ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | Photographs, images and information in this booklet are courtesy of:

- **Ed Youngs Hardware**, which maintains an archive of the history of the Village of Williamsville, NY
- **Williamsville Historical Society**
- **A History of the Town of Amherst, New York** by Sue Miller Young, 1965
- **Historic Village of Williamsville Website**
- **Williamsville Businessmen’s Association**
- **A Brief History of the Town of Amherst**, copyright 1997, Amherst Museum
- **WIKIPEDIA**
- **Google Maps**
MAP OF THE VILLAGE OF WILLIAMSVILLE, NEW YORK

Maps courtesy of Google
Proposed Route

WCHS North/South Village Walkabout
Historic Village of
Williamsville, NY

The Castle in Williamsville, NY
WGRZ.com Channel 2—Buffalo, NY
May 11, 2010

AMHERST, NY — Once you step onto the grounds, with the stream gurgling and the birds singing in the background, it’s easy to let your mind drift back to another time, when dragons roamed the land and damsels found themselves in need of rescuing from yon tower.

But this isn’t medieval Europe, it’s Amherst, New York, and the castle isn’t imaginary; it’s real, and it was built in 1917 by a European immigrant and craftsman. The setting is perfect, on a little island, complete with moat and bridge. The castle was modeled after an existing castle in Germany using stones brought in from Holland, New York.

Mildred O’Rourke has spent half her life in the castle. She’s 88 and lives here with her son and her sister. Mildred and her family value their privacy, so we aren’t revealing the exact location or shooting inside but they allowed us to show you the beautiful grounds flush with Spring and landscaped with stone steps, arches, and bridges. There’s the tower, standing watch over the castle itself, and the bridge house, topped by a room warmed by a big fireplace where Mildred says men in the family gathered to play cards at night.

In 1956, fire gutted the castle in the middle of the night. All of the finely crafted interior collapsed into the basement. Mildred credits her parents with cleaning out the damage and restoring the interior.

So here it is, right in the middle of suburban Buffalo, built on a medieval concept of privacy and security and now a reflection of the best spirit and determination of western New York.
OESCHNER’S CASTLE
—A WILLIAMSVILLE TREASURE

Ignatz Oechsner was a mason from Germany. When he came to Williamsville, he decided to build a castle. Begun in 1917, the castle was built on a one-acre island in Ellicott Creek called “Dream Island,” located about four blocks south of Main Street. The castle was built of fossil rock brought in from Holland, New York. Mr. Oechsner worked on the castle for 25 years, but it was still unfinished when he died in the early 1940s. Included in the project were a main building, gatehouse, tower, dungeon, and coach house.

Oechsner’s castle is modeled after a castle in Germany and has many special little touches, such as the trademark ox over the door, and lions over the windows. There are downspouts with gargoyles and dragons and statuary all about the property.

1956 FIRE AT “DREAM ISLAND”

A village landmark was gutted by a mysterious fire on July 2, 1956. The castle on “Dream Island” off Oakgrove Drive was left a stone shell after the blaze, which was reported at 2:40 a.m. The building was well involved when fire fighters arrived, with flames soon bursting through the thick slate roof. Burning embers landed as far away as Park Drive.

For the first time in [fire] company history, a deluge gun was utilized as pumpers drafted from the waters of Ellicott Creek which surrounded the island. Trucks could not be driven across the narrow bridge and Chief Harold Stisser feared a collapse might occur.

—From the website of Hutchinson Hose Company: History

St. John Neumann served as founder and first pastor of SS Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church from 1836 to 1840.

During the War of 1812, American troops were stationed in Williamsville in the area between Garrison Road and Ellicott Creek. American soldiers and British prisoners were treated in a field hospital and log barracks that lined Garrison Road. A small cemetery, located on Aero Drive between Wehrle and Youngs Road, was used to bury the men who did not survive their wounds or illnesses. General Winfield Scott used the Evans House as his headquarters in the Spring of 1813 when his entire army of 5,000-6,000 men was stationed in Williamsville. In 1813, when the British burned Buffalo, people fled to the safety of Williamsville and nearby Harris Hill.

