

Kanestio Historical Society Times

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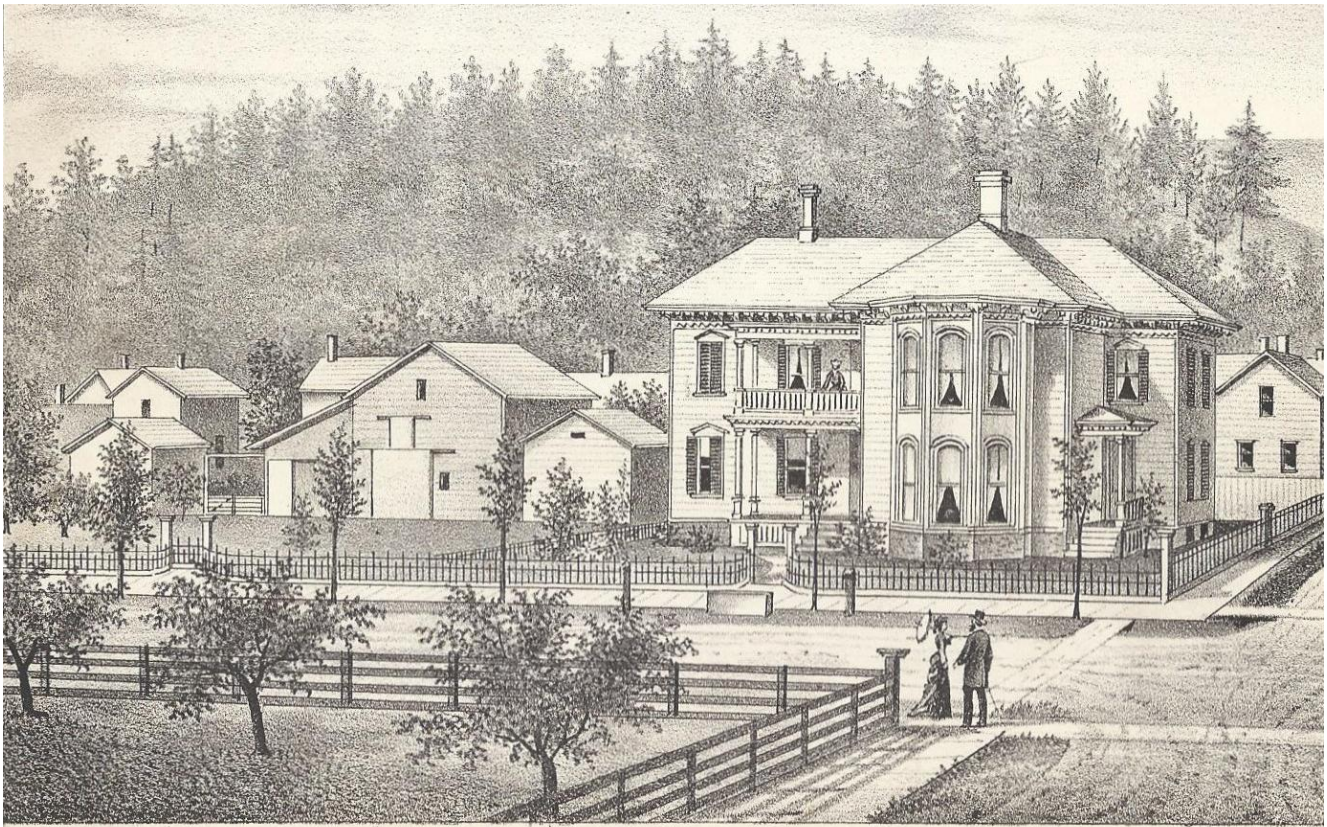
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Gail Davis, Editor - Suzanne Babbitt, Assistant Editor

Carter's in Canistota History



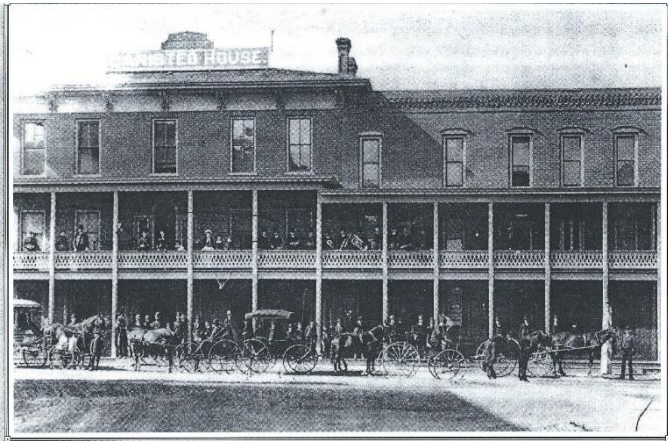
RESIDENCE OF JOHN CARTER, CANISTOTA, N. Y.

