



THE JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WWW.thejeffersonhistoricalsociety.org

May 2022



Residents and visitors to Jefferson can pick up this brochure before heading over to the Fuller District Schoolhouse on Harpersfield Road — open every Sunday, 12-3pm, from Memorial Day to Columbus Day weekends.

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He may say he is Mark Twain, and during Heritage Day you can take him at his word. Twain look-a-like Don Coons impersonates the caustic, outspoken author and lecturer to regale Heritage Day visitors. Be sure to stop by Judd Hall from 10:30 - 1:30 pm to hear some of Twain's colorful stories.



Come dance the night away under the tent as JHS once again presents the BLUES MANEUVER band — but this year come on SATURDAY, Heritage Day, July 9th, 7:30pm.





President's Message

By Kevin Berner

Winter is typically a quiet time for our programs, but the Jefferson Historical Society has been extremely active behind the scenes. COVID impacted our events offerings, but we and the Methodist church cohosted a festive holiday concert by the Upper Catskill String Quartet in December. Paul Trotta also did a fascinating online presentation about blacksmithing.

Bob Glas' strong leadership is moving forward work on Judd Hall. Contractors are lined up to build foundations for the elevator silo and a two-story addition that will provide general storage on the first-floor and archival storage on the second floor. In addition, many displays are progressing for our planned Nicholas J. Juried Museum of Jefferson History on the second floor.

Once again we can offer our free Music and More series to the community, thanks to Carol Bodnar's successful efforts to deliver funding from the Arts Council. In addition, a grant from The A. Lindsay & Olive B. O'Connor Foundation provided sufficient funds for us to build handicapped access into Judd Hall, and we are especially grateful to those who responded to our appeals letter with matching funds that secured the grant. Another grant received, this through the efforts of Bonnie Dailey, provided us with valuable help in organizing and protecting our archival materials. We have an extraordinarily strong record of obtaining funds from the Nicholas J. Juried Family Foundation, other funding groups, and individuals for specific restoration projects, programs, and equipment, etc. Our greatest financial challenge now is for ongoing expenses for fuel oil and insurance, two areas where the costs are increasing. We have energy conservation work planned to attempt to reduce our oil use.

We're excited to provide a wide variety of events during the coming summer, including music, speakers, art exhibits, and more. Another highlight for us is our annual Alumni Reception in Judd Hall held before the Alumni Banquet at the school. In addition to our museum opening this summer, the Fuller District Schoolhouse will be open each Sunday from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend with "schoolmarm" Bonnie Dailey providing tours.

Please visit our own YouTube channel where you can see videos created by Alex Berner, and a video of the Paul Trotta presentation. And, I hope you are enjoying our daily posts about Jefferson's history on our Facebook page.

We look forward to seeing you in 2022 as we resume JHS events and offer exciting new ones devoted to the history of Jefferson. If you are not a member, I hope you will join us in 2022.

Contact information or to learn more about us:

Mail: Jefferson Historical Society, P.O. Box 143, Jefferson, NY 12093

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THOMAS JEFFERSON

1743-1826

3rd President of the United States

1801-1809

by Clara Courtenay-Clack

Jefferson is best remembered as a great President and as the author of the Declaration of Independence. He won fame also as a

statesman, diplomat and political philosopher, and as the founder of the Democratic-Republican party.

Jefferson had a buoyant faith and soaring idealism. The name "**Jeffersonian Democracy**" is still given to the dream of a nation of free-holding farmers, living under as little government control as possible.

Democrat

A high degree of democracy was found in ancient Greece: the word means: "Rule by the people." Democracy grew after the Reformation in Northern Europe primarily in England, France, and the Netherlands around 1500. The Declaration of Independence adopted by the Continental Congress in 1776 has become a classic document in the history of democracy. The declaration was drafted by Thomas Jefferson who was very familiar with similar documents written previously in England, France, and the Netherlands. But Jefferson went beyond the English document which listed the natural rights of man as LIFE, LIBERTY and PROPERTY, adding "THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS" to these rights.

