

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

2021 Vol. 4- Fall kanestiohs@gmail.com Gail Davis, Editor

History of Canisteo's Parks



Postcard circa 1916 - Notice the watering trough at the end of the park in front of the NYP Depot and the drinking fountain at the Greenwood Street end of the park.

In 1852, when the corner stone was laid for the Presbyterian Church, the park was described as: "Directly in front of the new church was a combined marsh and frog pond. In the spring of the year all the streets were merely bogs. " (from Presbyterian Church 150 year celebration booklet)

The following is from an Evening Tribune article dated July 10, 1986". This copy is from a typed manuscript with, I suspect, some typing errors.

RELIVING HISTORY OF THE CANISTEO VILLAGE PARK

The Canisteo Village Park was originally the site of a double log cabin built by Timothy Russell and occupied by him and Lieutenant-Commander Andrew Morris and his wife, Lecretia Russell Morris, a cousin of Timothy. (Russell Street was named for the family). The Russell's, a Norman family, were among the first emigrants to America. One Russell had married Jane Cromwell, daughter of Oliver Cromwell. Both families came to Canisteo soon after the 1810 census and before 1820, the time of the Lieutenant-Commander Morris' death.

He had seen sea service during the Revolutionary War and did not want his sons to do like service. Later he moved here from the Connecticut seacoast. Following his death, Mrs. Morris moved to the Almond Road, outside of Hornell, where a descendant, the late Morris O'Conner lived for many years. Lieutenant - Commander Morris was buried in "Old Settlers" cemetery at Willow Bend where his grave has been marked by the DAR and by a government marker.

No record seems to be available as to when the Park site was first used as a park but the 1889 flood pictures of Canisteo show the bandstand, so certainly concerts are well remembered by many oldsters, although the names of the band members and leaders are difficult to ascertain.

The Canisteo Cornet Band played several selections on November 1, 1896 when the NYP Railroad ran its first excursion from Greenwood to Canisteo, where a republican mass meeting was being held as well as a general celebration in honor of the opening of the railroad.

The band stand was torn down in 1947 ending another era.

When Norm Harvey was the "Village Mayor," the firemen erected a monument in the lower of Firemen's Park, honoring the memory of the deceased members who had previously served in all the volunteer companies, past and present.



(August 2021 photo of the Firemen's Monument - plaque from 1929)

The "People to People" movement, suggested by the former President Dwight D. Eisenhower to promote friendship and understanding among ordinary citizens everywhere, was founded in 1956. Canisteo launched its "sister-city program in 1964 with Wauchope, South

Wales, Australia, a community about the size of Canisteo, having many similar interests. Letters were the first contacts made by Mark Meck and Robert Marchment of the two places, followed by gifts and sound tapes and pictures. In May 1965, Marchment, Bill Edmonds and Mrs. Geoff Smith, All of Wauchope, made a trip to Canisteo.

In 1966, Mr. and Mrs. Meck went to Wauchope where they were joined by Dr. Gerald Feeney, who was serving as a Captain in the United States Army in Thailand. At that time, Wauchope held a formal dedication of a sister-city park on our July 4th Independence Day. In turn, on July 4th, 1967, the lower part of Firemen's Park was dedicated. Twelve Australians arrived for the dedication ceremonies with many groups participating in the events planned. Many Canisteo residents assisted with the work at the park, including William J. Dennis and Fred Condon, who helped in planning the monument while professional carpenters and masons assisted. Students of Duane Ball's BOCES classes, from our school, also helped. The fortieth anniversary of the Canisteo Rotary Club launched the "Friendship" program May 26, 1965. Many people of the two sister-cities have visited back and forth as well as corresponding over the years, and students have been exchanged. A group of forty Canisteo and Hornell area people visited sister-city friends in April 1971; since the dedication in 1967 Australians have included Canisteo on visits to the United States.

from the Hornell Tribune, July 10, 1986



Circa 1910 view of the Park as seen from the NYP Railroad Depot.

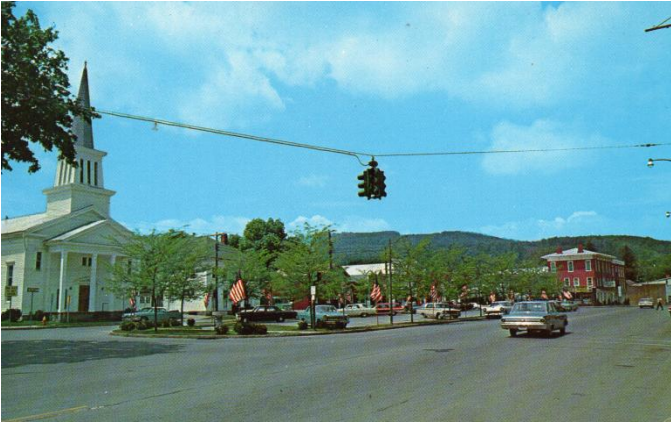


The new drinking fountain for horses was installed in 1916. Donated by the businessmen of the village, its solid masonry of handsome design constituted a \$200 project. The state highway project in the late 1950's required its removal. No memory remains other than this historical image to remind us of this by-gone era.

