A Line a Day: The Diaries of George M. Hayes

by Nancy Hayden

Introducing…… George McGill Hayes (1893–1980) Mayor of Canandaigua (1937–1947), Chairman of the Board of Supervisors of Ontario County and Mr. Canandaigua (1974). The list goes on: President of Wood Library, Granger Homestead Trustee, President of the Ontario County Historical Society Board of Trustees, Kiwanis Club Member, Charter Member of the Canandaigua Country Club, Deacon of the First Congregational Church in Canandaigua, Manager of Davidson Lumber Yard and Coal Company, accomplished pianist and vocalist, lay preacher, Salvation Army Advisory Board Member and his list of accomplishments does not end there!

As you can see, George was a very busy man during his lifetime and lucky for us, he was a devoted diarist. Although he resided in the City of Canandaigua, his diary entries also include descriptions of his adventures in neighboring towns in Ontario County. The diaries are held by the Ontario County Historical Museum and are a real treasure. In all, there are 19 diaries spanning 1910–1972.

“A Line A Day”….. is a new Chronicles series featuring excerpts from George’s diaries through the years. Let’s take a look at life in Canandaigua, in his own words, in the summer of 1910 when George was 17 years old.

July 13, 1910

“Took Mother and Elizabeth [sister] to the swimming school in the car and then Jack (George attended Mohegan Lake Military School in Peekskill NY; Jack was a classmate visiting him) and I played 3 sets of tennis [3-6, 6-3, 6-4]. I stopped in in the morning to ask Mr. Henry Hamlin [local attorney who resided at 152 Gibson Street] a crack tennis player and captain of the Rochester Team if he would object to having a game with Jack and I. He said he would be very glad to play and set the time for half past four.

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The Prohibition Party: Our Oldest Continuing “Third Party”
The drive for prohibition in America grew out of the long campaign for temperance. It was an attempt to achieve by political means a goal that was proving too elusive by moral persuasion alone. Several organizations tried to bring about prohibition, often building on the successes and failures they each experienced. One of them was the Prohibition Party. In the Ontario County Times, it was often called “the coldwater party.” Its ballot symbol was a water fountain.

Actually, the Prohibition Party still exists. They have a presidential candidate for 2020, C.L. Gammon of Tennessee. The party is billed as the oldest existing “third party” in the United States. However, you are not likely to see Gammon’s name on the ballot. The Prohibition Party appeared on the 2016 presidential ballot in only three states: Arkansas, Mississippi, and Colorado. The party has not qualified for the New York ballot in 2020. In 2016, the party received 5,617 votes nationwide. The 2012 election resulted in the Prohibition Party receiving only 518 votes. The last time it received 100,000 votes or more was in 1948. However, it was not on the ballot in New York that year. While it has an interesting history, the Prohibition Party has seldom been a threat to either major party, although it did significantly dilute the vote for Republicans in New York in 1884. The party’s poor showing at the polls is the major reason you will not see it on the ballot in November 2020. Under the Election Law, it cannot reach the threshold vote to qualify.

There was once a time when the Prohibition Party did qualify for the ballot in Ontario County and New York State. In 1919, the Prohibition Party and the Socialist Party both enjoyed a place on local ballots. In the 1920 Presidential Election, Ontario County voters gave Warren G. Harding (Republican) 13,361 votes. James M. Cox (Democrat) received 5,678 votes from local voters. Socialist Eugene V. Debbs received 914 votes and the Prohibition Party candidate (Aaron Watkins) received 186 local votes. Socialist ideas captivated more voters in this county in 1920 than Prohibition did — and that was the year the 18th Amendment went into effect! It was the start of a downward slide for the Prohibitionists, snatching defeat from the jaws of victory, so to speak. In just the previous election (1916), the Socialist Party received only 53 votes in Ontario County, while the Prohibition Party received 349 votes. The Republicans and Democrats received almost 14,000 votes that year, Charles Evans Hughes (Republican) won the county, but Thomas Woodrow Wilson (Democrat) won the presidency. That election took place less than six months before America entered World War I, reflecting the argument that prohibition was a war issue.

