

Acknowledgements:

Mrs. G. – for her love and understanding

The Village Boards

Mrs. Addie Shield, former County Historian

The Staffs at P.S.U.C. & City Libraries

To my daughter, Colleen

To my grandson, Tralane Rabideau

And all the others who encouraged me with their assistance
to fulfill this endeavor.

HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE OF DANNEMORA

In writing the history of the area known as Dannemora, one has to be also aware of the community that is enclosed on the north side of Cook Street. It would no more be possible to separate these two as it would to separate the port from the starboard and the craft to stay upright.

Prior to the arrival of Lydia and Phinneas Hooker in 1836, the flow of human traffic was very slow. A hunter or so and even those in search of iron ore crossed the area where the village limits are today. These two hardy individuals came here to board and room the miners who were coming to the area. Mrs. Hooker in Hurd's 1880 History of Clinton and Franklin Counties, claims that she was the first woman to live here. They spent the early days living in a rude log shanty and she claimed, "Yes, we came here first, came to board the 'hands' who were to work the mines the hill". Just who "they" represented is not known, but it may have been someone connected with furthering the ore business. Both of these people are buried in a section off gravesites were moved when the powerhouse was built, and the Dannemora Community Methodist Church Cemetery was moved from its former site.

In the early 1830's iron was discovered around Chateaugay Lake and attracted settlers to the area. It was believed there were sizable deposits and that they were of high grade. During 1832, ten area businessmen each deposited \$100 in a venture to mine the ore. They purchased the right from Judge Elisha Arnold of the Town of Peru. The company then called their purchase "The Averill Ore Bed", but for some reason they never developed their holdings.

In 1842 Charles Averill and F.L.C. Saily then bought out their original eight partners and the mine was open. It operated successfully for a time and the two partners were happy with the results. Mr. Averill then sold his holding to Mr. Saily who later on sold out to Burton Chittenden and Company from Burlington, Vermont.

Much of the land that lies within the Village of Dannemora was owner by St. John B.L. Skinner. Mr. Skinner was a prominent lawyer in Plattsburgh, and it is believed he gave the name 'Dannemora' to the area that resided in the western area of the Town of Beekmantown. It is believed he borrowed the name from the famous Swedish iron ore area that lies northwest of Stockholm, Sweden. The ore fields there were well known since the mid-15th century in Europe because of the high grade of iron ore.

The name Dannemora is a combination of two words. "Danne" comes from the early settlers in Sweden, from Denmark, or "Danne's". "Mora" is descriptive of the Fenny Spruce Tree found in that locality of Sweden.

April 9, 1842, saw the State Legislature enact legislative guidelines whereby all the mineral rights in the state would be surveyed. Appointed by the Governor was Ransom Cook, of Saratoga Springs. Mr. Cook was also to study the possibility of using inmate labor in the mining of iron ore and smelting the by-products.

~ 1843 ~

Ransom Cook reports, "I examined the Saily and Averill vein, and the Skinner vein, which are parallel and contiguous to each other ... these mines are in Beekmantown. About 17 miles from Plattsburgh, and about 5 miles northwest from a waterpower on the Saranac, where the ore is worked. The ore is of magnetic variety and is very valuable ... next to the Adirondack mines, these are the best located of any I have visited ... the proprietors offer to dispose of these mines with two hundred acres of land ... and a valuable water privilege on the Saranac, for about \$70,000."

May 13, 1844, saw the legislature approve a new state prison. Section #1 included, "There shall be a state prison established someplace in this state north of the line running east to west of the city of Albany, for the purpose of employing the state prison convicts in mining and manufacturing of iron, together with the manufacture of such other articles from iron as are principally imported from foreign countries. Such prison shall thereafter be named and called the name of the county in which it may be located." Of the original \$30,000 investment to enact this prison, \$17,500 was used to buy the mines, some 200 acres of land and water privileges on the Saranac River.

~ 1844 ~

News that the new prison would use inmates in jobs other than competing with labor unions was greeted with joy. In February, a 26-gun salute greeted the news. New York City had a 100-gun salute and like in other cities of the State, also there were other expressions.

Mrs. Elizabeth Swetland of Plattsburgh, in a letter to her son-in-law, Henry Webber, wrote in part, "I understand their steam machine answers all expectations of Skinner and Averill ore bed, and the forge. Whether they will now settle the question as to the place where the state prison is to be I much doubt, but it would be a fine thing for our place if they settled it at the Skinner bed – but the Keeseville people are striving hard."

~ 1845 ~

Early in 1845, Mr. Cooke received confirmation as the agent at the state's new penal colony. Many local men were employed when the land clearing was started in February amidst five feet of snow on the ground. They had to clear the virgin timber and erect a stockade. Work on the temporary buildings for the officers, guards, workmen and prisoners was started by the 21st of April. There was still some three feet of snow on the ground when the kiln for a blacksmith shop, the physician's office, the tailor, shoe shop and the clerk's office were started for the incoming inmates. The late spring road conditions and other inconveniences in erecting these buildings put the completion time back to June of that year.

June 3, 1845, saw the villagers stand in amazement as the ringed black and white uniforms of the incoming draft of convicts who had marched from Plattsburgh to the main gate. Each had his attached ball and chain which was also an unusual sight to the people. The contingent of fifty

men came from Mount Pleasant Prison and to them, the sight of the area must have been bewildering, to say the least. Each one was probably wondering about his crime and if it was worth being sent to this forsaken spot in the Adirondacks.

Progress was slow on the construction because the heavy chains and balls hindered the men's movements. It was soon decided to lighten the chains and with it, construction also increased.

Governor William Bouck made an inspection of the facility about this time. He had taken a buggy ride from Keeseville to Cadyville after his train ride from Albany. The part from Cadyville was all on foot so the Governor must have been in excellent shape to climb the hill.

First escape occurred "after Mr. Cook had left to get the second batch of inmates from Auburn, two convicts who were at work in the yard, in which as yet there was much standing timber, erected a pole against the pickets, by which they climbed to the top and then dropped on the other side." They were discovered by a guard, who gave the alarm, and the signal gun (which was a 24#) was fired in order to give notice to the inhabitants of the surrounding country. The escape was made immediately after dinner (leave your trip on a full stomach).

About this time (August 16, 1845), a reporter from the *Plattsburgh Republican* came up to see what was happening and in part he reported, "On Wednesday last, we paid a trip to the Clinton Prison which is in the progress of erection in the wilderness, about seventeen miles west of the village. As we plunged into the mire holes, or justled over the bogs and rocks, we each time mentally voted for the construction of a good road to this important point."

"As we progressed from the woods on nearing the location, the view was picturesque and interesting. Directly in your face is the new village of 'Dannemora' about nine weeks old. There are several comfortable dwellings among the recently blackened stumps, then there are block houses and shanties of various qualities, sprinkled among the tall trees, presenting a wild rural appearance, but reminding one that a gust of wind might crush them beneath the falling forest."

The East Hall was finished in a heavy snowstorm, as they finished the slate roof for the year. One hundred twenty-five feet were completed and housing for 126 of the 184 men assigned to Clinton Prison. Four stoves kept the place at a 'very uniform and agreeable temperature' according to Cook's report.

It must have been quite a sign to see the wooden stockade that enclosed the prison proper and the open ore pit to the west. Roughly the distance covered more than a mile and it should have looked like a wilderness fort. A few years ago, some of the original stockades rose out of the gate and behind the Bill Brennan home. The logs were close together and still in good shape after being in the ground almost a hundred years. The prison at that time consisted of some twelve acres.

The agent was permitted a number of things according to the act passed on April 16, 1845. One of these was, "Together with one cannon to be used for giving signals in case of the escape of convicts." Village residents kept an ear out for 'Big Bertha' as they knew the fifty dollars reward

would help their financial status. To be given credit also was the 'Dannemora Trade Winds' that laid low, sections of stockade, and eager prisoners would then proceed to freedom.

It should be pointed out that the act, previously mentioned, declared, "No license shall be hereafter granted for the sales of intoxicating liquors within three miles of said prison." Another reason the prisoners wanted to leave Dannemora, some might say.

During 1846 the village residents wanted their children educated and they hired Miss Electra Hammond as the teacher. The site (rumored) of the school was at the corner of Saranac (Emmons) and Cook Streets. Tuition for the 'Select School' ranged from 25 to 30 cents per child per week. Miss Hammond left after the 1847 school year and subsequently was followed by John Stackpole and Elizabeth Higby.

Private concerns were mining ore in the area and the State found fault with the fact none had yet come from the prison. Mr. Cook, in his annual report of 1846, claimed the prison had only been opened eighteen months and it was too hard to build the prison and then get into the ore business at the same time. Then there were those who claimed the law of 1835 was violated because the employment of prisoners at making iron was contrary to that law.

During 1846 discharged inmates were given \$.03 a mile back to the point of conviction. Many stayed in the area because of a lack of funds. Ill-fitting clothes that incoming men gave up for the striped ones were now given to those discharged. Previously, they received \$5 upon leaving the prison.

During 1847 the state outlawed the "flogging system". At this time, the Whigs gained control of the Board of Prison Inspectors and sealed the reign of Ransom Cook.

Business was booming across the street from 97 Cook Street as Ezra Tucker began the first hotel. He was soon followed in this business by James Hart. The prison caused merchants to come and set up businesses. Seymore Edgerton, J.W. Kingsley, Eli Chittenden and Charles Cook to mention a few. Mr. Kingsland arrived at a contract with the State to manufacture the iron and they had a lot of problems in this venture. The State kept trying to get the money it claimed was due them and after some eight years abandoned the contract.

A reporter said, "All the iron producing machinery, which filled a building 50' x 150', was described by a local businessman ... far superior to anything of the kind, at least in this section of the country. That which has been constructed for elevating, crushing, winnowing, and separating the ore is every part of it an entire new plan and original with Ransom Cook. Prison Inspectors reported on the question of mining at the prison. On the open market each ton cost \$4.50. To the state \$12.50. They suggested renting the Averill Bed for 10 years. The owners would receive \$1.25 for each ton raised. Enclose the entire compound with a picket fence."

Population for 1848: 146 men
1849: 157
1850: 119

By the end of 1850 there were 250 more cells than inmates. Also, there was a problem in keeping guards and keepers which results in unrest.

Mail service arrived on January 17, 1850, when James Gibson was announced as Postmaster.

A state engineer was appointed to make a survey of the seventeen-mile route from the Village of Plattsburgh to Dannemora. It took him six hours to traverse the distance and he claimed, "It went over, uninterrupted ascent, deep sand, broken rocks and worn gullies." He also stated, "That the route was bad, worse and worst."

During 1851 Catherine Keese, a Quaker preacher from the union, twelve miles south of Plattsburgh, made frequent trips to the prison for religious services. Not much is known about her, but her dedication to her ministry was probably appreciated by the incarcerated inmates of the prison.

News spread throughout the village with the news that Governor Washington Hunt would arrive at Dannemora on August 30th. His wife and party visited the prison when the villagers got to see the State's Chief Executive.

In 1851 the State realized from the sale of ore \$16,700 and expenditures amounted to \$38,000. The annual appropriation from the State Legislature had to finance the difference. The original idea of making the prison self-supporting was losing out and both sides began to realize the fact.

In 1852 Governor Hunt was forced to send inmates to Clinton as the other two prisons were overcrowded. The State's supply of iron ore ran out, so they had to pay heavy rent to the adjacent mine owners to get iron ore. Prisoners were transferred back to Auburn and Sing Sing as they anticipated closing the mine. Critics said the iron venture was bound to fail. The two prisons were also overcrowded so there was pressure to keep as many as possible here. Labor unions were also opposed to any closing while the State Legislature didn't want to write it off as a bad investment.

