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**CITY OF NORTH TONAWANDA  
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION**

*Made with pride  
in Western  
New York.*

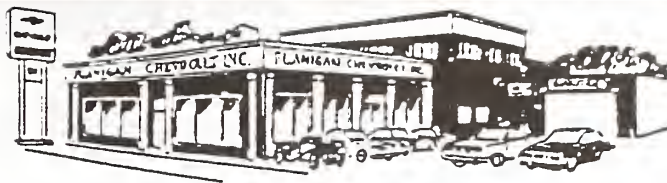


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CHEVROLET HAS BEEN SERVING NORTH TONAWANDA

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# NORTH TONAWANDA CATHOLIC SCHOOL

PARISH SCHOOLS  
EDUCATING NORTH TONAWANDA SINCE 1903



*then*

Ascension School --- est. 1907

Our Lady of Czestochowa School --- est. 1903

St. Joseph School --- est. 1947



*now*

OLC Campus (PreSchool-Gr.2) 57 Center Ave  
St. Joseph Campus (Grade 3-5) 1469 Payne Ave  
Ascension Campus (Grade 6-8) 75 Kell St

Pre School (3 yr old)--2 afternoons

PreSchool (4 yr old)--5 mornings

PreSchool (4 yr old)--3 afternoons

**FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN**

Grades 1-8

- + class sizes limited to 18 students in PreSchool through Grade 2
- + NYS certified teachers (a total of 188 years experience)
- + Art, Music, Library Skills, Physical Education Programs
- + Computers in each PreSchool through Grade 5 classroom for daily use
- + Computer instruction beginning in Grade 3 (Macintosh and IBM Labs)
- + Second Language program
- + After School program
- + Full Remedial and Enrichment program
- + Complete Sports Program
- + Bussing provided to eligible students from N.T., Niagara Wheatfield, and Starpoint

INSTRUCTION IN CATHOLIC FAITH

AND LIVING CHRISTIAN VALUES THROUGHOUT CURRICULUM

*accepting registrations for most PreSchool and Kindergarten through 6th grade classes*



CONTINUING EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Main Office **693-2828**

Participating Parishes:

Ascension, Our Lady of Czestochowa, St. Albert, St. Joseph





## 1997 NORTH TONAWANDA CITY OFFICIALS



### ELECTED CITY OFFICIALS

MAYOR: JAMES A. MCGINNIS

COMMON COUNCIL  
PRESIDENT: DANIEL J. CUDZILO FIFTH WARD

ALDERMEN: CATHERINE G. SCHWANDT FIRST WARD  
LEONARD J. WUDYKA SECOND WARD  
MARY LOU PIEPER THIRD WARD  
KAREN D. MANGEL FOURTH WARD

CITY TREASURER: LESLIE J. STOLZENFELS

CITY ATTORNEY: JEFFREY N. MIS

CITY COURT JUDGE RICHARD C. KLOCH, SR.

### CIVIL SERVICE OR APPOINTED CITY OFFICIALS

CITY ACCOUNTANT:	DAVID R. JAKUBASZEK
CITY BUILDING INSPECTOR:	MICHAEL R. EISENHauer
CITY ASSESSOR:	BRIAN M. HESS
CITY CLERK:	JOHN W. WYLUCKI
CITY ENGINEER:	DALE W. MARSHALL
CODE ENFORCEMENT/PLUMBING:	STEPHEN R. KURBIEL
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:	MICHELE A. TOW
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:	CHARLES R. FLEISCHMAN
FIRE DEPARTMENT:	DAVID A. ROGGE
VITAL STATISTICS:	PATRICIA H. YAHR
POLICE DEPARTMENT:	LLOYD C. GRAVES
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT:	GARY J. FRANKLIN
RECREATION/PARKS/YOUTH:	JOHN P. SILSBY
WASTEWATER TREATMENT:	PAUL J. DROF
WATER DEPARTMENT:	PAUL F. MCDONOUGH

# THE BIRTH OF THE CITY OF NORTH TONAWANDA

**1777:** The New York State Constitution was adopted in 1777, with the City of Kingston named the State Capital. In 1797, the City of Albany was made the State Capital.

**1808:** Niagara County was established on March 11, 1808. It was originally part of Genesee County. Buffalo was the county seat.

**1821:** Erie County was established on April 2, 1821. It was originally part of Niagara County. The northern boundary included that territory of land of the old Niagara County, south of the middle of Tonawanda Creek.

**1836:** The Town of Tonawanda was established on April 16, 1836. It was originally part of Town of Buffalo and included Grand Island, which became a township in 1852.

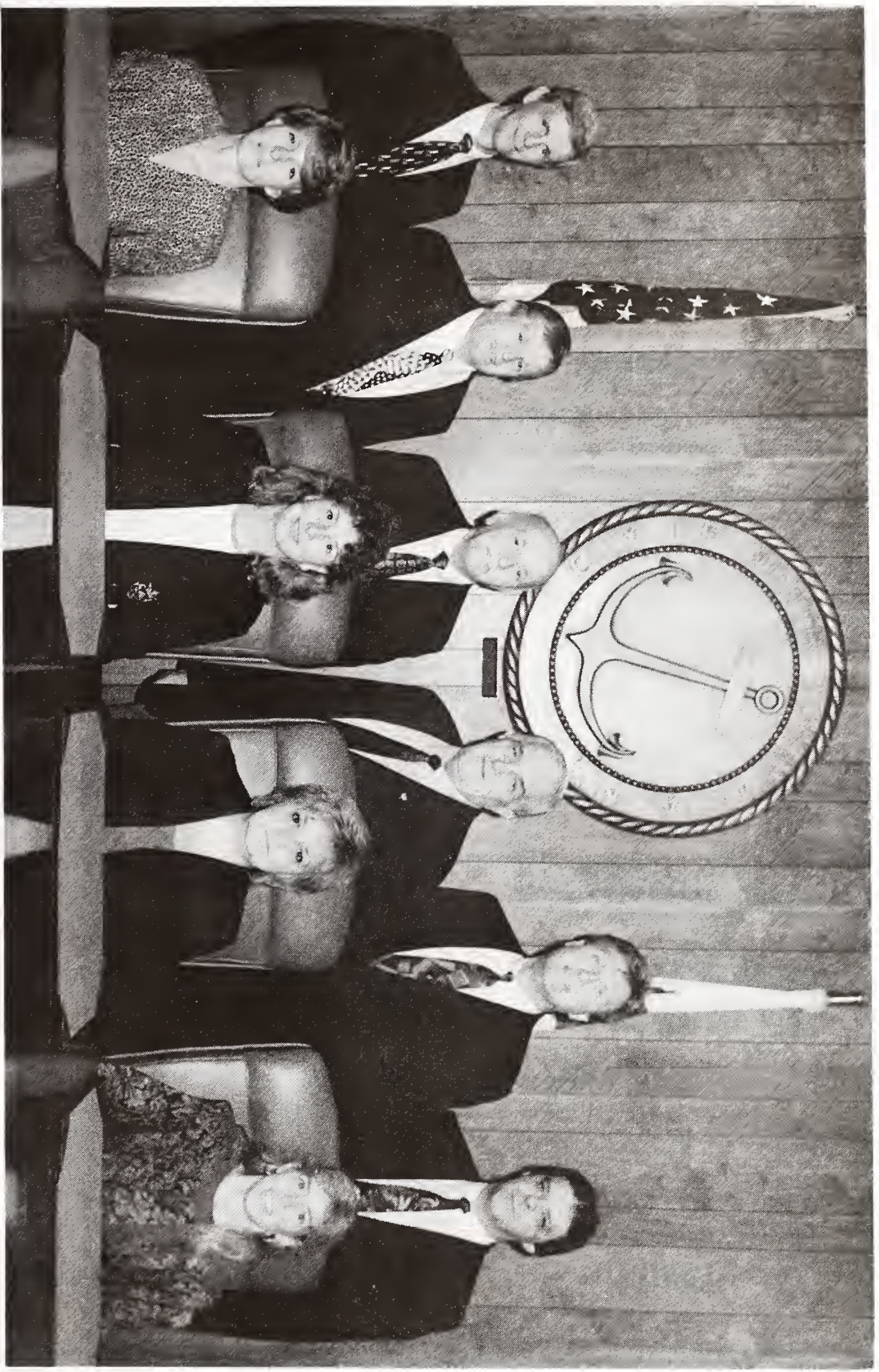
**1836:** The Town of Wheatfield was established on May 12, 1836.

**1857:** The Village of Tonawanda had the unique position of being in two counties. The three wards south of Tonawanda Creek (current the City of Tonawanda) were in Erie county and the forth ward on the north side (currently the City of North Tonawanda), was in Niagara County. The boundaries which form the ward on the north side of the Village of Tonawanda were: the Niagara River, Tonawanda Creek, Division (Mile) Street and Wheatfield Street. There were frequent disputes over which side of the creek should receive the most improvements. The "Gravel Incident", involved a dispute over the transportation of gravel from the gravel pit at Thompson Street and Payne Avenue (located behind the current North Tonawanda City Hall) to repair roads in the Wards located across Tonawanda Creek (currently the City of Tonawanda). After the separation, the settlement became a part of the Town of Wheatfield.

**1865:** An act was introduced in the New York State Legislature on May 8, 1865, incorporating the Village of North Tonawanda. The name "Village of Niagara" was originally considered and used for a short period of time, however, there was already a City of Niagara Falls and a Town of Niagara, so the name North Tonawanda was finally chosen. The boundaries were increased to the present size of the City of North Tonawanda. It had a population of 440 people. The villages of Martinsville and Gratwick were annexed to North Tonawanda.

**1897:** As the lumber business and other industrial ventures grew, there was a requirement for additional municipal services to support the expanding Village. A movement to become a City arose, which caused quite a bit of political wrangling. Finally, an act was introduced in the New York State Legislature on April 24, 1897, incorporating the City of North Tonawanda. Albert E. Keen, Village President, became the first Mayor. The sidewalks were made of wooden planks and the streets were gravel.





**CITY OFFICIALS - 1997**

standing: CHESTER R. KLIMEK - Deputy City Clerk, DANIEL J. CUDZILO - Common Council President, JAMES A. MCGINNIS - Mayor  
LEONARD J. WUDYKA - Second Ward Alderman, JEFFREY N. MIMS - City Attorney, JOHN W. WYLUCKI - City Clerk  
seated: LESLIE J. STOLZENFELS - City Treasurer, MARY LOU PIEPER - Third Ward Alderman, KAREN D. MANGEL - Fourth Ward Alderman  
CATHERINE G. SCHWANDT - First Ward Alderman





Albert E. McKeen  
1897



Jacob Y. Smeaton  
1898



W. Cooke Oille  
1899-1902



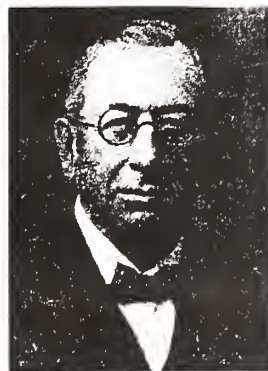
Henry Smoyer  
1903-4



James P. MacKenzie  
1905-6 1926-27



Eugene de Kleist  
1907-8



Louis T. Fick  
1909-12



John A. Kafer  
1913-14



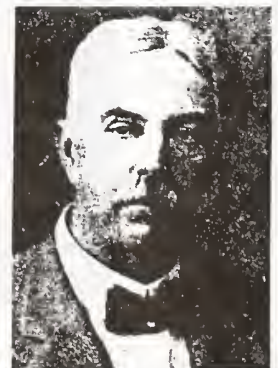
Benjamin L. Rand  
1915-18



Carl F. Drewes  
1919-25



Robert R. Pullen  
1928-31 1934-35



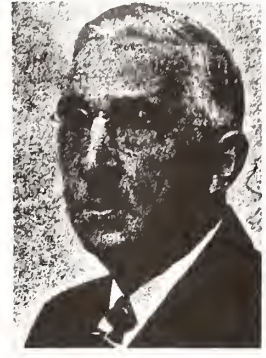
Samuel W. Brown  
1932-33



John E. Wallace  
1936-37 1940-43



Myles W. Joyce  
1938-39 1944-47  
1952-55 1960-61



Stanley M. Rosinski  
1948-51

# CITY OF NORTH TONAWANDA MAYORS



Frederick B. Durkee  
1956-57 1963-66



John F. Koczynski  
1958-59



Henry P. Smith III  
1962



Paul A. Rumbold  
1967-1971



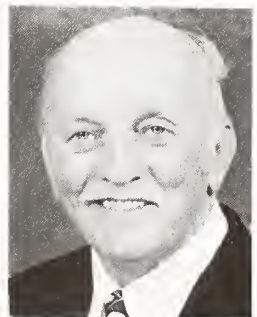
Edward S. Wlata  
1972-1975



William C. Wittkowsky  
1976-1979



Elizabeth C. Hoffman  
1980-1992



James A. McGinnis  
1993-1997



# CITY OF NORTH TONAWANDA FACTS

The City of North Tonawanda, located midway between Buffalo and Niagara Falls, is the second largest community in the County of Niagara, and the 15 largest city out of 62 in the State of New York. The 1990 population, according to The United States Census Bureau was 34,989. North Tonawanda has a land area of 10.5 square miles. The City's infrastructure includes 118 miles of paved highways, 121 miles of sanitary sewers and 60 miles of storm sewers. The perimeter of the City is 13.5 miles, 9.26 miles of which is waterfront. There are 244 acres of wetlands within the 6,830 acres which comprise the total area of the City. It is located 566 feet above sea level and has an annual temperature of 46.8 degrees and an average rainfall of 36 inches. Moody's Investor Service, a New York City firm that rates governments, gave North Tonawanda an A rating on our debt, the only City in Western New York to have that high a rating. The City is served by Conrail, NFTA bus lines, the Buffalo and Niagara Falls Airports, the New York State Thruway and major county and state highways. Two prominent water resources serve as Municipal boundaries: the New York State Barge Canal (Tonawanda Creek) on the south and the Niagara River on the west.



Subject to the provisions of the State Constitution, the City operates pursuant to its Charter and various other laws applicable to the City. The Legislative power of the City is vested in the Common Council which consist of five Aldermen, all of whom are elected concurrently for a two-year term. The Mayor is also elected for a two-year term. Electricity and natural gas are supplied throughout the City by Niagara Mohawk Power

Corporation and National Fuel Gas, respectively. Sanitary sewer collection, treatment and disposal facilities are maintained by the City. The City also maintains its own water supply and distribution system. In reference to public safety, the City maintains a central police headquarters, an emergency management office, and seven fire stations. Garbage, street repair and snow plowing are some of the major functions performed by the Department of Public Works. In the area of recreation, the City maintains 2 swimming pools, 17 playgrounds, 13 tennis courts, 11 softball diamonds, 13 hardball diamonds, 5 major parks, a youth center and an 18 hole golf course.

Historically, North Tonawanda has been an important regional manufacturing center. The City's strategic location at the confluence at the Erie Canal (now called the Barge Canal) encouraged the development of a strong industrial corridor along the waterfront and on Tonawanda Island, which is accessible by both vehicular and rail traffic. Major shopping centers are easily accessible. We are now focusing on the Tourist trade to include Canal Fest, the Herschell Factory Complex, the Carnegie Cultural Center, the Rivera Theater and a major commitment by, New York State, to develop the Tonawandas' canal shoreline and harbor.



**NORTH TONAWANDA**





Albert Smith



George Smith



Edward Harrington



Fred Root

## CITY COURT JUDGES



J. Theodore Moses



Howard Praker

On April 24, 1897 the Village of North Tonawanda was incorporated into a city. In the 100 years since then, the voters have elected ten City Judges.



Katherine Rowley Lautz



Anthony Brick



Robert Duerr



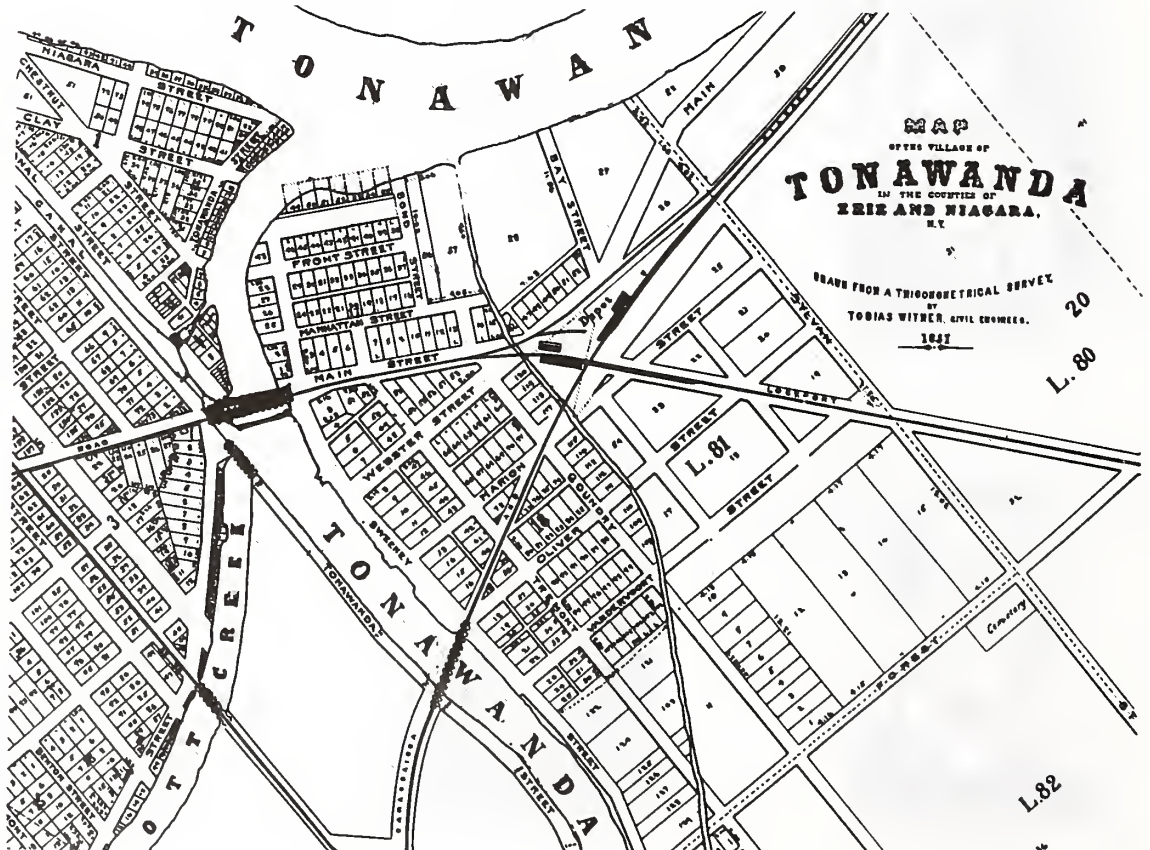
Richard C. Kloeh, Sr.





Tonawanda Iron was constructed by the Niagara Iron & Steel Company in 1873 and became the Tonawanda Iron & Steel Company in 1889. In 1895, a second blast furnace was put in operation. President William McKinley sent the spark to ignite the furnace by wireless from the White House. Tonawanda Iron, which produced approximately 3,000 rail car loads of pig iron each year, closed its doors in 1972.

Aerial View of the Tonawanda Iron Works and the International Paper Company on Tonawanda Island, c. 1960



A portion of the original 26 acre site was used for Fisherman's Park. The International Paper Company was established in 1925 and occupied a 29 acre site until 1975 when it closed its Tonawanda Island facility. Freighters regularly delivered raw materials, logs and wood chips for conversion into paper products. Smith Boys Marina now occupies the former International Paper site.



## CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE



**Robert and Marigail Sondel:** Robert and Marigail are Co-Chairmen of our Centennial Committee. Robert currently serves as Assistant City Attorney and is a life-long resident of North Tonawanda. In 1974 he married Marigail, then a Buffalo resident, and she also fell in love with the City. Both Bob and Marigail are active in area organizations and are interested in keeping North Tonawanda the outstanding community that it is.



Front Row: David Jakubaszek, Bob Sondel, Marigail Sondel, Sandy Wurl  
 Back Row: Joe Duval, William Miles, Nancy Bolduc, Cathy Schwant



Front Row: Sally Ann Glynn, Judith Kay Miller, Mildred Olscamp, Rosemary Gugino  
 Back Row: Alexander B. Soos, Charles Gugino, Walter G. Miller, Keith Lemke,  
 Dale S. Rogers, William Miles, Pat Sinnott, Fred Wisniewski

Absent: Charlie Fleischman, Elizabeth Robson, Terry Shaw, Rae Proefrock, Dan Killian,  
 Dr. Robert Chick, Richard Keil, Paula Barnard, Kelly Simon, Dan Haight



## CENTENNIAL BIRTHDAY PARTY COMMITTEE



**FREE  
ADMISSION**

**NT  
Centennial  
Birthday  
Party & Dance**

*Thursday, April 24, 1997*

**High School  
Auditorium  
7:00 - 11:00 p.m.  
Doors Open 6:00 p.m.**

**Gifts,  
Cake  
&  
Ice Cream**

100  
1897 1997  
NORTH TONAWANDA

A decorative graphic featuring a rope border. Inside the border, there is a small illustration of a figure holding a banner with the number '100' and the years '1897' and '1997'. The text 'NORTH TONAWANDA' is written at the bottom of the graphic.

**Maryalice Demler:** Maryalice, our Birthday Party Mistress of Ceremonies, is a North Tonawanda native. Currently a television news anchor for WGRZ, Channel 2 in Buffalo, she is an honors graduate of Niagara University. A former Miss New York State, she is a volunteer with the T.O.Y.S. Program, Canal Fest and other community organizations. Maryalice and her husband, Nate Marton, make their home in North Tonawanda.



**Front Row:** MaryLou Pieper, Jean Jakubaszek, Elyn Broeker  
**Back Row:** Chairman David Jakubaszek, Mary Brenzel,  
Leslie Stolzenfels, Norman Alexander.

**Additional Thank-You's to:** Wegmans Food Market on Niagara Falls Blvd. and Tops Friendly Market on Nash Road for their donations of the birthday cake. Also, Richard Keil, Frank Keller, Jerry Waldkoetter, Irene Niese Riemer, Judy Ellman, Cathy Gambino, Charlie Fleischman, the Common Council, Board of Education, Tonawanda News, and all others who contributed to the success of our Centennial book and birthday party.



Left to Right: Michele Tow, David Jakubaszek, Sandra Wurl

**CENTENNIAL  
BOOK  
COMMITTEE**

**David R. Jakubaszek:** David is the City Accountant and Chairman of the Centennial Birthday Party. The son of Theodore and Helen, he is a life-long resident of North Tonawanda. He received a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Gannon University and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army. David and his wife, Jean, have four children: Jennifer, Michael, Thomas and Joseph.

**Sandra A. Wurl:** Sandra has worked in the city's Community Development Office since 1986. Her experience in assisting with grant applications helped in the production of this book. Sandy is proud of her family name and heritage. She was surprised to learn that, in 1843, Edmund Wurl was one of the purchasers of land that became "Martinsville," her home town, and that Martin Wurl sat on the first City Council in 1897.

**Michele A. Tow:** As Community Development Director, Michele enjoys working with residents to preserve the City's historic treasures. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, she has degrees from Ohio Wesleyan University and SUNY at Buffalo.

**THANKS FOR YOUR INVALUABLE ASSISTANCE WITH RESEARCH, PHOTOS AND WRITING, AND YOUR SHARP RECOLLECTIONS OF OUR HISTORY**



Left to Right: Elizabeth Robson, Willard Dittmar, Janet McKenna

**Willard B. Dittmar:** Willard is president of the Historical Society of the Tonawandas, formed in 1961. The Society's Museum opened in 1964 in the old New York Central Railroad Station, where he is Curator and Exhibit Director. Mr. Dittmar is also Historian for the City of Tonawanda. Willard worked in the Engineering Department of Remington Rand Corporation on Main Street in the City of Tonawanda for 35 years.

**Elizabeth Robson:** Elizabeth, North Tonawanda Historian, is shown in costume during the 1995 T-NT Days at the Heritage Coalition booth. A school teacher at Col. Payne for many years, Ms. Robson taught the first grade and fourth grade, where the curriculum of local history encouraged her to explore the rich history of the Tonawandas region. She belongs to the Historical Society of the Tonawandas, as well as other Historical Societies.

**Janet McKenna:** Janet, reference librarian at the North Tonawanda Public Library from 1971-96, helped a generation of North Tonawandas do research. Mrs. McKenna is an alumna of Syracuse University and SUNY at Buffalo. She was a founding member of Literacy Volunteers of North Tonawanda and has served on the boards of directors of the Historical Society of the Tonawandas and the YWCA of the Tonawandas.



# NORTH TONAWANDA CENTENNIAL CALENDAR

January 4, 1997	Beard and Moustache contest registration begins
April 24, 1997	First-day cancellation from the Post Office goes on sale
April 24, 1997	Birthday party at the North Tonawanda High School Auditorium
April 25, 1997	Shrine Chanters Centennial Music Program sponsored by ZONTA
June 14 and 15, 1997	Garage Sale of the Century
July 3, 1997	Musical Celebration of the 100th Anniversary
July 4, 1997	Fireworks to commemorate the City's Centennial
July 5, 1997	Dedication of Heritage Park
July 6, 1997	Centennial Parade
July 20, 1997	Beard and moustache judging at Canalfest
October 4, 1997	Oktoberfest at Gratwick Hose Hall



**NORTH TONAWANDA**





Aerial View of North Tonawanda and Tonawanda Island, c. 1957





## ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF HISTORY

Five great bodies of water with their connecting rivers and streams have shaped the history of Western New York and North Tonawanda in particular for centuries. The four great Ice Ages scooped out valleys and deposited rocks and gravel in certain places when they melted. As they receded they left the Great Lakes. Animals which had wandered south to escape the cold gradually returned so that the lakes were teeming with fish and the forests home for deer, bear, beaver and many other animals.

