





NYS OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION
& HISTORIC PRESERVATION
P.O. BOX 189, WATERFORD, NY 12188
(518) 237-3643

HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY FORM

OFFICE USE ONLY
USN

IDENTIFICATION

Property name(if any): KATHLEEN F. GILLIS, WILLIAM L. GILLIS
 Address or Street Location: 520 SOUTH MAIN STREET
 County: FULTON Town/City: NORTH HAMPTON Village/Hamlet: NORTHVILLE
 Owner: KATHLEEN F. & WILLIAM L. GILLIS Address: 520 SOUTH MAIN ST. NORTHVILLE, NEW YORK
 Original use: VACATION HOME Current Use: PRIMARY RESIDENCE
 Architect/Builder, if known: NA Date of construction, if known: 1825

DESCRIPTION

Materials - please check those materials that are visible

Exterior Walls:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> wood clapboard	<input type="checkbox"/> wood shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> vertical boards	<input type="checkbox"/> plywood	
	<input type="checkbox"/> stone	<input type="checkbox"/> brick	<input type="checkbox"/> poured concrete	<input type="checkbox"/> concrete block	
	<input type="checkbox"/> vinyl siding	<input type="checkbox"/> aluminum siding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cement-asbestos	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	
Roof:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> asphalt, shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> asphalt, roll	<input type="checkbox"/> wood shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> metal	<input type="checkbox"/> slate
Foundation:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> stone	<input type="checkbox"/> brick	<input type="checkbox"/> poured concrete	<input type="checkbox"/> concrete block	

Other materials and their location: NA

Alterations, if known: ADDITION TO HOME ATTACHED GARAGE & LAKE ROOM Date: 1938

Condition: excellent good fair deteriorated

Photos

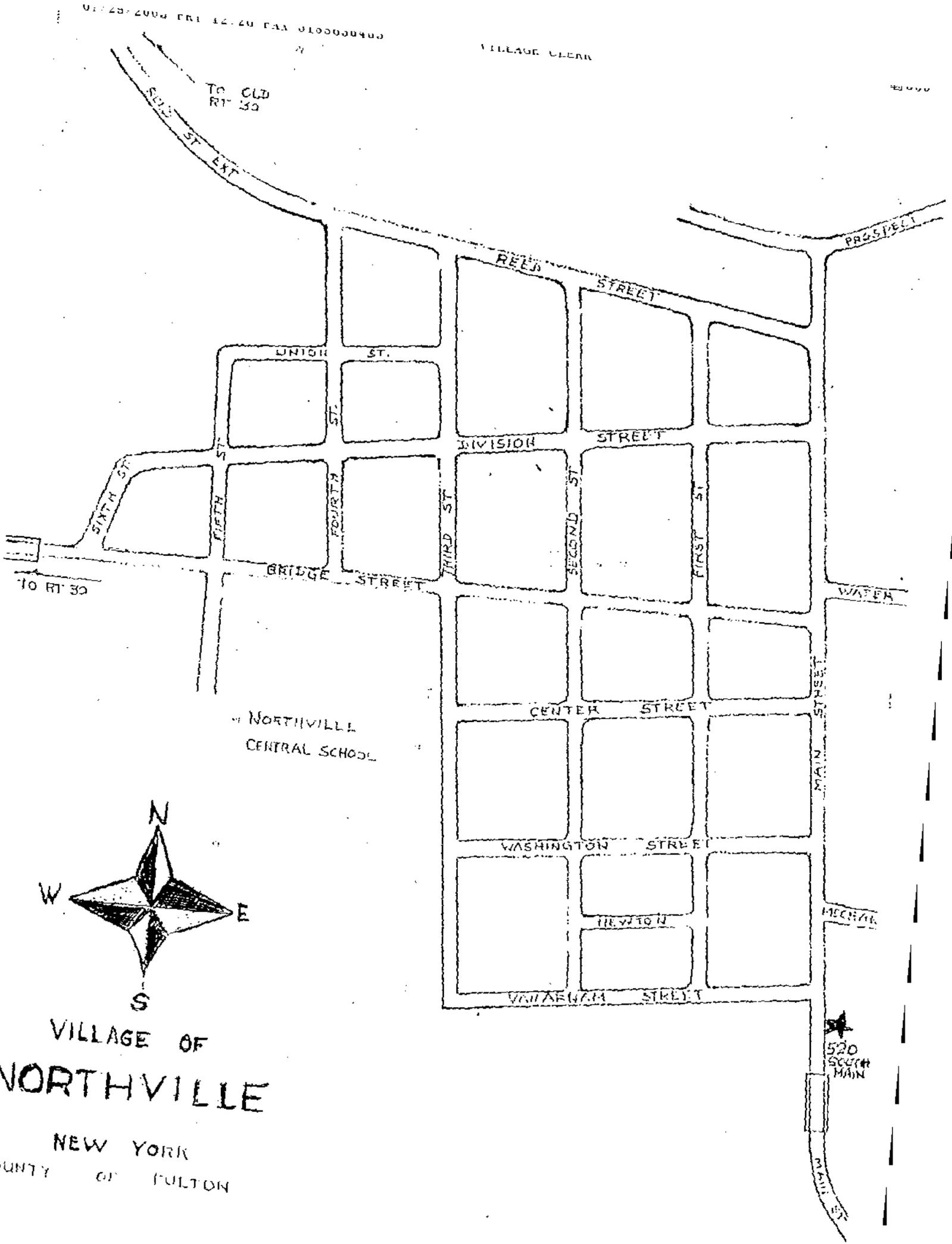
Provide several clear, original photographs of the property proposed for nomination. Submitted views should represent the property as a whole. For buildings or structures, this includes exterior and interior views, general setting, outbuildings and landscape features. Color prints are acceptable for initial submissions.

Please staple one photograph providing a complete view of the structure or property to the front of this sheet. Additional views should be submitted in a separate envelope or stapled to a continuation sheet.

Maps

Attach a printed or drawn locational map indicating the location of the property in relationship to streets, intersections or other widely recognized features so that the property can be accurately positioned. Show a north arrow. Include a scale or estimate distances where possible.

