Daily Eagle Archives Posts

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From the Archives: Diaper Alley (9/2/2011)

The College Archives, housed in Drake Library, hold records, photographs and other items of historical value, including pictures of the long gone "Diaper Alley!"

As many are aware, the years after WWII were boom years for higher education. Schools like Brockport, which up through WWII felt that a freshmen class of 100 or so was large, began seeing their enrollment increase exponentially due to the G.I. Bill and related factors.

One new element in the student mix were married students, often former GI's with their families. They needed housing, and an initial response was to construct a set of dorms on the south side of Hartwell Hall, by the railroad tracks.

According to one library staff person, now long retired, who lived in these dorms with her husband and child, the residents jokingly referred to their dorm area as "Diaper Alley!"
A wonderful part of Brockport history is the European tour a group of Brockport students did in 1961 with their production of the popular musical "Guys & Dolls."

Fifty years ago this fall, a group of Brockport students embarked on an eight week tour of Europe with their production of the hit musical "Guys & Dolls." The production had been done the previous year at Brockport, and then a letter came from a Department of Defense office, inviting the College to send a group of students on tour with the show to military bases in Europe under the auspices of the USO.

The nature of the trip imposed a number of restrictions. Only 16 students and one faculty advisor could go, as opposed to the original cast of 40. Some students who had been in the original show couldn't go on the tour for various personal reasons, and substitutes had to be found. Since they were going to be on an extensive tour, all scenery, props etc. had to be able to be taken down and fit into regulation footlockers.

Dr. Hetler and the students pulled together and by all accounts had a wonderful experience and added a bright moment to many G.I.’s at bases scattered across Europe. Pictured here are some of the "Guys" at the airport.

By the way, at the Class of '61 reunion this week some of the troupe were here, and put on some of the songs and scenes from the musical, still troupers after all these years!
Earliest football photo... (Daily Eagle 10/5/2011)

Earliest photo of a Brockport football team.

This 1890s photograph is the earliest known picture of a Brockport football team. "Principal," or President, Charles Maclean was a keen advocate of the sport; you can see him in the second row on the right, wearing a derby.
Greek Letter Societies (10/14/2011)

*Early Greek Letter Societies at Brockport: the Civil War era to the 1930s.*

Greek Letter Societies flourished at Brockport from the 1860s through the 1930s. There were several sororities and fraternities, each having a room of their own in the school. The first two were Gamma Sigma, for men, which was founded here in 1869, and Arethusa, for women, founded in 1870. Both of these established chapters in other Normal Schools in New York.

The Greek Letter or literary societies played a significant role in the life of the school in their day. They carried out many of the functions later performed by the student government and various clubs, for example sponsoring dances, teas, and other social events, staging plays and debates, and bringing speakers of the day to campus.

In the 1930s however a student government had come into being, there were other social groups, and perhaps most importantly, the new "Principal" or president, Ernest Hartwell, was not supportive of Greek societies and when the new building was planned (today's Hartwell Hall,) he simply did not allow for rooms for the societies as there had been in the old building, and the groups faded away. Greek societies came back to Brockport only in the 1970s.

The college archives has a large collection of their minute books, photographs, dance cards, posters and much more. Hint: there is a lot of primary source material for a research paper! Pictured here are the members of Arethusa ca1875.
Sometime after WWI a living memorial of poplar trees was planted on campus, along Utica Street by what is now Alumni House, (then the principal or president's house,)and along the north side of campus, by the railroad tracks. Some of the trees are still visible in aerial photographs from the 1960s, but they are all gone now. There was a photo of them in the 1932 Saga Yearbook, and Principal Alfred Thompson wrote:

"Beautiful thoughts are inspired by nature's trees. The Lombardy Poplars around the campus that lift their heads so gracefully to the sky are living memorials to the one hundred one members of our school who answered our country's call in the World War. Some of our poplars did not survive and some of our boys did not return. Beautiful thoughts these trees inspire."
In the 1950s there was an active Veterans Club at Brockport, and one of their most significant projects was running a variety show that played not only at Brockport, but toured regional VA Hospitals to entertain the veterans there. Pictured here are the "Brockettes" who appeared at the Bath VA in January 1954 along with the other members of the show, the comedians, band...

In the old scrapbook this photo comes from there are letters from several VA hospital managers, and copies of hospital patient newsletters, praising the members of the show for brightening the day so for the patients.
Herman Burlingame was a professor of mathematics at the Normal School, and he did double duty by also serving as the librarian. Born in 1835, he was from Norwich, where he had attended the Norwich Academy and worked as a surveyor with his father. He later taught mathematics at that academy, and then in 1868 came to Brockport as teacher of mathematics. A keen mathematician, he offered one of the early algebraic proofs of the Pythagorean Theorem, and developed a set of special blocks for teaching calculation of cubic roots; a set of the blocks are on display in the Alumni House.

In his role as librarian for the Normal School he helped expand a small book collection into more of a real library, building one of the larger libraries among New York Normal Schools. This and the reading room he established were forerunners of today's Drake Library.

A popular teacher and colleague, he appears to have had the unfortunate distinction of being the first serving faculty member to die (1891) while still on the staff. His death was widely mourned in both the campus and village communities, and a special memorial booklet was published by his colleagues, who observed of Professor Burlingame that he was:

"...always genial and courteous, ready to lend a helping hand whenever needed, constant and faithful in his work. He commanded our respect by his ability as an instructor and his manly Christian character, and we never failed to find in him a steadfast and sympatizing friend, while his cheerful patience and fortitude during these last months have made him still more dear to us."
New Dining Hall at Brockport! (Daily Eagle 12/2/2011)

New in 1928 that is :-)  

In 1928 a space in the college building (it was just the one building then, standing where Hartwell is today) was dedicated for use as a cafeteria. The December 5, 1928 article in the Stylus on the cafeteria noted that this was the first cafeteria in the history of the school.

While in earlier years some students, as well as faculty, had roomed in the building which included kitchen facilities there was never a cafeteria or dining hall as such. After a terrible dorm fire at Fredonia at the turn of the century students no longer lived on campus, and either boarded in town, or commuted from home. So to have a space right in the building where you could get a hot meal on a cold day, or some coffee or tea, and not have to go out to your boarding house, or eat a cold lunch from home, was a real advancement in campus life!

The Stylus article gave credit to Principal (President) Alfred Thompson for encouraging the project and finding some $2,000 to support it, and to the labor of the Phi Alpha Zeta fraternity members who did a lot of the actual work in renovating the space. Mrs. Mabel Good, a local caterer and cook, was put in charge of the cafeteria, and the decorating was overseen by Miss Yale, a popular art teacher at the school.
Aerial view of the campus.

The college archives has a collection of aerial photographs of the campus that run from the late 1940s to the mid-1970s. The photo here is from January 1957. Looking to the northwest, you see the campus as it was then; the main building, (today's Hartwell Hall,) Lathrop, (then the student union,) and the early dormitories along Kenyon, Morgan and Neff.

The college was still limited to the original six-acre plot that dated back to 1835, but was on the verge of an exciting era of expansion that over the next decade or so would see the college greatly expand, creating the campus we know today. Or perhaps it would be better to say the campus we knew, as we once again are entering an era of growth, with the new SERC building under construction and a new academic building being planned; time perhaps for a new set of aerial photos?
"Names, Personal" (Daily Eagle 1/5/2012)

**Old fashioned names from an old college publication...**

One of the staple questions in the archives is that of someone asking for information about a family member of a previous generation, who is thought to have attended Brockport; did they actually go here, when, and so on. When looking for people from earlier years one handy reference is a book published in 1917 to mark the semicentennial of Brockport becoming a state school. In addition to a program of the day, the text of some of the speeches, and a history of the school, the book includes supplements that list the faculty of the past 50 years, and several listings of alumni covering 1868-1917.

In using this book recently the archivist was struck once again by some of the personal names, many of which one no longer sees in use. It would be interesting research to look into the history of personal names, the effects of gender and class on them and so forth. The library does have some titles on this sort of thing in the catalog, and article databases like Academic Search, JSTOR and Project Muse would be good resources as well. But for now here is a sampler of names, perhaps reminding one of earlier generations of family, grandparents and so on. Or, perhaps the names will serve as a resource for naming that baby that is on the way? :-)

**Girl’s names:** Ada, Adella, Augusta, Beulah, Blanche, Clara, Cora, Della, Dora, Edna, Etta, Hattie, Ida, Leona, Lettie, Lillian, Lily, Lottie, Luella, Lulu, Mabel, Maud, Millicent, Minnie, Nellie, Pearl, Phoebe, and Sadie.

**Boy’s names:** Arthur, Chauncey, Chester, Clyde, Delbert, Edwin, Horace, Hubert, Lloyd, Milton, Oliver, Roland, Roscoe, and Roy.
"Breach of Promise" (Daily Eagle 1/13/2012)

A curious story of one of our 19th century faculty...

In the archives there is a set of photographs of faculty of the latter 19th century. While doing research on the subjects of the photos, the archivist ran across the following story concerning one of them from the Brockport Republic, the local village newspaper of the time (which has now been digitized and is searchable online, contact the archivist for details.)

"Brockport Republic., 3/27/1879 p3

THE BREACH OF PROMISE CASE.

Although for some time informed of the general facts of a case of breach of marriage promise originating in this village, we did not give publicity to them because those most interested did not seek notoriety. But now, since the matter has been published abroad, with more or less inaccuracy, and that the true facts may be known, we give them as derived from authentic sources.

The parties to the case are Miss Alice Braman of this village and Mr. Charles Boss of Smyrna, Chenango Co., N. Y. Miss Braman is daughter of Dr. A. N. Braman, and principal of the primary department of the Brockport Normal School. Mr. Boss is now principal of the Union school at Cobleskill, Schoharie county, N. Y. Miss Braman is 27 years of age, and Mr. Boss 23. In the year 1872 Mr. Boss became a pupil at the Normal School, and about that time became acquainted with Miss Braman. He graduated in 1878. About four years ago he began paying particular attention to Miss B., and after a year and a half of courtship they became engaged to marry. They kept up a regular correspondence, and he visited her occasionally, the last time during the vacation of the school last summer. They continued correspondence until last November, about Thanksgiving time, when Mr. Boss wrote to Miss Braman that she held a second place in his affections, and desired to be released from his engagement.

Then Miss Braman's father wrote to Mr. Boss that his daughter's affections could not be trifled with in that way, and that the matter could not be allowed to rest. About Christmas Mr. Boss sent a lawyer by the name of Ray, to Dr. Braman to effect a settlement. He was informed that a settlement could only be made with Mr. Boss. Nothing more was done about the matter until first of the present month, when Miss Braman began a suit for $10,000 damages, and caused Boss to be arrested on a criminal charge to which he was subject under the law relating to breaches of promise. He gave bail in the sum of $3000. When the matter comes to trial it will be tried in this county.

Miss Braman is a lady of the highest respectability. Mr. Boss has always been considered a respectable gentleman, and his father is a substantial farmer at Smyrna. As Mr. Boss has never found fault with Miss Braman, it is inferred that the cause of his breaking the engagement was a "new affinity." This may be erroneous. We are certainly not disposed to do Mr. B, any injustice. It has been stated that the suit
was instituted solely to obtain money. This we are informed is not the case. The friends of Miss Braman think that a young man has no right to retain a young lady's affections for years during the best period of her life, and then forsake her. They hold that it is a wrong and an offense that should be punished.

