



FENTON
HISTORY CENTER
museum and research center

Second Quarter
2008

FENTON FOCUS

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The Fenton Campus and Programming are Expanding
A Letter from the President

Dear Fenton Members & Friends,

At the 2008 annual meeting I was privileged to be chosen as the new president of the Fenton History Center Board of Trustees. I feel that this is a very important position to fill especially as the Fenton moves in the direction of expansion and providing more services to the community of Jamestown and Chautauqua County.

For the many of you who I have not yet met I would like to provide a little bit of information about myself. My wife, Megan and I live in Jamestown with our two daughters, Lilyan and Meredith. I am a 7th grade US history teacher at Chautauqua Lake Central School in Mayville, NY and hold a bachelor's degree in history from Penn State University and a master's degree in history education from SUNY Fredonia. Although I am not a native of Jamestown, I have only lived in the city for 8 years; I grew up in Russell, Pennsylvania and spent much time Chautauqua County. I really believe that this city is moving in the right direction and I see the Fenton as a part of this positive move. This city has an incredible past and I see the future as being positive.

I know that in the next few years much is going to be happening with the Fenton History Center. There is movement to purchase the house next to the Fenton and moving a lot of our operations into that facility. This will allow us to renovate the Fenton into a true Victorian mansion and put more of our vast collection on display. We will be letting you know how you can help with the expansion plans. We are also working on new educational programs for adults and young people. We established the Fenton Institute this year and hope that many of you have been able to take advantage of these courses. We must learn and understand our past in order to properly build our future. The education department of the Fenton has been very successful in taking programs into schools.



The Hall Memorial Home at 73 Forest Ave.
Soon to be part of the Fenton campus.

We would like to see this increase, but we are pleased with what is happening. The work being done by schools in our area on local history is very encouraging and interesting. Persell Middle School is doing much research on the Lost Neighborhood of Brooklyn Square. I see great things happening in the preservation of our local history and I am very excited to be a part of it.

One area that we are working to see improvement is in our membership roles. Members are what keep our organization going. Not only do they provide much of the financial base for the center, they are also needed to run the many programs and events that so many people in our community enjoy. If you know people who are interested in history and are not members suggest to them that they should join and if you are a member please considering becoming more involved. We really need your help in promoting the great things that the Fenton is doing. I look forward to meeting and seeing many of you at our yearly events. Please mark your calendars and try to attend as many of these activities as you can.

I am really looking forward to serving as the president of the board of trustees and being involved in making the Fenton History Center an even better place in this community.

Sincerely,
Michael Rohlin
President, Board of Trustees

History Detectives and Camp Brown Summer Camps

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 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!).

IN THE GOOD OLE SUMMER TIME :

JR. HISTORY DETECTIVES
for students entering Grades 1-3
August 4-8 9 a.m. to noon.

Jr. History Detectives will spend Friday morning at Midway State Park for a tour, old time games, and fun!

Cost is \$50.



436 Visitors in One Day!

The 2007 – 2008 holiday exhibit, "Deck the Halls" opened to the public on Friday, November 23, 2007. The exhibit centered on the Victorian practice of bringing the outside in. The Fenton Mansion was decked out with fresh greens, flowers, herbs and pinecones. The Fenton's tradition of showing a wide variety of decorated trees; celebrations and holiday traditions from our immigrant populations were also included in the exhibit. Approximately 1,200 visitors found the time in their busy holiday season to see the beautiful and educational exhibit. The largest daily turnout was the last day, January 19th, which coincided with the annual "Doors Open Jamestown" event. On that Saturday, we had 436 people come through the museum to experience the holiday exhibit! Thank you to our great team of volunteers for installing a wonderful showpiece (and for taking it down too). A special thank you to our sponsors who made the exhibit possible: **Stormer Mechanical Systems, The Yaggie Family, JAMA, and Jamestown Business College.**

IN THE GOOD OLE SUMMERTIME :

HISTORY DETECTIVES
For students entering Grades 4-6
August 18-22 1-4 p.m.

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!) Cost is \$50.



CAMP BROWN

A CALL TO ARMS.....
LIFE AS A CIVIL WAR RECRUIT
Camp Brown recruits must be in grades 4-6.
July 21-25

Muster in at Fenton History Center on Monday, July 21, to spend the week as a 112th Regiment recruit. Practice drills, learn about a soldier's equipment and life in Camp Brown. This year we'll also be making our own hardtack and discovering what recruits did with their leisure time in camp.