Prepared by: WILLIAM L. GILLIS address: 562 STANTON AVE. BALDWIN, N.Y. 11510
 Telephone: 516-378-6278 email: GILLIS997@AOL.COM Date: AUG 5, 2005



VILLAGE OF NORTHVILLE

NEW YORK
COUNTY OF FULTON

**WILLIAM L. GILLIS
KATHLEEN F. GILLIS
THE
JOSEPH F. SPIER HOME
1825-1851
520 SOUTH MAIN STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 521
NORTHVILLE, NEW YORK 12134
518-863-4730
516-378-6278**

TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO, MY WIFE AND TWO CHILDREN PURCHASED THE "JOSEPH F. SPIER HOME". AT THAT TIME WE WERE UNAWARE OUR HOME HELD SUCH HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

OUR FAMILYS' GOAL, AT THAT TIME, WAS TO HAVE A SUMMER RETREAT AWAY FROM THE FAST PASSED LIFE ON LONG ISLAND. IT ALL STARTED WHILE COMMUTING TO WORK ONE MORNING, I SPOTTED A SMALL ADVERTISEMENT IN THE NEW YORK TIMES REAL ESTATE SECTION LISTING THIS HOME. UPON ARRIVING AT MY PLACE OF BUSINESS I CALLED BILL COLE REAL ESTATE TO INQUIRE. BILL'S DESCRIPTION WAS ENOUGH TO PERSUADE MY WIFE, KAY AND CHILDREN TO ENDURE A FIVE HOUR DRIVE TO MEET MR. COLE AT HIS HOME IN EDINBERG.

I REMEMBER DRIVING UP TO THIS HOME, WHICH SAT ON TWO HUNDRED FEET OF LAKESIDE PROPERTY AND SAYING TO MYSELF, "WHAT COULD BE MORE BEAUTIFUL". WHILE BILL WAS SHOWING US THE HOUSE WHICH WAS THEN OWNED BY MR. BRUCE RHODES, AN ANTIQUE COLLECTOR AND DEALER WHO FURNISHED THE HOME WITH PERIOD PIECES ADDING TO THE CHARM OF THIS HOME. I OBSERVED THAT ALL THE DOORWAYS AND THE STAIRCASE SEEMED AT ANGLES NOT QUITE VERTICAL NOR QUITE HORIZONTAL AND BILL COLE SENSING MY DISMAY, LOOKED ME IN THE EYE AND SAID, "BUT THIS IS THE CHARM OF AN OLD HOME, BILL." HE WAS RIGHT, OF COURSE, LIKE PEOPLE, WE ALL SETTLE IN TIME, THIS OLD HOME AS WELL, HAD GRACEFULLY SETTLED IN IT'S OWN CHARMING WAY.

EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS HOME WAS HISTORIC, THE WINDOWS WERE ORIGINAL, THE WIDE PLANK FLOORS, INTERIOR DOORS, AS WELL AS

THE FRONT DOOR, INCLUDING THE BRASS DOOR KNOCKER ALL APPEARED ORIGINAL. THIS WAS A PLACE I HAD TO OWN.

MANY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THAT DAY AND THROUGHOUT THIS PERIOD OF TIME MY WIFE, KAY AND I HAVE LOVINGLY MAINTAINED THIS OLD HOME WHILE RETAINING AND PERSERVING IT'S ORIGINAL CHARACTER, HISTORY, AND CHARM.

IN 1992, AFTER SATISFING THE BALANCE OF THE MORTGAGE, THE MORTGAGE COMPANY SENT US " THE ABSTRACT OF TITLE". READING THROUGH THIS DOCUMENT WAS A TRIP THROUGH HISTORY AND WE REALIZED WHAT HISTORY HAD PASSED THROUGH ITS DOORS. STARTING WITH THE BUILDING OF THE HOME IN 1825, AND THE FIRST INHABINENTS, "THE SPIERS". IT WAS THEN, THAT WE REALIZED THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF THE ABSTRACT ALL THE HISTORY OF PAST OWNERS WAS HIDDEN FROM GENERAL VIEW. SO, ARMED WITH A FINE PUBLICATION ON THE HISTORY OF NORTHHAMPTON, WHICH WE PURCHASED AT THE "RED BARN" FROM AL AND DONNA BRED, WE WERE ABLE TO PUT TOGETHER THE HISTORY OF "THE JOHN F. SPIER HOME". WHILE THIS WAS IMPORTANT TO US, IT SEEMED IT WAS ALSO IMPORTANT FOR OTHER HOMES IN NORTHVILLE TO BE MAINTAINED, AND RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR HISTORY FOR TIME TO COME.

THE VILLAGE OF NORTHVILLE IS STEEPED IN HISTORY. PERSERVED FOR THE MOST PART, FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF IT'S RESIDENTS, AND THE MANY TOURISTS WHO VISIT EACH YEAR. VIEWING THE BEAUTIFUL LAKES AND SHOPS WHICH LINE OUR MAIN STREET. TO SEE THE BEAUTIFUL OLD HOMES STILL STANDING AFTER ALL THIS TIME. THIS IS MY REASON TO PURSUE, WITH YOUR ASSISTANCE, AN OFFICIAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION FOR THIS HOME AND OTHERS LIKE IT SO PEOPLE WILL APPRECIATE THE HISTORY OF NORTHVILLE AND NOT HAVE IT LOST IN TIME OR MODIFIED BEYOND DESCRIPTION FOR THE SAKE OF CONVENIENCE AND LACK OF KNOWLEDGE.

TWO MANY OLD LANDMARKS HAVE BEEN LOST FOREVER FOR THESE REASONS BY SOME WHO ARE SHORT SIGHTED, AND OTHERS WHO VIEW OUR HISTORICAL LANDMARKS FROM A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW.

IN CONCERT WITH OUR BEAUTIFUL MUSEUM, THE HISTORICAL DISTRICT OF NORTHVILLE IS NECESSARY TO PERSERVE. ONE THAT WOULD INCLUDE SUCH GUIDE LINES AS ADDRESSES THE ALTERING OF THE EXTERIORS OF THESE LANDMARKS. THE BUILDING OF NEW COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES, WHICH ARCHITECTURALLY DO NOT FIT NOR ENHANCE THE

HISTORICAL AMBIANCE OF THE SURROUNDING HISTORICAL HOMES AND COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES STILL STANDING.

