

## *Town of Danby*

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*Town of Danby Historian*

**Danby.** The Town of Danby originated as a portion of the Watkins and Flint Purchase, the lots sold by the development company's agent located in Owego. When Spencer, in Tioga County, was designated a town, it included land that is today Danby. In 1822, however, the New York State Legislature annexed Danby, along with Caroline, to Tompkins County. The final transfer occurred on March 22, 1823.

Over the years, two land adjustments were made to the Town of Danby. In 1839, a square of land on Eastman Hill was taken from the Town of Caroline and added to Danby, and in 1857, a triangular piece of land lying northeast of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad (DL&W) tracks was transferred from Danby and placed within the Town of Caroline.

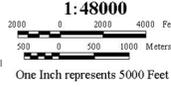
The name Danby can be traced to Thomas Osborne, born in 1632, who became the Lord High Treasurer of England. He lost his power and spent five years in the Tower of London, then regained his freedom. He was awarded a number of titles, including, in 1674, the Earl of Danby. He died in 1712.

According to Glenn Norris, the Earl of Danby received a grant of land in the New World in the eastern portion of New York. That parcel, however, after being organized as the Town of Danby, was in a section of the state claimed by Vermont and in 1789 it was given to Vermont. Norris believed that early settlers from Danby, Vermont,

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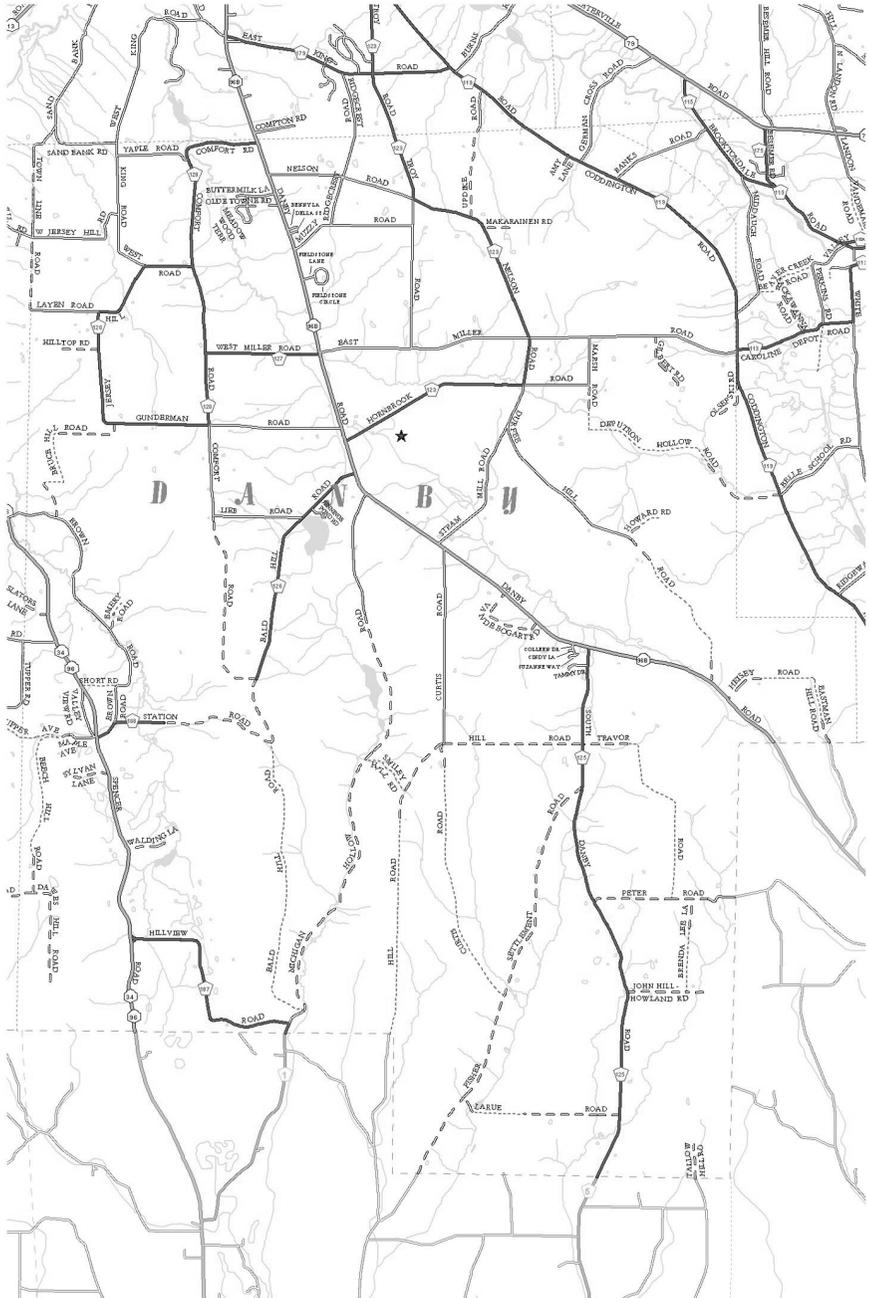


