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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.

President's Comments

Its great to be open again! We have had a lot of visitors at the Museum in July & August. Our Norman Rockwell display has been very well received, as are the rest of the displays. As we look ahead in September & October, we are able to bring two programs back to the Town Park Clubhouse. September 14th is Steel Making Process and October 12th is Greg Kinal. There is a slight adjustment with the programs as there will be no food or beverages served per the Town of Clarence. We hope you will still come and enjoy our programs. Please continue to follow us on Facebook and our Website for any updated announcements and information. We can always use volunteers! If you might be interested in volunteering, please contact us at 716-759-8575 or email us at museum@clarencelibrary.org

A RANSOM NOTE

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The Automobile Club of Buffalo – Country Club

Now

The Clarence Town Park Clubhouse

When you visit The Town Park Clubhouse, do you have a favorite part of the building, from the stately columns in the front to the large assembly room inside? Maybe you have never been inside our Clubhouse. I especially like the buntings that are put up on the balcony for the holidays.

The Town of Clarence purchased the Clubhouse and surrounding property in 1957. It was added to the National Register of Historic places in 2012.



The Automobile Club of Buffalo was organized on June 2, 1903, at a dinner at the Ellicott Club. During its more than 8-year existence the Club had engaged in an extensive campaign of road sign work and that has placed it as an invaluable service to motorists and users of public highways.

On May 15, 1911, the Club's new country home was completed and informally opened for service. This achievement was termed the crowning success in the history of the Club. Its membership boasted a membership more than 3000. The County Club immediately became a mecca for the Automobile Club members and their families. Not only local members but members of Clubs throughout the country were welcome there.

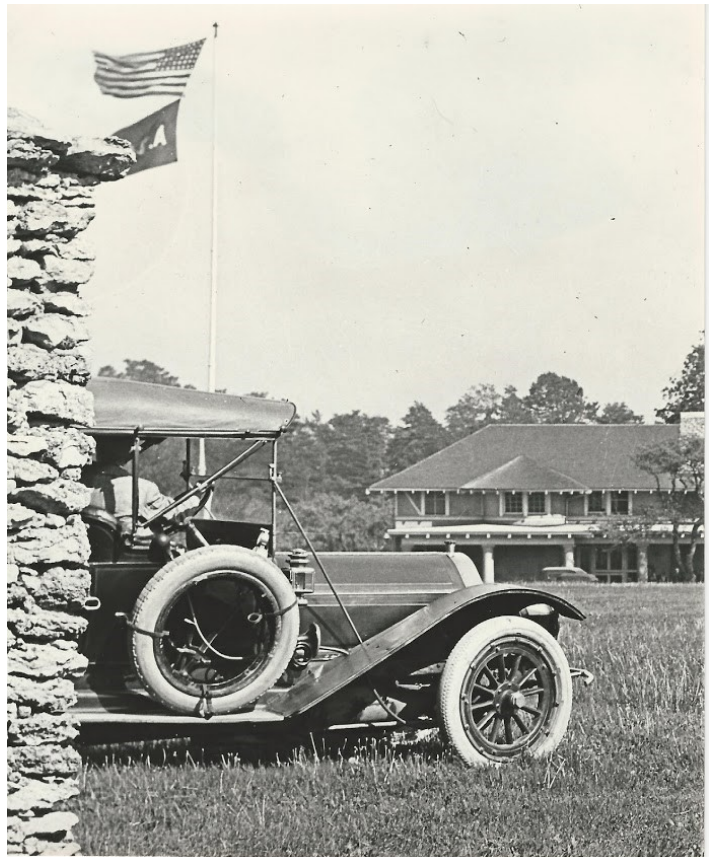
The Clubhouse was built to promote membership in the Automobile Club of Buffalo. It was one of 6 country clubs built by similar organizations in the United States. The Clubhouse was designed by the

architectural firm of Esenwein & Johnson and is built in the craftsman style. The 14 ft wide verandas overlooked a picturesque setting for its visitors. It was built at a cost of \$60,000.00 and had every modern convenience. There were even bathtubs in the overnight guest bathrooms!

