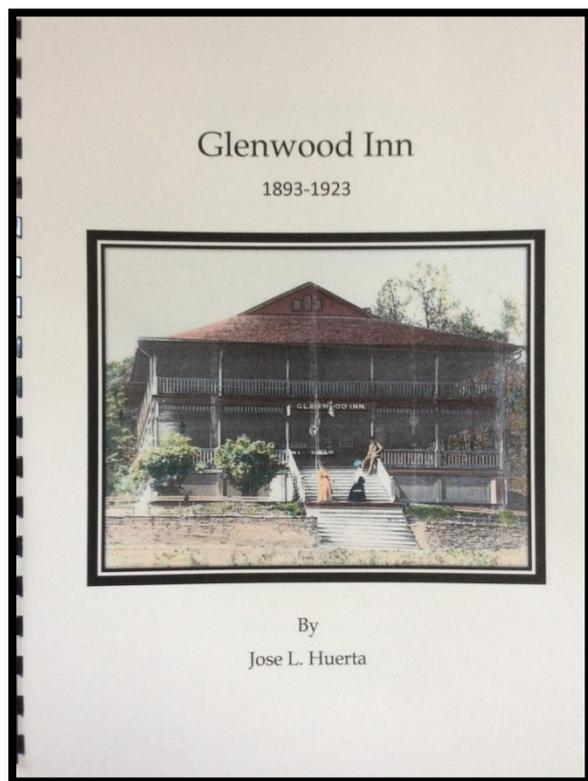


# Kanestio Historical Society Times

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](http://www.kanestiohistoricalsociety.com)

2021 Vol. 2- Spring [kanestiohs@gmail.com](mailto:kanestiohs@gmail.com) Gail Davis, Editor

## New Book Available



The Glenwood Inn was a popular resort area located between Hornell and Canistota from 1893-1923. Early in 1893 the Board of Directors of the Hornellville Electric Railway Company, looking for ways to increase the ridership on the trolleys between Hornell and Canistota, decided to purchase land and develop a recreational park with areas for picnicking, boating, roller skating, tennis and even installed a merry-go round. The park was family oriented with no alcohol allowed on the premises. Glenwood was extremely popular and in one article we found was described as "the Disneyland of our time." We found many newspaper articles

telling of family reunions and company picnics held there as well as numerous accounts of visits for Saturday night dances or Sunday outings. The Inn was destroyed by fire in 1923. By this time automobiles were replacing trolleys and the owners decided not to rebuild.

Finding information on Glenwood has proven to be extremely difficult but our author, Jose Huerta, was relentless in his search and he compiled this 40 page book with photos (many in color) and the history of the Inn.

If you have additional information of the Glenwood, please contact us. We have been unable to find any photos inside the Inn or the Skating/Dance pavilion and would love to get a glimpse inside. My personal wish is to find a picture of the merry-go-round. I imagine an old fashioned carousel with hand carved horses prancing around in a circle to carnival music.

Jose's books "*A Brief History of the Hornell and Canistota Electric Railway Companies - 1891 -1926*" and "*Glenwood Inn 1893-1923*" are both for sale at the Historical Society for \$20 each plus \$5 shipping and handling. Supplies are limited so get your orders in early. A full list of local history books by local authors is available on our website.

## Annual Dues Reminder

It's that time again to remind everyone to renew your annual memberships by paying your dues. Dues go from January - December regardless of the month you joined the Society. If you receive your newsletter by mail check the date on your mailing label to see if your dues are up-to-date. We rely heavily on your dues to meet expenses.

## Kan-Es-Teo Motel



In the last newsletter we asked if anyone remembered the Canisteo Motel or had pictures of it. The motel cabins were owned by Earl Helmer on his property adjacent to the American Legion. This property is now owned by Larry and Priscilla Bixby and the motel units have been replaced by Larry's garages. I found a couple newspaper pictures of the units but not a picture of the large green and white sign that hung from a pole in the front that I remember. The units were moved to Hornell after Larry's dad, Ken, purchased the property.

The following information is from an article in the January 1, 1953 issue of the "Canisteo Times."

