



# THE JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WWW.thejeffersonhistoricalsociety.org

March 2026

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## HORTICULTURE HERITAGE & HISTORY

### Polly's Peony

By Kathleen Puciato

My great, great, great grandfather Louis Auguste Lachaume arrived in America from Vesoul, Haute-Saône, France. A catastrophic flood devastated Vesoul and pushed many to leave the region and seek a living elsewhere. In 1856 he purchased land in Yonkers, New York at 212 Saw Mill River Parkway and began a nursery business growing fruits and flowers. His wife Adele, took the fruits and flowers in a horse drawn wagon to the market in Manhattan. This business persisted for three generations and finally closed in 1959. I grew up with stories of the family business which expanded into one of the largest florist businesses in Yonkers, New York.

Because of this heritage we always had field guides and reference books on hand. I also learned to recognize what a plant would be from its early shoots emerging in the spring. About twenty years ago while walking in the state forest that adjoins my Eminence property, I saw what looked to be a peony pushing its way through the leaves and pine needles within a few feet of the stone foundation of long ago residents. Nearby were the skeletal remains of what might have been a lilac. This peony was probably planted by whoever built this house and lived here.

The land where I found the peony was part of the Blenheim Patent and sold to settlers in the early 1800s. The 1856 Map of Schoharie County, New York, in the town of Summit, indicated that H. Gardner lived in the location of the long abandoned foundation. His immediate neighbor to the south was P. I. Harder. A stream on the map ran between the properties and that stream is still there today. The neighbor P. I. Harder lived on the property that I currently live on, lot #47, in the township or patent of Blenheim being the same lands mentioned and described in the deed thereof executed by Cornelius Ray to Peter I. Harder and recorded in the Clerk's Office in said County April 6, 1826, in Book I of Deeds on pages 110 & 111. Also, the New York, U. S. State Census, 1855, Schoharie, Summit records Henry Gardner age 45, farmer, wife Polly Gardner, age 50. The next entry in that census is Peter I. Harder suggests that they lived next to each other as the 1856 Map indicates.

Well, I dug that peony up with great care so as not to disturb the root system. For decades it was living in



Continued next page

# President's Annual Report – 2025

Jefferson Historical Society

As we reflect on 2025, it is clear that this past year was one of exceptional activity, growth, and transition for the Jefferson Historical Society. Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers and board members, we completed one of our busiest and most successful years to date.

Throughout the year, we offered a wide range of programs, including engaging lectures, memorable concerts, and a dramatic reading that drew strong community interest. We also continued our active collaboration with genealogical researchers from across the region, strengthening Jefferson's reputation as a center for historical research and education. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to preserving and sharing our town's rich heritage.

At the same time, 2025 marked a year of important transitions for our organization, as several long-serving board members concluded their terms.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Carol Bodnar, who has been with the Society since its reinstatement and has served as Vice President and longtime grant writer. Through her tireless efforts, she successfully secured funding for our Music & More series and played a major role in the restoration of the Maple Museum, improvements to the Town Green, and the work that led to Jefferson's Historic District designation. Carol also led fundraising efforts for the purchase of Judd Hall and coordinated much of our programming, from arranging performers to managing publicity. Her leadership and dedication have left a lasting legacy.

Gail and Werner Rentsch also stepped down from the board this year. A tribute to Werner appears elsewhere in this issue, and we are grateful for his many contributions. Gail served as our Fundraising Committee Chair and newsletter editor and was a leader in our efforts to enhance the Town Green through tree planting. Together, Gail and Werner exemplified a deep commitment to our mission, and we thank them sincerely for their years of service.

We are also grateful to Joan Powers, who stepped down as Secretary but remains on our board, continuing to share her experience and insight. We welcome and thank Bonnie Dailey, who has taken on the role of Secretary and has already become an important part of our leadership team.

The Jefferson Historical Society is an all-volunteer organization, and our success depends entirely on the generosity of time, talent, and energy from our members. With the departure of several key individuals, we now face both challenges and opportunities. To maintain—and hopefully expand—the high level of programming, research, and educational work for which we are known, we must continue to share responsibilities more broadly and encourage new volunteers to step forward.

If you are interested in becoming more involved, whether through programming, research, fundraising, communications, or other activities, we would be delighted to hear from you. Your participation makes a real difference and helps ensure that our work continues for future generations.

