

Points of Interest

■ Finger Lakes Trail

The 560-mile trail crosses the town through the Danby State Forest.

■ Lindsey-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve

Routes 34/96, West Danby. Hiking trails through a 500-acre nature preserve.



■ Hall Tavern

Leonard Hall's home was used as a stage coach stop on the Ithaca-Owego Turnpike. The tavern opened in 1811 when the turnpike was chartered. Today, the building is a private residence.

■ 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 Road 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.

■ 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, 2358 W. Danby Road, was built in 1870 and had an active congregation until 1998. Today, a business offering space for events and receptions operates in the building.

Census

Like many Tompkins County communities, Danby's population rose in the early 19th century and then declined. The town's population did not surpass its 1840 level until the 1990 census counted 2,858 town residents.

Town of Danby	Tompkins County
1840: 2,570	32,296
1920: 1,143	35,285
1960: 2,059	66,097
2010: 3,389	101,624

Residents of Note

Dr. Samuel Parker (1779-1866)

Ordained as a Congregational minister in 1812 at the Danby Federated Church. In 1833 the American Board of Domestic Missions sent Parker on a tour of the Pacific Northwest for mission sites. His book, *Parker's Exploring Tour beyond the Rocky Mountains*, went through six editions. He returned to Ithaca where he died in 1866.

Prince and Lement Duplex (formerly Duplessis)

The first free African American family to take up land in the Town of Danby and in the county. They were born in Connecticut and arrived in Danby in 1811 with their son George, Prince Jr., Mark, and their daughters, Arsena and Craty. Like other pioneering families, they fractured their family coming to the New York frontier, leaving a married daughter behind in New Haven, Conn and several infants buried in the local cemetery. Prince had gained his freedom with his service during the Revolutionary War; Lement was born a free black woman.

William Grant Egbert (1867-1928)

Born in Danby and later studied violin in Europe. He returned to Ithaca and in 1892 founded the Ithaca Conservatory of Music where he was president until 1924. In 1931, with studies in music, elocution, dance, speech, radio and physical education, it became Ithaca College. In the 1960s the college moved to its new campus on South Hill and further expanded its curriculum.

Cemeteries

- Baptist Church - Valley View Road, West Danby
- Danby Presbyterian - (also called Congregational Cemetery) Bald Hill Road.
- Danby Rural Cemetery - Curtis Road.
- West Danby Methodist - Maple Avenue and West Danby Road (Routes 34/96)

There are several inactive cemeteries and small family plots in Danby. For details: <http://www.nytopmki.org/tcem.htm>

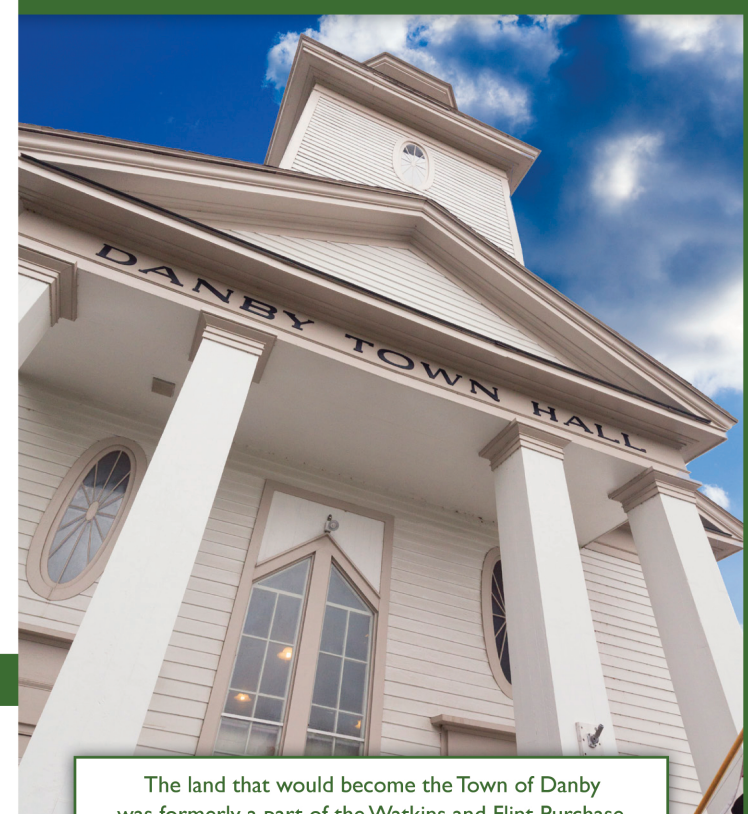
For more local history:

- <http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/historian>
- <http://www.thehistorycenter.net/>
- <http://goo.gl/9tA03o>

Text by Joan Grant, Town of Danby Historian. Design/production: Allison Kaiser. Cover photo: Adam Baker. Editing: Bruce Estes, Carol Kammen. The Tompkins County Bicentennial Commission sponsored city and town history brochures to commemorate the county's 200th anniversary in 2017.