WHILE THIS MAY SOUND LIKE STANDING IN THE WAY OF PROGRESS, PLEASE BE ASSURED THIS IS NOT MY AIM. YOU CAN STILL ACHIEVE BOTH WITHOUT GIVING UP EITHER. A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF WHAT I SPEAK IS A TOWN ON THE EAST END OF LONG ISLAND NAMED "STONYBROOK". TAKE A WALK THROUGH THIS TOWN AND YOU WOULD BE HARD PRESSED TO PICK OUT THE NEW FROM THE OLD. THE TOWN FATHERS OF STONYBROOK, MANY YEARS AGO, IMPOSED STRICT GUIDELINES FOR THE BUILDING OF NEW COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES. THEY MUST COMPLIMENT THE HISTORICAL STRUCTURES STANDING, AND ADHERE TO BUILDING CODES ENACTED TO INSURE THAT THE EXTERIORS OF THEIR DWELLINGS DO NOT CHANGE OR CHALLENGE THE HISTORICAL NATURE THE TOWN PRIDES ITSELF OF HAVING. THIS TOWN HAS BECOME A MECCA FOR TOURISTS WHO VISIT YEARLY TO VIEW A TOWN WHICH STILL EMBRACES IT'S PAST AND PRESERVES IT'S FUTURE.

SINCERELY,

WILLIAM L. GILLIS AND KATHLEEN F. GILLIS

**-PROVENANCE-
THE
JOSEPH F. SPIER
HOME
520 SOUTH MAIN STREET
NORTHVILLE, NEW YORK 12134
1825-1851**

THE JOSEPH F. SPIER RESIDENCE IS LOCATED ON THE EAST SIDE OF SOUTH MAIN STREET IN THE VILLAGE OF NORTHVILLE IN NEW YORK STATE.

THE HOME IS A TWO STORY, FEDERAL COLONIAL, RESTING ON A PROPERTY EIGHTY BY TWO HUNDRED FORTY FEET OF LAKE SIDE PROPERTY ON THE NORTHVILLE LAKE. THE HOME ORIGINALLY WAS A FARM CONSISTING OF OVER TWO ACRES OF LAND, WHICH WAS ACQUIRED BY THE BLACK RIVER REGULATING AUTHORITY IN 1938. IN CONCERT WITH THE BUILDING OF THE CONKLIN DAM, THIS FARM LAND NOW SLEEPS UNDER THE NORTHVILLE LAKE.

THE HOME WAS BUILT IN 1825, FOR JOSEPH F. SPIER AND HIS WIFE LYDIA, WHO LIVED TOGETHER THERE FOR TWENTY-SIX YEARS. (IN 2006, WE WILL BE THE SECOND LONGEST RESIDENTS OF THIS HOME SINCE IT WAS BUILT ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY ONE YEARS AGO.)

JOSEPH F. SPIER, NAMED AFTER HIS FATHER, WAS BORN IN LAKE PLEASANT, NEW YORK, IN 1799. SHORTLY AFTER HIS BIRTH HE MOVED WITH HIS FAMILY TO THE VILLAGE OF SACANDAGA, WHICH WAS TO BE RENAMED NORTHVILLE IN 1827 THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF JOHN F. SPIER.

DURING HIS LIFE TIME, JOSEPH, LIKE HIS FATHER, ACHIEVED GREAT HEIGHTS BECOMING THE FIRST POSTMASTER OF NORTHVILLE. THIS POSITION LASTED TWENTY-ONE YEARS. HE ALSO OPENED THE FIRST MERCHANTILE STORE IN 1822. DUE TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS BUSINESS WAS ABLE TO BUILD THE FIRST ALL BRICK STORE ON MAIN STREET IN 1822. THE STORE AND THE POST OFFICE WERE LOCATED ON THE NORTH WEST CORNER OF MAIN AND WASHINGTON STREETS.

JOSEPH F. SPIER ALSO BECAME A TRUSTEE IN THE NORTHVILLE METHODIST CHURCH WHERE HE BECAME SUPERINTENDENT. A POSITION HE HELD UNTIL 1855. IN THAT SAME YEAR, MR. SPIER, FORMED A CEMETARY ASSOCIATION TO BUILD A NEW CEMETARY IN THE VILLAGE DUE TO THE LACK OF AVAILABLE SPACE IN THE ORIGINAL CEMETARY ON

MAIN STREET. THE NEW LOCATION WAS BUILT ON PROSPECT STREET ON LAND THAT MR. SPIER OWNED.

JOSEPH F. SPIER LIVED HIS ENTIRE LIFE IN NORTHVILLE. HE PASSED AWAY ON JANUARY 17, 1893, AT THE AGE OF NINETY-THREE. HIS LOVING WIFE, LYDIA FOOTE SPIER, DIED ON JULY 21, 1892 AT THE AGE OF EIGHTY-SEVEN AND THEY AND THEIR CHILDREN STILL SLEEP IN THE OLD NORTHVILLE CEMETARY ON SOUTH MAIN STREET.

