

The Story of Mayfield

ERIC CLOSE, TOWN AND VILLAGE HISTORIAN

FIFTH ISSUE - BRUMAL RETROSPECTIVE - JANUARY THROUGH MARCH 2025



Winter in the old Village Square

Apparently, a picture is worth about a thousand words or so. But sometimes it doesn't even take one word to invoke the feeling of nostalgia. An image, smell, taste, or sound can teleport us directly into our memories. And just for one fleeting moment, we can feel young again. So, what are our memories worth? A thousand words? A million bucks?

No and No. They are *priceless*.

Our little village *ain't* what it used to be...a victim of several tragic fires over the last century, the old square stands nearly empty. Its been over 50 years now since the post office and supermarket burned down. All of the old landmarks from the glove industry are gone too—the Wilkins factory and the Mayfield Glove Co. no longer stand prominently in the square. Also notice the tall and proud Elm Trees, a foreign sight around here nowadays—as the species has been blighted by the Dutch Elm Disease.

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- ***"The Bygone Days of Bannertown"***



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 2025 events.

Starting Monday, April 21, at 6:30 p.m. with Fulton County Historian Samantha Hall-Saladino and Jessica Henry Clements will present "Fashion in the Age of the Suffragists" at the Mayfield Presbyterian Church, 22 N Main Street, Mayfield.

On Saturday, June 14, the 42nd Annual Strawberry Festival with music by Aaron Mittler will take place at The Rice Homestead from 12 to 4 p.m. A "Treasures in the Trunk" sale will also be part of this event, and the historic Rice Homestead is open for tours.

Thursday, July 17, the Annual Ice Cream Social with music by the Musicats Duo will be held at The Rice Homestead from 6 to 8 p.m.

Monday, Aug. 18, David Brooks, Education Director of Schoharie Crossing State Park will present "Strange History from Along the Erie Canal at Schoharie Crossing" at 6:30 p.m. at the Mayfield Presbyterian Church, 22 N Main Street, Mayfield.

The highly anticipated annual Fall Harvest Cruise-In with music by Dan Lynaugh will be Saturday, Oct. 4, from 12 to 4 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 20, Mayfield Town Historian, Eric Close, will present "Sir William Johnson and the Founders of Mayfield" at 6:30 p.m. at the Mayfield Presbyterian Church, 22 N Main Street, Mayfield.

A holiday favorite, the Annual Christmas Open House at The Rice Homestead will be Saturday, Dec. 6 from noon to 4 p.m. A vintage holiday experience with homemade pies, cookies and mulled cider to sample, crackling fires and holiday home tours.

The Rice Homestead's 2025 summer exhibit will be "Echoes of Yesterday - The Clothing Collection of the Mayfield Historical Society." The Rice Homestead is open for tours Wednesdays and Saturdays from noon to 4 p.m. beginning June 14 through Aug. 30. Tours can also be made by appointment.

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

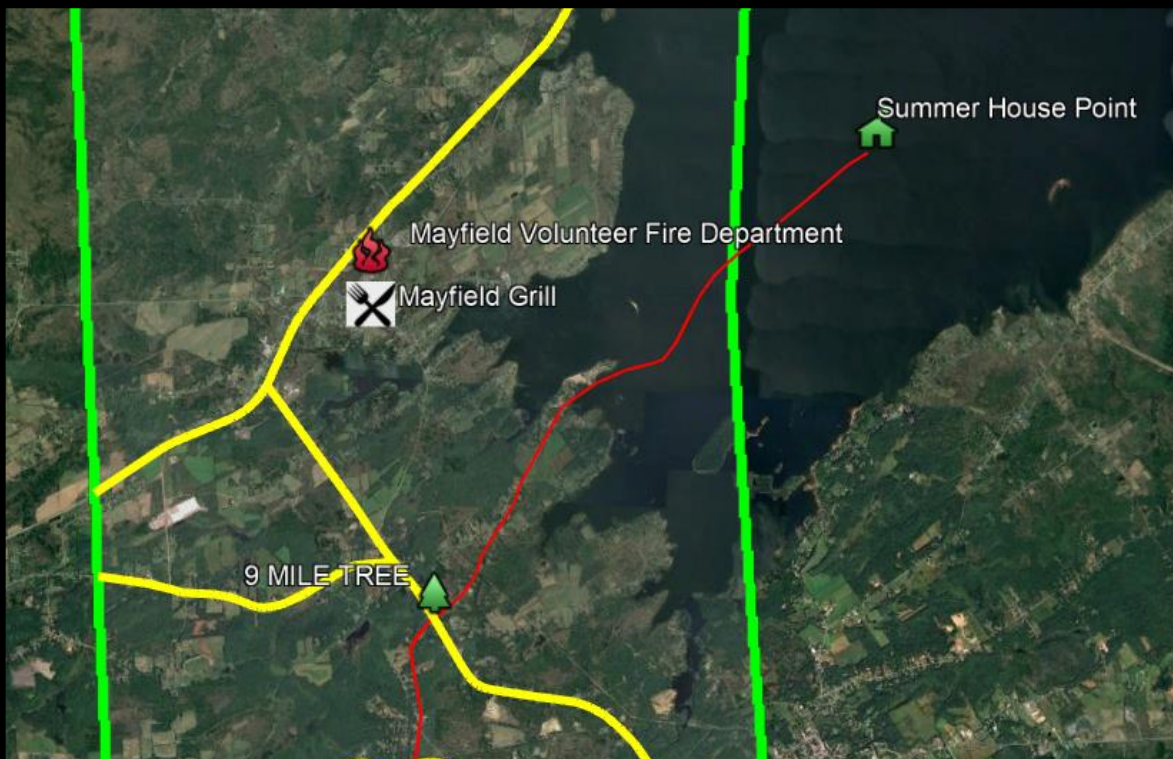


ERIC CLOSE
MAYFIELD TOWN HISTORIAN

IF YOU ARE NOT ON FACEBOOK, YOU CAN FIND SOME OF MY WORK PUBLISHED ON THE MAYFIELD TOWN WEBSITE. I PUBLISH A WEEKLY MEMORIAL ON THE FACEBOOK PAGE, IN HONOR OF A CITIZEN OF MAYFIELD WHO HAS PASSED AWAY. YOU CAN FIND THESE ON THE HISTORY SECTION OF THE TOWN WEBSITE, UNDER THE LINK OF "[Town Historian's Digital Archives](#)" THE LINK TO THE WEEKLY MEMORIALS CAN BE FOUND AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND HONORED IN THIS MANNER, PLEASE CONTACT ME. – HISTORIAN@MAYFIELDNY.ORG

