

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
www.kanestiohistoricalsociety.com

Vol. 1 - Winter 2019 kanestiohs@gmail.com Gail Davis, Editor

2018 in Review

It has been another busy and productive year for the Historical Society. Our museum is open to visitors Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons thanks to the volunteers who donate their time: Jose Huerta, Shelly Florence-Glover, Sue Babbitt, Phyllis Cassidy, George Dickey, Margaret Stephens and Gail Davis.

There are many other volunteers who help with our Antique Treasurer's Sales and our pie and cookie sales. I know if I start naming names I will forget someone but we couldn't carry out these fund raisers without the generous support of these volunteers - those that bake and donate goods as well as those who help set up and work at the events. Special thanks to Stan and Barb Arthur who take our unsold items to Good Will after each sale.

Thank you to Steve Cotton and Russ Pierce. Their work schedules do not permit them to join us during normal work hours but they are very involved as their schedules permit with displays and building maintenance.

Kudos to Steve Cotton and George Dickey for the work they did this year for the first ever Steuben Country History Awareness Week. We were very well represented at the event and these guys put many hours into our displays.

Thanks to all who made donations to the Society this year. Many of you added a little (and sometimes a lot) extra when you paid your dues. Lifetime members were also generous with donations in lieu of dues. Special thanks to Heather Kilmer Young and Irma Ficzeri for your very generous donations.

June - Seniors Luncheon

In June of this year we hosted a tea for some of our more senior members where they shared memories of growing up in Canistota. Several of our attendees had reached or passed their 90th birthdays. It was a very special afternoon filled with reminiscences and laughter.



Seated: Margaret Koch, Elnora Feeney Shaut, Dorothy Lee Roe, Charlotte Andrews. Standing: Christine Thomas, Margaret Stephens, Sally Florence.

Old Non-Profit Cookbooks

Recently I was looking through an old Baptist cookbook and found myself taking a trip through Canistota history as I recognized names, remembered faces and had instant recollections of certain recipes that I connected with different people. We often urge people to donate old family diaries and bibles to collect local history. I think a

collection of these cookbooks, put out by many churches and other non-profit organization, would be another way of exploring our history. Do any of you have some of these old Canisteo cookbooks, complete with food stains, that you would like to donate?

July - Garden Tour and Tea



Ursula Smith hosted members and supporters of the Historical Society to an afternoon tea and garden tour. We were treated to delicious savories and sweets made with fresh produce and a tour of a most amazing vegetable garden. The weather was perfect and the setting spectacular. We were unable to secure enough local gardens to continue our tours this year but are most grateful to Ursula for sharing her garden with us.



August - Wayland Outing

In August our monthly meeting goes on the road to visit another local museum. This year we visited the Wayland Historical Society. We were envious of the size of their building and the number of artifacts they had preserved and the way they were displayed. A visit to this museum is well worth your time for an enjoyable look at life in the olden days.

November Events

Our Election Day Pie Sale kicked off our November events. We had 46 pies donated and several monetary donations raising a record \$647 for our treasury. Sales from our Yesterday's Treasures tables earned us another \$227.

Twenty members and guests attended our Harvest Dinner on November 20th. We all left feeling like stuffed turkeys after enjoying a variety of traditional holiday dishes and desserts.

Christmas in the Village was held the Saturday after Thanksgiving with an expanded venue for 2018. Our mayor lit the Village Christmas Tree to kick off the evening which included visits with Santa, cookie decorating, vendors in the fire hall and specials by other village merchants. The Historical Society served hot cocoa and cookies to over 100 excited children and parents. For many this was their first visit to our second floor exhibits, and they expressed their surprise and delight at the large collection of Canisteo history on display. We always say that one of Canisteo's best kept secrets is the Historical Society Museum on our second floor. This is one secret we don't want to keep and encourage everyone to spread the word about our museum and research materials.

Our final fundraiser for the year was our cookie sale which turned out to be our biggest ever. We made over \$500 on sales and donations. Thanks to all who baked and decorated the beautiful selection of cookies we had to sell.