This lithograph from *Clayton's History of Steuben County* caught my eye as I recognized it as the building on Greenwood Street kitty corner from the school. About the same time I came across this picture, I received an email from Dana Aultman stating he was related to the Carters that figured in the early history of Canistota and he attached a link to an article he thought might be fodder for a future article. Dana's email sent

us both down quite the rabbit hole researching Carters and Canistota history.

John Carter was born in Ithaca, NY January 26, 1821 . He moved to Greenwood with his parents in 1830 and moved with them again to the Canistota area in 1839. He was engaged in farming and lumbering on the Bennetts Creek Road for twenty-five years prior

to moving to Canisteo Village. After moving to the village he was engaged in erecting houses, among them are numbered some of the more elegant homes in Canisteo including the above home on Greenwood Street. He also purchased and ran the Canisteo House for a number of years.



The Canisteo House in 1887
 Located at West Main Street on what was commonly referred to as the Manwell Block

John's obituary tells us much about the man.

"August 21, (1888) – Again we are called upon to chronicle the death of one of our oldest inhabitants. At 3:15 o'clock it was announced on our streets that John Carter was dead. As a neighbor he had few superiors: always dealt out to the poor by him.

... Mr. Carter has lived to see many changes in this village and town. He has seen the wild Indians hunting ground turned into beautiful fields of golden grain and to see the little hamlet grow into a flourishing village and many is the time he has assisted in the process of its growth, thus planting the Oak of Time that will never fade from the memories of our people.

...Mr. Carter has quite a number of pieces of property in the village and among them is the Canisteo House, which he has owned for a number of years. And at one time he was the proprietor of the same, and a jolly good landlord he made. Traveling men were delighted to put up with him for the boys must be well take care of, and he was always ready with plenty of good stories with which to entertain his friends.

...Mrs. Carter and the sons and daughters, together with his brothers and sisters, and other relatives have the sympathy of all in their sad affliction, for in his death we

lose one of our kindest and best citizens, and one who has always had the welfare of this place at heart."

Carter Foundry - Canisteo Iron Works 1873 - 1930's (photo on back page)

Researching the Canisteo Iron Works has been quite the challenge with lots of conflicting information in newspaper articles and testimonials on file at the Society. It appears that the agricultural tool manufacturing business was started by a man named Carroll who sold to Henry Carter in 1873. **William Carter** took over the business from his father in 1895 and continued to run the business until 1924 when his sons, H. Perry and Ernst Carter took over, changing the name to "The Carter Brothers."

The foundry made a specialty of engines, reversible plows, horse shoes, cultivators, potatoes diggers, land rollers, large kettles, sleigh and wagon shoes, post mauls, hay racks, root cutters, stump machines, pulleys, hangers and shafting. They were known as a machine shop and boiler works, and later added the manufacture of steam engines. They made tractor engines that looked somewhat like a locomotive steam boiler, also made store fronts that held glass and many were used in Canisteo and Hornell.



These photos showing the Carter storefronts mentioned above were taken across from the Dollar Store on Main Street in Hornell in March 2024.

This article from the July 6, 1904 *Canisteo Times* shows the Carters going into the car manufacturing business.

Canisteo develops a new industry. Being built in Carter's Foundry for Hornellsville Party –a full fledged Tonneau automobile is being built in W. D. Carter's Foundry in Depot St. The machine is for R.C. Pierce who has several original ideas in auto construction, which are being placed in the machine. The gasoline engine was made in Carter's foundry, 8 horse power, 800 revolutions, to run 25 miles per hour. Bodies red, interior beautiful red leather.

