

Medina - Here's To Our Heritage compiled by Ed Grinnell and edited by Catherine Cooper, has recently been released by the Medina Area Historical Society. What a feeling of satisfaction Ed Grinnell should experience for his uncountable hours of research and writing. As Medina Village Historian, he has given us through his devotion to local history, a meaningful sense of our past. It is on the surface, a compilation of Medina's history, but more deeply it is the legacy of a community largely through peoples' lives which Ed has particularly embraced through his research. The index for individuals is very impressive simply by the hundreds of people listed. Yes, Ed Grinnell and the Medina Historical Society can be very proud of their publication which will last for many years to come as the authoritative word on Medina's history.

While the name Medina carries with it certain perimeters of its geographic location, one should not assume that only Medians will be interested in the book. Let one give this publication a plug by saying it is a local history which should be of interest to the greater Orleans County Community. Incidentally, the book is available at the Medina area Chamber of Commerce office for \$27.00, hard bound.

Our illustration with the article shows the former Medina R.R. Depot erected in 1908, now the Senior Citizens Center.

Here follows some excerpts from the chapter "The Iron Horse Comes To Town":

"Before the advent of the railroad in 1852, the means of transportation for Medina citizens were quite limited. Packet boats made the trip to either Buffalo or Rochester overnight; the stage coaches gave bumpy, dusty ride; carriages were perhaps a luxury that not all could afford; traveling by horseback meant enduring the weather elements. Providing the traveler had enough fortitude, one could always walk.

"Word of a possible railroad must have excited the whole population. The earliest notice found was the Orleans Republican issue of May 17, 1848 which told, "The Directors of the Rochester and Lockport Railroad Company have determined upon the location of their route. We have been shown the detailed map of the route, which passes through all the important and growing villages; Brockport, Holley, Albion, Medina, Middleport -- upon the line of the canal."

"The other Albion paper, Orleans American, reported on a

Stock-holders meeting of December 10th, 1850 (issue of Dec. 19) that the company intended to proceed with its construction (of the rail line from Rochester to Niagara Falls) as fast as possible; with the hope of completion in 18 months."

"The Orleans Republican reported in their issue of July 7, 1852 that the railroad had been completed. The editor that day was privileged to ride the first "regular train from Rochester to Niagara Falls," which he chronicled in the following week's paper.

"On Wednesday last (June 30) we stepped on board -- we found a company of invited guests, the Mayor, Common Council and Press of Rochester amid a number of guests of this place. (Albion). Immediately upon leaving we (observed) the smoothness of the road along which we were flying at times 40 miles an hour. A ride of less than 2 hours brought us to the Falls. -- At 5 o'clock the party took the cars homeward. -- The road is nearly an airline on a perfectly level grade with scarcely a curve the whole distance--"

"The new railroad had an ad. in this same July 7 issue giving the passenger train schedule. Trains going from Rochester to the Falls would be leaving at 6:30 & 9:30 AM and 6:48 PM. From Albion going west at 7:45 AM, 2:15 & 4:50 PM. From Albion east, 9:15 AM, 5:15 & 6:48 PM. No prices were quoted, however, "passengers are urged to procure tickets before entering the cars, a discount of 5 cents on each ticket -- when purchased at office."

"Medina's first depot stood fairly close to the railroad at the north east corner of the West Street (Ave.) crossing. It was raised a few feet with a platform allowing passengers to step on and off at that level. A shed on the east end of the depot housed freight. The Tribune of August 7, 1862 announced that a freight depot would be built. "It will be entirely of Medina Sandstone, 200 feet long and 34 feet wide, covered with a slate roof and made fire proof. The new building will be on the north side of the railroad between West and Prospect streets (should read, and Gwinn Streets)" (The building stood south of the present railroad museum and former Village Square Furniture store, 530 West Ave.)

"The Aug. 7th article continued, "The passenger depot will be moved back -- about 12 feet and sunk to a level with the track."

"The old passenger depot was used into the early 1900's. It had been modernized in 1886, this

was described by the Tribune of Feb. 4th: "the old structure (had) stood ever since the road was built, some 35 years ago. -- The ladies toilet room -- is to be furnished with a table, chairs, toilet articles and a marble wash stand with running water. -- Gas will hereafter be used for lighting -- a new feature."

"On October 27, 1887 the Tribune reported that a fire had been caused by a carpenter using a hot poker to make a hole. The fire department was credited with saving the building. The writer lamented that "the depot was thoroughly overhauled (recently -- and) we hope they will put it in as good shape again." The building was used for approximately another 20 years before being replaced by what is now the Senior Citizen's Center.

For generations the railroad's passenger service was a great benefit to the community. As many as twelve trains each way were on the schedule each day. This gradually changed as the use of automobiles increased and bus lines became available. As early as September 1948 it had been announced by the NY Central that there would no longer be passenger service after the 26th of the month. The Public Service Commission probably did not allow this as the very last train, #49, was reported by the Daily Journal of November 26, 1957."