

SHARON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

December 2021

NEWSLETTER

Some of the programs coming next year:

- Ballads of Schoharie Creek Drownings
- Harriet Tubman & Underground Railroad
- Ancient & Champion Trees of Schoharie County
- Story of Roseboro Hotel
- Rediscovering The Forgotten History of Blacks in Schoharie County
- America's Quilting History
- Paranormal Activity 101
- If Streets Could Talk-History of Sharon Springs
- Notorious Ruth Bader Ginsburg
- Famous Decedents 1692 Sales Witchcraft Trials
- Amish Life in Schoharie County
- History of Caves-Schoharie County
- Hops Farming
- The Schoharie Indians

STAY TUNED

238 Main St., Box 363, Sharon Springs, NY 13459

sharonhistoricalsocietyny@gmail.com

Or by appointment—call 518-860-5513

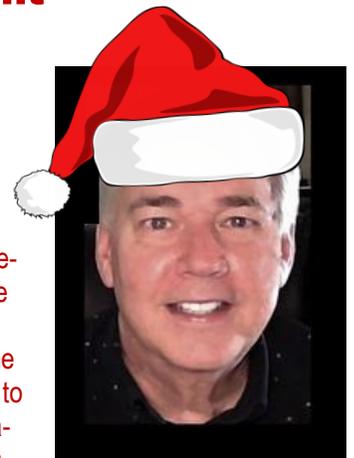
Greetings from the President

Seasons greetings!

The year has just flown by and it has been a great year for the Sharon Historical Society. As you will read in this newsletter, our historical program series has been a great success. In fact, we are planning to have two programs a month starting in January.

Our biggest news is that the Sharon Historical Society is undertaking an expansion project that will include purchasing the property next door to make more display space, a two-story expansion onto the back of the museum, and renovation of the barn. We are thrilled to be working with the Nicholas J. Juried Family Foundation on this project. Nick has committed to helping us with kick-starting Phase I of our project. We hope to start working on that part of the project early next year.

Exciting times are ahead for the SHS! Watch us grow in 2022! "Keep the Past Present" and enjoy the holidays!



Ron Ketelsen, President - Board of Directors



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Greetings from President	1
Peek at 2022 Programs	1
Recap 2021 Programs	2
The Invention of Christmas: Who Really Wrote A Visit from St. Nicholas?	3
Ted Mack's "Original Amateur Hour"	4
Joy of Discovery	5
Year Round Resort	6
Winter Sports	7
Sharon's Winter Wonderland	8

Unique items sold by the Sharon Historical Society make great Christmas gifts! If interested, please use contact information above.

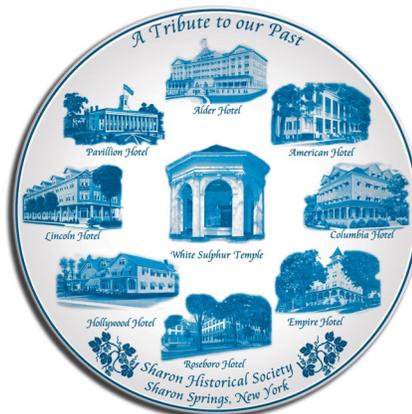


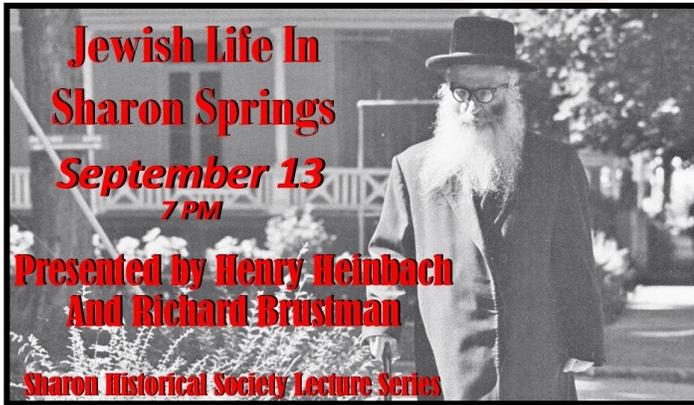
Plate with historic images—\$18.00



Ski at Sharon Springs posters
18 X 24 framed \$20; unframed \$15
8 X 10 framed \$10; unframed \$5

