

JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

December 2019



YEAR END REVIEW

The Jefferson Historical Society is just about to complete its most productive year yet with very active programming and extensive building work. We look forward to 2020 with enthusiasm.

EVENTS

This year we hosted a presentation on the development of Jefferson by Preservation Consultant Jessie Ravage; a gathering of local businesses; a meeting of local historical societies/historians; a birding festival with a bird walk, talk, and photo display; Textile Day, an historical Main St. walk; and alumni reception by early July. On Heritage Day in July we had a dedication ceremony for Judd Hall (the former Masonic Hall) along with our biggest display yet of historic materials tied to Jefferson. In the fall we hosted our second historians' meeting, and a family pumpkin carving event followed a few days later by providing Halloween treats for children at Judd Hall. We staffed a JHS table in December at the Methodist Church's holiday bazaar while simultaneously putting on a large holiday market at the newly renovated Mill Pond Inn which you may remember as "George & Lil's." We also gave presentations about Jefferson for the Carlisle Historical Society and at the Stamford library. Judd Hall was the site of eight open mic events run by the Jefferson Central School Art Club on the first Friday of each month from February through September. Performers ranged from young children to senior citizens. The open mic will resume in February. Our Jefferson Farmers' Markets ran for 21 weeks Saturday from May through October. Our free summer concert series featured the Upper Catskill String Quartet, Blues Maneuver, Celebration of Strings with the Leonata String Trio and Briar Rose String Quartet, the Canal Street String Band, and the First Call Brass Ensemble performed from the bandstand on the Green. We led a guided walk through the Old Jefferson Cemetery north of the Heartbreak Hotel. We also gave a historic tour of the heart of the business district, old cemetery and Fuller District school house to CROP students from the school.



Judd Hall Dedication Ceremony: President Kevin Berner, Stephanie Ruquet & Diane Ericson, Bob & Dee Glas as Colonel Stephen Judd and his wife Statira, and the sign dedicating the building.



Tour group heading into old Jefferson.



Students from the CROP group on their tour of the Fuller District School House.



A family enjoying our second annual pumpkin carving at Judd Hall.



Attendees exchanging ideas at our second meeting of historians and historical societies.



Our holiday market recently in the newly renovated Mill Pond Inn.



The Upper Catskill String Quartet performing in the Maple Museum.



We sponsored the Blues Maneuver for their traditional concert on the Green the night before Heritage Day.



The Celebration of Strings concert in the Maple museum included the Briar Rose Quartet (left) and Leonata String Trio (with Natalya Milman missing this photo.)



The First Call Brass Ensemble performed from the bandstand built by the Jefferson Cornet Band in 1900. The Canal String Band had the audience tapping their feet to the music in the Maple Museum.



The Jefferson Farmers' Market (left) was an active place to be each Saturday morning for several months. The open mic events in Judd Hall (right) attracted large crowds.

RESTORATION

We rent the Maple Museum from the town and have worked each year to restore more at the building. This year we replaced the worn linoleum in the foyer with a hardwood maple floor. The small kitchen received a facelift and new refrigerator. A new toilet was installed in the bathroom. Town Historian Ingrid Zeman began developing a display of the town's maple industry in the room off the foyer.

We purchased Judd Hall in December 2017. Accomplishments there this year were repairs and painting of the entire exterior and replacement of damaged window panes. Eagle Scout candidate Eric Parker and his work team gutted the second floor of the building removing paneling, plaster and lath walls, and ceiling tiles. Our JHS work teams sealed gaps between the clapboards in preparation for spray foam insulation that was applied to all the second floor walls. Recently walls were framed in that area for our planned office/archive room. Behind the building six large trees growing too close to the foundation were cut down and their roots removed. A section of the foundation on the north wall was cracked and had shifted in position. That area was removed and the foundation was replaced. While the area was dug up, we replaced the septic tank. Additional work was also done around some of the building sill and a heating duct is being added to the kitchen. Contractors have been lined up to upgrade the electrical work and apply the sheetrock upstairs so the Sally Swantz Memorial Archive Room and Nicholas Juried Museum of Jefferson History can be developed. Sally was a strong supporter of JHS and was passionate about genealogical research. Engineers have developed plans for the fabrication of the required metal fire escape and we are awaiting bids for that actual construction.



