



THE BULLETIN

Cortland County Historical Society



Volume 6, Issue 1

February 2013

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Special points of interest:

- Look inside on page 2 for special upcoming programs
- The Diana Bicycle made in Cortland is on display at SU Art Galleries as part of their exhibit: *Nouveau Risqué* running January 24–March 17, 2013. If you missed the Cortland Standard article visit their website at:
<http://www.cortlandstandard.net/articles/01092013n.html>

Mindy's Musings

Nelson Mandela said: "education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world." As part of Generation X, my education was never a questioned element. It was because of many people, and laws that this was the case. Historically, as a middle class, female, it may not have always been a given that I would be educated.

Thanks to the work of Horace Mann (1796-1859), schooling was required after a certain age. Mann also helped to push for reform, in requiring education for teachers, thus standardizing what students would learn. His work also made it so that all students were able to obtain an education, regardless of wealth.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended segregation in schools. In 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education* declared segregation of schools unconstitutional, overturning the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision that upheld racial segregation in public facilities acceptable as long as "separate but equal" facilities were available.

In 1972, the passage of Title IX made certain that no student would be discriminated against because of gender. While today, the law is often cited as requiring equal opportunities for women and men to participate in sports, the law was originally worded to keep women from being excluded from any educational program or activity that received federal funding.

Today, a basic education is often taken for granted, not recognizing the struggles of the past that many endured to provide students with equal opportunities to education.

While many of these educational reforms were easily seen, it took a while for me to understand the importance of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In the summer of 1998, my educational path took a sharp turn for the south, as my family moved to Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Growing up in Weedsport, New York, the importance of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was hard to see. In North Carolina, things were very different. While, the school had been desegregated, the remnants of the change still remained. It became very apparent to me just months into my experiences at my new school; when we voted for Homecoming Court, it was required to nominate two students from each home room, one white, and one black. Historically, when the school had desegregated, and early homecoming votes were taken, a black student would win based on being the majority of the school population. This upset the white parents. To rectify this, they created two homecoming positions, Miss THS (Tarboro High School), and Miss Homecoming. The student with the most votes would become Miss THS, and the second would be Miss Homecoming. In the fall of 1999, this was rectified, for the first time, as only one student per home room was nominated regardless of race. Erasing the effects of segregation still continues.

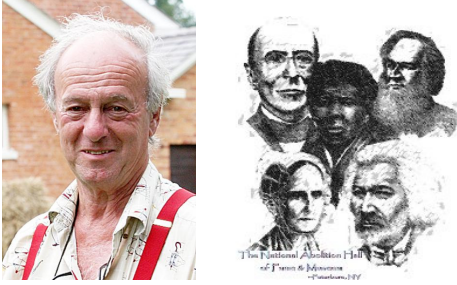
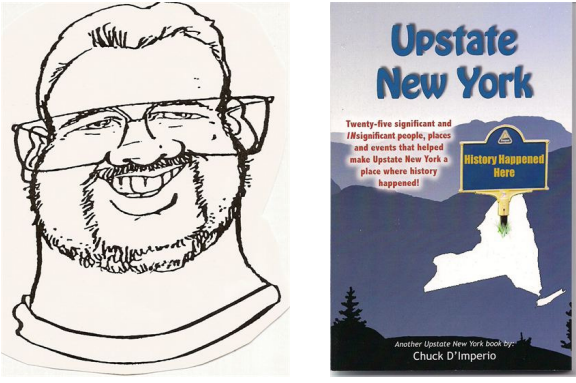
Cortland County has historically been progressive in the field of education. This issue pays tribute to one of the schools that contributed to this distinction. A school that during a time of segregation and slavery opened its doors to all; regardless of race or gender. Over 150 years later, we honor the work and dedication of the teachers and founders of New York Central College, McGrawville.



New York Central College

Upcoming Programs

Calling all history buffs! Join us Wednesday evenings for fascinating special events and lectures sponsored by Cortland County Historical Society. All events are free and open to the public.