"Canisteo has long lacked tourist facilities, with only a few homes catering to travelers, and the one existing hotel usually filled with long term roomers. Mr. and Mrs. Earl Helmer of West Main Street have constructed a neat 2-room motel by their drive-in picnic park and for nearly a month now it has been heated and ready for occupancy. There is a single unit and a double unit.

The new hotel has been designed with every thought to attractiveness and comfort: One room and lavatory are predominantly peach, blue and lavatory predominantly ruby and green. Between is a neat shower, with its separate entrance. The rooms are completely separate, each with its own front and rear entrance, and pleasant windows. For winter the theme is warmth and view; for summer, airy cross ventilation and a pleasant picnic ground at the back door, with electric plugs available for picnic cookery and lighting. Canisteans who have more guests than they can accommodate would do well to keep in mind the Helmer's new Kanesteo Motel."

## Donation Thank You

Last year, with the restrictions and safety issues posed to our membership by Covid, we had to rely heavily on donations to cover our operating expenses. Our members were very generous and we can't thank you enough for your support. Many of you continue to send donations and words of appreciation for the work of our volunteers along with your dues. We have seen an increase in membership which is very gratifying. Thank you to the following for your donations and continued support:

- \* CN Bank
- \* Canisteo Masons
- \* Dana and Maggie Aultman
- \* Elizabeth Russell
- \* Tim Allen
- \* Bill and Fran Tucker
- \* Jack Carter
- \* Debra Jakobi - Memorial Donation for Betty Flanagan
- \* Steven Sherman
- \* David Freeland
- \* Steve and Sally Weed
- \* Francis Clancy - Memorial Donation for Betty Flanagan
- \* John & Lois Leonard
- \* Steve & Connie Cotton
- \* Tony Galeazzo

**SOUTH MAIN STREET** is probably the shortest street in the village but one with an amazing amount of history. This article in the April 1, 1957 issue of *The Canisteo Times* gripped my interest.

## "Oldest" House Receives an April Face-Lifting

*Our "oldest village house" is being renovated for a new town hall this week. A pioneer resident of the crossroads called Bennettsville, now Canisteo, kept a diary and noted that his house and store were the first structures erected here. The early historian, William Taylor, recounted the year 1828 as the date this house was completed.*

*Village Engineer Wm. I Brown of Greenwood Street resided in the South Main Street structure for several years. He found the Taylor diary between partitions, loaned it to someone, now wishes he had it back. It told how the payment for work done on the house was in whiskey, side pork and corn meal. The barter system was in full swing in those days. An old pioneer, the late Julius Hitchcox, assured Mr. Brown that this was the first house built in the village, and the Richardson Furniture Store nearby was the first business establishment.*

#### RECENT OWNERS

*At one time the late Dr. S. C. Williamson's father owned the house stoutly constructed and sheeted with wide pine boards. Mr. Brown bought it from Dr. Frank Betron, veterinarian; and sold it to Mrs. Esther Bancroft. Later Clinton Freeland bought it and then sold to the Town of Canisteo. It was a 10-room structure with woodshed, but no fireplaces. Until recently Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Gatewood and family lived in the house. The town board also owns the former restaurant building adjacent, now used as voting headquarters, for the town and village ballot casting.*

#### COLONIAL STRUCTURE

*Work has started this week on transforming the venerable residence, and voting center into a modern town hall. A new Colonial front of brick facing and pillars, will extend across the frontage of both buildings in So. Main Street.*



This picture of the house and restaurant drove me crazy for weeks. I've been known to over-analyze a situation and this was no exception. We have two pictures of the house and restaurant from both ends of the street. To me it looked like one "L" shaped building with a 2 story main structure and a one story wing with a front porch. We could not find a door to the 2-story section so figured entrance had to be made via the restaurant porch making this one building, not two.

Leora Drake, former Canisteo Historian, wrote several articles on the older homes of Canisteo. She describes some of the houses in this way. "Originally these homes were all built along the same architectural lines, with a two story upright and one story wing at right angles to the upright on low cellar and exterior walls, making low ceilinged rooms in contrast with those built soon after this period." Our picture fits this description adding to my confusion. Was it one structure or two?

