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Historian rediscovers 'lost' Saratoga County industries

By PAUL POST

The Saratogian

SARATOGA SPRINGS — Author Tim Starr has captured a piece of local history that's often overlooked in a new book, "Lost Industries of Saratoga County."

Published by The History Press, his 176-page work features a variety of long-gone companies — from the Button Fire Engine Works in Waterford to the Mount Pleasant Glass Factory in Greenfield.

"When I first moved to Saratoga County, I read a lot about the history of racing and the mineral springs," said Starr, 39, a Granville native. "This is a facet of Saratoga County history that hadn't been concentrated on, at least not in-depth. People in towns where these plants were

located might know about them, but that's about it."

Button Fire Engine Works manufactured thousands of fire engines that went all over the country in the mid-1800s. Many were used throughout the greater Capital Region, including Saratoga County.

Mount Pleasant Glass Factory, also known as the Granger Glass Factory, was established in Greenfield in 1844 and made hundreds of thousands of bottles for Saratoga Springs' mineral water. The company moved to Saratoga Springs around 1865 and operated until around 1910.

Starr also writes about the wooden ware firms in heavily forested towns such as Day, Edinburg and Providence that made everything from barrel covers to

washboards during the 19th century.

No book about Saratoga County industry would

be complete without referencing its many paper mills, such as the old West Virginia Pulp & Paper Co. in Mechanicville, once touted as the world's largest plant of its kind. Ballston had a large paper bag factory on the banks of the Kayaderosseras Creek, and Chase Bag Co. was a huge plant in the Fenimore section of Moreau.

The long, painful demise of International Paper Co.'s Hudson River Mill in Corinth is another important chapter in local history.

"Lost Industries" is Starr's 10th book and took about a year to complete.

"I just went to all the local historical societies to research what plants and factories were in their respective towns," he said.

Starr graduated from Castleton State College in Vermont with a dual major in history and accounting. A Rock City Falls resident, he's employed as an accountant for Hometown Health Center in Schenectady.

"It's tough to make a living in history," he said.

But there's no question that it's one of his deep, abiding passions. In addition to writing, he serves as a board member and treasurer of Brookside Museum, home of the Saratoga County Historical Society.

Starr will present and sign copies of his book at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at Red Fox Books, located at 28 Ridge St. in Glens Falls, adjacent to City Hall.

For more information, go to www.historyofsaratoga.com.