	<p><u>February 20, 7 pm: Artifact Show-and-Tell, Cortland County Historical Society</u></p> <p>While the historical society holds countless treasures, there are many artifacts handed down from parents and grandparents in our very own homes of both historic and personal value. Join us for an evening of story-telling with historical artifacts. Bring an artifact such as a family heirloom or other historic piece of special value to you, and share its story and significance.</p>
	<p><u>March 20, 7 pm: Norman Dann, Beard Building, 7-9 Main Street</u></p> <p>Dr. Norman K. Dann of Peterboro will speak on the Abolitionist movement of Central New York. A Professor Emeritus at Morrisville State College, his books include <i>Practical Dreamer: A Biography of Gerrit Smith</i>, and <i>When We Get to Heaven: Runaway Slaves on the Road to Peterboro</i>. He will bring copies of his most recent book on the relationship between Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Gerrit Smith.</p>
	<p><u>April 3, 7 pm: Joseph Brownell, Beard Building, 7-9 Main Street</u></p> <p>Dr. Joseph Brownell of Cortland will be speaking about the notorious Gillette murder case, but with a twist he has not spoken on in the past: its context with a concurrent trial for murder that led to a quite different end. Dr. Brownell, who was born in the foothills of the Adirondacks, is Professor Emeritus at SUNY Cortland and the author of <i>Adirondack Tragedy</i>. Come hear the true story behind Theodore Dreiser's novel.</p>
	<p><u>May 8, 6:30 pm: Chuck D'Imperio, Beard Building, 7-9 Main Street</u></p> <p>Award-winning broadcaster and Upstate New York historian Chuck D'Imperio of Oneonta will be speaking on the historic individuals, events and folk tales of our region. We are lucky to have him speak in Cortland with his busy lecture schedule. Chuck's talks are described by attendees as "lively, thoughtful, fascinating and ALWAYS A LOT OF FUN!"</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Please note this event begins at 6:30.</p>

New York Central College

At the society's (American Baptist Free Mission Society) Fourth Annual Meeting, May 5, 1847, Grosvenor presented an address proposing a "Free Institution" for the "literary, scientific, moral and physical education of both sexes and of all classes of youth." (Short 251; Christian Contributor, July 21, 1847). The principles of the institution were to be antislavery, equality of sex and race, manual labor, provision of a Christian education with the Bible as a textbook in morals, and temperance, which meant abstention not only from alcohol, but also coffee and tea. Its purpose was "to sustain the doctrine of the unity, common origin, equality and brotherhood of the human race." (Foss 400) The founders adhered to the ideal that if persons of different backgrounds lived and studied together, racial harmony would result. The committee appointed to study the matter, after first considering a site in Perry, N.Y., selected a 167-acre farm at the edge of McGrawville, Cortland County. They chose this site because of its more central location, "its freedom from the unholy influence of large towns," (Frederick Douglass's Paper, Mar. 10, 1854) and an offer of \$12,000 for purchase of the land. McGrawville then had only 559 inhabitants. A plank road under construction and a prospective railroad would like the village with nearby cities. Incorporation of the institution as New York Central College followed. (Christian Contributor, Jan. 10, 1849)

The Free Mission Society solicited contributions, for the college through its own agents and from the antislavery public. Benefactors included Gerrit Smith of Peterboro, who seems to have donated relatively handsome sums on several occasions.

With a great community celebration, the cornerstone of the College Hall was laid July 4, 1848, in a field at the edge of the village. (McGrawville Express, July 6, 1848) The villagers helped to build the Hall. In spring 1849, as the building neared completion, the trustees invited Charles L. Reason, a well-known black educator and activist, to join the faculty of four men and two women to be in place on opening day. (North Star, April 13, 1849).

Works Cited in excerpt

Christian Contributor (Utica and McGrawville, N.Y.)

Foss, A.T., and Mathews, E. Facts for Baptist Churches. Utica, N.Y.: American Baptist Free Mission Society, 1850.

Frederick Douglass's Paper (Rochester, N.Y.)

Short, Kenneth R. "New York Central College, a Baptist Experiment in Integrated Higher Education, 1848-1861." *Foundations* 5 (July 1962): 150-156

(Excerpted from: Hanchett, Catherine M. *New York Central College and Its Three Black Professors, 1849-1857*). (CCHS manuscript 188)

The Central College student who attained the greatest wealth, influence, and political clout may have been John Francis Cook Jr. (1833–1910), of Washington, D.C. He had his early education at Union Seminary, a private Washington School of which his father was owner and teacher. The senior John Cook, born a slave in Maryland, was the first ordained African American Presbyterian minister, the first pastor of Washington's famous Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church. Biographic sketches of father and son are in the [Dictionary of American Negro Biography](#).

John Cook Jr. is said to have attended Central College from its opening in September 1849 to 1853 (Murray, Notes). He probably completed the entire Preparatory program. Accompanied by his younger brother, George F.T. Cook, John Jr. went to Oberlin College for about a year. In early 1855 on the father's death, both young men returned to Washington where they continued the Union Seminary until about 1867.

From 1865 John Cook Jr. became actively engaged in District of Columbia politics. Appointed a clerk in the office of the District Tax Collector in 1867, by 1874 he had advanced to head the office. His other District government positions included alderman from 1868, city registrar, justice of the peace, and commissioner of jurors. He was District Delegate to three national Republican Party Conventions.

