

Fall/Winter 2019

The Story Teller

MONTEZUMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MONTEZUMA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
PO Box 476
Montezuma, NY 13117

Pioneering
family
legacy carried
on
in women's
suffrage

2020

Membership
Please join us
today!

A 2020 membership form is included with the newsletter.

Please renew or become a new member in 2020,

THANK YOU!



In 2020, we celebrate the passage of the 19th Amendment which was not brought about by a singular event, individual, or group. Instead, it was women and their allies, working together for decades and spanning the turn of a century, who fought and won the constitutional right to vote.

Until recently there wasn't a known connection to this movement in Montezuma's history. There's not even a

mention of the fight going on in nearby Seneca Falls for women's right to vote. I often wonder what were my grandmothers' reactions living in Montezuma during these radical times Interestingly while researching a burial site in Prospect Hill Cemetery for the three year-old son of Caroline Maria Clarke Seymour, a link was found to a well-known social reformer, suffragist, Caroline Maria Seymour Severance.

In the last issue of *The Storyteller*, I featured an article of one of the first pioneer settlers in Montezuma, Dr. Peter Lynsen and his wife, Maria Clarke. Their daughter, Caroline Maria Clarke married Orson Seymour, Esq. and lived in Canandaigua. They had three children, two of which died at the age of one and three years and are buried in Prospect Hill Cemetery. Their first-born daughter, Caroline Maria, born in 1820 lived to be 94 years old. She died in 1914, in Los Angeles, California, well-known in the women's rights movement and as the "Mother of Women's Clubs."

In an autobiography she wrote and left along with other papers at Smith College in Geneva, NY, Caroline tells of her father's death at her early age and living with her Uncle James Clarke in Auburn. She referred to her younger years as dark in comparison to her life following her marriage to Theodore Severance, a banker from Cleveland in 1840. She described her uncle James as "a strict Presbyterian and would insist on our attendance at every revival meeting, where we would hear about nothing but humankind's unending sinfulness and its eventual doom through eternal punishment." She attended a Female Seminary at Geneva, where she graduated valedictorian in 1835. Caroline shared after her marriage to Theodore she was "at once freed from the bondage to authority, dogmas and conservative ideas." This



Like her grandfather, Dr. Peter Lynsen Clarke, Caroline followed his footsteps into new territory as a pioneer leading the way for women and crusading for a better society

experience liberated her with her marriage to Severance who was very concerned with great movements to reform society, rather than simply bemoan its decaying state. While raising five children, the Severances devoted themselves to the abolition of slavery, temperance, and dietary reform, and joined in the formation of the Unitarian Church in Cleveland in 1854. They also became very active in the woman's rights movement of the time attending their first convention in Akron in 1851. In 1853 she was asked to prepare a tract for the Ohio Woman's Rights Association arguing for equal property rights. In 1855 the couple moved to Boston, where, through the Unitarian Church they became good friends with some of the great reformers of the time, including Theodore Parker and William Lloyd Garrison. Here they planned an organization for woman's rights, although their principal work was for the abolition cause.

During the Civil War Caroline worked for the Sanitary Commission, and afterward for the Freedman's Bureau which tried to settle the newly freed slaves; and in 1868 joined with others to form the New England Woman's Club, for the purpose of encouraging the continuation of reform efforts that had been so significant before the war serving as President until 1871.

She was associated with Susan B. Anthony during those early years, although later began to disagree with Anthony's strategies and preferred to work with individual state and territorial legislatures and build a flood of state laws elevating women to equal citizenship. She and her husband helped form the American Woman Suffrage Association to pursue those ends. She established the Moral Education Association of Boston, worked to get women onto the Boston School Board, and helped establish a girls' Latin School. Finally, in 1871, she helped form the Women's International Peace Association with the goal to rid the world of war.

In 1875 Caroline moved to Los Angeles, where she organized the Los Angeles Women's Club in 1878 her dedication to improving the lives of homeless children, resulted in the establishment of the Orphan's Home Society in 1883. She helped develop the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, began a city public library system, worked to found a local branch of the University of California (UCLA), promoted historic preservation, crusaded for woman's suffrage, and championed world peace. In 1912, for her many years of efforts on behalf of suffrage, she became among the first women to vote in the presidential election in California at the age of 92.