There did not seem to be a follow up to the story, and one hopes there was in the end an amicable resolution. A few years later Miss Braman left the faculty of the college and went to Montana where she married and lived until her death in 1924. Miss Braman was an 1873 grad of the Normal School, and the "Primary Department" she was "Principal" of was the elementary grades section of the campus school of the day.
"A Fatal Plunge" (Daily Eagle 2/3/2012)

**Historical background on one of the Hartwell Hall "ghosts."

An inquiry came recently to the archives about the stories of ghosts in Hartwell Hall, in particular asking about the historical background to one of the ghosts, who is said to have drowned on the campus property. When a student here did an oral history project in 1993 with some Hartwell Hall staff and mentioned that one of the ghosts was said to have been a drowning victim, the archivist was skeptical, never having run across a mention of anyone drowning on campus. However, some time later, the archivist ran across the following report that ran in the old village newspaper, the Brockport Republic, on July 26, 1888:

"Yesterday afternoon an accident occurred at the Normal School buildings which resulted in the death of a well known Brockporter named Edward B. Rowley, whose home is on Clinton Street. In the rear of said building there is a cistern some eight or ten feet in width, and about the same depth, which at the time of the casualty contained seven and a half feet of water. Over the cistern was a plank covering, and upon that about a foot of earth. This earth was being removed by Mr. Rowley and another party, because the planking had become unsafe by reason of decay and needed replacing. Early in the afternoon he stepped upon one piece of plank which broke and let one leg through, but did not deter him from continuing his labors. The top was nearly uncovered when, without warning, another plank gave way and he disappeared in the water. His assistant peered through the opening, but could not see him as it was very dark, and when a sufficient opening could be made there was no sign of his whereabouts. It was some ten minutes before the remains were recovered by means of a hook.

That he should lose his life with assistance so near at hand seemed as strange as it did awful, and yet the circumstances were so peculiar that nothing short of greater care on his part could have averted the catastrophe.

Mr. Rowley was an industrious and obliging citizen, and therefore a great loss to the community. For quite a time he kept a drive barn on King Street. There survive him a wife and two daughters, to whom will be extended a full measure of sympathy.

Coroner Kleindienst came here from Rochester last evening but did not consider an inquest necessary."

Does this help verify the existence of ghosts in Hartwell Hall? The archivist will leave that to you to decide...
You too can be an archivist, like Marian Schleede ’42 (Daily Eagle 2/17/2012)

Preserving and passing on history is something anyone can do!

This post is prompted by a couple of things. The first was getting some materials from the alumni office, which included four scrapbooks that had belonged to Marian Schleede ’42 (Quackenbush.) The scrapbooks are remarkable! They start with one that includes her acceptance letter from Brockport for Fall ’38, and many documents and photos of people that are unique in the archives, for example a mimeographed handout listing all the boarding houses for girls in the village, photos of faculty like Edmunds, Hartwell, Tuttle, Schroeder and others at picnics, outings and so on, not the more formal yearbook poses at all. There are many charming photographs of Marian and her friends as well, for example the one featured here of Marian, left, and Betty Bolger on the steps of Hartwell.

Another thing is that folks from the Women's Center recently contacted the archives, asking about how to preserve the history of the Women's Center, which is having its 15th anniversary this spring.

What I suggested to them in essence was to do what Marian Schleede had done, namely to save primary documents; key papers, like her acceptance letter, freshman "bible" and photos of herself and friends, both casual and at events like the graduation daisy chain. Things like that original proposal to establish your new program, or the group photo of the founding members of your conference, minutes from meetings, charter documents and so on, they are unique, and once gone, irretrievable. You can easily save them yourself, mark them in some way, "do not discard," let others know these are primary documents to be retained, and if you wish, at some point you might consider passing them on to the formal college archives here in the library.
Alice Lennon was a daughter of William Lennon, long time science professor at Brockport. She graduated from Brockport in 1891, and then attended Smith College, graduating in 1895. She taught science here from 1896-1904, at a time when there were not many women science instructors at all. She is pictured here in a year book that came out in 1899.

Alice took a year off for further study at Cornell, and then moved to New York City, to work for the Y.W.C.A. in Harlem. Subsequently she moved on to teach at the Ruben Gap-Nacoochee School in Georgia, a school for the "mountain people" there. Many may know of this school, which still exists, as the source of the popular Foxfire series of books that came out in the 1960s about the skills and crafts of the mountain people.

In a book about the school, "Mountain Legacy" by Frances Statham, there is a long section of reminiscences of the school in the days before WWII, with many of the former students fondly recalling Miss Lennon and her influence on them.
The History of Academic Regalia at Brockport (Daily Eagle 3/21/2012)

The beginnings of wearing a cap and gown at Brockport.

The wearing of academic regalia, the cap and gown and so on, has a long history, going back centuries. It wasn't always the custom though in this country for students to wear a cap and gown at graduation ceremonies.

Here at Brockport the custom began in the fall of 1900, when it was agreed at a meeting of the senior class that the cap and gown would be worn the following spring for commencement. The November 1900 issue of the "Normalia," the student news of that era, described the reasoning behind the decision.

"The great object in adopting the cap and gown is in the matter of expense. With this a student who cannot stand the expense of a graduation dress, or suit, need have no fear to stand on the platform among others who can, for all appear alike. As the cap and gown cost much less, and can very easily be sold to the succeeding classes for at least half the price, all can easily afford to buy them. The appearance of the cap and gown is neat and attractive, and although much fun may be made of them and their wearers the first year or two, after a few years this will be done away with, and all will be glad of the change."

(It was noted in an earlier issue that between a suit, new shoes etc., one might spend as much as $20 or even $30 dollars on graduation clothes! Pictured here is an ad from the Normalia for Welch's Department Store, which was on Main Street, where the Post Office is now.)
Our college mascot's beginnings...

On September 19, 1958, the Stylus ran an article titled "Mascot Ellsworth Symbolizes Spirit." The report said that Ellsworth had his debut on Spring Day, May 4, 1956 when "...he was presented to the student body by his parents, the Stylus staff and cartoonist Bob Bloxsom. Ellsworth's main aim in life is to carry on the spirit of B.S.T.C. His job has been to lead Brockport's athletic teams on all fields and battles of competition, and to attend college dances, assemblies, concerts and plays."

As the "Hazing Committee" put it in a mimeographed document welcoming freshmen to Brockport in the mid 1960s, "Let Ellsworth be your guide and carry your spirit throughout the years... It is fitting that the high soaring eagle be chosen since his affinity for great heights is symbolic of the college motto, 'Let each become all he is capable of becoming.'

Ellsworth is shown here from a pep rally at homecoming in 1957. The costume may be a little less sophisticated than today's, but the spirit is the same!
Earliest Catalog (Daily Eagle 4/30/2012)

Our earliest surviving catalog.

A little something from the archives for a change of pace at the end of another busy year: a scanned copy of the 1842 Brockport Collegiate Institute catalog! It is the entire catalog, minus only the pages which listed the students in attendance by name (there were 154 men, 75 women.) This is the earliest surviving catalog. Click on the link below to view it or to print it. (It is only a few pages.)

The Brockport Collegiate Institute, which opened in December 1841, was the successor to the earlier Baptist Academy, founded 1835. That academy had closed due to some of the financial hazards such small private schools faced back then, and a group of interested Brockport citizens revived the school under a new name. None of the records of the Baptist Institute are known to exist today, but there is a substantial run of records from the era of the Collegiate Institute on to the present in the college archives.
"Friendly flowers and stately trees" (7/11/2012)

The history of our Alma Mater.

The lyrics of our school's Alma Mater were written by Marie Lillian Weldon '16 (pictured here from her class picture) and are set to the music of Gotteschalks' "Last Hope." You can hear the Brockport College Community Chorus perform it on YouTube at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFJibVcGiRA. She wrote the lyrics and set them to music sometime in the 1914-1915 academic year, the first mention in commencement programs of their use being in 1915. So far research in the archives has not determined what the origins of the writing of the Alma Mater were; who decided that there should be an Alma Mater for the school and how was Weldon selected to write it...?

Marie Weldon was born in Ogden and when at a young age her mother died her father moved with her and her sister to the Town of Sweden where they lived with her aunt and uncle, the Nugents, on Redman Rd. Marie attended the local one room school and then went to high school in Brockport at a time when the village high school was still part of the college's "Training School" department. She graduated high school in 1914 and then continued on at Brockport for the two year Normal course of that era.

She seems to have been a creative young woman, serving on the staff of the Stylus in its first years as a proofreader, and was a frequent contributor of poetry to its pages. In the village newspaper from the time are mentions of her as having the most "comical" costume at a "Hallowe'en" party at a Myrtle Woodward's home and as being the secretary of a newly established sewing circle, the "Willing Workers."

After graduation in 1916 she got a teaching job in the school system in Hudson NY. She is mentioned in the village paper again in 1917 when tragedy struck, with her father and then her aunt who raised her both dying in the same week. She served as executor of her father's estate and then returned to Hudson to teach. She is mentioned once or twice more in the following years as returning for visits, the last such mention being in 1945, where she is noted as living in Rochester. She seems not to have married, and her death date is unknown.

Attached here is a scan of the music and words to the Alma Mater as they ran in the Stylus of June 1925, when they first began appearing in this form; prior to this it was either simply noted that the Alma Mater had been sung, or only the lyrics printed. Perhaps the music and lyrics could be the basis of a team building exercise at an upcoming unit retreat or meeting for you? ;-) posted by ccowling [2012-07-11]
A new collection on the campus school is added to the college’s Digital Commons.

It’s funny about the Campus School at Brockport, many people know about it, as they may have gone there themselves, or known people who did, or had family who worked in the school and so on, but many other people are quite unfamiliar with the very concept of a campus school.

The short version of its history is as follows. The campus school here ran from 1867 to 1981. Two important goals and functions from the beginning were to first provide an opportunity for hands on training for students learning to be teachers, and then to serve as a model school, where new teaching techniques and technologies could be experimented with.

It was an actual school, always comprising grades 1-8, and for some of its history it even had a high school department, until the village of Brockport centralized its schools and built a high school in the 1920s. The students for most of its history were children from the local area, but in the latter 1960s and '70s the school was a pioneer in urban-suburban integration efforts.

There was a campus school reunion last summer which drew several hundred attendees, demonstrating that even 30 years after its closing the school has quite an alumni and emeriti following. Brockport wasn’t unique in having such a school by the way, they were common to most Normal schools and Teachers Colleges; our president, Dr. Halstead, was a campus school kid at Cortland for example!

Pictured here are students making snowman on the lawn of Hartwell Hall outside the campus school wing in 1953. (Later, in 1965, Cooper open as a new home for the school.) Something to cool you off on these hot summer days perhaps :-) We have a new section in the Digital Commons on the Campus school if interested!
This past week, construction workers made a fascinating discovery at Hartwell Hall. They were digging by the center steps and found a cornerstone of a previous building placed carefully in the ground against Hartwell's foundation! The stone is marked "1900" on two sides, and it is the cornerstone from the last major addition to the old building complex. That older complex was demolished in sections and replaced by today's Hartwell Hall in the years between 1938-1941.

This cornerstone is from a wing that was on the north (Monroe Avenue) side of the old campus. The wing was built circa 1900 and housed both the "Training School," as the Campus School was then called, and a new auditorium for the school. There is a 1902 special report on the dedication of the building in our Digital Commons. Also in the Digital Commons are some historic photos of the old building, including a color postcard view clearing showing the "new" addition.

The addition joined a complex whose center portion was the original building of 1835, rebuilt after a fire in the 1850s, and two wings added in the 1860s. In addition to this long-gone complex, there were a number of private homes on what is now the lawn of Hartwell, along Utica and Monroe.

The workers the archivist spoke to said that, in the course of their work this year, they have run across a number of former building sites and parts buried in the ground, Medina sandstone window lintels, concrete steps, house foundations and so forth. They said that while digging a trench parallel to Hartwell, about 10' or so out, they found the line of the foundation of the old building complex, which at its base was 5' thick of cut stone.

Plans are not yet decided for the rediscovered cornerstone, but it will be preserved for the future, as part of Brockport's ongoing story.
Our old neighborhood... (Daily Eagle 10/12/2012)

The campus neighborhood in 1902.

