

# Town of Ossian Historical Society Newsletter

## 38th Edition                      October-December 2021

### THE OLD MAN'S DRAFT OR THE FOURTH REGISTRATION

The Old Man's Draft was the term for the fourth Selective Service registration in the United States during World War II that was held in April 1942.

I found out about the Old Man's Draft when I was researching my mother's family history. She had two older brothers, Norman and Merle. When I was looking up Merle's name information appeared that he was drafted by the Selective Service for World War II. I knew he was beyond the draft age at that time but this draft was for men born between 4/27/1877 and 2/6/1897 ( ages 45 to 64 ) called the Old Man's Draft or the Fourth Draft. It was not intended to be used for military service but as a way to gather data on the skills of men considered too old for active military duty and to provide a complete inventory of manpower resources in the United States that could be used for national service.

The draft cards contained the following information:

1. registrant's serial number
2. name, residence, mailing address and telephone number
3. date and place of birth
4. name and address of his employer
5. height, weight, race, hair color, eye color, distinguishing marks
6. signature
7. name and address of a person who would always know registrant's address.

I searched for the names of any men from Ossian who had been drafted in the Old Man's Draft but was not able to find any.

Some men from Ossian were sent questionnaires for the regular draft by

the clerk of the local Draft Board during May of 1942. They were Walter D. Rawleigh, Howard Pease Sleggs, Robert George Scott, Carl Marion Hinds, Clifford Jay Knapp, Charles Robert Fitzpatrick and Philo Abel Gates.

Sources: Wikipedia, Dansville Genesee Country Express and Wheeling Intelligencer.

Rhea Walker, Historian

LITTLE BITS AND PIECES FROM THE WEST VIEW COLUMN  
Dansville Genesee Country Express

March 12, 1942

Peter DePuy of Buffalo, with a friend, Luther Pringle, also a defense worker in Buffalo, spent Sunday in Ossian with his mother, Mrs. R.J. DePuy.

April 30, 1942

Robert Barron of Dansville, R.D.3 was fined \$5 for instructing an unlicensed operator.

April 28, 1942

The blackout of last Wednesday night proved a failure in this section as no one was notified.

Mrs. Floyd Gary did some papering for Mrs. Gordon Wilson and Mrs. Roy Perineal last week.

Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Moore and son, and George Milligan, spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Doley Milliman.

Mr. and Mrs. Al Endress and daughter Arlene and Mr. and Mrs. Crocoll of Buffalo spent the week-end at their summer home.

May 7, 1942

Miss Mary Gray has returned to school after being confined to her home for several days with the three day measles (Liberty measles in the last war).



May 12, 1942

The following officers were elected at the school meeting of District 4, West View: Walter Moore, trustee; Floyd Gary, collector; and Glenna Moore, clerk.

May 28, 1942 - Dansville Town Talks

Mr. and Mrs. Alton Isaman are moving to the Lloyd Shay farm in Ossian.

June 11, 1942 - The Ladies Aid of the Ossian church will serve a roast beef supper at the new town shed, Thursday evening, June 11.

#### FORMER CANASERAGAIN WRITES LETTER

C.B. Casterline received a letter the past week from his brother, D.C. Casterline, of Pasadena, California, and in it he wrote: "The day your letter came a bond agent called on me and after some talk and when about to leave, at the door, he remarked that he was born in a little town in Western New York probably I never had heard of the place when he said Canaseraga. Then I said, "Well, you will have to come in, take a cigar and let us have a little visit, for I was born two and a half miles from the same place." I looked at his card closer and saw his name was White, a fine young man in looks and address, about 40 years of age. I said: You are not a son of Wm. White?" and he replied, yes, he was my father." I can't tell you, Britt, how queer it made me feel - a son of Billy White, blood and bone - and my mind suddenly went back to the year of '69, I think it was, when I was clerking for you in the Canaseraga Niles Branch Drug Store when Billy White used to come in quite frequently to trade, and I recalled the fine little black team he drove and what a fine specimen of a man he was. His son told me his father built and donated the Episcopal Church in Canaseraga. The visitor told me he was born in 1880, that were ten children in the family, seven boys, all



living but one, and three girls, who are living in California. While they were on the farm he one night made a bundle of his clothing intending to jump out of the window and hike, but something prevented his departure. He went to Cornell, graduated, married a Boston girl, went overseas and was in some of the hard battles in France, came back sound and well, last year took his wife and son seven years old now and made a trip abroad. He is now living in Pasadena and is in the employ of Blankenhour, Hunter & Co., bond brokers in Southern California. I know them well.

