

Historical Happenings



Dansville Area Historical Society

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Website: dansvilleareahistoricalsociety.wordpress.com

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VOLUME 22, No. 2

"Caretakers of Our Area History"

SPRING 2014

President's Report

Dear Members and Friends,

Gerri is traveling this month, so I have stepped in to bring you the President's letter.

On behalf of the Board, a tremendous thank you for your support of Dansville Area Historical Society! The membership drive has been very successful with a high rate of renewals. Several of you moved up to Silver, Gold, and Platinum levels. Your commitment helps so much -- not only to sustain the Museum, but also to show that DAHS is important to our community.

We see the community's involvement also as we go forward developing a strategic plan for the Museum for the next three years. Two of our three planning sessions have now been held, and input from members and friends who volunteered to serve on the planning committee is invaluable! Read more in "Committee Reports."

Dogwood Festival weekend just ended. The weather was mostly sunny and temperate which is a great report for this time of year. The DAHS booth at the craft fair did a brisk business selling our gift items. A best seller was the

two-volume set of Rushbottom Cookery cookbooks -- must have been the aroma of Zweigle's hots from the Episcopal Church's stand across the aisle! Many visited the Museum, and it was nice to see familiar faces and new faces as well.

DAHS has scheduled a special day on June 22 to thank our members and friends for their support. On display will be the new up-to-date plaque honoring Life Members. (See a full list in this newsletter.) We hope you bring your family and friends. Stop in to view the Museum rooms, visit with fellow members, enjoy refreshments, relax on rocking chairs set up on the porch, and perhaps play a bit of croquet. Details are below. Looking forward to seeing you!

Nancy

Nancy Helfrich, Newsletter Editor

P.S. - We'd like to hear from you. Email us. Drop us a note. Share your reminiscences of Dansville. Suggest topics you'd like researched. Ask us questions. Tell us what you like. Tell us what you want to see in the newsletter.

Sunday, June 22 in the Park - and at the Museum - with DAHS



Join us Sunday, June 22, from 2 to 4 as we honor our Members and Life Members with a open house and reception at the Historical Museum, 14 Church Street. View the refurbished plaque with the names of our 89 Life Members. Enjoy refreshments, go on an artifact scavenger hunt, and relax with friends on the porch in one of our rocking chairs.

Then walk across the street to Pioneer Park to play or just watch a game of croquet! Bob Pinckney of the Livingston County Historical Society will help and give instruction. Mallets are provided. All ages are welcome and encouraged! A playing field and a practice area will be set up. Chairs and cold drinks will be on hand.

All are welcome to attend and play croquet

Committee Reports

Website and Facebook

Posts on the website <http://dansvilleareahistoricalociety.wordpress.com/> this year have been varied. We post copies of the DAHS Newsletter and post program and event announcements. We also post status of events – in March we quickly let people know our speaker had to postpone. In one post, we asked viewers for help with a photograph from the Museum showing 13 people but no names. A few guesses were offered through our Facebook page, but no solid leads yet. I also posted an article from the November 27, 1952, issue of the *Genesee Country Express* about Gottlob Bastian's historic desk which was donated to Clara Barton Chapter No. 1 of the American Red Cross. I hope I have gotten you curious enough to go to the website to see how the Red Cross and a desk are related!

Overall visits to our website are looking good. We are just a few months into our third year for the website. In March of this year, we had our first four-digit total views for one month with 1,084 views. We have had 3,560 views for the first 4½ months of 2014.

Here is a search phrase a visitor typed in to a search engine that brought him/her to our website: "what is the oldest building still erect in dansville, ny." I would say that would be Hartman's Tavern (Inn) operated by John Hartman and built between 1806 and 1811 by his father, Harmon Hartman. It is located on Main Street, just north of the Dansville Primary School.

The Facebook page is a little more active with 354 "Likes." Items we have shared recently include photos of the demolition of Blum Shoe Manufacturing Co. building on Milton Street. We also share historical and community events. Individuals have messaged or emailed us asking for history on various people, places, and items. Some offer to donate items or are looking for pictures of family members. These requests are answered and/or forwarded as appropriate.

Chad L. Schuster

Did You Know?