Early 1950's pictures of the Main street and the park before the dismantling of the park to make way for the new parking lot – diagonal parking and shade trees were a prominent feature.



In 1959, as part of the reconstruction of Rt. 36 through the Village of Canisteo, the parking lot in the center of the business district, formerly the village park, "must receive 9 to 12 inches of coarse aggregate fill, plus a blacktop finish coat, and trees are to be planted around the edges of the lot"



Six synchronized two and three color traffic signals were installed by the State Department where Main, Greenwood and Depot Sts. intersect and where Main and Maple Street meet. Two pairs of pedestrian wait-walk signals were installed. New sidewalks and granite curbing were being installed and grass plots graded and seeded inside the sidewalks. The project was to be completed in 1960.

Sometime after 2010 the street lights were cut back to two at the intersections of Greenwood and Depot Sts. to Main St.

New changes will be coming next year as the NYS Department of Transportation embarks on a new construction project for the village in 2022.

Sister City Park and the Gazebo



In 1999, a community effort led by Sam Bonfe, chairman of the village planning board, began the revamping of our Sister City Park, formerly called Firemen's Park. Construction of a new bandstand to replace the bandstand removed in 1947 was completed

with the donations of time and materials by local craftsmen and businessmen.



A memorial to area veterans of all wars, a 10-foot tall granite pillar with three foot cannon mounted on top was added.

Memorial bricks were sold, as well as many other fundraisers, to help fund the park projects. You are likely to find an ancestor's name on a brick if you visit the park. While there, be sure to stop at the Firemen's memorial and check out the Sister City Park Plaque and other memorials in the park.

Clock Tower



A village clock tower was erected in October of 2002 again with donation of materials and labor of local businessmen and craftsmen. First State Bank offered a match program to raise the final funds needed to purchase the clock.

Patriot's Park



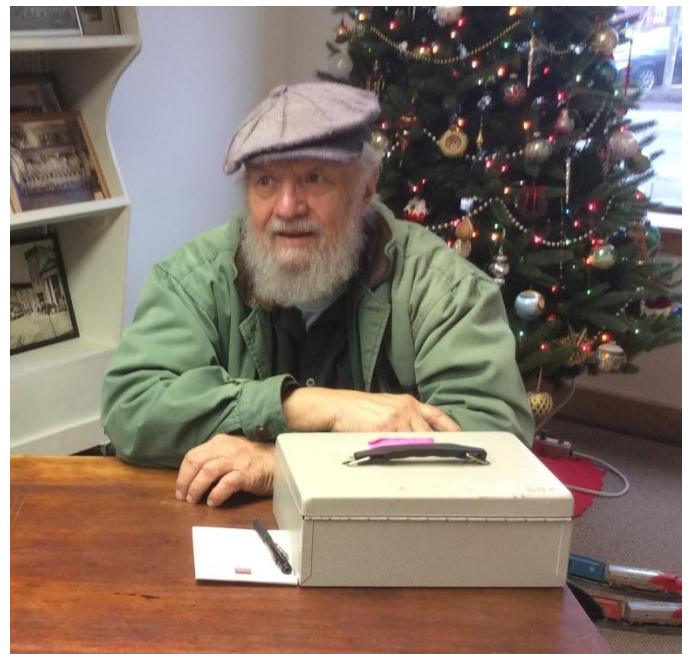
2002 also saw the construction of Patriots Park through the efforts of the Beautification Committee led by Sally Florence and Marilyn Chase and a grant secured by senator Randy Kuhl. This also began the search for the parts to the fountain believed to have been in the South Main St. Park area. It was through the search for pictures of the 2 layer horse trough, upper for horses and lower for dogs and cats, that the committee became aware of the base of a fountain being used as a planter in a local family's yard. The ensuing search revealed the above circa 1920 picture of Kathryn Jamison standing next to the fountain on the site of the new bandstand. The base was cleaned with new fountain parts added to become the center attraction in the new Patriots Park.



Volunteers Honored at Annual Picnic

Our first event back as a group was our annual dish-to-pass picnic held at Rotary Park. 21 were in attendance on a beautiful summer evening in Canisteo. How good it seemed to be outdoors without masks with our friends. Three of our long time volunteers have been sidelined with health issues during our Covid recess and they were recognized for their many years of service.

Stan Arthur



Over the years Stan has served faithfully on the Board of Directors, the building/maintenance committee, has put up numerous window displays, worked on sorting & cataloging our collection of maps. Stan assisted in the negotiations with the insurance company after our fire & then pitched in during the rebuilding and recovery process.

Stan's insight into many issues that came up over the years has been invaluable. Along with these contributions, we've always appreciated his good nature & sense of humor.

