



# A RANSOM NOTE

Clarence Historical Society Newsletter

Winter 2018

### Board of Trustees

- Thomas A. Steffan, President
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- Sandra Larkin, Treasurer
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- Douglas Larkin
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- Robert A. Geiger,  
Clarence Town Board Liason

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

Meetings begin at 7:00 pm at the Clarence Historical Museum.

### A RANSOM NOTE

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## Milestones

The definition of a milestone is a significant point in development. The Town of Clarence is marking another milestone for the year of 2018! It's the 210<sup>th</sup> year of the formation of the town.

March 11, 1808 was the date of formation when Clarence was included into Niagara County. The first town meeting was held on April 2, 1808. We are the oldest existing town in Erie County. Erie County was formed out of Niagara County in 1821.

There will be bicentennial celebrations around Erie County in 2018 for other towns reaching their 200<sup>th</sup> milestone. Erie County will enjoy that milestone shortly.

As we move into 2018, the historical society will be researching the many milestones of our town for the past 210 years. How many supervisors have we had? How many types of industry have been in the town? Who are some of our notable citizens? What military service has our town witnessed in 210 years?

Our present leaders at town hall are always working toward a better tomorrow for town residents. We are currently looking at the 2030 Vision.

Milestones..... Clarence has seen many since March 11, 1808. We look forward to presenting these milestones through time in future issues. We invite you all to join the historical society's look at the development of the Town of Clarence!

**Town of Clarence**

**~ 1808—2018 ~**

## Pat's School Files

# The Good Old Days on the Farm

Recollections by Mildred H. Kamner

Reprinted from The Golden Door Knob  
Clarence Senior Center Magazine 1984

I find I am living in a highly computerized, mechanized world, and I must accept it—like it or not. There is, however, nothing or no one to keep my mind from going back in memory and reliving those days in the early 1900's. Life was slower –simpler – and the pressure was not so great. Whether it was a better way or more difficult one rests in individual opinion. I worked then and I work now.

As a youngster I never heard of a supermarket. We prepared our own jams, jellies and relishes – we had yearly apple butter cooking – we had butchering days. Early in the morning until late at night the big cauldron kettles were hung on a pole over an open fire. On apple butter cooking days the materials were ready. Sweet apples had been taken to the cider mill to be pressed. The apples were pared, cored and quartered and placed in tubs of water. The early morning found a couple good neighbors outside the door, ready to help. Fire was going nicely under the kettle – cider was cooked down – apples were added as well as the spices. The odor of the cooking plus the odor of the wood smoke was something to always remember.

Butchering day found good neighbors ready to help. The pigs were one by one killed – dressed – and then what a job – cut up lard was rendered, sausages – three or four kinds – were made, hams were prepared for the “smokehouse”. Good old apple or hickory wood was used. That smokehouse aroma can't really be described – you had to be there. Nothing from those animals was wasted. That's a story in itself.

Water didn't come from a faucet. I remember the chain hoist to which a bucket was attached. I remember our valuable windmill. Later a gasoline engine did the work. Water supply from a spring-fed well not only supplied our family but served as a cooling agent for three to five cans of milk

(ten – gallon ones) which came from our dairy and were sent by train into our neighboring city of Buffalo. Many a time I rode the milk wagon drawn by one or two horses to the Clarence Center train depot.

Mother also made from fifty to one hundred pounds of butter twice a month which Dad and his six- year- old daughter – me – delivered to customers in the city in a horse drawn wagon – so I held the horses while Dad delivered the butter and farm produce to his customers in Buffalo.

Waves of nostalgia sweep through me, and I do often think of a way of life that is gone forever – life on my father’s dairy farm, known as Forest View Dairy Farm on Hochman Road, which today is known as Greiner Road. My oldest brother, Norman, was born in 1892 in a log house across the road from my present home, which was built in 1894.

I could go on and on with stories of my young life when there was but little mechanized agriculture. I drove a four – horse team many times. Today this power structure is seldom seen and is considered a novelty. One thing I must mention before I end my few reminiscences. I again see “evidences of the good old days,” both on the farm and in my neighboring villages, of firewood split and neatly piled by the side of the buildings. My brothers and I carried it in the proverbial “woodbox” every night. It was used as fuel for preparing meals and baking and to stoke the pot-bellied stoves and fireplaces that heated the other rooms. Today it is serving the same purpose it did seventy five years ago.

Nostalgia is a great nerve tonic – perhaps that’s what keeps me going. I do hope it provided a bit of information or revived some romantic or pleasant memories of days before computers, water, and energy shortages, and waste- water disposal problems.

## *Judy's Gems*

How did Clarence get its name?

