

The Story of Mayfield

ERIC CLOSE, TOWN AND VILLAGE HISTORIAN

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AN OLD FASHIONED WINTER

This old photo, although undated, likely dates to the winter of 1913-1914. This scene is not the result of just one blizzard, but a long, cold, hard winter, with storm after storm slowly adding onto the banks. Bernhardt Mountain rises in the background and the hills just below—around Jackson Summit and Dennie Hill show an era long forgotten, when the mountain side farms were still cleared and Mayfield's landscape was wide open.

THE WINTER OF 2025-26

"OLD FASHIONED WINTER" WAS A TERM THROWN AROUND A LOT THIS YEAR. THE RESERVOIR FROZE IN THE FIRST WEEK OF DECEMBER AND REMAINED SO UNTIL THE MIDDLE OF MARCH. ASIDE FROM A RAINSTORM IN THE MIDDLE OF DECEMBER, SNOW WAS PILED VERY DEEP. WE TAKE OUR MODERN TECHNOLOGY FOR GRANTED, PLOWING THE ROADWAYS AND SNOWBLOWING WITH EASE. IMAGINE THE SCALE OF WORK WITH HORSE-DRAWN WEDGE PLOWS AND SNOW ROLLERS TO CLEAR WELL OVER 50 MILES OF HIGHWAYS.

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RICE HOMESTEAD, APRIL 1936

Come take a step back in time at
The Rice Homestead! We look
forward to seeing you!

Bob Suits
President,
Mayfield Historical Society
Rice Homestead
328 Riceville Road
Gloversville, NY 12078

MAYFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNOUNCES 2025 EVENTS

MAYFIELD, NY - The Mayfield Historical Society, home of The Rice Homestead at 328 Riceville Road, in Mayfield, New York, has announced its 2026 events.

Saturday, June 13

43rd Annual Strawberry Festival ... and Treasures in the Trunk
Noon to 4 p.m. at the Rice Homestead, 328 Riceville Road
Enjoy delicious strawberry shortcake with ice cream, and refresh with cool lemonade as you listen to live music by Aaron Mittler from 12:30- to 2:30 p.m.

Thursday, July 16

Ice Cream Social and Concert
6-8 p.m. at The Rice Homestead, 328 Riceville Road
Musicats Duo will perform live on the lawn for this annual favorite, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m! Bring a chair or use one of our picnic tables while you enjoy creamy ice cream and your choice of homemade cake. Homestead tours are part of the fun.

Monday, August 17

MHS Presents: "Update: The Great Sacandaga Lake Discovery Center" 6:30 p.m. at the Mayfield Presbyterian Church, 22 N. Main St. Join us in welcoming Jon Stead, Fulton County's Administrative Officer/Clerk of the Board of Supervisors. Stead will give an update on the Great Sacandaga Lake Discovery Center, planned as a regional attraction and complement to the Adirondack Experience in Blue Mountain Lake and the Wild Center in Tupper Lake. Refreshments will be served.

Saturday, October 3

Fall Harvest Cruise-In
Noon to 3 p.m. at the Rice Homestead, 328 Riceville Road
A great event for families and car enthusiasts to come together for fall fun and food, including desserts and hot dogs with Mayfield's own Lee's Snack Bar's famous meat sauce. Bring a chair or use one of our picnic tables. Homespun goods will be available for sale, and live music will be performed by singer/guitarist Dan Lynaugh from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Monday, October 19

MHS Presents: "America 250: Mayfield in the Revolution"
6:30 p.m. at the Mayfield Presbyterian Church, 22 N. Main St.
Join Mayfield Historian Eric Close as he discusses the role that Mayfield residents, geography and politics played in the American Revolution 250 years ago. Refreshments will be served.

Saturday, December 5

Christmas Open House at the Rice Homestead
Noon to 4 p.m. at The Rice Homestead, 328 Riceville Road
Come and offer glad tidings to all, among roaring fireplaces and seasonal decor. Complimentary homemade cookies and hot mulled cider is prepared on the wood-fired stove. Homemade pies are available for purchase, and festive music will fill the air!

SPECIAL SUMMER EXHIBIT

Wednesdays & Saturdays in June/July/August from Noon to 4 p.m. (and at special events)
"The American Revolution in Mayfield"
Our special exhibit for 2026 commemorates 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence in our country. This exhibit highlights the many ways in which the American Revolution touched the people of Mayfield -- bringing some together, tearing some apart, and making an impact that can be measured even to this day.

Many thanks to all the volunteers and public for supporting us. If you would like to get involved, please contact us on Facebook or email – Mayfieldhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Bob Suits, President
"Like" us at
www.facebook.com/ricehomestead!