These photos show the second floor of Judd Hall where Eagle Scout candidate Eric Parker led a team removing the walls and ceiling tiles. The left photo shows the room before spray foam insulation was added while the right photo shows that process completed.



Here the future office/archive room has been framed out.

This past July we again had the Indoor Yard Sale in Judd Hall. The sale brought in \$1721.68 in six days over two weekends. That money will be used for buying fuel oil for Judd Hall.



This is what Judd Hall looks like outside now all repaired and painted. On the right Dawn Lewis (seated) and Stephanie Ruquet of the Indoor Yard Sale team are seen visiting with a customer at their highly successful

PROJECTS

Replacing Trees on the Green - submitted by Gail Rentsch

In 1879, 120 maple trees were set out at the edge of the Green in a double row and were sometimes referred to as the Bridal Path or Lover's Lane. Later, a Park Association was formed that invited "all male citizens of Jefferson to appear on the park with teams if possible to contribute labor toward beautifying the said Park." Today a single row remains and it includes gaps without trees.



Many activities have been held on Jefferson's Green. The original use was as a military training ground. The Green has also been the site of camp meetings, 4th of July celebrations, Jefferson Fairs, Old Home Days, Maple Festivals, and Heritage Days. It was open to all groups and organizations and included Sunday School picnics, band concerts, free movies, baseball games and ice cream socials.

Over the years many maple trees died and were removed. During the first two or three years of the Maple Festival, Boy Scouts planted some maple trees as replacements. In 1976 Mrs. Augusta Jones presented to the town a check for \$40.00 for a tree to be placed on the Green, in memory of her brother-in-law, Roscoe Jones.

JHS is committed to restoring a complete single row of sugar maples to line the perimeter of the Green in keeping with the history of the Green and in a nod to the maple sugar industry in Jefferson. With full support of the Jefferson Town Board, seven trees will be planted in Spring 2020 and more will be planted as needed in the future.

JHS has initiated a fund-raising effort to support the purchase, planting, mulching and maintenance of new Sugar Maples. All donations are welcome. Sponsorship of a tree is \$200 and to dedicate a tree on a plaque mounted on the Green will be available for an additional fee (to be determined.)

Fuller District School House - submitted by Barbara Palmer

One of Jefferson's gems is the Fuller District one-room schoolhouse located on the outskirts of the hamlet just east of Town Hall. The schoolhouse has a rich history including being saved from complete demise and lovingly restored by Cleo Moore, who attended school there until 8th grade. He moved the schoolhouse to his property where he restored it and opened it as a museum. Many people of all ages visited it over the years.

After Cleo's death, his family donated the schoolhouse to the Town of Jefferson. It was moved again, to its present site. Shortly after, a Jefferson Girl Scout troop took it on as their Silver Award project. They cleaned, sorted and organized the objects within and held a dedication ceremony. An Eagle Scout had a bluestone path built for it and the town replaced its windows and roof.

Recently, there has been a surge of interest to continue restoration and make the community more aware of the gem that it is. Barb Palmer and Clara Clack, along with other volunteers have been working both on interior and exterior projects. Items that were unrelated to the schoolhouse or were produced/published after 1930 (the year it closed) have been removed, while many items including a globe, old mirror, desks, slates, toys etc. have been added.

The current focus is to have an 1854 map of the U.S. restored so that it may be safely displayed in the schoolhouse year round. The JHS is planning to work with the CROP students from JCS on building a history/nature trail leading to the old mill ruins. There are also plans to clean an area next to the schoolhouse for a picnic space. Members of JHS have applied for a grant to help with the costs. Another group of people has volunteered to scrape the siding of the schoolhouse to prepare it for JHS members to paint it.

