



The Hitching Post

Vol. 12 No. 3

RAVENA 1914~2014

Fall 2014

Main Street

By Roger A. Wilber

Many long-time residents of Ravenna can still remember our Main Street as it was in the 50s and 60s, a time of “hustle and bustle,” the heart and soul of our village. One vivid memory I have of Main Street is the little ice cream shop the Cistin family operated at the corner of Wendell and Main, the National Commercial Trust Bank in the middle and the Chicorelli Funeral Home near the east end.

I remember the street providing almost everything people wanted—grocery stores, barber shops, hardware stores, department stores, restaurants, liquor stores, newsrooms, among others. All businesses were owned by local residents who took pride in their properties which, along with their surroundings, were kept neat and clean.



When some people look at Main Street today, they might ask, “What happened to all the stores?” To answer that, we need to return to the past.

The development of the Ravenna area began primarily with the arrival of the railroad yards in the latter part of the 1800s. Workers needed housing and the “necessities of life,” and, as population increased, so did the need for hotels, homes, and businesses. With their dependence directly or indirectly on the railroads, businesses gradually expanded on Main Street, which was a direct route to Coeymans Landing and one of only two major routes to Albany. Owners now envisioned even more potential customers.

In 1924, when the railroad operations were moved to Selkirk, many workers, who had built or purchased homes, continued to live in Ravenna. The removal of most of the railroad facilities, however, was the first change to impact the growth of the village, yet the businesses on Main Street continued.

With the improvement, however, of Route 9W into a major highway between Ravenna and Albany, people who lived south and west of Ravenna began to use a more direct route. As a result, traffic decreased on Main Street.

Perhaps the greatest impact on the village’s business section was construction of the New York State Thruway in the 1950s. Because of that and the increased use of 9W, some businesses relocated to the 9W corridor: A&P, Palmer Lumber Company, Mayone’s Supermarket, Kearney Ford, Roxy Cleaners. Then Stewart’s, Cumberland Farms, Rite Aid, National Bank of Coxsackie and strip malls were added. The new business center in Ravenna was now the 9W corridor, not Main Street.

Some Main Street businesses continued to struggle but eventually succumbed and closed: Ravenna Iron, Forman’s Clothing Store, Tier’s Department Store, Bernasconi’s Pizza, Albano Barbershop,

**RAVENA
COEYMANS
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

**2014-2015
OFFICERS/TRUSTEES**

PRESIDENT
RALPH BIANCE 2017

V. PRESIDENT
DAVID ROSS 2015

TREASURER
MARIE STURGES 2015

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LINDA PETERMAN 2017

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PROGRAMS/PUBLICITY
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LINDA PETERMAN

RESEARCH
DAVID ROSS

P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

Dear Friends,

This year we decided to publish a third newsletter to highlight the incorporation of the Village of Ravena during its centennial year. With our Ravena residents we celebrate events which helped to shape the community from 1914 to the present. In this issue we feature one lifelong resident's perspective of Main Street, thumbnail sketches of eight mayors and timeline through photos. The historical society is grateful to Mayors John Bruno and William Misuraca, Jr. and their Boards of Trustees who have provided us with space for our museum and our exhibits.

Sincerely,
Ralph Biance

Mayor's Message

Dear Community Members,

It is with great pleasure and honor that I welcome you to this special edition of the Ravena Coeymans Historical Society newsletter. As we celebrate the centennial year of Ravena's incorporation, take a moment to think how our community has grown and become the wonderful place it is today.

I am proud to have grown up here, to have raised my family here, and to have a business here. Ravena is an area rich with history and culture, and I would encourage everyone, young and old, to take a tour of the historical society's museum. You will quickly learn much about our unique and interesting history.

Whether you are just passing through or planting your roots here, I sincerely hope you experience all the wonderful things Ravena has to offer.

Sincerely,
William Misuraca, Jr.