During this time, Edmund and Jacob Kingsland of Keeseville built extensive iron works for the State. S.H. Hammond wrote in his book *Hunting Adventures in the North Wilds (1854)*, "Leave off from Plattsburgh to Dannemora, there you will be at the end of the road. There civilization has made a pause. Tame life will be left behind you, luxuriant and solemn, tall trees and running brooks, quiet lakes, and rugged mountains. Old primeval things all, as they were spoken into existence by the voice of God."

In the spring of 1854, the Catholics of the community heard that a priest from Saint Peter's Church in Plattsburgh would be visiting them. Up to this time, no one of this faith had come to visit the local residents and it was appreciated by them. Father E. Cauvin celebrated Mass in a home of one of the local Catholics and afterward others followed his footsteps.

On July 22, 1854, the blast furnace was finally placed in operation and the following winter the forges were completed within the stockade. A tragedy soon struck when fire consumed the blast furnace and all the investment was lost (June 26, 1856).

The local people knew that the area was increasing in population and the word was that there would be a new town added to Clinton County. It became a reality on December 14, 1854, when the Town of Dannemora was formed from the Town of Beekmantown. Dannemora had as its southern neighbor the Town of Saranac and the east to west line would be Smith Street – named for the abolitionist Gerritt Smith of Utica.

In 1855 Reverend Charles Hagar of Plattsburgh organized the Methodist Church. The thirty-three-member congregation held its services at the local school. Construction of the church was soon started and over \$4,000 would have been spent when it was dedicated during March 1869 by Reverend Dayton from Burlington, Vermont. It stood on the corner of Bouck and Barker Streets and was moved when the school district purchased the lot for a new brick High School. The church was moved by a ‘come-a-long’ to its present location on the east side of Mason (Clark) Street. Many of the early members are names still identified in the Village: Buck, Meader, Lewis, and Henry.

A murder on August 12, 1861, saw Augustus Wright killed while on duty in the prison rolling mill. This native of Watertown, New York was also buried there, and the inmates were charged in the murder. An inmate saved another employee from death during the plan that night.

Since the 1840’s, the annual pigeon migration had taken place. At times they were so numerous so as to blot out the sun. It was said most trees harbored from twenty to eighty nests and the trees bent under the heavy burden of the roosting birds. Locals used to capture this main ingredient of ‘Pigeon Pie’ and send them to southern markets. On July 17, 1857, the pigeon hunters were at work, having already captured over 1,800 birds when the pigeons left the area and flew to the forests of Maine. They never returned to the area, and it must have seemed strange after some 17 years of seeing them around the area.

During 1855 shoes/boots were ‘contracted’ for in Clinton. It was a new adventure for the prison authorities. The disastrous fire of 1856 saw the Kingslands go to court to get back money on their original investment. The loss to them was \$100,000. There were 150 inmates employed at \$.75 per day. It took some eight years in the court system before this was cleared up. Governor Morgan at one time refused to pay the award.

During this time, the Prison Physician started. “These convicts, in the mines, have been subjected to catarrh and rheumatism to much more extent than those employed elsewhere.”

Other news was that thirty to fifty inmates were now employed in stave making, coopering plus the iron and shoe business. Reports now were that 278 men were serving their time.

The following years (1858) the State decided to buy the Averill Mine.

Additional cells were started in 1859, making a total of 554 beds now available. Overcrowding was somewhat relieved.

When the Civil War broke out, the Village saw many of its young men enlist. Records indicate that sixty-four men were credited to other places, such as Saranac. No exact figure is available on this part of the history. A number of these veterans are buried in the Saint Joseph's cemetery.

February 4, 1860 – *The Albany Daily Knickerbocker* said about Clinton Prison that it was, “Too inaccessible, too much surrounded by intense cold and snowstorms to ever be other than a losing concern, an extravagance and folly, tolerated for the sole purpose of proving that there are men in the world sufficiently empty-headed to spend twelve shillings every time to make a dollar?”

In 1862, TB cases arose to a serious level in Clinton Prison and Doctor Jabez Fitch recommended, “The property of cutting off the tobacco ration.” He also maintained that “Very many, suffering from indigestion and nervous diseases, are made worse if the disease is not directly caused by its constant use.” Some doctors thought the diarrhea problem was caused by large amounts of molasses in the daily diet.

This health hazard also had its side effects on the work force as this dreaded disease caused some to contract and die from this lung disease.

Dannemora Town Supervisor, Andrew Williams, had contracted for 200 inmates to manufacture nails from the ore. This lasted two years, and the inmates were paid \$.55 per day.

The 1864 report by the Inspectors of State Prisons made note of the sixteen miles from Plattsburgh by the Plank Road, four of which the State maintained. They also concluded, “It is quite apparent that the location of the prison forbids the expectation that it will ever earn its expense.” The Legislature did appropriate money to buy machinery and materials for the manufacture of iron and nails for State use. All contracts using inmate labor for private contractors was ended during July. Previously, the State had contracts to lease 150 men at a \$.75 per day to contractor Jacob Kingsland of Keeseville. Some two years prior to this announcement, Mr. Kingsland had abandoned the contract, which seems to prove the State takes its time. At this time, they produced 325 kegs of nails each day. The name applied to them was unique – Empire Nails. It should be noted that about this same time, Governor A. Morgan told the Legislature that it had been an error to build the prison here because of high maintenance cost.

The *History of Ellenburgh* has this to relate about the “Dannemora Crossing”. “Dannemora Crossing is about one mile south of Ellenburgh Depot, and about 10 miles from Dannemora ... Not only was wood shipped from this crossing but carloads of food supplies for Dannemora Prison were unloaded here. A plank road had been built very early from Hammond's Corners to Dannemora to transport iron ore and the nails manufactured at Dannemora Prison by the convicts.” Mrs. Stevens remembers the big wagons drawn by four horses loaded with food supplies being taken over the steep road to Dannemora.

During 1865 the State Legislature prohibited further use of the 'contract' system and inmates were to be used only by the State. The iron business was so profitable in 1868 that the other two prisons were asked to consider this. The State was notified that the owner would be raising the amount from ten to twelve shillings. The Prison Inspectors objected to this and then leased the "Chittenden Mine". The State also began to operate the "Hall Mine" which was located near the main entrance. The Assembly Committee said the mines should be purchased in order to have a suitable supply of iron ore for the prison's needs.

"The picket fence was twenty feet high. The main buildings, constructed of dressed stone, are in the form of a "T" and are respectively 56' x 364' and 46' x 160'. The cells are constructed in a block 3 stories high in the center of the building, a wide corridor extending completely around between them and the outer walls. The main buildings have slate roofs and are completely fireproof." This account was in J.H. French's *Historical & Statistical Gazetteer* as mentioned before.

Jason Fairbanks opened a mine about a mile north of the Village, and it proved fatal to him in his endeavors. Andrew Williams then took over but soon gave it up as it proved too lean and inaccessible. The original owner had been St. John B.L. Skinner who, by now, was President Lincoln's Assistant Postmaster General in Washington.

The State Legislature in 1865 prohibited further use of the 'contract system'. The State was the only one to use inmates after the change in the system. Much has been written on the system so no use in redoing this area.

When January 12, 1873, dawned, a new Prison Warden came to the job. This 35-year-old native of Clintonville knew about prison life. He had been at the infamous Libby Prison during the Civil War. Stephen Moffitt left the Union Army as a General, after enlisting as a private previously. He was injured at the second Battle of Seven Oaks and was carried off the battlefield. Subsequently, he lost that leg, and everyone knew of his disability.

When he attended church, people could tell who was coming down the aisle as he entered. This setback did not hamper his spirits, as he served the County in many elective offices. Stephen held the job for three years, being replaced in 1876.

New York State Prison Inspectors reported, "The manufacture of iron and nails at Clinton Prison has proven disastrous as a financial undertaking."

In 1878 the mine was closed. This resulted in many able-bodied inmates being transferred back to the other two prisons. The stockade was removed, and the west line is the same as today, from north to south.

Construction of two new cell blocks, the South and West Halls, were started. The West Hall was 301' while the South Hall some 250'. The South Hall was connected to the then-Warden's House. A new Administration building was constructed and lasted until the mid-1930's. It was north of the old main gate.

An artist's conception of an aerial view of Clinton Prison of 1869 shows the layout of the straggling prison. It also proves a point that the State of New York took possession of enough land on its southern boundary that forced all lot lines in the Village to be forced southward. The artist shows a line of trees stretching the length of Cook Street in front of the wooden stockade. A photograph of later years shows the construction of the stone wall to be in front of the trees. The land from the wooden stockade to the new wall is the land in question. The last of the maple trees that provided the border along Cook Street was cut down when the new prison entrance was made. These trees had graced the Warden's Garden for years before their destruction.

In 1869 a map of the Village was made and is in the County Clerk's Office. Using the map and the artist concept of the prison clearly shows the various places within the compound.

The men at 97 Cook Street always sought their freedom and in 1870, two inmates 'borrowed' a team of horses and a wood-drawn sleigh. They were caught at the Beckwith School at Elsinore - west of Cadyville. It is reported that there were numerous escapes previously.

The New York Times of December 21, 1971, ran an article entitled, 'Forges in the Wilderness'. Forges had been in evidence since 1841 and even earlier on the Saranac River. Each of these forges cost between one to two thousand dollars to build. The capacity of these forges was between 70 and 100 cords of wood each. It took a small army of wood choppers to keep the forges going and at times, the mountain sides have been proof of the chopper's axe.

When a draft of fifty inmates arrived in Plattsburgh on December 10, 1874, it was a typical winter night. The temperature was hovering around the zero mark when the horse drawn sleds headed up those thirteen miles and some 1300 feet to the prison.

Correspondence was a big thing in the prison system and generally speaking, prior to 1874, an inmate could write once in every three months. During the year, the inmates heard that they could now correspond once a month those outside. Special letters were permitted when the need arose. There were no restrictions on incoming mail for those who were incarcerated.

A serious fire in November 1874 saw many of the local guards answer the prison's fire bell. A fire in a large pile of charcoal caused around \$12,000 damage through the loss of the charcoal and the destruction of a large part of the prison's pickets. This fire also helped cause a deficiency in the operation of the prison for that year.

During the command of General Stephen Moffitt of Plattsburgh (1873-1876), the noted photographer Seneca Ray Stoddard came to photograph Clinton Prison. In an issue of *The North Countrymen* of September 19, 1979, his original photographs were presented to the readers. Along with the memorabilia were the comments Mr. Stoddard made about the general prison life. It is believed these were the first photographs ever taken of this thirty-year-old institution. By using the map of 1869, one has a good concept of where these places were located within the confines of the barricade.

Newspaper account of an escape of August 28 claimed, "Last Friday, a 25-year-old convict got pass to go see the doctor and hasn't been seen since". A frisk was started, and it was discovered that ten other inmates had perfected arrangements to break out through the new rolling mill. This was attached to the forge and was in a concealed spot. The steam going to be used to sound the alarm in escapes had been plugged with rags to render it useless.

The Chazy band came to the Village as the New Year started and their music was delightful for the Village residents. Some 150 couples enjoyed the street dance and that night, the Neilson String Band from Chateaugay played at the Clinton House.

On June 2, 1877, prison officials announced a change of policy at Clinton Prison, "hereafter no one will be admitted to the grounds unless on business. Curiosity seekers and late-night seekers are warned to stay away".