The attached plat map from a 1902 Monroe County Atlas shows the campus and its neighbors as they were at the time. The wing jutting out at the north end of the building was the campus school wing added in 1900, the cornerstone of which was recently discovered buried by Hartwell Hall. Notice all the homes around the school, many of which were acquired by the state in the 1950s and 1960s as the school expanded post WWII. (As another point of reference, note today’s Alumni House, at the bottom end of the image, the south end of campus. By 1902 this formerly private residence had become the official home for the principals, later presidents, of the school. Dr. Donald Tower was the last president to live in the house. After he left in 1964 the new president, Albert Brown, first lived in a private home, and then the college purchased the current president’s house on Holley Street.)
Our student union is named after two men, William (portrait shown here) and James Seymour. James, the elder brother, was a co-founder of Brockport with Hiel Brockway, but James moved on from Brockport in the early years after its founding. William however remained, and lived an extraordinarily long and successful life here in the village.

He had started in the mercantile business with his brother James, and then in the 1840s became involved in a foundry business in town (Brockport, like many canal towns of that era, was quite a hub of industry compared to the college town and commercial center of today.)

This foundry produced the first batch of Cyrus McCormick's recently patented reaper (a major advance in agricultural machinery) in 1846. Subsequent disagreements over fees led to McCormick moving his operations elsewhere, and Seymour collaborated with local businessman Dayton Morgan (of the Morgan Manning House) to launch their own reaper business, based on Seymour's "New York Reaper." This business move, while successful, also brought on a long patent battle with McCormick.

In addition to his business career, William Seymour was active in civic affairs, especially in education, perhaps in part because his wife, Nancy, was one of the first school teachers in Brockport. He served on the board of the Brockport Collegiate Institute for a number of years, and played a crucial role in the "Normal School Wars" of the late 1860s.

In brief, there came an opportunity to reposition the private collegiate institute as a state Normal School, a move which would ensure the continued presence of higher education in the village, where otherwise the institute was facing closure due to financial circumstances. This opportunity created tremendous controversy over the financing required of the local community to refurbish and expand the local building to meet state requirements. The move to raise the money via a tax on residents of Brockport and Sweden was naturally a matter of great debate, and William Seymour was a leading figure among the supporters of the tax, as the only way to maintain a school of this level in the community. Without the efforts of Seymour and others the old collegiate institute would have closed, and there would be no comprehensive college here today.

Born in Litchfield Connecticut in 1802, Seymour lived to see the early 20th century, dying at the age of 101 in 1903. Retiring in his 70s, he remained active until the end of his life, making several trips to Europe in his 80s with his daughter and son in law, and visiting the Chicago Exposition in 1893. He loved
to read, and could quote from memory long passages from Shakespeare. He also enjoyed playing billiards with his friends in his billiards room on the top floor of his house, the building that today houses the village offices and the Brockport Museum. The painting shown here is of William Seymour in his old age, done by his niece Helen Hastings, who was later the founder of the Brockport Museum in what had been the family home. This painting hangs today in the Seymour Public Library, and was photographed by retired Brockport graphic designer Norm Frisch, who is active in local history these days.

There are some documents online in the Digital Commons local history collection about Seymour and the reaper industry, and a book was written in recent years by a scholar of agricultural history, Gordon Winder, based in part on his research at Brockport where we have materials from the Seymour & Morgan Company. (The American reaper: harvesting networks and technology, 1830-1910.)
Alene Butler was a Brockport resident with a deep connection to the local community and its educational institutions. She attended the “Training School” section of the old Normal School at the time when it included a high school department, in the years before the village of Brockport established its own high school. She graduated from that “High School Department” in 1925, and from the State Teachers College at Albany in 1929. She then obtained a teaching position in the recently established Brockport high school, where she taught history until 1968. In the 1930s she began to take graduate level work at the University of Rochester, and received her master’s degree in 1939. Her thesis was on the history of the Brockport Collegiate Institute.

Using extensive primary source materials, from the minutes of the board of trustees to the back files of the village newspaper, as well as interviews with local people who recalled the old Collegiate Institute, she wrote a fine history of the school during its years as a private academy. The academy movement of the early and mid 19th century is an intriguing part of educational history, combining elements of what were to become the high schools and four year colleges of the 20th century. These academies offered educational opportunities to women and minorities when they were not so available at the colleges of the day, and they represented an admirable locally based and supportive enthusiasm for education.

Her thesis examines in careful detail the history of the school, the physical campus, teaching goals, educational opportunities, textbooks used, its financial challenges, student life and much more.

Brockport's archives did hold a copy of the thesis, but it was a photocopy of the original, done many years ago, and so poor in quality as to be almost unreadable. Recently the archivist borrowed the original from the University of Rochester’s Special Collections and scanned it on the archives book scanner, for placement on the Digital Commons.

Miss Butler is pictured here at the time of her retirement from the Brockport High School in 1968, with the "Arista" year book being dedicated to her.
Upcoming Bicentennial (1/9/2013)

*The Town of Sweden will be celebrating its bicentennial in 2014; catch up on your local history, including that of the College, now!*

The Town of Sweden was formed out of the old "Triangle Tract" in 1814. The history of the town, of the village of Brockport, and that of our College as well, are closely intertwined. A good start to learning about this history would be to read the newly digitized copy of the Town of Sweden Sesquicentennial book, just added to the Digital Commons. There's quite a bit in there not only about the local community, but the College as well.

[https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/local_books/14/](https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/local_books/14/)
The archivist was scanning the 1928 yearbook today and happened to notice a quite unusual first name, spelled in two different ways, "Onnalee" and "Onnolee." Curious, he looked into the name, and at first was stumped, but his luck turned better when he tried the second spelling of "Onnolee." Some readers may know where this is going already, but for those who don't, the name comes from a 19th century romantic poem about a tribe of Indians in the Finger Lakes. The author was known as the "Bard of Avon (NY)," a William Howe Cuyler Hosmer. Among other poems he wrote one entitled Yonnondio, which title was borrowed by Walt Whitman for a work of his own.

The name Onnolee comes from a maiden of this tribe, a tribe which is vanquished in battle and the fair Onnolee becomes a captive of one of the warriors of the other tribe. In classic romance fashion, she seizes his knife, kills him, and then leaps to her death in what is now Hemlock Lake. Thus the poem runs, and the archivist will leave judgements of its historicity and literary merits to those better qualified. Perhaps someone of our faculty in English or History are familiar with it?

It is intriguing that the poem was well known enough in its time to prompt parents to name their daughters after the Indian maiden, and that our class of 1929 had two women students so named, Onnolee Hamil of Brockport, and Onnalee Gaze of Long Island! Attached here is Onnolee Hamil's entry in the 1928 Stylus Commencement issue, the last year such an issue was done. The next year the Stylus became the newspaper format it is still today, and the Saga Yearbook was launched, which ran until it ceased in 1996.
Herbie the Robot! (Daily Eagle 2/8/2013)

Just 82 years ago this month Herbie "Televox" visited Brockport...

In February 1931 Brockport's Lecture Committee, a sub-committee of the "Blanket Tax Committee," forerunner of today's BSG, secured a novel lecture or demonstration for the school. The lecture featured "Herbie (or Herbert) Televox." This was a robot built by Westinghouse engineers at their Pittsburgh PA plant.

It was basically a heavy cardboard cutout of a man covering some circuitry and other equipment. The robot could take a telephone call, make a few buzzes and other noises, answer some stock questions with answers recorded on 78 records, and wave his arms. Primitive seeming as he may be to us, he was a sensation in that era when the whole idea of robots was new. For more on this event there is attached here a page from the Saga Yearbook and the Stylus of 1931.
Before PC’s, before typewriters... (Daily Eagle 2/22/2013)

A sample page of a 19th century registration book.

Before they had a PC with the latest version of Word, before they had typewriters, staff here needed to have good penmanship, as all records were written out by hand. From the surviving records it does not seem that the use of typewriters was common here until about 1900. Attached is a scan of one of a student register for the 1860s. Several of these massive, oversize leather bound volumes survive to this day in the college archives.
No charter, but... (Daily Eagle 3/14/2013)

We did have information on the beginnings of today's honor society...

A member of Kappa Delta Pi, the honor society, stopped by the archives recently inquiring about their history and the original charter. Unfortunately we don't have the charter, but were able to find information about when this society recognizing academic success started here.

Apparently an honor society was formed in the 1948-49 school year with the intention of securing a Kappa Delta Pi charter, and they were successful. One interesting part of the story to the archivist was that their faculty adviser was Wayne Dedman, Department of History, who later wrote "Cherishing This Heritage," the history of the college.

A nice example of how archives questions sometimes go; we didn't have the charter, but we do have runs of the Stylus, the Saga yearbook and so on. Another possibility the archivist suggested is to try to connect with the founding members, some of whom may well still be around and enjoy reminiscing about their time here at Brockport!
"Something doing every minute" (Daily Eagle 3/27/2013)

An alumni banquet of 1911.

While researching something else, the archivist ran across the attached letter of 1911 in an old scrapbook. It is an invitation to an alumni banquet, and nicely captures something of the era. Perhaps some ideas for our alumni staff of today ;-) 

The archives has quite a bit of material on alumni groups and events of years gone by. It would be an interesting study to research, well back in the late 1800s for example there was an active chapter of Brockport alumni in the New York city area.

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THE FIFTH ANNUAL BANQUET
Of Former Students of the Brockport State Normal School
FRIDAY EVENING, MARCH THIRTY-FIRST, AT 6:30
HOTEL SENECA, ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

GUEST OF HONOR will be Principal Alfred C. Thompson, and it is hoped that a large attendance of former students will be present to extend our new Principal a royal welcome.

ALL FORMER STUDENTS—whether graduates or not and their husbands and wives—are cordially invited. You are hereby personally invited and requested to pass the word along to any and all former students whom you may know. The Committee desires to overlook none, yet it is difficult to keep a complete list on account of a constant change in addresses.

A GOOD DINNER is being arranged by the dinner committee.

AN ENJOYABLE PROGRAM is planned by the speakers' committee, and although we are unable to announce all names now you may be assured of hearing some excellent short talks by people of note.

A SPECIAL MUSICAL ATTRACTION will be offered, including vocal and instrumental solos, quartettes and orchestra. In addition there will be a rousing "Everybody Sing" feature, which will be enjoyed by all.

ANOTHER FEATURE offered will be the opportunity to renew old acquaintances. Have a good old-fashioned chat with some former schoolmate, affording the chance of a lifetime to feel young again—and the privilege of meeting members of other classes.

SIGN THE ENCLOSED POSTCARD and mail it as soon as possible, advising others to notify the committee early. Something doing every minute is promised, so "Cram" now, come by "pony" or train, be prepared for an "exam" in eating and laughing and a "test" in singing. Remember the day and hour and do not "flunk".

THE COMMITTEE

Tuition, including books and board, $1.50.

About a special supplement to the Democrat & Chronicle which ran on May 21, 1967.

On May 21, 1967, the Democrat & Chronicle ran a special supplement titled "Campus Century at Brockport." The supplement was part of the observance of the centennial of the college having become a state school in 1867. (We were a private "collegiate institute" before then.)

Read about the school in an era when in one year the freshman class increased by 35%, from 590 to 900! Learn about President Al Brown, the Peace Corps program, the Fancher Campus, "automation" in education, as well relive a time when you could get a steakburger plate for 85 cents, drive a brand new '67 Dodge Monaco, and much more.

You can view the supplement, which was recently digitized, by following the link to the Digital Commons.

https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/student_archpapers/35/

Dr. Derby visits two elderly Brockport alumnae residing in Japan, Lillian Wells 1893 and Florence Wells 1904.

In 1960 Dr. Orlo Derby of the Department of Education went to Japan to teach for a year. While there he looked up two Brockport alumnae, sisters, who had resided in Japan for many years as missionaries and teachers, including throughout WWII. He wrote a piece for the Spring 1960 Alumni News about meeting them which you will find attached here. How curious to think of these two sisters living in Japan all those years, and what experiences
they must have had!
The first college yearbook was a one time effort published in 1899. The next such effort was in 1914. The Stylus had just started that spring, and was published in magazine format. Each June issue was the commencement or yearbook issue. In the 1928-29 school year, the Stylus went to a newspaper format, and a new yearbook was launched, the Saga. The Saga ran from 1929-1996, when for a variety of reasons it was discontinued.