(518) 774-0703



Mayfield's History Tour WINTER 2025

Check out the storied traditions at the Mayfield Grill, operating since the end of prohibition. Ever heard of "Nine Mile Tree Road" ? Learn the origin of its name... In February, I was honored to speak at the Fire Department's Banquet, where I gave a short speech about the origins of the department. Find out more on the next page!

LIVING HISTORY



MAYFIELD

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

ESTABLISHED 1889

ORGANIZED APRIL 6, 1895

INCORPORATED MAY 16, 1895

PART ONE: ORIGINS

The sole purpose of any fire department is to respond to the calls of distress made in a perilous

time of need; and in their duties, strive for the best case scenario while balancing the line between miracle and disaster.

With that in mind, management of the department's internal operations are of vital importance to its success. It is imperative that the department install officers at its helm who are experienced, capable, and well-tempered in the face of danger.

It is a priority of those officers to ensure the safety of the active members; and that their training and equipment may serve as their lifeline, and a lifeline for others when faced with the worst-case scenario. It is furthermore necessary for these officers to make the arrangements for the department to have access to a modern and effective apparatus to extinguish, or at the very least, contain the worst of fires. These are prominent subjects throughout the history of the Mayfield Volunteer Fire Department.

Since 1889, this department has been marching on the path of progress. As technology advances over the decades, so has the equipment of the firefighters. From hand pumpers and bucket brigades to modern ladder trucks, it is the spirit of the men and women in uniform that make this fire department an integral part of Mayfield.

The illustrious traditions of the Mayfield Volunteer Fire Department began in a time before the Village of Mayfield was established. The earliest fire fighters were unorganized volunteers who simply acted out of an instinct to help others in need—which remains the fervent spirit of the fire department to this day. These people would help families escape from their homes, attempt to stop the spread of fire, and send word out for help.

In the 1880's, the community surrounding the old "Mayfield Corners" was rapidly growing. Numerous leather firms providing job opportunities brought many new families to build their homes and eventually, create a new village.



The Jackson House, Mayfield Village Square,

The village square was a vibrant place in its heyday. There was a large hotel, harness shop, general stores, glove shops, and factories. On April 30, 1886, a fire broke out in the hotel (Jackson House), which destroyed and leveled the village square. The following is a news report from that tragedy.

The *Great Fire of 1886* was devastating to the people of Mayfield. Although much was done to prevent the spread of the fire, they had no means to put it out. They helplessly watched the bustling village square burn to the ground. It was this fire that forced the brave and ambitious men who took action that day to join together. Necessity is the mother of invention.

In 1889, Hamilton C. Robinson was appointed as the Town of Mayfield's Fire Warden. Scarce records remain of this particular era in Mayfield's history, but the typical town fire warden of the day would have had many responsibilities. Town fire wardens usually performed inspections of wood stoves and chimneys. They also would have been responsible for alerting and assembling volunteers in the event of a fire and usually had either a budget or were reimbursed for their expenses. In 1890, Warden Robinson was reimbursed for \$10 expenses; in 1892, \$30; and 1893, \$35. Without any surviving records, it is impossible to know what the expenses were. The increase in expense does suggest that Fire Warden Robinson had a growing congregation of volunteers. Mayfield's band of volunteer firefighters soon became a strong cohesive unit, and in the Spring of 1895, organized the Mayfield Volunteer Fire Department.

The first meeting was held on April 6th, 1895. On that day, the 41 members voted to name themselves the "Mayfield Fire Company." Samuel Vandenberg was elected Foreman, and George Hathaway elected 1st Assistant Foreman. By the end of that month, they completed and submitted their Charter and Certificate of Incorporation, which was approved by the Mayfield Town Board on April 30th. The charter was granted by the office of the New York Secretary of State on May 16, 1895. Samuel Vandenberg was installed as Chief at the first annual meeting, and the 48 charter members were initiated with a fee of \$1.00 each.



The original Mayfield Fire House. Located on School Street, where the Mayfield Grill's parking lot is today

CHARTER MEMBERS OF THE MAYFIELD FIRE COMPANY, INCORPORATED MAY 16, 1895

Samuel Vandenberg	Edwin Stoddard	Fred Herrick	Herbert Hathaway	Fred B. Rose	Charles A. Wilkins
George Hathaway	William G. Hartin	William H. Thompson	Harvey Hathaway	George Myron Tyrrell	Henry B. Stears
Lemuel B. Kline	Truman Mercer	John C. Cogan	Newton Fonda	William P. Brown	George E. Mercer
Henry P. Tooker	Jesse Kilts	Archibald Richardson	Mulford Neahr	Firmer W. Brown	Frank Brower
David E. Bartholf	Herbert Tooker	Edward S. Childs	Baltus H. Dixon	Marcus A. Richardson	Louis E. Jerome
Willis Wilkins	Jacob B. Pettingill	Frank Davison	William Griffeth	Oscar Wilson	William S. Pettingill
Mercer Danforth	Joseph Bennett	David Milroy	John E. Cooley	Byron D. Brown	John Roberts



A Ghost of the Past

THE NINE MILE TREE

I remember being a little kid and asking why that stretch of asphalt was called The "Nine Mile Tree Road." The victim of my question did not know, so I made up my own answer. I figured that the name had to do with those nearby towering pine trees, which--to a little kid--may as well have been nine miles tall. But, that is obviously not the correct answer.

