

Town of Ossian Historical Society Newsletter

21st Edition

April 2016

Ossian – From Allegany County to Livingston County

In 1856 the Allegany County representatives to the New York State Assembly were Isaac Hampton and Alexander Main. The Livingston County representatives to the Assembly were Lyman Odell and Alonzo Bradner. That year the assembly was in session from January 1, 1856 until April 9, 1856. They were in session Mondays through Saturdays. If any representative had to miss some sessions for any reason, including illness, they had to request a leave of absence for the time away.

On January 19, 1856 Mr. Baker, private secretary of his excellency the Governor, appeared and presented a communication from the Governor. In part of the communication he addressed the schools in the state, the number of schools, attendance, deficits in our public school policy, and stated that all schools in each town should be placed under the control of a board of education. He also touched upon *emigration in our country. There were 319,223 *emigrants landing in New York in 1854 and 136,233 in 1855. He stated that “Foreign emigration is an element of

national prosperity, the importance of which we are not likely to over-estimate. The strangers come to us rich in what we most need, the ability and the disposition to labor. The labor enters immediately into every department and branch of our industry. To emigration we are largely indebted for the early settlement, the rapid development and the rising greatness of the western states.”

The Assembly and the Senate had to consider and decide on such items such as payment of canal damages to individuals’ property, granting divorces, extra pay for the soldiers of the War of 1812, one-half pay for Revolutionary War officers, petitions from 500 hat trimmers against hats being made in state prisons, changes of individual names, withholding from a woman her right to suffrage and protection of the deer in our state.

Some of the bills introduced in this session were to create new counties, one from parts of Allegany and Steuben Counties, to be called the County of Canisteo, one from the Town of Corning, for the erection of the county of Erwin, out of the second district in Steuben County, one from the Town of Burns,

Allegany County, for the erection of a new county from parts of Allegany and Steuben, one from citizens of Allegany County for the erection of Highland County, one from the citizens of the Towns of Greenwood and Jasper in favor of a new county with the site at Hornellsville and one from the citizens of Steuben County praying for the erection of a new county to be called Kent.

On March 14, 1856 Mr. Bradner gave notice that he would, at an early day ask leave to introduce a bill to annex the Town of Ossian, Allegany County and the Town of Dansville, Steuben County, to the County of Livingston, and to provide for holding courts alternately at Geneseo and North Dansville, in said County of Livingston.

On March 15, 1856 Mr. Bradner presented three petitions of citizens of Ossian, Allegany County, to attach said town to Livingston County and establish two shire towns in said county; which were referred to the committee on the erection and division of towns and counties.

On March 22, 1856, Mr. Bradner presented five petitions of citizens of Livingston County that the Town of Dansville, Steuben County, and Ossian, Allegany County, be annexed to Livingston County; which were referred to the committee on the erection and division of town and counties.

The 1857 legislative session started January 6, 1857 and ended April 18, 1857.

On January 7, 1857 Mr. Sweet gave notice that he would, at an early day, ask leave to introduce a bill annexing the Town of Ossian, Allegany County, to the County of Livingston. On February 27, 1857 an act to annex the Town of Ossian to the County of Livingston, which was read the first time, and by unanimous consent was also read the second time, and referred to the committee on the erection and division of towns and counties. Then on March 9, 1857 Mr. Bradford presented three remonstrances of citizens of Allegany County, against any and every division of said county; which were read and referred to the committee on the erection and division of towns and counties. Two days later, on Wednesday, March 11, 1857, Mr. Bradford, from a majority of the committee on the erection and division of towns and counties to which was referred the assembly bill entitled "An act to annex the town of Ossian, Allegany County, to the County of Livingston", reported against the passage of the same. On the motion of Mr. J. A. Smith said report was laid on the table.

On March 13, 1857 Mr. J. A. Smith, from the minority of the committee on the erection and division of towns and counties, to which was referred the

assembly bill entitled “an act to annex the town of Ossian to Livingston Co.” reported in writing. On the motion of Mr. J. A. Smith the report was ordered printed and the bill was referred to the committee of the whole. At 12 o’clock on March 18, 1857, the Senate went into executive session, and after some time spent therein, the doors were opened and legislative business resumed.

Mr. Sweet offered for consideration of the Senate, the following resolution: Resolved, that the assembly bill No. 227, annexing the town of Ossian to Livingston County, be committed to the same committee of the whole in charge the apportionment bills. The President asked the question if the Senate would agree to said resolution, and it was decided in the negative.

The Senate then resolved itself into a committee of the whole, and proceeded to the consideration of the special order, being the bills untitled as follows:

“An act for the apportionment of the members of the assembly of this State”.

After some time spent thereon, the President resumed the chair, and Mr. A. M. Smith, from said committee, reported in favor of the passage of said bill, without amendment.