During the long winter of 1876-1877 local residents had to put up with some eleven feet of snow. It is the heaviest snowfall ever recorded and must have caused some roofs to cave in under the extremely heavy load. With no snowplows or snow blowers to move the white covering, it must have been difficult in getting around the area. A most welcome spring was on everyone's mind as March ended that year.

~ 1878 ~

As the year of 1878 began, the local residents were hearing that a railroad from Plattsburgh would be started during the year. This was good news because all the commodities of life had come over the rough and long Plank Road from Plattsburgh and Saranac. A new link with the outside was on everyone's lips. During June work was started on both ends of the line with 60 inmates doing the Dannemora end. The narrow gage line would wind along the 17.07 miles and rise 1,300' to the railroad and freight depot. The buildings were built just to the west of the southern spot off Flagg Street that goes to the prison powerhouse. The small wooden frame structure on the east side the spur would be known as the "Small Station". People heard that the line would go near West Plattsburgh out, instead it went west of Morrisonville, distressing the folks in West Plattsburgh.

September 29th, six of the local lads decided to become engineers, brake men and conductors by taking the engine out on a trial run. The unauthorized use of this train caused damage to the engine. This reminds local people of about a hundred years later when some local lads would take the school bus on an unauthorized run to neighboring communities. Seems the more things change, the more they remain the same.

A reporter from Plattsburgh recorded about a trip to Dannemora and said, "Six miles more brings us to Dannemora, at the north side of which surrounded by a board fence twenty feet high, stands Dannemora Prison, with a large group of buildings used for manufacturing purposes, and a few dwelling houses for officials. The road appears well built, ironed with rails weighing 65 to 70 pounds to the yard and is nearly finished and ready for trains."

The railroad was finally opened in December. Though it was built by the State of New York, it was transferred to the Chateaugay Railroad Company in 1881. They signed a ninety-nine-year lease at a nominal figure with stipulations they maintain the line plus transport the officers and supplies free of charge.

After some negative words about iron ore production, the final word arrived at the prison – close the mine and stop all production of iron products. The yearly yield of 50,000 kegs of nails was not enough. To produce this product over 6,000 tons of ore and a million bushels of charcoal were used in the production. The Superintendent of Prisons then transferred a considerable number of aged and infirm inmates to Clinton Prison from Auburn and Sing Sing. The able-bodied men were sent back downstate.

With the closing of the mine, the stockade was done away with to the west and enclosure was on a north-south line from Cook Street. It has remained that way ever since.

During 1878 a contract was let that would make Clinton Prison one of the largest and most complete prisons in the United States. There were to be 656 more cells which would reflect on the local economy as more workers would be needed in this new endeavor. When the plans were put into operating in 1881, there was another disaster awaiting the plans. There were not enough inmates in the prison system to use the new units. However, it would not be until 1887 when a noticeable influx would fill the 'Crowbar Hotel'. Some six years later, the population would reach the one thousand mark.

Excitement in 1879 saw the escape of the railroad engine from Dannemora to Cadyville. Luck was with the engineer because this February 28th trip saw the engine derailed in a bank of deep snow. It went down a fifty-foot embankment but suffered no damage. The engine was returned to the tracks, which was an advantage of the narrow system.

March 3rd saw a similar incident when a platform car, loaded with iron ore, let loose and it stopped some three miles away near a trestle. Albert Ladue jumped from the runaway train and landed unhurt in the snow.

Trains ran twice a day from Plattsburgh at 8:35 a.m. and 3:25 p.m. They consumed about one and a half hours to make the trip.

Many of the local people decided to go down to Saranac on Memorial Day (May 30, 1879) for the dedication ceremonies of the monument to the Civil War veterans. The Saranac band played appropriate music for the occasion during the impressive ceremony in the Methodist Church cemetery. The Town of Saranac had the highest percentage ratio of any place in the county for men sent to join the Union forces. Some 419 who had left the valley were in attendance that day, but the many whose names were inscribed on the four sides were noted as missing or dead. The area around the cemetery was crowded with wagons, buggies, and those on horseback. They wished to thank the veterans for their efforts to save the Union. The monument was one of the few erected in the County to note such sacrifice.

As the railroad line was being extended to Lyon Mountain, the workers struck for a 25% increase in wage. Denied their demands, the workers took up their tools and headed back to Dannemora.

On June 15th heavy fires occurred along the new roadbed, forcing the trains to return to Dannemora. Many of the local people went to quell the disastrous situation.

June 28, 1879, a newspaper reporter gave details of a train trip to Dannemora. "At Dannemora, carriages are in waiting, bound for different points beyond, over the mountain into the wilderness and in other directions, and everything indicating an active state of business incident to the changed condition of things which had made this an important point on a new railroad line." (Saranac Town History?)

No date set here: As the leaves were turning to their final splash of color in October, an escape of seven inmates took place. These convicts were clearing a field of stone when they all decided it was time for freedom. They jumped the guard and gagged him. They broke their shackles with iron bars and made good their escape to freedom. It was later reported that all of them were recaptured and back behind the grey walls of Clinton.

August 16, 1879 - A letter from an inmate to his wife: "The room is small but scrupulously clean, not a fly, bug, or mosquito to bother me, a large oil lamp with plenty of oil, four good clean blankets, a big feather pillow, four white sheets and pillowcases. Pillowcases and sheets are washed and bleached on the grass once a week, a table with cupboard and draws, five white tablecloths, one washed once a week and more if I want it. At night I roll down in front of my bed six thicknesses of carpet and tumble into a bed fit for a king. Today we had coffee, rice, pudding, ham and mashed potatoes and gravy. Weekdays Irish stew, soups, pork and beans and fish. The men leave off work at four and lay in the grass in the sun or shade as they choose until six when we go into supper. They are not overworked or cruelly treated. No better or humane man can be found than our new Warden (Isiah Fuller) and Mr. Moon our Deputy Warden."
From your affectionate husband

Completion of the rail line to Lyon Mountain and the first shaft took place on December 6th. Eleven days later the first trainload of ore came through the Village. This would be a sight for eighty-five years as mining continued at that place.

Some of the local inhabitants worked in the woods around the area, but most of them worked for the State as prison guards. Those who worked in the woods saw quite a change from days past, as wood was becoming more of a saleable commodity. During the year, half a million logs floated down the Saranac River on the way to Plattsburgh in the event you don't believe it, you can still see the sawdust at the Municipal Beach.

On New Year's Eve (1881) a most disastrous fire occurred at the prison. Flames shot skyward and a pall of smoke hung over the area as people of the Village became quite concerned. The greater part of the compound burned during the first hours and estimates later arrived at \$150,000 for reconstruction.

Fire at the Alien & Cunningham block took a toll of Village real estate later on. At the time, it was occupied by Carroll and Company, who were in the hat trimming business. The house of John Parkhurst, former warden, was also a victim of flames that day. Mr. Parkhurst had been in charge of the prison from 1860 to 1869 and for three months prior to General Moffitt's reign on January 12, 1873. The Lou Buck block burned in the same area in 1945 in a night many people of the Village well remember. It is the same location that Ting's Tavern and Restaurant is now built.

Stories on Mr. Allen & Cunningham say that they owned a business here and they were alternately the Postmaster. It seems when one party won in Washington, that partner was Postmaster and moved the Post Office to his side of the business. When the opposite party came to power, the Postmastership went to the partner and back across the room.

After a series of additions to Saint Joseph's Church throughout the years, news spread among the Catholic members that a new parish was to be formed by Bishop Wadhamm. Prior to this the church had been a missionary church of St. Peter's in Plattsburgh, St. James in Cadyville, and Church of the Assumption in Redford. The Bishop, on May 3, 1883, announced that Father George Belanger, who was no stranger to the parishioners. Father was the first pastor for the St. Joseph's Parish. This kindly servant of God and man would cover the next thirty years and he would always be remembered by them.

They 1884 saw the start of construction on erecting a stone wall around the front of the prison. This would replace the wooden palisade that had been erected thirty-nine years before. Many local masons were used to build the wall and many North Country people remember the new venture. Cost of this newest addition to Clinton Prison was \$20,000. It must have been a more ominous sight as the palisade was lost to the view of the local people. The wall, with the exception of the wall post, was completed during 1887.

As the prison grew, the Village did likewise. Along with this growth was the need for better schooling and the school district decided to construction a new building. It was built on the original site at the corner of Cook and Saranac (Emmons) Street. The old school was moved across the street to become the fire house in 1885. Construction lasted a year and was completed in 1886 for use by the Village children. The State and Town each contributed \$,1,250.

When the school was opened the eager students were happy to move into the new two-story structure. It was a wooden frame building with the primary grades all on the ground floor. Advanced classes were quartered on the second floor with Mr. J. Frank Nash as instructor. Mr. Nash, in later years, became the editor of a Syracuse newspaper. This is the same building the Knights of Columbus purchased in 1925 for their council rooms. It stayed that way until the government purchased the lot for a post office in 1940. It was torn down by the government, but no building appeared until Maggy's Pharmacy opened.

For years prior to 1886, much discussion was held at the state level in regard to using convicts in fields of competition to outside labor. This controversy would continue for years to come.

During the year, the production of pantaloons and coats was the main industry inside the wall. It had replaced the iron business when ten thousand pairs of pantaloons were made by the inmates. A reporter from the Boston paper, *The Commonwealth*, arrived in the Village during September of 1886. In his description, he told about coming across Lake Champlain from Burlington and arriving in Plattsburgh. He wrote it over the course of a couple of days and in part said, "In 1844 there were no inhabitants, now there are 1,400. They include about 500 convicts and officers with their families, plus a mixture of Yankees, Irish and French-Canadians, generally poor picturesque. The prisoners work a private mine outside the state arm for which the state pays \$1.25 for every ton of ore. The mine has been enclosed and guarded. In the northwest corner of the stockade, a great cave of 30 feet by 60 feet gives access to the mine, 1,000 feet deep where work is carried on by lamplight with a dozen fires where charcoal and ore burn together."

He also gave great praise to the Clinton House (hotel) and the buxom lady who served delicious trout from a nearby lake. Noted also was that the stagecoach arrived in the Village once a day. There seems to be a point of confusion here because the mine had been closed for some eight years and the enclosure around the mine had been done away with. Some dates must be wrong, but what one is not sure at this time.

Local residents were quite concerned with the exceedingly high winds on July 13, 1887. The trees shook violently and many toppled, causing damage to their homes. Broken limbs were strewn about the Village, but these folks were not alone, as reports from Clinton and Essex counties told of like happenings. This storm started in the afternoon and lasted well into the night before a return of normalcy was noted.

Plattsburgh Sentinel from a "50 years ago" column, "Here after the convicts at Dannemora Prison are not alone to wear uniforms but the officers as well. The officers' uniforms will be of a different style from those worn by the convicts."

The turmoil of how to use the inmates and the prison facility continued over a number of years. It was the usual Albany careless attitude that seem to carry over to today. The State Legislature would pass a law one year, stating a certain purpose, and then the following year the same body would change the whole picture. In 1888 the Superintendent of Prisons appealed to the Governor for action. An extraordinary session was called to overcome the tangled mess. They finally pushed through legislation eliminating the use of prison labor. It forbade the use of power machinery for manufacturing in the prison system, disbanded the public account system and then allocated a quarter of a million dollars for the purchase of material for manufacturing purpose. The Superintendent of Prisons claimed it "introduced idleness instead of industry, withdrew the convicts from the shops and put them in their cells."

Warden Isaiah Fuller then had to inventory the stock and held a public auction to disperse the surplus goods.

