

Beth Israel Congregation of Corning

Children Participate In Annual Festival Of Lights, Hanukah



Children who took part in the annual celebration of the Jewish Festival of Lights, Hanukah, Sunday at the Beth Israel meeting rooms at 136 Pine Street are shown during the symbolic lighting of the candles. Marwyn Samuels, son of Mr. and Mrs. Hyman Samuels of South Corning, (shown center with candle) had charge of the lighting. Other children shown are Natalie Lubin, Steven Kaniz, Mark Kaniz, Carol Gaby, Richard Mamolin, David Rosenblatt, Ronnie Rinde, Charles Kahn, Bobby Kahn, Judith Spiegler, Cynthia Samuels, Debra, Judith and Linda Byer, Nancy-Dee Sarner, Judith Braveman, Marcia Earle, Joab Kunin, Marilyn Lipton, Sharon, Darleen and Gerald Kaplan, Helene and Stephen Reichelson, David and Aaron Karp, and Gayle and Stanley Dobromil.

Photo from The Evening Leader, December 7, 1953

The story of Corning's Jewish community is not well known, something local historian David Austin is working to change; he has recently published a book titled *The Beth Israel Congregation of Corning*; which offers a look at the history of the congregation, and the local Jewish community, from the mid-1800s through the early twenty first century.

The book relays the story of early settlers including Mark and Morris Ansoerge, Anna and Morris Cohn and David & Gotlieb Tobias who all worked in the clothing industry. Later settlers included grocers Harris & Mollie Barth, traveling salesmen Issac Braveman and Morris Davidson and optician Louis Stone. And as time went by, and the area grew, more business opportunities arose; and people branched out; Gotlieb Tobais moved into the local movie theater world, Braveman and Davidson opened a clothing shop on Market Street; and Davidson later served as the local police commissioner. And in 1903 there were enough Jewish residents in Corning to form a congregation, and The Beth Israel Congregation of Corning was born.

For more information check out David Austen's book.

Cornplanter (1752 - 1836)

Seneca War Chief & Diplomat of the Seneca People



Photo from the book Legends of the Iroquois (1902) told by Cornplanter & compiled by William Canfield

Cornplanter was a member of the Seneca tribe that once lived in our area, and was war chief of his people during the American Revolution. The Seneca Tribe fought with the British against the American colonists. After the war Cornplanter worked hard to learn more about European American culture, and encouraged his people to do so too; and he mediated many disputes between the Senecas and the Americans believing this would improve the lives of his people.

He signed several peace treaties with the Americans including the Treaty of Canandaigua (1794) which promised peace between the Americans and the Seneca; and the Treaty of the Big Tree (1797) which established Seneca reservations.

In 1796, in appreciation for his work in keeping the peace between the Senecas and the Americans he was awarded 1,500 acres land by the State of Pennsylvania.

The land known as the “Cornplanter Tract” was located along the Alleghany River in Pennsylvania, three miles south of the New York/PA border, in Warren County, PA.

Cornplanter eventually came to the conclusion that his people were not benefiting from what we would describe today as a policy of assimilation, and that his elder half-brother, the Seneca prophet Handsome Lake was correct; that their people should reject the European-American way of life, and instead embrace traditional Seneca ways of life, that policy being one he worked to foster with his people during the later years of his life.

Cornplanter died in 1836 and is buried in the Riverview Cemetery, also known as the Cornplanter Cemetery, in Warren County, Pennsylvania.

For more information check out the books:

The Hatchet and the Plow: The Life and Times of Chief Cornplanter by William Betts and *Legends of the Iroquois: Told by Cornplanter* by William Walker Canfield, the later book is available as a free download from Google Books.

Charles Corwin (1883 – 1954)

Choir director, educator and co-founder of Corning Painted Post Civic Music



Photo taken of painting in Corning's Christ Episcopal Church Choir Room 10.7.2024

Charles Corwin was born in East Orange, New Jersey in 1883,
and was musically inclined from a young age.

His first professional job was as choir director and organist of St. Andrews Episcopal Church in his hometown. In 1914 he was offered the same position at Christ Episcopal Church in Corning.

