

The Fenton Receives Federal Grant



FENTON
HISTORY CENTER
museum and research center

Third Quarter
2008

FENTON FOCUS

The Fenton History Center has been awarded an Institute of Museum and Library Services Museums for America grant that will be the foundation for managing the backlog of archival donations that have accumulated over the past decades. The project will take two years, and over 5,500 hours of work by the current staff and project staff. Volunteers will also be a key component to the success of the project. "This is a huge step forward for the history of Jamestown and southern Chautauqua County. This grant will really provide the support to get our hands around the many, many items that have been donated over the years and are significant to our local history stories" says Fenton Director Joni Blackman. The entire project will cost \$216,233.40. The federal grant provides \$95,656 while the majority of the match is composed of NYS funds and in-kind workspace from the Jamestown Public Schools.

The special collections that are going to be organized and cataloged are full of important records, photographs, and other paper artifacts about the southern Chautauqua County region.

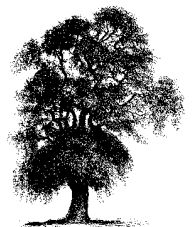
This project works in with the overall expansion plans that the Fenton History Center Board of Trustees adopted in 2006. The first phase was the acquisition of the Hall Home property. This grant will allow the newly organized and cataloged archive materials to be relocated to the new property over the next few years. The project will start August 1, 2008 and be completed by July 31, 2010.

The Jamestown Public School District is partnering with the Fenton History Center during the entire program by providing a donation of work and storage space for the collections as they are being processed. Jamestown Public School staff will be determining the primary documents and other archival materials of interest for inclusion in the District's active student "hands on experience" to learn the proper techniques for collecting, handling, arranging, describing, analyzing and interpreting district archival records, other primary source documents and actual newspapers. "The grant reviewers in Washington, D.C. like the idea that we were partnering with the school system and they were benefiting from the collections as well" says Karen Livsey, Project Director for the grant.

Grounded in the past, Growing towards the future

After so many years of needing more space – we have finally made the wish a reality! Using the strengths of the Fenton staff and volunteers to take on the job of finding more work and programming space has brought about the purchase of the adjoining Hall Home property. The Center is now the proud owner of a very usable building and beautiful property and has saved an 1846 structure. Through the generosity of Sen. Catharine M. Young and the grant program of the NYS Department of Education, the Fenton will be able to meet the current programming needs and expand to meet the community's needs.

Watch for ways
you can help
with the
expansion
project! We
need your help.



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A VISION FOR SUSTAINED GROWTH



History Detectives Summer Camp

“In the Good Ole Summertime:”

For students entering Grades 1-6

August 18-22 from 1-4 p.m. Cost is \$50/week.

What was it like to spend the summer around Chautauqua Lake in the good old days? Join us for a fun-filled week exploring local pastimes in the days of trolleys, steamboats, and Model A’s. Highlights of the week include a tour of the Fenton History Center’s “Satan’s Bowl of Death”-early auto racing exhibit and a visit by local antique car and jalopy owners (with their cars, of course!). History detectives will end their week at Long Point State Park. Activities include a guided tour of the park, old time games, and swimming. (Bring your suits!)

Collecting Memories of Celoron Park



On a humid summer evening former resident Tom Goodwill presented an interesting, informative and entertaining slide show about Celoron Park. The presentation was based on the history of the park and Tom’s collection of postcards and images.

A few friends, who also collect like items, also added to the presentation. Mr. Goodwill was successful in collecting many of the community’s stories about the “Coney Island” of Chautauqua County. Lee John of WSEE also hosted Mr. Goodwill on his morning radio show to prompt more information from the community. Mr. Goodwill was also able to collect a number of photographs from local residents who had many good memories of the park and make some good connections to continue his quest, which will eventually result in a published work about the wonderful park and part of our local history.

Scenes from Camp Brown
Thank you to our “Soldiers” and “recruits”. We couldn’t have done it without you!



