



THE PRESERVATIONIST

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2021

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A Message from the President

Dear Landmarkers,

I hope you all had an enjoyable summer. It is hard to believe fall is upon us already. I say it every year- summers go by too quickly around here! Without a doubt, this summer was much better than last summer, but it was still a little subdued due to the ongoing pandemic. And subdued best describes the Landmarks activities for 2021. Thankfully, our two Walks & Talks and the mansion tours in July had better-than-expected attendance, and we hope that is the case with the remaining events this year! I want to thank everyone for their continued support of the Society. The memberships, attending fundraising events and the donations have kept us going this past year and a half. The remainder of this year and probably the start of next year will still be a bit of a challenge for us, but we are very hopeful that "normal" returns to us by next spring and summer!

Unfortunately, I also have a less-than-expected outcome to share with you. Previously, I had stated that we were hoping to get some more roof work done this summer on the #1 mansion, but some unknown variables would probably affect the progress. Sadly, no roof work took place this summer. The unavailability of contractors, the lack of employees the available contractors were trying to work around and the never-ending rain prevented any roof work. Needless to say, we are very disappointed. The complete lack of progress up there was unexpected. Hopefully, the workforce and the weather improves dramatically by next spring.

Also unexpected, or somewhat unexpected, was the recent situation with the historic Obilston Apartment Building. The maintenance on the building has not been kept up on for a number of years, which led to the building being condemned this summer. It appears to be another instance of an out of town owner not maintaining their property. I truly hope the significant deterioration does not lead to the demise of that magnificent building. Back in the early 1990's, we lost the Kanatenah Apartment Building to fire. That building was on the opposite side of Genesee Street, just up the street from the Obilston. The late Douglas Preston, past executive director of the Oneida County Historical Center and staunch advocate for historical preservation, once called those buildings, "Gateposts to Utica's historic downtown".

The possible loss of the Obilston because of neglect is very troubling. It would be an absolute travesty for Utica to lose that beautiful building also.

Steve Grant

President



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MERCHANDISING

Our Merchandise Committee is at work with plans to increase our Landmarks Society shop. New ideas include mugs, glassware, t-shirts, and so much more are being considered.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE AN EMAIL VERSION OF OUR NEWSLETTERS - CONTACT US AT 315-732-7376.



A NECESSARY MESSAGE — by Joe Bottini

Please allow me the privilege of screaming at those not in tune with local history preservation. Hopefully, this newsletter is read by other than members of the Landmarks Society. This message needs to be made a public cry of urgency before we lose more of that which makes our past an interpreter of our present - and a predictor of our future. As the Oneida County Historian, with a deep love for our portion of this great nation, it is my hope this message will resound from the magnificent hills of our community. I feel it my obligation to speak out about this sad commentary on the failure of our local government agencies - neglecting their sworn duty to represent our community.

It is vital that we get the local powers-that-be on the same page with local history folks, or we will not make big progress. It took me close to ten years to get one project completed. Without the understanding of County Executive Anthony Picente, Jr. (one of the few who gets it), the dream would still be in slumber. It must be said, every progressive government entity should have a line-item in their budget for financial aid to local history preservation. Each legislative branch of local governments ought to have an active standing history committee that meets with the local community historians, engaging in a continual dialogue of work to be done. The character of a community is revealed by its interest in learning and understanding our past as to its influence with our present condition.

"Shepherding the legacy of those who came before us, who struggled to create for those of us that followed, is a moral obligation inherent in the decency of each human soul. To show an interest in the past is a characteristic of civilization, says a lot about the need to consider the history of a building before demolishing it. Old buildings and proper historic markers give a city its character, and are the glue that binds a city into a cohesive, well-functioning unit - based on a true pride in her past, commitment to her present and an excitement for her future."

The Landmarks Society (volunteers) struggle beyond comprehension to preserve our local history, somehow being encouraged with the tiny steps of progress they make each year. God Bless their magnanimous hearts and deep compassion for historical preservation. The unbelievable commitment to their mission is beyond the limits of most ordinary folks. Someone needs to "blow their horn" loud enough to wake up the politicians to their duty to support the magnificent work of this august body of volunteers. If a government agency does not respect the past, they are unfit to direct the present and certainly not worthy of planning our community's future.

