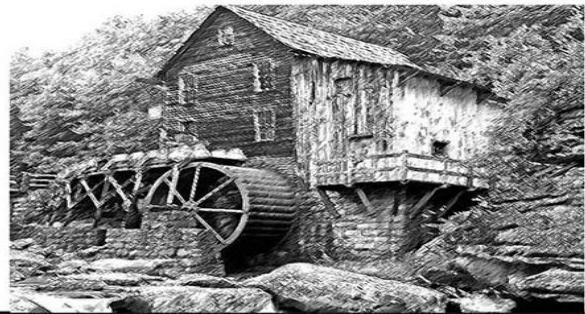


# The Gristmill

## Saratoga County History Journal



Preserving the History of Saratoga County

Fall 2022

## “All That Glitters” - The Hadley, NY Gold Mill

By Maureen Jones,  
Reprinted from the  
Winter 2021/2022  
Hadley-Lake Luzerne  
Historical Society  
Newsletter

Our area has supported many small businesses in the centuries since our towns were settled, though maybe not many and exciting as Hadley's gold mill!

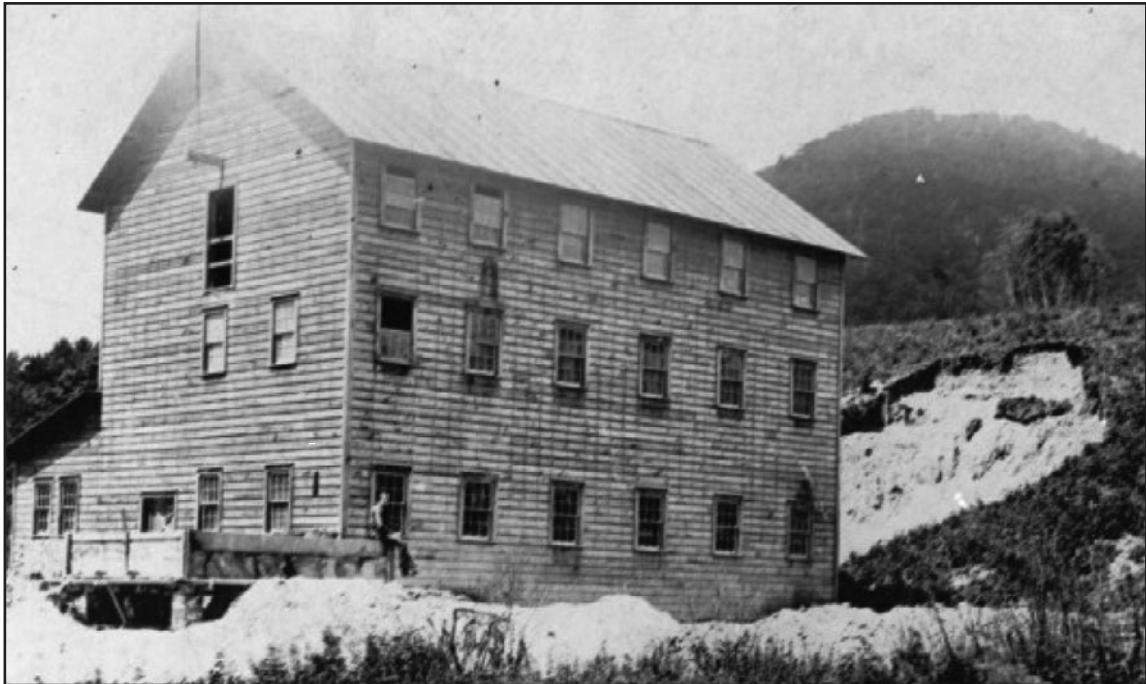
In the mid 1800's, Gold Fever hit the United States. The California Gold Rush, 1848 through 1849, captured the imagination of the world even though the merchants who served the prospectors usually made more than the prospectors!

Meanwhile, the Adirondacks were “opening up” to exploration. Telephones, early automobiles, and railroads all allowed both businessmen and tourists to visit the acres of wilderness and small settlements.