This wilderness area was attractive to the human beings who began to inhabit the Western Hemisphere. They needed water to live, food was abundant, and moving from place to place was fairly easy by boat, however fragile the craft. It is believed that they migrated from Asia across the Bering Strait to Alaska and dispersed through the continent east and south. The people who settled here were the Neuters, so-called by the French fur traders when they began to come through in the early 16th century. There were a few small villages scattered through this area. Some artifacts were found on Tonawanda Island which may be from a people who predated the Neuters.

Most of the Indians in New York State were Senecas, Cayugas, Onondagas, Oneidas and Mohawks. They lived further east. The Mohawks were the Keepers of the Eastern Door near the Hudson River. The Onondagas were the Keepers of the Council Fire, and the Senecas were the Keepers of the Western Door. These nations were constantly at war with each other until they agreed to join in the Iroquois League. Then other nations who would not join them became the enemy. The Hurons, Neuters and the Eries who lived in what we call Ohio were attacked, killed, adopted, or dispersed. There was so much fighting in the area that it became known as the "dark and bloody ground." The Senecas, whose homes were chiefly near the Genesee River, only came to this area to hunt and fish.

Explorers from Europe began coming through here in the early sixteen hundreds, first the French "voyageurs" and then the English, traders all, mostly in furs. The Tonawandas were not very significant at first except for the stream that had to be crossed: the Ton-e-wan-ta which means "swift water." The Indians for many years had a trail for portaging between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie which went between the present Lewiston and Buffalo to by-pass the Falls and the rapids.

The conflict between the French and the English finally erupted into the French and Indian War, won by the British. The victors took over Fort Niagara, Fort Schlosser above the Falls, and the trail along the Niagara River. They called it the Military Road. In North Tonawanda it followed quite closely the present River Road, Webster Street, and went by pontoon bridge or ferry across Tonawanda Creek to the present Main Street in Tonawanda. The remnants of that Military Road still exist in Niagara Falls and from the southern boundary of Tonawanda to Grant Street in Buffalo.

The British began making improvements in the movement of goods when they took over. They laid off the Indians who had been carrying the goods along the portage to Fort Schlosser and used carts instead. The Indians resented the loss of wages so they waylaid a wagon train returning to Lewiston from Fort Schlosser at what we now call Devil's Hole, attacked the soldiers and pushed the wagons off the cliff. Only the wagon master, John Stedman, and the drummer boy named Matthews escaped. In restitution, Sir William Johnson, Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the British Government, exacted from the Iroquois a reservation of four miles on both sides of the Niagara River for the British Government.

When the Americans took over from the British after the Revolution, they reduced the reserved land to one mile. Many residents in North Tonawanda today see on their deeds "part of the Great Lot (x) of the Niagara River Reservation." Property west of Division Street is within that reserved area. Division Street was at one time named Mile Street because it is one mile east of the Niagara River. That is North Tonawanda's legacy from the Devil's Hole massacre.



Because of all the fighting in the Western New York area families would not move here. There were some cabins used by fur traders but it was not until about 1809 that families started to come. George N. Burger was the earliest known settler, followed by Joshua Pettit in 1810. He settled on property near a stream which now runs through Fisherman's Park and is called Pettit's Creek Flume. Another early settler was Garret VanSlyke. He built a tavern on the north side of Tonawanda Creek in 1810. He had two daughters who operated a toll rope ferry across the creek. They once helped in the capture of a thief by stalling his escape across the creek.

The War of 1812 encompassed the destruction of almost all buildings in this settlement called Niagara on both sides of Tonawanda Creek. But by 1817 settlers were beginning to come. The Erie Canal digging had commenced in Rome, New York. It promised great economic expansion along its length when it was completed. The community of Niagara could not fail to benefit.

Stephen Jacobs, a veteran of the Battle of Bunker Hill, bought 196 acres of land along the Niagara River about two miles north of Tonawanda Creek in 1817. It was sold to him for \$9 an acre by Judge Augustus Porter, a Buffalo resident whose family has had a significant influence on the growth of Western New York. James Carney settled on Tonawanda Island, sometimes called "Carney's Island", in 1819. In 1825 the Island was sold at public auction but because of speculation the price rose above what Carney had provided and he lost it and moved to the mainland.

Colonel John Sweeney and his brother, James, first settled in Buffalo in 1811. They bought much of the land north of Tonawanda Creek, later the Erie Canal, and had it cleared of lumber which was used to build a pier in Buffalo and to sell to settlers who purchased lots and needed the lumber to build their homes. The Sweeneys donated land for the first schoolhouse. Its location has a marker erected by the Historical Society of the Tonawandas on Main Street between Tremont and Goundry. They also gave the land for the Methodist Church which stands there. They were involved in the building of the first railroad depot and James' son John became the station agent. The Sweeney brothers had the first dock on Tonawanda Creek constructed and built the first grist mill and sawmill. They held several political offices. In 1825 James was given the right to operate a ferry from the north side of Tonawanda Creek to Grand Island.

Dr. Jesse F. Locke was the first resident physician to locate his office in the Tonawandas. He started his practice in the village in 1838 and continued until his death in 1860. Henry P. Smith was a pioneer lumberman. He started rafting logs from the shores of Lake Erie to the Tonawandas. His descendant, Henry P. Smith III, was a congressman from this area for a number of years.

In the meantime William Vandervoorte (the family later dropped the "e") had bought 1,700 acres of land from the Holland Land Company and built a home for himself. He sold lots to settlers including a large group from North Germany who had come to this country to escape religious persecution. They called their village Martinsville after the Lutheran leader Martin Luther. They settled along Sawyer's Creek and part of the Erie Canal. Their street was called William Street at one time, then Niagara Falls Boulevard. Sweeney Street joined it at Bush's Bridge which carried wagons and later cars from the brick road across the canal and on into Buffalo. Eventually Martinsville was annexed to North Tonawanda as was Gratwick. The street name was changed to Old Falls Boulevard when the curve in Niagara Falls Boulevard near the Wurlitzer plant was straightened out. The Boulevard now crosses the land where a sawmill stood which obtained its power from Sawyer's Creek.

Another group of immigrants from Germany established itself firmly at the northern end of the area. Many of the men worked for White, Gratwick and Mitchell, a large lumber operation along the Niagara River near the present Riverside Chemical Company. Their community was called Gratwick. Mr. Gratwick was very wealthy. He owned two other companies, one of which controlled a 31,000 acre forest in northern Michigan. He lived in a turreted mansion on the northwest corner of Delaware Avenue and Summer Street in Buffalo. When Gratwick visited the mill, he must have had to come by carriage, train or trolley. He was connected to many civic activities.

Men who were not employed in the lumbering industry found work in the band organ and wood carving business, or other employment connected with the great availability of lumber. Gratwick was a self-contained little village, as was Martinsville, with stores and other businesses along Oliver Street. Most of the families belonged to the Lutheran religion. They established St. Paul's Lutheran Church in 1888 on Washington Street and St. Mark Lutheran Church in 1891. St. Paul's has moved to East Felton Street and St. Mark's to Oliver Street. The building of the new St. Mark's took place while the Rev. Paul H. Fretthold was pastor there. His tenure was 42 years. He was prominent and nationally known among Lutherans as well as being respected and beloved among his congregation.

William Vandervoort built the first hotel and managed a store on Grand Island when Stephen White began cutting the white oak there and sending it to Boston for shipbuilding. In 1836 a bank was established in the store. Vandervoort built the first brick residence for his sister, Sarah, on the north bank of the Erie Canal where the Packet Center now stands. White built a luxurious mansion in 1835 called "Beechwater" on Tonawanda Island near where Steamers Restaurant is now. Here he entertained Daniel Webster, the famous orator, U.S. Senator and statesman, as well as other prominent families. Webster was associated with White in business. Webster's son, Fletcher, married White's daughter. The island was the local center of lumbering activity and, unfortunately, the mansion was demolished in 1906 to make more room for the immense stacks of lumber.

North Tonawanda's present Main Street was originally named Webster Street to honor Daniel Webster. Main Street had been the old Military Road joining Main Street on the south side according to a map of 1866. By 1875 Main Street became the road joining Delaware Street in Tonawanda to River Road in North Tonawanda. The principal business area became Webster Street.

Development of the community of North Tonawanda was slow in the mid-eighteen hundreds but individuals began small enterprises such as general stores, grist mills, grain storage facilities, news publications, banks, and the like. Settlers moving west renewed their grocery stock, perhaps arranged for further water transportation, picked up supplies they would need in their new home or arranged for a letter to go back home to say how they were.

A spur to development came with the advent of the railroads. They detracted from the business on the canal but commercial shipping was cheaper, though slower, by canal. Railroad tracks ran right down the center of Main Street in Tonawanda and Webster Street on the north side. At one time there were sixteen different railroad companies using the tracks in the Tonawandas and there were three streetcar lines.

By the 1870's the lumber business was taking off. Logs from the shores of Lake Erie were running out, so rafting of logs fell off. Sawmills were being built further west so that ships could be loaded compactly with sawed lumber and shipped to the Tonawandas for transshipment by canal or rail. The Tonawandas Harbor was crowded with vessels waiting to be unloaded and then reloaded with machinery and other products needed further west. At one time the Tonawandas were the lumber capital of the world. Lumber was stacked from Isle View to Witmer Road with only a few breaks such as the Niagara Iron Works, later the Tonawanda Iron Works. Stacked lumber led to several disastrous fires among the lumber businesses in the two communities. Volunteer fire companies from the whole surrounding area would respond with their horse-drawn carts carrying their water tanks pumped by manpower. When firehouse horses died they were often honored like members of the brigade.

Another important commodity shipped on the canal was grain. As the Midwest became populated, farmers shipped the grain from their rolling acres of golden wheat by water through the Great Lakes. North Tonawanda had a grain elevator owned by Louis T. Fick in 1882. There was a flour mill owned by McDonald & Ebersole and a feed mill owned by Franklin Getz in 1883.



The Civil War was felt profoundly by North Tonawanda not only by its people but by their businesses. The most famous person was Lewis S. Payne. He was already an established businessman, husband and father. He raised a company of soldiers, outfitted them and was elected their captain. Payne became a scout for the Union Army. He was captured in 1862 while on duty and spent three years in a Confederate prison before being exchanged in March, 1865. He reached home on April 1, with the rank of Colonel, eight days before the assassination of President Lincoln. Col. Payne continued in business and politics after the war as before. He is buried in Elmlawn Cemetery. There is a blue and gold State marker on the central drive showing the direction to his grave.

Many men of the area fought in the Civil War, not the least of whom was Fred Sommer. He was wounded at the Battle of Bull Run, discharged, and then volunteered as a guard at the prisoner-of-war camp in Elmira. A little known fact about the Civil War is that in North Tonawanda an iron-clad ship was being built for the Union Navy to take on the Confederate's Merrimac. It was named the "Tonawanda" but never saw duty because the war ended before it was commissioned.

The use of natural gas for lighting streets and homes grew in the mid-to-late eighteen hundreds. Crude oil wells were discovered and research began on uses for it, leading to kerosene stoves and lamps, motor oil and a myriad of other uses. Manufacturing burgeoned in the late eighteen hundreds and early 20th Century. The Niagara River Iron Company was formed in 1872. Although it ran into financial trouble and closed, it reopened as the Tonawanda Iron Company.

Four band organ companies were operating in North Tonawanda at one time. The one that lasted the longest was the Herschell-Spillman Company, one of whose buildings now houses the Carousel Museum.

Eugene DeKleist owned the band organ company on Niagara Falls Boulevard near the trolley line to Lockport. He went into business with Rudolph Wurlitzer who bought him out and continued making musical instruments in the same building, renaming it Wurlitzer. Over the years, Rudolph and later his son, Farney, made the coin-operated record player, the electronic organ and piano and various devices to help in World Wars I and II. Farney's home still stands on the southwest corner of Goundry and Niagara Streets. Eugene DeKleist's modest factory still stands behind the larger Wurlitzer Industrial Complex on Niagara Falls Blvd.

With the rapid growth of manufacturing came the influx of immigration. Some of the Irish who helped build the canal stayed on. Many Germans came in the first waves to escape conscription into the army, because of religious persecution, and to find work in band organ manufacturing and wood carving. They established Lutheran churches and schools. Hungarians came and also established a church. With the advent of large numbers of Polish and Italian families came the need for Roman Catholic churches to be added to those of the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists.

In the early years of settlement after the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, Tonawanda and North Tonawanda were one community called Niagara. Then the large western county of Genesee was divided into Erie County and Niagara County with the dividing line at the canal. In 1854 the community became the Village of Tonawanda consisting of four wards. The First Ward was located on the north side of the canal (Tonawanda Creek) and the other three wards were south of the canal.

In the 1850's petty differences arose between the First Ward and the other three over the gravel pit off Thompson Street near Payne Avenue in the First Ward. Gravel was taken and used for street purposes in all four wards. First Ward residents believed that taxes collected from their ward should be used to pay for work and gravel only on the streets of the First Ward. A resolution to that effect was brought before the Village Board of Trustees on May 6, 1854. However, the resolution was tabled, thus temporarily ending the dispute...but not for long! The Village continued to use First Ward gravel in the wards south of the canal (or creek) which further deteriorated the situation.

The result was that, in 1855, the Village Board finally authorized the First Ward to withdraw from the Village of Tonawanda and in 1857 the State Legislature gave its approval. The two communities, however, still had many ties involving business, social, and family matters. The area north of the canal (the former First Ward) became part of the Township of Wheatfield for the following eight years and was governed by the Town Supervisors. By 1865 the community wanted to incorporate as a village. On May 8 the State Legislature approved and the weighty question of a name arose. "Niagara" was considered but there were already so many "Niagaras" that the "Village of North Tonawanda" was finally chosen. The Village continued to grow in population and expand in land area. Along with its sister village south of the canal, the two together became the largest lumber port in the world and an important manufacturing center.

The Village Council Hall and Live Hose were located on Thompson Street between the railroad tracks and Oliver Street. The facility, built in 1874, also served as the first City Hall after North Tonawanda became a city. Municipal offices were located on the second floor.

As the lumber business and other ventures grew coupled with the Village's rapid expansion and "growing pains" a movement arose to become a city, causing quite a bit of political wrangling. Lewis T. Payne, lawyer and son of Col. Lewis S. Payne, was opposed because he feared it would raise taxes. Nevertheless the State Legislature concurred and Henry E. Warner, a lawyer and assemblyman representing the village, introduced a bill to incorporate North Tonawanda as a city. On his second attempt, the bill was passed on April 24, 1897 and immediately signed by Governor Black. Assemblyman Warner telegraphed home with the good news that North Tonawanda was now a city. The sidewalks were made of wooden planks and the streets were gravel, but North Tonawanda was indeed a city.

Our second City Hall was located at the corner of Main and Tremont Streets in a building that also housed the Police Department and the YMCA.

In 1914 Europe became embroiled in World War I which lasted until 1918. The United States joined in 1917 after the sinking of the passenger ship "Lusitania." Many young men from the Tonawandas went off to war. Young women joined them as ambulance drivers and nurses. Men at home worked in factories to make products needed for war and women worked with the Red Cross, making bandages and knitting warm clothing for the "boys at the front." Some may remember the face of Uncle Sam on the poster with his finger pointing right at the viewer as he says, "Uncle Sam wants YOU! Buy War Bonds." Thirty-seven boys and men from North Tonawanda made the supreme sacrifice for their country in "The Great War."

LeGrand Simson DeGraff, a prominent businessman, held a belief considered startling in his day, that a person enjoying material success owed a debt of gratitude to his community. On June 13, 1913, DeGraff, together with Army surgeon Dr. John A. Rafter and the Mayor, unveiled a plan to construct a community hospital in North Tonawanda. They rounded up support in the business community of the Tonawandas and DeGraff said that he and his associates were prepared to foot the entire bill for a brand new hospital building, fully equipped and ready to operate, at a cost not to exceed \$40,000. There were two major conditions...that the indigent of the communities would receive free hospital care and the two cities were to maintain the hospital property. If they failed to meet these conditions for over two months, the property would revert to the donors for disposal. DeGraff lent his leadership, financial resources and ultimately his name to the hospital which would serve the Tonawandas. On November 30, 1914 DeGraff Memorial Hospital was unveiled to the public, and the first patient was admitted on December 4, 1914 at the cost of \$1.30.

Then, along came the flu epidemic of 1918. During the fall, every day brought its obituaries in the newspaper. DeGraff Hospital was unable to take all the cases of the "Spanish Flu" as it was called. The YMCA, located where Flanigan's Chevrolet is now, was pressed into service to accommodate cots in the gymnasium. Every able-bodied person helped. The Red Cross was very busy at home and abroad in those days.



After the war women united to get the right to vote (granted in 1920) and prohibition was instituted which lasted about fourteen years (1919 - 1933). During that time there was quite a bit of "rum-running" between Canada and the United States across the Niagara River, Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. The Jazz Era, the Roaring Twenties, had begun with bobbed hair, short skirts, dances like the Charleston and the Black Bottom. There were several dance halls in and around the city. Young men would take their dates there or maybe they would go to a movie, stopping afterwards at the Sugar Bowl for a soda or sundae. A fellow might even get a goodnight kiss at the door if he played his cards right.

Although there was an economic slump after the war, employment improved. New industries and businesses were springing up. Durez was founded in 1921. The Tonawanda Iron Works was going well. The Niagara Savings and Loan was thriving. Remington Rand, Cramer Industrial Supplies, the Auto Wheel Coaster Company, Lenox Furniture, International Paper Company and numerous lumber companies were functioning. Van Raalte Silk Mill, where the Packet Center is now, was making silk stockings. The Rivera Theater was opened in 1926 with silent movies in black and white to the tunes of the "Mighty Wurlitzer" organ.

In 1929 the cornerstone was laid for a new City Hall building. It was constructed on Payne Avenue by Thompson Street on one side and the property known as Brauer Park on the other. Dedicated in 1930, the cost was \$200,000. City Hall now occupies the site of the infamous "gravel pit" that led to the separation of the Village of Tonawanda into two areas, one north of the canal and the other south of the canal, that eventually became the Cities of North Tonawanda and Tonawanda.

And then came the crash of 1929! Businesses closed, factories laid off workers, people were forced to use whatever they had been able to save to live on. They tried to get credit at the grocery store and come to an arrangement with the landlord about the rent. There was no safety net of welfare or unemployment insurance. Private social services were overwhelmed with applications for assistance.

Some families tried to grow a few vegetables in their yards. If the law allowed, they might keep a few chickens for eggs and meat. In early spring dandelion greens with bacon grease and vinegar dressing substituted for lettuce. Wild strawberries and other berries supplemented the diet. Those who had access to a creek and were experienced might be able to catch enough frogs for a frog-leg meal, or a snapping turtle for turtle soup. Some householders knew edible mushrooms well enough to feel safe in gathering them after a rainy spell. Many housewives knew how to cook animal heart, liver, kidneys, brains and stomachs (sweetbreads) to supply protein. For after-school snacks, children often had a cup of milk-soaked bread or a piece of bread and butter with a forbidden sprinkle of brown sugar.

Few "Help Wanted" ads were running. Gradually the government provided some programs which helped. Companies which had closed or slowed down were encouraged to begin producing again under the National Recovery Act. A group of young men whose families were on relief (welfare) had just joined the Civilian Conservation Corps and older men were offered the Works Progress Administration. These two groups performed public works projects. The 1937 North Tonawandan read repeatedly that, "the rearmed nations of Europe were ready for another war."

Sixty years ago North Tonawanda was a busy town. The Tonawandas City Directory for 1937 exhorted, "The Twin Cities are rapidly losing their separate identity. While not yet united politically, they are so united in spirit, and in civic and patriotic endeavor, that they have come to be known everywhere as 'The Tonawandas'." The Twin Cities' population was estimated at 33,503. Labor and jobs were vitally important to the Depression community. About 10,000 men...no mention of women...were employed in local industries.

Some of those companies were: Buffalo Bolt Co., Rudolph Wurlitzer Manufacturing Co., Remington Rand, Inc. (early information retrievers), American District Steam Co., International Paper Co., Van Raalte Co. (fabric producers), Buffalo Steel Co., Creo-Dipt (manufacturers of shingles), Auto Wheel Coaster Co. (producers of children's wagons and sleds), Spillman Engineering Corp. (amusement rides)...all moved, merged or gone today.

Still here in 1997 are William Wattengel Funeral Home, Riverside Chemical, Inc., in business since 1906, Wagenschuetz Hardware Co. and Buffalo Pumps. In 1937 Berry Electric Co. advertised home service for electric appliances. Walker Brothers and Monroe sold and repaired timepieces at 50 Webster Street. Insurance coverage could be obtained from Crown Insurance, which might cover repairs to your car at Kudla's Collision Service. The present Chesapeake Packaging was then Tonawanda Corrugated Box Company.

The Tonawandas still were a large white pine lumber market because of the Great Lakes, the Barge Canal and railroads which facilitated transport. Among the goods produced by the still plentiful lumber yards were millwork, trim, wall boards, and shingles. Bennett Homes, many of which were built on Stanley and Bennett Streets and near present day Lowry Middle School, were produced by Bennett Lumber Company and advertised nationally.

The Lowry Middle School building was formerly the city's high school with George Lowry as principal. He retained that post for 30 years. Legendary football coach George Vetter had just been appointed. Felton Grammar School, a large Victorian edifice constructed in 1901 at Bryant and Thompson Streets, served younger scholars. It was named for active citizen and past Board of Education President Benjamin Felton and had been the high school from its opening until 1926. Seven elementary, two Roman Catholic, and four Lutheran schools educated primary students.

In June, 1937 someone with a spare \$.50 could escape the heat and the Depression with a sail on the show boat Canadiana for a three hour ride on Lake Erie. Dancing to an orchestra and a cooling lake ride were part of the tab. Twenty-eight couples took out marriage licenses, almost double 1936's totals. A six-room house on East Felton Street was advertised for \$3,200. If you were one of 958 citizens working a 40-hour week at Remington Rand making Aristocrat and Kardex files, you could save your money at the State and First Trust Banks and get a mortgage and a \$113 Frigidaire for your new kitchen. If a worker lacked a private car, public transport could carry the family to Niagara Falls, Buffalo, or Lockport on trolley cars, but their days were numbered even before World War II. On August 20, 1937, mounting labor unrest contributed to the demise of the International Railway Company. Their tracks remained for years. Carpenter's Rapid Transit provided local bus service, and the Erie, New York Central, and Lehigh Valley railroads carried passengers and freight.

Gratwick, the First Ward, Oliver Street, and the streets west of Division existed in 1937 as they do today. But there were many blank spaces on the 1937 map. Wurlitzer Park, the properties along Sweeney Street (except for Martinsville) and north of Walck Road, and the area behind Ward Road were sparsely inhabited. Homeowners could see the railroad tracks clearly from Ward Road.

The *Evening News* had just been bought by Charles E. Hewitt. Social Security legislation had recently been held constitutional by the Supreme Court. Amelia Earhart's plane was lost. Actress Jean Harlow succumbed to kidney disease. "Okies" left their dust bowl homes for the far west. Murder and scandal were perennially popular news stories.

Remington Rand was founded by James Rand, Jr., a Goundry Street resident who borrowed \$10,000 from his father, who ran an office supply company, to start a business whose product was visible file systems. Later the two Rands merged, and further mergers created an internationally known enterprise.



Recovery from the Depression was slow but it was given a help up when the Allies went to war with Hitler in 1939. They were desperately in need of war material which the United States finally agreed to provide under the Lend-Lease Act. This put many men back to work. Soon the United States began to mobilize and federalize the National Guard. After Pearl Harbor, many more women began taking factory jobs to replace those of men who went to war.

Throughout 1940 news of weddings and summer picnics was interspersed with accounts of the Battle of Britain. Young men were urged to enlist immediately for choice assignments. Of concern to immigrant North Tonawandans was the registration and fingerprinting of aliens. The draft was approved on October 16 for all men between 21 and 35, and high school bandmaster Stanley Cyran left for Fort Dix.

"Uncle Sam needs all your old newspapers and magazines for packing!," urged the *Evening News* of Oct. 29, 1941. Boy Scouts were assigned to pick them up. It was the forerunner of our modern day recycling. Scrap collection drives were begun to gather metals for the factories. Homemakers took the tops and bottoms out of used cans, flattened them and added them to anything else they could find. One of North Tonawanda's major donations was the engine in the house high up in the cantilever bridge which was only used once or twice to raise the bridge to make sure it worked. Then the project of building bridges all along the Erie Canal for ocean-going vessels was abandoned because of the high cost.

Before rationing was instituted later, Budwey's at 425 Oliver Street sold ten lbs. of sugar for \$.47. Wilders Hardware Store offered two now obsolete household necessities for \$1 each... ash cans and wash boilers. Coal would be delivered by Ives Ice & Coal, Rose Coal & Builders Supplies or Thiele Coal and Feed. A Mercury coach automobile cost \$629. The silhouette of a B24 bomber was a teaching tool for identifying Allied or enemy aircraft. Ann Sheridan, Jack Oakie, and Martha Raye starred in "Navy Blues" at the Riviera Theatre. Oliver Street residents could patronize the Avondale Theatre at Robinson Street. *Fighting Ships of the USA* had just arrived at the Library.

