

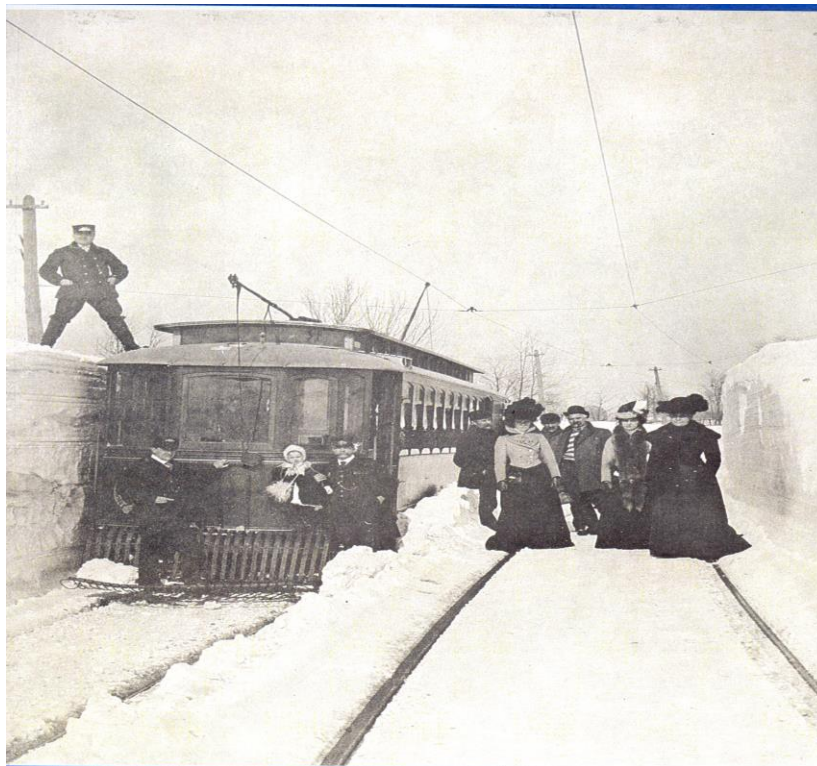


**Town of Ontario  
Historical & Landmark  
Preservation Society  
NEWSLETTER**

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

February 2024

Volume 1



## **Winter Brought Special Challenges to the Trolley**

By Liz Albright, Ontario Town Historian

The Rochester to Sodus Bay Trolley ran down Ridge Road through the town of Ontario from 1900 to 1929. In winter, the Sodus Bay Line really had its troubles with ice packing on the rails in the towns and snow drifts in the country areas.

The roadways were not plowed in winter during the first few years of the 1900s; and when the snow was deep and drifted, a motorman never knew what to expect on the track. Often the farmers drove their teams with sleighs down the trolley roadbed adjacent to the Ridge Road. When a trolley met a sleigh, the trolley car would back up to a driveway

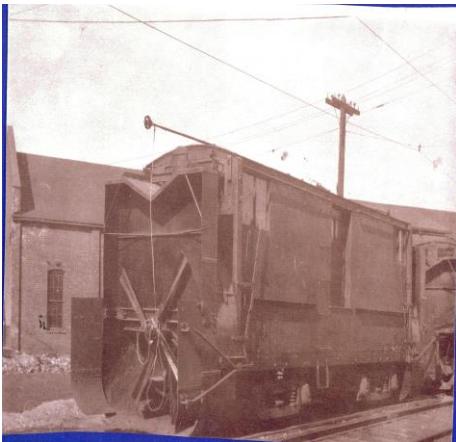
or road crossing. But if the trolley overtook a sleigh going in the same direction, it followed the vehicle to the nearest crossing or driveway. It was impossible to maintain schedules because of these delays.

During one severe storm, a passenger car was in Williamson for four days. One afternoon, another car left Sodus for Rochester about 2 p.m., and at the first curve west of Sodus it left the tracks and ran on the frozen ground into a field. It was left there for two days until the work car came from Williamson. Meanwhile the crew returned to Sodus to take a later car for Rochester and the towns enroute.

Blizzards were terrible in 1902. One cold wintry afternoon when a crew arrived at Green's Siding west of Sodus, it found the phone out of order. They waited in the storm for two hours, but no car came along going west. So, with a red lantern, the conductor walked about 300 feet ahead of the trolley until he came to the village limits of Sodus and waited for his car to take him into the village.

There were snow drifts from three to twelve feet deep during February 1902, but the line was closed for only one day due to the long hours and hard work by the men in two rotary plows. Each plow was manned by three men to keep things going smoothly.

One cold January day in 1902, it had been snowing and blowing for hours. Plowing through a snowdrift just east of West Webster, the trolley jumped the track, whizzed through a wire fence and stopped in a meadow. It was cold, and at that time, the cars had electric heaters. *[Coal stoves would be installed later]*. The motorman had a box of tools; and with some of these, he and his conductor cut some of the farmer's fence, pulled down the rear trolley pole, and wrapped some wire around the end. Then they strung a wire across the meadow to the trolley track and somehow got a wire up over the trolley wire above the track. The current was then able to enter the car and get the heaters running again. Eventually, the wrecking crew came with an extra passenger car. The passengers were transferred and sent on their way. The car was so far off the track, it took the men several hours to pull the car back to the track during a snowstorm.



