

# **Historical Happenings**

Dansville Area Historical Society "Caretakers of Our Area History"



Volume 20, No. 3

Summer 2012

## **President's Report**

Dear Members and Friends,

The end of the summer season brings with it several good things. The leaves will be turning bright colors very soon. We also will have cooler night temperatures and warm days. We won't remember the above 90 degree weather of 2012. In the DAHS Museum, we have made great strides at tackling the humidity in the basement, also known as the tools and industry exhibit area. Chad Schuster brought in a dehumidifier at the beginning of the summer, and with the help of several board members, we have done a fine job of manually emptying the contraption. Just as the humid summer ends, we have now have planned a more permanent way of draining out the water that collects!

The DAHS board met in July. The meeting was to review the Pioneer Park project. Pioneer Park is the new name for the park across from our museum on Church Street which was formerly called Instructor Park. We had earlier voted to do this project – to put a memorial in Pioneer Park commemorating its beginning as Dansville's first cemetery. We set up a committee to take care of picking the memorial and for the fund raising. The insert in this newsletter has information on the memorial; we hope you will help us complete the project by sending a donation. The address is Dansville Area Historical Society, P.O. Box 381, Dansville NY 14437, and donations are tax deductible.

We again had our tent at the New York State Festival of Balloons over Labor Day weekend. Dick Mark and his crew did a great job setting up and manning the booth throughout the hot, hot weather. Thanks to all who visited.

In our last newsletter, we told you about a grant we received to begin working on a long-range plan for the Museum. That process has started with a committee made up of DAHS board and community members. More information is in this newsletter, along with training sessions our members have attended.

Change is inevitable. We like to see change when we see progress, but some things also regretfully force us to accept a change. Marie Roberts, after 25 years of dedicated service, has stepped down from the board. It is our loss. Marie, we hope to continue to see you at our activities!

I suggested it in the last newsletter, but I am once again inviting everyone to stop by the museum to see our rearranged displays and renovated room. In the meantime, we look forward to seeing you at our Annual Dinner Meeting on Saturday, October 13. Our speaker, Les Buell, has requested two long tables to display Civil War medical equipment and supplies. It looks like an exciting presentation! Tickets will be available at the Dansville banks, or from any board member, or call me at 585-335-8909.

**Jim** Jim Snyder, President

# Acquisitions: April 16 - August 1, 2012

Al Hawk, Acquisitions

- Book, *Down the Banks, a Romance of the Genesee*, published 1877 by A.O. Bunnell, Dansville
- Miniature Bible (3 x 4 inches, one inch thick), dated February 18, 1857. Names inside: Mr. Lewis Snyder, Pittsford, NY; Melissa Ryesoft

#### From Catherine Robin, Geneseo

- Militia Enrollment List, State of NY 1916, with 890 names from North Dansville, Livingston County (for conscription as needed)
- Card table printed with cover showing business card size ads for many local Dansville businesses

#### From Hunt, NY, via David Palmer, West Sparta Town Historian

Photo album with old portrait photographs, and a picture frame

#### Carol Quibell, Dansville

- Seven photos of Lemens Service Station (Clara Barton and Church Streets) from Shell (1950s) to Exxon to Sunoco
- Six photos of the Blum Shoe Mfg. Co. factory just before and during demolition.
- Photo of old Dansville Fire Truck recognizing George Roberts as 2<sup>nd</sup> VP of the WNYVFA

#### Bill Lemen, Dansville

- Booklets:
  - o "The Jackson Sanitorium" (poor condition) when James H. Jackson was Chief of Staff;
  - Dansville by Pen and Camera, 1898, by G.W. Ames, printed by Breeze Printing House, Dansville
  - o "Clara Barton Chapter No. 1, a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary brochure", September 9, 1931
  - o St. Mary's "Parish Pathways", 100 year history of the church, 1845-1945
- Newspapers: *Dansville Breeze*, August 13, 1946; *Genesee Country Express*, August 15, 1946. Both expanded issues celebrating 100 years of Dansville growth.