After the War of 1812, Williamsville had a grist mill, a saw mill, a general store, and a tavern. Isaac Bowman, appointed Postmaster of Williamsville in 1813, owned the first store. Samuel McConnell kept the tavern, and Dr. David S. Conkey, who arrived in 1807, was the first physician in Amherst.

In 1983 Williamsville passed an Historic Preservation Code to conserve its old buildings.
Every summer in Williamsville, the Old Home Days celebration is held in Island Park, located on Main Street in the Village. The Carnival begins with a parade on the opening Tuesday, and for four days, thousands of people ride the rides, enjoy the food, and see the people of Williamsville. The festival is in remembrance of several women who in the mid-19th century would come to the park once a summer to drink tea and catch up on the years past.

GEOGRAPHY

Williamsville is located at 42°57’45” N 78°44’33” W (42.962546, -78.742435). It is northeast of Buffalo, New York. According to the United States Census Bureau, the village has a total area of 1.2 square miles, all of it land. Population density averages 4091 people per square mile.

Ellicott Creek flows through Williamsville from south to north. The Onondaga Escarpment runs east-west across the village, and Glen Falls marks the place where Ellicott Creek falls over the escarpment. An early name for Ellicott Creek was “Eleven Mile Creek.”

Main Street is New York State Route 5 (east-west). Joseph Ellicott, an early surveyor, had improvements made to the “Great Iroquois Trail,” an ancient path from the Hudson River to Lake Erie. It was known as the “Buffalo Road” and later as Main Street. North Union Road (NY-277) is a major north-south road through the west end of the village. Transit Road, also surveyed by Joseph Ellicott, was named for an important surveying instrument. Transit Road marks the boundary between townships (Amherst and Clarence, Cheektowaga and Lancaster, among others), which explains the need for an especially precise survey.

Joseph Ellicott’s surveys of western New York divided the Holland Purchase* land into a grid of more or less square townships with boundaries aligned north-south and east-west, a system related to the Public Land Survey System (PLSS) used in most of the rest of post-colonial America. In western New York, strict accordance to the PLSS was not required or followed, since the land was not federally owned, but rather had passed directly from the Seneca Indians to land speculators such as the Holland Land Company.

The New York State Thruway (Interstate 90) passes through the south part of the village and connects to Interstate 290. A Thruway toll plaza located near the village has been a matter of controversy for years and recent proposals suggest it be moved farther east.

* THE HOLLAND PURCHASE | The Holland Land Company was organized by six banking firms in the Netherlands to purchase the unsettled land of western New York State. Their agent, Theophile Cazenove, in 1792-93 bought more than three million acres, known as the Holland Purchase. It included the area west of the “Transit Line,” located 13 miles east of here, from Lake Ontario to Pennsylvania. The purchase excluded a strip along the Niagara River and six reservations established for Indians. Joseph Ellicott, the company’s agent for more than 20 years, surveyed towns and planned roads and mill sites. He laid out the city of Buffalo, promoted canal construction, and dominated party politics in the area. From its main office at Batavia, the company sold most of the purchase in 360-acre lots, exacting a small down payment. From the Holland Purchase were formed four counties and parts of four others, comprising 129 rural and suburban towns and 11 cities. (Source: New York State Museum website)
NOTABLE WILLIAMSVILLE RESIDENTS

- **Thomas Dao** (1921–2009) | physician who developed breast cancer treatment alternatives.
- **Rob Lalonde** | Professional ice hockey player
- **St. John Neumann** (1811–1860) | Canonized Roman Catholic Priest and Bishop who was the founder and first pastor of SS Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Williamsville.
- **Todd Marchant** | Professional ice hockey player
- **Wendie Malick** | Professional actress

ANCESTRIES

German 33.3%, Irish 21.7%, Italian 15.0%, English 11.5%, Polish 11.0%, French 4.7%.

