



A RANSOM NOTE

Clarence Historical Society Newsletter

Fall 2024

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Board Meetings are held the 1st Thursday of each month.

Meetings begin at 6:30 pm at the Clarence History Museum.

A RANSOM NOTE

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Happy 70th Anniversary to the Historical Society of the Town of Clarence! 2024 is the Society's 70th Year mark as it was formed in 1954.

Where did the summer go! It has been a remarkably busy summer as we have been working on several projects!

Our first project was the addition and refurbishing of our outdoor signage. The Wilson Greatbatch Barn has now been identified with a large sign on the barn and a write-up explaining the barn and Mr. Greatbatch. The two signs in front of the Log Cabin and Watchman's Shanty have been updated with new sign boards. There will be a new sign board installed outside the main part of the Museum Building explaining its history and we will have a new Community Board placed by our sign off Main Street. The Signage Project was made possible by a grant from Legislator Chris Greene and Sign Works from Lockport, NY for helping design the signs.

Another project currently in the works will be three new benches placed around the campus. Two benches will be out back overlooking the Park and the Pond, and one bench will be placed by the Community Board, by Main Street. This project was made possible by a grant from former Legislator Ed Rath.

Our third project in the works has been sorting and arranging the collection of Clarence Newspapers, by decade, which are ready to be digitized. The collection will start from 1950 and go all the way through March 2010. We are working with a local company for digitizing and will eventually have all the newspapers electronically in the Museum for research.

We cannot thank Parks Superintendent Jason Holden and his entire Parks crew for all their help this summer with all our projects around the campus! Along with getting the new signs up, clearing brush and old trees for the benches, the Parks Department is also refurbishing the Watchman's Shanty with cleaning, fresh paint, and a few repairs, which will give it many more years of life.

We are looking forward to the Holidays and will be decorating the Museum. Please look for more information on our Holiday Open House. We would like to thank the musicians who have played music at our open Sundays. We have dubbed them the "Porch Pickers." We have had great programs and speakers this year and look forward to the 2025 programs! Lastly, and a big Thank-You to everyone who supported our Programs, attendance at the open Sunday's, and the Volunteers for all the hard work at the Museum and Farmer's Market!

Historian's Corner

by: Joe McGreevy

Town Historian

School House Lost - District #11

As many prepare for another school year, I pause to reflect on the one room schoolhouse lost this past year. The school at the corner of Keller and Strickler was destroyed by fire and now is a pile of rubble. Known as District # 11 School, it educated many farm children of northern Clarence for almost 100 years. The Town of Clarence has a long history of one room school houses. Unfortunately, few remain.

The first school was established in the Hollow or Ransomville in 1805, six years after Asa Ransom settled in 1799. The school was located on Ransom Road and Miss Rebecca Hamlin was the first teacher. The second school was further north and east, on Salt and was later moved. The first larger two story school building was built in 1841 and called the Clarence Classical School, but was a private institution and students had to pay tuition to attend. The school was converted into an academy in the 1850's and a new brick building was constructed. As the population continued to grow in the 1850's and 60's more school houses were built, one of the was District # 11.

Clarence had many large farm families in the early years, some were so large that a few families could make up an entire school. This was the case at School District # 11, built in 1862 during the Civil War. District # 11, known as the Riegle District, was a one room schoolhouse built with limestone quarried locally. In the late 1800's Stella Croup was the teacher, pictured as the teacher below. Alice Gamin was also a teacher at the school. It lasted as a school from 1862-1954 when it was converted into a private residence. Two generations of the same family have owned it ever since.

A Picture of District # 11 School with Stella Croup as the teacher and several students.

A story about District 11 is as follows:

"This district (#11) was known as the Riegle District because the Riegle children made up most of the classroom. Some of the older boys went to the school for a few months in the winter and they spent more time making things tough for the teacher than they did in learning. No teacher in the area would even take the school. Finally the trustee heard of a very active teacher who was a stranger to the area and he persuaded him to accept the position.



All went well for a few days while the boys studied the teacher. Then one recess, the boys went into some nearby woods and whittled out some cedar daggers. When the teacher rang the bell, these bigger boys refused to enter the school backing their defiance with the daggers. However, the teacher was too quick for them. He grabbed one and threw him into the vestibule, then a second one and then a third on top of the first. By this time the others marched themselves into the classroom. The teacher had won their respect and the rest of that year passed peaceably."