The Northville area had the first gold mill in the southern Adirondacks. Dr. C.P. Bellows, a dentist from Gloversville, constructed a test mill in 1889 but it failed.

Enter the Sacandaga Mining and Milling Company. It was located on the north bank of the Sacandaga River about a mile and a half from the hamlet of Hadley. The mill was built by John E. Sutphen of Albany and V.L. Rice. In this three story building, built about 300 feet away from the river, sand from the river was processed. Geologists in 1898 noted that this sand contained quartz grains, magnetite, mica, garnet and other minerals and probably came from eroded Adirondack rocks.

The “Sutphen Process” sifted through sand to extract



The Hadley Gold Mill

gold in many steps. The sand was moved by wheelbarrow into a chute on the second floor of the mill, where it was fed into a drying and sifting machine, and then into small rolls where the material was pulverized. The business owners stated that the old existed as a bromide in the quartz and the material needed to be pulverized and mixed with a “secret formula” that allows a chemical reaction to convert the mix to gold. An “amalgamator” completed the process.

The mill itself was described as capable of processing ten tons of sand per day. An impressive feat for a local business!

Professional geologists were skeptical and collected sand from the river bank. The New York State Museum's Dr. E.J. Wheeler tested the sand for the avowed presence of bromides and found none. A well respected assayer in New York City found that the sand contained a trace of

**Continued on next page**

# Hadley, NY Gold Mine

Continued from previous page

gold with a value of less than 20 cents per ton! This was certainly not the foundation for a new Adirondack industry.

During the late 1800's and early 1900's, thousands of claims for gold and silver were filed with New York's Secretary of State. No record of gold in the quantities needed to sustain a business was among them. Many rocks and minerals were and still are mined in the Adirondacks. From talc to garnet, businessmen have developed economical viable operations.

There is one big gotcha to searching for gold in the Adirondacks. You can prospect for gold all you want, but you can't keep it! Over 200 years ago, the creators of the New York Constitution included a law stating that any gold found in New York, on public or private land, is the property of New York State.

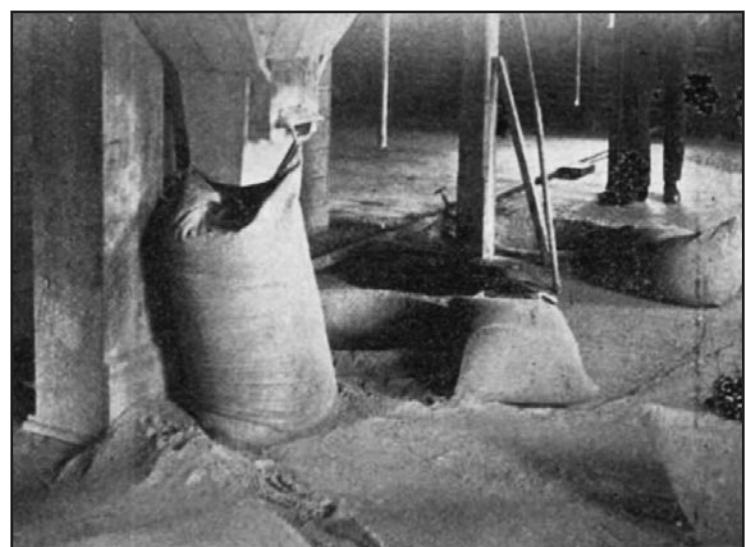
By the way, reality TV shows promote the glamour of the search for gold and other precious minerals. Closer to home, if a hiker wants to find "gold" in the Adirondacks, they can begin their search at "Goldmine Creek", a named stream in the town of Benson. They can imagine their good fortune if they actually find a microscopic trace of Adirondack gold!