Canisteo: Its Prosperity at the Turn of the Century

July 1967 College Term Paper
by Diane Scott Miller

Part III

In 1900 the village of Canisteo could boast of two schools; the Free Union School, presently the Strait's Mill, and the Academy, located on the present site of the high school building. Students at the Academy were required to pay tuition and its enrollment gradually began to decrease. Soon after 1900 the schools combined at the Academy building. The new school was tuition free. As Mr. Fred Crane recalls, there were separate classrooms for each grade and one of each. There was no cafeteria so all the students were forced to go home at noon. There were no interscholastic sports but in the earlier days the Free School and the Academy each had a baseball team with games between the two schools. The school yard had very little gym equipment but Crane does remember some swings in a group of elm trees. Boys and girls of all ages had to amuse themselves with a few simple games. Mr. Crane recalls that "Mossy" was a favorite. Mr.

Henry Hollands tells about "Duck on the Rock" for which two teams were chosen and two rocks were placed one on top of the other. The object of the game was to knock off the top rock with a small stone that you threw. A point was received each time the top rock was tumbled. Mr. Charles Smith describes "Sheep-Pen-Down" where a boy took off on a run dropping small pieces of paper as he went. The next boy would follow the path and try to catch him (I'm sure that girls could handle the game today!) I asked Mr. Smith who picked up all the papers and he exclaimed that they were probably left right there since at that time there wasn't a First Lady who was promoting a beautification program. Baseball was also a favorite pastime during recess.

Besides the village schools there were country schools in each district. Each school was governed by a trustee who hired the teacher and a superintendent whose job it was to oversee all the schools in the township. Miss Josephine Stephens recalls her years at the Number 2 School on the Adrian Road. The one room building, heated with an old wood stove, usually contained anywhere from 15 – 20 students. A single teacher was expected to teach all the subject matter for grades 1 – 8. Miss Stephens remembers that it was often an effort to scrape together enough money for books. Upon entering high school she walked the three miles into the village each day.

In these early days elementary regents were given for all the basic subjects. Before a student could proceed with high school material he or she had to pass a regents exam in reading, writing, English, arithmetic, history, and geography. However, whenever a student felt ready, he could take a certain regents and if he passed, could go on with a more advanced course in that field. Thus the brighter pupils were often entering high school by age 12 or 13 and graduating high school when they were 16.

The high school regents schedule which was announced in a 1901 edition of the newspaper, included exams in the following courses: rhetoric, civics, economics, Caesar, Virgil, Xenophon, and physiology. Besides passing these exams, one of the typical graduation requirements was the

memorization of an original poem or speech. This was recited either at graduation or at an assembly of the entire student body. Miss Stephens who was at this time a student at Corning High School, chose a topic in 1905 that would also be powerful today in 1967. The conclusion read as follows:

"Although the Negro woman of today is ignorant, sinful, and unfortunate, yet she holds in her hand the fate of a whole race. Until she is lifted from this unfortunate position and the Negro child is taught honesty and loyalty at his mother's knee, there can be no solving of the Negro problem."

Indeed, it must have been a forceful speech.

What did these early Canisteans do for entertainment and relaxation? Needless to say, they didn't enjoy a 35 or 40 hour work week as we do today, but they still needed some type of diversion. Baseball seems to have been a favorite pastime in the summer months. The village field was located on the flats which were on the left hand side of Depot Street along the river. According to Mr. Crane, the town produced a pretty good team during these years. Many of the players came into town during the summer and a local merchant gave them a job. Freddy Combs, who later played for Cleveland, came to play ball each season from Corning. The Sororsis Society of the Presbyterian Church ran a refreshment booth at the park. A July, 1901 issue of the local paper announced a forthcoming game, "A fast game of ball is scheduled for tomorrow on the local diamond between the Canisteo team and the Cuba Giants. Canisteo is playing a swift game and is sure to give their husky opponents a hard tussle. Everybody should go!"

