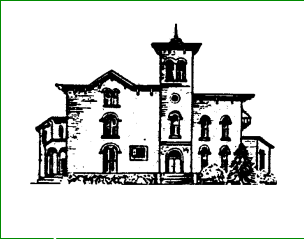


Second Quarter  
2006

“Real People  
Making History”



FENTON HISTORY CENTER- MUSEUM & LIBRARY  
**FENTON FOCUS**

## The Lost Battalion finds a home...

A local resident brought the photograph, shown on page two, into the Fenton Museum. It is the 1929 reunion of the 77<sup>th</sup> Division; also known as the Lost Battalion, at the Hotel Statler in Buffalo. Luckily I had just returned from a seminar in Washington, D.C. and had met a historian who represented the National Guard Museums in our 50 states. He told me about the New York National Guard Museum

in Saratoga Springs, which is also the home of the NY Military Museum. I spoke to the Director of the Museum and found out they had just opened an expanded World War I exhibit with a special exhibit on the Lost Battalion. Needless to say the photograph and all of its information was sent to the NY Military Museum where it is teaching visitors every day. This story is a wonderful illustration

of the right artifacts and archival materials finding their way to their rightful place. The picture will be researched, and the names of the men will be forever linked to their image. Their families will be able to see their ancestors and the information will remain intact. This is the job  
*Cont. on pg. 2*



## Midway Park

Midway Park on Chautauqua Lake, New York-circa 1920. A view of the bathing beach, toboggan slide, bathhouse, food concessions and 2nd floor open air Roller Rink Pavilion-built in 1913. When Midway Park first opened in 1898 William McKinley was president, very few automobiles were in use, and horse drawn carriages were still the favorite means of

transportation. At that time Midway Park was a picnic ground on 17 acres of land, much of it a wooded area. Opening day, July 12, 1898, provided bathing and boating adjacent to the picnic area as well as dancing

in the dance hall, basketball, tennis, and croquet. These were the lively attractions of the era.  
*Cont. on pg. 6*



*Enlargement on pg 6*

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## Here's a Win –Win Proposition...

### Planned Giving to keep the Fenton working well into the 21st Century.

The Fenton is teaming up with the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation to offer planned giving opportunities for our members and friends. Planning for the Fenton's future is a task we can undertake now. A few of the options are to add the Fenton to your will, and donate gifts of securities, life insurance or property. Another option, the Gift Annuity, makes it possible for you to receive high returns on an asset for the rest of your life and then results in a charitable contribution to the Fenton History Center. Former Board of Trustee member J. Mathews Hagberg is chairing the Planned Giving program here at the Fenton. If you have questions or just want to talk about the possibilities of helping secure the Fenton's future, please do not hesitate to call Joni Blackman, Director at 664-6256.

## Publications Committee...

The Publications Committee was restarted with a great project this past quarter. The members of the committee are Paul Leone, Chairperson, Traci Langworthy, Kathy Barber, Sam Genco, Karen Livsey and Clarence "Claire" Carlson. They are working on Claire's project "History in Wood: the Furniture Industry in Jamestown NY 1815-1930" The book is a much needed reference tool as well as a fascinating story of the growth of the hardwood furniture industry in Jamestown. If you have information about the topic, please feel free to contact any of the committee members or call the Fenton at 664-6256. It will be sometime before the finished product is ready for sale. Stay tuned.

## The Civil War and Chautauqua County – Camp Brown for Kids

Camp Brown, our area's civil war boot camp, will be reinstated as a summer camp experience for middle school age historians. The camp will be a great time to learn what it was like to be a soldier in 1862. Southwestern Middle School Social Studies teacher Dan Lewis will be bringing the Civil

War time and the local perspective to life for our students. Camp Brown will run July 10-14 from 10 am to 3 pm. The cost is only \$50 per child. Space is limited to 16 children. Call 664-6256 to register today.

## The Lost Battalion finds a home... Cont.

and joy of museums. Museums matter in everyone's daily life. They provide the cultural framework to build up our quality of life. The grandfather that connects to his grandchild through visiting automobile and train museums can launch that child's future as an engineer, designer, historian or educator. Everyone needs to cultivate interests and hobbies to grow. In this day of fast moving entertainment and electronic everything, I encourage you to pass on your interest in local history to others. Hope to see you and your protégé at the museum and library soon.