Like her grandfather, Peter Lynsen Clarke, Caroline followed his footsteps into new territory as a pioneer leading the way for women and crusading for a better society,

Editor's Note: In January 2020 I will celebrate my 20th year as town historian for Montezuma. In October, Cayuga County Historians celebrated the 1919, New York State mandated law to ta appoint Historians in all towns and villages. Without this law, I probably would not be holding this position today.

Since becoming historian following in the tall footsteps of Horace "Sonny" Carner and the work he passed on to me, I've been fascinated with the study of the Clarke family. I feel like I know the family personally and now as we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the right for women to vote, I was privileged to meet yet another one of the pioneering Clarke family members. History is about people, events and experiences that formed their lives and how it evolves over time. I'm grateful we get to carry those stories on.



Early Turnpikes & Bridge Tollgates were modern-day versions of today's Thruway

Early transportation westward through New York State included two important turnpikes that crossed the Seneca River with toll houses located in Montezuma. One was called the Montezuma Turnpike with a tollgate located near the marina on Route 31. The other turnpike and tollgate was located just north of the bridge now on Routes 5 & 20. The Cayuga and Seneca Road Company was chartered on April 18, 1843 and a quit claim was filed on March 20, 1895.

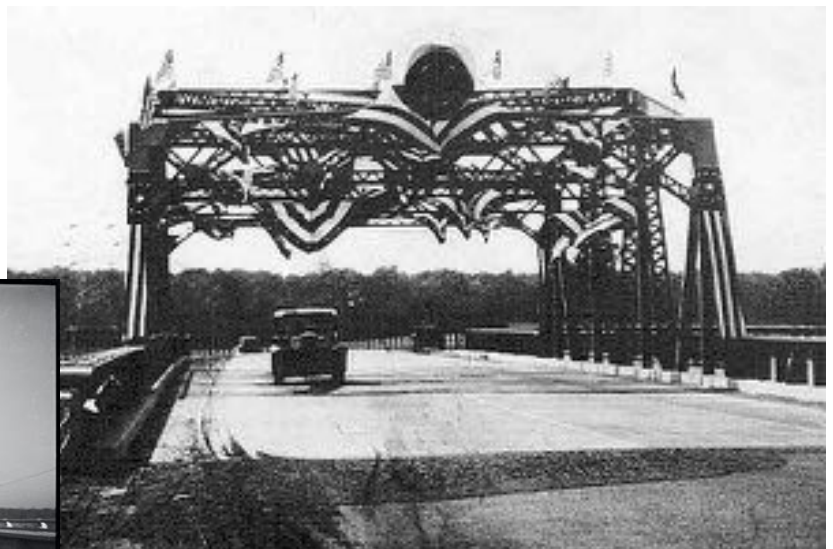
The bridge spanning the river became known as Free Bridge. In the 1930's an effort was made to rename the bridge for the Jesuit Priest, Father René Ménard, known as one of the first white men to live in the area. Father Ménard's colleagues praised highly

his intelligence and judgement, adding that he had a special talent for winning the Indians' confidence.

Over 250,000 signatures were obtained to petition the state to rename the bridge.

On August 25, 1933 a very large dedication ceremony was held at the bridge. A bronze plaque was installed on the center of the bridge on the north side.

Below is a 1997 photo of the plaque taken by John S. Allen.



ROUTES 5 & 20 DEDICATION OF THE MENARD MEMORIAL BRIDGE CROSSING THE SENECA RIVER

Cornell students present design ideas for Park Trailhead

Community Presentation scheduled for Thursday, December 12th at 7:00 PM

A group from Cornell University is part of multidisciplinary, student-run, community design organization called, Design Connect. The group is rooted in collaborative, democratic, and sustainable principles for the advancement of towns in Upstate New York. Every semester, the organization provides practical experience to students working with local municipalities and non-profit organizations while providing design and planning services for who may not have the resources to hire professionals.

A team of nine students have been working on the project. They were given a tour of the park to familiarize them with the history. Their designs are focused on ideas for the



Byron Lapp Memorial Trailhead area off High Street to assist the Friends of the Park's Design Committee in laying out a handicap accessible walkway leading from a parking area to the Butterfly Garden and mural site.

The first draft of their plan designs were presented on Thursday, October 17th.

The Design Committee gave the students feedback at this meeting which they took back to work on before completing the project this semester.

A Community meeting will be held on **Thursday, December 12th at 7 PM** at the Montezuma Town Hall. Please come out and support the students' work for our community.