Fenton Institute Sessions: The Bicentennial & Genealogy 101



County Historian Michelle Henry and filmmaker Chris Hall spoke to a small crowd at the Jackson Center about the earliest years of our County. Ms. Henry

talked about our County’s earliest government and how it evolved, how we grew physically and the expanding needs of our citizens impacted the County’s services and budget. She incorporated a number of photographs and documents as well.

Mr. Hall gave a very good, concise explanation of the War of 1812 in our area. He also spoke about his upcoming film *Flint Creek*—the documentary, to be filmed in Chautauqua County and Los Angeles, CA tells a story about the War of 1812 and the actions that took place within the county through fictitious characters based on the populations who were involved. The film also covers the campaign of 1813 and the British invasion and burning of Buffalo.

The next Fenton Institute session will be **Genealogy 101 – learning how to begin researching your family**. The session will be September 13 from 9 AM to noon. The cost is free for most members, and only \$5 for others, depending on your membership category. Potential members are \$10. If you are interested, please sign up as soon as possible so we will know where to hold the session.



Red, White & Blue : A Salute to Our Hometown Heroes



Along with the Town of Carroll Historical Society the Fenton History Center told a number of stories about our soldiers from the Civil War through Vietnam. The Municipal Band provided great timely music, the basket raffle was very successful, the food was yummy and all had a good time.



Join us next year!



Mark your calendar now...the **2008 Saints and Sinners Lake View Cemetery Tours** are October 18 and 25.

They will step off each hour throughout the afternoon and evening.

We are also adding a **"Midnight Mausoleum Tour"**. It is a fundraiser and more information will be coming soon!

This just in...

The Bemus Point –Stow Ferry is running Friday evenings 4-8 PM and Saturday & Sunday 1 – 8 PM through Labor Day. It is manned by volunteers who love our lake. Go see the oldest operating transportation on Chautauqua Lake (started in 1811). Take your family out for a tour of scenic Bemus Point by way of Stow, N.Y.

Local History Course to Be Offered at JCC

A new history course being offered at Jamestown Community College this fall promises to foster greater awareness and appreciation for the place of the Chautauqua region within American history. The three-credit hour class, called Topics and Methods in Local History, will meet on Wednesday afternoons from 2:40 to 5:25 p.m. beginning Sept. 10 and continuing through Dec. 10. The course also may be taken for honors credit in JCC's new honors program.

Course instructor Traci Langworthy hopes to engage students with a diverse range of topics, including Native American prehistory, Chautauqua County's role in the Underground Railroad, late 19th century tourism on Chautauqua Lake, Gilded Age industry, and the local impact of the Great Depression and World War II, among others. The course is also designed to introduce students to the field of public history, which studies how the past is interpreted for popular audiences in museums, films, and other non-academic settings. Multiple class field trips and guest presentations are planned. Students will be analyzing written material, artifacts, photographs, oral histories, and other firsthand testaments to life in southwestern New York.

"The intent is to give students the opportunity to examine for themselves the same sorts of primary sources that historians use to investigate the past," Langworthy said. "In the process, I hope students will come away from the class with a new appreciation for how valuable the study of local history is. In addition to teaching us about our own area's rich history, it can also teach us about American history as a whole."

Ms. Langworthy has been a member of JCC's full-time history faculty since 2004 and currently serves on the boards of the Fenton History Center and the Sheridan Historical Society. She holds a master's degree in history and a graduate certificate in museum studies from the University of Delaware, as well as a bachelor's degree in history from Oberlin College. In recent years, she has been selected to participate three times in the National Endowment for the Humanities' "Landmarks in American History and Culture" program for community college professors.

To register, or for more information, call the JCC registrar's office, 338-1018.

