

NNHS NEWS LETTER

Northville Northhampton Historical Society

Issue 146
December 2022
Editor
Gail M Cramer



Joseph and Lydia Foote SPIER HOUSE Built 1825

Historical House at 520 South Main Street,
now being renovated and modernized



12/2022

The Spier house in Northville was the first to receive a Town of Northhampton historic plaque celebrating its place on the town's Designated Landmarks Register. The Town of Northhampton Historical Landmark Commission was created by ordinance of the Northhampton town board in 2003 for the purpose of evaluating and aiding in the preservation of the historic, architectural and cultural resources of the town. The town of Northhampton has a unique heritage whose story can be told through the many buildings and structures that relate its remarkable history. The Spier House is part of the earliest history of the village of Northville. (The Historical Landmark Commission no longer exists)

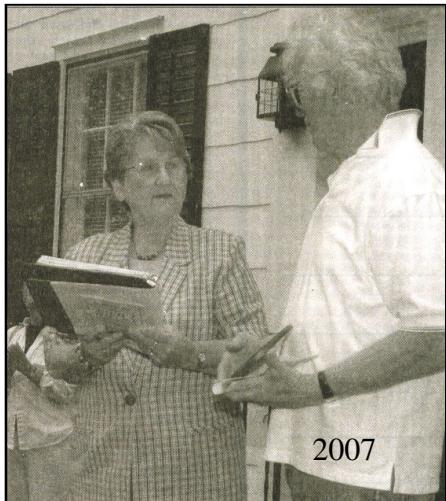
Joseph Spier Sr, and his wife, Olivia, were among the earliest settlers in the town of Northhampton, coming to this area in 1800 with their infant son, Joseph F. Spier who was born in 1799. Their eldest son, Joseph F. Spier, inherited his father's dedication to civic affairs and held office of town clerk, tax assessor, treasurer of the Cemetery Association and trustee of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He also acted as pastor to the newly created church for a short time, performing several marriage cere-

monies. Joseph F Spier operated one of the first mercantile businesses.

Joseph F. Spier was named the first postmaster when the Sacandaga post office was established in 1824. At his suggestion, the postal address was changed to Northville in 1827, even though the village of Northville was not incorporated until 1873. Spier operated the post office out of his store on the corner of Main Street and Washington Street.

Joseph and his wife bought several acres of land along Hunter Creek, at the end of Main Street from the Van Arnam family. He lived here in this Federal Colonial farmhouse, circa 1825. During the 1940s the house served as studio and country home to Mel Graff, a well know cartoonist.

There have been many owners of the Spier House starting with Joseph and Lydia. They sold it to Marilda E Benton of Greenfield, NY, in 1851. The last owners before the family that owns it now in 2022, were Kathleen and William Gillis. They owned the house for 43 years. Quoting Mr. Gillis, "We have lovingly maintained this old home while retaining and preserving it's original character, history and charm."



Town of Northampton Historian, Gail Cramer, presenting the historical plaque to William Gillis
Photo: Trojan



Photo: Trojan

We bought the house in 1980. I believe I was the longest owner having spent forty three years in that beautiful home. What intrigued me more was the fact that eighty percent of the windows were original, unbelievable, the front door staircase, interior doors, and hardware. Truly amazing, considering the home was one hundred and ninety eight years old. Very little was changed on the interior. Former owners seemed to respect the history of this home. I miss owning it, hated to sell it and disappointed to have lost the Town of Northampton Historical Designation. after just shy of two hundred years of History.

There was always something really great about living there A peaceful feeling, a warmth, hard to explain it. It was like the house, and all those who lived there - Accepted You.
William Gillis

My father, Mel Graff, bought the house in 1946. It came with a wood burning cook stove in the kitchen, and an oak ice chest. The floor in the kitchen was definitely not level. I was six years old and had just gotten roller skates. I could stand in the kitchen and roll down the floor without moving my feet. There was a large room across the back, an addition, that was just above the lake. Wooden steps descended to the water, one of the best features of the house. We had an ice rink in the winter and there was a catwalk and dock in the summer. My father, a professional cartoonist, had a studio on the second floor. He worked best at night and often until 2 in the morning doing research and meeting a schedule. I could drop in to see him when I got home from school. He occasionally wrote me illustrated letters. One summer when I was 10, and away at camp, he wrote about the lake (see page 3)