Highlights of the week will be visits by two Civil War re-enactors: Todd Langworthy, teacher and historian, of Fredonia will join us as First Lt. Alonzo Cushing of the 4th U.S. Light Artillery and Joe Bolivard of Forestville will arrive as a Civil War surgeon.

Troops gather daily from 1-4 p.m.
Cost is \$50 plus \$15 (to cover equipment issued to each recruit). Register early as space is limited.

Call 664-6256 or visit www.fentonhistorycenter.org for more information and to register.

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: _____

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

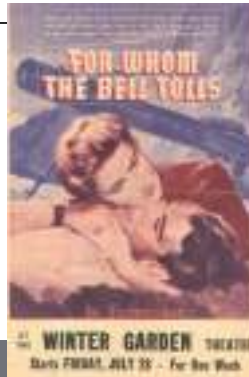
\$ _____ membership amount VISA M C

Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date _____

Cardholder's Name: _____

Cardholder's Signature: _____

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| <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 | \$60 - \$99 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior | \$30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$15 |



Collections...

The more you know about history, the more interesting it all becomes. Things tie together and you see life as a grand, four-dimensional panorama, the small and the large, the personal and the national, wondrously entangled.

Recently a donor came in with the records of the Remocwen Club, which she had gone to some effort to collect from various former officers and their families. The club disbanded in 2006 after serving a purpose in Jamestown for over 65 years. A few of the items in the collection were the minute books, printed yearbooks and the club's official embossing stamp. The final few years of minutes are missing, carelessly discarded by a third generation.

"It was hard to fit in if you moved to Jamestown and weren't Swedish or Italian," the donor said. The Newcomers Club welcomed people their first two years, but they could remain in the Remocwen Club the rest of their life. Many a story could be told of these women who arrived in Jamestown, perhaps as war brides after World War II, or when their husbands came to Jamestown for employment.

We also received a packet containing several pilot and master's licenses for Peter Johnson at the turn of the 20th century. These were for Chautauqua Lake steamboat navigation and they came with some excellent steamboat photos not previously in our collection.

A few of the other interesting items recently accessioned include:

- a 1944 Wintergarden Theater movie advertisement,
- two WW II Marine Corps uniforms,
- an 1866 Buffalo and Oil Creek Railroad stock certificate,
- a 1931 Saturday Evening Post ad featuring the Jamestown furniture industry,
- a souvenir photo of the 1997 J. H. S. homecoming queen (a former Fenton employee) including the jumper she is wearing in the photo,
- 1940's advertisement from Jamestown's Rollarena skating rink,
- a DVD of the Roll-O-Bowl race track near Panama in 1957,
- a formal corporate photo Christmas card of the Norquist Brothers.

- Norman P. Carlson, Collections Manager

Fenton Institute News:



After two very successful adult sessions led by Heidi Bamford (left) and Pam Brown the third session – a discussion about the beginnings of our **County** in celebration of it's upcoming **Bicentennial** – will take place **Saturday, July 19th** from noon to 2 pm at the Jackson Center. County Historian Michelle Henry and others will tell the story of the earliest years in our County's history. It should be very interesting – did you know the Bicentennial stretches from 2008 to 2011? Come to the talk and find out why. The sessions are **free** to members at certain membership levels. Call to reserve your spot! 664-6256

Heidi Bamford and Session I of the Fenton Institute program

Memorials

In Memory of:

Shannon A. Carroll-Summer by Elsie Reynolds

Mary T. Doolittle by Elsie Reynolds

Frank O. Anderson by Elsie Reynolds

Wayne Herrick by Mat and Lane Hagberg, Mr. & Mrs. James W.

Anderson, Burt Anderson, Robert S. Bargar, Almet N.

Broadhead, Sherwood S. Cadwell, Russell E. Diethrick, Jr.,

Charles H. Price, Theodore Ricketts, John Bauer, Miles

Lasser, Kenneth Strickler, & Elsie Reynolds

Betty Baker Nelau by Elsie Reynolds

W. Park Catchpole by Elsie Reynolds

Audrey Bartholomew by Elsie Reynolds

Sam Olson by Linda and Nick Manno, Frank and Mary Walzer,

Robert and Anne Plyler, John and Lisa Yaggie, Russell and

June Diethrick, Jr., The Families of Habitterra, Bob and

Priscilla Kenyon, Lynda and Dana Albert, John and Joni

Blackman

Gladys Hlosta by Elizabeth Wendt, Barbara Cessna

Howard TeCulver by Teresa Anderson

Images... R. H. Jackson

The Fenton Museum has just received two complimentary copies of a very important book from the Boyds Mills Press entitled, "Robert H. Jackson, New Deal Lawyer, Supreme Court Justice, Nuremberg Prosecutor", a biography by Gail Jarrow. Last year we granted permission to Ms. Jarrow and Boyds Mills Press to use images for this project from photographs owned by the museum.