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

OUR LOCAL HISTORY IS GOING DIGITAL! IT IS A WORK IN PROGRESS, BUT PLEASE CHECK IT OUT. GO TO THE TON WEBSITE, "TOWNOFMAYFIELDNY.GOV" AND YOU CAN FIND IT IN THE HISTORICAL SECTION UNDER THE LINK OF "[Town Historian's Digital Archives](#)"

THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT TO HISTORICAL PRESERVATION IS "WE THE PEOPLE." AND BY THAT, I MEAN THE FOLKS WHO SHARE, DISCUSS, AND QUESTION WHAT IS KNOWN. AS A HISTORIAN, I AM NOT ONLY A TEACHER OF HISTORY, BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY A STUDENT. IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE, PLEASE CONTACT ME. — HISTORIAN@TOWNOFMAYFIELDNY.GOV (518) 774-0703



ERIC CLOSE
MAYFIELD TOWN HISTORIAN



Copy of John Collins' Map of May Field (ca. 1770-1775) From the New York State Archives

AMERICA 250

ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

January 16-19, 1776

PUBLICATION FROM THE JOHNSON HALL STATE HISTORIC SITE, FACEBOOK.COM

"On Saturday, January 17th, Johnson Hall will commemorate Philip Schuyler's 1776 raid on Johnstown— an opening act of aggression in what would prove to be a long and bloody conflict in the Mohawk valley. But what led to this raid?

The violence of the Revolution had already reared its head in Johnstown in the summer of 1775, when an armed mob attempted to seize Sheriff Alexander White over the arrest of one John Fonda. When White took refuge at Johnson Hall, the rebels demanded that he be handed over or they would extract him by force. Despite their threats, the situation resulted in a stand-off, as the gathered assailants had neither the troops nor artillery to face the Hall fortifications and artillery, nor the reported 400 heavily armed tenants that Sir John could mobilized to defend it.

In early January of 1776, Major General Schuyler in Albany was busy assisting Henry Knox transport his famed train of artillery across the Hudson River. As soon as that was complete, however, Schuyler turned his attention westward. On the 13th, he began gathering forces for the raid— three days later they were on their way. In a letter to the Continental Congress, Schuyler explained that "... perhaps I shall something exceed the Tories in Number; whom we are informed are about seven hundred, they have Cannon, we have none and we have a very small Quantity of I hope however to give a good account of them."

On the evening of January 16th, a Mohawk delegation from Fort Hunter, led by Tiaohrhèn:sere' (Little Abraham), met with Schuyler near Schenectady. This large force of soldiers was concerning to the Mohawks, as it was in direct violation of the treaty agreed at Albany in 1775, affirming Mohawk neutrality and that no military forces would make incursions into the valley. Schuyler maintained that the militia intended no harm to the Mohawks, but only were there to deal with Sir John. It was agreed that Mohawk delegation could function as protected mediators during negotiations. A letter was also sent to Sir John, demanding his presence the following day.

On the 17th Schuyler's forces progressed westward, meeting Sir John near the location of present-day Amsterdam. Schuyler demanded that Johnson relinquish his entire armament and persuade area Loyalists to do the same. Initially defiant, Sir John rejected the order, to which Schuyler delivered the chilling threat that resistance in arms would be met with "Force without distinction."

Sir John was allowed a day to consider the options, while Schuyler continued his advance. By this point, Schuyler's militia had grown to 3,000 men, including nearly 1000 men of the Tryon County militia under Colonel Nicolas Herkimer. Now only four miles outside of Johnstown, this army would prove to be the largest American force ever to be assembled in the Mohawk Valley during the Revolutionary War.

On January 19th, facing overwhelming danger to his family and community, Sir John acquiesced. Schuyler marched his forces to Johnson Hall to confiscate all the armaments there. At the insistence of the Mohawk delegates,



Courtesy of the Johnson Hall State Historic Site

Schuyler agreed that Sir John be allowed to remain in his home under a condition that he not to take up arms or organize any resistance to the Revolutionary government. In the meantime, Schuyler sent out smaller parties to round up other reported Loyalists in the area for arrest.

The following day, local Loyalists were ordered to William Street, and in front of a line of American troops outside the courthouse, grounded their weapons. Further arrests followed. Two men in particular, accused of disloyalty to the rebellion by a neighbor, were interrogated by Schuyler who "tried by every means in my power to make them confess..." to no avail. Ultimately, a dozen residents were abducted from Johnstown during the raid, including six of the leading Scottish tenants, and a further half-dozen English, Dutch, and German community members, with orders that they be sent to Pennsylvania for imprisonment."