Photographs on this page are from *The Engineering and Mining Journal*, Sept 3, 1898, Page 275

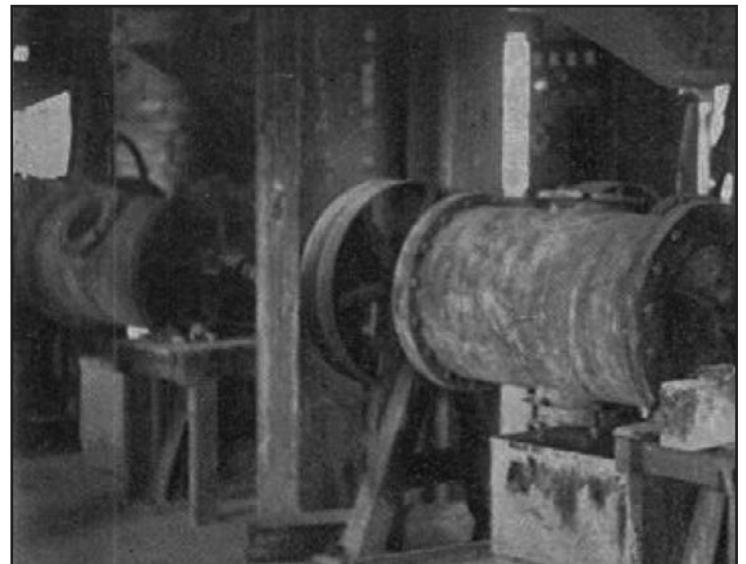
**Factoid:** In 1878, a topographical representation of Palestine was constructed on the west side of Round Lake. It was about five hundred feet long and on a scale of two and a half feet to the mile. Called Palestine Park, it was built by Rev. W.W. Wythe who also built one in the Methodist camp at Chautauqua, NY.



Ground floor in the Hadley Gold Mill



Third Floor in the Hadley Gold Mill



Sutphen Amalgamators in the Hadley Gold Mills



Preserving the History of Saratoga County

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# Ballston Spa Mexican War Monument

## The Village remembers their fallen sons

By Dave Waite

When the call went out for volunteers in 1846 to fight in the Mexican War one of the first from Ballston Spa to respond was 20-year-old Ransom Pettit. Enlisting in Colonel Burnett's 1st Regiment of New York Volunteers, and was sent to Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, New York to begin their military service. Early in 1847, the regiment boarded ships in New York Harbor and on February 1st dropped anchor off Tampico on the eastern coast of Mexico. By the Spring of 1847, another two dozen men from Ballston Spa had volunteered and followed Pettit to fight in this war against Mexico.

The *Ballston Journal* of April 27, 1847, reported the departure of these young men with these words of praise: We can say with truth that a braver set of young men are not to be found, and should they be called to meet the foe there will be no flinching on their part, but all will give a good account of themselves. In such hands, we are perfectly willing to trust the reputation of Old Saratoga for bravery and prowess in arms.

In newspaper reports from that period, some of those volunteers were identified, and by matching these names with online military records, details of a handful of these young men are revealed:

Albert G. Barnes, age 21, tailor enlisted April 21, 1847; Henry Ford, 21, carpenter; Seneca Shepard, 22, enlisted April 21, 1847; Philander Millard, 36; William H. Thompson, age 21, shoemaker; Andrew Armstrong, 24, farmer; Wilber Palmer, 23, bricklayer; Hiram Smith, 18 enlisted April 24, 1847; James Porter, 21 laborer; William H. McKittrick, 18 clerk; Nicholas Armstrong, 21, farmer.

The Mexican American War often called the Mexican War in our country, broke out in 1846 after the United States formally annexed Texas. When President Polk called for volunteers to aid in the fight, New York State responded by sending two regiments. Lasting less than two years, the war increased the size of the United States by adding 1.2 million square miles of territory including the present-day states of California, Nevada, Utah, and large parts of Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico. In terms of lives lost, of the 100,000 American servicemen who participated in the war, over 12,000 lost their lives. With diseases such as yellow fever and malaria plaguing the troops all through the war, only one death in eight was caused by enemy action.



Mexican War Monument

When these battle-proven soldiers came back home sixteen months later, four of their comrades were missing from their ranks. As we will learn, the brave souls who gave their lives for their country would soon be memorialized by the citizens of Ballston Spa. For those who returned, the community came together and held a supper in their honor. This acknowledgment of their service, held at Ballston Spa's Village Hotel in August of 1848, was attended by 130 guests.