Major ancestry groups reported by Williamsville residents include:
- German - 27%
- Irish - 17%
- Italian - 12%
- English - 9%
- Polish - 9%
- French (except Basque) - 4%
- Scottish - 3%
- Russian - 2%
- Swedish - 1%
- Dutch - 1%
- European - 1%
- Swiss - 1%
- Ukrainian - 1%
- Hungarian - 1%
- Black or African American - 1%
- Scotch-Irish - 1%
- Puerto Rican - 1%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Races in Williamsville, NY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian alone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The village was incorporated **November 4, 1850**, with the following officers: Benjamin Miller, president; John S. King, Henry B. Evans, Philip J. Zent and John Hershey trustees; Dr. William Van Pelt, clerk. The first postmaster was Jonas Williams, from whom the village took its name.

Demeter Wehrle engaged in the manufacture of furniture in 1850, and since 1874 has carried on a large retail establishment.

The old grist mill of Jonas Williams was successively operated by Juba Storrs & Co., Oziel Smith, J. Wayne Dodge, and others; it burned in 1895, Henry W. Dodge losing his life in the fire. About 1812 Jonas Williams also built a tannery, which was afterwards conducted by John Hutchinson for fifty years or more; it burned in 1872.

As early as 1840 John Reist erected a second grist mill, which passed to his sons, Daniel, Elias and Jacob Reist.

The gelatine factory was started in 1872 by James Chalmers and is now owned by James Chalmers’s son (James).

Caleb Rogers built the first school house in Williamsville in 1812, and a Mr. Johnson was the first teacher.

In 1898, with a population of about 800, the village of Williamsville contained:

- 5 general stores
- 2 hardware stores
- 2 shoe stores
- 1 drug store
- 1 jewelry store
- 1 furniture and undertaking establishment
- 1 weekly newspaper and printing office
- 2 hotels
- 1 large gelatine manufactory
- 1 flouring mill, 1 feed mill
- 1 brewery
- 1 tinsmith
- 1 harness shop and feed store
- 2 meat markets
- 3 shoe shops
- 4 blacksmith shops
- 1 Union High School
- 6 churches

Recognize names from Village landmarks? For more details about Erie County in 1898, visit [http://history.rays-place.com/ny/amherst-ny.htm](http://history.rays-place.com/ny/amherst-ny.htm)
5450 Main Street

THEN... Launderette adjacent to...

NOW... The Spotted Giraffe adjacent to...

5454 Main

...Bonds, for art supplies, deco

5430 Main St

Currently office space.

5429 Main St

Current location of Starbucks and Dublin House.

5428 Main St

at California Drive

Prosit Restaurant won the Williamsville Business Association’s 2008 Holiday Decorating “Best Building” award.

Williamsville Central School District

From: A History of the Town of Amherst, New York
By Sue Miller Young, 1965

Where six students graduated from Union Free School District No. 3 high school in 1892, 400 graduated from Williamsville Central High School in 1965. A faculty staff of 6 has grown to a staff of 385.

Where the total enrollment in public elementary and high school was less than 100 in a single building in the village of Williamsville in 1892, the school district, now centralized, has expanded to nearly 40 square miles and includes 4 elementary schools, 2 junior high schools, and a senior high school with a total enrollment of 6977. The operating budget for 1965-66 is over $6,000,000.

The voters of the district have approved the construction of a new high school, two elementary schools and plans are being completed for a referendum for the purchase of 10 additional sites, some to include “campus schools” including elementary, junior, and senior high schools on one location ... to provide for anticipated expansion of school enrollment within the next 10 years.
VILLAGE HISTORIANS

The Village of Williamsville was incorporated in 1850 and is one of over 550 incorporated Villages chartered by the State of New York. It encompasses an irregular square mile, most of which lies within the Town of Amherst with its southeast corner in the Town of Cheektowaga.

On May 9, 1983, the Village of Williamsville Board of Trustees adopted a Historic Preservation Code, the purpose of which is to promote the awareness of landmarks of historic, cultural, social and architectural significance in the Village of Williamsville and to safeguard the heritage, character and quality of life unique to the Village through the preservation of these landmarks.

