

## **TOWN HISTORY**

The picturesque Town of Alexander lies along the south border of Genesee County. It features land variations from 250 feet summits in the south to rolling valleys in the north. The Tonawanda Creek flows through the center of the town. The population is about 2450.

The Village of Alexander lies within the town at the crossroads of Routes 98 and 20. The population is about 480.

The town was part of the original Holland Land Purchase. It was set off from Batavia and organized as a town on June 8, 1812. The Town was given the name Alexander after Alexander Rea who purchased the first piece of land in 1802. The village of Alexander was incorporated in April 1834.

## **TOWN HALL**

The first school was organized in 1807. In 1811 we had a library called the Alexandrian Library, which became the Alexander Classical School in 1836. The present Alexander Town Hall is a three story cobblestone structure constructed in 1837 as the Alexander Classical School. It is the largest cobblestone structure in North America constructed for educational purposes. It is the only known cobblestone building utilized as a town hall in North America, as well as one of the few cobblestone structures originally designed for public purposes. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. To this day, the Town Hall is widely recognized as the focal point of town identity and is the only remaining historical public building in the town.

The structure was built by public subscription in 1837 at the cost of \$7,000. Hezekiah Barnard was the master mason of the building. Some years after, the school received a grant from the Genesee Presbytery and was re-named the Genesee Wyoming Seminary. The loss of students from the South, presumed to be the cause of the financial difficulties which plagued the seminary during the Civil War years, forced the school to close.

In 1886 a union free school system was organized in Alexander and the old Seminary building was turned over to the town for a public school. Fires occurred in the building in 1908 and 1936.

In 1937, eighteen nearby school districts voted to centralize under the name of the

Alexander Central School and a new building was constructed on the south side of Buffalo Street, across the street from the cobblestone structure. The former school building was acquired by the Town of Alexander and converted into town offices in 1940. Also, the fire department located in the building at this time. An addition was made in 1949 for a fire engine garage. The fire department moved out in 1964 when they built their own building. A meeting and courtroom was made from the truck garage. A museum was started on the third floor.

In 1995-97 the Town Hall was remodeled. The grounds were modified to look more original. The building itself was structurally stabilized and the interior of the entire building was remodeled. An elevator was added. The results of this remodeling are a building that we can be proud of and a building that is now being utilized by the museum, court, assessor, town clerk, town board and other boards, village, and community groups such as cub scouts.