The Red Cross flag was first officially flown in the USA in 1881 (the year the US Red Cross was founded), when Clara Barton flew the flag in Dansville, New York, during an appeal for donations to help the victims of forest fires in Michigan. (from *Askville* by Amazon)

Programs

Unfortunately, Tom Roffe, our speaker scheduled to speak on the D. L. and W. Railroad, became ill and had to postpone his March program. We wish him a full recovery and look forward to rescheduling.

Our next program will be held Thursday, July 24, at the North Dansville Town Hall auditorium at 7 p.m. Erica Joan Wacnecski will present "Medicine Show" which is a history of patent medicine. She is a member of the Medina Historical Society, well known for her presentations, and also an illustrator of several local books and a children's coloring book!

We are close to finalizing speakers for our Annual Meeting in October and our Musical Program in December. The date for December's program will be the Thursday evening preceding Dansville's Winter in the Village. If any of our readers have a program they would like to present, or an idea for a program, please call me at 335-2606 or email DAHS at dahs@stny.rr.com.

Corky Chapman

Fund Raising

We have new two items for sale: a glass cutting board with different Dansville historical places impressed into the board (\$25.00) and hanging ornaments about 3 inches by 3 inches, made from a tin-like metal (\$10.00). Each ornament has the photograph or likeness of a Dansville landmark with the name printed on the back. Although these can certainly be used on Christmas trees, they are also perfect as window hangers and ceiling fan pulls.

We did very well at the Dogwood Festival Craft Fair. A surprise seller were our cookbooks. We sold at least five sets in two hours! Sales during the Dogwood Festival also included our books, collectibles, notecards, and cotton throws. Remember that these items are always available at the Museum, which is open the first and third Saturdays of each month, or call 335-8090 to arrange for us to open the Museum for you.

We are working on a balloon collectible to be available by Labor Day weekend. Visit us then at the Museum or at our booth at the NYS Festival of Balloons, Saturday, August 30, and Sunday, August 31.

Corky Chapman

Committee Reports continued

Planning Committee

As part of the "Get Set" grant that DAHS was awarded, members of the Board along with community individuals interested in DAHS and local history have now met twice with Dr. Christopher Clarke, a museum consultant with more than 20 years experience working with museums and historical groups in New York State. The committee members include Chad Schuster, Janet Gunn, Teresa Dearing, Mary Jo Marks, Paul Constantine, Jeff Miller, Susan DeMuth, Nancy Helfrich, Peter Vogt, David Gilbert, and Betty Minemier. A third meeting is scheduled for June 23, after which the planning committee will draft a three-year Strategic Plan for the DAHS Museum. Anyone wishing to attend the third session can call me at 335-5743.

Nancy Helfrich

Community Outreach and Education

On Wednesday, June 18, the fourth grade classes at Dansville Elementary School will be visiting the Museum. Aimee Schwenzer, fourth-grade teacher, is coordinating the visit. Children from six classrooms will see all three floors of exhibits and artifacts. Museum volunteers will be stationed on each floor to explain aspects of our local history.

On Saturday, June 21, during our normal open hours at the Museum, we will host a group from Rochester who want to know more about the "Castle on the Hill." Curator David Gilbert will lead a talk for them.

We welcome any group who has an interest in the Museum or a specific area of Dansville history. Give us advance notice by calling Board President Gerri Waight (335-9640) and we will do our best to accommodate your date.



Dogwood Festival Visitors to the Museum - DAHS Life Members Jim and Jan Blum are shown here with their granddaughter Linda Trahan during the Saturday, May 17th open house at the DAHS Museum.



Landscaping Memorial - Life Member and good friend of DAHS, David Smith visited during the Dogwood Festival and is shown here beside the plaque honoring his mother Ruth Bornt Smith and Smith's Market which his parents operated on Main Street, now the home of Clockworks Wine and Liquor. David funded the landscaping to the front of the Museum in their memory.

Join Us for the DAHS Summer Community Program **Thursday, July 24, 2014 • 7 p.m.**



"Medicine Show" **History of Patent Medicine**

Presented by Erica Joan Wanecski
Member of Medina Historical Society

North Dansville Town Hall • 14 Clara Barton Street, Dansville, NY

Free Admission. Donations Gratefully Accepted. Handicapped Accessible.