A second newspaper article gave the following description:

*"The property includes the restaurant building in South Main Street occupied by the Freelands, and the adjacent residence occupied by Mr. and Mrs. George Gatewood and family. In addition there is a large tract of land in the rear of the two structures.*

*Present plans call for the moving of the former restaurant building toward the rear of the plot, and erection in the future of a Town Hall office building in keeping with the nearby Presbyterian Church architecture".*

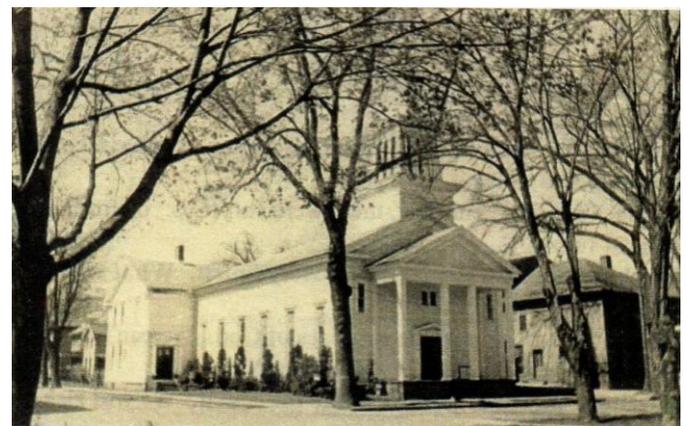
After numerous phone calls to some of our more senior citizens, Gerald Bertram finally put the issue to rest. His family ran the restaurant when he was a small child and they lived in the rear of the restaurant. The house was a separate residence but the two buildings were built close together. Gerry could not remember where the entrance to the Gatewood house was located. The restaurant was known as the Park Restaurant and managed by the Bertrams and Freelands at different times.

## Presbyterian Church and Manse 1904



The original plans for the town hall called for a colonial front with pillars following the colonial architecture from the Presbyterian Church. From the photo above from the 1989 Bicentennial Book I have to assume that plan was abandoned. The one-story structure would not have supported colonial columns.

Another major change on South Main Street has been to the Presbyterian Church and Manse. The Church was dedicated in 1853. The Steeple was added in 1869 and the colonial portico added sometime between 1936 and 1944.



The building was completely renovated in late 1997 and 1998. The second story was removed and the roof that had been flat and leaking was peaked and a façade to match the other structure in the business district added. A 4,880 sq ft. addition was completed with two new bathrooms, one handicapped accessible, a large conference room which could also be used for voting purposes and ramped back and front entrances. Feenaughty and Allen did the building, Fred Campbell the new wiring and Scott Teller the new heating system.

The Manse was built in 1854 and enlarged twice between 1887 and 1897. In January of 1923 the church purchased a new parish house. An addition was added to the back of the manse and it was converted to the "Community Building" complete with a gymnasium, bleachers, stage, kitchen, dining room, bowling alley and Sunday School rooms. The gymnasium ceased to be used in 1937 when the Canisteo Academy was built.

In more recent years the front ramp was enclosed adding protection from the weather and changing the appearance of the building once again.

In 1955 the Community Building was remodeled and named Somers Hall after Rev. Harry Somers whose efforts were behind the building of the Community Building.



Somers Hall - 2002

A corridor was constructed connecting the Church and Somers Hall to provide handicap accessibility and handicap restrooms in 2002.

Most of us are familiar with the many community events held in Somers Hall over the years but did you know that between 1943 and 1953 the Canisteo Garment Factory operated inside Somers Hall. The space was rented to help offset the expenses.



## Canisteo Loses Community Leaders

So much of our history comes from stories and tales passed down from generation to generation. Sadly, Canisteo has lost several citizens this winter and I cannot recognize all of them, but would like to mention three whose contributions and involvement in the community will be missed. Paul Greenfield, probably best known for his work with ARC but also a leader in the Baptist Church and fire department. Bob Pfitzenmaier, who we all know from his gas station, always present for Presbyterian Church events and his work with the fire department. Gerald Bertram was a neighbor

and leader in the Methodist Church plus the fire department and looked over the safety of our school children as superintendent of the Canisteo Central School bus garage. Gerry worked with me on a couple research projects this winter including solving the mystery of the Park Restaurant in the preceding story. Although not a Canisteo, Glen Bullock was a member of the Canisteo Rotary Club and well known to Canisteo residents for his community service. How often do we say we wish we would have asked more questions and written more down when someone has passed? That question is never more relevant as we mourn the loss of these community leaders.

