair (held the week of August 18-24) helping with the interpretation of Washington County history. Stop by the museum building to chat and network with WCHS board members, volunteers and other members from the Washington County 250th Committee during the event. Visitors will also be able to view replicas of wooden sleds on display created for use in the upcoming Knox Trail reenactment event this December 12-14. BOCES conservation and construction trades classes built these two sleds like the ones Henry Knox used to haul the cannons. The wood was harvested and milled by the BOCES conservation class which included Washington County students. The sleds were then built using hand tools modeled after 18th Century woodworking tools. The Farm Museum is a real asset to the Washington County Fair and to the Washington County community.

Interested in helping to advance the Society's programs? Consider serving on the Board or one of our working committees, help with the building, or ask about many other opportunities of how you can help. Please contact us or feel free to come in and meet our staff and volunteers to find out more. Look for Washington County Historical Society on Facebook and now YouTube and attend our events. Come help tell the story of the great history of Washington County, New York!

Pat Niles
WCHS President

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

Visit us on Facebook

Coming Soon—New Ways to Engage with WCHS

WCHS is excited to offer new opportunities to share our programs and engage with our members and the community. We are grateful to have received a grant from the Washington County Home for Aged Women which we have put to good use these past few months. We have purchased a new camera, audio equipment, microphones, computer and other items that will allow WCHS to not only capture our programs, but also to produce programs for our membership.

Beverly Raymond is a professional photographer who has volunteered her time to video our programs, and edit and upload the programs to our new YouTube channel. We are in the process of uploading the content of such programs as Sarah Hall speaking on American Revolutionary Soldiers buried in Washington County; our longtime board member Deb Craig speaking on Susan B. Anthony's life in Washington County; and Saratoga County Vice Historian Anne Clothier presenting on Elizabeth Munro Fisher, a loyalist young woman who joined Burgoyne's Army in 1777. Beverly has also videoed programs presented at the Hartford Recruiting Center on May 29 as part of the Washington County 250th program calendar.

With this additional new equipment, the Washington County Historical Society's offerings will be expanded. The production of future videos on Washington County history and historical figures such as Henry Knox and programs on activities in the Washington County historical community celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the Revolution are already in the works. The YouTube link is <http://www.youtube.com/@WashingtonCountyHistoricalNY>. Check for content uploads soon.

Also in the future, talks by local historians will be presented by Zoom to our members. The combination of having Beverly Raymond using the new equipment as well as training our volunteers and staff will give us exciting new ways to reach out to our membership.

WCHS Trash and Treasure Yard Sale & Appraisal Event

Join us on **Saturday, July 19 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.** for a yard sale at the Historical Society's headquarters, 167 Broadway, Fort Edward, NY. As a fundraiser for the Society, there will be items of historical interest and other items for sale on the front lawn of the Wing-Northup House. We encourage donations of items from our members for the sale. Good condition collectibles or household items will be gratefully accepted (no appliances or large furniture). If you have questions about the event or items you'd like to donate for the sale, please contact the Society.

We also will have an appraiser available that day for visitors to bring items to see what your treasures are worth! For a small fee (as part of our fundraiser) a professional will be on hand to assess values.

All proceeds from the day will benefit WCHS.

2025 WCHS Events

Our programs are free and open to the public (donations accepted). Questions? Please contact the Historical Society at 518-747-9108 during our open hours on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



WCHS Trash and Treasure Yard Sale & Appraisal Event

Mark your calendars to see us on **Saturday, July 19 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.** for a yard sale and appraisal event at the Historical Society's headquarters, 167 Broadway, Fort Edward, NY. Details are noted on page 2.

August 18-24 / Washington County Fair Week!

Location: Washington County Fair Farm Museum at the Fairgrounds, Greenwich, NY

Volunteers are needed to represent WCHS at the Fair. We have partnered with the Fair Farm Museum to help greet visitors in the museum and share WCHS information to take with them. We have a list of time slots available—if you are interested, please contact us to sign up. Thank you!

September 2025 (Specific Date and Time TBD) / Fort Edward Parade

We will host open hours at the Wing-Northup House during the time the parade will be marching down Broadway. Watch for more information in our *WCHS Newsletter*, local news outlets and social media with specific dates and times for this fun family event.

