



PARMA HILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

June 2026 Issue



55th Annual PHHS Banquet

More than 120 local history enthusiasts joined us on May 11th for our 55th Annual Banquet at the Exempt Club. Guests enjoyed a delicious dinner catered by Forest Hill Restaurant, followed by toe-tapping music performed by the Biscuit Brothers. The evening's theme, "A Night at the Commercial Hotel Tavern," paid tribute to the historic tavern that once stood at the site of today's M&T Bank in Hilton. It was a wonderful evening celebrating our shared appreciation for local history and community.

We were pleased to share the evening with veteran and Purple Heart recipient Hank Ross as we celebrated his 102nd birthday. Mr. Ross served as a Technical Sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II. As a waist gunner aboard a B-24 bomber, he completed 50 bombing missions. He is pictured above shaking hands with 12-year-old Joey Walsh.



From the President

I'd like to thank our outgoing President, John Foster, for his 12 years of dedicated service, and express my appreciation for the trust the PHHS has placed in me as I step into this role. My long-standing passion for history - what our Historian calls "the history bug" - and my family's deep roots in both the PHHS and the community inspired me to get involved and continue that legacy. Through my involvement, I've gained an even greater appreciation for our shared past, and I look forward to building on our strong foundation by supporting our mission and encouraging others to engage in discovering, preserving, and educating others about the history of Parma and Hilton.



Jeri Pickett, PHHS President

Congratulations Hilton Graduates!

*As the days and years roll by
don't forget the good old days in
Hilton High*

*Keith Holden
H. H. S.*

An entry in former
Village Historian Leith
Cox Wright's autograph
book from the 1920's



Among the Headstones

The PHHS cemetery crew has been hard at work this spring, focusing special attention on the gravestones of local Revolutionary War veterans. In April, PHHS members joined Spencerport Historian Virginia Parker and Ogden Library History Assistant Bridget LaDuca to repair the headstones of Ogden Revolutionary War veteran Ephraim Colby and his wife, Mary, located in Colby Street Cemetery. Both stones had broken at the base and, with a little work, were successfully reset in time for the town's Patriot Remembrance ceremony on May 30th.

Several members also gathered at Hoosick Hill Cemetery to repair the gravestone of Kitchell Reed, which had cracked completely in half. Mr. Reed served during the Revolutionary War at Fort Ticonderoga and Fort Edward, helped defend New York City from the British, and later settled in Parma after the war. While at the cemetery, the crew also cleared brush and repaired several other chipped and damaged stones. The Boy Scouts will be placing markers and flags on the gravestones of our local Revolutionary War veterans in Parma in honor of Flag Day and our continued celebration of America 250!

Happy June!

US Holidays & Observances

- Flag Day: June 14th
- Father's Day: June 21st
- Summer Solstice: June 21st

Historically Significant Observances

- June 6th is **D-Day**, which honors those who fought in the Battle of Normandy, France. This historical day is a reminder of the day troops of Allied forces staged one of the most pivotal attacks against Germany during World War II.
- Every year on June 14th we celebrate the **birthday of the United States Army**. Let's tip our hats and raise a glass to the military branch that was born in 1775.
- Each year on June 19th, we celebrate **Juneteenth** to commemorate the end of slavery in the U.S. Juneteenth is also known as Freedom Day.

Global Beatles Day: June 25th



Take a Tour

Take a self-guided tour of Parma's pioneer cemeteries and visit the graves of Parma's Revolutionary War veterans. The booklet contains brief biographies of each veteran, along with geographical coordinates of each stone. Download a copy of the tour book on our events web page or pick up a printed copy - coming soon!

Curator's Corner

Tools Then and Now and a Trip Down Memory Lane

Last month, I wrote of tools, then and now. That was tools for the farmer, carpenter, blacksmith, and others. This month, lets go inside the house, specifically the kitchen.

