

Souvenir Program

Ellicottville Centennial

ELLICOTTVILLE, N. Y.

1837 - 1937

August 8th - 14th



A Historical and Pictorial Review

*Ellicottville's Centennial
Celebration*

August 8-14, 1937

**Commemorative of the 100th Anniversary of the Incorporation of the
Village of Ellicottville, by the Legislature of the
State of New York, April 1st, 1837**

Under the auspices and sponsorship of the following organizations:

Village Board of Trustees
Town Board
Ellicottville High School
Boy Scout Troop 52
Wallace Bryant Post, American Legion
American Legion Auxiliary
Sons of The American Legion
Ladies Auxiliary Presbyterian Church
Columbian Reading Circle
Townsend Club
H. F. Northrup Hose Company
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The Post

ELLICOTTVILLE, N. Y.

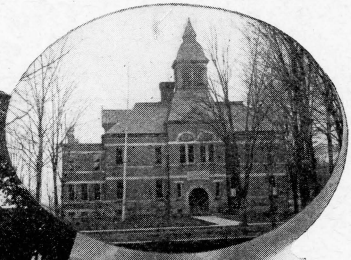
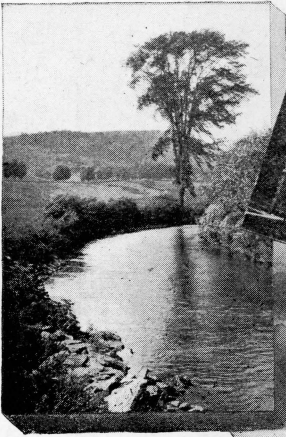
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Greetings from
ELLCOTTVILLE, N. Y.



Joseph Ellicott
117

The Village of Ellicottville was named in honor of Joseph Ellicott, agent of the Holland Land Company. Ellicott street and the Ellicott Square in Buffalo also derived their names from the same source.

Unusual History of Ellicottville

Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Village, April 1, 1937

by

JOHN H. NORTHRUP

The village of Ellicottville is nestled in a fertile valley among the justly famous "Cattaraugus Hills" at the confluence of Great Valley Creek with its tributaries, Plumb Brook and Elk Creek. These streams intersect picturesque ranges of hills that rise to a height as high as five hundred feet above the valley floor, forming a broad natural town site. The smooth even contour of these hills, variegated with patches of forest, orchards, cultivated fields and pasture lands, is characteristic of Cattaraugus county and most pleasing to the eye of the beholder.

The history of Ellicottville really begins with the Erie Indians or the Nation of the Cat, as the early French explorers called them. The Eries, being a numerous and powerful tribe, became jealous of the rising power of the Iroquois Five Nations, who realizing that the Eries constituted a menace to the peace of their Confederacy, took umbrage and waged a war of extinction against them, annihilating that entire tribe.

The Iroquois came into control of our beautiful valley and its surrounding hills in about the year 1655, but they never occupied it, except temporarily on hunting expeditions. This resulted in Cattaraugus county remaining a total wilderness, covered with dense forests and inhabited, only, by wild animals. Probably no other place in America, of comparable area, ever contained so many bears, wolves, lynx and puma. Moose, elk, deer, and wild turkeys also abounded, and great herds of buffalo periodically ranged over the Cattaraugus Hills on their way from the prairies of the mid-west to the Oak Openings of Erie county and Central New York. Great flocks of wild pigeons, "sufficient to darken the sky" were also common.

This section of the country was affected then, as now, by transportation on the Great Lakes waterway to the interior of America, which was carried on in birch-bark canoes and French batteau, and by land on ancient Indian trails that skirted the shores of Lake Erie.

Rude hunters and trappers, who took Indian wives and lived the life of the savages with whom they dwelt, led along our borders the vanguard in the cavalcade of "Westward Ho". Next came the fur-traders with their cheap Indian goods to exchange for valuable furs, closely followed by French soldiers and missionaries. LaSalle is said to have passed this way in about 1670 and to have explored the route later taken by Celeron, going from Lake Erie, by Chautauqua creek and portage, into the lake of that name and thence down the Allegany to the Ohio.