Object Lessons

from the Dansville Historical Museum by David Gilbert, Curator

DAHS Curator David Gilbert has undertaken an extremely interesting project: to narrate Dansville's history via the description and interpretation of 100 objects housed in our museum. We bring you one of these objects in this issue of the newsletter.

OBJECT #32: Medicine Bottle - Bastian's Life Animator (c. 1877) Donated by Mrs. Carl G. Bastian

Apparently, the old movie cliché was right: back in the day, they really did have traveling medicine shows, where people journeyed across the country in wagons selling patent medicines, mysterious concoctions of dubious effectiveness, touted to cure every ailment known to man (as well as the euphemistically-described “women's complaints”). We've seen these “step right up” scenes in countless old movies and television shows, and maybe we shook our condescending heads at the phony-baloney pitches and wondered how those country rubes could have been so gullible. To us, trained since Vietnam and Watergate not to trust without proof, this is just the grown-up version of “don't take candy from strangers.”

It's undeniably true that patent medicines (mostly a misnomer, since very few of them were actually patented) were big business in the 1800s, and not all of them were sold in the backs of wagons. Some of them sold by the thousands or even millions—nostrums with such fancy-pants names as Hostetter's Stomach Bitters (very popular with Union soldiers during the Civil War), Dr. Kilmer's Swamp Root, and Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Tonic (possibly the biggest seller of them all). They were very heavily advertised in newspapers and magazines, and a number of them became household names. The ingredients were almost always a secret although it was no secret that alcohol was often a major constituent (Hostetter's Bitters contained as much as 47% alcohol, which would help to explain why it was often sold in saloons). And many of them became popular simply because they were tasty, and, with a few tweaks to their formulae, evolved into such mega-selling soft drinks as Coca-Cola, Dr. Pepper, Hires Root Beer, and 7-Up.

But patent medicines didn't thrive simply because people were gullible. For starters, some of them...maybe not a lot of them, but some of them...were the real deal, and actually did alleviate suffering. Some of them are still around: Bayer Aspirin, Phillips' Milk of Magnesia, Fletcher's Castoria, and Richardson's Croup & Pneumonia Cure Salve (or, as we call it now, Vick's Vapo-Rub).

It's also important to know that, before the 20th century, a lot of people were still mistrustful of “real” doctors and their “real” medicines -- sometimes with good reason. Medical science, to a considerable degree, was still medical guesswork, and sometimes the cure was, quite literally, worse than the disease. Someone with syphilis, for example, might be prescribed a drug called calomel, which contained mercuric chloride, as nasty a toxin as one could ingest. (Hostetter's Bitters might get you drunk, but it wouldn't necessarily hasten you to your grave.) So, when someone like James Caleb Jackson -- who also benefited from people's suspicion of conventional medical science -- wrote a book in 1870 titled *How to Treat the Sick Without Medicine*, he was bound to sell more than a couple of copies. Of course, Dr. Jackson was no lover of patent medicines either, which would have put him at odds with Dansville's leading pharmacist, Gottlob Bastian, whose inventory included his own patent medicine, something called Bastian's Life Animator.

Bastian's pharmacy was one of a handful of local retail business --the short list included the Mader meat market and the Perry hardware store -- that endured under various owners for over 100 years. It was in or around 1834 that Edward Niles and Dr. Lyman N. Cook opened a drug store on Main Street, one of Dansville's first; eventually Niles assumed sole ownership of the business. It went up in flames in the great fire of 1854, but Niles would persevere, and before long his pharmacy would settle in to the new business block Charles Shepard built just south of his house (now the library). On Niles' death in 1865, it was taken over by his son, C. E. Niles, who ran the store until 1870. And that's when Gottlob Bastian, who had pretty much been the hand-groomed heir apparent, took the reins.