Lets start with the icebox. I had the notion that iceboxes had been around for many centuries but looking it up, the first real icebox was invented in 1802 by a Thomas Moore. From the description, it was portable, oval shaped, with a tin lining. Sounds a lot like a picnic cooler. This evolved into the wood cabinet style like we have in our depiction of an 1880s country kitchen. Electric refrigeration started coming into mainstream use in the early 1930s. I'm sure we can recall our parents or grandparents fridge, maybe a Philco or Frigidaire, with a little freezer section, that needed defrosting once a month, usually. Did you know that the local RG&E store on Main Street, next to the Pleasure Shoppe sold appliances, stoves, refrigerators and washers and dryers? Anyway, look at how the refrigerator has evolved. Frost free, double door, top freezer, bottom freezer, ice and water dispensers. When I was selling appliances for Kelly and Cohen, a 21 cubic foot unit was considered huge. Now...it's almost tiny. Anyone else remember the colors for appliances in the 70's? Harvest Gold, Avocado Green, Copper, Orange, and Black.

How about stoves? Until scientists found a use for oil and found that it could be refined to kerosene, wood and coal were the fuel sources. Natural gas and electric stoves came about around the turn of the last century. Now we have self cleaning, convection oven, glass top. I used to sell double decker stoves, with a microwave at the top. (They weren't really that popular).

The smaller appliances are more fun to look at. One of my favorites is a bread maker, Universal Number Two, donated to us by Paul Kron. It's early 1900s vintage, and a basic description, it looks like a five gallon pail with a hand crank. Instructions are stamped into its top "add ingredients, seal the top, and crank for three minutes, remove mix and put in a bread mold". Now, it's plug the bread maker into the wall outlet, add the ingredients and press start.

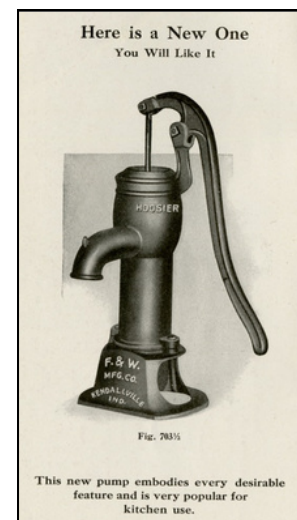
How about the egg beater? Everyone remembers them, hand cranked, and there's many variations on that theme. Many chefs still insist on using them, but the stand mixer is the usual. "Mom, can I lick the beaters when you're done making that frosting?" (Warning: make sure the mixer is unplugged and the beaters are out of the machine).

Got ironing to do? Take that cast iron iron over to the wood stove and let it get hot. (Does anyone do ironing any more?) I have my mom's Proctor Silex, and still use it occasionally.

Need a drink of water? Hopefully the pitcher pump in the kitchen is still primed. This is actually one of the favorite things kids like to play with when they visit the museum. Water back then usually came from a well. Many still do. I just got rid of mine last fall. I still have some water conservation habits that stem from my times of having the well get over pumped. One load of laundry an evening!

Next month, I might go back to tools. We just got in a whole batch of Craftsman power tools from the 50s. Sears had a sale! Take a trip into Monroe Ave to the Sears store and buy the whole set, put it on your Revolving Charge Card.

Ken Freeman, PHS Museum Curator



Information & forms for PHHS events can be found at www.parmahiltonhistoricalsociety.com/events/

Upcoming Events

Parma Hilton Time Capsule Submissions Requested

Fifty years ago, our predecessors here in Hilton came together to mark the Bicentennial in 1976 by assembling a time capsule that captured the spirit, values, and everyday life of their era. Today, we have the opportunity, and responsibility, to do the same for our descendants who will gather in 2076 to celebrate America's Tricentennial. We invite individuals, families, businesses, and organizations to contribute materials that reflect our community and the broader significance of America 250. The completed time capsule will be formally sealed during a public ceremony on August 8th at the Parma Museum. To have your materials considered for inclusion, please complete the application which can be obtained from the Parma Public Library, the PHHS museum, or on our website listed above.



Joan Toal, Dave Crumb and Amanda Dudley at the opening of the 1976 Parma Hilton time capsule during one of the PHHS America 250 Committee meetings. The contents of this 50 year old time capsule will be on display at the public ceremony on August 8th.

**JUN
11**

Burritt's Corners Historical Marker Ceremony

On June 11th at 10:30am, the PHHS and descendants of the Burritt family will gather at the corner of Rt. 259 and Burritt Road, formerly known as Burritt Corners, to unveil and dedicate a new historical marker. This marker will celebrate the Burritt homestead and the many Burritt family farms that used to stand in this area. The public is welcome to attend.