We first received a call from Ms. Jarrow on last June asking if we had any photos pertaining to the life of Robert Jackson. She was especially interested in any of family and friends as well as Frewsburg and Jamestown, NY at the time he was growing up. She also wanted photos of schools he attended, his teachers and activities he was involved in.

We began to gather these photos and added some others that might be of interest. Before any photograph can be sent to an author for review, we must be sure that they are owned by the museum and have no restrictions on them. When a donor brings in a photo, archival material, or an artifact, we ask them to sign a Deed of Gift, stating that in donating it to the museum, it is now owned by the museum. A few of our donors have restricted photos.

They ask that we never reproduce these photos for public use.

We can only use them for exhibits and viewing within the museum. We follow these restrictions implicitly.

As soon as we had the requested photographs chosen, photocopies were made and a packet of them sent to Gail at her home in Ithaca, NY. It would have been quicker to fax these to her but faxed photocopies aren't very clear when they reach their destination. She was very pleased with them and thought they would correspond with her script.

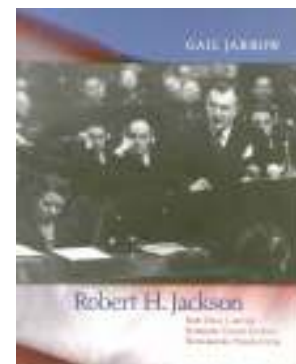
Ms. Jarrow was informed of the cost of each photo and had to decide whether to have the reproduced photos mailed to her, scanned to a CD, or an email with the photos sent as an attachment. Gail then made a request for additional photos that were sent to her. Soon after, we received her final list of nine photos for the book. Before these images could be scanned to a CD and sent, she needed to sign a very important document. Whenever we allow photographs to be reproduced for a book, to hang in a business or publicized in any way, an agreement must be signed that the museum will be given credit for ownership.

A Fenton First

A small, but dedicated group of Fenton supporters came together in February to raise some much needed general operating income for the Center. The group enjoyed a delicious catered dinner served by a number of the Board of Trustee members in the Mansion's elegant drawing room. Following the meal, Board Treasurer Martin Lydell brought the group up to date on the Fenton's Expansion plans and progress. Board President Mike Rohlin, his charming daughter Lilyan, and Director Joni Blackman then presented a short "Show, Guess and Tell" program using artifacts from the collection. Given all of the knowledge in the room it was surprising that no one knew all of the objects and their purposes. It was an enjoyable evening. Thank you to the Fenton Trustees who arranged and served the meal: Lisa F. Yaggie, Matthew Jones, and Julie Hull. Given the success of the event, another \$100-a-Plate "Evening at the Governor's Mansion" is planned for the fall.



Lisa Yaggie, Matt Jones, Lily Rohlin and Julie Hull serve while the guests enjoyed a fine meal and conversation.



Continued on page 5

We ask for a credit line in the book or on the photo stating: “*From the collection of the Fenton History Center, Jamestown, NY.*” After the document was signed and returned, the CD was sent to Ms. Jarrow in October 2007 and an invoice was sent to Boyds Mills Press.

As you can see this whole process took over three months but well worth the effort. To see our name and the Fenton’s photographs in print in Robert H. Jackson’s biography gives us a great deal of satisfaction.

Previous to this book, we provided photos to a book entitled, “New York’s Historic Armories: An Illustrated History” by Nancy L. Todd. Throughout the years we have contributed photographs to many books, magazine articles, and educational publications. Our photo requests from individuals and businesses average 75-85 per year. This revenue goes towards the upkeep of the museum.

We thank all of our donors for their additions to our collection and welcome photo donations of the people and places in Chautauqua County.

-*Sylvia Lobb, Registrar & Photo Archivist*

Threads... The Whimsy Pincushion

The item at hand is a “whimsy” made during the Victorian period from 1830 to about 1900. Victorian ladies of leisure in this period took great pride in creating these little beaded treasures “to bring a dash of color and luxury into their homes”. The purpose of this particular piece is likely that of a pincushion, though there is little evidence that it was used for that purpose.