Patsy Graff Suydam



My dad was always mending the fence. He made this wooden cutout and attached it to one of the fence posts

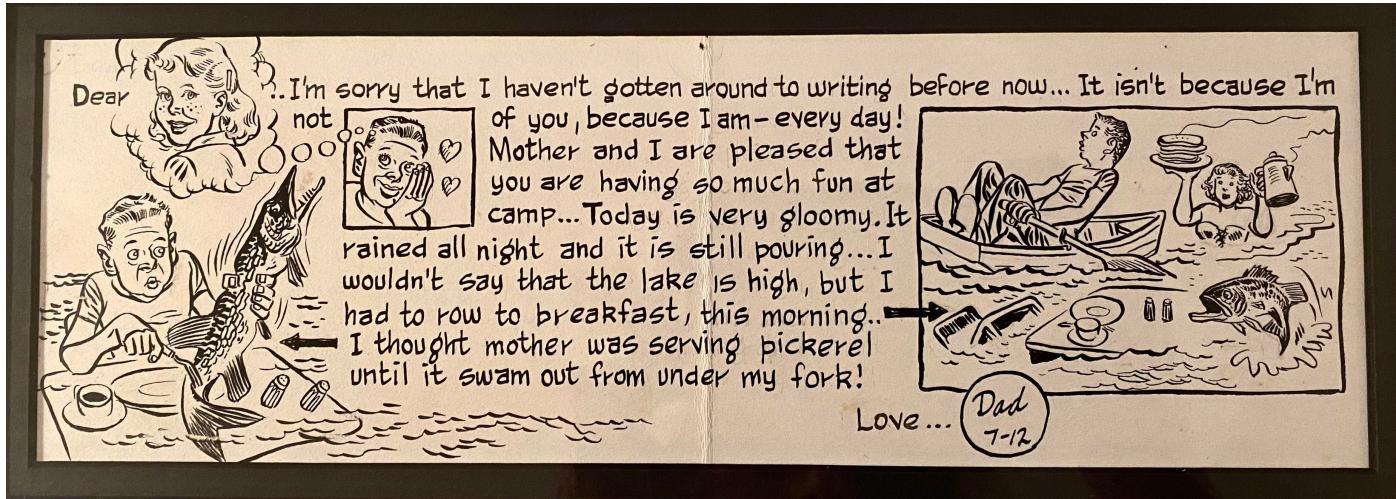


Genevieve "Gen", Mel and Patsy

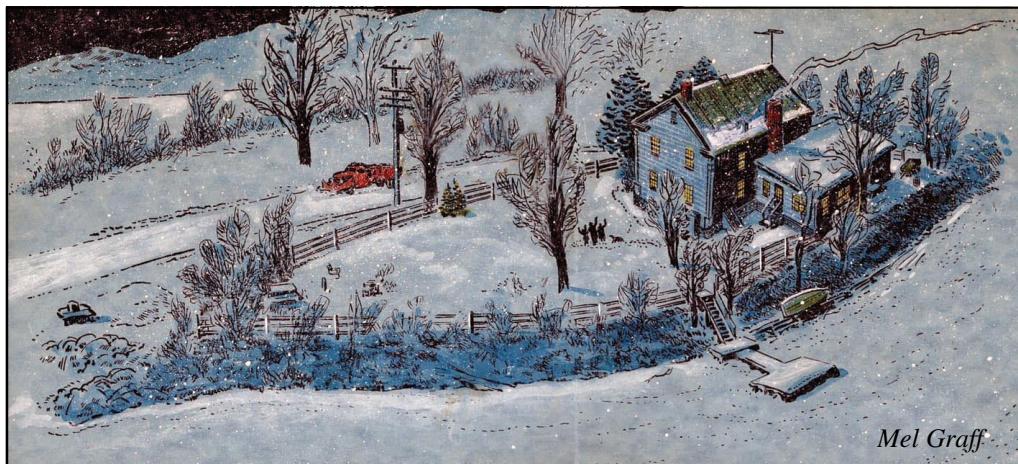


Patsy says that sometimes when her dad worked until wee hours of the night, he'd sleep late and then take a walk with their dog out in the country.