With the fall of Fort Niagara, in 1759, came twenty years of English Dominion, when British soldiers followed the trails that had been trod by the French for a hundred years, and the fur-trade of the west was opened to the traders of New York. This was followed by the "Hold Over Period", thirteen years following the treaty of peace that officially ended the American Revolution, during which time British troops still held the forts on the American side of the Canadian boundary and dominated the Indian tribes, who remained hostile to the Americans and retarded settlement in western New York.

More directly affecting this section was Sullivan's expedition against the Iroquois in 1779. With the destruction of their villages, cattle, horses, hogs, poultry, stored grain and growing crops the Iroquois were forced to flee from their native land in Central New York to Fort Niagara and to beg for food, clothing and shelter from their British allies. More than 5000 of them came to that post. They were scantily provided for and many of them died from starvation and exposure during the unusually severe winter that followed.

The British had difficulty in feeding their own garrison, prisoners and the Tory refugees who flocked to the fort for refuge from their countrymen. In the spring of 1780 the British induced the Indians to seek new homes in the wilderness and plant crops for their own sustenance.

The Senecas settled on Buffalo Creek, Cattaraugus Creek and Allegany river. One band, led by old Chief Kilbuck, settled at the mouth of Great Valley Creek. He and his clan later were frequent visitors in Ellicottville. His name has ever since clung to the locality where he settled.

In 1768 Sir. William Johnson entered into a treaty with the Iroquois by which there was established a line between the whites and the Indians, beyond which the latter

(Continued on page 8)

The Next Great Event in Western New York



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ELLCOTTVILLE, N. Y.

might feel secure in the possession of their land. This was known as the "Property Line" and extended from a point near Rome south to and across Pennsylvania.

After the Revolution the United States forced upon the Iroquois a treaty which established a western limit to their lands. This line extended from Lake Ontario "along and always four miles east of Niagara river to Lake Erie at Buffalo creek and thence south to the Pennsylvania line, thence west to Lake Erie and south on the west boundary of Pennsylvania to the Ohio." At that time New York state extended to a point west of Erie, Pa. This new Property Line caused so much dissatisfaction and was so unjust to the Senecas living on the Allegany west of it, that it was later changed to conform with the present western boundary of Chautauque county.

In the original charters granted by the British crown to Massachusetts and New York, the western boundaries of both extended to the South Sea. This resulted in both states claiming the Indian lands in central and western New York. The controversy was settled at Hartford, Conn. in 1786 by commissioners appointed by the two states. It was agreed that New York should have exclusive jurisdiction over the lands east of a line to extend from Pennsylvania to Lake Ontario and passing one mile west of Geneva. West of that line New York was given the sovereignty and Massachusetts the pre-emptive right of purchase, subject to the Indian right of Occupancy.

In 1788 Oliver Phelps of Windsor, Conn. and Nathaniel Gorham of Boston, with others, purchased the pre-emptive right to all of the Massachusetts land, about 6,000,000 acres for \$1,000,000. Later by a compromise settlement, Phelps and Gorham were given a deed to all of these lands east of Genesee river and a "Mill Seat" at Rochester 12 miles wide by 28 miles long, on the west side of the river, upon the release of the pre-emptive right to the remainder of said lands.

In 1791 Massachusetts sold the pre-emptive right to all of its remaining lands to Samuel Ogden, who was acting as agent for Robert Morris, the financial genius of the Revolution. Mr. Morris sold all but a small portion of his lands, known as the Morris' Reserve, to certain Holland investors, erroneously called the Holland Land Company, with the agreement that he would extinguish the Indian title. This he did at a council of the Senecas held at "Big Tree" (Genesee), in 1797, except a number of Indian Reservations. The "Big Tree Treaty" is worthy of extended discussion but space will not here permit. Suffice it to say that Mr. Morris secured title to more than 4,000,000 acres of some of the most fertile land in America for less than one-third of a cent per acre.

It may be of interest to note that the Ogden Land Company is still in existence and now holds the pre-emptive right of purchase of the remaining Indian Reservations. The frequent Bills entered in Congress providing for the division of the communal lands of the tribes among their individual members bear evidence of the activity of such organizations.