The title, "*Duke of Clarence*", was first granted to Lionel of Antwerp in 1362. In 1825 Clarence House was built in London, England. It was to be a royal residence and it took several years to complete. The Queen mother has lived there and most recently Prince Harry calls it home.

The year 1808 saw great territorial changes on the Holland Purchase. There was a complete re-organization of counties and towns. A legislative act made all that land lying between Tonawanda creek on the north and the center of the Buffalo Creek reservation on the south and also comprising parts of both Willink and Erie (Newstead) townships, was formed into a town and given the name of Clarence. In earlier days after Asa Ransom, who purchased the land from Joseph Ellicott, an agent for the Holland Land Co., it was also known to locals as Ransomville, Ransom Mill and Pine Grove. The price of land offered in those days was \$2.75 per acre (very few paid in cash).

The Town of Clarence was officially formed on March 11, 1808 and the first town meeting in the newly chartered Clarence was held April 2, 1808, in the tavern of Elias Ransom (210 years ago).

H. Perry Mason & Co. ed *History of Buffalo and Erie County Vol. I*

D. Mason & Co. Publishers, Syracuse, NY 1884

### 2018 Membership Drive

The 2018 Annual Membership Drive will begin in January 2018. All current annual historical society members will be receiving their application in the mail. If you joined the society or renewed your 2018 membership after September 2017, you are all set for the new year.

All Life Members will continue to receive their newsletters and program announcements without interruption.

## *From The Town Historian's Desk*

We have an exhibit at our Museum showcasing Clarence Fire Companies with early fire extinguishers, helmets, firefighting equipment, etc. This display was done by Douglas Urban last year when he was in his senior year of high school. Hopefully many of you have had a chance to visit the Museum and see this display done by a High School Student. Encourage your children/grandchildren to become involved in the Museum and use their talents in many areas as they broaden their knowledge of Clarence History.

We are lucky to have many dedicated Volunteer firefighters in the Town of Clarence. These men and women give of their time and talent to keep us safe. We all need to make sure they are not risking their lives fighting fires that could have been prevented. Winter weather is just around the corner and we can help do our part to make sure our homes are safe from fire. Are your smoke detectors in proper working order? Newer homes have them wired in, but some of us have the type requiring battery changes – make sure yours are in working order. Do you have Carbon Monoxide detectors in your home?

Fireplace and wood stove season is upon us. Many of us like to sit and relax before the crackling fire with our family. Make sure you have had your fireplace or wood stove inspected before using it this season. If you are not sure how to do it yourself, please hire a professional. Preventative maintenance is important to be sure there is no build up of creosote in your chimney or wood stove pipe that could cause a fire.

Our Fire Companies are always looking for new recruits. Even if you are not interested in becoming a Volunteer fireman, check out their websites where you can find much information about them, their mission, what they do to train, etc.

**Clarence Center Volunteer Fire Company:** [www.ccfvc.net](http://www.ccfvc.net)

**Clarence Fire Company, Inc:** [www.clarencefire.com](http://www.clarencefire.com)

**Harris Hill Fire Company:** <http://hhvfc.com/>

**Swormville Fire Company:** [www.swormvillefire.com](http://www.swormvillefire.com)

**East Amherst Fire Company:** [www.eafc.org](http://www.eafc.org)

**Rapids Fire Company – no website — covers parts of Northern Clarence**

*Mark Woodward,*

*Town of Clarence Historian*

# Elaine's Favorite

## *A Member Submission for Valentine's Day*

There are various theories on the origin of Valentine's Day, but the most popular dates back to the time of the Roman Empire during the reign of Claudius II, 270 A.D. Claudius didn't want men to marry during wartime because he believed single men made better soldiers. Bishop Valentine went against his wishes and performed secret wedding ceremonies. For this, Valentine was jailed and then executed by order of the Emperor on Feb. 14. While in jail, he wrote a love note to the jailor's daughter, signing it, "From your Valentine".



### HISTORY

- ◇ The ancient Romans celebrated the Feast of Lupercalia on February 14 in honor of Juno, the queen of the Roman gods and goddesses. Juno was also the goddess of women and marriage.
- ◇ The X symbol became synonymous with the kiss in medieval times. People who couldn't write their names signed in front of a witness with an X. The X was then kissed to show their sincerity.
- ◇ In the Middle Ages, young men and women drew names from a bowl to see who would be their Valentine. They would wear this name pinned onto their sleeves for one week for everyone to see. This was the origin of the expression "to wear your heart on your sleeve."
- ◇ In 1537, England's King Henry VII officially declared Feb. 14 the holiday of St. Valentine's Day.