## Renovations at Rotary Field

If you've driven or walked by the Rotary Field lately you've notice their new look. The overgrown trees and grass rutted from years of parking have been replaced by new sidewalks, marked parking spaces, black wrought iron fences, new restrooms and improvements to the ball field and bus garage.

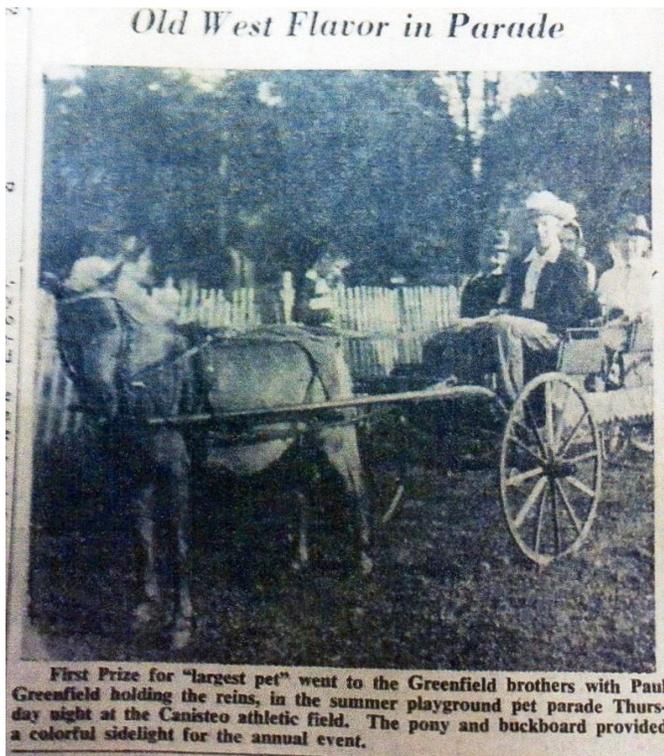
Have you ever wondered why this school athletic field was called Rotary Field? In 1932 the Canisteo Rotary Club started holding fund raisers to purchase the "Community Playground" on Elm Street. In 1932 a proposition to give Rotary Field to the Village was voted down. In July of 1935 at a meeting of the "Citizens of Canisteo" a vote was approved for the School to reimburse the Rotary Clubs their \$2,200 down payment on the property and the school would pay the balance of \$2,200. The Rotary Club donated their interest to the school and continued holding fund raisers to benefit the park.

The following quote is from a May 19, 1937 article in the Canisteo Times: "With all due respect to the Canisteo Rotary Club, which is a fine organization, why is the Canisteo Athletic Field called the Rotary Field. This field was purchased by taxpayers of the school district of the Canisteo Village". I have to believe the wise men and women of our community chose to honor the many contributions of the Rotary Club by keeping the name.

## The Field House

In November of 1937 the new Canisteo Academy and Central School Building was nearing completion. Much excavation was done at the rear of the school with the excess dirt being hauled to the Athletic Field on So. Elm Street where it was to be used for leveling and grading. Harold Deats and Carl Todd were running lines of survey on the athletic field to facilitate the new field house, fence erection and grading work there.