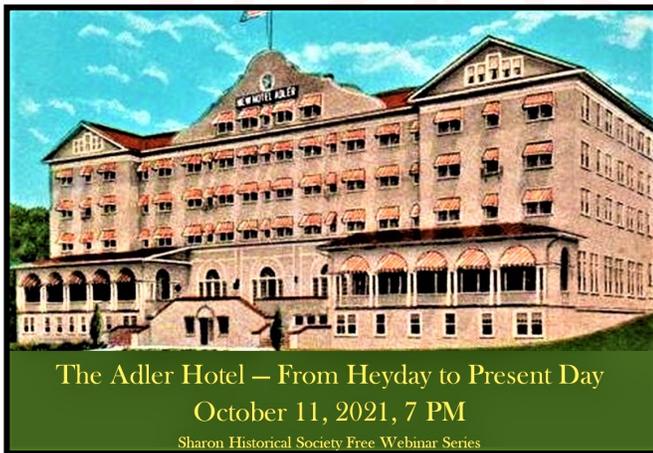
Recap of 2021 Programs

Henry Heinbach and Richard Brustman did a great job on September 13, 2021, telling about Jewish Life in Sharon Springs. Both men are of the Brustman family whose summer home is on Center Street. Although not year-around



Jewish Life In Sharon Springs
September 13
 7 PM
Presented by Henry Heinbach And Richard Brustman
 Sharon Historical Society Lecture Series

residents, the Brustman's have been friends of Sharon Springs for years—too many to count. Henry and Richard's story starts in the 1950s and goes through to the present as they explain the changes through the years. Henry talked about his first jobs at Denecke's Bakery and Minnie Schiller's Restaurant. Both Main Street businesses bring back fond memories. The image pictured at the left is a Rabbi by the Roseboro Hotel—a typical scene in the 1950s which many of us remember well. We didn't appreciate the hustle and bustle of the summer season when we had it and now it is gone.



The Adler Hotel – From Heyday to Present Day
 October 11, 2021, 7 PM
 Sharon Historical Society Free Webinar Series

On October 11, 2021 Ron Ketelsen took us on a virtual tour of the Adler Hotel from when it was built in 1927-1928—to the present in its advanced stage of deterioration. The Adler was the last large hotel to be built in Sharon Springs, at a cost of \$250,000—over 5 stories high with 150 rooms, its own Sulphur bath facilities, separate kosher kitchens, theater and ballroom. The shaped gable, arcaded porches and stucco walls are characteristic of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Ron showed home movies of the Adler from the late-1920s and 1930s when the hotel was in its heyday. Great program!

At the meeting on October 25, 2021, a Show 'n Tell was an addition to the annual election of 2022 Officers and Board Members. A couple of the Show 'n Tell items are shown at left. Ron Ketelsen brought the iron "Jonah and the Whale" bank and Caroline Bade brought a teapot from the Hollywood Hotel which Chef and Manager, James Bowmaker, had given her.



On November 8th, Pete Lindemann told us that James Tanner's legs "may" have been found in a surgeons' pit on the battlefield at Bull Run (1861). James Tanner (1844-1927), who was from Richmondville, lost both legs in the battle. Mr. Tanner's fame comes from creating a shorthand method and assisting law officials with depositions when President Lincoln was shot. Other snippets of information included in Mr. Lindemann's book range from the 100 year anniversary of the Cobleskill Library, to surviving the 1918 influenza epidemic, to the Brooks' Chicken sign. Pete recommended a website to search old newspapers for historic events. nyshistoricnewspapers.org. Nicely done!

November 8th



THEY MAY HAVE JUST FOUND JAMES TANNER'S LEGS
 And Other Schoharie County Articles
 by Pete Lindemann

THE INVENTION OF CHRISTMAS: Who Really wrote *A Visit from St. Nicholas*?

By Karen Cookson



This 56-line poem has been called the “the best known verse ever written by an American.”

With Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, these two pieces of literature have defined the way Christmas is celebrated in the English-speaking world for almost 200 years.

Not bad for an anonymous poem printed in the Troy (NY) *Sentinel* on December 23, 1823.

These works shifted the focus from religious ritual, Christ’s Mass, to family celebrations and gifts for children on the Eve of the 24th. It set what Saint Nicholas/Sinter Klaas/Santa Claus looked like (thanks to Thomas Nast), his mode of transportation, the names and number of his reindeer (pre-Rudolph) and how he gets in the house to leave gifts. No lumps of coal from this jolly old elf!