- BIBLIOGRAPHY -

NORTHHAMPTON, A TOWN NEARLY DROWNED
A HISTORY OF NORTHHAMPTON, NEW YORK
BY JOHN J. BENNIS
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RECORDS OF THE NORTHVILLE METHODIST CHURCH VOL. 264
MISCELLANEOUS UNPUBLISHED D.A.R. RECORDS 1964-65 STATE CHAIRMAN,
MRS. PERCY V. KETCHAM, RIVERHEAD, NEW YORK

ABSTRACT OF TITLE FOR JOHN F. SPIER HOME DATED FROM 1825 TO 1992

THE
JOSEPH F. SPIER
RESIDENCE
1825-1851
520 SOUTH MAIN STREET
NORTHVILLE, NEW YORK 12134

-DESCRIPTION-
OF
PREMISES

THE HOME WHICH WAS BUILT IN 1825 IS A TWO STORY CENTER HALL FEDERAL COLONIAL MEASURING TWENTY SIX HUNDRED SQUARE FEET (2600 S.F.). THE EXTERIOR STILL RETAINS THE ORIGINAL CLAPBOARD CONSTRUCTION WHICH IS IN PERFECT CONDITION AND WAS COVERED SOME TIME BACK WITH ASBESTOS SIDING FOR PERSERVATION AND MAINTENANCE REASONS. THE ROOF IS IN THE STANDARD GABLED STYLE ASSOCIATED WITH A FEDERAL COLONAL. THE BRICK CHIMMNEY IS ORIGINAL TO THE HOME BUT IS NOT IN WORKING CONDITION. THE BRICK AND STONE FIREPLACE IN THE LAKE ROOM IS IN WORKING CONDITION AND SERVES THE FURNACE AND FIREPLACE EXHAUST.

THE MAJORITY OF ALL THE WINDOWS ARE ORIGINAL AS WELL AS THE INTERIOR DOORS AND HARDWARE. THE FRONT ENTRANCE DOOR IS ORIGINAL AS IS THE PERIOD BRASS DOOR KNOCKER. THE FLOORS ON BOTH LEVELS ARE OF THE WIDE PLANK STYLE FAMILIAR TO THAT PERIOD. THE HOME ALSO FEATURES A FULL ATTIC ACCESSABLE THROUGH A HATCH OPENING ON THE SECOND FLOOR HALL CEILING. THE STAIR CASE IS ALSO ORIGINAL AND IN PERFECT CONDITION WITH A WOOD BANNISTER.

ADDITIONS TO THE ORIGINAL STRUCTURE ARE THE BATHROOMS (ONE FULL, AND ONE HALF) AND A EAT IN KITCHEN. THE LAKE ROOM AND ATTACHED ONE AND ONE HALF GARAGE WERE ADDED IN THE NINETEEN THIRTEES (1930'S).

THE HOME RESTS ON THE ORIGINAL STONE FOUNDATION WITH A THREE QUARTER BASEMENT AND ROOT CELLAR.

THE HOME HAS TWO MASTER BEDROOMS AND TWO OTHER ROOMS, WHICH CAN BE USED FOR SLEEPING QUARTERS BUT DO NOT CONTAIN CLOSETS AND A LIVING ROOM AND DINING ROOM.

THE HOME IS LOCATED IN THE VILLAGE OF NORTHVILLE, N.Y. ON THE EAST SIDE OF SOUTH MAIN STREET ON TWO HUNDRED FORTY FEET OF LAKE SIDE PROPERTY ON THE NORTHVILLE LAKE.

Finding and Decision
of the
Town of Northampton
Historic Landmark Commission

Regarding
The Joseph F. Spier Home
520 South Main St.
Northville, New York

Application
By
Kathleen F. Gillis, William L. Gillis

April 27, 2006

1. The Historic Preservation Ordinance (Ordinance) of the Town of Northampton empowers and charges the Historic Landmark Commission (Commission) to periodically revise the Town's Designated Landmarks Register (Register) by adding properties.
2. In the opinion of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the 'overall massing/form of the house,' 'details of the entrance' and the door, and 'the heavy timber framing and stone foundation' point to a building date for the Spier Home around 1835 – 1840.
3. Members of the Commission reviewed the 1905 New Century map and the 1890 Burleigh Litho map and believe both clearly show the unique shape of the Spier Home in its current location; and a property labeled 'J.F. Spier' appears in the approximate location on the 1856 map published by J. T. Hill.
4. The applicant supplemented the application with a copy of an indenture dated October 24, 1838, in which Jacob and Mary Van Arnum transferred the subject 'land & premises' to Joseph Speir (sic).
5. The applicant also supplemented the application with printed pages from a History of Fulton County/Town of Northampton which state that in 1841, Joseph F. Spier erected a brick building that was a store; that he acted as the treasurer of the Main street burying ground for about thirty years; and that he 'was the first postmaster, and it was ... at his suggestion that the name was changed to Northville.'
6. Mel Graff, a local Northville artist, lived in the Spier Home from 1945 to 1960, according to material compiled with help from the Northampton Town Historian and Commission member, Gail Cramer.
7. All requests regarding the application made of the applicant by the Commission have been reasonably satisfied.
8. A public hearing was held by the Commission on April 27, 2006, to consider the appropriateness of this listing, and no compelling arguments against addition of this property to the Register were heard.

Finding: The Commission finds that the property is over fifty years of age and possesses sufficient historic integrity; and is associated with the lives of persons significant in local, state and possibly national history; and

That the overall shape of the building, because it appears unaltered in the last 100 years; and the specifics noted by OPRHP and listed above were important in this finding and any plan to change them should be subject to prior review by the Commission in accord with the Ordinance.

Therefore, it is the decision of the Commission that the subject property, the Spier Home, be added to the Register effective immediately.