#### Eileen Della Costra, Kendall, NY

- F.A. Owen Booklets-- Instructor Literature Series: #121, Selection of Holmes, 1917; #128, Speeches from Lincoln; #153, Prisoner of Chillon, Japanese Myths and Legends, 1912
- "Clara Barton Chapter No. 1, a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary brochure", September 9, 1931

#### **Anonymous**

- Two old Dansville bottles, Norman Thompson, Bashon Pharmacy
- Two issues, Foster Wheeler Engineering Annuals, 1940 and 1942
- McFadden's Encyclopedia of Physical Culture, five volume set, NY: McFadden Publishing, 1928
- Eight programs from Dansville Knights of Columbus Minstrel Show, 1951-1959

#### **Anonymous**

Please call the editor, 335-5743, if any acquisition information is in error or if you need a record of your donation. Thank you.

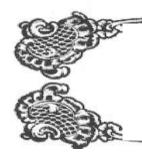
Though it seems far away, winter will be here in a few short months. Save the date for our

# **Annual Winter Concert**

with **78 RPM** 

Sunday afternoon December 2 at 2 n m ----Dansville Presbyterian Church

The Dansville Area Historical Society cordially invites you to attend



# DAHS Annual Meeting And Spaghetti Dinner



Saturday, October 13, 2012, at 6:30 p.m.

American Legion Home 34 Elizabeth Street, Dansville

Evening's Program:

## Les Buell's "Civil War Medicine"

Civil War medicine is an aspect of the war that is often neglected in textbooks and incorrectly portrayed in media and literature. Losses in the Civil War due to disease and lack of proper medical care cost the lives of far more soldiers than deaths from gunfire and bayonets on the battlefield.

Les Buell has been a Civil War reenactor for the last 20 years, the last 16 as a surgeon. As Major Buell, Surgeon, 21<sup>st</sup> Georgia Volunteer Infantry, Army of Northern Virginia, Les will demonstrate tools and medicines, exactly like those carried by a surgeon of the time period. See how "modern" medicine started with innovations on the battlefield.



**Dinner Tickets - \$8.00** 

Presale tickets available

At local banks, from any DAHS Board

Member, or call 335-8909 to reserve

# **Fund Raising at DAHS**

If you have even one of the wooden Dansville collectibles, if you have a red or blue or green Dansville coverlet, if you came by our booth at the Dogwood Festival and enjoyed a sample from our cookbook, you have **Marie Roberts** to thank.

Marie must have gotten confused and thought that when you celebrate a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an organization, you get to retire. We forgive her, but we already miss her.

Marie joined the DAHS board in 1987 and has been helping us fund raise ever since then. Because, she says, when you need a roof, you just figure out a way to make the money. No matter how much she downplays her contribution, we owe her a great debt—and maybe even a roof.

**During the Festival of Balloons,** the Museum was open and we had a booth at the Festival. Like most vendors, we benefited

from the great weather. We made almost \$500 in sales! Many non-Dansvillians stopped by the booth and were either interested enough or polite enough to inquire about our town. As always, there were many questions about the big brick building on the hill. Local visitors lamented, "isn't there anything that can be done to restore the Castle?" We'd be happy to hear if anyone has an idea.

### **New Board Members**

Two new members on the DAHS Board of Directors are **Sharon Harris** and **Jane Behnk**. Both grew up in Dansville and know a great deal about our area. Sharon works with Henty Realty; Jane is a retired teacher. They are a great addition to our board. Jane has also volunteered to serve as Corresponding Secretary. Welcome to you both!

### "DANSVILLE BREEZE"

The Only Daily Paper in Livingston County

BAYARD H. KNAPP, Proprietor

# **DAHS Works Toward Strategic Plan**

In our last issue, we announced that the Dansville Area Historical Society had been awarded a GET READY grant to help the Museum begin its strategic planning process.

In August, Sally Treanor, a consultant provided by Museumwise and the New York State Council on the Arts, met with a committee made up of board and community members. She has recommended DAHS for further grant funding which will enable us to produce a strategic plan for the Dansville Museum.