The Prohibition Party did continue to appear on the ballot for local elections for a few years, although its candidates often had other allegiances and were often cross-endorsements. In 1921, for example, Charles C. Sackett of Canandaigua was the Prohibition candidate for Member of the Assembly. Homer Snyder of Victor was the party candidate for County Treasurer and Howard D. Aldrich of Shortsville was the candidate for County Clerk. In those years when voters elected a Superintendent of the Poor, the Prohibition Party nominated Fred W. Hollis of Hopewell. The party even nominated Frank H. Snyder of Geneva for the post of Coroner. All those candidates won their contests. However, they were all cross-nominated Republicans and were widely understood as winners for that party. Founded in Saratoga Springs in 1869, the New York Prohibition Party was an extension of the national party formed in Chicago that same year. It reflected a move toward a political solution to the “alcohol problem.”

continued on page 9
Esprit de Corps

It is June and the museum is looking great! We are all ready for the coming summer season.

While our research volunteers keep our archives in order ready to help visitors discover their ancestral past in the research library, The Ontario County Arts Council has their exhibit on the “Majesty of Flight” in the north gallery. We look toward their new “Tell a Story” exhibition that will open on June 22nd and remain through the summer season.

When you enter the gallery adjoining the art exhibit, you will see our “All Things Presidential” display. It is a collection of memorabilia from every one of our 45 U.S. Presidents, including our current Chief Executive, Donald Trump. Using items from our collections and a few borrowed from our Director and Museum Educator, the display is educational, informative and colorful. Each section has an image of the President with items from their campaigns and administrations. These exhibit cases will take you on a walk through time and American history. Stop and browse our book shop too.

From January 16th, 1919 through December 5th, 1933, the United States was in its Prohibition era. Our newest local history exhibit developed by our Curator, Wilma Townsend, is a look at the period when it was, for the most part, illegal to make, transport or possess alcohol. Bootlegging, distilling moonshine, bathtub gin were all efforts to circumvent the laws resulting from the adoption of the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Nonetheless, medicinal whiskey was available by prescription and wine for religious use was permitted. This exhibit looks at our county and Prohibition, what led up to this national ban on alcohol and who was arrested in the illegal production and transportation of booze. Whiskey Point on Canandaigua Lake got its name for a reason. There are lot of artifacts and pictures including early saloons in Canandaigua, a real moonshine still, unopened bottles full whiskey from the 1920s and names with crimes charged to county residents who violated the Volstead Act.

Behind the scenes, the board, staff and volunteers are hard at work developing our fundraising projects for the year. June 29th is our “Garden Tour”; August 23rd, we will auction off donated “Small Treasurers Out of the Attic” at the First Congregational Church across the street and the third annual “John North Willys Bike Rally” will leave on a 10- or a 25-mile ride from the Cheshire Union Store on Sunday August 25th. We will culminate our fundraising year on October 19th at Warfield’s in Clifton Springs with the third annual “Speak Easy” party. Get out your flapper dress or your fedora, the Roaring 20s themed dress-up event will feature an audience participation play by The Acme Mystery Company. Lounge singer, Connie Fredericks Malone, will entertain during the cocktail hour. Your support of these events helps us to operate our history museum and pursue our mission to preserve and promote the history of our county.

All these wonderful exhibits and events that bring our history to life do not happen in a vacuum. The staff gets help and assistance from dozens of volunteers. We can not name them all here, but they come from all age groups and parts of the county to share their time and talents. As we said, the Ontario County Historical Museum is alive and ready for summer. Volunteers help our staff with events and are the lifeblood of our programming. Your membership support is essential and appreciated; it helps keep our admission free. As an organization, all we provide is a friendly and welcoming environment that nurtures a spirit of learning, volunteerism and giving. We thank our Board of Trustees for giving us the freedom and opportunity to make this all happen.

Stop in and visit this summer or attend an event. You will enjoy the fruits of our esprit de corps.
Our new exhibit “I’ll Drink to That! Prohibition in Ontario County, 1920-1933” is now open and ready to be enjoyed by both local residents and tourists. As we enter the summer season, we can consider what people did for fun during the Prohibition Era.