News of enlistees filled the paper. An article contained suggestions of what to take with you when you reported for induction. With 28% less nicotine, a gift of Camels was just the right present for your soldier boy. "So many men and boys have jobs in defense industries that help is scarce," and 50 women registered for defense work.

Pearl Harbor, on the island of Oahu in Hawaii, is best known as the scene of the Japanese bombing of the U.S. Pacific Fleet on December 7, 1941. Most of the fleet was in the harbor when Japanese carrier-based planes attacked without warning. Nineteen U.S. ships were damaged or sunk; on the ground at Wheeler Field 188 planes were destroyed. The raid caused over 2,200 casualties with negligible losses to the Japanese. The attack brought the U.S. into World War II. Newspaper headlines and radios screamed, "Congress Declares War on Japan" and in another week, "U.S. Now at War with Nazis."

After Pearl Harbor in 1941 rationing of food and shoes was instituted to make sure that there would be enough food and leather products for our armed forces and those of our allies. Gasoline and heating oil were rationed. Metal supplies for domestic use were scarce. So that there would be no profiteering resulting from shortages, the government put a ceiling on prices, wages, and rent. When women went to work, child care centers were opened to care for the children. Housing was hastily built to give homes to families moving here to work in factories doing war work such as Bell Aircraft, Buffalo Bolt and the Tonawanda Iron Works. Water and sewage plants were guarded against sabotage. Defense wardens were recruited. Durez produced phenol-formaldehyde plastic for the detonator caps of shells. The repercussions of this appeared decades later on the home front. Uncle Sam selected Richardson Boat Company to build 20 picket boats. Later on Richardson Boat produced 60 LCVP (landing craft vehicle, personnel) vessels each month, winning an Army-Navy "E" for outstanding production. Among other firms so honored were Buffalo Pumps and Wurlitzer, now defense contractors.

Wurlitzer's 1944 ad boasted, "The world over Wurlitzer goes on duty when men go on leave. In canteens and USO centers...back of almost every fighting front fighting men enjoy Wurlitzer recorded music." The firm was engaged in secret "research in the field of sound reproduction." The Wurlitzer factory on Niagara Falls Blvd. was a lovingly landscaped showplace, famed for its colorful flower gardens. Gardening was an interest of the plant's chief, Farney Wurlitzer. When he came to North Tonawanda in 1909, he managed a small factory, producing player pianos. They made band organs to accompany Herschell carousels and "Mighty Wurlitzer" electric pipe organs to accompany silent movies. With the advent of "talkies," Wurlitzer switched to the nickelodeon and later jukeboxes and pianos. Mr. Wurlitzer's home at 373 Goundry Street later became the Town Club and, in 1993 after that group disbanded, reverted to private ownership.

The last city directory published for the duration of the war appeared in 1942. There were 2/3 of a page of confectioners, six hotels including the WaHaKie Hotel on River Road, and 15 lumber dealers. The public elementary schools were Goundry, Pine Woods, Gratwick, Col. Payne, Wurlitzer, and Gilmore. All but Gilmore have been either demolished or converted to other uses. As part of the campaign to conserve for defense needs, the home of Frank Markowitz at 302 Niagara Street was reshingled with Creo-Dipt Zephyr shingles as "old homes must be made to serve anew." "Sweeney Park" is now Pine Woods Park and at the bend of Payne and 21st Avenues was "Polonia Park." The Hotel Shelton had been demolished in 1941. Ground was broken for the Nor-Ton Courts housing project on Spruce Street.

"Help Wanted" ads proliferated. Women could do "light, clean factory work" at Wurlitzer or International Paper. Because their sisters were at the front or in defense industries, DeGraff Hospital complained of a shortage of nurses' aides. Women were needed to read meters and watch for enemy aircraft. You could purchase war damage insurance to cover your losses if the enemy did attack. A full page and more of service-related items filled each *Evening News*. Wartime brides no longer wore silk wedding gowns but rather suits, and their new husbands, uniforms. "Henry Aldrich's Little Secret" and "The Invisible Man's Revenge" played at the Avondale. When soldiers came marching home, they found that \$5,550 could buy a house at 25 Allen Street. North Tonawanda lost a total of 103 brave men to World War II, which finally ended in 1945 after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Japan surrendered.

There was a period of adjustment after the war when armaments were no longer needed but there was such a great need for civilian goods that factories changed rapidly and employment was high. In fact so many men and women were working and making good wages now that the specter of inflation appeared and grew. Ceilings had been taken off wages and rents, food and shoes were no longer rationed and the country prospered. At first the city did not change much, but by 1948 there were many empty stores on Manhattan Street. Four buildings stood alone in the 700 block of Meadow Drive, east of Nash Road, by 1951. A great spurt in home construction opened Meadow Drive through from Payne Avenue, and Jesella, Pioneer, Moll and Master streets all opened by 1955. Abington Place and Belmont Court were platted in 1960. North Tonawanda as we know it was emerging.

The Korean War (1950-1953) was a conflict between forces of the United Nations (primarily the U.S. and South Korea) on one side and forces of North Korea and later communist China on the other. Korea had been divided along latitude 38 degrees north in 1945, Russia becoming the occupying force north of this line, and the U.S south of it. The war began when, having attempted to topple the government of the South by indirect means, North Korea launched a surprise invasion. United Nation forces were sent to assist South Korea under General Douglas MacArthur. The complexion of the war changed several times and the fighting moved back and forth over the 38th parallel. MacArthur was replaced in April 1951 by General Ridgway. Two years of negotiations, begun in July, achieved only an armistice signed on July 27, 1953. A peace treaty has never been signed and Korea remains divided as before. Thirteen lives from North Tonawanda were lost in the Korean Conflict.



Then came the "Cold War" (post-World War II relations between the Western Powers led by the U.S. and the communist bloc led by the USSR). Famous incidents in the Cold War included the Berlin Airlift (1948-49) and the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962). By seeking de'tente and by negotiating arms-limitation treaties, the U.S. and USSR sought to relax Cold War tensions.

The War in Vietnam began as a conflict in South Vietnam between South Vietnamese government forces backed by the U.S. and communist guerrilla insurgents, the Vietcong, backed by North Vietnam. The conflict originated in 1941 when a Vietminh guerrilla force was formed under Ho Chi Minh to fight the Japanese. In 1965 the U.S. had begun bombing the North in retaliation for the Use of Northern troops in the South. Increasing numbers of U.S. combat troops began to arrive and totaled nearly 550,000 by 1968. The large-scale U.S. campaign proved unable to do more than hold back the highly motivated Vietcong. Vietnamese civilians suffered terribly at the hands of both sides. Fruitless peace talks began in Paris in 1968 and in 1969 President Nixon announced the "Vietnamization" of the war by building up South Vietnam forces and withdrawing U.S. combat troops. The war had spread to Cambodia and Laos before a "ceasefire" signed in January 1973 preceded the total withdrawal of U.S. troops a few months later. The South was then overrun by Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces and the war effectively ended with the fall of Saigon in May 1975. North Tonawanda lost 12 casualties to this most unpopular war.

Citizens numbered 24,750 in 1951. Principal industries were: amusement devices, bolts and nuts, box boards, chemicals, grinding wheels, pleasure cruisers, office equipment and supplies, musical instruments, print paper, rayon goods, children's wagons and sleds, steam heating equipment, steam pumps, pig iron, and lumber and lumber products. In 1955 Melody Fair, a theatre-in-the-round, opened in a large tent at its present site under the direction of impresario, Lew Fisher. He brought a taste of the Broadway stage to North Tonawanda. Its permanent structure was built in 1974. In later years Melody Fair has featured a broad spectrum of musical entertainment. As postwar development intensified, northern neighborhoods sprouted streets of homes and thousands of children. The estimated school age population in 1952 was 4,275, with 1,100 in high school, 650 at Felton Grammar, and 2,575 in elementary schools. Gilmore School was expanded in 1957. Drake School was erected during the late 1950's. The city was acquiring property for the new high school and Spruce Elementary School. Ending years of overcrowding and double sessions, the high school opened in 1962 as did Ohio Elementary School. Named in honor of the late physician and Board of Education member, Dr. Thaddeus F. Reszel Junior High School opened in 1968 to serve north side students. Felton Grammar School, no longer needed, was demolished the next year. Luther Manor senior citizens apartment complex occupies its former site. The Catholic Diocese operated Bishop Gibbons High School at 1110 Payne Avenue from 1961 to 1971. Run by the Barnabite Fathers and Felician Sisters, after it closed it became Bishop Gibbons Apartments for senior citizens. Other such complexes are Scarfone Apartments, named for Stephen A. Scarfone, manager of the housing projects on Spruce Street, which it adjoins, and Carousel Park, a high rise at Goundry and Oliver Streets at the former site of Allan Herschell operations.

The 1960's were a time of road building. East Robinson Street was extended through to Division Street only in 1967. The impetus for joining Robinson and East Robinson Streets was to provide access to Powerline Plaza at Division and Erie. Also in 1967 the "Division Street Arterial" was approved. It generally followed the old high speed trolley line route. Say, did you know that North Tonawanda had its own "yellow brick road?" In recent years while Payne Avenue was being repaved, the yellow bricks with which it was at one time paved were revealed along the edges. Moving from 81-83 Webster Street, the Tonawanda News, under the direction of Mrs. Charles E. Hewitt, Jr., took up new, larger quarters on River Road in 1960. As population surged to northern neighborhoods, shopping and services followed. Payne Avenue Plaza, now Mid-City, opened with ten stores in 1951. The Sample, W.T. Grant Co., and a Your Host Restaurant joined Niagara Savings and Loan, Marine Trust Co., and Allan Mack Pharmacy there ten years later. Over the years, a variety of stores have come, gone and been replaced. by others. The new plazas had the regrettable effect of draining customers from older establishments along Oliver Street, forcing long time small businesses such as Niese's Dry Goods to close.

Shoppers lined up across the parking lot of the new Tops Supermarket on Goundry Street on opening day in 1964. Not that there were not many other supermarkets in town...there were...but by 1997 only two remain within the city limits. The old hotels fell into disrepair and were demolished. The Van Raalte Company site was taken over by the Downtowner, later the Packet Inn, in 1966. After some changes in ownership, it has become the Packet Center and now houses 84 efficiency apartments, a restaurant and offices. A local institution, the Sugar Bowl, quietly closed in 1965 when the Pullman brothers decided they no longer wished to continue the confectionery/ice cream parlor at 32 Webster Street.

Industrial musical chairs was the 1960's game. Taber Instrument moved to the old Bell Avionics Plant and Bell moved to Wheatfield. Roblin Steel added a third shift. Durez and Lawless Container added more space. So did Niagara Cutter. Mirrorlite Plastics made plastic cigar tips in the old Victor Safe Building on Payne Avenue. International Paper Co. marked its 40th year in 1964; ten years later they moved to New England. Taylor Devices advertised "liquid shocks." It still exists on Tonawanda Island.

Even in those expanding times, the sad line of closed, merged, or moved business had begun -- Buffalo Bolt, Van Raalte, Victor Safe, Herschell Company, Richardson Boat. Although the 500,000th Wurlitzer jukebox appeared in 1962, the last one was manufactured at the local plant in 1974. The city was becoming less of a factory town and more of a bedroom community for the Niagara Frontier. No longer was it necessary to expand schools. Fewer babies and a shortage of trained maternity nurses forced DeGraff Hospital to close its obstetrical services. A planned merger with Buffalo General Hospital was announced in 1996.

The industrial heritage of wartime and post-war North Tonawanda left an unhappy, dangerous legacy of inactive hazardous waste dumps. In wake of the nearby Love Canal situation in Niagara Falls, the 1980's brought awareness of possible dioxin-contaminated ground water in the vicinity of Occidental Chemical Corporation's Durez factory. The company also had used Gratwick-Riverside Park as a chemical dump. For ten years cleanup was undertaken on these and the former Booth Oil property on Robinson Street and Schreck's Scrapyard on Schenck Street. These and a few smaller sites were discovered, realized as possible contaminants, and ultimately cleaned up.

North Tonawanda is still a viable community. Looking back and forward, much remains to be cherished.

The Carnegie Library, built in the center of town in 1904 at 240 Goundry Street with a \$20,000 gift from philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, was headed by H. Pauline VanVoorhees Bentley from 1922-1962. Chartered in 1893, it was already in its second home, the first being now-demolished Goundry School, which preceded Felton Grammar as the city's first high school. Overcrowding impelled the construction of the "downstairs" children's room in 1938. Supplying children with books in their schools was a priority with Mrs. Bentley. The library joined the Nioga Library System in 1965. A 25,000 sq. ft. building on Meadow Drive replaced the jam-packed Carnegie Library on July 4, 1975. It has since expanded. By 1997 computerization has affected every aspect of the library now housing 142,000 books, as well as videos, audio cassettes, and other materials, in addition to active reference and children's departments. Literacy Volunteers of North Tonawanda, a volunteer tutoring service, was established at the library in 1981.

The Carnegie Art Center has occupied the library's former home since 1976. Operated by the Tonawandas' Council on the Arts, it is a moderately sized nonprofit art gallery and concert venue as well as an art school. All gallery spaces retain the original yellow pine flooring cut at local lumber mills in the City of North Tonawanda. In a park-like setting surrounded by gracious homes, the Carnegie has long been a cultural center for the Niagara Frontier community, dedicated to bringing a variety of cultural events to the Tonawandas and Western New York.



A group of carousel enthusiasts banded together in 1979 to form the Carousel Society of the Niagara Frontier. Dedicated to preserving the history of the merry-go-round in a city famed for them, they acquired a 1916 Allan Herschell carousel and began restoring it in 1982. The Herschell Factory complex, where wooden carousels were made, was purchased by the Society in 1985. Volunteers spent countless hours renovating a decrepit building complex. Now it functions as a museum where visitors can see wooden horses being carved by skilled craftsmen. In addition to horses, other animals have adorned carousels. The "hop toad", designed and carved in North Tonawanda, is the only carousel animal with human clothes. Children of all ages can ride the historical carousel and enjoy concerts and programs. The Carrousel Factory Museum is one of only two remaining carousel factories in the country, and the only complex which houses a museum. More than 23,000 people visited the museum in 1996.

On Dec. 30, 1926, the "showplace of the Tonawandas," the new Riviera Theatre opened on Webster Street. Designed in the Italian Renaissance style, the theatre, later renamed Riviera, was decorated with stained glass windows, elaborate tile floors, paintings, and murals. The highlight was the Wurlitzer organ, a demonstrator installed by the manufacturer across town. Seating 1,200, the theatre was a motion picture house from the day it opened, showing silent movies accompanied by Wurlitzer organ music. As television replaced movies, the Riviera fell onto neglect. (The Avondale no longer exists as a theater.) Monthly organ concerts were the only attraction that kept the theatre going. In 1989 the Niagara Frontier Theater Organ Society purchased the theatre and its contents. Since then volunteers have worked to restore the interior and its "Mighty Wurlitzer" organ.

The Riviera is now listed on the registries of the State and National Historical Landmarks along with the Carrousel Museum and the Carnegie Art Center.

The museum of the Historical Society of the Tonawandas is located in the old New York Central and Hudson River Railroad Station at 113 Main Street in the City of Tonawanda. The building was erected in 1870 and used as a rail station until 1922. Made of red brick, ornate wooden scroll work under the eaves of both ends consists of carvings of squirrels along with upright poles which support wood carvings of a man playing a flute. Throughout the years, the building was occupied by Post #264 of the American Legion, the Boy Scouts and the Delaware Street School. From 1935 it was used to house the library until 1964. The station was turned over to the Historical Society by the City of Tonawanda. The museum houses and preserves artifacts and other materials related to the rich historical heritage of the Tonawandas. Eight cast iron and aluminum markers have been erected by the Society throughout the "twin cities" designating historic sites. Willard B. Dittmar is the Executive Director and also serves as Historian for the City of Tonawanda. Elizabeth Robson serves in the same capacity for the City of North Tonawanda. If you ever have the opportunity to spend some time with these two "guardians" of our history, they will regale you with "tales of the Tonawandas." Their knowledge is priceless!

Come to Robinson Street and Payne Avenue, behind the church, at 7 a.m. on a Saturday in August. It's harvest time, and the North Tonawanda Public Market, known as the Farmers' Market, is the place to buy fresh produce, cheese, baked goods, preserves, plants, and to see and be seen. Everyone goes to market. In business since August 23, 1908, the popular attraction is open all year round. Fresh farm produce vies with "locally grown bananas" sold by hucksters. A trip there is a lot of fun, a place to meet old friends and a healthy way to spend more money than you planned.

No longer a highway for mules and barges, the Erie Barge Canal, renamed the New York State Barge Canal, now serves as a pleasure boater's path across the state. The walls of lumber are gone and the docks hold sailboats and outboarders. The Twin Cities of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda celebrate their common waterfront heritage during Canal Fest, a week long event held each July. Initiated by the Chamber of Commerce of the Tonawandas in 1983, it is now run by Canal Fest Inc. It was designed to bring the Tonawandas together, providing visitors with a history of the canal and community in addition to family-oriented fun.

A huge craft show and flea market attract thousands of visitors and hundreds of vendors. The Canal Fest Parade features floats and marching units from Twin Cities' organizations. A waterborne version on the canal is the Antique Boat Parade. All historic sites are open. Traditional Twin Cities rivalry continues in the annual tug of war. The Mayor of the losing city must push his or her counterpart across the Renaissance Bridge in a wheel barrow. Additional events include the Canal Fest Queen Event, a water-skiing show along the canal, a four-mile run, canal boat tours, an antique and classic car show and amusement rides. Also, an old-fashioned bed race, greased pole and fishing contests, the Twin Cities Officials softball game, concerts, street dances, all sorts of food and drink and much more, with a fireworks display on closing night. There's something for everyone at Canal Fest!

Cross-canal sports rivalries continue. The annual "T-NT" football game is a schoolboy grid classic. The North Tonawanda Lumberjacks won the first contest in 1904 without lights or mechanical scoreboard, defeating the Tonawanda Red Warriors 18-6. Neither Depressions nor wars nor arctic cold have stopped the game. The late George Vetter coached Lumberjack teams for 34 years, retiring with a record of 194 wins, 42 losses, and 13 ties. Coach Vetter was proud that the stadium behind Lowry Middle School was named in his honor in 1971. New high school athletic fields opened in 1996, and the grandstand at venerable Vetter Field was demolished this year. Tonawanda won an overtime thriller, 7-6, in 1996. The all-time T-NT winning record? Lumberjacks 49, Warriors 29 and 9 ties as of our Centennial Birthday.

Coincident with the city's centennial, more than 15 churches marked their 100th anniversaries during the 1980's and 90's. First United Methodist and two Lutheran churches, St. Martin and St. Paul, both in Martinsville, exceeded the 150 year mark. St. Mark's Episcopal Church celebrated its 125th anniversary in 1994. The extraordinary number of Lutheran churches attests to the German immigrants from 1840 and beyond. Many of them conducted services in German for years. One well-known pastor was the Rev. Paul H. Fretthold (mentioned earlier), the spiritual leader at St. Mark Lutheran Church in Gratwick from 1916-1958. It is said that he angrily preached one Sunday morning that he had driven up Oliver Street, counting saloons. "One on every corner," he thundered, and "No wonder people don't get to church Sunday morning!" Pastor Fretthold's descendants run Fretthold's Funeral Home on Oliver Street.

Mr. and Mrs. Terry Rank and son Justin wrote to the *Tonawanda News* to thank the officers who, at the height of the Blizzard of 1977, carried Mrs. Rank into the hospital where Justin was born three minutes later. The storm struck before noon on Jan. 30th, blinding drivers with 60 mph winds, 15 degree temperatures, and zero visibility. Cars were abandoned. Workers were stranded in offices and factories, some for days. Police, snowmobilers, and firefighters worked steadily to ferry essential workers to their jobs and deliver supplies to the snowbound. The *Tonawanda News* and DeGraff Hospital never closed, and city streets were passable two days after the storm ended.

Henry P. Smith III, was a descendant of two old-time local families. He represented North Tonawanda in Congress from 1964 to 1975 after serving as mayor, and later as judge of Niagara County Surrogate's Court and Family Court. Representative Smith was known for his opposition to impeaching Richard Nixon during the Watergate scandal.

Women had served on the Board of Education since Colletta Smith's tenure in the 1920's and 30's. But, in 1977, Elizabeth C. Hoffman was the first woman to be elected to the Common Council. "Betty," as she was popularly known, was also the city's first female mayor and holds the distinction of having been elected to seven consecutive terms, serving from 1980 to 1992, when she won a seat in the New York State Assembly. Barbara Banfield succeeded Mrs. Hoffman as First Ward representative, and a strong female presence now exists on the Common Council.



Goundry Street resident George Maziarz, whose family was active in local politics for many years, began his political career as Deputy City Clerk in 1977, becoming City Clerk the next year. He was elected County Clerk in 1989 until, in a special election, he was chosen to complete the term of State Senator John Daly, who resigned in 1995 to accept the governor's appointment to the Department of Transportation. Senator Maziarz represents the 61st District in Albany, having won election to a full term in 1996.

According to the official 1990 Census, North Tonawanda's population is 34,989. In 1996, there were 30,200 telephones in service, compared with 5,000 in 1940. Operators were replaced by dial phones in 1950. The chief industries employ 9,650 people, manufacturing box board, chemicals, precision instruments, liquid springs, steam pumps, paint, and metal and machine work. Many small companies have moved into buildings formerly occupied by departed firms. Wurlitzer Industrial Park, National Industrial Park and St. Mary Industrial Center all act as "incubators" for young, growing businesses. The North Tonawanda Centre of Commerce located on Wurlitzer Drive, off Erie Avenue, serves as an attractive location for Twin City Glass, AccuDie, ASOMA Instruments/Twin City, Inc. (pioneers in thickness measurement technology), FEI Products and Glidden Machine and Tool. Nearby Blue Bird Coach Lines provides transportation and bus tours. DeGraff Memorial Hospital is the city's largest employer. Schools are located predominately in north side neighborhoods...Drake, Gilmore, Meadow and Ohio. Meadow Elementary and the high school share a new science wing constructed in 1994 and a gymnasium/auditorium dedicated in 1995. Grant and Spruce serve the south side of the city, and there are Catholic, Lutheran and Baptist parochial schools. The Canadiana does not provide service anymore but the Niagara Clipper docks on River Road and offers lunch and dinner cruises and sightseeing opportunities. Tonawanda Island boasts two large marinas for pleasure vessels to dock and there is additional dockage along the river.

Increasingly the economy of the world has become global. Much manufacturing has left North Tonawanda for lower taxes, newly built factories, subsidized businesses, and cheaper labor. The economy of this city is becoming geared more to smaller business enterprises.

We are, however, discovering our rich historical heritage and its possibilities for tourism. New York State is recognizing this with financial assistance. North Tonawanda is awakening to the recreational, historical, and economic advantages of its four seasons along with our water heritage...the New York State (Erie) Canal and the great Niagara River.

Another millennium....another century will bring exciting changes and challenges to the City of North Tonawanda.



**Smith Building, c. 1930**

The Smith Building, located at the corner of Webster and Tremont Streets, was originally known as the Real Estate Exchange Building. Constructed in the 1890's, it was called North Tonawanda's skyscraper. The Smith Building also contained apartments called "Davenport Flats." The original Rivera Theatre, renamed the "Riviera" by Shea's Management Company, had a new marquee. An office building now occupies the former Smith Building site.



**Webster Street, c. 1928**

Looking south on Webster Street from the corner of Goundry Street, the original oblong-shaped marquee of the Rivera Theatre is visible on the left. The Rivera had opened on December 30, 1926, just a short time before this photograph was taken. Goundry and Webster Streets were paved with bricks.





**Riviera Theatre, c. 1930**

The Riviera Theatre, 67 Webster Street, was billed as the "Showplace of the Tonawandas" when the doors opened on Thursday, December 30, 1926. Advance reservations for the night cost \$1.00. The theatre was built by the Yellen Family, and Lempart and Son, Architects, developed the design, which was patterned after the opulent Renaissance style. The Wurlitzer organ for the new theatre was shipped from the Wurlitzer Company on November 26, 1926 and remains there today.

When Michael Shea's company took over management of the theatre in 1930, the name was changed to the Riviera and a new marquee was installed. The Niagara Frontier Theatre Organ Society acquired the theatre on February 14, 1989 and has worked with the community to restore the Riviera to its original grandeur.



**The "Mighty Wurlitzer" at the Riviera Theatre, c. 1995**

The organ installed at the Riviera Theatre was shipped from the Wurlitzer Company on November 26, 1926. The console was painted to harmonize with the theatre's interior by a Wurlitzer band organ artist.





**Goundry School, c. 1910**

Goundry School was constructed in 1866 and was the first major school building in the Village of North Tonawanda. The principal and four teachers provided instruction to students. The school, located next to the former Andrew Carnegie Library, was demolished when the new school administration facility on Humphrey Street was constructed.



**Andrew Carnegie Library, c. 1995**

The Carnegie Library was constructed at 240 Goundry Street in 1904 with resources from the wealthy industrialist, Andrew Carnegie. The former library, owned by the City, has a beautiful rotunda and two side galleries. It now houses the Carnegie Art Center.



## MEMORIES OF FELTON GRAMMAR-HIGH SCHOOL - 1926-27

These memories are recollected by a student from Martinsville, coming from a class of six or seven girls who finished sixth grade, and went to the "big" school in the City of North Tonawanda, Felton Grammar. It has been a LONG time, with some memories fading and others very sharp. Our small group of girls was overwhelmed by the size of the building, having come from a small "country" school on Old Falls Blvd. We got used to being put down by the city kids but at last we were absorbed and accepted.

