



**Dedication October 2, 2009**

While the Restoration is in full swing, it's not too late to make your donation to the Grooms Tavern Privy Restoration Fund. Just ask a Friend.

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# GROOMS TAVERN GAZETTE

Fall 2009

Friends of Historic Grooms Tavern

P.O. Box 116 Clifton Park, NY 12065

www.grooms-tavern.org

## The Country Tavern

By John L. Scherer

**T**averns and Inns like the Historic Grooms Tavern could be found throughout New York State during the nineteenth century. They were built along major transportation routes such as turnpikes, rivers and canals, and provided food and lodging for travelers. They were the motels and restaurants of today.

However, early taverns were not entirely for the convenience of travelers, they were even more frequented by the townspeople. Here the local residents could exchange news and opinions, acquire solacing liquors, and encounter incidental sociability. Most taverns had a large second floor room that could be used for public meetings or social

occasions such as concerts and dances. A formal parlor on the ground floor would be used by women, since they were not allowed in the tap room. Taverns were the hub of the community

Taverns were owned and run by individuals who like tavern keepers today had to acquire an annual license from their city, town or village to serve alcoholic drink and operate a public house, inn or tavern. The Clifton Park Town History Collection has a collection of early tavern licenses for the operation of taverns at Grooms Corners, Clifton Park Village, Jonesville, Vischer Ferry and Rexford. These licenses date to the 1850s and 1860s, and were renewed from year to year.

Accommodations for travelers were not what one would expect today. A number of people of the same sex often shared not only a room but even a bed. You might end up sharing a bed with one or two strangers. The chamber pot under the bed would be shared by all, and in the morning emptied in the outhouse or perhaps just thrown out the window.

Samuel Groom, who operated the Grooms Tavern during the mid nineteenth century, was also a blacksmith and wagon maker. His shop was next to the tavern. During a stop at the Grooms Tavern, one could have their carriage or wagon repaired or if needed the horse could be shod.

(Continued Page 2)



The Jonesville Hotel, Main Street Jonesville, NY

www.grooms-tavern.org

**Friends of Historic Grooms Tavern**

P.O. Box 1166

Clifton Park, NY 12065





**The Country Tavern** (continued Page 1) Tavern owners were often pillars of their community. James Groom, the original owner of the Grooms Tavern served the community as Town Supervisor and Town Clerk as well as New York State Assemblyman. The first meeting of the Clifton Park Town Board was held at his tavern in 1828. Ephraim Stevens, who operated the hotel at Clifton Park Village that still stands today, became the first Clifton Park Town Supervisor in 1828. James Jones who operated the hotel on the Plank Road Turnpike between Waterford and Ballston Spa gave his name to the village (Jonesville) that took shape around his tavern.

Many early nineteenth century taverns in New York State were of similar architectural form. They resembled our own Clifton Park Hotel with a colonnade across the front of the building. They often had the same floor plan as the Grooms Tavern.

On Friday evening, October 2 at 7 PM, Ronald Burch, Curator of Art and Architecture at the New York State Museum and also involved with the restoration of the Historic Nellis Tavern near Fonda will present a program on Taverns in the Mohawk Valley. His illustrated talk will highlight taverns in Clifton Park and compare them with similar taverns in the Mohawk Valley. He will also discuss life in these taverns. Appropriately, the lecture will be given in the Historic Grooms Tavern.

**FRIENDS TO LECTURE ON TAVERNS**  
**"Temples of Ease, Accommodating the Upstate Traveler in the Canal and Turnpike Era"**  
**October 2, 2009**

**CLIFTON PARK, New York** – The Friends of Historic Grooms Tavern, a not-for-profit association dedicated to Historic Grooms Tavern, will host a talk on the historical significance of taverns in the Mohawk Valley by Ronald Burch, Curator of Art and Architecture at the New York State Museum on Friday evening, October 2, 2009 from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Grooms Tavern, corner of Grooms and Sugarhill Roads, Rexford, New York. The talk is a First Friday Event at the Grooms Tavern and part of the River Days festivities the weekend of October 2-4 in the Town of Clifton Park.

Ronald Burch has been Curator of Art and Architecture at the New York State Museum for over twenty-five (25) years. He received a Masters Degree in museum studies at the Cooperstown Graduate Program and a Masters Degree in history from Duke University.

Mr. Burch will give a power-point presentation offering comparisons of several early to mid-nineteenth century canal and turnpike taverns in the Mohawk Valley. He will outline structural as well as functional similarities and differences of the taverns. His discussion will review the restoration of the Historic Nellis Tavern, Fonda, in which he is currently involved.

