



**Town of Ontario
Historical & Landmark
Preservation Society
NEWSLETTER**

www.heritagesquaremuseum.org

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Volume 2



Early Ontario Shoemakers

By Liz Albright, Ontario Town Historian

The cobbler was an essential craftsman in a newly established town such as early Ontario. In the early days, most jobs required people to spend a good portion of their day standing or walking. The early settlers needed sturdy shoes and boots. A cobbler repaired shoes as well as made new shoes. Cobblers also made and repaired other articles of leather such as saddles and harnesses.

In the days when only a few people lived in the community, there was usually a traveling cobbler who would go from place to place repairing and making shoes. He would sometimes stay with a family for several weeks mending shoes and making new ones, as well as doing any other needed harness or leatherwork.

As the community grew, a cobbler, or shoemaker, would open a shop in town. Some people purchased ready-made shoes from a general store or a clothing store. These shoes, however, were not as comfortable as the custom-made shoes crafted by the local cobbler.

The cobbler would first measure the customer's foot by tracing its outline and then matching it to the correct size "last". A last was a wooden or metal mold in the shape of a foot or shoe over which the leather was placed when making the shoes. In the early days, there were no right and left shoes. They were made straight and would conform to the foot when worn.



Customers sometimes supplied their own leather for their shoes. The sole of the shoe or boot was made from the toughest hides of cattle or oxen. The top pieces of the shoes were made of softer leather such as calfskin or goatskin. The pieces were sometimes stitched together with a needle and thread. The cobbler would use beeswax on the thread to make it stronger and more waterproof. The shoe could also be pegged together with wooden pegs. Most shoemakers preferred the pegs because the thread could stretch or break in damp weather. Charles Pease, who came to Ontario with his father Abel Pease in 1834 and settled at Brick Church Road and Ontario Center Road, manufactured shoe pegs when he first came to Ontario.

The late Ruth Turner Sheahen who grew up in Ontario in the early 1900s remembers her "high black patent leather shoes with twelve shiny buttons and red silk tassels at the top (for best) and my brown 'copper-toed' oxfords for play."

There were several cobbler shops in Ontario over the years. One of the early shops was located on Knickerbocker Road at Stevens Street before 1880. While history does not tell us the name of the cobbler, this shop was gone by 1885 after the cobbler fell into Bear Creek from a foot bridge and drowned.

Another early shoemaker was William Birdsall who had a custom-made boot shop on the north side of Main Street. This shop was destroyed in the Fire of 1885 which burned most of Ontario's business district but was rebuilt on the same site and remained in business until 1903.

A shoemaker located on the south side of Main Street in the early 1900s was Abe Mogray. The late Ruth



Turner Sheahen remembers "I would take my copper-toed shoes there to be repaired and I remember Mr. Mogray as a very lame man who walked with a cane. He also sold shoes which came in various lengths but were all the same width – good wide ones to assure a "fit for any foot."

Two early cobblers in Ontario Center were George Brown whose boot and shoe shop was located on the south side of Ridge Road on the western edge of what is now the P.J. Radiator Shop property (*see title photo*); and John Freeh who in 1895 had a cobbler shop on the south side of Ridge Road east of the four corners of Ontario Center.

When Mr. Freeh was appointed postmaster, he had his post office in this building, as well. This building was also used as a barber shop, then moved around the corner to Ontario Center Road south of the four corners where it became the town jail. It eventually became a garage and was finally donated to the Town of Ontario Historical and Landmark Preservation Society by Bill Butler and was moved to Heritage Square Museum where it was restored as the “Lockup”. In addition to its restoration as the town jail, this building also houses a very nice collection of cobbler’s tools including a cobbler’s bench, wooden shoe pegs and a sample of lasts and other tools.



Perhaps the most well-known of the shoemakers in Ontario were Tony Noto and his son, Louie. Tony, an apprentice cobbler in Italy, came to the United States in 1919 at the age of 20 to work in his brother’s shoe shop in Rochester. A year later he came to Ontario, bought out Allison McKown’s Shoe Shop and opened his first cobbler’s shop on the south side of Main Street. Tony moved his business a few times, once to another spot on the south side of Main Street and another time to an old harness shop which was located behind the bank. He eventually bought this little building and moved it to the west side of Walworth Road just south of Main Street. Finally, in 1939, Tony bought the old Grandin Building at 2015 Ridge Road, where Sue’s Hair Trends was most recently located. He and his family lived first in the apartment behind the shop and then in the apartment on the second floor of the building. Over the years, in addition to shoe repair and sales, Tony also did harness mending for the farmers. He also fixed knapsacks for Boy Scouts and pocketbook handles for the women and at one time carried a line of luggage.



In 1952, when he was discharged from the Army, Louie joined his father in the business. In 1969, after Tony retired because of ill health, Louie and his wife, Jean, bought the business. When the business closed in 1993, Noto Shoe Store had been the oldest business in the village having served the public for 73 years.

