

A RANSOM NOTE

Historical Society of the Town of Clarence

Winter 2026

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Board Meetings are held the 1st
Thursday of each month.

Meetings begin at 6:30 pm at the
Clarence History Museum.

President's Comments

As 2025 comes to a close, we would like to thank everyone for your support both at the Museum and at our Programs. We are looking forward to 2026 and have a full slate of interesting programs. We continue to move more research materials onto the main floor for reference. This past year we added the first Saturday of each Month to our open hours schedule, and it has worked out very well. This will be continued through 2026.

2026 is our Nation's 250 Year Anniversary. We are working with Alden, Lancaster, and Newstead Historical Societies to properly celebrate this milestone. In our Museum, we have added a display honoring this milestone in our Nation's History.

We hope everyone has a safe happy New Year and a prosperous 2026!

A Ransom Note

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Holiday Event

Boy, do we know how to throw a party!
Thank you to everyone who came out to celebrate the start of the Holiday Season with us and the Corfu-Pembroke Band!



Historian's Corner

By: Joe McGreevy

250th Anniversary Connections

As the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence approaches on July 4, 2026, I began thinking about what connections the Town of Clarence had to this momentous event. At first, I didn't think Clarence had any direct ties to the American Revolution. How could we celebrate the 250th Anniversary with no connections to it?

As it turns out, Clarence does have connections, many connections. More than fifteen Revolutionary War veterans moved to this area after the war and helped build our town, our county, and our nation. Their bones are buried in the town's soil, the same soil that they cleared, tilled, and planted.

When I think of the Revolutionary War, thoughts of distant battles and lands like Boston, Valley Forge or Bunker Hill come to mind. But some of the soldiers who fought in those distant battles ended up settling in Clarence. They raised families, built farms and helped shape the community we know today. Many of their descendants still live in Clarence.

In 1776, Clarence lay west of the Proclamation Line of 1763 and was considered "Indian Lands" by the British. While Clarence had been traveled through, none settled in the boundaries of the town. Many traveled along the Onondaga Escarpment, a major east-west route used by both the Haudenosaunee and colonists heading to Fort Niagara, or Buffalo. Clarence played no role in the Revolution itself, but the men who fought in the war played an important role in the town's early history.

After realizing this connection, I began a list of veterans who settled in town. Expecting a few, I was quite surprised when the list grew to more than fifteen. I set out to find where these men were buried, what battles they fought in, and when they settled in Clarence.

Many patriots from New England moved west after the war. Some were granted land in Central New York, as compensation for their services. It often took several years to sell their land grants and make their way farther west to Clarence.

What surprised me most was how young many of these soldiers were when they enlisted. Nathaniel Gallap enlisted at 16, Ephriam Derrick 19 (gravestone right), Jonathan Blount 17, Jacob Cummings 14. All of the veterans were under 34 when they enlisted with most under 23. The average age of the Continental Army was only 22. After gaining independence they moved west and helped build the new experiment we now call the United States of America.



With the list in hand, I set out to find their graves. Along the way I assessed all the cemeteries in town. I was saddened to learn how long our soldiers' graves have been neglected. Their forgotten graves lie broken, eroded, or missing, some beyond repair.

As part of the 250th Anniversary, I hope to begin cleaning the grave stones in these cemeteries and where possible repairing some. It is my goal to start this in the spring of 2026 to honor those who fought in the Revolutionary War. This anniversary is a great time to remember the Revolutionary heroes of our town. To walk past a grave of a forgotten Revolutionary soldier is to step over the roots of our freedom.

I have included the list of men and information I have found so far. If anyone has information on these men, I would love to talk to you. Please contact me at jmcgreevy@clarence.ny.us.

Name (Born)	Age/State Served	Arrival in Clarence	Cemetery Buried In
Benjamin Bowman (1758)	Under 25/Penn.	1815	Harris Hill
Jonathan Blount (1758)	17/Mass.	?	Fillmore
Jacob Boyer (1756)	19/Penn.	1813	<u>Ledgelawn</u> (Newstead)
Abraham Carmer (1760)	Under 23/NJ	1810*	Clarence Center
Franis Carr (1760)	Under 23/Penn.	1810	Danser (No Gravestone)
Gen. Leonard P. Crary (1768*)	15*/NY	1814	Harris Hill
Jacob Cummings (1760*)	17/Penn.	1812	?
Ephriam Derrick (1756)	19/NY	1808	Shope
Nathaniel Fairchild (1752)	23/Conn.	1809	Harris Hill
John Felton Sr. (1741)	34/NH	1810	Shope (No Gravestone)
Nathaniel Gallop (1760)	16/RI	1811	Beeman
David Hamil Sr. (1752)	23/Mass.	1810	Filmore
Asa Harris (1762)	16/Conn.	1807	Harris Hill
Josiah Manfield (1758)	17/VT	1811	?
Colonel P.L. Minar (?)	<u>2</u> /NY	1813	Harris Hill
Wyatt Tanner (1759)	/RI	1811	Harris Hill

*Date Discrepancy

Pioneer Cemeteries Offer Glimpse of Earliest Settlers

By: John O'Hare

There are several pioneer cemeteries in the Town of Clarence: the Shope/Schopf Cemetery on Hillcrest, the Strickler Cemetery off Main, the Beeman Cemetery on Salt Road, the Good Cemetery on Greiner at Meadowbrook, and the Danser Cemetery on Martin Road.