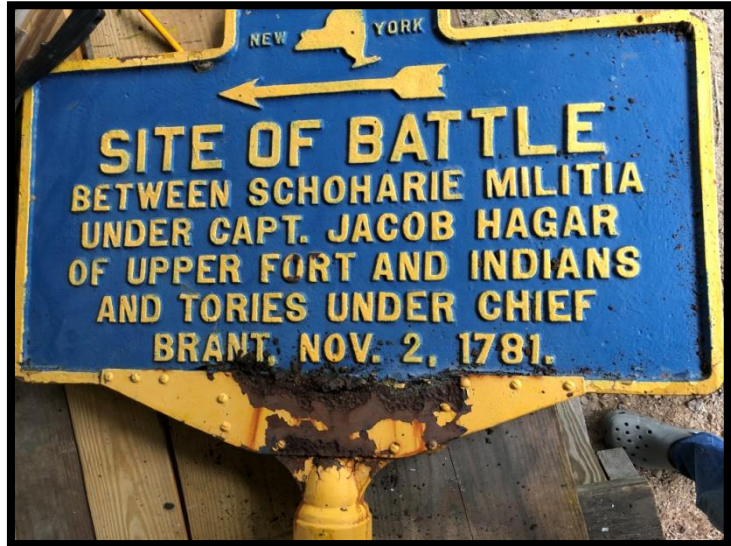
The schoolhouse will open again in warm weather. Watch for flyers and the sandwich board open sign, or stop by any time you see the door open!



Here our clapboard replacement project is evident on the side of the Fuller District School House. Next summer the building will be scraped and painted.

Revolutionary Battle in Jefferson - Historic marker - submitted by Bob Glas

Unbeknownst to many, during the Autumn of 1781, Joseph Brant, Adam Crysler and a large group of Indians attacked Schoharie killing Isaac Vroman. Crysler's objective was to retrieve his family and take them to Canada. A group of militia led by Jacob Hager and Timothy Murphy were joined by a company of Eastern troops led by a Captain Hale and followed in pursuit. A skirmish near Breakabeen left one Tory dead. The invaders continued to make their way to the Susquehanna and safety



when the patriots caught up with them in the vicinity of Lake Utsayantha, known as "The Narrows." However knowing they were being pursued, the Tories and Indians lay in ambush. When the firing began, instead of flanking the enemy as ordered, Capt. Hale began a retreat. Hager and Murphy caught up with him and made him turn around. After some time the enemy left the scene, the Patriots not knowing how many were in the party and having suffered two dead, broke off and retreated to Schoharie.

Since the 1930s an historical marker describing the event has stood about a half mile north of Oorah Boyzone the former Scotch Valley. It appears to have been repaired once but is in deplorable condition in a neglected turn around. With the blessing of the Historical Society, I've contacted the Pomeroy Foundation to replace the sign. If our grant is refused (January) I have plans (with a \$120 voucher from the Historical Society) to fix and halt any further deterioration. Oorah, through the good work of Holly Augi, has volunteered to landscape the turn around.

Thank You to Our Funding Partners - submitted by Carol Bodnar

Jefferson Historical Society events and projects received significant support from our funding partners in 2019. The Maple Museum Free Music and More Series was our most costly programming to date. The New York Council on the Arts Decentralization program, which Dennis Shaw administers in Schoharie County through the Greene County Council on the Arts, provided us with \$1960 to be used for musician fees. A new program, the Fair Game grant funded by local casinos contributed \$2000 towards the expenses of our Music Series. Our local CORE Values Thrift Store, which generously supports organizations in our area, gave us money to match our Verizon Volunteer dollars (thank you, Shannon Staib) to share the expenses for the big tent for Heritage Day, and for the Blues Maneuver to perform there the night before. Humanities New York gave us \$500 towards our Textile Day program in July, which featured Hallie Bond speaking on Quilts of Northern New York.

Work on Judd Hall continues and includes making the entire building handicapped accessible. Estimates on installation of an elevator and outdoor fire stairs and exit approached the \$40,000. Helping us to meet that goal, the A. Lindsay and Olive B. O'Connor Foundation presented us with \$15,000, to be matched by other sources. The Thomson Trust stepped in with a grant for \$4000, and with generous contributions from the Nicholas Juried Foundation and others we are now ready to move forward on that project. First,

however, there were other construction issues that needed to be addressed, and those projects are mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter.

JHS has supported the project to have the Hamlet of Jefferson nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District. Following through on last year's Historic Survey work of preservation consultant Jessie Ravage, JHS has received a grant of over \$6,000 to have Jessie prepare a nomination report to the State Historic Preservation Office. The report will detail the history of the Hamlet and the 91 properties that have been mostly unchanged since they were built in the 19th century. Designation as a Historic District will give Jefferson more reasons to be proud of our heritage, and will encourage visitors to seek out our town as a destination. Anyone wishing to take advantage of the tax credits associated with restoring historic properties may do so in consultation with the State Office - otherwise, no restrictions on property owners exist.