October 9, 2025 6:30 p.m. / Lecture: "The Patriots of Washington County"

Presented by Sarah Hall / Location: Hebron Preservation Society, 6560 State Route 22, Salem, NY

Sarah Hall will present stories and information about Revolutionary Soldiers in Washington County: Lemuel Haynes, Israel Harris, Joseph McCracken, Tobias Van Veghten, and Samuel Standish.

October 25, 2025 (Time/Location TBD) / WCHS Annual Membership Meeting

Watch for more information in our *WCHS Newsletter*, local news outlets and social media for more details about this annual event including our board meeting, Cronkhite Award and Historic Preservation Awards will be presented.

November 13, 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. / Lecture: Henry Knox Heavy Metal Tour

Presented by Pat Niles / Location: Hebron Preservation Society, 6560 State Route 22, Salem, NY

Patrick Niles will speak about Henry Knox and his artillery train which took artillery from St. Johns, Crown Point and Fort Ticonderoga. Henry Knox's mission helped drive the British out of Boston in 1776.

November 29, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. / Special Event! Meet Santa Claus at WCHS

Location: Wing-Northup House, Fort Edward, NY

Bring the kids to meet Santa and visit the Wing-Northup House at a special open house celebration! Horse drawn wagon rides will be available for a small cost and other holiday treats available.

From Haven to Hurdle: Elizabeth Munro Fisher's Life in Hebron

WCHS and Hebron Historical Society hosted a joint program this past May about Elizabeth Munro Fisher, portrayed by Anne Clothier. Following this program, we are pleased to print this article from Emilee N.K. Robbins, sharing some of her research on Loyalist women and especially Elizabeth Munro Fisher, a girl who came to Hebron in her childhood because of her father.

For young Elizabeth Munro Fisher, the Town of Hebron presented both opportunities and obstacles. She lived in Washington County for almost a year, growing quite attached to the quiet and communal way of life. However, as the child of a British military chaplain (and later wife of a British officer), the tensions between British loyalists and patriots became unavoidable and Revolutionary violence inevitable. Like many other loyalists, Fisher fled the colonies to establish a life with her children in Montreal. After the revolution, Fisher eventually returned to America, hoping to reclaim the land in Hebron her father lost. Though well-intentioned, such actions led to a legal battle between herself and her half-brother, Peter Jay Munro. The court case landed Fisher in prison for forgery, a verdict which she vehemently denied. Her time in prison ruined her life — ostracizing her from her community, severing her relationships with her children, and keeping her from any remaining wealth from her father's will.

This story in its entirety is explored in Fisher's self-authored memoir, *Memoirs of Mrs. Elizabeth Fisher, of the city of New-York, daughter of the Rev. Harry Munro, who was a chaplain in the British Army, during the American Revolution*, published in 1810. I began exploring her story in earnest in the fall of 2022 as I prepared a proposal for my PhD doctoral research. Her memoir was one of three that became the focus of my dissertation, an interdisciplinary study of women's autobiographical works during the American and French Revolutions.

What attracted me to Fisher's narrative was its many twists and turns, turmoil and triumph. It is a story that demonstrates the distinct issues facing loyalist women during the American Revolution and the ways they could adapt to uncertain and dangerous circumstances. And, thus, my obsession with Fisher's memoir began. I tried my best to uncover the many layers of her story, her various movements in North America, and her shifting relationships throughout her life. In the portrayal of her life included in her self-published memoir, Hebron emerges as a site of great significance. Her relationship to the land owned by her father, Harry Munro, serves almost as bookends to her life. Readers see how Hebron came to represent both the place that once offered her a new life before taking that life away.

As a child, Hebron offered an escape from her stepmother, Eve Jay Munro, a woman she claims extensively tortured her in her youth. According to Fisher: "When my father was from home, she would for the least misconduct, whip me, then lock me up in the cellar for a whole day, without giving me either victuals or drink...Often in this situation have I cried myself to sleep" (*Memoirs*, page 5).