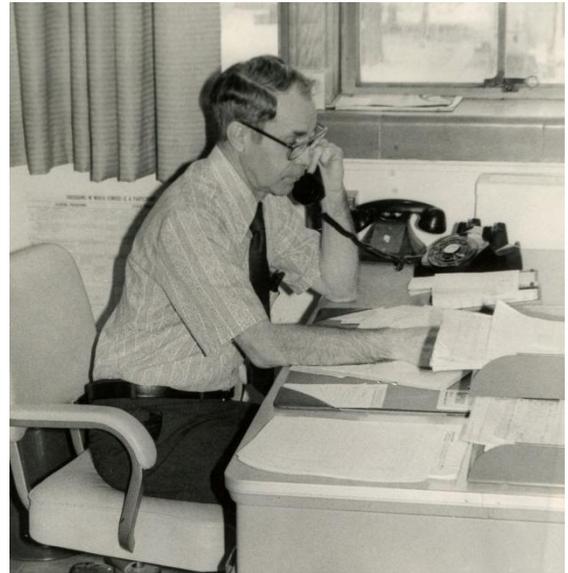
## Summer Events at Rotary Field



I grew up in the country and did not take part in Little League and other sporting events held at Rotary Field during the summer but I do remember visiting my cousin and going "to summer recreation" activities with her. Articles from the Canisteo Times helped jog my memory to some of these events. Most of us remember the firemen's carnivals and Fourth of July fireworks. In August of 1955 the Summer Rec program got approval for Round and Square dances to be held on the blacktop in front of the bus garage. It was open to all ages including adults. One article

reports over 200 parents and children attending the dances. Live music was added with Cliff Dennis and his Hornarkcans, among others, entertaining us.

Pet parades were always an anticipated event of summer rec. The preceding picture with Paul Greenfield was in my article before his passing this winter and I think now what a nice memory of a man who gave much to our community.



## John Heaslip

We recently received a collection of Canisteo Boy Scout Memorabilia from John and Pat Heaslip's children that included uniforms, souvenir mugs and a display of badges. When we receive this type of donation we like to have the history behind it to share for future generations. Steve Heaslip provided us with the following bio of his Dad. If you don't remember Mr. Heaslip from scouting I'm sure you'll remember him as our high school guidance counselor.

*John Heaslip arrived in Canisteo in the early 50's to take a teaching position at the High School. He got involved with Boy Scout Troop 83 assisting Harry Rahmlow the scoutmaster before taking over the troop when Rahmlow retired in 1952. He got his start in leading outdoor adventures at the Boys Club in Syracuse while studying for his Masters Degree in teaching at Syracuse University following his Army service in WWII in the Philippines. Scout meetings started promptly on Monday evenings at 7 pm in an old second floor open*

hall above the ACME grocery store along Main Street. Heaslip served several summers at BSA Camp Gorton as a camp counselor, even talking his new wife Pat into spending a week there early in their marriage. The troop's annual camp week was always the third week in July when he led the scouts up the hill to the Cherokee campsite for a week of outdoor activities. He always presented a slide show of camp week to scouts and interested parents in late spring enlisting scouts to attend camp each summer and always found scholarship money to help make sure all interested could attend.



Through the years he set down roots in the community. He and wife Pat settled into their home on Fairview Place raising sons, Paul and Stephen, all the while staying active in the community. He was an active member of the Canisteo Evening Star Masonic Lodge. A long time member of the town's Civic Club, he would often lug an old 16mm movie projector to meetings and often present a film for the group's evening meeting. His career at school took him from teaching into his role as long time guidance counselor and also senior class advisor and the school's bowling coach. His school duties found him on many weekends driving students around to visit local colleges and universities helping them on their career paths. Heaslip was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church in town, singing in the choir for many years as well as being the Sunday school superintendent.

Heaslip served the troop as scoutmaster for 23 years turning over the title to Larry Welles in 1975 after the troop observed their 50th anniversary. Retiring from the scoutmaster position, he remained active in the troop serving on the Board of Review for Eagle Scout candidates. He helped several generations of Canisteo scouts through the ranks and lived the scout oath by his example. Upon retiring from the school he stayed active with his many community connections well into his 80's and was a familiar sight riding his bike around town almost into his 90's. He passed away at the age of 96 in January of 2019 but leaves a legacy in the Canisteo valley well remembered by his former students, scouts and members of the community.

We'd love to have our readers share their memories of John by e-mail or letter so that we can share them with our readers.

## Research Materials

Most everyone is familiar with the collection of Canisteo artifacts we have on display at the Historical Society but few are aware of the vast amount of research material we have. Our volunteers have spent many years researching and documenting every facet of Canisteo history and we are always looking for ways to make this available to the public. One of our main goals is to share this information with younger generations. We want to thank Mr. James Freeland for challenging his 11th grade English students with an assignment that centered on local history and bringing his students to visit the Historical Society for research.



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: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Make check payable to:  
Kanestio Historical Society  
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Canistota, NY 14823

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

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Sue Babbitt	Co - President
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