In closing, I would like to thank every member, volunteer, and supporter who contributed to our success in 2025. Your commitment keeps our Society vibrant and strong. As we look ahead, I am confident that, together, we will continue to honor Jefferson's past while building a strong future for our organization.

Kevin Berner  
President, Jefferson Historical Society

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## Polly's Peony

Continued from Pg 1

semi darkness under the tall red pines that were planted in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corp. I planted it on my property next to a lilac bush in full sun. I was so happy to see the bright red bud swelling of the peony the following year as the early spring sun coaxed her back to life. Each year the plant grew and became fuller but did not flower. It took about five years for the first bud to appear and it flowered a glorious shade of white with the familiar sweet fragrance that only peonies can produce. Each year more buds developed and recently there were as many as a dozen blooms. I named it Polly's peony for Polly Gardner, a farmer's wife, who lived here with her eight children all born in Schoharie County. I like to think of Polly pausing to stop and smell the rich fragrance of the peony she planted by her sunny front door as I do each June when I stop to smell Polly's peony.

### References

New York State Census, Schoharie, Summit, 1855.

Map of Schoharie County New York, 1856, surveys by E. Wenig & W. Lorey, published by R. P. Smith, Philadelphia.

Warranty Deed, Peter I. Harder, April 6, 1826, Book I, pages 110 & 111.

## **We are saddened to announce the passing of Werner Rentsch on November 7, 2025.**

Werner, along with his wife Gail, were long-time and deeply valued members of the Jefferson Historical Society's Board of Directors. When the Society purchased the Masonic Hall (now Judd Hall), Werner was among the first to lend a hand—cleaning out the basement, painting walls, and assisting with general repairs. He worked with others to envision how the second floor could become a museum, helping to shape the space we know today.

Werner and Gail also served on our Tree Committee, developing a plan to fill the gaps where trees were missing along the border of the town green. Each year, as new trees arrived, Werner was there to help plant them—well into his mid-80s and beyond.

He frequently volunteered at the JHS table during the Farmer's Markets on the green, and when a team was needed to paint the exterior of the Fuller District School, Werner was there—brush in hand.

A professional artist, Werner captured the rural beauty of Jefferson in his paintings. Several years ago, he generously donated more than twenty of these works to the Jefferson Historical Society, and they continue to be displayed in rotation at Judd Hall. In later years, he became widely recognized for his equine paintings, especially of racehorses, and also created striking works featuring African wildlife inspired by his son's studies on the continent. In 2022 we were honored to host an exhibition of his art, during which Werner gave an engaging talk about his evolution as a painter. He was also a key organizer of our art shows.

Whether it was a concert, a lecture, or another community event, Werner and Gail were nearly always in attendance—supportive, kind, and enthusiastic. Werner was a wonderful person and a true pleasure to work and converse with. He will be deeply missed.



## **Jefferson in the early 1950s**

Dick Herodes

We were only 5 years from the end of WWII and the memories still lingered. We remembered 12 cent bread and ration stamps. And the shortages that existed. Most of us in my 1955 graduating class were farm kids. Eight of our thirteen classmates lived on working farms – I think only 1 or 2 of them are still in business today.

As I think back, many things were quite different from what they are today. Here are some of the examples in various categories.

School:

We spent our elementary years at the old Jefferson Academy next to the village green. The Academy was one of the first in Schoharie County. The building was on the site of the present Methodist Church. A blue historic sign still marks its location. The green was our playground. We played softball on a small field cut into the green. We played on the slide, swings and teeter-totter which are mostly gone now. Our classes were often doubled up. We had Mrs. Moore for both 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades in the same room. And Mrs. Fox for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. In the 6<sup>th</sup> we were finally moved to the big brick school built in 1937.

I remember being given government surplus grapefruit in bowls as well as small containers of pasteurized milk. The milk tasted bad because we were used to the raw milk on the farm. I also remember being given IPANA toothpaste as part of a program on healthy teeth. We all competed with a goal of brushing frequently and charts were kept by the teacher. It was a very long-term successful program and we became the first generation without dentures!

Our Principal was a Harvard graduate. And he brought in several teachers from Harvard as well. He also brought in a Juliard graduate to teach music – a Mr. Fraser who was probably the best in the county and put together our band and choruses. We had a teacher who had worked for Von Braun on his rocket program. Our faculty was, in retrospect, quite exceptional. We had only one teacher in high school for all the math and science classes – Mrs. Patterson. The various science classes were taught in alternate years. And if you wanted advanced math like solid geometry you had to take it by correspondence course. Something I and a couple of classmates did with the University of Nebraska. Today there are several teachers covering these subjects.