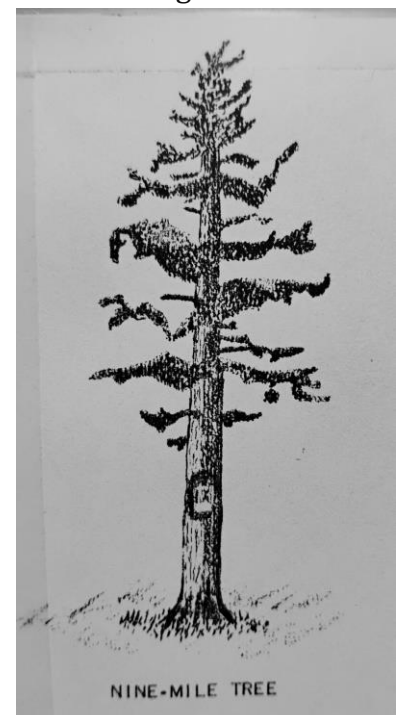
The Nine Mile Tree Road was named in honor of the Nine Mile Tree, a well-known landmark in the early chapters of our local history. That road is a section of what was the first road built in the present town of Mayfield.

As early as the fall of 1759, Sir William Johnson began construction on a fortification on the Sacandaga meadows, which he named "Castle Cumberland." This location, on a knoll where the Mayfield and Kenneyto Creeks converge, is commonly known throughout history as "Summer House Point." The fortification was completed by the spring of 1760; and for the purpose of protecting Sir William Johnson's wilderness settlements from enemy attacks at the end of the French and Indian War. At the conclusion of the war, Sir Johnson notably used the site as his summer recreation home. He then built a road from Fort Johnson on the Mohawk River to his Castle Cumberland, and along that road, more settlements began. This first road followed a trail that had been used by the Mohawk people to reach their summer sanctuary at the Sacandaga meadows.

In 1762, the Baronet founded his new city in the wilderness, "John's Town," and the following year finished construction on his Johnson Hall Estate. Sir Johnson put forth great effort to bring settlers to this frontier. German immigrants from Philadelphia, Irish and Scottish immigrants, and old Dutch families of the Mohawk valley began moving into the new lands.

In 1770, Sir Johnson built a new carriage road from Johnstown, which connected to the Sacandaga road about 6 miles east of the new settlement. There, a new settlement named "Philadelphia Bush" sprang up from the virgin forest. This new road was surveyed, beginning from Johnson Hall. At each mile along the path a tree was marked. It was cleared of its lowest branches and a roman numeral was carved in its trunk. The lesser known "Six Mile Tree" was located at the old "Frank's Corners," or the intersections that Progress Road and Black Street presently make with NY-29.

Although there was a marked tree every mile, the Nine Mile Tree is the only one whose legacy has survived the test of time. Most notably in regard to this tree is that it stood equidistant between three of Sir William Johnson's important estates. It was located nine miles from Johnson Hall, nine miles from Fort Johnson, and nine miles from his "Fish House" camp on the Sacandaga River.



During the Revolutionary War, the tree served as a beacon to remind travelers along the old warpath that the Sacandaga Blockhouse was nearby.

After the war, settlers began to repopulate the area, and in 1794, the Town of Mayfield was organized. The tree was often referenced in early deeds and when the town's first road districts were laid out. The records often described a road leading to or from The Nine Mile tree.

Mayfield's first two generations were well acquainted with this cherished landmark. It stood prominently, and was often regarded as a stately and beautiful pine.

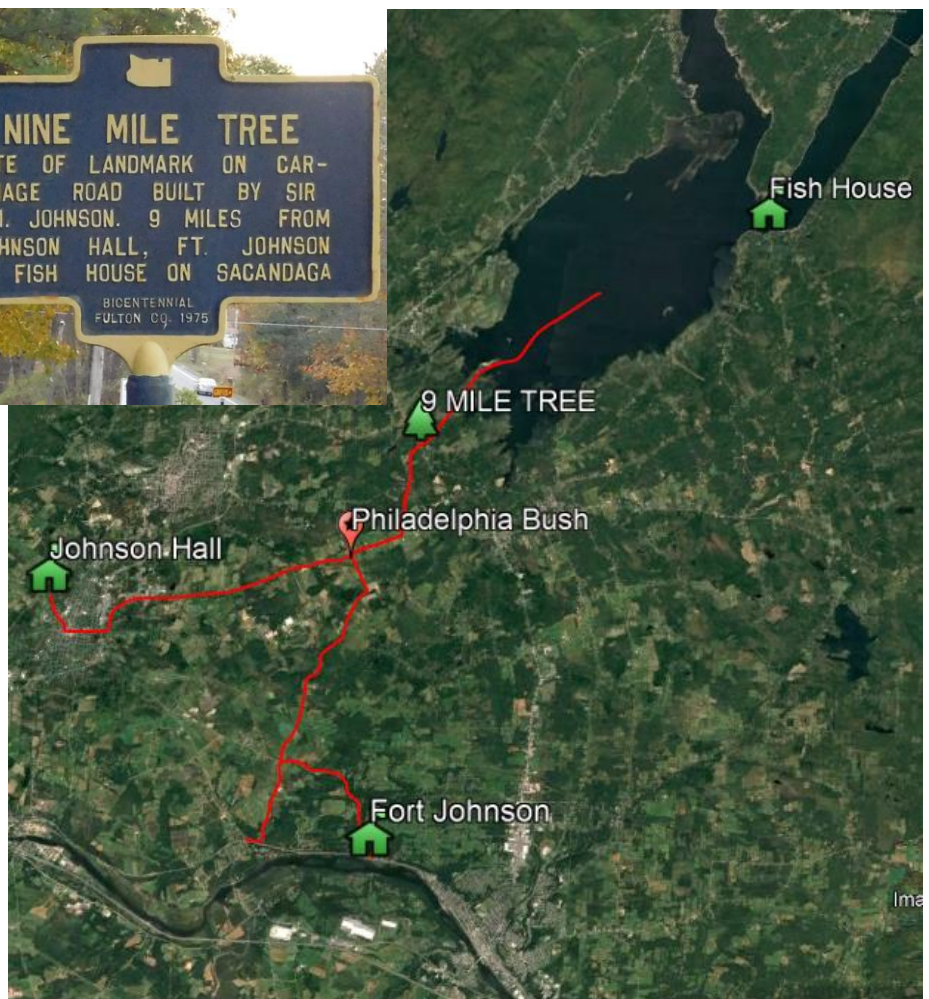
Unfortunately, the Nine Mile Tree was struck by lightning; and around the 1830s it was cut down by Jacob Lasher. One can speculate that the lightning strike at least blighted the tree, but if not, was a death sentence. Mr. Lasher owned the land on which the tree stood, and likely recognized falling branches as a hazard to the public travelers. After felling the revered landmark, Mr. Lasher was said to have salvaged and sold the remaining good lumber.