Cramer ____, Downing ____, Ferguson ____, Giles ____, Taylor ____, Williams ____









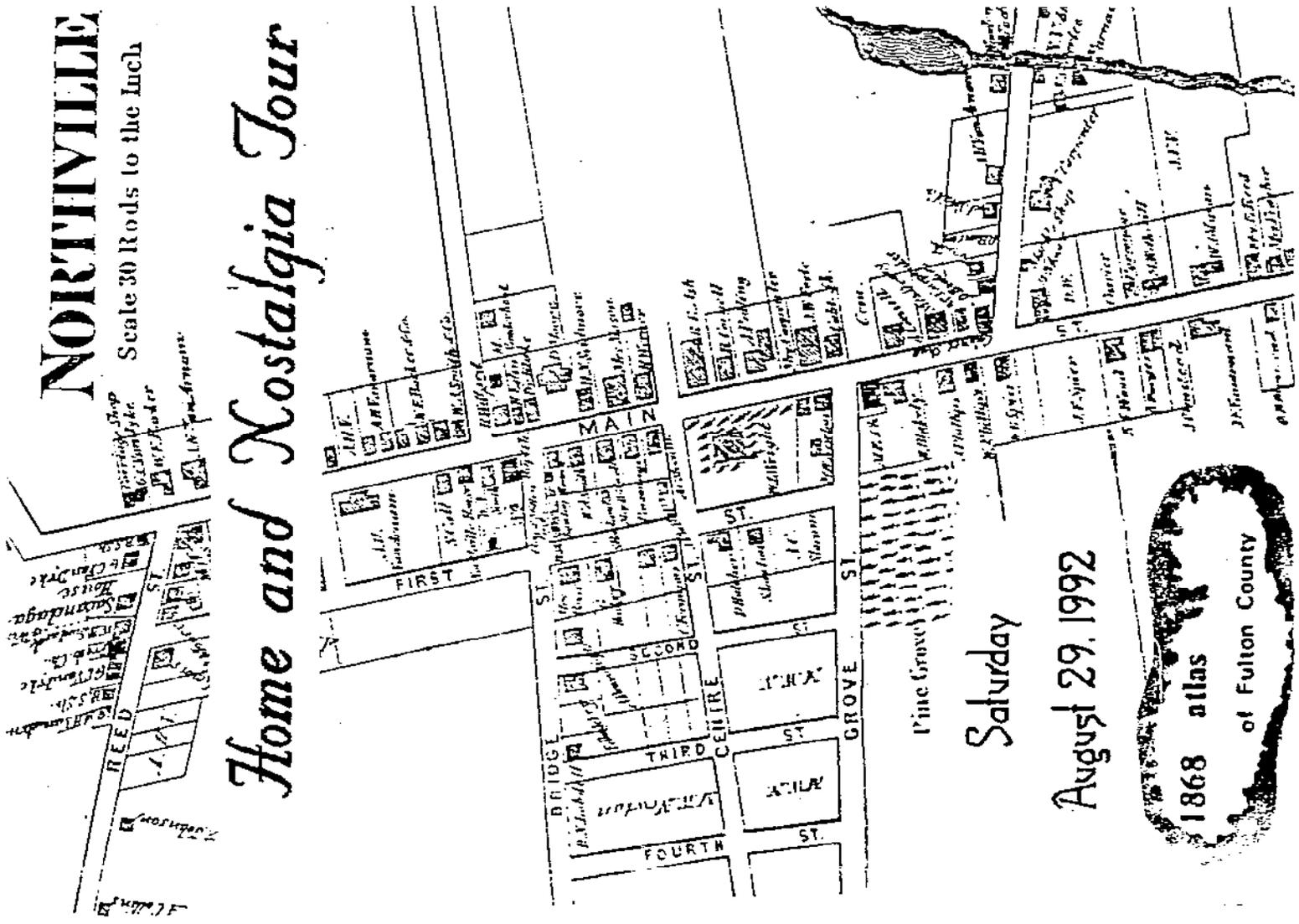




NORTHVILLE

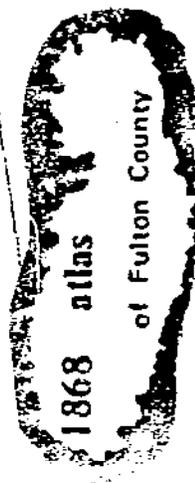
Scale 30 Rods to the Inch

Home and Nostalgia Tour



Saturday

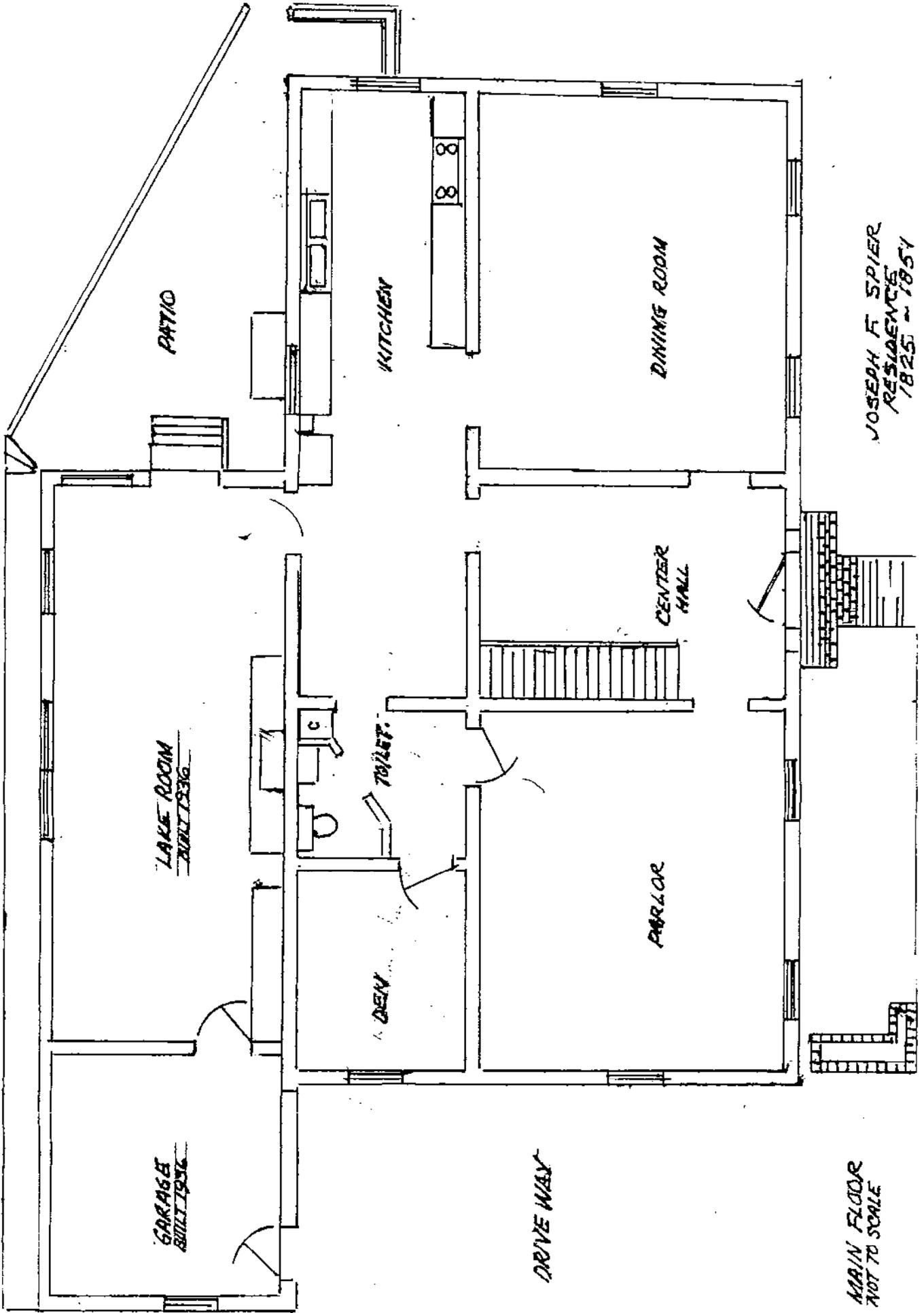
August 29, 1992



*Northville and Northampton Historical Association
and the Friends of The Northville Public Library*

We appreciate the many contributions of the
volunteers who so ably assisted us

NUKINVILLE LAKE



JOSEPH F. SPIER
RESIDENCE
1825-1854

PATIO

KITCHEN

DINING ROOM

LAKE ROOM
BUILT 1936

TOILET

DEN

CENTER HALL

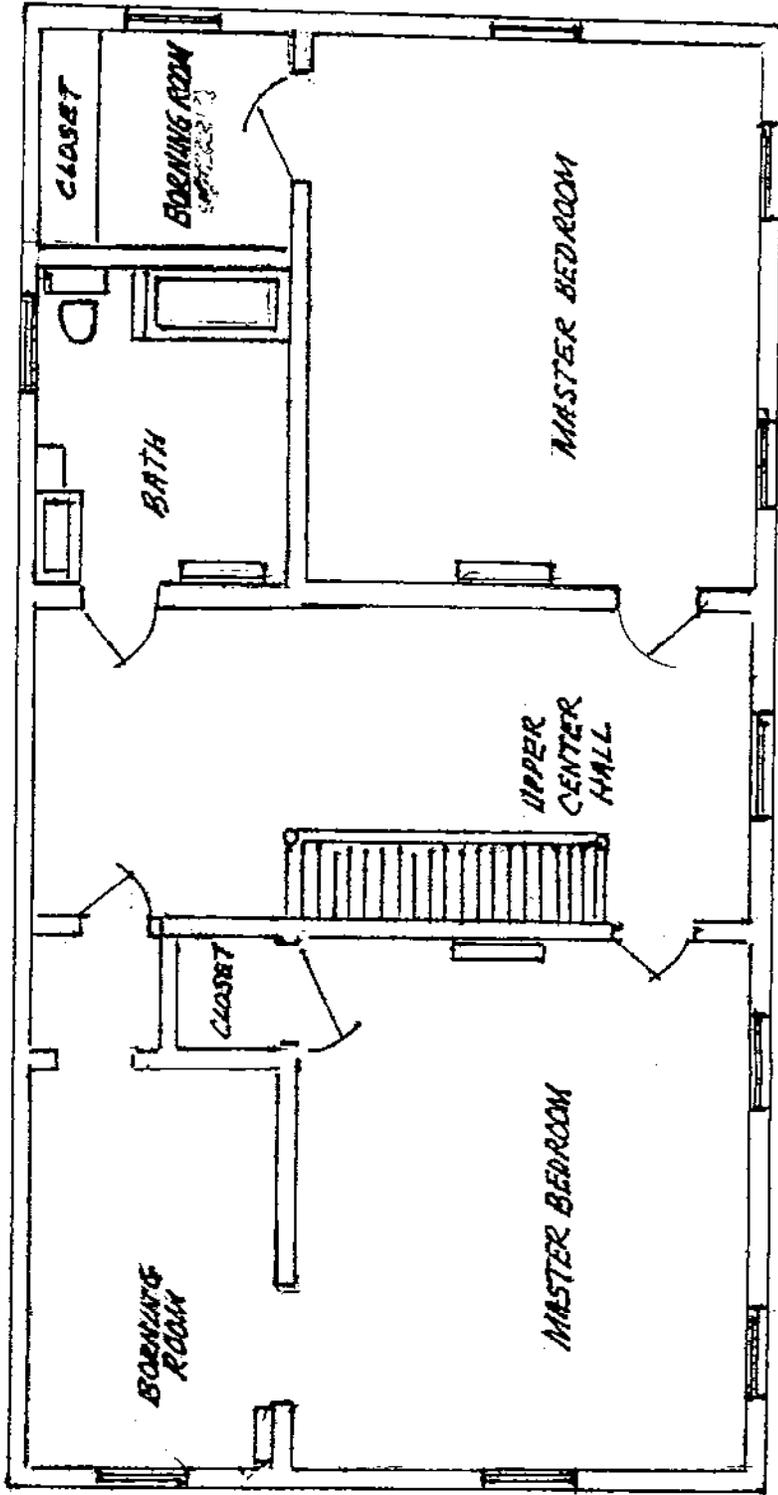
PARLOR

GARAGE
BUILT 1936

DRIVE WAY

MAIN FLOOR
NOT TO SCALE

NORTHVILLE LAKE



JOSEPH F. SPIER
RESIDENCE
2ND FLOOR

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6. Mei Graff, a local Northville artist, lived in the Spier Home from 1945 to 1960, according to material compiled with help from the Northampton Town Historian and Commission member, Gail Cramer.
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Cramer _____, Downing _____, Ferguson _____, Giles _____, Taylor _____, Williams _____

Mel Graff
Local Northville Artist

Comic Strip
"Secret Agent X - 9"



My father was born in 1907 in Cleveland, Ohio. In his early years he had jobs as a mechanic in a railroad roundhouse and driving a truck for his father who had a woodworking mill. Dad liked to hop freight trains and travel around the country, but what he always wanted was to be an artist. An older brother played baseball for the Cleveland Indians and was also a talented artist. As proof that early influences do count, my father sustained a life-long interest in railroading and baseball, and was a pretty good carpenter.



