

HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

by Leanna Hale

We've gone through many changes since 1975

The Clarkson Church

- Celebrated 150 years in the present church building in 1975 by issuing a book about the church history.
- In 1996 a Historical Cookbook was issued to celebrate the 180th anniversary of the inception of the First Presbyterian Congregational Society of Murray (1816)

Changes in the look of the town

- The Clarkson Store on the Northeast corner of Ridge Rd. and Rt. 19 was destroyed by fire in 1985. The brick building was constructed in 1825 as a general store, post office and stagecoach stop and continued to be a general store until just a few years before the fire when it became a deli.
- The old stucco service station on the southwest corner of the Ridge Rd. and Rt. 19 was demolished and the present K & K convenient store built. The original service station was built on the site of the Clarkson Hotel.
- The Terhaar home located on the Ridge Road east of the Town Hall was turned into the Lloyd Butterfield Town Hall Annex and then torn down to make the Town Hall parking lot larger.
- The post office was in the Clark house (two houses south of K & K on the west of Rt. 19). The postmaster 30 years ago was Jean Hoyt who became postmaster after her mother Blanche Clark retired. During the past 30 years, the present post office building was a diner, a real estate office and then became what is our present post office.
- Niagara Mohawk was on the site of the present fire district building.
- Also constructed in this time period were the Justice Court building, playground, sporting fields, shelter, the present town garage and the present honor roll board.
- 35 years ago, there were only a couple of housing tracts. Since then, several other tracts, sewer districts and Wellington Woods have been constructed.

Happenings around town

- Clarkson celebrated the town's 165th Anniversary in 1984. As part of this celebration, there was a reenactment of the 1960 Colorama by Eastman Kodak which had been displayed in Grand Central Station. You can see a copy of the original Colorama which hangs in the Town Hall.

- The town saw the retirement of the third Zastrow to work on Clarkson roads and the passing of Leon and Gerald Zastrow.
- U of R's first invitro baby born was a resident of Clarkson in 1984.
- During this period the Clarkson Historical Society was born and has taken a lease of the Clarkson Academy (built in 1853) and is in the midst of renovation.
- The State Troopers left Clarkson after having occupied three different substations over several decades (one of which was destroyed by an explosion).
- On the southern portion of the town, the Seymour Library moved into a new building just west of the old St. Mary's Clarkson Catholic Cemetery.
- The Bowman house, also later known as the Gordon Farm, and barns which had been vacant for many years were demolished.

Some other businesses around town

- The mall housing the Millhouse was constructed.
- Clarkson Electric founded in Bill Massar in his basement was moved to a new building on West Ridge.
- Among the businesses on East Ridge Rd. is the Apple Tree Restaurant.

A historian's opinion

Over 30 years ago the Vietnam War ended. Our town lost fighter pilot Ronnie Fegan in that war. Since then, there have been skirmishes that are often forgotten, like Grenada and hostages which were held in Iran for 555 days. We went from the Cold War to the Gulf War to the War on Terror. We witnessed live on TV the first attack on our country since Pearl Harbor.

A hospital stay has shortened even for open heart surgery which has become commonplace. Transplants are not experimental anymore. Cancer seems to be more prevalent, but more people seem to be survivors.

PC's have become commonplace in the home and are even being replaced by lap tops. There are cordless phones, cell phones, I-Phones, cable and satellite TV, DVD's, CD's and IPods. Despite all the time saving devices, including food processors and microwaves, we seem to eat out more than ever before. There are fewer "Stay at Home Moms" more organized activities for our children and we are constantly on the go. Cars have gotten smaller but more people drive trucks and SUV's. The traffic at the four corners has sure increased.

Each new era is exciting though, and it is sure interesting to remember how we "got here." Hopefully we won't make the same mistakes over again.