

MEDINA BUGLE

A Publication of the Medina Historical Society

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President's Message

Greetings! We are gearing up for a busy fall. Plans for the Ghost Walk tours are well under way. Please let us know if you have any ghostly tales to share. Tales of murder, mystery and general skullduggery are also welcome! We promise not to mention if relatives were involved!

Some time ago, we added a "Contact Us" feature to the society's webpage. We have received and answered several questions relating to local history – the POW camp, the Davey sleigh company to mention but a few.

However, the most amazing of all was a query from a gentleman in California requesting information on his great-grandparents, Martin and Josephine Sutter who lived in Medina from the 1850 -1900's. The reason for my astonishment at this query was that I knew that Martin and Josephine Sutter were my husband's great-great-grandparents. And so began a series of communications, exchanges of information and serendipitous discovery of relations.

Now, who mentioned ghosts?

Best wishes to all,
Catherine

The 250th Anniversary of Johnson's Creek

By Adam Tabelski

Okay, it's actually much older than that, probably hundreds of thousands of years older. But the winding waterway that flows northeasterly through Royalton, Hartland, Ridgeway, Yates, and Carlton was christened "Johnson's Creek" in 1759.

The name pays tribute to Sir William Johnson, the Irish-born Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the American colonies from 1755 until his death in 1774. As the prime intermediary between the crown and the various Native American peoples of the New World, Johnson's influence on the development of the colonial frontier cannot be overstated.

In 1759, the British and French were locked in a heated struggle for control of the North American continent. As part of a larger plan to attack the French on several fronts, that summer the British embarked on an expedition to capture Fort Niagara from the French and thus gain a strategically important outpost on the Great Lakes. An army of 2,500 British regulars and militia was sent west from Oswego under the command of General John Prideaux. Sir William Johnson, who had earned the respect and trust of the natives, led a contingent of more than 600 Iroquois warriors who joined the expeditionary force to take the

hatchet against Fort Niagara's French defenders.

The army left Oswego on July 1. The scores of bateaux sailed as a flotilla along the lakeshore and made overnight stops at the natural harbors of Sodus Bay, Irondequoit Bay, and Prideaux Bay (now Braddock Bay). On July 5, after rowing 35 miles in one day, the force bivouacked at the mouth of the creek that thereupon became Johnson's namesake.

An orderly book kept by a member of the New York Regiment of Provincials during the expedition recorded the stopping place on July 5 as being "Johnson Creek." The record also stated, "No tents to be pitched till further orders." Reveille was scheduled for three o'clock the next morning. Each man was to be issued "Rhum at the rate of 1 gill per man."

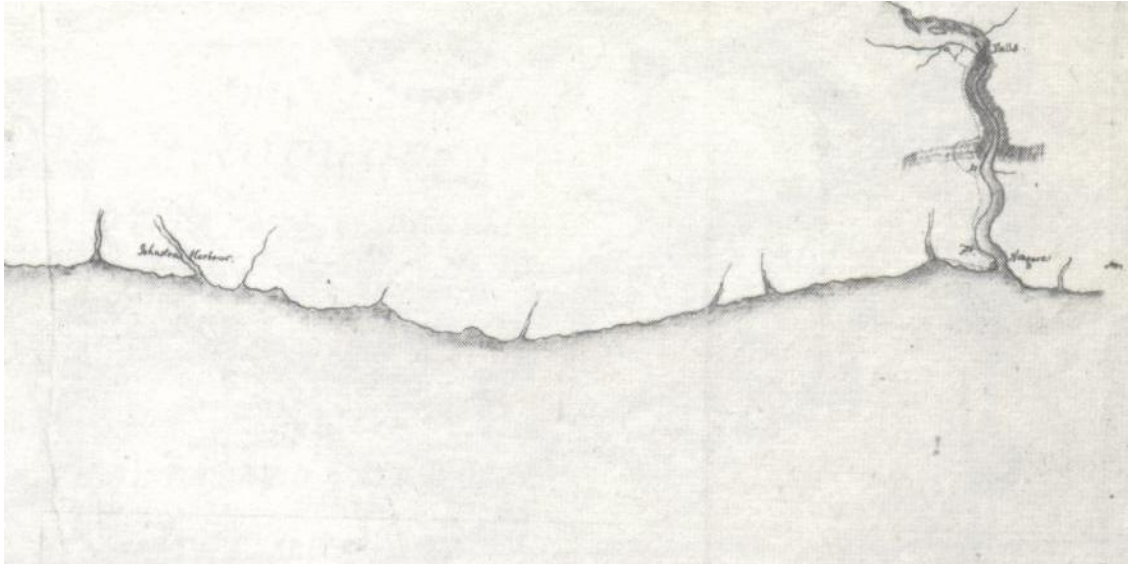
Further background on the appellation can be found by examining a contemporary map of the southern Lake Ontario shoreline drawn by Ensign George Demler, an engineer with the 60th regiment who participated in the expedition. The place where the creek flows into the lake is labeled "Johnstons Harbour." This could have been a reference to Colonel John Johnston, who commanded a large body of New York provincials during the campaign. But the reference to Johnson in the orderly book, and the fact that the Indian agent was the more prominent figure, leads the modern researcher to surmise that the cartographer just misspelled the name, as he did "Erondiquoit" and "Brideaux" [sic]. To complicate matters more, Johnston's name is sometimes spelled "Johnson" in other historical records.