The yearbooks capture the school of that year so well, and it is fascinating to leaf through them and see how things changed. You can now view the yearbooks for 1899, 1914-1950 online in the college's Digital Commons, thanks to the work of archives staff, especially our capable student assistant Candace Bateman! More will be added in the coming year. We'll finish with these words from the 1950 yearbook:

"Sing a song of the classroom scene,
Cards and cigarette in between,
Timed to the rhythm of college days,
From dances to teas - assemblies to plays.
Christmas festivities merrily go
And Winter Carnival romps in with the snow.
We pass our last examination -
Go forth to class day and graduation."

Oh, "Diaper Alley?" (Photo above) It was temporary housing for married vets, along the railroad tracks on the north side of Hartwell.
A Room with a Different View... (Daily Eagle 5/31/2013)

A scene long gone, looking southwest from the back of Hartwell Hall in the late 1940s.

This picture just surfaced in the archives. It is a scan of an unidentified negative taken in the late 1940s. With some help from an old aerial photo, and a 1902 plat map of the neighborhood around the school, the archivist's impression that this was an image taken from the back of Hartwell looking southwest was confirmed.

Part of what is confusing of course is that one is looking toward where today one would see Rakov, Residence Drive, Cooper across the railroad tracks and so on. At the time of this photo, however, the area was all still residential. You'll notice a street going west off Kenyon, about where today's Residence Drive is. That was West College Street, and it led to Millard Street, which paralleled Kenyon.

Further in the distance to the upper right, you can see playing fields and goal posts, about where today would be Drake and Allen.

As the post-WWII higher education expansion took off in the late '40s, the school began acquiring properties and adding new buildings. Some of the first were temporary classroom buildings and dorms north of Hartwell, along the railroad tracks. Then, structures we have today — Lathrop and so on — began to be erected. For the first time in its history, the College was more than a one-building school!
A new document on the history of the school is added to the Digital Commons.

This fascinating piece was written by science professor William Lennon (whom Lennon Hall is named for) in 1907. A general history of the school, it has a particular focus on the buildings and physical plant. An intriguing look at the long gone building complex that constituted our school for over a century, from 1835-1937.

https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/student_archpapers/38/
Thomas Adams '56 is featured in the attached piece from the April 1967 Alumni Newsletter. After college he joined the Marine Corps and was serving in Vietnam at the time of the article. He had married Jean Cooper '56.
Fighting Dad's Letter
Phrased for Children

It is a DIER there will be turkey for dinner today at the U.S. mess halls in Vietnam, because our military is notoriously tight about observing such traditional niceties.

Maj. Thomas G. Adams and the other American troops may not exactly luxuriate in a holiday atmosphere however, what with the Viet Cong at every hand. They’ll go about their jobs, Thanksgiving Day or no, with their usual proficiency.

Back home in Irondequioct, Adams’ wife, Joan, and his two children, Susan, 9, and Greg, 5, have a vivid idea as to what that job entails.

In two letters, marbledly different in language, as befits the age and experience of his audience, Tom Adams spelled it out for them.

(He and his wife met while both were students at the State University College at Brockport from there they were married the same year, and Tom went into the Marine Corps; he has decided to make it a career. Mrs. Adams is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cooper of 19 Athens St. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Sy Adams of Gloversville.)

* * *

TO HIS WIFE, HE WROTE:

"My dearest,

Moses has returned from the field. On the 11th I relieved the battalion commander who had to come back to get chewed out over a supply inspection. The battalion was conducting a Golden Fleece 52, a rice collection operation. We evacuated and harvested more than 100,000 pounds of rice. All of it came out by helicopter in two days.

Today at 0900 the battalion provided escort for almost 200 refugees, moving them smack dab through the C.V. country back to the security of district headquarters at Binh Son. Now this column was over 4,000 meters long, consisting, by actual count, of 673 men, women and children, 377 damn cows, and God knows how many chickens, ducks, pigs and dogs.

"Can you possibly imagine moving all these people and their animals, plus all their belongings and a battalion of Marines at the same time? We did it, and that’s why I’m now known as Major Moses.

"Honey, it was the most unbelievable, hilarious, pathetic, miraculous, exocuss you ever saw. Raining like hell, kids crying, cows running off into rice paddies, and a V.C. threat with every step.

"The people plodded along, carrying all the belongings they could bring with them. Old mamas and kids were barefoot in the rain, carrying their own weight in household treasures. A sad sight, but one that made me drive them like some sort of Simon Legree so they would get to Binh Son and out from under the V.C. yolk. The battalion did a fine job; it was a most satisfying operation and a most memorable day.

"The first Viet Cong main force regiment was 3,000 yards south of us last night, and chasing. So we just made it out in time. Not a Vietnamese refugee killed or wounded.

"Sandy Kemper, one of my platoon commanders when I was E.O. of Mike, was killed by a booby trap the day I flew out to take command. He was such a fine boy! A piece of me went with him.

"I will attempt to see his mother and father when I get home. Let me amend that; I WILL see his mother and father when I get home."

* * *

"We brought them rice to eat and we had our doctor and dentist give them all a good check up. You know how important that is. We had a party for all the children of the village. They played games. We gave candy and school supplies to the children. All the boys and girls can’t go to school like you do, as the Viet Cong have destroyed many of the school buildings. We are rebuilding them as quickly as we can.

"We had a dinner for all the old men of the village because they are the wise men who will have to provide leadership for the people now that we have chased the Viet Cong out. We will keep one platoon (45) of Marines in the hamlet now to make sure the V.C. don’t come back, and the people are allowed to live in peace. Also, some Vietnamese soldiers will stay with our Marines.

"By doing this we hope we can protect the people from the Viet Cong and show them they don’t have to be afraid any more. I think we have been quite successful. If we can do this in enough villages, the war will soon be over and all daddies can come home."
Mandolin Club Rocks Normal Hall! (Daily Eagle 6/21/2013)

History of the ca1900 Brockport Mandolin Club.

Well, OK, maybe they didn't actually say that the Mandolin Club "rocked" Normal Hall, but it sure did! This was a local instance of a popular musical phenomenon of the day, a mandolin orchestra. Nothing to do with the bluegrass music of today, these groups played both classical and popular music of a century ago using mandolins, guitars and cellos. Click on the link to the Digital Commons collection on the mandolin club.

https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/student_archpapers/39/
A memorial tablet from the old Normal school and its restoration.

At the June 1906 commencement a brass memorial tablet was placed in the old Normal School. The tablet commemorated the lives of three faculty members who had died in recent years while still teaching. (At this same time two portraits of former principals were presented as well, those of McLean & Smith, which today hang in the Allen Building.) The tablet names Herman Burlingame, Minerva Chriswell, and Jane Lowery.

When the old Normal building was torn down and Hartwell Hall raised in its place, the tablet was moved into the new building. In the mid 1990s it was taken down during the Hartwell renovation along with several other tablets. The tablets were stored in different locations, more recently in a back room of the library. Thanks to the initiative of library director Mary Jo Orzech the tablets are being restored by Duncan Chase of the Art Department and will be placed back in Hartwell Hall. The tablet to Burlingame, Chriswell and Lowery is shown here. It was cast by the Williams Foundry in New York City, which also did brass tablets and other work for such places as the Library of Congress and the Boston Public Library.

For biographical information and photographs of these three faculty please visit the college's Digital Commons (link provided here.)

https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/faculty_photos/
Eugenia Peckham was from Parma and attended the Brockport Collegiate Institute (as we were then known,) from 1842-1845. She was of a literary turn of mind and was strongly influenced by the woman who was head of the "Ladies Department" at the time, Clarissa Thurston. (Miss Thurston was one of several pioneers in women's education to come from Brockport. She left Brockport in 1845 and returned to Elmira where she was from, to start the Elmira Female Seminary.)

After her time here Eugenia was married, to a man named Hartwell, and continued her writing. (Her husband is likely a relation of Ernest Hartwell, the pivotal figure of the 1930s whom Hartwell Hall is named for. His parents had been farmers along Ridge Road and like many in the area, emigrated to Albion, Michigan where he was to be born.)

Eugenia Peckham Hartwell died in childbirth in 1854. (She is buried in Parma Corners Cemetery.) The following year a book of her poems was published by her father. A copy is held in the rare book collections of Drake Library, and from that copy a scan was made of the illustration of her, and her poem "On Seeing a Picture of Brockport Collegiate Institute." Inserted before the poem is a scan of an image of the Collegiate Institute from the 1840s.

ON SEEING A PICTURE OF THE BROCKPORT COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

I love on these pictured walls to gaze,
And recall the scenes of other days,
When I trod its halls with footsteps free,
And had naught of grief to trouble me.
I have hoarded long, as a treasured thing,
The joys that my school-girl memories bring,
And naught on life’s pathway seems so fair
As the gladsome days when my home was there;
When I conned the page of classic lore,
With the absent ones I may see no more,
Or wandered adown the dewy lawn,
As light of heart as the graceful fawn.
But most, of the joyous seasons there,
Do I love our room of evening prayer,
And deep does my heart in sadness swell
When I hear, in fancy, the low prayer-bell,
And the footsteps light of the happy throng
Hastening to join in the evening song,
And my soul seems borne on angels’ wings
To the land whence alone true pleasure springs,
As I hear the voices of loved ones raise,
Tuning to God their grateful praise,
And hear the low tones of heartfelt prayer,
Asking of Heaven protecting care;
And feel again the accustomed kiss
Of one* whose presence alone was bliss,
On whose lip was ever some gentle word,
Sweeter than notes of summer bird
To the happy hearts who knew no care
While they that loved one’s smiles might share.

*Miss C. Thurston, Preceptress.
Letter from a new faculty member — in 1842! (Daily Eagle 9/3/2013)

A fascinating discovery of a letter from a new faculty member at the Brockport Collegiate Institute in 1842.

Thanks to Gary Musante in the Department of Theatre and Music Studies for sharing this discovery with the archives! In doing some research of his own, Gary ran across a letter that is from a young faculty member, David Black, to a friend describing his new position. It is a fascinating and very rare glimpse of the life of a beginning professor of that time. The letter given below.

1842: David Black to Charles Carroll Parker

This letter was written by David Black (18xx-1843) to his college class-mate Charles Carroll Parker (1814-1880). They were 1841 graduates of the University of Vermont in Burlington.

The college catalogue says that David Black was from Fredonia, New York and entered the college from Sharon, New York, in May 1838. He taught in Sheridan, New York, but died in 1843. From this letter we learn that David taught briefly at an academy in Canton [presumably New York], and that he then taught languages at the newly established Brockport Collegiate Institute¹ in Brockport, New York.

Charles Carroll Parker was born in Underhill, Vermont. After graduating from college, he was the principal of Burlington High School from 1841 to 1845. He attended the Union Theological Seminary and was ordained a Congregational minister in 1848. He served as the pastor at Tinmouth (1848-1854), the pastor at Waterbury (1854-1867), the Principal of Gorham (Maine) Seminary (1867-1868), and finally relocated to Parsippany, New Jersey.

TRANSCRIPTION

Addressed to Charles C. Parker, Esq., Rector of the Burlington High School, Burlington, Vermont [forwarded to Underhill, Vermont]

Brockport Academy
August 1842

¹Brockport Collegiate Institute
My Dear Friend Parker,

I doubt not but you will be not a little surprised at receiving a communication from this part of creation & be ready to le me down with those who migrate, not emigrate. I left Canton. I left the Trustees of the Academy fighting about my stay. I left that Academy for I could see no ground to cause me to think that Institution could ever flourish. Religion! Religion or rather the lack of it with many was the cause! The Trustees were men such as I should call destitute of judgement withal as old Ben says, & moreover ignorant.

