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NEW BOOK ON ONEONTA HISTORY TO BE RELEASED

Compilation of news articles on city's history written in 1890's by Harvey Baker

ONEONTA, NY -- 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) has compiled the articles into a 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 will be published in October by Square Circle Press, but individuals can now pre-order the book at a special pre-publication discount price.

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 single-handedly built the Albany & Susquehanna railroad. This current publication of Baker's history, compiled by GOHS, makes it widely accessible for the first time since its initial publication more than one hundred years ago.

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 and Lime 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 will be included, we feel this will be 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 will be retailed at \$22.95, but until October it will be available to the public at a pre-publication discount price of \$15.00. The book can be pre-ordered through the publisher’s web site, www.squarecirclepress.com, or at the GOHS location on Main Street in Oneonta. GOHS is offering a special pre-pub discount of \$12.50 to its members. Booksellers and libraries are encouraged to contact Square Circle Press to arrange their orders through the publisher. The book will also be distributed through Ingram/LSI and Baker & Taylor.

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

Title: 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

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