

One of the first settlers of Dresden was Isaac Bogart, who with his brother, Harmon, came from Albany. They were related to the Van Rensselaer family of Albany and were wealthy people. They bought most of the land where the village now stands. Harmon located in Geneva, but they soon began to make improvements here, first laying out the streets for a village. On Main Street they gave land for three public squares or parks; one near the lake, another just east of the New York Central depot, and one about half way between the present village and Hopeton Corners. On this square an effort was made to have the county buildings located, but owing to disagreements between the parties and other causes it was a failure. Isaac built a house, a flouring mill and a store on Seneca street. Near the lake Harmon built a brick house for one of his daughter, Mrs. Delamater, on Cornelia Street. Mr. Delamater died before the house was finished, but his widow and two daughters occupied it for many years, and afterwards sold it to the late Clement W. Bennett. The late Dr. Charles Bogart was a son of Harmon Bogart. They also built many other houses and business places. Other pioneers came and bought land and built homes and started various kinds of business, and in course of time there were two hotels, two or three stores, another flouring mill, three or four blacksmith shops, a tannery, a woolen factory, plaster mill, sawmill, distillery, carriage shop, and after and crooked Lake canal was built, a dry-dock and boat-yard, where many canal boats were built; several storehouses were built and Dresden became a good grain market for the surrounding country. Between the years 1850 and 1870 Dresden enjoyed its greatest prosperity. In the late fifties a large distillery was built near the flouring mill at the foot of Seneca street, which employed a large number of men, and Francis Hood built two large cooper shops for the manufacture of whiskey barrels for the distillery. Afterwards he built a factory and put in machinery for making flour barrel staves and headings, and had at times from seventy-five to a hundred men in his employ. In 1874 or 5, the distillery having been destroyed by fire years before, and stave and heading timber becoming scarce, he moved his machinery and business to Michigan. This threw many men out of employment, and many left the village to find employment elsewhere. James Ewing, who owned and carried on the wagon and carriage shop, removed to Elmira about the year 1857. As he only employed from six to eight hands, and none of them went with him, the loss was not felt, as other parties soon came in and took up the business. Dresden has sustained its greatest loss in business from the numerous fires which have destroyed many of its business places, many of which have never been rebuilt. The following are some of them: The distillery and flouring mill and the building where the first store in Dresden was kept. These were all burned at the same time. The spoke factory, saw mill, blacksmith and wagon shop, hotel, the Banner mill and plaster mill, carpenter shop, S. H. Graves' wagon and blacksmith shop, postoffice and shoe store. These were never rebuilt. C. D. Brundage's store, rebuilt on the site of the burned hotel; the grain elevator, near the depot, which was rebuilt, again burned and again rebuilt; postoffice and store of C. A. Dains and dwelling of George S. Downey, store and postoffice rebuilt on lot adjoining. Some five or six dwelling houses have been burned; three have been rebuilt. A new canal boat, built by Charles W. Brown, near the steamboat dock and nearly completed, was also burned; a storehouse at the foot of Seneca street and the dock and building at the steamboat landing.

In the year 1867 the village was incorporated. It then probably contained the largest population of any time in its existence. The enumeration of its inhabitants taken at that time showed the number to be 372. Of this number only 28 are now living in the village. Of the 45 persons who signed the petition to have the village incorporated only 4 now remain, namely; Moses M. Harris, Shearman H. Graves, Samuel Dunlap and Seth Youngs. Charles W. Brown is the only man living in Dresden at the present time who was prominent in business in the days of its greatest prosperity. By the abandonment of the crooked Lake canal, the number of fires, and the death or removal of its business men, Dresden was reduced to its lowest degree of prosperity about the time that the Fall Brook railroad was built. There were then less than 300 inhabitants. In the last few years there has been gradual increase. The enumeration taken in 1898 gave the number 304; that taken in 1892 gave 330. Since the Fall Brook railroad was taken possession of by the New York Central the number has materially increased. Between thirty and forty men are employed on the pusher engines that make their headquarters here, and about the depot quite a number of new houses have been built and some new business started. There are several good water powers lying idle, and no better location could be found for capitalists to start manufactories, and make Dresden the lively place it once was.