JOHNSON HALL STATE HISTORIC SITE, FACEBOOK.COM

MAYFIELD'S VETERANS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF GRAVES ACROSS THE TOWN OF MAYFIELD ADORNED WITH THE AMERICAN FLAG. EACH WAVING STAR SPANGLED BANNER IS A TRIBUTE TO SERVICE AND SACRIFICES MADE BY A VETERAN OF OUR ARMED FORCES. MANY OF THESE FLAGS STAND OVER THE GRAVES OF VETERANS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

AN IN-DEPTH SEARCH WILL BE CONDUCTED TO FIND EVERY VETERAN OF THE REVOLUTION THAT LIVED IN MAYFIELD. THERE ARE MANY RECORDS THAT HAVE RECENTLY BECOME AVAILABLE ONLINE, WHICH WILL BE USED TO GATHER INFORMATION AND CREATE A DATABASE. THESE SOURCES INCLUDE: FAMILY GENEALOGY FILES; CEMETERY INSCRIPTIONS RECORDED BY THE D.A.R.; REVOLUTIONARY WAR PENSION APPLICATION FILES; THE ROLLS OF PENSIONERS; REGIMENT ROLLS, 1775-1783; COMPANY PAY ROLLS, AND MANY MORE.

CEMETERIES ARE A GREAT HISTORICAL RESOURCE AND OVER 30 REVOLUTIONARY VETERANS ARE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN BURIED IN MAYFIELD. UNFORTUNATELY, SOME HEADSTONES, BEING OVER 200 YEARS OLD, ARE IN A DECAYING STATE. THE RESTORATION OF OUR LOCAL CEMETERIES IS A VERY IMPORTANT PROJECT IN PRESERVING OUR LOCAL HISTORY. FOR MANY OF THESE VETERANS, A DECAYING, ILLEGIBLE TABLET LAYING ON THE GROUND IN SEVERAL PIECES IS THE ONLY RECORD WHICH MEMORIALIZES THE STRUGGLES AND HEROISM OF THEIR ARDUOUS LIVES.

WE MUST DO WHAT WE CAN BEFORE THIS HISTORY IS LOST.

The new bridge, Spring 1931. Courtesy of Paul Larner, from the H.A.Phelps collection.



Mayfield's School Street Bridge

It seems as though the final curtain may soon come down on our dear old Mayfield Bridge. The ninety five year old staple of our local infrastructure has been deemed structurally deficient by the state and must be replaced.

In September of 2025, routine state inspection found some deterioration in the bridge's structure and downgraded its load capacity to 17-tons, to which the town posted 15-ton limit signs, airing on the side of caution. Supervisor Brandon Lehr announced that on January 13th, the bridge was again downgraded to an 8-ton capacity as the state recently adopted

the much stricter Federal Bridge Inspection standards. This brings severe consequences to daily life in this town. School Buses are being rerouted, the town plow and garbage trucks can not cross, and the fire department now needs to take a much longer route to respond to any call on the southeast side of the crossing.

The Mayfield Bridge represents perhaps the oldest water crossing in the town. Early records show the existence of a bridge there, predating the establishment of Mayfield in 1794.



The old "Shawville bridge," Spring 1930. Courtesy of Paul Larner, from the H.A.Phelps collection.



Construction of the Dam and Bridge, 1931. Courtesy of Bruce Becker.

The current bridge was built in 1931 as a result of the Sacandaga Reservoir Project. The bridge was constructed as a part of the Mayfield Dam to create a year round water supply for the village of Mayfield. Otherwise, as water was let out of Sacandaga Reservoir through the Conklingville Dam during the year, the Mayfield Lake basin would drain to the point of becoming a detrimental swamp land.

Construction of the Mayfield dam and bridge began in September of 1930, and by June of 1931, the

project was completed. The roadways leading to the bridge were built to state standards, as they were later tied into the new State Route 30. This was one of, if not, the first paved roads in town, and

the highway was opened in 1932. The "Old Route 30" at one time ran the entire length of School Street.

The state continued to operate this stretch of highway until it was rerouted to its present route through Anthonyville in the 1960s. The Mayfield Bridge was therefore abandoned by the state and handed over to the town in 1967.

It is difficult to say exactly what the future of this water crossing will be. The cost for a new bridge may exceed the entire budget for the Town of Mayfield. Unfortunately, the "BridgeNY" grant program was defunded by the state this year, and the town officials are working hard to solve this issue. The town has been actively pursuing a solution since the September inspection, but the new grade severely intensifies the situation.



Replacing the deck of the bridge, 1991