Research Center News

Our genealogy and local history library has been very busy so far this summer. Visitors have ranged from down the street, to across the country, to across the ocean, sometimes all in one day. We are very happy to be able to share our resources and help patrons locate and trace their ancestors. On this subject, Fenton member Tina Mallare is inspiring some excitement. She has recently spearheaded an effort to add more Italian genealogies to our resources, which includes approximately twenty more names and their family information. She has also tied many of them to "The Lost Neighborhood" of Brooklyn Square. Photos are included with most of the family histories. We salute Mrs. Mallare for her dedication to her heritage, and for her desire to preserve those memories and genealogies for future generations.

Project Runway 1880

The Fenton drawing room was the setting for Project Runway 1880 on Saturday May 17th. It was a Victorian fashion show (minus the live models) to showcase some of the many dresses in our textile collection. Twenty-five people attended the event to get an exclusive

up-close look at a century's worth of dresses ranging from 1810 to 1914.

Director Joni Blackman highlighted the details of the dresses and the periods they were from. White cotton gloves were provided for those in the audience desiring to touch or hold an item. Volunteers including two Fenton Trustees carried dresses through the room for the audience to see while six dressed mannequins graced the front of the room. The dresses on display have been left in the drawing room through the summer for our visitors to admire. Please come in for a visit this summer, before our well-dressed "ladies" retire from the drawing room!



Now is the time to volunteer at the Fenton!! The Fenton History Center is looking for a variety of volunteers; we need help in the research center, collections and education departments and of course, the Hall Home project. If you enjoy research and genealogy please consider becoming a regular volunteer here at the Fenton. Assisting people with their family searches or helping staff members are just a couple of the possibilities. Do you enjoy working with artifacts or helping young historians understand our local stories? Or if making the Hall Home property a showcase for our Center interests you, call us at 664-6256. Thank you very much and we look forward to hearing from you. Make a difference!

New in the Gift Shop.....

We have added two new books to our bookshelves in the Gift Shop in the last month. We now carry the Robert H. Jackson biography by Gail Jarrow courtesy of the Jackson Center. It has several photographs that were reprinted from the Fenton collection.

A brand new book by a Kennedy resident, "Ed" Edwards is also waiting for you to read! It's entitled "**Show Biz Memories**". Mr. Edwards details his life as a Circus clown. He performed many times here in Chautauqua County, including Celoron Park.

Fenton photos were used in this book as well.

You'll be happy to hear that the Arcadia Publishing edition about **Jamestown** by Kathleen Crocker and Jane Currie is once again available. They go fast, please stop in and grab a copy while they're here!

The following businesses have chosen to help preserve and collect the Jamestown area's history: Habiterra Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Jamestown Board of Public Utilities, Harrington Sandberg Architecture and Engineering, Hartley GM Honda, Short & Smith Insurance, The Legend Group, The Lind Funeral Home, JAMA, Slone-Melhuish, Vullo's Restaurant, Bureau Veritas Certification, C.O.I.'s Safe House, South Hills Country Club, Moran's Floor Store, Frank A. Zimba, M.D., Allied Alarm Services, Inc., Lakeshore Savings Bank, Streetwise Creative, and Hitchcock Signs.

Please add them to your list of preferred businesses!

“Cool Off!”: A Brief History of the Fan

During the hot summer months we are all probably thinking of air conditioners and electric fans to cool things down. Outside of collectors, few of us give a thought to the individual fans that preceded these electrical wonders. Nevertheless, the first person on earth who felt too hot picked up a palm leaf to “agitate the air” and cooled him or herself. In hot climates fans must always have been invaluable to create a breeze and keep flies away.

The word ‘fan’ comes from the Latin *vannus* which means an apparatus for blowing the chaff from the grain. Fans existed in China, India, Rome, Greece and Egypt from about the eleventh century BC. They were used in these countries for both ceremonial and practical purposes. These were all rigid fans. A Japanese gentleman from the Tamba province near Kyoto is credited with inventing a folding fan mount in the reign of the Emperor Tanji, 668 – 672 AD. One night a bat flew into the gentleman’s house, flew too near the lamp and scorched its wings. As the gentleman picked it up, and saw its wings open out, he thought of having a fan with a folding mount. It was a distinct advantage over rigid fans because it could be carried in a cloth case, suspended from the belt or inserted in the sleeve, or the back of the neck, or even in the boot.