A Historic Preservation Commission was created for this purpose. This commission designates the landmark sites after conducting a survey to identify and document the history and/or significance of the landmark and after the Board of Trustees has conducted a public hearing.

To date, eleven sites including the Village Meeting House and the Williamsville Water Mills have been designated as historical sites.

5498 MAIN ST
The Amherst Camera Shop was relocated to Rock Street, where it still stands.

5503 MAIN ST
Amherst Hardware Store was affiliated with Bonds and closed due to competition from the Miller Brothers, Ben and Barney. Torn down for construction of Williamsville Executive Center.

SS PETER AND PAUL
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

In 1836, Rev. John N. Neumann founded a Roman Catholic mission at Main and Grove Streets that eventually became SS. Peter and Paul Church, which was built in 1863. Remains of the original 1866 stained glass windows, which were replaced in the early 1900’s, may still be seen in the sacristy.

St. John Neumann, consecrated fourth Bishop of Philadelphia in 1852 and canonized a saint by the Roman Catholic Church in 1977, served the young parish which stretched from Kenmore to Batavia.

SS. Peter and Paul has the distinction of serving as the second oldest parish in the Diocese of Buffalo.
5520 MAIN ST
Bert Sweeney Mens Wear was one of the longest established businesses in the village. They eventually closed their doors in 1999. Currently this area includes clothing stores, spa, and pizzeria.

5519 MAIN ST
This is now the Bank of America parking lot; the liquor store moved down the street, and still uses the same neon sign pictured here.

5511 MAIN ST
The Savoy Shop is now home to Williamsville Liquor Store and Stitch Witchery.

5510 MAIN ST
H.J. Klube Pharmacy was closed to make room for the Center of Williamsville.

5507 MAIN ST
Amherst Distributing operated their beer distributing business from the rear building. The Red Carpet was a former tenant, and currently the Glen Park Tavern occupies the building.

GLEN PARK
Located near picturesque Glen Falls, Glen Park is jointly owned by the Village of Williamsville and the Town of Amherst. It was built in 1976 with funds obtained from a federal grant and includes many interconnecting ponds which are now home for many ducks. Popular activities in this walking park include taking wedding pictures, fishing, and nature walks. With its rugged stone walls, it is the setting from which to view the spectacular waterfalls, the envy of all parks. Formerly the site of the famous Harry Altman's Glen Park Casino and Amusement Park, Glen Park is now a splendid place to enjoy the scenic views of nature.

ISLAND PARK
Located behind Town Hall, this park is the scene of many Village functions including Old Home Days, the Savor-the-Flavor/Taste of Williamsville Food Festival, Music in the Park Series, and Christmas Caroling in the Pines. It contains swings, slides, climbing apparatus, barbecue grills, and two-foot wading pools. There are two picnic shelters (the large pavilion and small picnic gazebo) which may be rented by area residents with preference being given to those residents residing in the Village of Williamsville.

LEHIGH MEMORY TRAIL
Running from S. Cayuga Road to S. Long Street in the Southwest section of the Village, this is the Village of Williamsville’s newest park. It was purchased from the Lehigh Railroad and converted into a park in 1990.

GARRISON PARK
Located at Garrison Road, S. Ellicott Street and Park Drive, Garrison Park is equipped with an 18”-deep wading pool, swings, slides, and a climbing apparatus. There is a small gazebo located in the park which can be enjoyed by Village residents.
The property on Academy Street was purchased for the Williamsville Classical Institute for $700, and a warranty deed was issued to the following trustees:


At the formative meeting, members pledged from $100 to $300, but the cumulative total was insufficient to develop the school.

Benjamin Miller then pledged $1,500 besides contributing chairs, desks, and benches from his factory, and the brick building was planned.

In 1857 the first catalog was issued, containing the names of the officers, teachers and students, some of whom came from as far away as the Canadian Northwest Territories, Washington, D.C., and Michigan. (Traveling preachers of the Christian Church publicized the school.)

Annual tuition was charged at fees such as $12 for English, $15 for Math. Study was divided into three years of trimesters, and included philosophy, astronomy, theology, trigonometry, botany, rhetoric, political economy, moral science, geology, chemistry, and Greek, Latin, French and German.