RESEARCH

An important part of the mission of JHS is to research Jefferson's history so it can be preserved and presented to the public. We continue to collect old photos of the town and a third volume of our Jefferson Then and Now photo books is approaching completion. I continue to work on the old Jefferson Cemetery and eventually we will publish a book of biographies of the individuals buried there. Another book is planned detailing as many of the historic businesses of the town as possible. Currently we have an extensive spreadsheet where we are trying to identify as many of the businesses, who owned them, when they owned them, where they were, etc. If anyone is interested in reviewing that list we would welcome their input. We would also like copies photos of the businesses. Another major ongoing project being conducted by Stephanie Ruquet is to learn as much as possible about Civil War soldiers with ties to Jefferson who died as a result of the war. That too will be assembled as a book. In addition to the 28 soldiers named on the monument in Evergreen Cemetery, 20 other soldiers who died have been identified as having a connection to Jefferson.

COMMUNICATIONS

The local history books that have been completed or are planned are one means of communicating about Jefferson's rich history. We also have a very active Facebook page under the "The Jefferson Historical Society" where we try to have a post about our history every day. We also announce our activities and those of other local historical groups. Over 1000 people are now following that site. We also have developed a web-site for JHS, but our Facebook page is our most active and dynamic communication site. We published articles about the Jefferson Cornet Band in the Catskill Tri-County Historical Views magazine (Vol. 1, No. 2) and the building currently housing the Breakfast Club in the Schoharie County Historical Review (Vol. 83, No. 1).

COLLABORATION

Nine of our members met with leaders of the Harpersfield Historical Society to learn about their organization and museum. We discussed ways that we could collaborate to the benefit of both groups.

Private Carl B. Skidmore

*Remembering a Marine from Jefferson who made the ultimate sacrifice during
World War I*

Submitted by Stephanie Ruquet

Carl Beard Skidmore was born in Summit on April 28, 1896, the son of Morris Wellington Skidmore, sometime merchant, sometime farmer, and his wife, Jefferson-born Mary Catherine Beard. Carl had an older brother, Ashley George Skidmore (who later became a clergyman). Their mother, Mary Catherine, died only ten weeks after Carl's birth. Morris Skidmore married again the following year, to Frank Leona Tinklepaugh. (Her name is also found as Leona F. Tinklepaugh). She was the birth mother of Carl's younger half-brothers, Morris Ernest Skidmore and Frank Hilton Skidmore, as well as the dear mother of her two stepsons.

The Skidmore family lived next door to the Methodist Church in Summit, where Morris was a grocer. Carl attended the nearby one-room Summit District No. 2 School which was located close to the firehouse. Sometime between 1900 and 1905, Morris Skidmore moved his family to Clapper Hollow in Jefferson where he supported them as a farmer. Carl attended Jefferson High School, then Albany Business College.

In 1917, Carl and his brother, Rev. Ashley G. Skidmore of Lexington, became Masons, members of Working Lodge #554 in Jefferson; their father was already a member, and their grandfather, Charles E. Beard, had been a charter member of the lodge in 1864.

In 1919, after the birth of their fourth son, Frank, in 1917, Morris and Leona moved to Rhinebeck where Morris then worked as a merchant again. In 1917 Carl lived on the Mattice farm in Clapper Hollow and worked on the Moxham Road farm that belonged to Charles Berner. He worked closely with Charles' son Willard. On June 5th of that year, twenty one year old Carl Skidmore registered in Jefferson for the draft.

In 1918 Carl went to New York City to seek employment, and it was there, on April 30, that he enlisted in the Marine Corps. According to local historian Mildred Bailey, Carl Skidmore was one of 32 young men from Jefferson who served during World War I.

In Quantico, Virginia, after his basic training at Parris Island, South Carolina, Private Skidmore received a medal for marksmanship. On June 30th, Carl Skidmore and his comrades in the 74th Company of the 6th Regiment were among 1600 troops who set sail for France on the Navy's *USS Henderson*. Three days later, fire damaged the ship and all the men were safely transferred at sea to the *USS Von Steuben*. They disembarked at Brest, France, on the 9th of July, 1918, and headed for the front.