Unfortunately of the 19 one room school houses that existed in Clarence very few still remain. School #12 at the corner of Goodrich and Main gone, or School # 6 gone. Most recently School District #11 met its end.



Genealogy & Research

by: Sandy Larkin

Researching the New York State 1865 Census

While working on our family genealogy tree, I was trying to find out more about my 3rd Great Grandmother. She was in the Federal Census of 1860, in the Town of Clarence, and my 3rd Great Grandfather was listed as a Widower in the Federal Census of 1870. The New York State Census of 1865 also listed my grandfather as a widower. What I didn't know until really looking at the 1865 Census, was the massive amount of information that was captured in this record. Population schedules were just the beginning. There are records of Marriages, Deaths, Agriculture, Industry other than Agriculture, Churches, Schools, Military, and General Remarks. I found my grandmother's death information and that included her date and cause of death as well as her birth location. The Military Sections of the 1865 Census had details of names who served, ranks, injuries, death, cause of death, location of death and burial. It was heartbreaking to see notations of injury to so many of our men as "insane".

So I began to research more information on the Town of Clarence in the 1865 Census. The land of Clarence was a part of Ontario County from 1789 to 1802. Genesee County was established, and Clarence land became part of Genesee County from 1802 to 1808. The Town of Clarence was incorporated in March 1808 and Niagara County was established. In 1821, Erie County was established. The 1865 Census was the first record after the Civil War ended on May 26, 1865. The census began June 1, 1865. I wanted to know how Clarence was doing in its 57 years of existence.

Clarence had 2 Election Districts that were recorded. The First Election District appeared to be East Clarence, Clarence Hollow and moving along Main Street towards Harris Hill. The Second Election District was North Clarence including Clarence Center. The Summary Report of the New York State 1865 Census, Town of Clarence states: 1865 Population 3610, an increase of 357 from 1855. Registered Voters in 1865: Native 436, Naturalized 340 with a total of 776. Aliens in 1865: 308.

The following is the Remarks section at the end of the First Election District.

First Election District Remarks

"Remarks of the Harvest of 1864 – Here state whether the yield of any particular crop, reported on the preceding schedule, was affected by drouth or otherwise. If so, to what relative amount as compared with common years? Barley & oats were not more than one third an average crop. Corn about three fourths. The amount of Butter was also one fourth less than average."

Remarks on the Influence of the War upon Prices –

"What is the average monthly pay (including board), of farm laborers through the summer months? 22
What by the year? 18 What were those wages in 1860? 18 & 11 Has the price of farming lands increased since 1860? (unreadable answer) State the relative increase 10 per cent: \$5 to \$10 per acre. How has the war affected the amount of debt between individuals? Almost abolished credit system. Has it tended to promote prompt payments? (unreadable answer) How has it influenced the amount of crime? No effect in rural districts. How has it influenced pauperism? Diminished it. What other changes in the social condition of the people have you observed since 1860? The cheapness of money was a great advantage to those that were in Debt. There are therefore, fewer instances of indebtedness between individuals; but the amount of indebtedness is the same, as money was loaned freely to parties that speculated largely in produce & real estate. People are also more extravagant & given to luxury."

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General Remarks –

“Many of the smaller farmers are selling out to the wealthier & go West. There are more very large farms now than there were formerly. Owing also to the extensive introduction of labor saving machines in farming the poor classes are compelled to seek a livelihood in the towns & cities. In the country proper therefore there are less people than ten years ago. Our forests are fast disappearing. Let the state at _____ forest laws.”

Jacob Berry, Enumerator, was duly appointed to take the Census of the First Election District of the Town of Clarence. His census report included 28 pages and was concluded on July 11, 1865. He began the census on June 6, 1865. Mr. Berry noted that there were 3 Inns, Hotels, Taverns; 3 Retail Stores and 1 Grocery Store. There were also notes of 2 Churches in the district.

The second Election District was approximately 50 pages and noted 12 Businesses. I found Hay Raker, 2 Wagon Makers, Brick Making, Shoe Maker and 2 Saddlers. There was no General Remarks section found at the end of the Second Election District census report.