Each student was expected to attend some place of worship every Lord’s Day and to join one of the two literary societies—one for men and one for women. The “Academy” closed in 1869. In 1874, after use by a congregation for worship, it reopened as Union Free School No. 3. Regents Exams were held in 1892, and graduates in its first class of 1895 included Gertrude Metz, Mary Long, Harriet Dodge, Lena Snyder, and Grace Beach, who won the first Chalmers Gold Medal for scholarship.

Jonas Williams, an early area settler in 1805 and the man for whom Williamsville is named, owned two mills on opposite banks of Elicott Creek. In 1811, Jonas Williams purchased the mill on Spring Street which today is known as the Williamsville Water Mill.

In 1908 the mill was modernized. A 100 hp water turbine replaced the large wooden water wheel as the driving mechanism for newly installed “two run of 54-inch French bury stones.” A cider press was installed.

In 1919, Messrs. Jacobi and Klein were listed as the owners, when litigation with the Village of Williamsville was necessary to establish their rights to the water in Elicott Creek. In 1947 they sold the property and all water rights to Daniel B. and Grace Miller Niederlander.

One of the early saw mills was located on the north side of Main Street near Union Road. It was built by John Long in 1808 and used water from Long’s Spring Brook, which originated in springs on the south side of Main Street on the present site of a large supermarket, and ran north through the Long farm. The brook still flows, paralleling Union Road, passing through the Forest Stream development and adjoining the Park Country Club where it meets Ellicott Creek.
5538 MAIN ST
Corner of N. Cayuga
Glen Pharmacy withstood the big chains coming into town until the early '80s. Vic Spoth Electric moved their business to a bigger location and the business is still run by the Spoth family. Currently the building houses a tennis supply store.

5529 MAIN ST
Pictured above is the southwest corner of Main and S. Cayuga. This was Matt Horey’s Tavern, which was torn down in 1923 to make room for the Williamsville Post Office, and the space was later occupied by a string of banks, currently Bank of America.

5528 MAIN ST
The NW corner of Main and Cayuga was home to Eggert’s Bakery. The space was later occupied by Mr Donut until the early '90s and is currently the home of Coldwell Banker Real Estate.

5522 MAIN ST
Black’s 5¢-$1.00 stocked everything under 1 dollar. This building was torn down (with many other buildings- Olson’s Music Store, for example) to make room for the Center of Williamsville.

Ellicott Creek was once called the Eleven Mile Creek. At one time it was a narrow raceway serving the many mills on the creek. In the 1930’s it was made larger and a dam was built to help control flooding.

The original building was demolished, condemned by the State Department of Education as antiquated and unsanitary, and a new school was built on the site in 1921 for $122,000. Board of Education members were Dr. William Biker, Ernest Walker, Howard Britting, George Measer Sr., George Walters, and Henry Longnecker. Opened in 1924, its first principal was Burt Brennan, followed in 1924 by Walter J. “Cap” Harrington. Twenty-five years later, Cap Harrington handed out 66 diplomas.

The high school was turned into Academy Elementary School, and in September 1951 the new High School (South) opened.

1890
5893 MAIN ST
Corner of Hirschfield
Dr. and Mrs. Lester (Marguerite) Lapp residence. He was a dentist; she was head of the School Board for years. The location is now Parings Wine Bar.

5874 MAIN ST
Riley’s Food Shoppe and the Liquor Store. This was Downes Food Shop, and the Liquor Store went by several names—Bono’s, Erie, Bouchard. Currently unoccupied.

5871 MAIN ST
Shows Herbert Perney’s real estate office. Was also used as a bed and breakfast for tourists. Building was torn down in the 60’s to make way for the Little White House Restaurant parking lot.

5870 MAIN ST
Corner of Rinewalt
Maier’s Garage, now Century Printing.

5878 MAIN ST
Building was restored by John Scheffer in the 80s. Currently occupied by lawyers.

5548 MAIN ST
This three-story red brick building was erected in 1854, shortly after purchase of the lot by Timothy A. Hopkins.

