



# CLINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

July 2021

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315.859.1392  
clintonhistory.org

Open  
Wednesdays 1 – 4 PM  
Saturdays 1 – 4 PM

## Clinton's Pool Makes a Big Splash—65 Years On

*Patricia Hogan*

The arrival of July in Clinton usually brings sunny days and warm—often hot—weather. Once school is over for the summer, the best place to be on a sunny afternoon is the Jack Boynton Pool on Clinton's Norton Avenue. This year Clinton's community pool begins its 65th season with a full list of services and functions even as concerns of coronavirus linger.

A 1955 issue of the *Clinton Courier* suggests that the town's families had discussed the idea of a community pool as early as 1940. Plans to build a pool, however, may have been postponed while Clintonians, like all Americans, dealt with World War II. After the war, Clinton folks concentrated on raising families and developing a town arena—building two, in fact, after the first caught fire in September 1953. Producing recreational facilities for frozen water first made sense given Clinton's lengthy winters. But as the number and size of Clinton families



The Clinton Community Pool in 1957 showing the pool house and the many bikes that transported kids to an afternoon swim. Photo taken by Dick Williams and used with permission.

grew throughout the 1950s, village officials revived plans to build a community pool for summer use. In 1953 the village established the Clinton Youth Foundation to raise funds for a pool's construction and operation. The Clinton Central School board voted to give a parcel of school land to the cause. With seed money from the Community Chest (forerunner to the United Way) and the Town of Kirkland, fund raising began in earnest in 1956. By the end of August of that year, the village had raised \$30,000, and though the sum fell short of the project's goals, it was enough to begin construction.

Groundbreaking ceremonies occurred on October 1, 1956. Less than a year later, on July 8, 1957, the Clinton Community Pool opened to the public.



This 1957 photo shows the Clinton pool before grass had a chance to take root on the grounds. Photo taken by Dick Williams and used with permission.

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When the pool first opened, two Clinton schoolteachers and coaches, Bud Morgan and Bernie Burns, managed the facilities and staff. Village and town historian Dick Williams, as a teenager, served as an early pool house attendant. The pool offered free swim times each day in the afternoon and early evening. In the mornings, lifeguards offered lessons for beginners and advanced swimmers. Junior life-saving instruction was also available. On Saturday mornings, staff taught five- and six-year-olds about water safety and, on Monday evenings, provided classes for just adults—no kids allowed. The pool also provided dedicated swim times for children from Clark Mills and Oriskany Falls. When the season came to a close, parents watched their kids compete in the annual swim meet of races and diving competitions.

In the early years, the pool attracted a devoted and youthful clientele. My siblings—Mary Anne (later a lifeguard), Sue Ellen, Timmy, and Michael—and I numbered among many. That first year, my sisters and I

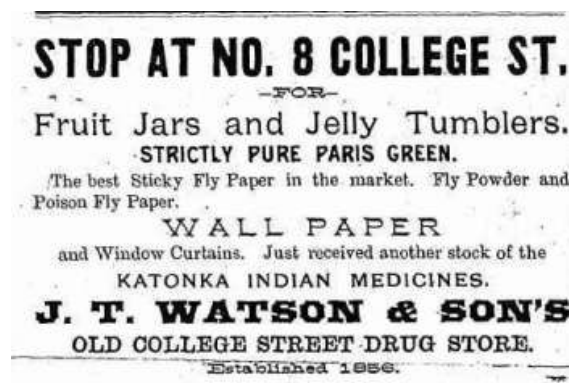
spent nearly every sunny summer day (and cloudy ones too) at the pool. We continued for years to head to the pool each afternoon. We walked over to Marvin Street, stopped for a moment in front of the homes of the Scooneses and the Costellos, and waited for one, two, or more sisters to step outside for the walk to the pool. No prior communication required. In Clinton, there were always other things to do, but few of them were more fun than an afternoon of swimming, sunbathing, and hanging out with friends. I still, many (too many) years later, remember the calming feel of the sun's heat, the happy sounds of kids cutting loose, and the numbing chill of the water during early morning swim lessons.