The July 20, 1888, issue of the *Plattsburgh Sentinel* carried the following new items: “The old prison fence adjoining the warden’s house at Clinton Prison has been removed and a low wall, surmounted by a fine picket fence, takes its place.”

In the same paper on August 10th, it related that, “The picnic and festivities at Dannemora will be held for the benefit of the Roman Catholic Church. Half fare on the Chateaugay Railroad will be fore this Saturday event.”

Then on the 14th of September it noted that, “There are 744 convicts in Clinton Prison Of these, 100 are employed breaking stone, 25 in laying out and adorning the ground about the prison, 25 in the stone quarries and 30 in the state machine shop. The remainder are locked up for want of work. Twice a day men are walking about the yard for exercise.”

The December 13, 1889, issue of the *Plattsburgh Sentinel* claimed that “180 dozen shirts are now turned out daily by the convicts at Clinton Prison. This venture came to a halt three years later when the Legislature again denied the use of inmate labor in this undertaking.

Prior to 1889, the State recognized the climate around here as being beneficial in overcoming the dreaded disease – tuberculosis. Inmates were transferred from the other prison facilities throughout the State. The number increased slowly, and the State budget was always a problem in solving the problem. One of the oddities was that in 1906, the TB wards were modernized, and new equipment purchased, but it sat there idle as there was not enough money appropriated for its use.

Another very destructive fire came during 1890 and many of the institutional buildings lay in ruin when it was over. Many temporary quarters were made to accommodate the population and the housing units.

The talk of the Village and, of course, the prison when the 1880’s began was the new way to legally kill condemned convicts – by electrocution. The laws of the State two years previous allowed this to become the official method to be used after January 1, 1889, and it also stated that each prison was to execute those sent from their judicial districts. Warden David Doble suggested that one central location be used for this purpose. This wasn’t to be until some twenty-four years later, however. During the year two inmates would come to Clinton to await this newest method of executing condemned prisoners.

During 1891, the principal industry at the prison was shirt making. Construction of new buildings to replace the ones destroyed by fire the previous year were begun.

On October 1, 1891, ‘Soap Box’ Hardy made an escape from the prison. Two days later at the D&H Railroad station in Plattsburgh, Patrolman Wool challenged a suspicious man waiting for the south bound train. Hardy pulled his gun and a western shoot-out ensued. As Hardy attempted to run up the incline, the Patrolman shot him in the leg. Hardy was found with new clothes, spending money and money. He later escaped a second time (TROY TIMES)

Quietly on January 1, 1892, a new warden came to Clinton Prison. He would forever leave his mark on both sides of Cook Street. Walter Nelson Thayer was assuming command of the prison and would be involved in both places for the next seven years. There would be two streets named in his honor later – Thayer Street and Thayer Lane at the east end of the Village.

The Plattsburgh Sentinel of April 29th stated in a news item that, “A new industry has been started a Clinton Prison – the bottoming of chairs. It will employ 150 inmates if it is successful.”

A new hospital was completed enough to allow the moving of inmates into the building. They had been temporarily quartered in part of the Warden’s residence. The new bath house was also finished, and this allowed for “an innovation in prison bathing” as there were forty-two sprays, six shower baths and four bathtubs. Warden Thayer claimed that where it was difficult to get the men to bathe before, they now regarded it as a pleasure, and they anxiously awaited their bath day. The walls of the old bath house were uncovered in the early part of 1978 when construction of the new gym began.

News spread that an electrocution was to take place on August 2nd. The dubious honor went to Joseph Wood. ‘Cal’, as he was better known, met his Maker at 11:47 a.m. on that date. Warden Thayer had seen him strapped into the chair. Cal is reported to have made a short speech prior to the final bolt. “Don’t hurry boys. God remember me in heaven. God bless me. Lord God, help ...” and with that, the fatal current forever sealed his lips.

Cal had been found guilty of murdering his father-in-law, Leander Pascoe. The tragedy had occurred near Stony Creek in Warren County. This was over a family dispute which had lasted for some time.

Prior to the electrocution, Warden Thayer read the death warrant to the condemned man Deputy Warden McKenna, Chaplain Anson Cheeseman and twenty-nine other witnesses were in the death chamber at that time.

The apparatus had been tested prior to Wood’s entry by using a yearling steer. It worked perfectly and Warden Thayer’s annual report stated, “Our new electrical machinery worked perfectly, and the electrocution was the most successful ever held, devoid of all revolting features and death being instantaneous.”

September 4th saw the opening of the new chapel. It allowed the population a single place in which to worship and religious services were held here on a regular basis.

It was also during the year that a new three-story brick industrial building was started. It was 50 by 200 feet and built entirely by convict labor. It was the largest building ever constructed, up to that time, by inmates. It would take over a year to complete the construction and would also contain a blacksmith’s shop when finished.

~ 1893 ~

During the early part of 1893 the State Legislature passed another law that permitted the use of convict labor at improving public highways. This was to be within a twenty-five-mile radius of the front gate. On the 13th of June the convicts started a macadam road from the train station, up Flagg Street to the front gate and then on towards Plattsburgh. This newest of modern roads made a smooth ride in a buggy and for sliding in winter, it was just supreme. Roads had always been a problem in the area and inmates had been used previously to solve the problem. Plank roads were the normal for that time and even now, some still retain that name.

Warden Walter N. Thayer realized that the prison and Village were subject to man's most ravishing dilemma – fire. It had consumed a lot of state property and that of the local people, from time to time. Warden Thayer started the ball rolling and out of this idea came the Walter N. Thayer Hose Company, now the Dannemora Fire Department. He realized the value of a volunteer group who would respond to the needs of their neighbors with their time and talents, the early morning hours and they have always answered unselfishly. From the old bucket brigade to the hand pulled pumper to the more modern ways of fighting fires. Warden Thayer's plan has been a godsend to the Village residents. It has been for ninety-six years the Village's most dedicated group of volunteers and because of their dedication, Dannemora is a nicer place in which to live.

Prison Population Now: 1,000

Local residents took an interest in the general election of 1894 that provided a new State Constitution. The charter was to take effect on January 1, 1897, and these new provisions would affect the prison and, of course, all the villagers. The new constitution forbade the use of State inmates at any occupation whereby any person, firm or corporation could profit from this labor, and it established the State-use system as the only one where prison labor could be used in the future. This problem dated even before the 1862 debate with J.D. Kingsland and Company. The State-use system is still in effect today.

The *Plattsburgh Republican* of June 30, 1894, noted the arrival of Liz Halliday. Liz was the first female to be sentenced to electrocution. Governor Flower later on commuted her sentence to life in prison and she later on wound up at Mattewan State Hospital. Liz had been found guilty of murdering the McQuillan sisters. Later, it was determined she had murdered her husband, her son, and her daughter in 1891. Then in 1906, she murdered a hospital employee at Mattewan. There is no evidence any female was electrocuted at Clinton Prison. (FISHKILL DAILY HERALD)

During this year the state decided to house all its tuberculosis and lung patients at Clinton. The salubrity of the climate here was well known and, with this factor, the new program was started. It would also mean that more help would be hired to accommodate this venture.

Much local talk was about the use of wooden water mains for the local people. This method of water distribution system had been employed elsewhere and now it was coming to Dannemora.

The work progressed very rapidly and on August 12, the western part of the system was pressurized. Those on the east end had water in the system the following month. This system was a vast improvement over the old method buying it from the people like Mr. Goodrich, who went from house to house with barrels on the back of his wagon. People would bring their containers to the wagon and pay for this precious commodity. There were, of course, those who would use well water and those who had springs available to their property. This water problem would be one of the seeds that would see a Village government in some future year spring forth.

During the year the newest building, the boiler house, would be used for the first time. It was a vast improvement over what previously had been used and would provide the prison until the riot in 1929. This building, like so many of that era, would be entirely built by inmate labor.

Early in 1896, villagers heard stories of how the State was looking for land to build a new complex in the area. Governor Morton urged the Legislature to use a large tract of land owned by the State, east of Clinton Prison for the site. He also noted the building could be built with inmate labor, thereby saving the State additional money. Approval was given and \$25,000 was authorized to begin the construction.

Warden Thayer immediately dispatched 250 convicts to start the work and all the problems were then put on his shoulders. He realized that with all the new buildings, it would increase the Village population, the number of school children and church enrollments. Things were looking better and better for the Village. The following year, the State Legislature would expend an additional \$75,000 for construction. Officials at Mattewan were hoping it would soon be completed so that it would relieve the load at the downstate institution. Warden Thayer, in his annual report, complimented the excellent work that had been accomplished and hoped to have a wing completed before his next annual report was written.

During the year, renovations to Saint Joseph's Church were completed. As additional personnel came to live, things changed also. There were new towers added to the front of the building and the bell placed at the highest level. A parish census showed that there were 1,300 parishioners attending to their spiritual needs in the building. Of the 230 families making up the census, 147 were of French-Canadian extraction and 83 were of Irish descent.

During the year a new classification system was being used. It was designed to denote the first-time prisoners as to those who had made the mistake previously. It was also noted that, in addition to a large segment of TB patients, Clinton was receiving from all other prisons the 'incurables'. The classification system listed the first offenders as class 'A', and they were kept at the receiving prisons. Because of the population of the judicial district there were few 'A' inmates here. Class 'B' were those who already served one previous sentence for a felony, and they went to Auburn. Class 'C' were those who had served two or more felonies, and this was the bulk of the population here, coming from Sing Sing and Auburn. Gradually an honor emblem system evolved, and each prisoner was awarded chevrons on the left sleeve for his conduct. This was the system for some seventeen years, when it was disbanded.

During the year the fire department invested in a fire bell. It would improve the previous method of assembling the firemen in times of emergency. The bell was purchased from Meuling in Troy at a cost of \$125. The bell weighed 525 pounds and is still situated inside the firehouse.

Many local residents were greatly alarmed when news spread that Civilian Nurse George Gimstead had been beaten up during an attempted escape. Inmates Crossman #3987 and Collins #2733 were charged with the November 2, 1898, attempt to gain their freedom. Violence had always been a by-product of some of the inmates and the people always lived with this in the back of their daily living.

When 1899 came around, the original appropriations had run out and the Legislature was asked for more funds. The same old story, 'shortage of State funds' was applied, and construction slowed down. When the annual report was made in September, the Superintendent of Prisons, Cornelius Collins, said in part, "The work could not be executed on account of the change condition of the market for materials, both with respect to price and the impossibility of early delivery". The condition at Mattewan, in the meantime, were listed as not only being unhealthy, but threatening.

May 4, 1899, saw the establishment by law of the Dannemora State Hospital by Governor Theodore Roosevelt. It was a place for 'such male prisoners as are declared insane while confined in a state prison or reformatory, or while serving a sentence of more than one year in a penitentiary'.

Early in November the initial buildings were completed after a period of five waiting years. A single wing, kitchen-mess hall and heating plant made up the hospital.

When the 20th century began, the outlook was that soon the new institution would begin to receive inmates and that would mean an increase in the hamlet.

This became a reality on November 15th when forty-eight arrived by special train when it arrived at the depot. Many of the local people knew of the event and were watching as the men were transferred to the State insane criminal hospital. Doctor Robert Lamb had been placed in charge and he saw these men who had arrived from Mattewan State Hospital.

The complex consisted of what was called wards 1-2-3, the loggia and old attendants' mess. The institution, in less than two years, would be filled beyond capacity.

Schiff and Keenan's Department Store was doing good business and ads with sales items appeared frequently in the *Plattsburgh Press*.