Upon arriving in Corning, in addition to his choirmaster and organist duties, he opened a music studio, offered instruction in voice, piano and organ; became supervisor of music for the Southside schools in the City of Corning, founded the C.F.A. Orchestra, The Corning Arts Society, The Corning Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra and co-founded Corning-Painted Post Civic Music.

For more information Google Corning's Memorable Maestro Charles C. Corwin, which will bring up a nice bio of Corwin, written by another Notable Local, historian Robert F. McNamara. The article is also available as a PDF.

Isabel Walker Drake (1856 – 1936)

Early photographer who captured snapshots of local life in late 1800s & early 1900s



Photo, believed to be Isabel Walker Drake, from the library's local history photo archive

Isabel Walker Drake, wife of banker James Drake, was an early adopter of a new technology in the late 1880s, the Kodak Camera. She loved to take pictures and had a talent for taking photos that captured her family having fun, and as a bonus the Corning area of the day.

Some of her photographs are in the library's collection and many more are in the collection of the Corning Painted Post Historical Society. The photos open a window into a long-lost world showing what life was like locally from the late 1880s to the early 1900s.

To find out more check out the book *The Women of Corning From Settlement To Present* by Geoffrey Kabaserive.

You can also view digital copies of the Drake photos in the library's collection; simply inquire at the Reference Desk.

Dr. Lucy Maltby (1900 - 1984)

Educator, home economist & founder of the Corning Glass Works Economic Division & Test Kitchen



Lucy Maltby, fourth from left in back row, seen with her 1917 North Side senior class



Dr Maltby at work from the Corning website, The Glass Age page 10.29.24

A Corning native Maltby studied home economics at Cornell and Iowa State universities and spent several years teaching at Mansfield University before being hired by Corning Glass Works in 1929.

Her initial work at CGW included customer service correspondence and writing instructional manuals for Pyrex.

She went on to found The Corning Glass Works Home Economic Division and Test Kitchen, and was a major influence on the evolution of Pyrex glassware.

For more information check out the library's Digital Vertical File, Dr. Maltby's page on Corning's Inc's Glass Heroes: Dr. Lucy Maltby page, and the book *The Women of Corning: The Untold Story* by Geoffrey Kabaservice.

Also of note, the senior class photo of Lucy Maltby is from the 1917 North Star yearbook.

Rev. Robert F. McNamara (1910 – 2009)

Historian and theologian, Rev. Robert Francis McNamara

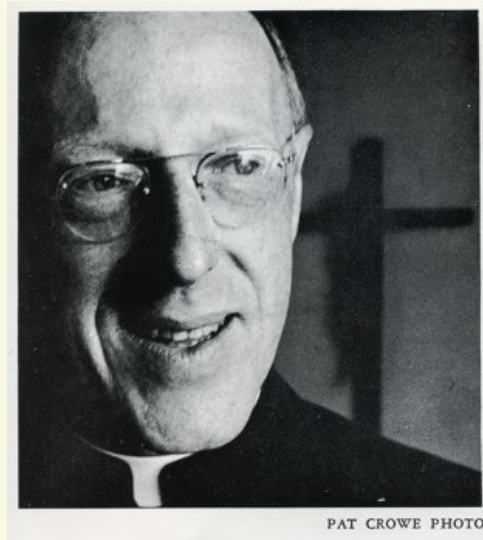


Photo from the jacket of the book *The Diocese of Rochester 1868 - 1968* by Robert F. McNamara

Robert Francis McNamara was born in Corning, New York on November 3, 1910.

The young McNamara went to college at Georgetown and Harvard; and later attended the Pontifical North American College in Rome.

He was ordained in 1936; but for purposes of this display related local history newsletter, our focus is on his love of history and work as a historian.

Robert McNamara founded and was the first president of the Corning-Painted Post Historical Society, wrote *The Good Old Days* historical column for the Corning Leader (1946-1948) as The Old Chronicler, authored a number of books on the history of our area including *Good Old Doctor Mac*, *The Diocese of Rochester (1868-1968)* and *A Century of Grace: The History of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Parish, Corning, N.Y. (1848-1948)*; as well as authoring numerous other articles and books.

