

Why does Medina have a Sandstone Hall of Fame?

Two hundred years ago settlers began to move into the heavily forested regions where Medina is located today. A waterfall on Oak Orchard Creek became a power source for the first sawmill in the area. Along that creek they also found stone suitable for building foundations.

A few years later the famous Erie Canal was being constructed between the Hudson River and Lake Erie. The intersection of the canal and the creek was a perfect place for a village and "Medina" was born.

As the canal was dug through Orleans County, workers found sections of stone very near the surface. In 1837 John Ryan opened the first commercial Medina Sandstone quarry adjacent to the canal in Medina. Thus began a local industry that would grow tremendously for the next 80 years.

At the turn of the century there were 50 quarries covering 2,000 acres located between Medina and Holley in Orleans County. These quarries employed as many as 1,200 workers and immigrants to the U.S. from Ireland, Poland, Italy, Germany and England came to this region to earn "good money". A stonebreaker could earn four dollars a day!

Stone from these quarries provided paving stones and curbing for the streets of Buffalo, Rochester, Cleveland and New York City. But more importantly a portion of the stone was used to create structures large and small - homes, churches, civic buildings, monuments and more.

The Medina Sandstone Hall of Fame seeks to increase appreciation for this important product of Medina's and Orleans County's history.

Medina Sandstone Buildings

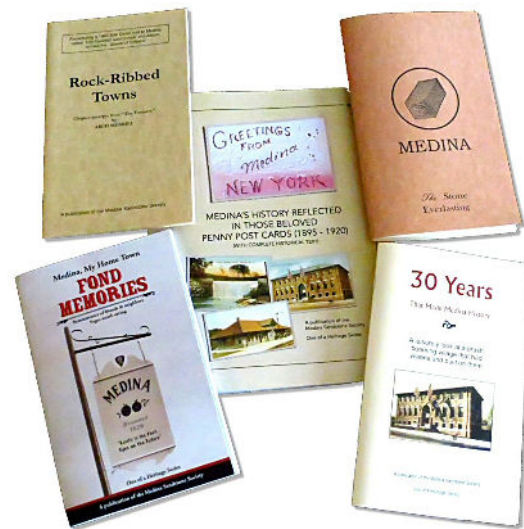
During the 2013-2024 period our Hall of Fame has compiled a list of 281 Medina Sandstone structures. From that list 81 buildings have been nominated for consideration and 43 buildings have been inducted and their photo plaques displayed in the Medina Sandstone Hall of Fame.

You can find the complete list along with other resource materials at :

www.SandstoneSociety.org/medina-sandstone-library/ ♦

Founded in 2004, the Medina Sandstone Society today is a New York State not-for-profit corporation with the purpose of serving as a viable community asset to aid local programs. The Sandstone Society has engaged in a wide variety of activities, including:

- Understanding the renowned stone itself.
- Fostering community support and esteem, supporting local projects and celebrations.
- Establish and maintain the Sandstone Hall of Fame.
- Develop an exhaustive list of Sandstone structures.
- Encouraging historic preservation.
- Marking special sites with sandstone tablets.
- Using grants and gifts to protect structures.
- Publishing texts and books of local interest.
- Honoring special citizens with awards.
- Saluting Medina's status as an Erie Canal port.
- Sponsoring "walking tours" of historic sites.
- Recruiting associates called "Stone Cutters".
- Establishing a Medina civic endowment named the Sandstone Trust.



Consult our website to learn about and purchase books. They're also offered at local book stores.

www.SandstoneSociety.org

Medina Sandstone Society and Trust
P.O. Box 25
Medina, NY 14103

2024 Sandstone Hall of Fame



The 2023 Hall of Fame inductees and Heritage Award recipients.

Appreciating the "extraordinary ordinary" that surrounds us in western NY and beyond.

Quote by Bill Lattin, retired County Historian

The Hall of Fame is located in Medina City Hall, 600 Main Street. Open weekdays from 9-5.

Hall of Fame plaques are manufactured and installed courtesy of Takeform Graphics, Medina, NY (www.takeform.net/)

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SANDSTONE HERITAGE AWARD

WHAT IS THE HERITAGE AWARD?

The new Sandstone Heritage Award is intended to recognize buildings, individuals, groups, etc. that significantly contribute to our understanding and appreciation of Medina Sandstone.

We are proud to honor the following individuals as recipients of the 2024 Medina Sandstone Hall of Fame Heritage Awards!!

2024 AWARD RECIPIENTS

JAMES FRIDAY

Jim is a Kodak retiree and loves local history. In 2021 he wrote a book about the local sandstone industry, "The History of Sandstone in Orleans County NY." The 108-page book includes many photos of the county's dominant industry. In the book he explores the geology of how and when the stone was formed, the rise and fall of the regional quarry industry and what remains today.

Friday is a descendant of Polish immigrants who lived in Albion. When he was a child, Friday spent a lot of time in Albion and often swam in the village's quarries.

