

THE YELLOW WASP

Lima Historical Society

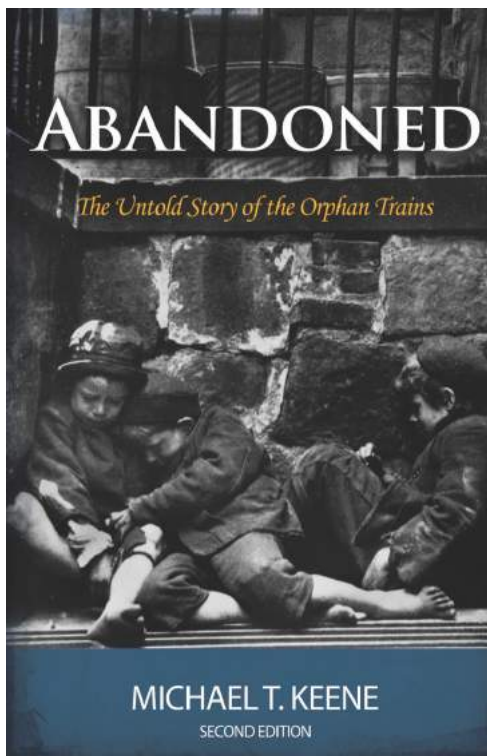
February 2021

Monday, February 1, 2021 at 11 AM***

Virtual Presentation

Abandoned: The Untold Story of the Orphan Trains,

By Michael Keene



Since the Lima Historical Society is presently unable to have in-person meetings and presentations, we are pleased to promote local history author and speaker, Michael Keene's, online program, titled *Abandoned: The Untold Story of the Orphan Trains*, to be shown on YouTube Premier, February 1, 2021 at 11:00am (EST) (**reservation required, also for viewing later)

By the end of the Civil War, an estimated 30,000 homeless and orphaned children roamed the streets of New York City, many of them the orphaned offspring of immigrant refugees from Ireland, who came here after the famines in that country during the 1840's and 1850's. In response to this crisis, the age of orphan asylums began, culminating in one of the most improbable and audacious episodes in American history. Called the "Orphan Train Movement," it endeavored to save these children lost to the streets by "heroes" who fought for their liberation. Join us for this introduction to some of the details and perhaps unforeseen consequences of this bold program. Mr. Keene is an accomplished speaker who has presented in-person programs for the Lima Historical Society in the past. He has published a number of popular books on local history, including this one, now in its second edition, on the orphan relocations.

***The program is free but requires registration. To do so visit: michaeltkeene.com/registration and you will receive a link by email to access the program on February 1st. If you are unable to tune in on February 1st, the link will allow you to view it anytime at your convenience.

Another Virtual Presentation: Closer to Home

Talking Buildings

What Lima's Architecture Says About Its Past

By Fran Gotcsik

Enjoy a leisurely interpretive tour featuring a host of Lima's historic homes and public buildings. It is available on our own website. Simply go to www.limahistorical.org and pull down the tab under the "History" heading in the banner to find "Lima Architecture Tour." You will be well-rewarded with a beautiful visual presentation of the changing architectural styles representing periods in Lima from the late 1700's through the mid 2000's. Warning: you may want to repeat the video several times in order to pick up all the rich architectural details relating to succeeding periods in Lima's history.

LHS Calendar of Events

PLEASE CLIP AND SAVE

Monday February 1st: 11 AM	Virtual Presentation. <i>Abandoned: The Untold Story of the Orphan Trains</i> , by Michael Keene. Reservations needed: michaeltkeene.com/registration . Link allows later more convenient viewings.
Thursday April 8th	Virtual Lima Historical Society Board Meeting on Zoom 7pm. All LHS members welcome to attend. Please contact us if you would like to receive a Zoom invite.
April -May May	Museum Committee hopes to reconvene socially distanced as Covid 19 conditions allow. Virtual LHS Annual Meeting on Zoom. Program TBD
Monday, May 31st	Memorial Day Opening of Tennie Burton Museum TBD as Covid 19 conditions allow.
FALL	LHS BARN SALE if Covid 19 conditions allow. Please save gently used items.

LIMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1850 ROCHESTER ST. LIMA NY 14485 (585-624-1050)
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Tennie Burton Museum Work Continues Despite the Pandemic

Maintaining collections and historic records at the museum continues to be a multifaceted work in progress. The back two storage rooms upstairs have now been unearthed and reorganized to allow both work space and more compact collections storage. New shelving and storage materials have been purchased for the more permanent rehousing of all these materials in the spring. All written artifact and photo records have now been entered into the new LHS database, with the task of scanning in photos and artifact images associated with those records still ahead of us. The Resource Room downstairs also calls out for attention. While we have plenty of filing capacity in the room, files in the existing cabinets need to be substantially rearranged for greater efficiency and access. So, we have charted a course for this spring when, hopefully, we will be able to reassemble members of the museum committee. We feel confident that we will be able to work safely—either individually, or in well-distanced pairs, to complete some of those goals and possibly make plans for a fresh new exhibit for whenever the museum reopens. Thank you to all who have helped and those who would like to volunteer.

