

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

2022- Winter kanestiohs@gmail.com Gail Davis, Editor

Happy New Year

2021 was certainly a year to remember and I think we're all glad to have it behind us and are looking forward to the new year.

Along with the New Year comes a reminder that your 2022 membership is now up for renewal.

Dues remain at \$10 for an individual, \$15 for family and \$150 for a lifetime membership. Dues run from January 1st to December 31st, regardless of the month you joined. Unfortunately with the increase in fuel prices our utility bills will be higher this winter so we ask that you send your dues in as soon as convenient and please consider adding a few dollars extra to help with the extra utility bills.

How Our Streets Got Their Names

Have you ever wondered who some of our streets were named after? There is a beautiful old Victorian house on Riddell Street that I pass on my daily walks. Growing up my classmate Jerry Fish lived in the house. When I came across this article I expected to find the house was built by someone named Riddell who had been a prominent member of the Community and the street was probably named for him. But as so often happens as I research our history my first impression does not bear out. The house I assumed was built by Riddell was in fact built by Herman Buck. However, the Riddell family lived around the

corner on West Academy Street and their story is certainly a noteworthy part of Canisteo history. Our Town Historian tells me at one time there was a Riddell house at the top of Academy Street that looked down the full length of what is now Riddell Street (presumably built by the parents or grandparents of the Riddell brothers), thus the name. All three buildings referenced in the articles (as well as the former Crandall and Crandall funeral home built by William Riddell) are now owned by children or grandchildren of Claude and Ruth Booth - another one of those coincidences that come out of historical research.

Master Craftsman - Frank Riddell November 18, 1954 Canisteo Times

Mostly these days the sole occupant of the 75-year-old Riddell house on West Academy Street is Frank Riddell, the only survivor of the family of 10 who used to live there. (20 West Academy St.) Mr. Riddell, now 84, has lived in these rooms since the house was built by his father, Dr. George Riddell. Dr. Riddell also built Riddell Hall, housing Claude Totten's grocery business, but then including a furniture store and the theater. Frank Riddell is a highly skilled craftsman and cabinet maker. He forsook work in a pipe organ factory in North Tonawanda to return to Canisteo and enter the poultry business with his brother, William Riddell, who died a few months ago. Passersby will be interested, on seeing the large concrete block hatchery building, to know that the blocks were molded by Frank and that he and William built the hatchery.



Both took considerable pride in the appearance of the grounds, and neighbors still regard Frank Riddell's flower show of gorgeous begonias and other blooms with respect and affection. Indoors, the spacious house shows more of Mr. Riddell's handiwork. He put in hardwood floors, built French doors and bay windows. He was also a meticulous housekeeper.

Mr. Riddell made a beautiful mahogany desk 35 years ago, a Christmas present for his sister, Mrs. Helen Waldo. An exquisite game table with inlaid Birdseye maple and ebony (3,812) pieces attest to his early craftsmanship. This table he made when he was 15 years old, about 70 years ago, to keep him awake nights when he had jobs firing four boilers and two engines. Now the beneficiaries of Mr. Riddell's talents are the neighborhood children for whom he has made chairs, wheelbarrows and cribs as Christmas presents.

New Donation



This wooden cabinet, donated by Ellen Bush, was from the Fashion Shoppe (or Fashion Bug) and was

used to display sewing supplies. Pattern books were displayed on top, and the patterns and other sewing supplies were stored in the drawers.



This picture was taken inside the "Fashion Shoppe" – now part of C&N Bank. Left to Right: Mrs. Brightman (Manager), customer, Virginia Dickey, customer, customer, Mrs. Foss (Betty Dennis' Mother)

Canisteo Boom Days

by Dan Eisenberg

Shopping in Canisteo was set up for the pre-automobile era, when you came to town on a horse, and to go anywhere else you had to get on a train and pay a fare. You could shop without a car, as the commercial center was within a few blocks of everyone. The late 40s and early 50s saw a great growth in automobile ownership, making stores in Hornell, such as Loblaw's or Sears Roebuck, or even Rochester much more accessible. Canisteo merchants suffered.

The solution was to make Canisteo attractive to cars. A new parking lot was more important to the merchants than the park. The destruction of Canisteo's park to benefit the merchants was not well regarded by everyone. I remember that the water fountain worked, in the early 50's. For years it didn't work before it was removed.

To inform the world that Canisteo now had lots of parking; the merchants organized Canisteo Boom Days. This was in 1956, give or take a few years. Merchants gave shoppers tickets to enter a series of drawings. The more you shopped the more tickets

you got. Some businesses gave out varying numbers of tickets for the same sized purchase. Drawings were held once a week, I believe late on a Saturday in late summer, for 10 weeks, and you had to be present to win. I believe the final grand prize, on the 10th night, was \$1,000. This did generate sizeable crowds, but the beneficial effects on Canisteo's merchants were minimal. It was not repeated.