He was born in Prussia in 1835, and immigrated with his brother Ottmar in 1852. For reasons lost to history they chose Dansville as the place to be, and, after a brief stint as a traveling salesman (practicing the promotional skills that would come in handy later on), he found employment as a clerk for another Dansville druggist, C. G. Wetmore. “Later,” we read in his 1916 obituary, “he entered the drug store of Edward Niles, and applying himself to the study of medicine he soon became an expert parmacuetist [sic], and when in 1870 he purchased the Niles drug store he was in every way fitted not only to compound medicines but to administer them for the relief of the sick.”

Within a few years, advertisements for Bastian's Life Animator began to appear in the local papers. One such ad, which ran in the *Advertiser* in 1876, read:

**Why suffer from
Dyspepsia, Liver Complaint,
Headache, Kidney Affections,
Loss of appetite and
GENERAL DEBILITY,
when BASTIAN'S LIFE ANIMATOR
will surely relief [sic] it?
This is also a most valuable Tonic for
Ladies of delicate health.
No family should be without it!**

Later ads would stretch the entire length of a newspaper column, and include glowing testimonials from places as far-flung as Cincinnati, Chicago, and even Oakland, California. "Your 'Life Animator' is the best medicine I ever used," gushed a fellow from Brooklyn. "It cured my dyspepsia, when every other remedy failed." (Dyspepsia was the old-timey word for acid indigestion.) "Have only used three bottles: have spent hundreds of dollars, and three one-dollar bottles of Bastian's Life Animator cured me." "My health is much better than when I left Dansville," wrote the man from Chicago, "and I know you did me much good while under your care, for which you have my lasting gratitude." And so on and so forth.

The obvious question that I wish I could answer but can't, is what Dr. Bastian's miracle tonic contained. I don't know if it contained a lot of alcohol, although it's suggestive that it was sold in large, 48-ounce amber bottles that look more like the product of a brewery than a pharmacy. Nor do I know just how popular the stuff actually was. Gottlob Bastian didn't become a millionaire from the sales of his tonic. Still, according to Bunnell, even after the turn of the century, the drug store was still selling a line of products under the umbrella "G. Bastian's Favorite Remedies." After Gottlob, two more generations of Bastian ran the pharmacy—first Edward, then Carl. Carl died in 1952; a few years later, the pharmacy was gone, replaced by Perry's Shoe Store.

As for patent medicines in general, their dominance in the marketplace began to erode following exposés by muckraking journalists, who offered horror stories of people getting addicted to or even dying from, patent medicines. In 1906 Washington passed the Pure Food and Drug Act which, among other things, required drug manufacturers to list the ingredients of their products. Surprisingly, the stupor-inducing Hostetter's Bitters was able to weather that storm (turns out one of its ingredients was quinine, which actually had medicinal value), but the one-two punch of Prohibition and the stock market crash was more than it could withstand, and by the mid-1930s, Hostetter's Bitters had disappeared from drug store shelves.



Inscription on bottle reads, "Bastian's Life Animator Prepared by G. Bastian, Dansville, NY." [From Dansville Historical Museum Collection, donated by Mrs. Carl Bastian.]

The More Times Change. . .

From the Minutes of a DAHS Board of Directors meeting held June 4, 1990 at the Museum: "*House and Grounds Report - Vincent Rauber: Vincent said flowers have been planted in front of the Museum. David [Gilbert] commented on the beauty of the dogwood tree near the front entrance during the Dogwood Festival.*"

. . .The More Things Stay the Same - View of the Museum front yard on Saturday, May 17, 2014. Just to the right of the front door is a plaque that reads, "Dogwood tree planted in memory of Vin Rauber who cared for our building and grounds, 1985-1997."



“...Donations Gratefully Accepted”

Since its inception, the Dansville Area Historical Society's goal has been to preserve and promote a legacy that comes to us as archives, artifacts, and research. To keep the Museum open, we ask for monetary help using the phrase, “donations gratefully accepted.”

Below is the list of our Life Members with the year they became Life Members. Some have been with us so long, the date was not recorded! Also listed are individuals, families and businesses who have donated this year. We honor you and your commitment to DAHS.