The above letter will be read with interest, so many are still readers of the Express who knew Wm. M. White when he was a resident in the south end of the town of Ossian, served the town as supervisor in 1860 and in 1873-74, active in politics, yet never held any other office, active in church, work and one of the finest specimens of physical manhood ever known in this county, and having character that fitted well with his human frame. He sold his large land holdings in Ossian in the eighties - where he had lived a princely life - and moved to Utica, home of his father - where he died several years ago.

Canaseraga Times, April 15, 1921 - Reprinted from the Dansville Express

### OSSIAN'S BERT PERRY - TRAIN ROBBER

Bert Perry owned property in the town of Ossian on Graham Road and on Bonner Road. In September I met with two gentlemen at our town hall. They have collected information about Bert Perry and may write a paper or book about him and were interested in what we had on file in Ossian. They said that Burt had started his train robbing career in the Hornell area. I had always wondered what he looked like and asked if they had a picture of him and they sent me one. This picture of Bert is his passport picture. He had traveled to Cuba and Mexico.





## OVERSEERS OF THE HIGHWAYS.

At the Town of Ossian annual meeting held on April 4, 1809 at Joshua A. Carpenter's house the following men were elected as Commissioners of highways, Levi Doty, Jacob Clendennin and Samuel Boylan. The New York State legislature, in 1787, decreed that Commissioners of Highways should open and extend all public roads to the extent of 32 feet at least. Each town was to have three commissioners and each county one. The town's commissioners were to divide the town and issue warrants for each road in which one man, the pathmaster was to act as local overseer. The pathmaster would make a list for his section of property owners and the number of days each was required to work on the roads each year. The office of overseer (pathmaster) was unpaid and was usually filled by rotation. The Overseers of Highways appointed on April 4, 1809 were: Elias Vanscoter, district 1, Isaac Wilson, district 2, William Pratt, district 3, David McCurdy, district 4, Richard N. Porter, district 5, William Boylan, district 6, James Haynes, district 7, and William Porter, district 8. The overseers' responsibility was the supervision of the labor.

In 1822 the Annual Town Meeting held at Richard N. Porter's house Merrit Brown was elected Town Supervisor, and the Commissioners of the Highways elected were Nathaniel Porter, Phenies Howard and James Miller. At this meeting 24 Overseers of the Highways were elected: Benjamin Jones Dytrite -1, William Hopkins - 2, Hvae Critenden. -3, Charles Carpenter -4, William Boyles -5, James Porter -6, Joseph New -7, Ezekiel Cowan -8, George Kelly -9, Walter Schooner -10, Chritiane Roupe -11, Jonathan Bidlack -12, J. Adams -13, Heman Orion -14, David Miers -15, Levi Davis -16, Pellis Tiffany -17, Rufus Pratte -18, Enoch Peas -19, Benjamin Copdale -20, Samuel Whipple -21, Thomas Thompson -22, Roswell Rulosons -23 and T. Williams -24.

During the 1826 annual meeting the title of the Overseers of Highways



was now Overseer of the Highway or Path Master. From then on the title was Path Master and the number appointed went up to 26 and then 27 by 1835. In 1835 the Commissioners of Highway were Richard Porter, Samuel More and George Lemen.

At the Annual Town meeting held in the Town of Ossian on the 4th day of March, 1873, 35 Path Masters were elected. By the April 1, 1878 Ambrose Shay was the Highway Commissioner and there were no Path Masters. The State of New York had decided by that time that each town would have a Highway department.

Annual Town of Ossian meetings after this began to show expenses made by the Highway Department. A special meeting was held on September 22, 1900 by the Town Board to decide about building a new bridge at Burrells Creek. A motion was made and seconded that the Highway Commissioner purchase a new iron bridge to be used in place of the old wooden bridge which is located at the foot of what is known as Burrell hill. The town board suggested that the Highway Commissioner shall not expend over five hundred dollars for said bridge.

On March 5, 1901 a meeting was held with the Town Board of the Town of Ossian to examine the accounts of John R. Pennock, Commissioner of Highways for said town for the year 1900 found the account correct as follows -

amount on hand March, 1900 -	\$574.51
appropriated for 1901 -	\$450.00
Total to be accounted for -	\$1024.51.

Amount expended by commissioner \$610.95

Amount in commissioner's hands

March 5, 1901 for Highway purpose \$413.56.

Total.\$1024.51