

BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY BOTANICAL GARDENS – A BUFFALO GEM

WNYGRS BUFFALO HISTORY DISPLAY – 1940 FORWARD



Buffalo – City of Industry



Buffalo – Contributing city to the war effort!



Buffalo - Gateway to the Great Lakes



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The following are brief descriptions of specific buildings or general industries found on the Summer, 2017 Western New York Garden Railway Society (WNYGRS) train display situated in House 5E of the Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens. We trust you will enjoy the layout as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

Buffalo Zoo – Located at 300 Parkside Ave. Buffalo NY 14214, in Delaware Park in the heart of North Buffalo, the Buffalo Zoo was established in 1875. The Zoo is celebrating over 140 years of operation with many new features and attractions. It's easy to spend the day there exploring all of the exhibits. The neighborhood surrounding the zoo is primarily residential. And as in our display, there is a railroad not too far away from the Zoo, part of an outer rail loop serving Buffalo industry.
(Modeled by Gary Tebo)

Gold Dome Bank – Located at One Fountain Plaza, the building was built between 1900 and 1901 and was the vision of architect E.B. Green with William Sydney Wicks. It is a prime example of the neoclassicism inspired by the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. It was originally built for the Buffalo Savings Bank, and remained that through the 1950's. (Model by Tom Schobert)

Liberty Building – The Liberty Building is located at 420 Main Street, across the Buffalo Metro Rail from Lafayette Square. Built in 1925, the 23 story office tower is a rare example of neoclassical architecture. At the time of its completion, the Liberty Building was the largest office building in downtown Buffalo and was built for Liberty Bank to serve as their headquarters. The Liberty Bank was originally called the German American Bank but its name was changed to the Liberty Bank after World War I to remove any connection to that war's main enemy. In order to illustrate the bank's new image, the building was christened with three replicas of the Statue of Liberty sculpted by Leo Lentelli in 1925. Two statues on the roof; one facing west, and the other facing east, representing Buffalo's strategic location on the Great Lakes. A third statue was placed over the Main Street entrance. Only the rooftop statues remain today. They stand 36 feet tall and are illuminated at night. (Model by Jack Henderson)

Shea's Performing Arts Center - Located at 646 Main St, is a theater for touring Broadway musicals and special events in Buffalo, NY. Originally called "Shea's Buffalo", it was opened in 1926 to show silent movies, taking only one year to build the entire theatre. Shea's hosts one of the few theater organs in the US that is still in operation within the theater for which it was originally designed.

Shea's Buffalo, flagship of the Shea's theater chain, was designed by the noted firm of Rapp and Rapp of Chicago. Modeled in a combination of Spanish & French Baroque & Rococo styles, the theatre was designed to resemble opera houses and palaces of Europe of the 17th and 18th centuries. Originally the seating accommodated nearly 4,000 people, but several hundred seats were removed in the 1930s to make accommodations more comfortable in the orchestra area. Currently, there are 3,019 seats. The interior was designed by world-renowned designer/artist Louis Comfort Tiffany, with most of the elements still in place today. A new grand drape, the fabric for which was manufactured in Austria, was installed in 2015, and the final restoration of the auditorium completed by the end of 2015. This included restoration of the balcony side walls and restoration of the surface of the main stage, as restoration of the auditorium ceiling and high walls was completed in 2014. The theatre celebrated its historic 90th Anniversary in January, 2016.
(Modeled by Lou Pease)

Old Spain – The building located adjacent to Shea's had as one of its tenants Laube's Old Spain restaurant that was opened in 1928. From a 1936 news article, it had Spanish tables with a Dubonnet colored table cloth and

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chairs in red and blue leather combined with a Mediterranean blue ceiling. The restaurant was divided into a series of little courtyards, the tinted walls antiqued with stone, brick and mortar effects. The walls were latticed with hand wrought iron and carving in the true Spanish rope work and herringbone motifs. Unfortunately, after 80 plus years of operation, the restaurant was closed. Today, it has become part of the Shea's facility with a small theater at one end and a lobby lounge and Shea's ticket office at the other end. It has been modeled as it was in the 1940's, especially the building's distinctive façade and top cornice. (Modeled by Tom Schobert)

