

His One Tune
By Douglas H. Shepard

It was in June 2003 that a generous donor gave the Barker Museum a copy of John E. **Sanford's** *His One Tune and a Few Others*, printed and published by Waldo **Hart** in Fredonia in 1915. Who these folks were and how the book came to be issued here makes an interesting story.

The Printer

Waldo Raymond **Hart** was born in Salmon Falls, NY on 16 October 1875 to Lyndal Simon and Emeline Frances (**Russell**) **Hart**. In 1892, the family (Lyndal, Emeline, Waldo and Mabel or Mabelle) moved to Fredonia where Mr. **Hart** worked as a carpenter. Waldo, who was about 17 when the family moved here, seems to have continued his schooling. The School District records show that both of L. S. **Hart's** children were attending District School No.8 (Barker Street) in 1893 through 1895.

By 1896 Waldo **Hart** had begun working as a job printer (the 1896 Directory has the misprint "painter") for Roy S. **Marsh**, Printer, at 4 West Main Street, where he soon became foreman. On 19 August 1901 he married Jennie E. **Prentice** in a double wedding ceremony with Emory **Lawson** and Anna **Miller**. Waldo and Jennie lived first at 135 Water Street, and later at 70 Spring Street. In 1905 they moved to Buffalo where he worked for some years, returning to Fredonia in 1908 with his own job printing business at 35 East Main Street, specializing in stationery, bank books and "all printing needs of the grape industry."

He continued at that address to 1917, then moved across the street to 42 East Main Street, where he remained into the 1930s. By 1935 he had taken his son Raymond into the business, which operated as W. R. **Hart** & Son at 29 East Main Street until his death in October 1942.

The Author

John E. **Sanford** was born in Forestville, NY on 13 May 1876 to George G. and Polly **Griswold Sanford**. He was educated at the Forestville Free Academy and at the Fredonia Normal School where he worked on "The Leader," the student newspaper. Several sources say he worked as a printer for the *Forestville Free Press* while still young.

After completing his schooling, he worked for a short time on the *St. Charles MI Review*. He moved to Fredonia around 1896, boarding on Temple Street while he worked at the *Censor*. The *Centennial History of Chautauqua County* states that after his return from Michigan, he worked for the *UP-TO-DATE*. That was grocer Louis N. **Starr's** "Humorous Weekly Paper," which ran from August 1898 through 1899.

In February 1899 George **Sanford** died in Forestville and his widow and daughter Ruth moved to Fredonia, where they lived with John at 77 East Main Street. John, who became Associate Editor of the *Censor*, married Bertha May **Bailey** of Findley Lake in April 1900 and they moved into an apartment on the third floor, over the *Censor* at 1 East Main Street.

He last appears in the 1904 Directory. From Fredonia he went to a position with several Detroit newspapers: the *Free Press*, the *Daily News*, the *Tribune* and the *Times*. He briefly worked for the *San Francisco Examiner*, then returned to the *Detroit Free Press* "just in time to cover the libel suit brought by Henry **Ford** against the **Chicago Tribune**" (July 1919).

At some time during his career he also worked for the *Washington Times*, the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, and the *Elizabeth NJ Journal*. In addition he apparently went to law school in Michigan, and he and his wife were admitted to the Michigan bar. In 1926, having suffered a heart attack, he took a leave from the *Detroit News* and moved back to Fredonia to recuperate, renting 99 *Forest Place*. Early in May 1927 he traveled to Detroit to arrange for his return there, but after coming back to Forest Place, he died on 18 May 1927 and was buried in Forest Hill Cemetery.

The Book

Why **Sanford's** only book of poetry was printed and published in Fredonia, and why by Waldo **Hart**, are matters for conjecture. **Sanford** may have made the arrangement with **Hart** when he visited this area in the summer of 1915, although there is more to the story than that. On the front page of its 19 May 1915 issue, under a photo of **Sanford**, "Associate Editor of the *Elizabeth (N.J.) Daily Journal*," the *Fredonia Censor* announced that he would be delivering the Memorial Day Address in Forestville on the 31st. That kind of publicity for a person and event not in Fredonia indicates the *Censor's* sense of support for their former colleague.

