Fairfield and the Academy

By Gerald Wiley

The town of Fairfield in Herkimer county was incorporated in 1796. The post office in the hamlet of Fairfield was established in 1804 with William Smith as postmaster. Fairfield Academy, founded in 1803, underwent many changes during its lifetime of almost a century.

In 1809 it became Fairfield Medical College. It was chartered in 1813 as The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Western New York. The medical school closed in 1841, having graduated more than 500 doctors of medicine. It is considered the birthplace of Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, the School of Medicine of University of Buffalo, and Albany Medical College.

A cover mailed in 1854 advertised the Fairfield Classical Academy and Female Collegiate Institute with a "large and competent faculty" and stated "the pianist is a gentleman of superior qualifications."

An 1889 cover enclosed stationery from Fairfield Seminary Boarding School for Young Ladies and Gentlemen offering twelve courses of study including telegraphy, elocution, violin, mandolin, guitar, shorthand, and typewriting.

From 1890 until it closed in 1902 the school was known as Fairfield Seminary and Military Academy.

The bicentennial of the founding of the town of Fairfield was commemorated in 1996 with a pictorial cancellation picturing an outline map of the town boundaries and the town hall. The cancellation was applied at the Fairfield Community Hall, serving temporarily as a station of the Middleville post office. The Fairfield post office had closed in 1995. ∎