



Pawlett Historical Society
P.O. Box 113
Pawlet, Vermont 05761

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Pages from the
**PAWLET
SCRAPBOOK**



Pawlett Historical Society

October 2022

A message from the President...

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NEWSLETTER

Rhonda Schlangen, Editor

Susan Hosley

We are happy to welcome our newest member to the board of directors, Jack Rath, husband of our curator, Sarah. We look forward to the knowledge and enthusiasm Jack will bring to our board. Look for his complete bio in an upcoming issue.

Reflecting on these past few months: we said goodbye to our Vice President Abbie Mahurin as she, her husband Andy, and daughter Ada, have relocated to Tennessee to be closer to family. We will miss their dedication, and we wish them all the best. Our Tag and Bake Sale in June was a welcome treat for bargain shoppers. Thank you to all the folks that supported this event. At our annual ice cream social, Gene Higgins of Rupert regaled us with reflections on the Pawlet-Rupert connection while enjoying refreshing sundaes. Our own Matt Proft has been taking time to clean the bronze plaques on the monuments around town.

We have rescheduled the Cemetery Cleanup 2.0 to late spring 2023. We hope you will join us for this event as well as in the summer of 2023 for the 50th Anniversary celebration of the Pawlett Historical Society's founding.

We would like to take this time to recognize our many volunteers for their gift of time (and, in the case of those that mowed the schoolhouse lawns, the gift of gasoline). We appreciate their generosity; we couldn't have done it without them.

If you would like to find out about volunteer opportunities, please reach out to one of our board members or myself at 802-645-0306

Our annual meeting will be held on November 10th at 7 p.m. at the Pawlet Library before the regular monthly meeting.

It's membership renewal time; you will find a form on the back page of this newsletter. Your membership supports the newsletter and a portion of the day-to-day operations of the Pawlett Historical Society.

With heartfelt thanks for your continued support,

Rose Smith

COMING EVENTS in 2023

Annual Meeting: November 10 at 7:00 PM—Pawlet Library

Late Spring: Cemetery clean-up

Mid-summer: Pawlett Historical Society 50th Anniversary and ice cream social

Please stay tuned for details!

Membership includes receiving the PHS Newsletter three or four times a year and welcomed attendance at all programs and special events.

\$10 single membership

\$15 family

\$25 contributing

\$50 sustaining

Name/Names _____

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Amount enclosed: \$ _____ Date: _____

Please return this form with your payment to PHS, P O Box 113, Pawlet, VT 05761.

***** Annual Membership *****

Judy Coolidge, Membership Chair, would like to remind everyone that it's time to renew your membership. Please use **form on back page** to renew.

Please return the form with your payment to PHS, P O Box 113, Pawlet, VT 05761.

Pawlet Chairs on the Antiques Roadshow

by Alice Blakely Marsh

Walton Blakely and Angelette (Horr) Blakely once lived in a house on Route 133 in Pawlet, Vermont. The house still stands, though the structure on the left, onto which the main house was added, was burned when lightning struck prior to 1977. Now, a brick addition on the right sets off the Greek Revival style house.

Walton and Angelette were married in her hometown of Castleton, VT, in 1851. At first, they lived with Walton's parents, David Blakely, Jr. and Esther (Edgerton) his six siblings, and an older sister, two younger brothers, and three younger sisters. This house was on Route 133 where now a lilac bush thrives, and evidence of a cellar hole remains. We know about this time in their lives due to a diary kept by Angelette for several months in 1851 and 1852. At that time, they were making preparations to move into their own house on Route 133. In March 1852, Angelette writes:

A beautiful morning as heart could wish. Everyone seemed anxious to improve the sleighing, people were passing in every direction, desirous to accomplish all within their power. Walton and myself went to Rutland from Castleton for the purpose of making some purchases; we succeeded after a hard days labor in making out a load consisting of furniture, crockery and a carpet, and left Rutland about six in the evening arriving home about half past eleven. It is needless to say we were happy when we came in view of a dwelling we could call home. Much to our surprise we found friends up and ready to receive us with a charming fire; after partaking of refreshments kindly prepared for us by sister Cythera, we soon retired and ere long we were lost in "tired nature's sweet restorer balmy sleep".

