NNHS NEWS LETTER

Northville Northampton Historical Society

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Editor
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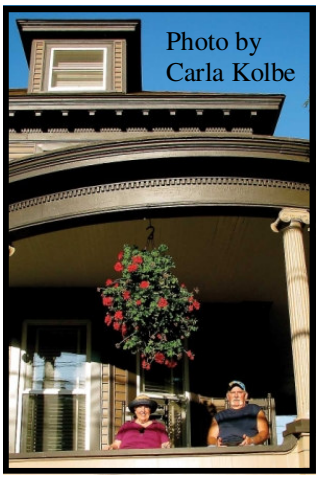
NORTHVILLE HOUSES
and other historical structures in the historic district
ARE ON THE NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER

Northville now has a large district on the National Historical Register as of May 2014, which includes eligible buildings, such as houses, barns, businesses, churches, significant monuments etc. Within the Historical district in Northville there are 177 buildings that are listed on the National Historic Register. There are 53 structures in the historical district which are not eligible to be listed as historical. The historic district encompases Main, Bridge and Division Streets, as well as buildings between Bridge and Division Streets. Below is a good example of one of the houses that are listed on the National Register of Historical.

421 Bridge Street
Built 1902



Shea and Al Lauria on their front porch

It seems that Northville holds a special place in the hearts of those who have grown up here. Many return when they retire, as my husband and I did. Here is what Shea has to say about "coming home".

"I knew Northville well as I was born and raised here. After college I headed for NYC and started my teaching career. I met my husband Al and we lived in the city for 12 years. We then moved to Long Island, as we both continued our careers. After thirty some years we decided to retire and thought returning to Northville would be a wonderful place to spend our senior years.

We started our house hunting and our agent, Lynne Paul, suggested looking at the Harris House. She never expected the two of us to buy it, but as we started our tour of the house, I entered the dining room and saw the beautiful Oak walls and floors, my jaw dropped to my knees.
Al took one look at me and said, "Oh boy, I think I am buying a house today." And we did! We love this house and we worked to make it a beautiful home. We are so honored to have it on the National Registry of Historical Landmarks.

God Bless America
Al and Shea Lauria

MUSEUM NEWS

June always brings us the privilege of having school children come and visit the museum. Mrs. English's class from Edinburg Common School with 15 children and the second grade class from the Northville elementary school visited with teachers and aids.

Hopefully they all learned something about the history of our town and village, as well as identifying some historical artifacts from our area. The children all love the jail door and think it's cool to close the door on other students and their teachers and pretend they are in jail. They also think the old permanent wave machine is awesome. Some of the boys identified it as something to jumper a car with.

The museum was open 2 days during the Trailway Fest. Skip, Gloria and Gail were the museum guides.

The museum will officially be open July 2 thru August 30, Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. and also by appointment. Call 863 - 2628 .

Substitutes are needed when our regular guides are unavailable. Please call and sign up.

History of the HARRIS/GRIFFIN(G) HOUSE

The tax maps show that Henry Foote owned the property in 1885

The 1890 R. L. Burleigh map of Northville shows a house on this lot. That house was moved to 112 N. Fourth Street, which is directly behind this house.

Architecture is Colonial Revival

In 1902 Peter and Lydia Harris who had lived in Hope, NY for many years on the old Harris Farm, built, as they called it "a commodious house" on Bridge Street.

They had 4 daughters and 2 sons.
Mrs. Harris was known for her hospitality.

Mr. Harris was the Supervisor of the Town of Hope and Hamilton County Treasurer for 33 years. He was very successful in the lumbering business.

Charles Griffin married Harris's daughter Emma in 1886. In 1916, Charles and Emma moved into this house. The tax map shows her name on the deed.

Charles Griffin was an exceptional business man which led him to work for the Morgan Lumber Company which later became International Paper Company. He became Pres. of IPC and served about 8 yrs. He also director of 4 companies; Lyons Falls Paper Co, the Gold Mining Company and Gloversville and Western Railroad Co. He developed two pulp mills in the Adirondacks which he later sold to IPC.

Charles and Lydia had two sons, one dying as an infant. Their son, Peter Harris Griffin was postmaster in Northville from 1940 to 1958. His wife was Betty (Clark) Griffin.

1940's the State Troupers headquarters were on the second floor of this house.

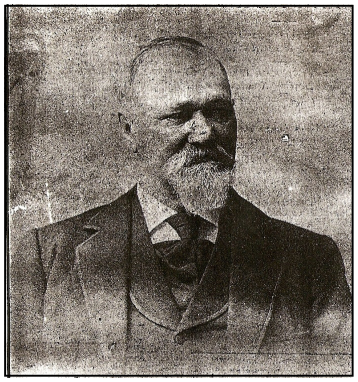
Properties that are on the National Historic Register in Northville are qualified to place a plaque on their property designating that honor. You may call 518 237 - 8643 for information on how to purchase one.

A PUBLIC SERVANT.