Another occurrence that now and then transpired in the winter time and created a great deal of interest, if not excitement, was the arrival of the rotary snow plow. Sometimes these villages were snowed in for 24 hours or even more without news from the outside world or newspapers or mail. *[No telephones for most people in those days!]* Some of the more nervous citizens would sit up late at night waiting for the plow to get through for one or more trolley cars would surely follow it with shivering passengers, the mail, and tidings as to how the outside world was going. Satisfied that all was well, oil lamps here and there, one by one, would flicker out.

The late Gert Doyle from Ontario shared some of her memories of the trolley in winter:

"I remember hearing a story many times in my family. There was a plow on the trolley for plowing the snow off the tracks. One time, in a wicked snow storm, the trolley was stuck between Union Hill and Lincoln Road. My brother had gone out with one of our horses – he was really a fiery kind of horse! And when he realized that the trolley wasn't there, he started out towards Union Hill. But before he met the trolley, the trolley had already unblocked and was coming back, so he turned around and began racing the trolley car with his horse. And the people would look out and say 'Who's that crazy person racing the trolley with his horse?' And it was my brother!"

"We went to high school in Webster, and I can remember the first year my sister Ruth went by trolley. We lived on Lincoln Road about two miles from the Ridge Road where the trolley stopped. A group of kids that lived a mile farther

down than we did – in Lincoln – would walk three miles every morning to catch the trolley. In the wintertime, a parent would take the sleigh and go out to meet them to bring the kids home at night. That must have been the last year for the trolley because when I went to high school, the trolley wasn't there."

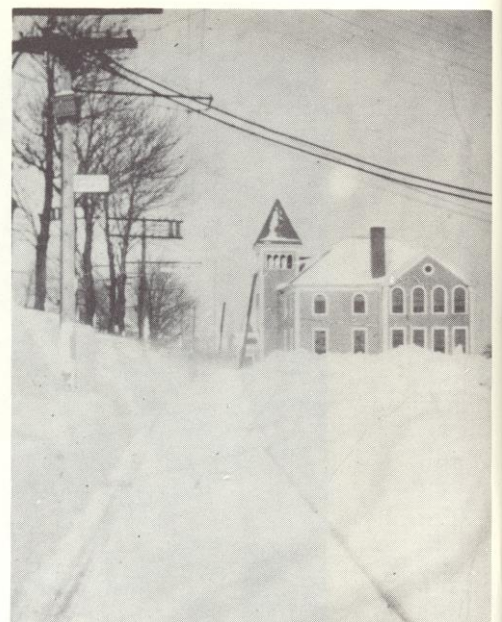
Another memory shared by Ruth Turner Sheahen for the book *History of the Town of Ontario 1807-1957* edited by Augusta Trimble:

"I remember Main Street rutted with ice and snow in the winter – being snowed in by drifts that had to be shoveled out by hand. The only plow was one used by the street car to clear the tracks; so we children often walked to school between the rails. We would scramble up snow banks out of the way of the 8:30 trolley and wave to the high school kids aboard. Most of these upper classmen had walked for miles through the country to the car line so they might attend high school."

[*This is the first Ontario High School which was located on the north side of Ridge Road across from the present-day Wayne Elementary School.*]

"The old trolley was hot underneath. The heat caused a coat of ice to form on the snow, and some of the town kids would skate to school up the middle of the tracks."

Source: *The Royal Blue Line* by William R. Gordon, 1952



## Joyce Lyke – President Heritage Square

Our 2023 season ended with "Celebrating Fall", "Apples, Apples, Apples", and "Halloween Happening". Our Scarecrow Challenge was a great hit and one we plan to offer this year. We closed off the year at our November General Meeting with a recap of the season and a fantastic speaker. This year we were pleased to have Doug Toppings from the Toppings Ladders in Marion describe his family's amazing journey from the 1850's to 1990's supplying our county with ladders. We have all stood on a "Toppings Ladder" while picking cherries or apples. Several of us checked our barns when we got home for a Toppings Ladder! Heritage Square is looking ahead to our 2024 season! Our docents are looking forward to sharing their knowledge of our buildings with you. Every time you come you will see or hear something new. This is our history! What were your relatives doing in the 1800's early 1900's? We cannot forget where we came from. We just celebrated our 200th anniversary as a county last year. Ontario has been a town since 1807/08. As I was checking dates for this article, I discovered why one of my relatives came to Ontario in 1811. Ore mining was just getting started and they needed axes to clear the trees. He made axes! It is the little things that surprise me.

Heritage Square Museum will be open for guided tours every weekend from June until October.

Remember as a member you have free guided tours. You may also call Patrice Metzger at **585-455-1401** to arrange tours on other days.

We are opening our season with a Chicken Barbeque on Friday, May 31 from 4 until sold out. Join us on June 2 for the official opening day! More details to follow.

Each of us has our own area of expertise. Heritage Square can always use more people to make this Museum a vibrant place to visit. As an added benefit we do have good times together!