As the four young men who had fallen during the conflict were not brought home for burial, plans were already underway to remember their sacrifice with a monument. It was never revealed whose idea it was to establish a memorial for those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for their country, it is likely that the returning veterans were at the forefront. A subscription-based fundraiser was started, and the community responded with enthusiasm.

For the design and cutting of the memorial, the community turned to Ballston Spa stone and marble craftsman Orville D. Vaughn. The monument was a white marble obelisk inscribed with "Erected by the citizens of Ballston Spa and vicinity Oc-

tober 19, 1848," as well as the individual commemoration of the fallen soldiers on each of its four sides.

On the side set facing east is an inscription for Sargent James Schermerhorn of Co. F, 9th Regiment United States Infantry. James was born in Ballston Spa on July 1, 1827, the son of Cornelius & Hannah Schermerhorn. James was the son of a war veteran, Cornelius who had served in the War of 1812 as a private in the New York Militia's Saratoga Battalion. During the Mexican War, James took part in battles in Contreras, Churubusco, San Antonio, Molino del Rey, and Chapultepec, as well as the capture of Mexico City. James died at Pachucha, Mexico on March 9, 1848, one month after the signing of The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo which officially ended the war. While it is possible that James Schermerhorn died fighting in ongoing guerilla actions by Mexican insurgents at the end of the hostilities, it is more likely that he succumbed to yellow fever or one of the other diseases that were prevalent throughout the war.

Facing west is the memorial to Ransom B. Pettit, of Company H, 2nd Regiment New York Volunteers. Ransom, born in Ballston Spa on June 25, 1827, was only

Continued on next page

# War Monument

Continued from previous page

nineteen when he enlisted in December of 1846. Under the command of Colonel Ward Burnett, the 2nd Regiment landed at Vera Cruz in March 1847 where they took part in the siege of that city. They then moved westward, fighting in the Battle of Cerro Gordo, where they were in the vanguard in pursuing and capturing Mexican General Santa Anna, and the Battles of Contreras and Churubusco which resulted in the fall of Mexico City. Private Ransom Pettit died during what was known as the action of Atlixco on October 19, 1847, which was a U.S. victory late in the war that defeated the Light Corps of the Mexican Army. Throughout the war, Burnett's New Yorkers participated in some of the fiercest fighting, earning praise for their courage and performance. Out of 1,000 men, the 2nd Regiment New York Volunteers suffered nearly four hundred casualties, with 199 deaths from combat wounds or sickness.

The North side of the monument commemorated 38-year-old Private Alvin Luther. He was the son of Gideon & Olive Luther. His father Gideon was a Revolutionary War veteran who had served as a private with the Rhode Island Militia Regiment. Alvin had Enlisted on May 24, 1847, in Whitehall and served with Company A 1st Regiment US Army. Private Luther entered the war too late to participate in the siege of Vera Cruz in March of 1847, though he served as part of the garrison that occupied that city until the end of the war. They were stationed along the Rio Grande where Alvin died on April 4, 1848. He likely died of yellow fever, malaria, or one of the numerous other diseases that were constantly plaguing the army during those years.

On the South side is Private Hiram Smith, who had served in Company E of the 3rd Regiment United States Dragoons. Hiram was born in Ballston Spa on August 8, 1830, and having enlisted on April 21, 1847, at the age of sixteen, likely the youngest volunteer from the village. So far, no records have been located to indicate which Smith family from Ballston Spa Hiram was related to. The 3rd Regiment had been raised for one year of service in the Mexican American War just two months before Hiram enlisted. Dragoons were a class of mounted infantry, who used horses for mobility but dismounted to fight on foot. Private Hiram Smith was likely involved in the Battle of Molino del Rey in September of that year and gave his life in service of his country at Perote, Mexico on October 23, 1847.