Editor's Note: This issue features some events that occurred during each mayor's tenure, some a mayor directly spearheaded and others, trustees and community members envisioned and/or voted upon. We thank Clerk-Treasurer Annette Demitraszek and Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Kristine Biernacki for their gracious assistance and warm smiles. The photos on pages 6-7 represent only a sample of the village's development—its years of planning, its years of growth and consolidation. Appreciation, also, to Joe Boehlke and Harry Sturges for sharing their photos.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

Member	\$10 annually
Family	\$15 annually
Supporting/Individual	\$25 annually
Supporting/Family	\$50 annually
Patron	\$100+
Benefactor	\$250+
Individual Life	\$100 (55 or older)

MEMBERSHIP

BUSINESS SPONSORS

Supporter	\$50 annually
Sustaining	\$100+ annually
Patron	\$250+
Benefactor	\$1000+

**The Society welcomes new members, businesses and contributions, with checks payable to:
The Ravena Coeymans Historical Society c/o Treasurer
P.O. Box 324, Ravena, NY 12143**

Museum Hours

The Historical Society Museum is open every **Thursday** (except holidays) from **1-3 p.m.**
For an appointment, call 756-9395 or 756-6536.

Visit us at www.coeymanshistory.org



Steve's Market, Beck's Roller Rink, Cronin's Hardware, Bush's News, Forman's Drugstore, Sandy's Tavern, Landmark Coffee Shop and others.



When new people moved into the village, they tended to shop elsewhere. What was once a “community” business section for many generations became a memory.



Yet, not all businesses abandoned Main Street. Fori's, Szechuan Empire, Biscione Law, Persico Oil, Persico Hardware, Ravenna News-Herald, and the Halfway House continued to thrive. And the Ravenna Free Library, Ravenna Fire Department, Ravenna Post Office, Congregational Christian Church and St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church became the “life blood” of the street.

Many walking Main Street today might get the impression businesses no longer consider the location viable. They see a few empty buildings, some in dire need of repair and cleanup, but their impression would be shortsighted. What has happened is a

change of focus.

Former businesses which supplied food, clothing and appliances are replaced now with those providing specialized services: Stolz Agency, Bullcock Utilities, Upstate Homes & Properties, Starr Entertainment, Hootz Family Bowling Center, Mueller's Automotive, Attorney Brendan Baynes, Dentist Steven Essig, Surveyor Charles Hite, Alexander Varga & Co., CPA Several beauty salons, barbershops, and a few antique shops now line the street.

What can one conclude from all of this? That Main Street Ravenna has been altered dramatically by change, change not caused by the local business owners. Some village main streets outside the general flow of traffic might never return to the prominence they once had unless saved by an economic resurgence of huge proportions.



For our Main Street it is not likely to happen. We must now look to the future and consider the following questions:

- How can Main Street be made a more inviting place, not just for businesses, but as a vital hub within the village?
- How can we help local businesses continue to grow and prosper?
- If the 9W corridor is the new “Main Street,” how can we connect it with village businesses on Main Street so both continue to grow and prosper?

These are challenging questions—not answered simply or quickly.

MAYORS OF RAVENA



President John E. Phillips
October 9, 1914 - February 22, 1915

Date of birth: August 24, 1843
Education: Red Hook schools (Dutchess County)
Married to: Abbie Hapeman
Occupation: NY Central Railroad conductor
Political Party: Citizens' Ticket (tri-partisan)
Events:

- ◆ Speed Limit Ordinance: 15 miles per hour
- ◆ Sewage/disposal plant survey approved

Date of death: February 22, 1915
Place of burial: St. Paul's Lutheran Cemetery
 Red Hook (Dutchess County)



Alfred T. Swartout
1943 -1945

Date of birth: March 12, 1873
Education: Ravena schools
Married to: Jennie Shear
Occupation: NY Central Railroad engineer
Political Party: Democrat
Events:

- ◆ Filtration plant construction started 1944
- ◆ Ravena school district voted for a joint-teaching program with Coeymans 1944

Date of death: August 13, 1946
Place of burial: Chestnut Lawn Cemetery in New Baltimore

- ◇ Selected acting mayor November 1943, to March 1944, and elected mayor for final year of Van Hoesen's unexpired term



Arthur Van Hoesen
1915 -1943

Date of birth: September 20, 1876
Education: Albany Business College
Married to: Emma Hoffman
Occupation: Teacher/Feed and fruit store owner
Political Party: Republican
Events:

- ◆ Construction of Ravena sewer system started 1915
- ◆ Office of Police Justice established 1915
- ◆ Village ordinances adopted December 1915
- ◆ Village contracted with Atlantic Light & Power Co.. 1917
- ◆ Stephen Mosher donated property for a park 1921
- ◆ Village began sidewalk construction 1922
- ◆ Ravena High School burned 1920 and rebuilt 1922
- ◆ Ravena railroad yards moved to Selkirk 1924
- ◆ Village purchased fifty-four fire hydrants 1926
- ◆ Ravena watershed contract signed with City of Albany 1928
- ◆ Park Hotel on Main Street burned 1931
- ◆ Ravena Police Department formed 1932
- ◆ W.P.A. gave \$49,000 to develop Mosher Park 1935
- ◆ Mosher Park swimming pool opened 1936
- ◆ Park Committee formed/First Annual Field Day 1938
- ◆ New water filtration plant approved 1941

Date of death: November 10, 1943
Place of burial: Chestnut Lawn Cemetery in New Baltimore

- ◇ Appointed to complete Phillips's term March 1915
- ◇ Title changed to mayor from president 1927
- ◇ Longest tenured mayor—twenty-eight years



Rodger M. Kilmer
1945 -1954

Date of birth: April 1, 1904
Education: Red Hook schools (Dutchess County)
Married to: Ann E. Schott
Occupation: Grocery store owner
Political Party: Republican
Events:

- ◆ Businessman Fred Bush sold Bush's New Room to Harold and Isabel Roberts 1945
- ◆ Village signed street contract with Central Hudson 1947
- ◆ Ravena Fire Police Squad formed, first in local area 1949
- ◆ State Telephone Co. erected building on Main Street 1950
- ◆ Village water filtration plant dedicated 1951
- ◆ Fire destroyed Ravena Christian Church 1951
- ◆ West Shore Railroad merged with New York Central 1952

Date of death: November 7, 1992
Place of burial: Chestnut Lawn Cemetery in New Baltimore

- ◇ Resignation effective July 13, 1954 [fluoridation issue]

MAYORS OF RAVENA



Harley A. Townsend
1954 -1962

Date of birth: January 27, 1898
Education: Ravena schools
Married to: Euphemia Glen
Occupation: NY Central Railroad
Political Party: Republican

Events:

- ◆ New V.F.W. building constructed in Mosher Park 1955
- ◆ NYS Thruway opened, diverting traffic from Main Street, October 1956
- ◆ Village chartered Ravena Free Library 1956
- ◆ West Shore Railroad Station passenger service stopped running 1958
- ◆ Village purchased and modernized former A&P store for village offices 1959
- ◆ Ravena firehouse burned and was rebuilt 1959
- ◆ Ravena Rescue Squad formed 1960
- ◆ Atlantic Cement Company constructed 1962

Date of death: April 1, 1968
Place of burial: Chestnut Lawn Cemetery in New Baltimore

- ◇ Appointed to fulfill Kilmer's unexpired term and, by resolution, voted mayor for five-year term 1957



William Misuraca, Jr.
2014 - present

Date of birth: October 3, 1972
Education: Ravena schools
Married to: Jenafer Rudolph
Occupation: Halfway House Tavern owner
Political Party: Republican

Events:

- ◆ Ravena Centennial Celebration
- ◆ Building relationships and fostering unity among all members of the community



Raymond T. Bailey
1962 -1989

Date of birth: December 12, 1916
Education: Ravena schools
Married to: Kathryn Hoyt Travis
Occupation: Food inspector NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

Political Party: Republican/Democrat

Events:

- ◆ RCS Junior-Senior High School opened 1963
- ◆ Post Office built on Main Street 1963
- ◆ Village and Town of Coeymans built and operated joint sewer plant 1967
- ◆ RCS Junior High School constructed 1971
- ◆ Mosher Park modernized—new pool complex, with basketball and tennis courts built—1970s
- ◆ Water filtration plant modernized 1970s
- ◆ Pulver House destroyed by fire 1977
- ◆ Ravena Police Department expanded and modernized 1980s
- ◆ Ravena Hose Co. #1 building erected 1988