At the outset, the Holland Land Company had great difficulty in making sales of land, due to the fact that most of the early settlers had little or no money with which to pay for it. To overcome this obstacle they adopted the very liberal policy of accepting personal property, as a consideration for first payments. This resulted in almost every kind of article being traded for the possession of tracts of land. One man gave his dog as a down payment, another an old shot-gun. Many equally curious instances were recorded. The company was satisfied to wait for payment until the settlers were able to clear their land and raise crops with which to pay for it. They even postponed payments of interest in order to encourage settlement. After the war of 1812 land was rapidly taken up.

When Mr. Phelps came onto his vast domain in Central New York and settled at Canandaigua, he brought with him many of his relatives and neighbors from Connecticut and Massachusetts, among whom were his cousins Frederick A. Ebenezer and Henry Saxton. Augustus Porter was another relative. He and Frederick made the survey of the greater part of the Phelps-Gorham Purchase. Later we find Mr. Porter engaged in surveying the Holland Purchase and Henry Saxton in the Land Office in Batavia.

CATTARAUGUS COUNTY ORGANIZED

To quote from John Green, son of James Green the first settlers in Great Valley: "I came with my father to Olean in 1806. He was the first supervisor of Olean, used to go to Batavia to attend the settings of the Board of Supervisors".

March 11, 1808, by Act of the Legislature, Cattaraugus County was formed from Genesee and annexed to Niagara county, which then included Erie, until such time as it should contain 500 taxable inhabitants qualified to vote for Member of Assembly. Buffalo was the county seat.

The Act also provided: "And be it further enacted that the County of Cattaraugus be erected into a town by the Name of Olean and that the first Town Meeting in said Town be held in the dwelling house of Joseph McClure in said Town."

Accordingly, on March 28, 1817 the first Town Meeting in Cattaraugus county was held in the first log house built at McClure's Settlement (Franklinville) by Gen. McClure. At the same time and place Cattaraugus county, having attained the requisite number

(Continued on page 10)

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upon the success of its first 100 years and assures the residents of that village that "the first hundred years are the hardest."

Centennial Celebration Program

August 8th to 14th, 1937

Inclusive

(All events are on Eastern Standard Time)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 8

Special Services in Local Churches

2:30 P. M.—Baseball Game in Calumet Park—Gowanda vs Ellicottville

7:00 P. M.—Concert Ellicottville High School Band, Paul Smith, director

8:00 P. M.—Historical Spectacle

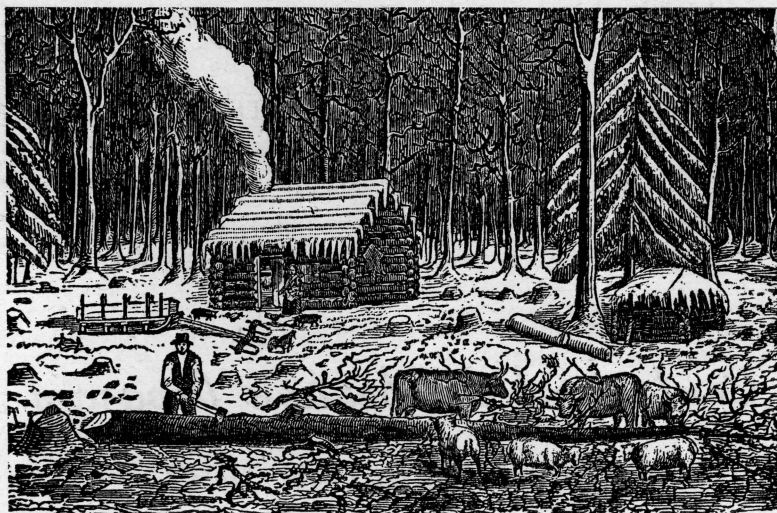
(Continued on page 12)

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OLEAN, NEW YORK

of qualified voters, was duly organized; and Jonas Williams, Isaac Sutherland and Asa Ransom were appointed a commission to locate the county seat. They selected the site of our beautiful village and marked the spot by the erection of a large ironwood post.



SETTLEMENT BEGINS

The surveyors of the Holland Land Company were able to spot especially attractive locations and later led settlers to sites which they had previously selected. Gen. McClure settled on land that he had surveyed in Ischua Valley. Rickertson Burlingame surveyed the town of Ellicottville and we find him listed with Grove Hurlburt, Orrin Pitcher, Archelaus Brown and Orrin Brown as the first to take contracts for land in this town.