The Colored Musicians Club - The Colored Musicians Club was organized in 1917 (over 100 years old), chartered in 1935, and is the only remaining African American club of its kind in the United States. It long provided rehearsal space and social opportunities for Buffalo's African-American musicians. From its beginning, it hosted jam sessions with some of the foremost jazz artists in the country, including Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Nat King Cole, Lena Horne and Ella Fitzgerald. The club bought its current building in 1944, and rented space to Local 533 American Federation of Musicians, Colored Musicians Union of Buffalo. When Local 533 merged with the white Local 43 in 1969, ownership of this building by the club insured its survival as a thriving institution. Today, it is the longest continuously operated African-American musicians club in the United States, and the building houses a museum tracing the history of jazz in Buffalo while also serving as a venue for great music performances by local and national jazz artists. Some may ask, why have they not changed the name from the sometimes offensive "Colored"? Celebrating their centennial this year, Club President George Scott stated, in a Buffalo News interview, "These guys had to fight like crazy to make this possible. To change the name would be an insult to what they did. And when people ask why we didn't change it, it gives me the chance to tell their story." (Modeled by Tom Schobert)

Studebaker Dealership – Buffalo was the birthplace of the Pierce Arrow automobile, and there are several buildings in Buffalo that still have the Pierce Arrow name on the face of the building. In the 1940s, Studebaker acquired Pierce Arrow and had a continuing presence in Buffalo through the 1940's. The model is a reminder of the rich heritage that Buffalo has in the development of the automobile. (Modeled by Gary Tebo)

Buffalo River – The Buffalo River is an important part of Buffalo as shown by the water feature in the middle of this display. It is fed by many streams and creeks, serving many industries along its shore and a winter home for lake boats that tie up for winter maintenance during the months of lake ice. Canalside in downtown Buffalo sits on the shores of the Buffalo River, where you can rent a boat to paddle along the historical shore and see the industrial side of Buffalo, or take a commercial boat tour along the river and out into Lake Erie. (Modeled by Bob Rodgers)

Naval Park – Along the Buffalo River is the Buffalo Naval Park with two ships and a sub in the water, a museum building and an outdoor exhibit of Navy planes. One of the ships, the USS Sullivan, is in memory of the five Sullivan brothers who perished on the Junaoe when it was sunk while withdrawing from a naval battle where it was first hit. Because of the loss of all five brothers, the Navy instituted the rule that all members of a family cannot serve on the same ship. The sub is the USS Crocker, diesel electric boat. We have model a similar sub to represent this park dedicated to our servicemen. (Modeled by Derrick Gillette)

Grain Silos – "Silo City", the grain silos along the Buffalo River, have been a common site in Buffalo for well over a hundred years. Grain from the Midwest was brought by boat, then hand shoveled out of the boats and into the silos where it was stored prior to be milled and converted into flour for shipment to the East Coast, or used in cereal manufacturing in Buffalo. The hand unloading ceased only a few years ago, with all grain now unloaded mechanically. General Mills has been processing grain in Buffalo for over 75 years, with the comfortable aroma of Cheerios drifting over downtown Buffalo. The grain mills fell into disrepair for several

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years, and the rail lines serving most of them have been torn up. However, in the last decade there's been a resurgence in use of the silos, with one area having been repainted to a Labatt's Blue six-pack, as a "go big" tribute by artist Earl Ketry, since Labatt's US headquarters is located in Buffalo. The silo's themselves are next "RiverWorks", a popular location for ice skating, curling, concerts, a passive beach, and a brewery, with more planned. (Modeled by Jack Henderson)

Buffalo Light House – The octagonal Buffalo Light House was commissioned in 1833, and built of cut gray limestone resting on a stone foundation. The diameter of the tower measured 18'6" at the base and tapered up to 11'3" at the parapet. At the top, a ten-sided iron, brass, and copper lantern resided bringing the tower's height to 44 feet. Inside the lantern was a Winslow Lewis patented Argand lamp and reflector system with a unique greenish lens meant to intensify the light. The harbor superintendent and the collector of the port tested the lens from out on the lake and determined that the reflectors alone produced a better light, and the lens was removed. (Modeled by Jack Henderson)

Warehouses – Supporting the industrial industries in Buffalo and surrounding communities are numerous warehouse which were primarily serviced by rail spurs in the 1940's. (Modeled by Jack Henderson)

Edward M. Cotter – For cities on large bodies of water with industrial buildings close to the water and not easily accessible by land, a fireboat is a necessary addition to the local fire department. The Edward M. Cotter is such a boat. The model is not of the Cotter but is similar. The Cotter was built in 1900, rebuilt in 1953 and renamed "Firefighter" upon her return to service. The following year she was renamed the "Edward M. Cotter". Her namesake, Edward Cotter, was a Buffalo firefighter and leader of the local firefighters union who had recently died. The Edward M. Cotter is considered to be the oldest active fireboat in the world, and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1996.