How the name "Johnson's Creek" survived is not clear, as there was no white settlement at the landing spot for more than four decades after July 5, 1759, until the arrival of pioneers William Walsworth and Elijah Hunt in 1803. Today, the cottage community of Lakeside surrounds the mouth of Johnson's Creek.

Postscript: Upon General Prideaux's death during the siege of Fort Niagara, Sir William Johnson assumed overall command of the expedition. He received the surrender of Captain Pierre Pouchot, the fort's French defender, on July 26. The British ultimately won the French and Indian War, gaining undisputed possession of the North American colonies and Canada.

Picture Caption (next page):

Ensign George Demler's "A Sketch of the South Shore of Lake Ontario..." *Clements Library*. (Johnson Creek is the one labeled second from the left. The large river to the right is the Niagara)



Local Generosity – Part 3 **Submitted by Catherine Cooper**

Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the Medina Tribune, March 4, 1909.

Upon coming from the dry goods store Helen remarked that she would like to go to a first class milliner's. "The leading milliner of this town and a shop that where styles and prices compare most favorably with any in the larger cities, is that of Miss J.M. Chase," said Aunt Hester. "The best dressed ladies of this town get there hats there and only yesterday, I heard a woman talking about the elegant line of hats she is showing just now." Upon entering the parlors, Helen was impressed with the up-to-date stock and found that she could get just what she desired at a most reasonable price, and she was not long in selecting a beautiful and becoming hat. So pleased was she with her visit here that she declared to her husband, on leaving, that she would never trade at any other place. This store is now showing some exceptional values in this

season's millinery and also some stylish and up-to-date early Spring styles.

"Of course you will want a clock or two for your new home," continued Aunt Hester, when they were again on the street, "and so we will go to C.F. Hurd's jewelry store. He keeps a large and well selected stock and is a strictly honest and reliable dealer. His is the oldest established jewelry store in this section, having been established in 1876, and he carries the largest and best selected stock to be found in Medina." This popular store was soon reached and after selecting a beautiful mantel clock and a smaller one which pleased Helen so much she declared she must have it in the kitchen, Jack insisted that she take a beautiful Tiffany ring which had attracted his attention, as a wedding ring. Aunt Hester suggested that they look at the silverware for their table, and finding just what they wanted at prices really lower than the city stores asked for the same quality, they purchased a dozen Reed & Barton knives and forks and their Aunt also insisted on including a beautiful set of solid silver spoons. Jack

also left his watch, a valuable timepiece to be cleaned and regulated, and they left the store much pleased with their bargains. "Anyone desiring fine jewelry," remarked Jack, "can surely save time and money by trading there."

