



JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WWW.thejeffersonhistoricalsociety.org

August/September 2023

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE TREES ON THE TOWN GREEN?

By Paul Trotta and Gail Rentsch

Recently, retired forester Paul Trotta, Jefferson councilman Ken Cole, and Gail and Werner Rentsch representing the JHS, walked around the Town Green looking at the thirty-five trees that line the area. As volunteers of a Green committee, we, and Barb Palmer who was unable to join us that day, wanted to evaluate how the older and newer maple trees were thriving and to identify those that were not.

It was Colonel Stephen Judd who was instrumental in creating the town of Jefferson in 1803 and donated, in 1817, a parcel of prime land to be used for militia training and an academy. Development around the Green ensued but by the 1870s livestock grazed on the Green and it became a dumping ground for construction debris. In 1879, Reverend Charles H. Travis, the Methodist minister, had 120 sugar maples planted in a double row around the Green, which beautified the area and became known as the Bridal Path. Trees have been added to the Green at various times, and records show that between 1966 and 1968 some of the original trees were replaced by local Boy Scouts around the time of the first Maple Festival. In 1976, hardware store owner Walter Dittmaier and Town Supervisor Charles Buck Sr. each planted an evergreen in the center of the Green, and, in 1987,

the Jefferson Fun Day committee planted some maples along the rim. Over the years, many of the original sugar maples died and were removed but not replaced. It is believed that several of the biggest trees on the Green that are still in place were part of the original 1879 planting. By the 2020s, large gaps between trees indicated where many trees were missing. It was then that the Green committee formed to restore a single tree line along the edge of the Green. During the last three years, this committee planted thirteen new sugar maples and one hydrangea (placed under electric wires that would not accommodate a tall tree) and arranged for pavers recognizing donors who supported our efforts.

What we learned...

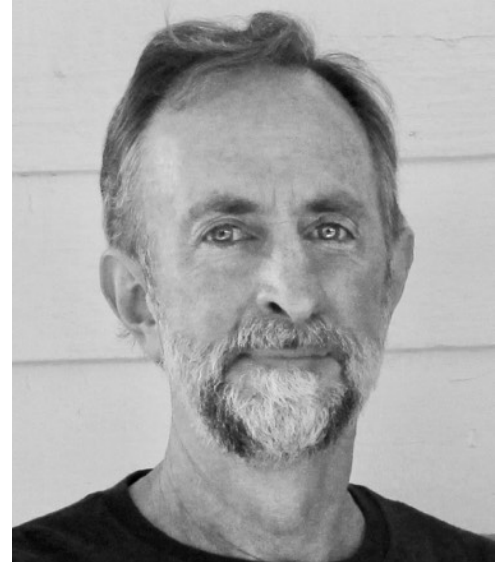
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President's message

By Kevin Berner

As documented in the photos in this newsletter, the Jefferson Historical Society had an exceptionally busy spring and summer. Following three days of grand opening weekend events for the Nicholas J. Juried Museum of Jefferson History, it was open regularly each Saturday through the spring and summer for the first time with its hours corresponding to those at the Fuller District one-room schoolhouse. Many individuals took advantage of our new elevator to access the museum on the second floor.



JHS volunteers participated with the committee planning Heritage Day, and volunteers worked in Judd Hall staffing the museum, the Fuller District schoolhouse, and the Maple Museum for a quilt show. In addition, we sponsored the appearance of Abe Lincoln (Pete Lindemann) and the ever-lively Blues Maneuver band.

Our special thanks go to Carol Bodnar who ran our Free Music & More Series for many years. She arranged for performers, procured grants to cover many of the program expenses, and prepared press releases for each show. This year, several volunteers joined the Program Committee, which allowed Carol time to step aside for other activities. The new group introduced events with Teresa Fellion's BodyStories, Annette Aguilar's Brazilian jazz, and the Zydeco/Cajun music by The Rubber Band.

Lecture programs held at Judd Hall included a presentation by Bonnie Dailey about genealogy, and me on my Jefferson ancestry. We also provided programs or led tours for adult education groups, Jefferson elementary school children, the Foote reunion, and a family from France.

The debut of Alex Berner's latest JHS video based on Dr. Duell's home movies from the 1930s shows students getting off the bus at the old school at the current site of the Methodist church. Other scenes show the 1936 construction of the brick school on Route 10.