The HOPKINS BLOCK, or “Brick Building” as it was called, was for many years the tallest commercial building in Amherst.

Originally a carriage shop, it has subsequently housed a school room; E.H. Smith’s general store; Bill Measer’s grocery store; Howard G. Britting’s general store specializing in jewelry, school supplies, cigars and candy; Clara Walter’s Village Shoppe, later Bancroft’s Village Shop; and more recently, haberdashers Roneker’s Mens and Boys Wear, R.J. Wells Co., and Marty’s Formal Wear.

Early in the last century the telephone switchboard for Amherst’s 40 telephones and the Village Post Office were also located in the building.

5547 MAIN ST
Gerald Swartz Building. Currently the home of Grabstetter Wellness and Assemblyman James P. Hayes offices.

5541 MAIN ST
Corner of S. Cayuga
Beach-Tuyn Funeral Home
The present building was built in 1888 as an undertaking business by John Wehrle, Edward Tuyn and Albert Beach.

Muleskinner Antiques won the “Most Original” Holiday window decorating contest.

Buildings were restored by John Scheffer in the 80s. Currently occupied by lawyers.
5560 MAIN ST
“Ted Dungey’s” Rexall Pharmacy, aka Amherst Drug Store. The Amherst Drug Store Building is still standing on the NE corner of Main and Rock St. Ted Dungey always had the best ice cream and soda fountain in town. Currently a local artisanal gift shop, Village Artisans.

5553 MAIN ST
Smith’s Music Shop, which was torn down to make room for the Police Station/Village Hall/Hutchinson Hose Fire Department.

The colorful history of the Hutchinson Hose Company, a Village institution, is traced back to 1856 when citizens organized the community’s bucket brigade-style volunteer effort under the banner “The Rough and Ready Fire Company #1.” Using water from Ellicott Creek, the “smoke eaters” fought major fires in the stone schoolhouse on Cayuga Road and the Dodge Mill. In the late 1890s the Rough and Ready Company, established some 40 years earlier, was reorganized as the Hutchinson Hose Company.

5759 MAIN ST
Main and Garrison SW corner. Note the old Garrison Park water tower behind the structure. Currently a multipurpose building including Great Northern Pizza Kitchen.

5747 MAIN ST
This was Carmer's Auto Parts until 1968. Currently is Vern Stein Fine Art.
5735 MAIN ST
Bihr’s Food Shop was open until the ’70s, when the owners moved to Orchard Park, where Bihr’s remains open to this day. Now the building houses the Vacuum Store, Scanlon Jewelers and the Golden Parachute.

5728 MAIN ST
This was Fritz Barndollar’s Sunoco Station, torn down in the ’70s. Currently empty, its most recent occupant was Pitt Petri.

5725 MAIN ST
Corner of Main and S. Ellicott
Dr. Pratt’s house and office. One of the first houses on Main St that was used as a business. Now it is Excuria Salon.

5698 MAIN ST
One of the buildings on the Miller Homestead. Sue Miller Young, the village historian, lived in this home until 1964. This building still stands and is the offices of Franz Manno Service Corp.

5564 MAIN ST
This building was originally owned by Adam Rinewalt who ran the Amherst Bee before the Measer family continued to run the business in the same location today.

THE AMHERST BEE

No tour would be complete without mention of the AMHERST BEE, a Village institution nearly as old as the community itself. The weekly Amherst Bee, in continuous publication since its first four-page issue left the hand press March 27, 1879, has long been regarded as the official newspaper for both the Village of Williamsville and the Town of Amherst. For more than a century, its pages have recorded a colorful account of the people, places, and events which define our local history.

Early Bees, displaying a masthead picturing bees swarming around a beehive and the motto, “So doth the busy bee improve each golden hour,” featured stories, national and local news, a railroad guide and timetable, Buffalo market reports for area farmers, and auction bills in both German and English. The first offices of the newspaper were located on the south side of Main Street near Cayuga Road, close to the home of its first publisher, Adam Rinewalt.