Though the plan had been to hold a dedication ceremony on October 19th, heavy rain that day pushed the date to the following Wednesday. At One O'clock in the afternoon on October 25th, 1848, the dedication procession formed in front of the Village Hotel on Front Street. At the head was Colonel Thomas Low, followed by the Ballston Band and the Saratoga Independent Artillery. Next in line were the veterans of the Mexican War from

the Village, led by William H. McKittrick bearing an American flag wreathed in mourning. After McKittrick came other Mexican War veterans Seneca Shepard, Nicholas & Andrew Armstrong, Hiram Ford, Wilber Palmer, and James Porter. Following next were relatives and close friends of the fallen who were to be honored that day, the village clergy and representatives of the village Free Masons, the Eagle Fire Company along with a large contingent of citizens who brought up the rear.

The procession headed east on Front Street and then turning south on Milton Avenue to Orville Vaughn's shop where they met the wagon carrying the monument. The procession then proceeded to the Ballston Spa Village Cemetery on Ballston Avenue where the monument was erected and dedicated. Before the monument was set in place a hermetically sealed basin container was placed under the base. This vessel contained the subscription book of those who aided in the erection of the monument and a short biographical sketch of each of the volunteers. The ceremony concluded in front of the Court House on High Street with a speech by 19-year-old Moss Kent Booth and singing by the Ballston Spa Glee Club.

When in later years the community would gather, the sacrifices of their military veterans were always acknowledged. One example was the Centennial Celebration for the village held in 1907. The main speaker of the day, Ballston Spa resident, Judge Jesse L'Amoreaux. While speaking of those who had answered the country's call, gave this remembrance of this who went west to fight in the Mexican American War:

And in 1847, a heroic band of young men join the forces of Scott and Taylor in Mexico; and in yonder cemetery, an imperishable monument erected by our citizens perpetuates the memory of those who found a soldier's grave on the battlefields of Vera Cruz and Churubusco.

The monument to these four young men who gave their lives for their country still stands today in the Ballston Spa Village Cemetery. To visit this memorial in the Ballston Spa Village Cemetery, enter through the second Ballston Avenue entrance coming from West High Street. The monument is located just beyond the northwest corner of the red brick receiving vault.

In 2023, it will be 175 years since the dedication of this monument. While there is presently no plan in place to retrieve the memorial's time capsule, it is something that should be considered. Why would these records have been placed there if not to someday be brought back out for the benefit of future generations?

*I want to thank William Curtiss of the Ballston Spa Village Cemetery Association for the directions to the Mexican Monument that are included in this article.*

*The sources for this article are Grose's Centennial History of the Village of Ballston Spa, and internet resources museum.dmma.ny.gov, hudsonrivervalley.org, and online newspaper archives fultonsearch.org and nyshistoricnewspapers.org. The photograph of the monument is by the author.*

# When Religion And Politics Mixed

By John Cromie, Esq.

A great disturbance occurred in the Town of Ballston and environs during the year 1800. Two local preachers became locked in debate over religious practices and politics, which, over six months, reached a crescendo in a public debate and accusations in the press. For the two antagonists it was dead serious. For most others, it was entertainment.

Four historical sources provide a glimpse into the event: a preface to A Plea for the Non-Conformists<sup>1</sup>, a passing paragraph in the Memoirs of the Rev. Ammi Rogers, AM<sup>2</sup>, the July 10, 1800 *Saratoga Register*<sup>3</sup> at the State Library, and fragments of the June 26, 1800 *Register*<sup>4</sup> pasted in a trunk owned by the author.

The battle of words began at Christmas time 1799. Elias Lee, a Baptist preacher, published an anonymous letter in the newspaper condemning the celebration of Christmas and other festivals of Episcopalians<sup>5</sup>.

Lee was 34 years old at the time and had moved to western Milton with his parents and siblings six years before from Danbury CT<sup>6</sup>. He was associated with the Baptists of Troy and looking to make a mark for himself to secure the call to become the first pastor of the young congregation at Ballston Springs<sup>7</sup>.