*-Joni Blackman, Director*



## Memberships...

Growing the Fenton History Center family one membership at a time... Our membership's support in giving of their time, knowledge and funding is very important to the Fenton staff and Trustees. As Chair of the Membership Committee I am asking each Fenton member to rise to the challenge of bringing in at least one new membership to the Fenton History Center. As a current member, you can tell your friends and family about our wonderful museum and library, our interesting programs for children, and our ongoing conservation work for our hometown. I find the best way to show prospective members our local history is to bring them to the museum and library, and then they want to be involved too. We are open 6 days every week from 10-4 Monday through Saturday with additional hours on Monday evenings until 9 PM. Bring your friends and family in and show them your local history museum. When your prospective members become new members, their name and your name will be put into a drawing to give away the new "Jamestown" book in the gift shop. Hope to see you soon!

*-Julie Hull, Board President  
Membership Com.. Chair*

## A New Business Venture...

The Fenton History Center is embarking on a new business venture to build its future while saving and sharing Jamestown's past. The new Business Membership program is in full swing. Business leaders are vital to the past and future of our city. Businesses are encouraged to help support their local school's field trips to the Fenton, help us keep up

with repairs on the 1863 mansion and help maintain the collections for future generations of Jamestown citizens. Businesses receive many solicitations – but this is our city, our history and our future. There are many marketing and networking benefits to becoming a Fenton Business partner. For more information visit our website at [www.fentonhistorycenter.org](http://www.fentonhistorycenter.org) or call us at 664-6256.

## Summer Day Camps...

Become History SLEUTHS! Boys and girls, grades 1-3 and 4-6 have a number of exciting opportunities to "unearth" some fun at the Fenton History Center this summer.

Join the Jr. Historians and History Club for summer fun in August. Learn how artifacts for the Fenton Museum's summer exhibit, "Treasures from The River: North and South", were recovered from the Chadakoin River in Jamestown and the St. John's River in Jacksonville, Florida. Find out what archeologist's do after they find the artifacts. Follow clues to Hidden "treasure" on the Fenton Center's

grounds. History Club will tour the Lakeview Cemetery to find the tombstones of the men and women we learn about in our Local Lore program, as well as other important people in Jamestown's past! Join our Master Sleuth, Sabrina Blanco, for our history day camps this summer:

### **Jr. Historians Grades 1-3**

Session I  
July 30 - August 4  
9 am to 12 noon

Session II  
August 7 - 11  
9 am to 12 noon



**History Club  
Grades 4-6**  
Session III  
August 14- 18  
9 am to 12 noon

Session IV  
August 14- 18  
1 to 4 pm.

The cost is only \$50 per week and scholarships are available. Call 664-6256 and ask for Fran Fair, Edu. Director.

## Library...

### Genealogy 101 or how to begin searching for and through your family tree.

What is the right or accepted way to write a maiden name? Refer to a birth, marriage and death date? How do you find the right John Johnson or one of your ancestors whose name was changed when they arrived in America?

All these and other questions will be answered in the Fenton's new Genealogy 101 and 102 classes. More information will be available as we get closer to September. Class sizes will be limited, due to our limited space. The classes will be free to members.

### Mr. Lincoln's War – the Local Connection

The Fenton History Center is launching a local history Civil War website within the next few weeks. The website tells the personal stories of three local soldiers. The soldier's letters home to their loved ones are the basis of the website that also teaches about Governor Fenton and President Abraham Lincoln's role and their connections to our Chautauqua County soldiers. The website was researched and built by Barb Cessna, Joel Babcock and Doug Hoisington. It is a great tool for understanding the great job our ancestors carried out for our country.

### "A Clerical Survey, a Source of Amusement Then and Now"...

Stop in and see the delightful article "A Clerical Survey, a Source of Amusement Then and Now (or 1803 and 2003)" written by Karen Livsey, and published in the September 2005 issue of the Swedish American Genealogist. What would normally be straight forward research about

family records from the Mangskog, Varmland parish turned into an amusing research project because the digitized record book had a number of children's scribbling and an older child's drawings throughout the records. There are young artist's versions of the church, the

pastor and his wife, a horse and many "people" with only a head and two legs. The author took some time to research the pastor of the time and his artistic children. Please stop in and read the article – you'll be glad you did.