After the tree was gone, the stump that remained was equally as relevant. As the passing years turned to decades, the oldest folks of Mayfield would often point out the stump to their children and grandchildren, some stealing a chunk of it for posterity.

By the turn of the next century and into the 1920s and '30s, few but the oldest local residents knew of its whereabouts. In the fall of 1933, an historical marker was placed and dedicated by the D.A.R. in honor of the Nine Mile Tree. The oldest residents were called upon, who located the old stump, which had all but withered away. A ceremony was held on September 24th, 1933, in which attorney John T. Morrison addressed a crowd on some of the early local history relating to the landmark.

Over time, the stump had completely rotted and returned to the Earth from whence it came. The historical marker had also been lost. In preparation for America's bicentennial, a new sign was erected by Town Historian and Bicentennial Committee chairman Albert Niles. A ceremony was held on May 23, 1976, at which 200 people attended the dedication of the new sign.

Today, the sign relating the history of our first local road is passed by without a glance. Motorists speeding along on the State highway surely take modern roadways, cars, and navigation for granted.



Local Business Spotlight



Times may change but tradition continues.

The Mayfield Grill is a solid institution of tradition in this town; and it is filled to the ceiling with some of our most endearing history, wild legend, and questionable lore. Heather Kline, the owner for the last half-decade, celebrated the 90th birthday of the Mayfield Grill this past year. The local landmark's humble beginnings date back to August of 1934: just nine months after the end of Prohibition. Since that time,

the completion of eight decades in business has seen several owners come and go, carrying the torch and passing it along to keep the tradition alive.

The Jerome Theatre

The story begins during the "Roaring Twenties," the prosperous Golden age of American culture. Mr. Louis Jerome bought a 60 x 120' lot at the corner of 1st Ave and School Street and built a fairly large two-story structure. The bottom floor was made a billiards parlor, operated by Allen Parker. There were pool tables with other games as well as a soda fountain which also sold various snacks and prepared meals. On the second floor, Jerome built a movie theatre, and was issued a certificate of compliance dated May of 1926, allowing a maximum capacity of 246. This old document was found in the wall during renovations in the 1990s.

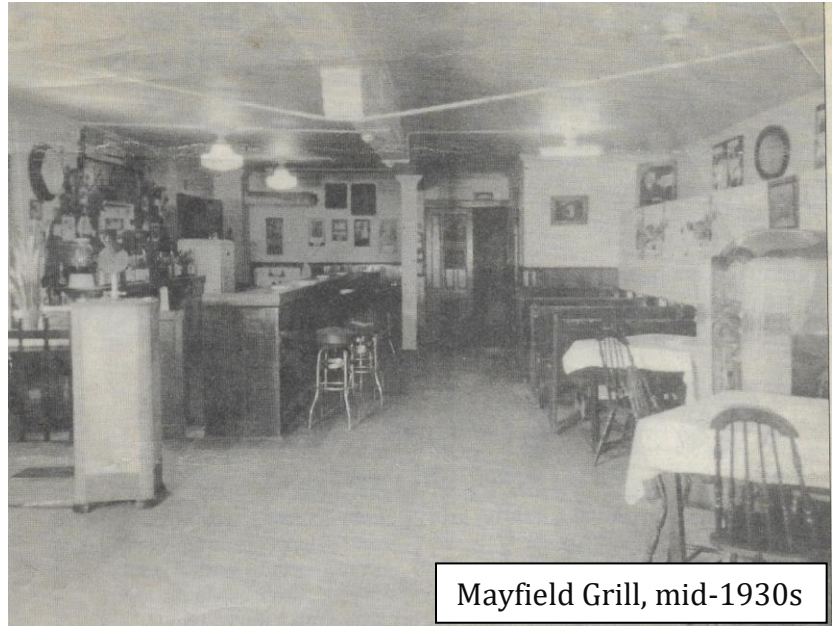
The projection room was overseen by Justin "Jud" Fonda, with Clinton Booth and Alwinnie Parker working as the projectionists. For the silent films, the theatre was equipped with a player piano, which under special circumstances, was played by Fred Bennett or Leland Warner. Brothers Basil and Dayton Gifford also served roles in management throughout the tenure of the theatre.

The Jerome Theatre became a very popular spot in Mayfield. The first known screening was of a silent film: "The Reckless Age," on New Years Day of 1926. Screenings were held weekly, usually on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday nights. A stage was built in the theatre to hold boxing matches, which became widely attended events. Also from the stage, the children of the Mayfield grammar schools would put on class plays and skits. The Mayfield Village Board, Mayfield Yacht Club, and Parent-Teacher Association often held their meetings or hearings there. Between the films, comedy shorts, weekly serials, news reels, concerts, plays, and boxing matches, admission tickets ranged between 15 and 40¢. As this was during the age of Prohibition, alcoholic beverages were not sold.

The theater remained a popular place into the early 1930s. But, with the stock market crash in 1929 and subsequent plunge into the Great depression, business began to slow. A decrease in patronage and increase in economic pressure forced the Jerome Theater to close in April of 1932 after about six years in business.