The Greater Utica Magazine (promoting local history) has been running a for-profit business with scant profit since the COVID-19 disaster. As a private business, our government is not obligated, nor should they be, to help them in any financial avenue. However, moral support of all local businesses ought to be on the "to-do" list of local government representatives. In the essence of full disclosure, I have been a contributor to this publication for the past number of years, and not once has any local government official encouraged my efforts. It has been wonderful to hear accolades from such local history luminaries as Frank Tomaino (O D features) and Joe Kelly (the Joe Kelly T V show) both whom have been toiling for many years with this issue of promoting our unique history. In a modest way I say unique because: "Oneida County has as much, if not more, people and events connection to America's history as any region in the nation."

Neither group is positively encouraged by our local politicians/government. In spite of this lack of support, they each have managed to accomplish many fine gains in preserving local history.

An example of the total disregard for the extraordinary history in this county is the ignoring of one important Utica Park that is the birthplace of Utica. When the latest park plan was finalized there was one glaring absence - Bagg Commemorative Park. This small park is located in, and commemorates the founding of, Utica. It is in dire need of physical attention to its grounds as well as the Proctor Memorial building within its confines. Another small memorial is sadly neglected with over-growth of its shrubs and trash embedded in its tiny confines. Imagine, the first meeting to organize the New York State Abolition Society happened in a building on this corner (SW corner of Bleecker and Charlotte Streets) Much credit goes to those who were generous enough to place two small monuments at this site; and shame to those who have since neglected to maintain its prominence. Both of these mini-parks were not on the list of parks to be given some tender loving care. Each is of *national* significance.

It is past time that the powers-that-be get severely chastised for dereliction of duty. In the old days, they would have been tarred, feathered and run out of town on a rail. Better yet, they ought to be forced to spend two hours listening to me in a closed room. I extend my sincere thank you to all of the hearty volunteers of both the Landmarks Society and Oneida County History Center, Dominick and Brad Velardi of Greater Utica magazine, as well as Frank Tomaino and Joe Kelly,. God Bless each you and your work on behalf of all of us who enjoy the fruits of past legacy.

WELCOME NEW TRUSTEE PHIL BEAN



Phil Bean is a graduate of Proctor High School and has earned degrees in history from Union College, Oxford University, and the University of Rochester. When he was 14 he devised a plan, endorsed by the Common Council, to save the Henry Seymour House on Whitesboro Street; he was unsuccessful but never lost interest in trying to preserve architectural treasures. A historian by training, he is the author of "The Urban Colonists: Italian American Identity and Politics in Utica, New York" (Syracuse University Press, 2010), as well as a number of research articles on Utica's immigration and political history, including a political biography of Utica's James

S. Sherman, based on his personal papers at the New York Public Library. For almost 25 years he was a college administrator, mostly as a Dean at Harvard and Haverford colleges. He returned to Utica in 2019 and now serves on the Board of Directors of the Rotary Club of Utica and as Vice President of the Board of Trustees of the Utica Public Library. "I'm very much looking forward to contributing to the extremely important work of the Landmarks Society," Phil says. "Utica's prospects for renewal are more significant than any time since the late 1960s or 1950s, and although change often comes at a price, we need to ensure that the long-term cost to our heritage isn't high. Preserving the best of the past will help ensure our best future—the finer architecture of the past lends character to communities that both locals and visitors value, and its survival can sometimes play a role in advancing prosperity."

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Landmarks Society is to actively promote the preservation and restoration of historically and architecturally significant buildings and sites in the Utica area. Through projects, community education, advocacy, marketing and planned activities, the Society engages its members, partners and the community in preserving the past and protecting the future.

The Landmarks Society was chartered by the State of New York in October 1974 as a nonprofit, educational corporation. The purposes for which the Landmarks Society was created include the following: 1) To protect, enhance, perpetuate and preserve buildings, landmarks and other districts of historic, architectural and cultural significance; and 2) To acquire by purchase, gift, devise, or otherwise, the title to, or the custody and control of sites, buildings and areas of historical and cultural significance."

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS!

