

# Kanestio Historical Society Times

23 Main St - P.O. Box 35 - Canistota, NY 14823  
(607) 698-2086 Wed - Fri 1-3 PM Monthly Meetings - 3rd Tuesday 7:00 PM

Spring 2017 [kanestiohs@gmail.com](mailto:kanestiohs@gmail.com) Gail Davis, Editor

## In Our Collection Graduation Photos



Class of 1967 - 50 Year Class

As I was trying to figure out what the content of the next issue of our Newsletter would be, Steve Cotton was planning for his 40<sup>th</sup> Class Reunion and my husband Gary and I were planning for our 50<sup>th</sup>. It made me wonder if our members were aware of just how much school history and memorabilia we have at the Historical Society.

We have yearbooks from 1899 through the current years. We have handbooks, baccalaureate and graduation programs, and programs from plays, musicals, water ballets, and concerts. We have

alumni directories, handbooks, and files of newspaper clippings. We have a surprising amount of information from the old Canistota Academy - course curriculums and lots of pictures depicting the fashions of the day.

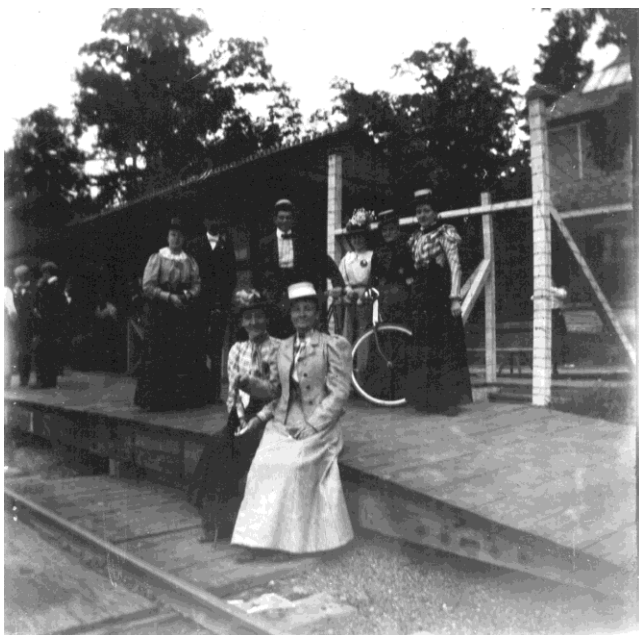
We also have extra copies of the Graduation Class Photos from 1967 - 2008 for sale. If you are in town for a reunion or planning for one, take time to stop in and browse our school related items, as well as the many historical exhibits in our second floor museum.



## Canisteo Schools



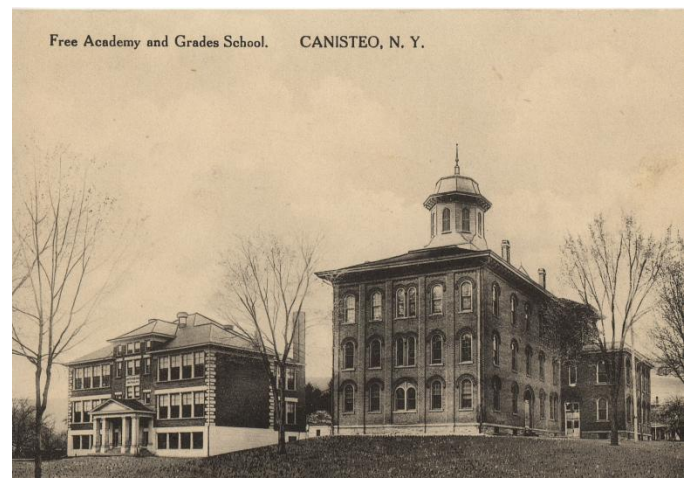
In the late 1860's the Reverend Lewis Laine of the Canisteo Presbyterian Church felt there was a need for a place of higher education in the village, more than was provided by the local public schools. Money was raised and a building constructed at the corner of Greenwood and Academy Streets, to be known as the Canisteo Academy. The first class entered in September of 1871. Students paid tuition to attend and those from outside of the village lived in the boarding houses that developed in the area. Students came from many of the surrounding towns. When the NYP railroad was completed in the 1890's students from along its route rode the train to and from school from as far away as northern Pennsylvania. A passenger platform was constructed where the railroad crossed Academy Street for the students' use.



In 1873 the village had outgrown the one room school house on Greenwood St. and a new elementary school was constructed on Sixth Street. There were six grades, hence the name the Graded School. In 1897 the Academy and Graded School were combined and became a public school. The combined district was known as the Union Free School.



In 1914 a new grade school was constructed next to the Academy Building, now the high school. There was a new emphasis at the secondary level in preparing students for entering colleges and universities. In a 1920 Canisteo Times Newspaper article it was reported that the Canisteo Academy was overcrowded. Registration for the 1st week of school was 327 students with over 100 enrolled in the high school. In 1935, because the Academy buildings had become inadequate, Canisteo approved the formation of a central school system. A new school building was erected on the Canisteo Academy site with the grade school incorporated into the new structure.







