

# MEDINA BUGLE

A Publication of the Medina Historical Society

October 2022

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Fall is in the air, and I don't know about you, but I couldn't be happier Summer is ending. As the days start to become shorter and the nights begin to get longer, I can't help to think of the reasons, why fall is the best season.

Trips to the Apple Farm, Friday Night lights. Leaves changing colors. Pumpkin pie, hoodie season, hayrides, Halloween, Thanksgiving and of course the fall programs of the Medina Historical Society.

Our first program was by author Julie Sheppard who gave a talk about her biography of Silas Burroughs a Medina man who went on to be senior partner of the internationally known pharmaceutical manufacturing firm called Burroughs Welcome & Co. More information can be found on our website [historicmedina.org](http://historicmedina.org).

On Oct 31st, 2022, 7:00pm at the library Dee Robinson from Albion's Hoyt Library will present Andrew Downie McPhee – Circus Pioneer.

In November the Museum will host a public display of "Wedding Gowns through the Ages" on Saturday Nov. 21 10-3 and for our Holiday celebration on Monday Nov 28th from 7-8pm. Refreshments will be served.

I look forward to meeting and greeting you often during the last few months of 2022. And don't forget to view us on Facebook and our web site and as always thanks for your continued support.

Sincerely,

*Reinhard Rogowski*

*President, Medina Historical Society*

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**A Look At Early Thanksgiving**

**The Oak Orchard Creek Feeder**

**What Medina Has 1883**

**Erie Canal Bicentennial Continues**

**WNY Heritage article by Craig Lacy**

**A LOOK AT EARLY THANKSGIVING**  
**By Russell J. Waldo**  
**Originally Published On November 19, 1941**

It might be dangerous to stake one's reputation upon the assertion that Thanksgiving is strictly a religious feast. It is a day of practical rejoicing in the good things of this world, and there may even be people whose mouths are fuller of turkey than their hearts of thanks. Every year there are more people sitting down to the "groaning boards" upon these days of civic festivity.

Many log schoolhouses in the woods heard the words of the proclamation signed by our first president George Washington on October 3, 1789. "Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly implore his protection and favor."

"Where both house of Congress have by their joint committee requested me to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer [sic], to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts and many signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peacefully to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness."

"Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26<sup>th</sup> day of November next, to be devoted by the people of the United States to the service of the great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is or will be, that we may all then unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks for his kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of his providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted, for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge and in general for all the great and various favors which he has been pleased to confere [sic] upon us."



"And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions; to enable us all whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our national government of wise just and constitutional laws, discreetly [sic] and faithfully executed and obeyed to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness to us) and to bless them with good governments, peace and concord; to promote the knowledge, and practice of true religion and virtue and increase the science among them and us; and generally; to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best."

Think for a moment of the shivering few pioneers in the Holland Land Purchase in 1811 when

at the behest of Ephriam Waldo (later a Supervisor of the Town of Hartland in Niagara County) a small group assembled at Carrington Fish's Tavern at Royalton Canter to give thanks to Almighty God for the many blessings bestowed upon them. Alvin Castle a settler preacher and farmer at Slayton Settlement was asked over. A Mr. Demare of West Shelby was expected but he was completing his cabin which would be sixteen by fourteen feet and covered with bark, and would be unable to attend.

A Mr. Freeman (Asher) one and a half miles south of Peenyville (Now Middleport) was present. Alaxander Coon and his family were there. A Mr. Clark (probably Samuel), the Davis brothers, Wm. and Levi and Ezra Barnes of Ridgeway were there.

The writer heard his grandfather, Homer D. Waldo, recite years ago how these sturdy pioneers went about the forest a few days before Thanksgiving to hunt fowl and other meat to supplement the products of their new farm lands. My grandfather often hoped for the day when neighbors could assemble themselves in like manner, not a family group, but many family groups to partake of bountiful feast as did the Puritans of the New World.

The occasion cited was featured by a long prayer service and hymn singing led by Alvin Castle. This occupied much of the forenoon. Then followed the feast. The afternoon was given over to visiting and more prayers and singing. The assemblage departed after dark to their many homes hewed out of the great forest.

Many years later Thanksgiving meant recitation and singing at school on Wednesday afternoon. Church Thursday morning before the assemblage around the "groaning boards." Plum pudding had been made during the summer months and had been stored away in the cellar. The day before Thanksgiving housewives prepared vast quantities of apples and mince meat for pies. Turkeys and suckling pigs were made ready for the huge ovens for which the period was famous. Preserved plums, peaches and pears were waiting to be served.

