

# Kanestio Historical Society Times

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

2022- Summer [kanestiohs@gmail.com](mailto:kanestiohs@gmail.com) Gail Davis, Editor

## New Look for Downtown Canistota



If you live in the Canistota area you're well aware of the changes taking place. In early March the trucks and excavation equipment moved in as the surface of Main Street and some of the older trees along the streets were removed. The pavement and trees in the park were removed and heavy equipment began digging ditches for new infrastructure.

New sidewalks were poured in the park in May and we can begin to see the shape of the new parking area. The project will not be complete until the end of next year but then we can expect to see new trees that won't damage the underground, new sidewalk and new lighting and seating. We will try to keep you updated as we start to see signs of a rebuild.

Other improvements include replacement of existing sidewalks and an additional 1000 feet of new sidewalk along State Route 36, modern

acorn style lighting in front of businesses, installation of a dedicated left-turn lane along Rt. 36 to reduce congestion and improve the flow of traffic and a new parking lot, benches, picnic tables and other enhancements to the town park.

## Volunteer Recognition



Jose Huerta

Jose has been a member of the Historical Society for many years and his contributions are numerous. He covered weekly volunteer hours, many days by himself, and was always available for our fundraisers. He has written two books - "A Brief History of the Hornell and Canistota Electric Railway Companies - 1891-1926" and "The Glenwood Inn" - both available at the Society. After our 2014 fire,

Jose spent countless hours cleaning the pictures and frames from our collection that had suffered fire and water damage. He has taken black and white photos of early Canisteo and meticulously colored them with water color pencils for us to sell at the Society as a fund raiser. Special thanks go out to Jose for his thoughtfulness and hours of volunteer work for the Historical Society.

## **The Spotlight Is On...**

By Suzanne Babbitt

As the Kanestio Historical Society seeks to gather & preserve the history of our valley, maybe we tend to focus on the distant past, rather than events more recent. Do we think that "If I lived through it, it doesn't count as OLD"? Not true! So in future newsletters we will focus from time to time on local folks who've played a part in writing Canisteo's story.

A red & white pole marked the barber shop of Tom Wood for the last 45 years, closing last November, just 2 months before Tom passed away on January 30, 2022. Tom has been a familiar figure, clearly visible standing beside his barber chair chatting with or just listening to the customers in his shop. Oh, what stories those walls could have told! But apparently not Tom as his wife Caroline told me - he never brought home any "stories." She would relate some town news to him & he'd say, "Oh, I already know that."

Caroline told me how she met Tom back in the early 1970's, all because of her twin sister Mary. Growing up in Bolivar, after high school Tom went off to barber school in Schenectady. He apprenticed with Paul Hattar in Hornell, later bought the business when Paul died & opened up shop across the street from Mary Priso's beauty salon. Over the next couple of years Tom met Mary's sister Caroline after she came home from nursing & X-ray tech school in Elmira. For the next 18 years Caroline was office nurse for Dr. Patti.

From 1963-69 Tom was a member of the Army Reserves, going off for training while he continued to build his business. In 1976 Tom & Caroline

married & soon relocated his shop to Depot Street just down from the Canisteo Post Office. Tom's work ethic was rare. Every workday he could be seen walking down 3rd Street & turning onto Depot. He wasn't one to take random days off just because he owned the business. In fact he NEVER did. If he needed to schedule a doctor visit, he'd insist it be on his regular day off - Wednesday. Otherwise he would worry that men would come by & see the place closed, & he'd lose a customer.

Tom was involved in several community functions. He was a Mason, Morning Star Lodge #65, a faithful member of Rotary serving as President & then later as Secretary. In 1996 he was given the prestigious Paul Harris award. His favorite 2 hobbies were coin collecting & golf. With Caroline assisting he also enjoyed jigsaw puzzles. They both enjoyed hometown activities, never vacations that would take them away from the village.

And so comes the end of an era - Tom is certainly missed, but he will be treasured in our memories. As readers view the photo below of Tom giving John Heaslip a trim, maybe some of you will have a memory you'd want to share with us.



**Dish to pass picnic at Rotary Park -  
Tuesday, July 19th 6 PM - All are welcome**

## A Visit with My High School Coach

by Bob Lonsberry

### "Lean into the Hill."



1976 Cross Country Team

He yelled that as we ran by, whispered it as we stood close, repeated it at every course over hill & dale. Duane Ball, my track & cross-country coach for most of the years from 7th grade until we graduated.