The abuse of Fisher became so harsh, a neighbor informed her father of the mistreatment. At first, Harry attempted to convince his wife to end the treatment. Despite his requests, the maltreatment continued. When a doctor advised Harry to intervene, her father brought Fisher to his land in Hebron. After such abuse, her time in Hebron was a welcome change, a sanctuary from her pain. She wrote that she was "much delighted with this change, being at liberty to range the woods as [she] pleased" (*Memoirs*, page 7). Fisher loved the land so much that she requested to remain in Hebron when her father left in the winter: "I begged my father to leave me in the country" (*Memoirs*, page 7). With this plea, her father did allow Fisher to remain, staying with another family in Washington County. Hebron, in these circumstances, was a place of refuge; a place where Fisher could explore the land, enjoy her childhood, and avoid the wrath of her stepmother.

Article continues page 5 >>>

However, at the end of Fisher's memoir, Hebron comes to represent her undoing, the land that led to her imprisonment, ostracization from her family, and social downfall in her community. In 1800, her half-brother, Peter, insisted upon meeting with Fisher to settle the matter of their father's land and deeds upon his death. She wrote that, "he made some proposals to me, which I rejected, thinking he wanted to take advantage of me...he went away much displeased with me" (Memoirs, page 39). The tension between the half siblings led Peter to file a formal complaint in Albany. On October 27th, Fisher was brought to jail before being tried for forgery the following March. According to Fisher, her brother cared little about her well-being:

"his heart was untouched with mercy - I was to be immured in prison for the rest of my days" (Memoirs, page 40). After her release from prison in June 1806, her life was altered forever. While she had friends before her trial, she claimed that she knew no one and had no connections to rely on. Even her children refused to speak to her. When talking about the land once more, she wrote, "What is property? It is only lent, and we must leave it" (Memoirs, page 43). Though Hebron was a source of comfort for Fisher in her youth, it became a stain on her life and the source of great pain and injustice.

Elizabeth Fisher's relationship to Hebron demonstrates the irrevocable impact of the American Revolution. This place that once offered Fisher a way out of her suffering ultimately contributed to her downfall, first a refuge from her mistreatment now a representation of injustice. Though her story is one filled with hardships, Fisher remained resilient. Left behind by her family and friends, she wrote and published her own version of her story, taking charge of her public image. The story she shared helps us further understand the aftermath of revolution. Fisher not only lost her community, belongings, and freedom, but she also lost her former attachment to a place she once loved.

- Submitted by Emilee N.K. Robbins - PhD Candidate, University of North Carolina, Greensboro

History in the Palm of Your Hand



For the better part of the 20th century, the lowly matchbook was used for cheap advertising for all types of businesses and events. They were easily found in bars, restaurants, banks, service stations and, of course, weddings. You could grab one or a handful from these businesses on your way out.

With the advent of disposable lighters in the 1970s and the later ban of indoor smoking, the matchbook saw a decline in its use as cheap advertising. People have been collecting them for as long as they've been around and, thanks to collectors, we can still remember places that in many cases are no longer in business.

Matchbooks are starting to make a comeback as businesses start to realize they aren't just for lighting a cigarette/cigar and are still a relatively cheap form of advertising.

- Article and photos submitted by Deborah Guynup



Several examples of some Washington County matchbooks

History of the Washington County Fair

The Washington County Fair has a history, and a very interesting one at that. It all started back around 1883 on the southern end of Lake Lauderdale on the O.C. Valentine farm.

Around 1889, the Cambridge Valley Agricultural Society and Stock Breeders Association was formed. The organization purchased the rights to the fair and moved it to Cambridge. During its time in Cambridge the fair grew exponentially and began to draw crowds from many area communities.

Not only did the fair benefit from its relocation, so did the village of Cambridge, and likewise its railroad business. Already a railroad hub before the popularity of private automobiles, the Delaware and Hudson Railroad began to offer round trips to the fair for \$3 from such communities as Granville, Fort Ann and Fort Edward. The out-of-towners sometimes came from as far away as Troy, which had a regular daily connection to Cambridge during that era.

The popularity of the fair at the Cambridge site was due in part to the fact that it included 40 acres of land, stables for up to 200 hundred horses, a half-mile racetrack, a grandstand that seated 2,500 people, and seven acres of buildings. A major boost occurred in 1929, when electrical service was installed.

