

THE ALLEN TOWN NEWS

MAY, 1974

ALLEN STREET - ITS PAST AND PRESENT

Today a walk along Allen Street catches one up in a kaleidoscope of sights and sounds, the charm of a few really interesting shops tastefully done, the nettlesome view of run down apartment houses, empty store fronts contrasted with the grace of a few still lovely town houses. It is an interesting street, full of the contrasts of rich and poor, beautiful and ugly, that are well known to the urban dweller and preferred by him to the pasteurized pleasantness of the suburban scene. A little more than a hundred years ago it was quite different. Allen Street then was a country lane along which cows were herded from a farm on the east end of the street area to Main Street. The farm belonged to the Hon. Lewis F. Allen for whom the street was named while still a young man in his thirties.

Lewis Allen came to Buffalo from Massachusetts in the early 1820's. He became involved in the real estate business, was a member of the Holland Land Company and at one time owned nearly all the property on Grand Island where he experimented with raising the short horn cattle, being an acknowledged expert in the field and an author of a standard work on the care and feeding of this particular breed.

Buffalo was fortunate in that so many of her early citizens were, like Lewis Allen, men of talent and ambition who were ambitious not

only for themselves but for their city and who translated that interest into specific action for the betterment of the area. He served on the city's first board of health and was one of the founders of Forest Lawn Cemetery and the Buffalo Historical Society.

He married Margaret Cleveland, aunt of Grover Cleveland, who as a boy was a frequent visitor in the Allen home, the lovely Peter Porter mansion on Niagara Street. Cleveland received from his aunt and uncle both financial assistance and encouragement in his plans to become a lawyer. Granddaughters of Allen interviewed in 1938 by H. Katherine Smith for the Courier Express and by Ellen Taussig in the Buffalo Evening News in 1962 recall snatches of remembered events and stories from their childhood of the exciting life at the Niagara Street house, host to many famous people of those times, Harriet Beecher Stowe, General Winfield Scott, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and even Chief Red Jacket and his braves who added a startling touch to the hearthside upon occasion.

When Allen Street was named, its benefactor planted elms and maples along its length in preparation for a new role as a

residential site, but at that time it was considered too far uptown for convenient living. However in the late 80's and 90's it became a fashionable street, home to such famous Buffalo names as Frederick L. Danforth, Sidney Shepard, Dennison Sawyer, William Peabody and Jacob Schoellkopf.

When Ellen Taussig interviewed Miss May Cleveland Allen in her home on College Street in 1962, surveying her many years of interest in the Buffalo scene Miss Allen said "Buffalo has not progressed. It has gone backward. It needs men who really love it. The men who built the city really felt about it... made it go."

One wonders if this rather grim comment really is irreversible. Active associations of interested people are at work trying to upgrade the area to which Allen Street lends its name and this spring along its length a row of cherry trees will again blossom. Hopefully they were harbingers of more than just a season.

EDITORIAL - SPRING 1974

AREA OF CONCERN

At last count there were 34 liquor

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Please send this form with a
check made out to the Allentown
Ass'N., Inc. to: Mrs. John Berean.
163 Mariner St.
Buffalo, N.Y.
14201
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license holders in the area of the Allentown Community, which extends from Main St. to Wadsworth Street plus Days Park and from Edward Street to North Street. Added to that, there are 4 liquor stores and 3 stores that sell beer. The liquor license holders range from restaurants, and hotels to the influx of new bars on Allen Street.

The area of major concern to the Allentown Community is the bars, and even more specifically the new bars that have appeared within the last two years in the area of Allen St. The questions that arise from the intrusion of these new bars are: what are they doing to our community, what can we do to correct the unpleasant side effects and how can we prevent even more bars from opening their doors on the already overflowing Allen Street?

Since the issuance of liquor licenses and opening of the doors of these new bars there has been a considerable increase of traffic as well as street noise, motorcycles particularly, in the area, especially at the late hours in the evening. There have also been many complaints from the neighbors of adjacent residential streets that garbage that has accumulated behind the buildings, let alone the mess is unsightly. Added to the above problems is the ongoing parking problem

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

* Annual contributions provide membership
* in the following categories:

- * Active or Associate \$3.00
- * Retail Business 5.00
- * Corporate 15.00
- * Sustaining 25.00
- * Contributing 50.00

I wish to enroll as a member
in the category checked.