Along with her firefighting duties, during the winter the Edward M. Cotter is used as an icebreaker on Buffalo's rivers. Edward M. Cotter mounts five fire monitors (nozzles) that are capable of pumping 15,000 US gallons per minute (0.95 m³/s; 12,000 imp gal/min). She can often be seen sailing out of her berth and south-west to Lake Erie, returning north through the break wall and firing her fire monitors. (Modeled by Ron Witt)

Buffalo Stock Yards – Established in 1863 by the New York Central, it was closed in June of 1958. At one time there were over 200 meat process plants in the Buffalo area, the stock yards with over a hundred acres and was well centered to service these plants. Today, the area houses the main post office on Williams Street which utilized the railroad tracks behind it when mail was sent by train between cities. An interesting fact on the affect the Stock yards had on the development of Buffalo, the Crandall House at 949 William Street was opened in 1881 primarily to serve those in the stockyard. It was the first hotel in Buffalo with both telephone and telegraph. (Modeled by Gary Ludwig)

Ross Manufacturing – Through not a detailed model of a local industry, Ross Heater and Manufacturing Company was representative of the many small factories and machine shops that made Buffalo an important part of the industrial revolution, and home to many car manufacturers (e.g. Pierce Arrow) and parts plants (e.g. Ford, GM). Tonawanda is still a primary home to manufacturing of engines for GM vehicles (GM Tonawanda Engine Plant), Lockport harbors Delphi production facilities for radiators, air conditioning units and other parts, with Ford having a large stamping plant in the Town of Hamburg. Ross Manufacturing was acquired by American-Standard in the early 50's. (Modeled by Tom Schobert)

Oil Refinery and Storage – Though not as prevalent today as it once was, refining of oil into various petroleum products was a major industry for the Buffalo area. Today, most refining is done elsewhere and brought in by pipeline, truck, or rail. The Seneca Nation Casino in South Buffalo is the location of where some

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of these refiners were located, visible from the thruway to/from downtown Buffalo, with Ashland Oil having a large facility in Tonawanda near the Grand Island South Bridge, surviving today as Noco Energy.

(Modeled by Gary Tebo)

Curtiss P-6E ("Hawk") - Western New York has been at the forefront of aviation, and prior to and during WWII produced many airplanes for the Military. Curtis Wright buildings were around the airport where P-40 Warhawk fighter aircraft were manufactured during WWII, and most notably known for their later use in China by "The Flying Tiger" Squadron. In the town of Wheatfield, Bell Aircraft & Aerospace left a long legacy – from the Bell P-39 Airacobra to the One Man Rocket Belt and later the Lunar Module Lander. Though these buildings would be much too large for the display area, please look upward at the P-6E Hawk that is flying over our layout. The Hawk was a single-engine biplane fighter introduced into service in the late 1920s with the United States Army Air Corps, and operated until the late 1930s prior to the outbreak of World War II. It represents the design and manufacturing capability of Western New York in critical times for our nation.

(Modeled by Bob Rodgers)

Vineyards – Though not modeled for a specific vineyard, Western New York and Southern Ontario is home to many vineyards, with some dedicated to the making of wine and some dedicated to the manufacturing of grape juice and jellies by Welch's. In the 1940's children were let out of school at grape harvest time, picked the grapes which were taken to railroad sidings, and from there to the processing plants in Westfield. Today, a trip into Westfield still shows the many Welch buildings, and the vineyards are a thriving product throughout the area. Of interest is that Lucille Ball (Lucy Ricardo of "I Love Lucy") is from this area, and in one of the episodes, Lucy and Ethel were "stamping out" the grapes. Look closely in the model and you can see Lucy stomping away. (Modeled by Gary Tebo)

Thank you for taking the time visit the Gardens and the WNYGRS' June 2017 display. We hope you enjoyed this quick tour of Buffalo and the display of our rich history.