The school was named after the Felton family - a prominent North Tonawanda family which produced leaders in government and education. The "look" of this building remains very clear in my mind after all these years. It was built of white brick, with a large center section covered at the top of the three stories with a soaring dome. It had impressive steps leading to the main door and two wings. Boys and girls entered from the ground floor level.

The Grammar School (Junior High or Middle School) was on the first floor and the Senior High was on the next floor. Flights of polished oak steps led to these levels from the coat rooms on the ground floor. These rooms consisted of wood partitions with coat hooks every 18 inches or so, one for each pupil. The main room consisted of a large study hall in two sections, with nailed-down desks in rows, and a wide aisle in the middle for exit use. There were no lockers. Everything was kept in our assigned desk with a top on hinges that lifted up. There was no security but I never heard of any incidents of thefts from the coat rooms or desks.

At the front of the hall was a raised platform with one desk at which sat Mr. Myron Rocks, our principal. He was loved and respected but very strict. He kept a small "ping" bell on his desk which dismissed us with a series of single rings. After everyone was at attention facing the center aisle, the music started. At first it was from the high school band upstairs, and later a "Victrola." We marched in rows down the stairs to the coat room. There were "watchers" who sent students back to the top if they were out of step.

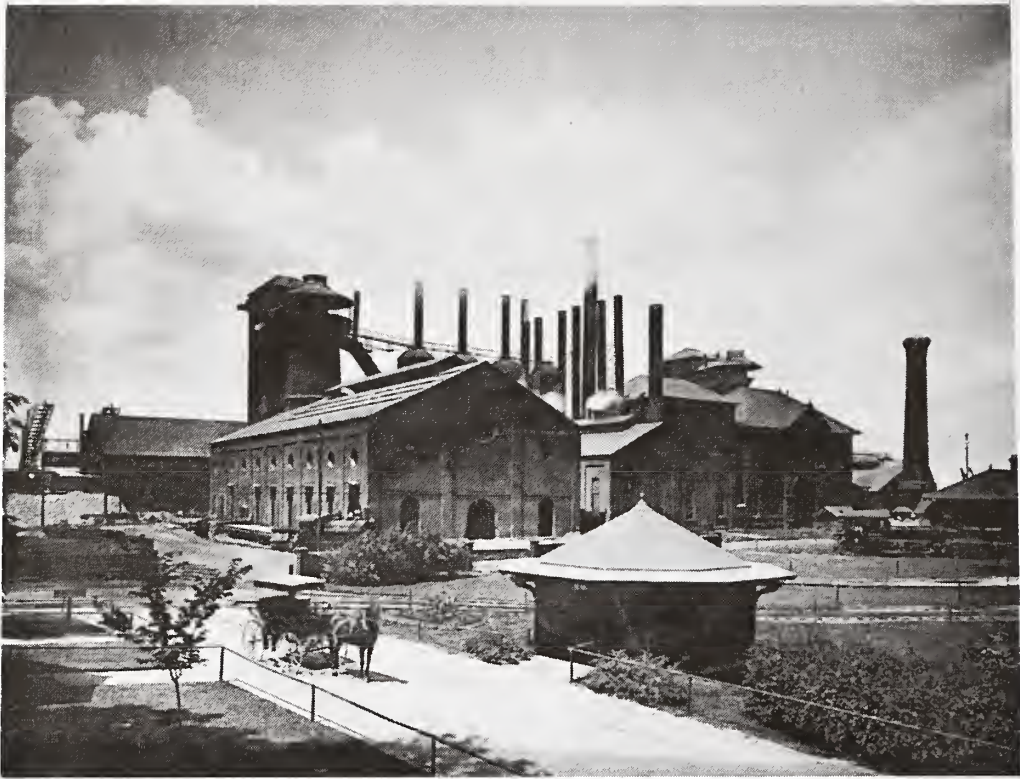
Freedom at last! We were on our own for one hour to have lunch. There were no tables, no cafeteria and nothing to drink except water, but after lunch we were free to leave the building and walk around. A candy store, the library, and the city cemetery were nearby. We left the building, rain or shine, warm or cold, and it was our responsibility to be back before 1 o'clock.

The classrooms were off the front and back of the study hall. Bells announced the change of classes. As I recall, all the faculty was female except for the gentleman who taught handwriting. As pupils we were expected to follow all rules and respect the teachers. I know of no incidents of misbehavior but, if there were any, they must have been taken care of appropriately! I have only pleasant memories of classes.

The second year we moved upstairs as the Senior High left for the new school on Payne Avenue. A gym was put in the downstairs after the desks were removed. We lined up according to height. I moved from near the front to near the back in one year! Activities consisted mostly of directed exercises, marching to music and throwing a basketball back and forth.

Graduation from 8th grade was held at the new Senior High School in the auditorium. It was a thrill I still remember, especially walking across the stage to receive a diploma, rolled up and tied with red or blue ribbon. Now in my 80's I can remember many pleasant details. It was certainly a privilege to attend Felton School. I think I can safely say that North Tonawanda has never had another building to compare with it.

Mary Kroening Henry



**Tonawanda Iron and Steel Company, c. 1900**

An early photograph of the Tonawanda Iron Works, before the automobile, which changed ownership several times in its 99 years of operation in the City of North Tonawanda. The company had its own railroad with 4 miles of track on its property. Two engines are visible, one directly above the horse and carriage, and a second on the far right.

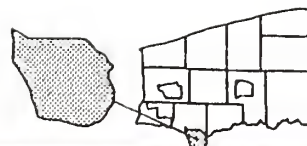


**The Tonawandas, c. 1923**

The aerial view of North Tonawanda and Tonawanda clearly shows the Erie Canal. The process of filling in the old Erie Canal from Tonawanda to Buffalo had begun. The terminus of the newly enlarged New York State Barge Canal at that time became and remains today the Tonawandas Harbor.



# North Tonawanda

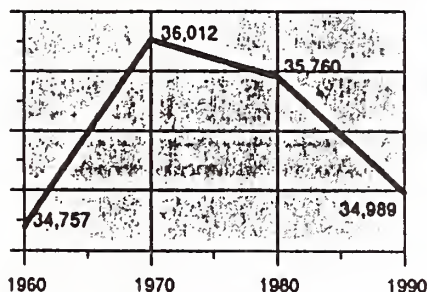


## Population

Total	34,989	
Male	16,749	47.9%
Female	18,240	52.1%
White	34,612	98.9%
Black	56	0.2%
Am. Indian	112	0.3%
Asian	129	0.4%
Other	80	0.2%
Hispanic*	278	0.8%

\*can be of any race

## Population Trends



## Age

Median age	34.4	
Under 5	2,470	7.1%
5-17	6,239	17.8%
18-20	1,347	3.8%
21-24	1,880	5.4%
25-44	11,340	32.4%
45-54	3,224	9.2%
55-59	1,590	4.5%
60-64	1,823	5.2%
65-74	3,197	9.1%
75-84	1,510	4.3%
85 and over	369	1.1%

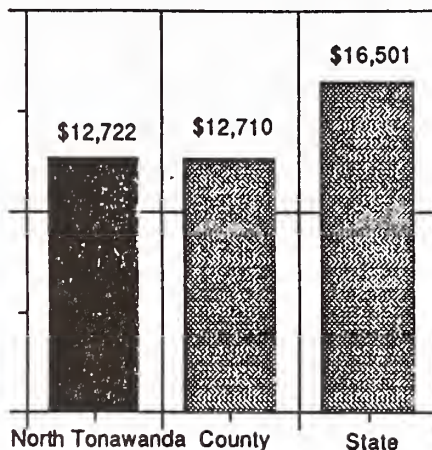
## Top Ancestry Groups

German	36.1%	
Polish	17.4%	
Italian	9.3%	
Irish	9.1%	
English	6.8%	

## Annual Income

Per capita	\$12,722
Median household	\$29,576
Median family	\$34,987

## Per Capita Income Comparisons



## Household Income Ranges

Less than \$25,000	40.6%
\$25,000-\$34,999	20.2%
\$35,000-\$49,999	21.4%
\$50,000-\$74,999	13.7%
\$75,000-\$99,999	3.1%
\$100,000-\$149,999	1.0%
\$150,000 or more	0.0%

## Education Levels\*

Less than 9th grade	7.3%
9th-12th, no diploma	12.9%
High school graduate	38.0%
Some college, no degree	16.4%
Associate degree	10.3%
Bachelor's degree	10.0%
Graduate degree	5.2%

\*highest attainment by persons 25 or older

## Types of Households

Married couple	57.2%
Male householder	2.8%
Female householder	10.6%
Nonfamily household	29.4%

## Home Values\*

Median value	\$68,100
Less than \$50,000	19.8%
\$50,000-\$99,999	69.0%
\$100,000-\$149,999	10.1%
\$150,000-\$199,999	0.9%
\$200,000-\$299,999	0.2%
\$300,000 or more	0.0%

\*owner-occupied homes only

## Top Employment Sectors\*

Retail trade	18.7%
Manufacturing (durable)	16.9%
Health services	10.8%
Educational services	8.7%
Manufacturing (nondurable)	8.4%
Professional services	5.9%
Finance, real estate	4.9%
Construction	4.2%
Wholesale trade	3.9%
Transportation	3.8%
Public administration	3.7%

\*jobs held by residents, regardless of city or town of employment

## Lifestyles

Great Outdoors	XXXX
Fit & Active	XXX
Arts Scene	X
Fine Dining	XX
On the Move	X
Home Improvement	XXXXX
Playing the Market	XX
High Tech	XX
Global Thinking	X
Glued to the Tube	XXXX

## Notes

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Business First research.





**Allen Herschell Co. Inc., c. 1919**

The best-known carousel maker in the United States was Allan Herschell. The former manufacturing facility on Thompson Street is now the Herschell Carousel Factory Museum. North Tonawanda played a major role in the amusement park industry, and more hand carved carousels were produced here than in the three other major centers in the nation: New York, Philadelphia and Abilene, Kansas.



**Allan Herschell Company, Second Floor Paint Room, c. 1919**

Majestic carousel horses made a ride on a merry-go-round a joyful experience. The 1916 #1 Special Allan Herschell Carousel at the Museum is one of the first produced at the factory. There are 36 horses, one chariot and one lovers' tub.



## TONAWANDAS SERVICE CLUBS

**The Zonta Club of the Tonawandas:** Zonta is an international service organization of women executives in business and the professions. The local club received its Charter in 1931. A service organization, Zonta has participated in many worthy undertakings both in the community and internationally, focusing on the status of women. In 1966 Zonta established two annual scholarships. Members also participate in and donate to Hospice, The McLaughlin Center, Opportunities Unlimited and areas directly concerned with the welfare and advancement of women and children. Zonta International has non-government organization status with the United Nations on a consultive basis. The U.N. committee's goal is to promote women's rights.

**The Exchange Club of the Tonawandas:** The Exchange Club is an all-volunteer national service organization for men and women who want to serve their community, develop leadership skills and enjoy new friendships. The Tonawandas organization was formed on September 17, 1946 and currently sponsors a wide range of activities to improve our communities, help the disadvantaged and encourage good American citizenship. The principal areas of Exchange's National Program of Service are youth, Americanism and community service, with child abuse prevention emphasized as the national project.

**The Rotary Club of the Tonawandas:** Rotary is an international club of professional and business people which was established in 1917. "World peace through understanding" is the club's focus today. Members work on various fund raising activities and contributions. The local Rotary donates to area groups such as The United Way, hospitals and scholarships. They also sponsor International Student Exchange Programs.

**The Lions Club of the Tonawandas:** The Lions Club is part of the world's largest service organization. The not for profit club has served the Twin Cities for over 51 years. They focus their efforts on the sight and hearing impaired citizens of our area, providing necessities such as frames and lenses, hearing aids, eye and ear examinations to those who otherwise would be unable to afford them. Known as the "Knights of the Blind," their club motto is "We Serve."

**The Kiwanis Club of the Tonawandas:** Members of the Kiwanis Club participate in a number of fund raising events. All proceeds are turned back to the community through ball team sponsorships, scholarships and the Pediatric Trauma Unit at Children's Hospital. The focus of Kiwanis is youth, reflected in the annual circus for kids, Hugh O'Brien Youth Awards, alcoholism and drug abuse coloring contest and other charitable donations.

**The Business and Professional Women's Club:** Since receiving their Charter in 1939, they have promoted full participation, equity and economic self sufficiency for all working women. The BPW serves women by offering them a unique network in which they can strengthen their individual empowerment for balancing work and family, build leadership skills through community involvement, develop personal and professional skills to further their careers and learn about the issues that matter most to working women. The BPW membership represents every age, race, religion and political background. They have true strength because they represent diverse women working together to make the common voice of women heard.

**The Boys and Girls Club of the Tonawandas:** The primary mission of the Club is to enhance the quality of life for youth as participating members in a diverse society. The Club promotes, through its fund raising efforts, positive relationships and providing behavioral guidance and the promotion of health, social, educational, vocational, recreational and character development of youth. The President of the Club for the 1996-97 year is Jeffrey N. Mis, North Tonawanda City Attorney and the Executive Director is Michael R. Basehart. The Club was incorporated in June 1938. The first clubhouse was located at 252 Vandervoort Street and the current facility is on Franklin Street, Tonawanda.



**Wintering in Tonawandas Harbor, c. 1911**

The Erie Canal connected the Great Lakes with the Hudson River at Albany, opening commerce from the Midwest to the Atlantic Seaboard. Lumber schooners delivered their cargo brought from the Upper Great Lakes where the lumber was transferred to canal boats to be shipped to its final destination. During the winter, as many as 50 ships occupied the harbor between North Tonawanda and Tonawanda, because navigation during cold weather was not possible. Looking west from the bridge joining Webster Street in North Tonawanda and Main Street in Tonawanda, there is a clear view of four ships: the H.E. Runnels, the Miztec, the Niagara, and the Wyoming.



**Rafting on Tonawanda Creek, c. 1870**

Logs were shipped to the Tonawandas from the Upper Great Lakes. Workers made holes in the logs with long-handled drills and chained the logs together to make rafts. Iron Pike poles, 14 feet long with a hook on the end, were used to move the logs in the water. The log rafts were then shipped east or west on the Erie Canal. The men in the photograph from left to right are Matt Scanlon, Pat Scanlon, Dan Burd, William Sutton, Martin Scanlon. The sixth person is not identified.

Directly behind the men is a lumber schooner and to the right of the schooner is the "John C. Baker," another lumber ship. In the upper left are stacks of lumber on Tonawanda Island and to the right is North Tonawanda. The dock on the bottom is on Goose Island in the City of Tonawanda.



## A CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF NORTH TONAWANDA

According to Henry Gonnert, who wrote a U. S. Geological survey, "Tonawanda" is an Indian name meaning "swift water," probably suggested by the fast flowing Niagara River. Another explanation comes from Arthur C. Parker, authority on Indian Legend and Lore: The name "Tonawanda" is derived from the Indian word "TA-NA-WUN-DA": it means swift water and refers to that section of the stream which flows over broken stone bottom.

- 1492:** Christopher Columbus discovers America, arriving on the ships Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria.
- 1524:** In 1524 the explorer Verrazano sailed into the present location of the New York City Harbor.
- 1609:** Henry Hudson sailed a river, now named after him, from New York City to the site of Albany.
- 1615:** This territory, including the Tonawanda, was originally populated by an Indian Nation called "Neuters," before it was claimed for France by French explorers. Although there is no record of a Neuter village in the area, it is believed that villages were established in the natural setting at the mouth of Tonawanda Creek.
- 1616:** Etienne Brule, and in the following year the Frenchman Grenoble, explored the area. The Tonawandas area was then geographically a part of the Province of Quebec.
- 1626:** The explorers were followed by hardy priests, like Pere de la Roche Dallion, who visited the area and was followed by Pere Jean de Breheaf. The Jesuits were among the Neuters as early as 1626.
- 1643:** The Iroquois Indians defeated the Neuter nation. From 1643 until conquest by the white man, the Niagara Frontier was controlled by the Seneca Indians, keepers of the western door to the Iroquois Nation.
- 1669:** Robert Cavalier sieur de la Salle graced these shores for the first time. His visits were repeated in 1670 and 1672 and twice in 1679, the year the famous boat "griffon" was built. Father Louis H. Hennepin made his first visit to these shores in 1678 and then returned in 1679. LaSalle made his first visit in 1669.
- 1679:** In December 1678, La Motte de Lussiee and Father Hennepin and others came to the banks of what is now Cayuga Creek in La Salle, to build a sailing vessel. This group was joined by La Salle and Henri Fonti on January 22. The keel to this famous craft was laid on January 26 of that year. When completed, it weighed 60 tons and carried 5 guns. Iroquois who happened along accidentally were surprised to see this immense boat afloat. The Griffon set sail August 7, after it was determined that it could ride into Lake Erie with a good north or northeast breeze. There were 34 men aboard, and the journey to Green Bay on the northwest shore of Lake Michigan was uneventful. Indians on the shores of the Niagara watching this graceful craft exclaimed "Gannarum," which means "how wonderful." The first explorers claimed this territory for France and we were then a part of the province of Quebec. The French enjoyed the friendship of the Indians in this area because they paid them well for carrying their merchandise and equipment over the portage. When the British took over this territory they used teams of oxen for this purpose, thus taking away the Indians only source of revenue and invoking their wrath which brought on the "Devil's Hole Massacre."
- 1687:** Several Indian settlements were built along the Tonawanda Creek. Many Indians sought refuge there after De Nowville's raid.
- 1759:** On July 24, the battle of "LaBelle Famille" was fought a few miles up river from Fort Niagara, resulting in the total defeat of the French by the English.

**1764:** In July, the Seneca Indians deeded title to the English of a strip of land on each side of the Niagara River, extending from lake to lake. The English strengthened Fort Niagara and built Fort Erie on the west bank of the Niagara at the junction with Lake Erie.

**1770:** On March 5, the Boston Massacre took place, followed by the Boston Tea Party, on December 16, 1773, both clashes between the English and the Patriots. The Revolutionary War Battles of Lexington and Concord were fought on April 19, 1775, with the participation of Paul Revere and the Minutemen. The Battle of Bunker Hill took place on June 17, 1775.

**1776:** The Declaration of Independence was signed by the Continental Congress on July 4. The Continental Congress ratified the Treaty of Paris on January 14, 1784, formally ending the Revolutionary War.

**1777:** A State Constitution was adopted in 1777, forming the State of New York, with the Capital at Kingston. The State Capital was moved to Albany in 1797.

**1787:** The Constitutional Convention was convened in Philadelphia on May 25 by the Continental Congress, to create a document to govern the United States of America. On September 17, a total of 39 of the 42 delegates signed the United States Constitution. New York was 11th out of the original 13 states to ratify the Constitution and become part of the United States.

**1797:** The Holland Land Company was formed in 1797 by a group of wealthy Dutch who purchased all the land west of the Genesee River from the Pennsylvania State line to Lake Ontario and to the Niagara River. The purchase was made through Robert Morris who was the financier of the Revolutionary War.

**1800:** The entire area, which includes the current site of the Town of Tonawanda, Village of Kenmore, City of Tonawanda and City of North Tonawanda, was almost an unbroken forest. The only road to Buffalo was Military Road and a part along the river which became River Road. Clearing the land was done by felling some of the trees, which were cut into lumber and made into the homes of settlers. Another method known as "sloshing" consisted of cutting and burning all trees and brush that hindered farming. Great fires could be seen burning for days under careful control. The ash from this process made the land very productive; crops were plentiful. Streets were narrow and rough, and paths through the thick woods were for those traveling on foot or by horse.

**1801:** The first bridge over Tonawanda Creek was erected by the United States Government for military purposes. This structure was temporary and lasted for only a short time. After the bridge fell, the crossing was done by a rope ferry until 1824.

**1808:** Niagara County was established on March 11. It was originally part of Genesee County. Buffalo was the County Seat.

**1809:** George N. Burger was the earliest known settler. He built a combination house and tavern on the shore of Tonawanda Creek, just east of the Niagara River, which later was occupied by the Vincent Koch & Company Lumber Yard.

**1810:** Joshua Pettit built a log tavern on the premises occupied by the Tonawanda Iron Corporation, now the site of Fisherman's Park, beside a small stream which bears his name. He stayed here until 1835, when he moved to Allegheny County. Garrett Van Slyke built a tavern on the north side of Tonawanda Creek and had two daughters who operated a toll rope ferry across the creek.

**1811:** The United States government was becoming concerned over the many incidents that were leading the country into another war with the British. Military road was built from Fort Niagara to Fort Porter and another bridge was erected over Tonawanda Creek.



**1812:** President James Madison declared war on England on June 1. That same month a Block House was built on the south shore of Tonawanda Creek and occupied by a company of 16 regulars. The entire frontier was alarmed. The British and Indians captured Grand Island in August.

**1813:** Fort Niagara was captured and burned by the British on December 19. British forces marched up the river, destroying everything in their path. Manchester (Niagara Falls) was burned and every Block House, including the one in Tonawanda, as well as the almost all the buildings in the settlement, were reduced to ashes. On September 10, Captain Oliver Hazard Perry won his great naval victory at Put-in-Bay, Lake Erie. His famous message, "We have met the enemy and they are ours," brought joy. The American forces invaded Queenstown on October 13 and after sharp fighting were driven with heavy losses. Brock's Monument marks the spot of this famous battle. On December 30, Buffalo was set ablaze. The settlers took whatever possessions they could carry and move inland.

**1814:** The prospects for the war were gloomy. Buffalo, Black Rock and Manchester were in ashes. The American forces were rallied and on August 14 the Battle of Fort Erie was fought.

**1815:** Peace was finally declared and the Treaty was signed at Ghent, Belgium on December 24, ending the War of 1812. The cost of was tremendous and the articles of peace were not satisfactory. After the war the development of the Frontier lagged, but slowly rebuilding began. The slave question began to flare and reach our border. The farmers were almost unanimously anti-slave. This question was discussed in log huts, beside fireplaces and over pages of rarely possessed newspapers.

The route of the proposed Erie Canal waterway, from the Hudson River to Lake Erie, was surveyed by Dewitt Clinton in 1810 and in his report of 1815, the success of this project was assured.

**1817:** Stephen Jacobs purchased 196 acres two miles down the river from Judge Augustus Porter for \$8.00 per acre. This land was covered with a thick forest and clearing the land for farming was begun at once. This pioneer at the age of 17 was in the Battle of Bunker Hill. The timber for building the first lock, where the Erie Canal enters the river, was furnished by him. President James Monroe visited Niagara Falls on August 9. The visitors did not stay at Tonawanda, as the entire settlement consisted of a log tavern, a rope ferry across the Creek and a few log houses. The first steamer navigating the Niagara River and Lake Erie was built in Black Rock in 1817. Her engines lacked sufficient power to drive the boat against the river current, so teams of oxen were hitched to the boat by rope and helped pull the steamer to Buffalo, where the engines moved the unwieldy craft to the lake. Black Rock at this time had considerable lake commerce. Sailing vessels were towed to the lake by oxen attached to long ropes, the boats having no trouble sailing down from Buffalo and the lake.

Construction of the canal started when the first spade of dirt was turned on July 4. When one considers the crude implements and machines engineers used during this period, the Erie Canal is truly one of the greatest engineering feats of all times. In 1823, construction commenced on the route between Black Rock and Lockport.

**1819:** James Carney settled on Tonawanda Island, sometimes called "Carney Island" on some old maps. The first steamship crossed the Atlantic. This was the awakening of steam transportation on land and sea. A mill was built above the mouth of Tonawanda Creek.

**1820:** A report to the legislature in 1820 said that improving natural channels as parts of the canal system was not advisable, except Tonawanda Creek, which was said to afford an example of "a quite narrow bay". The report was signed by Dewitt Clinton, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Samuel Young, Myron Holley, and Henry Seymour. A 1824 report from the Canal Commissioners states that "a great part of the Niagara River above the Falls is now a harbor for lake shipping, easy to access and more secure than any other. Boats may enter this harbor Tonawanda, with ten miles less of Canal navigation from the Black Rock Harbor and fourteen miles less than Buffalo."

**1821:** Erie County was established on April 2. It was separated from Niagara County, with the northern boundary of Erie County to include all the land south of the middle of Tonawanda Creek.

**1823:** Judge Wilkinson constructed a dam on Tonawanda Creek (near the existing Renaissance Bridge) to raise the level of water in the Creek higher than the Niagara River. This allowed boats and barges to travel down the canal (where Niagara Street is presently located in downtown Tonawanda, and the long stretch of park between Niagara Street and the Niagara River) to the City of Buffalo, without having to fight the swift current in the Niagara River. The dam raised the water in Tonawanda Creek four feet higher than the water in the Niagara River. This required that a lock be built (now the site of the parking lot off Niagara Street, by the Canal Town) to lift boats from the Niagara River going east to Lockport through the canal, or lowering them going west, towards Niagara Falls. The dam created a small island between the creek, the lock and the canal, which was called Goose Island. The residents of Goose Island had a reputation of providing drink and entertainment to the canal workers and boatmen. A Buffalo Land Company bought large tracts of land and laid out a future village. The surveyors were Albert H. Tracey and Charles Townsend.

**1824:** The State ordered Tonawanda Island sold in the City of Albany, at a public auction. The buyer was Samuel Leggate of the City of New York, who bought it for \$23.00 per acre. James Carney, an early resident of the settlement, was long associated with Frontier activity, having driven an ox team from Lewiston to Fort Schlosser for Porter Barton & Co. He also propelled scow boats from Schlosser to Black Rock with bundles of salt. James Sweeney purchased his first parcel of land at Tremont and Main Streets.