Increasing circulation and the addition of a horse-drawn press prompted a move to new quarters at the corner of Main and North Cayuga. The offices and press were relocated twice more before being moved to the present location in 1941. Since acquiring the business in 1907, the Measer family and the Bee have been synonymous. Publishers George Measer, his son Trey, and Trey’s son Michael—now the fourth generation of the family—continue to carry on the long-standing Village tradition. A complete record of the paper, which has received much acclaim for its service to the community and pioneering efforts in the trade, is on microfilm at the Williamsville branch library.
5686 MAIN ST
The first home of Glen Campbell Chevrolet...
...and later the Ford Service Training School, then Shirley Manson Interiors. Currently occupied by D.K. Benson Interiors.

5687 MAIN ST
Home to Gene’s Tailoring, the Village Thrift Shop, Bud Zimmerman’s Mr. T.V., and the original home of Stereo Advantage.

5686 MAIN ST
Building currently home to Kelly & Swetz, Attorneys

5678 MAIN ST
Building currently home to Kelly & Swetz, Attorneys

5672 MAIN ST
Building currently occupied by Robshaw & Assoc. Attorneys

The WILLIAMSVILLE METHODIST CHURCH was first a schoolhouse built in 1821, on the Iroquois Trail (Main Street). In 1821 the first Methodist group met in homes and in General Hopkins’ barn. In 1834 the “First Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church” was organized.

MAIN ST & ROCK ST
Looking west

5676 MAIN ST
Building housing the Howard G. Britting Insurance company. Currently occupied by a clay crafts store.
5662 MAIN ST
Building still stands. Has been refurbished and is currently occupied by lawyers.

5661 MAIN ST
Read Motor Company, a Ford Dealership in 1932, when this photo was taken. Now home to Read’s Laundry.

WILLIAMSVILLE MEETING HOUSE
5658 MAIN STREET
The Disciples of Jesus Christ trace their Williamsville history to 1835, the movement seeking to restore primitive Christianity by reproducing the church of the apostles. Baptism was a very important ceremony, and many a sinner was led to the waters of Ellicott Creek and immersed as a welcoming into the fold. Originally located at the Northwest corners of Eagle and North Ellicott Streets, by 1870 their congregation had grown to almost 200 members. The small church was then sold for $1000 to the Lutherans, and new property on Main Street was acquired from Christian Rutt in 1871. The building was completed in the same year, and along the way many improvements were made, including the unique baptistery still located in the elevated “stage.”

This period of time around 1871 appears to be the high water mark for the Disciples of Jesus Christ, and their history suggests that the loss of local manufacturing and exodus to Buffalo gradually shrank their numbers until by 1894, only 116 remained. By 1948, the years had caught up to the structure, and weakened beams forced removal of the bell tower. Finally, by 1976, the congregation lost membership to the point that it was disbanded, and the church sold to the village for $1. Subsequently, the Village of Williamsville Historical Society came to its rescue, and major renovations were completed, allowing the building to function as a museum and gathering place for concerts, weddings, and meetings.

For many years, it had been the hope of Village officials and the Historical Society that the bell tower be replaced, giving the Meeting House eligibility for a place on the National Registry of Historic Sites. The funding, however, was too great for the Village to bear alone. Through the help of several local politicians, a new bell tower was completed and dedicated in March 1997. Having returned the church to its historical past, the Society applied for and received status on the National Registry of Historic Sites.

5578 MAIN STREET
EAGLE HOUSE RESTAURANT (1827)
Built by pioneer Oziel Smith, the Eagle House has been in continuous service for over 175 years as an inn, stage coach stop, and tavern, and boasts of holding the oldest hotel license in the state. The Eagle House is one of the most celebrated landmarks in the area. There is a cellar and passageway leading from the back of the building under the driveway to Glen Park which may have been part of the Underground Railroad.

Oziel Smith is noted as purchasing “by Sheriff’s sale” the grist mill on the East side of Ellicott Creek, the saw mill on the West side of the creek, and about 100 acres of land throughout the Village. This acreage included the property where he built The Eagle House Tavern.

