

MEDINA BUGLE

A Publication of the Medina Historical Society

April 2016

President's Message

Spring has finally arrived and we certainly welcome it after this past winter. Despite the winter weather we have been very busy at this Historical Society. A beautiful parlor stove is now in the parlor of the museum. New displays are being brought down for a new look. The military room has been reorganized and updated and it looks great.

Don't forget our spring cleanup day on May . Many hands will make it go much faster.

Our program in January was "Show and Tell" with great memorabilia from our members. The February program with President Roosevelt (FDR) was outstanding. Humor, history and songs made up for a great program. Our March program will be on Barns which should prove to be very informative. April we will be honoring the men and women who died during the Vietnam Conflict. Catherine does a great job lining up new and exciting programs.

The Dinner with the Merritts was an overwhelming success. Paul and Jim Dresser were the winners of the drawing. They and two guests attended and according to both Paula and Jim they thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Once again, thanks to Gail Miller, our membership is at 65 with hopes of getting even more this next couple of months.

If you haven't paid your dues for 2016, please do so –thank you.

Check our listing of upcoming programs. You can also check on our NEW website at www.historicmedina.org that David Miller has designed. It is very user friendly. Thank you David. Also don't forget the historical society is also on Facebook.

Also a special thank you to Frank Berger and John Wasnock contributing articles for this and further newsletters. We are always looking for historical information to include in the Bugle. If anyone has ideas or articles please let Gail Culver know,

Sincerely,

Reinhard

Officers 2015

President: Reinhard Rogowski

Vice President/Treasurer: Craig Lacy

Secretary: Shane Sia

Membership: Gail Miller

Newsletter: Gail Culver

Board:

Cindy Robinson

Georgia Thomas

Catherine Cooper

Be sure to visit our new website:

www.historicmedina.org

Indian Neuter Fort in Shelby

About one and a half miles west of Shelby Center is the site an ancient Indian Fort. A broad ditch enclosed in a form nearly circular, about three acres of land.

Historians have written of the fort since the mid1800s, describing bones and tools found on site. Today remains may still be found in two earthen mounds on which trees were erected as barricades. Two large boulders stood at the southern entrance can also be found.

According to historians, the Iroquois in the late 17th century destroyed the fort, either as assimilating or obliterating the Neuter or Neutrals as they are sometimes referred. A historical marker near the road marks the located of the site. The marker reads:

Neuter Fort

Occupied in 14th century by Neuter Indians, only double palisaded fort in New York State, destroyed by Iroquois in 1650.

Other local sites have been identified in Oakfield, LeRoy and Lyndonville

(Thanks to Frank Berger for sharing an article from the September 5, 1990, issue of the Journal

UPCOMING EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

- March 28 th

Barns, Our Rural Treasurers

Norma McQuay, History center of Niagara.

- April 25th

Honoring Western New York Soldiers killed in Action: Vietnam War,– Patrick Kavanagh.

Forest Lawn Cemetery Historian

- May – Annual cleanup Month - May 21st, 10 a, until noon.

- June 18th– Heirloom Herbs program
- Sept – Book reading, *Queen of the Bremen*, by Marlies Adams DiFante, The true story of an American Child trapped in German during World War II
- Oct – Candlelight Tours in the Museum



BEEHIVE OVENS

By Jack Wasnock

I don't believe that most of our members realize the architecture gem, we have in our museum. It is our beehive oven. I think we should push this gem. I do not believe that there are many left in this area. I have take some parts from an article that was published in the "Early American Living" magazine.

There are several kinds of beehive ovens. Some were built out doors, some in the back of the cooking fireplace, some built by the side of the cooking fireplace.

The ones built inside of buildings were mainly built of bricks. The ones built outside could also be built of clay and stone. Although the article did not say anything about stone. There were also portable ovens.

A photo of one in the John Teller house build in 1760. Shows one very much like the one in our museum, that is in the old photo taken in the dinning room, before the fireplace was changed. There is quite a science to building an oven. A mason had to have a lot of knowledge when building one.

- (A) If an oven was to flat, on top, it would lose much of its heat out the oven door, and the door would be to low for loading.
- (B) An oven built to tall would have cold spots, in at he top of the dome that would never get heated.
- (C) An oven in which the walls and hearth were to thin would not retain enough heat for baking bread.
- (D) An efficient, directly fired oven will have a door that is about 61% of the height of the dome.

Most ovens were built adjacent to the fireplace. Although the conductive heat that seeped through the masonry wall separating the fireplace from the oven was not great enough to keep the oven at high cooking or baking temperatures. Warm for low temperature applications such as drying herbs. Also an adjacent fireplace also preheated the oven, so it would get warm faster using less fuel.

For the mason, the side-by-side placement simplified construction of the oven flue. Which could be built into the main fireplace chimney. Another could be built with its own straight flue. That required additional building materials.

When building an oven the mason might leave an open spot under the over. That raised it up to an easier working height. The space below served either as an ash box (covered with a metal door), or for wood storage. The colonist save the ashes for making lye.

Oven sizes ranged from 24 by 30 inches to 3 by 4 feet. To prepare the oven for baking. Start a fire in the front of the oven, add wood and when the fire is burning well, let it burn to the back of the oven. The oven must be fired with wood, until it comes up to temperature. You can tell wen the oven is getting hot, as the soot burns at 650 degrees. But, additional firing time is required for the heat to thoroughly penetrate the mass.

Once the oven is properly heated, remove the burning coals and embers from the oven, with a hoe and a shovel. Sweep the inside of the oven, and lightly swab with a damp rag on the end of a stick.

Before loading the oven, insure that it has reached the proper temperature, 450 degrees. Experience bakers, stick o know from experience what feels right. Another method is to toss a handful of flour or corn meal unto the oven floor. It should brown in about 13 seconds. If it burst into flame the oven is to hot.

Once the oven has reached the proper baking temperature. You can start loading bread directly unto the oven floor, with a peel, free formed hand shaped loaves require no pans.

Because, the oven holds heat for a long period of time, more than one baking can be possible, with one firing.

Early cooks baked leavened breads first, followed by biscuits and scones. Then pies, cookies and slow one pot meals, like beans. After that maybe to dry fruits and vegetables.

Also, in 1843, baking powder came out and in 1850, Louis Pasteur's discovery of commercial yeast, changed baking. Before that a sour dough starter was use instead of yeast.