Members of the committee include Paul Constantine, Teresa Dearing, David Gilbert, Janet Gunn, Mary Harris, Nancy Helfrich, Ken Holbrook, Paul Hoffman, Jenn Howard, Jenni Leuzzi, Jeff Miller, Chad Schuster, Jim Snyder, and Peter Vogt. The committee will continue to meet to draft an application for the next phase of grant funding and to lay groundwork for a planning focus.

# One Hundred Years Ago October and November 1912

By David Gilbert, DAHS Curator

Then, as now, 1912 was a presidential election year, and one of the more unusual ones at that. Republican William Howard Taft was the incumbent, and his Democratic opponent was New Jersey Governor Woodrow Wilson. However, former President Theodore Roosevelt, who felt betrayed by the policies of his handpicked successor Taft, sought Republican nomination. Upon failing, he formed a third party: the Progressive, or Bull Moose, Party.

The Dansville Advertiser, the local Republican newspaper, threw its support over to Roosevelt. But the splitting of the Republican vote pretty much handed the election to Wilson. In Dansville, the vote was Wilson 592, Taft, 482, and Roosevelt 100.

In addition, Dansville had a special rooting interest in the race for governor. One of the candidates was a native Dansvillian. Job E. Hedges, 50, was the son of Major Job C. Hedges who had been slain in the Civil War siege of Petersburg, VA. Job E. had

followed his father into the legal practice and made his name in New York City as a special attorney general for the state. He won the Republican nomination, and his campaign included a speech given to a packed crowd on October 26 in Dansville's Heckman Opera House (where a gas station stands today at the corner of Church and Clara Barton Streets). He won Dansville handily in the November election but lost out to Democrat William Sulzer.

1912 marked a new phase in the history of Kelly Brothers Nurseries: the publication of their first retail catalog. Brothers James and William Kelly had formed their nursery back in 1892, although older brother James had done some small-scale. They specialized in ornamental and fruit trees. As the *Dansville Express* gushed, "Their trees are grown in the Genesee valley, the best locality in the world for raising nursery stock, they have a large frost-proof brick cold storage plant, and they will give the closest attention to orders whether large of small."

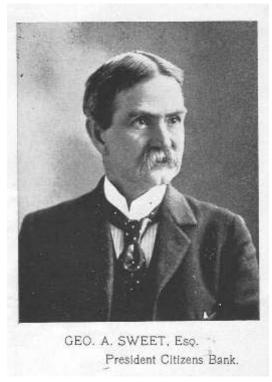


From a 1913 ad

But until 1912, Kelly Brothers had been strictly a wholesale business. Starting in the fall, it was now possible for Mr. and Mrs. Property Owner to purchase seedlings ordered from the Kelly Brothers catalogs. As the *Express* noted, "James A. Kelly, the senior member of the firm, has been attending fairs and fruit growers conventions this fall, and he had come in contact with many persons of large experience who assure him that the firm will make no mistake in engaging in the retail trade."

Before joining his brother in the family business, William Kelly in his younger years worked in the fields of nurseryman George A. Sweet. Sweet died on November 13, 1912, at the age of 68. The son of Sidney Sweet who was at one time co-owner of the Comminsville foundry, George entered the nursery business back in 1869, in partnership with Jonathan B. Morey. He married Clara Maxwell, daughter of fellow nurseryman Olney B. Maxwell (of Maxwell Block fame); their son Maxwell Sweet would join his father in the family business which became the George A. Sweet Nursery Company in 1896.

George A. Sweet had the double distinction of being the first president of Dansville's Red Cross Chapter No. 1 (1881) and being the first president of the Citizens Bank of



Above photograph from "Dansville By Pen and Camera," published by G.W.Ames, 1898. Printed by Breeze Printing House. Dansville, NY.