Sanford must also have made arrangements with his old friends at the *Censor* to run a series of his articles, perhaps as deliberate publicity for the as yet unannounced book-to-come, because, at fairly regular intervals the *Censor* began running selections of **Sanford's** poetry and feature items. The first, on 8 August, was his poem "A Musical Meeting." On 25 August appeared, for the first time, "**Sanford's** Column."

"J. E. **Sanford** writes for the *Censor*: 'Chautauqua'." That was a poem celebrating his home county which was to appear in the collection he was planning. In the 8 September 1915 issue, "**Sanford's** Column" consisted of "My Skipping Rope" and "They Disown Him," (neither one was to be in the book), the latter, a comic quatrain apparently about selfish trolley car patrons.

*The car seat hog is not allied
With any porcine breed
A fact of which four legged pigs
Are very proud indeed.*

By that date Sanford had left New Jersey and moved on to San Francisco, the dateline on the 8 September column. In the *Censor* of 22 September appeared "**Sanford's** Letter," a humorous account of the **Sanfords'** train trip across the country to California along with a comic poem on "Vacations," another piece that did not make it into the book. "**Sanford's** Column" in the *Censor* of 6 October, datelined 19 September, described some tourist sites around San Francisco and commented on the "melting-pot nature of the country." He adds "Some members of the Press Humorists were invited to give a program at Oakland the other night and I gave them some verses I ran in Elizabeth [in the *Elizabeth NJ Journal*], which they seemed to like because this locality has been a melting pot of races." The poem was "Good Old U.S.A." celebrating our diversity unified under one flag. This too was a poem that did not appear in the book.

His 13 October column, datelined San Francisco 1 October, dealt with the large number of women voting in the local elections and the impressive amount of civic improvements he saw. This was followed by a poem that had appeared in the *Examiner* entitled "Aerophone Troubles," about an international telephone operator. (In his book, the title is "Aerophone Trouble.") On 10 November his column dealt with the San Diego Exposition, and in the 24 November issue of the *Censor* we find the first mention of **Sanford's** book of poems coming into print: "From J. E. **Sanford's** book. 'His One Tune and a Few Others.' to be issued in a few weeks before Christmas price \$1.00." This is followed by four poems: "For This we Give Thanks" ("For Which We Give Thanks" in the book version), "His Thanksgiving", "His One Tune", and "The Friends from Home."

The 1 December column simply ran three more of **Sanford's** poems, "Lost Wonderlands", "No Imitation", and "He Kept at It," of which only the last is in the book. In the 15 December 1915 issue of the *Censor* appeared the announcement that **Sanford's** Christmas Book is "now on sale at **Chatsey's** and **Robinson's**." This was followed by "**Sanford's** Column" in the 22 December issue, a poem called "The Jones' Christmas" with a headnote that it was from the book which was for sale, and on 29 December,

the *Censor* paid its last respects to its former colleague's work, running the poem "Sport" with the same headnote as before.

Sanford's name, his column and his poetry then disappear from the paper. No doubt the *Censor* felt it had done its part for an old friend. The connection with the *Censor* is clear enough. What is more a matter of conjecture is the printer. Logically, if the *Censor* ran some of **Sanford's** writings, they might have been expected to issue the book as well. We may imagine, however, that back in the late 1890s and early 1900s both the young printer Waldo **Hart** at *4 West Main Street*, and the young *Censor* editor at 1 East Main Street knew each other and may well have become friends. **Sanford** was all of seven months younger than **Hart**. Whatever the exact circumstances, it is gratifying to record that the Museum has acquired a very pleasant work that was the collaboration of our local newspaper, our local printer, and their formerly local friend.