Francesca Deierlein
Robert Sheldon
Barbara Jo Carino
Doris Harf
Ronald & Charleen Pernet
Jill & Tom Spellman
Mary Lawrence Owens
Stephen Harrison
Don & Joan Dorn
Magdalen Czech
Barbara Wuest
Richard & Connie Griffith

Nancy Agen
Patricia Knobloch
David & Janet George
Shirley Felt
Patrick Cuffe & Aimee Tarasek
Fred & Kathy Capozzella
Joan & Duane Patocka Hatcher
Gary Gianotti
William Watkins
Phyllis Leahy
Franklin Sciacca
Grace McNasser

Lorraine Fava
Dan Hoffman
Dyann Scharf
Jeffrey Ritchie
Ray & Linda Velazquez
Jeffrey & Jacqueline Crannell
Joanne Z Potasiewicz
Mary McCorduck
Raffi Berberian
Phyllis Vashio

During these Covid times, please consider a donation to The Landmarks Society to help further our mission of Historic Preservation.

Please consider The Landmarks Society in your Estate and Legacy planning.

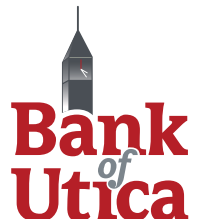
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Potato Hill Farm and Trails

1904 Potato Hill Road, Boonville, NY

Tucked back almost imperceptibly on rural Potato Hill Road is the Potato Hill Farm and Trails, a privately owned and operated farm that also has graciously developed and provided public access to a wonderful series of well-designed and maintained outdoor trails for hiking, biking, jogging, snowshoeing and cross country skiing. It is a part of the much larger BREIA (Black River Environmental Improvement Association), a not-for profit corporation funded by a private family foundation as a gift to the people of New York. Their mission is to improve and protect the natural outdoor environment while promoting its appreciation while encouraging exercise and activity among the public, primarily the area's school-age youth. The five miles of trails vary in difficulty from very easy to more challenging, are baby carriage friendly and wheelchair accessible. There is a covered picnic area, free-to-use bikes of all sizes with helmets available, but pets and motorized vehicles are prohibited. The main rule is to be respectful of the grounds and facilities, and carry out any trash. The environmental stewardship of BREIA and the Potato Hill Farm is exemplary.

Chad Burdick of Forestport has remained instrumental in developing and maintaining the BREIA system of trails and facilities, as well as "scoping out" potential new areas to acquire. Chad's father and grandfather were also involved for many years in similar capacities.

A variety of unique animals can be seen on the farm, including alpacas, donkeys, black Welsh sheep, Percheron horses, and alpine goats.

BREIA, as it turns out, is far more extensive than just the Potato Hill Farm. Other BREIA trail systems and facilities exist on Egypt Road, Dustin Road in Forestport, Jackson Hill, The Canal Trail,

Peacock Hill and Lyons Falls among others, and more are added to the list on a regular basis. What started out initially as a program exclusive to northern Oneida County has grown to well over 70 miles of trails and now spans nine to ten counties, and even into other states.

A key element in all of this is the Black River Outdoor Education Program (BROEP) which was developed in 2007-08 and continues to this day. BROEP works with local schools to provide a wide variety of interesting, educational, healthy and totally-inclusive programs to school-aged children. Aerobic fitness activities are promoted and encouraged.

Elaine Hage, wife of Trustee and Past President Paul Hage, was recruited as the Program Developer/Director to create the BROEP, and she came up with a magnificent set of programs that benefitted and inspired thousands of school children. Elaine put together a "dream team" of individuals to offer educational programs that worked in unison with fitness activities to provide a seamless, wholistic experience, all for free. A partnership was struck with Birnie Bus of Rome for transportation from school to Potato Hill and back. The initial targeted age group was kindergarten to eighth grade, and was later expanded to twelfth grade. The first year proved to be an overwhelming success serving 2800 individuals.

BROEP is still operating today per pandemic regulations.

Landmarks applauds the mission of this fine organization.



RURAL LIBRARIES OF ONEIDA COUNTY— by Michael Bosak

Libraries have held a central and critical role in the dynamic of rural upstate communities for decades, and many for more than a century. They exist in even some of the tiniest communities and hamlets, and remain vital even in the digital and social media age. They help provide internet access, magazine, periodical and newspaper access, varieties of programs, fax services, as well as book lending and a myriad of other services. They are destinations, gathering places, and sometimes "the only game in town". Their roles remain strong even while digital media continues to garner an ever-increasing place in our lives. Let's celebrate our many and varied local rural libraries!

