

# KIRKLAND TOWN LIBRARY



SAMANTHA

1904 - MOUNT BEDFORD, NY

# CLINTON DURING SAMANTHA'S TIME

- Trolleys ran through the village and a daily train stopped as it traveled from Utica to New York City.
- Clinton's own Elihu Root served as secretary of state to President Theodore Roosevelt.
- Electricity had recently come to town.
- Hamilton College opened for another year with a freshman class of sixty-one men.
- Shoppers could buy butter for 25 cents at New York Grocery; Edison May Records were on sale at G. Floyd King "The Music Man;" and heating stoves were on sale for as little as \$3.50 at H.J. Allen's Busy Corner Store.



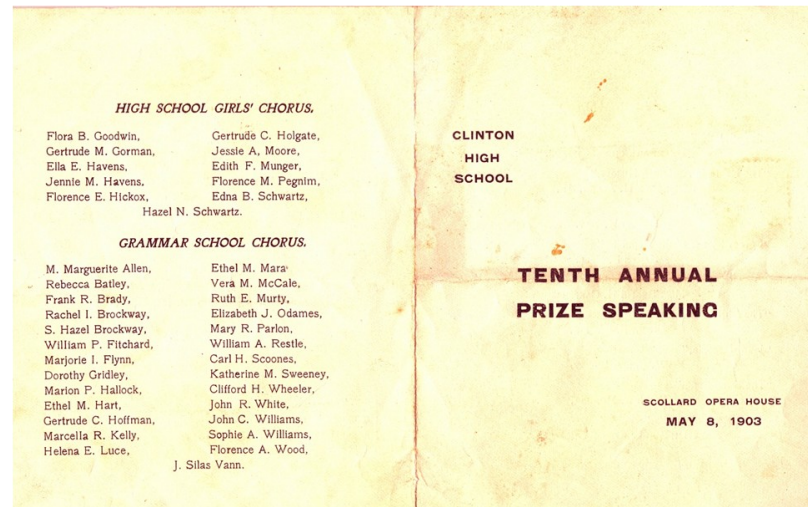
*This photo shows West Park Row in 1905. Notice that there is both a car and a horse and buggy on the street, which wasn't paved. (Photo courtesy of the Clinton Historical Society.)*

# ORATORY CONTESTS

In *Samantha Learns a Lesson*, Samantha was the grand prize winner in the Young People's Speaking Contest at the town's opera house.

Clinton kids in the early 1900s also participated in oratory events. According to the Clinton Historical Society newsletter, "Students gave stereotyped orations and competed for prizes based on their literary technique and stage presence." Samantha certainly stole the show with her performance!

Many of Clinton's oratory contests were held at the Scollard Opera House, which was located on West Park Row above where the Clinton Shoe Center and China Sea are now. The Scollard Opera House never really hosted any operas but was the social activity center of the community, showing movies, plays, concerts, and much more.



*This photo shows a program from an oratory contest in 1903 held at the Scollard Opera House. (Photo courtesy of the Clinton Historical Society.)*



*The Scollard Opera House was located on the second floor on West Park Row.  
(Photo courtesy of the Clinton Historical Society.)*

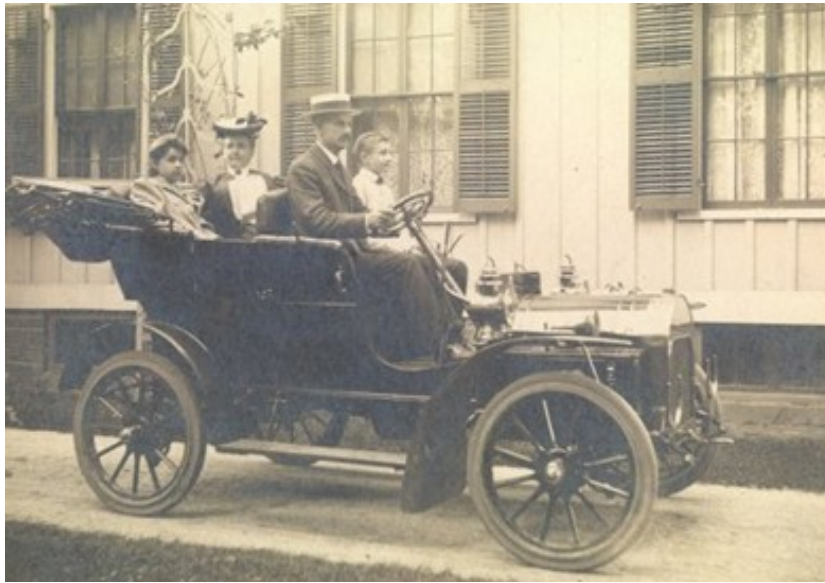


# FIRST CARS IN CLINTON

In 1905, cars were far outnumbered by horses and buggies. Samantha's Uncle Gard was of the few people who owned his own automobile.

Frederick DeWolf Smythe of Chestnut Street purchased the first automobile in Clinton in 1903. It took quite a while for the trend to catch on in Clinton. Roads were muddy and bumpy and weren't even paved until 1910, at the earliest. If your car broke

down or needed repair, you were out of luck. The first garage didn't open until 1912.



*This photo shows a car outside the Schilling family home on Marvin Street (near Tony's pizza) in 1906. Uncle Gard's car probably looked a lot like this one with Aunt Cornelia sitting next to him in the front seat and Samantha and Nellie in the back. (Photo courtesy of the Clinton Historical Society.)*

# TELEPHONES

Grandmary tells Samantha that she thinks the telephone is a sign of progress in 1905, saying it's a useful invention for ordering food or calling for help in an emergency.