Date of death: January 19, 1991
Place of burial: Chestnut Lawn Cemetery in New Baltimore

- ◇ Mayoral term changed to four years from two 1962
- ◇ Elected as Republican in 1962, Democrat in 1968



John T. Bruno
1990 - 2014

Date of birth: September 14, 1937
Education: Ravena schools
Married to: Carol Winters
Occupation: Lafarge Operation Maintenance Superintendent

Political Party: Democrat

Events:

- ◆ Ravena Rescue Squad/Senior Projects built 1991
- ◆ RCS Community Library chartered 1994 and relocated to Main Street (former Knights of Columbus and Beck's Roller Rink) 2013
- ◆ Ravena Elementary School purchased to consolidate village offices 1996
- ◆ Ravena Coeymans Historical Society, RCS Community Library, Ravena Coeymans Police Department, Village Court, RCS District offices, Head Start program and Ravena Health and Fitness Center located in village municipal Building 1996-2013
- ◆ Veterans Memorial Park, a consolidation of monuments on Main Street 1998
- ◆ Ravena Coeymans Historical Society provisional charter granted 1998, with permanent charter awarded 2008
- ◆ Major improvements to water treatment plant, doubling its capacity 2005+

Sources

Village of Ravena Minutes 1914-2014
The News-Herald
Village Trustee William Bailey
Mary Farinelli
Town Historian Harry Sturges
Roger Wilber

THE VILLAGE OF RAVENA HISTORY THROUGH PHOTOS - THE EARLY YEARS



Pulver House , corner of Main St. and Railroad Ave. 1884



Albany County Produce Co./Duffy Mott, Dempster St. circa 1880s



Ravena School, Mountain Rd. 1889



Strevell & DeFriest Hardware Store, corner of Main St. and Central Ave. 1889



Ravena Christian Church, corner of Main St. and Mountain Rd. 1890



Temperance House, corner of Central Ave. and Main St. 1892



Roberts Building, with Babcock & Baldwin Furniture and Undertaking, corner of Main St. and Pulver Ave., circa 1894



Ravena Iron Co., Main St. 1902



Masonic Temple, Main St. 1905



Arthur Van Hoesen and wife Emma, circa 1905



Pulver Avenue circa 1906



Odd Fellows Temple, Main St., Hartt Grocery and Ravena Post Office, 1906



Ravena H.S., Mountain Rd. 1910



West Shore Railroad Ravena Station, Russell Ave. 1911



Ravena Fire Department, Main St. 1913

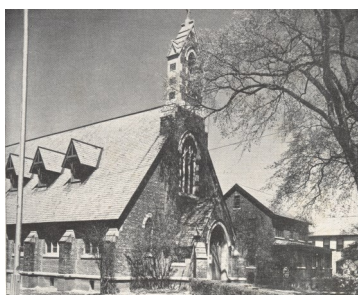


Halfway House Tavern, Main St. 1914



Munzberg's Barber Shop, Main St. 1914

THE VILLAGE OF RAVENA HISTORY THROUGH PHOTOS ~ THE GROWTH YEARS



Church of St. Patrick, Main St. 1917



McCulloch Avenue circa 1925



Babcock Funeral Home, Pulver Ave. 1929



Chicorelli's Market, Main St. 1931

Some of Ravena's Advantages

Five Miles of Concrete Sidewalks
 Four Modern Garages.
 Twenty-Five Fraternal Organizations
 Fifty Business Places.
 450 Modern Homes with a Population of 2,500.
 Village Owned Water Works.
 Motorized Fire Department.
 Police Protection
 School Faculty of Thirteen Teachers.
 Fine Highways in All Directions.
 Commercial Lighting Service
 House Lighting Service.
 Five Foot Concrete Sidewalks on Streets.
 One Mile From Hudson River
 Modern Fire House.
 Ideal Village for Children
 Fire Alarm System.
 New \$150,000 Fireproof School Building.
 Parochial School
 Free Public Library.
 Village Park.
 Four Churches.
 A National Bank.
 Modern Sewer System.
 Telephone and Telegraph Service.
 Transportation by Rail or Water.