## Your Roots are Showing...

Attention All Swedish Genealogists! At the Fenton History Center's Gift Shop we have an excellent resource for you. Your Swedish Roots: A Step by Step Handbook by Per Clemensson & Kjell Andersson is now available at The Museum Shop. This book helps you start your search into who your ancestors were, why they left their home, and finding out if you have any relatives that live in Sweden today. Clues to your family history are made more evident by searching the right places and asking the right questions. This

book helps you to make the most out of the sources available to you at home. In your search, you may come across documents that are written in Swedish and not convenient for retrieving the information you need. This book translates basic documents and teaches you how to identify familiar words on other official papers, like ship manifests, to find out where your family came from, which route they took to get here, and when they came. With a dictionary in the back that translates Swedish words that are commonly found in church books, you are sure to easily trace your family's Swedish roots. Taking you from the photo album in your living room to a graveyard in Gotland, Sweden Your Swedish Roots is a tremendous resource that every Swedish Genealogist should have. Stop by The Museum Shop today to get your copy! Hardcover, 222 pages only \$29.00 (\$26.10 for Museum Members).

*-Johanna Bowen  
Gift Shop Manager*

## Textiles...

One of the artifacts in the textile collection at the Fenton History Center was likely left in the building when it was used by various veterans' groups as a meeting place. It is a silk twill weave shawl in a red, ecru and tan plaid pattern. It measures 72 inches by 54 inches, with a five inch fringe on two ends.

There was a handwritten note attached to the shawl with the following:

"This shawl was made in Italy and presented to Nellie Grant. Her father, President U.S. Grant, presented it to Major William McKinley who later gave it to a friend Colonel Albert Price. In time, Mrs. Price gave it to Mrs. Nettie Moore Mosley. On September 7, 1919, Mrs Mosely presented the shawl to James M. Brown Women's Relief Corps, # 73, asking that it be preserved with their historical relics."

Shawls were one of the most widely worn items of clothing during the eighteenth century, and that popularity continued in the nineteenth century as well. During the 1860's it was the only practical wrap that could be worn over the voluminous, hoop supported, skirts. Besides paisley shawls, which were the ultimate in style, plaids were a very popular pattern. Queen Victoria had a particular liking for tartan, and she was a style-setter during her entire reign.

U.S. Grant was president from 1869 to 1877. His daughter Nellie (Ellen Wrenshall Grant) was born in 1855 in Wish-ton-wish, Missouri on July 4, 1855. She first married Algernon

Sartoris on May 21, 1874, in the White House. He died sixteen years later, and she married second Frank Hatch Jones in 1912. She died in Chicago in 1922, and is buried in Springfield, Illinois, in the same cemetery as is Abraham Lincoln.

The James M. Brown Women's Relief Corp # 73, in Jamestown was the ladies auxiliary to the James M. Brown Post, GAR – veterans of the Union Army during the Civil War.

Colonel James M. Brown was commander of the 100th Regiment of New York State Volunteers. He joined the army at age 35 on May, 28, 1861 and was made a captain of the 72nd New York Infantry. He was promoted to Colonel of the 100th Infantry on January 10, 1862. He was killed in action at Seven Pines, Virginia on May 31, 1862. He also served in the Mexican War as an assistant surgeon.

Jamestown's Fenton Mansion was the last home of the GAR.

*-Phoebe Forbes, Textile Curator*

### Thank you In-kind Donations

**Gail Sandy, Falconer Village  
Pharmacy donation of 2  
mannequins  
Axiom Office Imaging  
The Coffee Exchange  
Quality Markets**

## Collections...

In April we received three jackets, two pairs of trousers, and a cap and tie for a uniform for the Townsend Club band in Falconer in the mid 1930's, the "heart of the Great Depression." The donor is Ed Turner who for many years was the band leader and a teacher at Southwestern Central School. He and his younger brother, Robert, and their father were members of the band.

Dr. Francis Townsend in California in 1934 came up with a suggestion to alleviate or cure the Depression. Have the federal government give each citizen over age 60 \$200 a month to spend. This was to be financed by a national sales tax. The idea proved highly popular. A national organization and local clubs formed – one in Jamestown and one in Falconer. The men in the Falconer group formed a band. They got their uniforms from the firm that supplied service stations with their employee's uniforms in those days.

In 1936, the local band was the official band for a Townsend Plan convention in Cleveland. They had pictures of themselves made up in advance to sell.

