



THE JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

WWW.thejeffersonhistoricalsociety.org

August 2025

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Dyer Road

By Bonnie C. Dailey,
JHS Trustee and Jefferson Historian

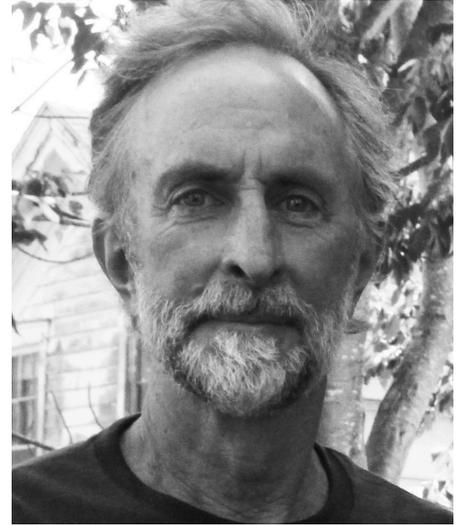
STORIES ABOUT THE ROADS OF JEFFERSON ARE MEANT TO GIVE US A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF OUR TOWN AND ITS FOUNDERS. WHEN YOU SEE A ROAD SIGN, WE HOPE YOU MAY ASSOCIATE THE NAME WITH A FAMILY AND WHAT THAT FAMILY DID TO HELP SHAPE OUR TOWN.



Dyer Farm later owned by Willard Berner Enid Road with Old School Baptist Church.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As we wind down an especially busy spring and summer season at the Jefferson Historical Society, I'd like to share some highlights from an eventful year.

Our museum philosophy is simple: it must evolve each year to give visitors a reason to return. Every winter, we dedicate ourselves to making changes for the upcoming season. This year, we introduced three new interactive exhibits that have been especially well-received: identifying vintage kitchen tools and dairy cattle breeds and pairing historic photographs of Jefferson with modern images taken from the same perspectives. We also curated a special display honoring Jefferson's World War I soldiers, featuring personal items of Carl Skidmore—the only serviceman from Jefferson to lose his life to combat wounds.

Throughout the season, we welcomed visitors from across New York, as well as from North Carolina, South Carolina, and New Hampshire, many of whom came to research family histories or explore exhibits connected to their ancestors. Generous donors enriched our collection by contributing thousands of historic local photographs and newspaper clippings, thereby helping preserve Jefferson's story for future generations.

We were honored to host a regional gathering of local historical societies and historians at Judd Hall. The event featured a presentation by Kim Young, President of the Conesville Historical Society, and fostered valuable discussions about shared challenges and opportunities in preserving our local histories. Additionally, we organized History Day in the Maple Museum, where various historical societies showcased their exhibits to the public. The event's keynote speaker, Shannon Finn, delivered a fascinating talk on the history of butter-making in Jefferson, focusing on the Danforth Farm.

Collaboration was a key theme this year. We partnered with the staff of the Old Stone Fort to present a full day of rotating educational programs for a large group of homeschoolers. We also worked with the Jefferson Art Room, providing the Maple Museum space for a week-long community project to create dragon puppets for the Heritage Day Parade. The Methodist Church let us use their sanctuary for our quilt show.

Visitors from near and far enjoyed our concert series, guest speakers, museum exhibits, and the Fuller District one-room schoolhouse. As we look ahead, we hope you'll join us for our upcoming fall activities.

Thank you for your continued support of the Jefferson Historical Society.

Kevin Berner

UPCOMING JHS PROGRAMS

- Wed. 8/13 Dave Ruch concert, Maple Museum
- Sat. 8/30, 10-2pm The last day Judd Hall Museum and Fuller District Schoolhouse are open for
2025, except by appointment
- Sat. 9/13, 1pm Co-sponsoring talk by Chuck Henry on NYS Historic Newspapers
at the Gilboa Historical Society museum
- Fri. 9/19, 7pm Those Darn Cats concert, Maple Museum
- Sat. 9/27, 1pm Co-sponsoring talk by Debra Hill on conducting oral history
interviews at Gilboa Historical Society museum
- Sat. 10/4,
10am-4pm Fall Festival at the Old Stone Fort, Schoharie
- Sat. 10/4-Sun 10/5 The Spirit of Jefferson Art Show
10am-4pm (Schoharie County Arts Drive-about) at Judd Hall
- Sun. 10/26, 3pm Dear Mama, Papa, & All Carl Skidmore program at Judd Hall
- Sun 12/14, 2pm Upper Catskill String Quartet – Holiday Concert, Methodist Church

DYER ROAD

by Bonnie C. Dailey....