July 11th saw the annual election of W.H. Thayer Hose Company with the following men voted into office: Captain, Ed Hennelty; 1st Captain W.L. Cosgrave; 2nd Captain, Joseph Robarge; President, William Keenan; Vice President, M. Van Gorder; Secretary, J.F. Keenan; Treasurer, J.C. Lawrence; Chief Engineer, Ed Norris, and J. Nash as Delegate to the State Convention.

The popular place during the summer months was the Chazy Lake Park. Excursions were held on the train to help the people enjoy the cool clear water of the lake and it was the in-thing to do.

Local merchants decided to close one day a week and give their employees a well-deserved break. The barber shop decided against closing, however, with the rest of the business places. There would be no reopening after Sunday services were over.

Another saddened affair was noted when Warden David Dobbie died. His many friends on both sides of Cook Street mourned the passing of this sixty-year-old man who had succeeded Walter N. Thayer.

The Dannemora Drum Band, under the direction of Simon Alpert and Norman Burdick, were practicing weekly. The fourteen enthusiastic members were looking forward to having villagers join in this musical endeavor for the winter months.

~ 1901 ~

People, from time to time, had mentioned about forming a 'Village' form of Government and thereby getting a more unified, and closer, form of local government. On May 2nd the initial meeting was held to incorporate the people into the Village of Dannemora. The '*Star of Hope*', the Department of Corrections bulletin, reported it this way, "It is proposed to include within the corporate limits of the Village an area at least one mile square ... as soon as the Village shall have been legally incorporated, it is the intention to bond the corporation in an amount sufficient to enact a water works ... but it is expected that other improvements will rapidly follow, notable street lights, sidewalks, curbs and all essentials of a down to date village. The wood walkways will be replaced with cement sidewalks as an example of progress". Finally, on July 18, 1901, a vote was taken, and the people agreed to become the Village of Dannemora.

Two days later, the Governor and his official party arrived in the Village. Governor Odell had undertaken a tour of State facilities at his own expense and his itinerary called for a visit here. When the train pulled into the station at 11:00 a.m., besides the Governor there were the Speaker of the House, three State Senators, two State Assemblymen and some of their wives in the official party. Warden Deyo and others were on hand to greet the Chief Executive on his visit and greeted him warmly. A write-up in the *Plattsburgh Evening News* told of the day's event.

A radical departure was taking place during this time in the prison when the 'lock step' system was dispensed with. Movement of inmates was made easier after this decision. The State Legislature budgeted for an additional forty beds for the TB ward at the hospital. Completion of the project was not expected for over a year.

The 10th of August issue of the '*Star of Hope*' read, "It is expected that President Seth Allen, Trustees Orin S. Henry, and John Foy will be elected as well as Abram Schiff as Clerk and William Graves as Tax Collector. Mr. graves is already the present school tax collector."

The October 3rd issue claimed, “The long-talked water works, the establishment of which was the moving cause of the incorporation of the Village of Dannemora, has now become an accomplished fact, the water having been turned into the pipe system and made available to the residents of the Village.”

With the coming of winter, local papers were advertising coal delivered to your house for \$6.00 per ton.

The new State Parole Board came into being during October. It was hoped that it would provide a more uniform system across the state for releasing inmates back into society.

During 1902 the villagers decided they would accept a ‘Dannemora Union Free School District’. They so notified the State Education Department and the boundary lines for the district were approved. Land in both towns would be included that exist even to this date – 78 years later.

The following year things were busy at Clinton Prison. Some five men were electrocuted during this span – making it the largest number ever to be electrocuted. The Van Wormer brothers accounted for three of the five deaths. A story relates how the mother of the two boys was quartered here during this time and as the lights dimmed in the boarding house, she knew another son had paid the price for the murder they were convicted of. Father Belanger had spent many hours with the three men and each of them decided to become a convert before his final hour. This case was also noted as the first one where plaster of paris casts were admissible in court linking the suspects with the shotgun death of their uncle.

A big change in the prison came about when all cells were equipped with electric lights. Gone were the old kerosene lamps and the job of seeing that enough kerosene was on hand for the evening’s light.

In February 1903 stories were heard in the Village of inmates being on opium at Clinton Prison. This resulted in the Principal Keeper being transferred, three employees resigned, two others were dismissed, and one was suspended indefinitely. Some reports laid claim that one-half to three-fourths of the inmates were addicted to opium. (NEW YORK HERALD)

Baseball games secured lots of local interest and this year was to be no different. A news report noted that a baseball game saw Cadyville blank Dannemora 3-0 behind F. Darrah. A triple play of Carr to Kelly to Lynett helped the Cadyville cause. A dispute in the 9th inning saw the Dannemora town team leave the field of play. Disco was the starting pitcher for Dannemora and was relieved by McCorry in the 4th inning.

Construction was still taking place in the prison and this year saw the new prison dining hall opened. Since the fire of 1890 (16 years prior), the inmates had to eat their meals in their cells. Now they would be brought to the mess hall in company formation for all of their meals. This must have been a relief to the inmates from the old system.

In June, the new TB ward had been completed. All new furnishings and equipment were ready to greet the men. The trouble was that there was a shortage of money from the Legislature to put this into operation. It would be another year before the place was finally put online.

Things at the 'State Hospital' had been quiet but everyone knew of the overcrowding that had existed since the opening. Over a dozen men barricaded themselves in a dormitory room. They had made some tools which they hoped to use in an attempt to escape. The tools smuggled in were used to try to pry the bars out of the masonry, but the disturbance was quelled before it became a fact. One of the ringleaders was killed when another inmate hit him in his head with a window sash intended for an attendant.

The March 21st issue of the *Plattsburgh Republican* noted that some of the buildings in Clayburgh were being moved to Dannemora, among these the old Clayburgh store. These buildings were being dismantled then reconstructed at their arrival on the hill. Some of these homes are located at 68-70 and 72 Smith Street. The old Clayburgh store was originally owned by John Myers, late of Plattsburgh, and later by the Chateaugay Ore & Iron Company.

With an enlarging population, the people decided a Town Hall was needed for the people of the area. There had been no large meeting hall, so it was proposed to build a place. In order to start the new construction, the firehouse had to be moved north of its location. The schoolhouse had been here some twenty-three years since coming from the south side of Cook Street.

There was much talk around the Village as spring broke upon the scene. One of the local boys was going to play in the major leagues. Bill McCorry had been a sight on the Village streets and this year, he was to play with the Saint Louis Browns in the American League. Although his stay with the Browns as a pitcher was not very long, it was the start of a long, fruitful career. He managed the old Albany Senators, the Plattsburgh Major and finally wound up as the New York Yankees Traveling Secretary.

When September rolled around, the firehouse was to be used as a schoolhouse. This situation lasted for a couple of years. There are those who also remember going to school in the Town Hall when it was finished.

Renewed efforts were made to use inmates in road construction during the year. Inmates had helped with the plank roads previously, and now they were to be used on a large scale. One group of twenty-five men were taken to Morrisonville and housed in an abandoned stone house while building roads in that area. Where the road gangs were close enough to return to the prison at day's end, this was done. But when it was some distance, they slept in tents or any available shelter for the night. Forestry was another area where inmates were used locally to improve the area.

On September 18th, Sergeant John Healey was shot by Marquis Curtis #8529 and John (Canada Blackie) Murphy #6040 during an escape attempt. Where the revolver came from was not sure, but it was suspected it had been smuggled into the prison. Sergeant Healey recovered from the assault by these two inmates.

April 1st saw Warden Walter Thayer become Warden at Great Meadows Prison. His legion of friends remembered him kindly as they had kept track of his rise in the Department.

Another assault kept locals on edge as July 6th saw Guard Tom Reid shot by Marquis Curtis and then Alexander Devo used an iron bar on the prison guard. Injured also was William Whipple when Curtis used a hammer on him.

After many months of construction, the new railroad depot was opened for business in 1912. Located directly west of the old one, this much improved structure was enjoyed by those using the train to Plattsburgh and beyond.

At Clinton Prison, a reforestation project saw twenty-five inmates used in this project.

During the same period of time the new Parish house was built directly north of the Methodist Episcopal Church on Barker Street. This much needed area would see many programs carried out by church members and would add to community improvement.

It should be pointed out here that Barker Street is reported to have been named after a religious leader. Just who it was is not known at this time. There were no members of Saint Joseph's Church or the Methodist Church who can come up with anything about 'Barker'. It would be my belief he (or she) may have been influential in getting the prison here or again being employed at the prison.

During 1913 the last electrocution was scheduled for Clinton Prison. The State had decided to carry out all such future decisions of the Court at Sing Sing Prison. Executions had been held at Clinton for the past twenty-one years. Fred Pauling of Rensselaer County was the last man to die here at Clinton.

A most welcome routine was changed at Clinton when Sunday dinners would be served to the population. Prior to this, the inmates had been locked in from 4:30 p.m. on Saturday until 7:30 a.m. Monday mornings. Breakfast and chapel on Sunday mornings were the only break before, but now a hot meal was to be given all at noon. Tea or coffee was given out on Sunday afternoons prior to the new mess schedule going into effect.

The biggest item of conversation in 1914 was the new school building. It had been started in 1913 when land on the corner of Bouck and Flagg Streets had been purchased for the new education complex. The new two-story wooden structure would cost the taxpayers \$15,000. Encompassed in the building were six classrooms, an assembly hall, a playroom, and supervisor's office. The building had been designed by Mr. Max Westhoff.

Things had been progressing at the State Hospital and the report on September 30th showed that a certified capacity for the new hospital had been placed at 358. The actual count of inmates showed 514 though.

The talk around the Village, and Saint Joseph's Parish, was that Father Belanger was to retire. It proved to be true and Father, after thirty-two years, bid his parishioners farewell and the loss of

this saintly man was felt by everyone. Besides his duties in the Parish, Father had served as Chaplain in the prison for a number of years. He must have related many of his experiences on both sides of Cook Street for many years. It proved to be a sad 1915 for those who knew him.

August 10, 1915, Governor Charles Whitman, and his official party came to inspect both state institutions.

As the area continued to grow, the needs of Saint Joseph's Parish continued also. The new Pastor, Father Alfred Hervieux, asked the parishioners to increase the size of the church. A \$19,000 addition and remodeling job was finished in 1916 and the parishioners were very happy over the expansion program. A full basement was included along with electric lights and an interior renovation project.

The fire department decided to hold movies in the Town Hall on December 16, and they netted for the occasion \$29.12. The Town Hall was also used for basketball games.

Tragedy struck the community when the second director at the State Hospital was murdered. Doctor Charles North was killed by an insane inmate. The Doctor had been here thirteen years and had a host of friends who were saddened at the tragic events of December 12th.

On December 14th, the fine spirit of friendship was expressed when the fire department decided to send the Mayor Halifax, Nova Scotia, a check for \$25.00. This was to help the victims of the terrible harbor explosion that had blown up a munitions ship in the harbor.

With World War I making the headlines, the locals were registering with the Draft Board. The news out of Europe grabbed the newspaper headlines and there were many anxious days for the young men of the Village. Just how many were inducted, I am not sure at this time. World War I saw the death of Peter Conboy. He had been employed at the Dannemora State Hospital prior to his entry into the service.

January 1st saw a new Director at Dannemora State Hospital. He was Dr. John Ross. Dr. Ross must have served in the armed forces during World War I, as he became a charter member of Post 852 American Legion at a later date.

Sometime during the year, the new TB hospital was completed outside the walls. It was located where the Superintendent's residence now stands. The capacity was 400 beds and was built almost exclusively by inmate labor. The building was used until the more modern hospital complex was put into operation in 1941.

