

## Annual Events

**Saturday before Palm Sunday – Easter Egg Hunt**, sponsored by the Danby Pirates Club, on Fisher Settlement Rd, South Danby. The club also sponsors a Fishing Derby, Hunter Safety Course, and annual Christmas party.

**June – Community Yard Sale & Barbecue**, West Danby.

**July – Danby Fair**, sponsored by the Danby Volunteer Fire Co and the Danby Community Council, Danby Rd, at the firehouse and on lawn outside.

**Summer – West Danby Picnic**, held each year in different locations in the community.

**Oct – Fall Fair**, Danby Federated Church, 1859 Danby Rd. 607-272-1687.

## Bed & Breakfast

**Log Country Inn**, 4 La Rue Rd, Spencer NY 14883. 607-589-4771.

## Speciality Shops

**Contented Country Gifts**, 297 Jersey Hill Rd. 607-272-3009.

**Jean Nowack's Country Caning Shop**, 2628 West Danby Rd (Rts 34/96). 607-564-9241. Cane, rush, splint chair seats. Shop open for drop-off and consultation. Paintings by Wayne Nowack are on view and available for sale. Call ahead for an appointment.

**Uncle Bill's Antiques**, 39 Bald Hill Rd. 607-273-0997. Specializing in 19th- and 20th -century fine and primitive furniture.

## Recreational Areas

(all have exceptional bird-watching opportunities)



**Danby Forest**, southern portions of the town. Thatcher's Pinnacles ↑ (named for the original owners of the property) on Bald Hill Rd Ext above Green-Mettler Cemetery is a prime county vista, offering a panoramic view of West Danby, the Newfield hills, and Connecticut Hill, with the county's highest elevation of 2,097 feet. Hiking, biking, cross-country skiing.

**Finger Lakes Trail** – crosses the town, from the NW corner to the eastern side, mainly through the Danby State Forest (see map).

**Lindsey-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve** – Rts 34/96, West Danby. Hiking trails through a 500-acre nature preserve that features steep hillsides, a 20-acre lake, and diverse natural habitats.



## Cemeteries

**Congregational**, Bald Hill Rd, ½ mile S of Rt 96B.

**Danby Rural**, see #5.

**Episcopal Hill**, Peter Rd.

**Green-Mettler**, Bald Hill Rd Ext.

**Handy Farm**, South Danby Rd.

**Mandeville**, Nelson Rd between E Miller and Hornbrook Rds.

**Old Curtis Road**, Curtis Rd Ext in Danby State Forest.

**Van De Bogart/McGowan**, La Rue Rd in Danby State Forest.

**Ward/Miller**, Fisher Settlement Rd.



**West Danby Baptist**, Valley View Rd. ↑

**West Danby Methodist**, West Danby Rd (Rts 34/96).

## Historical Markers

**Church of New Jerusalem site**, Rt 96B, 1 mile SE of Danby

**First Church**, see #2.

**Jennings Pond**, see #3.

*For more information* – Danby Town Hall, 1830 Danby Rd, Ithaca NY 14850. 607-277-4788; Joan Grant, Town of Danby Historian, 607-272-7335.

## Credits

Prepared by Municipal Historians of Tompkins County and the Office of the Tompkins County Historian

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Text and photographs by Joan Grant, Town of Danby Historian

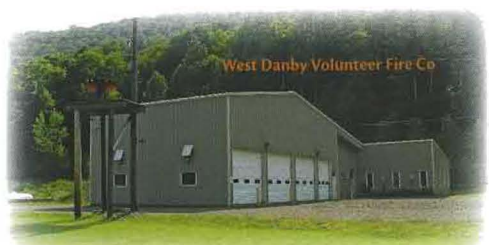
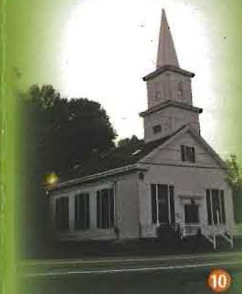
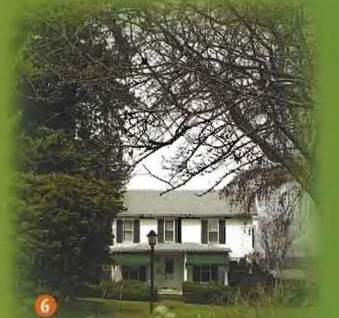
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# Touring the Towns of Tompkins County, New York