Dansville (1887). He served as Village President (as the office of mayor was then known) in 1876-1878 and again in 1890-1891. He was the first president of the Union Hose Company which organized in 1874. He had also been president of the Greenmount Cemetery Association; after hi death, his family financed the building of the George A. Sweet Memorial Entrance into Greenmount Cemetery.

## ------ and Training-------Seminars and Training------

Part of the emphasis at DAHS these days is learning more about "the Museum business" and finding ways to develop opportunities for volunteers. This is especially important when we realize how fortunate we are to be the caretakers of an incredible building that houses countless artifacts and archives, and now that several of our long-time knowledgeable members are stepping down. It is quite a responsibility. In the past few months, Paul Constantine, Chad Schuster, and Nancy Helfrich attended "Basic Museum Training" a full-day session offered by Friends of Livingston County History. Topics included docent training, collections management, and strategic planning. In June, Nancy Helfrich attended a workshop at the NY Archives Conference on "Managing and Digitizing Images."

We encourage any member of DAHS to become more involved. If there is any area that interests you, or if you are not sure but are willing to pitch in, we would love to hear from you. Call Chad Schuster at 335-8487 or Jim Snyder at 335-8909.

# The Dansville Hall of Fame The Citizens Honor Roll

By David Gilbert, DAHS Curator

In the May 2012 newsletter, we completed our roll call of the twenty men and women who were inducted into the Dansville Hall of Fame in 1989 and 1995. But many other noteworthy Dansvillians were also nominated for recognition. The Citizens Honor Roll comprises 75 names; half are listed here, half will be listed in our next newsletter. Perhaps when names are someday added to the Hall of Fame, they will be from among these people, listed here in alphabetical order.

- <u>Dr. Benjamin P. Andrews</u> (1856-1938)—One of the organizers of the Dansville Red Cross, 1881. In 1888 helped form the Village Improvement Society which beautified local parks. Played a major role in the organization of the Dansville Public Library.
- **<u>Dr. Harriet Austin</u>** (1826-1891)—Practicing physician at Our Home On The Hillside; editor-inchief of *The Laws of Life*. Advocated dress reform for women; created the "American Costume."
- <u>Claire C. Bateman</u> (1879-1969)—Long-time Dodge Automobile dealer (1912-1957); active in Republican politics. Charter member and president of Dansville Rotary Club. President, Dansville Board of Trade.
- <u>Ellen Bateman</u> (1884-1959) –President of Dansville Women's Civic Club; secretary of NYS King's Daughters organization for 25 years; wife of Claire Bateman.
- <u>James J. Blum</u> (1900-1984)—Son of Philip Blum, President of Blum Shoe Mfg. Co., Board of Trade, Board of Education, Hospital Board. Board of Directors, Citizens Bank (later Security Trust).
- <u>John Blum</u> (1822-1907)—German immigrant, opened shoe store in Dansville, 1859. Established Blum Shoe Manufacturing Company, 1885. President, Board of Health.
- <u>Marie Leven Blum</u> (1896-1978)—Played a primary role in the development of the local Girl Scouts; active in the local Red Cross.
- <u>Philip E. Blum</u> (1863-1936)—son of John Blum; executive at Blum Shoe Mfg. Co., Director of Citizens Bank, Board of Trade.
- Amos Bradley (d. 1885)—with his sons, owned and operated several Dansville paper mills, from 1820 on.
- <u>Lewis W. Bradley</u> (c. 1900-1984)—Dansville School Superintendent, 1937-1956. Active on Library Board, Rotary Club.
- <u>Lester Bradner</u> (c. 1790-1872)—Mercantile leader, canal advocate; first president of the Bank of Dansville (1842). His Main Street house later became Dansville Memorial Hospital.