### GREETING CARDS

- ◇ Approximately 145 million valentines are sent in the U.S. each year according to estimates by the U.S. Greeting Card Association. That's second only to Christmas with 1.6 billion units, and is followed by Mother's Day with 133 million units.
- ◇ Women purchase approximately 85 percent of all valentines.

## *Interesting facts about Valentines Day*

### CHOCOLATE

- ◇ Casanova, well known as "The World's Greatest Lover", ate chocolate to make him virile.
- ◇ Physicians of the 1800's commonly advised their patients to eat chocolate to calm their pining for lost love. To this day, many women find comfort in a box of chocolates when dealing with heartbreak.
- ◇ Richard Cadbury produced the first box of chocolates for Valentine's Day in the late 1800's.
- ◇ More than 33 million heart-shaped boxes of chocolate is sold and over \$1 billion worth of chocolate is purchased for Valentine's Day in the U.S.

### ROSES

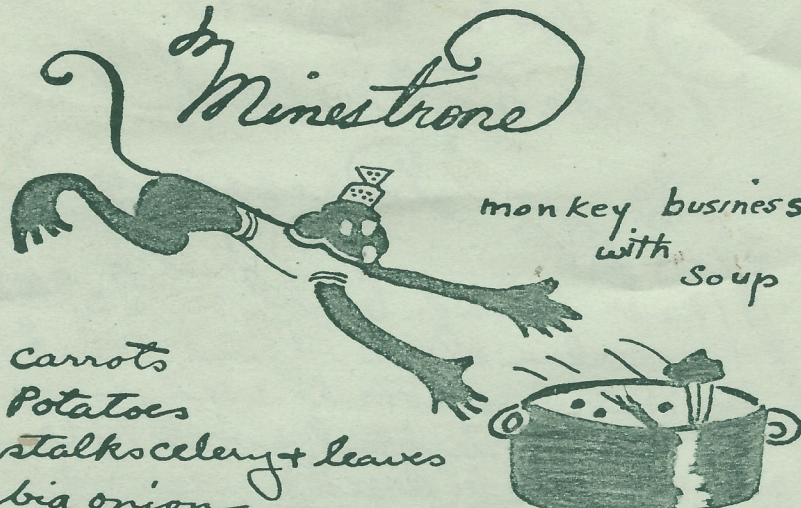
- ◇ The red rose was the favorite flower of Venus, the Roman goddess of love. They are considered the flower of love because the color red stands for strong romantic feelings.
- ◇ 189 million stems of roses are sold in the U.S. on Valentine's Day, 60 percent of them are produced in California, and the rest of them are imported mostly from South America.
- ◇ 73 percent of people who buy flowers for Valentine's Day are men, while only 27 percent are women. 15 percent of U.S. women send themselves flowers on Valentine's Day.

### A Few More Facts

- ◇ In addition to the U.S., Valentine's Day is celebrated in Canada, Mexico, United Kingdom, France, Australia, Denmark, Italy and also in Poland.
- ◇ 220,000 is the average number of wedding proposals on Valentine's Day each year.
- ◇ The most fantastic gift of love is the Taj Mahal in India. It was built by Mughal Emperor Shahjahan as a memorial to his wife.

*My*  
**Minestrone**

monkey business  
with  
soup



4 carrots  
4 Potatoes  
4 stalks celery + leaves  
1 big onion  
1 clove garlic --- small bunch parsley  
2 tomatoes or 1/2 can - 1 T. olive oil  
1 t. basil -- 1 1/2 T salt.  
Grated Parmesan cheese  
Put prepared vegetables into 2 qts water  
simmer 1 hr. Add rest of ingredients  
and cook another hr. Serve with  
cheese sprinkled on top. Meat may  
be added or any other vegetables you  
might have

Marquerite F. Schuler

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Note

The Museum will close during winter-January and February - For cleaning and refreshing the exhibits!

Museum will reopen Sunday March 5, 2018



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

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[www.clarencehistory.org](http://www.clarencehistory.org)

Facebook Page: Historical Society of the  
Town of Clarence

Email: [museum@clarencehistory.org](mailto:museum@clarencehistory.org)

***MARCH 2018 PROGRAM***

**Tuesday, March 13, 2018**

**7:00 PM**

**“Monarch Butterflies”  
Their Habitat, Predators, Etc.**

**Presented by David O’Donnell**

**Eastern Monarch Butterfly Farm, Clarence NY**

**Join us for this program to learn about Monarch Butterflies**

**And help bring them back to this area!**

**Town Park Clubhouse**

**Doors Open at 6:30 pm**

**Free and Open to the Public**