Many new items were donated to us recently, including a quilt made by 5th graders at JCS and a woven blanket made in 1850 that was once owned by the Zeh family on North Road. A cider press with an 1867 date was donated from a Jefferson home. The Phelan family donated a painting done in the style of Thomas Cole and an old replica of an older coin found in their garden on Main Street where Wind in the Willows is now. We also received several old-time tools and greatly increased our Jefferson photo collection. One unique old photo enlargement shows George W. Harris, his siblings, and parents in a formal family portrait. George built the opera house and old wooden school on the town green along with many of the nicer homes in Jefferson more than a century ago.

Finally, we are grateful to Barb Palmer and Sara Henry for their organized effort to introduce new volunteers to many of our events. If you are interested in helping, let us know the kinds of activities you would like to participate in to help us serve the Jefferson community and increase the breadth of our offerings.

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_v3Vrzcz9gvBig

What we learned, continued from pg. 1

As we walked around the Green, we observed that several of the trees were not faring well. Interestingly, the original trees planted in 1879 seem to be hanging on, although our forester recommends professional pruning and fertilizing to support their survival for many more years. Also, we noted that several trees that were planted in the last forty years are not thriving. Two mature trees on the south side of the green did not sufficiently leaf out this year and their dead limbs are unsafe if they break off and fall. In addition, a young, recently planted tree did not make it through last winter. This tree filled in a gap in a low area that was subjected to salt run-off from Park Avenue, a road that was repaired last summer but not ditched well enough to prevent salt from spreading onto the Green. New trees nearby also appear to have been affected by salt run-off but were able to leaf out this summer. Then, too, we discovered that two trees on the northeast corner are in trouble, with flaking bark, poor leafing, and bare limbs at their tops. These, too, are unsafe and in need of removal. That brought the total to five trees — going, going, gone! We were deeply discouraged to see so many distressed trees on the Green.



What is happening?

Salt used to keep roads clear of snow and ice in winter is harmful to trees, especially susceptible trees such as sugar maples. When salt is deposited within the root zone of trees by runoff of melting snow and ice, the chloride ions in salt can be taken up by a tree's root system. This element is transported systemically throughout the tree and can result in the disruption of the photosynthetic process, causing fine root mortality and otherwise

stressing a tree. Signs of this stress can include dieback of leaves, buds and fine twigs. In their weakened state, trees damaged by salt are more

likely to become infected by tree diseases.

Some sugar maples on the Green already appear to be troubled by disease. Based on visual symptoms, it is difficult to tell which disease is present. A suspected fungal disease known as Verticillium Wilt did not culture out in a Cornell University diagnostic lab but an unnamed fungus did. The presence of this fungus might lead one to believe that some trees on the Green may be suffering from a decline syndrome. This decline may have started through the introduction of road de-icing salt and wounds in the bottom of the trees' trunks caused by years of careless weed whacking.

What can be done to keep the trees healthy?

Pruning, fertilizing and regularly watering trees during times of drought can help trees fight off the effects of salt, disease, and other negative onslaughts. Placing mats over the root zone of newly planted trees, with clean mulch to hold the mats in place, can keep weed whackers and mowers from damaging bark. Also, Jefferson can petition the county to improve road drainage that will prevent salt from flowing onto the Green. All earlier and current attempts to replant the trees on the Green have focused on restoring our glorious sugar maples that have been so much a part of our history. But this may not be the best solution going forward. It is clear that sugar maples, which have thrived in Jefferson for hundreds of years, are more susceptible to road salt damage than several other tree varieties. By diversifying tree species, we are more likely to keep the tree community healthy. For the future, we plan to select replacement trees that are more resistant to de-icing salt, and select species that can resist the most prevalent tree diseases.

Our Past Preserved in Place Names

Clapper Hollow

Third in a series of articles about our town's early settlers and the places named for them

by Bonnie Dailey

Clapper Hollow Road, Clapper Hollow and **Clapper Hollow Creek** are located in northwest Jefferson. If you follow NY Rt. 10 north about 2 miles from Jefferson toward Summit, you'll come to a sharp right curve. Turn left there onto Moxley Street. Clapper Hollow Road branches off almost immediately to your right. After 2.3 miles, there is a sign and parking area for the Clapper Hollow Nordic Ski Trail. This is one of three entrances to the 818-acre Clapper Hollow State Forest, which features an 8-mile network of hiking & cross-country ski trails.

From the entrance to the Nordic Ski Trail, continue about 1.4 miles to a 'T' where Stannard Road branches off to your right and Clapper Hollow Road continues to your left. This is Clapper Hollow. William Clapper (1812-1876) was considered "one of the early pioneers in this section." William built the Clapper Family Farm, and the area is named for him.

William and his first wife Betsy had seven sons and two daughters.



Clapper Family Farm

The children in the photo are

Jenny and Chauncy Clapper, children of Schuyler, grandchildren of Harvey, and Great-Grandchildren of William and Betsy Clapper.