April 19, 1919, saw the community saddened when two inmates murdered civilian nurse Charles Gunther. Indicted for the crime was Walter Levandowski and Leo Jankowski. Their attempted escape failed and during it also injured was Daniel Cummings, another nurse. He had been stabbed and assaulted by the same pair.

Movies were shown to the inmate population on Saturdays as a new form of entertainment. It proved popular to the incarcerated inmates as many had not seen these 'movies' before.

With World War I over, many of the men back in Dannemora talked about forming a new American Legion Post. These veterans of World War I had meetings in the latter months of 1919 and there received their charter on January 30, 1920. The 15 original charter members were: John Ayotte, Doctor Miles Buck, John Bolia, Earle Daly, Ed Fleming, John Keenan, Ed Kennedy, Art Leonard, Frank Manogue, Mike McGrath, Don Parsons, Dr. Ted Reid, Henry Relation, Dr. Harold Robert, and Dr. John Ross.

It seems 1920 was the year for organizations as on June 6th, the Knights of Columbus Council #2166 was formed. Like the Legion, many of their first meetings were held during the end of 1919 and their charter records show the following were elected as the first officers: Grand Knight – William Pender; Deputy Knight – Tom Devlin; Recorder – George Brown; Financial Secretary – Louis Bissonnette; Treasurer – Tom Barrett; Lecturer – Don Parsons; Advocate – Dan O'Connor; Chaplain – Father Alfred Hervieux and Chancellor – William Roach.

The latter part of the year saw the Catholic Daughters form. They were chartered on December 5th.

During February 1921 a report from the prison showed there were 138 employees with annual payroll of \$17,495.46.

After many years of pleading with the State Legislature, money was finally appropriated to buy the old Cunningham lot for the State Hospital. The 942 acres were valuable in that they protected the hospital grounds. The rising inmate population caused a shortage of water and during dry summers, water had to be pumped from the abandoned mine shaft.

During a cold bitter morning of January 22, 1922, the Village was threatened when flames consumed the Adirondack Hotel. With the thermometer hovering around zero, John Farrell discovered the blaze around ten minutes to four in the morning. He was on his outside rounds of the prison when he noticed the catastrophe and notified the fire department immediately. The restaurant on the ground floor, conducted by Bert Hulbert, seemed to be the place of origin and it soon spread to the second floor.

The Village department responded quickly but the two lines were not enough. This, plus low pressure in the lines, threatened everything in its path. People had lined the streets and could see the flames shoot skyward from the doomed structure.

At this point, Warden Harry Kaiser directed that the inmate fire department join the Village in putting down the flames. High pressure lines within the prison walls were utilized. They were taken through the front gate to the fire just to the west of the main entrance.

Ice covered the firemen and equipment as they stood their ground and battled the blaze. The C.L. Nash Building next to the hotel was thought to go any minute but the determined firemen kept it from going up in smoke. Residents were loud in their praise of Warden Kaiser, Principal Keeper John Healey, and the inmates for their part in stopping this raging inferno. Chemical wagons were brought out of the prison to help fight the already two-hour fire.

Both departments gave up on the hotel and put all efforts into saving the adjoining structure. About 6:30 a.m. the roof and side walls collapsed as sparks flew skyward. Many landed on the roofs of nearby buildings. Some roofs had a good cover of snow which helped the situation out considerably.

Villagers helped clear the Nash Butcher Shop, the Post Office, and other stores in the immediate area. Considerable losses in the building were suffered by M.W. Mabry and Isaac Knight who had a paint shop in the building. The Geroux brothers, Silas and Fred, were remodeling the structure and had spent some \$1,000 on the apartment in it

The hotel had been built in 1875 by Jeff Roberts, a well-known individual. It had been a hotel for many years. He sold it to the Merchants National Bank of Plattsburgh, who had recently sold it to the Geroux brothers as mentioned.

When the sun came up that morning, all that was left was a pile of rubble, but the local people were thankful that the Village had not suffered a more terrible fate.

March 29, 1922, saw a horrible tragedy to Joseph Weitekamp. This industrial foreman was burned to death in the prison. It seems a fire was started, and Joseph grabbed the 'fire pail' to quench it. Instead of water, it contained gasoline and the explosion covered his body in flames. Witnesses told the story, and it was assumed inmates had replaced the water with the gas.

April 1st saw Doctor Charles Burdick as the new Director of the State Hospital. He saw Ward 6 open during the year as the hospital continued to expand.

Fires continued to plague the Prison. This time, on the 18th of March, the shop building burned. Practically all the stock and machinery were lost during the blaze. The shirt and clothing shop, clothing finishing shop, stockroom and industrial offices were also lost. Immediate plans were to build a 65 x 300-foot three-story cement building to replace the loss. It would take some four years of work.

When Principal Keeper John Healey retired in August, he was called into Warden Kaiser's office, and he never expected what was handed to him. He had been well thought of during his years at Clinton, by both inmates and co-workers, and he was presented a diamond on behalf of the inmates. A committee of inmates made the presentation. One of them made a short speech and then made the presentation. He stated it was a good will remembrance for the treatment the men had received at his hands during the years he had been at the prison and the spirit of fairness with which he always met them. It was a scene that probably never took place before or since.

Villagers were saddened when death claimed Doctor J.B. Ransom on March 8, 1923. This physician had made a host of friends down through the years. One of those who came to the services was his understudy of a few years past, Doctor Walter Thayer. A special train came from Plattsburgh with friends from throughout the state. Burial followed at Riverside Cemetery in Plattsburgh.

July 12, 1926, saw the fire department buy its first motor vehicle. It was a model T truck that they paid \$125 for from Glen Savage. With this the men could respond faster to the emergency calls of the Village. The old was giving way to the new.

During the year the prison industrial building was completed and put into operation. It was quite an improvement, according to everyone, and the scenery of the Saranac River valley from the top floor was excellent.

Construction had been going on for some time and in 1927 the cement wall on the west side was completed. The old wooden stockade was being replaced with this imposing structure that encompassed the north yard the whole prison now was enclosed with cement walls.

The tragic news spread like wildfire, and everyone was upset to hear of the tragedy on Chazy Lake. This time, five seniors were missing and presumed drowned as a squall overturned the boats that the class had used for a picnic on the lake. Death had touched the homes of five families in the Village and it was an extreme time of sorrow for everyone. Divers were brought in to help in the search for the recoveries and eventually all five were recovered. Those who lost their lives that day were – Edmond Rowan, Kate Canning, Kathleen Smart, Tom Tobin, and Bernadette Drollette. The date was June 4, 1927.

In the latter months of 1927 officials at the prison had been informed that the underworld was planning on blowing up part of the prison wall. With that out of the way, then certain inmates could escape from the ‘Siberia of the North’.

Domonic Liaco, a New York City desperado, was the inmate who let the story out. Domonic was later stabbed by Leon Kramer, a member of the infamous Whittmore Jewelry thief gang, for leaking the news. His wounds were not considered too serious, and he was placed under special protection in the prison hospital. Kramer is believed to be the leader of the gang who planned to shoot their way to freedom.

Dr. Kelb, Commissioner of Correction in Albany stated, “We were given reason to believe such a thing might be tried and have been on guard against it for several months. We are dealing with desperate men, and we are prepared to use desperate measures. Because of the Buamer law, so many hardened criminals have never before been serving long sentences at one time as now and the prison of the state are overcrowded. We expect some protest from them at this situation and are ready to meet it.”

Siege conditions at the prison have been in effect for some time. Machine guns have been concealed at the east and west ends of Cook Street all summer. Guards have been given extra drills with the pistol, rifle and machine gun and have been ordered to shoot to kill, if necessary. Extra precaution has been set up to protect the prison perimeter while powerful search lights have been installed on the wall.

A wooden box addressed to Warden H. Kaiser, in care of the industrial department, was opened and found to contain 6 automatic pistols, 400 rounds of ammunition, 3 bottles of liquor and some county road maps. Prison officials had known for some time about the incoming package. About a month after the first arrival, a second one was received in the same manner. This time the identification number had not been mutilated and officials were able to trace the box to the point of origin.

It was a period of unrest for the villagers with rumors flying about as fast as they could be manufactured. Things finally cooled down and many a prayer was answered over the situation.

When July 22, 1929, dawned it was going to be the longest twenty-four hours to the Village residents that they would ever endure. Things seemed normal, although there was word out that the inmates at Clinton were determined to upset the usual prison routine. Jimmy Volpe had tipped off the administration that unrest was the number one topic in the various cell blocks. Jimmy could converse in several languages, and he had heard the plans discussed in a couple of these, so he kept the front informed on a day-to-day basis.

When breakfast was finished the inmates, all went to the north yard from where they were then to go to their daily work assignment. Like a bolt of lightning, it broke out and along with the roar, was heard from wall to wall and beyond, to startle and awaken the sleeping residents of the Village.

With angered threats of "Kill him – Kill him" the stones were whistling through the air towards the unarmed officers in the recreation yard. Officer Ernie Bressette was struck by the flying missiles and knocked down. Some of the convicts struck the officer with clubs. When the sound of the wall officers' guns broker into the bedlam of the noise, the assaulting inmates looked to see if they were on the front sights of the rifles. They broke their concentration of killing the man long enough for him to get up and start to run to safety. Once inmate was shot as he was chasing Officer Bressette, just in time. He was chasing the guard and with a raised club was about to strike him again when the speeding bullet stopped him in his tracks. Mr. Arthur Murphy was also attacked by the inmates at this time.

At 8:10 a.m. an inmate placed a phone call and announced, "This is a convict speaking. We don't want any shooting."

About this time the inmates spread from the yard down to the shop and block areas. Around the carpenter shop, carefully placed piles of wood shavings were soon put to the torch. Smoke then spiraled skyward and with the shrill prison whistle piercing everyone's ears, the rioters seemed to take heart and wanted to destroy everything in sight. Others were figuring out ways to scale the wall and try to get into the street of the Village and, of course, freedom.

It was about this time that the Village residents cleared the doubt from their minds and having heard about the rumors, knew trouble was on hand. Their father, uncle or next-door neighbor was in trouble, and it didn't take them long to get the recently oiled rifles and shotguns down from their spot and head for Cook Street.

Most of the Village stores were opened by then and the incoming rush was for more ammunition just in case they ran out of the supply they had brought from home. Cook Street must have resembled Dodge City when the Wells Fargo gold supply was coming into town. Those who roamed the street were ready, willing, and able to take down anyone who dropped on the outside wall of the prison. They all had an investment in Clinton Prison, and they were all out to protect that investment.

Some of the younger villagers kept indoors as they shootings took place from time to time. The lady at 8 Bouck Street came out when her home was struck by stray bullets and told her younger daughter to get inside and stay there. Others ran from house to house instead of the usual relaxed walk, just in case more shootings took place.

The inmates had split into three groups by now as they sought out areas of the prison to torch or destroy. Administration officials under Deputy Warden Asa Granger started placing phone calls for assistance. They called the State Police Barracks at Malone and Troy for needed help. The Plattsburgh Barracks was also called, and they assured officials they would soon be on their way to Dannemora. Captain Broadfield ordered Lieutenant C.B. McCann and J.B. Lynch to drive the forty-two miles, with thirty-five fully armed State Troopers from Malone. Other troopers came from areas like Ticonderoga and Star Lake. Game Warden and Border Patrol agents were also on hand along Cook Street.

Before long, the milling inmates decided to scale the wall. They all rushed the cold grey cement structure. The first to arrive knelt down and the next ranks climbed on their backs to try to form a human chain to the top. All three walls were attacked at once but a volley from the machine guns stopped the men in their tracks. The sounds of the chattering guns and the whistling bullets told many they would just as soon get out of sound and sight of these cold steel monsters. It was in the initial threat that inmates Reis, Brunner and Shackelford knew that the screaming bullets had found their mark.