Continued from page 1

Dyer Road runs 2.8 miles North/South from Peraglie Road at its north end to Enid Road at its south end. It's a quiet drive through a largely wooded area. A doe and her fawn stopped to watch me drive by when I checked it out.

James Dyer (1756-1835) was born in Scituate, Rhode Island on 23 April 1756. He appears in the 1774 Rhode Island census in Johnston, Rhode Island, located about five miles from Scituate. He and his wife Molly Marcy were married in 1776 in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, and it was there in April 1775 at age 19 that he enlisted as a Private in the local militia. He re-enlisted several times, serving throughout most of the Revolutionary War including at the Battle of White Plains. His regiment was stationed at West Point, and he served for one week in New York City as an orderly to Gen. George Washington!

After the War, James Dyer brought his family to Jefferson. He appears as a resident of Jefferson on the 1803 tax rolls. James lived here only until 1809, when he moved to Berne, NY. He applied for and received a pension for his military service. After James' death, his wife Molly Marcy Dyer (1759-1844) may have come back to Jefferson to live with one of their children, since she is buried in East Jefferson's Old School Baptist Church Cemetery. James was buried in Altamont, NY.

James and Molly's 13 children were all born before the family moved to Jefferson. Most of the children seem to have relocated with their parents to Jefferson sometime between 1800 and 1805, but not all of their children remained here. Their oldest son Winthrop I (1779-1857) did stay in Jefferson, and he became the patriarch of the Dyers of Jefferson.

The Dyer family was active in their church and in community affairs. Dyer family members ran a sawmill (mid-1800's), purchased stock in the

Jefferson-Gilboa Turnpike (1844), served as an officer of Jefferson's first Grange Hall (1891), served among Jefferson's Commissioners of the Poor (1851, 1860, 1896) and as Highway Superintendents (1877 and 1887). They helped establish the second creamery in Jefferson (early 1900's) and were among the thirty petitioners for a new Town Hall and Opera House in 1911. In 1917 a Dyer served on a town committee formed to help prepare for WW1. Last but not least, Miss Rose Belle Dyer rode in a carriage as the Goddess of Liberty in Jefferson's 4th of July parade on July 8, 1897.

The family's greatest contribution to our community, however, may have been their church and its cemetery. Winthrop I's son Calvin Dyer and his wife Betsy deeded land for a church to the trustees of the First Baptist Church of Jefferson in May of 1837. The Old School Baptist Church was built soon thereafter on that land. Its huge framing

timbers were hand hewn. Two wood stoves heated the church during services. Light when needed was furnished by oil lamps. In its heyday, people came by horse and carriage from towns in the

surrounding area and as far away as Ashokan and Olive Ridge (55-60 miles away). Horses were tethered in sheds at the back of the church. The church was always filled at each meeting. Over a century later, however, the church had deteriorated and in 1956, the back portion was blown in during a severe windstorm. Since the roof had fallen and the walls were leaning precariously, it was deemed best to destroy it. The Jefferson Volunteer Fire Company stood watch as the remaining structure was burned down about 1965.



A photo of one of the 2-day meetings in Jefferson.

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In 1936, Frank Dyer and his wife Effie deeded a cemetery property to the newly incorporated East Jefferson Cemetery Association. The East Jefferson Cemetery is located near where the Old School Baptist Church once stood, near the corner of Dyer and Peraglie Roads in East Jefferson. More than 230 individuals including at least forty-one members of the Dyer family are buried in this cemetery. The land it occupies was once on the farm of Seymour Dyer. He passed the farm down to his son Frank, who later sold it to Willard Berner (Willard's Grandson is Kevin Berner, President of our Jefferson Historical Society). Frank Dyer bequeathed \$5000 in his will as a trust fund to maintain the cemetery. Thanks to this trust fund and an active cemetery association, the East Jefferson Cemetery continues to be well-maintained and managed to the present day.

