

People of Importance

1813 – 1913

Jacob VanBenthuyesen settled in Pottersville and built a sawmill beside a brook at what is now Natural Stone Bridge and Caves. Descendants of the VanBenthuyesens still operate Natural Stone Bridge and Caves today.

Rev. Jehiel Fox organized the first church, the Baptist, in 1796-97. It was the oldest Baptist Church in this region and the mother of most of the Baptist churches in Warren County. Rev. Fox was a prominent pioneer Baptist preacher in northern New York.

Charles H. Faxon, along with Alexander Robertson, built the Tannery in Chestertown in 1849, around the dam at the outlet of the Mill Pond. C.H. Faxon also owned the grist mill at that site, originally built about 1800. Mr. Faxon was president of the Glendale union Agricultural Society and created the Fair Grounds in Pottersville where the Pottersville Fair was held.

Joel F. Potter built the first store in Pottersville in 1839, just south of the Wells House. He was the first business man and is credited with starting the movement which resulted in the formation of the village. He gave Pottersville its name and was appointed the first postmaster December 5, 1839.

1913 – 2013

Harry S. Downs was proprietor of the Chester House, which was famous throughout the North Country and the summer home of many New Yorkers who enjoyed life in the Adirondacks. He was also an organizer and president of the Chester-Schroon-Horicon Bank and an organizer and first president of the Chestertown-Pottersville Chamber of Commerce.

Walter H. Wertime was a prominent attorney from Cohoes and also had a law practice in Chestertown. In 1923 he purchased the Faxon family property and operated it as the Panther Mountain House until 1956. In 1941 the building was destroyed by fire but was rebuilt and continued to operate. Mr. Wertime also bought and operated the Chester Theatre and the town water works in Chestertown. After the passing of Harry Downs, he also purchased the Chester House property.

Mott Phelps invented and built an early hand-drawn fire engine for Pottersville around 1920. Mott and his brother Frost Phelps operated Phelps Sawmill which was located next to what is now the Black Bear Restaurant and Bar. The system was much like soda/acid fire extinguishers and was used in conjunction with a hand pump. The pump had a single handle and was operated by one man. The "Phelps pump" was used often in fighting fires in and around Pottersville. After the formation of the Pottersville Volunteer Fire Department in 1948, Mott

and Frost Phelps were recognized for their efforts to get fire protection for Pottersville by being elected Honorary Members of the Pottersville Volunteer Fire Department.