- <u>Claude</u> F. <u>Bragdon</u> (1866-1946)—Arcitect. Broadway set designer. Remodeled library and Noyes (Red Cross) house; built Alta Vista in 1901 (home of Drs. James H. and Katherine Jackson).
- <u>Wallace J. Braman</u> (1877-1965)—Dansville School Superintendent, 1918-1937. Served on Library Board; also served as local Red Cross chairman.
- Merritt H. Brown (1806-1864)—Prominent local businessman, postmaster, village president; supported the building of the Main Street canal branch.
- <u>**Pearl S. Brown**</u> (1891-1976)—Dansville first kindergarten teacher; taught kindergarten 45 years (retired 1961).
- <u>Joseph</u> <u>W. Burgess</u> (1851-1927)—Journalist, founder of the *Dansville Breeze*; wrote humorous articles as "Old Zimmerhackle." Noted local temperance crusader.
- <u>Joel W. Clark</u> (1788-1854)—Co-founder of Colgate University; later moved to Dansville; wrote first local history: *Miniatures of Dansville Village*, 1844.
- <u>Ralph W. Clements</u> (1886-1966)—Dansville teacher and principal; Dansville Central School's first athletic coach.
- <u>Warren Commins</u>—Established furnace and machine shop (1839) on the future site of Foster Wheeler, Comminsville named after him (now Cumminsville).
- Brig. Gen. Allman T. Culbertson (1911-1996)—Dansville native, served in Air Force during World War II. Commander of Air Development Center at Griffiss Air Force Base.
- <u>Hermon W. DeLong, Sr.</u> (1851-1935)—Owner of DeLong Book Store (Maxwell Block) 1875-1935; editor of *Breeze*; manager of Bell Telephone office for five years.
- <u>Samuel G. Dorr</u> (c. 1755-1843)—Early settler to Stone's Falls area; owned and operated woolen mill there.

## The Citizens Honor Roll (cont.)

<u>James M. Edwards</u> (1850-1930)—President of Merchants & Farmers Bank; first president of Dansville Board of Education.

<u>Millard Fillmore</u> (1800-1874)—U.S. President. As a teenager, spent several months in West Sparta as an apprentice at a fulling mill.

**Ray M. Finch** (1888-1953)—Local schoolteacher for 29 years; served as Dansville postmaster; North Dansville Town Supervisor, 1950-53.

<u>Dr. Elmer Griswold</u> (1874-1959)—Dansville dentist. President of Board of Trade, 1914-17; charter member, president, of Dansville Rotary Club; director of Citizens Bank. Last surviving local veteran of the Spanish-American War.

**Amariah Hammond** (1773-1850)—Early successful farmer; first Supervisor of Steuben County's Town of Dansville (which included village of Dansville at the time).

Robert F. Hart – President of Dansville & Mount Morris Railroad; elected North Dansville Town Supervisor in 1955, a post he held years -- longest-serving Town Supervisor in Livingston County and in New York State.

<u>Barry O. Haywood</u> – Director of Music, Dansville Central School; long-time chair of Dogwood Festival Committee, Lion Club Minstrel Show; Dansville mayor, 1999-2007.

<u>Margaret E. Hondelink</u> (1906-1992)—Dansville music teacher from 1935-1965; first woman member of Dansville Rotary Club.

<u>George Hyland, Sr.</u> (1803-1880)—Owner of several local businesses, including American Hotel, Dansville Pail Factory. Led the winning faction in

the famous 1844 "canal battle" to construct a spur into the village. State Assemblyman, 1861.

<u>John Hyland</u> (1837-1900)—Son of George Hyland, Sr. With his brother, George Jr., built the Hyland House hotel (later Hotel Dansville). Important figure in Republican politics; village postmaster.

<u>Dr. Kate J. Jackson</u> (1844-1921)—Wife of Dr. James H. Jackson; matron of Jackson Health Resort. Involved with Village Improvement Society, Dansville Red Cross, Dansville Library.

<u>James A. Kelly</u> (1873-1938)—Co-founder, Kelly Bros. Nursery. Vice-president, New York State Nurserymen's Association.

<u>William F. Kelly</u> (1873-1949)—Co-founder, Kelly Bros. Nursery. Served on Village Board of Trustees.

John F. Klink (1869-1940)—Prominent local photographer; founded Hygienic Food Company (1897), made grain coffee substitute (Hy-Co). Founded Clink Motor Car Company (1907-10).