Regarding sports, we had only boys' baseball and basketball. Soccer did not exist. Girls' sports did not exist. Girls did cheerlead. We had both spring and fall baseball with a separate championship for each. Cross country crept in during my senior year



Continued next page

but few participated. Our league consisted of only Schoharie County teams. Stamford and South Kortright were non-league games. We had a small gym for basketball which was to our advantage. Our zone defense left little room for our opponents to move. The gym also served theatre and music performances with the attached stage. The gym is now a cafeteria.

We all took the school bus until maybe our senior year when a few cars showed up in the parking lot. Eight of my thirteen classmates were there from first grade through graduation. Stability in the population was the norm. We had no kindergarten. It started a couple of years later.

**The Farms:**

Farming was the economic lifeblood of the town. There were countless farms, mostly producing milk but there was also egg and vegetable production. Most of the farms were around 100 acres. Our farm on Nichols Rd. and Moxley St. had 108 acres with some 25 cows, a few pigs and 100 chickens. We grew potatoes and sweet corn as well as corn for the cows. I distinctly remember my father selling a burlap bag full of potatoes or sweet corn for \$1 !! Our milk was delivered to the Stamford Creamery in cans with our unique number painted on the side. The night milk was cooled in cold water in our milk house. That and the morning milk were then picked up by our milkman and taken to the creamery. At one point my father was the milk man and I would ride with him on his route to the Stamford creamery. I remember the cans being unloaded into the creamery and then washed and delivered back to us at the other end of the creamery building. The unique numbers ensured that the cans got back to the right farmers. My father would always stop at a small corner store and buy me one of the small pies on the way home. A vivid and treasured memory for me.

There were about a dozen farms on our two roads. Not one is a working farm today. BUT the number of houses has grown dramatically. Mostly owned by retired people and city people wanting a country retreat. This is probably good for the tax base but not for the population of JCS.

**The Village:**

We had two grocery stores – Hewlett and Mitterer. Farm families did all their shopping in one of these stores. We purchased all our needs on credit until the monthly milk check arrived. Then the monthly bill was paid. There was a lot of trust and honesty involved. Supermarkets had not yet arrived. There were two bars – Gleich and George and Lil. The former is now the Heartbreak and the latter the Mill Pond Inn.

We had two churches – Methodist and a very small Catholic Church. I remember one of our classmates being allowed to leave early to obtain his Catholic training.

There was a hospital run by Dr. Duell located in a classic house on a corner of the village green. I was born there. It has since burned. Later Dr. Duell had his hospital and practice in other locations on Creamery Rd and then West Main St. Dr. Duell was our school doctor and handled all the vaccinations etc. We even had our own mortician - Clyde Wilcox. The town took care of us literally from the cradle to the grave.

A trip to Stamford or Oneonta was a very big deal. And there was very little eating out. You ate at home.

**The People:**

A significant number of our citizens were first- or second-generation people in the town. They were German, Italian, Hungarian and Czech. When my father’s Czech family arrived in 1920 there was some definite tension between the new arrivals and the people who had been here for generations. By 1950 this had dissipated, and my best friends were from many of those Old-Time families. We were just all Americans and patriots. WWII had a lot to do with bringing us all together.



Standing, left to right: D. Zeh, D. Dayton, L. Champlin, R. Sloan, D. Whitmore, E. Zona, R. Zeh. Seated: Mr. Pafunda, T. Augugliaro, R. Danforth, R. Havrsh, H. Peterson, J. Schineller, R. Herodes.



**Piano Restoration**

The inaugural concert of our 1918 Bush & Lane upright grand piano took place on December 20<sup>th</sup>. Accomplished vocalist Dr. Susan Harwood was at the keyboard playing familiar holiday music, and members of our Jefferson community sang along with her. The piano, advertised in 1918 as a “Pompeian Parlor Grand” upright, had been sitting unused and forgotten for many years in the old Masonic Hall. Rain coming through the Hall’s leaky roof had begun to damage the piano, as well as the building, when the Jefferson Historical Society came to the rescue, purchasing the building in December 2017. It took awhile for the piano to be recognized for the fine instrument that it once was. However, one October day in 2020 our Treasurer Stephanie Rubin-Ruquet’s brother Glenn Rubin sat down in front of it. He later wrote to the board, “I raised my arms and struck the first chord and realized I was in the presence of royalty! What a sound! This was no ordinary upright piano.”



