

MEDINA BUGLE

A Publication of the Medina Historical Society

March 2011

President's Message

Greetings!

As the season changes and Spring is right around the corner we look forward to many exciting changes for 2011. Spring will bloom and along with flowers and sun we are in the planning stages for an Antique Show, Civil War 150 year Anniversary remembrance and of course an Easter Bonnet Contest.

In February the Museum participated in Medina's Wine about Winter which was very successful. We counted over 200 people many of whom were new visitors to the Museum.

Our February 28th monthly meeting featured Patrick Weissand and his lecture on the Presidents especially the "dead" ones. Dave Miller shared the slides he has scanned and I must say these pictures will soon be our new treasures.

Thank you for your continued support and let's hope Spring 2011 will be one to remember.

Next Monthly Meeting

**Medina Historical Society
March 28th 2011**

**7:00pm Town of Ridgeway
Bldg**

Officers 2011

**Next Board Meeting
March 14, 2011**

**President: Cindy Robinson
Vice President: Craig Lacy
Treasurer: Sandy Tompkins
Secretary: Shane Sia
Board: Chris Tompkins.**

New Editor

Reinhard Rogowski

I am very excited to be the new Editor and relatively new member of the Medina Historical Society. I look forward to working with all our members and welcome any new ideas, story submissions, interviews or just to talk about the great history of our area. Please contact me via cell at 585-317-7457 or e-mail rrogowski@rochester.rr.com

Immigrants by Adam Tabelski

I've been thinking about immigrants lately. In particular, my immigrant ancestors.

Gabriel Tabelski, my father's father, was born in 'the old country' in 1894, near the end of the long century when Poland existed in spirit alone. He hailed from a place in the Russian partition—Potfilipie—that I can find no record of anywhere. How and why he got here is unknown, but I know he married the Polish-born widow Nellie Misiak Tekula in Welland, Ontario, in 1916 and moved to South Buffalo a few years later. That's where my grandfather, Matthew Francis Tabelski, was born in 1921. Soon after, the family moved back to Poland for the rest of the decade, returning to Buffalo for good in 1930.

Less is known about other ancestors from Poland. My great-great grandfathers John Matuszak and Thomas Majewski were both working in local stone quarries by the early 1890's—the former in Ridgeway and the latter in Albion. Neither of their wives could read nor write in English. I've haven't been able to locate any of their immigration or naturalization records... yet.

My mother's side is not Polish. My mother's mother's father was Thomas Buckle, who was born in England in 1887. His father, Robert, was head gamekeeper to the 3rd Earl of Kimberley, John Wodehouse, on a massive old country estate, Kimberley Hall. A single man of 24, Thomas came to America to meet emigrant kin living near the Finger Lakes. He crossed the ocean aboard the *Caronia* in steerage, landing at Ellis Island in the New York City harbor on April 7, 1912, exactly one week before the *Titanic* sank. The woman he later married in Yates County was born in the same corner of England as Thomas, and their families may have known each other in Norfolk. Her name was Alice Brown.

Wesley Taylor, whose middle name was "Admiral," was born in Ontario, Canada in 1878, where his forbears had resided for at least two or three generations. Somehow he

moved to the south side of Lake Ontario and married Dedie Annis in Albion in 1905.

The Annises have been in Orleans County since the early 1800's. Jacob Annis had a farm on Riches Corners Road and sold off some of his land to start Mount Albion Cemetery. The family line stretches back to Cormac Annis who came to Massachusetts Bay Colony from Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, Ireland, as an indentured servant in 1664.

Other branches of the family tree through the Taber line extend back to Edward Doty and Francis Cooke, both passengers on the *Mayflower* in 1620.

Whether they came 40 or 400 years ago, we cannot deny that we are a nation of immigrants. What drove them to the New World? Each has a different story. As the Irish poet Eavan Boland writes:

"By their lights now it is time to
imagine how they stood there, what they
stood with,
that their possessions may become our
power:
Cardboard. Iron. Their hardships parceled
in them.
Patience. Fortitude. Long-suffering
in the bruise-colored dusk of the New
World.
And all the old songs. And nothing to lose."

This Old Land by Adam Tabelski

Our accepted timeline of local history too often starts with the arrival of white settlers from the east in the first decades of the nineteenth century. We do well to remember this place is older than we think.

For example, when Ridgeway's first permanent settler, Seymour Murdock, arrived here in 1810 after traveling down the Ridge Road, he was traversing an old Indian path which the Iroquois had used extensively to reach Canada. The thoroughfare, known in the Seneca dialect as Ne-ah'-ga Wa-gwen-ne-yah, had only been lately improved by the Holland Land Company to facilitate the immigration of settlers. In fact, the primitive log cabins these first white residents built for shelter were often modeled after the Iroquois wigwam.

The Indians had not altogether disappeared by the time of white settlement. In the *Pioneer History of Orleans County* (1871), Arad Thomas records that "Indians in families, or singly, frequently traveled about among the dwellings of the pioneers to beg or sell their small wares, or get whiskey." Laura Bostwick came from Massachusetts with her family in 1817 and many years later she recalled the Indians who wandered the area, sometimes stopping at the family cabin for rest and warmth. She was a little afraid as they slept with their feet to the fire, "like logs on the floor."

There were never any Seneca villages in what eventually became known as Orleans County, but this land had been used by the natives for hunting and

fishing. By the early nineteenth century, Seneca's were living permanently on the reservation on Tonawanda Creek. Sometimes food was scarce there, and the early Shelby land baron Andrew A. Ellicott earned special praise for helping to feed the Tonawanda Seneca's. For his kindnesses, he was adopted into their society and given the name "Kiawana," or "good man."

The Senecas referred to themselves as the Nun-da-wä-o-no, or the "great hill people." Their territory, Nun-da-war-o-no-ga, stretched from the area of Canandaigua Lake westward to Lake Erie. The Senecas, sometimes known as the "keepers of the western door," were one of six tribes that comprised the Iroquois confederacy, the Ho-dé-no-sau-nee, or the "people of the long house."

Places of white settlement were bestowed with Seneca names. Medina was Date-geh-o-seh; Albion was De-owun-dake-ho. Both villages were established in the wake of the completion of the Erie Canal in the 1820s.

And we, in turn, named things after the original inhabitants of the land. What packet boat carried Governor DeWitt Clinton down the Erie Canal in 1825? The *Seneca Chief*.

For more information about the early history and culture of the Native Americans of our region, read *The League of the Iroquois* by Lewis Henry Morgan, published in 1851.

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406 WEST AVENUE
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