

CLINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2007

P.O. Box 42  
Clinton, New York 13323

## VANISHING LANDMARKS LEAD-OFF TOPIC FOR SEPTEMBER

Utica native and Society member Frank Tomaino is the prominent local historian who speaks and writes constantly about our rich heritage. We are fortunate to have him lead-off our 46<sup>th</sup> year of programs on Thursday evening, September 13 at 7:30 by discussing "Vanishing Landmarks of Central New York."

Mr. Tomaino is the retired editor of the *Utica Observer Dispatch* and is a trustee of the Oneida County Historical Society. He still writes the popular history column in the Sunday O-D and speaks frequently to area groups about our history.

Tomaino graduated from Utica College and has written the book *History For the Fun of It* and numerous stories in the O-D over the years. Come and enjoy with us Frank's presentation on September 13 followed by refreshments.



### OLD ROBINSON/TAYLOR BLOCK CHANGING

The former CVS (Brooks Drugs, Wagoner's Rexall Drug Store) was sold in fall 2006 to Richard Trevisani of Utica. It is now undergoing renovations and a **FOR LEASE** sign is in the window. CVS left for its new store on Meadow Street in April 2006

This block dates from 1876 when William Robinson and Matthew Turnock bought the lot and built the brick structure at today's 3-6 West Park Row. The original wooden blocks burned in a fire in 1872, hence, the current blocks are the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of structures there.

Originally there were three store fronts but since the early 1960's the drug store occupied the entire street frontage.

In the late 1920's the Oneida Creameries store was there, but Grand Union bought it out in the early 1930's and used the two store fronts

where the CVS entrance was.

The Robinson Block became the Taylor Block when owned by Clinton doctor George R. Taylor, a grandfather of Howard Chaney, in the 1930's. The third floor of the block was used for boxing and wrestling matches run by the Clinton Sporting Club in that decade, too.

Bristol-Myers-Squibb Co. traces its founding in 1887 to the second floor of the Robinson Block when it basically was a pill factory. It left for Syracuse after two years. A plaque on the West Park Row side, which tells the Bristol-Myers story, was placed by the Society in 1973.

Other stores through the years on the ground floor were George King, cigar store, L. J. Gilbert, druggist, Charles R. Carruth, attorney, A.N. Owston, hardware, H.S. Deland, restaurant, Isaac Dawes, shoe store, Celsus McCabe, dry cleaning, Clarence Weaver, liquor store, George Burdick, shoes and clothing store, Charles Cone, clothing, and Grand Union, groceries.

Starting in 1878 Matthew Turnock operated a cabinet and undertaking business out of the north section of the block where CVS had its photography machines more recently.

Emrys Owens became an undertaking partner of Henry Turnock in 1935 and bought that section in 1942. Owens sold Frigidaire appliances, Zenith TV's and radios, and furniture there until Robert Wagoner bought the north section in the early 1960's to expand his Rexall store.

What stores will be next?

**CLINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Founded in 1962

**DIRECTOR S**

- John Burdick
- Faye Cittadino
- Frank Cittadino
- John Fitzpatrick
- Christopher Fox
- Patricia Fox
- William Holland
- Walt Jury
- Wade Lallier
- Glen MacGregor
- Brian Rand
- Roseann Suhr

**WEB SITE**

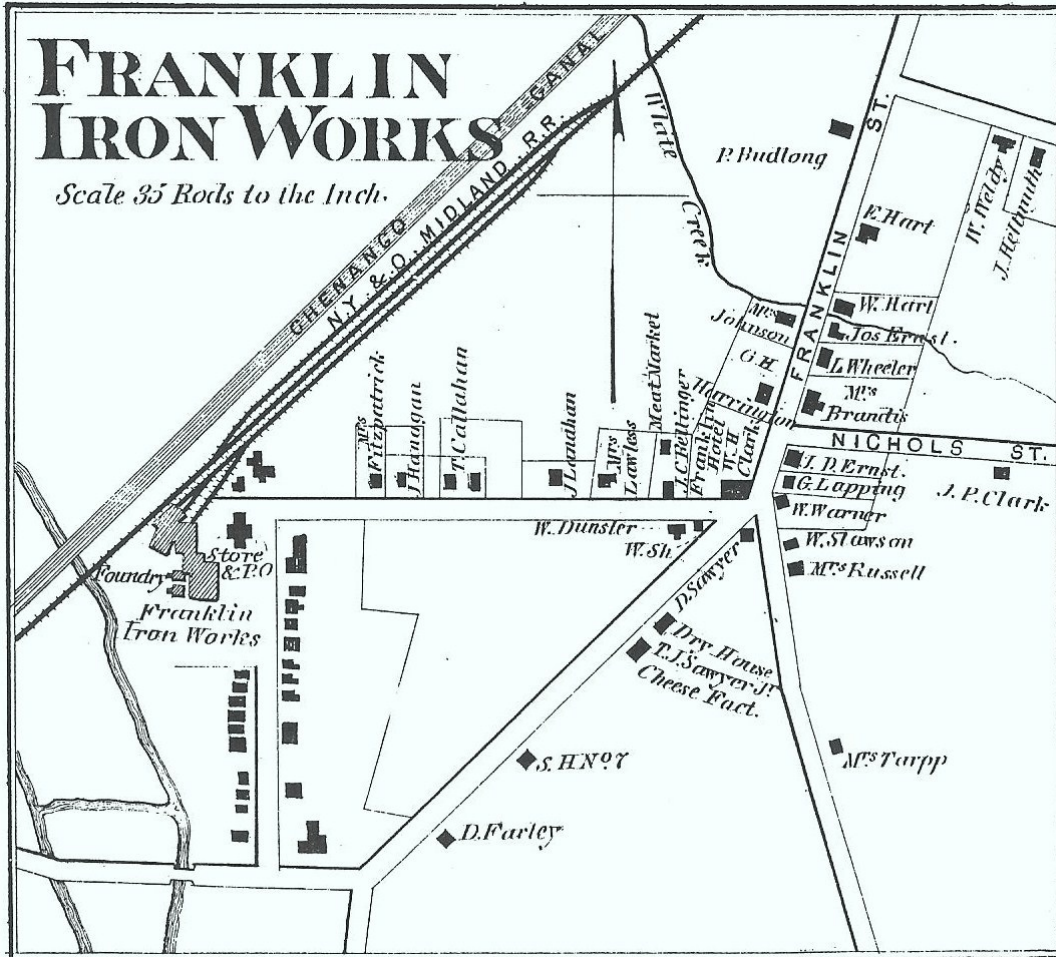
[www.clintonhistory.org](http://www.clintonhistory.org)