It may be of interest to some readers that the Dyer family likely descended from early Puritan stock. Samuel Dyer and his wife Mary were members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. They followed Anne Hutchinson to Rhode Island, where several of their children were born. Mary left the Puritan Church to become a Quaker and was hanged in Boston Commons for her outspoken religious beliefs. A statue of Mary Dyer is located outside the Massachusetts State House in Boston.



Old School Baptist Cemetery

Credits to:

A History of the Town of Jefferson (1976), by Mildred Bailey

Early Families of Jefferson, by Eugene Bouton
Ancestry.com

FamilySearch.org

Find-A-Grave.com

Thanks to Kevin Berner, Stephanie Ruquet, George McCroy for their valued editorial reviews and suggestions.

HISTORY PUZZLE

WHAT IS THIS?



Once upon a time this was a very handy tool. Can you identify it and what it was used for?

WHAT WAS IT?



The item in the previous newsletter is an inkwell made by the Gorham Manufacturing Company, c.1900, in their New Queens pattern.

JHS HAPPENINGS & EVENTS



Left and Below: Vic DiSanto gave a talk on Revolutionary War era flags on display.



Above: Pete Lindemann in Judd Hall presented a lecture on the Civil War Monument in the Jefferson Cemetery



Right: Musician and music historian Dave Ruch performed traditional & historical songs of NY State.



Above: Sue's Garage performed early Rock n' Roll songs that had the audience dancing and singing along.



Above: On Service Day, JCS students plant flowers and help weed mulch for the trees on the green.



Above right: 1st row: JCS Teacher Andi Cammer with Heidi Collischonn, Gianna Rhodes, Lexi Blumberg, Aubrey Hotaling. 2nd row: Barb Palmer, Sara Henry, Gail Rentsch..



Joan Powers gets well-deserved thanks for her years of service as JHS Secretary



The Maple Museum was full to the brim with donated items for the 8th Annual JHS Indoor Yard Sale.



HERITAGE DAY

Left: Head of 20 ft. dragon that enlivened the parade
 Above: Martha Hacklin and friends created dragons for the parade in the Maple Museum.

Below: John Polito as Professor Science gave a magic show off the porch at Judd Hall. Flower box displays were planted and cared for by Sara Henry.

**Below:
 NEW IN THE MUSEUM OF JEFFERSON HISTORY**



Above: A display honoring the Jeffersonians who served in WWII



Left: The 120-year-old Wilcox-Smart crazy quilt was a popular item in the JHS quilt show held in the Jefferson United Methodist Church



Below: Using his drone, John Papp was able to duplicate photos of various Jefferson farm sites as they look today compared to historic photos of how they looked in earlier days.



Above: Brian Hubbell disassembling our 1918 Bush & Lane upright piano for restoration. In the process a 1920 quarter hidden in the piano was discovered.

Two Brothers from Jefferson Served on Opposite Sides in the Civil War

by Stephanie Ruquet

Over the years, a number of people have asked me if anyone from Jefferson served in the Civil War on the side of the South. My answer has always been “No, I haven’t come across anyone.” Well, now I have to change that answer. I have found a fellow who was born and raised in Jefferson and later enlisted in the Confederate army.

Born about 1814-1816, Edward Rowley Jr. was the son of Edward Rowley (1788-1878) and his wife Sarah Pitcher (1790-1820). Originally from Connecticut, Edward Sr. relocated to Schoharie in 1808, married Sarah in 1809, and settled with his growing family in Jefferson in 1810. The US Census of 1820 indicates there were 4 boys in the family: 2 males aged under 10 years old and two males aged 10-15. The names of three are known today: Frederick, Harvey, and Edward Jr. Frederick went to California during the gold rush, returned home and served terms as sheriff of Schoharie County. Harvey moved to western New York and Edward went south to Georgia. Their father Edward was a farmer and a carpenter, well-known in the community for his skills at producing cabinets and chairs, coffins, and caskets. A successful businessman and craftsman, Edward Sr. was also a musician and a devoted member of Jefferson’s Presbyterian Church.