Ellicottville was in the white pine country. These magnificent trees, towering to heights 150 feet above the surrounding forests, supplied valuable timber and attracted settlers as honey draws the bees. It seems almost incredible that such gigantic trees once grew here. Authentic records were made from actual measurements of a white pine that stood on the campus of Dartmouth college, which was six feet in diameter and 270 feet high. The stump is still preserved. Likewise, there are stumps in Great Valley from which mammoth pines were cut a hundred years ago.

It is well known that Grove Hurlburt built the first log house in Ellicottville, in 1815, and that Orrin Pitcher lived in it the first winter while erecting a similar one for himself, on the site of Fred Plotz's garage.

It is also well known that Baker Leonard came from Batavia and erected the first frame house, in 1817, for the Holland Land Company for a tavern; that it cost so much, when completed, that the company refused to accept it; that he moved into it and opened a public house and store, or trading-post, and employed Henry Saxton to manage the store; that certain public functions were performed within its walls.

It is not so well known that the excessive cost came from the fact that the lumber used in its construction had to be hauled from the saw-mill of James Green, at Kilbuck eleven miles away; that the trail was marked, only, by blazed trees; that there were no bridges and the way was obstructed with fallen trees, swamp land and rough ground.

It is not generally recognized that this house served as the County Court House from 1818 to 1820 and became the center of all official activities of the county. Here the County Courts were held, the Board of Supervisors met, and the County Records were kept. Here also, the town was organized and the first Town Meeting held on the second Tuesday in March, 1821.

It is not well known that this house was the principal trading place of the Indians on the Allegany Reservation, and that the floor of the trading room was frequently covered with Indians rolled up in their blankets to sleep for the night; that the Seneca chief, Ely S. Parker, who studied law in the office of Angel & Rice and later was breveted a General on the staff of General Grant and who wrote the Articles of Surrender that were signed by Gen. Robert E. Lee, at Appomattox, was a frequent visitor in the Saxton home. Letters from him to the writer's grandmother, the late Hannah Saxton Skinner, are there preserved.

(Continued on page 13)

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MONDAY, AUGUST 9

- 1:30 P. M.—Band Concert
- 7:00 P. M.—Band Concert
- 8:00 P. M.—Amateur Hour
- 9:30 P. M.—Pavement Dance. (Music by Johnny Grady's Orchestra)

TUESDAY, AUGUST 10

- 1:30 P. M.—Band Concert
- 2:30 P. M.—Old Timers' Meeting in High School Auditorium
- 7:00 P. M.—Grand Firemen's Parade
- 8:00 P. M.—Historical Spectacle
- 9:30 P. M.—Pavement Dance

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11

- 1:30 P. M.—Band Concert
- 2:30 P. M.—Baseball Game—East Otto vs Ellicottville
- 7:00 P. M.—Band Concert
- 8:00 P. M.—Amateur Hour
- 9:30 P. M.—Pavement Dance

(Continued on page 17)

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ELLICOTTVILLE, N. Y.

The first wedding ceremony in town was performed here when the first lawyer, John A. Bryan was united in marriage with Eliza Dixon, a sister of Mr. Leonard's wife, Lucy. Contrary to published accounts, John A. Bryan was not the first postmaster, in 1822. Baker Leonard's commission as postmaster dated Aug. 4, 1820 is still preserved in the old house. Here also, Baker Leonard died April 17, 1821 and later Henry Saxton married his widow.

EARLY TAVERNS

Besides Baker Leonard's tavern there were others of early date. Probably the next in order of time was the Eagle Hotel, built in 1818 on about the site of Mrs. J. E. Doolittle's store. It burned in about 1855.

The Leavenworth Hotel, a three-story structure with eaves to the street, extending down to the second-story, was built in 1822. The writer has evidence to show that it was moved to the corner of Main and Monroe streets to make room for the Crawford House that burned in 1890, and which was replaced with the fine brick structure recently improved and now the modern Lincoln Hotel. The Leavenworth Hotel was known as the "Arcade" in its new location. It was moved a second time, back on Monroe street to make way for the brick-block now occupied by the New York store. There it housed the saloon of John Headerman and many other businesses. In 1905 John H. Northrup purchased the old building, removed the third-story and remodeled it into two stores and two living apartments. It is now occupied by the garage of James J. Parks.