Dana's email that let me down this path of Carters in Canisteo history shows the Carter interest in automobiles.

... In researching a distant relative of mine, Byron J. Carter, I found out that he died from gangrene from a facial injury that kind of led to the invention of the electric car engine starter. Here's a [link](#) to the article about Charles Kettering (the inventor) and how an event with his friend Byron Carter led to the invention.

Injuries were very common in those days when cars were started by hand-cranking them.

Perry Carter still operated the business until the early 1930's.

William D. Carter

Following are excerpts from the obituary of William Carter:

...Mr. Carter was a well known and highly esteemed business man of Canisteo for more than 59 years, during which time he owned and operated the Canisteo Iron Works. For six years he served as sole trustee of the Canisteo rural school which was located in the building now occupied by the Roller Mills (on Fifth Street) . It was chiefly through his efforts that the Canisteo Academy, a private school, became the Canisteo Union School which name the Canisteo Schools now bear.

...Since Mr. Carter's residence in Canisteo he has been a useful and public spirited citizen, serving in many public offices. He was a member of the village board for several terms, served as member of the school board for 11 years and was active in the volunteer fire department as a member of the Hook and Ladder Company.

Homeward Bound - the Life of a Hobo



By Suzanne Babbitt

On April 16, 2024, Dave Clark from Elkland, PA, presented his hobo character to the Kanestio Historical Society. He entertained his audience with humorous & delightful insights into the history & life of men walking & riding the rails across our country. The word hobo originated during & after the Civil War as many men from both sides were struggling to return to their homes, sometimes only to find there was no home left. Thus, "hobo" meant "homeward bound."

One distinction that Dave Clark's character emphasized was that these men were not bums, thieves or troublemakers. They were honest &

willing to work for food or a place to sleep, pitching in to do any job offered. Their numbers increased or decreased as the country's economy was bad or good. As you could imagine their numbers were high during the Great Depression period, though many men were eligible for training & work with the CCC camps around the country during the early to mid 1930's, until WW 2 began.

We also learned that train travel was used a lot, though that was risky, depending on which kind of boxcar you chose & whether the train boss (guard) was vicious. As the hobos traveled they developed a special language for their life on the road. They came up with symbols that they might put on a sign post or gate letting other travelers know if this place or family was friendly or good for a handout, or if the dog was mean. As hobos gathered at campgrounds at night, they would share what food they had, trade stories of their adventures, even sing about home. We also learned of some famous men who had spent time living the hobo life.

Student's Corner

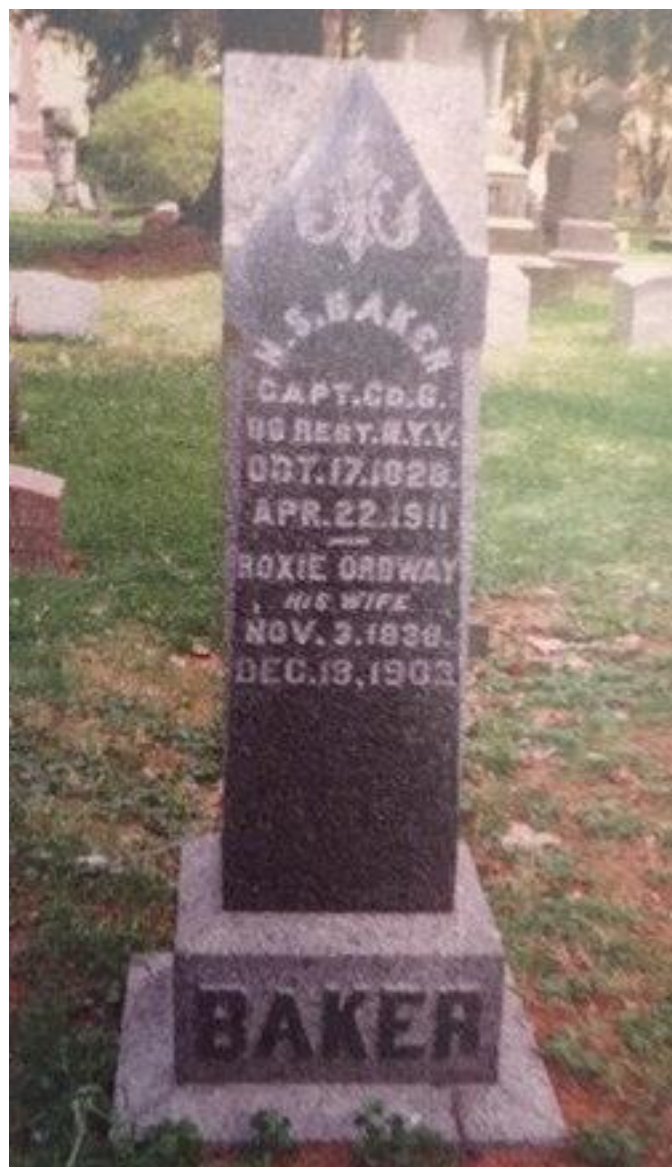
Nathan Stephens Baker by
Coby Peters, Kylan Burdick
10/10/23