Mayfield's Bar & Grill

On December 5, 1933, Congress passed the 21st Amendment to the Constitution, effectively ending the 14-year prohibition of the sale, manufacture, import, and transport of intoxicating beverages. Shortly after, William Arsenault rented the lower floor of the building from Mr. Jerome, which he renovated into a bar and grill. A heating system was installed, as was a new bar, booths and tables. The walls were partially finished in wainscoting. By the middle of August, Mr. Arsenault was granted the licenses to sell alcohol and a grand opening was held. Sixty years after the fact, Dick Stewart recounted that day to Mayfield's Historian, Betty Tabor.



According to Mr. Stewart, there were large wash tubs full of beer, cold water, and ice; the latter of which was procured from Elphee's Ice house across the street. There were many spittoons for tobacco chewers and the sawdust-covered floors were littered with discarded peanut shells.

With new life, the ownership of the property and the business changed several times over the next decade. Extensive renovations were made to conform to the new business model. The theater on the second floor of the building was renovated into living space; and for a short time was used to cut and sew gloves. The bar and grill flourished on the first floor. William Arsenault ran the business for a couple of years until it was taken over in 1936 by Marvin Montanye.

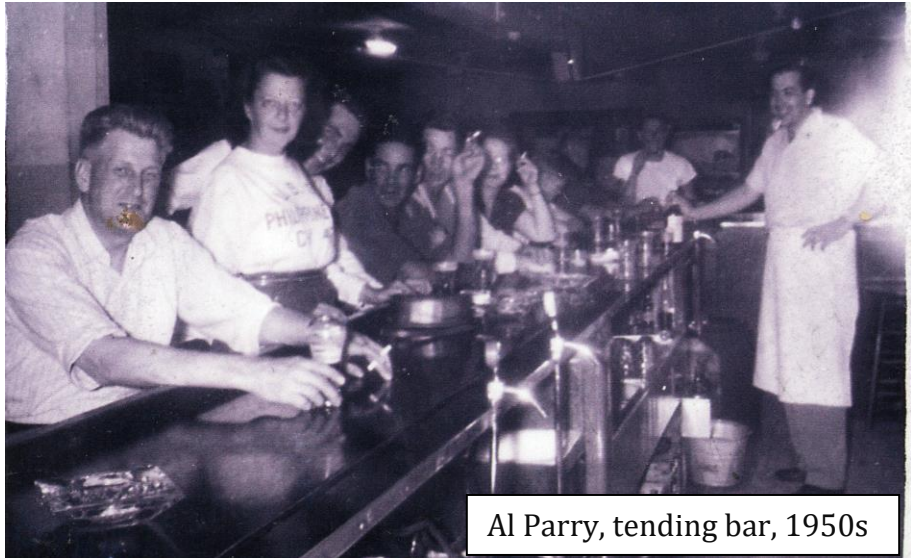
In 1940, the business was taken over by Joe and Lottie Czech. They ran what was known as the Czech's Mayfield Grill. Mr. and Mrs. Jerome sold the property to Lenore Huckans in December of 1941. Mr. Jerome was in failing health since suffering a skull fracture caused by a bar-room attack in January of 1939. He never fully recovered and died at the age of 74 in 1948. Huckans sold the property three days after her acquisition to the Czechs.

After five years of running the grill—the latter four years having total ownership—the Czechs sold the property and business to Vernon Hoag, a local bar keeper by trade. Joe and Lottie Czech are most remembered in Mayfield for running another tavern called the "Check-in," which later became "Pour Jim's." That business went out in 2014, and the building was demolished in February of 2022. Vernon Hoag owned and operated the Mayfield Grill for 8 months before selling it, continuing his bar keeping career. He subsequently ran the Pine Lake Lodge before taking over the Alpine Inn in 1949.

In May of 1946, the Mayfield Grill was purchased by two couples: Julian "Juley" & Sophie Boduch and Alfred & Jen Parry. Under their ownership, numerous improvements were made to the business. The kitchen was refurbished with modern equipment; and the menu was directed towards light fare and sandwiches. The bathrooms were outfitted with new "thrones" installed on pedestals. According to Tabor, to use the "throne" was to be "Queen for a day." The bar room and booths were tidy, clean, and orderly. Patrons could enjoy hot music from the jukebox, shuffleboard and games of pool. The Boduchs and Parrys hosted an annual New Year's Eve Party to show their appreciation. The patrons were served a large buffet dinner,

followed by a memorable or perhaps blurry memory of the celebration. As proprietors, they were very well respected and operated a highly successful business.

After 20 years of joint ownership, Mr. and Mrs. Parry sold their half of the business to Mr. and Mrs. Boduch. They reorganized the business under the title Boduch 's Grill Inc., and continued their venture until 1975. They sold the grill to Arthur Hall and Gerald Richardson. Mr. Boduch passed away two years later.



Al Parry, tending bar, 1950s

Hall and Richardson, better known as "Grub" and "Gid" carried on the business through the mid-70's, and their tenure has left many, many stories. None of which will be told here, as many of them (along with the rest of that decade) have been forgotten, or concealed to protect many, many upstanding reputations. But, they were reported to be wild and rockin' times.

The Good Old Days

In the spring of 1976, the Mayfield Grill was purchased by Garth and Judy Wemple. Their tenure as owners, which lasted until 1985, is very fondly remembered. The factory workers at Coleco got their paychecks on Thursdays. Many of them came into the grill, where Judy would cash their checks. The men's basketball and softball teams were common patrons after their games as well. A tall draft beer was \$1, and they all usually would have a couple. Judy would also prepare those famous "huge sandwiches," from freshly sliced beef, ham, or turkey.

A stack of quarters atop the wooden rail of the pool table meant one thing: get in line. It was 25 cents a game and very popular, too. There was also a bowling game for 10 cents, and a foosball table. Accompanied by a jukebox and occasional musicians, the grill was a hometown staple. Green Beer was served on St. Patrick's day, and folks such as Gene Hoose and Milt Hart were alleged to have one (maybe two, but definitely not any more) and sing Irish songs.