Spotlight on Local Business

by Suzanne Babbitt

Ken's Auto Collision (2021)



The history of Ken's Auto Collision is really the story of Ken Backer, a young man from Hornell who on April 1, 1981, went out on his own to start an auto body shop in Canisteo. The tale begins earlier with Ken's graduation from Hornell High School in 1975 after studying auto body work in the Hornell BOCES program, followed by 4 years in the Air Force.

After the service, he went to work for Larry Wilkins at Canisteo Auto Mart for several years before purchasing the property at 15 West Main Street from Carol Moranza. Ken started out with 2 bays, adding 2 more in 1984, eventually ending up with the 5 he has presently. In 1990 the office section was built. Over the years he has employed various workers, at one time as many as 5, but now says it is impossible to find anyone who wants to

work in this field. In recent years there have been very few students going into this type of study.

The area BOCES auto body classes have had a very low enrollment, and it is worrisome to him.

As we discussed the different upswings along with downturns in the economy over the last 40 years, Ken said that surprisingly his business has stayed quite steady. He credits this situation to the deer population in our area. 75% of his repairs come from vehicle / deer collisions. There has been very little fluctuation in this percentage in all that time.

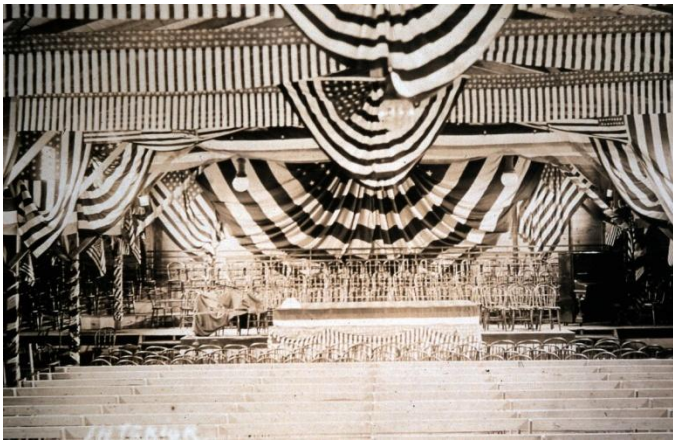
When asked if he had ever thought of taking up a different line of work, he said "no" as there is great satisfaction in having a vehicle come in looking a mess and within a short time being driven out looking like new.

Before Ken's Collison

A religious revival swept the country in 1915. The Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist churches decided to sponsor a series of Revival Meetings. Dr. George Preston, who lived in the current Wimodaughsonian Library, donated the corner of his lot, now the site of Ken's Collision, as the site for a temporary tabernacle to house the meetings. In just a few weeks the 75 by 100 foot structure was erected at the cost of \$700. It was built to seat 1,800 with a choir loft for 200. Electric lights were installed but every time the trolley passed the lights would flicker. O.O. Laine solved the problem over night with the aid of his helpers by installing gas lights. The pews were built by M.P. Slawson and heat was provided by four large coal stoves - the revival being held in March.



The interior was draped with flags and buntings. On Wednesday March 3 the first meeting was held and continued for the next four weeks. Services were held nightly except on Mondays with a choir of 150 trained voices. The meetings were conducted by a traveling evangelist, the Rev. A.W. Miller, who was also a lawyer - therefore, the name Miller Tabernacle. A special train was run on the N.Y. & P Railroad to carry people from Whitesville and Greenwood. The regular passenger trains on the Erie and the trolley from Hornell brought additional worshippers. Many brought lunches and stayed all day. By the fifth night the building was filled to capacity. According to the Canisteo Times "675 souls hit the dust."



Inside the Tabernacle



Coleman's Garage in the Early 1950's

From Our Readers

I was so happy to see the article and pictures about the parks in Canisteo! I remember what the old park looked like with the trough for watering horses, the old drinking fountain, the beautiful shade trees. Thank you for all of the information on the old park and the changes that were made (and when).

~ Martha (Travis) Thompson

The Old Belle Haven Country Club

by Jose Huerta



The original house was built around 1867 with a living area of around 3,202 square feet on a lot size of 13.7 acres. The home was two stories high located at 5909 McBurney Road on the former Canisteo- Hornell Road next to the Belle Haven residential community. It had 4 bedrooms, 2 baths, and a fireplace on the ground floor. During the 1920's the grounds were converted into a golf course and later renamed "The Canisteo Valley Course". The photograph shows the front steps and sidewalk leading to the building. Notice the trolley car tracks that ran in front of the entrance. An automobile of that era is about to also pass on its way to Canisteo.



This photo shows passengers departing from the trolley at the Country Club at a stop on route to Hornell. Notice the Concert at Glenwood Inn sign on the side of the trolley.

