

New York State Office for the Aging

Senior Citizen's Day Recognition

We would like to thank you for submitting nominations for the 2020 New York State Office for the Aging Senior Citizen's Day Recognition Event. Through an anonymous process, the Senior Advisory Council chose **Carolyn Ouderkirk from Fort Ann and William Cormier from Salem**

Congratulations William "Al" Cormier!



William "Al" Cormier grew up in Leominster, Massachusetts area. In 1957, earned his Bachelor of Arts degree at University of Massachusetts

and Master of Education, at Cornell in 1965. William married Sara Jane Smock in 1957 and they have three children – Bill, Bob and Rebecca; one grandchild Jacob. William and his family moved to Salem, New York in 1965.

For seven years he was an English/history teacher and then the Salem Central School high school principal for 27 years. In addition, he has been the Salem Town historian since 1983. William served in the Army National Guard New York State 1st Armored Rifle Battalion, 108th Infantry for eight years.

William is the author of *The Back Shop and Other Tales*, a railroading book about Salem; *Next Year in Salem*, a chronicle of the Salem home front during WWII; and most recently a vintage photograph book, *Along the Battenkill*, of life along the Battenkill in the 1800's and 1900's. William also wrote the Salem section for *The Covered Bridges of Washington County, New York* and *A Crease in the Landscape*, the story of the slate industry in Washington County.

William is a frequent contributor to the Washington County Historical Society's, *The Annual Journal of the Washington County Historical Society*. He has written six historical articles; "Out of the Great Depression: The Experience of the Town of Salem," "Salem's Forgotten African Americans," "The McCloy Letters," "The Northern Turnpike: Historic New York State Route 22," "When Pigs Fly," and "The Audubon Family of Salem, 1880-1949, A brief Recounting of their Washington County Residency."

William has also edited and published *Diary of a 19th Century Farm Wife* and *The Diary of Thaddeus Walker*. In 2017, he wrote the article "No Man's Land Revisited" for publication in the *New York History Review*.

William is an active church member serving in many capacities. In 1967, William co-founded the Salem Rotary and was a Charter member. He also held the office of president four times. William is a continuing member of the Salem Area Chamber of Commerce and its founding president in 1995. William is a member of the Washington County Historical Society and was a recipient of the James Cronkhite Award in 2004. In 2001, he was chosen for the Riverside School House list of honorees by the Fort Edward Historical Society.

William has been a member of the Association of Public Historians New York State since 1984, Certified New York State town historian since 2003, sup-

porter and member of Historic Salem Courthouse Preservation Association since 2002, served as clerk of the Salem Planning Board for ten years, Chair of the Salem Historical Preservation Commission since 1976 and has written numerous grants for historic preservation and record's management. In 1995, he developed a records management system and historical archives for the town and village of Salem, upgraded the storage system and facilities for the town in 2019. He served as a member of the Mary McClellan Hospital Board of Directors for many years, and volunteers his time at the Salem Food Pantry.

William has written many historical articles for the local newspapers and has given many educational programs to adults and students since 1984. He has successfully placed the Revolutionary War Cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005 and was instrumental in developing the National Historic District in the village of Salem in 1975.

William was asked, what advice he had about volunteering for other New Yorkers, and he stated, "We should live a life of 'Service Above Self.'"



MAKE YOUR MARK: MAY 2020