Lee's affront could not be allowed to pass without notice. It was answered in kind by the Rector of Christ Church, Ammi Rogers.

In 1799, Rogers was 29 and had been at the Ballston Center Episcopal Church since 1791, first as a reader, then deacon, and, finally, as a priest. Under his guidance congregations were established in Charlton, Milton, Galway, Waterford, and Stillwater. When he arrived at Ballston he administered to 14 families.<sup>8</sup> By 1800, 4,000 people were counted as Episcopalians.

The two went at it in the press "with great warmth on both sides."<sup>9</sup> Dueling arguments led to a public debate that took over the county courthouse, which was located on Middle Line Road's tallest hill in the Town of Ballston. This was high entertainment; hundreds of people flocked to witness the debate<sup>10</sup>. The debate lasted to the "dusk of the evening."<sup>11</sup>

Essentially, Rogers argued the Episcopal worship service and bishops were tracible to Christ and offered the communicant the undeniable fact, "that the Bible and Episcopal Church have been transmitted together in every part of the world." The unbroken chain from Christ to the Episcopal Bishop of New York proved the "Episcopal Church was the true church of Christ."<sup>12</sup>

Lee argued that if one practiced a religion that justified itself through a succession of bishops who were beholden to kings and popes and didn't allow the commoner to read scripture unfiltered by clergy, then that person could not truly support the republic and could not be a true citizen.<sup>13</sup>

Rogers called the debate's result, "no conviction of error on either side." However, in the Episcopalian's view, his antagonist was worsted and responded with personal vindictive as a result.<sup>14</sup>

That personal vindictive was a thinly veiled accusation that Rogers was a thief.

On June 26, 1800, Lee wrote a preface for a Ballston Edition of Thomas De Laune's *Plea* for the Non-Conformists and published an ad in The *Saratoga Register* announcing the book's future availability for purchase.

In the preface, Lee recounted how De Luane's *Plea* had been loaned to him for use in the debate and when he put it down, Rogers "took it up, and began to peruse it, turning over the pages very hastily."<sup>15</sup> Lee then recounted how he thought he had the book among other books which he passed on to friends as they were preparing to leave. But, De Laune's *Plea* was missing. Assuming it may have been mistakenly taken by Rogers, Lee asked his adversary for it, who denied having it.

Lee explained the printing of the Ballston edition of De Laune's *Plea* was necessitated because he could not procure another copy to give the person who loaned him the missing book. Instead, rather than have only one printed, he announced there would be 2,200 copies to be sold, and there were subscriptions coming in from all quarters. Thus, the implied theft by Rogers would have opposite results than intended.<sup>16</sup>

As further proof of the theft, Lee pointed to a recent letter to the editor from Rogers debunking De Luane with a "'terrible manifesto' against the book and its seditious, scandalous, malicious and libelous author."<sup>17</sup> Lee didn't stop to consider that De Laune's *Plea*, published in 1683, had many reprints and Rodgers, as an academic, may have had a copy in his library.

Rodgers' reply was a testimonial from his Wardens, Vestry, parishioners, and others published in the *Register* which attested to his character. According to Lee, the 20 or 25 signatories supported Roger's accusation that Lee was a "designing knave" and compared him and his denomination to the "swine that was plunged before us." Lee closed his retort with an expectation that some of those gentlemen who signed the testimonial, "will explain themselves in the next *Saratoga Register*, or I perhaps shall be obliged to publish some things which come a little in their way."<sup>18</sup>

Most likely, the great debate ended suddenly. "That summer and fall a sickness prevailed in the county of Saratoga with which many died."<sup>19</sup> Rodgers' wife was stricken and died leaving him with a three-month old and two toddlers. As fatherhood was not equated with parenting in those days, the children were sent to family members. Alone with memories, Ammi Rogers opted to return to his Connecticut home, and Elias Lee received

Continued on next page

# Religion

Continued from previous page

his call from the congregation at Ballston Springs.