**JUN
15**

America 250 Photography Contest for All Ages

Calling photographers of all ages and skill levels! Beginning June 15th, submit your best community-inspired and patriotic-themed photos for a chance to be featured in next year's community calendar. The contest runs through October 15. Full details, including preferred digital file formats, can be found on the website listed at the top of the page.



Burritt Homestead

Burritt's Corners, now the intersection of Burritt Road and Route 259, was first settled by Giles Burritt in 1832. Formerly a lumberman and tenant farmer near Sand Lake in Rensselaer County along the upper Hudson River, Giles came to Parma after hearing about the area from an acquaintance who had already settled here. Giles and his wife, Elizabeth Phelps Burritt, were among the earliest documented families in the region. Seeking more fertile and profitable farmland than the rocky soils common to the Hudson Valley, Giles settled near what would later become known as Burritt's Corners and established farms for each of his children. Today, the Burritt legacy continues, with many generations of Burritt descendants still call this area home. *Source: Parma, N.Y. The Hub of the Universe: Old Parma Families Remember Their Yesteryears by Shirley Cox Husted*

Information & forms for PHHS events can be found at
www.parmahiltonhistoricalsociety.com/events/

Upcoming Events

**JUN
15**

Kids Historical Marker & Coloring Contest



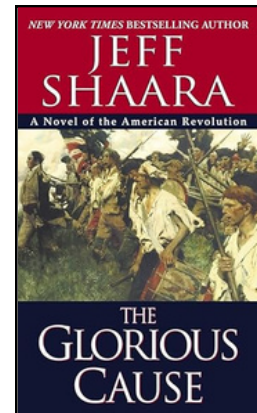
*Celebrating
America's
250th Birthday!*

Starting on June 15th, kids up to age 12 are encouraged to pick up a coloring page from the Parma Public Library, the PHHS Museum, or on our website, and create your own special historical marker! This is a great chance to reflect on our past and commemorate a special place, whether it is around a family home, a local park, or a favorite community landmark! Prizes will be awarded by age group and entries will be displayed for the public. The contest runs until September 15th.

**JUL
21**

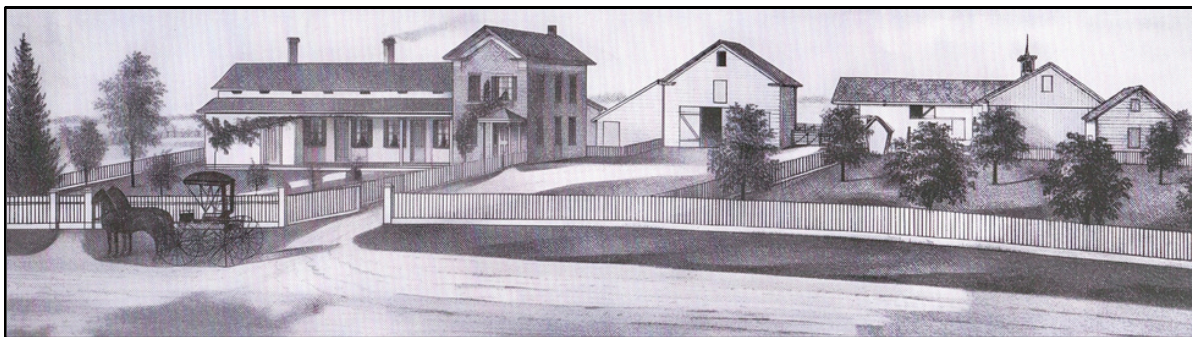
Historical Book Club Meeting

Copies of our next book, *The Glorious Cause* by Jeff Shaara, are available at the Parma Public Library. Learn more about the American Revolution during our continued celebration of America 250! The next meeting will take place on July 21st at 6:30pm in the Parma Public Library's Meeting Room. Registration is appreciated. Register at <https://calendar.libraryweb.org/calendar/Parma>. Search the calendar for the July 21st book club and click *Register your seat*.