With very generous support for the reconstruction from Don Keil, the Nick Juried Foundation and a few others, restorer Brian Hubbell of Otsego Piano Works in Cooperstown undertook to restore the piano. Mr. Hubbell started piano lessons at age eight and soon developed a profound appreciation for the intricate beauty of the piano. After graduating from Syracuse University, he enrolled in the world-renowned North Bennet Street School in Boston, MA. There he learned the art of piano rebuilding, including replacing the soundboard, ribs, pin block, bridge caps, strings, and action parts. He honed his skills at the Tanglewood Music Festival in Lenox, MA, where he spent the 2013 summer season working alongside the head piano technician from the Juilliard School of Music. After that summer, Brian was able to delve deeper into concert level tuning and regulation as a piano technician at Vanderbilt University and at the Steinway Piano Gallery of Nashville, TN. He is currently the technician for SUNY Oneonta and Hartwick College.



Our Pompeian Parlor Grand piano was completely disassembled for restringing, together with replacement of hammers, tuning pins, damper felts, let-off buttons, and other components. Brian tuned and re-tuned the restored piano, and it graciously took to its role as the central figure in our holiday concert. Don Keil has donated towards a series of concerts that JHS plans to have with the piano throughout the coming years. We hope the 1918 Pompeian Parlor Grand will continue to bring our community together as it did in bygone days.

## A Tribute to Carol Bodnar

The Jefferson Historical Society honors Carol Bodnar with deep gratitude and admiration for her extraordinary dedication, leadership, and vision.

As a founding member of the Society, Carol has been continuously involved since its very beginning. For most if not all of the organization's history, she served as Vice President, guiding our mission with steady commitment and unwavering enthusiasm. Even after stepping down from her many responsibilities this past fall, her legacy remains firmly woven into the fabric of our work.

Carol's impact has been both broad and profound. Since 2012, she has served as our principal grant writer, achieving remarkable success in securing funding for the Society's programs. Her efforts ensured ongoing support for our Music & More Series, which has brought concerts, speakers, and community activities to Jefferson year after year. In addition to writing grants, Carol led the programming efforts, booking performers, organizing schedules, and coordinating events while also managing most of the publicity that helped these programs thrive.

Her exceptional fundraising skills made possible major improvements to the Maple Museum, including foundation work, exterior restoration, complete repainting, and other projects. Through her leadership, she also secured funding for critical projects at Judd Hall and spearheaded the rapid fundraising effort that enabled the Society to purchase the building within an extremely short timeframe.

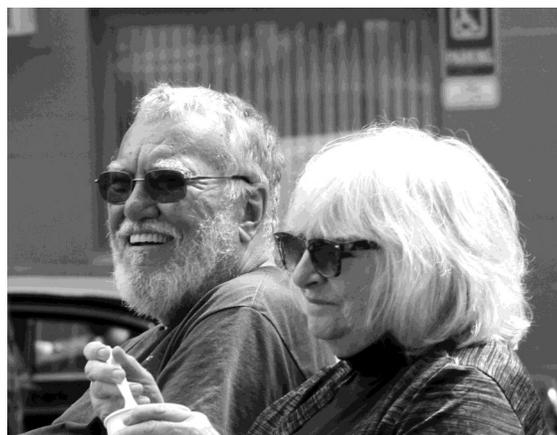
Carol's commitment to preservation extended beyond individual buildings. She led efforts to hire a consultant to do the research and application process that resulted in Jefferson's designation on the National Register of Historical Places. This achievement provided lasting benefits to residents and business owners by offering financial incentives to maintain and protect the town's historic structures.

Always thinking creatively about community engagement, Carol also developed the Jefferson Farmers' Market, which was held for several years at the Maple Museum and on the Town Green. She organized vendors, secured funding, and managed the logistics, creating a vibrant gathering place that brought people together and strengthened local connections.

Through her tireless work, strategic vision, and generous spirit, Carol Bodnar has shaped the Jefferson Historical Society in enduring ways. Her leadership preserved our history, enriched our cultural life, and strengthened our community.