**QUARTERS**

Former Clinton Baptist Church, built 1832, at 1 Fountain Street

**PHONE**

315-859-1392



**FRANKLIN**

**SPRINGS IN 1874 WAS CALLED  
FRANKLIN IRON WORKS**

Located just one mile south of Clinton is today's sleepy hamlet of Franklin Springs. The once-bustling suburb had a more exciting and glorious past as home of an iron foundry, cheese factory, two meat markets, one-room school district # 7, a roofing company, the lithia water springs and bottling plants, post office, a canal, a hotel, three saloons, an ice house, the NYO&W railroad station, and numerous homes for the workers.

The 1874 atlas map above shows what Franklin Iron Works looked like at its more prosperous time. Notice all the houses lining both sides of Furnace Street, the cheese factory, the school, and Nichols Street which is now Grant Road.

Lithia springs were discovered by Fred Suppe in 1888 and started another industry which lasted into the 1970's with the Split-Rock beverages. Around eight different bottling firms were in operation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Clinton hematite iron ore was mined on Kellogg Street, New Street, Brimfield Street, and Dawes Avenue and hauled by horse and wagon and later(after the trains started in 1866) via the railroad to the blast furnace. The furnace opened in 1852 and was closed around 1910 and torn down in 1913.

Slag, the byproduct of the blast furnace, was used as a roofing material between 1900 and about 1910 by the Commonwealth Roofing Company. The Peck family still owns many tons of slag which are visible just east of the Oriskany Creek off Route 12-B and Furnace Street. Now the slag is used for driveway fill.

With the iron business fading the post office was officially changed in 1898 from Franklin Iron Works to Franklin Springs, which it remains today.

The American Legion, town offices and highway garage, post office, an auto repair, an antique shop, and Clinton Tractor 's lot make up the businesses there today....a far cry from the heyday of the late 1800's.

### **MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT FRANK CITTADINO**

After an absolutely beautiful summer, we hope you are ready to enjoy a history-filled year of programs and activities here at your Clinton Historical Society. We will be celebrating our 45<sup>th</sup> year as an organization. Our program chair Bill Rudge has done a fantastic job responding to your requests and developing a very balanced program for our 2007-08 year.

Inspiration can come from a variety of sources. Recently, Faye and I were reviewing a video-taped

interview one of my students had conducted with Phil Munson. Mr. Munson was one of the founders of CHS and one of the first presidents. He grew up here, attended CCS and later Hamilton College, He generously shared his vast knowledge and love for the history of our community in so many ways. When asked by the student interviewer what the average person could do to support local history in our community, Phil spoke of the importance of supporting the Clinton Historical Society. He noted just how unusual it was for a community of our size to have such an organization that was dedicated to preserving our past and present for the future. We found his words particularly appropriate as the Clinton Historical Society begins its 45<sup>th</sup> year!

Phil went on to mention the important task of photographing everyday things and events in our community. The houses on the street, people enjoying midday snack at an outdoor table, construction work to one of our landmarks, etc.. To illustrate his point, he used examples from his latest photo album and held up a series of photos of the new post office being constructed(in 1990) and other everyday activities. Phil made us aware of the need to document constantly the events of today for tomorrow. Of course with digital cameras, it is easy and economical to do.

We encourage you to take Phil's advice, as we will, to photograph the everyday events throughout the Town of Kirkland. As Phil reminded us through the video, these everyday scenes ARE historic events and important to future generations! Discovering forgotten video tape and learning once again from the master historian that Phil was has inspired us to action. As we were in the midst of the Summer History Camp we shared Phil's message with the children. That my student acted upon my suggestion that he interview Mr. Munson resulted in preserving Phil's words and love of the community for others to learn and be inspired by.

Please remember we would be happy to add your photographs to our collection. We can either scan them into our computers or perhaps you could burn a disk which you might donate. Of course we could also download your images from your digital camera. Just call us when you have some images to share. Keeping a notebook handy so you can identify the location or event is a valuable tool which we recommend.

Recognizing that several historic cemeteries in our community were without identifying signs, we have designed and have had produced five very elegant signs. A ceremony to install them will take place at the **Brimfield Street Cemetery at 10 AM September 15**. Please join us for this somber but very important occasion.

We wish to thank those who have donated items to our museum, Please remember us when the time comes to clean that attic or basement. It is much better that the artifacts and memorabilia of life in the community remain here.

Thank you for your continued support. The fact that our members respond so generously to the needs of CHS has allowed us to enjoy continuous growth as we work to meet the needs of our community. Please join us in celebrating this special anniversary by participating in the many programs and activities planned for our 2007-08 year.

*Frank J. Cittadino*