

# Town of Ossian Historical Society Newsletter

28<sup>th</sup> Edition

September 2018

## Ossian School #2

School #2 was located on Poag's Hole Road in lot number 61. Earliest records of the school were found in the Ossian School Returns for 1823 made by the commissioners of the common schools for the Town of Ossian. These reports were made to the Clerk of the County of Allegany. The number of children taught that year was 33 and the school received \$23.06 to do so. In 1824 there were 30 children taught and the school received \$13.17 and in 1825 30 children were taught and the school received \$15.60. In 1850 there were 20 students and the money received by the school was \$30 raised by taxation and \$23 from public funds.

In the 1931-1932 school year the trustee for school #2 was Gordon Wilson, the clerk was Mrs. Aron Kennedy and the collector Edward Hilsdorf. After that date no one was named to these positions so it is felt that the school closed in the early 1930's.

At one time there were two schools located on Poag's Hole Road both of which called School #2, one in

Ossian and the other in Dansville. Poag's Hole Road ran through three counties, Allegany, Steuben and Livingston. The road was named after a man who came to the Dansville area around 1807. His name was Benjamin Kenyon. He was a desperate character and was nicknamed Captain Pogue. From this came the name of Pogue's Hole which applied to the narrow valley where he lived.

Rhea Walker, Historian

Sources: The History of Dansville by A.O. Bunnell, Ossian Town Records, Allegany County Records

## Frank Bonner

Frank Bonner, a model farmer residing in Ossian, Livingston County, N.Y., two and a half miles from Dansville, was born on his present farm, March 9, 1853, the year Franklin Pierce was elected President. His father and his grandfather each bore the name Samuel Bonner. The former was a native of Pennsylvania, the date of his birth being October 18, 1795. The grandfather's birth place was Ireland. He came to

America with his wife and one child, settling at first on a farm in Pennsylvania. From there he moved to Dansville, and later was found among the pioneers of Sparta, where he died after rearing a large family. Before that, however, he had returned to Dansville, taken up land where the present Main Street is now located.

His second son, Samuel, was trained as a farmer; and the boy continued to live at home until he was of age, meanwhile attending the pioneer school. When he first came to the present home of his son Frank, which was on December 11, 1813, it was a mass of uncultivated land. The first wife of Samuel Bonner, son of the elder Samuel, was Nellie Covert, daughter of Peter Covert. She reared seven children – William, Samuel, deceased, Marietta, James, Frederick, Nathaniel and Rose. Mr. Bonner cleared the land, built a part of the present buildings, and spent the rest of his life there, dying August 10, 1879, at eighty-five years of age. His second wife was Maria Knapp, daughter of Joel Knapp, of Connecticut, where she was born October 18, 1808. Joel Knapp's family came to Ossian among the

early settlers. Mrs. Maria Knapp Bonner reared three children – Alice, Celia and Frank J. Bonner. Although at eighty-six years of age, she is hale and hearty, and a member of the Presbyterian Church, where her husband served as Deacon for many years.

Mr. Frank J. Bonner spent his early life on the farm. He was educated at Dansville Seminary, after which he assisted his father up to the time of the old gentleman's death. His mother, two sisters and himself live happily at the old homestead. The brother and sisters evidently prefer single blessedness, neither having married. The fine farm upon which they live contains four hundred and forty acres, and is practically three farms. Mr. Bonner is diligent in business, overseeing all this valuable land. He is also interested in Buffalo real estate. Mr. Bonner has been a successful office-holder, serving as Supervisor three years, 1883, 1884 and 1889. He is a staunch supporter of the Republican party, and has always taken an active interest in political measures. The family attended the Presbyterian Church, of which they are all members. Mr. Bonner is not only a man of means, but a man of



resources, and is regarded as the leading man in the town of Ossian. He is universally respected – is, in fact, an excellent pattern for the rising generation.