Life Members (\$150)

2014 Sarah and Carl Wagner
2014 Gerrard and Norma Maltby
2014 Scott Hebert and Randy Haywood
2014 Len and Ann Davis
2014 Francine and Tom Knapp
2014 Richard and Verna Fox
2014 Michael and Marie Blum
2013 Jon Shay
2012 James and Nancy Helfrich
2012 Michael and Marcel Kelly
2012 Edward Perry
2011 Paul and Gay Frame
2011 Richard and Patricia Bondi
2011 Ted Jackson
2011 Chad and Colleen Schuster
2011 Dan and Cindy Rauber
2011 Dennis and Diane Gould
2010 Gerri Waight
2010 Mary and Clayton Harris
2010 Norman Henrich
2010 Sean Corbin Layer
2009 Mary E.S. Bacon
2009 Joe and Vicki Elliott
2009 David and Nancy Leven
2009 Patricia Harter
2009 Mida W. Bristol
2008 Enid and Keith Mitchell
2008 William and Judith Farrell
2008 Sherry and Gary Kramer
2008 Guy and Anita Bennett
2007 Arthur and Joan Gibson
2007 Pam LaForce
2007 Thomas and Joan Wamp
2007 Owen Derrenbacher
2007 Elizabeth A. Black
2006 Lou Anna Blum
2006 Irene Strick
2006 Bud and Dorothy Lang
2006 Carl and Lisa Hindle
2006 Sally L. May
2006 Fred and Betty Wyant
2005 Mr. and Mrs. Jim Snyder
2005 James R. Vogt
2005 William and Norma Forsythe

2004 Jane M. and Carl Behnk
2004 Stephen and Suzanne Schuster
2004 Marion Cosmano
2003 Jim and Jan Blum
2003 Eric Layer
2003 David and Margaret Aldrich
2002 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Brydges
2000 Paul Hoffman
2000 Mark and Julie Miller
2000 Barry Haywood
2000 Mr. and Mrs. Gary VanAuken
1999 Mr. and Mrs. Bill Lemen
1999 Richard and Lorraine LeBar
1998 Kemp Agency
1998 Jeannette Freeman
1998 Vernon and Ruth Teeter
1998 John Skillings, M.D.
1997 Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Caldwell
1997 Robert D. Morf
1997 Pat Anderson
1997 Dick and Johanne Gillard
1996 Mrs. Robert Kane
1996 Paul and Aniko Constantine
1996 Fred and Barb Calnan
1996 David Smith
1995 Jane Schryver
1995 Paul and Anne Black
1995 Albert and Janice Hawk
1994 Linda Shafer Layer
1994 Mrs. Priscilla Rowe Howe
1994 Virginia Zerfass Deal
**** David and Alison Knights
**** Ed and Joanne Hindle
**** Laura Babcock
**** George Weidman
**** Mr. and Mrs. Bob Minemier
**** Mrs. Glen Linzy
**** Mr. and Mrs. Philip Saunders
**** Joanna Townsend
**** Norma Evans
**** Donald Saylor
**** Linda Johnson
**** Mrs. Alice Packard
**** Mr. and Mrs. Howard Scott
**** Martha Rodman

Platinum Level Members (\$100)

Nancy and Norm Wetterau

Gold Level Members (\$50)

Crystal Eades
Fred and Kathleen Goodell
Richard and Tracey MacDonald
George and Maureen Finn

Silver Level Members (\$25)

Ken Holbrook
Barbara Stahl
Leo and Mary Jo Marks

Robert and Barbara Stickney
Mary Ann Holden
Marie Roberts
Arthur and Joan Gibson
Janice Teribury

General Members (\$15)

Donald McLane
Herm and Pat Kreiley
Sherrie Reilly
Harold and Carol Reynolds
Les Bowden
Joanne Rodgers
Richard Mark
Bill and Mary Lee Beierschmitt
Sarah and Robert Booher
James and Linda Culbertson
Rev. Walter and Marilyn Connor
Sharon Harris
Mr. and Mrs. Jon VanDerhoff
Craig and Janet Gunn
Brax and Marilyn Middleton
Norma Sheasley
Wixumlee McMaster
Suzanne and Frank Leicht
Gerald and Delores Partridge
Tom and Jerri Rounsville
Ralph Jr. and Corine Chapman
Carol and Robert Davies
Marlene Kouwe
Albert and Sharie Gladner
Dick and Elizabeth Whitenack
Mary Melenbacker
Maruth Dieter
Edwina Ferguson
Adria and William Shearing
Todd and Janet Moore
Gary and Norma Reilly
Nancy Doubleday
Jane Kenney
John and Mary Jo Jacobs
Janice Teribury
Pat Grant
Darla Paul

