

YESTERDAY & TODAY

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"Preserving the Past for the Future"



The east side of the square is shown in 1913 as bricks were ready to be installed. On the right we can see the furniture and undertaking business that years later became Sam's Diner. Next door was the hardware store owned by Ira Edwards, which is now Schiavone Dentistry. A playhouse is next, presenting "Ten Nights in a Bar Room."

Happy New Year and welcome to our Spring newsletter! 2025 is a year of several important milestones. Both Orleans County and the Erie Canal will be celebrating their 200th birthdays. In 1850, 175 years ago our Village of Holley was incorporated with Harrison Hatch as its first "president." And let's not forget our own Murray-Holley Historical Society, which turns forty years old this year. While the county is planning events to celebrate the sesquicentennial of both the county and the canal, the Village of Holley is gearing up to recognize the founding of our village later this fall. As for the Murray-Holley Historical Society, I have written a story for this publication with help from Marsha DeFilipps to chronicle our organization and its humble beginnings. Feel free to offer insights and suggestions on this history, and please remember contributions are always welcome for this newsletter. Our annual meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 22 at a location to be determined. If you have any nominations for officers of this Society please get them to President Dan Mawn before the annual meeting. Let's make 2025 another successful year for the Murray-Holley Historical Society.

Raymond Santoro
Newsletter Editor

BASKET RAFFLE



On December 20 our Society held the drawing for the two baskets for our annual basket raffle. Each basket contained a combination of gift cards, lottery tickets, and cash totaling over \$400 for each basket. Thanks to the local businesses that donated gift cards for the baskets. The drawing was held at the Holley Public Library. This year's winners were Rosanne and Jerry Wagner, and Lisa Schofield. Congratulations and enjoy your prizes!

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

On January 8th, fifteen members of the Society braved the cold weather to come together and enjoy the annual holiday luncheon at the Holley VFW. The meal consisted of Chicken French, baked ziti, and salad supplied by *Mangia! Mangia!* along with a selection of tasty desserts.



Plenty of delicious food was on hand for our annual holiday luncheon. President Mawn uncovers the ziti!

“School Board Sets Teacher Salaries”

Seventy years ago this article appeared in the Holley Standard, laying out teacher salaries and hires. I recognize many of these teachers' names, and longtime Holley, Clarendon and Murray residents will likely recall a number of them as well.

March 12, 1954: A special meeting of the Board of Education of the Holley Central School was called to order at 8:00 on March 11, in the kindergarten room of the high school building. Present: Supervising Principal, Alfred Perry; Secondary Principal, George Sullivan; Elementary Principal, J. J. Smith; trustees DeGraff, Friedo, Howard, Maxon, Quaranto, and Wilson. Absent: President of the Board, John Tapley; and trustees Bragg and Zappone. A motion was made and seconded to hire Graydon McCarty as full-time guidance teacher for the school year 1954-55. Mr. McCarty is to receive a salary of \$4650 for ten months and one-tenth of this amount (\$465) for one month extra, making a total of 11 months of that school year. Carried. A motion was made and seconded to have a half-day session for kindergarten pupils for the school year 1954-1955. Motion carried.

