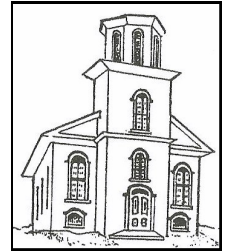


PRESERVE THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

## CLINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



April 2016

### BARBARA DECKER TO WEAVE LOCAL TEXTILE STORY

Society director Barbara Decker will speak at our April 10 program which starts at 2 PM. Her topic is "From Plain Weave to Plush: A History of Local Textile Manufacturers." Mrs. Decker has been active with the KAC in various capacities and has served as a Society director since 2012.

Mrs. Decker's interest in textiles started at an early age. She worked at the Ohio Historical Museum and learned to weave in a woman's home. For over 40 years Barbara has been weaving, showing and selling her work in exhibitions and at national craft shows. She has a B.A. from Skidmore College and a Master's in art history from SUNY at Binghamton.

Come and hear Barbara's lifetime involvement with textiles and weaving.

### INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

Your Society is proud of the research services it provides to people all over America who write in with inquiries about their family history.

Our research team takes special pride in responding to a few international inquiries. Recently a family in Roppenheim, Alsace, France wrote to the Town of Kirkland, which was referred to us, and asked if we had any information on their relative, George Vicks, born in Roppenheim in the 1820's who emigrated to the U.S. in the 1840's and Kirkland about 1860.

above Alsace street scene Roppenheim We not only found a great deal of information on George and his descendants which we forwarded to the grateful relatives still living in Roppenheim, but we were happy to find present day descendants. The late Margaret Timian Stanley, wife of our Society founder Ed Stanley, was a direct descendant as well as current Society members, Judy Vicks Sweet, and Betsy Fitzpatrick Beckman. Maybe there are others out there?

*Kudos to John Burdick for doing this great research and writing in English to Alsace Lorraine.*



Clinton Historical Society  
Founded in 1962

### DIRECTORS

Mary Benson Byrd-secretary

Ruth Cosgrove- vice-president

John Crossley

Barbara Decker

Lisa Firsching- treasurer

Erik Genalo

Robert G. Goering

Susan Goodier

Fran Lallier

Barbara Owens

Pat Smith

Jerry Semchenko-president

Robert Tegart- coordinator

Richard Williams- editor

### Web Site

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

### Phone

315-859-1392

### Mailing Address

P.O. Box 42

Clinton, New York 13323

### Facebook

Clinton Historical Society  
(original)

### E-Mail Address (NEW)

Clintonhistoricalsociety1@gmail.com

**Open Hours:** Wednesday 1-4  
and Saturday 1-4;

**Dues-** \$12.00 **individual** for  
1 year or \$30.00 for 3 years;  
\$17.00 **families/businesses** or;  
\$45.00 for 3 years; \$25.00  
**friends;** \$50.00 **contributing**  
\$50.00

## CLINTON'S FOUNDING

Robert Tegart gave the February program on Clinton's beginnings in 1787. Here Mr. Tegart gives readers an interesting sample of his report.

In 1785, after hearing about the opportunities in the west, a group of pioneers, with Captain Moses Foote as its leader left the Waterbury, Connecticut area headed for the Mohawk Valley. The Revolution had ended, the peace treaty had been concluded and the open frontier called them.

The small group of hearty souls first settled in German Flatts and spent "two harvests" there. In 1786, Moses Foote and his followers went out to explore the lands to the west. Moses Foote may have travelled on the Old Moyer Road, which was a major East-West trail leading to Western New York. They probably travelled from German Flatts to Paris Hill; then west along what is now Maxwell Road to Lumbard Road along the Oriskany Creek, across the flats and swamps to a "dry knoll", the site of the current Village Green.

Part of the group split away at Paris and found an elevated plain which they felt was a suitable spot for settlement 1½ miles east of the knoll Captain Foote chose. It was not an easy decision with both parties unwilling to compromise on the site for settlement. They met on the banks of a small creek but could not come to an agreement. They adjourned and a different group met the next day to continue the discussion. Finally Moses Foote persuaded the group to accept the current location which would become Clinton.

The Village Park is perfectly located on a knoll which is elevated. If one drives around the village they will notice that the village green is on an elevated plain well above the water level. This is indeed a perfect geographic spot to establish a community.

Tradition has it that Ludim Blodgett, part of this early group, in the fall of 1786 built a small log hut on the "Corner of the Village Park and Kellogg Street." Later in February of 1787, James Bronson, another of the early explorers, was said to have slept on what is now the village park, sheltered from a winter storm under the upturned roots of a large Hemlock.

In the next few months the population rose to 13 families. It was on March 3<sup>rd</sup> of 1787, that the main group of eight families arrived to what is now Clinton. They came on foot with ox carts carrying all their worldly possessions. Within the next few months the population rose to 13 families, then by autumn to 20 families. The movement had begun, and settlers were flowing into Clinton and the Mohawk Valley. Elkanah Watson, who travelled the valley in 1788 and 1791, wrote in his journal:

“Settlers are continually pouring in from the Connecticut hive, which throws off its annual swarms of intelligent, industrious and enterprising emigrants... numerous bateaus coming up the river freighted with whole families, emigrating to the land of promise.”

Clinton and Kirkland grew dramatically in the first 10 years of existence. The population of Kirkland increased 500% from 1787 to 1790 and then 400% in 1800. Throughout the first quarter of the nineteenth century it continued to climb. By 1801 the Seneca Turnpike, previously an Indian Trail, was chartered connecting Kirkland to the communities to the East and West.