Glenwood Park, located between Canisteo and Hornell, was a favorite picnic and amusement area. A special open trolley car made special runs to the park on Sundays. Mr. Hollands said that it was a nice place to take your girlfriend on Sunday afternoon. The river was dammed up at this point and row boats were rented for short pleasure trips. I asked Mr. Crane if many people swam and he explained that the boys sometimes did but "the girls had to wear too many clothes!" A big pavilion

was used for dances and band concerts. A concert was held on Sunday afternoon with either the Canisteo Band performing or one from a neighboring community. Trails for hiking ran back up on the hill through the glen.

The second floor of a long wooden building on the present site of the Pfitzenmaier Gas Station was a popular dance hall. Mr. Crane tells of the big crowds that gathered there until things got a little wild and the cop had to intervene.

The culturally minded people of the community anticipated the annual arrival of the Chautauqua Company. This group of performers was in town for a three or four day visit during the summer. Their program might have featured a lecture the first night, a musical play another night, and an opera on the third night. The shows were held under a huge tent on the school grounds.

Ice skating was a favorite winter sport for the younger people in town. They used the pond behind the present Newark Milk Company on Depot Street or a second rink on the corner of Union and Russell Streets. A huge bonfire usually provided some warmth and light.

Mrs. Pauline Boughner had to chuckle as she recalled the parade and other activities that were held to raise money for the addition of a science department on the high school. She remembered a parade that seemed like two miles long which consisted of many beautifully decorated floats, the boy and girl scouts, plus numerous school clubs. **After the parade there was a carnival in front of the school. A highlight was an impressive stage show featuring the "Floridora Sextet". How sophisticated the girls felt with their fancy gowns, big hats, and parasols! There was also a fortune teller, a group of Indian dancers, and several concession stands on the grounds. This event earned the fantastic sum of \$1,000 for the new "domestic science" wing!**

The June 12, 1901 issue of the Times Republican featured an advertisement for the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show which was to be held in Hornellsville. It said that the NYP railroad would run special excursions from Canisteo for the afternoon and

evening performances. The next week's paper commented that 600 people had ridden the special cars for the performance. One can only imagine what a thrilling show this must have been for children and adults alike!

Even though life in 1900 was far below the standard of the 1960s, these people could boast of a number of conveniences. Two railroads and a trolley line served as convenient means of transportation. The New York and Pennsylvania (NYP) railroad ran between Canisteo and Shinglehouse, Pennsylvania. The local station was located on the site of the present Rogers Oil Company, and the roundhouse and switch yard were near Byrd's Sawmill. According to an early time schedule, this short line stopped in every small "burg" between the two towns. Even between Canisteo and Greenwood, a distance of only ten miles, the train made stops at Fall Creek, Bennetts, and Norton Hollow. Mr. Crane tells how busy the Erie Railroad Station was in these days. The freight and ticket offices, which are both closed today, together employed five men. He explains that many items that are today transported by truck were then all carried by rail. Large quantities of hay, cattle, sheep, and potatoes were shipped out of here. The "way freight" went through every morning and left groceries and other perishables. A horse drawn mail wagon made daily runs between the station and post office. There was also a special horse drawn coach that carried passengers to the station.

The trolley car was the main means of travel between Hornell and Canisteo. This made a run every 45 minutes for the fare of only \$.10. Most of the people with whom I talked were only children in 1900 and a trolley ride was always a thrill. Many of them can remember seeing their first automobile. Miss Stephens recalls her first spotting of a Ford in 1905. A relative later bought an Oldsmobile and her sister dared her to drive it into town, a distance of about three miles. Never having had a driving lesson, she made out fairly well except for getting stuck in a mud hole along the way. Dr. Otto Stewart owned one of the first Hup Mobiles in 1904. John Powell was also an early owner of an automobile. When Dr. Thomas Cotton's parents were married there was quite a chase after the

ceremony. The newlyweds rode in the Stewart's Hup Mobile and were tagged by Mr. Powell in his car.

A number of villagers had telephones by 1900. A January edition of the Times Republican reports that several new telephones had been added to local lines by the Canisteo/Greenwood Company. This made about 50 phones in the village. The low rate of \$5.50 per year must have been a tempting offer.

