

**October 2026 Issue**

The PHHS Historical Lecture Series Begins a New Season at Our New Venue!

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our first meeting of the season on September 8th in the beautiful community meeting room at the Hilton Fire Hall! Assistant Hilton Historian Amanda Dudley shared engaging presentation on Parma's pioneer cemeteries, highlighting the stories of Parma's Revolutionary War veterans. She also shared some of the cemetery restoration and preservation efforts that have taken place over the past several years. We're grateful to Amanda for sharing her knowledge and the extensive research she has done on this topic, and helping us shine a light on the important history found within these often-overlooked local treasures. And thank you to everyone who came out to support our first program of the season!



A special thank you goes out to the Hilton Fire Department's Bob Floyd and Mike Lissow for sharing a bit of interesting fire department history, including the construction of the new firehall after the flood of 2009.



October Speaker: Briana Gervat

"In 2022, just as the world began to open after the isolation of a global pandemic, Briana Gervat set out to walk the length of the Western Front. Beginning at the border that France shares with Switzerland she went into the wild in search of hope and in search of peace. For 500 miles, she climbed over the mountains of the Vosges, through the battle-scarred landscapes of Verdun, the Marne, and the Somme, all the way to the North Sea in Belgium. It was not only a journey of thirty-six days, but a journey through a history that we have learned nothing from, only how better to repeat it." Excerpt from <https://www.theperegrinepilgrim.com/>

Join us at 7pm on October 13th at the Hilton Fire Department meeting room to hear the story of her amazing journey!





Among the Headstones

On September 12th, our cemetery crew spent the day at Sage-Knapp Cemetery on Clarkson Parma Townline Road, where we repaired multiple broken headstones and helped preserve an important piece of our community's history. A special welcome and thank-you to our newest volunteers, the Reynolds family, for joining us!

Located on the east side of Clarkson Parma Townline Road, Sage-Knapp Cemetery sits on land once owned by Jonas Knapp.

The area near the intersection of Clarkson Parma Townline Road, Parma Center, and Ireland Road was once known as Knapp's Corners. The cemetery takes its name from the Sage and Knapp families who lived in the area, many of whom are buried there. Burials took place at the cemetery from approximately 1823 through 1932. The site also contains the graves of early pioneers and Revolutionary War-era families, including James Billings, who died in 1829.

On Saturday, September 19th, our volunteers spent the day making progress on the restoration and cleanup of Pine Hill Cemetery. If you recall from our August newsletter, the long-forgotten Pine Hill Cemetery was recently rediscovered hidden within the farmland on Ogden Parma Townline Road.

Brian Dudley put his chainsaw to work clearing several trees, while the rest of the crew tackled the enormous job of string trimming throughout the cemetery grounds. Dave Crumb, John Toal and Amanda Dudley worked on raking years of weeds and overgrowth away from the cemetery, while fencing that had become buried in the vegetation was pulled out and removed.



Far left: The small Pine Hill Cemetery is revealed after decades of overgrowth is removed. Middle; Brian Dudley clears some small trees. Right: Brian Dudley, Dave Crumb & John Toal hard at work.

As the cleanup progressed, we made an exciting discovery. Along two sides of the cemetery, we uncovered what appear to be sunken walls beneath the area where the old fencing had fallen. As we began leveling the grounds, we also found what we believe may be remnants of an original stone fence. Years of growth appear to have raised the ground level significantly from the cemetery's original surface, so there is still plenty of digging and uncovering to be done. We are looking forward to seeing what more may be revealed! The crew also carefully gathered and positioned pieces of broken headstones so they can be repaired at a later date. Brush and fallen trees were cleared, and some initial leveling of the cemetery grounds was completed, although there is much more work ahead.

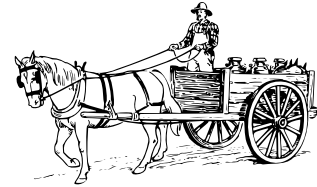
We are hoping to return to Pine Hill Cemetery in November to continue the cleanup, uncover more of the historic stonework, and make additional progress on restoring this special piece of Parma's history. A big thank you to everyone who came out and put in the hard work!

October 2026

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

The Ghostly Wagon of Parma

As October settles over Hilton and the nights grow longer, it seems fitting to revisit one of the area's most enduring ghost stories: the tale of the Ghostly Wagon of Parma Corners.



Featured in *Ghosts of Genesee Country: From Captain Kidd to the Underground Railroad* by Ralph Esposito, the legend centers around Walter Vond, a well-known African-American merchant and conductor on the Underground Railroad. According to local folklore, Vond used a covered wagon to secretly transport runaway slaves north toward Lake Ontario, helping them on their journey to freedom.

It was a cold, dark, and rainy day in the mid-1800s when two freight wagons stopped at Parma Corners. The roads were muddy, the rain fell steadily, and the canvas covering the wagons snapped in the wind. The lead wagon belonged to Walter Vond, and the other, to his assistant. As the wagons came to a stop, two men in oilskin coats stepped into the road. Their badges revealed them to be bounty hunters searching for people who had escaped slavery.