The month of November was given over to harvesting. It was a busy month gathering in the apples for the cellar, market and the cider press. Pigs were hung in the smoke houses which were on every farm. Sausage was made and stored away in huge barrels in the cellars. Quite unconsciously the Thanksgiving event was planned and prepared for as normally as the meals of every day. It was a fixed custom in every home. It wasn't commercialized. The stores of that day did not concentrate upon Thanksgiving Day as a day to induce widespread selling. The housewives of the day were prepared by their own efforts for the feast day of all feasts.

Regardless of the circumstances of the family the Thanksgiving meal never suffered. Every neighbor knew on advance how his neighbor would fare upon Thanksgiving. The spirit of the season found neighbors bringing in huge quantities of food for the newcomers whose land had been unable to produce their food. The fraternal Thanksgiving baskets of today seem to be an outgrowth of that early custom of the individual.

**Even as the Puritans called in the Massoit to their feast and made friends of them in the name of their God so may Thanksgiving continue down through the ages to come; a day to bring families together; a day never to be forgotten by the youth of today.**



## **DID YOU KNOW? THE OAK ORCHARD CREEK FEEDER**

Many of us know of or have heard of the hydraulic canals that once furnished Medina's early industries with motive power before the advent of electric motors. But did you know that this was not their main intended purpose.

In the early 19th Century, as an inland canal across New York State was being considered, of more concern than the route the canal would take was could the waterway be supplied with enough water and where would that water come from. Water would be needed not only for floating the barges but for lockage, to account for leakage from the canal bed itself and for any diversion of water from the canal to power factories along its course.

The early planners saw Lake Erie as being this limitless supply of water not only for the canal but also as an additional supply of pure fresh water. With Lake Erie at 572' above sea level, they envisioned an incline plane canal from the lake to Rome at 420' and then down the Mohawk River to the tidal Hudson River. However, the planners would soon discover that west of Rome, the state had a low depression where swamps and lakes would make an incline plane highly impractical and in the western division, from Buffalo to Rochester, with the slope being only 1 inch per mile and the canal only 40' wide, that the lake could barely supply enough water as far as Lockport let alone the 363 miles needed to reach Albany.

So it was a land based canal, following the contours of the land with locks to deal with the changes in elevation that was decided upon. But, without Lake Erie supplying the necessary water and leakage being much worse than anticipated with earlier canals losing an average of 8" of water per mile per day the canal had to be continually fed with additional water all along the way especially at the higher elevations. The search was on to find rivers and streams along the planned course which would serve this purpose.

In our section it was Oak Orchard Creek to the rescue! As the canal was being dug so was a "feeder" being dug. The state first constructed a dam on Tonawanda Creek located within the Indian reservation with a feeder canal connecting to Oak Orchard Creek. This would help increase the flow of the creek especially during the dry summer months. Then another dam was constructed on Oak Orchard Creek just south of what would become East Oak Orchard Street with a feeder leading to the canal. Opps! They miscalculated. As they approached the canal they found that the feeder was too low for the water to flow into the canal thus this feeder was abandoned for this purpose but would live on supplying water power to several industries along Orient Street and East Center Street.

Enter David Evans, a nephew of Joseph Ellicott. Mr. Evans contracted to dig a feeder to supply the necessary water for the canal. He erected a dam just south of Maple Ridge Road and dug his feeder north along the east side of South Main Street crossing to the west at the bend in the road by Butts Park, continuing north to in front of City Hall, then crossing under the street to the east side before turning north again where it flowed into the canal where a set of locks prevented canal water from back feeding into the feeder.

The completed Oak Orchard feeder was substantial enough that in 1825, upon completion of the canal, it was one of only 12 sources of water for the Erie, including the lake, supplying almost 630,000 gallons of water per hour and the only one between Lockport and the Genesee River. Mr. Evans would later construct the first major building in what would become Medina, a large mill on the feeder located approximately in the parking area behind the Country Club restaurant thus becoming the first to use the feeder water for power. Barges were also able to be drawn up the feeder to his mill, a swing bridge on East Center allowing them to cross the street, where grain would be unloaded and flour reloaded to be

floated back to the canal for delivery.

Soon, two additional raceways would be dug using this same water for a total of three. The western or original flowed along what we now call Mill Street, the mid lateral crossing East Center about where the Print Shop is and the eastern along the east side of Orient Street. The first two would drain into the canal and the third back into the creek north of East Center. Before reaching the canal, however, this water would supply the power to operate several mills, foundries, furniture factories and other industries.