NAME (Please print) _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

in the area. There has been no concern by the State Liquor Authority that the patrons of these taverns have to park somewhere. Consequently, the motorcycles are on the sidewalks and the residential streets are jammed on both sides (parking illegally on one side) with cars, leaving no space for the residents. Not only are the residents often awakened at late hours by the screeching of tires, but also by the added abuse of foul language.

The Board of the Allentown Association has set up a special committee to deal with this problem. The committee along with members of the board have met with, talked to and written the State Liquor Authority, the Erie County Health Department, the Buildings Department of the City of Buffalo and Councilman William B. Hoyt. We have been directed by Mr. David M. Coffey, Deputy Commissioner of the State Liquor Authority to collect actual times and dates of incidents, record them and forward them to him. This was done in the case of 223 Allen Street, the Allentown Bar, to prevent its opening, but to no avail. In another case, the Hi-Ho Silver Bar at 180 Allen Street, a letter was written to Mr. Coffey, followed by a meeting with members of the committee, Captain Lyman and Councilman Hoyt, but we were too late and the doors opened. It was interesting to note on the last case that Hi-Ho Silver did not even have a use permit from the City of Buffalo to open. We talked to the State Liquor Authority about this, but it was of no concern to them.

Since we have found the above route unsuccessful and the State Liquor Authority obviously unresponsive to the constituency they serve, we recommend the following course of action: First, to rectify existing bad effects from bars already in use; second, to try to prevent new bars from moving in. First: if there is a health problem from the accumulation of garbage, etc. notify the Erie County Health Department and someone on the Board of the Allentown Association. If there is a pro-

blem from noise, notify the Police Department and again a member of the Board as to specific date, time, occurrence of incident. Councilman Hoyt has expressed his concern and willingness to assist anyway he can, so if the problem persists, he should be notified.

Second; if you happen to hear of the possibility of a new bar coming into the area, notify a member of the Board, immediately, next Councilman Hoyt and lastly, write a letter to Mr. Bert Sarafan, New York State Liquor Authority, 2 World Trade Center, New York, New York 10047. Hopefully, with some fast and coordinated action the Allentown Community, as a whole, will be able to prevent the continuation of our present predicament. This effort will be a success if the whole community works together.

Frederic K. Houston
President

BEAUTIFICATION PLANS FOR ALLEN-TOWN

Beautification plans during the month of May, include the planting of Barberry bushes in all of the cement planters in the Day's Park Mall. Hopefully, these thorny bushes planted around the trees, will deter the vandalizing of the tree trunks and also soften the harsh effect of so much cement. The cement will also receive a neutral color of paint.

A cost-free improvement of the facades of two adjacent buildings will be offered to the owners as part of the same beautification project.

As a gesture of appreciation to North Pearl residents for their notably successful improvement of their properties the Allentown board has voted the necessary money to purchase flowering plants, to be planted and encircled with wire fencing on each side of the street.

The development and execution of this plan will be carried out by home owners

under the North Pearl block leader, Mrs. David Kerr.

ALLENTOWN WORLD CENTER

Visitors to the 1974 Allentown Art Show will have an additional treat waiting for them this June - formal Grand Opening of the ALLENTOWN WORLD CENTER.

What lies beyond those doors promises to be exciting. Aside from the expected art gallery, there will be several boutiques, craft shops, beauty salon, gourmet restaurant, potted plant place and ice cream emporium. All will be in keeping with the artistic aura of Allentown, while offering the convenience of a mall. There is even the promise of adequate parking (although all bets are off during the June Art Show).

It means you'll be able to view original art, buy a new dress or pair of jeans, pick up a new plant arrangement, have your hair cut, select a new leather coat or jacket, perhaps a medallion - all to your order - take in some lunch, without ever leaving the building.

