

The **Annual Business Meeting** of the Fenton History Center will be held at **7:00 pm on Thursday, February 4, 2015 at the Fenton Mansion**. All current members of the Fenton Historical Society are invited to attend. The membership will be electing Officers to serve the 2015-2016 term.



2015 Annual Report

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

January 15, 2016

“Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That’s why we call it the present”. This quote, attributed to Babatunde Olatunji, sums up some of what we are about at the Fenton History Center. Our primary mission involves the preservation of our history and making it available to those who wish to access it. Tomorrow, of course, becomes yesterday before you know it, and brings with it its own joys and challenges. The present is all about those of us living today-and what we can contribute to keeping history alive.

This year one significant project occurred that helped keep our history alive and preserved. The storage area for our larger acquisitions based in Falconer was being demolished and we had to find a new and suitable location for these wonderful items that would be safe and accessible. This major move could not have been accomplished without the help of financial support from the Sheldon Foundation and the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, JIT’s donation of their lifts and delivery fees, Mike Hudson of MCA Graphics and the great work of Rapid Moving Company.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Members and Friends,
What do the City of Jamestown steamboat engine, the Ahlstrom piano and a new carpet runner on the main stairs all have in common? You! Without your financial donations and volunteer hours the engine would not have been reset on new beams, the piano would not have been moved into the Mansion and the carpet runner and rods would not have been purchased and installed. These are examples of how the membership and friends of Jamestown’s local history stepped forward in 2015 to make good things happen in the research center, museum and collections. The research center volunteers have been

I must also note here the wonderful work of the many volunteers and staff that put in countless hours to see that this work was done quickly and safely.

I must also take a moment here to mention the wonderful Board I have the absolute privilege of working with. Not only do they volunteer their time for this, but also they give of their time to see projects through to completion. The Board has a wide variety of backgrounds and experience that contribute to the generation of new ideas and plans for the future and are more than willing to share their expertise, talents and abilities for the good of this organization.

The part of the quote-“That’s why we call it the present” -reminds me that all of the people that give their gifts of time, talent and financial support-are the real “Present” to this organization. To all of you who have supported us in the past-and will continue to do so in the future-I thank you on behalf of our wonderful organization and myself.

Sincerely,

Richard Lundquist.

President, Board of Trustees



critical in keeping the research center open and active. The Board of Trustees Buildings and Grounds committee volunteers have maintained the Hall House which houses the research center, collections, and special collections (paper). Volunteers made the holiday exhibit, “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree” shine. Volunteers have consistently assisted the collections and special collections departments all year long. The staff, with key volunteer assistance, are making real headway in cataloging the donation backlog.

Researcher Barb Cessna brought the Vets Finding Vets program to me in 2014. She has been diligent (on her own

time) in reaching out to local veterans and their social groups to build the participants in the program. They have been researching veterans in their families, starting or completing research about veterans from the War of 1812 and the Civil War we have in our archives and helping other researchers on their quests. Vets Finding Vets' purpose is to build our library of veteran's stories and to share them with the public. If you know of a veteran who has a local story we would love to meet them and record their story. We hope to expand this program in 2016.

Education Coordinator Sara Reale has been taking our artifacts, pictures and stories to the local nursing homes and assisted living facilities to share and gather other stories about the Jamestown area. She has been well received. Talk about a wealth of knowledge and memories!

The final accomplishment I have to add is your financial commitment. The Center brought in more support this year than in recent years past. Part of the funds were one time grants but other categories such as membership and unrestricted donations also increased.



**WALNUT GROVE
ARCHAEOLOGY
PROJECT**

This past excavation season we concentrated our efforts on what appears to represent the basement area of a barn/living quarters built at the same time as the mansion. The floor of the basement is about five feet below ground level and is partially paved with bricks. We recovered thousands of artifacts of all types which we are just finishing washing and cataloging. Next season we will continue to excavate this basement area as well as work at defining some of the other structures which are known to have existed on the property. Hopefully we can obtain funding to erect interpretive signs at the locations of these buildings. We are looking forward to presenting our findings to date at the meeting of the New York State Archaeological Association in Rochester in April. Many thanks to our loyal volunteers.