The same issue of the paper featured an ad for a "Modern Gas Light – 1/7 of a cent per hour to operate":

The Canton Incandescent Gasoline Gas Light is the marvel of the century. Never smokes or smells. No grease accumulation on it, no broken chimneys. It's absolutely safe, being approved by all insurance companies of the United States.

This must have looked like a wonder compared with the usual kerosene lamp of the day.

Mrs. Boughner can remember when her family installed their first bathroom in 1910. Since the family lived in an apartment over the millinery and music store on Main Street, it was convenient for customers and friends to try the new facilities. People even stopped by with bath towels and asked to use the tub! The Stewarts may have come to think it was more trouble than it was worth.

People traveling through town in the early 1900s would have had their choice of three hotels: the Parker House, presently the Grange Hall on the corner of South Main and Maple Streets; the Gillis House on the corner of Fourth and Depot; and the Canisteo House, presently the Sweeney Building. Mr. Crane remembers the "hitch barn" in back of the Canisteo House for wagons and horses. According to Crane, travelers were often hauling a load of hay or produce and they welcomed a protected place to park. There was an attractive dining room on the second floor which did a big business. The hotel bar was probably one of the liveliest spots in town. Stopping there as a young

paper boy, Crane witnessed many fights and much rowdiness. Later during Prohibition, the owner was so disgusted when he lost his liquor license that he closed the hotel and built a high board fence around the place. However, it was later reopened.

Although life at the turn of the century seems antiquated to us in 1967, the residents of Canisteo could be proud of their thriving community. The amount of industry at this time is impressive but unfortunately none of the businesses mentioned are in existence today. The village appears to have been unsuccessful at persuading new companies to replace these earlier ones. In 1900 the trolley car was used by Hornellians who came to work in Canisteo. This certainly wouldn't be the case today. The busy and well-stocked stores were another sign of prosperous times. These people certainly worked hard, but they still made time for relaxation and enjoyment. Even though times in general have drastically changed, we as Canisteans in 1967 could have learned valuable lessons from our predecessors of 1900!

Editors Note: Special thanks to Diane for sharing this look at Canisteo history from 1967 with us. If you missed the first two parts of this series you can find them on our website at www.kanestiohistoricalsociety.com.

Coming Events - Save the Dates 2019

Jan. 15 - tba
 Feb. 19 - tba
 Mar. 19 - tba
 Apr. 16 - tba
 May 21 - tba
 June 18 - tba
 July 16 - Annual Picnic 6:00
 August 20 - Outing
 Sept. 17 - tba
 Oct. 15 - tba
 Nov. 5 - Election Day Pie Sale - Yesterday's Treasures Sale
 Nov. 19 - Harvest Dinner - Election of Officers
 Nov. 30 - Christmas in the Village
 Dec. - 14 - Cookie Sale
 Dec. 17 - Christmas Program

(Check the park sign for program titles)

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

2019 Officers

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Larry Stephens | Co- President |
| Sue Babbitt | Co - President |
| Toni Stevens-Oliver | Secretary |
| Gail Davis | Treasurer |
| Phyllis Cassidy | - Corresponding Secretary |

Directors

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Sue Babbitt | 2019 |
| Stan Arthur | 2020 |
| Jose Huerta | 2021 |
| Gail Davis | 2022 |
| Jerry Bush | 2023 |

Mystery Solved

In one of the last issues I posted a Molasses Cookie recipe from Harriet Greenfield. It used bacon grease instead of shortening. I have tried for years to make molasses cookies that tasted like my mother's but could never quite get the same taste. I recently tasted a molasses cookie made by Canisteo's Ray Lockwood and it tasted just like Mom's. Can you guess the secret ingredient? Ray still makes his cookies with bacon grease!!

In Diane's article on page 4 she mentions a parade and carnival held on the school grounds to raise money for a new science department for the school. Below is a picture of that carnival found after the hard copies of the newsletter were printed.