Being now in an old neighborhood is never easy. Allentown is a very special place. It has quietly (too quietly, in the opinion of many) established itself as the gathering place for the finest artisans, craftsmen, artists, antique dealers, restaurants, etc., outside of New York City. Unfortunately, the Art Show itself does not allow for a full display of all the talent in the area. All this talent has been watching the ALLENTOWN WORLD CENTER gather steam, begin its construction and take shape. There could be no more critical audience than the locals who cherish the "small shop" atmosphere of Allentown.

Jim Biggs had to have two things going for him at the outset: a strong belief in Allentown and a feeling for the Allentown experience. It begins to look as though he had them. He started out well - picking out a landmark location that would suit his purpose, keeping the basic flavor of the building, bringing in businesses that would not detract from or over-commercialize the area. More than that, he has not hesitated to voice his belief in the future of Allentown. Now, that's really good listening to a large

number of people who have always been aware of the good living to be had there. Too often, Allentown devotees have had to listen to untruths that have become almost legend about the area. The fact is, there is less crime in Allentown than nearly anywhere else in the Buffalo area. Allentown is bursting at the seams with highly respectable businesses. A new element has begun to make itself at home there - the legal profession. More and more lawyers are beginning to open their offices in the lovely, stately homes that abound in the picturesque streets.

Now, that's all very good and Allentown can use it. But Jim Biggs has really gotten to the heart of what Allentown is all about. He's gotten together people who have made an art of their business, who take great pride in every article put up for sale, artists who handcraft much of the merchandise available. There is a great "hometown" feeling in the air at the Center. You won't find a national franchise anywhere. No machine stamped furniture or jewelry. Even the leather suit you decide on will most likely be made to your order - with artistic ability and love.

The people who will sell to you within the Center have been waiting a long time for a place like this - somewhere unhurried - almost a return to a long-gone era - when people took time and effort to know their customers and to produce to custom. Even the splitlead philodendrum you select can be chosen after, if you so desire, a long philosophical discussion of the varying personalities of plants and the best type of plant for you.

Of course, if you're really addicted to the hit and run type of shopping, no one

will stop you. They'll just feel that you're missing a great deal. But, even so, you won't have missed the prime ingredient of the Center - QUALITY. Shops no longer display quaint signs saying "By Order to His Majesty, King _____"; if they did, this would be the place, and they would read "By Order to You".



THAT'S OUR MAX!

The Buffalo Council on World Affairs' Outstanding World Citizen of the Year for 1974; recipient of D'Youville College's "Community Service" Award for 1974...Max B. E. Clarkson; Citizen of the World; Chairman of the Board, Graphic Controls Corporation; Chairman of the Mayor's Citizens' Advisory Committee on Community Improvement; Allentowner. That's our Max!

Born in Scotland and educated in England and Canada, Max earned his B.A. and M.A. degrees at the University of Toronto. Luckily for us, he kept moving - on to Buffalo and into Allentown.

Max and his charming wife Madeline were residents of Arlington Park for fifteen years before moving

to Summer Street.

In 1960, Max Clarkson, Olive Williams (the 'First Lady of Allentown' and life long resident of Irving Place), along with other area residents, including Marcella Berean, revived an organization founded in 1938 by Edwin J. Weiss, and known as the North Street Community Association.

The purpose of this revived organization was the 'preservation and restoration of our distinctive area'.

In 1962, Max succeeded Olive Williams as president of the association and N.S.C.A. became incorporated as the Allentown Association.

After serving as President of the Allentown Association for several terms, Max was elected Chairman of the Board. In 1970, Chairman Max led a group of area residents through the herculean task of establishing our Allentown Community Center. Residents, friends of Allentown and area Foundations contributed over \$200,000.00. Through a series of temporary storefront 'centers' and despite discouraging set-backs, vicissitudes-Max's strong optimistic leadership has made today's Community Center at 111 Elmwood Avenue a reality.

The Center under the capable direction of Ron Maier, our Executive Director since last September, has recently become an agency of the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County. Max, as Chairman of the Board, continues to give generously of his time and talents toward the on-going growth of this unique Community Center in the heart of Allentown.

Our heartiest congratulations to Chairman Max on his recent worldly citations-and our sincere thanks for his undiminished devotion to Allentown.