During the fighting over the next three months, Private Skidmore was gassed twice and wounded once in the hand. He fought in the Saint-Mihiel Offensive, September 12-19, and was cited for bravery during the nearly month-long Battle of Blanc Mont Ridge in October.

During the Meuse-Argonne Offensive (also known as the Battle of Argonne Forest), on the morning of November 1st, 1918, Private Carl Skidmore was wounded in the right thigh and abdomen by machine gun

fire. He was taken to the Second Mobile Hospital where he died later that night, just ten days before the end of the war. Private Skidmore was buried the next day, and was later reinterred in the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery. In 1921, his remains were finally returned to America and Carl B. Skidmore was laid to rest in Jefferson's Evergreen Cemetery, next to his birth mother, Mary Catherine. A government-issue, military veteran's headstone for Private Carl B. Skidmore's grave was applied for by Alfred H. Demarest, Commander of the Ralph Sperbeck American Legion Post 249 in Richmondville, in June, 1940. The application was approved and the headstone was installed on the grave later that summer.

Carl's nephew, Mr. Frank Skidmore of Durham, North Carolina, inherited a collection of letters that included ones written to and by his Uncle Carl while he was in the Marines. In 2017, Mr. Skidmore published a poignant book containing letters written by friends and family in Schoharie County to Carl, entitled *Dear Boys in Service*.

We are pleased to announce that Frank Skidmore has donated these original letters written to Carl and the rights to reproduce *Dear Boys in Service* to the Jefferson Historical Society. The book is currently available for purchase on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).



Left to right: Willard Berner and Carl Skidmore probably taken in 1917. Carl at his induction into the Masonic Lodge in Jefferson and in training at Parris Island, South Carolina.



The Skidmore home along Clapper Hollow Road within what is now the Clapper Hollow State Forest.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020

2020 Lecture Series at Judd Hall

Sunday, April 19, at 2 pm.: Diane Galusha, author of *Another Day, Another Dollar: The Civilian Conservation Corps in the Catskills*, will talk about the corps and the camp that was operated in Breakabeen. After the talk, Ms Galusha will autograph copies of her book.

Sunday, May 3, at 2 pm.: Chuck D'imperio, newspaper columnist, radio personality and prolific author of upstate travel books, will talk about foods that originated in upstate New York. After the talk Mr. D'Imperio will be autographing copies of his books.

Sunday, May 17, at 2 pm.: TBA.

2020 Indoor Yard Sale

The Indoor Yard Sale at Judd Hall returns this July for three weekends. Information on donation drop off dates and times will be announced in June. Start cleaning out your closets and start saving those white elephants for the sale! New and gently used items will be needed—craft supplies, decorative items, kitchenware, linens, clothing, tools, small furniture items, etc.

2020 Farmers Market

The Jefferson Farmers' Market will return for the 4th year on Saturdays from 9am-noon running from May 28-October 10 in the Maple Museum.

2020 Open Mic

Year two of the Open Mic series in Judd Hall will start on February 7th. The event is held on the first Friday of each month with sign-ups for those wanting to perform starting at 6:30pm and the show starting at 7pm.

2020 Maple Museum Free Music & More

6 Saturdays in May & June, dates to be announced: Dance/Movement classes.

Saturday, June 6, 11am: Historic Jefferson walk, meet in front of Maple Museum.

Saturday, June 6, 2pm-4pm: Alumni Reception in Judd Hall.

Friday, June 26, 7 pm: Maple Museum Accent Dance Company Performance.

Friday, July 10, 7:30 pm: Blues Maneuver, under the Tent the night before Heritage Day.

Sunday, July 26, 4:30 pm: Nelson Brothers Country & Western Band, Maple Museum,.

Saturday, August 8, time to be announced: Upper Catskill String Quartet Saturday, Maple Museum.

Sunday, August 23, 2pm: Celebration of Strings, Maple Museum.

Friday, August 28, 7 pm: Rubber Band, Maple Museum.

Sunday, September 13, 2pm: Sweet Adelines, Maple Museum.