"Now that you will want horse furnishing goods," said Aunt Hester, "I will take you over to Harry Allen's Harness and Trunk store. He has a large and well selected line of harnesses, blankets, robes, whips, trunks and suitcases, and just at the present time is selling a large quantity of these first-class goods." Jack, who was a practical young fellow and well posted on horse furnishing goods, left his order for a fine handmade set of single and double harnesses. It is needless to add that the prices were remarkably low for goods of their superior quality which Mr. Allen always handles and on which he has built up his most enviable reputation. "Anyone wanting anything in the horse furnishing goods," said Jack, "will do well to call at this store. His prices are certainly right."

"For your flour, grain and feed," said Aunt Hester, "I have always found that it pays to use only the best and that it is not wise to feed good stock on poor feed. The intelligent buyers are dealing with S.P. Blood & Co. Their store and feed mill are located opposite the new town hall and they keep constantly on hand everything in this line there is a demand for. They are headquarters for the best bread and pastry flours and their celebrated Niagara Fancy bread flour and Shelby Mills pastry flour brands are in demand by intelligent housewives who have come to realize that they are more economical and give better satisfaction than any other kinds. Jack

will of course go there for all kinds of poultry feed and supplies, of which they carry a complete stock."

"Why, good morning, Mr. Nichols," exclaimed Aunt Hester. "I want you to meet my nephews, just arrived from California." When the introduction had been completed, Aunt Hester remarked, "Helen, you will find Mr. Nichols of immense value to you in your new home. When you do not feel disposed to go to the trouble and expense of preparing a great big dinner, just for you two, or if you should happen to have a lot of company drop in on you unexpectedly, don't worry about providing for them – just take them down to Mr. Nichols' restaurant and he will relieve you of all responsibility by serving you and your guests a most appetizing meal and it will be really cheaper than getting it yourself, not to mention the hard work, worry and bother you will save, leaving you perfectly free to visit with your guests. Then, too, you will meet and make many friends among our local people and will join many of our local societies, which will entail, of course, the providing of dainty little afternoon luncheons, and occasionally a more elaborate dinner party. Don't let these worry you. Mr. Nichols has an established reputation in this line and he will know just what to do to relieve you of all trouble and responsibility and will serve a repast, anything from a small afternoon tea to the most elaborate dinner or banquet, in a manner that will reflect great credit on you as a hostess."

The party then left for the Medina Laundry where Jack left an order to call for their linen which had become soiled with the dust and the dirt of their long journey. They were surprised at the

excellent work done here and at the unusual care of the most delicate fabrics entrusted to them to be cleaned. Mr. Maddock also explained to them their system of dating every article coming to the laundry for the first time, thereby demonstrating conclusively the length of time their linen was wearing. "Their careful and painstaking business methods have succeeded in giving them a large and growing business," explained Aunt Hester. Every customer of this laundry is a satisfied one. Do not send your laundry out of town – you have a first-class laundry here at home and it is best to patronize local business men."

"Then your farm implements of all kinds, of course, you will buy at Martin & Brace. They sell the famous LeRoy plows and carry a large and complete stock of rakes, harrows, cultivators, and supplies for all kinds of farm machinery, and are agents for the celebrated Deering machines. Another line of interest to farmers is the Friend Mfg. Co. spraying outfits and gasoline engines and the celebrated Milburn wagons and I can personally recommend them from a business acquaintance of many years, as perfectly reliable dealers." This firm also handles the wonderful Racycle and Emblem bicycles. The recycle, owing to its peculiar construction is guaranteed to ride one quarter easier than any other bicycle made. The Emblem is also a strictly high grade machine but sells at a more moderate figure.

"You will want the best there is in wagons and carriages," remarked Aunt Hester. W.D. Waterbury & Co. carry the finest line of light wagons to be purchased anywhere. At present they are showing the best line they have ever carried, of all the styles of buggies, road

wagons and rubber tires. They are deserving of the patronage of horse owners of this vicinity, having been in the business here in Medina for years, and are selling their goods to all prudent Medina and Orleans county purchasers."