We thank Carol for her years of service, her countless hours of dedication, and her unwavering belief in the value of Jefferson's heritage. Her contributions will continue to inspire us for generations to come.

**With heartfelt appreciation,  
The Jefferson Historical Society**





Reimagining what the town of Eminence looked like led by Karen Cuccinello



Minekill Falls 1905 by Newton and Myra Dibble



"Fallen Heroes" by Stephanie Ruquet. How Civil War Jeffersonians met their fate.



Bonnie Daly, Sue Tricario, Joyce Barber and Barb Palmer at the Spirit of Jefferson Art Show



Churchill Farm by John Polito



Bill Diamond, Brian Darcy prepped the green for the Historic District sign.



Home school tour at The Old Stone Fort with Clay Edmunds

Stacey Flanagan demonstrated proper gravestone cleaning last September at the Old Jefferson Cemetery.





Bonnie Dailey , Kenneth Ayers Oral History interview



Christmas sing along led by Susan Harwood on the restored piano



Upper Catskill String Quartet Holiday Concert.....



.....and their audience



"Those Darn Cats" played some smooth Jazz



Quilt display at the Methodist Church



A favorite perch on Heritage Day for Gail Rentsch, Ed and Jaquie Atkins, Werner Rentsch and Rich Bodnar.

Best pay heed to Miss Dailey!



Stone cleaning by Stacey Flanagan



Eloise Wood 1908



Arthur Decker 1905



JHS Class of 1908

## Rediscovering the Glass Plate Negatives of Newton and Myra Dibble

Glass plate negatives produced using the dry plate method were commonly used by photographers between 1880 and 1920. These fragile glass plates were eventually replaced by flexible film made from celluloid and later acetate—materials more familiar to modern photographers. The convenience and durability of these newer negatives offered a great advantage, leading to the decline of glass plates in the early 20th century.

One local photographer who worked extensively with glass plate negatives was Newton Dibble of Jefferson. Dibble operated a photography studio on Main Street from 1903 to 1910. After his death, his wife, Myra, continued the business until around 1920. From 1903 to 1905, Dibble worked out of the now demolished Clark Building, located immediately east of today’s Breakfast Club. He later moved to 159 Main Street, two buildings west of Judd Hall, where he maintained a second-floor studio and home.

During their careers, the Dibbles documented many aspects of community life. They produced studio portraits, student group photographs at local schools, family portraits taken in homes, images of local scenery, and photographs of community organizations. Many of their images survive today as prints, postcards, and, in smaller numbers, as stereoscopic photo pairs that were viewed in three dimensions using a stereoscope.

The Dibble’s original negatives were primarily 8×10-inch or 4×5-inch sheets of chemically treated glass. For many years, a large collection of these negatives was forgotten. More than 300 were recently rediscovered in the archive room of the Jefferson Town Hall. About 80 of them had been printed years earlier by Bill Nicholson of Harpersfield using traditional darkroom techniques, but most had remained “lost” for decades.

With permission from the Town, Kevin Berner undertook the task of digitally preserving the collection. He photographed each negative using a digital single-lens reflex camera mounted on a copy stand, with the glass plates placed on a light board. The images were then processed in Adobe Photoshop to convert the negatives into positive digital photographs.

Because the original negatives are so large, the resulting prints are exceptionally sharp. Unlike modern small-format negatives, they require little enlargement, allowing fine details to be preserved. Many of the Dibble’s original studio logbooks were also found with the negatives. Some plates still carried identifying numbers along their edges, which corresponded to entries in the logbooks. These records made it possible to identify the subjects and dates of many photographs.

A selection of these restored images has been shared on our Facebook page, allowing the community to reconnect with its visual history. In addition, an art show featuring Newton and Myra Dibble’s photographs is planned for the first weekend of October, offering an opportunity to celebrate and preserve this remarkable local legacy.



Benona Hubbell  
1906



Right:  
Mrs H.M. Dayton  
and baby 1909  
Far Right:  
Class of 1914  
Charles Shew, Sally  
Copestake, Helen  
Ruland



## Thanks to Gail Rentsch

Gail Rentsch has been a dedicated and valued member of the Jefferson Historical Society for many years, serving on the board alongside her husband, Werner, and giving generously of her time, energy, and leadership. She played a central role in guiding the Society's fundraising efforts, chairing the Fund-raising Committee and leading initiatives such as the Farm to Table dinner, annual appeals, participation in the Mohawk Valley Gives campaign, and outreach to local businesses in support of the Music & More series. Gail was also instrumental in securing recognition for the Society through the Delaware County Electric Cooperative.