That was his line - at least it was the line I held on to. Of all the encouragement & advice, the prodding & pushing, it was those 4 words: "lean into the Hill." They've been part of my psyche for 50 years, a gift from Mr. Ball. It has been helpful in running & crucial in life.

Like it was in junior high, when life was hard & home was hell. When times get tough, you have to be tougher, when adversity pushes, push back harder. Attack your challenges, lean into the Hill, fight to get to the top. Never wear out & never give in.

That's what I learned from Mr. Ball.

He was the ag & heavy equipment teacher. It was that way at my school. If you took conservation, Mr. Ball taught you how to operate a backhoe & a bulldozer, & if you went out for cross-country or track, Mr. Ball taught you how to run.

He was a farm kid from up in Corfu, the oldest of 8, with a 4:44 mile that was the school record until his brother broke it. He met his wife at Alfred Tech. She was the daughter of the family he boarded with, & one afternoon she watched him in the basement rec room playing ping pong. He looked at her & joked that if she shined his shoes he'd take her out. She did & he did. They were 19 & 15 then, & have been together ever since, as husband & wife for 62 years.

I met them again yesterday. She had valve surgery last November. He uses a walker & sits in a chair that helps him stand. He is stooped & is in the hard part of life, with the death of loved ones & the memories of a life that was & a vigor that is gone.

He teared up often. And 7 times as we sat & talked he said, "Lean into the hill." But this time he was speaking mostly of himself, not of me, not just as a coach, but as an exemplar. I am a beneficiary, a man who could use a phrase & by his example & circumstance show that he truly knew what it meant.

He told me the importance of a team, that team is family & family is team, that he always wanted the attention on his runners & not on himself, but we're all part of the team. A team that could decide whether it wanted to be winners or losers. He spoke warmly of the steak dinners he put on each year for his runners. Coaches get a stipend, some extra pay for their time & efforts, & it is an important source of income, especially for a new teacher with a young family. But his stipend got put aside to pay for the steak dinners & to remind them that they were part of his family.

I wanted him to know that he had made a difference in my life. He had given me a motto of resilience, & he had taught me a sport for a lifetime, the keystone of my physical vigor to this day. I told him that my life had been better, & that my children's lives had been



bettered by the passing on of the lessons of fitness he had taught me. Me & 1000's of others.

32 years in the classroom & on the track. One teacher in a small town doing his job. How to run a farm, how to drive a tractor, how to raise a family.

How to live a life worth living. I never took a class from him, but he was one of the most useful teachers I ever had. And I'm just one of many, a brush dab on the masterpiece of his life's work.

And he was just one of many, then & now, in schools large & small, of every sort & in every state. Those who fulfill the high & holy calling of teaching. Who day in & day out do their best, & set an example, & strive for good, to leave young people & society a little better than they found them.

It is a mission of love, & I told him that I recognized that, & that I loved him back.

I am so grateful for this visit with the past, to express my gratitude, & to let this man know that it had not been in vain, that his life's work was the bettering of other people's lives, that we truly were a team & always would be, & that such was his impact & legacy that even as he runs his last race & leans into his last hill, that countless of us still hear his shouted encouragement & push harder & live better because he was our coach & teacher.

Even though the sun is setting you can still feel the warmth. I walked out trying not to cry. Then I drove a couple of hills over to our old school, to take a lap on the track & run the hill from the old cross country course - back & forth beneath the pine trees that spell out our town's name on the hillside - then I cut down by the cemetery & the playground & finished up by running downtown & back...the faint echoes of my coach playing in my head & in my heart.

Editors Note: Sadly Duane passed away on April 2, 2022. We feel so fortunate to have this remembrance from Bob. If anyone else has a story to tell about a teacher from Canisteo who made a lasting impression on your life we would love to print it in our newsletter.

## Yearbooks for Sale

Are you curious about what you parents or grandparents' school days were like? We have a collection of yearbooks at the Society for your perusal. If we have extras we sell them as a fund raiser for the Society. Most of these are used with autographs across some of the pictures. Currently we have issues from the following years for sale - \$10 each plus \$5 for shipping or they can be purchased at the Society: 1946; 1947-48; 1951; 1954; 1958; 1959; 1961; 1968; 1974.

## Patriot Story

By Toni Stevens-Oliver

## Jeremiah & Anne Baker

Jeremiah Baker was born 9 May 1749 in Middletown, Connecticut, the son of Timothy Baker and Hannah Candee. He married Anne Stephens on 4 Mar 1773 in North Canaan, Connecticut. To them were born 11 children: Mary, Hannah, Thankful, Cynthia, William, Simeon, John, Bazy, Jeremiah Jr., Noah and James.