"Don't you feel thirsty?" asked Aunt Hester suddenly. "I do. Let's go over to H.J. Cummings and while Helen and I are enjoying a refreshing drink, of which he serves the best in town, especially his chocolate ice cream sodas, phosphates, Moxie, etc., Jack can try some of his cigars. Mr. Cummings sells the best cigars, I am told, in Medina. Your poor uncle, before he died, often told me so and that this store was headquarters for the smokers of the town who appreciate the best in tobaccos." Mr. Cummings also makes a specialty of cut flowers and floral designs and Jack purchased a dozen beautiful fresh carnations for Helen, which pleased her very much.

En route to the hotel they called at the office where Aunt Hester introduced the young people to the editor, Mr. Frank H. Hurd. "You will want all the news every week," said she, "so I will subscribe for the Tribune for you. It is the best and brightest paper printed in this section of the country and gives you all the local news."

When they returned to the hotel, Helen tried to express their thanks and appreciation. "You have bought us everything," she exclaimed. "I have tried to purchase you a suitable outfit to start with," replied Aunt Hester and I trust you young people will observe from our trip and experience of today that you can buy everything you need from your merchants here in town and that you lose both time and money by going to the city to make purchases. Patronize your local

business and professional men and I will leave you what little I have, for I will know that you are going to be prudent young people and will make many friends here.” In conclusion let us say in behalf of this worthy couple, who have so liberally patronized our home merchants, that they will be found worthy and desirable residents and being interested in home industries will soon make many friends in this locality and help to build up and advance the commercial prosperity of the village. We trust all will give them a hearty welcome.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**THE MEDINA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
IS LOOKING FOR
SEVERAL PEOPLE TO
TRANSCRIBE RUSS
WALDO’S ARTICLES TO
BE INCLUDED IN A
FUTURE BOOK.**

**CONTACT CRAIG LACY (798-
2233) OR CATHERINE COOPER
(798-4131)**

**Birth of Medina Fire Fighting
Russell J. Waldo**

Editor’s Note: This article was transcribed by a student in Todd Bensley’s AP U.S. History course. It will be included in the future book collection of Waldo’s writings.

Our blood quickens at the sound of the Baptist church bell as it strikes out the fire box number which saves our modern buildings from destruction. Vastly different back in 1842 when the demon of fire fighting enveloped a cabin of early settlers.

There were few settlers around to fight the fire at Alexander Coon’s in Shelby in 1816 and the cabin under construction had to burn itself out. Fortunately for the family their worldly goods were in their first cabin. Except for the presence of many at a dance at David Timmerman’s tavern in Shelby in 1820 that tavern might have been reduced to ashes. That fire was confined to one room.

In the same manner in 1825 a fire broke out in Uri Moore’s tavern on the docks. This fire had a good start when discovered late into the night. The nearby canal with its ample supply of water saved the structure.

Bucket brigades getting their supply of water from Clinton’s Big Ditch, beginning in 1825 saved several cabins in the woods settlement which otherwise might have been reduced to ashes. A small barge in 1828 or 1829 almost burned out but for the work of hard working fire brigades. These fire fighters were volunteers in every sense of the word. They were fighting for the

homes hewn out of the forest through hard labor. Home builders of today can not realize the sense of co-operation possessed [sic] by those sturdy pioneers when a fire was discovered in another cabin.

Every resident of the settlement knew what it cost in sweat to build a home from standing timber. Fire was their dread and they willingly fought.

David Farnum came to the Medina area about 1824 and built a cabin north of the canal overlooking the canal builders' section north of what is now East Center Street. This cabin was massive in proportions for a log cabin and consisted of several rooms. Like other cabins it was of only one floor, but covered a large area.

One evening in midwinter the family had gone across the canal to attend a "Worship of God Service" in the cabin back of where John Parsons built. (Ground occupied by gas station northeast corner, Center and Church). In the midst of the service canallers sounded the fire warning. Every man secured his buckets and across the canal he went to the empty home of Mr. Farnum. By the time Mr. Farnum arrived the fire was well under control and within a few minutes more, extinguished. The fire ruined three rooms.