Not just kids noticed the pool's draw. An editorial in the July 2, 1964, issue of the *Clinton Courier* remarked that the pool needed donations of lawn furniture and a lawn mower, but it also reported on the crowds. "A couple of things are needed at the swimming pool. From the looks of attendance for the past several days, one of them isn't bodies. Use of the pool has been such that about the best one can do is get wet by jumping up and down in the same place, and even then, while you're up, someone may take your spot."

Jack Boynton, the author of this 1964 editorial and publisher of the *Courier*, used his newspaper to promote Clinton's pool enthusiastically for nearly two decades. He also served as treasurer and president of the Clinton Youth Foundation. After he passed away in 1975, the pool was renamed for him.

Over the years, staff has added services, events, and programs, expanding the pool's value as a village institution. The enlarged grounds, snack bar, birthday party rentals, and family movie nights have only strengthened the pool's place in Clinton life.

Enjoy the summer. And maybe some afternoons at the pool.



## CHS Annual Meeting, May 17, 2021

This year's Annual Members' Meeting was held via Zoom. Thank you to the many members who sent in their signed proxies form indicating support for the candidate slate. The Building Committee chair reported on the completion of two large projects: much-needed new bookcases for archival materials and a new quiet, energy-efficient heating and AC system. No more banging equipment during programs! The Membership chair reported 471 members as of May, and 84 percent of active members are up-to-date on their dues. The Curator reported that the long-term effort to inventory all items in the museum collection is nearly complete. We've received several interesting donations this year, including a mail valet case owned by Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant III, daughter of Clinton's Elihu Root and wife of President Grant's grandson.

Wade Lallier announced he would be stepping down as President but would remain a Board member. Wade announced several awards: Longtime volunteers Walt Jury and Roseann Suhr were awarded the 2021 Lifetime Achievement Award for their years of service to the Society; Anna Wisniewska was awarded the Award of Merit for her dedicated help with the collection inventory; And Eunice Zoeckler received special commendation for her longtime help with the newsletter. Thank you Walt, Roseann, Anna, and Eunice for your service!

The election of new officers and board members for 2021–2022 was confirmed. Rose Raymond was elected as the new President and Patrick Grimes as the new Vice-President. David Iles and Tim Fox were reelected as Treasurer and Secretary, respectively. Sharon Williams was elected to a second term on the Board; continuing Board members are John Brady and Mike Revenaugh. The new Board members are Tom Adams, Christian Goodwillie, and Mary O'Neill.

In closing, thanks were given to retiring Board members, Pam Denison, Moe LaLonde, and Gill Goering, for their service to the Historical Society.

## Celebrating the Fourth, 150 Years Ago

The following article appeared in the *Clinton Courier* on July 6, 1871.

The Fourth. – The glorious Fourth was duly celebrated this year by the public in general and everybody in particular. It commenced at about twelve o'clock, midnight, with a big bonfire and ring of cannon at the head of the Park, and a fusillade of firecrackers and small arms was kept up during the day.

A pleasant company gathered in the Harding Grove to pic-nic. The Declaration was read, short speeches were made, the Clinton Cornets discoursed enlivening music; bountiful refreshments followed. But "the hunt" turned in the direction of Utica. Thitherward the crowd was attracted, and the multitude thronged. And it was a great day for that festive city. The procession was immense, and a large success. But the balloon ascension was the event of the day. Conductor Baker, of the U.C. & S.V.R.R., well played the role of the "daring Aeronaut" on the occasion. At about 5 p.m., the cords were loosed, and up into the blue ether amid the plaudits of ten thousand spectators "he sailed and he sailed."

Of the getting to and from Utica by horse cars, the upturnings and overturnings, the crowding and delays, might a volume be written. The maledictions pronounced against those infatuated individuals who still persist in opposing "steam communication," were fearful to contemplate, and warrant the prediction of woes unnumbered on their heads.