Before *Visit*, Protestants soft-pedaled “papist” Holy Days, and the Puritans fined folks for observing the pagan Christmas, Hallowe’en, Easter and all those Saint’s Days borrowed from the old zodiac-centered astrologic religions.

So who wrote this poem? New Yorker Clement Clark Moore asked the Troy *Sentinel* if they knew who had sent it to them. When they said “No,” Moore published it as his own. Moore was from a wealthy New York family; their estate, Chelsea, named that part of lower Manhattan. He was a Bible scholar, translated pious tomes, disdained tobacco as “opium’s treacherous aid” and castigated naughty children in *Old Sana-taclus* (that may have been confused with the more famous poem) and in his only other children’s poem, moralized about laziness and arrogance. He was more “Bah, Humbug!” than “Happy Christmas to All.”

Since the 2000 book *Authors Unknown* by Donald Foster, another author has been offered, and some pretty convincing evidence has come forth. Foster is the literary detective who identified the anonymous author of *Primary Colors*, and does research based on images, spelling, punctuation and meter. He identified **Henry Livingston, Jr.** as the “real” author, a Poughkeepsie Revolutionary War veteran who wrote light verse and holiday poems, many uncannily similar to *Visit*. Family members recall him reading *Visit* aloud in 1807, and say the reindeer names were the same as his horses’ names. A grandson has a final copy of the poem given to him before Livingston’s death in 1828.

Would Moore have had Santa smoking a pipe? Probably not, but Livingston would. Moore claims he wrote it in his head, and included it in his own book in 1844.

Foster doesn’t definitely take sides, that it’s a mystery that “probably doesn’t need to be solved.” Calling Clement Moore a thief and a liar is a bit harsh, but since this poem has defined how we celebrate Christmas, maybe it’s important to correctly identify its author. Livingston’s descendants claim his authorship. Is it important? You decide.

“Happy Christmas to all, and to all, a good night.”

[A longer version of this article was printed in the *Schenectady Gazette* 12/25/11. Used with permission. Illustration by Thomas Nast/US Library of Congress.]

Ted Mack's Original Amateur Hour

Local residents were pleased to see a Sharon Springs carpenter and painter, Orlo Snyder, appear on the television program, "Ted Mack's Original Amateur Hour" and win fifth place on April 28, 1952. Mr. Snyder played the "auto-pedal harp" which took him over thirty years to construct in his spare time. Various acts, sometimes singers or other musicians, quite often vaudeville fare such as jugglers, tap dancers, baton twirlers, and such, would perform, with the audience being asked to vote for their favorites by postcard or telephone. The Sharon Historical Society was honored to later be the recipient of Mr. Snyder's auto-pedal harp which is on exhibit in the Museum.



Photo at left shows Louis Wolford with accordion, Orlo Snyder with guitar, Rev. Clyde Joudry at far right. Two men in background are unidentified.

Photo below shows Orlo Snyder standing at right with auto-pedal harp, to his left is Louis Wolford, next to him is Lewis Lipe. Others are unidentified.



The Rocks

Joy of Discovery

Pure undefiled research is joyously pursued without concern for utilization. It is, for historian and curator, cherished as sacred duty, professional obligation.

Applied research has a mundane, immediate use. It is drudgery because it is often specified and directed by others for a predetermined purpose. Authorship and its joys are subverted to a higher good.

Heritage is born of applied research. Season, anniversary, and current public issue dictate to its authors the nature of articles and the thrust of its message. The product requires that all efforts directed toward its creation must melt into a finished product of unified composition. Authorship in this instance is not a very independent, challenge-filled mission.

Then, on occasion, the mundane obligation unexpectedly explodes to reveal fresh discovery. Serendipity becomes the muse, satisfaction the reward. Information gathered routinely for an article provides the researcher with facts that surprisingly and joyously lead to the solution of a problem unrelated to the original research; unplanned for its salutary effects.

For many years a large oil painting has hung in the office of the Association's director. It depicts a hotel, labelled Congress, and related structures, obviously associated with a mineral water spa. The



Detail of Magnesia Spring "temple" today, shown on right in Butterworth painting, constructed in 1863.

frame of the work carried an apparently contemporary label that reads:

Main Street, Saratoga Springs about 1845
1817 James E. Butterworth 1894

Saratoga Springs historians have examined the work and found its components perplexing. The hotel depicted is totally dissimilar to other renditions of the building by the same name formerly at that Spa. A stream and bridge never existed at that location in Saratoga, the principal street of which is called Broadway, not Main. Rather than deceive the public,

and perplexed by the painting's deception, curators have kept it in semi-seclusion.