Barneveld Free Library 118 Boon Street

The Barneveld Free Library Association was formed in 1874 when Jacob Wicks offered a room, rent free, for the use of a library. A subscription paper was circulated for the purpose of raising funds and the sum of \$99 was secured. On November 21, 1874, the subscribers met on the home of Dr. Luther Guitau and organized as the Trenton Library Association. The association started with 240 books.

Unfortunately, on March 17, 1875, the entire block where the library was located burned and most of the books were lost. The exceptions were the 40 books in circulation at the time of the fire. However, the citizens were resolved to have a library. They met and raised \$118.75. Books were donated from many parts of the country. By the end of 1875, a total of 1,200 volumes had been received.

On June 12, 1875, the organization was incorporated as the

Barneveld Library Association. The incorporators chose to name the library after the Village of Barneveld, which had been named by Gerrit Boon.

It was then decided to erect a building. A site was bought from John Hughes for \$100. Mr. Hughes gave back half of the purchase price as a contribution. By 1876, the association had raised \$1,200.

The cornerstone of the building, which is still in use, was laid July 27, 1877. The total cost of the building was about \$1,700. The building was erected by the great-grandfather of former Congressman Alexander Pirnie of Utica who served in the House of Representatives from 1959 to 1973 and was a World War 2 veteran, attaining the rank of Colonel and who received the Legion of Merit and Bronze Star.

Today the library is linked with the Mid-York Library System by computer, offers wi-fi service, internet accessible computers, pre-school story hours and numerous programs throughout the year.



The library is called the Barneveld Free Library, and has become a museum and a historical center as well.

Obtained from the Barneveld Free Library website, "History."

Librarian Greta Madore has been at the Barneveld Free Library for over 40 years. She lives within walking distance of it, and while she speaks of retirement, she finds herself not-yet ready to do so, at least not just now.

Fall - Winter Hours:

Monday: 10:00 am - 12 noon
 Tuesday: 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm
 Wednesday: 10:00 am - 12 noon
 Thursday: 1:00 pm - 6:00 pm
 Friday: 12 noon - 4:00 pm

John F. Seymour and the Grandfather Clock

At a meeting held on December 5, 1881 at Dr. Guiteau's, a note of thanks was passed thanking John F. Seymour for donating a grandfather clock to the Barneveld Library Association.

John F. Seymour was born at Pompey Hill, Onondaga County, N.Y., September 21, 1814, son of Henry and Mary Ledyard Forman Seymour. He died February 22, 1890.

About 1820, the family moved to Utica. In 1839 he was admitted to the N.Y. "Bar" when he joined his brother Horatio in the practice of law.

Horatio was elected Governor in 1862 and appointed his brother John as private secretary. John was a champion of the Oriskany Monument which he followed until its completion.

John was one of the "managers" of the Oneida Historical Society at its founding in 1878 and was its vice president for many years.

John delivered a centennial address at Trenton on July 4, 1876 sketching the history of the town. A copy of his address is on file at the Barneveld Library.

The above information was taken from "Transactions of the Oneida Historical Society at Utica, N.Y., Book #5, 1889 – 1892. W.C. Rowley. A copy of this is posted inside the clock, which is pictured above.

John and Horatio Seymour were the brothers of Julia Seymour Conkling, the wife of Roscoe Conkling and the matriarch of the Miller-Conkling-Kernan Mansion, #3 Rutger Park.

Woodgate Free Library 11051 Woodgate Road

The Woodgate Free Library building began its life as a one room schoolhouse, built around 1894, and abandoned by the school district in the late 1920's. It officially opened as a library on October 15, 1931 after the school district agreed to its new use. It is located



at "Woodgate Corners" near the intersection of Route 28 and Woodgate Road. When it opened, books were donated by neighbors, friends and residents, and other books were loaned by area libraries.

Besides serving as the community library, church services were held in the building for many years during the 1940's.

A new 1000 square foot "memorial" wing was added in 1994 through \$20,000 in donations as well as a grant from New York State Senator (47th District) and Woodgate resident William R. Sears.