Mr. Brooks renewed the amendments made in committee of the whole. The President put the question as to whether the Senate would agree to the

amendments and it was decided negative. The President then asked if the Senate would agree to the report and it was decided affirmative. It was ordered that said bill be engrossed for a third reading.

Mr. C. P. Smith made the motion on March 20, 1857 and it was resolved that the bill No. 227 be referred to the same committee having charge of the Assembly bills No. 46, 45 and 84.

At 7 PM the same day the Senate met again and received a message from the Assembly requesting the concurrence of the Senate to the following bills, one of which was “An act to annex the Town of Ossian to the County of Livingston”. After some time the committee reported in favor of the passage of the bills. It was ordered that the bills be read a third time. The act of annexing the Town of Ossian to Livingston County was read a third time.

The President asked the question whether the Senate would agree to the final passage of the bill and it was decided in the affirmative of all the members elected to the Senate voted in favor thereof, as follows:

For the Affirmative 17

For the negative 5

The bill was passed on March 20, 1857 and after approval from the Governor, Ossian was annexed to Livingston County March 23, 1857.

*In this speech the word is spelled with an “e” Emigrants, Emigration.

Source: 1. Journal of the Assembly of the State of New York 1856. 2. Journal of the Senate of the State of NY 1857. 3. Allegany County, NY, Wikipedia
Rhea Walker, Ossian Historian

***** Upcoming Events *****

Sat., 4/30/16 – Chicken BBQ, 11am-2pm, at Ossian Community Center, \$10 per dinner. Pre-sale tickets call Cathy 519-6897, Barb 335-8215, or Rhea 335-5312. Sale at the door and take outs available.

Fri., May 6, 2016 – Special meeting to vote on change to the historical society constitution. Ossian Town Hall at 6:00pm

Sun., 5/15/16 – Annual meeting at 1:30pm and Author Michael Keene at 2pm, at Ossian Town Hall. He will talk about his new book. No charge. Refreshments served.

Sun., 7/10/16 – Luncheon & Ice Cream Social, 11:30am-2:00pm, at Ossian Community Center. \$6 hot dog, baked beans, ice cream, and beverage. We are taking registrations at this time for the Ossian summer recreation program.

July 25-29, 2016 Ossian Summer Recreation, 9:00am-Noon at Ossian Community Center. Ages 5 to 12.

Sat., 10/15/16 – Cider and Cookie Sale
More information to follow.

Sat., 12/10/16 – Chili and Soup Luncheon and Cookie Sale at Ossian Community Center.

Ossian Grange #1484

The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry had been established to promote economic and political well-being for community and agriculture. As I read through the old minutes of our Grange, guest lecturers attended the meeting and spoke of the price of milk, fuel, feed, equipment and insurance. Belonging to the Grange meant you were able to take advantage of the lower insurances offered, as well as get in on any discounts, deals and available monies that were out there.

In 1932 the Ossian Grange had begun its tenth year of being established. There was a membership of seventy-five adults. In January of 1932 the following officers were elected and installed:

Master:	Earnest Sample
Overseer:	James Gibson
Lecturer:	Helen Carey
Steward:	Will Coultney
Asst. Steward:	O’Dell Scott
Chaplain:	Mary Walsworth
Treasurer:	Lester McNinch
Secretary:	Thelma Judd
Gatekeeper:	Floyd Gary
Ceres:	Margaret Gary
Pomona:	Arlene Carney
Flora:	Lina Mae Denton
Lady Asst. Steward:	Jennie Bonner
Pianist:	Addie Weidman

They enjoyed a membership of 70 or more adults. In order to get the best attendance, the meetings were on Friday evenings and usually at 9pm. Seems late? Not if you want the farmers to attend who have to do their evening chores, which included milking the cows and feeding the stock, then get cleaned up and eat their evening meal. Most of the time they were once a month, and sometimes more as dances were a regular event as well as card parties, and other entertainment. The meetings were held in the Ossian Town Hall and sometimes in members' homes. The Covert and the Shay families hosted many of them.

On May 26th of 1932 the Teeter and Newton store and the Town Hall were destroyed by fire. This left the Grange going back to holding meetings in the homes' of members.

In June of 1932 the Grange members started to actively look for a place to hold meetings. Richard Campbell of Dansville offered the Dansville Town Hall as a meeting place for the Ossian Grange. While the membership was grateful, they were also hesitant to leave Ossian. The following were appointed to look into this possibility of building a Grange Hall in Ossian with the Town Board: Brothers Linzy, Weidman, Forsythe and Sister Perrine. In July 1932, Brother Linzy and Brother Weidman spoke for the Committee, reporting back that the Town Board had voted an approval for a Grange Hall to be built. The cost of the building itself would be \$1,280.00, not including heat,

gravel or sand. After much deliberation, they decided to build on the Kennedy land at Ossian Center, very close to where the Town Hall sits today. In August 1932, the Town replaced their building first and the Grangers had some meetings there and even a few dances to keep the money coming in as they earned on the average of \$22.00 to \$36.00 per event.