New York State Plane Central  
1983 North American Datum



Tompkins County  
Information Technology Service  
GIS Division

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brought the name to the Watkins and Flint Purchase when land in central New York became available.

Elias Deyo, a Dutch immigrant who arrived in 1796, is said to be the first to build a home in the village of Danby. The Ithaca-Owego Turnpike, opened in 1811, passed through the village. Its president was Dr. Lewis Beers, one of the earliest settlers in the town. In 1806 his brother, Abner Beers, opened the first store in a log building. In 1841 the turnpike became a public highway. Today it is State Route 96.

South Danby is centered around the Hall Tavern, built in 1811, and still standing at 2613 Danby Road. Leonard Hall, according to Linda McCandless in her chapter on the Town of Danby in *The Towns of Tompkins County: From Podunk to the Magnetic Springs* (pp. 75–76) operated the tavern having received permission to sell “strong or spirituous liquors and wines to be drunk at the dwelling.”

Moses Barker settled West Danby in 1808, establishing a Baptist Church there in 1810. The Ithaca & Athens Railroad, which became the Lehigh Valley Railroad, passed through West Danby where it erected a depot. The station and trains were discontinued in the 1940s. A post office established in 1850 is no longer in operation.

**Beers Settlement** was established by Dr. Lewis Beers and his brother Abner. It never developed and the name is now long out of use.

**Curtis Road** was named for Dr. Elbert Curtis who settled in the area in 1809. Curtis was the town’s second doctor.

**Jennings Pond** was created by the Ithaca Water Company in 1895 as a watershed for the City of Ithaca’s water supply. It is located one-half mile up the Bald Hill Road and is named for the Benjamin Jennings family who arrived in Danby in 1802. It was never used as a reservoir, as intended, and in the 1930s the Jennings family conveyed 10.75 acres to New York State. It is now sometimes called Danby Pond and is maintained by the Town of Danby. The pond is located at the headwaters

of Buttermilk Creek, and it is part of the New York State Parks system and Buttermilk Falls State Park.

**Michigan Hollow** was a small settlement in the southern part of Danby. It received the name Michigan because that was the destination of a party of emigrants who found themselves in Danby and decided to remain. They named their new home for the place they had expected to be. Michigan is an adaptation of an Indian word. *Michi* means great and *gami* means water. The only Great Water in the Michigan Hollow area of Danby is Michigan Creek, not exactly the equal of one of the Great Lakes!

**Miller Road** was named for Ebenezer Miller and his two sons, William and Raymond, who settled land and created the road in the early nineteenth century.

**The Pinnacles** was originally called Thatcher's Pinnacles, named for its original owners, and is sometimes still referred to that way. The place is located in the central southwest corner of Danby and stands at a height of approximately 1,730 feet. It is accessible from Bald Hill Road at the intersection with Station Road, where there is a marker for Abbot's Loop trail that leads to the Pinnacles. The trail is maintained by the Cayuga Trails Club and is part of the Danby State Forest. From the Pinnacles there is a nearly 180-degree panoramic view of West Danby, the Newfield hills, and Connecticut Hill.

**Yaple Road** is named for Jacob and John Yaple who, along with Isaac and John Dumond, came into Danby in 1789 after being forced from land they had cleared in Ithaca but to which they did not have legal title. The families moved four miles south of Ithaca, cutting their way through the woods to their new home located a short distance from the bridge that now crosses Buttermilk Creek.