

# Kanestio Historical Society Times

23 Main St - P.O. Box 35 - Canisteo, NY 14823  
(607) 698-2086 Wed - Fri 1-3 PM Monthly Meetings - 3rd Tuesday 7:00 PM  
[www.kanestiohistoricalsociety.com](http://www.kanestiohistoricalsociety.com)

2020 Vol. 2 - Spring [kanestiohs@gmail.com](mailto:kanestiohs@gmail.com) Gail Davis, Editor

## Wild Bill Cody

Ties to Canisteo from the files of Leora Drake,  
Canisteo Town Historian

1950-1979 (check these dates!!)



Going through the files of our two past town historians, Leora Drake and Virginia Dickey, never fails to amaze me. These ladies compiled a wealth of information without the use of the internet and computers. They both used typewriters, probably using the hunt and peck method, yet their manuscripts contain few errors or erasures. The one advantage they did have over modern researchers was interviews with people who had

first or second hand knowledge of the stories of early Canisteo.

I recently found a nine page manuscript of Leora's on the "Old Houses in Canisteo & Vicinity." That in itself is the basis for a great newsletter story. The whole article reads like a "who's who" of Canisteo, as I recognized name after name that could be a story by themselves, but the references to Wild Bill Cody prompted this article.

According to Leora, **Alfred Mills** was married to Anne Moore, a granddaughter of Col. Bill Stephens. Alfred had been employed on the Union Pacific Railroad as a boss for a gang of men during its construction, which was started during the Civil War and completed in 1869. While employed on this railroad, he became a very close and fast friend of "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Cody had earned that nickname because he had contracted to furnish buffalo meat to feed the workmen on that line after release from Army service and until he again became an army scout in 1868. In 1872 Cody was elected to the Nebraska legislature; then, served in the 5th Cavalry in the Sioux War in 1876 and in the Battle of Indian Creek killed in personal contact, Chief Yellow Hand.

Later contacts, as well as personal visits between Cody and Mills, kept their friendship strong and alive and every year Cody spent his vacation in Canisteo at the Mills home, especially around 1876 and later as he always went to the late **Nicholas Weyand** to have his beard and goatee trimmed. Cody organized his "Wild West" show in 1883 and took it to Europe in 1887. During the years he traveled with this show, every time he was in Hornell or near vicinity, he was an overnight and dinner guest at the Mills' home.

Several years ago the late **Dr. Harry Stewart**, retired dentist of Canisteo, gave me some of his recollections of the "old days" freshening the memories of many folks here of this forgotten bit of local history. His parents, **Jimmy and Janey Stewart**, owned a music store on Main St. (at the site of our Historical Society) for over 50 years. Janey operated a millinery shop in the building where many local ladies bought their hats. Harry's parents were determined that he should take piano lessons and had arranged for him to take lessons from **Louise Mills**. He had arrived for his first lesson and was trying to absorb the basic principles thereof, when they heard a commotion outside. Looking out, they beheld four black Shetland ponies on a tandem, driven by none other than Buffalo Bill Cody himself. Harry was too excited to settle down to a prosaic music lesson and was delighted when asked to stay for a 6 o'clock dinner with his hero.

He had no recollection of the dinner conversation nor what food he ate and when Cody turned to him and asked him if he would like to see the show in Hornell the next day and how many were in his family, his day was quite complete. Cody gave him five comp tickets needed and the next day the Stewart family drove to Hornell behind their sorrel mustangs, hitched it to a post at the old fairgrounds and proceeded to enjoy the day to its fullest.

Many of us probably saw this show before Cody's death in 1917 and remember the Western type stagecoach, yipping and yelling cowboys and Indians, the latter painted and feathered to the 9th degree and many other western stage props, used in his show in Hornell. It was 1916 that I viewed it. At the head of the parade that circled the three rings was Buffalo Bill himself, mounted on his favorite horse and leading his band of "Congress of Rough Riders of the World." They made a very effective entrance following a small herd of buffalo, shooting blanks into the air and whooping it up. He certainly made a very striking appearance, as I remember him, in his fancy western buckskins, big hats and long, flowing white hair and Vandyke beard. Over the years at different times two Canisteo young ladies had the honor of riding in the stagecoach in place of the usual actress occupant, one a Canisteo banker's daughter. (Leora doesn't give the names of these 2 ladies.)