The first fans were imported into Europe in the 1500’s, and for the next century and a half were considered the toys of the European courts. From the seventeenth century, until electric fans in the early to mid 20th century, they were considered fashionable accessories for ladies, and they were and are collectible.

The two fans shown here are from the collection of Jeannette Fenton Gilbert. The ivory “brise” fan is dated circa 1775 – 1800. A brise’ fan is one without a ‘leaf’- and is made of only the ‘sticks’.



They are held together with a fine silk ribbon. This fan has pierced ivory sticks, with a filigree of roses and birds. It most likely originated in China. The folding fan shown has pierced ivory guards (the end pieces) and sticks and a silk satin leaf. Notice the painted flowers form the initials “J F”. There are also flowers painted on the other side of the fan.

Jeanette, or her sister Josephine, may have painted this fan and others in the collection. There are several with the initials “J F” painted on them, and fan painting, like china painting, was approved as an amateur hobby during the Victorian era.

A great variety of materials were used to make fans. Vellum, parchment, silk, feathers, gilding, painting, embroidery, lace, sparkling gems and spangles, ivory, whalebone and wooden sticks, mother-of-pearl, tortoiseshell and horn, among others.

The role of fans in fashion altered as women’s roles changed. After World War I, only three types of fans were produced in any quantity, feather fans that were popular in the 1920’s, art fans, which were roughly comparable to our designer accessories, and advertising fans. Fans were from a time when folks sat on their front porches, to keep cool and visit with their neighbors. Air conditioning has changed a lot of things.

-Phoebe Forbes, Textile Curator

Ginseng Collecting

A man brought in a 1926 penny post card the other day and left it for me. He had found it lying in the driveway, perhaps blown there from someone’s trash. The card is an early form of direct mail advertising. It is addressed to Charles Fardink in Clymer from a wholesaler in New York City. It is soliciting wild ginseng.

Ginseng collecting may be the oldest continuously practiced economic activity in Chautauqua County. Ginseng, *Panax quinquefolia*, is an herb native to eastern American woodlands. There are few mentions of ginseng hunting in the old histories, but the practice was well established in rural areas of New England and Pennsylvania where our earliest pioneers came from. It was initiated by the Jesuits in Canada in the early 1700’s and quickly spread throughout the colonies. It was ideally suited for a supplemental income source for the cash starved settlers surrounded by forest.

The Jesuits had learned of the high value the Chinese placed on a closely related plant species they used as herbal medicine. Indians, including the Iroquois, made some use of it themselves, but were quick to learn its value as a trade item. Early generations of white Americans made little or no use of it. It was only with the Baby Boomers and New Agers of the ‘60’s and 70’s that Americans began using ginseng to any extent. Paradoxically American retail products tended to feature Korean ginseng. There has been relatively little scientific investigation of the alleged benefits of ginseng use. Results have been equivocal and inconsistent. The Chinese faith in its healthful effects results not from experience, but from the resemblance of the root to a man’s form and the fact that ginseng lives the longest of any herb, over 182 years in one known instance.

Ginseng, con't.

Like many rural men of the mid 20th century, my father hunted ginseng for recreation and a little extra money. The card offers "\$19.25 to \$18.50 per pound" for wild ginseng. I can remember the price rising from that neighborhood to double that while my father was alive. It brought 52 cents a pound in 1858, \$7.50 in 1913 and as much as \$1,000 today after wild fluctuations in the last few years mostly resulting from political and regulatory factors. Wild ginseng is rare today. The much less costly cultivated product largely satisfies the market.