Nathan Stephens Baker was born on October 17, 1828, in Canisteo, NY to Jeremiah Baker and Eunice Powers. Nathans's mother died when he was young, in 1829. Nathan married Roxie Ordway in May of 1855. Nathan enrolled in the army on September 19, 1861, as a 1st lieutenant. Nathan was a member of the 86th New York Infantry regiment (nicknamed the "Steuben Rangers") and fought in the Civil War. The Steuben Rangers were organized in Elmira, NY on November 20th , 1861 under the command of Colonel Benajah Bailey. They left for Washington D.C. on November 23 rd , 1861. Starting from January 1 st , 1862, Nathan Baker kept a diary describing of day-to-day events throughout his service in the war. Here are the diary entries during the battle of Gettysburg:

Wednesday, July 1. Marched from Emmetsburg to Gettysburg – Yet some wounded both sides. Also women & children leaving Gettysburg for safety.

Thursday 2. Hard fighting commenced 4:20 P.M. Our brigade engaged 6 P.M. & retired 7 P.M. fought desperately. Loses heavy each side advancing & retiring inturn. 7.30 we wore driving them. My Co. lost 1 killed 6 wounded.

Friday 3. Gettysburgh, Pa. Firing commenced at daylight. Our Regt not actively engaged only is supporting Batteries. Loss of Regt 3 wounded. Fighting hard till 11A.M. again 1 P.M. balance of day – Result of todays fight said to be in our favor. We captured 4.



Here are the entries for the battle of Wilderness where Nathan was injured:

Thursday 5. Up at 4 A.M. & started toward Spotsylvania Court House at 5 A.M. Went to within 4 miles of S. Court House & then went west till about 3 P.M. when we went into an engagement – took a few prisoners & have a few men wounded in Regt. We drove the enemy slowly & laid on arms on the field. Jas. Wright slightly wounded, foot.
Friday 6. Ball opened on our right daybreak – We are in first line engaged slightly during A.M. About noon the enemy broke through the left of brigade & finally forcing us back, wounding Rant Allison, killing Hiram Hallett & wounding me. We fell back & there was considerable confusion. We finally got a position in breastworks was drove out & retook them.

Saturday 7. Div Hospital, wound dressed nicely & doing well. My boys all here that are wounded. Curley Ambulance Driver Edwin Morse 3 Mich. True name. Started for Brandy Station dark crossed Rasidan 10 P.M. and parked

After the war Baker returned to Canisteo to his wife Roxie and daughter Charlotte, who was born after he left for the war, in 1862. Nathan and Roxie had another child later in life, Harris, in 1882. He died April 22 nd, 1911, at age 82. If you would like to read Nathan's diary yourself, there is a typed version here:

https://libraryweb.org/~digitized/books/Civil_War_Diary_of_Captain_NS_Baker.pdf

Coby Peters, Kylan Burdick - 10/10/23

From Our Readers:

Folks,
Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your building last Friday
I am Ondra (Willis) Murray granddaughter of Mildred (Day) Stephens who graduated from High School in Canisteo and went on to take the Teacher Training Course at Alfred. I am attaching a write-up which she sent to me when I was writing a paper for a teaching class when I was in college. It talks in detail about the one room schoolhouse she attended and in some detail about school in Canisteo.