The library acquired what is now the Woodgate Community Center down the road and on the south side of Woodgate Road around the 1990s. It serves as a meeting hall and is a better location for programs and events.

Sandy Pascucci is the Library Director.

Open: Monday & Wednesday 2:00 pm – 7 pm
 Thursday & Saturday 9 am – 2 pm

Prospect Free Library 116 State Street, Prospect

The Prospect Free Library recently relocated from a small house that served as the office for the Eastern Rock quarry office into the building that once housed the Prospect Volunteer Fire Department. It is "around the corner and a stone's throw away" from the Prospect Falls Winery and tasting room, another tourist attraction and local gem. The Town of Trenton renovated and retrofitted the structure for the use of the library, which opened in May of this year. Director Betsy Mack is very pleased with the size and openness of the new building, which is much more conducive to providing a variety of programs.

In recent years the Prospect Volunteer Fire Department and then the Village of Prospect dissolved as entities due to financial insolvency issues, with responsibilities transferring to the Town of Trenton.

The "new" Prospect Library is a fine example of an adaptive reuse.

Summer Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm
 Wednesday: 10:00 am – noon, and 2:00 pm – 7:00 pm
 Friday: 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Winter Hours:

Monday: 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
 Tuesday: 2:00 pm - 7:00 pm
 Wednesday / Thursday: 2:00 pm - 8:00 pm
 Friday: 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
 Saturday: 10:00 am - 12 noon

All three of these libraries are part of the Mid-York System.



THE YAHNUNDASIS GOLF CLUB

In 1897, the Yahnundasis Golf Club was formed with 51 members, only 6 of whom knew how to golf. In its first year, 75 members were added. The new club was named after a Native American word to describe the early pattern of settlement in Utica and New Hartford – “around the hill” – Yahnundasis.

The land for this club was at the rear of McQuivey’s greenhouse, adjacent to the Baby Hospital (later the site of St. John’s Home and School). The club then purchased the Sherill Farm and part of the Moore Farm, a total of 120 acres for \$13,650. The farm house was opened as a club house on May 18, 1907. It was originally a 9-hole course, but expanded to 18 holes in 1911.

The present club house was designed by Utica architects Lin Kinne, Egbert Bagg, and Roy Newkirk, at a cost of \$130,000, and formally opened April 22, 1924. A pool was added and a bathhouse

constructed using timbers from the old barn. One of the biggest events was when President Taft played golf here with Vice President James Schoolcraft Sherman of Utica. President Taft was granted one of the very few honorary memberships.



(Derived from information from the New Hartford Historical Society).

The Yahnundasis Golf Club will be the site of this year’s Annual Dinner on November 18th.

Programs & Events

“Nightmare in the Nursing Home”

**Thursday, Friday & Saturday,
October 14th, 15th and 16th, 2021**

**The Munn Castle, #1 Rutger Park
6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.**

Tickets: \$15.00, available online via our website and on Facebook

Themed guided tours of #1 Rutger Park, which was formerly a nursing home

Each tour will be in a scheduled time slot

“Happy Hags” Donuts and Cider and Character Coffee provided

Rutger Park Mansion Tours

**Boilermaker Weekend,
Saturday, October 9th, 2021**

**Every hour on the hour from
11:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.**

\$10 // tickets available at the door



The Fall Harvest High Victorian Tea

Join the Landmarks Society of Greater Utica for our Fall Harvest High Tea!

**Sunday, September 19th, 2021
at #3 Rutger Park**

**Two seatings at
11:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.**

Tickets are \$25

**Go to our Facebook page to get tickets
(sales end September 17th).**

Annual Meeting, Dinner, and Awards Ceremony

Thursday, November 18, 2021 | \$35/ticket

Choice of Entrees:

- Chicken Cordon Bleu or
- Cape Cod Baked Haddock with lemon butter or
- Vegetarian / Gluten-Free (upon request)

Includes: Mashed potatoes with cheese, Caesar salad, carrots in orange butter sauce. Coffee/decaf, hot tea, water

Dessert – cheesecake with fresh strawberries

**Send checks with choice of entrée to:
Landmarks Annual Dinner
c/o Mike & Penny Bosak
P.O. Box 85
Forestport, NY 13338**

Make checks out to The Landmarks Society of Greater Utica

Note: **Checks will NOT be cashed until the day of the event**

PLEASE INCLUDE PHONE NUMBER

Ticket sales end by close of business on Monday, November 15th.