A motion was made and seconded for the board to prepare and send the salary change notices, as listed, to the teaching staff. Carried unanimously. John America, \$4350; Alice Bird, \$4100; Georgia Bowen, \$4100; Charles Britting, \$4500; Mabel Brockway, \$4300; Eva Butcher, \$4100; Eva Butler, \$4100; Michael Charles, \$3750; Catherine Cole, \$4100; Joseph DeBello, \$3850; Andrew DeCarlo, \$4450; Alethea DeGraff, \$4150; Cecil Ellinwood, \$4450; Clifford Ennis, \$4500; Marie Ennis, \$4100; Mary Ennis, \$4250; Ethelyn Gillette, \$4650; Marian Gordon, \$2900; Margaret Harling, \$4100; Kenneth Harris, \$3550; Arlene Higley, \$4100; Barbara Howard, \$4000; Stewart Lay, \$4950; Virginia Lay, \$4300; Mary Leuze, \$4500; Mary Licurse, \$4100; Julia McAlister, \$4100; Graydon McCarty, \$5115; Julia Miller, \$4650; Ethel Neidert, \$4100; Levia Nenni, \$4100; Margaret O'Donnell, \$5500; Alfred Perry, \$5950; Alice Reed, \$3850; Raymond Shahin, \$3300; Robert Siring, \$3600; Imogene Smith, \$4500; John J. Smith, \$6000; George Sullivan, \$6000; Jennie Thomas, \$4650; Diana Warren, \$4300; Inez Way, \$4500; Mary Webster, \$1350; Helen Weeks, \$4300; Elsie Woolston, \$3950. A motion was made and seconded to appoint Alice Bird on permanent tenure as kindergarten teacher, effective July 1, 1954; Mrs. Bird having completed three years of probationary employment in that position, and having been recommended by the supervising principal, Alfred Perry, and the superintendent of schools, Harold Osborn. Carried unanimously. A motion was made and seconded to appoint Audrey Reed on tenure as librarian, effective July 1, 1954; Mrs. Reed having completed three years of probationary employment in that position, and having been recommended by the supervising principal, Alfred Perry, superintendent of schools, and Harold Osborn. Carried unanimously. A motion was made and seconded to appoint Imogene Smith on permanent tenure as high school probationary employment recommended by the supervising principal, Alfred Perry, and the superintendent of schools, Harold Osborn. Carried unanimously.

A motion was made and seconded to increase the salary of Margaret O'Donnell from \$5200 to \$5500. Carried unanimously. A motion was made and seconded to increase the salary of Mr. Sullivan from \$5500 to \$6000, and Mr. Smith from \$5500 to \$6000. Carried unanimously. A motion was made and seconded to change the salary of the supervising principal from \$6700 to \$6950. Motion carried.



It is quite an eye-opener to see what these teachers were making back in the 1950's. Today these salaries would easily be twenty times that. Many of these teachers were still in the classroom twenty years later when I went through high school, and a few were there after I had graduated.

A History of the Murray-Holley Historical Society

40 Years of Local History

It may be hard to believe, but the Murray-Holley Historical Society has been active in the community since 1985. It had humble beginnings, founded on the idea to preserve local history for future generations. Starting with a small core group of dedicated individuals, the real push to form a society came about when Ted Jenney, the chairman of Diaz Chemical, made a tantalizing offer to Marsha DeFilipps.

Most local residents know Marsha. She has held a lengthy and distinguished role as both the Village of Holley and the Town of Murray Historian for more than 45 years. With her desires in preserving the past, she was well aware that the Diaz Company was sitting on an asset that was of great significance to the community: the 1907 NY Central Train Depot. The dilapidated structure sat on Diaz land, vacant and abandoned, for over thirty years. Marsha approached Ted Jenny to see what could be done to get the building.

"We were glad to get rid of it," Jenney commented in a 1991 movie about the depot, "she probably saved us money by taking it."

For the first few years of its existence, the Historical Society had a small museum in a room at the Legion Building. The tiny quarters didn't have much space for displays, but what it lacked in artifacts it made up in visibility: people coming in and out of the Post Office would stop in and visit. Early members such as Tom Felice and Fedora Formicola dedicated their Saturday mornings to opening up the modest room and interacting with potential members.

The Society wrote their by-laws, elected their first officers, and incorporated as a non-profit organization. Meetings were held Wednesday evenings at the community center on the square, and retired school teacher Jane Pearce was elected as the first president.

