



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CORTLAND RURAL CEMETERY

SPRING 2017

A primer on “The King of Primers” – C.W. Sanders

CRC preface: As we were contemplating stories for this issue, we were fortunate to receive an out-of-the-blue package from our good friend K. Ann Dexter relating to the notable gentleman buried in one of our most prominent family mausoleums – that of Charles W. Sanders. Included in Ann’s generous gift were two lovely primers authored by Mr. Sanders (she has an extensive collection of them herself, housed at the remarkable, historic Glen Haven School House) and a photocopy of a July 11, 1889 obituary for Mr. Sanders written and published by The Cortland Standard. We thought our supporters might appreciate excerpts from that obituary of this accomplished local author!

Charles W. Sanders, whose name is familiar to educators in all parts of this country, in Europe, and Japan, died in his home at 53 East Fifty Third Street, New York City, on Friday July 5, in his eighty fifth year. He had been ill for nearly three weeks...he expired with his Bible beside him...and not a dozen feet from him were sheets of manuscript to be sent to his publishers for a new series of textbooks... Mr. Sanders was, perhaps, as widely known as an educator as any man now living... He was born March 24, 1805, in the town of Newport, Herkimer County, this State. His father was a farmer, not well off, but with an ambition to give his children good educations.

At that time the country schools were the crudest sort of mental refineries. Sheds and log houses were their edifices, and the instructors were regarded competent if they could read the Bible, do a sum in addition, and spell from Webster’s spelling book. When he was four years old, he was sent to one of these places and in the following four years he succeeded in acquiring quite as much exact knowledge as his teacher and ‘was graduated.’

When he was nine years old his father removed to Homer, Cortland County, and settled on wild lands. At fourteen years he had practically finished his education and two years later he became a licensed teacher, met with all the adventures that a teacher at that time encountered when he strove to instruct persons bigger than himself...

When he was twenty-four years old, he was made, by election, [an] inspector of common schools, holding that office for several years. After teaching in the schools of Homer and Cortland, he began the compilation of a spelling book and writing a reading book for all classes. Previous to that time, readers had been made up from selections from the works of the masters of English literature and in most cases were beyond the simple comprehension of children. So, most of the lessons in the First, Second, and Third Readers were from the pen of Mr. Sanders.

Many men and women now in middle life and not a few approaching pretty closely to old age remember the books of which Mr. Sanders was the author. [The] Allibone [dictionary of literature] says that 13,000,000 copies of Sander’s Readers had been sold between 1838 and 1860. Mr. Sanders made a very large fortune with his works, and as long ago as 1859 the



CHARLES W. SANDERS AND HIS
FIRST BOOK SCHOOL READER





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Help fund this season's wish-list items!

Needless to say, we appreciate and will put to good use – in general grounds-keeping – any gift you can make to the CRC. Should you wish to help fund a particular item or initiative, please consider assisting with these two items this year:

- **Projector, projector stand, and portable screen** (budget: \$2000) — to assist us in hosting events in our Chapel (such as readings, history presentations, concerts, memorial services, and films) that support our cultural mission and help raise funds, friends, and awareness.
- **Reconstruction of Chapel basement-entry** (budget: \$10,000) — suffering from collapsing walls and a buckled driveway, this entry to the basement of our Chapel is critical to winter equipment storage and also helps provide structural strength to the East side of this historic structure. We have estimates but limited funds to proceed with repairs.

DIGITAL PROJECTOR AND PORTABLE SCREEN



CHAPEL BASEMENT ENTRY

Burial books now being scanned!

Thanks to a grant from the Ralph R. Wilkins Foundation, our home-made book scanner is now up and running, allowing us to take digital photos of our one-of-a-kind burial record books. The resulting images will be published online over the coming months and will serve as digital 'back-ups' for these irreplaceable documents in the event of water or fire damage. (Interested in helping us scan our books — a process that involves triggering a camera, turning pages, and just a bit of computer knowledge? We'd love to hear from you!)



A primer on the “King of Primers” – C.W. Sanders (cont.)

CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

statement was made in Trubner’s “*Bibliographical Guide to American Literature*” that his publishers, Ivison & Phinney, paid him about \$30,000 a year. [Note: This would be roughly equivalent to \$841,000 today!]

