

COUNTRY LAWYER'S OFFICE



”Country Lawyer’s office.”

Located on 7 Church Street, the compact one-story red brick building with four white pillars was built around 1835. It was a replica of the Ontario County courthouse in Canandaigua, which was modeled after a Greek temple.

The building was acquired in a tax sale in Canandaigua in the 1840s by Charles Hobbie, a lawyer, who used it as a law office for another two decades.

A Civil War veteran named Samuel S. Partridge came to Phelps to practice law shortly after the War and moved into Hobbie’s law office a few years later. Partridge never owned the building, but, due to the 1939 best-selling novel, *Country Lawyer*, written by his son, Bellamy Partridge, the building has been known since as the

John B. Parmelee took over the Partridge practice and bought the law office from the Hobbie family in 1931. After Mr. Parmelee’s death in 1950, it was sold to another lawyer, Robert Quigley, who sold it to his law partner, John Britting in 1981. Mr. Britting sold it to his last partner, John Riley, in 1995.

Bob Quigley served as State Assemblyman for 10 years and, later, 19 years as a judge in the Court of Claims.

Other lawyers who practiced there over the years and went on to other pursuits were E. Bellamy Partridge – author; James Harvey – Ontario County District Attorney and County Court Judge; and Gary Tyman – now a Catholic priest.

The building was used as a law office until the retirement of John Britting in 1999. It was sold in 2002 to Jim and Dawn Cheney. In 2005 it was sold to the Historical Society with assistance from Mary Hicks Preston. In 2007, PCHS and the community underwent a strategic planning process to determine: 1) how best to interpret and tell the story of the country lawyer offices (1840s-1999) and 2) the next chapter of this story about a small, red brick building in Phelps!

In 2008, with support from community members, PCHS and the Preston Foundation this building was refurbished and is open for public visitation by appointment.

In September 2010, The newly formed **Midlakes Artisans Cooperative** (MAC) began to call this building home. In cooperation with PCHS, the Cooperative has the building open on Fridays and Saturdays Noon to 4 PM. In addition to the restored Lawyers Office, you will find wonderful unique items for sale. Caned chairs, to walking sticks, baskets to textile quilts, handmade cards to knit wear and photographs, and more can be found at the Cooperative. These objects carry on the tradition of historical hand arts into modern day.

Midlakes Artisans Cooperative (MAC) at the Country Lawyer’s Office is Open Fridays & Saturdays from Noon- 4PM.