Butterfly Garden Grows



Montezuma Historical Society Friends of the Park invested this summer in expanding the Butterfly Garden with native plants purchased through the Butterfly Beltway program offered through the Seneca Park Zoo.

The results were beautiful colorful blooms this summer and fall that provided home, food and shelter to butterflies, hummingbirds and pollinating bees.

Handicap access and the brick walkway will be expanded next year for everyone to enjoy easy access to the garden and gazebo. Extending the walkway will be one of the projects expanded on next year as we work with Cornell Design Connect plans. Let us know if you are interested in having a brick imprinted for the walkway.



The Great Island, Ga-weh-wa-na

Native American name for Howland's Island

Legends and History Surrounding Howland's Island

Presented by Cheryl Longyear, Montezuma Town Historian

**Saturday,
January 11, 2020
10 AM
Montezuma Audubon
Center, Route 89,
Savannah**

2020 Historic Photo Calendars Available

Visit MHS display and sale at the Weedsport Winter Festival, December 14th 9-AM-2:30 PM

Archaeological studies have shown the 3500-acre Wayne and Cayuga County Howland's Island was first inhabited by prehistoric peoples and then by different Native American tribes or nations.

French fortification is alleged to have provided security and safety on the Island known as the St. René Mission. Father René Ménard was the first known white man coming to the northern Cayuga Lake and Seneca River area serving as a Jesuit Missionary from Canada in the 17th Century.

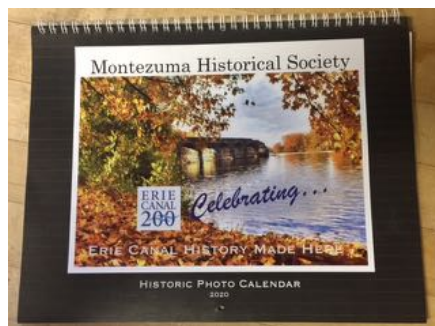
Recorded history reflects lands of the Island being granted to Revolutionary War veterans in 1791, but the earliest recorded for white occupation is around the year 1800. Land

speculation was underway and squatters quickly took advantage of the rich vacant land cleared to make a home on the Island.

Humphrey Howland purchased the Island and lands to the west in 1824. So begins a long, varied and fascinating history of the Island.

We will explore the many changes and uses the Island provided over the next 200 years from its ownership by the Howland and Sibley families, a WWII prisoner war camp and many more up to being a part of the Montezuma Wetland Complex today.

EARLY ONE-ROOM HOWLAND'S ISLAND SCHOOL



2020 Calendars are available for purchase. The cost is \$15. There are twelve new historic photographs for each month.

The calendars, note cards, mugs and historic and post cards will be available for sale at the Weedsport Winter Festival & Craft Show in Weedsport on **December 14th, 9 AM- 2:30 PM**, at the Weedsport Jr-Sr High School, 2821 E .Brutus Street. MHS members will have a

display at the event, or contact Cheryl at 315-776-4656 and to save you one for you. The calendars can be mailed with additional postage and handling of \$5 added to the cost. They would make a nice gift for friends or family with memories of historic sites in Montezuma.

2020 Membership

Below is a membership form for 2020 dues. We appreciate your continued support of the Montezuma Historical Society in order to continue our efforts to preserve our history.

Name (s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____ New or _____ Renewing Membership

Our mailing and printing costs keep increasing. Newsletters can now be received via email and posted on our website. We would appreciate adding \$2 to your dues if you would like a copy mailed. _____ Yes, please mail the newsletter.

General Membership:

- \$10 Individual \$25 Business Basic
- \$15 Family \$50 Business Supporter
- \$50 Supporter Other Donation
- Yes, I'm interested in Volunteer Opportunities with MHS; please contact me!

Friends of the Montezuma Heritage Park:

- \$10 Ditch Digger \$25 Hoggee
- \$50 Sal the Mule \$100 Lock Tender
- \$500 Canaller

The Montezuma Historical Society is a Private 501(c)(3) organization, and your donations and contributions are tax deductible.

The Story Teller



MONTEZUMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PO Box 476
Montezuma, NY 13117

PHONE:
315-776-4656

E-MAIL:
cml115@tds.net
<http://www.montezumahistoricalociety.org>

Join Us on Facebook at:
<https://www.facebook.com/Montezuma-Historical-Society-Friends-of-Montezuma-Heritage-Park>



Happy Holidays