Beyond fundraising, she was a driving force behind the joint efforts of the Historical Society and the Town of Jefferson to enhance the Town Green, helping to plan and implement the planting of new trees, filling gaps left by aging ones, and organizing fertilization efforts to strengthen both young and mature trees.

Gail served as the editor of our newsletter for several years. She gathered the materials and formatted them for delivery to our members. Her steady leadership, thoughtful guidance, and deep commitment enriched every aspect of the Society's work. Although Gail stepped down from the board this past fall, her impact continues to be felt, and we remain deeply grateful for her many years of service and the lasting legacy she leaves behind.



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## Collaboration between the Historical Society and the Town Historian

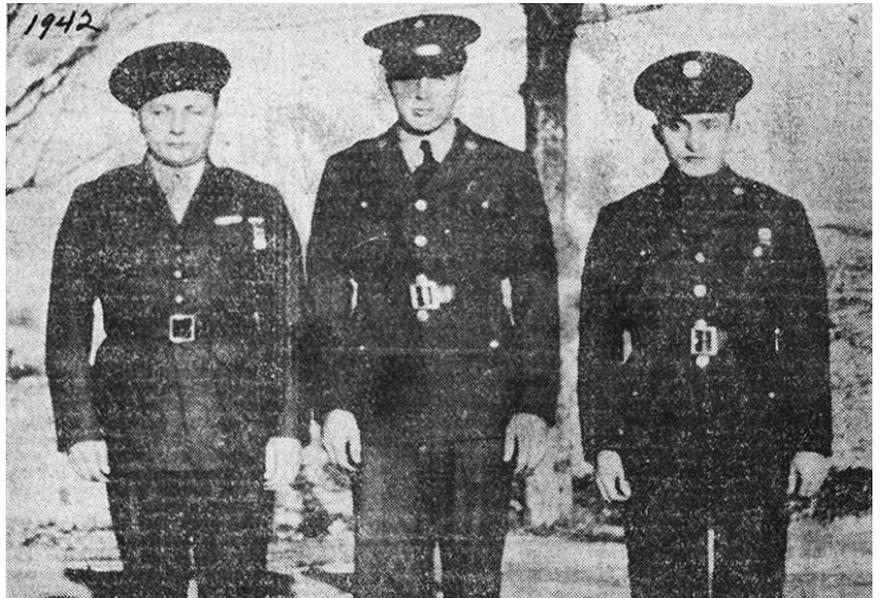
by Bonnie C. Dailey, Town Historian

Last February a young lady from Washington State contacted me. She was looking for information about her Grandparents and Great-Grandparents, who once lived in Jefferson. She had never known them and wanted to learn more about them. Only a week or two before, Kevin had published a photo of a page from the 1956-57 telephone directory on JHS' Facebook page. It listed my dad – and the young lady's G-Grandfather, Ferdinand Golfetto! When she told me their last name, an image came to mind. I was about six or seven years old, and my dad had taken me with him to an inn here in Jefferson. Men were sliding steel pucks down a long, smooth, sawdust-covered table – the game was "Table Shuffleboard" and we were at Golfetto's – later known as George & Lil's, and today as the Mill Pond Inn.

It turned out that Ferdinand had emigrated from Italy to the U.S. in 1912. He and his wife had five children, three boys and two girls. Many of us remember the ads brothers Mario and Malio faithfully published in the Jeffersonian Yearbook every year – for Mario's jewelry store and Ameglio's photography studio in Stamford.

We found a photo of the three Golfetto boys in uniform during WW II, and Malio's granddaughter wrote: "Gosh these ads and the phone book page are fun to see. It is so wild and bitter-sweet to me that you yourself knew some of my family that I never got a chance to meet. I find myself wondering, "What were they like?" Learning more about them as people is fascinating to me. Thank you for all your help!"

It was the collaboration between Kevin Berner at JHS and me as the Town Historian that allowed us to help this young lady fill in some gaps in her family history. She was thrilled to see photos and learn something about her ancestors, as well as the Town of Jefferson along the way!



PFC Morio Golfetto, Marine corps, New River, N. C.; PFC Malio Golfetto, 58th Ordnance company, Raritan arsenal, Metuchen, N. J.; Pvt. Herman Golfetto, Newark, N. Y.