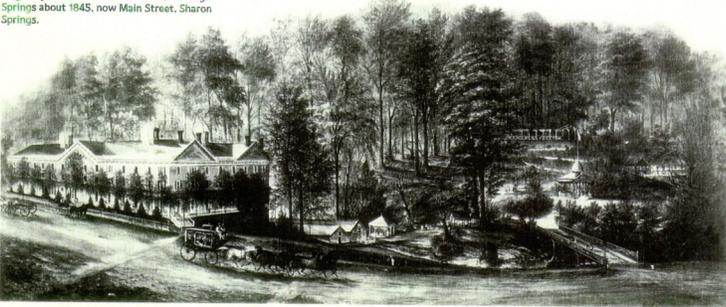
Research for an article in *Heritage* on New York's early spas produced information and illustrations that revealed that the painting was not, in fact, of Saratoga Springs and its Congress Park, but an accurate, portrayal of a Sharon Springs landscape done in the 1860s or 1870s. Sharon's Congress Hall has been documented by photograph, and the image matches that on the canvas. The long bath houses and spring water pavilions exist in somewhat altered form today.

Voilà! An important landscape document has been identified, the error in labeling corrected, its identity no longer hidden under a cloud of unsubstantiation, its depiction in every detail now revealing rather than perplexing. Discovery clearly makes it all worthwhile. Editor



Detail of postcard view of Sharon Springs, ca. 1860, with Congress Hall in center, burned in 1875.

Detail of painting by James E. Butterworth Originally identified as Main Street, Saratoga Springs about 1845, now Main Street, Sharon Springs.



This article appeared in the New York State Historical Association's magazine "Heritage" Vol. 1, No. 6 July/August 1985. It tells of the discovery of a James E. Butterworth mislabeled painting.

The piece explains how a large oil painting hung in the office of the Association's director. It depicts a hotel, labeled Congress, and related structures, obviously associated with a mineral water spa. The frame had a label which read:

"Main Street, Saratoga Springs about 1845
1817 James E. Butterworth 1894"

Although Saratoga Springs had a hotel by the same name, the one in this painting is not similar. A stream and bridge never existed at that location in Saratoga. Rather than deceive the public, the painting was kept in semi-seclusion.

Later, when research was being done for an article in *Heritage* on early spas, illustrations revealed that the painting was not of Saratoga Springs and its Congress Park, but an accurate portrayal of a Sharon Springs landscape done in the 1860s or 1870s. Sharon's Congress Hall has been documented by photograph, and the image matches that on the canvas.

A limited number of postcards were printed which depict Butterworth's painting. Congress Hall is the large building at the left of the image. Congress Hall burned in 1875. The Lower Bathhouse can be seen in the center and the Magnesia Temple at the right.



Sharon Springs' Year Round Resort

Sharon Springs, originally known only as a summer retreat, was promoted by the White Sulphur Company as a year-round resort in 1940. In 1938-39, Edgar Handy built the second rope tow in the United States at Sharon Springs. (The first was built in Woodstock, VT.) The 1,000 foot ski tow operated daily for skiers who enjoyed the many trails of one-half to one mile in length, located only 300 yards from the Village. Transportation was available or guests could ski-walk from the hotel to the main slopes. Excellent skiing facilities were available for novices and experts. The more adventurous could attempt Suicide Hill.



Winter Sports

AT SHARON SPRINGS, N. Y.

SKI AND WINTER SPORTS CLUB OF SHARON SPRINGS, N. Y., INC.

New York Representative
 WHITE SULPHUR COMPANY
 41 BROAD STREET
 Telephone: HANover 2-8684

Regular Round-Trip fare from Grand Central Terminal to Fort Plain, N. Y., is \$10.10. However, any benefit of train fare reduction due to larger parties or special holiday rail rates will be refunded on arrival at Sharon Springs.

For further information, call New York Representative (Hanover 2-8684), or get in touch directly with Ski Club headquarters in Sharon Springs.

For authentic snow reports, apply at the New York Central Ski Bureau, Grand Central Terminal, New York, or see any Metropolitan newspaper.