During the Revolutionary War, Jeremiah Baker served as a Private in Captain Simon Spaulding's "Independent Company" out of Westmoreland County, Connecticut. They saw engagements in Northern New Jersey, Philadelphia, and Monmouth, as well as many battles against the Iroquois, who were allied with the British.

Most of the men in Captain Spaulding's company were from Forty Fort, located along the Susquehanna River in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania (the Wyoming Valley). This area was a stronghold built by settlers from Westmoreland County, Connecticut. At the start of the Revolution, both Connecticut and Pennsylvania claimed this land based on charters granted to both by the king.

The men of Forty Fort joined the Connecticut militia, as they saw themselves as citizens of Connecticut. That is why on 30 June 1778, the women, children and older men of Forty Fort were left mostly defenseless when 400 British Troops with the aid of 700 Iroquois attacked. The Wyoming Valley Massacre had very few survivors. On that day Jeremiah Baker's wife, Anne, was alone on their farm with her newborn daughter Thankful, four-year old Mary and two-year old Hannah. When the Iroquois crashed into her home, taking her food and lighting her farm on fire, Anne was struck blind from fear. It is that which saved her life. The Indians took pity on her, and released her with her children into the woods.

Word of these events reached Jeremiah Baker. His wife had no help, her friends were all murdered, and the Connecticut government said she was in Pennsylvania, while the Pennsylvania government noted that she was a Connecticut citizen. Jeremiah's letters to the Continental Congress, asking to be released from his duties to go to his wife, and take her to safety with family in Connecticut, are on file at the National Archives.

After the war, Jeremiah Baker and all of the other families from Forty Fort were forced to give up all of their holdings in the Wyoming Valley. A group of 12 families floated on barges up the Susquehanna River to the Chemung and stopped for a time in Waverly. Hearing of land being sold by Phelps and Gorham further west, they traveled on to

investigate. They found a lovely valley, cleared already by Native groups who had since moved on, with rich fertile soil. They bought the land that would become Canisteo and Hornellsville.

## CANISTEO IN 1790

by George Dickey

On Christmas day 1789 a Durham boat pulled up to the river bank and began unloading members of two families, those of Uriah Stephens and Benjamin Crosby, thus began the settlement that would become Canisteo. The men had assisted the boat crew in poling the boat up the river while the older boys had driven a herd of cattle along the river bank. The trip had been difficult, the year had been dry and the river was low and blocked in places by gravel bars and fallen trees so the trip had taken longer than expected.

Bill Stuart, in his Stories of the Canisteo Valley, had stated that a party of men had been here earlier in the summer to build a cabin and harvest hay to feed the cattle over the winter. In the spring additional families arrived and farms were laid out along the river.

During the summer of 1790, the Federal Government conducted a census of the population in the states so we have record of who was here during that first year. Unfortunately the census only listed the heads of families by name and then the members of the families in three categories; Males under 16, males over 16 and females. Canisteo, at that time, was included in Ontario County which covered all of western New York. Since we know most the families that were here, we can isolate the records for Canisteo. That record is as follows:

<u>Heads of Families</u>	<u>Males over 16</u>	<u>Males under 16</u>	<u>Females</u>
James Headley	1	1	2
William Baker	2	1	1
Jedediah Stephens	2	2	4
Uriah Stephens	2	3	1
Uriah Stephens, Jr.	1	1	2
John Stephens	1	1	2
Richard Crosby	3		3
Solomon Bennett	3	2	3
Andrew Bennett	1	1	2

Using family records let's see if we can put some names to these numbers?

The first family listed is that of James Headley (Hadley as it was later spelled). Here we have to be careful as there are two James Headley's in the early history of Canisteo. There was a James Headley among the associates who purchased the two lots and a James Headley who settled along the river east of the purchased lots between Adrian and Cameron. The east boundary of the village of Adrian marks the eastern edge of the original purchase. I had wondered why Hadley had purchased land outside of the original purchase until I found an assessment roll for 1800 that showed two James Hadley's. The records we have for the Hadley family show that in 1790, the family consisted of James, his wife Rhoda Jones, a daughter also named Rhoda and an unnamed son who apparently did not survive childhood.