With the spread of the fires, the fire departments of the Village came to help in whatever way they could. They asked for assistance from Morrisonville and Plattsburgh and were told they would soon be on their way. With the situation in the prison, it was impossible for the firemen to try to put out the flames as in a regular battle. They had to mount the walls and haul the hoses up before feeling the live hoses respond to the scene below. They also placed their fire trucks near the prison wall and pumped water over the wall towards the carnage of burning buildings. The eight inches of water in the reservoir were soon drained and just a mud hole was left in its place.

By now the wire services were spewing forth the messages that a full-blown riot was in progress at the 'Siberia of the North' Clinton Prison. Newspapers were waiting for more news so they could hit the streets with the latest on the insurrection in the state penal colony. They would distort some of the facts, but in general, would give an accurate account of the happenings.

Around 10:00 a.m. the first of the State police arrived from Malone. They stormed the prison through the prison gate and drove back the infuriated prisoners. Some of the inmates knew the riot was ended and they decided to go back to their cells and lock themselves in. From there, they yelled encouragement to those outside and cursed the guards and State Police.

A group in the southeast corner of the prison refused to give up on their bid for freedom. In this area they burned the blacksmith forge, the mattress shop, and the shoe shop. The fire was unchecked in these shops and fear was held out for the cotton shop where thousands of dollars' worth of the material was stored.

The inmates ransacked the powerhouse looking for Peter Dame, M civilian employee. They searched the area in vain as Mr. Dame was not to be found. He later came out of hiding when he was assured the riot was over and he was safe. He later came out of hiding when he was assured the riot was over and he was safe. His safety was the act of inmates who worked with him. They put him inside one of the unused boilers in the area and because of this humanitarian act, Peter Dame saw more days after July 22, 1929. The convicts did manage to put the powerhouse out of operation during this time.

Many of the roaming inmates grabbed anything they could – crowbars, pickaxes, wrenches, shovels, hammers, hatchets, and pieces of wood that would be helpful in a hand-to-hand situation. Even nuts, bolts and small pieces of metal were hurled at the skyline hoping to strike the guards on the wall. It seemed their aim was bad because no one was hurt by the flying missiles.

Around noon the 26th, infantry from Plattsburgh Barracks came onto the scene. The two companies were under the command of Major Max Sullivan. They were combat bound, bayonets inserted, hand grenades and tear gas being visible to those who also lined up on Cook Street. The infantry unit was deployed in extended formation the length of the wall.

About this time, Father Robert Booth and Principal Keeper Granger came in to make an appeal to the convicts. They told them how useless their efforts were, and they should return the prison to the officials. They mentioned how the Army was outside the gates and if they got over the walls, they would shoot them in the street. To make this visible to the inmates, the front gate was opened and before their eyes were the armed soldiers with a tripod machine gun pointed towards the prisoners. The two State Police mentioned, and ten more State Police made up the party that heard the final ultimatum issued to the insurrectionists. The belligerent inmates were then all quartered in the storehouse area.

About this time a plane flew over the prison and the shaken inmates spread the rumor that the Army had sent a bomber to help fight the convicts. Adding all the things against them, the die-hard group decided it was time to quit. The inmates did not realize that the plane was carrying photographers. One picture was recorded in the *New York Times* of Tuesday, July 23rd.

With the gunfire over and the fire and smoke lessening, the Village residents were making trips outside their homes. The activity that took place on Cook Street would be always indelibly

etched in their memory. Stories and rumors would abound until the toll of time diminished the events of this Monday.

Some five hours after the melee started in the recreation yard, the inmates then gave up the fight and were placed in their cells. Here they continued to curse those in charge, and they banged their metal plates and cups on the rows of iron bars in front of them. Some went for rhythmic movements while others beat indiscriminately as their mood moved them. The din could be heard above the prison walls, but the villagers knew this was better than what they had been hearing and seeing from time to time.

The excitement within the village saw many forget their breakfast and now that lunch was past, they still didn't feel hungry. They were all fired up when they would be placed in bed some eight hours later, or more. Later they would still be asking questions. "Mom, will dad be home tonight? Do you think dad had anything to eat since his breakfast?" These and other questions about the safety of their loved ones would cross the mind's eye as they settled down to a summer's evening slumber.

Food at the prison was forgotten for the day also. Those who had anything they could nibble on were going to have to do it because the menu for the day was canceled. That breakfast of oatmeal, milk, bread, and tea would be long lost before another hot meal would touch their lips.

Clinton Prison had housed the most incorrigible in the State system and they were the ringleaders of the riot. Over 1,500 inmates were housed there. The normal count was 1,160, of whom 118 were serving life and another 400 with bits of 20 years or longer were here. Some of the infamous, now forgotten, men were the Kramer Brothers, John (Bum) Rogers, Francis (Boston Billy) Monahan and two unidentified members of the Richard Whitmore bandit gang. All of these had been placed in solitary confinement prior to the day's happening. Jake Kramer had been placed in there eight months earlier after he had stabbed another inmate in a fit of revenge.

After all were locked in the cell halls, the investigation began as to why the riot, even though it was known for weeks prior to the outbreak. Various reasons were given, among which overcrowding, refusal of a full holiday on Saturday, recent transferees from other prisons on discipline problems. Unsanitary conditions of the cell halls, too small living quarters, pay of about a penny a day for their labor and to have new potatoes placed on the menu.

The 124 guards by day's end were all on hand even those who had the day off and those who were on vacation. When they heard the whistles locally, or found out by the new media, they called in for further assignment. Many would spend a long day before normalcy would return to the institution. Shifts would be extended, changed and days off only on an emergency basis. Everything would be changed after today and during the course of their remaining employment. Cars were not as accessible as today, so the trains were the easiest way back to Dannemora for those on vacation.

The three dead inmates were picked up and then brought to the morgue for final identification. Likewise, those other twenty who had received wounds would be taken to the prison hospital for further treatment. The influx of inmates overtaxed the facility at the hospital and with reduced help, it was a problem to take care of all their needs. By night, all three deceased inmates were buried in the State Cemetery south of the prison.

Authorities then decided to determine if the powerhouse could be brought back to some kind of service. Plans were made also to get the Plattsburgh Gas and Electric and the Northern New York Telephone to install temporary lines both to the prison and the Village. Lines were strung from (Saranac-Cadyville) and when the sun was setting, some service had been restored to both places. Some homes in the Village were without power but candles and kerosene lamps were put into service. The long summer evenings were also a help as darkness didn't descend until around 9:30 that night. The employees of both groups donated their services so the prison and the Village would have some kind of service until more permanent repairs could be made. The villagers were wholly dependent upon the prison powerhouse for their electricity at the time.

As each hour passed, less and less noise filtered to the street. The firmed-up inmates were tired since the past fourteen hours had seen the start of the riot and they were ready for some rest.

Work continued throughout the night as the ringleaders were segregated from the population as shifts of guards removed them from their cells and they were placed in segregation. Weary and tired prison guards would sneak a chance to rest their feet, grab a sandwich or relate some experience of the day with their coworkers.

As the sun rose over Mount Mansfield in the east, new day was dawning and with it a new era in the correction field. Movements within the prison would be minimal and it would remain so for some time to come. The daily newspapers were hitting the streets across the land and front-page coverage told of the 'Riot at Dannemora' and the cost for repairs would be \$200,000 or more. But this was just another day, it seemed.

The State started clearing the land north of the area above the west gate and decided to build wooden houses for State workers. These wooden structures were built with inmate labor, and they were to be a low rent project for lower pay scale employees. Along with this, work was progressing on the powerhouse and disposal plant along the south side of the tracks. The State decided that they didn't want the powerhouse to be placed inside the confines of the prison. As work progressed, it came inevitable that the cemetery belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church would have to be moved. A few of the headstones were taken and placed in an area immediately to the northeast corner of Saint Joseph's cemetery. Two headstones belonged to the original settlers of Dannemora – Lydia and Phinneas Hooker. A sad story is that many of the other headstones were taken and then placed in the new walls on the east side of the prison.

The pump house at Chazy Lake was also under construction and when completed, would provide the prison and State Hospital with an inexhaustible source of beautiful water. The water line was dug over the mountain and along the road to the new construction. Some claim that

the Village had a chance to lay pipe in the same ditch to the lake but decided against it because of the cost involved.

June 16 saw the funeral of Thomas Barrett in St. John's Church in Plattsburgh. A reporter told of a man who walked down the church aisle, genuflected, and then knelt in prayer for the repose of Tom's soul. The man had been a former inmate and he had spent the previous night riding the train from New York City to attend the services. He claimed he had a hunch and decided to come back to Dannemora. He found out about Tom's funeral and described him, "If they were all like Barrett, it wouldn't be so rotten. Barrett was about the whitest man I met up here."

Tragedy will always be a part of the living experience but the tragedy on October 16, 1930, was one of the most tragic. Young Philip Kennedy had walked his father to the corner of Bouck and Barker Street. He then was walking back east when in the vicinity of 20 Bouck Street, picked up a black wire. It was charged electric line and this small boy was shaking from the electrical impulses. His neighbor, Adrian LaFontaine, left his house on Bouck Street and noticed the little Kennedy boy. He rushed to help the lad and when he grabbed him, they both became captive to the current. Bob Kirby was coming along about that time and saw the plight of these two. By using his rubber raincoat, he pulled them away from the tragedy. It was too late, as both were victims of this tragedy and as the news spread throughout the Village, people burst into tears. They were unashamed to let others know how they felt because Dannemora had been visited by this day's tragic events.

Before too long, those on both sides of Cook Street had heard that Asa Granger had been admitted to the Champlain Valley Hospital in Plattsburgh. It was on Christmas Day, and it became apparent an operation was needed immediately. After the appendicitis operation complications set in and this Granville native took a turn for the worse. Asa soon died and the whole community knew of this loss. He was known as a strict, but fair, disciplinarian and the inmates knew he was a formidable individual. He never related prison stories to anyone and always listened to the grievances of the prisoners. Asa was a former member of the U.S. Marine Corps. When his body was taken from the funeral home to the train station, an entourage of over two hundred fifty people marched in line. Warden Kaiser led the group, followed by members of the Lodge of Elks in Plattsburgh. The Village Mayor and Village officials, prison guards and his host of friends from Dannemora. It was a sad farewell to this highly respected member of our community as the train headed south. Asa had been appointed Principal Keeper upon the retirement of John Healey on September 1, 1922.

Warden Harry Kaiser threw the switch that placed the powerhouse into operation in 1932. This \$554,679 dollar project was the most modern system in the prison system, and it supplied heat, steam, hot water and electricity to the prison and state hospital. The tunnel to carry the pipes and lines had gone up Barker Street to the prison wall. Another story is that the State offered the school district any return steam from the institutions that could be used to heat the school. It was rejected, as they felt they would have no idea of how much steam would be available to the

new building under construction. Ever since the day Warden Kaiser threw the switch, the steam has been vented into the air and kept people awake until it became second nature to them.

A record high of 60 degrees was registered in the state on January 13, 1932, as a heat wave gripped the area. Winter clothes were shed for a short period but were not put too far away.

Construction on A and B Block was finished, and this modern block was soon filled with excited prisoners. All the modern living facilities were available in the block and gone were the old 'bucket' system that remained in the other cell halls.

Also completed was the laundry, state and barber shops and bath house. These modern facilities were welcomed as the prison began to change from the old system to a modern institution.