The Senear Hotel, which stood on the present site of the Bank of Ellicottville, burned so many years ago that the oldest residents can only remember having heard others speak of it. The writer has a picture showing it in 1866.

Irving Hall, an imposing three-story structure, stood on Payne's corner. It burned in 1872. The Mansion House, successively known as the Huntley, Warner, Whitney, Hughey and Fenton, stood on the site of Orrin Pitcher's log cabin and burned in 1895.

The Gregory tavern built in 1822, stood on the site of the new Catholic church and was moved farther down Jefferson street and remodeled into two dwelling houses now occupied by J. E. Fitzpatrick and Emma Poschen. The Reynolds tavern, which stood on the site of Supervisor Pettit's fine new home, was moved up Washington street to "the point" and is now occupied by Claire Harris. It was built in about 1818.

The Fish tavern at the top of Fish Hill was a favorite resort of the early military organization of the town and where they held periodic drills. Here, too, the drovers from the west stopped with their droves of sheep and cattle on their way to eastern markets. The yards and gardens of the villagers were fenced to protect them from these great herds. The town pound was located at the south end of Monroe street, where stray cattle were confined.

EARLY SCHOOLS

The first school was taught by Eunice Carpenter in Orrin Pitcher's log house in 1818. The next year Ursula Maltby taught one in Baker Leonard's house. In the winter of 1820 Chauncey J. Fox taught in the original Court House. He was followed by John W. Staunton, the next winter.

"Select Schools" were taught in the Holland Land Office, the first County Clerk's Office, the Alex Bird house and in the second story of the first schoolhouse, which was erected on the public square in about 1824, while a district school was taught in the first story. A Female Seminary was opened in 1835.

A controversy developed that split the school district in two. One faction built a schoolhouse on the corner of Elizabeth and Adams street. It was later sold to William Beecher and is now occupied by John Schults. The other faction built a small building near the Catholic church. The old schoolhouse was purchased by Nicholas Devereaux and remodeled into a chapel for the Catholic church. It was later occupied for many years by William Scoville as a tin-shop and now houses the farm implement business of E. E. Litchfield & Son.

The rapid growth in school population, thrift and good sense brought about a reunion of the district and, in 1851, a beautiful colonial type of school building was erected on the public square to meet the growing needs of the community. In 1887 this was moved to the present site of Fitzpatrick & Weller's last factory, on Mill street, and converted into a grist mill by Daniel E. Bartlett, where it burned May 19, 1893. The brick High School was erected on the square in 1887. The stone jail that stood on the public square directly across Washington street, was torn down for the stone that it contained to be used in the foundation of the new schoolhouse. This was later enlarged and, in 1928, the rear portion of it was demolished and the present commodious modern structure erected.

EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

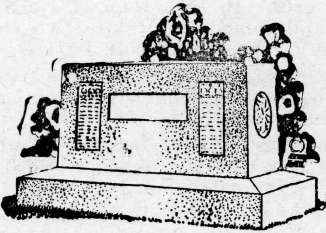
May 19, 1851 Bishop John Timon deeded to Nicholas Devereaux the property situated on the northerly side of East Washington street, formerly owned by Ellen Cronin and

(Continued on page 15)

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later by the writer hereof. The old house that still stands on that property, may have been the first chapel used in Ellicottville by the Catholic church. This is indicated by the fact that the first church erected at the foot on Washington street was built the same year.

In a historical sketch of the church by Father Edward J. Rengel, he states that Rev. T. McEvoy came here before 1850 and said mass in the old Mansion House and six months later in the Devereaux Land Office. He also, corroborates statements made by others, that Nicholas Devereaux purchased the first schoolhouse and converted it into a church edifice. These facts tend to strengthen the theory that the old Cronin house may have been the first Catholic chapel.

The first Presbyterian church was erected in 1838 where Peter J. Heunderfeld later built his furniture factory, store and undertaking establishment, on Monroe street, now occupied by William H. Green. The present brick church on Elizabeth street was erected in 1852. The first Methodist church erected in 1850 is the building on Elizabeth street that was remodeled into a double house by Halsey F. Northrup, at the time the present edifice was built in 1892. Methodist church services were held here about 1822.