Walton and Angelette spent the rest of their lives in this home that had been built by David Blakely, Jr. The house was divided into two parts: one part for the parents and the other to accommodate newly married sons. In 1887, Walton and Angelette's son, Herbert, married Mariam Brown, who had lived in another house along route 133. Herbert and Mariam moved into the old part of the house, and Walton and Angelette remained in the main house. In 1917, Herbert's son, Robert, married Lucy Grover from Tinnmouth. By this time, Walton and Angelette had died, and Herbert and Mariam lived in the main house. Robert and Lucy lived in the old part. Sadly, Robert and Herbert both died in 1926. Lucy and her three children moved back in with her folks in Tinnmouth. Then Mariam died in 1929. Many family treasures were divided between Lucy, and Robert's sister, Winifred.

After I was married in 1970 and had a new house with little furniture, my Grandmother Lucy gave me five chairs that



Angelette (Horr) and Walton Blakely, circa 1851. Photo courtesy of Alice Blakely Marsh

had been in storage in the Tinnmouth home since 1929, as far as I know. They were sturdy farmhouse chairs with stenciling on the backs. My grandmother told me they were Blakely chairs. She had long before tied a card onto the chairs saying, in part, that they came from the Walton Blakely side of the house. When our children were young, we used them with a walnut drop leaf table that also came from Lucy.

Angelette's diary had gone to Winifred's granddaughter, Jenny. I first saw it in 2015 when Jenny visited from the West coast, and I started wondering if those chairs could have been on the load Walton and Angelette brought from Rutland in 1852..

Thanks to Liz Dodge, my very generous third cousin once removed, who also has a home on Route 133, I was given a ticket to Antiques Roadshow at Shelburne Museum this summer. I brought one of the chairs and was very pleased to learn they had been made between 1840 and 1860! The appraiser was knowledgeable in aspects of manufacturing the chairs and agreed it was likely they came from Rutland

at the time Angelette describes in her diary. We will never know for certain, but I like to think my Great-great grandmother Angelette chose these chairs for her home with Walton and cherished them, as did others after her. The five chairs are now insurable for \$1000.

Alice Blakely Marsh is a retired Registered Nurse and has lived in Jericho, Vermont for the past 50 years. She has been involved in genealogical research, especially for her Rutland county ancestors, for over 20 years. She is a member of the Pawlett Historical Society, the Middletown Springs Historical Society, and the Tinnmouth Historical and Genealogical Society.



One of five Blakely Chairs, circa 1852, handed down through the Blakely family for generations and recently appraised on the Antiques Roadshow.

PHS ANNUAL MEETING
Thursday, November 10, 2022
7:00 PM at Pawlet Library

Some of the people in the Anti-slavery Association and what they did or were, is very interesting. The people are Beriah Green and his son. Beriah was the president. Capt. Ebenezer Allen was in command after Beriah Green died. William Lloyd Garrison was a great disciple of America. He wanted to set people free of slavery. He went to Boston and was the editor of "The Liberator." Some others are Fayette Shepherd who employed power to educate people with ease, Paul Hullett and Ozias Clark, who were fatefully called old "wheel-horses," and Rangers who went on a journey of exploration within British lines captured [and subsequently freed] two slaves.

In May of 1874, Beriah Green delivered an address on the local liquor traffic in the town hall in Whitesboro. While waiting for people to vote at the ballot box, he fell dead.

Bibliography

Hollister, Hiel, *Pawlet for One Hundred Years*, Originally published 1867 and reprinted by the PHS in 1976

Block, Muriel L., *Beriah Green, The Reformer*

Cross, Whitney R., *The Burned Over District*



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6th Grade Essays

From 1982 until 2015, the 6th grade students of our local school (first the West Pawlet School and then the Mettawee Community School) conducted research projects about our community history, in collaboration with the Pawlett Historical Society. The essays that generations of students produced capture the remarkable and every day stories of our community as seen through young eyes. These essays are filed in the Pawlett Historical Society archives, organized by Trustee Judy Coodidge. We are exploring other ways to make these essays more accessible to interested community members, and hope to revive this project in the future. For more information about the Brenda Smith 6th Grade Memorial Project, please see www.pawlethistoricalsociety.org

In 1985 Sixth grader Stewart Denko wrote this essay about Beriah Green (1795-1874), and the text of the essay reflects the perspective of a twelve-year-old at that time in history. Green was a radical abolitionist at a time when the voices for freedom in America were few in number. Green embraced an educational and social vision that went beyond the mere ending of slavery and embodied equal opportunity for all.¹ Green spent part of his childhood in Pawlet, Vermont, where he attended our community school.