Keeping up with tradition, Garth and Judy would host a big New Year's Eve bash at their own expense. She spent much time preparing everything: ziti, salads, meat, mac and cheese, desserts, and more. A plywood board was slapped over the pool table, and the food laid out for all to enjoy. Although the next day's mess was never fun to clean, It was a great time for all.

Many people remember the trust Garth had in his patrons. It was a time when everybody still knew everybody. Several different sources confirm the same stories. Garth would head off for bed, leave the keys on the bar and say, "lock up when you're done!" Or at least send the patrons on their way with a six-pack. In Judy's own words, "times do change, and many younger generations will never realize how it was to live in the good old days...and they were Good Old Days."

The business changed hands a few times over the following decade. From 1985 to 1990, Jim and Hollie Dorman owned and operated the grill. In 1990, they sold it to Jack Spraker who operated it for 2 years before selling to Phil Szumowski.

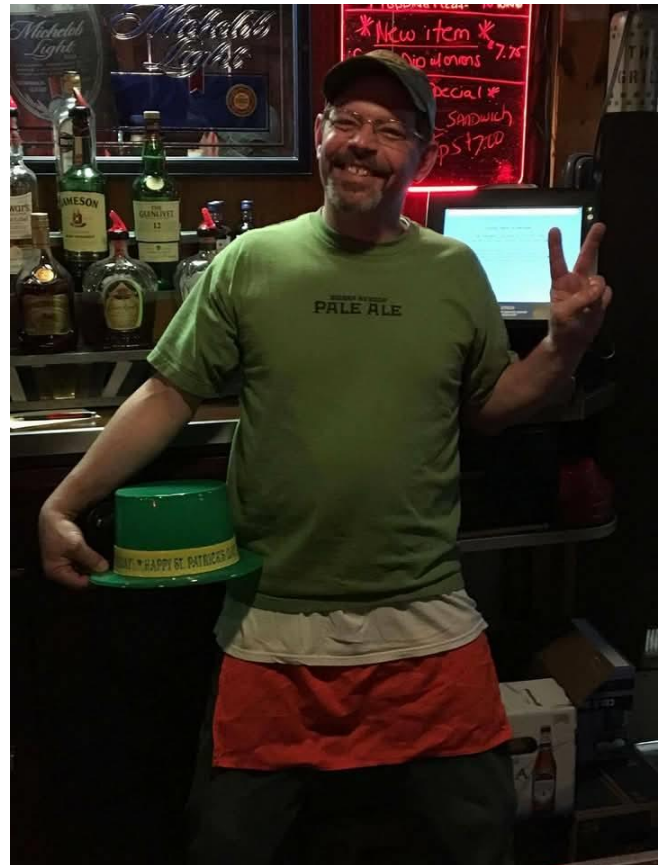
The building was showing its age after seven decades of use. Mr Szumowski did extensive renovations to update and ensure a future for the business. He enlarged, modernized, and reorganized the kitchen and the menu. New booths along with paneling were installed in the bar room. Catering services were also offered to local clubs and various groups in the upstairs banquet hall. Mr. Szumowski also purchased the old Close apartment house on the corner of First Ave and School Street. The old house was condemned; so he demolished it and transformed the vacant land into a parking lot. Phil sold his property and business in 2004 to Michael Zambella who owned it for two years

Soul & Passion

Mayfield Native, Kevin Chaffee, started working at the grill in 1992. Usually staffed as a bartender, it was a job of passion for the outgoing Mr. Chaffee. His ship came in during the fall of 2006, when Clark Bona purchased the Grill, liquor license, and hired Kevin to run the business. After 2 years of hard work, Kevin purchased the Mayfield Grill in August of 2008.

Having heard countless stories from patrons dating back to the early years of the grill, Kevin had a deep understanding of his history and significance in our community. Kevin had stated that the Mayfield Grill was a "working man's bar," and dedicated himself to providing a quality and affordable experience. His girlfriend and later wife, Tracy, was with him every step of the way and together they "restored the grill to its former glory." He designed the new logo and coined the motto, both still in use.

Not only a place for food and drink, the grill was host to numerous activities. Kevin rekindled the fire on old traditions and started new ones as well. Some of these include the dart, pool, horseshoe and pitch leagues, an annual pig roast, as well as an annual Winterfest--which included a volleyball tournament. Kevin also started the Grill's annual ice fishing tournament. The Chaffees were very proud of not only carrying on a piece of local history, but of our great community for their continual show of support.



Kevin Chaffee, St. Patrick's Day 2017

Trials & Tribulations

To the deep sadness of our entire area, Kevin Chaffee grew very ill, very quickly. He passed away on March 30, 2019 after an 18-month battle with cancer. Before he departed this life for another, Kevin made certain that the traditions of the Mayfield Grill would continue. Kevin called on his friend Heather Kline, who took over on the night of January 22, 2019.

Heather took great caution in her first year as proprietor. She sought to learn the "ins and outs" of the industry before making any changes. Through a steep learning curve, she planned to experiment with the business in 2020. The universe had other plans.

The Coronavirus outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December of 2019. January 20th, 2020 marked the first reported case of the virus in the United States. Over the next two months, it spread then quickly descended our country into a chaotic pandemic. Both the federal and state governments took action in order to "slow the spread" of the virus. On Monday, March 16th, industry was brought to a screeching halt. This executive order flipped the Mayfield Grill's business model upside down.

Patrons were prohibited from entering the premises. The sale of alcohol was banned and grill operated takeout services only. With limited hours between 4 and 8 p.m, Thursday's tradition of wing night met a serious challenge; but the community showed great support. Within 2 hours, they ran out of wings, and had to place an emergency order with Antonucci's in Gloversville. Eleven cases of wings were promptly delivered, and immediately began to cycle to the fryers. With both fryers running at full capacity, the wings didn't sit around long enough to need to be refrigerated. In 4 hours that day, 2,700 wings were sold, and the Mayfield Grill had hopes of survival.

