

July 2026 Issue Special AMERICA Edition!



Happy 250th Birthday, America!

July 4th, 2026 marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, making it one of the most significant Independence Days in American history. As the nation celebrates its semiquincentennial, communities like ours across the country are reflecting on 250 years of history, honoring those who shaped our nation, and looking ahead to the future!

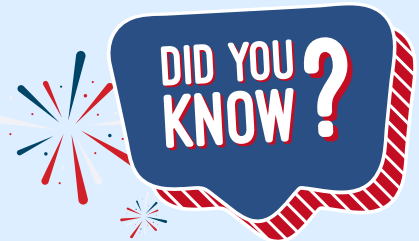
From the Historian's Desk

In early 2025 at the Monroe County Historian's meeting a discussion came up from the County Historian about the forthcoming year 2026 and its importance as the 250th year since the Declaration of Independence, the Revolutionary War, and our country's democracy. At our Parma Hilton Historical Society, we began planning for it a year early. That has paid huge dividends because as the year 2026 has unfolded the PHHS team along with the Recreation Department and the Parma Library have been brimming with America 250 activities for Parma and Hilton.

To name a few; a book club has been organized where the members have read; David McCollough's 1776, Cokie Robert's Founding Mothers, and presently are reading Jeff Shaara's Glorious Cause. In December to kick off America 250 members of the Historical Society joined the Recreation Department on the Village Christmas Walk. Members were in costume and talked about the upcoming years' proposed activities. All Parma Historic Cemeteries have been spruced up and Amanda Dudley has researched and published a documentary of the Revolutionary War Soldiers buried in Parma. Four of our PHHS board members qualified and joined the Sons of the American Revolution. To do this they had to prove direct ancestry to a Revolutionary War soldier. PHHS members marched in the Parma Hilton Memorial Day Parade. An activity book has been created for school children and others totally focused on Parma Hilton history by Margaret Whelehan and Nancy Leport.

The list continues. The 4th of July is the Nation's Big Event and the whole country will focus-in. Later in July Parma will host Summer Smash which will be themed for America 250. All through the rest of the year there will be other activities that will embrace the America 250 celebration. All in all, this is a great year to bring out the flags and show our enthusiasm, patriotism, and thanksgiving for all the great things this country and our hometown have done over the years.

David Crumb
Parma Hilton Historian



Interesting America 250 Facts

- The next major national anniversary after 2026 will be the Tricentennial (300th anniversary) in 2076.
- July 4th became a federal holiday in 1870, nearly a century after independence was declared.
- The famous Liberty Bell likely did not ring on July 4, 1776. Historians believe it may have been rung several days later when the Declaration was publicly read.
- Three U.S. Presidents died on July 4th including Thomas Jefferson (1826), John Adams (1826) and James Monroe (1831).
- Children born in 2026 will grow up entirely in America's third century of independence. When the nation celebrates its 300th birthday in 2076, they will be 50 years old!

★ We asked... "What does America 250 mean to you?" ★

"America 250 for me is a time of reflection on where we came from, how we got where we are today, and where we are going with this great American experiment. Will we honor our founding principles and truly create a more perfect union."
– Nancy Whelehan Leport, 2026 Citizen of the Year

"America 250 is a celebration of the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and a time to honor historical contributions of our ancestors, reflect on the country's past, and look forward to the future."
– Amanda Dudley, Assistant Village Historian

"Today, I was at the RR tracks in Darien Center, waiting for 1-1/2 hours for the "Big Boy" #4014. Largest and most powerful Steam Engine ever built. It was restored over a 5 year period and was part of the America 250 trip from Cheyenne WY to Philadelphia PA. Cars & trucks were packed along Erie St. (parallel to the tracks). It seemed like the whole town came out. What a day in America! This makes me proud to be an American, to see just a "drop in the bucket" of our accomplishments."
– Dave Almeter, PHHS Treasurer

"This! Coming together to celebrate our shared passions and interests, enjoying our community traditions with family and friends, all while honoring the sacrifices of those who came before us that made these moments possible."
– Margaret Whelehan, PHHS Trustee

"Celebrating our country's 250th is a time of reflection for the dedication of our fore fathers and the adversity our country has had to overcome to protect the principles that our country was founded on. It is also a time to hope for future unity, peace and equality for all."
Lynne Preissing, PHHS Trustee