According to historian Ken Gottry, crowds of 30,000 to 40,000 people were common at the fair in the first half of the 1900s. Admission to the fair was 25 cents, with a grandstand seat costing \$1.50 and a box seat \$3. Gottry also noted along the midway there were side shows, games, fortune tellers, eateries, souvenir stands, a merry-go-round and a Ferris Wheel. The exhibit halls held fruit, vegetables, needlework, preserves and baked goods. At one point, the fair was considered to be the largest poultry show in the country.

The fair fell on hard times during World War II, when it was closed and ultimately went bankrupt. The fair rebounded, however, and in 1954 the Cambridge Valley Agricultural Society and the Washington County Junior Fair joined forces to bring the fair back to life and moved it to the intersections of NYS Routes 29 and 40 in Greenwich, the site of the present Hannaford supermarket.

The boards of directors of the two organizations, still separate but working together, purchased at 25-acre lot at the intersection of NYS Route 29 and Old Schuylerville Road in 1961, moving the fair to its current location.

The 1960s and '70s saw a dramatic expansion of the fairgrounds, which allowed the event to become the spectacle it is today. In particular, there was the purchase of a 43-acre parcel in 1967, with a dormitory added four years later to supply housing for the large number of children involved with such organizations as 4-H and the Future Farmers of America (FFA). This time period also saw many different events and attractions come and go, including the short-lived pony races.

In 1991, the Cambridge Valley Agricultural Society and the Washington County Junior Fair's board of directors merged into one 32-member volunteer board and changes its name to simply the Washington County Fair, Inc., a moniker that remains today.

The year 1999 saw the construction of the agricultural center and in 2008 another 40 acres were purchased to add to the parking area and allow for further expansion.

Currently the fairgrounds encompass 120 acres and has become the largest tourist attraction in Washington County, annually drawing 120,000 visitors or more a year. The 2025 edition of the fair runs from Aug. 18-24, with general admission priced at \$15. A full week's pass costs \$45. Tuesday is Veterans Day, with all vets admitted for \$7. Thursday is children's and military day, with school-aged children and all active military admitted free. Parking is also free. For more information visit www.washingtoncountyfair.com.

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Volunteer Spotlight—Arlyne Henley

We are grateful to all our volunteers, and welcome the opportunity to spotlight their many accomplishments on behalf of WCHS. Learn a little more about Arlyne Henley of Fort Miller, New York. Arlyne has helped with the decorations and gardening at the Wing-Northup House among other various projects.



I grew up in Tariffville, Connecticut, and have lived in Alabama, South Carolina, and Colorado as well.

My volunteering started in the 1980's with the Groton Jr. Women's Club (Groton, CT), Girl and Boy Scouting, Meals on Wheels, Yaddo gardening and docent, Master Gardening Program, Showcase of Homes, Ladies Auxiliary of Saratoga/Wilton Elks #161, along with working in the Saratoga Springs School District for 20 years.

My husband, Thad, and I moved from Saratoga to Fort Edward three years ago, loving our 160-year-old home. I chatted with Sarah during the Living History Weekend, 2024, and the rest is history (pun intended). I am in awe of all the knowledge Sarah and fellow volunteer, Jane, have historically and business-wise. Also meeting other volunteers is an added plus. Promoting our area is easy as can be with all the history. And I hope that my minuscule contribution will help make our area a more interesting place to visit/study/grow with.

Volunteering with the Washington County Historical Society is an excellent way to learn about our county's history while helping to protect and preserve the past. We welcome all who wish to help us with our mission and all types of skills are needed!

A few examples of volunteer roles, but not limited to:

- Read cursive and transcribe old documents
- Help with programs and events
- Conduct genealogical research
- Help with mailings
- Serve on the Board of Trustees
- Digitize photographs
- Social media skills
- Garden or handyman skills

Interested in using your expertise and talents to volunteer with the Historical Society? Contact us to discuss various opportunities to help and learn more about the history of Washington County, New York.

WCHS 2025 Board of Trustees

OFFICERS

President	Patrick Niles
Vice President	Cheryl Putorti
Treasurer	John A. Mead
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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!





WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY EST. 1940

167 Broadway, Fort Edward NY 12828-1709

Telephone (518) 747-9108

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Summer 2025 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

Yes No

2. I would like to be contacted about volunteering

Yes No