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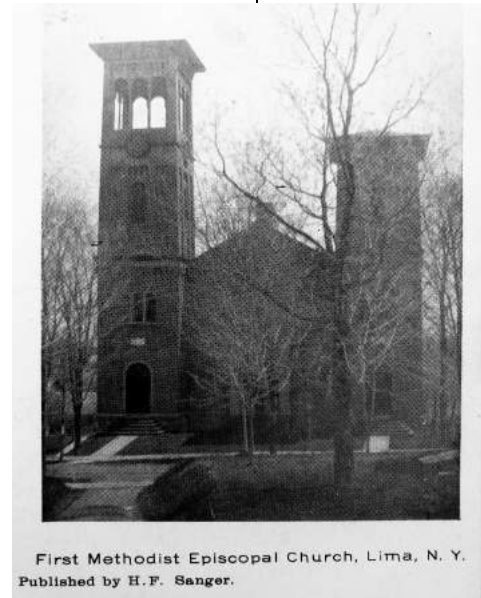
If you cannot find your name in this list, you may have forgotten to renew your LHS membership for the coming year.

Renewal form on the back cover. We appreciate your support

Lima's Methodist Episcopal Church And the Roots of Genesee Wesleyan Seminary

In last September's issue of the *Yellow Wasp*, in an article entitled "Lima's Historic Treasure: The Campus on the Hill," we discussed the impact of Genesee Wesleyan Seminary and Genesee College on the history of Lima: its 19th century population and commercial growth, its architecture, and its reputation as a nationally recognized educational center. What we failed to acknowledge was the significant role of Lima's historic Methodist Episcopal Church and a group of influential congregants in initiating and actualizing those developments. The brick church pictured here, which many of you will remember, has disappeared from its Rochester Street location across the street from the Tennie Burton Museum. It was torn down in 1956 after suffering irreparable damage in a storm.

More than 50 years before the brick church was erected, Jonah Davis of Delaware settled on a farm three miles south of the village. He and a few other itinerant preachers or "exhorters" licensed by the Methodist Episcopal (M.E.) Church began offering services at Davis' farm and at the local schoolhouse. By 1827, the group had grown sufficiently to move their meetings to the Town House/School in the business district of Lima where services were led by a Rev. Parker on Sunday evenings. This period saw a major revival of local interest in the church, leading to the official incorporation of the M.E. Church in Lima in 1828 with many prominent individuals on its Board of Trustees.



First Methodist Episcopal Church, Lima, N. Y.
Published by H. F. Sanger.

Mabel Jenks reports that the following year, 1829, a small wooden church was built on West Main St that was later enlarged and moved to Rochester St. Of significance, however, is that the same year, many of those prominent M.E. members, had begun to consider and promote a competitive proposal by their parent organization—the Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church—to establish a co-educational institution of higher learning in a town in the region. In 1830, Lima won that competition, and the decision was made to establish Genesee Wesleyan Seminary on College Hill in Lima. Looking back now, we would have to assume that this was due to major promotion by Lima's M.E. Church Trustees and congregants, who were apparently able to make their case convincingly enough to elicit pledges of financial and in-kind support from across the wider community. Land donated for the new school by Augustus Bennett, one of the M.E. Trustees, was presumably an important factor too. The Seminary opened its doors in 1832---and Lima would never be the same.



The church on Rochester St. became the place of worship for Seminary students, faculty, and staff, with regular attendance mandated for students. As the numbers of students increased in subsequent years, the wooden church was replaced in 1857 by the double-tower brick church with bell tower and rose window of stained glass, fragments of which are in the Tennie Burton Museum collections. It was constructed at a cost of \$16,000. Major repairs and renovations appear to have been needed about 20 years later for a cost of \$4000. A bell was hung in the north bell tower in 1881 but had to be removed immediately since it was cracked. It is not known when the bell tower was removed, as later photo on left shows, but perhaps it was in 1883 when the church was re-roofed.

After Genesee College removed to Syracuse in 1869 and GWS closed in 1941, the number of congregants began to decline. Then in 1950, a freak wind storm tore the roof off the church, making it unsafe for use; it was abandoned by the congregation. In 1951 the GWS campus, and with it, ownership of the M.E. Church on Rochester St., was sold to Elim Bible Institute. The church, was purchased by C.E. Wemett of Hemlock, and then demolished in 1956. Despite failed plans for a medical clinic on the site, a home was eventually built there by George and Rebecca Hanrahan.

If any of our readers have further information about the church for our records, please contact us through the LHS website.

Sources: Mabel Jenks, Lima: The Crossroads of Western New York, 1964 and written recollections by Helen De Camp in 1944, Democrat and Chronicle 1956. Thanks to those who contributed information, photo scans and insights for this article, including former Lima Historian, Doug Morgan, Joy Niswander, Annette Warsaw, Rose Reynolds, Tom Reynolds, and Fran Gotsik. Photos and documents used are in the Lima Historian's files and the collections of the Tennie Burton Museum of the Lima Historical Society.

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