Before I reached home, I had an application to go to Brockport. My intention had been to study a year at home. I agreed to go & teach ½ time. I teach 2½ days per week & get $300 a year. The school is large — 4 male teachers & 4 female teachers. “The building is of stone 4 stories in height above the basement & 60 feet by 100 upon the ground. It is divided transversely by two halls, one of which belongs to the Female Department. There are 4 general school rooms, a large Chapel, 32 rooms for students 14 feet square to each of which is attached a bedroom. The building was raised for a college & for one year they had college exercises. It cost $20,000 & $2,000 was afterward spent in repairing & finishing it.”

The Brockport Collegiate Institute

The Brockport Collegiate Institute, as they call it, has been in operation only half a year. There is a foundation you see for great things. My part is to teach the languages. I have just engaged to instruct 3 of the teachers in Latin. One is a lady, by the way. Metaphysics I soon intend to bear down upon. The distinction made by the [Samuel Taylor] Coleridge men between the Reason & Understanding — or I ought to say the Existence of both there as distinct faculties — has always stumbled me. What necessity in supposing this faculty (reason) to exist? In the language of Dugald Stewart, let me ask, “What good reason can be given for assigning one name to the faculty which perceives truths that are certain & another name to the faculty that perceives truths which are probable? Would it not be equally proper to distinguish by different names the power by which we perceive one proposition to be true & another to be false?” This I acknowledge has some weight with my mind, however I wish truth. I have as yet established to system; consequently not interested in defending or assailing anyone. Truth & truth only is my object. I can not be interested in persuading myself of falsehood. Will you be so good as to make some remarks on the subject if your mind is made up on it? I am aware that the subject does not admit of mathematical demonstration. But still it may be presented if true in a light that is convincing at least to a mind that is not clouded too thickly with prejudice.

For some time past I have been conscious of an inward yearning after truth on many subjects & this truly is an important one for the whole system that we were taught is hinged upon it & I well remember the words of that true, great & good man of whom I count it an honor to be a pupil — that “without this distinction, there can be no philosophy.”²

By this time the Seniors must have got their sheep-skins. I wish when you write that you would write where Morse is. I think I wrote to him last though I am not certain. Write how you get along (I suppose it is vacation with you now). I have had none except about 3 weeks & one week of that I studied hard inasmuch as the weather was inclement.
Tell me what has become of George Lyman. I suppose they will get — if they have not already got — Mr. Bliss to fill Dr. Marsh’s place. The main pillar of the U. V. M. has fallen & I fear it has seen its best days. If you please, write the number of Freshmen — alias Frenchmen — that have entered.

I can tell you but little of Brockport as I have not been here a week. The village, however, is pleasant. Locust trees, as in Burlington, are very numerous round the dwelling. I should think it is nearly half the size of Burlington.

How do you progress in the study of the Greek particles? As expected, I find few teachers that know anything about them. No long since, the principal of a large academy & one that had been teaching Greek for at least five years, told me he did not know that any one had ever written on the power & even of the particles. I find my time was not by any means misspent when devoted to investigating them. The habits of investigation I then acquired I shall ever appreciate. I then learned clearly the meaning of Lord Bacon’s Induction. It is laborious but is the only touchstone of truth in such subjects.

My time shall hereafter be devoted to the languages & metaphysics. I shall spend little time in mathematical enquiries. By this, however, I do not intend to imply any intention to neglect extending my knowledge on other subjects — that it [to] acquire a stock of general knowledge. This I deem important. I do not intend to be a mere linguist or metaphysician. The great object of society is to make a man an agreeable & useful member of society.

I must stop for you may think I am too prosy & will just beg the honor of subscribing myself your friend & class-mate, — D. Black

Huntington I think cannot be far from here. We are only 20 miles from Rochester. I may possibly visit him if the distance be not great.

FOOTNOTES

¹ “In 1841 a group of people in Brockport, which was a vital commercial and manufacturing town then, opened the Brockport Collegiate Institute in a building located where Hartwell Hall now stands. The building had housed another academy in the 1830s which failed for financial reasons. The Collegiate Institute was a thriving success scholastically but like many such schools struggled financially. In 1866, largely through the efforts of Malcolm MacVicar who was the principal and a leader in education circles, the school became one of the four new state “Normal” schools established in New York.” [Source: The College at Brockport website]

² David Black is no doubt referring to Rev. James Marsh, D. D. — the deceased President of the University of Vermont, and who served as the Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy. He died on 3 July 1842, just before this letter was written. He was succeeded by Rev. John Wheeler.
"Smile, it won't hurt you." (Daily Eagle 9/24/2013)

A little about Alfred Thompson, head of the school 1910-1936.

Recently a faculty member inquired about Alfred Thompson, and on reflection it seemed like others might be interested in some information on this former head of the school. He was "Principal," as they called the president then, of the Brockport Normal School from 1910-1936. A Yale graduate, he was well liked and respected by both students and faculty. Thompson Hall is named after him.

He and his wife are shown here on their way to the 1936 commencement in a snapshot from the archives. Attached is the memorial page in his honor from the March 2, 1937 Stylus.
"Dealing with the death of a close friend, Dr. Thompson was truly a cultured gentleman. Many of our faculty had known him for years — even before he came to Normal College. All those of us who were now in the institution had also come to know him and love him, appreciating his patience, understanding, and overall spirit of cooperation. We, as students, were encouraged to seek the hundreds of his former students, in the school and out in the field, who today deeply honored the thought that they have been as enduring friends and counselors."

"Be Yourself Right"

Dr. Thompson, born on a farm in Northfield, Vermont, died on December 31, 1937, the son of Harvey R. and Mary (Stapleton) Thompson. He was a graduate of the Normal College and married Mary Martin, whom he met while teaching in a Vermont school. Their children are Emily, Margaret, and John. They have three grandchildren.

Dr. Thompson was a vice-president of the Normal College, serving on the Board of Trustees from 1930 to 1937. He was also a member of the faculty of the Normal College and later became its president. He was appointed as the first director of the Normal College in 1932, a position he held until his death.

Dr. Thompson was a noted scholar and writer who contributed many articles and reviews to the Educational Review, the American Educational Research Journal, and the Journal of Educational Administration. His book, "The Stylus," was recognized for its contributions to educational thought and practice.

"In Memoriam"

Dr. Thompson died on March 2, 1937, after a long illness. He was survived by his wife, Mrs. Mary Thompson, and their three children. He was interred at the Normal College Cemetery.

"The Stylus"

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, BROCKPORT, N. Y.
TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 1937 No. 11

"In Memoriam"

Of small men great things are written in an attempt to capture the vacant spaces in the houses of their lives. Of great men, few things can or need be written for their houses have open doors that have welcomed many and much and whose visitors will ever speak of their hospitality. Dr. Thompson's was a large house, well furnished with kindliness, geniality, accomplishment, and human understanding; and his numerous guests will prize all curtains as they meet with him in memory.

Dr. Thompson was the father of our school family. We are a part of his household. We shall think of him always in terms of our family life. We will remember him in his office, his cheerful face an example for us of the suggestions on his door—"Smile, it won't hurt you." Or sitting at his old roll top desk over which hung his motto—"Do your work as well as you can and be kind." Or the picture of him walking up the campus walk, his black Derby a guide to his students, and his pot of tea, a welcome and a comfort to all who would talk with him in his study.

Dr. Thompson was known to all of us as a leader of our school family. The school was a part of his household, and he was a leader with other elders; when he caused the praise of memory he deserved our gift. We will sing his favorite song:

"When the depending leaves
Like drops from thy gentle straw
Tell our thoughts with their soft sound
Dr. Thompson, teacher, lead—"
Mary Jane Holmes is largely forgotten today, but in her time she was an immensely popular and successful author. Her many books sold very well, and some were also serialized for magazines or adapted for use on the stage, and at least one, Lena Rivers, was made into a movie in the early days of film. She was probably one of the most successful women authors in the latter 19th century in this country.

Her husband, Daniel Holmes, had gone to the old Brockport Collegiate Institute and went on to become a successful lawyer. He was also a staunch advocate for our school and served on the board for over 40 years. Holmes Hall is named after Mr. and Mrs. Holmes.

The College archives has set up a page on Mrs. Holmes and will be adding materials to those already there. Her books are widely available in libraries like our own, and in sites like Google books. The new Digital Commons collection does offer one small book of hers with a local connection, though: the Christmas Font story, about children in the Sunday School at St. Luke's church raising money to buy a baptismal font. The font is still in the church today!

Featured here is an image of her not often seen; the stock photo one generally sees is a profile shot of her when older, but this is her at a younger age. The original is in the Mary Jane Holmes Room in the local Emily Knapp Museum.
A glimpse of "Physical Culture and Athletics" here in the early 1900s, featuring a newly discovered photograph.

In the early 1900s, team sports were present here at Brockport, as shown here in this circa 1908 photograph of the women’s basketball team with their coach, Ermina Tucker, standing in the center back row. Miss Tucker taught "elocution and physical culture" at the Normal school from 1904-1910.

Notice the neat row of Indian clubs — they look like bowling pins, almost — hanging from the walls of the gymnasium behind the group. Instead of the stationary devices and weight machines of today, exercise in that era commonly utilized free weights like these clubs which were very popular. Indian club swinging was even an Olympic event in that era!

Indian clubs are swung in a series of movements, either by oneself, or in a class. They are enjoying a bit of a comeback actually, for their effectiveness in stretching and toning muscles.
A local history group, the Brockport Community Museum, (a separate body from the Emily Knapp Museum in the village hall,) is having an event this Saturday at 10am in Sagawa Park that might be of interest to some. It is the unveiling of an illustrated sign with information on the history of many of the local churches. This history goes back a number of years; St. Luke's Episcopal is having their 175th anniversary this fall for example.

There are substantial historical connections between the college community and local churches. The college was started after all in 1835 as a private academy by an American Baptist group, and many faculty and staff have been active in one or another of the local faith communities over the last 175 years. There have been, and continue to be, some student groups that connect with local churches as well. The Brockport Community Museum has several current and emeriti college staff on the board, and welcomes all to this event.

Shown here is the Brockport Presbyterian church on State Street about 1910, from a glass plate negatives in the college archives' special collections. Notice the manse on the left; this was demolished in the 1960s.
Recently, Mike Andriatch of Alumni Relations asked the archivist about the history of the local Newman Center and club, the Catholic student group. The subject had come up with some alumni of the 1950s he had been in contact with, who were wondering if there was any history of this group they had been a part of then.

The answer was yes, we do have some materials on it, and not only the primary source materials typically found in the archives, yearbook entries, Stylus articles and so on, but history professor John Kutolowski wrote a history of the Newman movement here in 1990, and the archives has a copy. Thanks to technologies unavailable at the time written, this history has been scanned and placed in the college's Digital Commons where it will be freely accessible to all. (See the link with this article to locate this history.)

Pictured here from the 1937 Saga yearbook is Josephine Mannix, who was a campus school "teacher critic" here from 1928-1961. She was likely the first Catholic faculty member, and from its inception in the 1940s was instrumental in helping establish and build the Newman fellowship.

https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/student_archpapers/40/
From Cavalryman to Building Superintendent (Daily Eagle 11/11/2013)

A Veterans Day recognition.

As a gesture toward our veterans, the archivist is posting this article that was discovered while researching information for the Stylus centennial this coming spring.

The article is from the Spring 1915 number of the Stylus (which was a quarterly magazine format then,) and that issue included the accompanying photograph as well as an article on Silas Holbrook, the building superintendent, who had recently passed away. As a young man, Mr. Holbrook had served in a NY cavalry regiment in the Civil War and was active after the war in veterans groups like the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic, the main Union veterans group). A scan of the original article is attached. In the photo, Holbrook appears to be wearing a GAR medal and ribbon.