Mildred was the wife of Sanford Mead Stephens (son of Perry and Mable Stephens) who also lived in Canisteo. They lived on Russell St. which is why I was interested in the Silk Mill history. I remember walking by it as a child, but it seemed a dark and scary building then (late 1950's).

Thanks again for our visit!
Sincerely,
Ondra Murray

Attending School in Steuben County 1914-1924

by Mildred Day Stephens

written in longhand 1973-transcribed by her
granddaughter In March 2022

Part I - Gilbert Hill School

I entered the country school at the age of 7 (1914), namely Gilbert Hill School, District No. 6, West Union Township, Steuben County, New York. My father, Frank H. Day was the trustee; and my teacher, throughout the grades was Mary A. Johnson.

We lived on a farm about one mile from the school, and my brother and I walked to school, except on cold, blustery winter days. Then our father took us with a horse and sleigh. Of approximately 25 pupils, we were the only ones who were ever transported. All others waded the snow, as snow plows were non-existent.

Curriculum consisted of the basics: reading, writing, arithmetic, English, American history, geography, physiology and physical training (15 min. per day), all without the aid of a "hickory stick". I do not recall ever seeing Miss Johnson strike a child, save maybe a few little raps on the hand. Some of the boys, including my brother, shot a few paper wads at the ceiling.

There were all 8 grades in the school. I cannot remember the titles of the textbooks that were used, except it seems as if we had a Milne arithmetic book, and our reading books had an orange-colored nasturtium on the cover.

During the winter we had hot lunches, that is, one

hot thing, either cocoa or soup. Each child would bring a vegetable or meat, and we had a large kettle in which the soup cooked all forenoon on the top of the wood stove. Or, someone brought milk, cocoa & sugar and the kettle was used to make cocoa. Of course, each child brought his own lunch box. If you had something in it you didn't like, you could always trade with someone else. My brother always ate part of his lunch on the way to school, then at noon he would want some of mine. In one way, the school was very modern - we had a 15 min. break (recess) forenoon and afternoon.

Drinking water had to be carried in a pail from a nearby farm spring. The children took turns, one child each day going after the water. As it took two to carry the pail, you could ask your best friend to go with you. If you were gone too long, the punishment was sitting in your seat during recess. Believe it or not, that spring never froze during the coldest weather. We did not drink from a common dipper. Each child brought his own drinking cup.

There was no lighting in the school house, but there were plenty of windows so we didn't need light, and it was never used at night. Of course, there were outside restroom facilities.

Contrary to many country school houses, ours had two rooms, which gave us a good place for games in stormy weather, without disrupting the main room. My father built the schoolhouse.

Outside sports were baseball, tag, prisoner's base, run-sheep-run in the summertime; and coasting and skiing in the winter. Our skis were home made from barrel staves, and worked pretty good.

I can't remember that anyone ever played hooky from school. The teacher knew all of the parents, and I am sure they would have immediately heard of an absence. Then, as now, it was necessary to take a written excuse if you missed a day.

About 3 or 4 times a year, the District Superintendent, Mr. Wilcox, came to call, which was a big event. He was rather pompous looking - roundly sturdy, slightly bald and always used a lorgnette. He would speak to the pupils for awhile (I can't remember what he said) then talked with the teacher for a long time. In the meantime, pupils were supposed to study, and woe unto those who

made a noise.

On the way home from school, we sometimes had fights among the children. I remember one in particular (we always seemed to have "sides") when our side scooped up a cupful of polliwogs from the ditch, and put them down the neck (inside her clothes) of a girl on the other side. My brother did the "scooping" and our parents heard about that right away.

Christmas was a big thing in the country school. We always had a program, usually a play by the older students, and recitations and singing by the younger ones. We had an organ in our school, and I was the only one who could play it, so that was my part. All the families came for the program, we had a Christmas tree, and at the end of the program, Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus came to hand out gifts. One teacher managed all of these things by herself, which now amazes me.

The last day of school was another big day. Another program was prepared, and again all of the parents came, bringing food for a picnic - under the trees if nice weather and inside if it rained.

We had a library corner, which was not present in all country schools. I remember we had a set of The Book of Knowledge, another set which I can't remember and several shelves of other books - classics now.

I finished 8 grades in 6 years. If a student was smart (which, of course, I was) you absorbed enough knowledge from hearing the other classes recite to enable you to move along faster. (This is one good reason for the present trend toward group classrooms).

