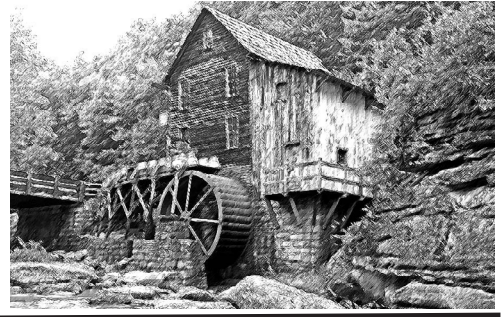


The Gristmill

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Franklin Carpenter – Man of Four Wives

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In the spring of 2013 a unique item was donated to the Saratoga County Historian's Office by Reed Antis of Moreau. It was an official badge belonging to a former Saratoga County Sheriff. Reed purchased it from the popular online auction site Ebay when he learned that it belonged to a man named Frank Carpenter who served as Saratoga County Sheriff in the late 1800s. Curious as to who Carpenter was and when he served, I began to flip through the files. Finding a well-researched account of his life compiled by Lynn Calvin (a volunteer researcher in the County Historian's Office), I was even more intrigued after reading his bio.

Franklin Carpenter was born in Corinth on January 17 1830, the son of Daniel B. Carpenter and Maria Deyoe, and began his life of public service in that town. He was a school teacher, held the position of Commissioner of Highways and went on to serve two terms as Town Supervisor (1861-1862, and 1867-1868).

Sometime between 1850 and 1855 Carpenter married his first wife, Mary Jane, and lived with her on a farm in Corinth (as indicated by the 1855 New York State Census). Mary Jane passed away in June of 1866 and was buried in the Carpenter Cemetery in Corinth. By 1870, Carpenter married his second wife, Amanda M. Watson, and in 1871 they had a son, Franklin W. Carpenter. In November of 1873, Franklin Sr was elected to a three-year term as Sheriff of Saratoga County. Sheriff Carpenter, his wife Amanda and young son Franklin left Corinth to live in the courthouse and jail (all one building) in Ballston Spa. An announcement in *The Saratogian* on Thursday, March 12 1874 mentioned that Sheriff Carpenter had sold his farm in Corinth to John Killbury. The 1875 New York State Census shows the family in Ballston Spa residing at the Courthouse/Jail with one servant, the jailor and sixteen prisoners. Out of the 16 prisoners, two of them were women (both convicted of



Sheriff Carpenter's badge

intoxication).

Carpenter's term as sheriff was not a dull one. Late in 1875, Carpenter arrested the well-known Saratoga County Treasurer Henry A. Mann for issuing \$118,000 (equal to approximately \$2.4 million today) in notes that were not authorized by the county. According to newspaper accounts of the time, the committee appointed to investigate Mann learned that he was planning to leave town to avoid the impending charges so they set up a watch for several days culminating in the arrest that occurred at 1am in the morning at the Mann residence, catching the suspect off guard.

It is possible that an incident which occurred late in his term had an effect on Sheriff Carpenter's plans to return as sheriff in the next election. In June of 1876 charges were filed against Sheriff Carpenter for allegedly taking prisoners

out of jail in Ballston Spa and bringing them to the polls to vote in the election of town officials in Milton. Some newspaper accounts called for him to be ousted from his position for this offense but in the end it was determined that the rules for the election of town officials were much less stringent than those for higher offices and the charges against the Sheriff were dropped.

After his term of office expired, Carpenter and his wife briefly lived in Saratoga Springs before purchasing the former Loren Freeman farm in Gansevoort (Town of Northumberland) and relocating there. Shortly after the move, Amanda became ill and died on August 14, 1877 at the age of 47. She was also buried in the Carpenter Cemetery in Corinth.

The following year Carpenter entered into his third marriage with Charlotte Dayton Houghton. Charlotte was the widow of Tilly Houghton, who had held the office of Corinth Town Supervisor in between Carpenter's two terms. The marriage took place in Canandaigua, where Charlotte had been living after her husband's

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