Business Members (\$25)

Lattimore Physical Therapy
Tony's Pizzeria
Beta Sigma Phi
David and Laura Emo
Thomas and Delores Clark
John Vogel
Rushbottom Heights
Star Theatre
NAPA Auto Parts

Remembering Richard Eades

I was saddened to hear of the recent passing of Richard Eades, long-time Dansville schoolteacher and supporter of the Historical Society. Few people did more than he to promote the education of the historical legacy of the Dansville area; he gave slide show programs and donated several decades worth of Dansville Country Express issues to the Museum. On a personal level, I was among those who took his high school elective course in local history, and for me it was an inspiring experience. I've always been interested in history in general, but here was history I could actually reach out and touch because it was all around me, and Mr. Eades was the one who set me on the path to all the research and writing that I've undertaken for the last three decades. Mr. Eades was the most influential teacher of my life, and I will always be indebted to him.

David Gilbert, DAHS Curator

Richard E. Eades Memorial Fund

To honor our teacher, friend, and benefactor, the Dansville Area Historical Society has established the Richard E. Eades Memorial Fund.

Richard Eugene Eades passed away March 12, 2014, in New Hartford, NY, where he had recently moved with his wife Crystal.

For more than 25 years, from 1964 to 1990, he taught at the Dansville Central High School, primarily Grade 11 American History. He also served as Department Chair for Grades 7-12. Dick was well-known for his love of Dansville area history, and the DAHS Museum has been fortunate enough to receive many of the files and records he gathered from his research.

We benefit from these records, but even more so from the years of work and dedication he gave to our Society.

Dick was born in Rome, NY, in 1935. In 1957 he received his B.A. from Hamilton College and entered the U.S. Army, serving two years at Fort Knox, KY. Honorably discharged in 1959, he enrolled in St. Lawrence University where he received his M.Ed. degree in 1960. From 1960 to 1964 he taught high school Social Studies in Earlville Central School in Earlville, NY, and then moved to Dansville. Upon retiring, he and Crystal moved back to Earlville where he remained active in many church, community, and fraternal organizations.

Gifts in memory of Richard Eades may be made to the memorial fund and sent to the Dansville Area Historical Society, P.O. Box 481, Dansville, NY 14437.



Richard E. Eades

**DANSVILLE AREA
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

Box 481
Dansville, NY 14437
585-335-8090

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DAHS Museum

14 Church St.,
Dansville, NY
Open 10 to 2pm
1st & 3rd Saturdays

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DAHS Upcoming Events

Sunday, June 22 -

*DAHS Reception at the Museum to Honor Members and Life Members.
Refreshments and Scavenger Hunt, 2 to 4pm.*

Learn to Play the Game of Croquet in Pioneer Park 2pm to 4pm.

Thursday, July 24 - Community Program, "Medicine Show," the history of patent medicine, presented by Erica Joan Wanecski. North Dansville Town Hall, 7pm.

Saturday, August 30, and Sunday, August 31 - Visit our booth at NYS Festival of Balloons. New wooden collectible depicting the Festival of Balloons will be available for sale.

All Programs and Activities are Free and Open to the Public

Dansville Area Historical Society Membership Renewal 2014

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Also give address and time period for any different summer/winter address.

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

☐ This is a Gift Membership from: _____

☐ **General** \$15.00 ☐ **Silver Level** \$25.00

☐ **Business** \$25.00 ☐ **Gold Level** \$50.00

☐ **Life** \$150.00 ☐ **Platinum Level**...\$100.00

☐ I am already a DAHS Life Member & would
like to make an additional donation \$ _____

☐ Additional donation \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

*PLEASE CHECK the appropriate boxes and enclose payment payable to DAHS. Mail to
Dansville Area Historical Society • P.O. Box 481, Dansville, New York 14437*