North of the Beeman Cemetery on Salt Road and just east on County Road is the Hunts Corners Cemetery, with more than 350 memorials. The first burial here was Joshua Choate (1768-1828), who died at the age of 60. Ebenezer Hunt (1777-1844) and family were originally from Pownal, Vermont, and came to Clarence in 1825. They had their household belongings shipped here via the new Erie Canal. They were soon well-established in this part of town. The Reverend Harrison Perry Hunt (1825-1989) was the pastor at Hunts Corners Baptist Church for 42 years and was one of Clarence's best known and most respected religious leaders. Early burials in the Hunts Corners Cemetery include other members of the Choate and Hunt family, as well as members of the Manfield, Billyard, Crego, Hulls, Bratt and Utley families.

Just east of the Hunts Corners Cemetery is what is known as "The Pioneer Cemetery" on County Road in Newstead. It lists Zebubn Eldred (1742-1811) as its first burial and is also known as the Edred Cemetery. There are more than 1,400 memorials here, and many were north Clarence residents, including members of the Choate, Aylsworth, Pratt, Cummings, Baker and Burdick families. These early families trace their roots back to Vermont, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and some may have served in the Revolutionary War.

At the time this area was settled it would have been a part of the newly formed town of Clarence, which was formed in 1808. It wouldn't be until 1823 that Newstead and Alden would each become independent towns, followed by Lancaster in 1833. Much of this growth was a result of a migration of Mennonite farmers moved to Western New York from the Susquehanna Valley in Pennsylvania. Many of these families settled in the north country of Clarence, including several of those buried in the Danser Cemetery on Martin Road.

The Danser Cemetery contains 37 memorials, including the final resting place of Mary Waltman Kroll (1774-1816). She came to Clarence with her husband, Jacob Kroll (1770-1853), circa 1811 from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, making them some of the earliest pioneer settlers migrating from the Susquehanna River Valley. Their daughter, Elizabeth, was born in Clarence on July 4, 1811, and the couple had seven other children. Elizabeth would have been one of the first children born in the north country of Clarence. Her mother, Mary, would unfortunately be one of the earliest deaths in the north country, passing away and being buried near their farm in 1816 making her the first person to be buried here. Her husband, Jacob Kroll (1770-1853), lived another 37 years and was buried here in 1853 at the age of 82 years old. Their son, John Kroll (1797-1868), is buried in the Strickler Cemetery with his wife, Barbara Bicksler Kroll (1798-1865), and other members of the Strickler, Shope, Drudge, Marzoff and Bicksler families.

These were among the first Mennonite families who immigrated to Clarence from the area around York and Lancaster, Pennsylvania. They were ostracized because of their refusal to fight in the Revolutionary War, and many left their homes because of the treatment they received. Most went south on "The Great Eagon Road" into Virginia, but many others followed the Susquehanna River into New York toward Canada. A great many of them liked the area and ended up settling here in Clarence.

There are seven members of the Danser family buried here. The cemetery is also known as the Wyckoff Cemetery. Albert (1772-1829) and Elizabeth Wyckoff (1771-1860), were two of Clarence's earliest residents and also from Pennsylvania. Jacob Root (1773-1829) and his wife, Mary Carpenter Root (1777-1834), from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, had a neighboring farm and are buried here along with other members of the York, Kroll, Krull, Wyckoff and Danser families.

These pioneer cemeteries offer an intriguing glimpse back into the past of who the earliest settlers were to tame this once densely forested area of Clarence.

Membership Corner

Time to renew your membership!

*You can renew your membership in person or by mail!
Simply download the application from our website and
send it in!*

We have different tiers to choose from:

Student Under 18—\$5

Individual—\$15

Couples—\$25

Family—\$30

Business—\$50

Individual Life Member—\$150

*Membership renewal forms will be mailed in January
each year!*

**We
our
MEMBERS!**



Wordsearch



Winter Weather

DIRECTIONS:
Find and circle the
vocabulary words
in the grid. Look
for them both
horizontally and
vertically.