In 1828, eight years after Sarah died, Edward Rowley married Lydia Decker (1805-1877). In the ensuing years, Lydia gave birth to five children: Elizabeth, Sarah, Eli, Charles, and Mary Jane.

When Edward Rowley Jr. relocated to Georgia, he first settled in Washington County and later moved to Baldwin County. He married Mrs. Harriet Hitchcock Lawson in 1844 and they had a daughter, Laura, born in 1845. The couple also raised Harriet’s young son Hugh. By 1860, Edward had become a wealthy farmer, or “planter” and owned over a dozen enslaved persons. His personal estate as reported on the 1860 census was \$21,250 (the equivalent of \$823,027 today).

A month after the start of the Civil War, on June 12, 1861, Edward Rowley Jr. enlisted in the 9th Georgia Infantry and served as a private in Company F. In February and March of 1862 he served as a wagon master in the regiment. Edward’s service record seems to indicate he didn’t serve beyond 1862, and on the *1864 Census for Re-Organizing the Georgia Militia*, Edward Rowley was noted as “exemption: discharged.”

In August 1862, at the age of 26, Eli Rowley enlisted in the 134th New York Volunteer Infantry and served in Company C until July 1863 when he was transferred to Company E of the 10th Regiment of the Veterans Reserve

Corps due to lung problems. He served in the Veterans Reserve Corps until his discharge on July 14, 1865.

Did these two brothers ever face each other in battle? No, Edward and Eli never fought in battle against each other during the war. The only time their respective regiments were combatants in the same battle was Gettysburg, but the brothers were no longer with their regiments by that time.

Edward last appeared on the federal census in 1870, living with his wife in Milledgeville, Baldwin County, Georgia. His personal estate was now only \$600 (\$14,723 in today's money). It is unknown when Edward Rowley Jr., who served in the Confederate army, died or where he was buried. Eli Rowley who served in the Union army returned to Jefferson after the war, married, and had a child. He died in 1867 from the lung problem he acquired in the war. The location of his grave is also unknown today.

Jefferson Historical Society's

Silent Auction & Sale

The fun starts

Saturday, September 20

10-4

and continues on

Sunday, September 21

12-4

At Judd Hall

163 Main Street, Jefferson

Featuring new & gently-used items, antique & vintage items, collectibles, prints, jewelry, housewares, home decor, & much, much more!

Why JHS Is Pleased to be a Part of Mohawk Gives

For the last three years, JHS has been selected to participate in a several counties-wide fundraising effort in support of not-for-profit organizations. The umbrella organization for these efforts is Mohawk Gives, a non-profit that reaches out to a wide number of corporate donors around the country. Over this month, we will update our webpage on the Mohawk Gives website to present to a wide-viewing public all that we offer to our community. Being part of this program puts us in competition with other non-profits in our category to qualify for money awards to organizations that show various levels of support from their communities. We hope that when the time comes for the giving to commence, Jeffersonians will show their support for us. All funds for JHS sent to the Mohawk Gives website will be delivered promptly to us. In the last two years we were able to earn several hundred dollars; this year we hope to up that. All levels of support can help.

The opportunity to visit and donate to the **Jefferson Historical Society/Mohawk Gives** website will open at 12 AM on Monday, **September 15, 12am and close on Friday, September 19, 9pm.**

For up-to-date information on the historical society's activities, or to contact us:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/The-Jefferson-Historical-Society-309739662479973>

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvUkiAnAt_v3Vrzgz9gvBjg

Website: thejeffersonhistoricalsociety.org

Email: historicalsocietyjefferson@gmail.com

JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION FORM

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2025

(Members receive a 10% discount on JHS merchandise)

Membership Category (Please circle one)

Individual....\$20 / Couple/family....\$35

Individual lifetime..\$150 / Couple lifetime...\$250

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

For a donation to the Jefferson Historical Society, please note the areas you wish to support:

General Operating Expenses \$ _____

Fund for the Future \$ _____

Music & More series \$ _____

Newsletter publication \$ _____

Other (please specify) _____

My donation is in memory of/in honor of _____

Make your check payable 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 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible as allowed by
law.



JEFFERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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From a new, interactive display in the Nicholas J. Juried Museum of Jefferson History