It was a gift to the Fenton History Center by Marjorie Peterson in 1996. It was found in the home of her father, O. Gilbert Burgeson, so we might assume it was fashioned by one of her ancestors. The cushion is in the shape of a seven-pointed star, seven inches in diameter. It is covered with royal blue wool, and the backing is red wool. Clear white beads, sewn very close together, with white thread form decorative leaf shapes. There are loops of the beads around the perimeter, and it is most likely stuffed with sawdust, because it is very firm.

Glass beads were used as early as medieval times to decorate textiles, but their popularity came and went. In some dame schools beadwork had been taught in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In the 1830’s it became a craft of the middle classes. Beads were more durable than the wool yarn used in Berlinwork (needlepoint) and provided a shiny texture. At the end of the 19th century, beaded embroidery was ‘excessively’ popular again and beads were used everywhere – on bags and purses, necklaces and belts, making flowers, decorations for dresses, hats, and for fringes. Picture frames, cushion covers and lampshades, all were covered with beadwork.

It was relatively difficult to accomplish (beads could be easily broken through rough handling or by using too large a needle) and the finished product was very heavy. Generally therefore, at least in the home, beadwork was limited to small pieces like this pincushion.



Most of the beads were manufactured in Murano, Italy (near Venice) which prospered because of the demand for beads. Strong thread or very thin wire was used to attach beads to their backings. There were several methods used to attach them:

One bead and one stitch at a time.

Threading many beads onto a thread, and then stitching them down, one stitch at a time.

Tambour stitch embroidery – which is chain stitch using a hook, like a crochet hook, from the back of the work. The hook is punched through the backing fabric where the bead is wanted, and the bead, which is strung on a thread, held in the lower hand is looped down, one – or several - at a time. Crochet or knitting with beads strung on yarn.

During the last part of the nineteenth century, needlework of all kinds was very popular, and many women raised it from a domestic pastime to a highly regarded art form. We are lucky to still have these beautiful pieces.

Sources for this information:

Anchor Manual of Needlework – Interweave Press, 1958

The Ladies’ Worktable – Margaret Vincent, 1988

-*Phoebe Forbes, Textile Curator*

Check out the Fenton’s re-designed Website.

Thanks to a NYS Education Department Legislative Grant from Senator Cathy Young and Fenton Member Doug Hoisington – we are sharing more of our local history worldwide!

Visit www.fentonhistorycenter.org soon.

Fenton to the Rescue!

The Cattaraugus County Bank, located on Fairmount Avenue in Jamestown, held their grand opening celebration on April 16th, however their artwork did not arrive on time for the big day. Branch Manager Cheryl Federes called the Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce office in Jamestown for help. They directed her to us. The Fenton's staff selected three pieces of historical art to loan the bank for the one-day event. On loan for the day was a framed 1871 map of the city of Jamestown, a watercolor of the Chautauqua Belle by local artist, William Waite, and an enlargement of a photo of the marketplace in Brooklyn Square from 1866 (see below). The reviews were unanimous! Everyone, public and bank staff alike, were raving about how wonderful the art pieces looked on the bank's walls. If your business has a short term need, maybe the Fenton can lend a hand – exhibits, artwork and speakers. We are here for you!



Volunteer at the Fenton

The Fenton History Center is currently looking for volunteers. There are many opportunities here to suit your time and talents! You may choose to volunteer once a year, once a month or once a week. Assisting at special events and fund raisers, greeting visitors and working in the gift shop or helping staff members - are just a few of the possibilities. If you are interested in making a difference by helping here at the museum, call us at 664-6256.

Thank you very much and we look forward to hearing from you!

Thank You Volunteers

The Sheldon House on Lakeview Avenue was the setting of our annual Staff and Volunteer Appreciation Party. On January 24th, a snowy Thursday evening, we were warmed by food, coffee and friendship. The staff and volunteers is rather small but very loyal. Those who braved the weather were treated to a tasty array of hot and cold hors d'oeuvres along with coffee, tea and punch. The spread was all graciously prepared and arranged by Registrar, Sylvia Lobb, and assisted by Office Manager, Paula Bechmann. Director Joni Blackman thanked the group for their hard work and dedication to our mission to save and teach about our local history. The next volunteer appreciation event will be a summer picnic in the Fenton's park.



“This Week in Local History” and “Hometown History” Debut

Have you noticed the Fenton History Center name popping up in new place over the past year? In your email? In the Post-Journal? In your Internet browsing? Last April, Office Manager Paula Bechmann, began sending a weekly email to members and friends of the Fenton. “This Week in Local History” is short statement about an interesting event in our area taken from local historian and Fenton Collection Manager Norman Carlson's files. Attached to this information is a mini-newsletter of sorts, describing the upcoming events or important announcements. It's a great way to keep in touch with our members! We have received some important feedback from the emails that adds to our local history files to help with future research.