Yahnundasis Golf Club, Seneca Turnpike, New Hartford

6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. - Cocktail Hour (cash bar)

7:00 p.m. 8:30 p.m. – Dinner & Program

8:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. – Awards Ceremony

**Program will be Rhodes Hospital presented
by Rick Giffune and Jeff Madden**

Mansion Holiday Tour

Saturday, December 11th at #3 Rutger Park | 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

\$20 admission / tickets available at the door

Local realtors have agreed to decorate the mansion to the hilt for the holidays!! Each room will provide its character backdrop to a different realty agency who will beautifully decorate it in the holiday spirit!

SUMMER WALKS & TALKS RETURN *(albeit on a limited basis...)* — by Michael J. Lehman, AIA

After a COVID-related hiatus in 2020, the Landmarks Society's popular Monday night summer walks & talks returned on a limited basis this summer thanks to the efforts and hard work of LSGU president **Steve Grant**, board member/chair of the Historic Buildings & Sites Committee **Michael Lehman**, and LSGU member **Franklin Berry**. Two well-attended walks- one in July and one in August- were held.

On July 19th, by on-going popular request, LSGU's 50 plus guests revisited the *Olmsted designed Proctor Boulevard neighborhood* in South Utica. Attendees included many residents of the neighborhood, several LSGU board members, and invited South Utica Common Council member Celeste Friend. Tour guide Mike Lehman highlighted Olmsted Bros. development design features implemented from 1913 to 1929 and individual homes ranging from the work of talented local architects to a Sears Roebuck kit house.

Following on August 16th, LSGU explored Rome's historic North George Street neighborhood with Franklin Berry as our tour guide. Franklin shared with the group what he had learned about the history of Rome and how it related to the development of the street. In addition to individual building spotlights on various architectural styles and sharing stories about the families that lived in them, those in attendance were also able to view the interiors of restored 507 N. George St (which the owners spontaneously & graciously opened to the 40 plus guests on the tour). Franklin also arranged for complimentary refreshments at the end of the tour courtesy of the owner of the Oak & Ivy Bed & Breakfast at 600 N. George St.

In 2022, COVID permitting, we hope to return to our regular weekly Monday walks from early June through the end of August. As part of the nationwide **OLMSTED 200** celebration (the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr.) we are planning on partnering with the recently created **Utica: Olmsted City initiative-** headed by new LSGU board member **Phil Bean**- to include several walks which will help to raise awareness of the unusually large number of Olmsted Bros. designed parks and residential garden neighborhoods in the Greater Utica area. In addition, please contact Michael Bosak, LSGU VP for Education, at 315.732.7376 with any suggestions for future walks that you would like to see in 2022.

These walks & talks, along with the other LSGU programs and events which advance our Landmarks mission and which the community enjoys and benefits from, are only made possible by your memberships and the generous financial support of our donors and sponsors.

As always, many thanks for your continued support which allows LSGU to bring these popular quality-of-life enhancing walking tours to the Greater Utica community year after year.

July 19, 2021 | Proctor Boulevard, Utica

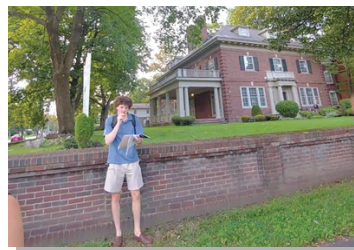
Utica's Olmsted Garden Neighborhoods
1913-1929

Presenter: Michael Lehman, AIA



August 16, 2021 | North George Street, Rome

Presenter: Franklin Berry



**A new feature --
Historic Homes
of America**
(from Facebook)

The Owings House, built in 1896 in Laurens, SC, designed by George F. Barker, another splendid photo by @godzilla1950.



THE PRESERVATIONIST



**THE FORMER ODD FELLOWS HALL ON BOON STREET,
ACROSS FROM THE BARNEVELD FREE LIBRARY, NOW A PRIVATE RESIDENCE.**