Thomas L. Greer, M.D., Project Director

FENTON HISTORY CENTER STAFF

Joni Blackman, Director
Paula Bechmann, Office Manager & Housekeeping
Norman Carlson, Collections Manager
Sara W. Reale, Education Coordinator

Karen Livsey, Librarian/Archivist
Victoria Parker, Collections Assistant/Education
Barbara Cessna, Researcher
Museum Teachers: Julie Hull, Gesele Koehler,
Martha Korcyl-Milliner

The Board of Trustees and a few members matched a \$5,000 challenge to add \$10,000 to the Doris and Carl Hagberg Fund at the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation which supports the ongoing expenses at the Hall House Research Center. You are showing your support with your money. Thank you.

For the "rest of the story" please see the other reports from Rick Lundquist, Board of Trustees President; and the staff who have worked very hard this year to collect, conserve and teach our local history.

Thank you to...

the **staff** for their willingness to work for a fraction of their worth with endless energy, compassion and great ideas.

the **dedicated volunteers** for their enthusiasm, expertise and willingness to help us out whenever we call upon them.

the **Board of Trustees** for their commitment to the Fenton and our local history.

our **members, sponsors, grant makers and visitors** that make the work worthwhile.

I feel we truly are a team.



Joni Blackman, Director



VETS FINDING VETS PROGRAM

A year ago we launched the *Vets Finding Vets* program to add to the family information available at the

Research Center as well as to introduce veterans to their past family members that also served their country. The program is still in the awareness building stage. A number of helpful veterans have stepped up to help spread the word. Thank you to Tom Jones, Steve Johnson, and David Marsh. I have reached out to many groups such as the American Legion, Police and Sheriff's Departments, the Chautauqua County Veterans Services, local outreach groups and those involved with Veteran's Day services to pass along the program information. Assemblyman Goodell, Senator Young and Representative Reed have all been contacted and sent information as well.

The interest is building and hopefully more stories will be recorded. I ask you to share the program with any Veterans you know. The program has great potential and we all look forward to seeing it start to grow.

Barb Cessna, *Vets Finding Vets* Coordinator

WHAT WE DO

The mission of the Fenton History Center – Museum & Research Center is to provide educational and cultural opportunities for the residents of Chautauqua County and its visitors through the collection, preservation and exhibition of artifacts and archival materials pertaining to Jamestown, New York.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2015

	2015 Actual	2015 Budget	%Year
General Operating Income, unrestricted			
Municipal Assistance	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	100.0
County Assistance	\$ 8,004.00	\$ 8,000.00	100.1
Fundraising	\$ 92,002.33	\$ 83,775.00	109.8
Donations	\$ 8,832.00	\$ 5,825.00	151.6
CRCF Fund and interest	\$ 17,811.44	\$ 16,500.00	107.9
Memberships	\$ 18,245.45	\$ 20,000.00	91.2
Gift Shop sales	\$ 6,796.51	9,000.00	75.5
Memorials	\$ 120.00	\$ 150.00	80.0
Earned Income	\$ 14,364.99	\$ 14,900.00	96.4
Hall House operating support	\$ 8,400.00	\$ 6,000.00	140.0
Total	\$ 190,576.72	\$ 180,150.00	105.8
Expenses, Unrestricted			
Payroll Expenses,			
Administration* (incl. all taxes)	\$ 75,087.65	\$ 74,831.45	100.3
Insurance	\$ 15,482.30	\$ 13,000.00	119.1
Supplies	\$ 254.40	\$ 1,125.00	22.6
Printing	\$ 1,143.96	\$ 1,120.00	102.1
Telephone/Internet	\$ 2,014.32	\$ 1,725.00	116.8
Postage	\$ 1,319.68	\$ 1,190.00	110.9
Gift Shop	\$ 5,855.95	\$ 3,000.00	195.2
Advertising & Fundraising	\$ 5,845.39	\$ 5,145.55	113.6
Maintenance & Repairs	\$ 4,240.09	\$ 4,000.00	106.0
Hall House utilities,			
maintenance	\$ 13,184.18	\$ 9,425.00	139.9
Education Dept.	\$ 11,542.13	\$ 12,215.00	94.5
Collections Dept.	\$ 40,996.95	\$ 41,002.00	100.0
Exhibits Dept.	\$ 879.36	\$ 2,000.00	44.0
Research Ctr.	\$ 6,927.25	\$ 5,900.00	117.4
**Miscellaneous	\$ 4,419.29	\$ 4,471.00	98.8
General Operating Expense	\$189,192.90	\$180,150.00	105.0
Net Gain/(Loss)	\$ 1,383.82	\$ -	0.7681

*Administration costs include marketing, adult programming, exhibit design and installation, & fundraising.