Curiously, many years later, the library director from 1969-1985, George Cornell, took pride in having served as a young man in the last horse mounted cavalry regiment in the Army, the 12th Cavalry! He joined the regiment in the years immediately before WWII, and said that for the first year or so of his service they were still horse mounted. As the war approached, the cavalry regiments were gradually converted from horse mounted to employing trucks, half tracks, etc. Cornell's regiment was the last to be switched over.
SILAS H. HOLBROOK

The sudden death of Silas H. Holbrook which occurred on March 10, 1915, came as a shock to everybody connected with the Normal School, as he was greatly respected and loved by all with whom he came in contact.

Mr. Holbrook was born September 13, 1845, in Catskill, New York. His boyhood was passed much the same as that of any other boy in a small village community of that period. He attended the little village school and in vacation time worked in his father's brick yard. It is said by those who knew him that, as a boy, he was unusually active, of excellent disposition, but always ready to fight for a just cause.

On October 21, 1861, when he was sixteen, he enlisted in Company D, Seventh Regiment of the New York Volunteer Cavalry. Soon after his Company was sent to Washington for drill. While in Washington, on March 31, 1862, his regiment was mustered out of service. He immediately reenlisted in Company L of the First Regiment of Mounted Rifles, New York State Volunteers.

It is related by one of the officers that while in camp at Washington, after his re-enlistment, young Holbrook's captain turned to him on the parade ground one day and said, "Private Holbrook, can you drill a squad of recruits?"

"I can, sir," was his prompt reply, given with his usual quick decision.

He was immediately appointed sergeant of his Company. The warrant over the officer's signature reads: "Reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity and abilities of Silas H. Holbrook, I do hereby appoint him First Sergeant."

Immediately after this, the First Regiment of Mounted Rifles was ordered to Fort Monroe, Virginia. Here Sergeant Holbrook witnessed the great battle between the Monitor and Merrimac. His regiment was active within from seven to twenty miles of Richmond in the vicinity of Petersburg mostly on scout duty under General Butler and later under General Kilpatrick. War records show that Sergeant Holbrook's regiment took part in about one hundred engagements. On November 29, 1865, he was discharged at City Point, Virginia, with rank of First Sergeant with an enviable war record for bravery, patriotism, and devotion to duty.

Upon his return from the battle field, he became section foreman on a railroad near Syracuse until his marriage. Then he learned the carpenter's trade in Oneida County, where he built boats for the Erie Canal for a time.

Forty years ago he came to Brockport and immediately went into business as a carpenter and contractor and built many of the residences and business places of this village. In 1889 he built the Normal School gymnasium which connects the Training School with the old buildings.

On July 1, 1897, he was appointed superintendent of buildings and
grounds of the Brockport Normal School. In 1900, when the new Training School was built, Mr. Holbrook acted as State Inspector of the job. During his long connection with the Normal School, he never was absent from his duties a day and his death occurred as he was going from his work in the school to his home.

Mr. Holbrook also took active interest in Grand Army affairs, at the time of his death serving as President of the New York State Regimental Association of Mounted Rifles. He has also associated with the order of Odd Fellows, and was a member of the Huntley Steamer Company in the old Fire Department.

Col. James D. Bell, Department Commander of the State of New York G. A. R., was a member of Mr. Holbrook’s regiment. Mr. Holbrook, at the time of his death, was Vice President of the Monroe County Veterans Association.

Mr. Holbrook was a sober, industrious, kind-hearted, accommodating man, devoted to his duty, and a good friend. All connected with the Normal School miss him and he will remain in their hearts a cherished memory.

"The longer on this earth we live
And weigh the various qualities of men
The more we feel the high, stern-featured beauty
Of plain devotedness to duty.
Steadfast and still, nor paid with mortal praise,
But finding ampest recompense
For life's ungarlanded expense
In work done squarely and unwasted days".
The landmark 1969 history of the college is now available on the Digital Commons.

In the late 1960s as the college prepared to observe the centennial of becoming a state school in 1867, it was decided to have a history of the school written. Wayne Dedman of the History Department was selected as the author, and in 1969 "Cherishing This Heritage" was published.

The history he wrote was a comprehensive, scholarly study of the school from its founding as a private academy in 1835 to the comprehensive liberal arts college it had become by the 1960s. He covers in ample detail the institution, the curriculum, the faculty, student life, all grounded in extensive use of the historical records of the college. He also included some excellent chapters on the history of the local area and the village of Brockport.

Professor Dedman began his career at Brockport in 1945, coming from a high school teaching position in Illinois. When he came here in he had the masters degree, but later in the 1950s he became the first person granted a PhD in history from the University of Rochester. Coming at the time he did he was in a position to know many who were intimately associated with the old Normal school and earlier history of the college, and his book benefited from this familiarity.

He retired in 1981 and moved to Arizona with his wife, where he died in 2000. He is remembered by many today as a colleague, mentor and friend, and is memorialized in the W. Wayne Dedman award given annually to a student of merit in history.

Thanks go to Richard Black and his staff who identified and supported the digitization of this important history.

https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/student_archpapers/41/
Pauline Haynes came to Brockport in 1924 and became head of the Music Department in 1925, retiring in 1966. She was an elegant, stylish woman who traveled widely and was highly regarded as a music educator. She was popular with the students of her day, and her fellow faculty and staff. There is a room named after her in Alumni House.

Read the attached clipping from the June 9, 1938 Stylus to learn about Miss Haynes and her meeting Emerson’s son! She is pictured here in her office in Hartwell in the 1950s.

Faculty On The Spot

After attending the Model School, which served as a training school for the Plattzburg Normal School, Miss Haynes entered Skidmore College, where she majored in public school music, and took a minor in piano. The following two summers Miss Haynes studied at the Thomas Whitney Surette Summer School, at Concord, Massachusetts. This summer school is attended not only by music educators but by professional artists, authors, architects and dramatists, who are interested in music as an avocation. The following fall she went to Princeton where she was supervisor of public school music. After two years at Princeton, Miss Haynes became a member of the staff at B.N.S. and came to Brockport to serve as music supervisor. During the summer of 1932 Miss Haynes, and Miss Vinal, toured Europe visiting England, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Belgium, and Holland. During her sabbatical leave, Miss Haynes studied at Columbia University and was granted a Master’s degree in music from this institution.

Miss Haynes told us of an interesting experience when she was studying at Surette Summer School in Concord. She was invited to the home of Ralph Waldo Emerson to have tea with the famed author’s son, Dr. Emerson. She spent the day wandering through the gardens of the late Emerson home and reading the original manuscripts of some of his great works, incidentally Miss Haynes’ hobby is collecting books and records. She has in her possession now an enviable collection of books.

She told us that she “dabbles” at golf and tennis, but that her favorite recreation is dancing.
A remarkable example of local history work now available on the Digital Commons!

Mary Smith was the Town of Hamlin historian for a number of years, and among her other activities she wrote a manuscript history of the "Triangle Tract," the triangular wedge of land that has its base on Lake Ontario along the Hamlin town line, and runs south, encompassing the present day towns of Hamlin, Clarkson, Sweden, Bergen and LeRoy.

Some members of the local Brockport Community Museum Board have been working with Mary to make her work, which is truly a scholarly and thorough history of the early development of this region, more widely available. To that end the original typed manuscript was scanned in the college archives and is now on the Digital Commons.

Board member (and retired college graphic designer) Norm Frisch will be working on the manuscript to enhance the images, and make it more contemporary and publishable in form. He is going to be receiving assistance from another retired college staff person, Ginny Campbell.

If you have any interest at all in local history in general, or that of this region in particular, this manuscript is a must read!

https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/local_books/19/
Fannie Barrier Williams was an African American woman from a local Brockport family. She attended the Brockport Normal School, as we were then known. After graduation she went south to teach in the schools being set up for freed slaves, and her experiences there led her in the direction she followed for many years to come, that of an activist for civil, labor and gender rights. She was a public speaker and writer of some note in the latter 19th and early 20th centuries.

She was the only black woman for example to speak at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions. She and her husband were close allies of Booker T. Washington and helped found the NAACP. Her activities were wide ranging and well recognized at the time, but after her retirement from public life and return to Brockport in her old age, she became increasingly lost sight of in the historical record.

Wanda Hendricks, associate professor of history at the University of South Carolina, has recently published the first ever biography of Fannie Barrier. Ms. Hendricks did some of her research in the archives and local history collections of our college library, and is a keen advocate of reviving Fannie Barrier's name in history.

There currently is a resumed effort for example to see Fannie Barrier Williams named to the Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls. Ms. Hendricks has submitted a nomination, as have the college archivist and several others.

We have two copies of this biography in the library circulating collection on the top floor, E 185.97 .W55 H46. Check the catalog before coming over, they may go quickly into circulation!
Now being restored, thanks to a generous gift!

Before Hartwell Hall was built in the late 1930s, another building complex stood in about the same location. This was the building of the old Normal school, as we were known in that era. A special feature of that building were the stained glass windows that graced the main corridor and foyer, some gifts to the school from graduating classes and some from the the sororities and fraternities then active.

The story of the windows original placement, their removal, rediscovery, and placement in the library are probably not well known by many on campus. The accompanying file will tell that story and has images of all the surviving windows. The wonderful news is that these windows, which have long needed some restoration and preservation work, are now going to receive just that thanks to a generous gift by an anonymous donor. What a lovely thing to do, to enable these unique remnants of our history to be safeguarded for the future!

https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/art_docs/1/
There is a long tradition of innovation at Brockport in the realm of instructional technologies. Dr. Sherwin Swartout was a leader in this field, joining the faculty at Brockport in 1950. The audio-visual department he headed supported both still photography, slide show and other standard AV offerings, and was also a pioneer in the use of closed circuit TV in the classroom. Much of this work was done in conjunction with the teachers in the Campus School, like Peg Hare Browne. Shown here are a group of students in the '50s, members of the audio-visual club.
Dr. Sherwin G. Swartout was born in Sanborn, North Dakota. He received his Bachelors Degree at the Valley City State Teachers College, Masters Degree at the University of North Dakota, and Ph.D. Degree at Ohio State University. His experiences prior to coming to Brockport were many and varied. He was a Coach and Mathematics Teacher in the Willow River Public Schools, an Aircraft Designing Engineer for Boeing Aircraft Company, Instructor at the University of North Dakota, Superintendent of Schools at Cooperstown, North Dakota, and Research Assistant at Ohio State University. Dr. Swartout served as a bomber pilot during World War Two. He is married and the father of three children.

Dr. Swartout joined the Brockport Faculty in 1950 as Professor of Education and Director of Audio Visual Services. In 1956 he became the Director of the Closed Circuit Television Station at Brockport.

It is with sincere gratitude that we the Class of 1957 dedicate this Saga to Dr. Sherwin G. Swartout for his untiring devotion and service to the development of the field of education and those preparing to enter this profession.
---THE ROLE OF AUDIO-VISUAL---

The major objective of the Audio Visual Department is service to the students and faculty of Brockport State Teachers College. Among the many services offered are photography, chart, and graph, equipment maintenance and repair, projectionist, tape recordings, and most important of all, the training of those who wish to become acquainted with the many Audio Visual Materials available.

The department, under Dr. Swartout, has grown from a few films and projectors, to a large center containing the most modern equipment.

CLASS ROOM TELEVISION

AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS CENTER

CLOSED CIRCUIT T.V. DEDICATION

This center and its services are in the hands of students who have shown an interest and a competency in the administration and operation in Audio Visual Services. There is a club, which is apart from the working staff, where training in one’s interest area may be obtained, eventually leading to a position on the working staff of the center.

It has been through the efforts of Dr. Swartout that Brockport has an Audio Visual Program second to none among Colleges and Universities. It has required considerable time and planning to train this working staff. Not merely in efficient operation of equipment, but more importantly is the understanding of the potential value of Audio Visual aids to teaching.
This spring is a busy season for students doing internships in the archives. Pictured here is Emily Henrich '15 in the background, who is doing research on the history of the Stylus and its predecessor the Normalia; on left in the foreground is Emily Lake '15, working on a digitization project of our collection of oral history interviews with alumni and emeriti, and right foreground is Sharon Carpenter '14 who is researching the history of the student literary publications, Jigsaw and its predecessors. Not shown is Kaitlin Schrimmel '14, who is researching the Greek letter societies prominent here in the Normal school era, 1870-1940.
A question about statues that were in the old Normal school spurs a few more questions!