**1825:** The Erie Canal was completed in October at a cost of \$7.6 million. Opponents to this new waterway called it "Clinton's Ditch." To celebrate the opening, cannons were fired along the side of the canal, and in one hour and forty minutes, everyone from New York City to Buffalo was aware of this historic event. The first work on this end of the canal was started in Tonawanda and it was very definitely an impetus to settlement at the mouth of Tonawanda Creek. At this time, the settlement consisted of a bridge across the creek, a few houses and two small stores.

William Vandervoort purchased 1700 acres of land from the Holland Land Company on the north side of Tonawanda Creek, where he built and occupied the one log house side. William Williams established a ferry over the Niagara River in 1825 acting under a special act of the Legislature. The ferry traveled from the South side of Tonawanda Creek to Grand Island. James Sweeney was also given the right to operate a like ferry on the North side of the Creek. The settlement was referred to as Niagara.

**1828:** James Sweeney located first in Buffalo in 1811. He was one of the original owners of that tract of land which was to be the Village of North Tonawanda. He built the first frame dwelling. Clearing of the land was begun at once to furnish timber for the Buffalo Pier and prepare the way for the sale of village lots. He donated lots to the first Methodist Church and the first school house and was generous to destitute children, furnishing them with books and clothes. In 1852 his son, John Sweeney, built the first depot and was station agent for several years. He also built the first sawmill on site of the Dam waste gates. This was the only mill of its kind in this section of the country.

The Niagara, the first hotel, was built by Vandervoort in 1828 and was destroyed by fire in 1844. When the Boston Company began cutting white oak lumber on Grand Island, he managed a store there as a partner. In 1836 the first bank was established in this store. He built the first brick residence for his family in North Tonawanda. The completion of the Erie Canal started the migration to the West, defined as all territory west of the Allegheny Mountains. Scores of wagon trains filled with furniture, farm implements and tools for clearing land, children and livestock came in a never ending parade from the Mohawk Valley to Western New York.



**1829:** The State Legislature chartered the Ellicott Creek Slack Water Navigation Company to maintain slack water navigation in Ellicott creek by means of dams or locks from Williamsville to the junction with Tonawanda Creek. In the spring of 1829, Benjamin and Mary Long built a home at the point where Ellicott Creek joined Tonawanda Creek. The home still exists today as a historic site. The Long Homestead is owned by the City of Tonawanda and maintained by the Historical Society of the Tonawandas.

**1833:** Daniel Webster was an interested party in 1833 when his company, formed in Boston, Mass., purchased 16,000 acres of white oak timber on Grand Island for \$5.00 per acre and began cutting and sending it to the Atlantic seaboard where it was used in the shipbuilding industry. Stephen White, manager of the East Boston Co. from Salem, Massachusetts, purchased Tonawanda Island as his home. He built the mansion which stood on the South end of this Island, near where Steamers Restaurant is located today. This magnificent mansion was named "Beechwater" and the interior was finished in solid cherry and black walnut from Boston and marble mantels imported from Italy. Stephen White occupied this home for ten years. His daughter married the son of Daniel Webster, Fletcher. The mansion was eventually demolished to make room for additional piles of lumber. Daniel Webster, the eminent statesman, was a frequent visitor to this area, staying at the White Mansion on such visits. Many parts of the hulls of the famous Yankee Clippers, which firmly impressed traders in the early part of the nineteenth century and established in United States as a youthful country with radical ideas and as a naval power, were made of white oak from Grand Island. It was the lumber venture that brought Daniel Payne Baxter, an expert millwright to this area, from New England, along with his four sons. Baxter's specialty was erecting sawmills and putting in the machinery. He and his sons settled on Grand Island. Later two of his sons immigrated to the West in Prairie Schooners. The Boston Company's Store brought Louis S. Payne as clerk.

**1836:** The first school was erected in the area which now includes Main and Tremont Streets, the site now occupied by the First Methodist Church. The building was approximately 20 feet by 30 feet. There were 21 taxpayers and 12 non-taxpayers living in the settlement at this time. The first steam railroad in Western New York, the Buffalo and Niagara Falls line, was opened and ran on the right of way through Main Street in Tonawanda and Webster Street in North Tonawanda. The line was completed September 6. The whistle of the locomotive echoed through the woods. This line was later taken over by the New York Central System.

The Town of Wheatfield was established on May 12. The Town of Tonawanda was established from the Town of Buffalo on April 16. The Town of Tonawanda included Grand Island which became its own township in 1852.

**1837:** The second Seminole War was fought on the Canadian side of the Niagara River. The Americans along the border were in sympathy with the Insurgents. A small American steamship, the "Caroline," carried supplies to a party of insurgents on Navy Island. An English force was sent from Chippewa, Canada opposite Niagara Falls, New York and found the vessel on Grand Island. The British killed 12 men, towed the boat into the river and set it on fire. It drifted down the river and over the Falls.

**1838:** Dr. Jesse F. Locke was the first resident physician to locate in the Tonawandas, starting practice in the village and continuing until his death in 1860. The laws of 1838 provided for the navigation of the Tonawanda and Ellicott Creeks, promoting their use in connection with the canal.

**1839:** Henry P. Smith was a pioneer lumberman. He started rafting logs from the shores of Lake Erie to the Tonawandas. His descendant, Henry P. Smith III, was a United States Congressman serving the City of North Tonawanda for a number of years.

**1842:** The First Methodist Church was established at Main and Tremont Streets on land donated by Colonel John Sweeney. The present structure was built in 1880.

**1843:** Martinsville was established when Carl Sack, Edmund Wurl and Fred Grosskopf purchased 1700 acres of land from William Vandervoorte at \$15 per acre on Tonawanda Creek in the Southeast corner of the Town of Wheatfield, 4 miles east of the Village of Tonawanda. The first families, from Germany, came to this country to escape religious persecution. The first Lutheran Church was built in 1846. Martinsville was named after the Lutheran leader, Martin Luther.

**1847:** Lewis S. Payne, who settled in 1841 built a home in what is now North Tonawanda. It was then the first ward of the Village of Tonawanda. The home was located near the crossing of the Canandaigua Branch of the NYC Railway over Tonawanda Creek. Nearby, he built the first steam saw mill. Later Colonel Payne became one of the City's most prominent citizens and had a farm on the corner of Wheatfield Street and Payne Avenue, the highest point in the area. It is believed that Wheatfield Street was named because it was a direct lane from the Colonel's wheat fields to the docks on the river. A public school, now the Community Center, was built on land donated by his heirs and is named after him. He is also credited with encouraging New York to build the State Ditches in this section, which reclaimed much swamp land.

**1848:** North Tonawanda was chiefly populated by canal boatmen and their families. When some Cleveland capitalists, attracted by the possibilities of port advantages as a point for shipping lumber and grain, set up operations, the population of the settlement began to grow.

**1849:** The Cleveland Commercial Co. bought 500 feet of river frontage and built an elevator capable of storing 250,000 bushels of wheat. This company made improvements to the harbor and gave a public square to Tonawanda as well as sold many building lots on long credit. The elevator burned in 1857 and the concern moved to Buffalo.

**1850:** The Tonawandas began to assume the proportions of a lumber port in the latter part of this decade. This activity marked one of the outstanding periods in our history. The industry enjoyed a steady expansion for nearly 40 years, until timber near the water's edge of the upper lakes became so scarce that it could no longer be shipped or floated down to the head of the canal. The lumber was not carried by wagon was floated and towed in great rafts chained together and brought here to be sawed into lumber and shingles. The whine of great saws and the whir of joiners filled the air with men working twelve hour shifts for wages of \$1.50 to \$2.00 per day. This new commerce, coming into the small village, was to transform it overnight. Municipal problems were multiplied many times. Fire protection became a serious matter and water supply just as pressing a concern. Better transportation facilities both for workers and for shipping out the lumber were needed. The streets, surfaced with loose gravel, were practically impossible after a rain and very rough and dusty when dry.

**1851:** William Dornfeld started a Dry Goods and General store in a sunken canal boat, retrieved from the water. He built the Martinsville Hotel where the Martinsville Post Office was formerly located.

**1852:** The Town of Grand Island was established. It was formerly part of the Town of Tonawanda.

**1854:** The beginning of the movement which resulted in North Tonawanda's withdrawal from the original Village of Tonawanda, is credited to a resolution offered at the May 6 meeting of the Village Board of Trustees. This resolution provided that all monies collected from the taxable residents of the First Ward, presently known as North Tonawanda, should be expended for the benefit of the streets of that Ward. The resolution was tabled, then again resurrected in 1857.

**1855:** The Tonawanda Village Board authorized the First Ward to withdraw from the Village of Tonawanda.

**1856:** William Dornfeld and Christian Fritz purchased a saw mill in Martinsville, which was built by Joseph Hewitt and located on Sawyer Creek, where Niagara Falls Boulevard was built. In 1860, Christian Fritz built his own mill and Dry Kiln to supply the surrounding County.



**1857:** The Village of Tonawanda consisted of three wards in that section of the village, now the City of Tonawanda, and one ward in that part of the old village, now known as the City of North Tonawanda. The boundaries which formed North Tonawanda at this time were: the Niagara River, Tonawanda Creek, Division (Mile) Street and Wheatfield Street. There were frequent disputes over which side of the creek should receive the most improvements. A disagreement over highway money to be spent was settled temporarily by leaving the decision to the street committee which had equal representation. The "Gravel Incident", involved a dispute over the transportation of stone from the gravel pit at Thompson Street and Payne Avenue (located behind the current North Tonawanda City Hall) to repair roads in the Wards located across Tonawanda Creek (currently the City of Tonawanda).

**1857:** An act was introduced in the New York State Legislature to separate North Tonawanda's ward from the Village of Tonawanda. This act also provided for the governing of North Tonawanda as a part of the Town of Wheatfield, and it remained such for 8 years.

**1861:** On August 12 the Confederate Army opened fire on Fort Sumter, a Union Army stronghold, located in Charleston, South Carolina. In the fall, Colonel Payne, at his own expense, formed a Civil War company of volunteers, part of the 100th Regiment, which was recruited from western New York in Buffalo. He landed at Newport News, Virginia, in April 1862, with his regiment and formed a part of Casey's Division, a Division of McClellan's Army in the famous Peninsula Campaign. His regiment took up their position on White Oak Station. Colonel Payne was in the Battles of Williamsburg and Seven Pines. He is buried in Elmwood Cemetery. The Civil War battles of Antietam, Fredricksburg and Shiloh took place during 1862, as well as the battle between the iron clad ships Monitor and Merrimack.

**1863:** The biggest campaign of the Civil War took place at Gettysburg Pennsylvania, on July 1 through July 3, resulting in a Union Army victory. The Union Army, under General Sherman, invaded Georgia in 1864 and marched to the sea.

**1865:** An act was introduced in the New York State Legislature on May 8, incorporating the Village of North Tonawanda. The name "Village of Niagara" was originally considered and used for a short period of time; however, there was already a City of Niagara Falls and a Town of Niagara, so the name North Tonawanda was finally chosen. The boundaries were increased to the present size of the City of North Tonawanda. It had a population of 440 people. The villages of Martinsville and Gratwick were annexed to North Tonawanda. Colonel Lewis S. Payne was elected Niagara County Clerk in 1865 and a Member of the New York Assembly in 1869. He was later elected as a New York State Senator.

Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant on April 9, in the Town of Appomattox, Virginia. President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated on April 14 in Washington D.C. The Civil War ended. Approximately 650,000 soldiers had lost their lives.

**1866:** A map of the City shows that Main Street was the original Military Road. Its name was later changed to Webster Street, in honor of Daniel Webster. Railroad tracks ran down the center of the street. Goundry School was constructed and was staffed with four teachers and a principal. The former school site is currently an empty lot, located next to the former Andrew Carnegie Library.

**1868:** On February 12, the Colonel John Sweeney Rural Cemetery was founded, located across the street from City Hall on Payne Avenue. Many old residents are buried in this cemetery, to include graves from the old Tonawanda Burying Grounds, formally located along the Niagara River, south of Tonawanda Creek.

**1870:** The Hydrant Hose Company had a fire station located on Sweeney Street, next to the Delaware Street Bridge. The current location of the Historical Society of the Tonawandas is located in the old New York Central and Hudson River Railroad Station at 113 Main Street, originally constructed this year and used as a depot until 1922.

**1872:** The first permanent banking business was founded by Edward Evans on June 1. It was succeeded on May 1, 1877 by the firm of Evans, Schwinger & Co. These banks were followed by the State Bank on May 1, 1883. The Armitage - Herschell Company, which made steam engines and boilers, was started this year and began building carousals in 1883. By 1891, the company was building more than 100 carousals a year.

The Niagara River Iron Company was established. The Company purchased 165 acres of land from M. Bush along River Road. The buildings were erected in 1873 and manufacturing operations began the same year. The blast furnace was designed for an output of 50 tons of pig iron per day. The Company dock was 500 feet long and reached a 10 foot depth of water. A large crane raised freight from vessels. The last buildings were erected in 1895 and occupied an area of 4 acres. Branch tracks of the New York Central served the site. Fisherman's Park is currently located at this former industrial property.

**1874:** The Village Council House was built at a cost of \$5,000. It was located on Thompson Street, between Oliver and River Road. This building had sections for fire apparatus and the jail on the first floor, Council rooms on the second floor and a hose and lookout tower also.

**1875:** A new bridge was built using a wrought iron structure, weighing 50 tons. It was erected by the Wrought Iron Bridge Co. of Canton, Ohio.

**1876:** On May 7, twenty men met for the purpose of establishing a fire company. On May 15 the Village Board approved their request and formed a volunteer fire company called the North Tonawanda Bucket Company, later to be called the Columbia Hook and Ladder Company #1. They were located at the Village Council House on Thompson Street. In 1914, the first motorized fire truck was delivered to the City and was assigned to Columbia Hook and Ladder.

**1880:** A construction contract for a stone bridge on Oliver Street over the state ditch, which has since been tiled and covered, was awarded to Frederick Schultz for \$622. The proposed macadamizing of Webster Street to be paid for by public subscriptions was considered. The residents of Christiana Street wanted the name of the street changed to "Maple" but the petition was tabled.

**1882:** The figures for lumber shipments exceeded those of Chicago, when the Tonawandas became the lumber market supreme. Tonawanda Island, or Wilkinson Island, was practically a wilderness, being occupied only by White's old mansion, which for years had been falling into decay. The Island was purchased in 1881 or 1882 by Smith Fassett & Co. After this purchase, a bridge was built and the wilderness was gradually pushed back until the island became entirely industrial. The area of the Island is 85 acres, the greatest part of which was covered with lumber, soon after its purchase by Smith Fassett & Co. The turn of the century brought gradual changes, and for another 30 years the lumber industry slowly declined until it had been practically all replaced with other industrial activities, including iron and steel businesses, lumber finishing, chemical processing, plastics and musical instruments, radios and other concerns meeting modern demands for new products.

**1883:** It was the custom of the Village to discharge the police force about the time navigation on the lakes and canal was closed by cold weather. The sailors and canalers caused the constabulary endless trouble when they came ashore. This element gave the Village the reputation of being the roughest port in the World. Alert Hose Company was incorporated March 3 and was located near the old labor hall on Thompson Street.

**1884:** A proposition from the Michigan Pipe Company to lay four miles of pipe and construct a pumping station and boiler house at a total cost of \$20,000 was investigated. Census figures showed that the population was 2509. The DeGraff Mansion, located on the corner of Payne Avenue and Goundry Street, was built and was the first home in the Tonawandas to have indoor plumbing.



**1885:** Several local citizens were given permission to form a water company, and a project was initiated under private control and then taken over by the municipality. Activity of the new water company was the highlight of this year. In September, village President Thompson and Trustees Batt and Oelkers took a flat boat out into the river past Little Island and at various intervals on the way across filled jugs with water sealing them and marking the location. A Buffalo Chemist analyzed the contents of the various containers and showed that the best water was obtained about half way across. Eventually the Council transformed this process into the modern system which today provides pure, filtered water from the Niagara River. Water pipes were made of wood. Occasionally even now one is found in excavation to be well preserved. Pipes were supplied by the Hobbie Ayrault Co., which began production in 1857, after incorporation in 1885, with capital of \$50,000. The water obtained by the Holley System from the Niagara River was supplied to both of the villages of Tonawanda and North Tonawanda. At the Council House on Thompson Street, the public approved a proposition to permit the new company to install 72 hydrants in six miles of wooden mains.

In January a progressive citizenry, with George P. Smith as founder, organized the first municipal water works system after many offers were considered by private concerns. Mr. Smith was a man with many plans for his village. He organized two trolley companies, building lines to Buffalo and operating service in both Tonawandas. He had franchises for cross town lines but did not use them. He also built the only "skyscraper" at Webster and Tremont Street, the Smith Building, and assisted in the development of other portions of the business section.

The Tonawanda Gas Light Company had been granted permission to lay 4 miles of pipe line and a contract was signed to light 125 street lamps at \$15 per year each. James Warren was given the contract for cleaning and lighting 100 new street lamps at 80 cents per day. A fine of \$25.00 was fixed for anyone caught turning stop cocks on the new lamps; and persons convicted of hitching their horses to the lamp post were fined \$5.00. Police records do not show any violations of these ordinances. An atmosphere of romance surrounded the Lamplighter. As the shades of night were falling, children used to wait his coming. He would turn on the gas with a key on the end of a long stick, then with a light enclosed in an iron tube lowered down, the gas was ignited. He passed from post to post down the street, leaving behind him a row of bright lights in the glass globes, and then disappeared around the corner. The advent of Electricity stole his occupation, but his art is enshrined in memory and song.

**1886:** The new water works was tested on December 24 in the presence of village officials, firemen, residents and visitors from Tonawanda and other communities. According to the previous agreement, the company was to furnish sufficient pressure to throw streams of water from 12 separate hydrants at least 80 feet in the air. The day of the test was cold and a high wind prevailed, causing many persons to expect failure. But contrary to pessimistic anticipations, the Village records show the new hydrants hurled columns of water from 85 to 125 feet perpendicularly into the air. This new method of throwing water on a fire relegated the steam pumper to comparative inactivity.

River pollution was a problem even at this early date. Objections were registered about Buffalo Sewage in the Niagara River polluting the waters that flowed past the Tonawanda intake. The Village Janitor's salary fixed at \$1.00 per day. His duties were to take care of the Council House on Thompson Street and lighting of the kerosene street lamps on Webster and Tremont Streets. James Ryan, Sr., was appointed. The Little Island Swing Bridge was proposed. Island Street, in response to a petition from lumber men, was laid out from Main Street to the proposed site of the bridge.

Citizens petitioned the council to require the New York Central Railroad to provide either watchmen or gates at the nine grade crossings in the village after many fatal accidents. Trains traveled through the village at 30 or 40 miles per hour, because there were no ordinances regulating speed of trains through the village. All property owners were required to trim trees that were less than nine feet from the pavement so the gas street lamps could throw more light. If the property owners refused to comply, it was ordered done and the cost was assessed against the property.

**1886:** In April, Bell Telephone Co. applied for permission to erect a line of "symmetrical painted posts 40 to 60 feet high" on the west side of Webster Street. Permission was denied so Manhattan Street was substituted.

The creation of a Central Fire Headquarters was suggested. The village leased a part of the Gravel pit property on Robinson Street from the New York, Lake Erie and Western Railroad. The New York Central and Hudson Railroad was granted a permit for a bridge over Tonawanda Creek.

On March 1, the "Ironton Boys" submitted a petition to the North Tonawanda Village Council asking to be recognized as a fire organization. On March 6, the Common Council granted their petition and authorized the creation of the Active Hose Company No. 2. The Village Council approved a lease for a parcel of land at 84 Robinson Street between Marion Street and the tracks, as the location of the Hose House. On September 7, 1897, the Council ordered a horse drawn, 4 wheeled hose wagon at a cost of \$325. The Active Hose supplied the horse. On July 14, 1917, the first motorized pumper, at a cost of \$8,246, was delivered to the City and assigned to the Active Hose.

Gratwick Hose Company No. 6 was also organized by the Village Council. The Companies first fire station was on Felton Street, the current site of Riley Gear, and was dedicated on July 28, 1892. Their current fire station is located at 110 Ward Road and was dedicated in 1964.

**1887:** In April, the Common Council authorized the creation of the Live Hose Company No. 4. On July 18 the Council designated the Live Hose to act as a salvage company until the Village could purchase hose for the cart. On January 3, 1888, Live Hose was given the old Alert Hose quarters on Thompson Street, which was shared with Columbia Hook and Ladder.

The village fathers were confronted with many petitions from railroads for switches to be extended across streets to reach new lumber yards and mills that were springing up in many sections. There were petitions filed against such switches by citizens, but the minutes of the village board show that such petitions were disregarded. The New York Central obtained a switch across Vandervoort in spite of the objections, with the understanding that it could connect with a lumber yard on the gravel pit site but that no gravel should be removed. The new City Hall now graces one end of this property, as the lumber industry and the railroad switch have long disappeared. A fine recreation field occupies the other end of this area. Goundry street opened, while litigation for this right of way cost the village \$1,000.

**1888:** The North Tonawanda Police Department was organized on April 20 with two patrolman under the command of Chief Charles Kohler, with the primary function of improving the quality of life for the residents by controlling drunks and vagrants and to watch for fire in the lumberyards at night. The salary of a police constable was \$144 per year, prorated for the time served, which began in the spring and ended in the fall. The First telegraph fire alarm system was installed by the Utica Fire Alarm Co. It was connected with a bell at headquarters and a gong in the Council House. Ten strokes of bell was for a fire. Fifteen strokes indicated a general assemblage of the people and two strokes for more water pressure. A stringent fire ordinance governing the operation of the system was then adopted. The Census showed 3383 or 607 families lived in the Village. William Clark was the census taker and was paid \$20 for his work. He visited every family. The new Village Board of Trustees now had a membership of 6.

Tonawanda Electric Co. received permission to run pole lines and wires for lighting homes with electricity. B. F. Betts was hired to make the first map of the village copies of which were filed with County and State. The Board required all real estate transfers to be recorded on this. There were six miles of docks along the Niagara River, and by 1888 the Tonawandas became the second largest lumbering port in the world.



**1888:** Webster Street was paved. The Village Trustees voted to spend \$800 for a new Hook and Ladder Fire Truck, which was dedicated on May 12 and \$2,900 for street lighting. Two miles of water main extensions were authorized in supplementary contracts with Tonawanda Water Co. The first catholic church, Ascension, was constructed in 1888 at its current site. It burned and was rebuilt in 1894.

**1889:** Auto Wheel Coaster was founded and through the years maintained an excellent name in the sled and wagon business. The company went bankrupt in 1964 and burned down.

**1890:** On June 10 the Niagara Savings and Loan Association opened for business.

**1891:** On January 26 Rescue Fire Company #5 held its organizational meeting. The first known fire station was on Old Falls Boulevard, near Lockport Road. The Company's current fire station is located at Strad Avenue. The first trolley system serving the Tonawandas, called the Tonawanda Street Railroad Company, was formed.

**1892:** Pine Woods School was constructed on the site of the parking lot for Park Lanes Bowling. The DeKleist Organ Works, the forerunner of the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company, began operations.

**1893:** The Public Library received its charter from New York State.

**1894:** The Village Council authorized the organization of Sweeney Hose No. 7. The Gratwick Trolley Line opened on June 30 and went out of business in 1922.

**1897:** As the lumber business and other industrial ventures grew, there was a requirement for additional municipal services to support the expanding Village. A movement to become a City arose, which caused quite a bit of political wrangling. Finally, an act was introduced in the New York State Legislature on April 24, 1897, incorporating the City of North Tonawanda. Albert E. Keen, Village President, became the first Mayor. The sidewalks were made of wooden blanks and the streets were gravel. The Tonawandas' Armory was built in 1896 and formally dedicated in 1897.

**1898:** The Rand Ledger Company was established to manufacture, promote and sell special record keeping equipment and supplies. This company was the later named Remington Rand Inc. and was located on Sweeney Street, east of the Delaware Street Bridge.

**1899:** A proposal to build a bridge across the Niagara somewhere between Buffalo and Tonawanda was made for the purpose of lowering experimental apparatus into the current to develop electricity. The Council sent a lengthy resolution to Governor Theodore Roosevelt when the bill authorizing the structure was placed before him, requesting his veto on the basis that navigation to the lumber ports would be endangered and prosperity of the Twin Cities threatened. The resolution stated among other things that there was unloaded annually on the Twin City docks between 500 million and 700 million feet of lumber and from eight to sixteen million pieces of lath; from 30 to 66 million shingles. The docks covered five miles of water front in North Tonawanda and about two miles in Tonawanda. Iron ore shipped into North Tonawanda amounted to 250,000 tons. At a special election taxpayers voted \$15,000 for street lighting and a contract was signed with the Tonawanda Power Co. for \$12,000.

**1899:** A telephone franchise approved by the Council was vetoed by Mayor Ollie because he thought it did not favor the City enough and did not stipulate rates. Another draft was submitted a few months later when the City asked for a free telephone in the Fire Chief's residence. This was also rejected by the City, this time by the council and in 1900 definite telephone terms on which the City would do business were outlined by the Aldermen. These included a term not to exceed 50 years, a flat rate in the City and to Tonawanda of not more than \$36 for a business phone and \$18 for a private phone, ten free telephones to the City offices and a guarantee of ample protection to the City offices and its residents from damage and injury from the lines. The toll charge to Martinsville was 25¢. The franchise was with the Bell Telephone Co. and was finally passed during Mayor Smoyer's term. The City got eight free telephones. Another project of the Aldermen was to negotiate a three cent fare on the Gratwick trolley between North Tonawanda and Gratwick. In the election, the proposition of spending \$30,000 for sewers in Ironton and 40 streets east of Oliver Street was voted on, as well as \$9,000 for reconstruction of the Council House in Thompson Street.