Once Prohibition began, saloons, taverns and some private clubs closed. Grocers could no longer sell wine or spirits, liquor stores closed or turned to selling other products. People young and old sought out other entertainment activities: dancing, plays, motion pictures, vaudeville, dining out, sports especially baseball, summer activities on the lakes, and club events. If you really wanted to drink, you could find and illegally purchase alcoholic beverages throughout the county relatively easily. Or, you could travel to speakeasies in Rochester or Geneva. It continued to be legal to drink alcohol in your own home.

Dances were very popular events where you could meet up with friends, listen to the latest music, or go on a date. Communities large and small across the county offered venues for dances — grange halls, pavilions, even formal ballrooms. During Prohibition, all alcohol was forbidden at public events such as these; however, many partygoers certainly indulged in drinking prior to and after the dances. One of the most popular entertainment spots was Roseland Park. Opened in 1925 on the northern shore of Canandaigua Lake, Roseland Park (originally Lakeside Park) provided wholesome family entertainment with attractions such as refreshment stands, amusement park rides, midway games, a gas station, picnic areas, and a dance hall. The Roseland Dance Pavilion became one of the most popular places in the area to enjoy a night of dancing and fun. Well-known dance bands and orchestras were booked to play at the pavilion where couples could dance to the latest jazz and blues music.

“Going to the pictures” was also a popular activity during Prohibition. Silent movies were the norm until 1927 when movies began to have soundtracks. Movie theaters and opera houses were the venues for plays, musicals, special entertainment programs and motion pictures. The latest movies could be seen at the Playhouse in Canandaigua and at several locations in Geneva such as the Temple Theater. Romantic comedies, westerns, slapstick were particularly popular and were shown nearly every night of the week except Sunday. In 1928, City of Canandaigua residents voted to allow motion pictures to be shown on Sundays. Vaudeville shows were great entertainment and were presented at public halls across the county. Often run by traveling companies, vaudeville was a combination of light opera, dance and musical acts, acrobatics, magic tricks, and comedic acts. A vaudeville show was tailored to appeal to audiences across all social classes. Vaudeville declined with the rise of motion pictures.

Dining out continued to be popular during Prohibition particularly in the larger towns. Without legally able to sell alcohol to their dining clientele, restaurant owners had to get creative. Local newspapers were full of ads encouraging those looking for a nice dinner out to try their delicious specials, enjoy a home-style holiday meal, or stop for refreshments after the ball game or a night at the movies. Many of these dining establishments served alcohol before Prohibition; most likely some of them made alcoholic drinks available for certain customers.

So, enjoy your 2019 summer entertainment activities and take some time to visit our latest exhibit at the museum!
Jack and I went to the Bijou right after dinner (lunch). I took some pictures to Robinson’s and MacFarlane’s to be printed. I had a picture of Helen, Catherine and Edith together and one of the whole bunch that played croquet. Jack and I met Mr. Hamlin at the courts [Sonnenberg Park then known as Howell St. Playground] about half past four and we played 3 sets [3-6, 4-6, 4-6] of lob-tail doubles. He did not have to exert himself in the slightest.

At 20 minutes of 8 we started for Geneva by trolley to visit Professor Brooks the astronomer and possibly get a glimpse of some planet through his telescope. We finally succeeded after a long walk in finding him at his house. After introducing ourselves we sat and talked for a while and then he took us to his observatory which was not far off and let us view the moon and also Jupiter through his 10 ¼ inch telescope. We had a very interesting sight of both. We then took the trolley home and arrived there about half-past ten.”

July 16, Saturday
The day starts in with rain. Jack teaches me how to play poker for a while. We then went to the Y.M.C.A. and played pool till eleven. After that we walked downtown and bought some music and stopped at the Chocolate Shop. Came home and played some more poker. Went to dinner and after dinner played poker for about fifteen minutes. Went to the Bijou Dream and then into the Historical Museum. In the evening we went over next door to Aunt Clara’s to call. Cousin Elizabeth and Cousin Sue were there also. We spent awhile in talking and then we played the piano. Some of the pieces were “Blue Bells of Scotland”, “Stars and Stripes Forever” and “Rastas on Parade”. After the call we went down to MacFarlane’s to get Catherine Welch’s pictures but they were not done yet. Took a walk down town after that.