The remarkable history of St. John's Episcopal church and that of its wonderfully sweet toned bell is too extensive and well known to need repetition here. The story of the later churches is equally well known.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Truman R. Coleman and Theodore Smith were engaged in the land business, on their own account, from 1847 to 1852, and carried on a private banking business at the same time.

Eleazer Harmon carried on a banking business for two or three years about 1855, in the first County Clerk's Office. This was the little one-story brick building that stood in the rear of the Court House until recent years. It was built in 1823.

J. King Skinner opened a bank of discount in the second-story of the old brick-block Jan. 1st, 1858. In November of the same year he moved his business into the Devereaux Land Office, on the opposite side of Washington street where the Ellis Block now is.

The Bank of Ellicottville was organized July 15, 1878 and opened its office for business in the Second County Clerk's Office, now used by the High School for its domestic science department. This building was erected on the public square in 1853.

EARLY INDUSTRIES AND ODD ITEMS OF INTEREST

Few know that a tannery was operated by water power derived from a primitive over-shot water-wheel on the Daniel Crowley lot at the west edge of the village. The old mill-race is still easily discernible.

Equally unknown is the fact that the late Frank M. Fitch was a cooper in his youth, and manufactured butter-firkins, (quarter-barrel oak tubs), in the little building that stood on the bank of the creek where Nitchie's garage now is. Mr. Fitch performed every operation from the felling of the trees and cutting of the staves to the finished product. The little building was later occupied by Stephen A. Harrington as a grocery store and office of Justice of the Peace. He was followed by Frank Bille, who was noted for the high quality of his bananas and peanuts. To quote his oft made statement: "I loosa on da peanut and maka on da banan."

The old grist-mill that stood on the site of the Ellicottville Electric Light plant, was built in 1832. In it J. King Skinner served as the first station-master of the Rochester and State Line Railroad. Prior to its erection the settlers carried their grist, on horse-back through wolf infested forests, to the mill built at Peth by James Green in 1813.

The Holland Land Office is still in existence. It was built by Baker Leonard in the winter of 1817-18 directly across Washington street from his tavern and faced the public square. In 1892 it was moved farther west and built into the Methodist parsonage. The ancient doorway and windows are still intact. It served as the home of the home of the much beloved "Grandma Mudgett" in her latter days.

The little red building that stood at the corner of Great Valley road and the road leading to Mutton Hollow, which was recently torn down, was part of the old "Toll Gate". The only other commemorative evidence we have of the "Old Plank Road" is the Plank Road House, (Evergreen Tea Room) in Great Valley.

"The Independent Bachelors" were organized Feb. 16, 1848 for the expressed purpose of electing bachelors to office. Failing to elect any of their candidates in the following election and some of their members taking fair ladies of the village to be their brides, the organization soon dissolved.

There are many personal interest stories relating to our early citizens, that have never appeared in print, but lack of space will not permit their publication here.

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 12

- 1:30 P. M.—Band Concert
- 2:30 P. M.—Old Timers' Meeting in High School Auditorium
- 2:30 P. M.—Baseball Game in Calumet Park
- 7:30 P. M.—Historical, War Veterans and Fantastic Parade
- 8:30 P. M.—Historical Stage Spectacle
- 10:00 P. M.—Pavement Dance

FRIDAY, AUGUST 13

- 1:30 P. M.—Band Concert
- 2:30 P. M.—Baseball Game, Calumet Park
- 7:00 P. M.—Band Concert
- 8:00 P. M.—Amateur Hour
- 9:30 P. M.—Pavement Dance

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14

- 1:30 P. M.—Band Concert
 - 2:30 P. M.—Old Timers' Meeting in High School Auditorium
 - 2:30 P. M.—Baseball Game, Calumet Park
 - 7:00 P. M.—Band Concert
 - 8:00 P. M.—Historical Spectacle
 - 9:30 P. M.—Pavement Dance
-

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ELLICOTTVILLE, N. Y.

ERIE COUNTY FAIR

SEPT. 13 to 18, 1937

SIX DAYS

SIX NIGHTS

HAMBURG, NEW YORK