Source: Biographic Review. The Leading Citizens of Livingston and Wyoming Counties, New York 1895

## **Early Industry and Mills in Ossian**

Industry in Ossian, 1850 Census

Rufus Dresser, Man. Lumber, water power, one saw

R. Woolworth, Man. Lumber, water power, one saw

Jesse Losey, Man. Lumber, water power, one saw

William Canfield, Man. Lumber, steam, one saw

John Smith, Man. Flour, water power, three stones.

The New York State Census in 1855 listed the following owners of sawmills in the Town of Ossian: Isaac Hampton, William Hover, John Bosworth, Leonard Denison, Charles Thurman, Lemont Blouchard, Stanley, Isa Burrill, Wm. Ulyett, James Wilkins,

Wm. Selbert, James Mitchell, Charles Porter, Marcus French, Scott Shafer, Ira Barnes, Lucius S. Bisbee, Samuel Murray, S. Swah and Co., Milo Hampton, Elias Geiger and M.L. Davis.

## **Where Our Forests are Going**

From the Jan. 6, 1881 Dansville Express

To make shoe pegs enough for American use consumes annually 100,000 cords of timber, and to make our Lucifer matches, 300,000 cubic feet of the best pine are required every year. Lasts and boot trees take 500,000 cords of birch, beech and maple, and the handle of tools 500,000 more. The baking of our bricks consumes 2,000,000 cords of wood, or what would cover with forests about 50,000 acres of land. Telegraph poles already up represent 800,000 trees, and their annual repair consumes 300,000 more. The ties of our railroads consume annually thirty years' growth of 75,000 acres, and to fence all our railroads would cost \$45,000,000, with a yearly expenditure of \$15,000 more for repairs. These are some of the ways in which some of our American

forests are going. There are others: our packing boxes, for instance, cost, in 1874, \$12,000,000, while the timber used each year in making wagons, and agricultural implements is valued at more than \$100,000,000.

From the Fishkill Standard

## **200<sup>th</sup> Ossian Presbyterian Church Celebration**

The Ossian Presbyterian Church, in coordination with their 200<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, would like to announce that in honor of a former parishioner's extreme generosity, we are officially announcing the changing of the name of the Ossian Community Center to The Heath Homestead.

Behind it all: Eleanor Heath (1854-1912) passed away a single woman with a large tract of inherited property. Her parents, William and Rhoda Heath, had 4 children, with Eleanor the only one that lived beyond her parent's demise. Rhoda and Eleanor handled the farm and its employees after William passed away, in 1876, from their home which was situated behind the Ossian Community Center. The home was

located near the large old maple tree that still stands there today. In 1912, upon Eleanor's death, the Ossian Church became heir to the Heath property and money. This generous inheritance was given with the stipulation that it be used for pastoral salary. Eleanor's family was all deeply involved and concerned with the health and growth of the church and knew of the need for a monetary donation of large proportions. A small country church, having mostly farmers and laborers as parishioners, the money was not flowing to keep up with expenses and the need for continuous pastoral care. With the Heath family's forethought and generosity, the intentions to create a path to keep this beloved church open came to be for many years to come.

Come and join us for the rededication, combined with the Bicentennial Celebration on September 29, 2018, 11am-1:30, held at the present Ossian Community Center. The following day, Sunday, September 30, 2018, there will be a Bicentennial Commemorative Service at our church at 9 am with Pastor David Smith presiding.  
Michelle Vanderbosch



## **Cemetery News**

I would like to thank all who helped and attended the Ziti Dinner in June. It was a successful dinner and we raised several hundred dollars for all three Ossian cemeteries and with a donation from the Historical Society, we able to fix three headstones in Wood Cemetery, two in Ossian Center Cemetery and three in West View Cemetery. Snyder Brothers Cemetery Service did an excellent job of pouring new foundations and putting the broken headstones back together with epoxy. They took careful care of our pioneers.

While the Ziti Dinner raised money, it also raised awareness of a few families who checked out their ancestor's stones and decided that they would get those fixed too. Don Rawlings and family had work done on the Wilkins headstones (his mother's family), Lisa Cuddeback fixed her grandmother's stone and John Shay fixed Mary E. Shay's stone, who had passed away when she was 14 years old.