Bruce Leslie, History, recently asked the archivist about the stained glass windows in the library on the ground floor. Having received a powerpoint from the archivist about them, he replied that colleagues had asked about a particular photo from a 1930s catalog. The photo shows two of the windows in the main corridor of the school, and near them in the hallway are some statues. The question was, where are the statues today?

This is a good question, and in turn it begs a few more. In the old Normal school building there were not only statues, stained glass windows and other pieces, but there was a small museum. The museum had a long history, going back to the collegiate institute days of the 1850s or earlier. It started as a collection of natural history materials, rocks etc., and over time grew to include all sorts of other things.

For example, one item in the museum was the model temple shown here. It was a gift from one of the alumni who after Brockport had gone on to missionary work. A number of Brockport alumni went on to this sort of endeavor in Japan, India, Burma and other locations. Last year for example the archivist posted here about two Brockport grads who went to Japan as Presbyterian missionaries c1905 and stayed there into their old age in the 1960s!

In the late 1930s the old Normal building was torn down, and the building we call Hartwell built in its place. In this transition from one building to another the museum was not moved over to the new building. Although the full story is not known, it is known that many items later ended up in the village museum. Other items, like this temple, were taken by faculty and kept in their offices. When the faculty member who took this model retired in the early 1960s the temple was passed on to John Killigrew, History, who in turn placed the model in the archives in the early 1990s.
Amputations in the College Infirmary?! (Daily Eagle 4/1/2014)

This rather unusual photo might appear to feature Dr. Carl Sansocie, college physician, performing an amputation of a foot in the college infirmary.

However, that might be an April Fools interpretation of this photo, it is more likely that he is simply removing a cast from the young woman's foot ;-)

Dr. Sansocie was the college physician here for a number of years starting in 1949. He served in the Army Air Corps in WWII, and received his M.D. degree from the Syracuse College of Medicine in 1948. He had a private practice in Brockport as well as his work at the college. That practice started at Lakeside Hospital when it was still in the original location in the old Manley Shafer home at 196 Main Street, before it moved to West Avenue. He was a popular physician both on campus and in town for many years.
We have Dr. Hellman’s newsletter, do we have yours? (Daily Eagle 4/10/2014)

The archives is hunting for department and program newsletters...

In the 1960s and ’70 Robert Hellman of the Biology Department (pictured here) worked hard to develop an arboretum at the Fancher Campus the college owned then, over in neighboring Orleans County. (It was sold in the 1980s, and is the Hickory Ridge Golf Course and RV Park now.)

You can read about the arboretum in the attached article from the Buffalo Courier Express. (The original we had was a poor quality photocopy, cleaned up here as much as possible.)

Getting to the point of this story, you could read a lot more about the arboretum and the botany work at Fancher by visiting the archives and reading the issues of the Arboretum newsletter we have here. There are many newsletters out there that different departments, programs and units produce, or have produced, but the archives has only a small portion of them. That’s a shame, because they can be a wonderful source of information on the activities of an area. If you know of a newsletter from your area please consider contacting the archives to see if we have it, and if we don’t, perhaps we can make arrangements to borrow copies to scan or to keep here. Do consider adding the archivist to your mailing list too!
Prof's Golden Dream Real Green

BROCKPORT — It’s now possible to travel into Orleans County to see a Cattaraugus County forest, view an Adirondack forest and meadow, and see trees native to the Ontario watershed.

In a few years it may also be possible to see a Finger Lakes farm and view Staten Island as it looked in the 17th century, notes Dr. Robert A. Hellmann, a member of the biological sciences dept. at Brockport State College.

He has spent the last decade developing a 50-acre arboretum at Brockport’s 501-acre Fancher Campus located eight miles east of Albin.

THE ARBORETUM IS UNIQUE because it is divided into sections that are representative of different parts of the state, Dr. Hellmann explained. College students, as well as area clubs and organizations, have been able to take a "cook's tour" of the state’s diverse trees and shrubs by walking through the trail-lined arboretum.

"This is the only place in the world, as far as we know, that you can see ecological groupings of trees from specific parts of a region," said Dr. Hellmann. "The natural inclination is to collect exotic things, while everything here is native to the state," he added.

Dr. Hellmann traces the project back to 1963 when he came to Brockport after spending a good part of the previous five years doing fieldwork on forests for the American Museum of Natural History.

He realized that prospective elementary school teachers needed tree specimens to learn how to identify different species. He first considered planting trees on the Brockport campus, but buildings were popping up faster than trees.

The concept has been growing ever since and he estimates that he has brought in 1,000 specimens in his low-budget effort during the last decade. Most of the trees were relocated personally by him with the aid of a long-handled shovel.

It’s been a time-consuming and occasionally frustrating project which may take another 15 years to complete, he said. The lack of rainfall earlier this year wood rotted most of the trees he planted in the spring.

Dr. Hellmann has spent considerable time in the field and countless hours poring over research studies conducted by others in an effort to insure the accuracy of his six distinct forest types.

WHILE FIELDWORK WAS not possible on the 17th Century Staten Island site, he did get considerable assistance from the State Island Institute of Arts and Sciences.

That site is proving particularly difficult because the soil here is not really suitable for the bayberry, bear oak, pitch pine and other growth which covered parts of Staten Island when it was settled by the Dutch. He is planting a colonial hemlock at that site, complete with a spring house and garden containing vegetables grown by the Dutch.

The Adirondack forest site was officially opened last fall and features red spruce and balsam fir. The Cattaraugus forest is approximately 40 per cent complete and is one of the largest sites with its ash, elm, dogwoods, cottonwoods and silver maples. The Adirondack meadow is also well along with its juniper and pitch pine.

The Finger Lakes site is in the planning stages and will contain a useable tractor shed located in a reconstructed meadow which will have a fence row of ash and black cherry trees.

(The Courier Express is a Buffalo NY area newspaper. This article is from a 1977 issue.)
A new story emerges about the former married vets housing.

An interesting bit of College history has just surfaced, to do with the married student housing that once stood at the south end of Hartwell Hall, where a parking lot is today. A woman who is part of a group researching the former CCC camp in Hamlin (where Hamlin Beach Park is today) called looking for photographs like the one here of the housing for married veterans that once was located on campus at the south end of Hartwell Hall, by the railroad tracks.

According to her, several Hamlin old timers recalled in interviews that the barracks which were in the CCC camp, and that in WWII housed POWs, were in the late 1940s moved to the campus for married veterans' housing.

That the buildings were here was known, and there are many stories about them, including that the residents of the housing jokingly referred to it as "Diaper Alley!" But this is new information about where the buildings came from, and will be interesting to pursue.
Actually, it was new back in the late 1920s, but the "Blanket Tax Committee," shown here from the 1929 Saga yearbook, was a major thing at the time. It was the forerunner to the Student Council, which led to the Faculty Student Association, which in turn led to the establishment of the Brockport Student Government in the 1960s. In 1929 the work of this committee was described as follows.

"During the past three years many progressive steps have been taken at Brockport Normal. Notable among these is the establishing of the blanket tax. Resolutions were adopted organizing a student finance committee. This finance committee aims to give students the greatest possible return for their money. To this end it has assumed partial control of extra-curricular activities and has appointed sub-committees to care for each major activity. As these sub-committees become more efficient, the result of their assuming responsibility is bound to be student government."

Prior to this, activities like dances, debate contests, lecture series, concerts and so forth had generally been organized by one or another of the fraternities and sororities then present. In the photo here you will see two faculty whose names are on present-day buildings, Cooper and Lathrop.
Carl Akeley is an interesting figure in the history of environmental science. He grew up in nearby Clarendon on a farm in the latter 19th century, and never had much formal schooling. He was a keen naturalist though, and like many naturalists at that time, learned to practice taxidermy as a way to study animals. Remember, this was before good binoculars and cameras with zoom lenses were available, so you really needed to have that specimen in hand to study it!

He studied taxidermy at a shop in Brockport run by a man named David Bruce. It is an interesting connection to another local man, George "Buzz" Guelf, who was also a keen naturalist. Two of Guelf's mounted birds are on display at the Seymour Library, and in the collection of his glass plate photographs here in the college’s special collections are some photos of birds, scenes along Lake Ontario and so forth.

Akeley went on to some fame, including designing the famous African Hall at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.
In the spring of 1954, the student literary publication was called Vistas. This predecessor to Jigsaw had begun in 1949. The spring 1954 issue had Tony Mascioli '54 as editor, a man who has been honored with a section in the "Shoulders to Stand On" GLBT history project by the Rochester Gay Alliance. Faculty advisors to the publication included Dr. Eric Steel, William Manitsas, and Dr. George Queen.

The cover art was done by junior John Nelson '55. In a surprise phone call earlier this spring, John told the archivist that he was the artist of that cover and wanted to donate the pen-and-ink original to the archives! While visiting the area from his retirement home in Florida, he came by the archives to give us the framed illustration.

One interesting exchange in meeting John was that as he was pointing out the buildings in the cover and discussing his drawing, the archivist referred to the main building as "Hartwell Hall," which puzzled John for a moment, until we remembered that in John's time it was simply the "main building," and wasn't named Hartwell until later in the 1960s!

John spoke fondly of his time at Brockport, recalling with appreciation many of his teachers, especially John Chesnut who taught English. He also played soccer on the famous 1950s team under coach "Hunt" Parker. John recalled that the most popular hangout on campus for students was in "Ma Green's" coffee shop in the main building. The big downtown place was the Hotel Landmark, which stood where the post office is today.

After Brockport, John was a Navy pilot for eight years and then, as he said, put his Brockport education to work and taught school for 29 years. Today he is enjoying retirement in Fort Myers, Florida.
"Brockport NY: A Narrative of That Place" (Daily Eagle 6/9/2014)

A recent local addition to our online local history materials.

Some years ago Jonathan Mark Smith, son of longtime Biology professor Del Smith, wrote his dissertation for a geography PhD at Syracuse University. Recently we were able to receive a digital file of the dissertation from Syracuse with Dr. Smith's permission and have now added it to the local history section of our Digital Commons.

Smith did a very detailed study of Brockport's beginnings up through the 1880s. Anyone with an interest in the history of the village, the various industries, the college and so forth might well find much of value here. He did much of his research here at the college, as well as at the Morgan Manning House with Eunice Chesnut.

https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/local_books/20/
Laslo Boroshy was an early campus photographer who worked here from 1966 till his untimely death in 1971. Despite the accompanying photograph (taken in Edwards ca1970,) he was not actually a robot, but rather was an immigrant from Hungary who had come to the U.S. after the short lived rebellion against the Communists, in which he was said to have taken part.

Norm Frisch, retired graphic design artist, worked with Laslo and recalled that:

"Laslo and I worked together, first in the basement of Hartwell Hall, then in the bowels of Edwards Hall after it was built. Laslo was from Hungary, but spoke English with an accent only the very discerning ear could detect. As I recall, he claimed affiliation with the Hungarian Freedom Fighters... He was an accomplished photographer who was very diligent and meticulous in the way he worked. He did have a great sense of humor and was really easy to work with. He was not married--but was a "ladies man". Female co-workers and student helpers really liked him a lot... Roy Agte, a Methodist minister, was a friend of his..."

According to information from Norm, prior to Laslo the campus photographer was an Al Moses, who may have been the first to hold that position. After Boroshy a fellow named Mel Wittenstein had the job, and then of course Jim Dusen, who retired in recent years. Following in Jim's footsteps today is Matt Yeoman.

