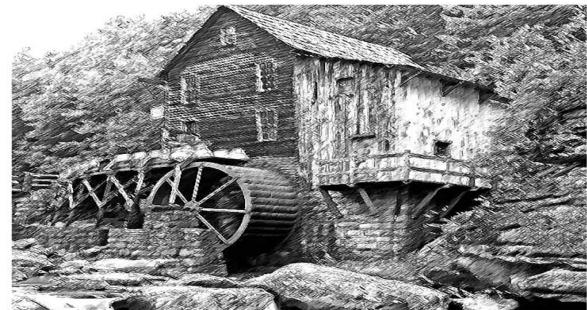


The Gristmill

Saratoga County History Journal



Preserving the History of Saratoga County

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Preserving Brookside Museum

By Jim Richmond

The Saratoga County Historical Society has operated the Brookside Museum in Ballston Spa since 1971. During these last almost 50 years, the Museum's programs have provided Saratoga County residents and visitors with a touchstone for the understanding and sharing of our rich history which extends back more than 300 years. Native Americans frequented the area for hunting and fishing and to partake of the mineral springs before the first Dutch settlements were established in the Saratoga Patent along the Hudson River in the late 17th Century. With the partitioning of the Kayaderosseras and Clifton Park Patents in the years preceding the American Revolution, the county's central, western and northern regions were open to settlement.

The museum, with its collection of 30,000 artifacts spans the history of the county from these first beginnings into the 20th century and beyond. However, the museum is more than artifacts, manuscripts and images from the past. It is an outpost for living history, sharing the experiences and social customs of generations past with the next generation. It is preserving and presenting this legacy to school children and adults who desire to understand their history to make sense of the world around them. It is gathering memories of men and women whose families can claim local connection back several generations. Yet Brookside also has a mission to share our heritage with the thousands of new families that have settled throughout Saratoga County since the Museum's founding who know little of this history.

This is a challenge for any historical society, an almost

Brookside Museum at work: A school field trip



Among the 30,000 items in the Brookside Museum collection



Col. Elmer Elsworth
Engraving



1870 Medicine Chest

impossible task in many respects. If this is our mission, then how do we accomplish these far reaching goals? Brookside Museum has bravely taken on this task. Outreach programs to schools present this history to almost 4,000 children throughout the county each year. One of the Museum's signature programs – Sheep to Shawl – has brought young students to the museum annually for 40 years. From archeology programs to living history

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