# Destination Danby





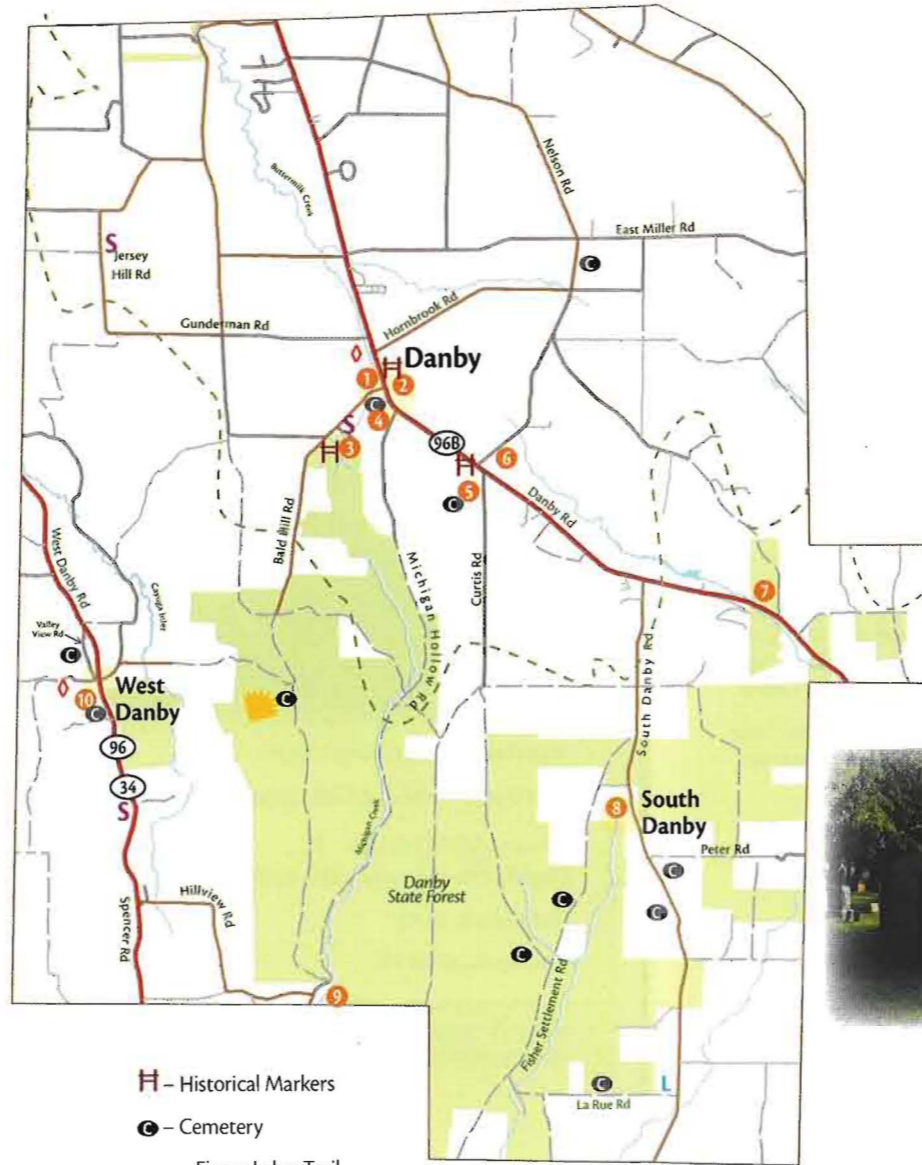
# TOWN OF DANBY

Danby is a rural town spread out among the hills and many acres of reforested New York State land. Buttermilk Creek runs north through the town on its way to the gorge and falls in Buttermilk Falls State Park. Throughout its history Danby has been chiefly agricultural. The northern area of the town was first settled in 1795 by two families named Yapple and Dumond who had lost their claim to land in Ithaca. Two years later Dr. Lewis Beers formed another settlement in South Danby. In 1811 Prince de Plessis, an African American who gained his freedom by Revolutionary War service, settled here with his wife, Lement, and four grown children. Originally part of the Watkins and Flint land purchase and subsequently incorporated as part of Spencer in Tioga County, Danby was annexed to Tompkins County in 1822. Many Danby residents have a Spencer postal address today. The Ithaca-Owego Turnpike (Rt 96B), a toll road completed in 1810, opened the region to commerce, becoming a state highway in 1841. During the early 20th century Danby had a significant Finnish population. The town has two active communities today—Danby and West Danby.