So what began as a need to supply water for the Erie Canal become a catalyst that helped Medina to grow from a collection of canal worker shacks into the thriving village that would one day call their new government building, City Hall. ♦

## **DID YOU KNOW? WHAT MEDINA HAS**

*Medina Tribune - Thursday, January 25, 1883*

Medina has "at present" (with prospects of more) 11 stone quarries, (which give employment to about 500 men during the busy season), 1 manufactory of pumps, sinks and miscellaneous hardware and 3 foundries where sinks and pipe and other castings are made a specialty (the four places giving employment to nearly 200 men), 1 iron works and foundry where agricultural implements are manufactured, 3 flour mills (one of which, Weld & Hill's, turn out from fifty to sixty thousand barrels of flour annually), 6 carriage and wagon factories (one of which Davey's, does more business in that line than all the others in Orleans county combined), 3 heading and stave factories, 1 canning factory, 2 fruit drying houses, 1 carbonate of lime flour (fertilizer) mill, 1 sash, door and blind factory, 2 planning mills, 1 spring telephone factory, 1 button factory, 1 barn door hanger factory, 1 patent reach factory, 1 brewery, 1 brick yard, 5 cooper shops, 5 hotels, 6 livery stables, 8 restaurants, 5 coal yards, 1 cider mill, 1 telephone exchange, 2 telegraph offices, 1 bank, 12 grocery stores, 5 jewelry stores, 5 clothing stores, 4 dry goods stores, 3 hardware stores, 4 agricultural implement stores, 8 shoe stores, 2 furniture stores, 1 leather glove and mitten store, 2 fancy goods stores, 4 harness shops, 5 meat markets, 2 copying houses, 5 barber shops, 2 places where musical instruments are sold, 14 millinery stores, 1 hoop skirt factory, 1 marble works, 4 candy factories, 4 bakeries, 4 confectionery stores, 2 book stores, 1 news room, 1 cigar manufactory, 1 general newspaper agency, 1 gun shop and sewing machine rooms, 3 sewing machine agencies, 4 printing offices, 3 dentist rooms, 2 photograph galleries, 6 insurance offices, 6 churches, 4 school buildings, 1 free reading room, 14 lawyers, 9 physicians, 6 produce dealers, and - we had almost forgotten it - liquor saloons too numerous to mention, It has moreover as fine and substantial business blocks as any village in the state, a large number of benevolent and charitable societies, an excellent fire department and although not quite as large a "heap of wealth" as our neighbor, the "hub" has as enterprising a set of business men as can be found anywhere, who challenge comparison as to the amount of business transactions with any other village of not more than 5000 inhabitants in Western New York.

**Medina, a sleepy little village along the Erie Canal, not by a long shot!**

## ERIE CANAL BICENTENNIAL CONTINUES

As I sit down to write about the Erie Canal I think back to working in a middle school in Maryland and there was a history teacher doing a huge bulletin board on the canal and I started talking to him and he was enthusiastic about the canal and started to lecture me. I told him I grew up on the Erie Canal and had traveled its length and our town of Medina had the only road that went under the canal – he liked that! I gave him the children’s book, “The Amazing Impossible ERIE CANAL” by Cheryl Harness - you would have thought I given him gold. It’s a book I would recommend for all ages, it has so many details about the canal.

It's always nice to find someone not from here that understands the value of the canal to our nation. That wonderful “ditch” made for westward expansion and made New York the EMPIRE state, our state helped make our nation an empire, how great is that! It was our state that paid for the canal!

When one goes into our lovely bookstore the Author’s Note you will find many books written on the Erie Canal so you can learn of the canal’s many contributions to our nation and all sorts of interesting facts. I hope you will check the store out and find a book on the canal that you will enjoy.

We are still in the BICENTENNIAL of our great canal and as we approach the 2025 year I hope you will find an activity that you and your family will enjoy.

Learning the language of the canal is fun...

Black Rock Turkey – it wasn’t turkey! It was salt pork pieces and white gravy poured over toast or biscuits – it was very filling and cheap to feed the men that worked on the canal - they even made up a song about it!

Canaller – a person that earned their living on the canal

Clinton’s Ditch – another name for the canal because Gov. Dewitt Clinton really got the “ball rolling” on getting the canal built – it was a “slam” against the governor but he proved his dream was right!

Hoggee – a person who drove the mules

Grubber – a person who pulled out bushes and roots along the canal path

Powder monkey – a person who worked with the blasting powder for the canal and did you know some of that powder was left over from the War of 1812?

