

PAINTING RESTORED!!!!!!



JOHNSON NEWSPAPERS PHOTO BY CHRISTINA SCANLON

The photo on the left shows an early 1800s portrait of W. Hudson and Jane Camilliea Stevens donated to the Lewis County Historical Society that was sent to the State University of New York at Buffalo for restoration work two years ago. The photo on the right shows the same picture following restoration.

Restoration transformation

TWO-YEAR-PROCESS: Restored painting from early 1800s returned to historical society

By STEVE VIRKLER
Johnson Newspapers

LOWVILLE — A portrait from the early 1800s has returned to the Lewis County Historical Society after a nearly two-year restoration process at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

"We're really pleased with it," said Jerry E. Perrin, the historical society's office manager.

Historical society members Hamish and Eloise Davy, in September 2013, took a painting of then-children W. Hudson and Jane Camilliea

Stephens — donated in 2011 by Jane's great-great-granddaughter, Sarah Jane Medary of Eugene, Ore. — to Buffalo.

Restoration work was done by the college's art conservation department and was conducted as a fellowship project by student Christine

Romano, under the supervision of professor James Hamm.

"It cost us \$500 for the materials to restore the painting," Mr. Perrin said. "The work was free."

The society collected \$350

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in donations for the project, and the remaining \$150 was covered with proceeds from the Black River Valley Concert Series, he said.

The painting had a couple of large complex tears, one small complex one and nine other small tears or punctures, according to a condition summary conducted at the college.

The restoration effort in-

cluded analysis of the paint layer with an optical microscope, cleaning, mending of several tears, tape removal from the back, reducing varnish, humidifying, filling and inpainting.

"It looked so dark before," Mr. Perrin said.

Separate paintings of the children's parents, Apollos Stephens (1793-1867) and Lovinia Allen Stephens (1819-1873), were also part of the 2011 donation. They are also on display at the

Lewis County Historical Society headquarters at 7552 S. State St.

"Hopefully, in the future, we'll get the parents' paintings restored," Mr. Perrin said.

According to a short history of the family compiled by the society, Apollos Stephens was the son of Ehud Stephens, one of the first settlers in Lowville in 1797. He was a merchant in Copenhagen for many years and also served as the town of Den-

mark's clerk in 1825 and again from 1829 to 1833, then as town supervisor in 1838 and 1839. His wife, Lovinia, was born in Massachusetts, but little else is known about her. Mr. Stephens later married Betsey Moors in Copenhagen.

As for the subjects of the painting, W. Hudson Stephens became a prominent Lowville attorney who wrote a history of the Number Four Tract in the town of Watson in 1864, was a

member of the New York State Historical Society and sent meteorological data to Albany from 1870 to 1900. He never married.

Jane Stephens married Dr. Charles Earl of Syracuse and they moved to Myersville in the Wyoming Territory.

Their daughter Stella was a postmaster with her husband, John Gatlin; she was also a kleptomaniac, serving a year in a Wyoming prison for steal-

ing from the mail before being pardoned by President Grover Cleveland in 1894.

Stella's son, also named John, pursued a career in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and was honored by the Department of the Interior with its' Distinguished Service Award in 1967.

To view a Powerpoint presentation about the painting's restoration, visit <http://wdt.me/RestoredPainting>.