We Welcome All Interested Tour Guides

May 4th at 10AM
BRICK CHURCH

Join Billie at Brick Church to reserve your spots or just to find out more about being a guide. If you can’t be there, please call Billie Lochner (585-265-3863) or Patrice Metzger (585-455-1401) to sign up or with any questions about guiding.

Heritage Square Museum tours run June 1st through October 27th. Free tours on June 2!

(Remember members receive free tours anytime.)

We are excited about the upcoming season and appreciate our guides

Spring Cleaning Time!

Please Help!

The 10 buildings comprising Heritage Square need to be vacuumed and dusted after having been closed for the long winter. I already have a few volunteers but I need 6 more members to commit to a few hours. I will be working with you, and all cleaning supplies will be provided. We'd like all the buildings to look their best for the school tours beginning end of May and our opening to the public June 1 and 2. Please call me to volunteer or for more information. Jan Kunzer: Cell (585)507-2648, Home (315)524-2274, or email JMARK129@hotmail.com

Summer Program Updates

Mark your calendars now for two new events. For the first time we will be offering three interactive programs for children between the ages of 5 and 10 who are accompanied by an adult. The three programs will be held on Thursday mornings at 10:00 am on June 27, July 25, and August 22. Each day there will be a historical tidbit, craft, and games of the period. The programs are free, but participants are encouraged to register prior to each program. email: jslynd@aol.com or 585-271-4925. Participants may attend one or all the programs.

If you are faced with the challenge of not knowing what to do with all your stuff, you'll want to spend a Saturday afternoon at the Museum. On August 3 the afternoon will begin with an informal performance by the Melody Makers Recorder Consort at 1:00 pm and followed by an interactive program "The Kids Don't Want our Stuff" starting at 2:00 pm. This is the chance to learn about strategies for dispersing of your treasures to others as you explore "Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Plate" with Judy Price, retired Cooperative Extension Educator and Judy Lynd, retired Family and Consumer Scientist. You will also get hints for how to begin to downsize with ease. The strategies offered will help ensure the daunting task before you can be less stressful and become a rewarding experience. The program is free, but a donation to supplement the cost of printing handouts will be appreciated. Registration is encouraged. E-mail jslynd@aol.com or phone 585-271-4925.

You may have noticed we are encouraging program participants to register in advance. This will help the presenters determine how many people to expect when planning interactive activities. Register now for these educational and fun opportunities.

Help Wanted in the Gift Shop

The Gift Shop at the museum is open every Saturday and Sunday from 1:30 until 4, from June until end of September. We are always looking for some new people that would like to work in the gift shop.

Please call Pat Coddling at 315-524-7837

Get Ready for the Annual Heritage Square Barn Sale!

Our sale will be:

Thursday,	May 9 th ,	9am – 7pm
Friday,	May 10 th ,	9am – 7pm
Saturday,	May 11 th ,	9am – 12pm, \$5/bag (Bring your Wegmans/Tops bag)

Donations accepted:

Thursday,	April 25 th ,	4pm – 7pm
Saturday,	April 27 th ,	9am – 1pm
Thursday,	May 2 nd ,	4pm – 7pm
Saturday,	May 4 th ,	9am – 1pm

You may also call Joyce Lyke at **585-738-9476** to arrange a donation. We do not take clothing, electronics, food, large exercise equipment, personal care items, curtain rods, or pharmaceuticals.

Do You Like Gardening?

If the answer is yes, we could use your help. Ray Sanger is putting together a committee to put some color in the grounds at Heritage Square Museum. We are looking for people who are willing to rake, plant, weed and help keep the grounds looking good. Initially they would meet to discuss what needs to be done; after that the group would get together or work singularly as they wish to keep the grounds looking good.

If you are interested in joining Ray, please call Vera Graves at **315-524-4731** to sign up.

School Tours Coming Right Up!

We are all set with ten school tours this spring; except, of course, we are in need of more docents. Please consider helping out. Encourage a friend. The docent sign-up meeting will be May 4th at Heritage Square. Non-members who participate as docents frequently become members. If you miss the May 4th sign-up at the Brick Church, call Ann Welker at 315-524-9330 to fill in the empty spots

Schedule

Monday	May 20 th	Gananda (4 th Grade)
Wed, Thurs, & Fri	May 22, 23, & 24	Webster Plank Rd (4 th Grade)
Wed & Thurs	May 29 & 30	Wayne (2 nd Grade)
Friday	May 31 st	Sodus (4 th Grade)
Tuesday	June 4 th	Marion (4 th Grade) & Rochester Christian (3 rd Grade)

New Things Are Happening at Heritage Square

A new focus group has been presented with the challenge of creating new programs for the 2024 season. After much discussion, it was agreed there were events from previous years that should be continued, but that we needed to create new activities that would entice members and visitors to return to the Museum on a regular basis. The group was also challenged to make programs meet the needs of all age groups and encourage people unfamiliar with the Museum to take advantage of some of the programs being offered. Mark your calendars now for some of the returning events.