To learn more, check out his biography *Priest Forever: The Life And Times of Robert F. McNamara*, take look at his *Good Old Days* columns, found in the library's Digital Vertical File; or check out his articles found in the Crooked Lake Review archives online at www.crookedlakereview.com

Col. William Murrell (1845 - 1932)

Union Army soldier, state legislator, newspaper editor & education advocate

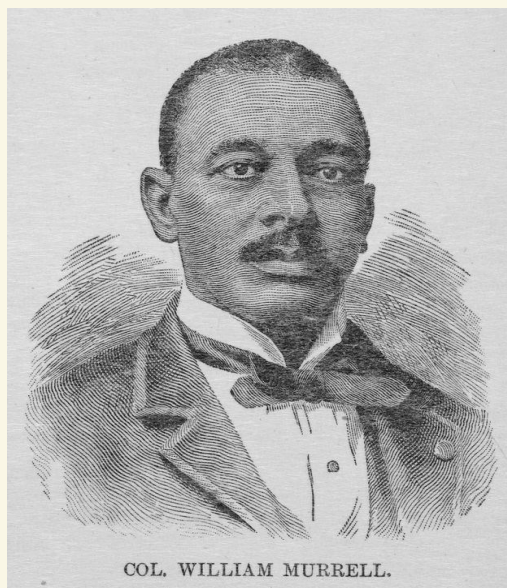


Photo from the New York Public Library's digital collection

Col. William Murrell was born into slavery in Georgia, he escaped and joined the Union Army serving with distinction and was awarded the Butler Medal for Distinguished Courage.

After the war he moved to Louisiana where he served in the state assembly and senate. He became editor of the newspapers The Madison Vindicator (L.A.), The Baltimore Vindicator (M.D.) and The Trumpet (N.J.).

In 1910 Col. Murrell moved to New York State and spent the remainder of his life in Corning and Bath, becoming a State Commander of the local G.A.R. (The Grand Army of the Republic); a post-Civil War Union veterans group and worked on educating the local African American community.

For more information check out the library's Digital Vertical File, which includes Col. Murrell's in-depth obituary.

Margaret Higgins Sanger (1879 - 1966)

Women's health & birth control advocate



Photo from The New York Public Library's digital collection

A Corning native, she was one of eleven children and watched her mother become aged before her time and die young due to living in poverty combined with frequent pregnancies.

Sanger became convinced family planning, including birth control methods were necessary for women to live long, healthy lives. She became a nurse, moved to New York City, published several books and journals advocating for birth control including

The Woman Rebel (1914) and *Birth Control Review* (1917); opened the first birth control clinic in the United States in Brownsville, Brooklyn; and later founded Planned Parenthood.

For more information check out the books: *Women of Corning: The Untold Story From Settlement To Present* by Geoffrey Kabaservice, *Margaret Sanger: An Autobiography* by Margaret Sanger, and *Margret Sanger: A Life Of Passion* by Jean H. Baker.

James "Deacon" White (1847 - 1939)

19th Century Baseball Star, Catcher, Thirdbaseman Member of the Baseball Hall of Fame



Photo from the New York Public Library digital collection

Catcher and third baseman James L. White, nicknamed Deacon for his Christian lifestyle, was born on December 2, 1847, in Caton, New York.

Prior to the Civil War baseball, or base ball as it was then known, was a city-based sport.

Deacon White served in the Union army during The Civil War, and learned to play ball from other soldiers during the war. During that era base ball players threw and caught balls bare handed; which is why you'll see old photos of Deacon White sans a glove gazing determinedly skyward, with his hands in the air, while waiting to catch the ball.

White became the most prolific catcher of the 1870s and later changed positions and played third base.

During his career he played with the Monitor Base Ball Club of Corning and then the Forest City Ball Club of Cleveland, before moving on to play with The Boston Red Stockings, The Chicago White Stockings and The Buffalo Bisons.

He retired in 1890 at the age of 42.

During his career, White had a batting average of .312, with 2,067 hits during 1,560 games.

He was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2013.

For more information on Deacon White, check out the books on 19th century baseball in the library's collection, The Baseball Hall of Fame website or the Baseball Reference website.