When Our Valley Went Up in Smoke (Article by Harry B. Kelsey 1964)

Two hundred years ago this first week in April, a war party of Mohawk Indians put the torch to every house and village along the Chemung and Canisteo Rivers.

Of course, this was a good 20 years or more before our pioneer settlements began and, for that matter, 15 years before the historic Sullivan expeditions. Never-the-less, the valley was occupied - not by white people - but by Indians, specifically the Wolf Clan (Munsee) of the Delaware. Hence, the affair might be considered an Indian war - but was it?

Actually it was not for it was conceived and directed by a handful of white men who hit upon this daring and unique manner of retaliation to bring about an end to one of the most savage and barbaric Indian uprisings that ever plagued the Colonial frontiers. Strangely enough, it worked! It signaled the beginning of the end of what history records as "Pontiac's War".

But how, you say could the Indian inhabitants of the Chemung River valley - be possibly related to the activities of Pontiac, chief of the Ottawa, whose stomping ground was in the vicinity of Detroit?

While history generally singles out the Ottawa chief as being a leading character in the far-flung uprising, Pontiac himself, related the ranting of a Delaware Indian prophet to excite the Indians to an uprising. This particular prophet, whose exact identity is obscured in the mist of history, was an evangelist of the Algonquin Indian religion and, like a few others of that particular time, claimed intimate association with the Great Spirit of the Indians. Whenever he appeared (usually at a great gathering) the prophet would expound a doctrine of expulsion of the evil white race from the continent and a return to the primitive way of life.

The Wolf clan of the Chemung River Delaware had such a prophet and under the leadership of two notorious chiefs, Squash-cutter and Longcoat soon became principals in the uprising.

"This is the place from whence the Wicked One (the Devil) belched forth all the lies and suspicions dispersed among the Indians" said Christian Frederick Post who visited this valley in 1760, "the devil has great power here".

This was three years before the uprising and four years before Sir William Johnson, Colonial Indian Commissioner, sent down his friends, the Mohawks, to chastise them. The Delawares fled westward before the Mohawk "task force" but their homes and livestock were left behind.

Under the date of April 16, 1764, Sir William Johnson in a letter to Gen. Thomas Gage said: "Last night two Indians arrived Express from Diaoga (now Athens, Pa) with letters of the 7th Inst. acquainting me that about the 1st Inst. Captain (Henry) Montour with 140 Indians and some Rangers set off from Otseningo (near Binghamton) & notwithstanding ye great height of the Several Creeks & Rivers made an expeditious march to the Cayuga (Chemung) and other branches of the Susquehanna, which they found had been abandoned with ye utmost precipitation by the Enemy, they accordingly destroyed 2 well built large towns, and then proceeded to the large Town of Kanestio consisting of 60 very good Houses which they burned, with a large quantity of Indian Corn & provisions, Several new saddles, large kettles, working utensils & other articles were taken from the inhabitants, & killed a large

number of horses, cows, hogs & such which from their poverty neither the enemy nor they were able to carry away.

At Kankaghto they destroyed 36 houses, at another town higher up 30 (houses), besides a number of small villages, & scattered houses along both banks of the river, in the whole amounting to near 200 houses most of which were well built of squared logs with good chimneys. Captain Montour sent off two parties by different routes who were in pursuit of the enemy when the express came off. One of the Indians who brought the letters gave me a draft of their route of which the enclosed is a rough copy. All the enemy's Towns & Villages on the Susquehanna being now destroyed."

Eventually squash-cutter (who was once a resident of what is now "West Elmira") and Long Coat (who lived further up the River) were brought in by the Indians themselves and delivered up to Johnson as hostages for their good behavior. Squash-cutter got smallpox at Johnson's place and passed on to the Happy Hunting Ground. Longcoat was deposed of his command post.

Even the great Pontiac came and signed up for peace - after which he went into seclusion and, when out of it, was knocked off by one of his own Indians. As for the Delaware prophet, well, as so often happens in history - he just disappeared and was swallowed up in oblivion.

Henry Montour, who headed up Johnson's Mohawks, was an uncle of "Queen Catherine Montour" and her sisters "Queen Esther" and "Queen Molly" - all of whom were supposed to have been living in this area at the time but somehow seem to have miraculously escaped.

So goes the history of this valley - "the prettiest place that ever I did see" as one of Johnson's men described it, 200 years ago.

Gasoline War in Canisteo - July 1927 Canisteo Times

The gasoline price war in Canisteo appears to be in full bloom. Some of the stations are selling at 14¢, 13¢ or even 12¢ per gallon.