Treasurer of Hamilton County Passed Away Recently.

Northville, March 10.—In the passing of Hon. Peter Harris, which occurred in this village recently, Hamilton county lost one of its most honest, reliable and upright public servants. For many years he served the county in a public office, first as supervisor for the town of Hope and later he was chosen county treasurer, which office he held for 26 years up to the time of his death. He was born in the town of Hope in 1832, and was the son of James H. and Catherine Van Vleck Harris. For nearly 40 years Mr. Harris was active in the political life of Hamilton county and there was no office within the gift of the people that they were not willing to give him. Mr. Harris was interested in the lumber business and was popular and highly regarded among his business associates. As county treasurer he was considered one of the most honest in the State and his long service in that position was a high tribute to his ability and integrity.

GOOD NEWS
If your property is not in the Northville Historical District it does not mean that your historic house can't be placed on the National Historic Register . You will have to apply personally to the division for historic preservation. Call 518 237 - 8643 for information



HON. PETER HARRIS.

Are there any restrictions to owning property that is listed as a National Historic place? When private or local funds are used, and a project does not require state or federal permits or licenses or SEQRA reviews, listing on the National Register does not in any way interfere with a property owner's right to remodel, alter, manage, sell or even demolish a property. If state or federal funding is applied for and used, it is at this point that the property would then be under the restrictions of the National Register status. So if you apply for a state or federal grant be aware there will be some restrictions on your property.

Do you know the history of your historical house?
You can search for the information yourself or there is a 2 volume manual in the Northville library that contains research already done on many houses, or you can contact your local historian who may have researched your house

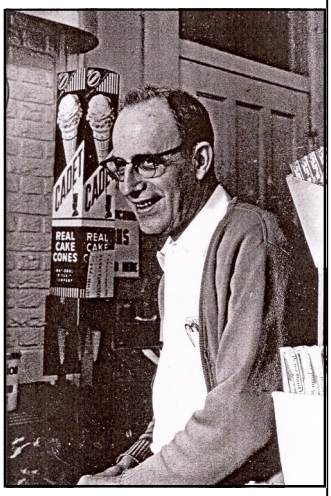
Some of the second graders from NCS leaving after their tour of the museum. They each get to ring the bell on their way out.

Corner of Division and Third Streets

The NNHS annual meeting met May 28th, 2014 at the Bradt building. They enjoyed an indoor picnic (too cold outside that day). Officers were elected for the next year and much business was discussed concerning the society. The Secretary report concerning the meeting was emailed to the members.

Folks We Won't Forget

Herman A. Lewek
1913- 1992
Pharmacist



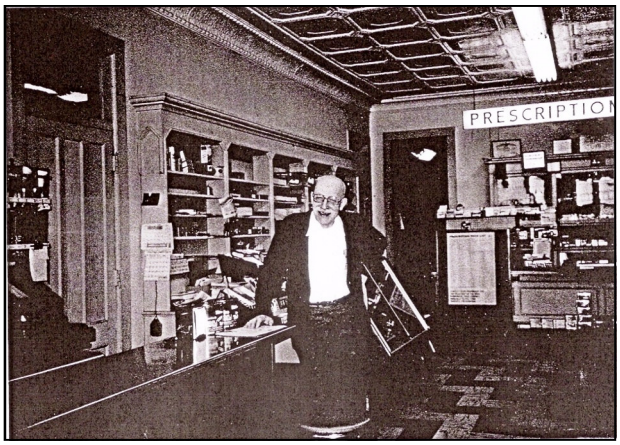
Herman and his wife Eleanor moved to Northville in 1952 and bought the existing drug store on Main Street. He served his community as a pharmacist until 1991. They had 3 children; James, Kathryn and Mary and 5 grandchildren.

As someone wrote, " His cheerful smile and professional expertise emulated from Lewek's Drug Store in Northville for nearly 40 years. Herman will be sadly missed by all."

Mr. Lewek grew up in Amsterdam, NY, graduated from Albany College of Pharmacy, and worked in Gloversville before moving to Northville.

He was a veteran of the U. S. Army and served in Europe in WW II. His rank in the army was First Lieutenant, A member of Northville American Legion Post, Ticonderoga Elks Lodge BPOE, Past President of Northville Central School Board. A communicant and usher of St Francis Roman Catholic Church and past member of the parish council. Member of St Michael's Society of Amsterdam.

Someone remembers back in the 60's going to Lewek's after attending the movies at our local theater. "We'd get a soda, candy bar or ice cream sundae."



1941

NORTHVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL CROWNS QUEEN OF MAY

Students of the Northville Central School conducted their annual May Day exercises Friday afternoon, consisting of crowning the May queen, followed by a series of athletic events for boys and girls of the schools in the Tri-County League. Ruth Grosso was crowned as 1941 queen by Carol Heath, who was accorded that honor in 1940.