July 4th Canisteo Bike Race

Newsletter articles submitted by
Shelly Florence-Glover

Canisteo, July 4 1899 - The ten-mile handicap bicycle race was a leading feature of the events of the day. There were 16 entries of whom 12 started in the race. The handicap start was nullified soon after by the passing of a freight train which held the riders at the Depot street crossing of the Erie so

that all had an even start from there. That delay accounts for the apparent discrepancy in the time recorded. Mark Almy of Canisteo soon passed the rest and led the whole distance coming in an easy winner, time, 29 minutes and 40 seconds, receiving the first prize, a fine bicycle. Carl Flohr was thrown and injured so that he did not finish the race.



This photo of Mark Almy at the race is part of the William Stuart Collection at the Society.

Other events of the day included sack races, three legged races and a potato race. The ball game between Hornellsville and Canisteo was won by Canisteo. Score, 26 and 5.

Sources: Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, Wed. July 5, 1899. 2nd article newspaper unknown.

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You can also find past issues of our newsletter on the website as well as more information about the Society, upcoming events and books we have for sale in our book store.

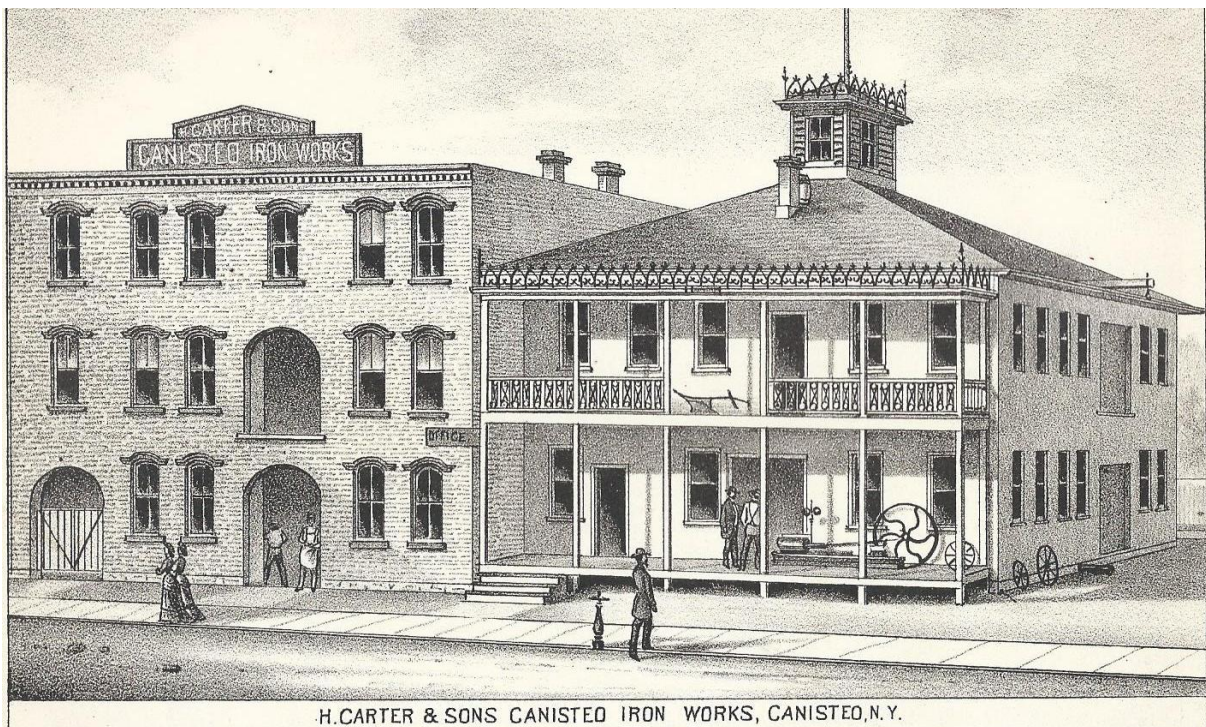
Donations gratefully accepted toward operating expenses.

Directors

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The Back Page



Lithographs from History of Steuben County with Illustrations by Prof. W.W. Clayton - 1879