Beriah Green & Anti-slavery

By Stewart Denko

Mrs. Hunt's class, West Pawlet School
May 29, 1985

Beriah Green was born on March 24, 1795, in Preston, Connecticut. He was the oldest of six children. Beriah's parents moved to Pawlet in 1810. It is here at the Pawlet Academy, the local school, that he received his training. He attended college in Middlebury in 1816. Beriah taught school for awhile at Phillips Andover Academy.

In January of 1821, he married Maria Demingot in Middlebury. However, this lasted only five years. Then he married Doraxa Foote at Middlebury. His home became known mostly as "Old Hive." They had one son, Beriah Green, Jr., who became a Reverend.

In August of 1830, Beriah Green became a trustee of the Western Reserve College [OH]. In 1833 he journeyed to Whitesboro [NY] where he founded the Oneida Institute of Science and Industry.²

¹National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum. 2022. <https://www.nationalabolitionhalloffameandmuseum.org/beriah-green.html>

²Editor's note: The Oneida Institute was founded by George Washington Gale in 1827 in the village of Whitesboro (near current Utica) New York. Beriah Green became the second president of the Institute in 1833. The Oneida Institute was a short-lived (1827-1843) but highly influential school that was a national leader in the emerging abolitionist movement. It was the most radical school in the country, the first at which Black men were just as welcome as whites.



Beriah Green, courtesy of the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum

Beriah published a book called *History of the Quakers*. Another book is *Sermons and Discussions with a Few Essays and Addresses*.

Anti-slavery in Pawlet began in 1777. Beriah Green was the first president of the Anti-slavery Association. The people of Pawlet always disliked slavery. They tried to get permission from the Congregational Church for an anti-slavery lecture, but the church refused to open its doors.

Neighbors: Growing Up and Growing Old in Rupert and Pawlet

By Rhonda Schlangen

Gene Higgins is a local living treasure. Gene, the Rupert Historical Society President and historian, was the Pawlett Historical Society's featured speaker at our July ice cream social. About thirty community members gathered under tents on a bright, sweltering Sunday afternoon. They enjoyed ice cream sundaes while Gene regaled us with stories about growing up in Rupert and the close ties between the Pawlet and Rupert communities.

We heard about Gene's birth in the 1930s at the hospital in Granville. As his family didn't have an auto, local store owner Russell Hatch collected newborn Gene and his mother from the hospital and brought them home to Rupert. Gene shared many examples of how neighbors relied on and helped each other as simply part of the day-to-day workings of a community.

We learned that West Pawlet at that time was "pretty cosmopolitan" because it was the center of the slate industry. There were two Welsh churches, a Protestant Church and a Catholic church. We learned that West Pawlet grew with each wave of immigrants, spreading from what is now the village center. Spruce Gum developed as a suburb, so named because the houses there were built so quickly that the lumber hadn't aged, and the wood gum seeped out.

And so we traveled with Gene through the history of our two communities. We heard about all kinds of connections: the role of the Grange in connecting Rupert



Quarry workers circa 1866-1936. Photo by Archie Burdick, who photographed life in the Pawlet and Rupert communities.



Children berry picking near the Indian or Mettawee River circa 1895-1910. Photo by Nelly Bushee, who photographed life in the Pawlet and Rupert communities.

and Pawlet community members, the telephone party lines that allowed one to listen in on neighbors' calls, the saloon that is now Roy Egg's studio, the Borden milk factory outside of West Pawlet that collected milk from area dairies, and on and on.

Gene is the kind of gifted storyteller who can lead an audience around the winding paths of a story, painting a vivid and complex history that leaves us laughing. Those same words seem to fall flat when conveyed in print. Gene brought to life the color and texture of the lives of friends and family that are no longer with us.

While few are as gifted storytellers as Gene, no doubt we have a lot to learn from each other. Please take time to talk to your neighbors and hear their stories. At a time when we seem to be losing so many of our wise old and not-so-old ones, consider stopping for a moment to check on your neighbor, pull up a chair, and chat.

You can visit Gene and the museums of the Rupert Historical Society above the Rupert Kittay Library in the old District No. 4 Schoolhouse and a recently restored Cobbler Shop House, located next door. The museum exhibits seek to display aspects of community life in several eras of Rupert's long history. The Cobbler Shop House is dedicated to small town life in the late 19th century. Museum hours are Saturday, 10 a.m. – noon, and by appointment.