**1900:** The Village Board authorized moving the City Hall and Police Department from the Thompson Street building, which would still house fire vehicles, to the YMCA Building on the corner of Main and Tremont Streets, currently the sales lot for Flanagan Chevrolet. The City rented space at this building. Sweeney Hose moved into its new quarters on Schenck Street, near Niagara Street. On April 24 the Village Board adopted formal rules and regulations for the Police Department. The first traffic signal was installed.

**1901:** Felton School was constructed at Bryant and Thompson Street and became the first High School in the Village. Goundry School became a grammar school, and in 1926 Felton School also became a grammar school.

**1902:** The City entertained The Western New York Volunteer Firemen Association. The Board of Trustees was active and stated the population was over 10,000.

**1903:** The City accepted a gift of \$20,000 from Andrew Carnegie for the construction of a Library.

**1904:** The Carnegie Library was built in the center of town at 240 Goundry Street. It was one of nearly 3,000 libraries built in the United States between 1885 and 1919 with money donated by the wealthy industrialist, Andrew Carnegie. The building is listed on the State and National Registry of National Historic Places. A children's room was constructed downstairs in 1938 to relieve overcrowding. The first TNT Football Game took place in 1904, with the Lumberjacks beating the Warriors 18 to 6. On January 27, one of the worst fires in the history of the City destroyed the Lumber Company and Yards of White, Rider & Frost on Tonawanda Island, burning for four nights and three days.

**1906:** The Board of Public Works on March 26 presented a resolution limiting the speed of "Motor Vehicles to one mile in six minutes on the city streets and alleys." (10 miles per hour).

**1908:** On August 23 the City Market, located on Robinson Street and Payne Avenue, opened for business. The facility is often referred as the Farmers' Market, and is open all year round.

**1909:** Columbia Hook & Ladder built a new building at a cost of \$4,000, at 252 Oliver Street. It served as Fire Headquarters until 1972, when it was sold for \$11,500.

**1910:** The Wurlitzer manufacturing plant, located on Niagara Falls Boulevard, purchased the old DeKleist Barrel Organ Company.

**1912:** On October 1st, the Common Council responded to petitions from Active Hose, Alert Hose, Gratwick Hose, Live Hose and Sweeney Hose and appointed full time drivers/horse care takers for each firehouse, at a cost of \$60.00 per month. This action is thought to be the start of the paid department as we know it today. The United States Post Office, now on the National Historic Registry, was built at its present site.



**1914:** The United States Congress declared the War against Germany on April 6. Germany surrendered a year and a half later, and the armistice was signed at 11 a.m. on November 11, 1918. During the war 8,020,780 military personnel were killed; 50,585 were American soldiers. Thirty seven of the American soldiers were boys from North Tonawanda who made the supreme sacrifice in World War I. Their names are inscribed on the Heroes Memorial, midway across the Renaissance Bridge, between Tonawanda and North Tonawanda as well as at the War Memorial, in Brauer Park, next to City Hall..

Many North Tonawanda men were represented in every branch of the service during World War I. At the opening, local candidates for officers' positions were sent to training camps at Madison barracks, Fort Niagara and the Great Lakes Training Station. When the Draft law became effective, most of the men taken were sent to Camp Dix and Camp Upton. Company K, 74th Infantry was used for guard duty until August 1918 when it was designated as a company of the 108th Infantry and sent to the western battle front with the 27th Division. Here our boys did valiant work in breaking the Hindenburg Line and participating in other offensives. At home other men formed the Home Guard to do local guard duty while the women of the community volunteered for the Red Cross and the Boy Scouts sold War Savings stamps.

Ground was broken on April 13 for the construction of DeGraff Hospital. The first patient was treated on December 4. The hospital concept was initiated by LeGrand Simson DeGraff, Army surgeon Dr. John A. Rafter and the Mayor of North Tonawanda in 1913, when they decided to build this project at a cost not to exceed \$40,000. The current hospital is located on the original site and is the result of many expansion projects. The hospital was named after LeGrand DeGraff's father, James H. DeGraff.

The City placed in service its first piece of motorized fire apparatus on October 1, a Hook & Ladder truck assigned to the Columbia Hook & Ladder Company. The truck was destroyed in an accident on March 30, 1929. The Panama Canal was completed at a cost of \$336 million. It took ten years to build the 40 mile canal, which spans Central America between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

**1918:** The "High Speed Line" was officially opened on June 9 and for a long while was the fastest and most comfortable mode of travel between Buffalo and Niagara Falls. The travel time from the foot of Main Street in Buffalo to the foot of Falls Street in Niagara Falls was approximately one hour. This line was discontinued August 20, 1937 and demolition began September 28. A severe flu epidemic occurred pressing the services at Degraff Hospital. The YMCA, located at the current site of Flanigan's Chevrolet, used its gymnasium to accommodate cots. City Hall and the Police Department were also located in this building.

**1919:** On May 22, the Police Department obtained its first mechanized patrol vehicle, a motorcycle. A single span railroad draw bridge, with a cement counter weight, was constructed to allow larger tug boats and barges to pass underneath. The bridge was lifted only once. The New York Central Railroad tracks were relocated to this bridge from their original location, down the middle of Main Street.

**1921:** Durez Plastics and Chemicals Company, located on Walck Road, was founded. The company founder, Harry M. Dent, selected North Tonawanda for his business enterprise because he considered it the center of the market area for plastics. The plant manufactured phenolic resins and molding compounds. The original name was General Plastics Inc., which was changed to Durez in 1939. Oxidental Chemical closed the facility in 1996.

**1924:** International Paper, located on Tonawanda Island, started operations in 1924. After fifty years of business, the facility closed in 1974 and moved to New England.

**1925:** The Rand Ledger Company merged with the KARDEX Company to form the Remington Rand Co., located on Sweeney Street.

**1926:** The Rivera Theater was opened on December 30, 1926, with silent black and white movies, accompanied by the sound of the Mighty Wurlitzer Organ. It has a seating capacity of 1,200 and was later renamed the Riviera. The Niagara Frontier Organ Society purchased the historic theater in 1989 and it has been restored to its original magnificence. A new High School (currently Lowry Middle School) was constructed on Payne Avenue and graduated its first class in June 1927. Felton School became a grammar school.

**1927:** The first television set was developed.

**1929:** The new City Hall, located at Payne Avenue and Thompson Street was completed and dedicated, at a cost of \$200,000. The American Legion was given permission to erect a Memorial Hall next to the building in Brauer Park. The council approved the purchase of municipal Incinerator Plant for garbage and other waste disposal, located on Walck Road and Zimmerman Street. The Stock Market crashed.

Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt visited this area on July 11 on his inspection tour of the Barge Canal, which replaced the original Erie Canal, as a guest of the City of Buffalo. The cost of the construction and equipment for the canal was \$175 million. The Bill authorizing the creation of the Niagara Frontier Bridge Commission was signed on April 13 by Governor Roosevelt. The newly formed Commission met on June 1. In this same year Governor Roosevelt approved an appropriation of \$250,000 to purchase land for the approaches of the Grand Island Bridges. The total cost of this project was approximately \$8 million.

**1933:** Tondisco Inc., was founded by Norman Ackerman and Roy Glawf as the Tonawandas Distributing Corp., at 91 Scott Street, Tonawanda. In 1952 it moved to their current location at 80 Thompson Street.

**1935:** The Grand Island Bridges were formally opened and dedicated on July 15.

**1937:** Industry was booming in North Tonawanda. Some of the companies doing business were: Buffalo Bolt Co., Wurlitzer Manufacturing Co., Remington Rand Inc., American District Steam Co., International Paper Co., Tonawanda Steel Inc., Van Raalte Co., Buffalo Steel Co., Creo-Dipt Shingle Co., Auto Wheel Coaster Co., Spillman Engineering Corp., Richardson Boat Co., Victor Safe Co., Tonawanda Corrugated Box and Durez Chemical.

**1939:** Three Mile Island, which was created by the construction of the Barge Canal, and is now the main part of Ellicott Creek Park, was geographically a part of the City of North Tonawanda and Niagara County. The county of Erie petitioned the State of New York for its use, and on May 1 it was transferred to the County of Erie.

The Active Hose Fire Hall was constructed, with the grand opening held on May 13. Two classic films, the "Wizard of Oz" and "Gone with the Wind" were released.

In September, World War II started in Europe when Germany invaded Poland.

**1940:** According to the United States Census Bureau, the 1940 population of the City of North Tonawanda was 21,900.

**1941:** Pearl Harbor, the United States Naval Base in the Pacific Ocean, was attacked by the Japanese on December 7. President Roosevelt declares this "a date which will live in infamy." The United States formally entered into World War II by declaring war against Japan and Germany.

**1944:** The Battle of Normandy, which was the invasion of Europe by the Allied Armies began on June 6, referred to as "D-Day." This was the final drive to liberate Europe.



**1945:** On May 8, Germany surrendered at General Eisenhower's headquarters in Reims, bringing an end to the war in Europe. On August 6, the first atomic bomb is dropped on the Japanese City of Hiroshima. On September 2, Japan surrenders to General McCarther on the deck of the USS Missouri, anchored in Tokyo Bay, bringing a close to the war in the Pacific. During World War II, it was estimated that a total of 15 to 20 million military personnel lost their lives. United States military personnel deaths were approximately 292,000. Of the total, 103 men were from North Tonawanda. Their names are identified at the War Memorial, in Brauer Park, next to City Hall.

**1947:** Memorial Pool was built and dedicated on July 4. The Fire Station at Payne Avenue and Walck Road was built to house Truck #2, the hook and ladder.

**1950:** According to the United States Census Bureau, the 1950 population of the City of North Tonawanda was 24,731. The Korean conflict began on June 25, when North Korean soldiers invaded South Korea, crossing the 38th parallel. Drake School was constructed in the 1950's.

**1951:** Payne Avenue Plaza, now known as MidCity Plaza opened with ten stores. The stores included: The Sample, WT Grant Co., Your Host Restaurant, Niagara Savings and Loan, Marine Trust Co., and Alan Mack Pharmacy. Many of these store fronts were torn down in 1996 to allow for the new Sears Hardware Complex. The first main frame computer, UNIVAC (Universal Automatic Computer) was produced by Remington-Rand and was used by the United States Bureau of Census.

**1953:** The Korean Conflict ended on July 7, when an armistice was signed between the United States and the North Koreans. Politically and militarily, the war was inconclusive. Approximately 1.5 to 2 million military personnel were killed during this conflict. Among them were approximately 23,300 American soldiers, and 13 were from the City of North Tonawanda. Their names are identified at the War Memorial in Brauer Park, next to City Hall.

**1954:** In Vietnam, the battle of Dien Bien Phu resulted in a victory of the Viet Minh by defeating the French. The French withdrew from Indochina and the United State presence in the country of Vietnam increased at this point. The first nuclear powered submarine Nautilus was launched in January.

**1955:** Melody Fair opened in the original round tent on its present site. The permanent structure was built in 1974. A great spurt in home construction opened Meadow Drive through from Payne Avenue and Jesella, Pioneer, Moll and Master Streets all opened this year.

**1956:** The original Sewage Treatment Plant was built. Prior to this the City discharged its sewage directly into Tonawanda Creek or the Niagara River.

**1957:** Grant School is expanded to accommodate the increase in student population. Dr Seuss publishes the children's book The Cat in the Hat.

**1958:** The Live Hose Company No 4 dedicated their new fire station on January 25, located at Goundry and Vandervoort Street. The United States Government creates the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to coordinate our efforts in space.

**1960:** According to the United States Census Bureau, the 1960 population of the City of North Tonawanda was 34,757. The Tonawanda News moved from downtown to its present larger location on River Road.

**1961:** The Catholic Diocese opened Bishop Gibbons High School. Astronaut Alan Shepard makes the first United States suborbital space flight on May 5 aboard the spacecraft "Freedom 7." The Berlin Wall was constructed, dividing the German City of Berlin into East Berlin and West Berlin.

**1962:** The North Tonawanda High School, dedicated this year, cost \$3,850,000 to build to accommodate a student population of 1,800. Astronaut John Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth on February 20, 1962. He orbited the earth three times aboard the spacecraft "Friendship 7." The Cuban Missile Crisis began on October 16 when an American U-2 plane photographed missile launch sites in Cuba, resulting in the Naval blockade of Cuba, which ended on October 28 when the Soviets missile sites were dismantled and withdrawn.

**1963:** Ohio Elementary School was dedicated. The City Green House and Botanical Gardens were opened. President John F. Kennedy is assassinated on November 22 in Dallas Texas by Lee Harvey Oswald, who was subsequently killed by Jack Ruby. The Beatles, a musical group from England, released their first recording in 1963, "Please Please Me", followed in 1964 by their second hit "I Want To Hold Your Hand."

**1964:** The new quarters for Gratwick Hose Company No. 6, located at 110 Ward Road, was dedicated. The Tops Supermarket on Goundry Street opened. The store closed in 1997 when the new Tops Super Store opened in the City of Tonawanda.

The United States government, involved in the Country of Vietnam since the mid 1950's, escalates its military involvement. This was based on the Gulf of Tonkin incident, when United States vessels were allegedly attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats, resulting in a Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, on August 2. In simple terms, it was the South Vietnamese and the United States governments against the Viet Cong, a revolutionary movement in South Vietnam and the North Vietnamese government, separated by the 17th Parallel. The Tet Offensive started on January 30, 1968, resulting in the attack of provincial and district capitals, including the United States Embassy in Saigon. Our involvement peaked in 1968, at a troop strength of approximately 549,000 men. The conflict dragged on until the Paris Peace Accords were signed on January 31, 1973. During the Vietnam Conflict, it was estimated that a total of 1.1 million military personnel lost their life. United States military personnel deaths exceeded 58,000. Of that total, 12 were from North Tonawanda. Their names are identified at the War Memorial in Brauer Park, next to City Hall.

**1965:** The Sugar Bowl, a local institution, closed when the Pullman Brothers decided they no longer wished to continue the ice cream parlor business on Webster Street. On July 4, Gratwick Riverside Park was dedicated during ceremonies highlighting the Village Centennial. The Houston Astrodome, which is the nation's first totally enclosed stadium, is constructed in Texas.

**1966:** On October 4 a meeting was held with former Coach George J. Vetter and the North Tonawanda Football Hall of Fame became a reality. The Hall of Fame building is located behind the old Carnegie Library. The Van Raalte Company site was taken over by the Downtowner Motor Inn, later the Packet Inn.

**1967:** East Robinson Street was extended from Zimmerman Street through to Division Street to provide access to the Powerline Plaza, located at Division and Erie. The Division Street Arterial, following the old high speed line was authorized.

**1968:** Reszel Junior High School opened. Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King is assassinated in Memphis Tennessee on April 4. Presidential candidate Robert Kennedy is assassinated in California, during his political primary victory party, on June 4.

**1969:** Felton Grammar School was demolished. Luther Manor, a senior citizens apartment complex occupies the former site. American astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin land on the moon on July 20, coining the phrase "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." The Woodstock Music and Art Festival takes place in Bethal, New York, from August 15 through 17, attracting 500,000 people.

**1970:** According to the United States Census Bureau, the 1970 population of the City of North Tonawanda was 36,012.



- 1971:** Bishop Gibbons High school closed and the complex was converted into Bishop Gibbons Apartments for senior citizens, which opened in 1980.
- 1972:** On June 28 the new Fire Headquarters, located at 495 Zimmerman Street, was dedicated. The building is the current home of Engine No. 7 and Ladder Truck No. 2. A general alarm fire burned the Auto Wheel Coaster Company on May 29.
- 1973:** The North Tonawanda Youth Center was authorized on March 27. The Senior Citizens Center was authorized on October 1 and moved into the Carousel Park Complex on February 28. On January 31, the Paris Peace Accords were signed, resulting in the withdrawal of United States military personnel, return of POWs and the end of our military involvement in Vietnam.
- 1974:** The Wurlitzer Plant produced its last jukebox. President Richard Nixon resigns the presidency after the Watergate Incident.
- 1975:** The City of North Tonawanda constructed a new 25,000 square foot Library building on Meadow Drive to replace the smaller Carnegie building. On July 4, the new facility was dedicated. The Carnegie Art Center now occupies the old library. Construction on the City's new 18 hole golf course was completed and it was dedicated on September 1. On January 28 the fire station at Nash Road and Deerfield Drive was dedicated. On April 30, the City of Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese Army, thus ending our presence in that country.
- 1976:** The United States of America celebrates its Bicentennial on July 4.
- 1977:** The Blizzard of 1977 took its toll on Western New York. While the City of Buffalo was under a winter siege for a week, North Tonawanda streets were all passable within two days. Singer Elvis Aron Presley, who was born on January 8, 1935, died on August 16.
- 1979:** The city dedicated the new Central Garage, located at 758 Erie Avenue, which is the current home of the Department of Public Works. Elizabeth C. Hoffman was elected the first woman mayor of North Tonawanda and served from 1979 until 1992, when she won a seat in the New York State Assembly.
- 1980:** According to the United States Census Bureau, the 1980 population of the City of North Tonawanda was 35,717. A chemically contaminated section of Niagara Falls, the Love Canal, was declared a disaster area. Cable News Network (CNN), a 24 hour news channel, created by Ted Turner, broadcasted for the first time.
- 1981:** The new Wastewater Treatment Plant was placed into operation. The plant and sanitary sewage delivery system cost more than \$42,000,000. Although it was funded in part by the Federal and State Governments, the City's share of cost exceeded \$10,000,000. This plant is one of three existing physical-chemical plants in the United States. It was designed and built to handle the waste discharges of many industries, now no longer located in the City. Music Television (MTV), a 24 hour music video channel, was launched.
- 1982:** On November 13 the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in Washington, D.C. It consists of a bronze sculpture of three soldiers and a V-shaped Wall bearing the names of American soldiers killed during the Vietnam Conflict.
- 1983:** Canal Fest was initiated by the Chamber of Commerce of the Tonawandas. It is a week long celebration of the canal heritage of the Tonawandas. Family oriented fun, includes the TNT Tug of War, a giant parade, craft show, beauty contest, bed races, boat parade car show, water skiing, boat building and racing and fireworks. This celebration is currently run by Canal Fest, Inc. After the Tug of War competition, the Mayor of the losing City must push the winning City's Mayor over the bridge in a wheelbarrow.

**1985:** The former Herschell Carrousel Factory Complex was purchase by the Carousel Society of the Niagara Frontier and converted into a museum dedicated to preserving the heritage of the hand-carved carousel. The museum offers displays, special exhibits and wood-carving demonstrations. The Society acquired an 1916 carousel, originally made in North Tonawanda, restored it on site, and now offer rides on this historic merry-go-round. More carousals were manufactured in North Tonawanda than in the City's three major United States competitors combined: New York, Philadelphia and Abilene, Kansas.

**1986:** The United States Space Shuttle Challenger exploded after liftoff from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on January 28, killing all the astronauts aboard.

**1989:** The Berlin Wall, built in 1961 to separate the sections of east and west Berlin, was torn down. In 1990 the re-unification of Germany took place.

**1990:** According to the United States Census Bureau, the 1990 population of the City of North Tonawanda was 34,989. On August 2, Iraqi military forces invaded the Arab State of Kuwait, which started the Gulf War. After Operation Desert Shield turned into Desert Storm, the war was won in a few days and a surrender took place on February 28, 1991.

**1994:** A new Science wing is added to the Senior High School, while Meadow School is expanded.

**1995:** George D. Maziarz was elected to the New York State Senate, representing the 61st District, and is still serving as our Senator. A new gymnasium/auditorium is added to the Senior High School.

**1996:** The high school athletic fields were constructed and opened, and the old concrete bleachers at Vetter Field were demolished in 1997. At this point, the TNT football record for 87 games is the Lumberjacks with 49 wins, the Warriors with 29 wins and 9 ties. The City bonded \$1.3 million to construct an additional 9 holes at the City owned Deerwood Golf Course. The Canadian government legalized gambling in Niagara Falls, Ontario and the Casino opened in December.

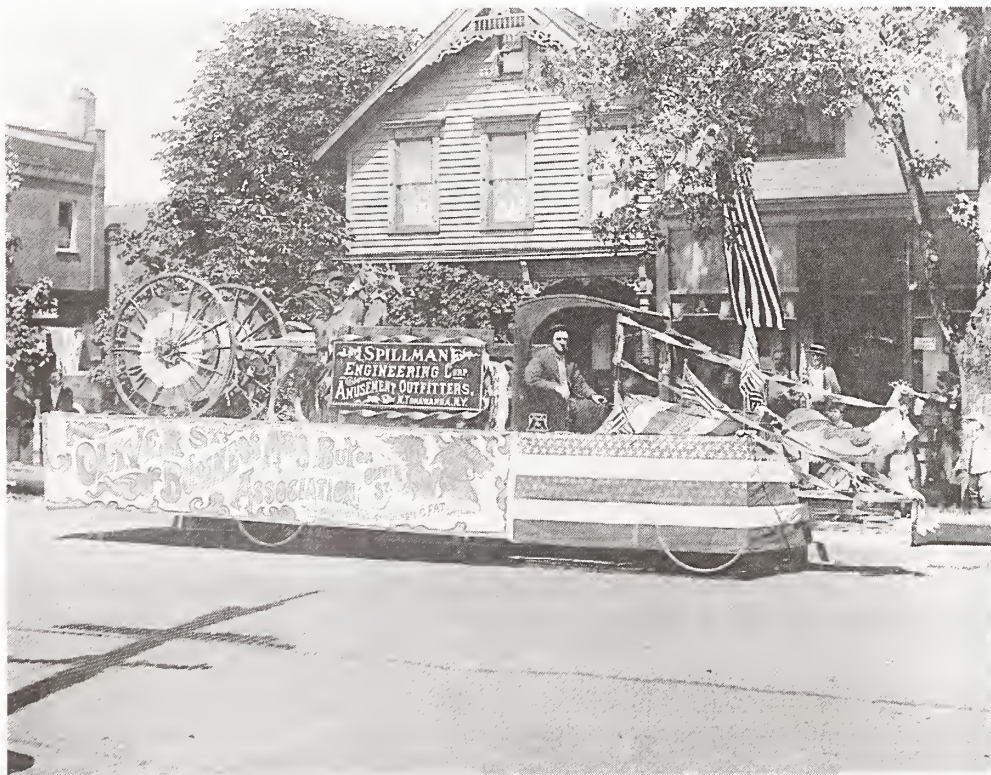
**1997:** The City of North Tonawanda celebrated its Centennial Birthday on April 24. A party took place at the new High School Auditorium that evening, and many members of the community participated in this historic event. A giant Birthday Cake with 100 candles was presented. The Beard Growing contestants were recognized and the City's Centennial musical piece, "The Redwoods," was played by the school band for the first time. A dance concluded the evening's activities. James A. McGinnis is the current Mayor of the City.





**North Tonawanda City Hall, c. 1947**

City Hall at Payne Avenue and Brauer Park was constructed in 1929 at a cost of \$200,000. It occupies the site of the infamous "gravel pit" that led to the separation of the Village of Tonawanda into two areas: one north of the canal and another south of the canal that eventually became the Cities of North Tonawanda and Tonawanda.



**Independence Day Parade, c. 1915**

An elaborately decorated float heads down Oliver Street, just south of the Odd Fellows Hall at Schenck Street. Three carousel animals adorn the festive float, a rooster at the head and two giraffes, with young firefighters astride, pulling the hose reel. The former Wittkowsky Photography Studio is visible behind the rooster.

## **DEGRAFF MEMORIAL HOSPITAL: GROWING UP WITH THE TONAWANDAS**

Having responded to the changing health and wellness needs of the Tonawandas for over 80 years, DeGraff Memorial Hospital pauses during the North Tonawanda Centennial of 1997 to look back down the road it set out on in 1914 to its present path on the "Road to Wellness." The hospital is looking ahead to serving our communities in the next Century.

On June 13, 1913, LeGrand Simson DeGraff unveiled a plan to construct a community hospital in North Tonawanda. DeGraff, a prominent businessman, lent his leadership, financial resources and ultimately his name to the hospital which would serve the Tonawandas. On November 30, 1914 DeGraff Memorial Hospital was unveiled to the public, and the first patient was admitted on December 4, 1914 at the cost of \$1.30.

In June of 1948, the hospital was converted into a voluntary institution, owned and operated by a non-profit community corporation. The years between 1950 and the early 1990's saw numerous fund raising campaigns, expansion projects, technological and patient-care advances. The DeGraff Hospital Foundation (the fund raising arm of the hospital) was incorporated in 1983. DeGraff Hospital became a member of the Voluntary Hospitals of America in 1986, joining a national alliance of hundreds of locally-owned, not-for-profit hospitals.

When DeGraff Hospital first opened, its purpose was to treat and care for the medically sick and injured. In the 1990's, caring for these individuals is still very much a part of the hospital's mission, but now we must be committed to meeting the entire health and wellness needs of the community. This means caring for people not only when they are sick but also when they are healthy -- in order to ensure they stay healthy.

Today, DeGraff Memorial Hospital is a 155-bed health care facility which provides ambulatory surgery, cardiac rehabilitation, driver rehabilitation, physical, occupational and speech therapies, an Oncology and Infusion Center for cancer and blood-related disorders, and the only Medical Rehabilitation Unit in Niagara County. The DeGraff Adult Day Care Center cares for mentally and physically impaired adults of our community. The McLaughlin Center of DeGraff maximizes the health and well-being of older adults and their families with a wide variety of programs and services. DeGraff also operates a network of primary care sites including Tremont Medical, PC and DeGraff Family Medicine, and enjoys partnerships with area businesses, educational institutions and other providers.

