

MEDINA BUGLE

A Publication of the Medina Historical Society

Mar 2010

THE DAILY PRESS
Thursday, Jan. 10, 1889

The Methodist Spire Collapses

Nearly all day yesterday the wind blew a strong gale from the west, but about four o'clock it seemed to gather new violence, and after dashing a preliminary shower of hail, rain and snow seemed to settle down for an all night stay with us. That it did is proven by the many broken chimneys, unroofed barns, smashed windows and the fallen Methodist church spire.

Early last night, the streets were deserted save for a few, who were kept down town on business, or fearful that a fire or some other catastrophe would happen. The wind continued to increase in violence until at midnight it was blowing a hurricane, but after that it died down a trifle and changed its course slightly, until at two o'clock, when it seemed to come on again from the southwest, with redoubled energy and so remained all night and is blowing quite a gale to the present time.

About four o'clock a terrible crash that could be heard even above the roaring of the wind, shook the town. People who heard it awoke with fear and trembling and it was soon learned that the Methodist Church spire had fallen, and that the residence of M. Cooper, situated about twenty feet directly east, was partly buried under the pile of debris. People began to collect and it was found that the spire had fallen in a northeasterly direction, just grazing the

west wing, tearing the cornice off and completely crushing the wood shed. The yard is filled to a depth of some three feet with a pile of broken timbers, brick and slate all of which are broken in fine pieces and the collapse could not be more complete. The family of Mr. Cooper had a very narrow escape and are receiving the congratulations of their many friends today.

The Methodist Church where it now stands was built in 1875 and had the highest spire of any church in Medina, being 156 feet in height. Early in the month of May 1884, a high wind moved the steeple to such an extent that a crack some three feet long was made in the brick work, and several architects came and looked at it. Among them were A.J. Warner of Rochester and William Morgan, of Somerset.

The minutes of the Common Council under date of May 9, 1884 say:

"Mr. J. Warner and Mr. William Morgan made the following report on the condition of the M.E. church steeple.

Gentlemen: - The undersigned have examined the condition of the spire of the M.E. church and determine the same to be unsafe in its present condition. - A.J. Warner

I fully agree in the above statement but believe it can be made perfectly safe and have been engaged to repair and strengthen the timbers with new braces. - Wm. Morgan

Whereupon Mr. Chapman offered the following and moved its adoption:

Whereas, It appears from the report of A.J. Warner, the architect employed by the Board of Trustees of the Village of Medina to examine into the condition of the steeple of the M.E. church in this village that the said steeple is unsafe and in a ruinous condition, and liable to fall and to do serious damage both to life and property, therefore,

Resolved, That the Trustees of the Methodist Church located in the Village of Medina be ordered and required to take down and remove the said steeple or to render the same entirely safe without delay.

Resolved, That the Clerk be instructed to serve a notice upon the Trustees of said church of the requirements of the foregoing resolution.

Carried by the following vote, Yes, Chapman, Griffin and Landauer.

Shortly after this, Mr. Morgan with a force of men, repaired the steeple and pronounced it entirely safe, in fact stronger than ever. It stood the test of over four years until last night, when it collapsed under the circumstances above recorded.

The loss to Mr. Cooper will probably reach \$500, as the house is badly jarred by the immense weight which fell. The church society will lose something like \$2,500, as in the descent of the steeple some large timbers struck the roof, caving it in, making a hole about five feet square, and strewing the auditorium with plaster and lath. Whether the steeple will be rebuilt cannot be learned at this time. Crowds of people have been going to see the ruins all day, and each one takes some broken bit of slate or piece of wood away with them as a memento.

NOTE: The Daily Press was a short-lived daily newspaper which began publication on January 14, 1882. It was first published by John D. Squires in a

frame building located where the HSBC Bank now stands. The paper was later purchased by Squires' brother Alex and George E. Cooper, who was a resident of the above mentioned residence at the time. This may explain the inclusion of the background material of the minutes of the Common Council in the article.

Early Schooling in Shelby and Ridgeway

The year 1810 marks the date of the first settlers in either the town of Ridgeway or Shelby. Those hardy settlers came from colonial areas where schools had proved the very backbone of their community life. With them these hardy settlers brought that inner desire for learning. They, however, brought few books with them on their first trips except their Bibles. It was not until a few years later that books began to come in to supplement their religious reading material.

Thoughts of all Medina this week turn to schools. It is thought that a look into the history of the first log schoolhouses will prove interesting. At first the settlers were used as the institutions of learning. Alexander Coon, who settled two miles west of what is now Shelby Center, built a cabin in about six days without nails. This was used by Mrs. Coon as a school where she taught the children of David Demara and her own children. Later students included children of Jonathan Morse.

Miss Caroline Fuller of Batavia was the second to teach in the present township of Shelby. This was 1817. The next winter J.N. Frost taught the full winter school. Children from the families of Amos Gregory Andrew Ellicott and Jacob Zimmerman were added. Matthew Gregory taught school in a log schoolhouse during his nineteenth and twentieth year.

