

# Town of Ossian Historical Society Newsletter

20<sup>th</sup> edition

December 2015

## The Ossian State Forest

The Ossian State Forest is located in the town of Ossian about two miles northeast of the hamlet of Swain. It is about 1303 acres in size. Rustic recreational opportunities are available in the state forest with limited amount of development. There is a camping area at Evergreen Pond on Scoville Road with tables and fire rings provided. It is a carry-in-carry out facility. Hunting and trapping are allowed in accordance with all game regulations, unless otherwise posted. Be sure to check with the Department of Environmental Conservation for the regulations.

The state forest land was acquired under the terms of the Hewett Amendment to the State Constitution and the terms of the Enlarged Reforestation Act. Agricultural abandonment of the land began to occur during the years of 1910-1929 on the hilltop land now occupied by the state forest. Prior to the acquisition by the state, part of the forest was logged and a narrow gauge railroad transported the wood for variety of products such as lumber, hemlock bark for tannery use and "chemical wood" used in making alcohol.

The majority of the land was acquired between 1932 and 1938. The Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) planted trees in the forest which included red and white pine, Norway and white spruce, Japanese, European, Siberian and Dunkeld Larch. The CCC was also active in other activities such as fire control, road building and maintenance.

Additional acquisitions of land for the Ossian State Forest occurred in 1947-1948 and 1961.

Rhea Walker, Ossian Historian

Sources: New York State Department of Conservation, Ossian State Forest and Livingston Unit Management Area

## William M. White

In October of this year we had our fall walk on the property formerly owned by William M. White, now owned by Sue and Weimar White (no relation). The walk was so nice and the property so beautiful it made one think about the time that William White lived in Ossian and to see if I could find out more about him.

William Mansfield White was the son of Hon. Hugh White, who was the son of Hugh White, a soldier in the Revolutionary Army, who was the son of Hugh White, of Upper Middleton, Conn., who in 1784 moved with his family to Central New York, and was the founder of Whitestown. William M. White was born in Waterford, NY on July 8, 1833. His mother was Marie Mills Mansfield of Kent, Conn. He attended the military school of Professor Kinsley at West Point. He attended Hamilton College in Clinton, New York and was a member of the class of 1854.

William White lived on White Road in Ossian near Canaseraga. His home was called Sweet Briar and it is said that he had a wooden sidewalk built from his home down to Canaseraga so when his wife's friends came for tea they would have something on which to walk.

He owned and managed a farm in Ossian, NY for 28 years. He married Anna Marie Pierpont of Pierpont Manor, NY on January 22, 1863. Together they had six sons and seven daughters. Hugh age 5, William P. age 3, Anna M. age 1 and Hubert age 8 mo. are listed as in the White household in Ossian in the 1870 census. Other children were Pierpont, Florilla Mansfield, Mary, Cornelia Butler, Isabel, DeLancy Pierpont, Charles Carroll and John Dolbiare.

While residing in Ossian, Mr. White was a warden in the Trinity Church in Canaseraga. He was active in the Livingston County Historical Society and was the president of the society in 1880. The fifth annual meeting of the Livingston County Historical Society was held on January 11, 1881 at the Highland House in Dansville at which he gave the President's address. In his speech he made note of the great things that had happened during the past year. The first Great Act of 1880 was that the Federal Government fulfilled its pledge to redeem its currency in coin and that a surplus of 90 million dollars has been used towards paying the national debt. He also stated that business was revived, commerce prospered, a bountiful harvest crowned the year and the census reports over 50 million in population – making it apparent that we are the most prosperous nation of the earth. The railroad made transit possible during all seasons and made the resources of the country available on demand and has reduced the cost of transportation as to make railroads available for internal commerce, a car load of wheat can be taken to Rochester for \$5.00. The year of 1880 has placed the county of Livingston in the position of having inland towns on the main lines of travel and business of the railroads so we can

look forward to a future of growth and prosperity.

The 1870 census listed the following employees of Mr. White:

Aurelia Segar, 45, nurse, Margaret Wilson, 23, cook, Honora Coccin, 22, nurse, Margaret Shuitley, 18, waitress, Eliza Wilson, 18, domestic servant, George Devins, 28, farm labor and Eliza Lund, 30, seamstress.

Some of his neighbors at that time were the Kingston brothers, Frank, John and David who were all married with families, J. Scott, G. G. Holdridge, Fawcett, Bacon, Preston and Graham families, some of which came from Scotland.