Margaret Stephens



Margaret Stephens was a charter member of the Historical Society. She has been an active & enthusiastic KHS member since its inception. Her love for this community, its history, but most of all its people has made her a “cheerleader” for our society. Margaret has served the Board of Directors, as corresponding secretary, and on the memorial committee. She has helped out at probably every activity over the years: in the kitchen, at pie & cookie sales, helping to sort & price sale items. But most of all she has been our unofficial “good will ambassador,” welcoming everyone who comes through the door. When out & about around town she’d talk up our activities & encourage folks to learn about & get involved in their local history.



Do any of our older and wiser readers know the origin of this plaque in the park or the missing names?



Sally Florence



Sally Florence, having been raised in Canisteo by history loving parents, has had home town stories in her blood. She has loved & been dedicated to the KHS for many years. Sally became interested in what information the NY State & area historical societies could teach us. Off to meetings she would go, bringing back helpful ideas for cataloguing, preserving & displaying our collection. Many resources, grants, etc. became available to us. Sally's particular area of interest was in fabric & garments of the early residents. Sally served on the Board of Directors and organized and worked at many of our Fund Raisers. She served as Co-President and Secretary. For her many years of dedication & hard work, we are thankful.

Upcoming Events

September 21 - 7:00 NYP Railroad - John Babbitt
October 19 - 7:00 Pictures around Canisteo- Steve Cotton
November 2 - Election Day Pie Sale and Yesterday's Treasures sale. 8-12 AM
November 16 - 6:00 Dish to pass Harvest Dinner and Election of Officers
December 18 - 9-12 - Cookie Sale

August Field Trip

Our August program is traditionally a group visit to another local historical society. This year we ventured to Rexville/West Union. It was a rainy afternoon but didn't dampen our spirits.

Our first stop was Pflumm's Country Store for lunch. The food was outstanding and the atmosphere perfect for our trip across the street to the museum. Larry McCaffrey has done an outstanding job of refurbishing the old cabin and collecting local history to create the museum. Larry repeatedly stressed he had lots of help and support from the firemen and others in the community.

After leaving the museum we traveled on to the Hartsville Slate Creek School where Steve Cotton met us and gave us a tour of the recent renovations to the building.



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

2020-2021 Officers

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

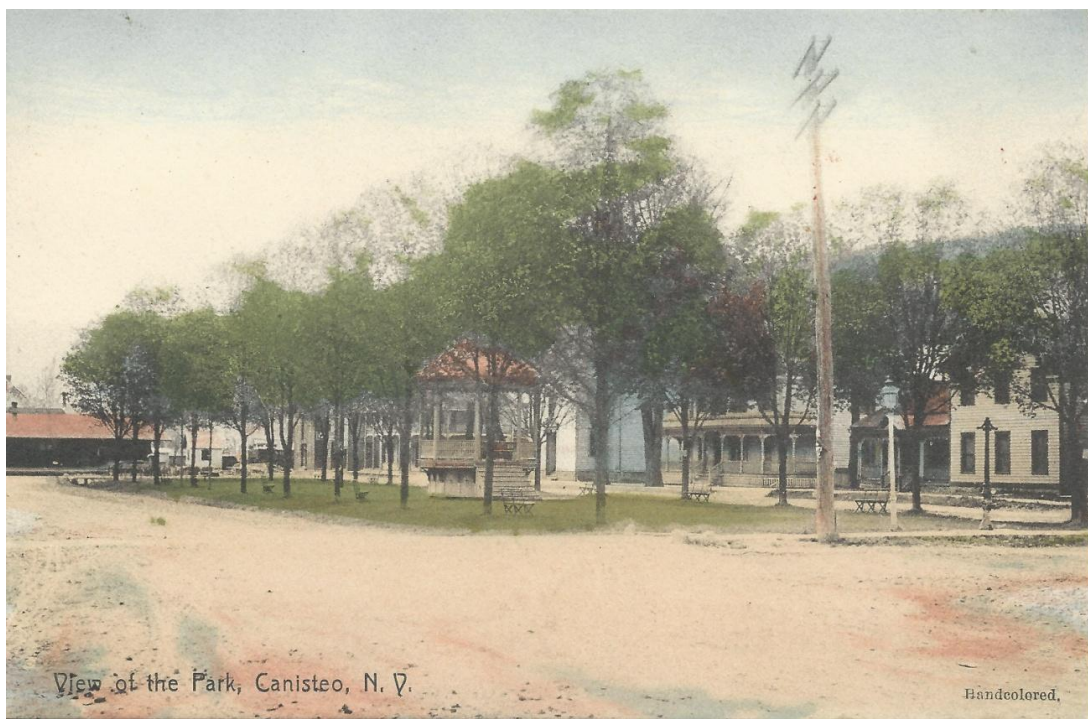
Directors

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

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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.



View of the Park, Canisteo, N. Y.

Handcolored.