If anyone remembers the size of the Town Hall, it's hard to imagine that anyone could hold a dance there, especially as the pot belly stove took so much room. Due to unforeseen expenses like a shortage of fuel, they ended up getting a loan from Pomana Grange (head Grange), when they were building. So they traded cases of light bulbs for gasoline, getting at least half of what they paid for the bulbs, and considered themselves lucky to get that!

In December of 1932, they finally held their first meeting in the new hall. They were proud of making it in by the end of 1932 so their 10th year anniversary was memorable.

In January of 1933, the League of Dairyman, held their Annual meeting in the new Hall. Thus began the rentals of the Hall, which brought in an income. They held dances, card parties, holiday parties and more, because this is what Granges did in farming communities. They supported the community the best way they knew how. The building of this Hall was a big event in this Town, brought on by a tragic fire.

Months after completion, they held a dedication that was attended by close to 300 people. Each family brought a dish to pass and their own table service. A good time included a dedication ceremony by the Pomana Grange and a dance.

Cathy Saunders

George W. Weidman 1927-2016

George Weidman was a man who contributed a great deal to our community, to his job and fellow workers and to other laborers in our area. He participated in local government, his union and helped others with workers compensation and most of all he loved his family and living in Ossian.

He left school early to join the Coast Guard during World War II. George was one of our last World War II Veterans so we salute him and surely will miss him. Rest in peace George.

Memories of Dorothy Bancroft

People gave their time and knowledge for community neighbors and children in Ossian. I'm referring to a former 4-H leader, Dorothy Bancroft, in the 1960s. I think of her so often in my life. My Mom never sewed but we still had that black Singer sewing machine that her daughters would learn on thanks to Dorothy. I can still remember Dorothy saying that my seam ripper was my best friend and heard too often, rip the seam apart as it can be done better and straighter.

My family certainly benefited from the practice sessions of baking and when county fair time came around, the family was there scarfing up the baked goods that weren't up to par – you know the ones that were a little darker on the bottom or not quite the perfect round cookie.

Today, I belong to a weekly sewing circle called “Denim and More” sewing for charity and I can't help myself picking out the corners of children's quilts that other sewers completed and each corner I picked, Dorothy came to mind - perfection. Dorothy Bancroft gave freely of her time. Thank you, my friend Dorothy, I learned well and you are missed but never forgotten.

Nancy Walker Smith

The Dansville Advertiser, June 7, 1927 60 Years Ago

Echoes from Bygone Days

Farmers in Ossian complain that they are from two to four weeks behind with their spring work. This condition exists throughout the country.

The Dansville Advertiser, June 7, 1927 Brief Tales about our Neighbors

Ossian

Mrs. Dorr Bonner has been quite ill.

Dolores Derrenbacher has been visiting her grandparents in Garwood.

The school in District No 5 closed with a picnic on the banks of Sugar Creek last Friday.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter McTarnaghan of Dansville were Sunday guests of Mr. and Mrs. James Gibson.

Miss Ruth Hand has returned to her home in Friendship after teaching a successful year of school in District No.5.

Mrs. Joseph F. Kearney and son Howard, of Fairport, have been spending a few days with her sister, Mrs. Lloyd Shay.

Mrs. Samuel Hecker of Angelica and Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Hecker of Rochester spent last Tuesday with Mr. and Mrs. James Gibson.

Some of the young people had a surprise party for Miss Ruth Hand at Mrs. Elizabeth Derrenbacher's last Thursday evening. Dancing and a general good time is reported.

Dansville Express

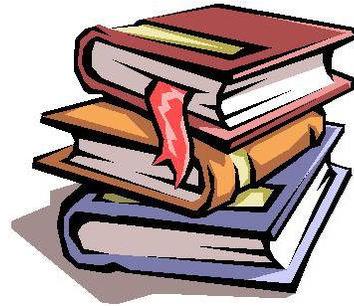
Thursday Jan. 31, 1895

Fire in Ossian

A large barn and other buildings on the farm of Hon. Isaac Hampton Destroyed.

Last Thursday afternoon the buildings on the home farm of Hon. Isaac Hampton of Ossian were burned together with their contents. The buildings consisted of a large horse barn and sheds, a carriage barn, corn house and hog pens and they were all in good repair. The house was in danger of burning several times, and it was so charred on the outside that the siding will have to be relaid. All the household goods were removed and they were damaged somewhat. The house was fully insured and there was a small amount on the other buildings, but there

is a loss on the contents of the barn, which was grain and hay.



Little Free Library

Remember our little library located in front of the Ossian Town Hall. There are books available for everyone. We have some large print books also. It's a take a book, return a book library, no charge.