Town of Danby



The land that would become the Town of Danby was formerly a part of the Watkins and Flint Purchase, a 336,380-acre patent granted by New York State July 25, 1794 to numerous eastern investors. The Purchase included all or parts of what is now four counties in the Southern Tier.

Danby was first part of Tioga County and made part of the Town of Spencer in 1806. On Feb. 22, 1811 the towns of Danby, Cayuta (Newfield's former name), and Caroline were formed from the Town of Spencer located in Tioga County. Danby was annexed to Tompkins County on March 22, 1822, and the final transfer occurred one year later.

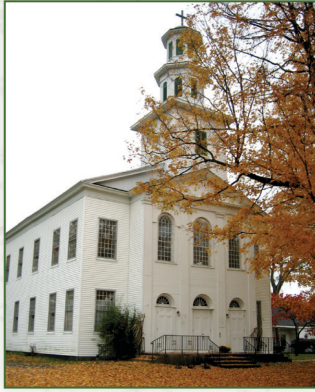
Two land swaps changed Danby's borders. In 1839 part of Caroline was added to Danby and in 1856 a portion of Danby was annexed to Dryden. The town is divided into three hamlets: Danby, West Danby and South Danby.



Danby Points of Interest

■ Danby Town Hall

1830 Danby Road. This 1826 building, originally the Baptist Church, was used 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 Soldiers' Monument that lists the names, ages, and death dates of 45 Civil War soldiers from the town.



church building in the town. It is the county's oldest church building. The congregation merged in 1954 to form the present Federated Church that serves two denominations, the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ.

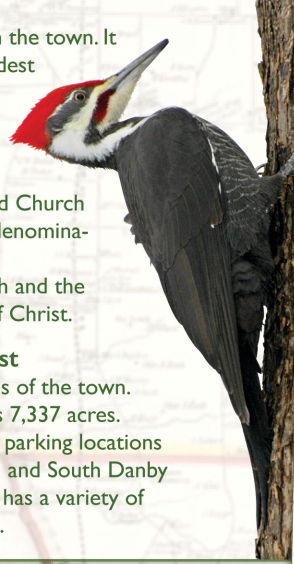
■ Jennings Pond (Danby Pond)

Leib Road & Bald Hill Road. 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 recreational area today.

■ **Danby Federated Church**
1859 Danby Road. Organized in 1807 as a Congregational church and in 1813 became the first

■ Danby Forest

Southern portions of the town. The forest covers 7,337 acres. Public access and parking locations on Bald Hill Road and South Danby Road. The forest has a variety of scenic landscapes.



Pileated Woodpecker

The pileated woodpecker is a large woodpecker that inhabits deciduous forests in Tompkins County. Photo by Louis Brunet / Cornell Lab of Ornithology



1933 - 1997

Former or abandoned Danby farms were added to the state forest system from 1933 to 1997. The Danby State Forest received about 6,200 acres in 1956 from the federal government. That land was acquired in the 1930s through a federal purchase program of marginal farmland. View is from Thatcher's Pinnacles in Danby State Forest.

1795 Isaac and John Dumond, with Jacob and John Yaple, were among the first settlers to the town after losing land at the head of Cayuga Lake.

1811 The Ithaca-Owego Turnpike is completed putting Danby on an important commercial route into the region. The road is today's NYS Route 96B and along with NY Route 34/96 are the major highways in the town.

1800-1802

The first schools in Danby were located in the hamlets of South Danby and Danby.



1871

The Ithaca & Athens Railroad, later to become part of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, began serving Danby.

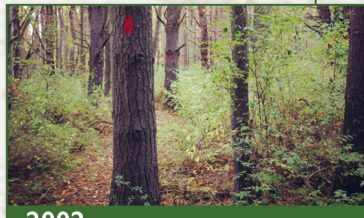
1939 First commercially productive natural gas field in Tompkins County drilled in Danby near intersection of Comfort and Gunderman Roads.

1946

Danby Volunteer Fire Company organized.



1956 Town voters agreed to consolidate schools with the Ithaca City School District.



2002

Danby Community Park Association obtained 90-acres that become Dotson Park, which now includes a disc golf course and hiking trails.



2004

White Hawk Ecovillage was founded. The village was planned for 120 acres with 30 homes in a circle around a common meeting house and recreation area. Residents are encouraged to use alternative forms of energy. By late 2016 nine homes had been built with more planned for 2017.