While the freezing and thawing of the ground can't be helped, it heaves

the stones around and they tip, break or sink. We can always keep working towards fixing what we have. Let me ask you just to walk around the cemeteries and see how well they are maintained. Just realize that the Cemetery Associations cannot take care of property they don't own, your family headstones are yours to maintain. You also might consider sending a donation to the cemeteries located in Ossian.

Cathy Saunders

## **Apple Cider Time**

Fall is here and it is time for cider. The Ossian Historical Society is planning on holding their Cider Sale on Saturday, October 27, 2018. Look for the advertisements in the local penny savers for details.

## **Historic Roadside Markers.**

I have applied for two historic roadside markers to be funded by the Pomeroy Foundation and both have been approved. One of them commemorates Ossian's participation during the WWI effort and the other School #2 located on Poag's Hole Road. They should be here soon.

Rhea Walker



Part of the Allegany County 1856 Map

STATISTICS OF ALLEGANY CO																			
Towns	White Females	White Males	Colored Females	Colored Males	Total Population	Native Born	Foreign Born	Slaves	Over 21 Years Head only	Under 21 Years Female	Land Owners	Native Voters	Naturalized Voters	Dwellings	Families	Churches	Deaths Dumb	In sane	Non Voters
Angelica	902	914	5	4	1826	1618	208	162	14	21	262	334	43	301	333	4	3	7	2
Atlen	307	341			1048	1065	83	33	5	3	176	217	10	198	203	3			
Alfred	857	871			1728	1653	75	45	31	29	339	472	10	342	372	2		2	
Almond	975	977			1952	1888	64	45	49	49	323	431	19	340	344	3		1	1
Andry	1259	1369			2628	2394	234	175	25	54	394	387	40	363	379	6			
Andover	363	394			1777	1562	215	202	47	47	343	357	33	329	344	3			
Alma	103	243			412	362	50	46	5	8	38	91	4	72	74				
Belfast	1023	1079			2102	1923	179	159	24	81	262	413	39	472	419	4			
Bardsall	349	449			837	772	65	36		7	128	163	29	154	154				
Bellevue	480	504			984	970	14	8		1	153	233	6	189	197	3		1	
Burns	372	365			1037	1004	33	76		10	167	245	7	183	211	3		1	
Cascade	1150	1229	4	7	2400	2304	96	64	1	3	294	504	35	463	484	2			
Centerville	670	677			1353	1254	99	70		6	241	172	29	274	254	3		1	
Cuba	1020	1037	6	6	2129	1937	192	163		14	323	444	17	344	421	4		2	1
Clarksville	357	394			781	776	5	2		12	131	207	3	153	164			1	
Friendship	324	309			1330	1221	113	92		44	232	133	24	343	346	3			2
Genesee	424	402			876	871	25	24		4	157	195	1	163	175	2			
Granger	587	631			1218	1162	56	32		8	206	244	32	232	215	2			
Grove	521	576	1		1118	1080	38	37	7	16	178	214	34	116	116	1			
Home	1070	1037			2165	2010	83	53	12	29	306	414	32	464	438	5		1	
Independence	551	534			1135	1124	11	9		10	203	234	2	224	227	4			
St. Jackson	686	607			1453	1437	21	14		10	150	142	7	214	211	4			
Lawson	605	708			1313	1244	72	22	3	6	126	204	31	237	252	2			
Washington	977	972	5	2	1994	1928	66	51	3	7	334	494	13	394	404	4			
Sevo	1521	1664	15	27	3227	3038	178	85	32	46	420	683	53	620	629	5			1
West	713	734	14	11	1522	1497	23	12		4	291	374	13	347	354	1			
Willina	540	573			1123	1102	31	30	16	34	272	224	11	243	224				
West Almond	463	504			971	962	9	5		22	116	234	4	134	142	1			
<b>Total</b>	<b>3004</b>	<b>3204</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6281</b>	<b>5929</b>	<b>2944</b>	<b>1723</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>1536</b>	<b>2102</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>1834</b>	<b>1834</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>

White Faced Hornet Nest