….To be continued in the September Chronicles.

Jack and George visited the old Historical Museum on July 16th. It was located next to the old Union School where the present YMCA is located.
Your Historical Society

Friends compete at Finger Lakes National History Day

Ed Varno stands with the officials from the New York Council on the Arts, Fabiana Cheu and Kristin Herren at the 2019 Museum Conference in Cooperstown in April

Jack Haley explains his drone images at the Historical Society May 22nd as part of the Arts Council’s “The Majesty of Flight” exhibit

Ted Williams speaks at military flight talk

Group shot of students at National History Day

Mayor Ellen Polimeni and Chester Freeman unveil a new marker in West Avenue Cemetery remembering Austin Steward
Viral Leanings
by Maureen O’Connell Baker

The Davis Mansion - Township of Gorham
A few miles down the east side of Canandaigua Lake in the Township of Gorham stands a stately house that has sparked my curiosity for many years. A recent discovery of a photo taken in the 1930s initiated a research project which resulted in a plethora of interesting finds. This white fortress at the corner of Turner and East Lake Road must have served some sort of purpose as she sits there watching over the lake. I soon discovered it was originally known as the Davis Mansion, named for the early settlers who migrated from Wales in the late 1780s. Four generations of the Davis family lived on and farmed the property, each generation making improvements and additions to their house and land.

In March 1928, fourth generation Edmond Davis and his wife Anna, sold the property to Clarence and Frieda Averhill. Mr. Averhill operated a gasoline and oil business at that location to service the new automobiles that were becoming popular. Soon thereafter, with an addition of an enclosed porch and an opportunity for a new and much needed livelihood, the porch area of Averhill became known as the Rathskeller, a German term for a tavern or restaurant. An ad from June 12th, 1931 in the Daily Messenger read “Have Sunday Dinner at Averhill, although the road is under construction, there is no delay in going over it.” The July 21st, 1933 Daily Messenger advertised “Free dancing every Saturday night (with music by an orchestra) and serving draught beer, salads, and sandwiches.” In addition, this full-service restaurant was also a favorite venue for clubs and organizations from as far as Rochester for banquets, and small gatherings.

The Averhill Rathskeller served the public until 1944 when the property was sold to the MacKinzie family. On April 10th, 1944 a business application was filed for the MacKinzie Inn which continued to serve the public as a restaurant and inn for the next 15 years. Since 1960 the property has changed hands several times... never to fully regain the grandeur it once had.

By 2010, the Davis Mansion, Averhill Rathskeller, and MacKinzie Inn had been converted into apartments, still proudly keeping watch over the lake.

Mail Box

Dear Wilma:
On behalf of the Valley Garden Club I am writing to thank you for the very informative and interesting tour of the WWI Exhibit. It offered a person a comprehensive look at the courage and suffering of the men and women involved in the War….

Wilma, you are a walking encyclopedia and we were blessed to have you as our guide.

Finally, we felt privileged to see the flight exhibit that was full of fun and surprises. We will be back.

With much thanks,
Peggy Kane

Friends:
I am enclosing a check for $100 to cover research cost as described and to provide a little extra for a donation to your organization. The research package you sent me was excellent. Thank you for your efforts.

Sincerely,
Scott Noble
Mill Valley, CA

To: Ontario County Historical Society
Our sincerest thanks for passing along the beautifully frames picture of Chief Joseph Brant. We are honored to have it and will display it with pride.

Sincerely,
Native American Cultural Center, Inc.

Ed,
I can’t adequately express my sincere gratitude for your support. If there is anything, I can ever do for you, don’t hesitate to ask me.

Warmest regards,
Ted Williams
News and Announcements

- Things are moving rapidly forward with our June 29th “Garden Tour”. Tickets are available from several locations. Call Maureen at the Historical Society 585-394-4975 for more details on the gardens and where tickets will be on sale. Hope you can join us.

- In other Museum event news, our “Small Treasurers Out of the Attic” auction will take place on August 24th. We need small items that we can be put on the auction block. We are looking for Canandaigua memorabilia as well as other items. We want to thank the First Congregational Church of Canandaigua for offering to host this event. Watch your mail for details.