The Clapper Cemetery, where William & Betsy are buried, is located farther up Clapper Hollow Road. Some original Clapper homes still can be found on Grenier Road, which was the original Old Clapper Hollow Road. The road is now a dead-end off Stannard Road, but it once continued all the way to Charlotteville. The old road followed Clapper Hollow Creek, which flows into the Charlotte River.

William Clapper descended from a large family of German Palatines. His Great-Grandfather Hennerich (or Hendrick) Klapper and his mother Anna Agatha Klapperin were among the original families who sailed to New York in 1710 under the protection of Queen Anne. The British settled these German 'Palatines' in the East and West Camps on the Hudson River just north of New York City. Hendrick and his mother Anna appear on the "Hunter Lists" of Palatine immigrants dated 4 Oct 1710 and again on 24 Dec 1711.

Schoharie Valley was settled in 1712 by Palatines from the East and West Camps. However, our Jefferson Clapper family arrived later. They seem to have stayed near the Camps after 1712. They may have been tenant farmers on Livingston Manor.

Hendrick Clapper's son Peter Clapper (1743-1821) was born in Rhinebeck NY. He later relocated his family to Claverack, NY. Both towns are near the location of the camps and near Livingston Manor. Peter Clapper was a soldier in the Revolutionary War and in the New York colonial militia.

Revolutionary War veteran Peter Clapper's son Jacob Clapper (1773-1860) was born in Claverack. He first appears in Jefferson in the 1820 federal census. Jacob's household in 1820 consisted of eight

members with six children under 16, including eight year-old William. In 1855 Jacob (age 80) and his wife Hannah were still in Jefferson, living in the household of their oldest son William, the pioneer mentioned earlier.

They joined other settlers in Clapper Hollow. Revolutionary War veteran Abijah Beard came to Harpersfield with his family and members of the Judd family in the winter of 1789. He lived in Clapper Hollow. He was a blacksmith by trade and was the first blacksmith in town. He and his wife, the former Hannah Judd, were buried in the North Harpersfield Cemetery.

Today it may seem remote and forested, but in the 1800's Clapper Hollow was a lively area, full of farms, businesses, and clusters of homes. Silas Dikeman built Jefferson's only foundry about 1850 on the Clapper Hollow Creek. He maintained a machine shop in which he made plows, churning machines, waterwheels, parts of sawmills and did general repairs. The blacksmith forge of Mr. Adin Warner was situated in Clapper Hollow. Mead, Wayman, Allen, Dikeman, Picket, Denney, Bradley, Truax and other families also settled there.

Several members of Jefferson's Clapper family served in the Civil War. William and Betsy Clapper's sons Samuel (1832-1900) and John W (1847-1915) were among them. Samuel enlisted in 1861 and John enlisted in 1864. William's brother Levi (1825-1884) and William's grandson George W. Clapper (1846-1864) enlisted together in Feb 1864. George unfortunately died of an illness at age 16, only seven months after enlisting.

Harvey Clapper (1845-1928), another son of William, served as Jefferson's Commissioner of Highways in 1888.

John W's son Earl J. Clapper (1886-1949) served with the US Army during WWI and was in France during the war. *The Jefferson Courier* stated that "nearly one-half of our boys are overseas, either in England or France."



Jacob Clapper
(1773-1860)

Among many other men and women from Jefferson, Leland James Clapper and Lloyd John Clapper served in WW II. Robert Lewis Clapper served with the Army in Korea. Richard A. Clapper and his brother Chapman both served in Vietnam. There probably were many more Clapper family members who served in the military.

Jefferson's own Dr. Duell delivered a baby boy in Clapper Hollow during a snowstorm in late March 1947. Chapman G. Clapper walked on top of the stone walls to meet the good doctor and lead him to their house!

In the 1970's Clara Courtenay-Clack and her late husband Thomas Clack purchased land on Grenier Road adjoining Clapper Hollow State Forest. Tom developed trails leading to the Forest. These days Clapper Hollow is vibrant again, as Clara rents out an old hunting cabin as a successful Air B&B.

With special thanks to Clara Courtenay-Clack, Stephanie Ruquet, and Richard A. Clapper for providing information and editorial assistance for this article.

Bibliography:

Cobleskill Index, Obituary of John Clapper, July 22, 1915

The Palatine Families of New York, A Study of the German Immigrants Who Arrived in Colonial New York in 1710, by Henry Z. Jones, Jr. (1985)

History of Jefferson by Mildred Bailey

RECENT JHS EVENTS

Students from the county's S.C.H.O.O.L. adult education walk through the Old Jefferson cemetery in June with JHS's Kevin Berner and Stephanie Ruquet



Below: A July dance presentation by BodyStories Teresa Fellion in the Maple Museum



Below: Jefferson's Judge Lynn Hait in Judd Hall gives a talk about the West Jefferson Cemetery.