I. Population. CENSUS of the Inhabitants living in the *Smith Road* of *Franklin* in the County of *Livingston*, N. Y., on the first day of June, 1865. This Enumeration was made by me, on the *17* day of June, 1865. *Chas. Schutte* Enumerator.

Number of Inhabitants	Dwellings			Name of every person whose usual place of abode was in the family on the 1st day of June, 1865. Give include as in the family those absent in the army and navy.	Age	Sex	Color	Education to the highest attained	In what country of this state, or in what other country born.	Number of times married	How married	Profession, trade or occupation.	Usual place of employment, if out of the city or town, where the family resides.	Voters		Employment in military or naval service of United States											
	Number of family	Of what material built.	Value											Male	Female												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
124			5/3	<i>Edna Croop</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>W. Mass</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>None</i>															
				<i>John H. do</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>None</i>															
				<i>James do</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>None</i>															
				<i>William do</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>None</i>															
				<i>John do</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>None</i>															
125	<i>Stone</i>		<i>5/3</i>	<i>William Schutte</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>None</i>															

From the Desk of Gabe McGreevy

What was school life like in the mid-1800s? What subjects did students learn, and how are we taught differently now? A report from 1954 of a 90 year old woman named Edna Croop might be able to provide us with some answers. Her report stated that in 1864 at the Martin District School, a one room brick schoolhouse that is no longer there, the school focused more on grammar than on other subjects. At the end of every year she would get a prize from her teacher if she did perfect on her spelling. She felt that some subjects, like arithmetic, were neglected because the teachers did not know how to help the children! The blackboard was the most important piece of equipment in the early school houses. Paper was hard to find so the blackboard and chalk was used for most teaching and discipline. You might be kept after school to write the same thing over and over again. Edna said for lunch she would usually have bread, butter, and some honey or jam. That's it! No Lunchables, pizza, tacos, cookies, or chocolate milk, just bread, butter and jam, sometimes boiled eggs. During recess the boys didn't play football or baseball. They would instead race and play hide and seek, and the girls would play games like London Bridge Is Falling Down. What can we take away from this? Even though some subjects are the same, school life was quite different from today.

Membership Corner

It is Membership Renewal Time!!!

We would like to welcome our newest life member, Kelly Natalizia!

You can renew your membership on our website or
in person.

We have different tiers to choose from:

Student Under 18—\$5

Individual—\$15

Couples—\$25

Family—\$30

Business—\$50

Individual Life Member—\$150

Thank you all for joining!

We 
our
MEMBERS!

HALLOWEEN WORDSEARCH

Happy Halloween!



N	O	Y	T	K	S	P	H	M	H	A	T	E	K	S	A	C	M	T
B	C	G	P	U	S	Z	T	Y	L	N	B	E	V	X	A	R	O	H
T	T	X	R	E	H	A	U	N	T	A	G	L	U	U	E	D	T	G
E	O	Z	N	E	E	T	M	W	S	H	U	Y	L	V	Z	K	N	I
N	B	J	R	I	C	R	R	I	O	O	M	D	A	H	N	S	A	N
O	E	Y	P	A	H	A	C	S	H	E	R	D	B	A	I	A	H	D
T	R	H	O	C	K	B	T	G	B	O	A	P	R	O	D	S	P	I
S	A	U	T	U	M	N	S	R	N	C	E	P	Z	D	O	D	N	M
B	R	I	L	H	V	C	O	T	A	B	N	O	T	E	L	E	K	S
M	W	Y	O	Q	A	O	W	N	Y	N	R	T	E	M	A	R	E	J
O	D	W	K	D	M	B	C	H	W	E	R	E	W	O	L	F	I	C
T	L	S	J	S	P	W	E	O	P	W	B	Y	D	N	A	C	R	A
G	R	P	T	B	I	E	W	A	F	T	J	Q	I	T	G	D	E	C
G	D	I	M	R	R	B	E	Y	A	F	T	E	R	L	I	F	E	K
Z	C	D	C	N	E	R	M	Z	U	W	I	R	U	C	T	M	Y	L
K	B	E	G	K	M	M	E	U	Y	X	F	N	M	O	O	N	A	E
O	X	R	V	I	U	A	F	Q	V	D	B	X	W	J	X	D	J	R
W	M	P	R	M	W	K	C	A	L	B	B	L	O	O	D	S	U	X
L	O	G	B	Z	D	I	R	V	Q	K	H	I	C	M	H	D	S	M