The Society set about to raise money so that they could have the Depot moved from its original location on the railroad tracks down to its present location behind the village square. The growing membership came up with all sorts of fundraisers for this endeavor. They sold tee shirts, Holley postcards, and ceramic depot banks, held an annual Fall Fountain Festival on the square, the Gitsis family had annual pancake breakfasts at their Sam's 2 location and donated all the proceeds to the Society, and just about every and any idea was put into motion to help raise funds.

The Society received state grants to help offset some of the costs, but those grants came with stipulations in terms of the building and foundation. The depot had to have a full basement with restrooms. The basement plans included a kitchen, storage areas and a large meeting room along with a separate entrance.

While digging the foundation, a large, old safe was uncovered. Hoping to capitalize on the Al Capone vault hysteria, the Society took advantage of this and held a Grand Opening of the safe, complete with public events and fundraising. On November 14, 1987, several hundred spectators were on hand as Wayne Fauci used a torch to open the safe. Although the safe was nearly empty (its only contents were two keys), the media coverage from Rochester's TV stations and newspapers was a windfall for the Historical Society. Donations poured in and members joined as never before.

On a frigid, windy March 4, 1988, Roy Kenyon Construction went to move the depot. Unfortunately, they were unprepared for the size of the building, and made the decision to saw the depot in half. They

then set about moving each half from the train tracks, down Batavia Street, into the square, and down towards the foundation. The entire journey took almost six hours, as telephone and cable wires had to be moved and traffic redirected. Throughout the day classes from the Holley schools witnessed the historic event, and townspeople and the media gathered to watch.

The next day the more delicate task began of placing the depot on its new foundation. With both halves now in place, the Historical Society continued in their efforts to raise funds for the restoration. They started a newsletter, which contained historic articles and updates on the depot's progress. Danny Mawn built a scale replica of the depot building, which was housed in the village office for several years.

Jerry Wagner repaired and replaced the shingles on the roof at a cost of \$10,000. The state mandates often caused such restoration to be more expensive than anticipated. The windows all had to be replaced, and at a cost of \$500 per window society member Dix Lusk came up with the idea of memorial windows to raise the needed funds. LeClair construction of Rochester installed the windows, which were completed in July 1989. LeClair also won the bid to replace and repair the cedar siding, which he completed in February 1990. Society member Frank Formicola supervised the painting of the depot, which was done by volunteer society members.

In 1991, Historical Society member Raymod Santoro made a movie to raise money for the depot. Using grant money from the Orleans County Council on the Arts, "Holley Train Depot: Moving of a Landmark" premiered at the Holley High School auditorium in September. The film was later shown to schools and area historical groups, and sales of the video raised over \$1,000 for the society.

Meanwhile, progress on the depot continued. State grant monies were used to build the deck, add a railing, and work on the interior of the depot. Display cases were donated by the Eastman House in Rochester, and of course generous donations of books, postcards, historic clothing, signs, and photographs continued to come in. By the time the depot was finally ready to open, it was a proud moment for all those who donated their time, money, and services.

On July 31, 1994, the day finally arrived. Speeches were made to a large gathering who had assembled in front of the depot. Chuck Strong, who had been mayor during much of the restoration gave a talk, as did County Historian Bill Lattin. The Holley Murray Historical Society Museum was now open to the public.

In 1990, Jane Pearce was succeeded by Nancy Smith as Historical Society president. Following Nancy we have only had two more presidents, Wayne Fauci and Dan Mawn. While the Society has been very stable over these forty years, unfortunately most of the membership has gone from being in their 30s and 40s to older members in their 60s and 70s. Weekly meetings went from being held at the museum to the public library so members would not have to go up and down stairs.

In addition to restoring the depot, the Society has added to their grounds with several historic items. The large bell dated 1894 on the east side of the museum was originally housed in the Holley Methodist Church. Each year the second-grade classes from the Holley school come to the museum as part of their local history curriculum, and President Mawn takes delight in ringing the bell for the students. There is also an historic sandstone monument on the west side of the depot fronted by flowers, and a state historic marker designating the history of the canal loop where the depot is presently located.