K	K	T	U	M	Z	U	W	X	R	H	X	F	P	V	C	H
S	E	I	T	F	S	U	B	Z	E	R	O	M	A	F	O	G
F	R	O	S	T	C	A	M	C	R	H	A	I	L	L	L	D
U	T	U	F	L	R	O	O	L	G	A	L	E	A	U	D	R
W	Q	J	X	E	I	H	J	O	T	Q	R	A	A	R	S	B
P	S	B	R	I	S	K	B	U	B	Y	P	E	W	R	N	D
X	N	N	I	P	P	Y	A	D	S	G	U	I	K	Y	A	W
B	O	S	L	U	S	H	Q	Y	O	P	I	F	C	S	P	I
L	W	B	S	N	O	W	F	L	A	K	E	R	B	L	W	N
U	D	P	S	L	M	J	O	I	A	H	A	E	L	E	L	D
S	R	P	N	H	J	P	I	W	D	B	O	E	I	E	N	C
T	I	W	P	K	O	G	J	M	X	R	F	Z	Z	T	V	H
E	F	N	D	Q	Y	T	C	O	W	A	V	I	Z	I	T	I
R	T	F	I	C	I	C	L	E	S	I	K	N	A	D	W	L
Y	H	I	F	Y	V	P	M	Q	X	N	N	G	R	I	K	L
M	G	C	I	S	T	O	R	M	C	O	L	D	D	X	U	L
J	T	Y	W	R	V	V	T	Y	A	X	Q	B	I	J	W	G

BLIZZARD

FOG

RAIN

BLUSTERY

FREEZING

SLEET

BRISK

FROST

SLUSH

CLOUDY

GALE

SNOWDRIFT

COLD

HAIL

SNOWFLAKE

COLD SNAP

ICICLES

STORM

CRISP

ICY

SUBZERO

FLURRY

NIPPY

WIND CHILL

Crossword

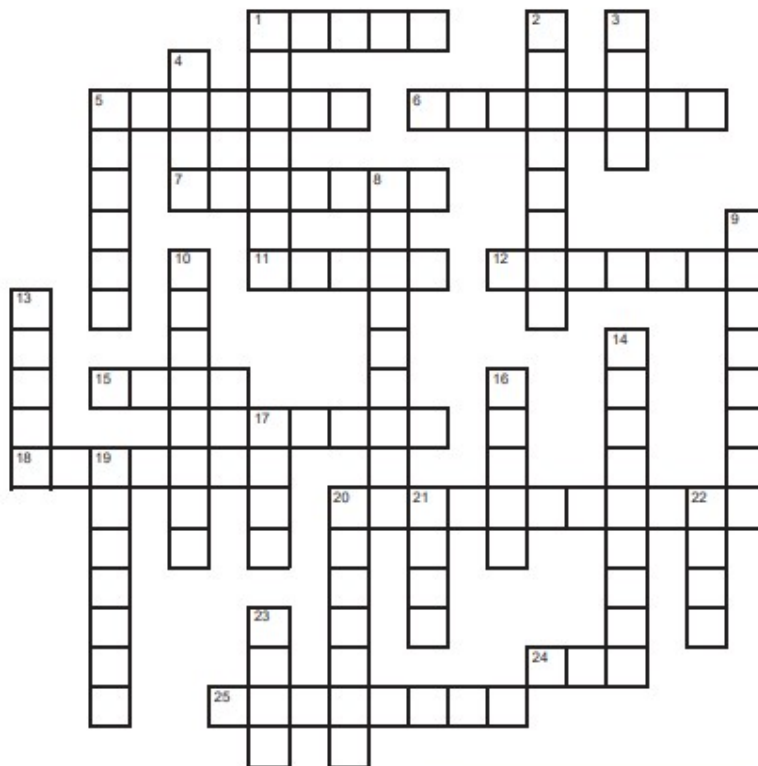
Come Rain or Shine

ACROSS

1. Full of sunshine.
5. Long-term atmospheric conditions.
6. Moisture in the air.
7. Extended period of dry weather.
11. A strong disturbance in the weather.
12. Light rain.
15. Pleasant temperature.
17. Not cloudy.
18. Rotating funnel of air.
20. Measure of thermal energy.
24. Low visibility weather.
25. Prediction of weather.

DOWN

1. Different climates throughout the year.
2. Heavy snow.
3. Ice pellets from the sky.
4. Moving air.
5. Covered with gray.
8. Powerful tropical cyclone.
9. Prolonged period of hot weather.
10. Covered with clouds.
13. Ice crystals on surfaces.
14. Bright electrical discharge.
16. Frozen rain.
17. Opposite of hot.
19. Colorful arch in the sky.
20. Sound during a storm.
21. Thin fog.
22. Drops from the sky.
23. White fluffy precipitation.



Blizzard	Mist
Clear	Overcast
Climate	Rain
Cloudy	Rainbow
Cold	Seasons
Drizzle	Sleet
Drought	Snow
Fog	Storm
Forecast	Sunny
Frost	Temperature
Hail	Thunder
Heatwave	Tornado
Humidity	Warm
Hurricane	Wind
Lightning	

72 YEARS • 1954 - 2026



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE TOWN OF CLARENCE

Founded in 1954

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Email: museum@clarencehistory.org

Facebook: *Historical Society of the Town of Clarence*

Instagram: *clarencehistorymuseum*

“To collect, preserve, and share the history and heritage of the Town of Clarence”

The Historical Society of the Town of Clarence Inc is formed for the following purposes:

- To identify, preserve, and display materials of historical significance of Clarence
- To encourage historical research, analysis, and study for the publication of historical papers, articles
- To educate the community through lectures, tours, online resources, school field trips and research opportunities



The Historical Society of the Town of Clarence deeply appreciates the support of the County of Erie, the Town of Clarence, our members and the community as a whole.