Left: Kevin Berner presents a talk about his great-grandparents, Clifford & Mary Danforth



If it hadn't been for them, restoration of Judd Hall wouldn't have happened. Honored during the Grand Opening celebration of the Museum were, L to R: Bob Glas, David Savatteri, Kevin Berner, and Margo Cooper, representing her uncle Nick Juried.



Left: Annette Aguilar jazz concert in the Maple Museum.

Below: The Rubber Band wows a large audience, bringing them to their feet.



JHS EVENTS - HERITAGE DAY



Above: JHS volunteers Brian and Caryn Darcy greeted folks and answered questions.

Right: Pete Lindemann of Cobleskill made an impressive and knowledgeable Abe Lincoln who engaged people in "his" history as he strolled around the town on Heritage Day .



Above: In the Maple Museum, Diane Ericson and Stephanie Ruquet display a coverlet donated to JHS.



Left: Blues Maneuver band once again rocked the tent on the Green. Dancing was contagious and lots of folks caught the fever.

OTHER JHS EVENTS — AT THE SCHOOLHOUSE



Left: 4th- and 5th-grade JCS students visited the Fuller District Schoolhouse to learn what earlier Jeffersonian schools were like.



Above: Vic DiSanto gave the students a talk about the Iroquois Confederacy and Bonnie Dailey illustrated what it was like to attend a one-room school.



Left: the students enjoyed lunch at the mill site on the trail behind the schoolhouse.

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Among some salt-tolerant species that can succeed in Jefferson's climate are Red Oak, Thornless Honeylocust, Native Sycamore, and tolerant maples such as Norway Maple and Sycamore Maple.

Our committee, in conjunction with the Town Board, is committed to supporting the young trees. This month we will install matting topped by wood mulch around the tree trunks that will permit water to seep through to the roots and block sunlight that feeds weeds. The mats are essential to prevent future assaults by weed whackers. In addition, once the town has removed the dead and unhealthy trees, we have identified a young oak tree* to replace two lost trees on the Green. We will plant that tree and feed all the young trees with a basic 20-20-20 water-soluble fertilizer next spring.

Other solutions that can help preserve the older trees for many more years to come include hiring a professional tree pruner to eliminate dead branches

that appear diseased or infested. So, too, these older trees need the services of a professional arborist to drill fertilizer into their roots. This is a very expensive solution that will require grants if we can proceed. Also, we hope to purchase more young trees to replace four of the five being cut down this summer.

The Jefferson Green is a unique and valuable part of our community that brings us together and reminds us of our history. It is worthy of our support.



**A young oak tree has been donated to the JHS by Sweet Meadows Country Home & Gardens on Rt. 23. It will be planted in the spring, once the dying trees are removed.*



A winter view of the Bridal Path planted by Reverend Charles H. Travis in 1879.



JHS volunteers planted a young maple tree in 2022. Not all the young maples planted on the south side of the green did well.

Julia Ann Boggs Hastings—a Rare Literary Talent?

By Stephanie Ruquet

While researching another topic, I came across the following in an 1905 issue of the *Jefferson Courier*.

“We Will Never Leave the Farm,” by Mrs. Julia Hastings of South Jefferson, is the title of a new song just published by the Success Music Co. of Chicago. Mrs. Hastings has shown much ability as a composer. A copy of this music will be sent postpaid on receipt of price, 25 cents, by addressing Mrs. Julia Hastings, South Jefferson, N. Y.

I was so intrigued that I searched for additional information about Julia Hastings in the newspaper indexes I regularly use—fultonhistory.com and nyshistoricnewspapers.org. The next item I found about Julia was that she and her sister Emma were both ill with pneumonia. This was printed in the February 29, 1908, issue of the *Hobart Independent*. That was followed the next week by an announcement that both sisters had succumbed to their illnesses.

Mrs. Emma Boggs Simons and her sister, Mrs. Julia Boggs Hastings, of this village [*Stamford*], were taken ill with pneumonia last week. Mrs. Hastings died on Friday and her sister, Mrs. Simons, on Sunday night. They were two estimable women, much respected by all. Mrs. Simons was a widow, having lost her husband several years since. Mrs. Hastings was an older sister and their lives were closely bound together. Mrs. Hastings was a women [*sic*] of rare literary talent. (*Hobart Independent*, March 7, 1908, p. 1)

A published songwriter? A rare literary talent? I continued to search for more information about Julia and try to locate some of her writings. But whether I searched for Julia Boggs or Julia Hastings, the newspapers of the day yielded no more information about her.

