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**192 YEAR-OLD AUTHOR CELEBRATES BIRTHDAY WITH RELEASE OF NEW BOOK**  
*Compilation of news articles on Oneonta's history first written in 1890's by Harvey Baker*

ONEONTA, NY -- What do railroads, silver mines, wolf bounties, normal schools, and barns raised by witchcraft all have in common? They all appear in the new book, *Oneonta in Olden Time & Bits of Oneonta History: An Interesting Series of Articles by Harvey Baker, Published in the Oneonta Herald During the Years 1892-1893*. The book has just been released by Square Circle Press.

In 1892 and 1893 Harvey Baker—arguably the most important presence in the history of Oneonta, New York—penned a series of sixty-three articles on the city's history for the *Oneonta Herald*. The Greater Oneonta Historical Society (GOHS) compiled the articles into a new book and celebrated the release on October 16th with a book launch and birthday party for Harvey Baker, who turned 192 years old on that day.

Harvey Baker was a prolific writer who contributed to several Otsego County papers throughout his life. His articles for the *Oneonta Herald* are his account of how Oneonta evolved from aboriginal lands to frontier settlements, a bustling village, and eventually to a railroading powerhouse. Based on his research of the area's history dating back to colonial times and up to the current events of his lifetime, Baker covers topics as diverse as the American Revolution and Civil War, family histories, regional folklore, local newspapers, churches and schools, Native American legends, turnpikes and canals, and local geography and ecology. His description of the development of the railroad from Albany to Binghamton is of major interest; Baker is considered by many to have built the Albany & Susquehanna railroad single-handedly. This current publication of Baker's history makes it widely accessible for the first time since its initial publication more than one hundred years ago.

The release event and birthday party featured a birthday cake for Mr. Baker, who could not be present for obvious reasons. Joining members and officers of GOHS were Suzanne Baker Clark and Margaret Baker Witherbee, great-great-granddaughters of the author. The sisters displayed scrapbooks and manuscripts of their ancestor's writings held in the Baker family archives, which were viewed with interest by visiting members of the public. After comments by GOHS Director Bob Brzozowski, GOHS President John Carney and Square Circle Press publisher Richard Vang, the sisters both spoke briefly about the thrill of seeing the articles come back into print after so long.

Born in Broome County, New York in 1818, Harvey Baker became a mechanic and millwright at an early age. He began rebuilding water wheels in saw, grist, and other mills and factories. He first visited Oneonta in February 1841, when he made his first contract to put his wheels into the local mills. In addition to his mechanical skills, Baker was a gifted public speaker and lobbyist who worked for decades to bring the railroad to Oneonta. An original stockholder of the Albany & Susquehanna railroad, he also contracted to build the rail beds, bridges, and trestles, personally supervising the work between Albany and Binghamton. He later purchased and developed land near Oneonta, selling it to the Delaware & Hudson railroad for their machine shops. In community life, Baker served as Oneonta village president and town supervisor, was a charter trustee of the Oneonta Savings Bank, and owned the

Howe's Cave Lime and Cement Company. He also owned two farms and wrote extensively on farming in the *Otsego Farmer*. Baker died at his home in Oneonta in 1904.

"We're really thrilled about the publication of this book," said GOHS Director Bob Brzozowski. "It's been a project three years in the making, and through our collaboration with Square Circle Press, we are finally seeing it come to fruition." The book reproduces the articles exactly as they were published—typographical errors, spelling variations, and all. "We felt it was important to preserve the text as published, not only to create a primary source document for researchers and historians, but also to preserve the character of an older newspaper," Brzozowski stated.

The book is laid out chronologically according to the dates the articles were published, but the table of contents is arranged according to similar subject matters, such as railroads, family histories, schools, churches, and more. "Along with the index and illustrations that are included, we feel this is a valuable contribution to the scholarship of upstate New York, Otsego County, and Oneonta in particular. Plus, it's just really great reading," added Brzozowski.

The paperback book is retailed at \$22.95 and can be purchased online at the publisher's web site, [www.squarecirclepress.com](http://www.squarecirclepress.com), and at other online retailers such as *Amazon.com*. It can also be purchased at retail bookstores or at the GOHS location on Main Street in Oneonta. The book is distributed through Ingram/LSI and Baker & Taylor and also through the publisher.

For more information about how and where to purchase this book or other titles, products and services available from Square Circle Press, please visit the publisher's web site.

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