AFTERLIFE
AUTUMN
BAT
BLACK
BLOOD
BOO
BROOMSTICK
CACKLE
CADAVER
CANDY
CASKET
CAT
CAULDRON

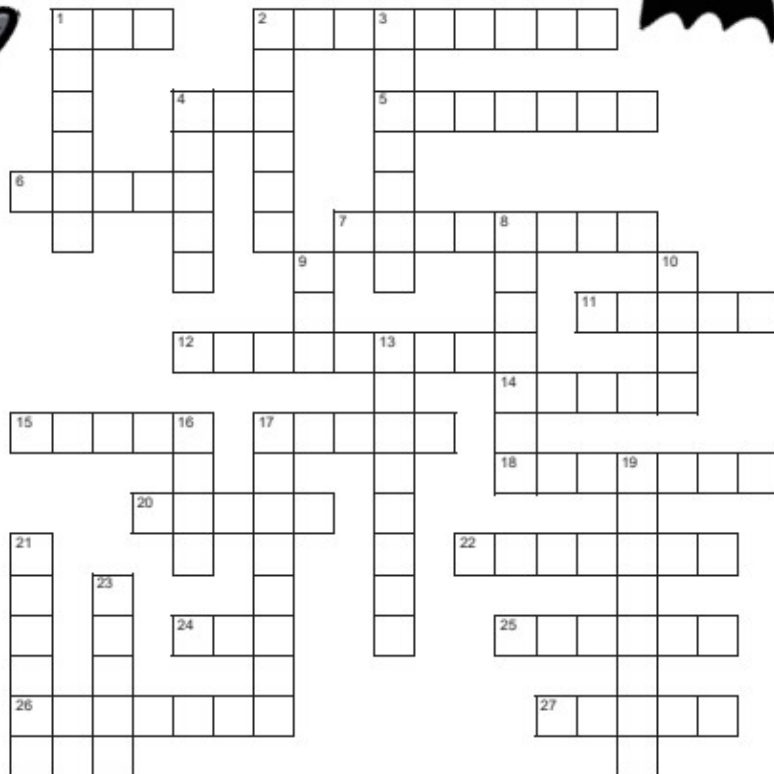
COBWEB
COFFIN
CREEPY
DEMON
EERIE
GHOST
GHOUL
GRIM REAPER
HAUNT
HOWL
MASK
MIDNIGHT
MOON

MUMMY
OCTOBER
OGRE
OWL
PHANTOM
PRANK
SKELETON
SPIDER
TOMBSTONE
TRICK
VAMPIRE
WEREWOLF
WITCH

HALLOWEEN CROSSWORD



Halloween



Across

1. He swallowed the canary.
2. Playground for ghosts.
4. What a spider spins.
5. Frankenstein has one.
6. When ghosts come out to play.
7. Scare.
11. What the pot might call the kettle.
12. October 31st.
14. ____ or treat.
15. Witch transportation.
17. Frightening.
18. The Count.
20. A skeleton is just a bunch of these.
22. Disguise.
24. Lives in the belfry.
25. Incey wincey is one of these.
26. Main ingredient in a popular pie.
27. ____ stories.

Down

1. Where a vampire sleeps.
2. Evil or mischievous creature.
3. He hates garlic.
4. Samantha for example.
8. ____ house.

9. Whooo? Whooo?
10. Mr. O'Lantern.
13. Comes out on full moon nights.
16. Might be full, half, or new.
17. A boney sort of fellow.
19. Fire burn, and ____ bubble.
21. When something makes our skin crawl, it's this.
23. Found in Egypt.





HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE TOWN OF CLARENCE

Founded in 1954

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Facebook: Historical Society of the Town
of Clarence

“To collect, preserve, and share the history and heritage of the Town of Clarence”

The Historical Society of the Town of Clarence Inc is formed for the following purposes:

- To identify, preserve, and display materials of historical significance of Clarence
- To encourage historical research, analysis, and study for the publication of historical papers, articles
- To educate the community through lectures, tours, online resources, school field trips and research opportunities



The Historical Society of the Town of Clarence deeply appreciates the support of the County of Erie, the Town of Clarence, our members and the community as a whole.