Date TBA: First Call Brass Band, Bandstand on the Green

JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY LEADERSHIP

Officers:

Kevin Berner, President , bernerkl@gmail.com
Carol Bodnar, Vice President
Stephanie Ruquet, Treasurer
Joan Powers, Secretary

Board Members:

Shannon Finn
Bob Glas
Faye Harris
Barbara Palmer
Ingrid Zeman, Town Historian
Bonnie Dailey

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- Web-site: <https://www.thejeffersonhistoricalsociety.com/>

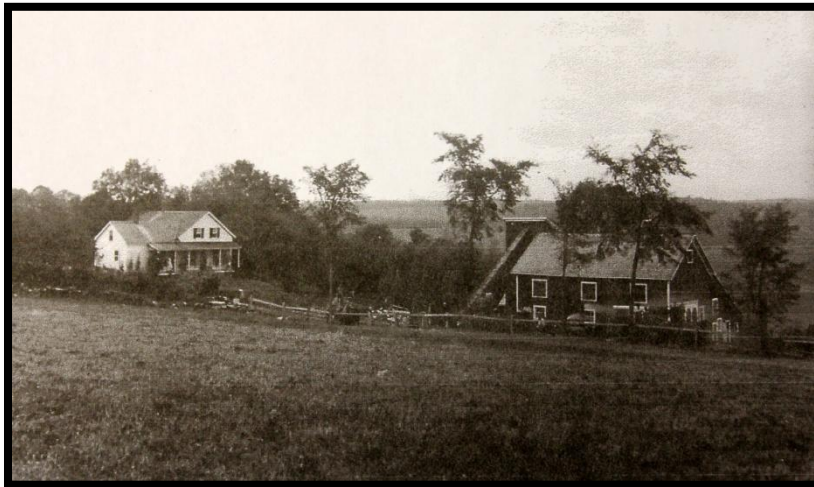


Marvin J. Hubbard's Hardware store as seen in 1924. In earlier days it was the Hubbard's Cottage Inn. Others who ran it as a hardware store before Marvin were Delos A. Seeley and Joseph Gilmore. In 1957 Walter and Rose Dittmaier took over the hardware business. Since the late 1980s the building has had a series of owners as a restaurant. Today it is the Breakfast Club.

MYSTERY PHOTOS - Can you help us with their identification?



This photo was in the Jefferson Town Historian's collection. It was labeled as being in East Jefferson in 1912. On the side of the photo it identifies Victor Terpening riding over the bridge. Could it be crossing the West Kill?



These lower two photos are of the same barn. The close-up is from our family collection. I found the middle photo years later at the historian's office. It must have been somewhere in Jefferson.



Please don't throw away grandma's photos if she lived in or visited Jefferson. We'll sort through them, scan them, and return them. We would like to document as many people, places, and things in Jefferson through photos as possible. Our museum will included a large display of Jefferson buildings. I have also been collecting photos of residents of the town from the past. Those will be displayed in the museum as well. Someday we may also make a book of biographies of past residents.

Help us preserve Jefferson's past!

A few more mysteries.



These top two scanned photos were donated by Van Hubbard from his family's collection. Can anyone identify these two farms?



These photos came from Mabel Totten Faoro but she didn't know where they were. I believe they are two sides of the same house. Do they look familiar to anyone?

Jefferson Historical Society - Membership and Donation Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Membership Categories

_____ Individual yearly ...\$15

_____ Couple/family yearly....\$25

_____ Individual lifetime....\$100

_____ Couple lifetime\$150

Donation Opportunities

Judd Hall restoration \$_____ Maple Museum restoration \$_____

Maple tree project \$_____ Music series \$_____

Other (please specify) _____ \$_____

My donation is in memory of/in honor of _____

The Jefferson Historical Society is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Book orders

Name: _____

Mailing address: _____

	Unit price	# Books	Cost
Jefferson Then and Now - Volume 1	\$20		
Jefferson Then and Now -Volume 2	\$20		
Maple Festival - The Jefferson Years	\$20		
Willard Rising Stewart 1933 Diary	\$20		
Postage & mailing	\$5/book		
Total			

Please make your check out to the "Jefferson Historical Society" and mail it together with this form to P.O. Box 143, Jefferson, New York 12093



Jefferson Historical Society

P.O. Box 143

Jefferson, NY 12093



*Winter on Jefferson's
Main Street over a
century ago.*