"I like to think of America 250 as a special opportunity to reflect over the last two hundred and fifty years and try to gain a grasp of everything that went into establishing the United States of America as an independent nation from England. Much has happened over those years to challenge our democracy, yet it still prevails. Hopefully America will have a bright future as time goes on, but there is no insurance unless the American people are vigilant and understand that democracy just doesn't just happen but must be earned and maintained to endure. It has been gratifying to witness this year's America 250 Celebrations unfold both nationally and locally."
– Dave Crumb, Historian

"America 250 is a celebration of America's fight for independence and that if our ancestors hadn't fought for us, we wouldn't be where we are today. And that's why kids shouldn't fool around during the pledge of allegiance."
– 12 year old Quinten Dudley

"Well I don't think it means as much to me as it does to you, but I think it means freedom for all of Americans."
– Hilton Historian Dave Crumb's grandson, 12 year old Joey Walsh

"To me, America 250 means celebrating the best and most precious country on earth. It's one day, we're all proud Americans, regardless of experiences. U.S.A.!"
– Michael Heise, Big H Podcast

"America 250 is a moment to honor the people, communities, and stories that have contributed to our shared history while inspiring future generations to engage in civic life and service. America 250 is ultimately about connecting our past, present, and future through a renewed commitment to the American story."
– Ryan Rockefeller, Assistant HP Rec Director



Among the Headstones

In honor of America 250 and our continued celebration of local Revolutionary War patriots, we thought it fitting to share the story of Asa Bebee.

Asa was born in Colchester, Connecticut, on May 2, 1763. He was just 13 years old when he served as an express messenger during the Danbury Raid of 1777. His job was to warn the people of Danbury that British forces were advancing to destroy the guns and ammunition stockpiled there for the Patriot cause. When British troops landed in Norwalk, Connecticut, messengers like Asa played a critical role, carrying urgent warnings to local militia leaders and helping coordinate the colonial response.

In 1825, Asa sold his mountain farm and moved to West Greece, New York. He likely learned of opportunities in the area from his brother-in-law, Flavius Day, who had purchased land in West Greece from Benjamin Barrett in 1820. Asa was a diligent citizen in the West Greece area and a member of the "Vigilant Society of Parma and Greece, for the detection of horse thieves and other purloiners."

Asa lived to the age of 88 and spent his later years in the Hoosick area (Manitou Rd and Ridge Rd area). He is buried alongside his wife in Hoosick Hill Cemetery, where Flavius Day and Benjamin Barrett are also laid to rest. Though only a teenager during the Revolutionary War, Asa Bebee played an important role in one of its pivotal moments. Fittingly, this patriot passed away on July 4, 1851 - Independence Day!



Holidays & Observances

- Independence Day: July 4th
- Bastille Day: July 14th
- Parents' Day: Fourth Sunday in July
- National Disability Independence Day (commemorating the signing of the ADA): July 26th

Fun & Unofficial Holidays

- National US Postage Stamp Day: July 1st
- Collector Car Appreciation Day: Second Friday in July
- National Ice Cream Day: Third Sunday in July
- National Amelia Earhart Day: July 24th



The Buffalo Bills: Lead: Al Shea. Tenor: Verna Reed. Baritone: Dick Grapes. Bass: Bill Spangenberg.

July 13th: National Barbershop Music Appreciation Day!

Barbershop Legends of WNY: The Buffalo Bills

In 1947, baritone Hershel Smith, a corporate executive, and lead singer Al Shea, a policeman, got together at Smith's home in Buffalo, New York with the idea of forming a barbershop quartet. Tenor Vern Reed, an executive for a boy's club, and bass Bill Spangenberg, a truck driver for a steel company were added. The quartet competed at various competitions with modest success. Shortly afterward, Smith was promoted and transferred to Madison Wisconsin, and the quartet was disbanded. Had they not reorganized, the entire face of barbershop harmony may have been vastly different than it is today. However, Shea and Reed insisted on continuing, and they found baritone Dick Grapes. The quartet blossomed quickly, winning a national competition in 1950, and developing quite a fan club. Over the next few years, they booked many engagements and cut some records. They are widely considered to be "the greatest barbershop quartet of all time." Source: <https://singers.com/group/Buffalo-Bills/>

Upcoming Events

ON
GOING

Be part of history! **There's still time to contribute to the Parma Hilton Time Capsule**

Who: Individuals, families, businesses, and organizations in the Parma Hilton area.

What: Printed materials, photos, written letters or reflections, or other unique items that help tell the story of our time.

Why: Our local predecessors came together to mark the Bicentennial in 1976 by assembling a time capsule - and we'd like to do the same for our descendants who will gather in 2076 to celebrate America's Tricentennial!

How: Complete the application which can be obtained from the Parma Public Library, the PHHS museum, or on our website listed above.

Deadline for submissions: July 12th.