In 1882 William White moved to Utica where he was very involved in the church and community. His wife died in Utica on September 22, 1884. Mr. White died of apoplexy at his home in Utica, NY January 2, 1896 at age 62.

Rhea Walker, Ossian Historian

Source: Hamilton Literary Magazine, Vol. 30, Fifth Annual Meeting of the Livingston County Historical Society

### **Days Gone By**

#### **Nunda News 1859**

Republican Assembly Convention

The convention was held in Dansville on September 30, 1859 to select delegates to represent the District in the

Senatorial Convention, and to nominate a member of Assembly. Isaac Hampton Esq., of Ossian, was nominated for chairman.

October 22, 1859

Republican County Convention

A meeting of delegates from several towns of Livingston County was held October 19, 1859 in Geneseo. William M. White of Ossian was selected as a secretary.

#### **Canaseraga Times**

Friday, November 23, 1917

Bonner Shay of Ossian has purchased the William Bacon farm on Miller Hill and will take possession this fall.

Miss Ruth Taylor gave a blow out at her pleasant home recently in honor of winning woman suffrage in this state.

Friday, April 26, 1918

Canaseraga has just five men left who are of military age.

The marriage of Miss Thelma Linzy and Mr. Dorr Bonner of Ossian took place last Wednesday.

#### **Dansville Breeze**

Monday, January 5, 1925

The following transfers of real estate have just been recorded in the Livingston County Clerks Office: Ossian – Francis S. Kingston to Daniel F. Kingston.

## **George Howard Bancroft Jr.**

12/27/1926 – 11/29/2015

The following article was in the “Equine Extra” .

George Bancroft of Dansville, New York brings a wealth of experience to our pages on the subject of Percherons.

Percherons have been a part of George's life for 50 years and are still used by George for plowing on his 100 acre farm.

To watch George work his 3-team hitch of Percherons is truly a pleasure. You become instantly aware of his experience, and confidence in his team, whether at work tilling the fields or winding his way through the cones at an exhibition.

When asked to give a description of the Percheron, George states, "The Percheron is an intelligent and loyal horse. Blessed with tremendous, strength and stamina, they willing undertake and achieve all that is asked of them."



Pictured is George's Team, as they plow one of the fields. During a summer storm in July of 1997, one of the horses was struck by lightning. George hurried to his side as he lay motionless in the field. The site that George was about to witness, was something he will never forget! As George neared his stricken comrade, he observed one of the other horses standing over the stricken horse. The horse kept was prodding the motionless, stunned body and nickering softly. It was as if he were trying to encourage the horse, that he would be fine, if he would fight to hang in there. As George stood over the injured horse, comforting him, he gazed up and saw a tear streaming from the eye of the other horse. That incident left no doubt, in many minds, that animals have the ability to feel compassion and are aware of the seriousness of a situation. The lightning strike left the horse badly burned and near death. After months of

treatment and convalescence,  
the horse is back with team!

George and his team won the  
New York State Plowing  
Contest - Best Teamer. Equine  
Extra salutes George Bancroft  
and his Percherons. They truly  
are "A Team For All Seasons"!

God speed my friend, we'll miss you.

### **Texas Sheet Cake**

Recipe from Jane Derrenbacher

1. Sift together in large bowl:

2 c. Sugar

2 c. Cake Flour

½ teasp. Salt

2. Bring to a boil:

2 Sticks Margarine

1 c. Water

4 Tablespoons Cocoa

3. In small bowl beat:

2 Eggs

1 teasp. Baking Soda

½ c. Buttermilk

1 tablespoon Vinegar

1 teasp. Vanilla

Add part 2 and 3 to part 1

Pour into a greased sheet pan 11"x17"  
(with sides). Bake 375 deg. for 20  
minutes. The batter will be warm when  
placed in sheet pan.

### **Frosting**

Bring to a boil:

1 stick Margarine

4 tablespoons Cocoa

1/3 c. Milk

Cook 2-3 minutes.

Add:

1 tablespoon Vanilla

1 lb. Confectionary Sugar

½ cup Chopped Nuts

Spread hot frosting on cake immediately  
upon removal from oven. Both must be  
hot.



Enclosed is a membership application  
for membership in the Town of Ossian  
Historical Society. We are always  
looking for new members and would  
welcome all. If you are a current  
member please use this form to continue  
your membership and pay your 2016  
dues.

Thank-you,

Rhea