## Get Ready for the Annual Heritage Square Barn Sale!

### Our sale will be:

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

### Donations accepted:

Thursday,	April 25 <sup>th</sup> ,	4pm – 7pm
Saturday,	April 27 <sup>th</sup> ,	9am – 1pm
Thursday,	May 2 <sup>nd</sup> ,	4pm – 7pm
Saturday,	May 4 <sup>th</sup> ,	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.

## Update on 2024 School Tours

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 4<sup>th</sup> at Heritage Square. Non-members who participate as docents frequently become members. The school tours have become very popular and we have a full schedule of tours:

### Schedule

Monday	May 20 <sup>th</sup>	Gananda (4 <sup>th</sup> Grade)
Wed, Thurs, & Fri	May 22, 23, & 24	Webster Plank Rd (4 <sup>th</sup> Grade)
Wed & Thurs	May 29 & 30	Wayne (2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade)
Friday	May 31 <sup>st</sup>	Sodus (4 <sup>th</sup> Grade)
Tuesday	June 4 <sup>th</sup>	Marion (4 <sup>th</sup> Grade) & Rochester Christian (3 <sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:artyjudy@gmail.com) or 585-271-4925 to learn more about available opportunities.

## News Flash !

*Diane Costenoble has volunteered take over as editor of this newsletter. Thank you, Diane and ...*

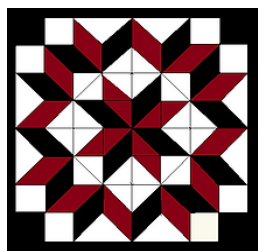
**Best of Luck !**



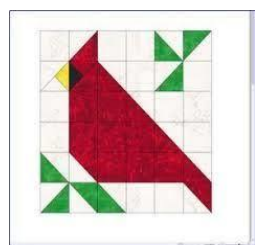
## Paint a Barn Quilt, July 20, 10 – 4

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](mailto:jlyke@rochester.rr.com) to register.



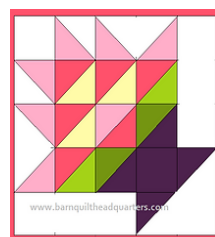
#1 Carpenter Star



#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
Constellation Energy Corp.	1503 Lake Rd.	Ontario	14519	
Crown Electric Supply Co., Inc.	75 Route 104	Ontario	14519	585-265-2480
Dennis Dey Plumbing & Heating	2386 Trimble Rd.	Ontario	14519	585-729-4067
Don & Jon Lawn & Tree Service LLC	P. O. Box 5	Ontario	14519	585-737-9891
Elder Acres	5673 Arbor Rd.	Ontario	14519	315-333-1048
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Konstantinou's Liquor LLC	2020 State Route 104	Ontario	14519	315-524-3015
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Richard A. Leszyk, Attorney	322 Ridge Rd.	Ontario	14519	315-524-9113
Lyons National Bank	6280 Furnace Rd.	Ontario	14519	315-524-9661
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 2023-2024 Board of Directors

Joyce Lyke, President	585-738-9476	<a href="mailto:jlyke@rochester.rr.com">jlyke@rochester.rr.com</a>
Cindy KuKuvka, Vice President	315-573-4872	<a href="mailto:cmkk1@outlook.com">cmkk1@outlook.com</a>
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Jim Graves, Secretary	315-524-4731	<a href="mailto:gravesjasr@yahoo.com">gravesjasr@yahoo.com</a>
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Richard Denison, Trustee	315-524-3726	<a href="mailto:rdenison01@yahoo.com">rdenison01@yahoo.com</a>
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Barbara Sanger, Trustee	315-524-3389	<a href="mailto:barb.sanger@yahoo.com">barb.sanger@yahoo.com</a>
William Slocum, Trustee	315-524-4841 Cell: 585-506-6392	
Liz Albright, Town Historian	315-524-9127	<a href="mailto:albright_liz@yahoo.com">albright_liz@yahoo.com</a>
Non-voting member		
Office: 2200 Lake Road	315-524-2942 ext.703	<a href="mailto:historian@ontariotown.org">historian@ontariotown.org</a>
Heritage Square Museum		<a href="http://www.heritagesquaremuseum.org">www.heritagesquaremuseum.org</a> <a href="mailto:heritagesqmuseum@yahoo.com">heritagesqmuseum@yahoo.com</a>

### In Passing

Since our last publication, the Society has lost several of our members. Our condolences to the families of the following:

Shirley Cataldo, August 20, 2023  
Richard E. Chase, January 16, 2024  
Marjorie Davis, October 15, 2023  
Gayle Flatt, October 9, 2023  
Mary Catherine (Kay) Herrmann, August 10, 2023  
Bruce Hudson, September 2, 2023  
Gerald (Jerry) Thompson, November 4, 2023



Town of Ontario Historical & Landmark  
Preservation Society  
P.O. Box 462  
Ontario, NY 14519-0462



## **Heritage Square Needs You!!**

An important sign-up meeting for:

**– School Tour Docents – Weekend Guides – Gift Shop Attendants -**

will take place on May 4<sup>th</sup> at Heritage Square – stay tuned.