The origin and development of *Democrat* in the United States was closely related to the Puritan Revolution in Europe. The Pilgrims who fled Europe wanted to make a new home that abided by "just and

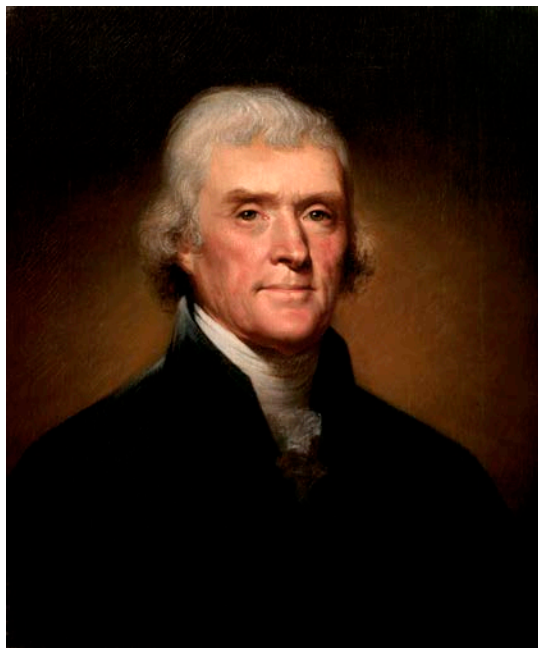
equal laws," the freedom of religion, the freedom to choose where you live and work, and the freedom to elect public officials. These American ideals account for the millions of immigrants who are still attracted to the pure ideas of democracy, which often does not exist in their native lands.

Jefferson Democrat was a movement for more democracy in American government in the first decade of the 19th century. This movement was led by then President Thomas Jefferson. The Jeffersonian followers favored States rights and a strict interpretation of the Constitution. They viewed the United States more as a confederation of sovereign entities woven together by a common interest and placed their faith in an agrarian economy and a rural society.

New York played a pivotal role in the Revolutionary War and upon war's end New York's border became well defined. At this time farmers were respected as honest, hardworking men who provided for their families. Many early American leaders believed that farming was the most respectable way of life and should remain the most important sector of the nation's economy. Founding father and future president Jefferson was

the leading spokesperson of this belief, called Agrarianism (a society based on agriculture and small, self-sufficient farmers.) Jefferson claimed that land ownership was a natural right of citizens, and that the small farmer was at the forefront of American republicanism (a form of government in which elected officials govern for the benefit of the citizens.) To maintain an agrarian society the United States needed a steady supply of new land for the rapidly expanding population. To many new immigrant families cheap and abundant farmland represented the freedom fought for in the American Revolution. Jefferson believed that if the settlers owned their own land and made a living

Continued on next page



Jefferson Historical Society's
2ND BIG SILENT AUCTION FUNDRAISER
In the Maple Museum

The bidding starts
Friday, May 27
At the Opening Reception
(Refreshments served)
4-7 p.m.
And continues
Saturday, May 28
10-4 p.m.

Winners will be notified beginning
immediately after
the closing of the bidding at 4 p.m. on Saturday.

See the JHS facebook page beginning May 14 for
photos of the great items
that will be up for auction!

Continued from pg. 3

selling products from that land, they would take an active interest in those governing their land and insist that elected officials make decisions that benefitted ordinary citizens including small farmers. Fulfilling Thomas Jefferson's hopes, farmers were at the forefront of frontier expansion in those early years of the United States development. During the first decade after the war, farmers continued to move further North but also Westward. The land in Upstate New York was cheap compared to other areas, although immigrants had to cope with rocky soil and long winters. The population was initially settled by mostly Germans and Dutch; later more Northern Europeans would settle, Scotsmen, Irish, English, Scandinavian, and other immigrants who did not mind the weather and knew how to use rocks to their advantage.

With all this faith and idealism it is no wonder our town wanted to claim the name of Thomas Jefferson. The area that encompasses the town of Jefferson was patented before the Revolution in 1771, and was generally known as the Strasburg patent. This was during the time of political patronage given as favors under the British crown. John Butler bought this patent in 1771. The Strasburg patent was surveyed by John Van Allen into lots for settlement after 1793. It was surveyed rectilinearly into nearly square lots of about 120 acres apiece. The tracts were laid out with no regard for topography, hence the

long demarcation stone walls traversing rivers, mountains and hollows, which are still visible and should be respected. The town of Jefferson was created in 1803 from a portion of the town of Blenheim. The first town meeting was held in the house of Stephen Judd, our town's founder. By then, the majority of the Jefferson population was made up of freeholders, or middle-class free men who owned property. These were small farmers, mill owners and merchants that owned property and therefore had the right to vote.