They began searching the wagons. When one of the men lifted the canvas on the second wagon, he froze. Three frightened faces stared back at him from the darkness.

Suddenly, the silence erupted into chaos. A struggle broke out, and the fugitives fought desperately for their freedom. Bond whipped the horses, sending his wagon racing down the muddy road as the bounty hunters gave chase.

The rain grew heavier and the road became nearly impossible to see. Ahead, rushing water had flooded the roadway, but there was no time to stop. The wagon struck the floodwater, overturned, and threw the man and woman into the icy current. The bounty hunters could only stand helplessly as the rushing water swept the couple away into the darkness.

To this day, The Tale of the Wagon remains one of Parma's most haunting local legends. Some say that when the rain falls heavily and the roads grow dark, the sound of galloping horses and creaking wagon wheels can still be heard in the distance.

And if you're traveling near Parma on a stormy October night, keep an eye on the road. You may see a wagon that isn't really there!

We're collecting local ghost stories and legends! Do you have a spooky Parma tale, strange Hilton encounter, or story passed down through your family or around the community? Share your story with us and help preserve the fascinating, and sometimes mysterious, history of our area for future generations! Email us your stories to parmahiltonhistory@gmail.com!



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Curator's Corner



As I've mentioned in the past, one of my nightly habits is to surf the web, mainly eBay, but also Craigslist. You never know what you might find there. Late in the summer, under "Free Stuff," I found 19 large retaining wall blocks. My original idea was to use them to enlarge the equipment corral outside the PHHS building. That idea has since drifted toward using them as a surround for our Time Capsule area, though I'm fairly certain we will need more of them. If anyone has more of these larger-sized blocks, which weigh 70 pounds each, please let me know. I know this because I weighed one. But this is all a story for another time.

Anyway, one night on Craigslist, I spotted this ad header: "Pollution Free, Environmentally Friendly, Dr Approved Cardio Machine." This was in the Farm and Garden section, so I sort of ruled out it being an exercise bike. So, out of curiosity, I clicked on it. Yes, it was a non-powered, reel-type lawn mower. It was a much newer version of the typical push mower of times gone by.

We have one of those older-style mowers in our collection, currently sitting in the General Store area with a copy of an ad for a similar-style mower. Ours has the nice old, heavy wooden handle and has the name Crown on it. Our AI friends say Crown was just a brand name and was made by some outside company for various distributors, sort of like today's MTD.

A while back, on one of my days at the museum, I was standing in our Farm display area and got to wondering if our mower actually worked. Things were a bit stiff, so I broke out the penetrating oil and gave everything a few squirts, and it started working. Why stop there? Let's take it outside and see if it will actually cut grass. I found out a few things from that. One, yes, it works and cuts as it should. Two, our lawn is very bumpy. Any rut you hit with this thing means you stop, and quickly.

I can recall, as a kid, when we would go visit my grandparents on Hazen Street, Grandpa had a very similar mower to this one, and us kids would go push it around his lawn, probably hacking up the work he had already done. I'm sure he appreciated our "help." But I don't remember his lawn being as bumpy as this. I also don't recall being as winded pushing that mower as I was after just five minutes with this one.

Did you ever wonder when the first lawn mower was invented? Or when the first powered mowers came about? A quick search tells me it was invented in 1830 by Edwin Beard Budding in Stroud, Gloucestershire, England. Here's more on the History and Evolution:

- Inspiration: Budding got the idea after seeing a machine in a local textile mill that used a bladed cylinder to shear the smooth finish off woolen cloth.
- Design: His iron machine was pushed from behind and used a revolving cylinder (reel) of blades to cut grass uniformly, replacing the difficult and slow scythe.
- Gas-Powered Mowers: In 1902, the first commercially available gas-powered lawn mower was produced. Lightweight aluminum engines arrived in 1953, making home rotary mowers popular. (Many thanks to Wikipedia and Google for making my research life easier!)

I don't know how long it would take to cut the grass at my house, with its 100-by-200-foot area, using that Crown Cardio Mower, and I'm not about to find out. I do recall, long ago, having just a 22-inch self-propelled rotary mower to do it with, and it took over three hours. That might have been spread over a couple of days. I'll take my zero-turn now, thanks. You can come and see our Crown Environmentally Friendly Cardio Mower any Sunday until November 29th. I hope we won't be needing the use of our Environmentally Friendly Snow Removal Tool before then.

Until next month,
Ken
PHHS Museum Curator



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

Upcoming Events

**OCT
13**

PHHS Historical Lecture Series Presentation

Join us on October 13th at 7pm for the presentation "Walking the Western Front" presented by Briana Gervat. Briana became the first recorded woman to hike the Western Front Way solo, retracing the front lines of World War I.

**OCT
15**

Last Call for Photo Contest Entries!

Attention photographers of all ages and skill levels! Last call for 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.