During Samantha's time, the telephone was just coming to many homes. In Clinton in 1905, there were about 350 subscribers to the Clinton Home Telephone. To improve service, a new exchange building was built on Williams Street.

There, operators could make connections or anyone without a home phone could come in and place a call. Nationally, only about eight percent of homes had a telephone and a three minute call from New York City to Denver cost \$11!

Grandmary was right: the telephone was a sign of progress. She would surely be surprised to know that in the twenty-first century, many homes were actually getting rid of a home phone in exchange for just using cell phones.



*This photo shows a group of telephone operators at the new building on Williams Street in 1905. (Photo courtesy of the Clinton Historical Society.)*

# THE UPPER CRUST

Samantha and her family live in beautiful homes, have all the latest trends, and even have servants to wait on them. In 1905, there were some families in Clinton who lived a similar lifestyle.

Have you ever noticed a home on Norton Avenue (near Elm Street) that sits high on a hill above town? That home has been known as Christmas Knob and throughout the years, some prominent families have called it home. In the early 1900s, the Wood family lived there. They had a household staff that included a maid, a chauffeur, and a property manager. The house has been described as one of Clinton's showplaces: five bedrooms, six fireplaces, five acres of land, a swimming pool, a brick carriage house, and an additional building for the household staff. The next time you're driving down Norton Avenue, peek out the window and see if you can spot this gem.



*The Christmas Knob home, one of Clinton's finest homes.  
(Photo courtesy of the Clinton Historical Society.)*

# VOTES FOR WOMEN!

When Aunt Cornelia attends a women's suffrage rally, Samantha worries that Grandmary won't be pleased. Much to her surprise, though, Grandmary says she is also in favor of giving women the right to vote.

The women's suffrage movement was actually born in New York State around 1848, not far from Clinton. Here, the Clinton Political Equality Club worked hard to get women the right to vote.

Founded in 1909, they held meetings, wrote letters, and encouraged people to support the state-wide campaign.

*This photo shows a copy of a program from the Clinton Political Equality Club's annual meeting in 1915.*

*(Photo courtesy of the Clinton Historical Society.)*

## Clinton Political Equality Club

The Annual Meeting of the Clinton Political Equality Club will be held in the Kirkland Town Library on Wednesday afternoon, September 13, at 3 o'clock.

The meeting will open with a short but important business session.

### *Business before the Meeting:*

Annual Reports of Officers.

Election of Officers.

Report of the Town of Kirkland Canvass Committee.

After the conclusion of the business a special pleasure is promised the Club and its guests in the opportunity to hear for the first time in Clinton

MISS LUCY CARLILE WATSON

*Chairman of the Twelfth Campaign District of the New York State Woman Suffrage Party*

AND

MRS. WILLIAM S. SCHUYLER

*Former President of the New Century Club of Utica*

Miss Watson will give a first-hand account of the great *National Suffrage Convention* which she has just been attending in Atlantic City, and Mrs. Schuyler will make a practical talk, based on her own wide experience of civic and social work on *Why Women Should Work for the Vote*.

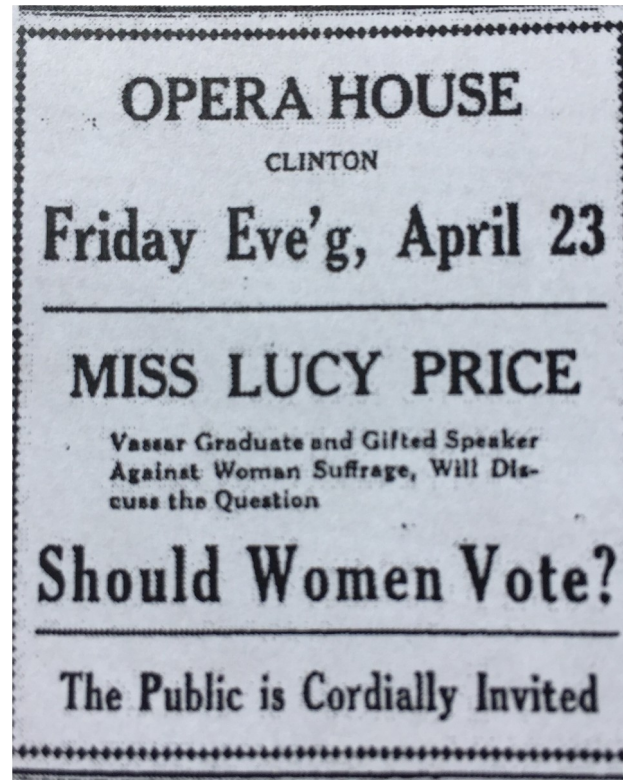
Every member is urged to be present at this Annual Meeting, and all interested who may not be members are cordially invited. This is the 6th Birthday of the Clinton Club. The best present you can bring it will be a new member.



## VOTES FOR WOMEN?

On the other hand, this advertisement in the Clinton Courier from earlier in 1915 advertises a talk against women's suffrage. *(Photo from the Clinton Courier.)*

It took 72 years, but in 1920, the 19th amendment to the Constitution was passed, giving women the same voting rights as men.



Thank you to Krizia Martin for sponsoring

## **SAMANTHA**

To learn how you can sponsor a doll or its accessories, contact Anne Debraggio, Director of the Kirkland Town Library, at: [adebraggio@midYork.org](mailto:adebraggio@midYork.org).

To learn more about our collection, visit [www.kirklandtownlibrary.org](http://www.kirklandtownlibrary.org).

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