One of my dad's other great interests was fishing and the out-of-doors; and that is why he first came to the Adirondacks and to Northville. In this early fishing picture my father shows off his catch and I appear mesmerized.

Our family moved from Speculator to Northville in 1945 and we lived on Lake Northville until the early 60's. Dad often stocked the Lake by trapping fish from the pools left behind in the spring when water receded on the Sacandaga. The fish had three options: die in the sun, be eaten by birds or be netted by my dad and live another day. He enlisted my help as a "fish herder" since the fish did not understand they were going to a better place. I waded through the shallow muck with fish squirming around my feet and ahead of me into my father's net.

My dad's first drawing instruction was from a correspondence course in cartooning. He later followed this up with a course at the Art Students' League in New York City. In 1928, at the age of 21, he left his job as a truck driver for his father and took his first art job in the commercial department of the NEA Feature Service in Cleveland. He retouched photographs, made picture layouts and did lettering. After a year in Cleveland my dad was transferred to the New York office of NEA and soon after that went to work for the Associated Press doing illustrations for serials and drawing caricatures of well-known personalities. He did a caricature of Franklin D. Roosevelt that the President liked so well he wrote my dad for the original. Dad also covered the Lindbergh kidnapping trial as a sketch artist.

The first comic strip my father drew was called "The Adventures of Patsy" which ran for 5 years and appeared in 115 newspapers around the country. I was named after the heroine, Patsy, but first, our family dog had to be renamed from "Patsy" to something different. I always remember that I was really named after a dog. The star of the Patsy strip was a child movie actress; probably influenced by Shirley Temple. While my dad was drawing "Patsy" he got a letter from Cleveland offering him the chance to draw an entirely new type of comic strip.

The writer of the letter said he could have all the details if he would swear before a notary that he wouldn't try to steal the idea. My dad thought that was too much trouble and wasn't interested. After that Cleveland got someone else to draw what turned out to be "Superman."



"Secret Agent X-9," the next comic strip my dad drew, was based on a detective created by the mystery writer, Dashiell Hammett, author of *The Maltese Falcon* and *The Thin Man*. The original comic strip was drawn by Alex Raymond who worked with Dad at King Features Syndicate. Alex Raymond was also working on another idea and in 1934 created the comic strip character "Flash Gordon," which was a smash hit. As a result, Alex Raymond dropped "X-9" and it was given to my father. In 1943, Dad persuaded King Features to drop the writer of "X-9" (not Dashiell Hammett any more) and let him handle the writing as well as the

art. "Secret Agent" appeared in around 200 newspapers including several Spanish-language papers in South America, Cuba and Mexico.

While drawing the comic strips my dad liked to include caricatures of people he knew, sometimes famous and sometimes not. One of the famous was J. Edgar Hoover. He wrote asking Dad to insert a message about the FBI in one of his strips which Dad did along with a likeness of Hoover. My dad didn't spare himself as a subject; at right is a self-caricature. One not so famous caricature my dad did was of Northville Central's former principal. I seem to remember that the caricature wasn't very well received at the time but years later, it brings Mr. Abby vividly back to me.



Dad knew that it was a popular impression that all cartoonists work only an hour or two a day. I remember being self-conscious as a kid about my father's profession when one of my classmates said, "Your father doesn't do anything all day but sit around and draw pictures." The truth was that my father spent 5 to 6 hours drawing each of six daily comic strips, not to mention the hours he spent



trying to come up with an interesting story. He tried to keep on schedule but a newspaper deadline was always looming and he was often behind. To ensure that his work would arrive both timely and safely he drove each week to the Fonda railroad station and personally handed his strips to a man on the mail car, along with a five-dollar bill. When we lived on Lake Pleasant in Speculator, that trip to Fonda meant an overnight stay in a "tourist home" in Gloversville.

During Dad's career he met and worked with some interesting artists and writers. Two friends were Al Capp who created "Li'l Abner," and Milton Caniff

who created "Terry and the Pirates"and who honestly tried to draw with his eyes shut. Sometimes people ask cartoonists how they can draw their characters looking the same day after day. The



artist might say he had been doing it so long that he could do it with his eyes shut. My father was intrigued with