## ARCH MERRILL - LOCAL HISTORIAN

submitted by John S Babbitt

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The beginnings of my personal love of local history probably came to me via my parents, but second on my list of my history mentors would be Arch Merrill, former editor of the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle. He and his typewriter produced many straightforward stories of the history, folklore, and geography of Western New York.

A newspaper colleague, Mitchell Kaidy, once described Merrill's style: "For 33 years, Arch Merrill hand-scribbled notes during the day and pounded the typewriter at night. During the day, he prowled small libraries and interviewed local historians and informed sources. At night, he transformed those notes into books and newspaper columns, producing 23 volumes of regional history and thousands of newspaper columns.

Raised in Cattaraugus County community of Sandusky, Archie "Arch" Hayes Merrill (1894-1974) was influenced by listening to old-timers tell stories around the cracker barrel at his father's general store - stories that were later woven into the fabric of his writings.

He enlisted in the Army in 1916, serving in France during World War I with Company B, 33rd Engineers. After the war, he worked for short spells in Washington, D.C., Detroit and New York City. He moved to Rochester where his newspaper career spanned some 50 years.

His first book, "A River Ramble" (1943), outlines his trip along the entire length of the Genesee River. His trek begins at a spot in

northern Pennsylvania where he describes the river's origin as "water that bubbles out of a spring...cold and crystal clear." He follows its ever-growing and meandering flow through rich farmland until "the commonplace stream becomes spectacular and magnificent" in the chasms of Letchworth State Park, before reaching the city of Rochester to pour into Lake Ontario.

Many names emerge from the pages of his stories: Prophets Joseph Smith, "a glib and convincing talker," and Brigham Young, "serious-minded, industrious, money-sharp," pulled up their New York roots, then moved west to establish Mormonism; Hammondspport's aviation pioneer Glenn Curtiss, "never satisfied with the mechanical status quo," sought out for his expertise by such notables as Alexander Graham Bell and Henry Ford; and women's rights advocate Susan B Anthony, "a warmly human person...her physical and moral courage was unquestioned," grew up as a farmer, a teacher and far more gracious and complex person than the one often portrayed as the iron-willed symbol of a movement.

Reading his books, we can sense Merrill's affection for the many noteworthy people who once lived in the Genesee Valley country. "The Great John L., "legendary John L. Sullivan, in the late 1800's used a barn for a training gym in tiny Belfast. Mary Jemison, kidnapped during the French and Indian Wars, who would live among the Senecas along the Genesee River for the rest of her life. Her story inspired a book that gave rise to the legend of "The White Woman of the Genesee." Clara Barton provided needed care and supplies to relieve soldiers suffering the horrors of the Civil War. She lived in Dansville, where she established the first chapter of the American Red Cross.

Merrill's books are still available for those in search of trivia and great stories of historic interest pertaining to southwestern New York. Local libraries and the Kanestio Historical Society have many of Merrill's books that are available on loan.

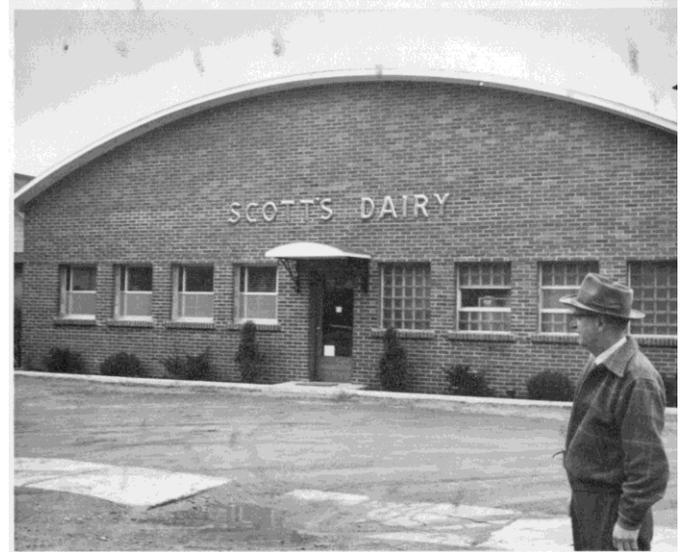
Reprints and used original copies can also be found on line through E-Bay and Amazon.