Not long after, sale of alcohol was permitted, as long as it accompanied a food order--starting with buckets of beer and ice. During a time of hysteria, patrons came to the takeout door wearing paper masks, turtlenecks over their mouths, or even gas masks. People were ordering out from as far away as Albany. Necessity is the mother of invention. Through contacts made in her other business, Sacandaga Candle Co., Heather began ordering candle and mason jars to make the unprecedented situation salvageable. The empty bar and dining area of the grill was transformed into a makeshift warehouse and assembly line. Large batches of sangria were "manufactured" and sold in pint mason jars. Unfortunately, the covid-19 lockdowns caused many small businesses to close down permanently. The community showed great support, and as Heather told me, "Sangria saved the Mayfield Grill."

In preparations for Cinco de Mayo, a significant amount of Don Julio was purchased, and the "assembly line" was upgraded for the production of margaritas. Fresh-squeezed lemonade became a hot seller both separate and as a mixed drink. June came and outdoor dining was allowed. The backyard was populated with umbrella shaded picnic tables; at which customers were able to sit and enjoy their takeout. On July 21st, the Grill began an outdoor "Mask-erade" happy hour, Tuesday-Friday from 3 to 5 pm. This ran weekly, and sought to have people enjoy the picnic tables during the nicest part of the day.



Blair, Thomas, and Heather Kline

After nearly nine months of the most challenging circumstances, the Mayfield Grill reopened on November 7, 2020. However, the pandemic was far from over. Heather decided to close down on December 27th and reopen for a January 7th wing night. Business went on as usual until January 20, 2021, when a rise in Covid-19 cases forced the Grill to close down the bar and proceed with only take-out orders.

After a return to normalcy, the grill has flourished. Heather has done interior remodeling and changed the menu a bit. Most of the hometown favorites are still available, with the same familiar recipes. Compared to years past, the grill is more of a restaurant than it has ever been before. The menu has expanded, and new dishes are tried all the time. It is a consistent experiment that has gone very well.

Heather is honored to carry forth a piece of living history. She said, "I'm not as suave with my words as Kevin was, but all I can say is that I really love it. I am comfortable in the Grill and I am glad that I ended up



here, " Heather grew up next door to the grill on First Ave in the home of her parents, Susan and Greg Warner. Greg was a staple at the grill next door. He participated in many of the bar game competitions and was often at the top of the dartboard scores with various partners and earned the nickname "Foosse" for being one of the fiercest competitors on the foosball table that was present in the bar for many years.

As a child Heather's Aunt Hollie and Uncle Jim Dorman owned the Grill, and Heather recalls helping move chairs and tables around while Hollie swept up. She also fondly remembers patrons of the grill cheering her on as she struggled to ride her bike around her back yard. And with a twinkle in her eye, said that Roy Town came right over and helped her learn to ride! For Heather, the Mayfield Grill has been an integral part of life, and she's proud to uphold this long-standing Mayfield tradition as it approaches the 100-year mark.

Dedicated to the memory of Kevin Chaffee and Garth Wemple

THE MAYFIELD GRILL | 8 School Street, Mayfield, NY 12117 | (518) 661-6088

A Place Called Home...



Down the road a fur piece lies a little town..Known for its country folk..they never let you down.

A helpin' hand is always there ..of this I know for sure...Just holler once or maybe twice..and they'll be at your door...

With a big ole smile and a pot in hand.. Home made love from their veggie stand..

An understandin' bunch they are.. They'll bundle you up ,put you in the car..

And cart you off..be it far or near.. Lend you an empathetic ear..

Maybe take a ride around the lake.. Tell old tales for memories sake..

Before you know it you'll have a smile on your face.. And be thankful for this country place...

A place called home, Glory be... I think we'll stay..Maw and me...

~Terrie Zierak, April 14th 2025

The Lost Sacandaga Valley

HOPE VALLEY



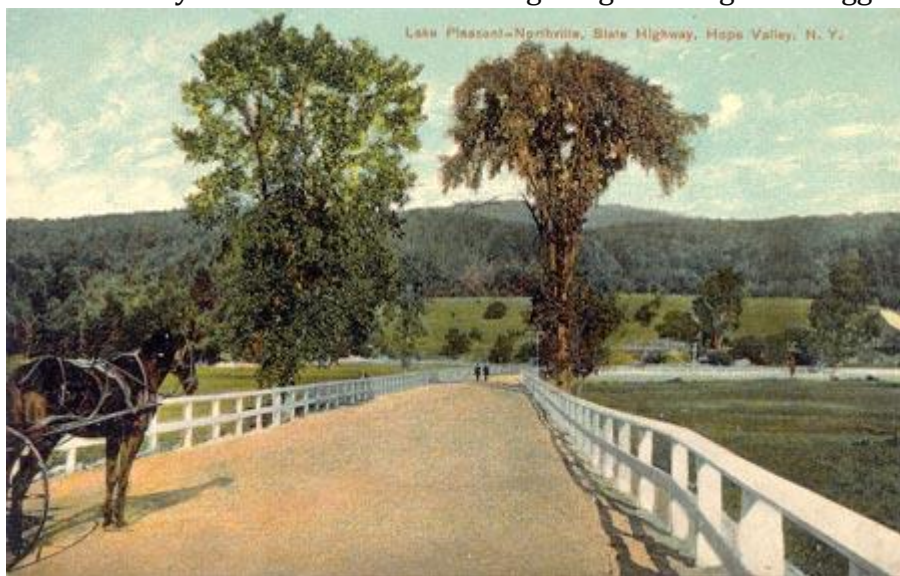
In all the written histories of the Sacandaga Valley, seldom mentioned--if ever--is the story of The Hope Valley. The small farming community sat at the confluence of the East Stony Creek and the Sacandaga River in the southeast corner of Hamilton County.