Sources: 1 *De Laune, Thomas, A Plea for the Non-Conformists, Shewing the True State of Their Case, and How Far the Conformist's Separation from the Church of Rome, for Their Popish Superstitions &c. Introduced into the Service of God, Justifies the Non-at Conformist's Separation From Them. In a Letter to Dr. Benj. Calamy, on his Sermon Called Scrupulous Conscience, Inviting Hereto. And a Parallel Scheme of the Pagan, Papal, & Christian Rites and Ceremonies to which is Added, A narration of the Sufferings Underwent, By Thomas De Laune, with a preface by the Author of the Review – and a Preface to the Ballston Edition; Re-printed by William Child at the Printing Office, North of the Courthouse, Ballston, Saratoga County; 1800. The preface by Elias Lee will be cited separately; 2 Rogers, Ammi, *Memoirs of the Rev. Ammi Rogers, A.M. a Clergyman of the Episcopal Church, Educated at Yale College in Connecticut, Ordained in Trinity Church in the City of New York, - Persecuted in the State of Connecticut, on account of religion and Politics, for almost twenty years; and Finally FALSELY ACCUSED AND IMPRISONED in Norwich Jain, for two years, on the Charge of Crimes said to have been committed in the Town of Griswold, in the county of New London, when he was not within about one hundred miles of the place, and of which he was absolutely as innocent as the Judge who pronounced the sentence, or as any other person in the world, Second Edition, Printed by G. Riche, Jun., Schenectady, 1826; 3 Lee, Elias, "To THE PUBLIC" Ballston, July 8, 1800; The Saratoga Register, Vol. III, No. 109, Thursday July 10, 1800, Ballston, Saratoga County, W. Child, Printer, p.3; 4 Lee, Elias, "NOW in the PRESS and speedily will be published DE LAUNES PLEA for the non-conformists, &c. &c. &c." The Saratoga Register, Vol III, No.107, Thursday June 26, 1800, Ballston Saratoga County, W. Child, Printer, p.?.; 5 Rogers, p26; 6 Grose, Edward F., *Centennial History of Ballston Spa, including the Towns of Ballston and Milton, The Ballston Journal, Pub., E. H. Lisk, Troy, NY, Printer, 1907, p. 231; 7 Grose, p. 75; 8 Rogers, pp. 22-27; 9 Rogers, p. 27; 10 Ibid; 11 Lee, Preface, p. v.; 12 Rogers, pp. 258 & 260; 13 Lee, Preface, pp. xiii & xiv; 14 Rogers, p. 27; 15 Lee, Preface, p. v.; 16 Lee, Saratoga Register, June 26, 1800; 17 Ibid; 18 Lee, Saratoga Register, July 10, 1800; 19 Rogers, pp. 28-30.***

**Note to our readers:** Do you enjoy reading the articles about Saratoga County in *The Gristmill*? Have you ever thought of writing one? While we insist on excellent research for the material we publish, we are not an academic journal. We want to tell the story of the people in our County which comes in all sort of forms and are often passed on in informal ways. In addition to writing, would you be interested in helping with the publication of *The Gristmill*? It is not a heavy lift. We usually meet about four times a year to review and make decisions about the submissions.

If you are interested in either opportunity, or would like additional information about either, please contact me at [PKP.NYS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:PKP.NYS@GMAIL.COM)

**Paul Perreault, Editor**

**Factoid:** Alcohol was not permitted on the grounds of the Round Lake Association. However, many barrels of "sweet potatoes" were delivered by Railroad Express marked "Dishes, Glassware, Handle with Care" to various Village addresses.

# Prior to the early 1950's

Most schools in Saratoga County were of the one-room variety

## Ballston District 9 - Middle Line Rd.



The students are top row: L-R John A. Schuster, J. Martin Lang, Stanley Kotarska, William Dean, Frank Dean, Warren Downing. Bottom row: L-R Alma Downing (Craft), Annabelle Hovey (Jennings), Genevieve Kotarska, Tarsilla Schuster (Cromie). The teacher at the time was Alice Armer Lane, who may have taken the photo.

## Malta Common School # 5 - Round Lake Road