All roads shown above are open and in good condition thruout the Winter months.

Again this year under the auspices of the Ski and Winter Sports Club of Sharon Springs, New York, Inc., the excellent skiing facilities of Sharon Springs are offered to the Metropolitan skier who is confronted by the problem of not wanting to wander far from home and yet be able to enjoy the very best skiing available to him in this sector.

Due to the peculiar climatic conditions at Sharon Springs, a situation exists whereby snow is plentiful here at times when the slopes of the surrounding countryside are quite barren of the white blanket. During the winter of 1938-1939, perhaps the mildest in the last few years, quite a handful of New Yorkers enjoyed a wonderful snowy winter here in the picturesque Mohawk Valley, unbeknown to the general skiing public.

Here, a little over 4 1/2 hours from Grand Central Terminal in New York is offered a 900-foot ski tow on open slopes only 300 yards from the village, while surrounding the town and within a radius of two miles can be found fine sweeping open slopes of one-half to one mile in length, having a maximum pitch of 30 degrees. As Sharon Springs is a new development, as yet, all trails through the woods have not been completed but there are several which are rapidly being rounded into shape. Here also hotel accommodations with all modern conveniences are available or if desired, excellent quarters in private homes can be obtained. Transportation facilities to and from the outer slopes have been arranged for your convenience.

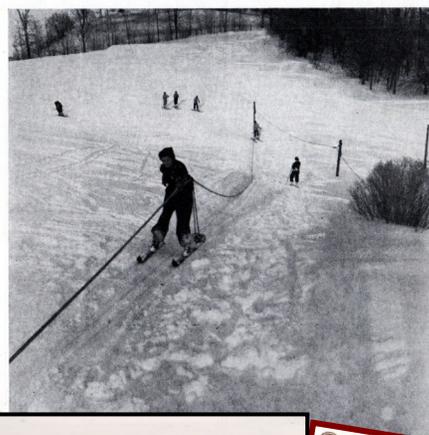
REGULAR WEEK-END SCHEDULE

FRIDAY { Leave New York, G. C. T., 4:30 P.M. or 6:50 P.M.
 Arrive Fort Plain, N. Y., 9:01 P.M. or 11:40 P.M.
 (15 minutes bus ride direct to Sharon Springs)

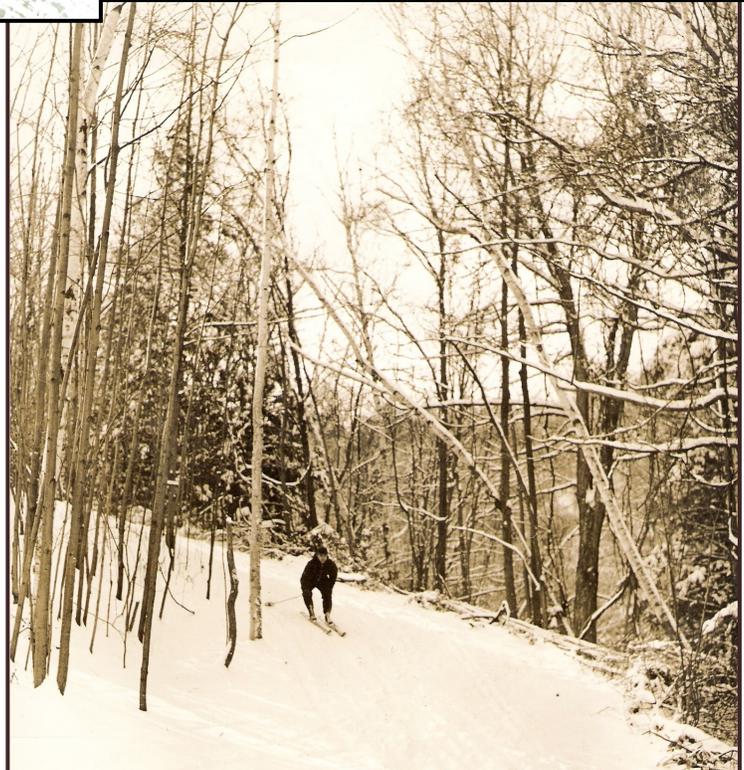
SATURDAY } Two Full Days Winter Sports.

SUNDAY }

SUNDAY { Leave Palatine Bridge, N. Y., 7:28 P.M.
 Arrive New York, G. C. T., 12:10 P.M.