The public is cordially invited to attend. Admission is free and light refreshments will be served.

**FRIENDS OF TAVERN TO HOST DISCUSSION OF**  
**"ORIGINS OF CHRISTMAS & CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS"**  
**WITH ROBERT HALLEY**  
**December 7, 2009**

**CLIFTON PARK, New York** – The Friends of Historic Grooms Tavern, a not-for-profit association dedicated to Historic Grooms Tavern, presents "Origins of Christmas & Christmas Ornaments" a lecture by Robert Halley on Friday evening, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. at Grooms Tavern, located at the corner of Grooms and Sugarhill Roads, Rexford. Preceding this presentation, there will be a holiday reception and Open House at the Tavern from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. with live music by the recorder consort "Sweetbrier", an ensemble of six musicians who will play medieval, renaissance and baroque Christmas music on period instruments.

The presentation by Mr. Halley includes an exhibit of 50-60 examples of antique Christmas ornaments dated from 1820s to 1940s. His talk will explore subjects such as the date of the first Christmas tree; pagan, religious and secular customs of Christmas; and, how religious leaders -- from a Pope in Rome to an Archbishop in England -- viewed pagan customs relating to Christmas. He will discuss how English kings before Queen Victoria and literary authors such as Samuel T. Coleridge, Washington Irving, Clement C. Moore, Harriet B. Stowe, Thomas Nast and Charles Dickens, all contributed to shape our ideas of both religious and secular celebrations of Christmas.

Robert Halley taught history for over thirty years. His wife Martha has been an antique dealer and collector for the last forty years. He has a broad knowledge of a wide variety of antiques that includes early pottery and stoneware, Christmas decorations, folk art, and a wide variety of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century objects. Mr. Halley has generously offered to appraise, free-of-charge, antique ornaments brought by attendees following the lecture.

The public is invited to join us for an evening of fun, learning about the history of antique Christmas decorations. Light refreshments will be served.

**HAVE YOU SEEN . . . ?**

. . . the exciting progress on the Outhouse at Historic Grooms Tavern? You should definitely stop by and take in this developing project. We also would like to take this opportunity to extend our wholehearted thanks to Chris Micheli -- who we were very lucky to locate and whose painstakingly, ever patient work is progressively bringing the outhouse *back* for all visitors to enjoy.

**FRIENDS OF HISTORIC GROOMS TAVERN**  
**ANNUAL MEETING**

**T**he annual meeting of the Friends of Historic Grooms Tavern will be held just prior to the lecture given on Friday evening, October 2, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. The Board will dedicate our newly renovated Outhouse, as well as hold a brief business meeting of The Friends, prior to the power point lecture on the history of Taverns in the Mohawk Valley graciously given by Ronald Burch. We look forward to seeing you, there!

Regular meetings of The Friends' Board of Directors are held on the *fourth* Monday of each month, generally, at the Tavern. The public-at-large is most welcome to attend our regular meetings. We are always looking for new board members to expand and diversify our Board of Directors, as well as members of the Friends who would like to join our volunteer panel. The volunteer panel is for those who would like to become more involved and could commit to a particular task, such as decorating the Tavern for the holidays, weeding the perennial garden, or bake/provide refreshments. Please call Alex Verrigni at 399.2446 or Pat Haffner at 371.8503 for more information.

The Friends of Historic Grooms Taverns ("FOGHT" or "FRIENDS") is a duly organized 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to the restoration and preservation of Historic Grooms Tavern of Clifton Park. Your contributions are fully deductible. See our website [www.grooms-tavern.org](http://www.grooms-tavern.org) or check the "Community Calendar" for events at [www.cliftonpark.org](http://www.cliftonpark.org). Thank you for your kind support!



**Calendar**  
**of**  
**Events**



- Oct 2nd 7PM **"Temples of Ease, Accommodating the Upstate Traveler in the Canal and Turnpike Era"**  
 Ronald Burch, Curator of Art and Architecture at the NYS Museum
  - Dec 7th 7PM **"The Origins of Christmas Ornaments"**  
 Open House, reception, holiday concert, holiday lecture on antique ornaments - watch for upcoming details
  - Monthly Meetings - September 28th  
**Annual Meeting: Friday Oct 2nd**  
 October 26th  
 November 23rd
- All Meetings Held At The Grooms Road Tavern**

