



A RANSOM NOTE

Clarence Historical Society Newsletter

Fall 2022

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Elaine Dinola, Board Advisor

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

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

President's Comments

Here we are—Fall of 2022 already! This summer seemed to go by very fast. We were able to bring back some programs this year and are pleased to announce that 2023 Programs will be starting in March!

Membership renewals will be going out in January so please watch your mail! We are growing and had new members join this past year, including many new life members!

Music on the porch went over very well this summer. If anyone knows of someone who would like to drop in and play some music during open Sunday hours, please let us know! We would like to thank Johnny O', aka the Mayor, and his friends and Joe McGreevey for having music this year!

The Historical Society will be closed January and February 2023 and will re-open in March 2023!

Everyone have a wonderful holiday season! Stay warm and stay safe!

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Update on Elaine Dinola

I recently had the opportunity to chat with Elaine and catch up. Elaine is living in a wonderful community in Johnson City, NY. Elaine and her friends are on the go go go! There is a community pool, games everyday, lots to keep young ladies and gentlemen busy!

Elaine was sharing with me many fond memories of her and Shirley Giglia. One of my favorite stories Elaine told me was about Shirley and her winter coat. I cannot do the story justice, so I will save that for Elaine to share sometime.

Elaine seems very happy and misses everyone, as we miss her!

Why I Love Trains

By Trustee and Life Member

Jon E. Rothenmeyer

I've always had a great fascination for trains. My earliest recollections are hearing the train whistles and viewing the trains of the former West Shore branch of the New York Central RR from the front window of my home on Main Street in the Hollow which faced the tracks. The trains varied, including freights pulled by a cab unit diesel to occasionally one with a great coal burning steam locomotive hauling the train. Don't forget, this was the early 1950s and the railroad still had some steam engines in the Buffalo area. When there was a traffic backup or wreck on the four-track mainline, I would be pleased to see a sleek passenger streamlined train rolling across the Main Street crossing. However cool to watch, that was a very rare occurrence.

I have not forgotten when my father took me for a visit to Buffalo's Central Terminal on the east side of the city. And my first train ride was a Cub Scouts excursion from Buffalo to Batavia on Veterans Day in 1958. Our family took a real train trip in the summer of 1959 when we rode the New York Central from Buffalo Central Terminal to Terminal Tower in Cleveland to attend a hardware show at the George Worthington Company warehouse and showroom. On the train we had dinner in the beautiful dining car; a delicious meal was served on railroad dining china, with a white linen tablecloth and a vase of flowers on it. The hustle and bustle of waiters serving us, the aroma of food and the chatter of other guests at nearby tables was memorable. The food was very good too!

We arrived late on a Saturday afternoon and the next day was a baseball game at Cleveland Stadium was sure exciting to a kid like me. Being a Sunday afternoon double header game, it was the "Indians" playing the Washington "Senators". They won both games by the way. Cleveland's Public Square in the heart of its downtown on which the Terminal Tower station fronted was a booming place with two large, fancy department stores; the May Company, and Higbee's Department Store. Another leading store, Halle's was just off the Square on Euclid Avenue.

My fascination with railroads continued throughout my youth. In August of 1965 I took the New York Central from Batavia to Grand Central Terminal on Park Avenue & 42nd Street in the heart of Manhattan in NY City. A visit to the World's Fair along with a sampling of the NY City subway and the Long Island RR was a major educational experience. Sadly, at that time, the last piece of the mighty Pennsylvania Station was being demolished, even as we utilized it. I could see then that this was a tremendous loss to a great city, but it was called "progress" at that time.

1975 was an awakening for me. My first car, a 1974 Dodge Dart and along with a 35mm Konica S2 camera, I was able to heighten my railroad interest in capturing area railroads and stations on film. In 1976 I joined the Buffalo Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, and it opened many doors for me regarding the railfan universe. Over the years, the Chapter presented outstanding programs each month along with operating several railway-oriented trips. Such excursions included many Canadian adventures on regularly scheduled Canadian National and Canadian Pacific trains. There were special steam excursions between Niagara Falls, Ontario and Toronto. During these years of the late 1970's and into the early 1980s, trips north of the border for train riding were frequent and productive. Many great friendships developed through my involvement in the railroad historical organizations.

Since September of 1973, I developed a real passion for railroad stations. When I saw that the landmark Albany Union Station was in grave danger of demolition, I realized that we would be losing another monument to the “golden age” of rail transportation. (Fortunately, this station was saved and is now repurposed as a meeting hall.) I took on the personal challenge to photograph as many stations as possible, both old and relatively new buildings constructed in the early to late 1950s during the last great gasp of passenger rail services by the private railway companies.