**Bayard H. Knapp** (c. 1881-1974)—Editor-publisher of *Dansville Breeze*, 1904-1945; Board of Trade president. Played a major role in establishment of Stony Brook State Park.

<u>Charles Knappenberg</u> (1885-1948)—Dansville attorney. Serve as Livinston County District Attorney, Dansville Police Justice, president of Merchants & Farmers Bank. First county chairman of American Legion.

<u>Charles T. Lemen</u> (1869-1948)--Superintendent of F.A. Owen Publishing Company for 40 years. Served as village mayor; first village and town historian.



In 1873 Stephen Allen built a hotel on the corner of Milton and Spruce Streets to accommodate passengers from the railroad. The rapidly growing **Blum Shoe Manufacturing Company** converted it into a factory in 1895. By 1903 an addition to the south was built, with more expansions to follow.

# "Made In Dansville" Display at Dansville Library

During August, **Jeff Miller** and **David Gilbert** of the Dansville Area Historical
Society filled the display bookcase at the
Dansville Library with items made in
Dansville.

Many visitors, including members of Dansville's High School class of 1942 (shown on our back cover) enjoyed the exhibit.

Jeff and David put together such a fantastic set of artifacts that we are reprinting some of their captions here:

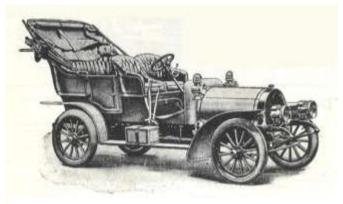
The Dansville Auto Trunk and Trailer Company was launched in 1925 by a pair of former Power Specialty employees, H. Morse Pickard and William Fogle. In addition to auto trunks (which, in those days, were litterally a trunk and not a part of the car itself), they also made tool chests, suitcases, and radio cabinets. The business moved to Livonia in 1927.



**Shults and Buck Chair Company** moved from Avoca to Dansville in 1892. Located on the future site of the Main Street car wash, it

was succeeded in 1907 by the George Arndt Chair company which in turn was succeeded by the Dansville Auto Trunk and Trailer Company. George Arndt chairs are still highly sought after by collectors.

The Klink Motor Car Co. Local photographer John Klink was one of the first Dansvillians to own a "horseless carriage" and so infatuated was he with automobiles that he decided to make some himself. Working out of the same Main Street building that housed the George Arndt Chair Co., he and engineer Charles Day began hand assembling cars in 1907 and kept going until around 1909 making about 20 cars in all. Sadly, no surviving Klinks are known to exist.



The Clink 1907 Seven-Passenger Touring Car

The **Dansville Brewing** Company. Commercial beer making in Dansville began in 1840 with the founding of the Dansville Brewery by Albert Huber. Located on Highland Avenue, it produced "Mountain Dew Lager Beer" and enjoyed its heyday in the 1880s. Grape-growing and winemaking also thrived on East Hill for many years. Both industries were shut down by Prohibiion in the 1920s and were never revived.

# Dansville Area Historical Society

Box 481 Dansville, NY 14437 Phone: 585-335-8090

Return Service Requested

#### 2012 Board of Directors

Jim Snyder -- President
Paul Constantine -- Vice President
Mary Harris – Recording Secretary
John C. Jacobs – Treasurer;
Membership
Jane Behnk, Corresponding Sec.

# **Directors**Fred Calnan

Chad Schuster, Webmaster
Richard Whitenack, Building and
Grounds
Al Hawk, Acquisitions
Nancy Helfrich, Editor
Richard Mark
Jeff Miller
Ed Perry
David Gilbert, Curator
Alice Burdick
Bettie Whitenack, Programs
Sharon Harris

#### **DAHS Museum**

14 Church St., Dansville
Open 10 to 2 p.m.

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays
Visitors Welcome!

Website:
dansvilleareahistoricalsociety.
wordpress.com



On August 11<sup>th</sup>, the Class of 1942 visited a display at the Dansville Library. See page 9 for details.