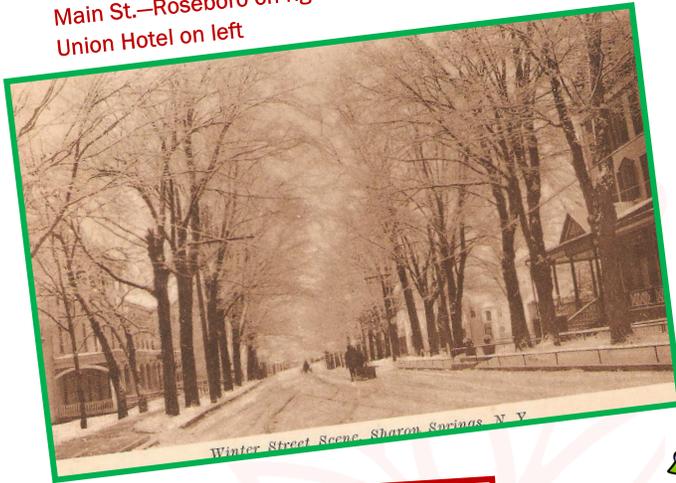
Sharon Springs—Winter Sports



Upper left clockwise:

- * Mrs. Sumner Rulon-Miller
- * Ski-sailing—White Sulphur Company of-
fice can be seen in background
- * Sharon Springs School Ski and Winter
Sports Club members marching down
Rockville Hill on the way to ski slopes
- * Ski poster can be seen in window of
Stone House porch
- * Skier coming down Suicide Hill
- * (Above) Ski tow was located on the golf
course near the Dugway—a 900-foot ski
tow and ski shop accommodated skiing
and sleighing enthusiasts of the 1930-
40s. Christine Winnie is the first skier on
the left. U. S. LaVallee is in the building
running the ski tow. Others unidentified.

Main St.—Roseboro on right
Union Hotel on left



Clausen Estate

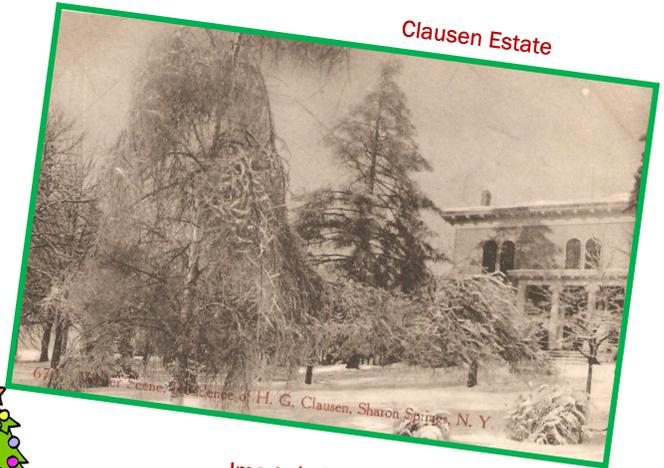


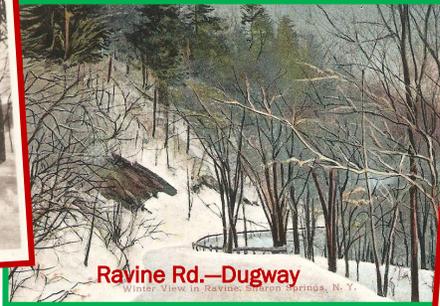
Image below shows Main St. by park —sign pointing to Sulphur and Magnesia Springs



Pavilion Ave.