In 1803 Samuel Kirkland described Clinton in his journal:

*January 9, 1803.*

*L.D. Clinton. Attended the service with Revd Mr. Norton at this place. Wonderful has been the goodness of God to this people! Upwards of one hundred communicants! What has this once howling wilderness, this solitary desert, produced in the course of fourteen years! What a rich harvest to the Divine Redeemer!*

Clinton had quickly grown into a thriving community!

*Above is a painting of a pioneer family and their belongings, oxen, and sleigh heading to central New York.*



## ITEMS SOUGHT BY THE SOCIETY

1– The society does not have a picture of Grover Cleveland when he attended Clinton's centennial in 1887. Does anyone know of a good picture of Grover and Frances here?

2– Yearbooks provide a great source for research and are often looked at. The Society collection lacks these years: prior to **1942, 1943, 1944, 1946, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1984, 1985, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2002, 20203, 2007, 2009, 2015**. Donations of these missing volumes is encouraged.

XX

## A.D. GRIDLEY PAINTING BEING RESTORED

A.D. Gridley wrote the first Kirkland history in 1874. He was a minister and lived on Williams Street. His family goes way back to the early Clinton settlers. M.E. D. Brown, a prominent Utica portrait artist, painted Gridley in 1853. The Society owns the portrait which has hung on the main level from time to time.

As with many things 165 years old, the painting needs some work and restoration is taking place under the supervision of Society director Erik Genalo. Local restorer James A. Cushman Is doing the work which will be completed by the end of the year.

We look forward to seeing the revitalized Gridley oil painting.

## EARLY STREETS OPENED

Gridley's town history listed these streets and when they were opened for development:

Mulberry Street 1833 or 1834; Meadow Street 1856; Franklin Avenue 1858; Elm Street 1861; Prospect Street 1864; and Williams, Marvin, and Chestnut Streets 1850.

Gridley also mentioned the first street which went along today's Kirkland Avenue to a house on Fountain Street. Some old deeds describe land in the early deeds as "on the road to Paris" for example.

## PAY DUES NOW

It takes a significant amount of volunteer time to process the dues each year. It would be helpful if all dues came in prior to April 15, 2016. The March newsletter contained the dues card which should be returned with a check for payment or use PayPal on our web site.

This year a three-year option is offered for convenience. Please note the exact amounts for the different categories. Members are encouraged to move up the tiers to **Contributing**.

**Extra donations have been included by several members and are also encouraged.**



*Shown at left is a picture of the arbor on College Hill Road taken by Society mem-*



*ber Zach Lewis. His life and career was a feature article in a recent "Mohawk Valley Living" magazine, published by Lance and Sharry Whitney, who also are Society members. The Society salutes Zach and the Whitneys for their creative talents and devotion to photographing local buildings to preserve their history*

*with images for the future.*

## TROLLEY RAIL SCHEDULE

Between 1901 and about 1936 an inter-city urban light rail system operated from Utica to Clinton. The trolleys came right up Utica Street around East Park Row and stopped at the southern end of the park. The car went north on West Park Row and back on the tracks which ran right down the center of Utica Street.

East of Brimfield Street the tracks were on the right side or south side of the road to New Hartford .

Here is a partial schedule from 1910:

LEAVE CLINTON- every half hour from 6 AM to 7:30 PM, then hourly until 11:30 PM

Saturday, every half hour from 6 AM to 11:30 PM, Cars leaving at 12 midnight, 12:30 AM, and 12:30 AM run only to the West Shore RR.

LEAVE UTICA- Cars leave from Main Street at 6:15 AM and every 30 minutes until 7:15 PM and then hourly until 12:15 AM.

Notes: The trolley stopped at the West Shore RR late at night. The West Shore crossed Genesee Street at today's Uptown area near the Price Chopper Plaza. The trolley barn was on Main Street near Union Station.

The Clinton Historical Society is an I.R.S. 503 (c) (3) charitable organization and is also recognized by the NYS Attorney General as a non-profit organization. Dues and donations are tax deductible.

*The Society appreciates members who consider it in their wills and estate plans.*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings,

This year, we celebrate 229 years of rich history and heritage. Our founders settled in Clinton after the end of the Revolutionary War. They faced many hardships most notably, severe weather and limited resources. However, they persevered because they developed a community where everyone helped at every level to flourish. Granted they received support from external sources, especially all the supplies offered by Mr. Isaac Paris, a prominent merchant from Fort Plain. This helped keep them viable during their growth period. Their sustainability would not have lasted if they didn't have the trust and confidence in each other. What they had at the very basic level was full communication in their small community. An understanding implied or indirectly, that their ability to grow was by supporting the needs of all.

Fast forward to today. We have the world virtually at our fingertips. So many forms of communication, for example, personal email, Facebook, Twitter, Instant messaging services: texting, Instagram, and Skype. All this and more can be instantly accessed from a desktop computer, laptop, cell phone, or an electronic tablet.

There are numerous ways to communicate with others without any interpersonal connections. Is this good or bad? That's an issue I will leave for you to decide. However, my belief, is that by nurturing a culture of community involvement and cultivating interpersonal relationships within our Historical Society walls and outside in our great community, the path is paved for others to follow.

We, as an Historical Society, will use the fundamental communication tools our founders relied upon, along with today's technology to preserve our link to the past and to cultivate our history now and in the future.

Warm regards,  
Jerry Semchenko

## CHANGES

In the 2002 period the 1933 grade 7-12 school building underwent extensive modifications.

This picture shows the former auditorium entrance, front walk, and flag pole on a winter day in 2002.

The entire auditorium was razed and replaced with the current performing arts center for plays and concerts.