Arch Merrill died at his home on July 15, 1974 at age 79, survived by his wife and daughter. He was laid to rest in Brighton Cemetery in Rochester, New York.

## Scott's Dairy

1946 - 1968

by Diane Scott Miller



**Scott's Dairy** had its origin in the village of Canisteo, NY in October of 1946. The dairy, purchased in 1946 from Harlo Atherton, was then known as Atherton's Ayrshire Dairy and was producing 800 quarts a day. Sometime before 1946 Harlo moved the processing plant to 16 Fourth Street in Canisteo (the present site of the liquor store and apartments). This is where the operation was when my dad bought the business.

At the time of our takeover in 1946 it was a fairly basic operation. Each farmer brought his own milk to the plant in 10 gallon milk cans rather than having a tanker pick it up at the farm like today. The equipment in the plant was limited since all we had were a receiving vat, pasteurizer, bottle washer (everything was in glass), and bottler that also attached the caps. However, it wasn't long before Dad expanded his product line making chocolate milk, buttermilk and cottage cheese. Even though I was only seven or eight years old at the time, my job was putting the lids on the cheese cartons. (No automation for that process!) For the first couple years we continued with the one delivery route in the village but eventually had two routes in town. After the purchase of a Hartsville route from Bert Preston in 1947 and a route to Jasper, Troupsburg,

and Woodhull from Stan Gay, rural delivery was started. Later, delivery to Adrian, Cameron, and Cameron Mills was added. Besides the homes along the way, all of these small villages had at least one grocery store. Most homes had an insulated milk box on the porch but the trucks were not refrigerated until later.



In 1950 the Scott's Dairy Bar was built at 38 W. Main Street in Canisteo. Dad made all of his own ice cream mix and ice cream. Originally it was all made in the back of the dairy bar but later at the plant on Fourth Street. We were known for our top quality rich ice cream; thick, creamy shakes; and a variety of sundaes. During the years that I worked there (1955-1962) our cones sold for \$.08 a single dip and \$.15 for a double. Milkshakes and sundaes were \$.25. We sold a variety of dairy products and later added hotdogs and hamburgers. Another favorite was our "Downy Flake" donuts made fresh every day. My aunt, Gladys Bertch Bullock, was the first manager of the store while Kay McKibben followed her and worked for many years. My brother, Bob Scott, managed the store for two years in the late 60s. Lillian Wilson was also a longtime employee plus my sister, Carolyn Scott Cannain who worked during her high school and college summers.

Having outgrown the plant at 16 Fourth a new building with state of the art equipment was completed in 1954 across the street at 17 Fourth Street. An addition to the back of that building was added in 1960. (The brick building now owned by Jeffrey Ryan). Dick Armstrong was long time plant manager and Cliff Dennis worked in the plant for many years. I believe it was about this time when

we started making homogenized milk. This process breaks down the fat molecules so that they resist separation and are blended throughout. More products had also been added including skim milk, orangeade, heavy cream, half and half, butter, and eggs. Homogenization would have taken another piece of equipment plus our overall increase in production needed more machinery and space. We also started using a new bottle top around this time which was deemed extra sanitary. It was a plug cap with another one that wrapped around the whole neck of the glass bottle (It wasn't until later in the '50s that paper bottles were introduced). The new plant had a large walk-in freezer along with the cooler so eventually all the ice cream was made there. Along with my brother, Bob Scott, others who froze ice cream were Royce Kilmer, Gary Forshee and Larry Powers.

In order to be licensed to sell milk in a new area, a local dairy had to be purchased. The Hornell market opened up when we bought Baisch's Dairy. They also had a small store that we kept open for several years. With the purchase of Himrod Dairy, the area around Keuka Lake was available. This added several more routes to the business and put a total of six delivery trucks on the road. Dean Bertch was route manager at the time. The Scott's products were also available in most grocery stores in these various towns.