NEED UP TO DATE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS AND EVENTS?



VISIT OUR WEBSITE WWW.FENTONHISTORYCENTER.ORG

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK FOR THE MOST UP TO DATE INFORMATION

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US:



Clean up and fix up the herb garden, teach some local history by giving a Brown Bag Talk, and dancing for pizza!



Buy and install the main stair carpet runner, pay to have the Ahlstrom piano moved and changing the beams supporting the City of Jamestown engine.



SERVING THROUGH INFORMATION



Your story is our community's story: a center for inquiry, investigation and scholarly research where you can explore your family history and discover how you are a part of this community's history.

- 1,466 people used the library & archives for genealogical and historical research – a 20% increase over last year.
- 11 requests from patrons and members were made from the special collections. Many more were made by the staff.
- Researchers responded to 24 written requests, and 2,104 phone research requests from around the world.
- 6,675 unique visits to the library/archive website pages- a decrease from last year – likely due to the new website launch in May.



Networking and learning (while snacking) during the library lock-in.

Notes from the Archivist's desk

We received a generous grant from the Sheldon Foundation to arrange three large collections of local significance. The grant allowed for more hours for both myself and collections assistant Victoria Parker. They were worked on throughout the year. Part of one of the collections included scanning hundreds of nitrate negatives. Finding aids will be completed soon and then they can be cataloged.

With Norman and Victoria's assistance we worked out how to efficiently prepare and move the large 3D collection. Special collections, many times referred to as archival, is always in need of more space. It is a constant juggling game to find room for the donations while keeping everything organized else and accessible. One of the problems in 2015 was the need to replace the 10 year old server that houses the catalog. That has been done, however the catalog is still not online.

I spent time away from the Fenton learning at the National Genealogical Conference in Missouri, and the NY Genealogical and Biographical Society's Conference in Syracuse. I represented the Fenton and our genealogy resources at the annual Scandinavian Folk Festival in July.

I wrote a majority of the Hometown History newspaper articles published on Fridays in the Post-Journal. Thank you to Norman, Steve Johnson, Janet Wahlberg and Phoebe Forbes for writing articles too. All this while helping researchers, members and staff as they work at the research center. It has been a busy year. Without the volunteers manning the phone, door and assisting researchers and members it would be hard to work on the list above. They are "priceless" to the operation of the research center.

Librarian/Archivist Karen E. Livsey

Researcher Barb Cessna

PRESERVING THE COMMUNITY'S PAST

Caring for a collection that is the community's cultural heritage.

- 142 separate artifact donations were received and processed. 21 library donations and 12 recorded for Fenton educational use.
- Addressing the donation backlog is an ongoing task. In 2015, 7 collections and 174 items were processed.
- Loans: 8 incoming loans, 6 for copying and scanning, 1 consisting of 44 items for exhibit, the final being large Cheney Family paintings; 3 outgoing loans. One loan was returned from 2014.
- 10 requests for photograph reproductions from the FHC collection with 33 photographs processed.
- 20 items were deaccessioned mostly due to number corrections and for use in the Fenton education collection.

The large artifact collection had to be moved to a new location this year. What a job! Thank you to Karen Livsey, Victoria Parker, Norman Carlson and a bunch of dedicated volunteers, financial support from local foundations, Rapid Moving Co., and JIT Toyota Lift.

**Notes from the Collection's Manager's desk**

The department was augmented by the employment of Victoria Parker who has steadily addressed a wide range of problems: organization, backlog, recovery from the move, return of rejected items, etc. She has marked, numbered and photographed hundreds of artifacts and boxed and shelved them properly. Her efficiency has freed up shelf space for more donation.

The major event of the year was the Herculean move of the major off-site storage. The move involved hydraulic lifts, removing exterior windows and a dozen volunteers over a month of days. The new space is more secure, has better pest infestation protection and does not have rapid temperature and humidity variations.

Collections Norman P. Carlson Victoria Parker **Housekeeping** Paula Bechmann **Textiles** Phoebe Forbes

PREPARING THE FUTURE THROUGH EDUCATION

Helping schools meet curriculum goals and providing resources for lifelong learning.