In 1949 an addition to the back of the school included a cafeteria, music rooms and several classrooms. In 1952 the Preston House on Academy St. was renovated and added to the school facilities. In 1955 an ag shop was added to the rear of the school shop. In 1958 125 acres of land were purchased from Edwin Childs and Harry Smith on Greenwood St and an elementary school was constructed. This new building included a library, combination gym and cafeteria, and one of the first pools to be built in a school system in the Southern Tier.



In 2003-2004, after many discussions and deliberations, both the Canisteo and Greenwood Boards of Education, plus the voters, agreed to annexation of the Greenwood Central School into the Canisteo School District. The Greenwood Building remained open through the 2011-2012 school year, housing the Greenwood elementary students and 7th and 8th grade middle school students from both schools.

## Do you remember when schools had a dental hygienist?



Margaret Stephens, Dental Hygienist

During the 1950's, 60's and 70's the school dental hygienist was the primary source of dental care for many students. I recently sat down with Margaret Stephens, who cleaned our teeth and was a confidant for many students in the Canisteo School system, to get more information on her job.

Margaret Findlay graduated from Eastman Dental School in 1947. The dental school had posted a position for a dental hygienist in the rural areas of Greenwood, Canisteo, Jasper, Troupburg and Arkport. Margaret had grown up in North Tonawanda and was a city girl. She knew she didn't want to work in a dental office so decided to apply for the job. She was hired, moved to Greenwood where she rented a room and soon met the love of her life, Richard (Pete) Stephens.

She spent approximately six weeks at each school, working out of the girl's coaches office with each school providing her with a dental chair, sterilizer and the other equipment she needed.

She took courses from Alfred and SUNY Cortland to get her teaching degree and was hired full time by the Canisteo School District in 1950. She took time off when daughter Peggy was born in 1953 and returned to the job in 1960. She saw every student at least once a year for a thorough cleaning

and would report any cavities or problems to the parents so that they could take their children to the dentist. She taught health classes to grades 1-6. Does anyone remember her cleanest teeth awards or having to get an excuse because you were late for class?

In 1978 the district abolished the position of dental hygienist. Margaret had seen 1,306 students in her last year. Multiply that by the number of years she taught and you get an idea of the impact she had on Canisteo students.

### **ROOSA HOLLOW**

#### **Reflections of a Rural School Teacher**

*This story was written by Mabel Jones - probably in the 1960's . Roosa Hollow or Cattie-tunk, now called the McChesney Road, ran from the Swale Road at the top of Creesy Pitch to Adrian with a branch to Brown's Crossing. Mabel was our neighbor when I was growing up and, although I never had her as a teacher, visiting her at her home was always a learning experience.*



A visit to Roosa Hollow many years after my two years spent there teaching in 1910-1911.

As I stand here on the brow of the hill where once was a good country road with homes, good enough, as they thought, at the time, along the way. Happy families, though father and mother had to work in the fields to earn a living for their little brood of bare foots. They were richer than millionaires in God's good country air, with all the flowers and birds to enjoy. Well I remember the call of the whippoorwill we listened to down in the valley at sundown.

I spent some time as a boarder in one of those homes, a young bashful schoolmarm. But where is everyone? No homes left, no barns, no road, only a rough path zigzagging down the hill to tell where the youngsters and I wended way each morning to the place of learning. And the School House, where is that? I will wander over the hill to the north, only a short distance. It will be in a clump of brush beside what was then a badly washed out road, hardly passable with a car! Oh no. We had seen them, and some of us had been lucky enough to have ridden in one -- I mean with a team and Democrat wagon. That is what they all drove.

Yes, this is where the road was, but where is the little clump of trees? Trees and brush everywhere now. Here are the remains of the foundation. No building, no out houses, no wood pile in the yard, no youngsters slowly meandering up the hill from their homes in the valley to the north, or gaily skipping toward home as they did at four o'clock.

I spent two years in that old school house. The seats were filled with boys and girls, twelve, if I remember correctly. From Sam Halletts were Willie and Ira. From Dell Olivers came Emma and Charles. From Ephraim Potter were two little ones, one from the McChesney home, and Edna, Harold and Hazel from Ellerington's. I cannot recall all their names.

As they grew up one was victim of the first flu epidemic to strike in our community. One poor unfortunate sat on the tracks when he could stagger no farther until the train helped him off. Another cut down by pneumonia, one fell asleep in his car after too many sleepless nights and was found dead from monoxide gas. Those boys - not one left! The girls have fared better. They have married and are scattered across the state. I hear that one is a minister, one has a restaurant, the others as far as I know are housewives.