A second dairy bar was built in Alfred in 1963. It was located on the left hand side of the road just before entering the village of Alfred. The building now houses Little Sicily Pizza.

By the late '60s it was time to either keep growing or sell out the business. Even though the business had grown to 40 employees with milk being provided by 12 local farmers, it wasn't comparatively a large dairy. In 1968 Dad received an offer from Weldonian Dairy in Wellsville and made a decision to sell. It was a bittersweet time for our family, especially for Dad since his whole life had been centered around the dairy business. However, there was another opportunity on the horizon as he dove into selling real estate by attaining his broker's license and establishing Scott's Realty.

**Editors Note:** This is an excerpt from Diane's story of Scott's Dairy. The full story and with several pages of pictures can be viewed at the Historical Society.

Check out the new weekly challenges on our face book page:  
[facebook.com>KanestioHS](https://www.facebook.com/KanestioHS)

Test your skills in identifying old photos and unique items from our collection.

## Time to pay your 2020 dues

It seems like I'm always reminding everyone that it's time to pay dues. Our annual membership runs from January 1st to December 1st regardless of the month you joined. If you receive your newsletter by mail the date on left side above your address shows your membership status. Unless it says "Life" or "2020" it's time to renew your annual membership. Your dues cover the cost of printing and mailing newsletters to our more senior members who don't use the internet. We mail 70 copies each quarter. Any extra money from dues and your generous donations go to pay utilities, insurance, supplies, etc. We receive no outside funding. Our operating budget comes solely from dues, donations and our fund raisers. There are no paid positions at the Society - Volunteers keep our doors open and maintain the displays and building.

### Dues Schedule

Individuals - \$10

Family - \$15

Lifetime - \$150

*Thanks to all for your generosity and continued support.*

## 2020 Program Schedule

*Note: Programs will be rescheduled after the stay at home orders have been lifted. Watch our website and face book page for the revised schedule.*

Apr. 21 - 7:00 - Women in the Civil War - C. Braack  
May 19 - 7:00 - Flight of the Vin Fizz - John Babbitt  
June 16 - NYP Railroad Stories  
July 21 - Annual Picnic 6:00  
August 18- Field Trip  
Sept. 15 - tba  
Oct. 20 -7:00 - In the beginning...The Founding of Canisteo - G. Dickey-Toni Stevens-Oliver  
Nov. 3 - Election Day Pie Sale - Yesterday's Treasures Sale  
Nov. 17 - 6:00 -Harvest Dinner - Election of Officers  
Nov. 28 - Christmas in the Village  
Dec. - 19 - Cookie Sale  
Dec. 15 - no meeting or program

### "Ace" Wanted the Rod - in a Hurry

*I found this article in the files of Historian, Virginia Dickey. I'm not sure of the date but guessing the 1950's. Ace Woodward lived on South Elm Street across from my grandparents. His portrait, along with his wife's, Luella, hang above one of the organs in our 2nd floor display.*

While completing some surveying on the River Road last week, Acel Woodward of Canisteo used the transit rod for a worthy but unorthodox purpose. The surveyors were working along the county highway a short distance east of Adrian.

"Hand me the rod, quickly," Ace shouted to a fellow helper. "I thought we were all through with it, are you sure you need it?" was the response.

"I'll say I'm sure I need it," Ace hollered, "I'm standing on the head of a rattle snake."

The men surveyed the situation and set their sights on the logical solution--finis to the rattle snake.

Kanestio Historical Society  
23 Main St., P.O. Box 35  
Canistota, 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**

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  
Canistota, NY 14823

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

#### **2020 Officers**

Larry Stephens	Co- President
Sue Babbitt	Co - President
Toni Stevens-Oliver	Secretary
Gail Davis	Treasurer

#### **Directors**

Stan Arthur	2020
Jose Huerta	2021
Gail Davis	2022
Jerry Bush	2023
Sue Babbitt	2024