# Looking for Leeches?

*Timothy Fox*

Walk down the stairs from the Society's front entrance, and you'll find the centerpiece of the Historical Society's permanent collection: The Apothecary Shop. Rehoused in our museum 20-plus years ago, from its original location in a storefront window on College Street, the shop re-creates a turn-of-the-20th-century drugstore in all its gas-lit glory.



The Apothecary collection was originally put together in 1965 by pharmacist Robert Wagoner. He created the display in the back of what was then the Park Row Pharmacy, on West Park Row, partly from pieces of the original Bristol-Myers Company (formerly the Clinton Pharmaceutical Company, which was located on the same spot), as well as other antiques of various provenance. As the pharmacy changed hands and names over the years (later to become Brooks and CVS), the space for the Apothecary display came into demand, and the bulk of the collection was donated by the Wagoner family to the Clinton Historical Society for permanent display.

Entering the re-created shop today is like stepping into another era. What makes it period appropriate? Shelf after shelf is lined with all manner of bottles and beakers, vials, and jars, with no plastic packaging in sight. Tools and vessels are made of glass, leather, brass, and wood. (And you don't often come across cast-iron chandeliers in today's typical pharmacy.)

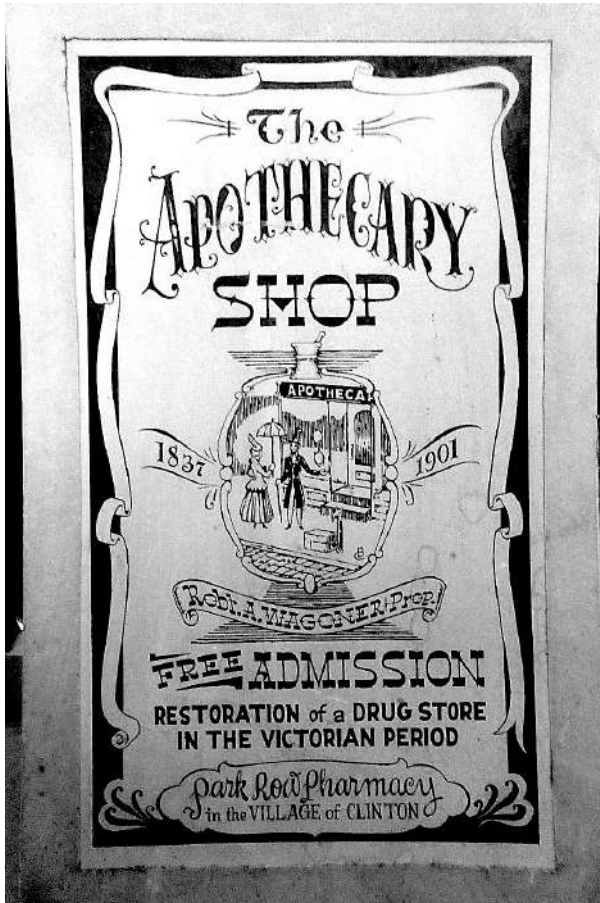
Browse the shelves, and the remedies on offer include pots and packages of sundry herbs, pills, oils, and perfumes; patent medicines and various homeopathic kits; sweets and suppositories; a flask of Rock 'n' Rye (rye whiskey infused with rock candy); myriad mortars and pestles, scales, and a copper cement mixer; and my personal favorite, a box of something called Rhubarb Fingers.

(As an aside, the modern reader may not recognize the health benefits of all these products; in an appraisal of the collection, an advisor to the Society described one product as a Wooden Electrical Quack Box, and another—the Micro Saccharimeter—was labelled, succinctly, as “quackery.” The past is a foreign country: they do health care differently there.)

Among the items on display, some in particular stand out. One such object, standing over a foot tall and dominating the back shelf, is a curiously constructed stoneware jar, bearing the elegantly etched label “Hirudines”—hirudines being the more elegant term for leeches. Designed to allow airflow and humidity, the jar kept the worms alive and comfortable. The use of these leeches for blood-letting was a common technique from prehistoric civilizations to the early years of modern medicine.