Hidden History

Parma and the Underground Railroad



Juneteenth not only celebrates freedom and progress, but it acknowledges an essential part of American history. This day, celebrated on June 19th, recognizes both the joy of emancipation and the continued pursuit of equality and civil rights. Small communities like Parma played a critical role in helping enslaved people escape to freedom during the 1800's. Seen above is the Chase Homestead as it looked in 1877, which was a stop on the Underground Railroad. Other Parma "stations" were the general store at Parma Center, the Samuel Palmer home, Walter Vond's boathouse at Hilton Beach, and the Lemman Wolcott home at the east end of Curtis Road. The Chase-Flack house still stands on Manitou Road.

Comedy Through the Ages

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/no-joke-ahead-of-his-100th-birthday-mel-brooks-donates-his-hilarious-archive-to-the-national-comedy-center-180988741/>

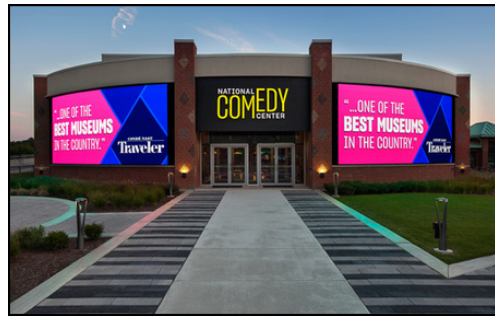
I found this article first in an online Variety post, and I thought I'd share this as it hits me as curator of the Parma Hilton Historical Society collection. I'll give you the short version here, comedian Mel Brooks has donated his comedy archives to the National Comedy Center in Jamestown, NY. I knew that Jamestown was already the home of the Lucy and Desi Arnaz museum, but not the National Comedy Center. Google being our friend, it was easy to find out more info on them. I'll do a bit of copy and paste from Wikipedia here:

The National Comedy Center is an American museum dedicated to comedy. Located in Lucille Ball's hometown of Jamestown, New York, the museum opened in August 2018 and reported 66,000 visitors in its first year of operation. [1] The museum had been operating since 1996 as the Lucille Ball-Desi Arnaz Museum, which is now located a few blocks away.

It's a great looking building, reminds me a lot of an older theater, with 37 thousand square feet of space. I could only wish for that much display and storage space for us. Anyway, back to Mel Brooks. As I said, he's donated his collection of comedy "stuff" including 150,000 documents and about 5,000 pictures. My first thought on that was, their registrar and archivist are going to have a great time getting that all into inventory, and digitized. Then, my next thought was "how much room do you need to store all of that?" I'm guessing it's all in bankers boxes or filing cabinets already but just how many? Well, again, Google AI to the rescue. Sixty to seventy bankers boxes, which are 12 by 15 inches and 10 inches tall. Or 20 to 30 four drawer filing cabinets, and that's just for the papers! The office at PHHS has four filing cabinets in it, along one wall. Either way, it takes up space. My thought was, if someone came along with a collection like that and wanted to donate it to us, where would we put it? I guess we'd have to kick Dave Crumb, Town Historian, out of his office. (Just kidding Nancy and Dave).

To wrap this up, I guess I'm going to have to get a couple friends together and take a day trip the Jamestown and go through the National Comedy Center, and maybe the Lucy and Desi Arnaz Museum. Perhaps we can twist the Recreation department's arms into making it a senior trip.

Ken Freeman, PHHS Museum Curator



The National Comedy Center presents the annual Lucille Ball Comedy Festival, which, for over thirty years, has showcased rising young comedians and comedy legends including Jerry Seinfeld, Lily Tomlin, Trevor Noah, Joan Rivers, John Mulaney and Ellen DeGeneres.



Spanning more than 6 decades, the archive begins with Brooks' earliest handwritten comedic notes created during his service in the U.S. Army during World War II.

**“Hope for the best. Expect the worst.
Life is a play. We're unrehearsed.”**

-Mel Brooks

PHHS on YouTube: www.youtube.com/@parmahiltonhistoricalsociety

Society Happenings & Highlights

Passing the Torch

This past month we welcomed Jeri Pickett as our incoming PHHS President. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to John Foster for his 12 years of leadership and service as outgoing President. We would also like to thank Nancy Leport for her 5 years as secretary, Mike Weldon for his 12 years on the board, and Kathy Edsall for her 5 years on the board. We would like to welcome Lynne Priessing as a new board member.