**OCT
31**

Community Trunk-or-Treat

Halloween Trunk or Treat is coming to the Hilton Community Center on Saturday, October 31, from 5-7 p.m.! This free family-friendly event will feature decorated trunks filled with treats, a kids' activity zone, live DJ, costume contest, surprise giveaways for the first 200 guests, and the spooky Graveyard Ghost Haunt for those looking for a little extra fright. Come dressed in your favorite costume and enjoy a fun-filled Halloween evening with the community! The PHHS will be there handing out treats; look for the trunk decorated as Hilton's old Hojack Railroad!



OCT

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

*Please visit the library
website or the links
below to learn more
and to register.*



ZOOM: Rochester's Olmstead Parks
<https://calendar.libraryweb.org/event/16716805>

The Attack on Pearl Harbor
<https://calendar.libraryweb.org/event/17094895>

*The Rochester Park Band: Entertaining
Rochester for Decades!*
<https://calendar.libraryweb.org/event/16857700>

Enchanting Transylvania
<https://calendar.libraryweb.org/event/17143599>

*Mission Mustang®: US Veteran
Connection & Healing at the Equicenter*
<https://calendar.libraryweb.org/event/17621155>

**NOV
17**

Historical Society Book Club

Join the PHHS for our next community book club! At the 11/17 meeting, we'll discuss *Espionage and Enslavement in the Revolution: The True Story of Robert Townsend and Elizabeth* by Claire Bellerjeau. Help us celebrate the 250th anniversary of America's founding this year by learning something new (and old)!
<https://calendar.libraryweb.org/event/17728172>

Society Happenings & Highlights

New Wright Cemetery Historical Marker

Thanks to the generous donation of Tom and Ann Burger, the Wright Cemetery on Hamlin-Parma Townline Road has a new historical marker. A ceremony to commemorate the new marker will take place on October 6th at 11am at Wright Cemetery, and the public is welcome to attend. Many descendants of those interred there still live in the Parma Hilton area today.

Home School Hour Museum Tour

The Parma Public Library Homeschool Hour group will be taking a field trip to the Town of Parma Historical Museum on October 5th! Students will explore unique artifacts and treasures that offer a glimpse into everyday life in the past, and learn how many of the things we rely on today are rooted in the ingenuity of those who came before us! We look forward to sharing the many wonderful items in our museum and teaching the next generation about Parma Hilton's past.



Happy October!

Holidays, Observances and Fun Dates:

- International Coffee Day and World Vegetarian Day: October 1st
- World Teacher's Day: October 5th
- Columbus Day / Indigenous Peoples' Day: October 12th
- World Food Day and National Boss's Day: October 16th
- Halloween: October 31st
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month

FALL and WINTER

Two-Piece
Garments, 75c
\$1.00, \$1.75

Underwear

Union Suits
From \$1.50
up to \$6.00

Union Suits of all descriptions, in cotton ribbed, fleece lined, cotton and wool mixed, light, medium and heavy weight woolsens.

GUARANTEED ALL PURE WOOL GARMENTS

Shirts	Two-piece Garments	Drawers
Cotton ribbed, fleeced lined and wool		

Kaynee
FOR
SCHOOL WEAR
\$1.75

Boys' Blouses
\$1.00
Cordoroy Knee Pants

Kaynee
MADRAS
NEAT PATTERNS
\$1.75

Men's High Grade Cordoroy
\$6.00
WEARING QUALITY GUARANTEED

Men's Mole Skin Trousers
\$4.50
THE PANT FOR LONG WEAR

C. O. CROOK & SON
CLOTHIERS
HILTON, N. Y.

Hilton Record Ad October 1921

**HUNTING
SEASON**

WILL OPEN SOON

If you want to be sure of your game you must have the right shells.

We Sell The Famous
Remington Kleanbore Shells

NITRO EXPRESS
SURE SHOT

ARROW EXPRESS

A. J. WADSWORTH
Plumbing Heating Electric Wiring
PHONE 182-F-2
HILTON, N. Y.

Hilton Record Ad October 1932

**HALLOWE'EN**

Make the children happy at this season with a Mask and Jack o'Lantern. We have a large selection of Fun and Noise Makers.

If you are having a party make it festive with Hallowe'en Decorations, Tallies and Favors.

Green's Drug Store
HILTON, N. Y.

Hilton Record Ad October 1932

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From our Camera Roll

A beautiful fall day for cemetery restoration efforts on September 12th at Sage-Knapp Pioneer Cemetery. This sign, along with the other pioneer cemetery signs throughout Parma, was erected in 1976 by Shirley Husted Cox and the PHHS in honor of the nation's Bicentennial. Nearly 50 years later, these signs continue to mark and honor the resting places of Parma's early pioneers.



Dave Crumb speaks to the crowd at the first presentation of our Historical Lecture Series. Before introducing our speaker Amanda Dudley, Dave shared some of his memories and stories about the history of the Hilton Fire Department.

One of the many great historical photos at the PHHS museum of the old Hojack Railroad train station in the town of Parma, circa 1910. Visit the PHHS at HP Rec's "Trunk or Treat" event to see our Hojack Train Station themed "trunk!"



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!