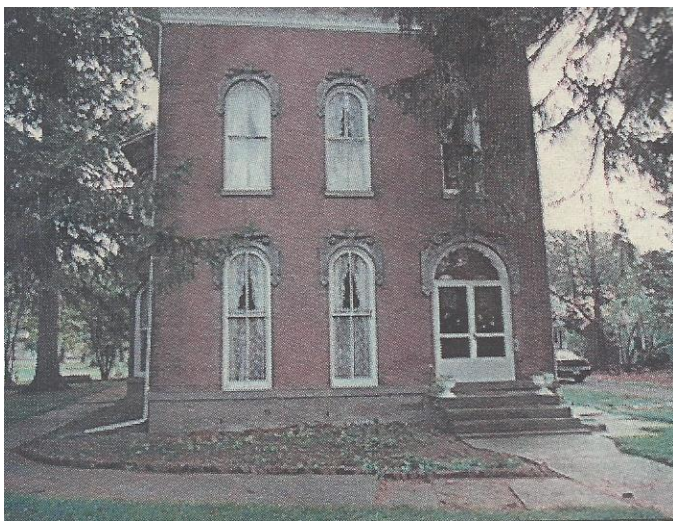
Canisteo October 14, 1874

from the Hammondsport Herald

We visited Canisteo a short time ago, and were surprised to see the improvement three years had made in that village. Of all the smart little villages of Steuben, we think Canisteo takes the lead. The manufacturing interest there is immense for so small a place. The shoe manufactory of Mr. M. Allison gives employment to a large number of workmen, and is one of the features of the place. In addition to this is the Sash and Blind Factory of A. B. Vorhis, which employs from sixty to one hundred workmen and meets a great foreign demand for sash, blinds, doors, moldings, brackets, etc., as well as filling the home orders. Then there is the chair manufactory, owned by a Stock Company and under control of the Taylor Brothers, sons of the late Nathaniel Taylor. Also the Foundry of Mr. J. Carter at which we noticed some very handsome iron fencing ready for shipment. An almost incredible amount of building is also in progress at present, some fine brick blocks among the number. Many fine dwelling houses have been completed during the past summer or now building, from seventy-five to a hundred, we believe, all neat and convenient, in which it would be a pleasure for anyone to live. These are for sale or to rent to the employees of the different manufactories or any who may want them. No one needs to go away from Canisteo because he cannot find a house to live in. The Railroad has been of advantage to Canisteo, surely -but it has had a railroad for years, and we think the real secret of its prosperity, as a village, is owing in a great measure, to the "go-aheaditiveness" and real western enterprise of its property owners. With no IMMENSELY wealthy persons in their midst, the moneyed men in Canisteo invest their money for the good of the town, endeavoring to render it as attractive and desirable a place of residence as possible. They full realize that for every dollar they invest in this manner, they will receive ten, yes, even a hundred fold.

The private residences of Canisteo are, many of them, very fine. Among them is the beautiful brick residence of Wallace W. Bennett (1); also that of Alonzo Bennett (2), whose place is at the entrance to the village and gives on a good impression of

what is to come. The elegant new house and grounds of Mrs. Nathaniel Taylor (3) would do credit to many a larger place. The residence of William B. Taylor (4) is particularly a pleasant one, as cheery a home as one may find in Old Steuben.



(1) Bergh House on Main that burned, we believe, in the late 1990's.



(3) Wimodaughsian Library)

We called, with friends, at the office of the Citizen, but found it "not at home," owing to the nearness of the supper hour, we suppose. We are glad to know that the paper is flourishing, for the Canisteo people are just the kind that will appreciate and support a good paper.

The future of Canisteo seems very sure, even with Hornellsville only four miles away, and the latter village very wide awake and enterprising, and a great Railroad Center as it is, must look to its laurels or it will be distanced by its young neighbor.

(2) Zellar Trailer Park Rt 36 south of village (this house is currently being torn down)

(4) Dr. Horey House at 25 West Main St.

Photos of these homes and their histories can be found in the Historical Societies Publication from 1989 on Older Homes of Canisteo. **References to owners of the homes are from that date.**

2022 Calendar

Planning has just begun, watch our website or face book for updated information.

January - no meeting scheduled
 February - no meeting scheduled
 March 22 - 7PM - TBA
 Apr.19, 7PM - Craig Braack, Women in the Civil War
 May 17, 7PM - TBA
 May 22 - Special Sunday Program - TBA
 June 2 & 3 Treasures Sale, Local Yard Sales
 June 21, 7PM, TBA
 July 19, 6PM Picnic in Rotary Park
 August 16 - Field Trip to another Historical Society
 September 20, 7PM - TBA
 October 18, 7PM - TBA
 November 8 - Election Day Pie Sale
 November 15 - Harvest Dinner, Election of Officers
 December - no meeting

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

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.

2022 Officers

Sue Babbitt	President
Toni Stevens-Oliver	Vice President
Gail Davis	Secretary/Treasurer

Directors

Gail Davis	2022
Jerry Bush	2023
Sue Babbitt	2024
Betty Merring	2025
Toni Stevens-Oliver	2026