Some early buildings such as Colonel Judd's house may have been demolished or lost to fire. Later as residents became more prosperous some of "Jeffersonian architecture" in the form of neo-classicism can be seen in the architectural designs of the older houses in Jefferson. Jefferson's style was popular in the early 19th Century, about the same time that the more mainstream Greek revival architecture also come into fashion. Unfortunately, many of these houses were lost to fire, but you can still see others in the heart of our town and its surroundings.

Sources:

A History of the Town of Jefferson 1771-1976 Mildred L. Bailey
Those Rugged Hills and Green Valleys 1987 by Evangeline MacLaury
The World Book Encyclopedia 1954

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Eugene Bouton, Jefferson, & Me

By Stephanie Ruquet

Life is made up of many connecting and intersecting circles. A lifetime ago, I spent four years living and studying at SUNY New Paltz, then called New Paltz State or simply NPS. I had grown up on Long Island where the land is mostly flat as a pancake and the tallest hill is 400' high. I was awed by the beauty of the landscape of the Shawangunks, and the Catskills to the north. After graduation I went back to Long Island to live and work, but always wanted to return to upstate New York. Years later I finally did just that when my husband and I retired to a rustic cabin in the woods in a little town named Jefferson, about 80 miles northwest of New Paltz.

When I was at NPS, I never heard of the town of Jefferson. But recently when researching a family of early Jefferson, I stumbled upon one of life's unexpected connections. Bouton Hall, the dorm in which I lived during my freshman year at NPS, was

named for Eugene Bouton, the first principal of the State Normal School at New Paltz. Eugene Bouton was born and raised in Jefferson.

Born December 6, 1850, Eugene was the only child of Ira Bouton and his second wife, Emma Foote. Ira, originally from Watertown, Connecticut, was a blacksmith, a trustee of the Jefferson Academy, and a lieutenant in the 104th Infantry Regiment of the NYS militia. Ira and his first wife Catherine Maria Stanley had eleven children, only three of whom lived to adulthood. Catherine died giving birth to her last child. Ira Bouton, his wives Catherine and Emma, and eight of Ira and Catherine's children are buried in the old Jefferson Cemetery.

Eugene Bouton's childhood home was on Westkill Road, on the part of the Foote farm his mother had inherited from her father Miles. After being educated locally, Eugene Bouton attended Cazenovia Seminary in Madison County, NY. He went on to earn both his B.A. and M.A. degrees from Yale University. He received his Ph.D from Syracuse University. After a career as an educator, administrator, and author, Bouton and his family settled in Bloomfield, New Jersey, where he died in 1951 at the age of 100.

In his final years, his love of history and genealogy came to the fore when Bouton decided to research and write a history of the town of Jefferson and its residents. It is our loss that he wasn't able to complete that book. However, the letters and papers of Eugene Bouton, containing a history-rich trove of genealogical material about the early families of Jefferson, are in the Manuscripts and Special Collections Section of the New York State Library in Albany. Copies of the material are in the collection of the Old Stone Fort library in Schoharie, as well as the local history collections of the Cobleskill Community Library and the Stamford Library, sources I have consulted often in my research about Jefferson's history. Yes, another of life's intertwining circles. Amazing.



EUGENE BOUTON

JHS EVENTS — JEFFERSON

Silent Auction Opening Reception

Friday, May 27, 4-7 p.m. - Maple Museum, 221 Creamery St.
Refreshments served and bidding starts.

Silent Auction

Saturday, May 28, 10-4 p.m.
Bidding continues; Winners announced.

Jefferson Central School Alumni Reception

Saturday, June 4, 2-4 p.m. - Judd Hall, 163 Main St.