Incorporated in this, the centennial year of the City of North Tonawanda, DeGraff's "Wellness Network" provides comprehensive assessment, education, and lifestyle modification programs for all individuals. The hospital will remain active as an organization dedicated to joining with and leading our community on the road to wellness.

LeGrand Simson DeGraff would scarcely recognize the hospital he founded back in 1914, but the dedication and commitment of the staff and volunteers working within the hospital is still as great as it was 83 years ago.





**DeGraff Memorial Hospital, c. 1920**



**White's Mansion on White's Island, c. 1900**

In 1833, the East Boston Timber Company acquired more than 15,000 acres of white oak forests on Grand Island. White Oak, used for building large sailing vessels, was transported on the Erie Canal to shipbuilding facilities.

One of the major investors in the East Boston Company was Daniel Webster, statesman and orator. Stephen White managed the company from his elegant mansion on the southern tip of "White's Island," constructed in 1835. Daniel Webster's son, Fletcher, married Stephen White's daughter, Caroline.

White's Mansion, called "Beechwater," was torn down in 1906 to provide additional lumber storage space. Tonawanda Island became the official name of the island in 1900. Through the years, it had many names: Carney Island, Liggett's Island, White's Island, and Wilkeson Island.

## NORTH TONAWANDA CITY STREETS

**WEBSTER STREET:** Named after Daniel Webster, who was investor in the East Boston Company of Massachusetts, which purchased acres of white oak on Grand Island. While visiting here, he stayed in the White Mansion on Tonawanda Island, home of Stephen White who represented the company. Stephen's daughter, Caroline, married Daniel's son, Fletcher.

**SWEENEY STREET:** Named after James Sweeney who donated land for the first public school house and John Sweeney who was a colonel in the War of 1812 and developed the local train station.

**PAYNE AVENUE:** Named after Lewis S. Payne who lived at the highest point in the area, the corner of Payne and Wheatfield Street. He had a farm and built the first steam sawmill. He was a famous scout during the Civil War, became County Clerk, State Assemblyman and State Senator. This street was originally called Forest Street, because of the thick forest.

**WHEATFIELD STREET:** This lane was a direct route from Colonel Payne's wheat fields to the docks at the river.

**DIVISION STREET:** Originally named Mile Road because a treaty required a boundary line, which followed the curve of the Niagara River, to be located one mile from the river.

**GOUNDRY STREET:** Named after George Goundry, who owned a great deal of land with the Sweeney Brothers and set up some of the village streets.

**CHRISTIANA STREET:** Named after Christiana Long Smith, who was the daughter of Benjamin and Mary Long, builders of the Long Homestead in Tonawanda, and wife of Henry P. Smith.

**VANDERVOORT STREET:** Named after William Vandervoort, who purchased land from the Holland Land Company, built a hotel and the first brick mansion in North Tonawanda.

**THOMPSON STREET:** Named after James S. Thompson, Village President from 1885 to 1887.

**EVANS STREET:** Named after Edward Evans, who founded the first banking business.

**LINCOLN STREET** Named after President Abraham Lincoln.

**GRANT STREET:** Named after President Ulysses S. Grant.

**WITMER ROAD:** Named after Tobias Witmer, an engineer and surveyor.

**ALLEN STREET:** Named after Edward Allen.

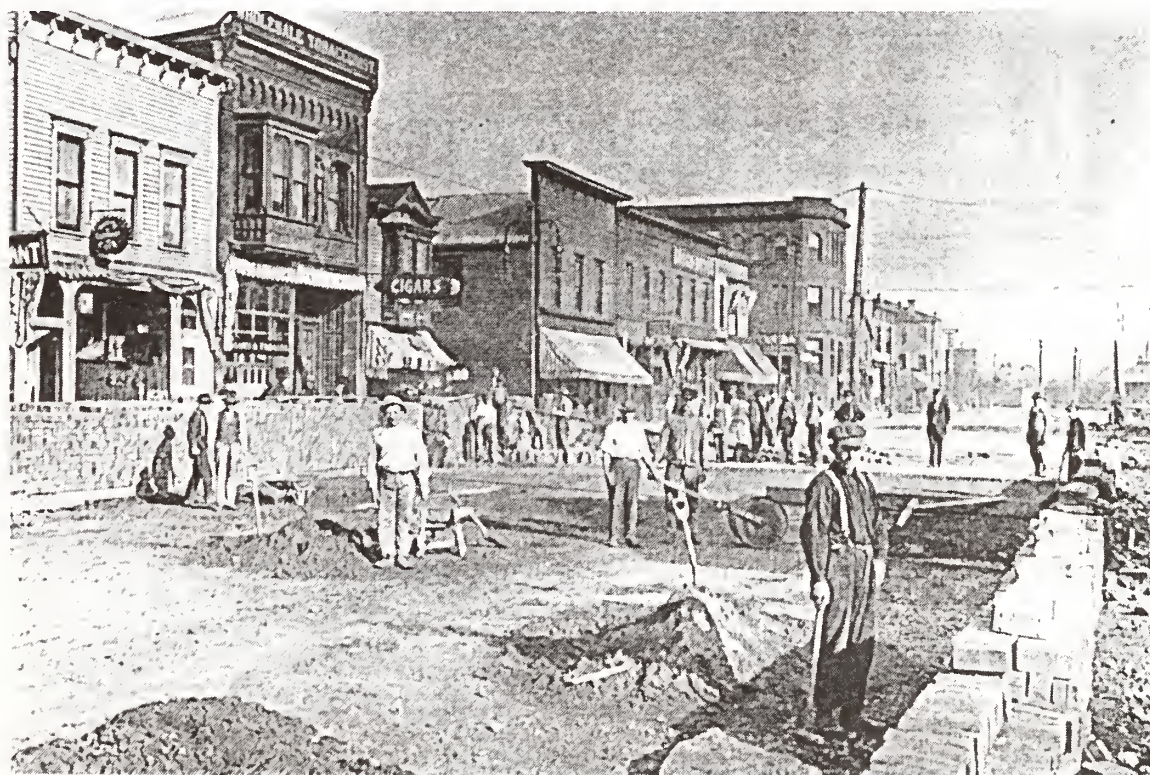
**CARRUTHERS STREET:** Named after Wallace Carruthers.

**DOEBLER DRIVE:** Named after Wilhelm Doebler.

**FASSETT STREET:** Named after F. S. Fassett, Village President in 1879.,



- FELTON STREET:** Named after Benjamin Felton, Village President in 1891 .
- HAGEN AVENUE:** Named after Charles Hagen.
- HEWITT STREET:** Named after William Hewitt.
- MILLER STREET:** Named after Henry and Edward Miller.
- OELKERS STREET:** Named after John E. Oelkers, Village President in 1892.
- ROBINSON STREET:** Named after Charles Robinson.
- SOMMER STREET:** Named after Frederick Sommer, Village President from 1888 to 1889.
- THOMAS FOX:** Named after Thomas Fox, killed during the Vietnam War.
- STANLEY STREET:** Named after Henry Stanley.
- WARD ROAD:** Named after William Ward.
- ZIMMERMAN STREET:** Nelson and Frederick Zimmerman.



PAVING WEBSTER STREET, NORTH TONAWANDA, NEW YORK - 1913  
 The photographer is looking north toward Goundry Street.  
 The store at the left is the White Elephant Cafe, and to its  
 right is the tobacco store of J.C. Beltz.

## NORTH TONAWANDA TROLLEY LINES

The trolley lines were the main means of transportation preceding the bus service of today. There were four main lines operating within our city limits:

**1884: The Gratwick Line** was known as the Buffalo, Kenmore and Tonawanda Line and was opened on June 30, 1884. This route came across the bridge from Young and Delaware down Main Street, Goundry, Vandervoort, Robinson and Oliver Street, to the intersection with Ward Road and returned. This was the local line and was well patronized. It was discontinued on July 1, 1922.

**1895: The Old Buffalo-Niagara Falls Line** was opened September 20, 1895. It operated from the foot of Main Street in Buffalo to Sweeney Street, Payne to the Gratwick trestle which took the cars over the Erie and New York Central Railroads at the north end of the city limits (the stone abutments, the only evidence of this line, are still standing), then down River Road to Buffalo Avenue, to the foot of Falls Street and returned. There are many happy memories of rides to the Falls on weekends and holidays. This line was discontinued on July 1, 1922. The car barns which stood on the east end of the Gratwick trestle were demolished on November 26, 1935.

**1900: The Lockport Line** used the tracks of the Erie Railroad and the first station was Goundry Street where a waiting room and newsstand stood. The next stops were Oliver, Payne, Division and Niagara Falls Boulevard in Martinsville, and thence to Lockport and returned. This line was used by those having business in Lockport, the County Seat, and carried a great many passengers before the advent of the automobile and the bus.

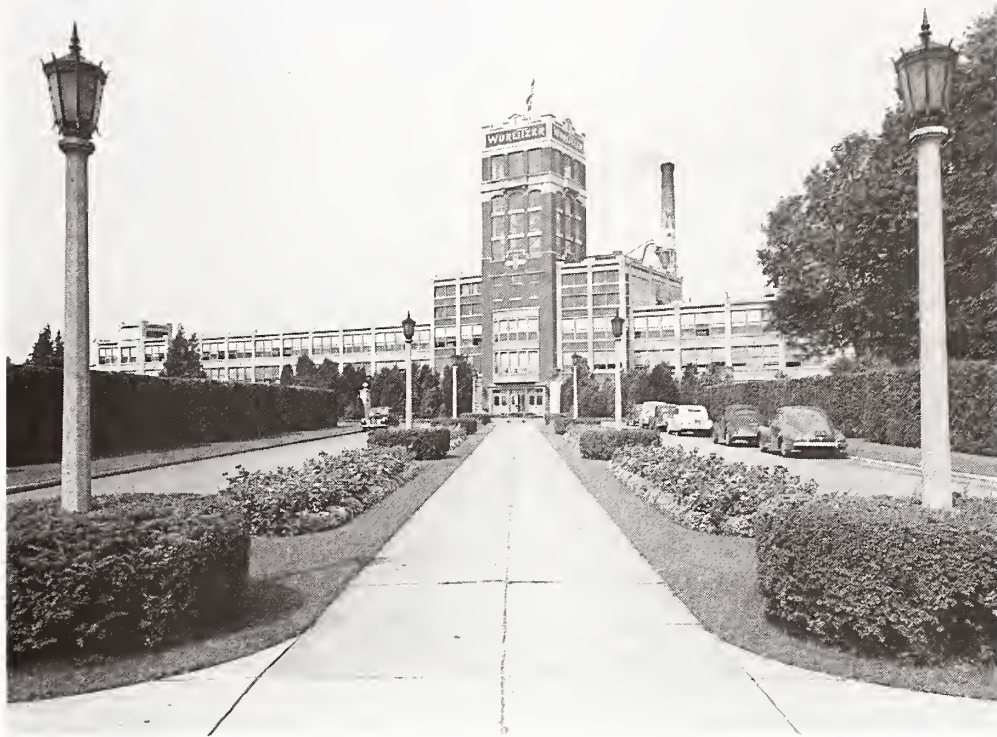
**1918: The "High Speed" Line** was officially opened on June 9, 1918 and for a long while was the fastest and most comfortable mode of travel between Buffalo and Niagara Falls. Travel time from the foot of Main Street in Buffalo to the foot of Falls Street in Niagara Falls was approximately one hour. This line was discontinued on August 20, 1937 and demolition began September 28. The tracks were built on an embankment, with bridges going over many streets, including Sweeney, Tremont, Goundry and Christiana. The City purchased the right of way which was a high embankment running north along Division Street from the canal across Wheatfield toward Walck Road where it tapers down to a normal level at the Payne Avenue crossing. A large part of the fill in the "China Wall" came from the old Payne Hill which was a famous sleighing and skiing spot in the winters of the good old days. Removal of the embankment was completed in the 1960's.



North Tonawanda Street Railroad, c. 1893

The North Tonawanda Street Railroad provided public transportation in the years before the advent of the modern bus. The trolley was stopped at the intersection of Goundry Street and Main Street next to the Hotel Sheldon, one of several hotels that existed in the downtown area during the heyday of the lumber industry.





**Rudolph Wurlitzer Company, c. 1945**

In 1910, the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company opened its North Tonawanda Division when it acquired the facilities of the Eugene DeKleist Musical Instrument Manufacturing Company and then built the Wurlitzer Plant. The prominent tower housed the huge water tank for the 750,000 square foot plant. Farney Wurlitzer, an avid gardener, took great pride in the beautiful flowers and landscaping shown in the photograph.

The Wurlitzer Company became the largest manufacturing company of its kind in the world. Automatic musical instruments, pianos, band organs and theatre organs were made in North Tonawanda. When the Rivera opened on December 30, 1926, a classic "Mighty Wurlitzer" was there; it remains today. A Wurlitzer band organ provides the festive music which makes a ride on the 1916 merry-go-round at the Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum special. The Museum recently purchased the perforating equipment used to make the rolls for band organs. Thousands of juke boxes were also produced by Wurlitzer, with the last one made in 1974. Manufacturing operations ceased in 1975. In 1978, the Wurlitzer Plant was sold and became the Wurlitzer Industrial Park, which now houses a diversity of industrial and service businesses.

## NORTH TONAWANDA POLICE DEPARTMENT

The North Tonawanda Police Department was organized April 20, 1888, with 2 patrolmen under the command of Chief Charles Kohler, with the primary functions of improving the quality of life for the residents by controlling drunks and vagrants, and to watch for fire in the mighty lumber yards at night. The Police station was located at the YMCA building, at the corner of Main and Tremont Streets, currently the location of the Flanigan Chevrolet Sales lot. By 1896, the force consisted of 6 patrolmen and a sergeant, under the leadership of Chief John F. Ryan. Formal rules and regulations for the department were adopted by the Village Board on April 24, 1900. The City's first traffic signal was installed around this time to control the influx of vehicular traffic.

On May 22, 1919, the department obtained its first mechanized patrol vehicle, a motorcycle operated by Patrolman Albert Kasbaum. Approximately three months later, on August 18, 1919, the machine contributed to his death, when he was shot by the operator of a stolen vehicle on Niagara Falls Boulevard. On November 1925, Frank X. Kinzly was appointed Chief to oversee 4 sergeants and 6 patrolmen. Prohibition was in full swing and the department was busy enforcing the unpopular law.

In May 1927, Frederick Hoefert was appointed Chief. In May 1929, the Police Station moved from the YMCA building at Main and Tremont to the new City Hall at 216 Payne Avenue. One of the great controversies over the move was complaints from citizens that the outside lights at the old station were green while white lights had been installed at the new station. In January 1946, Norris E. Gillespie was named Chief, the rank of sergeant was abolished and 3 Civil Service Captains were appointed. Captain Beilein died in the line of duty on his 58th birthday, October 10, 1949, when he was overcome by toxic fumes in a house on Lousia Parkway.

A one-way radio transmission system, from the Police Station to the Police car, was installed. This was soon replaced with 2-way radios. Patrick F. Grimaldi was appointed Chief May 1, 1951, to head a force of 40 officers. The present Auxiliary Police organization was formed in May 1951, with over 85 citizen volunteers under the leadership of Captain Robert E. Butler. The New York State standardized Basic Police Training was instituted in 1965 and the first canine, "Prince Von Bruno," a German Shepherd joined the force. School Crossing Guards replaced the four-way stop signs that Police Officers had to roll in and out of the street on school days. Modern communication systems put to rest the antiquated hard-wire call box with a flashing red light atop and the Police shoulder patch became part of the uniform in 1969.

Under Chief Frank P. Malone, appointed April 5, 1971, further modernization took place. The New York State-Wide teletype system was replaced with a nationwide computer based system for motor vehicle and operator information, and "wants and warrants" on individuals. DWI breath testing equipment came into use and radar was used to check the speed of motor vehicles. Compact, hand-held two-way radios were becoming available and a tape recorder captured telephone and radio messages to and from headquarters. The jail was remodeled and a pistol range was built. (Officers previously practiced in the garage at City Hall, much to the annoyance of the neighbors.) The position of Drug Enforcement Officer was instituted to combat a new social and criminal problem, use of illicit drugs.



The eighth and present Chief, Lloyd C. Graves, was appointed July 26, 1985. The current department has a Chief, 6 Captains, 4 Lieutenants, 34 Uniform Patrol Officers, 4 Detectives (including drug enforcement), 2 Juvenile Aid Officers, a Public Safety Officer, a Range Officer, a Court Security Officer, a Traffic Enforcement Officer, a Police Automotive Mechanic, 3 full time Clerks, 4 part time Police Matrons, 2 part time Clerks, 23 School Crossing Guards, and 35 Auxiliary Police Officers. On November 25, 1986, the Enhanced 9-1-1 emergency telephone system became a reality and is now used over 7,000 times annually to summon fire, medical, or police assistance. The Community Alert Network went on line April 6, 1987. Within 3 months, on June 26, the Alert system proved very useful when a new Mobile Gas Station on Division and Robinson Streets developed a piping leak, spewing thousands of gallons of highly explosive gasoline into the sewer system. Hundreds of people were notified and evacuated to safer areas within minutes through the mass notification process available with "CAN" computer magic. The first Neighborhood Watch meeting was conducted in the fall of 1987 by a group of Wurlitzer Park residents. The concept and results were so outstanding that the program spread city wide. The first D.A.R.E. class in the City was conducted in the fall of 1990. On April 6, 1990, the Common Council authorized the second Departmental canine, "Abby," a bloodhound.

April 1991 heralded in the new age of computers for the department with the installation of a Local Area Network and on January 1, 1993, the first codified Departmental Standard Operating Procedure, including amended rules and regulations, was adopted. The Zero Tolerance Domestic Violence Program kick-off with federal, state, and local officials was launched February 14, 1997. During the last 100 years, including the present force of 53, one hundred fifty-eight police officers have proudly served the City of North Tonawanda.



**North Tonawanda City Hall, c. 1926**

City Hall was originally located at the corner of Main and Tremont Streets in a building that also housed the Police Department and the YMCA. The First United Methodist Church, constructed in 1880 on land donated by Colonel John Sweeney, has been a prominent landmark in the downtown area since that time.

The three automobiles are a 1924 Dodge Coupe (Chief Ryan's car), a 1920's Dodge patrol wagon, and a 1926 Model "T" Ford. Flanigan Chevrolet now occupies the former City Hall site.

## NORTH TONAWANDA FIRE DEPARTMENT

The North Tonawanda Fire Department is known as one of the best paid and volunteer departments in the nation. The first City Fire Chief was Louis J. Wattengel, who started his service in 1897. As we celebrate our Centennial, the Fire Chief is David A. Rogge. The majority of the fire stations were located in the south west corner of the City, because that is where the industry was located. As the residential population shifted away from this part of the City, so did the newer fire stations.

In December, 1911, the Common Council received a petition from the members of Active Hose, Alert Hose, Gratwick Hose, Live Hose and Sweeney Hose for a full time driver and horse care taker for each firehouse. On October 1, 1912, the Common Council appointed drivers at a cost of \$60.00 per month. This action is thought to be the start of the paid department as we know it today.

In 1870, municipal records indicate that the Hydrant Hose Company had a fire station on Sweeney Street, next to the Delaware Street Bridge.

On May 7, 1876, twenty men met for the purpose of establishing a fire company. On May 15 the Village Board approved their request and formed a volunteer fire company called North Tonawanda Bucket Company, later to be called the Columbia Hook and Ladder Company #1. Originally located at the Village Council House on Thompson Street, they moved to 252 Oliver Street in 1914. The first motorized fire truck was delivered to the City and was assigned to Columbia Hook and Ladder. In 1947, the fire station at Payne Avenue and Walck Road was built to house the Hook and Ladder Truck. Members of the company respond to service in Truck 1, a 1980 Pierce 100 foot Aerial Ladder, located at the fire station at Nash Road and Deerfield Drive, built in 1975, and Truck 2, a 1974 Stuphen 85 foot Aerial Platform, located at Fire Headquarters, 495 Zimmerman Street, built in 1972.

On March 1, 1886, the "Ironton Boys" submitted a petition to the North Tonawanda Village Council asking to be recognized as a fire organization. On March 6, the Common Council granted their petition and authorized the creation of Active Hose Company No. 2. The Village Council approved a lease for a parcel of land at 84 Robinson Street, between Marion Street and the tracks, as the location of the Hose House. On September 7, 1897, the Council ordered a horse-drawn, 4 wheeled hose wagon at a cost of \$325. Active Hose supplied the horse. On July 14, 1917, the first motorized pumper, at a cost of \$8,246, was delivered to the City and assigned to Active Hose. On May 13, 1939, the Active Hose fire station at 427 Oliver Street was dedicated by the City. Members of the company respond to service in Engine 2, which is a 1971 LaFrance pumper.

In 1886, Gratwick Hose Company No. 6 was also organized by the Village Council. Their first fire station was on Felton and Knoll Streets, the current site of Riley Gear, and was dedicated on July 28, 1892. Their current fire station is located at 110 Ward Road and was dedicated in 1964. Members of the company respond to service in Engine 6, a 1993 Ferrara pumper.

In April 1887, the Common Council authorized the creation of Live Hose Company No. 4. On July 18 the Council designated Live Hose to act as a salvage company until the Village could purchase hose for the cart. On January 3, 1888, Live Hose was given the old Alert Hose quarters on Thompson and Kent Streets, which was shared with Columbia Hook and Ladder. On January 25, 1958, the Live Hose fire station at 71 Vandervoort Street was dedicated. Members of the company respond to service in Engine 4, a 1989 American Eagle pumper.



On January 26, 1891 Rescue Fire Company No. 5 held its organizational meeting. Their first known fire station was on Old Falls Boulevard, near Lockport Avenue. Their current fire station is located at 1241 Strad Avenue. Members of the company respond to service in Engine 5, a 1975 Ward LaFrance pumper.

In 1894, the Village Council authorized the organization of Sweeney Hose No. 7. In 1900, Sweeney Hose moved into its new quarters at 412 Schenck Street, between Niagara and Fasset Street. On June 28, 1972, the new Fire Headquarters at 495 Zimmerman Street was opened, the new home for Engine No. 7 and Truck No. 2. Members of the company respond to service Engine 7, a 1974 Ward LaFrance pumper.

The Fire Department currently consists of the following equipment: 5 pumps, 2 ladder trucks, 1 rescue vehicle, 3 cars, 1 pickup truck and 5 reserve fire engines. The Department has 51 paid firefighters.



**Village Council Hall and Live Hose Company, c. 1895**

The Village Council Hall and Live Hose were located on Thompson Street between the railroad tracks and Oliver Street. The facility built in 1874, also served as the first City Hall after North Tonawanda became a city on April 24, 1897. Municipal offices were located on the second floor.

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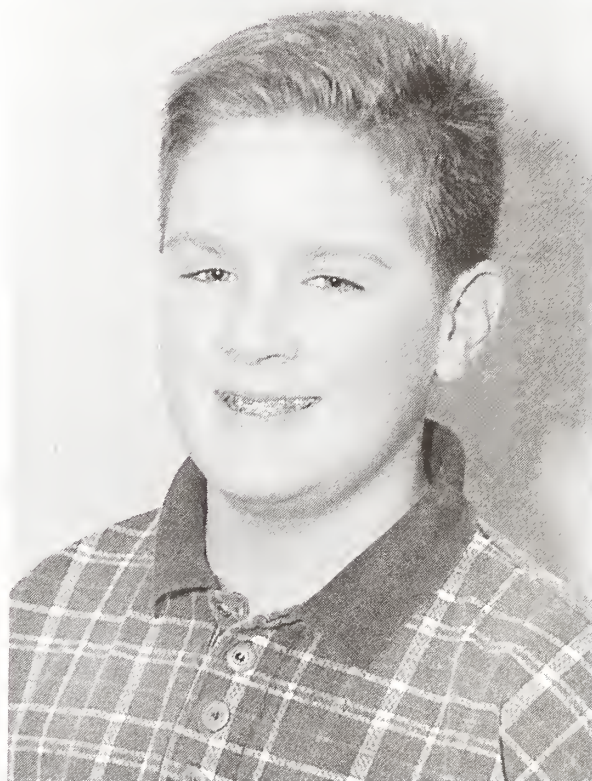
**Remington Rand Company, c. 1925**

The Remington Rand Company, a leading manufacturer of office products, occupied approximately 150,000 square feet of space at Sweeney and Marion Street, just east of the downtown business district. The company produced the first main frame computer, used by the Census Bureau. The former Remington Rand facility still houses industrial concerns.



## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNER OF OUR CENTENNIAL LOGO CONTEST

Casey Anderson's winning design was the inspiration for our Centennial logo. The contest was open to all city school district students. The logo will adorn stationery and commemorative souvenirs related to our Centennial celebration. Casey and his proud parents, Norman and Marley Anderson, have resided in North Tonawanda for seven years. An eighth-grade student at Reszel Middle School, Casey has previously been recognized for outstanding achievement in art. He participates in an advanced "studio in art" class. Future aspirations lie in the study of architecture or perhaps automobile design. Look for an "Anderson Building" or the "Caseymobile" around the first quarter of the Twenty-First Century! Mary Lou Pieper, teacher and Common Council member, coordinated the contest with assistance from Melinda Wright, art teacher at Reszel Middle School.



## CHURCH HISTORY

**Abundant Life Assembly of God:** The church is located at 1001 East Robinson Street and was incorporated on October 19, 1956 as the Evangelistic Center.

**First Baptist Church:** The church is located at 530 Meadow Drive and was organized on September 6, 1885 with 18 members. The original church was erected at 190 Vandervoort Street in 1888.

**Payne Avenue Christian Church Disciples of Christ:** The church is located at 350 Wheatfield Street and was dedicated on January 28, 1980 as Payne Avenue Church of Christ at Payne Avenue and Christiana Street.