DOING MORE THAN THEIR BIT for Uncle Sam are Mr. and Mrs. Morio Golfetto of Jefferson, who have three sons in the service. For the Christmas holidays all three were home for short leaves.

## JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS & DONATIONS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Total
Membership – Individual	\$20
Membership – Couple/Family	\$35
Membership – Individual Lifetime	\$150
Membership – Couple Lifetime	\$250
Donation – General	
Donation – Judd Hall	
Donation – Fuller District Schoolhouse	
Donation – Trees on the Green	
Donation – Fund for the Future	
Donation – Maple Museum	
Donation – Music & More Series	
Donation – Support of printed newsletter	
Donation – Other (please specify )	
<b>Total</b>	

My donation is in memory of/in honor of \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in volunteering for the Jefferson Historical Society Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

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



George sez:  
"Please lend a hand."

The Silent Auction brought in much needed funds. Thank you Stephanie Ruquet! JHS hosted area historians to share ideas, problems and solutions.

**FIND US AT:** Mailing address: P.O. Box 143, Jefferson, NY 12093

Email address: [historicalsocietyjefferson@gmail.com](mailto:historicalsocietyjefferson@gmail.com) Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/juddhall163/>

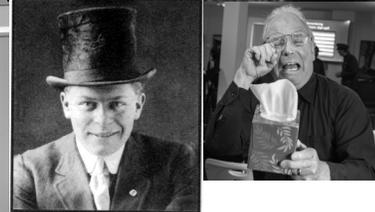
Website: <https://www.thejeffersonhistoricalsociety.com/> YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@thejeffersonhistoricalsoci8081>

## Dear Mama, Papa, & All

The Jefferson Historical Society 'Players' presented a dramatic reading at Judd Hall in October, reading excerpts from letters to and from WW I Marine Carl Skidmore stationed at the front in France, and his Jefferson family and friends here at home. The young Marine's letters downplay or fail to even mention his wartime experiences – a fire onboard his troop ship in the Atlantic that required evacuation of all on board to another ship, leaving their possessions behind – his location at the front – rampant Influenza and other disease among the troops – and the terrors of battle and death all around him. He assures his family of his health, safety, and anticipated return home at the end of the War.

Meanwhile, his family and friends pray for his early and safe return. Their letters describe the crops and growing season, as well as the war effort here at home. By the fall of 1918, rumors circulated that the War would be over soon. Everyone, especially Carl's parents, anticipated his safe return. The final, intense confrontation of the Battles of Meuse-Argonne resulted in the Armistice of November 11, 1918, but only at the expense of more than 350,000 casualties. Young Carl Skidmore was among the mortally wounded. He died of his wounds in Mobile Hospital #2 only ten days before the War was over. The final letters, from a Chaplain and a Red Cross Nurse who attended him at the end, brought tears to the eyes of many in the standing room only audience.

Our heartfelt thanks go to our producer and playwright couple Regina Larkin and Nick Petron, as well as to all the JHS 'Players'. Photos of the event are courtesy of the Mountain Eagle.



Above photos from Scott Keidong Mountain Eagle

Photo from Frank Skidmore



Production and Direction by Nick Petron and Regina Larkin

L to R: Kevin Berner, Nick Petron, Bonnie Daily, John Ruquet, David Savatteri, Paul Trotta, Shannon Finn, Bob Glas

## You Can Support Our Future

The Jefferson Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving our community's history for generations to come.

If you are considering your legacy, you may wish to include the Society in your will or estate plans. Another meaningful option is making a charitable contribution through your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from a retirement account.

These gifts help ensure that our programs, archives, and historic resources continue to thrive.

For more information, please contact Kevin Berner, [bernerkl@gmail.com](mailto:bernerkl@gmail.com) or 518 294-7196.

**ECONOMICS 101**– Members will receive the newsletter by email unless a print copy is requested. Print copies will be mailed.

JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PO BOX 143  
JEFFERSON NY 12093



### **Sale schedule**

**Friday & Saturday, August 14 & 15, 9-3**

**Sunday, August 21, 11-3**

**Friday & Saturday, August 21 & 22, 9-3**

**Sunday, August 23, 11-3**

## ***Jefferson Historical Society's 9th Annual Yard Sale***

**2 Big Weekends!  
Maple Museum  
221 Creamery Street,  
Jefferson**