**1 Danby Town Hall** – This 1826 building, originally the Baptist Church, was used as a church until 1866. It became the town hall in 1896 and was completely renovated in 1976 as a Bicentennial project. Today it houses town offices and a public meeting room. In front stands the 29-foot-tall Soldiers' Monument, of Italian marble with a granite base, which lists the names, ages, and death dates of 45 Civil War soldiers who gave their lives to preserve the Union. Fundraising for the monument began in 1866, and more than \$1,900 came from community donors. From the 1870s through the 1910s, a bandstand to the north of the building hosted the town's celebrated brass band.

**2 Danby Federated Church** – The Congregational congregation organized in 1807 and erected this first church building in the town in 1813. Their first pastor was the Rev. Samuel Parker, who came to the area as a domestic missionary. They merged with the Methodists in 1954 to form the present Federated Church, which in 1974 chose to preserve and refurbish the building as their house of worship. It is the county's oldest church building. **H**

**3 Jennings Pond (Danby Pond)** – Part of the Buttermilk Falls State Park system, this 40-acre pond was dug in 1895 by the Ithaca Water Company for the city's water supply. It was never used as a reservoir, but is a popular



- H** – Historical Markers
- C** – Cemetery
- Finger Lakes Trail
- Scenic View
- Recreational Area
- S** – Specialty Shop
- L** – Lodging
- Fire Department

recreational area today. It is the site of a Cayuga Indian village and probable birthplace of Chief Logan (Tag-gah-jute). **H**

**4 Deacon Clark House** – At 1874 Danby Rd, this early residence has a Federal-style front section built c.1818. Hezekiah Clark, church deacon, first settled in the town in 1803. The house reportedly was a stagecoach stop on the Ithaca-Owego Turnpike. Just to the south, at #1882, is a notable Victorian house with a cupola.

**5 Danby Rural Cemetery** – This cemetery on Curtis Rd is the burial site of W. Grant Egbert, well-known violinist and educator who founded the Ithaca Conservatory of Music in 1892. The school, originally located in downtown Ithaca, became Ithaca College in 1931, moving to its present South Hill campus in the 1960s. **↓**



**6 Beers House** – At 2081 Danby Rd is the former home of local physician Lewis Beers, who first settled in South Danby in 1797. He became an active

community leader as judge, justice, postmaster, and founding president of the Ithaca-Owego Turnpike, chartered in 1807. Of the Swedenborgian persuasion he founded and was the first pastor of the New Jerusalem Church, organized here in 1816. Further southeast, on Van De Bogart Rd, is the Van De Bogart dairy farm, operated by the family since 1865.



**7 Hall Tavern** – A popular stagecoach stop on the Ithaca-Owego Turnpike for man and beast, the tavern opened in 1811. Operated by Leonard Hall and accommodating overnight guests, it remained in the Hall family until the 1920s. Its small second-floor dance hall had a spring floor. It is a private residence today.

**8 South Danby** – In the mid-1800s, this community was a busy hamlet. The Methodist Episcopal Church, established in 1830, erected its building at 348 South Danby Rd in 1836. The building served also as a community center and is a private residence today. Across the road and up the hill at #393 is the South Danby Schoolhouse, serving Danby District #2 and privately owned today. Its façade comes from the original school built c.1803 across the road.



**9 Myers Gardens** – On six acres of lawn the gardens contain more than 550 different varieties of perennials and a 30-foot-diameter stone sundial. Also featured are a covered bridge,

working waterwheel, and blacksmith shop. A wooden shed called **Uphy House** (the name comes from the fossil, *Uphantaenia chemungensis*), has a large outdoor display case that contains a bed of 360 million-year-old glass sponge fossils found on the property, dating from the Devonian period.

**10 West Danby** – Settled in the early 1800s, West Danby was a busy community well into the 1900s. Danby Pioneer Grange no. 230, organized there in 1874, was active until the building burned in the 1980s. The West Danby United Methodist Church was built in 1870 and had an active congregation until 1998. Purchased in 2001 and renovated, it is now the West Danby Chapel, hosting wedding ceremonies and receptions and offering guest suites in the bell tower.