The Apothecary Shop not only serves as an anchor of the Historical Society's permanent exhibitions, but the display continues to grow. Just a few summers ago, Rick Wagoner donated additional items from his father's collection. The Apothecary Shop, and all the Society's other displays, are open to the public on Wednesdays and Saturdays throughout the year.



## Seeking Volunteers

The Clinton Historical Society was founded by a group of volunteers and is still run primarily by volunteers. We are currently looking for new volunteers to help with various tasks related to the museum's operation. If you love Clinton history and are willing to share your time, we can find a volunteer opportunity to match your interests and availability. For more information, please email us at [clintonhistoricalsociety1@gmail.com](mailto:clintonhistoricalsociety1@gmail.com) or call 315-859-1392.

**1871.**

FIRST ANNUAL  
**HORSE FAIR AND TROT!**  
OF THE  
**CLINTON  
DRIVING PARK ASSOCIATION,**

WILL BE HELD AT  
ROBINSON'S GROUNDS, CLINTON



WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY,  
July 26th and 27th.

PREMIUMS OPEN TO ALL.

**FIRST DAY.**  
Wednesday, July 26th.

HORSES—CLASS I.

Examination of Horses by Judges will commence at 11 A. M.

Best Stud Horse	.....\$10
2d " "	5
Best 3 yr. old Stud Colt	..... 6
2d " "	3
Best 2 yr. " "	..... 4
2d " "	1

CLASS II.

Best Pair Matched Horses or Mares	.....\$10
2d " "	5
Best Single Horse	..... 6
2d " "	3
Best Pair Draught Horses or Mares	.....10
2d " "	5

COLTS—CLASS III.

Best 3 yr. old Colt	.....\$4
2d " "	2
Best 2 yr. old Colt	..... 4
2d " "	2
Best Yearling Colt	..... 4
2d " "	2
Best Sucking Colt exhibited with Mare	..... 4
2d " "	2
Best family of not less than 3 Colts exhibited with dam	..... 6
2d " "	3

ROAD HORSES—CLASS IV.

Best Pair Matched Mares or Geldings	.....\$10
2d " "	5
Best Single Horse or Mare	..... 6
2d " "	3

*In the above class, Single Horses must show 2 1/2 minutes, and Matched Horses 4 minutes, to be entitled to Premium.*

CLASS V.

Best Stock Horse exhibited with 10 Colts 3 yrs. old and under	.....\$20
2d " "	10

**Purse No. 1,---\$50.**  
*For Horses that have never beaten 3 minutes.*  
1st, \$25; 2d, \$15; 3d, \$10.



# Ask the Historian

**I'd like more information about the building that sits between Kirkland Avenue and Utica Street. It's connected to the railroad in some way. I don't know much about it. (Tim)**

Answer by local historian John Burdick

This building, located behind the apartment complex on Kirkland Avenue, was a freight station along the route of the O&W (Ontario & Western) Railroad. It was built and opened in 1887 in time for the Clinton's centennial celebration. The freight station was the scene of a luncheon with U.S. President Grover Cleveland (who had lived in Clinton as a youngster) for the men of the village. (Women were not allowed, but they had tea with Mrs. Othniel S. Williams at her home at 21 West Park Row.) The freight station functioned until 1957 when the railroad went out of business. In the 1960s, it was moved

away from its frontage on Kirkland Avenue to make room for the apartment buildings, and it became the garage for the complex until it deteriorated.



Photo by Ernest Williams. Used with permission.

**Readers: Send us your questions to be used for future Ask the Historian!!**

## What Is It?

Thank you to everyone who sent in guesses on the May newsletter's What Is It? artifact. We received correct guesses from six members. **Les LaBrecque** sent in the first correct response, identifying the device as a rope wrench used to tighten the grid of ropes that supported a mattress on a bed frame.

Do you have any idea what the item in this photo was used for? Send your guesses to [clintonhistory1@gmail.com](mailto:clintonhistory1@gmail.com). We will reveal its purpose and the name of the first person to identify it correctly in the next issue.