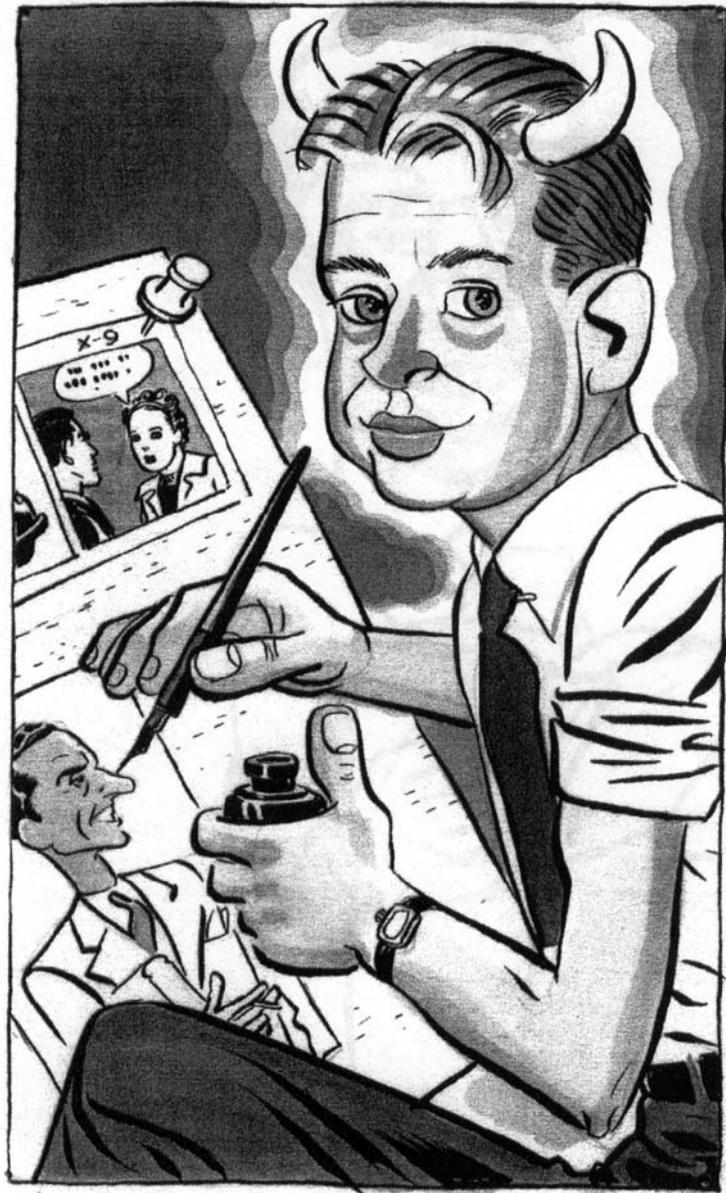


this idea and asked some of his friends to wear blindfolds and draw their characters. The results appeared in Life magazine in 1947. Two of these are above. Dad thought some may have "cheated" but not Milton Caniff.

In March 1960 my Dad left Northville and also "Secret Agent X-9" and moved to Orlando, Florida where he took over the Sunday page of "Captain Easy" while Leslie Turner continued to draw the daily. Captain Easy was a retired Navy flyer with a talent for adventure and solving crimes. Dad was able to have a less demanding schedule and this left more time for fishing, which he did up until the time he died in 1975.

I've often thought how wise my father was to have chosen a place like Northville to live. I have wonderful memories of growing up in Northville and I know it suited Dad.







Secret Agent X9 Starts At Hippodrome Saturday As Weekly Serial Treat



At left is Phil Corrigan, he-man G-man, as drawn by Artist Mel Graff in his FBI adventure strip. At right, Screen Actor Jan Wiley, who portrays X9 in the movies, strikes up a similar pose. The two pictures show more

clearly than anything else could how true to life Mr. Graff reproduces his characters. The picture at the right is an actual photo of Jan Wiley, the one at the left, Graff's drawing of him made from the photo.

Artist Mel Graff Will Come Down from His Northville Studio to Introduce His Film

Readers of The Leader-Republican who have been following the adventure strip "Secret Agent X-9" in this newspaper for the past several weeks will learn with interest that the popular strip which appears in motion picture form, is to be shown serially on the screen of the Hippodrome theatre, starting Saturday of this week.

Not only will the popular thrill movie start then, but Mel Graff, who draws it will be on hand to make a personal appearance and give the audience a chance to look him over, also hear how he works out his story in picture form.

Produced by Universal Pictures, the thrilling chapter play will be run as part of the program at the Hippodrome theatre every Saturday.

Graff, who does his work in his studio at Northville, has been seen recently as the guest of the Kiwanis Club and the Masons. His drawings have built up a tremen-

dous following among readers of over 100 newspapers throughout the country. Locally, "Secret Agent X9" appears daily in The Leader-Republican.

In the movie version of the adventure strip the producers have made every effort to capture the thrills that appeal to the readers of newspapers which carry the strip.

In his appearance at the Hippodrome, which will take place in the matinee only, Mr. Graff will illustrate some of his work in front of the audience. In addition, he will give away several of his original drawings.

Meanwhile, in the lobby of the theatre, there appears a display which compares some of Mel Graff's work prior to its insertion in The Leader-Republican. One may see the actual finished drawing before it is sent to the syndicate, where plates are made which are eventually sent out to the 100 or more papers which carry the daily adventure strip.

Graff Speaker As 150 Masons Meet For 1946 Banquet

Secret Agent X9 Artist Tells Tricks of Trade at FAM Dinner

Comic strip development through the years was traced last night by Mel Graff, who draws "Secret Agent X-9," for The Leader-Republican, in an address before the annual dinner meeting of Gloversville lodge, 429, F. & A. M. Mr. Graff said the strips were primarily intended to interest children, but it was found that adults followed them avidly and the modern strip is also written to "reach" the older people. About 150 attended the dinner held in the lodge rooms.

Henry Ford has been an intense follower of the comics, Mr. Graff said. Once, when the artist "killed" a dog, Ford wrote in and asked for the revival of the animal. Graff said it is no longer fashionable to have a character stay "dead" and the reader never knows when the "death" will be permanent.

"Revived in Nick of Time" Along that line he told of one artist having a man killed and his body stuck, head downward, into a hollow stump. Only the feet of the character were visible. Such a clamor went up from the strip fans that the syndicate ordered the man "revived."

"This was done," the artist continued, "by having a couple of boys find the man and report his predicament to the police, who effected a 'rescue' barely in time. There was just a spark of life, but that was sufficient." Mr. Graff explained with a twinkle in his eye.

There are many pitfalls in the path of a comic-strip artist, he stated. First he must avoid controversial subjects, be they political, religious, or what not. Then he must see that his character does not do queer things. As an example, he said he once drew a man nonchalantly flicking ashes from the cigar he held in his hand, while at the same time he was nonchalantly puffing at another. One must not draw telephones and floor lamps, he added, without also showing some of the wiring. Errors bring much mail from observant readers.

Veterans Were Guests

Mr. Graff made several drawings for the amusement of the gathering. His subjects included Stalin, F. D. R., Churchill.

The talk followed a turkey dinner served by Cayadutta chapter, O. E. S. Allan Goodemote, master of the lodge, presided, and Frank Rogers, general manager of The

Dr. Thompson Take Course

Morning Herald and Leader-republican, introduced Mr. Graff.

Honored guests were the members of the lodge who served their country during World War II. Of the 30 listed, the following answered the roll call:

Earl J. Grant, Jr., Frederick M. Crump, Frank J. Smith, Bernard W. Kimball, Vincent H. Alvord, Robert K. Lenz, Henry H. Lenz, Leonard E. Smith, Willard H. Taylor, Stanley E. Hulett, Hallock B. Alvord, Charles B. Stewart, Robert T. Hawkins, Herbedt C. Hageman and Martin Kohler.

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