Ravena Board of Trade
Ravena, N. Y.



Moshers Park Swimming Pool 1936



Bush's News Room, Main Street 1945



Persico Oil Company 1948 V.F.W. Building 1955



RCS Junior-Senior High School. Rt. 9W 1963



Ravena Post Office, Main St. 1963



Ravena Hose Co. #1, Main St. 1988



Grace United Methodist Church, Hillcrest Dr. 1965



Bernasconi's Pizza, Main St. 1967



Ravena Rescue Squad/Senior Projects 1991



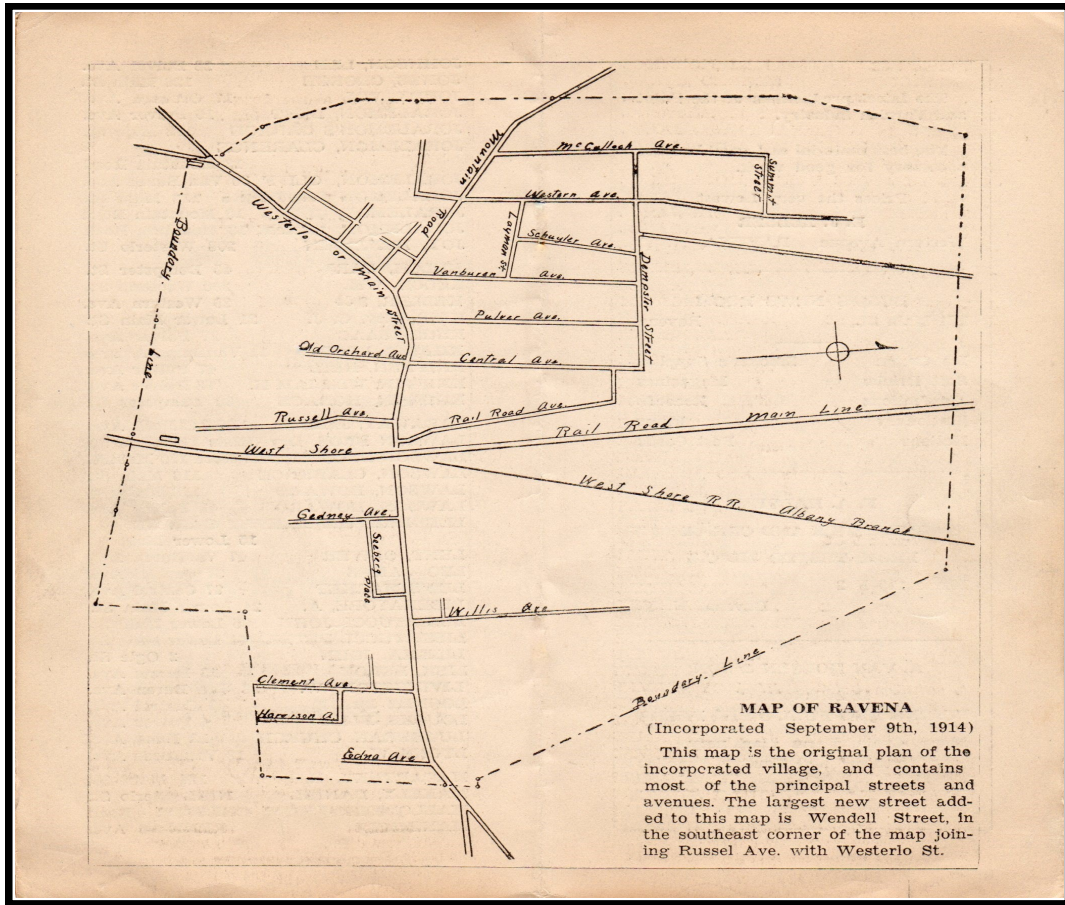
RCS Community Library, Main St. 2013



Village Municipal Offices, Mountain Rd. in 2014



Centennial Parade 2014



The Hitching Post
Ravena Coeymans Historical Society
 P.O. Box 324
 Ravena, New York 12143
www.coeymanshistory.org

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