In addition, he acquired the water lime works and all water power within the Village limits. Legend has it that Smith was an experienced builder who used his quarry to provide the two-foot-thick limestone foundation that the Eagle House sits on today. He is also credited with designing the curved ceiling and ballroom with a “spring floor” on the second story of The Eagle House. When the original grand opening of the Eagle House was delayed and the original structure burned to the ground, Smith immediately began construction on the building that now exists.
THE OLD VILLAGE HALL
Originally built with limestone mined from the Young's limestone quarry which occupied what is now the Buffalo Country Club, the hall housed all functions of the town, including the jail. It was torn down in 1963, and replaced with the new hall.

5583 MAIN STREET

5651 MAIN ST
This building is no longer standing, having been torn down for parking adjacent to Read's Laundry.

5650 MAIN ST
What was Fran's Subs is now the Village Grille and Village Coin & Jewelry.

5641 MAIN ST
The new A&P Supermarket. This was later Dial Drugs, the Billiard Hall, and now Ed Young's True Value Hardware.

The EVANS HOUSE was located in front of Ed Young's Hardware store. All that remains of the first home built in Williamsville is the marker placed here.

A log house built in 1799 by John Thomson, a partner of Benjamin Ellicott, this was the first structure in what is now the village of Williamsville. It was located at Main Street and Oakgrove Drive.

Later known as the SCOTT-EVANS HOUSE, it functioned as a tavern and inn as well as the local Holland Land Company office. It was also the site of the first recorded marriage in Erie County when Timothy S. Hopkins married Nancy Ann Kerr on April 28, 1804.

Consisting of seven rooms, two fireplaces, and a large garret, it served later as a residence and military headquarters during the War of 1812. The house got its name from the Evans family, relatives of Joseph Ellicott, Holland Company land sales resident agent. It was owned by the Evans family until 1925 and in 1955 it was demolished.
5640 MAIN ST
Rogers Market burned in the 1970’s. In its place sprang up Pizza by DiRose, which has now become Sorrentino’s Spaghetti House.

5630 MAIN ST
Matt Grunthaner’s Garage, which is now The Touch of Brass Gift Shop.

5618 MAIN ST
This building stood on the west bank of Ellicott Creek and is now the Main Entrance to Glen Park.

5613 MAIN ST
The Club Diner was operated by George Batt and later the Lowther family. The building was later used by Ed Hengerer as a gift shop. It was torn down in the early ’70s.

5611 MAIN ST
This building, remodeled of course, is currently being used by plastic surgeons.

5604 MAIN ST
Niagara Perma-nent Sav-ings & Loan building is still standing. At right is the Glen Art Theatre.

5606 MAIN ST
This is a picture of the Glen Art Theatre (aka “The Pit”) scanned from a decoupage.

5601 MAIN ST
This Sinclair gas station was razed to make room for the Arco Station, which is now The Irishman Pub.

5596 MAIN ST
Barney Miller’s Hardware Store near Main and Spring Streets.

5590 MAIN ST
Randall Baptist Church was built with the same limestone as the old Village Hall. It stood on the NW corner of Main and Spring Streets. Lucille Cordi’s stood at this spot, currently occupied by Coffee Culture Coffee Shop.

5584 MAIN ST
Amherst Appliances used this building until the Hanny family refurbished it to look like the original Eagle House of 1890.

72 CAYUGA ROAD
Home of the third school building in Williamsville. The “old stone schoolhouse,” as it is affectionately known, was built in 1840 on land donated by one of the area’s earliest and most prominent residents, Timothy S. Hopkins. The one-room school educated children from all around. Constructed in 1840 for a cost of $1,000, its first teacher was a Mr. Johnson, but it came to be known as Miss Spaulding’s School, for “Little Miss Bertha” Spaulding who taught in its one classroom for 25 years.

During recess and before school, the girls played on one side of the walk leading to the building and the boys played on the other. On stormy days, the pupils were sent home early, the older children being held responsible for the safety of the younger. Some years later the single room was partitioned to make two class rooms, and a second teacher was hired to accommodate the school’s 40 pupils.