In a remarkably succinct and sophisticated little paragraph, the card discusses the turmoil in China and implies something about its potential influence on the ginseng trade, then advises the recipient "not to hold your Ginseng and ship it to us at once." Today wild ginseng is entangled in a mountain of state and federal environmental and trade laws that have long since taken all the fun out of hunting. I don't know of anyone who still regularly collects it.

One other local sidelight, George Stratton, credited with developing the techniques for growing ginseng under cultivation, died in Busti, January 31, 1908 while visiting friends. Those friends and others in that area did grow ginseng for several generations.

So this unprepossessing scrap from someone's trash is a curious treasure for those who know, tying together many strains of past and present, personal and general, near and far.

-Norman Carlson, Collections Manager

Photographs..... Cornell E. Seaburg Photo Album

Our featured photo is from the snapshot album prepared by Cornell E. Seaburg from 1968-1971. This photo is of Jamestown's old City Hall and the Fire Department taken from Spring Street looking north from Second Street. Mr. Seaburg's purpose in compiling this album was to show downtown Jamestown as it was just before urban development began.

Jamestown native Cornell Seaburg was born in 1912, served in World War II and worked at his family's business, the Seaburg Furniture Manufacturing Company. He was also the treasurer of Dawson Metal prior to his retirement in 1977. He belonged to many of Jamestown's social organizations including the Fenton Historical Society where he served as vice president. He donated his album to the Fenton History Center in 1984, just two years before his death. His stepfather, Curth Swanson, assisted him digging into the history of many of the downtown buildings.

There have been requests for these photos from a wide variety of interests. Architects, historians, and new property owners have all used the album to determine the stories and appearances of the buildings prior to Urban Renewal. Other people have requested copies of the photos that show the movie theaters, hotels, churches, manufacturing companies, Jamestown High School and many other buildings in Brooklyn Square.

The album very well organized. Each page (62 total) has 4 snapshots of connecting streets to make a city block – north, south, east, and west. Every building is identified on each street with its business name and street number including a note where the photo was taken.

Given the amount of use the album has received and our mission to save it for future generations, one of our volunteers, Julie Muckinhaupt, scanned the album so future use will not cause further deterioration of the album. Inspired by the album, a Fenton member has taken up the huge task of recording the ongoing demolition of city buildings and additional new structures in Jamestown. This is a great service to the Fenton and our city. It will record the changing face of our city for future generations.

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-Sylvia Lobb, Photograph Archivist

The Summer Exhibits: Satan's Bowl of Death & In the Good Ole Summertime
Stop in and learn about two interesting times in our local history.

Old-Fashion Day

Saturday, August 9, 2008

9 AM to 3 PM

9th N.Y. Volunteers Cavalry
Civil War Camp
Shooting Demos
Experience Camp Life

Presentation of the Colors at 11:00 AM

Old Time Crafts

Crafts & Games for Children
Old Fashion Dress-Up Contest

Mechanical Antiques

Appraisals

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Antiques & Collectibles

Modern Crafters
Local Collections

Log Hewing



Food

Kettle Corn
Old Fashion Lemonade

Free Admission to
The Fenton Museum

Summer Exhibits:
In the Good Ole Summertime
Satan's Bowl of Death

Gift Shop Open



For more information: www.fentonhistorycenter.org

Fenton History Center
Museum & Research Center
67 Washington St.
Jamestown, New York 14701

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U.S. Postage
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Jamestown, New York

Have you sent in your renewal?

If you have misplaced your renewal, please use the form below to show your support for collecting, preserving and teaching **our** local history.

I am a new renewing member.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Governor's Circle | \$1,000+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Senator's Circle | \$500-999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Friend of Fenton | \$200-499 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Supporting | \$100-199 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Family | \$50-99 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Individual | \$30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Senior | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Student | \$15 |

To contribute by credit or debit card, complete the information below and send with your membership card.

\$ _____ membership amount VISA MasterCard

Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date _____

Cardholder's Name: _____