Steersman – the person who stands at the tiller and guides the boat

Stump puller – this invention pulled the tree stumps out it made the work easier

Topple – to overturn a tree

Towpath – the path along the canal where the teams that pulled the boat walked

Waste weir – a structure on the berm that allows excess water to flow out

In future articles I will relate more interesting facts about the canal but I leave you with one fact I think it really “cool” given today’s instant communication....

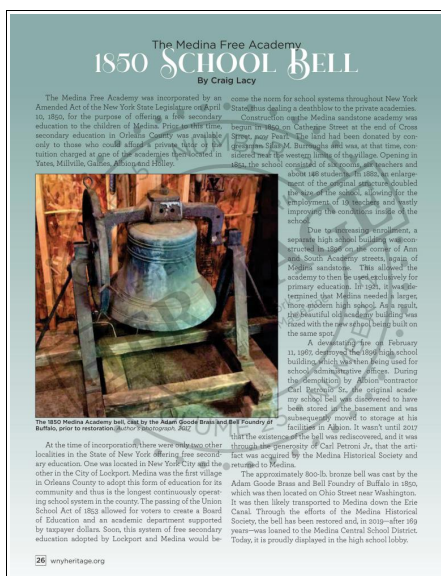
**They fired cannons along the canal when the Seneca Chief left Buffalo for New York City *(some of the cannons came from the War of 1812).***

**It took EIGHTY-ONE MINUTES from Buffalo to NYC to say the first boat was on its way! That was the fastest news had ever been transmitted!**

# THE MEDINA FREE ACADEMY 1850 SCHOOL BELL

WNY Heritage article July 21, 2022 by Craig Lacy

In last Fall's Bugle we reported on the newly restored Medina School Bell that is on display in the high school. More recently Craig Lacy published an article in the Summer 2022 edition of WNY Heritage magazine on this subject. This magazine is available at Lee Whedon.



Craig reports “As far as the experience goes, I was delighted to receive the call from the editor informing me that my article had been accepted for immediate publication in the upcoming summer issue of the magazine when, because of its brevity, the best I had hoped for was for it to be in the online version. I and others had worked hard to obtain, restore and place the bell back in the school system. The story of bell was an interesting one and the Buffalo connection of the Adam Goode foundry made it a good fit for the magazine which is why I considered sending it off to WNYH. The article turned out well.”

The Orleans Hub also did an article by Ginny Kropf >>>

## Plaque added to Medina school bell from 1850 now in high school lobby

By Ginny Kropf, correspondent Posted 30 September 2022 at 12:10 pm

MEDINA — A piece of Medina's history has found a permanent home in the lobby of Medina High School on Mustang Drive.

On Thursday morning, local businessman and history buff Craig Lacy presented a plaque to the school to accompany the 1850 bell which originally rang in the first school building on Catherine Street.

A larger building of Medina sandstone was constructed in 1896 on South Academy and was later known as Central School. After a fire destroyed the building in 1967, local contractor Carl Petronio Sr. was razing the building and found the bell in the basement. He removed it to storage in his facilities in Albion, where it remained until Carl Petronio Jr. discovered it in 2017. Carl Jr. contacted Catherine Cooper, then director at Lee-Whedon Memorial Library, and she then reached out to Lacy, thinking the Historical Society could better handle the bell than the library.



Photos by Ginny Kropf. Craig Lacy, left, Medina businessman and active member of the Medina Historical Society, and Michael Cavanagh, Junior-Senior High School principal, stand by the historic 1850 bell which has been installed permanently in the lobby of Medina High School. On Thursday morning, Lacy presented the school with a stand and plaque describing the history of the bell.

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

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

MEMBERSHIP DUES: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL DONATION: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL AMOUNT: \_\_\_\_\_

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



## **MEDINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

### **Officers 2022**

President: Reinhard Rogowski  
Vice President/Treasurer: Craig Lacy  
Secretary: Shane Sia  
Membership: Gail Miller  
Newsletter: Georgia Thomas

### **Other Board Members**

Catherine Cooper  
Barb Filipiak  
Cindy Robinson  
Kay VanNostrand

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Held at the Lee-Whedon Library (620 West Ave.)  
All programs begin at 7:00 pm

**Oct. 31 7pm - “Andrew Downie  
McPhee – Circus Pioneer”**

**Nov. 21 10-3 and Nov. 28 7-8**

**at the Museum**  
**“Wedding Gowns through the Ages”**  
**Refreshments served.**

Thanks to Craig Lacy and Georgia Thomas  
for the articles in this issue!

*Historical Society website*  
**www.HistoricMedina.org**