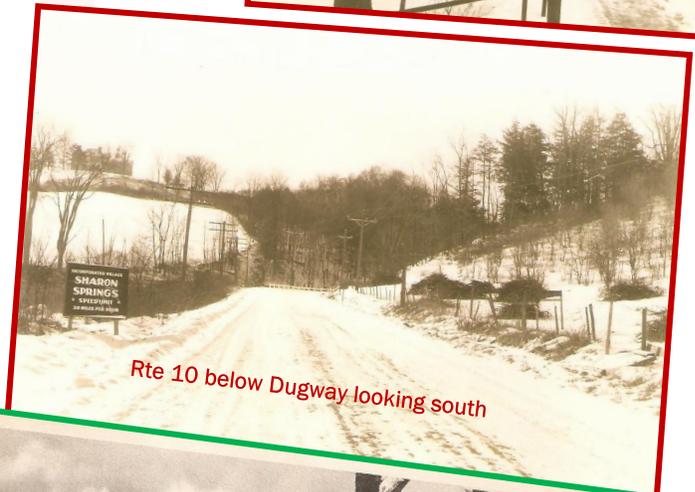
Ravine Rd.—Dugway



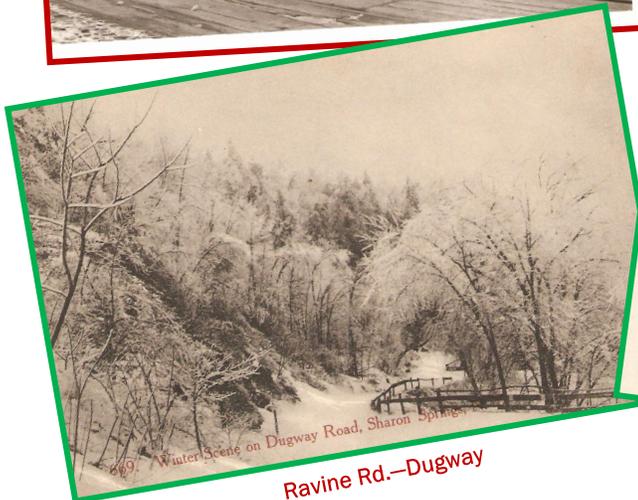
Depot



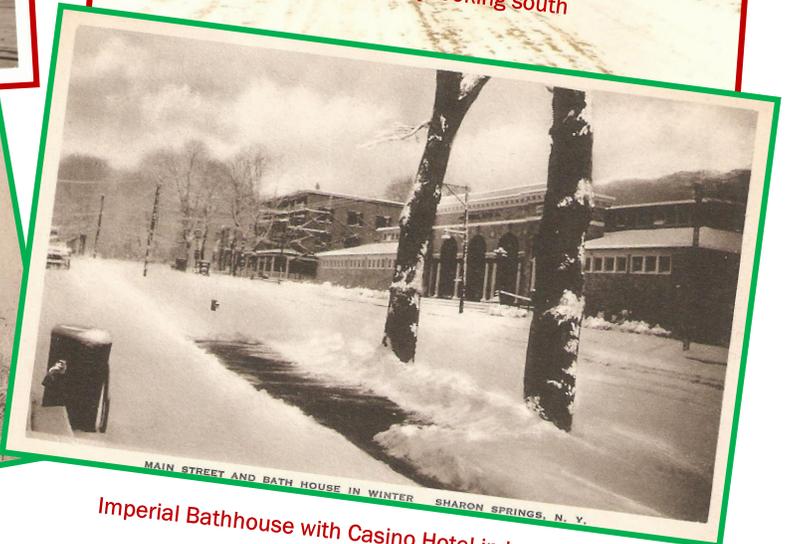
Rte 10 below Dugway looking south



Ravine Rd.—Dugway



Imperial Bathhouse with Casino Hotel in background.





Give the Gift of History!

Give a Sharon Historical Society
Membership as a gift this year to your
friends and loved ones!

Gift Membership Level

- 1. **Individual active member**; any person interested in the purposes of the Society is eligible. Annual dues for an individual active member is **fifteen dollars (\$15.00)**.
- 2. **Institutional member**: any organization, board, school, or library interested in history of Sharon is eligible. Annual dues for institutional members are **fifteen dollars (\$15.00)**.
- 3. **Lifetime member**; individuals only. Dues for a life member is a one-time fee of **one hundred dollars (\$100.00)**.

PLEASE NOTE: Membership dues are paid on an annual basis (Jan-Dec). Membership dues are non-refundable.

Gift Recipient Name _____

Gift Recipient Mailing Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Gift Recipient Email _____

Gift Recipient Phone Number _____

Would you like the gift membership mailed to your address or the recipients?

(All gift membership orders must be received before December 18th.)

- My address Please send directly to the recipient



Purchaser Information

Name _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Phone # _____ Email _____

Method of Payment (Please make all checks payable to the Sharon Historical Society)

- Check Visa Mastercard American Express

Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Name on Card _____ 3 digit code on back _____

Signature _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Please mail this form and payment to the Sharon Historical Society, P.O. Box 363, Sharon Springs, NY 13459