**Saint Mark's Episcopal Church:** The church is located at 61 Payne Avenue and was established on February 17, 1869 at Marion and Tremont Streets.

**Abiding Savior Lutheran Church:** The church is located at 1534 Ruie Road and was founded in 1959 at the corner of Ruie Road and Cambridge Avenue.

**Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church:** The church is located at 375 Payne Avenue and was founded on January 21, 1906 at Oliver and Thompson Streets. The cornerstone was laid on June 29, 1924 at Payne Avenue and Robinson Street.

**Saint Mark Lutheran Church and School:** The church is located at 1135 Oliver Street and was established in 1891.

**Saint Martin Lutheran Church:** The church is located at 322 Old Falls Blvd. and was organized in 1843. St. Martin celebrated its sesquicentennial in 1993.

**Saint Matthew Lutheran Church:** The church is located at 875 Eggert Drive and was organized on January 13, 1890.

**Saint Peter's Lutheran Brethren Church:** The church is located at 275 Bryant Street and was organized as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1887.

**Saint Paul's Lutheran Church:** The church is located at 64 East Felton Street and was founded on October 18, 1888 on Washington Street.

**Saint Paul Lutheran Church and School:** The church is located at 453 Old Falls Blvd. and was organized in 1861 in "Martinsville."

**Redeemer Lutheran Church:** The church is located on Falconer and Thompson Streets and was organized in February 1897 in Tonawanda and moved to Schenck Street in February 1899. Redeemer is celebrating its centennial in 1997.

**First Free Methodist Church:** The church is located at 958 Nash Road and was organized in 1950.

**First United Methodist Church:** The church is located at 65 Main Street and was organized in 1816. First services were held in Robert Simson's home on Ellicott Creek Road. The present church was built in 1880 on land donated by Col. John Sweeney where the first schoolhouse in North Tonawanda was built.

**North Presbyterian Church:** The church is located at 168 Payne Avenue and was organized in 1891. It was originally located at 195 Schenck Street with 74 parishioners. Its current building was dedicated on January 31, 1899.



**Third Presbyterian Church:** The church is located at 110 Felton Street and was organized on April 2, 1907. It began as the first English-speaking Sunday School in the Gratwick section of the City.

**Saint Albert the Great Roman Catholic Church:** The church is located at Niagara Falls Blvd and Melody Lane and was established in 1960. The first Mass was held in the Melody Fair tent and the current church was dedicated on June 4, 1967.

**Ascension Roman Catholic Church:** The church is located at 168 Robinson Street, was organized in April 1887 and held its first Mass at 20 Webster Street. The original wooden church on Robinson was destroyed in a disastrous fire. The current church, built of brick but identical to the wooden one, was dedicated on December 16, 1894.

**Saint Joseph's Roman Catholic Church:** The church is located at 1451 Payne Avenue and was organized in June 1947. The first Mass was held in a building at Warner Avenue and Witmer Road. The parish is celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 1997.

**Our Lady of Czestochowa Roman Catholic Church:** The church is located at 64 Center Avenue and was organized in 1903 by Polish immigrants who had arrived here as early as 1880.

**Saint Peter's United Church of Christ:** The church is located at 1208 Oliver Street and was organized on April 10, 1888.

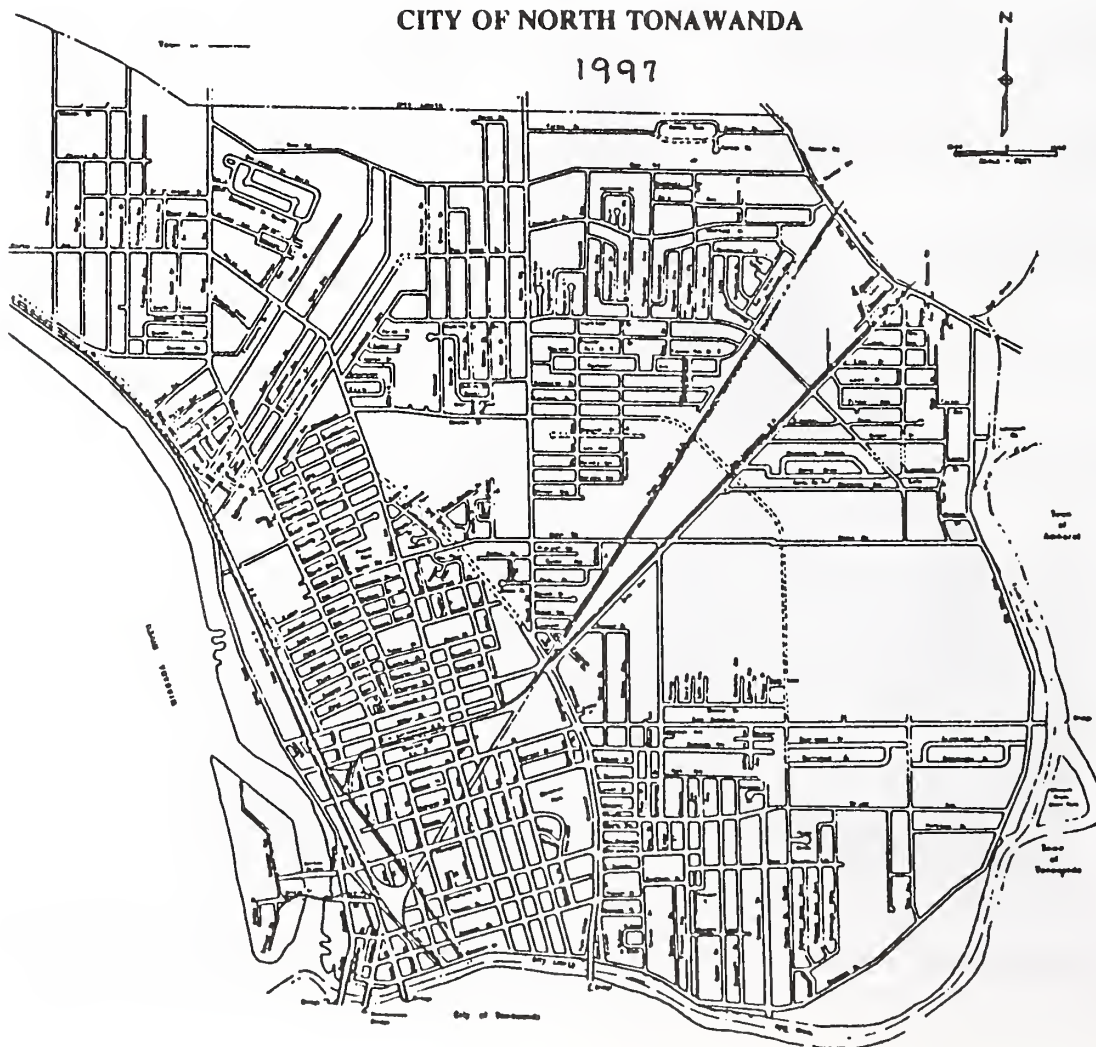
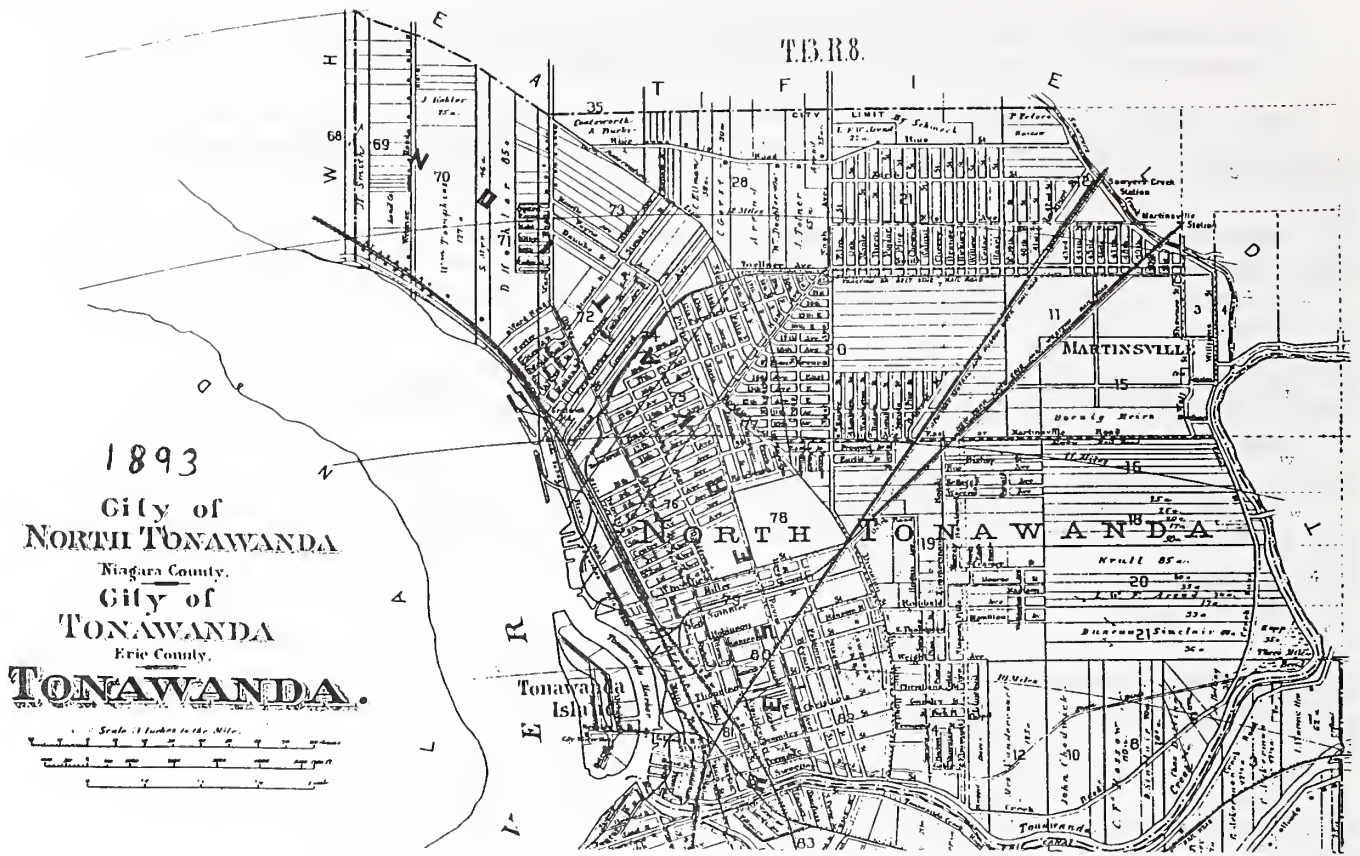
**Community Christian Church:** The church is located at 75 Seventeenth Avenue and was incorporated on October 22, 1981. It was founded as an independent Full Gospel church.

**The Fair Havens Church:** The church is located at 195 Schenck Street. It was founded in 1978 and incorporated in 1981. A new house of worship is being constructed at 7337 Ward Road, to be completed by early summer of 1997.



**First United Methodist Church, c. 1926**

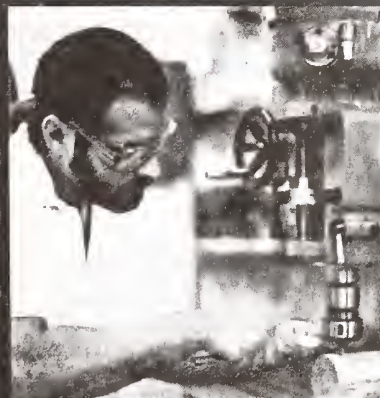
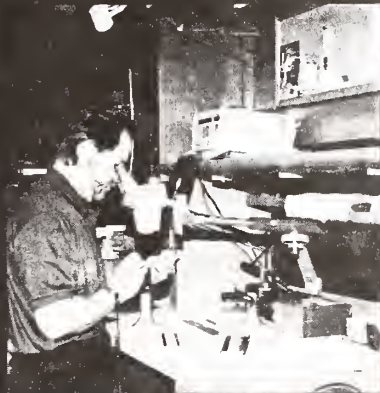
The church was built in 1880 at Main and Tremont Streets on land donated by Colonel John Sweeney. Col. Sweeney donated additional land in the same area which was used to build the first schoolhouse in the community.





106

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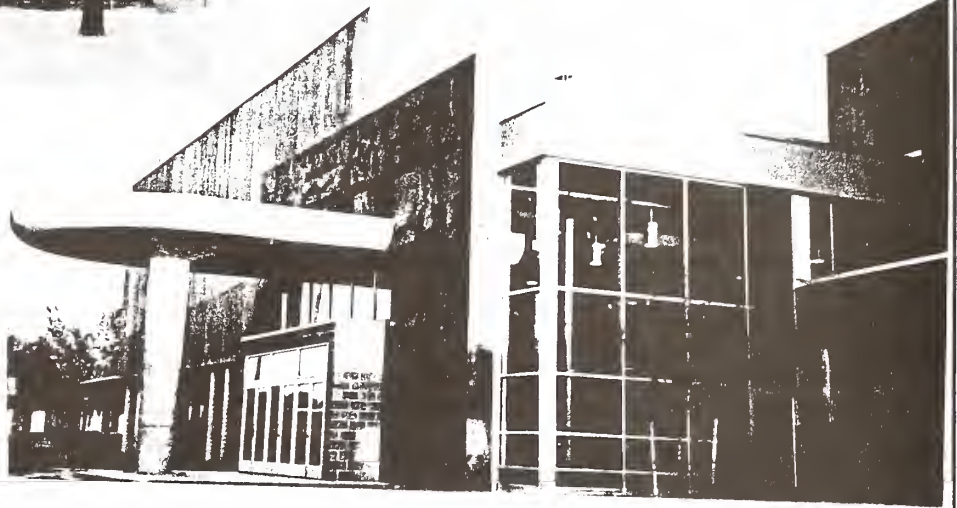
**Arvin Jones**  
Plant Manager





**North Tonawanda City School District**  
1897 - 1997

**"School is a building  
that has four walls  
with tomorrow inside."  
Lou Waters**



**Many of our North Tonawanda residents  
have fond memories . . .**



*Mary, with husband and resident, John Toman*

**N**orth Tonawanda has always been a special place for John Toman and his wife, Mary. Throughout the years, North Tonawanda's "small town" atmosphere allowed them to share in many of life's great pleasures. John served in the Army for 34 years and also worked in a local paper mill. Together, he and Mary raised two lovely daughters and resided on Linwood Avenue in North Tonawanda until John became a resident at Northgate Manor in 1993.

Staying in North Tonawanda was very important to the Toman's when choosing a nursing home. They chose Northgate Manor not only for its location, but also for its excellent reputation and the outstanding quality of care that John's sister Caroline has received since becoming a resident in 1988.

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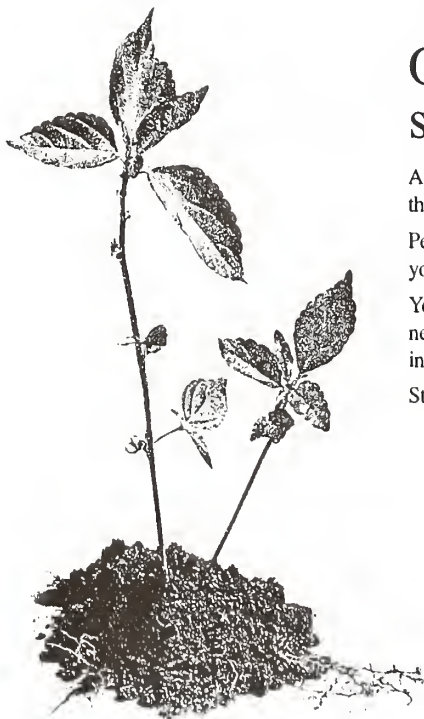
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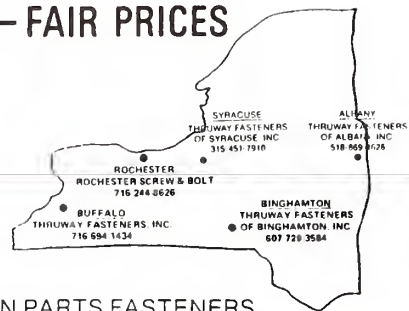
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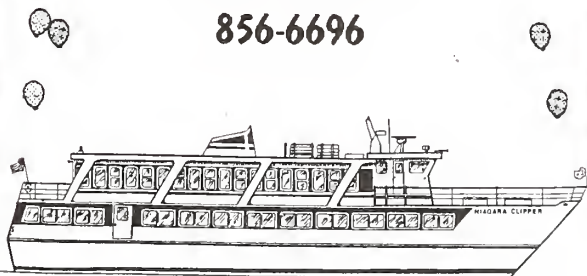
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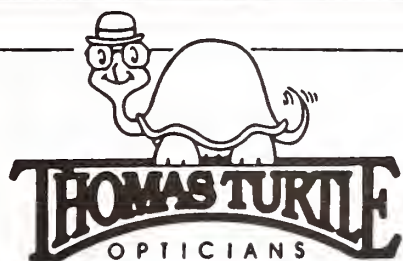
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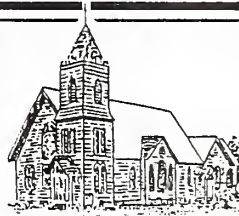


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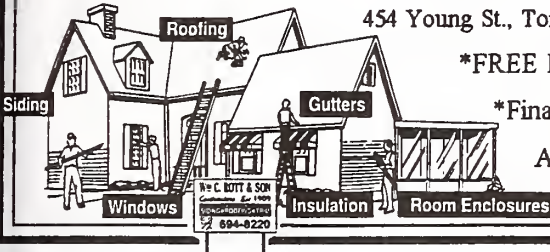
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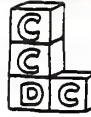
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Congratulations N.T. from:  
City Treasurer Leslie J. STOLZENFELS

Helen M. KOWALSKI

Straight Ahead to the Future!  
the URBANIAK & BRADY Families

Chester PAWELCZYK

Happy Birthday North Tonawanda!  
from: Matthew STOLZENFELS

In Memory of:  
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MOSLOW Family

Cindy BLACK

Elizabeth LEBAR

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In Memory of:  
John TRAPASSO (J.T. Men's Shop)

Mary GRZEBINSKI

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FAST SIGNS

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The Kevin CLARK Family

The ZAEPFEL Family

Jim & Jackie MORDICK



# FRIENDS OF NORTH TONAWANDA

Here's to the 21st Century  
THE ROBSONS

Best Wishes & GOD'S Blessings  
Robert A. & Elaine M. WELLENCÉ  
and family

Congratulations  
Dave & Kathy WEAVER

Mr Tim MORIARTY

Congratulations on the Centennial  
Celebration of North Tonawanda  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas RIVERA

Cindy L. OBERJOSH  
William & Elizabeth OBERJOSH

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HAPPY 100TH!!!  
S. KOZAK & family

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Best Wishes  
Florian & Helen FRYSS

Happy Centennial N. T.  
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence HAUSE

THE TRUNZO FAMILY

Congratulations on 100 years  
Jon & Marilyn Campbell  
In Memory of Tom & Helen MIS  
and Gordon and Irma CAMPBELL

RON & KAY KAISER

RON & SANDY BOWSER

Happy Centennial  
Brian, Madeline, Justin & Katie JONES

Happy Birthday North Tonawanda NY  
Ben & Dusty GLENN

Grace WOKERSIEN  
Edward & Phyllis WOKERSIEN  
James & Clarissa WOKERSIEN

Mrs. Hugh McLean 3rd

# FRIENDS OF NORTH TONAWANDA

In Memory of Casey Johanna STOLT  
from Lewis & Martha VeROST

Frank & Marilyn KILBURY

Margaret WOTHERSPOON

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Jeff, Sue, Liz, Tim & Andrea LICHT

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Phyllis I. ROSS

Richard & Olga BOPP

Roberta (BUYER) EVERS

Mr & Mrs Fred & Gina TADDEI

Ted & Ella KRAFT - Happy 100th!

Happy Birthday N.T. - N. HANSEN Family

In Memory of Elmer & Elsie WURL  
from Daughter Sandy

In Honor of Elizabeth C. HOFFMAN (Betty)  
First Woman Council Member (1978-79) & First  
Woman to Serve as Mayor (1980-92)

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Lynda & Corky wish N.T. Congratulations  
& Much Success in the Next 100 Years!

Mr Robert W. RAE



# FRIENDS OF NORTH TONAWANDA

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North Tonawanda!

In Memory  
Loving Wife & Mother  
Barbara A. SZYNKOWSKI

William & Pat JOLBERT  
Bill, Renee & Cheryl  
North Tonawanda, NY

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N. Tonawanda, NY

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Family

In Memory of Frank G. LYONS

John BORCZYNSKI

Walter MacDONALD III  
&  
Family

Congratulations N.T.!  
Ellyn ANDREES-BROEKER, Roger III & Lynelle  
Edward & Arlene ANDREES

Here's to the Next 100!  
The BRENZEL Family  
Karl, Mary & Kyle

Mr. Richard WRAZIN

Rev. & Mrs. Frank WRIGHT

Happy 100th N.T.  
THE HILDEBRANDS

JAKUBASZEK, Theodore & Helen (FRYS)  
David & Dennis

Mr. & Mrs. Ellis McINNIS  
Deborah McINNIS  
Timothy McINNIS

Happy Birthday, NT  
Norm, Lynn, Sarah, Katie ALEXANDER

Happy 100th Birthday North Tonawanda  
Harold E. & Rose Mary MANTE

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Jennifer, Michael, Thomas & Joseph

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Colleen M. FIEDYN  
Pauline E. FIEDYN

Clair Vernon & Bessie Lee Foster; children  
Marcelle, Clair R. & Roberta. Roberta married  
John F. Sarvey;  
children John M., Bonnie & Betty  
John & Cornelia Sarvey - Lisa Benjamin & Thomas  
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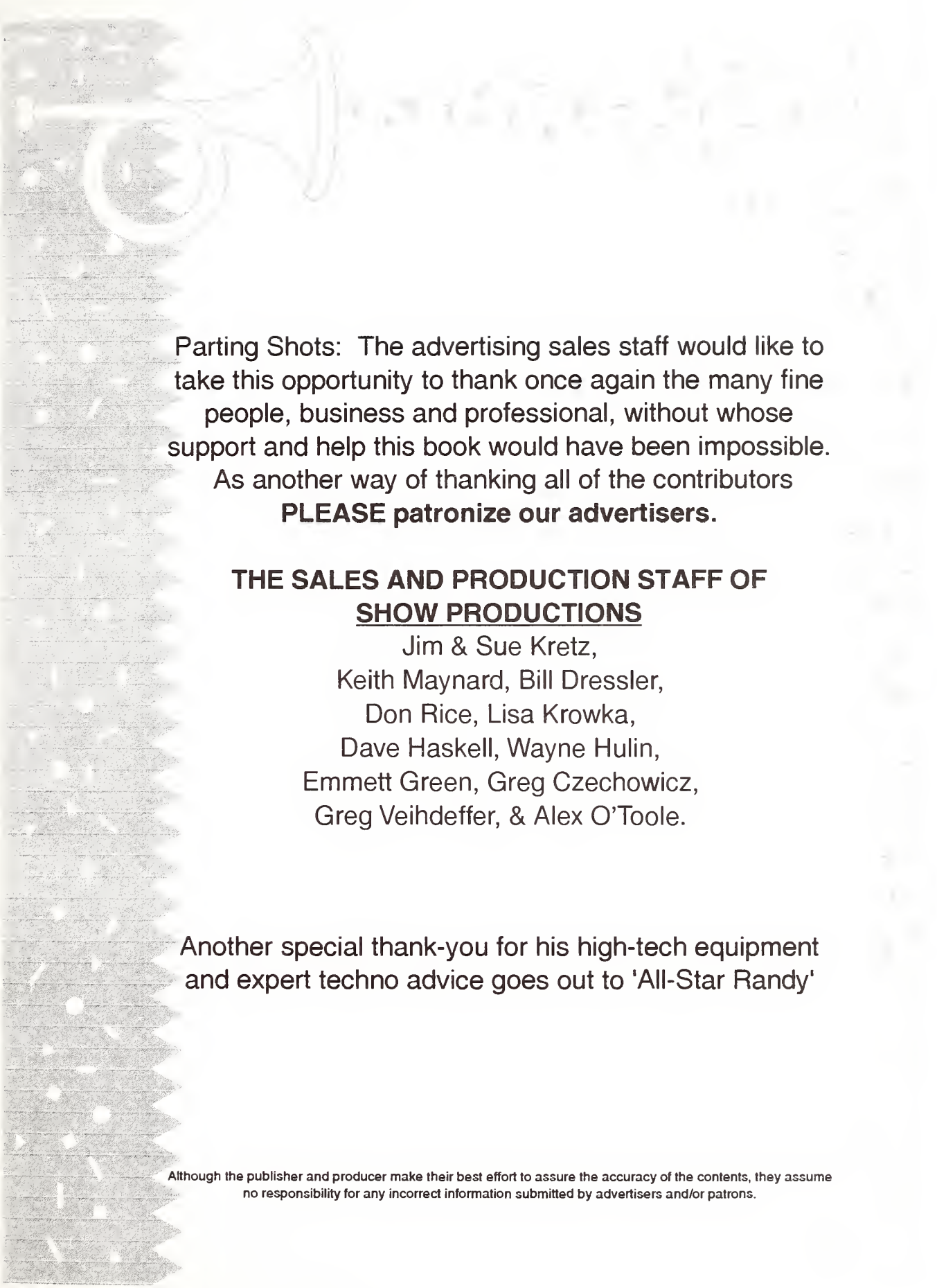












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