Next on the list is William Baker. Baker has been somewhat of a mystery, but a recent book by Marian Henry, Pioneers of Steuben County, New York, provides information on this family. William is the younger brother of Jerimiah Baker who we will meet later. The family consists of William, his wife Phebe Wardell and a son less than 16. The other older male is probably Phebe's brother Samuel Wardell who lives nearby according to the 1800 census.

Next is Jedediah Stephens, a distant cousin of Uriah Stephens. He is not one of the original purchasers but according to an affidavit from Uriah Stephens, Jr., He was owed money by William Wynkoop, and a Pennsylvania court had awarded him Wynkoop's shares in the Canisteo purchase in compensation. This family consists of Jedediah, his wife Abigail Cory and sons Silas and Nathan and daughters Abigail, Cynthia, Sylvia and

Olive. I have no idea who the second adult male is. Family records don't show a son who would be over 16.

Next in the census is Uriah Stephens. Uriah is the leader of the settlers and at 66 the oldest. With him is his wife Martha Rathbun. The other male over 16 is his son Elias and younger sons Elijah, William and Benjamin.

He is followed by another son, Uriah, Jr. His family consists of his wife, Elizabeth Jones. Their children are a son John and daughters Sally and Ann. You can see there is a discrepancy here as the census should show a third female.

The next name on the list is John Stephens, another of Uriah's sons. Besides John the family consists of his wife Olive Franklin and a young son Franklin and a daughter Cynthia.

Richard Crosby is the next person listed. The family records here are not as helpful and there are several possibilities. It is generally assumed that the three older males listed are Benjamin, the father, Richard and brother Ruben. If this is the case why is Richard listed as the head of family and there should be at least four females listed, Benjamin's wife Mary and daughters Mary (Polly) Rachel and Hannah. And alternative is the three males are Richard and his brothers Ruben and Ebenezer and a combination of wives and sister making up the females, with Benjamin joining them at a later date with the rest of the family.

The final two names on the census list for Canisteo are Solomon and Andrew Bennett. Solomon's family consists of his wife Sarah Stephens. The two younger

males are their sons William and Thomas, and a daughter Martha. Also in this family are his stepchildren Uriah and Daniel Upson and stepdaughter Elizabeth Upson. The census shows the two Upson boys as being 16 and over but according to the family genealogy Daniel is only 14. Andrew's household consists of his wife, Mary Miller, and an infant son.

One person we would expect to find listed is John Jamison. Apparently he has not arrived at Canisteo at the time the census was taken. He is, perhaps, the person listed at Patterson's (Painted Post) as James Jamison and on his way to Canisteo. Tradition also states that later that fall, Jeremiah Baker arrives in Canisteo to join his brother William and father-in-law Jedediah Stephens there. With him are his wife Ann Stephens and sons William, Simeon, John and Brazey, and daughters Mary, Hannah, Thankful and Cynthia.

## KAHOCO

KAHOCO , Kanisteo Homecoming, dates back to 1909 when Miss Eva Sturdevant started a tradition that continued for over 100 years. The "homecoming" was a chance for Canisteo women graduates to get together for a week of activities, each hosted by a different community member. The events started on Sunday with a worship service at one of the churches. Monday was an evening dinner, Tuesday a breakfast, Wednesday a luncheon and Thursday was the grand finale with members dressing up to a theme and gathering for an afternoon outing.

Entertainment was always an important part of the festivities and we have found a couple songs that became a popular part of the programs. The first song, adapted by Gertrude Burdick, was sung to the 1914 tune of "There's a Long, Long Trail" Margaret Stephens tells us that the Feeney sisters sang this on several occasions and it had become somewhat of a theme song.

The song I remember was adapted to a popular show tune by Dora Lee Snyder Alexander. The trio of Snyder sisters, Dora Lee, Linda (Norton) and Frances (Bloom) sang this beautifully.



### *"Our Favorite Things"*

*Village and Valley both with the same name.  
This is the home to which we all lay claim.  
Green hills and farmlands of these things we sing  
Cause these are a few of my favorite things.*

*Schoolyards with playgrounds and churches with  
steeples  
Each overflowing with all kinds of people.  
The sound of the music when the carillon rings.  
These are a few of my favorite things.*

*Evergreens shaping a name on a side hill,  
The creeks where we swam and the river all flow  
still.  
Carnivals held at the Rotary Field.  
School plays and ball games where friendships are  
sealed.*

*When the band plays, When the parades pass,  
When in cap and gown  
We cling to the memories of our favorite things  
and share love for our hometown.*

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
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