Seymour Murdock arrived in the town of Ridgeway in 1810. His oldest daughter remained at Avon flatly refusing to go into the Indian infested woods. Erza Barnes and Israel Douglas came that same year. Their children were the first students taught by Miss Betsy Murdock in the Murdock log cabin. Eli Moore, Otis Turner, Amos Barrett, and Milo Coon came the next year and the number of school children increased. At this time school was held in first one cabin and then another. Luscious Barrett, Sidney Barrett, and David Hooker came the next year. Mr. Murdock's barn had by this time been raised by soldiers, enroute to the Niagara frontier, in the battle of 1812. Soon after this the first regular school held outside a cabin was held in the barn and taught by Miss Betsy Murdock.

Medina schooling had its beginning where the Robert Newell Shirt factory now stands. Rev. Eleaser Savages, coming to preach for the Baptists in 1829, was the first organized "attempt to teach books in Medina." Prior to this, reading, writing, arithmetic, the Bible, [and] some geography had been taught occasionally in the cabins around Medina. Among those who found time to teach the children were Mrs. Sylvanus Coon, Mrs. John Ryan, Mrs. Justus Ingersoll and Mrs. William Gwinn.

Now that the Baptists had a meeting house and a minister whose salary was only \$50 per year and the privilege of teaching in the meeting house, thoughts began to turn to learning. Students learned from the schoolmaster's book.

The year 1832 found school being taught in a log cabin at the corner of Mill and Shelby streets (Present Cook block). This institution of learning was continued until into the forties when a district school was established in the old

armory on Park Avenue. This was a one story building at the time and school was continued there until 1851 when school began for the first time in the Academy (some records state 1849). The principal was Thales Lindsey, assistant principal was David H. Devoe, preceptress was Miss Ann D. Day. Primary department was in charge of Martha P. Lyman, assistant primary department H. Amanda Clark, second assistant primary, Miss Eunice E. Husted; music teacher, Miss Mary E. Fargo. The number of student in the academic department was 148. Total students in the schools, 603.

At this time the Burroughsian Lyceum flourished. There was a hall, cabinet and free library in the Academy building.

The president of the school board at that time was Silas M. Burroughs, also a member of the Assembly at the time from Orleans County. Russell K. Hurd was secretary; Horace Chase was treasurer; Dr. Azotas, M. Frost, Perrin V. Fox, Arthur W. Newell, Joseph Craig, John Ryan, and Oliver Watson were board members.

There were three sessions of school during the year. Two sessions were of fifteen weeks duration, one of fourteen weeks duration. Summer vacation was enjoyed for four weeks. Christmas and spring vacations were each two weeks.

There was a board of visitors. Those from Medina were Rev. Philo E. Brown, Rev. Daniel Reed (Baptist), Rev. Charles Furman (Presbyterian), M.C. Hopkins, Dr. A.M. Frost, Dr. Henry D. Holt, L.F. Carver, B.H. Alford, and Archibald Servoss, From Ridgeway the board members were L.D. Barrett, Lyman Bates, and William Jackson. From Middleport, Hon. James Norton and Rev. A. Kelsey. From Knowlesville, Hon. Sands Cole, Hon. J.F. Sawyer.

The years 1855 to 1857, Guy K. Cleveland was assistant principal and a very popular teacher. He went to Minnesota; became a prominent lawyer and judge. He served as a major in the Minnesota regiment and died in 1878. Elizabeth S. Cole and Abbie B. Burt were teachers at that time.

Records for 1860 reported an academic department with 212 students. There were 612 in the entire school. At this time a fall vacation of one week was enjoyed. Spring vacation was two weeks and summer vacation five weeks. There was no Christmas vacation reported.

Marvin M. Baldwin was principal in 1860-61. Oliver Morehouse was assistant. George H. Shattuck, one of Spencerian fame, taught penmanship. Mary J. Grieve was perceptress. The first graduating class was in 1866. The exercises were held on Friday morning, June 29th in Bent's hall. This was the present Bent's Opera house. The frame buildings which occupied the corner burned on October 7th at midnight. This fire was a detriment to the village. These commencements were held in Bent's Opera House mornings for many years and Editor Bowen was so accustomed to attending these; always on a hot forenoon that he seldom failed to omit "And as usual the day was hot". Sometimes he would add "In fact too hot for formal dressup".

The First graduating class consisted of six young ladies: Ella D. Balcon, S. Louise Starr, Ida M. Whalen, H. Elsie Merrett, Sarah Bridgman, Emma Davis; four young men assisted: W.T. Jacobs, Freeman A. Green, James C. Foley, and L.B. Swift.

Several books common in school use in this area during the period covered this week are on display in the Medina Daily Journal window. They include with year of publication: "A New History of the Life and Rein of

Peter the Great" (1811), "A History of North America" (1814) "A Brief Remarker" (1823), "Historical Reader" (1827), "Lives of the Presidents of the United States" (1833), "English Grammar by Kirkman (1835), "The English Reader" by Murry (1835), "Wonders of the Universe" (1842), "Arithmetic" by Adams (1848), "Smith's Illustrated Astronomy" (1848), "First Book of Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene" (1849), "Sanders School Reader Fifth Book" (1852), A copy of Walker's Dictionary of the period is also on display.