Tom Nershi Exhibit of Barn Photographs

Friday- Sunday, June 3-5 - Judd Hall (June 3, 7 pm artist reception)

Upper Catskill String Quartet

July 3, 3pm - Maple Museum

Maple Museum - First Presbyterian Church Plaque Rededication

Heritage Day, July 9, 10 am - Maple Museum

Mark Twain Impersonator

Heritage Day, July 9, 10:30 - 1:30 - Judd Hall Porch

Blues Maneuver Band

Saturday, July 9, Heritage Day, 7:30 p.m. - Jefferson Town Green

Leonata String Quartet

Sunday, July 24, 4pm - Maple Museum

John Jackson Whimsical Sculptures Exhibit

Fridays - Sundays, August 5-7 and 12-14, Judd Hall

First Call Brass Band

tbd, Jefferson Town Green

The Annual Indoor (& Outdoor) Yard Sale

Friday - Sunday, August 26, 27, 28, Sept., 2,3,4 - 9-3pm - Judd Hall

Werner Rentsch, An Artist in Jefferson

Exhibit Friday - Sunday, October 7, 8, 9
Presentation: Sunday, October 9, 3 pm - Judd Hall

BATTLE OF THE FLOCKEY

FIRST CHARGE OF THE U.S. ARMY CAVALRY OCCURRED IN SCHOHARIE COUNTY

By Bob Glas

August 1777, the Revolution had not been going well until the previous Christmas and January battles of Trenton and Princeton. Those glimmers of hope seemed to be threatened the following summer by Burgoyne's massive British army descending through Champlain and taking Fort Ticonderoga. Patriot generals Schuyler and Gates began sending out orders to all the Committees of Safety requesting militias to join the army of continentals and militias in Albany. The Schoharie Valley, however, was a hotbed of Loyalist Tories who had succeeded in infiltrating the local Committee of Safety which succeeded in delaying or preventing the local volunteers from going. George Mann (Mann's Tavern in what was to become the Town of Schoharie) and Adam Crysler, a farmer in Breakabeen, were both committee members with Tory sympathies.

Jefferson, 26 years before being established (1803), was situated on the ancient trails and current roads connecting the Schoharie Valley with both the Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers. One of the trails began on the upper reaches of the Schoharie in Blenheim, followed the Westkill stream up through what is now Jefferson then on down to the Middlebrook stream/ Charlotte Valley stream to what is now Oneonta. On this road Jacob Harper and his brothers and some other families settled in what is now Harpersfield in 1769. It was also on this path that groups of Tories and Indians led by Joseph Brant, John McDonnell, Adam Crysler and others would lead raids.

In August 1777, now Colonel Jacob Harper heard that Brant and McDonnell were moving East up the valleys burning houses unless an oath supporting the King was taken. Harper led his family down the Westkill to the safety of the forts in the Schoharie valley. He then rode off to Albany to seek aid against the growing threat of a Tory uprising. He succeeded



in enlisting the aid of a troop of 28 Continental Light Dragoons (cavalry) that were on their way to Saratoga. They were led by Jean Louis de Vernejoux, a French mercenary with a checkered past (more on this in the future). They approached the vicinity of Mann's Tavern and apprehended a group of Tories assembling there, but not George Mann who had escaped. After getting them to renounce their oaths to the King they were freed with pardons because they had not inflicted damage to persons or property. The troop then continued up the valley gathering more militia and arresting various Tories. Arriving at Joseph Becker's house by "Vrooman's Land" prisoners were led up a ladder to the roof. With the ladder removed, the roof became an erstwhile jail. Adding some more men from the Becker farm they proceeded to the Crysler farm. A marshy area then known as "**The Flockey**," a German word for marshy area, bordering Crysler's house (just south of today's village of Fultonham) where a barricade was manned by upwards of a hundred Tories plus thirty Indians. This was an opportunity for de Vernejoux to finally show off his troop's mettle. Forming a battle line with horns blowing, they fired a volley and then charged scattering the enemy. Pursuit was ended by a large thunder storm. Thus the first charge by the United States Army Cavalry entered the annals of history.