The conductor, Charles Metcalf, was paid for a short time to do that job by one of the New Deal government agencies.

One time Dr. Townsend, himself, came to Falconer, and the band's drummer, Art Myers, got to carry his luggage.

The organization and popular movement ultimately fizzled, but it was the grandfather of Social Security, instituted in 1935.

*-Norman Carlson, Collections Mgr.*

# Midway Park 1913... Cont.

Transportation to Midway Park and back to the villages and Jamestown along the lake was provided on the Jamestown and Lake Erie Railroad for \$.20 and \$.25. The trolley later changed to the Jamestown Westfield and North Western Railroad Company. Steamboat travel was also popular, but it took longer. A favorite way for picnickers to travel to Midway Park was to ride a steamboat to the Park and take the JW & NW home at the end of the day.

The first major amusement park ride came to Midway in 1926. The Jack Rabbit roller coaster was built with lots of curves.

Adventurous riders said it was a "wild ride" on the down-lakeside of the park. Many fun rides, including the 36-foot merry-go-round were added soon after the roller and a free beach as well as a beautiful picnic grove over looking Chautauqua Lake. Roller-skating continues in the open-air rink. The Heritage Tour offers a behind the scenes look at the historic facility. Many new educational programs are



offered at the park plus high tech electronic games in the arcade and a free laser light show.

Midway Park has had a number of owners throughout the years and expanded to a 40-acre park. It was purchased on March 1, 1651 by the Walsh family and has remained in their ownership until this year. At this time we don't know

what the future of Midway Park will be, but we hope that it will continue to serve the young and the young at heart.

*-Sylvia Lobb,  
Registrar*

# Special Events at the Fenton are big! ...

The Fenton History Center has played host to two Birthday parties and a Bridal shower already this year!

Ben's Civil War theme party was a hit! His friends enjoyed seeing him dressed in a uniform!! Holly and her friends came all dressed up!

With more parties already being planned for the warmer months, be sure to call for available dates for your special

event. We can make any Birthday ,Bridal or Baby shower a special day!



*Happy Birthday  
Ben and Holly!!*

*Thanks for  
celebrating with  
us!!!*

## Underground Railroad Heritage Trail Local Interpretive Exhibit ...

The Fenton History Center's Underground Railroad Heritage Trail Local Interpretive Exhibit is in the planning stages. The need for the exhibit is based on the many incorrect stories about the locations throughout our area of Underground Railroad stations. One such example involves the grand "house on the hill" located near the Newton Ave. intersection with Lakeview Ave. The home burned in 1942. The story goes that the house was a station stop and that a passage from the cellar of the residence extended west under the street. Fugitive slaves escaped through the passage when officers searched for them. The myth vanishes when a simple fact is revealed: the house was built in 1874 by attorney William N. Newton – 9 years



*Randall Sweeney, Chaut. Region Community Foundation Executive Director, and Joni Blackman*

reach out across the entire county. The Fenton recently received awards from the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation and the Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation for the design, production and marketing of the traveling exhibit. Thank you to the area community foundations for taking a strong interest in the education of their citizens.

after the Civil War and the abolishment of slavery. More myths will be cleared up as the exhibit installation time approaches. The UGRR local interpretive exhibit has a traveling exhibit component that will



*"the house on the hill", Lakeview Ave.*

## New Digital Cameras...



*Norman Carlson, Collections Manager, Randall Sweeney, Community Foundation Executive Director, and Joni Blackman, Director*

Norman Carlson, Collections Manager, Randall Sweeney, Community Foundation Executive Director, and Joni Blackman, Fenton History Center Director are looking at two digital cameras the Fenton History

Center purchased with funds from a Field of Interest grant from the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation. The cameras will be used in the Collections and Administration Departments. The Collections Department camera will be used to record images of donated artifacts, textiles and

archival materials. The Administration camera will be used to record activities and events at the museum and library."

Fenton History Center- Museum &  
Library  
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Jamestown, New York  
14701

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## Mother's Day tea at the Fenton History Center

Call the Fenton History Center and make reservations to treat mom  
to an authentic Victorian Tea in the Formal drawing room of  
Governor Fenton's 1863 mansion.

**Saturday May 13**

10:00 am and 1:00 pm

\$10.00 for adults

\$5.00 for children

Members are free

For reservations 664-6256

*Surprise mom  
with a  
Mother's Day  
Memory to last  
a life time!*