Editor's Note: The preceding and following articles were transcribed by one of Todd Bensley's AP U.S. History students as part of an ongoing Medina Historical Society project to compile the writings of Russell Waldo into a book.

Sauer Kraut Club

Many and varied have been the social organizations which have prospered in Medina during the past. Some have survived but a short time and others have continued on to become institutions. Social life in the nineties and at the turn of the century was more intensified. It is presumed that restricted modes of transportation when compared to that available today has more than a little to do with it.

Among the clubs that once gained considerable prominence and which has passed out of existence save in the minds of some of the then members who are living today was the Sauer Kraut club. Interesting bits are preserved in the files of the Medina press relative to the activities of the club.

One of these meetings was called at the invitation of George Gotts and it occurred on February 28, 1891. The announcement was by the executive

committee commanding the members to be present. At this time the following supplementary orders marked "red" were issued to the janitor.

"No. 1 That no member should carry on the way as the early bird catches the worm.

"No. 2 No loud and boisterous talk allowed to and from the meeting as there is sickness in Knowlesville.

"No. 3 Any and all members who can not control their appetites for stimulants will find a barrel of ice water in the rear of the house. No partiality will be shown any one, an equal share will be supplied.

"No. 4 If found on examination that any member has abstained from eating longer than three days previous to the meeting, he will be subject to trial and expulsion from the club."

At eight o'clock upon that memorable night vice-president Freeman mounted a high stool and started to talk in a trembling voice. He opened with "The absence of Pres. Bowen makes it my pleasant duty to swing the gavel and call for you to rise in your places and give the Sauer Kraut. Salute in honor of our host".

The minutes reveal "The salute was given and the Janitor whooped up to the tiger, in such a tragic voice and so closely resembled the roar of that rapacious animal that Brother Freeman fell in a sinking swoon into the arms of the club physician. At the same time the newly elected members hastily found protection for themselves behind the nearest object they could find. They soon hosed out to learn if the animal was really loose.

"The genial proprietor of "Cobweb Hall," Judge Allen, quick to take in the situation, in a tone of voice resembling a ladies man, or one held on probation to seek higher and better things, said 'Brother Pixley' and mayself

[sic] have been to Buffalo Bill's Great Show too many times to be unnerved by anything like the present, and with your kind permission we will sing 'Listen to the Cry of the Lamb' after which I desire to secure your unanimous consent to preside over your deliberation until other and better arrangements can be made. What is the first order of business?" "

Janitor Toplif read the following report. "Brothers, we are again assembled on this our third annual meeting, to discuss and devise measures for the best interests of our organization. It it [sic] well known, no doubt by most of the members, that this is the beginning of a new year and the third of our brief and prosperous existence anr [sic] as an officer and fellow worker with you in a good cause, I now after two years of patient and long suffering abuse, tender my resignation, to one who I sincerely hope will manage the finances in an honorable manner. My first term of office commenced two years ago, and you will all well know that it was then in its infancy, but with a united and determined persistence I have put down all opposition and am most happy to say I am in a way to extend our influence and usefulness beyond our own immediate circle."

"The second year opened under auspicious circumstances. The amount entrusted in my care was the extravagant sum of thirteen cents. I have tried hard to invest it in a way that would increase our coffers and I might give a statement far beyond your most sanguine expectations, but am sorry to say that I have listened to promises made by certain members which have never been fulfilled, and had thought before this meeting to loog [sic] for a short cut to Canada, and am sorry to say now that the treasury is now depleted, and if our members fail to come down liberally we shall have to suspend or go into

bankruptcy. I would suggest that a sum be assessed each member and placed in my hands that will put this organization on a sound footing. Thanking the members for their patient forbearance [sic], I wish to ask what is the will of the meeting.”

Brother Henry Allen stated that the janitor made an elaborate report yet no one knew what had become of the money in the treasury. The gentleman started by offering his resignation and wound up by asking the members to raise more funds and entrust to his care.

The janitor replied. “Yes sir, if the club desires to take charge of the funds I will try to endure for another term of suffering and abuse; anything to keep the funds from walling [sic] into the hands of the hayseeds.”

This last remark brought forth an animated discussion from the village boys and the hayseeds over the election of officers. The matter was finally compromised by giving the country boys the presidency and the village boys the rest of the officers. The meeting was here interrupted by a ladies voice with “Gentlemen I have the floor and announce that you will find tables in the dining room awaiting your inspection.

So endeth the first part of the third annual meeting of the Medina Sauer Kraut Club held in Medina. This meeting held solely for pleasure cared little if there was a nickel in the treasury after the bills were paid Razing was always in order and he that could not take it never found an invitation to resign membership. The razing did the trick or was intended to. As proved by the records it taught them to give out and take

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

NAME(S):

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

E-MAIL:

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: _____

Medina Historical Society
406 West Avenue
Medina, NY 14103
Phone: (585) 798-3006
<http://historicmedina.nytreasures.org/>