Mr. Sanders’ first series of school books, the quaint pictures in which are now held in lively remembrance [by those who read them], comprised the Spelling Book, the Primary School Primer (with its highly attractive pea-green covers), and the five graded Readers. The new series, begun in 1860 — with many of the delightful illustration portraying prim girls in long pantalettes rolling hoops in a prim, well-bred way, or weeping over deceased canary birds, displaced pictures more modern in style but scarcely more artistic — was more comprehensive.

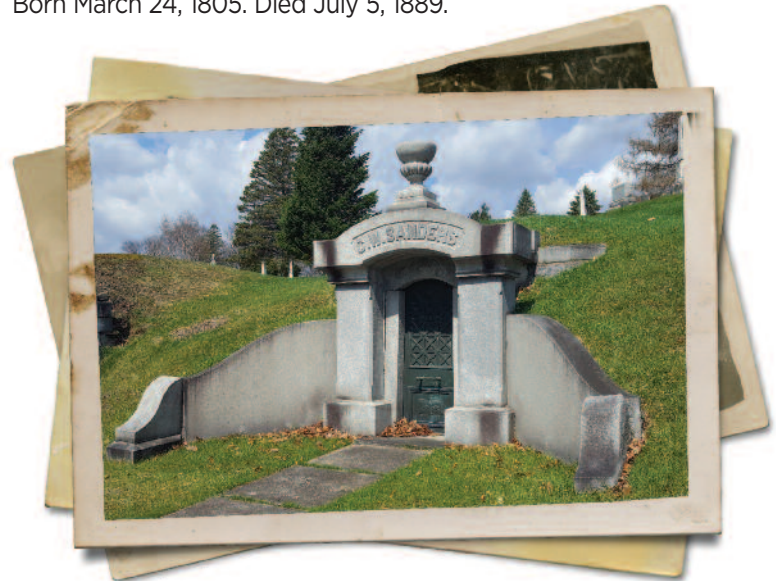
But the readers and spellers were not his only books for students. He [also] prepared two elocutionary charts, a test speller of English words, a phonetic chart, metrical stories in chemistry and natural philosophy, and...five singing books, indeed was the first to introduce singing into the public schools of the country... Mr. Sanders’s publications numbered forty-two books in all, and when he died he was preparing fifth series of his works. His Readers of the Union have been translated into the German and Spanish languages, the latter being widely used in the West India Island and throughout South America. When the Japanese Embassy [visited] this country [to] investigate the public educational system, they selected a great number of the Sanders text books, took them to Japan... and set up schools of English, believing that it was to be the commercial language of the world.



UNION AND CONFEDERATE
SERIES OF PRIMERS

Mr. Sanders was married August 2, 1842, to Miss Elizabeth Barker of New York, who together with two sons (Dr. Charles W. Sanders and the Rev Henry M Sanders), now in Europe, survive him. Mr. Sanders was [also] one of the founders of the New York State Teachers Association...

[His] funeral was held at the family residence in New York... The remains were deposited in the family vault in the Cortland Rural Cemetery. The cell was bricked up and hermetically sealed. Upon the enclosing slab were inscribed the words “Charles W. Sanders, author of Sanders’ series school books. Born March 24, 1805. Died July 5, 1889.”



THE SANDERS MAUSOLEUM
PHOTO BY JOHN HOESCHELE

“[The] Allibone
[dictionary of literature]
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Want to continue our progress?

*Please consider making a tax deductible gift
to the Cortland Rural Cemetery
and returning it using the enclosed envelope.
Thank you for your support!*



5th Annual Sweep-out Day!



MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS YEAR'S CEMETERY SWEEP-OUT DAY, HELD ON SATURDAY, APRIL 29TH! WITHOUT THE MANY INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS WHO HELPED US OUT, OUR 2017 SEASON WOULD NOT HAVE THE GREAT HEAD-START IT NOW HAS. OUR CEMETERY, AND THE COMMUNITY, OFFERS ITS HEARTFELT THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED! (SPECIAL THANKS TO THE TEAMS FROM UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, REV. CHUCK SMITH PRESIDING -- AND THE SUNY CORTLAND HISTORY CLUB, WILLIAM McNEIL, CLUB PRESIDENT!)



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