Join us on August 8th for a public ceremony where the time capsule will be formally sealed. You can also take a look at the contents of the 1976 community time capsule!

ON
GOING

Kids Historical Marker & Coloring Contest

Calling photographers of all ages and skill levels! 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.

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 of your own. Prizes will be awarded by age group and entries will be displayed for the public. The contest runs until September 15th.

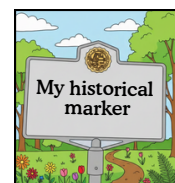


**Kids can join the library's open coloring
sessions for this contest on July 2nd and
August 21st from 10:30-1:30pm!**



Patriots of Parma Self-Guided Cemetery Tour

Assistant Village Historian Amanda Dudley has created a wonderful self-guided tour of the gravesites of local Revolutionary War soldiers buried in Parma-Hilton's pioneer cemeteries. Visitors can search by cemetery or soldier, find exact gravestone coordinates, and read a brief biography highlighting each soldier's service and contributions to the war effort. The tour features 16 Revolutionary War soldiers buried in eight local cemeteries. Pick up a pocket-sized printed guide at the PHHS Museum or download a copy from our website using the link at the top of the page. We would also like to thank Bill at Ryan Printing for another outstanding printing project. His work has helped bring this fascinating piece of local history to life and make it accessible to our community.



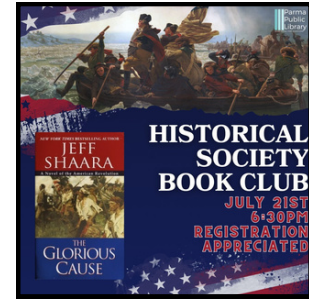
Information & forms for PHHS events can be found at
www.parmahiltonhistoricalsociety.com/events/

Upcoming Events

**JUL
21**

Historical Book Club Meeting at the Parma Public Library

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 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.



**JUL
13**

“Presenting with Pizza” Parma’s Pioneer Cemeteries



Join Amanda Dudley, Assistant Village of Hilton Historian, and explore the pioneer cemeteries within the Town of Parma, focusing on their historical significance, locations, and ongoing restoration efforts. In commemoration of America's 250th anniversary, Amanda will also highlight the Revolutionary War veterans interred in these cemeteries. This presentation will take place at the Community Center in the Ingham Room at 10:30am. Register at <https://hiltonny.myrec.com/> by clicking on Programs, then “Presenting with Pizza.”

**JUL
24**

Parma’s Summer Smash



This fun, annual community event put on by Hilton Parma Parks & Recreation Department will feature a food truck rodeo, live entertainment, kid-friendly activities, and a night-time Drone show finale to close out the evening. The PHHS will be in the “America 250” area along with members from the Genesee Country Village and Museum and Sons of the American Revolution. Join us at the Parma Town Park from 5-10pm.

JUL

Parma Public Library Programs (just a few, of many!)

Visit <https://www.parmapubliclibrary.org> for details and to see if registration is required!

July 2nd at 10:30am: Open Coloring for Historical Marker Contest
July 6th at 1pm: Braddock Bay Raptor Show
July 7th at 6:30pm: Travelogue: Antiquity of Egypt
July 13th at 6pm: 1776: America's Revolutionary Year
July 23rd at 1pm: African Drumming with Mayukwa
July 31st at 6pm: Adult After Hours: Summerween!
Every Wednesday at 10:30: Gazebo Storytime



Society Happenings & Highlights

Burritt Homestead Historical Marker Dedication

On June 11, 32 individuals gathered to dedicate the Burritt's Corners Historical Marker at the intersection of Burritt Road and Route 259 in Hilton. More than 20 Burritt descendants, along with PHHS board members and Parma Town Supervisor Dave Ciuffo, joined us for this special occasion. Charles Swift, a Burritt descendant who traveled all the way from South Carolina, had the honor of unveiling the marker.

Emma Watt Awarded PHHS Scholarship

Congratulations to Emma Watt, this year's Parma Hilton Historical Society Scholarship recipient! We have greatly appreciated her contributions as our intern over the past year and are excited to see where her passion for history takes her. Emma has helped digitize and catalog numerous precious historical documents, ensuring they are preserved for future generations. She has also assisted by videotaping our fall and winter community presentations, helping make local history more accessible to the public. Emma is currently studying History at SUNY Brockport, with minors in Museum Studies and Public History. We wish her continued success in her studies and future career, and we look forward to seeing all she accomplishes in the field of history!