Friday presently serves as the coordinator of the orleans.nygenweb.net website that includes a wealth of local genealogy data about Orleans County. ♦

MARIANA L. RHOADES

Researcher, Mariana L. Rhoades, with a MS degree in sedimentary geology from the University of Rochester, taught geology for over two decades at St. John Fisher College and SUNY-Empire State College as well as through other continuing education programs at Nazareth College and the Roads Scholar offerings. She has authored several papers on stone materials for the Erie Canal, California sandstones and other general geology topics.

She is the author of "Stone Industry in Erie County, NY, 1820-1930", "Stone Industry in Niagara County, NY 1820-1930" and the most recently published "Stone Industry in Orleans County, 1820-1930". The later is a definitive work documenting virtually every quarry and quarryman in that huge local industry.

Her primary research continues with documenting early stone quarries in New York State. ♦

MOUNT ALBION CEMETERY

Albion, NY



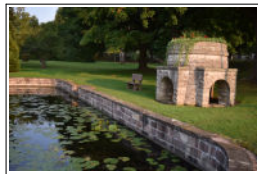
Mount Albion Cemetery is not only hallowed grounds for more than 20,000 people, but the historic site on Route 31 is a cohesive collection of sandstone workmanship that unifies the cemetery.

From the arch leading into the main entrance of the cemetery, to the office building, chapel, a Civil War memorial and many hitching posts, carriage steps and monuments, the painstakingly carved sandstone is prominent.

The Civil War memorial was inducted into the Medina Sandstone Hall of Fame in 2014. That 58-foot-high tower is a memorial to nearly 500 Orleans County soldiers killed in the Civil War. It was built in 1876.

The cemetery includes so much more, and the Sandstone Society is inducting the entire cemetery into the Hall of Fame.

The chapel was built in 1875, a year before the iconic tower was complete. The archway at the main entrance was completed in 1880. The keeper's house (now the office) and storage barn were completed in 1889. A sandstone spring house and lily pond were completed in 1908.



Mount Albion remains a much loved and revered place in the community. The site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976, the first in Orleans County on that distinguished list. ♦

CHARLOTTE-GENESSEE LIGHTHOUSE

Rochester, NY



The Charlotte-Genessee Lighthouse, built in 1822, may be the oldest Medina Sandstone structure. The sandstone was likely quarried from the deep Genessee River gorge to the south. The 40-foot-high tower was built in northern Rochester at the juncture of the Genessee River and Lake Ontario.

The lighthouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a City of Rochester Landmark.

The tower went out of service in 1881. In 1965, Charlotte High School students started a letter writing campaign to save the lighthouse from impending destruction. The students prevailed.

The tower was declared surplus in 1981 by the government, and the site is now managed as a museum by the Charlotte Genessee Lighthouse Historical Society, a nonprofit volunteer organization.

The Historical Society uses the next-door brick keeper's dwelling from 1863 as a local museum. The grounds also are home to a peace garden, detailing four encounters with the British during the War of 1812.

As of 2014, the lighthouse is again active, and listed in the United States Coast Guard Light List as light number 2333. ♦

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Penn Yan, NY



In 1823, a woman named Mrs. Susan Benson arrived in Penn Yan, New York to reside and found that there was no Methodist church, which she deemed totally unacceptable. About a year later, on March 29, 1824 the First Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Penn Yan was incorporated.

Over the next 74 years, the congregation outgrew two other buildings and in 1897 they decided to build their present building. They contracted with Jacob Allington & Sons of Elmira. They chose a Romanesque Revival style and used a beautiful ruddy gray Medina Sandstone. The cost for this magnificent building was \$35,000, a huge sum for that period. The church was dedicated on January 12, 1898.



In 2024, the First United Methodist congregation celebrated their 200th birthday and the Medina Sandstone they chose some 126 years ago still looks as beautiful now as it did then. ♦

ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Jamestown, NY



St. Luke's Episcopal Church was completed in 1894, built of rock-faced Medina Sandstone. Mary Prendergast left \$125,000 in her will to build the fireproof stone church in memory of her daughter, Catherine. (The original church building burned down in 1862.)

A plaque inside the church recognizes the family for their gift of building the church.

"This is none other but the house of God and this is the gate of Heaven," the inscription states.

St. Luke's is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is in the heart of the Downtown Jamestown Historic District. The church blends elements of the late Gothic Revival and Romanesque Revival styles.

The structure at 410 North Main St. has a traditional cruciform plan with a square bell tower attached to the northeast corner of the church. That tower features a clock on each face side and rounded corners topped with a conical pinnacle.

The bell tower was struck by lightning in 2013, damaging one of the corners. That tower also suffered years of water damage.

St. Luke's recently completed \$1 million of work on the tower, disassembling parts of the sandstone, rebuilding the stone and cleaning up the mortar.

The church property also includes a chapel and office building made of Medina Sandstone. ♦

The Medina Sandstone Society is proud to induct these outstanding examples of Medina Sandstone construction into the Medina Sandstone Hall of Fame Class of 2024.