- Canandaigua native John North Willys was a motorman in the early 1900s during the heyday of the automobile. He was known as the “man who could stand prosperity”. He started his career in the bicycle business and eventually bought and owned the Willys Overland Company. Willys is often credited with inventing the design for the jeep. For the third year, we will be hosting the “John North Willys Bicycle Rally” on Sunday, August 25th. This year we will be operating out of lands behind the Cheshire Union Store off NYS Route 21. Join us for either the 10- or the 25-mile ride. Call for details.

- Because of their work with suffrage research, our Director, Ed Varno, and Curator, Wilma Townsend, have been invited to participate in the planning group for the November 2019, “Woman’s Rights and Justice Conference”. The group will also focus on how to keep women’s rights in the forefront as our nation approaches the “2020 National Centennial Suffrage” celebration.

- Canandaigua Mayor, Ellen Polimeni, is assembling a team to plan the work needed to upgrade the city’s historic West Avenue Cemetery. The grounds are located on West Avenue somewhat across from the city’s Pioneer Cemetery that was restored in the late 1990s. The cemetery is the final resting place for many city residents including abolitionist Austin Steward and dates to the mid 1800s. The Historical Society holds the original sexton/burial record for West Avenue. It is an interesting read.

- Our relationship with the Ontario County Arts Council is flourishing with a wonderful exhibit, “The Majesty of Flight”. Two interesting related programs were held in May, “Oh Those Planes We Flew”, featured graphic artist, Ted Williams; and a talk on aerial drones by Messenger Post photographer, Jack Haley. Both were well attended.

- Our latest local history exhibit presents a look at the Prohibition Era in Ontario County. “I’ll Drink To That! Prohibition in Ontario County” starts with a look at the origins of the quest to prohibit the sale of alcohol and takes us through the repeal of the 18th Amendment. The exhibit was opened with our annual “Benefactor’s Reception” and featured a moonshine tasting. Special thanks to board members Natalie DeTraglia, Tricia Carey and Carole Lillis for their contributions.

- We want to give a shout out to the Sherwin Williams store in Canandaigua who donated the paint and materials needed to repaint our north gallery for the summer visitors. JSJ Decorating provided the labor at a very reasonable price. The galleries look great. Stop in and bring your summer guests.

- Finally, we want to note the passing of past board member, Herb Swingle. Herb taught history at the Greece Central Schools during his career and was an avid Civil War fan. His teaching followed a stint in the Vietnam War as a helicopter swing gunner. He had a pleasant approach to life and always a smile on his face. We will miss him. He was 74.
Local History Committee — Town of Canandaigua  
by Saralinda Hooker

Early in 2018, the Town of Canandaigua appointed a team of volunteers charged with raising public awareness of local history and encouraging preservation of the Town’s historic resources. The team has been meeting monthly since then, and has grown to 12 under the leadership of Town Historian Ray Henry and Co-Chair Saralinda Hooker. Each month the group produces an article for the Town’s online newsletter, available on the Town’s website. Anyone can subscribe, resident or not – add your name to the e-mail list at townofcanandaigua.org. The Team has its own page within the Town’s website, supplementing the Town Historian’s page, which also contains numerous articles on local history topics. Recent additions to the History Team page include:

West Lake Road Video Clips – See the historic sites of West Lake Road over two centuries in the form of short video chapters of 2 to 8 minutes. These clips are excerpted from the 2011 DVD West Lake Legacy, developed by Graywolff Productions for OCHS. Chapters cover the Yacht Club, the Butler Road Schoolhouse, the Natural Science Camp, Menteth Point, Camp Onanda, and more. See http://www.townofcanandaigua.org/page.asp?id=213

Historic Map Views of the Town – Looking to trace when your house was built or how your neighborhood developed? Find downloadable Town maps from 1852, 1859, 1874, 1904, 1916, and 1977, each one featuring a dot for every home or commercial building. The Team hopes to add more maps to the selection this year, and to produce hard copies for display at Town Hall. See http://townofcanandaigua.org/page.asp?id=193