As the Sacandaga River courses from Wells through the town of Hope, it peacefully winds its way downstream through the mountains. At the former site of Hope Valley, a geographic transition begins between a narrow ravine and a wide open basin. As the water flows, it is the gateway to the Great Sacandaga Lake.

Long ago, the vast and contiguous farmlands of the Sacandaga basin extended to its upstream extremity at the Hope Valley. There, flat and fertile lands along the river were choked by formidable boundaries of towering earth.

It was, likewise, the true natural gateway to the Adirondack Mountains.

The Adirondack communities of Hamilton County once thrived in a long forgotten age of rugged outdoorsmen. Life there was sustained by extensive logging, humming sawmills, and dangerous log drives down the river. The exhaustion of the resources, State protection of the woodlands, and better opportunities elsewhere brought the end of its industrial prosperity prior to 1900. Hope Valley suffered a long, steady decline which culminated with the creation of the reservoir. The closing of the gates at the Conklingville Dam was the final nail in its coffin.



The Lake Pleasant - Northville Road at Hope Valley. Courtesy of Hamilton County Genweb.

Upstream from Hope Valley, toward Wells and Hope Falls, suitable farmlands were few and far between. Settlers arrived along the water in small, isolated, and steep mountain hollows. All of the land was littered with large rocks and boulders deposited by the glaciers; which made farming very difficult. Crops of potatoes were rivaled chiefly by stones, as they were harvested from the soil in equal numbers

I have yet to find the origin of the town's name, but I believe the settlers looked upon the unfavorable lands and realized an unforgiving truth. Survival there was impossible without a whole lotta hope.



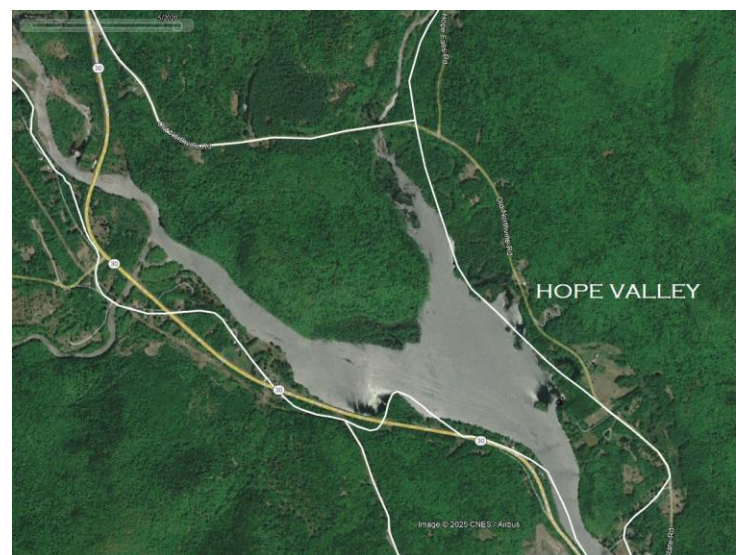
That part of the river is very rich with history. Along its side once ran an Indian trail into the interior of the Adirondacks, gaining access all the way to Canada. In fact, this was the route taken by Colonel Sir John Johnson in his Loyalist allies as they escaped patriot forces in Johnstown in May of 1776. Throughout the Revolutionary War, it was a path used by Loyalist and Mohawk forces to carry prisoners with them to Canada.

The first permanent settlement sprang up in the Hope Valley in the decade following that war. It was difficult to access from the south, due to the impenetrable swamp that gave the Sacandaga Valley its name. Ultimately, travelers could ford (cross) the Sacandaga River in low water at Fish House and head northwest along the north banks of the river. Among the first settlers were the Olmstead brothers, and families of Harris, Conklin, Stone, Brownell, Van Arnam, Annible, and others.

The small community was closely associated with Northville until the rapid development of the lumber and milling industries brought more settlers to the area to such an extent that the Town of Hope was created in 1819, having been split from the Towns of Northampton and Wells. At Hope Valley, a crossroads was formed along the river between Northville, Wells, and Hope Falls. Near this intersection, Jacob Van Arnam built a store, Reuben Thayer operated an Inn, and the rural community was granted a post office in the early 1820s.

Hope Valley's prominence was shortly thereafter exceeded by Hope Center and Hope Falls, where significant milling operations were undertaken. The post office in Hope Valley was discontinued in 1856. The residents there subsequently got their mail from Hope Center—halfway to Wells—and transacted most of their business at Northville.

The Hope Valley remained a small rural community for many years. However, the timbering industries which gave life to the town of Hope began to decline. This coincided with the start of conservation efforts in the Adirondack Park. It was written that the welfare of New York State is dependent on the environmental integrity of the Adirondack Mountains. The Adirondack Park was established in 1892. In 1894, Hamilton County passed a law prohibiting the taking of fish from all



streams except the Sacandaga River and the East Stony Creek. In 1905, the Town of Hope's population was 317. By 1925, the population had dwindled to just 163.

Some 15 families lived along the Sacandaga River and East Stony Creek at Hope Valley. They were all farmers, and as talk of a new reservoir floated around, they surely hung in uncertainty as to what their fate would be. The Sacandaga Reservoir project began in 1927, and the height of the new spillway was set at 771 feet above sea level. This sealed the fate of the Hope Valley. All 15 families there had to vacate their homes. The canyon walls there are fairly steep, but new roads were rerouted to higher ground and several of the families were able to move their homes to a spot on their lot along the new roads. Work on the new state highway began with eminent domain proceedings in 1938. A new bridge over the Sacandaga River just north of the old Hope Valley was completed by 1960, and the new highway opened in 1961.

You won't find Hope Valley on any modern maps—only in the pages of history.

“The Bygone Days of Bannertown”

I have published a new podcast on Spotify. Its title is above, and if you have the app, you can search it there and stream now for free. I am hoping to post new content frequently and welcome any ideas. So far, I have read written works about Mayfield as well as discussed broad subjects of local history and the many sources in which one can find information.