Searching on Ancestry.com, I found some bare-bones facts. Julia Ann Boggs Hastings (1851-1908) was born in Stamford, the fifth-born of eight children of Henry A. Boggs (1813-1892), a carpenter, and his wife Mary Baldwin (1815-1885). On March 23, 1892, Julia married Gilboa farmer David Hastings (1841-1916) in Harpersfield. David was always enumerated in Gilboa for the US and NYS censuses, and while she was alive and married to David, Julia was enumerated with David in Gilboa. Looking on findagrave.com, I learned Julia was buried in Stamford Cemetery. Her headstone merely has her name, the dates she lived, and the fact that she was the wife of David Hastings. The resting place of David was not listed.

I searched for her song on the Sheet Music Consortium website (digital.library.ucla.edu) and in other universities holding collections of American sheet music, but had no luck. I checked with Karen Cuccinello, curator of the local history collection at Stamford Library, to see if there was anything about or by Julia Hastings in that collection. Again, no luck.

So in the end there were still far more questions than answers. What were the words to Julia’s song? What other songs did Julia Hastings write? Did she also write the music for the songs? What else did Julia write to be noted as a “rare literary talent”?

Do you have any information about Julia Ann Boggs Hastings or her writings? If so, I’d love to hear from you. You can contact me at historicalsocietyjefferson@gmail.com.

LEAVE YOUR MARK ON JEFFERSON

The Jefferson Historical Society could not have accomplished all it has without the support of its members, donors, and grant-funding organizations and foundations. But we need to plan for our future financial well-being if we are to continue our efforts to preserve Jefferson's future, to serve our community, and to grow. This is why we have established **The Fund for the Future**.

This Fund is intended to help address core operational expenses and is how we can serve the Jefferson community for years to come. Also, it is a way for you to make your mark on Jefferson by leaving a long-lasting and recognizable impact after you are gone. Your contribution makes an indelible mark that demonstrates your love and commitment to Jefferson.

Contributions to this dedicated account will help JHS continue to grow into a reliable resource for the future work of the Jefferson Historical Society. It will allow us to continue to celebrate the history and culture of our town through our research and education into the past and our community cultural events. In addition, sufficiently building this account will fortify us against future, unforeseen expenses not generally covered by grants or targeted donations.

As a 501(3)c non profit, donations are 100% tax-exempt as allowed by law.

For further information about the Fund for the Future and/or to discuss how you can arrange to leave a legacy donation to the Jefferson Historical Society, please contact JHS Trustee, Mark Sisk, at 607 652-2167.

Don't Miss these Events Coming Up Soon

Friday, Saturday & Sunday
August 18-20 & 25-27, 9-4
Maple Museum

JHS 6th Annual Yard Sale

Friday, Sept 1, 7:30 pm
Maple Museum

***Fly Birds Bluegrass Concert**

Sunday, September 24, 2023
2-4 pm at Judd Hall
Museum will be open

***Memories of Titus Lake** 1920s through 1970s

Saturdays Oct 8 & 15, 10-2pm
Sundays Oct 9 & 16, 2-4pm
Friday, Oct 6m 5-7pm, Opening Reception
Judd Hall

***Tracy Jacknow Watercolors**

*Light refreshments will be served

JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION FORM

Name: _____

Membership Categories (Please circle one)

Address: _____

Individual....\$15

Couple/family....\$25

Email: _____

Individual lifetime..\$100 Couple lifetime...\$150

Members qualify for a 10% discount on JHS merchandise and may attend JHS monthly meetings, held the first Tuesday each month.

Donation Opportunities

Operating Exps. \$ _____ Judd Hall \$ _____ Schoolhouse \$ _____ Trees on the Green \$ _____ Fund for the future \$ _____.

Maple Museum \$ _____ Music & More series \$ _____ Other (please specify) _____ \$ _____

My donation is in memory of/in honor of _____

Please make your check 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!

Local Business Show Their Support for JHS.

We are grateful to the local businesses that supported JHS during our recent business fund-raising drive. Thank you for your donations and for your recognition of all that we do for the Jefferson community and the preservation of its history.

SILVER LEAF CONTRIBUTORS

Apple Barrel
Eklund Family Farm Machinery
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102 Park Ave (the post office site) Orrin B. Treadwell's Restaurant and Billiard Parlor before 1911 when the building was torn down and replaced with the Opera House/Town Hall.