Canandaigua Steamboats – Earlier this year the Town renamed its court/board room and its meeting rooms in honor of the Lake Steamers, and reproduced a steamboat photo for each room. For the images and a summary article on the Steamboat Era, see: http://www.townofcanandaigua.org/documents/files/Canandaigua%20Lake%20Steamboats-conference%20rooms(1).pdf

Hayes Diary - A Line A Day – For the next few months our newsletter entries will have excerpts from the diaries of George M. Hayes, an active Canandaigua community resident who jotted notes on his daily activities over 7 decades beginning in 1910, when he was a teenager learning to drive. His diaries are housed at OCHS, and give an eye-opening account of life in a slower and quieter period.

Features on local historic homes, who built them, and how they have been preserved over the years to help give our Town its special rural character. On another local history note, the first phase of the Town’s Reconnaissance Level Survey of Historic Properties is nearing completion. The final report, by Bero Architecture PLLC of Rochester, will provide a chronological history of the Town of Canandaigua, describing significant events, individuals, industries, and patterns of development that shaped the community up to roughly 1975. Phase 2 of the project, pending further grant support from the Preservation League of New York State in 2020 or beyond, will follow up with an inventory of individual properties and/or historic districts identified as having historical or architectural significance, and recommendations for protection of the Town’s historic resources. The Team has scheduled a public presentation of the Phase 1 report results on August 20th, 7:00 p.m. at the Cheshire Fire Hall. Please join the group to learn more about the survey and other local history activities.

continued from page 2 — The Educator’s Post

The party’s founders were following the example of the advocates of political abolition prior to the Civil War. In 1888 and 1892 the Prohibition Party received 2.2% of the popular vote nationwide. It steadily lost national standing after 1900, but occasionally nominated local candidates for decades.

Why has the Prohibition Party fared so poorly at the ballot box over the years? Historians have identified several reasons. For one thing, Prohibition has always been a largely rural religious phenomenon at a time when the nation was becoming increasingly urban and secular. The Prohibition Party has also supported both progressive and conservative causes creating confusion and conflict among its members. Its true believers cling to an unpopular central idea. Finally, many people consider votes for third parties as wasted votes.
The OCHS Organization

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We wish to extend a special thanks to all of the volunteers who donate so many countless hours in support of the Historical Society.

Address correspondence to:
Ontario County Historical Society
55 North Main Street
Canandaigua, New York  14424

We are open Tuesday through Friday 10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. and Wednesday until 9:00 p.m.

Business Members

We wish to thank the business members listed below for their continued support. Please consider them when purchasing goods and services. In addition to these business members, we also appreciate the small donations we receive from dozens of local businesses in Ontario County each year.

1840 Inn On The Main
Aberle Eye Care
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Membership Benefits in the Ontario County Historical Society

Receive Regular Museum Mailings — Keep Up-to Date on all Society Activities

Reduced Admission to Society Events and Fund Raisers, including Tour of Homes

(admission to the museum is always free)

Free assistance in the Museum’s Rare Documents/Genealogy Library

Membership in Time Travelers, a National Museum Benefit Program

10% savings on Museum Books Shop purchases

Subscription to our quarterly newsletter, CHRONICLES

Ontario County Historical Society

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General Membership Support:
Sr. Citizen $30; Individual $35; Family $50; Friend $75

Centennial Club Level:
Centennial $100; Benefactor $150; Heritage Circle $250; Director $500+

Please accept my additional gift of $ ________
I am interested in making an endowment gift; please contact me.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 29: Garden Tour — 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.; self-guided tour; tickets available June 1st

July 4: Closed for Independence Day holiday

July 19-21: Ontario County Arts Council “Golden Pallet” Art Walk; details at www.ocarts.org

July 19-21: “Downtown Arts and Music Festival”

August 10: Ontario County Arts Council presents “Create and Explore”; details at www.ocarts.org

August 15: History Drive — save the date; more info to follow

August 24: “Small Treasures Out of The Attic” — OCHS fundraiser; details at www.ochs.org

August 25: “John North Willys Bike Rally” in Cheshire — info @ www.ochs.org

September 4: Ontario County Genealogy Society meets at 7:00 p.m.