Today the depot is the site where the annual Flag Day parade terminates, with patriotic speeches and music filling the air. There are bake sales, Junefest activities, the July bicycle trek where the Society provides pastries and refreshments for the riders, and Halloween events for all ages. The depot museum

is also open every Saturday from May through November, with the regular hours being noon to 3pm. President Mawn also opens the museum by appointment, and you can sometimes find him at the site tinkering in the depot garage.

As a historic society, we sponsor scholarships for two Holley-Murray seniors at graduation. We welcome the second-grade classes each year, and in 2023 added a display case at the Holley Village office for additional historic displays that are rotated several times annually. Over the past few years we have updated and straightened up the museum display cases, added to our extensive yearbook collection, and started a filing system to house local photos and articles. In the past year alone the museum has been upgraded with a new roof, and we now have an ADA compliant ramp to enable better access to the building.

Many hands make light work, and we encourage local community residents to join us in **"Preserving the Past for the Future!"**

Charter Members of the Murray-Holley Historical Society:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Jane Pearce | 2. Irene Gibson |
| 3. Lewis and Marsha DeFilipps | 4. Bob and Helen Heath |
| 5. Mark and Mary Beth MacClaren | 6. Zoebelle Ludington & Ray Joyce |
| 7. Dix and Louise Lusk | 8. David Piedimont |
| 9. Jim and Anita Piedimonte | 10. Nancy Smith |
| 11. Frank and Fedora Formicola | 12. Raymond Santoro |
| 13. Tom and Mary Felice | 14. Louise Hart |
| 15. Art and Rita Hendel | 16. Paul Hendel |
| 17. Eula Lavender | 18. Celeste Brinkman |
| 19. Ellen Germeo | 20. Emilia Potote |
| 21. Ella Ashworth | 22. Wayne and Georgie Fauci |
| 23. Guy and Dottie DuSett | 24. Josephine Rayburn |
| 25. Robert and Karen Gerenski | 26. Sara DeFilipps |
| 27. Richard and Teresa Cary | |

It was this group of charter members who came together and joined the Society in its earliest days. Charter members paid \$50 for membership, which was membership for life. Most of these members gave of their time, money, sweat, and tears to help make our historical society what it is today. Most of them are no longer with us, but we honor them for their years of devoted foresight and service. These pioneers helped our organization grow into a dedicated group of individuals who deeply care about the Murray Holley community and its storied history.



Dedication of the Train Depot Museum, July 31, 1994:
TOP: County Historian Bill Lattin, Wayne Fauci, and
Mayor Chuck Strong; LEFT: Noted local author Irene
Gibson; RIGHT: Jane Pearce, first president of the
Murry-Holley Historical Society.



President Mawn received this banner in January to display in the museum. This acknowledges 200 years of the Erie Canal and its importance to not only to Holley and Orleans County but to New York and the United States as well.

Upcoming Dates:

April 22: Annual Meeting (location to be announced)

May 7: Monthly meeting of the Historical Society

26: Memorial Day Parade

June 4: Monthly meeting of the Historical Society

June 7: Junefest and Village Wide Garage Sale

June 14: Flag Day Parade



Annual Holiday Dinner, Jan. 2024: TOP: Dan Mawn, Sandy Heise, Joyce Potote, Amy Engert, Bob Nipher, Melissa Ierlan, Roy Bubb, Mayor Mark Bower, John and Wendy Kenny. BOTTOM: Amber Haag, Penny Tweedie, Betty Robishaw, Mary Jo Mele. Photograph taken by Greg Lawrence.

- MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION -

Membership year runs from May 1 to April 30

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Membership type (check one): ☐ Single \$5.00 ☐ Family \$10.00 ☐ Lifetime \$50.00

Clip or Copy and mail to: Murray-Holley Historical Society, P.O. Box 346, Holley, NY 14470