Roy Agte was the Methodist minister to the Wesley Fellowship group then associated with the campus, and Boroshy's memorial service was held at the fellowship's house when he died in 1971. (Roy later worked for the college for a number of years, with our international students.)
One of the longest running and most popular traditions of the old Normal School was that of Color Day. This annual event started in 1902 and the last one was held in 1937. It was a spring event held in May or June of each year. The details varied from year to year, but generally speaking it was a day-long event, with a baseball game and picnic during the day, along with a pageant based on a theme, for example a May pole dance and so forth. In the evening there would be a dance. They certainly had a different attitude toward lawn care and dandelions, as you will see in reading the article attached!

This event was very popular not only with the students of the school, but was attended by many in the village and from some distance around. The story goes that when Ernest Hartwell came to be principal of the school in 1936, he found the event to have become a bit more boisterous than he cared for, and the tradition was ended.

In the archives there is quite a collection of Color Day memorabilia, ranging from posters to dance cards to home movie footage of several Color Days of the 1930s. The event could easily serve as the basis for a student paper or internship.

This mention of Color Day was prompted by the archivist being asked a question about the freshman class of 1933, and when looking through the old bound copies of The Stylus the accompanying article and photo were discovered.
COLOR DAY
Twenty-Ninth Annual Held May 23

Color Day loomed up as a bright, sunny day much to the delight of all of the students at B. N. S. We assembled in Normal Hall at 8:45, a mass of multi-colored loveliness. The girls in their long skirts of yellow, green and prints with their white blouses and tight black bodices made a picture that only an artist can paint.

When Dr. Thompson and Mr. Cooper began to give the notices, really they became so confused by the beautiful spectacle before their eyes that they forgot what they were going to say for the moment.

After the preliminary instructions we all departed from Normal Hall and went out on the campus which was wonderful to feast your eyes upon because of the greenness of the grass and the golden hue of the dandelions. The people who took part formed a separate line and those who weren’t taking part went out to the south campus to look for seats.

When we had found our prospective seats, we had a short wait and then the grand march took place. After this our May Queen, Marian Schwartz, accompanied by her two attendants, Helen Sackett and Almeda Redman, were heralded. The coronation of the May Queen was a very impressive ceremony and it will long remain in our memory as an outstanding event of the day. The Seniors then did their bit and after this the Freshmen and Juniors took part in the dances.

At noon we had a very delicious lunch served to us on the west campus with Mr. Cooper serving as the head chef. He was aided by Mr. Perry of the Normal Department and Mr. Oliver of the High School Department. While this lunch was being served, the Seniors held a dance in the corridor which seemed to be a great favorite with the student body.

During the afternoon a Marionette show, “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves,” was given by Mr. Greene of the faculty of our sister Normal, Geneseo. This presentation was very worthwhile and was enjoyed immensely by everyone who attended.

In the evening the annual Color Day Dance took place in the gymnasium which was decorated in such a manner that it represented a medieval hall with its tapestries and old armor. A very good crowd attended our Color Day dance and we are sure a good time was enjoyed by all.

This was the twenty-ninth annual Color Day to be celebrated in our school and we are sure it will have a very prominent place in the history of the school as being new and different.
Our Orchestra (Daily Eagle 6/30/2014)

A predecessor to the Brockport Symphony Orchestra.

Nowadays we have our fine Brockport Symphony Orchestra, but many years ago there was another orchestra here, that of the Brockport Normal School. In the June commencement issue of the Stylus in 1925 there was the accompanying photo and text as follows:

"Has B.N.S. an orchestra? You just bet it has and it's a real one, too. Not a musical club, but a real, live, wide-awake orchestra of twenty members as follows: violins, Louise Kupping, Field Akeley, Philip D'Agostino, Marion Boyle, Francis Vanda, Marguerite Beadle, Marcus Carls; mandolins, Iona Axtell, Gertrude Simmonds, Winifred Smith, Eugene Stull, Almeda Rudman; cornets, Harold Davis, Elsie Northway; saxophones, Stanley Smith, George Smith, Faylista Holland; cello, Helene Gillette; drum, Elmer O'Dell, and piano, Ethel Jones.

The orchestra began its work by playing in assembly every Friday morning. This had its advantages. That is it treated the assembly to some very good (or should I say rare) music and it managed to cut short the third period by about five or ten minutes. Music was also given by request at the time of the visit of a committee from the New York State Educational Association.

The orchestra has added much to the enjoyment of many occasions during this school year. At the Christmas Entertainment and Training School Play marches were played while the children came in and took their places. The orchestra played between acts of the Senior Play, thus preventing any dull moments. The greatest success however was on Color day. 'Did you miss that?' 'What a shame!' 'Did they do well?' Nothing else but!

The orchestra has had a most successful year and the members are sorry it is nearly at a close. However, they will play once more..., namely for graduation. At this time they are planning to win even a better reputation for themselves.

-- Iona Axtell"
"Meet Married Women" (Daily Eagle 7/7/2014)

Something from the 1950s Stylus.

Sometimes when going through old issues of the Stylus it is hard to keep on task and not get distracted by all the other items in there. Just recently for example while going through the Stylus from the mid 1950s looking for articles about the football team for someone who had played then, the archivist found himself unable to resist reading a column entitled "Meet Married Women" to see what it was about. Click on the link to read the column for yourself!
Meet Married Women
BY ANNE DAHL

This week Mrs. Frank (Terry) Bortin is the selection for “Meet the Married Women” column. Mrs. Bortin resides in Henrietta and will graduate in January 1957. Her husband is employed by the Eastman Kodak Company. The Bortin’s are the proud parents of three young men. Danny and Dennis are 7½ year old identical twins and Kevin is 6 years old.

Through experience with the Guided Observation Nursery School in Rochester three years ago, Mrs. Bortin became very interested in teaching. She says, “I had always planned on getting a college education someday.” She feels that college is important because an educated citizenry is essential if our way of life is to continue. Mrs. Bortin also feels that older students in the class help the younger students to mature and that the sharing of ideas benefits both groups of students.

A day’s schedule for Mrs. Bortin starts out at 6:30 a.m. when she gets up to make her husband’s breakfast, and it ends at 12:30 P.M. when she finishes with her studying. The Bortin’s enjoy participating in a mixed bowling league on Friday nights and Saturdays find Mrs. Bortin scrubbing the house. Whenever she finds time to relax, she enjoys reading and “do it yourself projects.”

Remember to look for another Meet the Married Women’s column next year!
This summer, the evening of August 6 is the first special event of the recently formed Friends of Drake Library group. The evening will consist of a dinner followed by a 1932 movie version of noted Brockport author Mary Jane Holmes novel "Lena Rivers." Please consider joining us to support the library by enjoying dinner and a movie.
Mr. Chapman of Chapman Service Center (Daily Eagle 8/4/2014)

*Something about the man the building is named for.*

Most of our buildings are named after faculty and administrators, but Chapman Service Center is not. Given that it houses many of our facilities staff, it is appropriate that it is named after Elmer Chapman, who was head of facilities here in a very different era. He worked at Brockport from about 1940 to 1955, starting here when the "new" building, today's Hartwell Hall, had only been finished a year earlier. The school was still a "Normal" school when he started, and the whole physical plant consisted of that one building, today's Hartwell Hall. When he retired in 1955 the school had become a Teachers College, and was rapidly expanding in both student numbers and buildings.

From the accompanying Stylus article, it sounds like Mr. Chapman had a rather colorful life before coming to Brockport!
MR. ELMER CHAPMAN
The Genesee River with a hook and line. It was a monotonous thing. Probably it weighed all of nine pounds.

"As for hobbies, I used to develop a few pictures now and then, but I haven't taken any snapshots lately. Since I received library privilege, I spend most of my time reading. I like to sit here wigging my toes while indulging in a good book. My kids get a kick out of my wigging toes, especially if a toe has stuck out from one of my stockings."

"Tell me, Mr. Chapman," I asked, "have you a very favorite fish or did you?"

He thought a while and then he said: "I guess I don't like more than anything else is writing letters. My wife encloses addressed, stamped envelopes in her letters to me, and then the best I do is say: "Hi!" Dear. Wish you were here. Love, 'Chappy'."

"My favorite fish is a spaghetti with meatballs followed by apple pie for dessert."

I had noticed a particular animation of his face when he had said 'apple pie,' so I repeated, interpersonally, "Apple Pie?"

"Apple Pie," he reiterated, "I wouldn't marry until I found a woman who could make a good apple pie."

(His wife laughed too. She was sitting across the room from us.) "Tell me, Mr. Chapman, how did you become chief engineer at Brockport Normal?"

"I hung around the lake for about six years and then took a job being a hospital's furnisher. It was my boss at the hospital, who induced me to take a Civil Service Test. I passed the test (he received the third highest mark in the group) and was sent to Craig Colony for Eps. They abscond as assistant engineer. It was a big place and I got plenty of experience."

"How did you like it there?" I asked.

"It was a very nifty place," he remarked, smiling broadly.

I also smiled and agreed that it must have been.

"So, you were right in line for promotion when our new school opened here! Did you like your job?" I asked.

"I'm glad I qualified, Nick, for I like it here very much," he said. "Of course, I don't know much about the academic angle of the school, but as far as my equipment and facilities are concerned, judging what I've seen in other schools, we can compete with the best of them. You can also pitch me as saying, 'I've worked under many skippers in my day, and I think that Doctor Hartwell has got 'em all stopped.'"

His sincerity was evident in his then serious face.
Eunice Chesnut retirement (Daily Eagle 9/12/2014)

A longtime fixture in the local history community is retiring.

Eunice Chesnut has many connections to the campus and the local community. A native of Kentucky, she came to Brockport in 1950 with her husband, John, who had obtained a position here as an English professor. He was a very popular teacher for many years until his untimely death in 1969. Eunice went on to study history at Brockport, getting a master's degree in 1976.

She became involved with the Western Monroe Historical Society and the Morgan Manning House and in 1980 became the historian there. In the years since, she has written a number of books about Brockport and the area (which can be found at Lift Bridge Books and at Amazon.com) and has been a generous source of help and information to others engaged in researching local history topics.

This Sunday, September 14, there is a retirement reception for Eunice at the Morgan Manning House from 3 to 5 pm. All are welcome.
The college is holding the Diversity Conference this week, and it seemed appropriate share a diversity story from Brockport's past. This past summer, while going through an old bound volume of the Stylus, the archivist ran across a mention of a woman who attended Brockport then and was the subject of a feature piece in the December 4, 1941 Stylus. She was Nellie Gansworth '44, a Tuscarora from the reservation near Lewiston, and the article is attached here.

Interestingly enough, not long after, while going through some Writers Forum materials the archives had received, the archivist ran across a folder about the appearance here of an Eric Gansworth, a poet from the Tuscarora Reservation. On contacting Mr. Gansworth, who is now a professor at Canisus College, it turned out that he was indeed related to Nellie who was his aunt.

It is all part of a long and proud tradition at Brockport of open access and diversity!
Tuscarora Indian
In Soph Class

Nellie Gansworth, a sophomore in our midst, is an exceedingly interesting person. Why? Well, she is an Indian girl, from the Tuscarora Reservation, near Niagara Falls, N.Y. No, sorry to disillusion you, but she never lived in a tepee. In fact she says that life on the reservation is very similar to that of the city, and adds that the reservation is almost a nation within a nation, with self-government. According to Miss Gansworth most of the inhabitants of the reservation are employed in the various industries in Niagara Falls, and at present very little farming is done.

As for Miss Gansworth herself, she is a girl of many interests. She has taken a prominent part in scout work, church work and in the 4-H Club. She also finds much enjoyment in participating in athletics and in the appreciation of art and music.

Because of her artistic ability, Nellie was given the honor of being an art judge at the New York World Fair last year. Her popularity has not lessened, for only recently she christened a Flag Ship for the American Air Lines. Afterwards, Nellie was thrilled when given her first airplane ride.

Miss Gansworth admits that she has always wanted to become a teacher; she will surely be a favorite with the students, as her supply of interesting experiences seems endless.