To keep in touch with the general public we instituted a weekly article in the Post Journal on Wednesdays entitled, “Hometown History”. It features the story, photo and other interesting information about an artifact, photograph or archive item. They are chosen from the Fenton's extensive collection. There has been a tremendous response to these articles. Readers have called us with questions, made corrections or answered our “call for help” in finding out more details about an artifact that we had little or incomplete information on. We are grateful to all of the faithful readers who have aided us and hope our articles have been helpful and informative. Perhaps enough so, that it warrants a visit to the Fenton and maybe even a new membership!

Lights, Camera, Action...The Fenton Mansion is in a movie

It was a chilly, March evening at dusk with a lightly falling snow when the Fenton Mansion made her debut as a film star. The independent film company, Wonderworker Pictures, came to Jamestown to film the Mansion for the upcoming *Nicholas of Myra: The Story of Saint Nicholas* movie. The film will premier in Buffalo this December. The Fenton Mansion resembles author Clement Clarke Moore's Chelsea home. Mr. Moore wrote the poem *A Visit from St. Nicholas*, in 1822. It was also known as *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*. The film tells the legend of Santa Claus from the stories that grew out of the life of the third century bishop, Nicholas of Myra, who was an anonymous gift-bearer by night.

"People didn't believe it was possible to do this in Western New York," said Gerald Hartke, the writer and director of the film. "And that made me want to try it even more." Although the motion picture is being produced in Western New York, Hartke is adamant that it will look as though it could have been shot at

locations around the globe. "At first it was not an easy sell to potential investors, but now that people are beginning to see the results, it doesn't seem so unbelievable." The film has been shot entirely in the Western NY area within a 200-mile radius of Buffalo. For example, a quarry in Lancaster, NY is the Middle Eastern desert and the Albright Knox Art Gallery represents the Greco-Roman time period. The cast is also from Western NY although a number of the cast is working in other areas of the country. They took time out to come home to film their roles.

Producer and actor Matthew Messler, and Mr. Hartke researched the buildings of WNY for the 1800s time period and found the Fenton Mansion suitable. Although the Fenton Mansion has a tower and the Chelsea home of Moore does not, at the right angle the right photo can be taken to make it look like the Chelsea home.

**For more information
about the movie visit
www.nicholasofmyra-movie.com.**



Jamestown's Arbor Day 2008

The Fenton History Center staff participated in Jamestown's Arbor Day event April 9 on the west front lawn of the High School. This was the centennial, 100 years to the day, of the planting of an elm tree by the J. H. S. class of 1911 which was dedicated to the then serving U. S. President, Theodore Roosevelt. On October 10, 1910, the class, by then seniors, successfully invited Roosevelt to come for a dedication ceremony and photo.

Between the construction of a new school in the 1930s, and the Dutch elm disease epidemic, the Roosevelt Elm did not survive the years. Jamestown's ever alert arborist, Doug Hoisington, after learning about the Roosevelt event from Fenton collections manager Norman Carlson, planned the special celebration with the J. H. S. class of 2011. Ryan Roehmholdt and Gannon Jackson, co-presidents of the class of 2011 spoke at the ceremony, as did Hoisington, Carlson, Mayor Teresi, and others. The Chautauqua Region Community Foundation and the Jamestown Schools Forest Board were also represented at the planting due to their interest in "growing" the City's tree population. The tree that was planted is a Frontier Elm, a variety developed to withstand Dutch elm disease.



Pres. T. Roosevelt by the original Elm tree, the newly planted tree, Norman Carlson and students from the Class of 2011.



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

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
Permit #659
Jamestown, New York

The Summer Exhibits: Members Preview
June 6, 5:00 to 7:30 PM

'IN THE GOOD OLE SUMMER TIME'

**Explore life around beautiful
Chautauqua Lake.**

What was your summer like as a worker at
one of the many lake hotels or as guest at
one?

*The stories of the golden era will be told
through vintage photographs, period flyers,
advertisements, artifacts and other pieces
of our history.*



From the collection of Jim Albro



SATAN'S BOWL OF DEATH

Announcing jalopy racing every Sunday afternoon!

**Come learn about and if you were part of it, tell us
your story about the exciting and very muddy racing
at the Busti track. There was mud wrestling,
dare devils and fun!**

Thanks to a great response from the community – this
exhibit is full of lively photographs and memories of this
early race track.

June 7 through September 30, 2008
**Sponsored by the Jamestown Area Chamber
of Commerce**