Joseph F. Spier Sr and his wife Olivia, arrived in Northville from Lake Pleasant, NY. where they lived in a log cabin. They moved from there because of the remoteness of the area. They built the first brick house in Northville in 1819. The house still stands at 331 South Main street and is now used as a BNB. More about Joseph Sr. and Olivia another time.



The letter that Mel Graff sent to his daughter at camp when she was ten years old



Water color pen and ink drawing that Mel Graff did of the Spier house when they lived there.

Note Mel, Gen, and Patsy waving. Their dog can be seen also.



During a February 1969 snowstorm, Raymond May, left, James Camp and Richard Burton, standing, ride in a two-horse open sleigh in Northville

Leader-Herald photo archive

Northville 1955

Board Warns Water to Be Shutoff Unless Taxes Are Paid By Monday

Seven Arrests Were Made by Police, \$19 In Fines Collected

The Northville Village Board served notice, at its regular meeting last night, that those not paying their water rents by Monday will have their water shut off by the village.

During the meeting, Fire Chief Glenn Duncan reported two fires during the month. Policeman Clarence Davison reported seven arrests for the same period, and Police Justice John Houghtaling reported the collection of \$19 in fines.

Bills in the amount of \$1,482.34 were audited and ordered paid.

Mark Brownell was given permission to build a new house on South Third Street, and Lawrence Frye was granted permission to remove a tree on his property.

Mrs. Andrews Made Trustee

Mrs. Jack Andrews was elected trustee Thursday night during the business session of the On-O-Lee Council, Degree of Pocahontas, meeting at the rooms. She succeeds Mrs. Martha Groff, who forfeited the office in lieu of the position as keeper of wampum, to which she was elected in January.

The charter was draped by council members in reverence to a recently deceased member.

Mrs. Clarabelle Dedicke was accepted as a new member and installed as second counselor. Mrs. Helen Olmstead, finance chairman, suggested a method of raising funds for the purchase of new drapes and silverware for the club.

Deputy Katherine Dacorsi of Johnstown gave a resume of great council laws and by-laws. Twelve members attended. Guests were Deputy Elsie Stuk and Mohawk Council members, Mrs. Pearl Houseman, Mrs. Winifred Toth, and Mrs. Frances Robbins.

Club Discusses Kitchens

"Kitchen tricks and step savers" was the theme of the meeting of the Pine Bough Club Wednesday afternoon at the summer home of Mrs. Maynard Hall, Sacandaga. Mrs. Hall, who now resides in Elizabeth, N. J., is a former club

Funeral of C. F. LaPralie

Funeral services were held at 2

yesterday afternoon at the Claude A. Lipe Funeral Home for Clarence F. LaPralie. Rev. Earl Hunt of the Baptist Church, officiated.

Bearers were John Van Heusen, Frank Van Vranken, Donald Gifford, Herman Flieg, Robert Parker and Ford Sauve.

Burial was in the Edinburgh Cemetery.

Out of town friends attended from Albany, Gloversville and Little Falls.

Potato Chip Originated At Saratoga

According to one story, the to paper thin and popped it chip was born at Moon's Lake into hot fat. His revenge back-House on Saratoga Lake in fired when the finicky diner de-1853. Aunt Kate, an Indian cook, was bustling about the kitchen. Like most cooks at dinner time, she was trying to do a number of things at the same time. One of her activities involved slicing potatoes and name was changed to potato in the confusion one slice chips. popped into a pan of hot fat.

By the time Aunt Kate fished the slice out it had cooked to a delicious, golden brown. A hungry guest passing through the kitchen popped it into his mouth and ordered more.

Another version is that the chip was a deliberate invention of George Crum, the chef at Moon's Lake House. According to the Crum advocates, the chef was nettled at the complaints of a cranky guest who said the fried potatoes weren't sliced thin enough. With malice aforethought, Crum took his sharpest knif, sliced a pota-

Now when you are enjoying that picnic with a handful of potato chips, thank Saratoga for this creation.

Articles from a page in the 1955 Gloversville Leader Herald