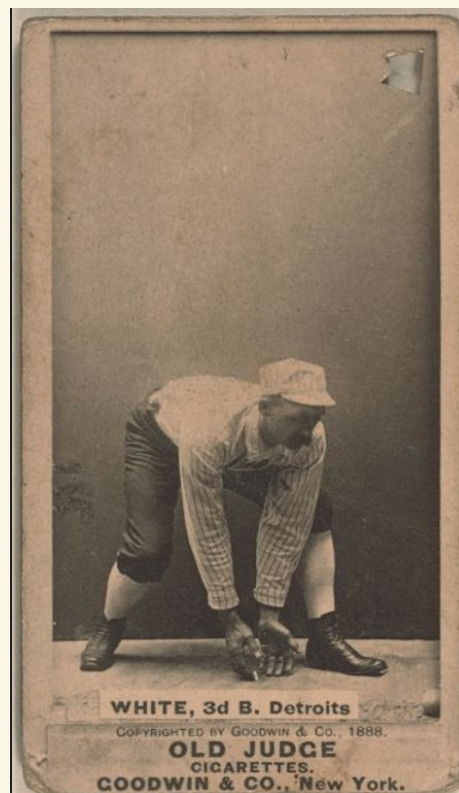


Photo from the Library of Congress, public domain collection

For more information check out:

Books:

The Beth Israel Congregation of Corning by David Austin

Blackguards and Red Stockings: A History of Baseball's National Association, 1871-1875,
Revised Edition by William J. Ryczek

The Hall: A Celebration of Baseball's Greats by The National Baseball Hall of Fame

The Hatchet and the Plow: The Life and Times of Chief Cornplanter by William
Betts

Legends of the Iroquois: Told by Cornplanter by William Walker Canfield

Margaret Sanger: An Autobiography by Margaret Sanger

Margret Sanger: A Life Of Passion by Jean H. Baker

Playing for Keeps: A History of Early Baseball, Revised Edition
by Warren Jay Goldstein

Priest Forever: The Life And Times of Robert F. McNamara by Ann K. Maloney

Women of Corning: The Untold Story From Settlement To Present by Geoffrey
Kabaservice, with a forward by The Honorable Amory Houghton Jr.

Newspapers:

Col Murrell Has Birthday, The Evening Leader, 5 26 1926

The Good Old Days columns (1946-1948), The Corning Leader
(The Old Chronicler AKA Robert F. McNamara)

Obituary Charles A. Corwin, The Evening Leader 2/27/1954

Obituary Robert F. McNamara, The Leader, 5/24/2009

Obituary Father Robert F. McNamara, 98; historian, author, instructor, Catholic Courier,
5/22/2009

Obituary Col. Murrell, Historic Figure Dies at Home, The Leader 2/13/1932

Online Resources:

Corning's Memorable Maestro Charles C. Corwin 1883-1954 by Robert F. McNamara,
The Crooked Lake Review, [https://www.crookedlakereview.com/
articles/34_66/59feb1993/59mcnamara.html](https://www.crookedlakereview.com/articles/34_66/59feb1993/59mcnamara.html)

The Glass Age: Dr. Lucy Maltby, Corning, [https://www.corning.com/worldwide/en/
innovation/the-glass-age/inspiration/glass-heroes/dr-lucy-maltby-glass-cookware-
innovator.html](https://www.corning.com/worldwide/en/innovation/the-glass-age/inspiration/glass-heroes/dr-lucy-maltby-glass-cookware-innovator.html)

Now We're Cooking with Glass! A Spotlight on Lucy Maltby, Corning Museum of
Glass Blog, [https://blog.cmog.org/2020/women-glasshouses-now-were-cooking-glass-
spotlight-lucy-maltby](https://blog.cmog.org/2020/women-glasshouses-now-were-cooking-glass-spotlight-lucy-maltby)

Priest Forever: The Rev. Robert F. McNamara, Steuben Hall of Fame, Class of 1991,
Crooked Lake Review, <https://www.crookedlakereview.com/authors/mcnamara.html>

Steuben County Hall of Fame (Charles Corwin, Rev. Robert F. McNamara, James
"Deacon" White) <https://www.steubencountyny.gov/202/Hall-of-Fame>

Other Resources:

The Library's Digital Vertical File (which is a work in progress!)

Ask at the Reference Desk for details.

Please feel free to share this newsletter and make copies of it.

Digital copies of the Local Notables newsletter are available upon request, and via the library's local history blog found at corningnyhistory.com

For more information on the Local Notables Display and/or to suggest a person for a future Local Notables Display contact:

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