Upon beginning of this quest, I have managed to commit the sad but still proud ruins of the old Delaware, Lackawanna & Western station in Buffalo, the Erie RR stations in Olean, Salamanca and Corning, and many others, from humble wood frame country depots to beautiful city stations to film. On the positive side, many local train stations now have been recognized as landmarks and have been preserved. Some are museums such as Orchard Park, Williamsville, and North Tonawanda. Without question, at one time not so long ago, the station had been at the center of every community. It was the place where news was delivered when out of town papers were dropped off from the baggage car each early evening or in the early morning as the case warranted. The local telegraph office was in the station; there were few home telephones and certainly no cell phones like today. The station was where you met your ‘Aunt Clara’ coming into town for a visit. Our fathers and uncles and women too went off to serve their country during World War I and World War II, many leaving from Buffalo’s Central Terminal, the DL&W station or the Lehigh Valley RR Terminal which once graced lower Main Street downtown. Many folks of course did not return, giving their lives in defense of our great Nation.

Railroad history is thus intertwined with the American experience, the good, the bad, and everything in between. The American railroad helped make us what we are today. Although to some it has faded into a shadow of its former glory, and those days of 1929 when Buffalo’s then new Central Terminal opened with some 200 and more trains per day in and out of the city, there are new beginnings with revitalized rail passenger service under Amtrak in this era of a new environmental consciousness. A well run, well maintained rail system makes huge sense in the 21st Century. While I do not expect to ever again see a train crossing Main Street in the Hollow, I do see the possibility for Buffalo to rebound as a beautiful city, with much of its historic architectural fabric in place repurposed for the new age. And we hope that trains coming and going from its railroad station will be a big part of that renaissance.

The distinct sound of a train in the distance presents each of us with a different experience. Many will recall great rail adventures with their families. Others will think of far away places with a wish to be aboard a train to seek new adventures. Listen for the train whistle. It is calling all of us!

Photo Credit to Trustee and Member Yvonne Buyers-Hicks 08/22/21



Recent Acquisitions



The Clarence Historical Society recently acquired some wonderful donations. We received the Coast Guard Uniform and Navy Uniform of Daniel Gregorio from the Gregorio Family. We also received artifacts from the Mosher Family on behalf of John Mosher, The Sheridan Hill Home Bureau, and a lovely reproduction of an 1832 Washstand from Anne Case.

Clarence Historical Society Oneta M. Baker Memorial Award Winner



We would like to congratulate Gianna Maloney, Clarence High School Class of 2022, for receiving the Clarence Historical Society Oneta M. Baker Memorial Award for 2022. Gianna will be studying history at the University at Buffalo Honors College this fall as part of the UB Teach Program. Congratulations Gianna! Best of luck in your future adventures!

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Its membership time! You can renew your membership or become a new member on our website or in person. If you sign up for a new membership, you will be covered for the rest of 2022 and 2023!

We have different tiers to choose from:

Individual—\$15

Couples—\$25

Family—\$30

Business—\$50

Individual Life Member—\$150

You can also notate if you would like to volunteer by helping during open hours, giving tours, working on exhibits, and office help! We can always use an extra pair of hands!

We have a new life member we would like to acknowledge and thank, Mr. Thomas Hens. Mr. Hens is the brother of the late J Michael Hens, the first Clarence resident killed in action during the Vietnam War.

We
our
MEMBERS!



1950's Music

The King Of Rock & Roll



HOLLYWOOD STAR
ROCK'N'ROLL
ELVIS
PRESLEY
LISA MARIE
MEMPHIS
BLUE HAWAII
GRACELAND
GUITAR
VIVA LAS VEGAS
BANANA
HOUND DOG
ALL SHOOK UP

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/4290/>

2022 Fall Program Schedule

Free and Open to the Public

All programs are held at the Town Park
Clubhouse - 10405 Main Street, Clarence
Doors Open at 630pm—Program starts at 7pm

Tues, September 13, 2022

“Clarence Before The Erie Canal”

Presented by John O’Hare P.E.

Tues, October 11, 2022

“1950’s with Music”

Presented by Greg Kinal

Tues, November 8, 2022

“Iwo Jima”

Presented by Greg Kinal



**HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF THE TOWN OF CLARENCE**
Founded in 1954

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Town of Clarence

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“To Preserve and share the History and Heritage of the Town of Clarence, respecting our past and striving into the future.”

The Historical Society would like to remember two very active women in the Town and specifically with the Historical Society, Judy Beers-Mason and Shirley Giglia. These ladies will be missed by so many.