(Excerpted from: Hanchett, Catherine M. *The Educational Goals of New York Central College McGrawville, New York, 1849-1860*.) (CCHS manuscript 197)

Dr. Louis Michael Vanaria

Dr. Louis Michael Vanaria , 86, passed away on September 30, 2012 in Port St. Lucie, Florida.

Dr. Vanaria was born in New York City, the son of Italian immigrants from Sicily. Following graduation from high school, Dr. Vanaria went on to earn three degrees from Columbia University. He also served his country as a second lieutenant navigator with the Army Air Corps during WW II.

Love of history and sharing his knowledge of it brought him to Cortland in 1957 when he joined the faculty at then Cortland College. For 33 years Dr. Vanaria taught history courses at CC, now SUNY Cortland, including a very popular one about New York State history.

“Lou” was a staunch supporter of the Cortland County Historical Society. He served on the publications committee and shared his knowledge about Italian immigrants to Cortland in several essays, including one about the 75th Anniversary of St. Anthony’s Day in Cortland.

One of Dr. Vanaria’s essays, Settlement Patterns of Cortland Italians: The First Generation 1892-1925, is found in Vol. 4 of the Cortland County Chronicles. FROM MANY ROOTS, and can still be purchased from the society.

I have two special memories of Dr. Vanaria. He was serving as the secretary of the board at CCHS when I joined. His minutes almost always included references to every-day things which were happening around Cortland; a reference to the November hanging of Christmas lights on Main Street with a balmy temperature of almost 70 degrees or a description of the delicious brownies enjoyed by all at the end of a board meeting.

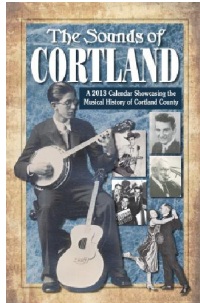
For me, the most outstanding memory is of Lou’s dedication to preserving the memory of Christopher Columbus!

“Remembering Columbus: A Quintcentennial Essay” was included in the 1992 time capsule as part of the 500 Quincentenary Jubilee.

Every Columbus Day many of us looked forward to reading Dr. Vanaria’s letter to the editor of the Cortland Standard. He would remind us of the continuing historical significance of that voyage made to the new world.

Many of us smiled when the Cortland Standard Editor, Skip Chapman, chose to print one of Dr. Vanaria’s letters again this past October, 2012, just a few weeks after his passing. A suitable tribute to both Lou and Christopher.

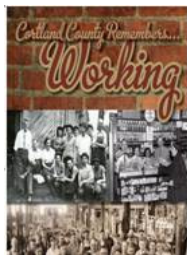
Diane Ames, CCHS Board Member



2013 Calendars are still available. Stop in or call (607)756-6071



a reference to the November hanging of Christmas lights on Main Street with a balmy temperature of almost 70



You can write your place in history. Contribute a story to, Working Part 2.

Working books are available for \$20.00 at CCHS

Calling All Workers

CCHS volunteers are working diligently at putting together our next book in the remembrance series: Working Part 2. So we want your stories about working diligently at the many different businesses across Cortland County.

E-mail stories to kaaren_pierce@yahoo.com, or contact CCHS at (607)756-6071 and arrange for someone to help prepare your story for publication.

Did You Know?

Have you heard? Cortland County Historical Society was selected as one of 200 sites to host the American Library Associations traveling exhibit: *Lincoln, The Constitution and the Civil War!*

From May 13, 2015 to June 26, 2015 the exhibit will be here in Cortland County. Thanks to a partnership with the Center for the Arts in Homer, we will have an accessible space for all to view the exhibit.

Even though 2015 seems far away, it is growing closer every day. To this end, we are looking for volunteers to begin helping plan programming and events for this special time. If you are interested in volunteering for this special project please contact Mindy or Jennifer at CCHS at (607)756-6071 or cortlandhistory@centralny.twcbc.com.

Membership Renewals (October–December 2012)

Thank you to our new and renewing members for their support.

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CORTLAND COUNTY
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Senior (optional 65 years & older)	\$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	For "Family" Category please list
Individual	\$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	names of family living at this
Family	\$40.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	address.
Supporting	\$75.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Sustaining (Cody Higgins Club)	\$150.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Sponsor (Charles Jones Club)	\$300.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Curator (Mary Ann Kane Club)	\$500.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Benefactor (Joan Siedenbug Club)	\$1,200.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Life Member	\$10,000.00	<input type="checkbox"/>	



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