Other girls pictured above include Dorothy Fischer, Peggy Conroy, Charlotte Hopkins, Sally Young, Ruth Frasier and Charlotte Frasier, court attendants; Janet Gardner, crown bearer, and Grace Cali and Velma Young, train bearers.

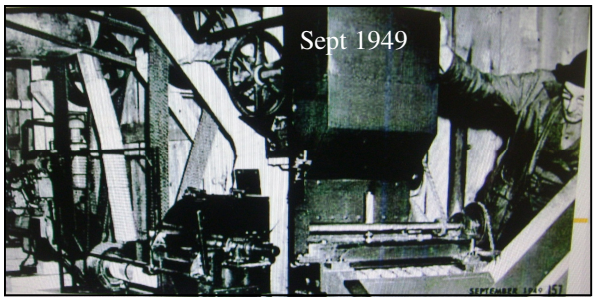
Northville's "Speakeasy"

Did you know that Northville had a speak-easy? It's location was on Water Street on the right-hand side, going East up the hill. The term is believed to be derived from the idea that people patronizing such an establishment needed to stay quiet or "speak easy" to avoid detection by the police or neighbors. "Speak Easies" were popular during prohibition days, often in old buildings, delapitated houses or in basements of a business. It was illegal to sell alcohol beverages during this time.

LUMBERMAN INVENTS MACHINE TO MAKE FUEL FROM SAWDUST AND OTHER LUMBERING WASTE

A Northville lumberman, Walter W. Letts, has invented a machine which can be used by small lumber camps to compress sawdust and waste into a cheap, clean fuel.

Machines do a similar job in large Northwestern lumber camps but proved impractical for small mills. Conservation officials believe the machine will provide a valuable by-product for the nation's lumber industry and make it possible for small lumber operators to make better use of timber lands.



The machine has been tested since January, Letts said, and is expected to be produced in quantity soon. It turns out "burnets," small cylinders about one inch in diameter and two inches long, and can produce more than 700 pounds hourly.

Clean and easy to handle, burnets can be used in a fireplace, stove, furnace, outdoors or any other place where solid fuel is burned according to Mr. Letts.

The compressed cylinders burn with a blue-white flame that resembles a burning alcohol lamp. There is almost no smoke once burnets are well fired, and less than three-tenths of one percent of ash is left.

The product will be sold by the package for picnickers, by the bag for home-owners and by the ton for industrial users. It can be used to replace wood, coal, coke or charcoal. Burnets weigh slightly less than coal, volume for volume. In sales they are expected to compete with charcoal.

The process of manufacture begins with the pulverization of wood—sawdust, chips, twigs, leaves, needles, bark slabs shavings edgings—any kind of cellulose. The wood dust flows over warm dry air from jets so spaced that the particles will be completely dried. Then the dehydrated dust flows into tubes to be compressed by hydraulic action.

12 Tons of Pressure

Eight plungers working in series apply a pressure of 12 tons to one square inch. No glue or other binding agent is used; the pressure, and heat resulting from pressure, bind the wood particles together.

For years lumbermen have compressed wood particles by a similar process, but a satisfactory machine for the average lumber mill operator had not been constructed, Mr. Letts said. The basic patent for which he has applied is on the shape of the plunger that forms the dust into a solid mass.

The burnet method is fast enough for high production, he said, and is almost automatic.

The machine itself occupies a space about 12 feet wide, 25 feet long and five feet high.

Mr. Letts said he has been working to develop the machine for about eight years. As a lumberman he wanted to find some means of disposing of sawdust and other wood waste that piles up around a lumber yard, and at the same time develop a by-product that could be sold.

Three-fourths of a tree is waste, say conservation officials. About half the tree is left in the woods; about half of what is used is wasted at the mill. The burnet process can convert into usable fuel the major share of the tree, now being thrown away.

Mr. Letts said it takes too much manpower to fire and regulate his mill boiler with such waste wood, that automatic oil heat is cheaper and more reliable.

Plant Employs 18 Men

The Northville plant employs 18 men. After it gets into full production, the inventor will turn his attention to the manufacture and sale of the basic machine to lumbermen throughout the nation, he said.

A Hudson Falls manufacturer of paper mill machinery has inspected the equipment and will build the units for sale, Mr. Letts said.

The development of the pilot model has cost more than $20,000, he explained, but the price of additional units is expected to be $10,000-$12,000 each.

The machine is especially designed to go into operation intermittently as waste accumulates or as time permits.

It was built after an inspection of the products and equipment of big Western companies that compress waste into large fire logs. Mr. Letts found their machinery and processes were not adaptable to the small mill. Then he experimented, designed his machine and had it constructed.

The first batch of burnets was produced Jan. 5. A demonstration for conservation officials, engineers and lumbermen was made Feb. 9. Gradually the bugs have been worked out of the equipment and full production can begin, Mr. Letts said.

He thinks he has found the cleanest fuel to handle and to use that has ever been developed, and that there will be a good and consistent demand for it.

Northville can boast of a number of inventors as well as Mr. Letts