The very successful **“Celebrating Fall at Heritage Square with the Scarecrows”** will be Saturday, September 28 from 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM. It’s not too early to start thinking about how you might design a scarecrow for display.

The **“Halloween Happening”** is planned for Saturday, October, 19 from 1:00 - 4:00 PM. As the time grows closer to that event, watch for some exciting new additions to the day’s activities.

Gather your treasures to donate to the **Barn Sale** scheduled for May 9 – 11 and come kick off the season on opening weekend on Sunday, June 2.

While all the details for some of the new activities are not yet finalized, we are excited to be offering a **new summer series for children** on Thursday mornings, June 27, July 25, and August 22. This would be a great experience for grandparents to share with their little ones.

A one-day Barn Quilt Painting class is scheduled for July 20. Additional information is in this newsletter. Space is limited so plan to sign up early.

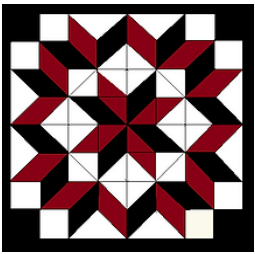
A **chicken barbecue**, member’s only events, and more activities are in the planning stages, so watch the website, Facebook, and newsletter for updates.

Volunteers are needed to ensure all our activities will be successful. Please consider sharing your time and talents with us. Contact Judy Lynd, artyjudy@gmail.com or 585-271-4925 to learn more about available opportunities.

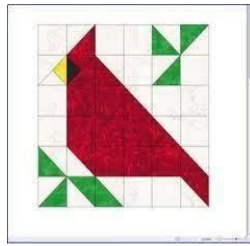
Paint a Barn Quilt, July 20, 10 – 4

Paint a 2' x 2' barn quilt in the design of your choice. Everything is provided for you to paint your block on primed steel over PVC frame (patent pending). Hanging hardware is also provided. You don't need a barn. Hang your "Barn Quilt" on/in your house, garage, shed, gazebo – anyplace you want to bring a little bit of beauty into your world!

Please choose which of the designs pictured below you would like to paint by June 1. Contact Joyce Lyke at 585-738-9476 or jlyke@rochester.rr.com to register.



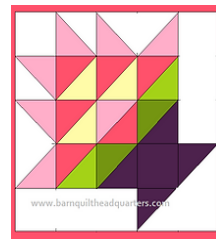
#1 Carpenter Star



#2 Cardinal



#3 Double aster



#4 Flower basket



#5 Mariner Star



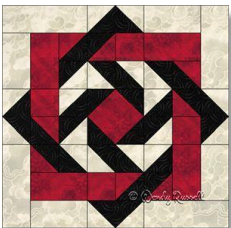
#6 Friendship Star



#7 Humming Bird



#8 Sun Flower



9 Slip knot

The cost is \$95 – everything is included. You will walk out with a finished barn quilt. Wear old clothes and bring your lunch! Don't procrastinate, there is a limit of 20 participants!

**Thank you to our Proud Supporters
of the Heritage Square Museum
And the Town of Ontario Historical and Landmark Preservation Society**

We would like to publicly acknowledge and thank the following businesses who have joined in supporting the Society and Heritage Square Museum. Please patronize them whenever possible.

Concord Insurance Agency	6270 Dean Parkway	Ontario	14519	585-265-6060
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Joe's Meat Market	6845 N. Slocum Rd.	Ontario	14519	315-524-8252
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Richard A. Leszyk, Attorney	322 Ridge Rd.	Ontario	14519	315-524-9113
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McDonald's of Ontario	1204 Route 104	Ontario	14519	315-573-2877
Murphy Funeral & Cremation Chapels LLC	1961 Ridge Rd., P.O. Box 426	Ontario	14519	315-524-4621
Ontario Family Dentistry PC	6277 Furnace Rd.	Ontario	14519	315-524-4135
Phil's Automotive of Route 104, Inc.	1364 State Route 104	Ontario	14519	315-524-8129
Steve's Custom Canvas	2999 Lake Rd.	Williamson	14589	585-750-9822
The Town of Ontario	1850 Ridge Rd.	Ontario	14519	315-524-7105x100
Weller Group LLC	6206 Slocum Rd.	Ontario	14519	315-524-8000
Wilbert's Lakeside LLC	6333 Lakeside Rd.	Ontario	14519	315-524-8800
Wolfe Tire	175 County Line Rd.	Ontario	14519	585-265-0851

Heritage Square Museum and The Town of Ontario Historical Society

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