The cabin was rebuilt within a few weeks. Mr. Farnum gave a standing invitation to an ox roast at his home as a token of his appreciation to the fire fighters. That was either 1828 or 1829.

A cabin serving as a stable located near the present site of the Medina Stamping

and Machine Co. destroyed two horses about 1828 or spring 1829 and this served as a warning to the early residents to look to their fire fighting equipment.

It was 1829 that thirty-five citizens of Medina met in the public house built by Joseph Cobb on the canal bank. They became much concerned over fires. Before the gathering dispersed into the cold night \$275 had been subscribed in sums ranging from twenty-five dollars to one hundred dollars; the same fund to be used to purchase a fire engine.

The fact that the village was to have a fire engine created a sense of security within the residents as nothing else could have done. The engine which turned like a grindstone, a crank on either side, was one of the modern miracles of the day. On May 19, 1832, the trustees voted to buy the engine and paid \$250 for it.

The hose used in those days was made of heavy oak tanned leather which was riveted. This heavy hose was very difficult to handle especially if it had become dry and stiff. Many a fireman got a severe drenching at a fire when a hole broken in the hose. When the hose broke all activity stopped at "Old Mercury" and a patch secured after which the cranking started again. While the repairing was going on bucket brigades went into action. This was required to be heavily oiled to keep it pliable and prevent decay. Even then the life of the hose was very short, perhaps four or five years at the most.

"Old Mercury" was tolerated until about 1835 when the trustees decided that a new more up-to-date fire engine was needed. The cost of this engine was \$1,000 and the raising of this fund was

the cause of much bitterness. To accuse our present village fathers of graft today would be modest compared with the broadsides delivered around Sylvanus Coon's store, Uri Moore's Tavern or around Joseph Cobb's House. There was a time when it seemed as though "Old Mercury" would still be retained. Several meetings were called before this new crane neck brake type fighter was secured.

The first fire company was organized August 16, 1832. John Parson was chosen as foreman, Simeon Bathgate was assistant foreman and James Evans secretary. Other members included, Rufus Ingersoll, Simeon Downs, Frederick Comstock, M. S. Hartington, Eleaser Thomas, Leander Woodruff, Marcena W. Clark, William Hotchkiss Jr., Richard Martin, Alexander Clum, James E. Evans, A. W. Eddy, M. P. Hopkins, Henry Phelps, Sylvanus Coon, Uri Moore, David Dudley, and George Willoughby.

The second engine purchased for the village was in 1835. It was called "Neptune" and was purchased from Lewis Seeley of Rochester.

The Neptune Engine Company No. 1 was organized January 13, 1836. Andrew Ellicott was chosen as foreman. Soon afterwards the old company was disbanded. In those early days it was next to impossible to keep an efficient volunteer fire department functioning. Often there was lack of organization and equipment out of order. This was seldom known until the engine was at a fire then refused to work.

Reorganization meetings were frequently called and every effort made to stimulate interest in fire protection.

The situation became so grave and the trustees passed an ordinance requiring every resident to provide himself with adequate fire buckets kept in a suitable place for instant use. This was in addition to the fire equipment which had been purchased.

Andrew Ellicott was succeeded by M. W. Clark and he in turn was succeeded by John Parsons in 1838. Oftentimes there was no active fire organization. When the fire alarm went out the work fell upon the shoulders of a faithful few including John Parsons, who could always be depended upon. Then there was E. M. Card and S. G. Purdy who could always be depended upon if John Parsons was there.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

FAMILY (\$20.00/YR)
INDIVIDUAL (\$15.00/YR)

NAME(S):

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

E-MAIL:

MAKE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER
PAYABLE TO:

MEDINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATION
AND CHECK OR MONEY ORDER
TO:

MEDINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ATTN: MEMBERSHIP CHAIR
406 WEST AVENUE
MEDINA, NY 14103

MEMBERSHIP DUES: _____

ADDITIONAL DONATION: _____

TOTAL AMOUNT: _____

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