When JHS purchased Judd Hall in 2017 volunteers worked to clean it up and, as we did, we debated what to do about two old, dilapidated settees that had been left behind. We worked around them and they remained in the building as two eyesores. Later in the year, Stephanie Ruquet was in Florida for the winter and found herself sitting on an old recovered settee as she listened to a historical presentation. She immediately phoned home with instructions to "hang on to that furniture! We can use them." I had just had a couch recovered by Capitol Upholstery in Voorheesville, and I knew they could bring these settees back to life. Now back in Judd Hall in all their glory, the settees will provide years of beauty and comfort to folks attending lectures, meetings, etc. The next time you are in Judd Hall take a look and grab a seat. — Sara Henry



A New Security System Installed

As JHS collects more Jefferson history through letters, photographs, antiques, and other precious family items, a security system was needed to protect them and the construction materials lying around waiting to be installed. We opted for a system that would cover theft, floods (remembering last year's water disaster), fire, and low temperature. Easy to install wireless components with motion sensors that combine with camera systems will alert a security company if anything is amiss. — by Bob Glas



Can you guess what these were used for? (Answer on p. 10)

A Civil War Family Tragedy

By Stephanie Ruquet

On the Civil War monument in Evergreen Cemetery is the name Miles Eggleston. Born in Jefferson in 1831, Miles was the son of Garrett Eggleston and Harriet Hurlbert. His paternal grandparents, Grove Eggleston and Leva Miles, originally from Connecticut, settled in Jefferson before 1810. Some fifty years later, nine descendants of Grove and Leva Eggleston—eight grandsons and one great-grandson—served in the Civil War. Miles was the only one who didn't come home.

Married by 1855, Miles and his wife Polly (surname unknown) lived in Jefferson and had three daughters: Rozella, Arstell, and Minia. Miles worked as a day laborer to support his family. He enlisted in the 134th NY Volunteer Infantry in August 1862 and was mustered in on September 22nd. On July 1, 1863, the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg, Pvt. Miles Eggleston was captured by Confederate soldiers. After the battle he and the many other captured soldiers were taken to Richmond, Virginia. There Miles was imprisoned at Belle Isle, a 54-acre island in the James River that was used by the Confederate army from June 1862 through October 1864 as a military prison for captured Union privates and non-commissioned officers. Conditions were deplorable. Disease was rampant, food and shelter meager. POWs brought to Belle Isle were very soon sick, filthy, vermin-infested, starving, and suffering from exposure.

Before he went off to war, Miles provided Polly with a six-acre leasehold in East Jefferson for her support and the support of their two little daughters, Arstell and Minia. Their eldest, Rozella, had died before the war. Polly Eggleston was aware of her husband's capture and imprisonment and mentioned it in her will which she wrote in October 1863. Some details of the leasehold land and its boundaries are also contained in the will. Polly died on January 3, 1864, and the will was filed with the Schoharie County Surrogate Court on February 28, 1864, only

seven days after her husband's death on Belle Isle on February 21st.

In her will, Polly provided for the support of her surviving children and named "her beloved friend" Lemuel Eggleston, Miles' older brother, as the executor of her will. On June 10, 1865, two-year-old Minia was enumerated in Lemuel Eggleston's household for the NYS census. A month later, on July 8, 1865, Lemuel was named guardian of the little girl. There was no mention of Arstell. Sadly, neither of the girls can be found again in the historical records.

Lemuel Eggleston is buried in Jefferson's Evergreen Cemetery. Grove, Leva, Harriet, and Garrett Eggleston are buried in the old Jefferson Cemetery just north of Main Street. Rozella is buried in the old cemetery on Creamery Street in Summit. The locations of the graves of Miles, Polly, Arstell and Minia are unknown today.



Answer to pg. 9 quiz: Butter molds

JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION FORM

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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

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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!

Book orders	Unit price	# Books or T-shirt size & color	10% Member Discount	Cost
Schools of Jefferson	\$25			
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History of the Jefferson United Methodist Church, 2019	\$5			
Slougher's Hilariously Illustrated History of Schoharie Cty	\$10			
JHS Tee shirt: sizes M, L, XL, 2X in dark navy	\$15			
Postage & Handling per each item	\$5			

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



Anna Stewart Totten with her horse "Kit" driving down Main St. Jefferson during an Old Home Day parade. Anna and her husband Wilfred ran an ice cream parlor/restaurant immediately west of what is now the Heartbreak Hotel.