Citizen of the Year

On May 5th, at the Village of Hilton Board of Trustees Meeting, Nancy Whelehan Leport was recognized as the Village of Hilton's 2026 Citizen of the Year. She was honored for her decades of dedicated service to the Hilton and Parma communities, including her leadership with the PHHS, commitment to preserving local history, and instrumental role in founding and leading the Hilton Alumni Association. Her lifelong dedication to service, leadership, and community pride truly embodies the spirit of this distinguished honor.

America 250 Committee

As we continue through 2026 and commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the PHHS America 250 Committee remains hard at work planning celebratory events and programs throughout the year. From the historical marker & photography contests to the patriotic kid's activity book now available at the museum, to the self-guided cemetery tour, there is something for everyone! Stay tuned for details on PHHS's participation in HP Rec's Summer Smash, along with upcoming community presentations on Parma's pioneer cemeteries and Revolutionary War veterans.



ELECTRO is the word to remember when you want to kill bugs and prevent blight. The line of "Electro" material includes :

- "Electro" Arsenate of Lead Powder,
- "Electro" Bordo-Lead Mixture not only kills all forms of leaf-eating insects, but prevents blight.
- "Micro" (for dusting) kills insects and prevents fungous troubles.

'Electro' products have been developed after years of careful study and experiment, and are the result of long experience.

Ask for our little folder about "Electro Products," but better still, select the "Electro" Mixture you need and use it.

A. B. & E. E. Fraser
Hilton, N. Y.

John Bauch
Hamlin, N. Y.

AGENCY McCALL'S Patterns **IVESON'S STORE** AGENCY McCALL'S Patterns

We have just received a few more patterns in fancy trimming Laces. Very pretty styles at 12 1-2c to 60c per yd.

The new style fancy Pearl Buttons at 10c & 15c card are here.



Ladies Bells—the "New Ones"—black and white leather—50c. Ask to see them.

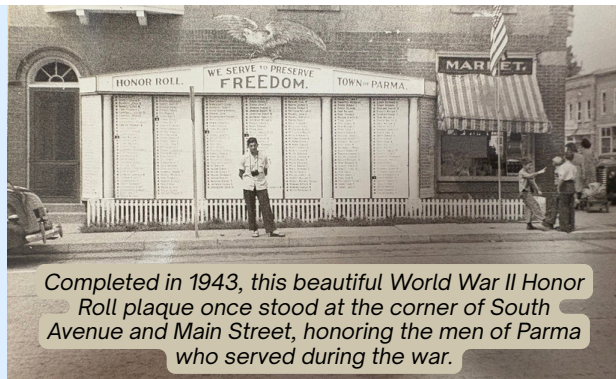
Children's Old Hickory Garters in four sizes—15c. to 25c.—and a school tablet free with each pair.

Iveson's Store

Hilton-Bell Phone 113

Share your stories!

You may have noticed the newsletter has a new look! We're always looking to keep content fresh and interesting, so if you have an old Parma Hilton related photo or story to share, email it to us at parmahiltonhistory@gmail.com. We'd also love to hear your suggestions on special newsletter segments you'd like to see, or local historical topics you'd like to learn more about!



Completed in 1943, this beautiful World War II Honor Roll plaque once stood at the corner of South Avenue and Main Street, honoring the men of Parma who served during the war.

June 2026

Museum Hours: Sundays 2-4p or by appointment
April 1st – November 30th / Closed on major holidays

From our Camera Roll

Members of the PHS marched in Hilton's Memorial Day Parade dressed in period clothing. During the ceremony, Assistant Village Historian Amanda Dudley delivered a tribute honoring Parma's Revolutionary War veterans, recognizing both their service to our nation and their role as early pioneers who helped shape our community.



We are pleased to officially welcome new Trustee Lynn Preissing to the board. She was sworn in at our May board meeting and we look forward to her contributions and service to the PHS.

The Hilton Lions Club recently welcomed Dave Crumb as a guest speaker at their meeting, where he spoke about the upcoming 250th anniversary of American independence. Dave is pictured here receiving a Certificate of Appreciation from Lions Club President Kim Fay.

Photo courtesy of Hilton Lions Club 20-E1



Get in Touch!

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Thank you to our friends at the Parma Public Library and Hilton Parma Parks & Recreation for their continued support!