One of the things most vivid in my memory are the electric storms we had in those years. Most of the window panes were out, in fact the frames were too old to hold them. As the wind and rain whooped through I huddled the youngsters in a corner to get out of the draft. I had always heard that balls of lightning might pass through.

And then there was the siege with the itch, the real old fashioned seven year itch. Books were few and parents too poor to buy so some had to use the teachers' books. Oh horrors, some of those little hands covered with sores. Mothers gave jars of butter and sculpture to soothe them and as a precaution for myself. I never got it.

You will say "Why teach in such a place? There were as many or more teachers as schools in those days. The new inexperienced ones usually were initiated in those places back in the hills. If you were a born teacher you stuck it out, if not you proceeded to hunt up a husband or another job.

I have been day dreaming long enough. Must be making my way down the grade, here are two houses. Yes, they used to be houses. Now just the shell of the house with sheep running in and out. Across the road was the large frame house of the Elleringtons. They were proud of their home that they had worked so hard to fix. We can look through where once were windows but the floor doesn't look safe to tread upon. Sheep paths and those made by wild animals cross the grounds.

Next we come around the hill to where my trustee, Dell Oliver lived. The important man of the district. His house, barn, out buildings and all have tired of standing unoccupied and tumbled to rest mid the thicket of plum and lilacs.

Of the ten homes in the district, there is only one where humans have lived during the last few years. But it now reminds one of a gruesome skull, widows gone and doors creaking. The open cistern tells the fate of an unfortunate sheep.

## New at KHS

Our volunteers have been busy over the winter months. The second floor has a new permanent display wall and exhibits have been changed and refreshed. The last of the picture rails have been installed giving us ample room to display our large collection of photos without filling our new walls with nail holes! We have restored a beautiful Victorian Crazy Quit which will be featured in the next issue of our newsletter. If it's been a while since you visited it's time to stop in and see what's new.

## Have you paid your 2017 Dues?

Please check the date above your address label to see if your dues are current. If you are a lifetime member, please consider a donation. Dues are the main funding for our newsletter which is still mailed to over 75 members. If you are able to

receive your newsletter via e-mail, please let us know. You will benefit by receiving the newsletters with colored photos and it will save postage and time for our volunteers.

**Know someone who would enjoy receiving our newsletter?** Pass your newsletter on and suggest a membership to the Historical Society. Our annual dues are a modest \$10. The upcoming alumni reunions are a perfect time to let your friends and classmates know about us and the treasure trove of Canisteo history housed at the Historical Society.

**Have visitors from out of town and you can't find anything to do in Canisteo - bring them to visit.** We have exhibits for all ages and interests.

**Looking for a unique gift?** We have a large selection of books filled with pictures and stories of Canisteo history.

## Coming Events - Save the Dates

**March 21** - 7:00 - Winters on the Swale from the 1943-1958 diaries of Virginia Dickey

**April 18** - 7:00 - Stony Brook Park by Jane Schryver & Paul Hoffman

**May 16** - 7:00 - John & Sue Babbitt will tell us about their trip to Australia

**June 1&2** - Crazy Days - Consider donating unwanted items when doing your Spring Cleaning - no clothing.

**June 20** - TBA

**July 18** - 6:00 - Annual Picnic at President Larry Stephens'.

**August 4** - 4 PM Steuben Country Historical Society Walk through Canisteo - this is a rain date from last August.

**August 15** - Outing to visit the new Andover/Allegany Historical Society. We will car pool and have lunch at nearby restaurant.

**September 19** - 7:00 TBA

**October 17** - 7:00 TBA

**November 7** - Election Day Pie Sale 9-12. Beginning of Yesterday's Treasure's Sale.

**November 21** 6:00 - Harvest Dinner

**November 25** - 5-8:00 Christmas in the Village

**December 9** - 9-12 - Cookie Sale

**December 19** - 7:00 Christmas Program

Kanestio Historical Society  
23 Main St., P.O. Box 35  
Canisteo, NY 14823

## The Back Page

*This newsletter is written in tribute to Virginia Dickey whose dream was a Historical Society to preserve and display local history for future generations.*

### Application for Membership 2017

Do you know someone who would like to receive our newsletter - perhaps an old classmate or out of town relative? For the low cost of \$10 (annual dues) you receive 4 issues per year of our newsletter.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues: \$10.00 Individual \*\*    \$15.00 Family\*\*  
\$150.00 Life

Make check payable to:  
Kanestio Historical Society  
P.O. Box 35  
Canisteo, NY 14823

### *Donations gratefully accepted toward operating expenses.*

#### 2017 Officers

Larry Stephens	Co- President
Sue Babbitt	Co - President
Jeanne Gore	Secretary
Gail Davis	Treasurer
Margaret Stephens-	Corresponding Secretary

#### Directors

Sally Florence	2017
Russell Pierce	2018
Sue Babbitt	2019
Stan Arthur	2020
Jose Huerta	2021