PHHS Museum Wish List

Peek in those attics, check those dark basements, and help us uncover and discover history! We're always on the hunt for special local artifacts and enhancements to our museum. Some of the items on our wish list are below. Have something we're looking for? Let Ken know at phhscurator@gmail.com!

- The first issues of the *Hilton Record*, including editions from the years 1897-1905
- Local business signs
- An antique barber chair
- A small barber pole
- A real coin-operated rotary dial pay phone
- An old cash register for the general store
- A leaf rake for maintaining the grounds

OLD HOME WEEK
(Come and Meet Your Friends)
and
9th ANNUAL CARNIVAL
of Hilton Fire Department
Thursday and Friday Evenings--Saturday Afternoon and Evening
July 28, 29, 30---Hilton
SATURDAY EVENTS
Big Parade at 2:00 P. M.
Marathon Run, Following Parade
Baseball--Hilton vs. Spencerport--3:30 P. M.
Magnificent Display of Fireworks
in Evening--Be Sure To See Them
Radio Entertainers
Merry-Go-Round, Ferris Wheel, Chairplane
Concessions of All Kinds Free Parking
No Admission to Grounds



July 2026

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

Curator's Corner

From the Collection

Sitting silently outside our building is an item that I'm sure everyone sees but never really pays attention to. That item has a long history with the Town of Parma. This our J.D. Adams #3 Road Patrol Grader. The Adams Company was in business from the 1880s until 1955 when it was acquired by LaTourneau-Westinghouse. J.D. Adams & Company built over 500 Model 11s graders for the military during WWII, mainly the tow behind style, and pulled by a crawler tractor.

Our records show this one was donated to the Historical Society in 2009 by D. (Dave?) Goodwin. I recently came across a DVD marked "Road Grader Project", June 2010. At that time a group of kids, I assume the Boy Scouts, came together and painted the grader from the yellow paint it had at the time, into the green with red wheels scheme that it originally was painted in. Since that time, it has been painted once more, by me, in 2019, in the same green paint color.

Our records show that the grader came to the Town in the 1890's. Over the years, it was converted to a tow behind grader for use with a tractor of some sort. I haven't found any history on when it was retired, but I would make a guess that it was involved in the paving of many of the Town's roads in the early 1920's. Early models of road graders would have been pulled by a team of horses or mules, and, depending on the size of the machine, the team could have been two, four or even six. Online pictures show one to two steel seats mounted to the front of the machine, almost over the front axle, with another seat at the rear, like ours, for the man controlling the blade angles.

This year, the paint was again looking a bit tatty and faded, and I decided to repaint it in an America 250 theme of red, white and blue, along with its corral mates, the well pump, the Planet Junior planter and the Planet Junior cultivator. The Semiquincentennial colors give our front yard a bit more pop, along with the hay bales that Margaret Whelehan painted and are now our driveway markers. I'm not sure how long the equipment will stay in this paint scheme, but Mother Nature has a way of making paint fade fairly quickly. When the time comes, our Adams grader will return to its original paint job of green with red wheels.

The research for this article took me down a number of rabbit holes, and some of the AI information can be a bit misleading. It seems that J.D. Adams & Company, like many others, would custom build machinery for their customers, or perhaps it was just continual improvement of a design? There is one picture of a grader very similar to ours, but it also has the Tilt Wheel mechanism that Adams designed and patented. That feature allows a grader to work on a steeper slope, like a ditch, without sliding. With antique equipment shows coming up soon that I would like to go to, I'll have to keep my eyes peeled for a similar unit.

Until next time,
Ken



Grader as it appeared when it was donated



Repainted to original colors in 2010



America 250 Patriotic refresh!

July 2026

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

From our Camera Roll

SUNY Brockport History major Emma Watt recieved the PHHS Scholarship in June. She is pictured here along side the PHHS America 250 Committee.



Many Burritt relatives joined us at the Burritt's Corners Historical Marker dedication. Shown left are 3 Burritt brothers Kim, Seb and Craig, who are the Great, Great, Great Grandsons of original settlers Giles & Elizabeth. On the right, descendent Charles Swift from South Carolina and Historian Dave Crumb unveil the marker.



The PHHS would like to thank Sherry Duchyns for generously donating two large hay bales for our America 250 Celebration at the museum! The bales were transformed into colorful patriotic displays by Margaret Whelehan, helping bring a festive touch to the museum grounds!



Get in Touch!

www.parmahiltonhistoricalsociety.com
Facebook: Parma Hilton Historical Society
Email: parmahiltonhistory@gmail.com
Phone: 585-392-9496
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Thank you to our friends at the Parma Public Library and Hilton Parma Parks & Recreation for their continued support!

