

Couple take nostalgic look at upstate New York sites

Greenwich native illustrates book of husband's tales

Q & A

from Thunder Mountain, her family farm, was just the same with the hills of Vermont on one side and Saratoga Springs on the other.

"I realized that Greenwich was an awesome place," said Elizabeth Cockey. "I had new eyes for it."

And her husband, Barton, a radiologist at the Greater Baltimore Medical Center, agreed. So while not tending to her father, they explored the environs. And what they discovered was a rich history that those in Washington County were eager to share.

Their frequent jaunts inspired a book, one that expresses the Cockeys' embrace of and reverence for Greenwich and its neighboring towns. Elizabeth's gracious water-

colors and gouaches of landscapes and street scenes, complemented by Barton's lively storytelling, have been combined in a coffee-table book.

"Upstate New York: Towns That We Love" affectionately surveys the beauty and history of Greenwich, Easton, Salem, Cambridge, Schuylerville and Saratoga Springs, as well as nearby landmarks.

Recently, Elizabeth spoke of her and Barton's labor of love.

Q: What were you trying to convey with your paintings of Washington?

A: Both a sense of place and my emotional attachment to it. As I looked around at the landscape and realigned with old friends and family, I realized I can come home again. It's just like the '50s when I grew up, wonderful and picturesque.

Q: And your husband, Barton, how did he approach the history?

A: He wanted to make it a light history. He would embellish with stories about locals and when I was a kid. But my husband, who is very well-educated, he wanted to do it right.

Q: You are an art therapist. Was creating this book therapeutic for you?

A: Yes it was. It helped me come to terms with my parents passing on. When your parents die, it occurs to you that you are an orphan and that you are really grown up now. The book is kind of a tribute to what my parents gave me and where I grew up.

Q: How long did it take you to create all 70 paintings?

A: From the time we decided to do to when it was published was five and a half months. We cranked this thing out because the publisher (Bridgeway Books) wanted to publish by fall. So every weekend we would come up. Toward the end, I was doing a painting a day.

Q: Did you learn things that you didn't know about Washington County?

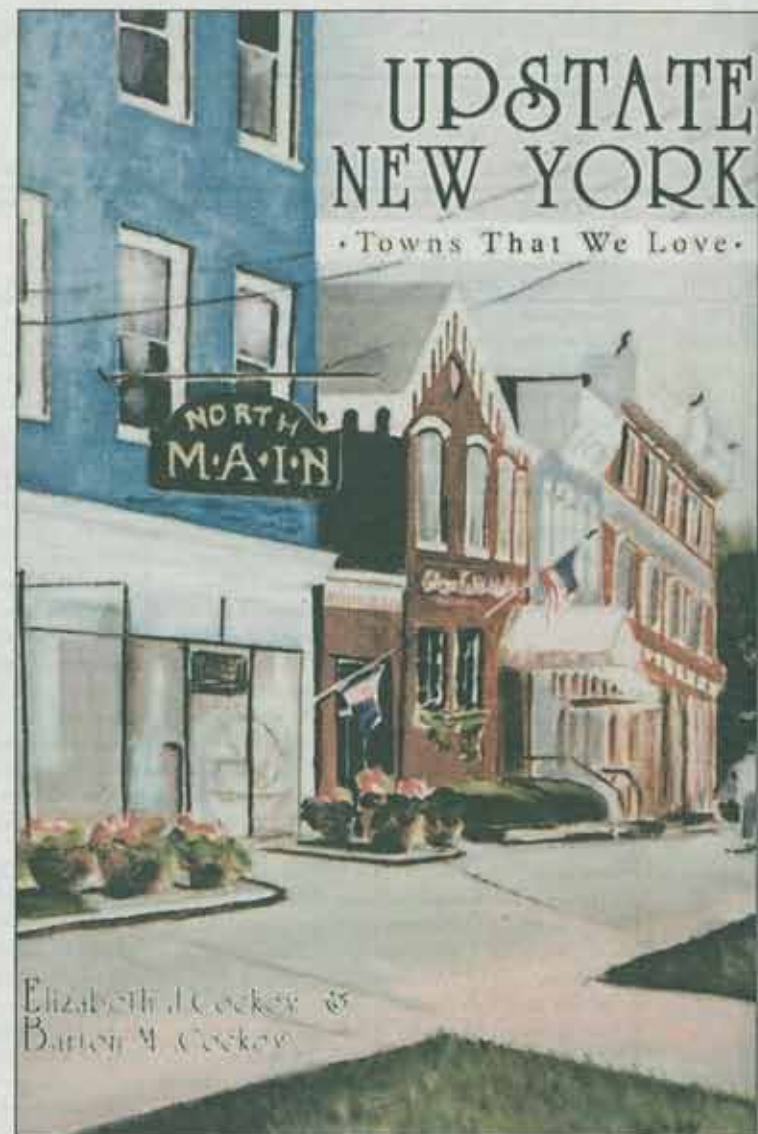
A: Yes and no. One of my favorites, that I already knew, the story of the Quaker Meeting house in Easton. The Quakers voted to be pacifists. So in 1777, when an Indian war party was coming, the Quakers sat in the meeting house in silence. The Indians were so impressed, thinking they were either nuts or heroic, they left them alone. This is a true story. Even though the meeting house has been moved, I painted the it from the same vantage point the Indians would have first seen it.

Q: What has been the reaction to your book from locals?

A: I'm like a movie star. I've already sold 800 books, which is a lot. People are buying them in multiples of 10 so they can send them off to children or others who used to live in the area. The publisher will probably do a second printing.

Q: Will you collaborate on another book with your husband?

A: We vacation on Chesapeake Beach in Maryland. So we are considering doing that area, which is also beautiful with a lot of little towns. But if we do, we won't tell the publisher until we are halfway through so we can go more gradually. We had a terrible schedule



for this book. Still, working on the Greenwich book was romantic and nostalgic. Reach Gazette reporter Wendy Liberatore at 395-3199 or at wendy@dailygazette.com.



The husband-and-wife team of Barton M. and Elizabeth J. Cockey created "Upstate New York: Towns That We Love."

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