Dining at the Club had table d'Hote and a la carte service from 7am to 11pm. You could dine in the cheery dining room, 8 private dining rooms, and a Café and Grill. Total seating capacity was 500 people. Posted on the wall in the side wing of the Clubhouse are early menu selections. Note the prices!

The Clubhouse has some of the original chairs. There are unique chairbacks with suits of a deck of cards cutouts in them. Originally standing at the head of the impressive staircase was the Rohlfs Clock. It was donated by Charles Rohlfs to the Automobile Club of Buffalo after he displayed it at the 1901 Pan American Exposition in Buffalo. The clock is now enclosed in glass located at the end of the room opposite the grand staircase. Note the unusual face of the clock. An original light fixture was found under the clubhouse floor in the mud by Paul Allen, a Parks Department employee and “caretaker” of the Clubhouse. Reproductions of the lights were made by David Brace and his son, Greg. The original light fixture is on display in the main entry to the Clubhouse.

We still have China from the Automobile Club of Buffalo stored in the clubhouse kitchen. Upstairs rooms, once used for overnight guests are now used for artifact storage of the Clarence Historical Society and my office. Other upstairs rooms are used for meetings and storage for other clubs and organizations in the Town.



There are two famous Fiery Paintings hanging over the mantels of the fireplaces in the main hall. These scenes were meant to advertise and encourage traveling out west to these sites.

Today our Clubhouse is used by many local citizens and organizations, and the Clarence Historical Society's programs for the community.

Kathy Hallock, former Town of Clarence Supervisor had the vision to see the importance of maintaining our Clubhouse. She called it "A Jewel in our midst"! The Clubhouse Restoration Committee has worked tirelessly for many years updating the clubhouse being cognizant of the time it was built.

Information for this article was taken from Clarence Historical Society Roadbooks, Town Historian Roadbooks, and quotes of Kathy Hallock from my personal interaction with her.

Pictures of the Clubhouse are taken from Clarence Historical Society collections.

Mark Woodward, Town Historian



The Society is proud to acknowledge and congratulate Clarence High School Senior, Michael Steremer, on receiving the Clarence Historical Society Oneta M. Baker Memorial Award



MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Welcome New Member Janice Noeck who is also now a volunteer!

Welcome New Life Member John O' Hare! John is a volunteer and wonderful asset for research!

Welcome the Hahn family who recently became a family member and Charles will be helping out and volunteering in the Museum

Thank you to the follow members for adding a special donation upon your membership renewal for 2021:

The Ehlert Family

The Clarence Hollow Farmers Market

Thank you to all members and nonmembers for their generous donations!

Donations to the Society are always appreciated and can be made by mailing to:
Clarence Historical Society
PO Box 86
Clarence, NY 14031

**We
our
MEMBERS!** 

2021 Fall Program List

We are following Town of Clarence health guidelines for COVID-19

Town Park Clubhouse
10405 Main Street

Tuesday September 14, 2021

Doors open at 6:30pm

Program Starts at 7pm

Steel Making Process
&
History of Steel Making in WNY
Presented by Don Williams

Town Park Clubhouse
10405 Main Street

Tuesday October 12, 2021

Doors open at 6:30pm

Program Starts at 7pm

Immigration
Presented by Greg Kinal



Clarence Veterans Memorial Flag Retirement

It was a true honor to receive the old flag that flew for so many years at the Clarence Town Park.

We will proudly display the flag in an exhibit in the museum.





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

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Facebook Page: Historical Society of the
Town of Clarence

Email: museum@clarencehistory.org

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

“Letters From Elaine Dinola”

All the way from Johnson City, NY!

1909: The first automobile races were run at the just-opened Indianapolis Motor Speedway; the winner of the first event was auto engineer Louis Schwitzer, who drove a Stoddard-Dayton touring car twice around the 2.5 mile track at an average speed of 57.4 mph.

President Warren G Harding accomplished very little while in office but he had one claim to fame, he was the first President who knew how to drive an automobile.

The first freeway in America was opened on December 30, 1949 in Los Angeles

After General Motors hired seven psychologists in the 1950's to determine the effects of Chevy's sounds on the buying public; one manager boasted “we've got the finest door slam this year—a big car sound!”