A tragic note occurred on Flagg Street when a construction worker was killed while walking up the hill. A stray bullet from the basement storage of the Grand Union killed Dennis Ford. The date of this was March 8, 1933. The case became a legal landmark decision because after being awarded an out of court settlement, Ford's widow rejected it. Later on, the negligence case was thrown out as the Grand Union Company claimed they were not accountable for off duties of their employees. The employees had been in the basement target shooting with the targets being placed against the east basement doors.

Segregation building was completed this same year and the octagon shaped building held a total of forty-eight cells, twelve cells to each of the four sections. In later days it would be called Special Housing Unit #14.

Villagers were shocked to hear that Prison Guard Daniel Nickerson had been killed just outside D Block. Tragedy to the family had happened a couple of years before when Dan's three children: Bernard, Kenneth, and Naomi, had been quarantined with scarlet fever. Funeral services were held at the home for Mrs. Nickerson and her remains were then shipped to Elmore from which they had arrived a few months prior. Mr. Nickerson was buried in Saint Joseph's cemetery among many beloved relatives and friends of the community.

The American Legion Auxiliary was formed on November 23, 1933. The membership elected as their first President, Mrs. Henry Relation. Mrs. John (Carrie) Bolla being the only original member, is still a member of this charter group. Down through the years, this group of dedicated women helped the members of Post 852 in many ways.

Another weather note records that February 9, 1943 saw a cold snap that recorded the lowest temperature ever records in that State, -52 degrees below. As one would suspect, it was a time not too many were venturing out. The whole month was dubiously awarded the coldest February ever recorded. Milk bottles showed a couple of inches of frozen cream above the neck and the team of horses that Harvey Rascoe used were full of icicles hanging off their cold noses.

An editorial about this time in the *Plattsburgh Republican* gave an insight to both the prison and Village life. It was entitled, 'Dannemora in Averill's Time' and in part said, "The residents may

well take justifiable pride in Dannemora which commands superb views of the Champlain Valley ... To the outsider, Dannemora means the prison village, but the native villager is proud of Dannemora and well he may be One shift of guards was coming off duty (night), a fine-looking lot of men, they were all in spotless blue uniforms. Laughing and joking as they came down the street as if they gave not a thought to the strenuous duty, they just left ... Her prosperity (Dannemora) benefits Plattsburgh and the county in general.”

During this general period, the beauty of the Warden’s Garden was a sight for everyone. Warden Thomas Murphy (1931-1939) saw the area to the west of the warden’s residence turned into a beautiful spot. Many a beautiful flower bordered the sidewalks around the area, while a water fountain dominated the upper level. At nighttime the fountain seemed to dance as various colored lights changed the shooting streams of water into a beautiful display. There were small lights set among the flowers that bordered the sidewalks that also gave a feeling of pride in this garden spot that had been bordered in by a wall of cobblestones taken from the Saranac River. The area next to the north side of Cook Street saw a poised and spouting swan arc, its water in a small curve that fell into a lighted pond. Fish of various sizes, colors and shapes were to be seen in there and in a case that was never fully solved, someone leaned over the stone wall with a fish pole and took all the fish home. Two sets of stairs on each side of the fountain led to the upper level of the garden and the maple trees that were on the lower level were some of the original trees that once lined Cook Street from Clark Street to Emmons Street. They originally lined the street to hide the palisade wall of the original prison. When other wardens came, the garden was allowed to deteriorate to the point where it was completely torn up and now is black topped as a parking lot west of the new front gate. Many a warm summer evening saw Cook Street with area visitors as they enjoyed a showplace and caused much favorable comment from everyone.

Of mention also was the swimming pool that was immediately east of the warden’s residence in the curve of the wall. It was hidden from the street by a lattice work barrier and some evergreens. Many a local youth swam in the pool when the Murphys were here, but when the Martins arrived in 1940 to become warden, that ended.

During the time Warden Murphy was here, a very fine gentleman was also living in the warden’s residence. Frank Murphy was the warden’s brother, and this kind person is well remembered for his many acts of kindness to Village youngsters. He was a true Samaritan and was sorely missed when he left our area. There are those who remember the commencement address he gave that hot June 19 in the High School gym.

A small fire on May 8th broke out in the state storehouse and with the aid of a strong wind, soon saw the building and contents in ashes. The strong wind lifted pieces of tar paper to the east and soon there was a grass fire. This led to the barns that Harry and Moody Manley owned to the east and soon the fire stretched across this large field. Those who had homes to the east held their breath, fearing their homes might become victim to the forces of nature and of fire. Quick action by the Village fire department and that of the prison reduced those ideas but for a time, it

was tense around that area. The storehouse was located on the south side of the railroad, just east of Saint Joseph's cemetery.

Dr. Blakely Webster became Director of the State Hospital on February 1, 1935. He remained in this position for over 9 years. Overcrowding was still a problem at the institution and during Doctor Webster's regime, two new wards (11 and 12) were built to help alleviate the problem.

A five-time appointed pastor, Reverend William Marshall died. His many friends of the Methodist Episcopal Church and of the village mourned his death. A devoted clergyman, he was well loved in the Village and his funeral was one of deep sorrow for this man of God.

During this time a fire broke out at the marsh and then a couple of days later would renew after burrowing under the top layer. The smoke and smell hung around most of the summer and it seemed it would never end. Many an Indian tank was carried into the area to squelch the flames and to the younger group, it was the place to be during the summer.

In 1937 the last of the state houses on TB hill were finished. The project that originally began seven years prior saw twenty-one buildings completed.

November 19th saw the official opening of e block as the more modern Clinton Prison continued to grow. It was to be the smallest housing unit to be built inside.

As progress continued in the modernization of the prison, 1939 saw the new administration building being used. The telephone switchboard was to be located directly in the middle of the main lobby. The Chaplain's offices were also located on the second floor. Changes have taken place since the original offices occupied the complex from time to time. The old administration was east of the new structure. It has been in use since 1880 and was about to be torn down.

A favorite son was mourned when William O'Brien died. He had taken over when Asa Granger had died, and he became the Principal Keeper. This well-liked person was to be sorely missed in the Village and also in the prison. His parents had ben early settlers in Dannemora when William was morn on March 3, 1876.

In 1939 the Methodist Episcopal Church saw much growth in its membership. Reverend Herbert Robertson was Pastor and during the year, the three religious bodies decided to become the Methodist Church.

Across the wall, the new kitchen and mess hall were opened. To say it was the last word in modernization would not do it justice. The whole place radiated the changes that continued since the riot of '29. Inmate population neared 2,000.

As 1940 began, sad news was announced by Father Hyland on February 17th. "Your pastor, Father Hervieux has died." This kindly and thoughtful priest had become a part of the village life these past 25 years. Many a warm story is still told about his native of Lanorie, Quebec. When his funeral mass was celebrated, those who knew and loved him not only filled the body of the church but overflowed into the basement. Speakers were installed to those who were there

could also participate in Father's Mass. Eyes were full of tears as the hearse headed east on Cook Street and the many correction officers gave a salute to a beloved confessor and long-time member of our community.

May 1st saw the Harry Alpert Lumber Company change hands and a young businessman, Francis Gregory, take over. This business would eventually expand to the Tom Miller Road in Plattsburgh and eventually closed its Dannemora offices. The railroad spur that brought items to the lumber yard's door also served other needs in the village and along the Saranac River area.

An addition to the east end of the powerhouse was completed and put into operation this year. You can note the color change from the original cement of the older complex. With all the new buildings that had been erected in the past ten years and those planned for the improvement were a necessity.

Rumors were popping up again and again to the tune that the Government was going to build a new post office. This became a reality when the Government purchased the K of C home on the corner of Emmons and Cook Street. The two-story wooden structure had been purchased by the Knights and used for their club rooms for a number of years. This 'rumor' of a new post office, of course, never became a reality after the home was torn down. It just became a vacant lot. It was again like so many promises from the great handout in Washington. The only thing that came out of the ground was weeds and was a community eyesore. This changed almost forty years later when Maggy Pharmacy dispensed aspirin for the headaches caused by indecision over the lot.

One of the most modern hospitals in the North County was opened on February 6, 1941. Much planning had gone into this new medical facility, and it was staffed with knowledgeable personnel. All the inmates' needs were attended to within this four-story brick structure. It was capable of housing 200 patients. The third floor was restricted to tubercular patients who came here for treatment from all the other state prisons. Dr. Zygmunt Pruski and the miracle drugs came along, and this problem just about disappeared in the late 1960's. The previous tubercular hospital was eliminated and in the area now is the superintendent's residence.

On August 5th the Knights of Columbus purchased the house at 28 Clark Street. They had been looking for suitable quarters ever since they left their former home.

Inside the walls, the final day arrived for the dedication of The Church of Saint Dismas. This three year brainchild of Father Ambrose Hyland saw many people come to see his beautiful edifice. Security was tight as the outsiders came in that afternoon and a gate through the north wall was closely scrutinized to see that no undesirables came in and also that none of the inmates left the premises. There is much written about the church so I will leave this to those more qualified, but August 28th was a red-letter day.

And then there was December 7th, "A Day that will live in infamy", said the President. Those who remember Pearl Harbor can recall exactly where they were and what they were doing when the news flashed came blaring across the radios.

With World War II on, the prison population in 1942 peaked at 2,000 men. Seems as draft notices were sent out, more decided to engage themselves in the states' correctional facilities. With the Federal Government pulling out all production stops, the shops here were also put into full use. Osnaburgh cloth was the principal item produced as well as items for the Navy, while still keeping up the production of state prisons. Two shifts worked on the production line with 10:30 p.m. as the closing hour. The federal government presented an "ENS" award for the work accomplished by the inmates. This ceremony took place in the North Yard on September 20, 1943.

Another cell block opened on August 10, 1943, when the largest block was completed. Originally called F & H Block, it was later decided to call it Upper and Lower F Block. During its construction period, it gave locals a place of employment. I remember during 1942 listening to the prison band play during the noon hour as we stretched out and ate our noon lunch.

1943 saw a fire in the Grand Union store on August 8. The store was located at the corner of Cook and Flagg Street in the Palmer building. It caused a shortage of food supplies as much of this commodity was going into the war efforts. It could be mentioned that the A & P also maintained a store on Cook Street. This was in the days when a trip to Plattsburgh was an occasion and not a twenty-minute jaunt.

November 30th was the last official working day for Doctor Webster, and it was announced that Dr. Francis Shaw would be his successor. This terminated nine years as Director of the State Hospital.

At this time, I end the history of the Village and the prison. It marks the first 100 years of the two places. Maybe with time on my side, I may further reconstruct the interesting tales of the other place in the world known as "Dannemora".

World War II: Prior to December 7th, many local men had decided to enter the armed forces. Selective service numbers had been drawn and with Hitler's drive for power in Europe, the handwriting was on the wall. The American Legion Post #852 erected an Honor Roll on the Town Hall noting many of the names. All branches of the Armed Services were represented as the days rolled by.

With the dropping of the atomic bomb in 1945, many of these men now knew that the "DOW" on their identification cards meant the duration of the war coming to an end.

When the village streets were once again filled with their smiling faces, many and varied stories of the war were repeated and repeated. A time of "freedom" was with just about everyone and for the rest of their lives was at hand.

Two names did not return. They were Frederick Agoney and Donald Bourey. Donald's body was returned, and he lies in St. Joseph's cemetery. Frederick was buried in Keeseville.

During the war years, temporary jobs were made the order of the days. Then when the returning servicemen came home, new lists were established, and they took the jobs at both institutions. A time of great change, but things worked out smoothly.