- 76 programs were presented to area school students, community groups and special programming for all ages. 31% drop from last year because of the decline in Jamestown and other school district participation in the Fenton's offerings.
- This year the summer campers traveled through time learning about the 19th and 20th centuries. Camp Brown campers learned about the life of a recruit from re-enactors Brian Teagarten and Les Trumbull. They made good use of Fenton Park and had a field trip to Lake View Cemetery.
- The Fenton Education department taught in 5 of the 18 public school districts in Chautauqua County and Continuing Education at JCC. We also provided discussion and interaction at Tanglewood, Lutheran, Heritage Green and Brookdale.
- Over 4,900 members and friends participated in the Fenton events: *Doors Open Jamestown*, *Brown Bag lectures*, *"Psycho Seamstress"* and *"Fenton Elected!"* summer exhibits, the *Walking Tours*, the *"Slice of History Pizza Challenge"* event, the *Fenton Elected! Gala*, *Blue & Gray 2015*, *Saints and Sinners Lake View Cemetery Tours and Mausoleum & More Tours*, *Candlelight Tours* and the *37th Annual Holiday Exhibit: "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree"*.

Notes from the Education Coordinator's desk

While most of the programming offered at the Center was well attended it has been a struggle to teach our local history in the public school classrooms. Much of the year has been spent finding ways to show the systems in the county our "wares". Two grants to pay for a consultant were denied so the staff has been designing a grassroots plan to meet area school administrators and teachers to acquaint them with the value of local history in the classroom and trips to the Fenton Mansion. We are designing inquiry based learning/document based learning programs, creating traveling trunks of artifacts and envelopes of primary source materials to better assist classroom teachers with the common core requirements.



I am working on creating a new holiday experience where visitors not only learn about the traditions of the holiday season, they meet the Fenton family. We will have all day summer history camps this coming year and continue to reach out to the local nursing homes and assisted living facilities to add to their activities. As always, the Fenton has a wide array of speakers available for group meetings.

Education Coordinator Sara Reale

Museum Teachers Gesele Koehler, Julie Hull, Martha Korcyl-Milliner, Fran Fair
With assistance from Norman Carlson and Dennis Wright



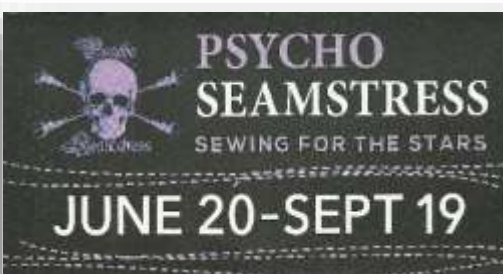
Fletcher Elementary Students learn about the 1800s from museum teachers Martha Korcyl-Milliner (right) and Julie Hull (above).



Re-enactors Les Trumbull and Brian Teagarten get ready for Camp Brown.



TELLING THE COMMUNITY'S STORY Exhibits serve as a bridge to awareness and knowledge of our unique local history by presenting a personal understanding the collection.



Visitors: on-site 2,904 website 10,640

Thank You for Your Support

PLANNED GIVING AND BEQUESTS

Winslow T. Shearman – purchase of a life insurance policy which will contribute the sum of at least \$50,000 in unrestricted funds.

If you would like information regarding opportunities for Planned Giving, leaving a legacy in your will (a bequest) or the benefits of a gift of appreciated securities or other property please contact Joni Blackman, Director.

MEMORIALS are a meaningful way to show the family you care and to support the work of the Fenton History Center.

Thank you to Roger and Karen Sundell for remembering James Butterfield, Marsha K. De la Cerda for remembering Doris Levin and Dr. and Mrs. Francis Palmer for remembering David Reale.

GRANTS

Operating and Programming Grants:

Chautauqua Region Community Foundation - four grants totaling \$8,824	Hultquist Foundation \$15,000
R. C. Sheldon Foundation \$25,000	The Lenna Foundation \$30,300
	Museum Assoc. of NY \$1,000

GOVERNOR'S CIRCLE \$1000+

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	Scandinavian Studies Program	

GOODS & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Clark Patterson Lee Design Group, Media One Group, The Post-Journal, The Chautauqua Daily Star, The Jamestown Gazette, The Coffee Exchange, Axiom Business Machines, Dan Gates at the Frame & Glass Shoppe, Jack Ericson, Bill Lucas, Streetwise Creative Group, Doug Hoisington for Earth Spark, Tops Markets, Sandberg Kessler Architecture & Engineering, The City of Jamestown Parks Department, Lake View Cemetery Association, Jamestown Renaissance Corporation, Gary Lynn, BOCES-Adult Education, Ahlstrom-Schaeffer Electric, Jamestown Roofing

THANK YOU— WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

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SERVING THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM

For every paid staff member 14 people volunteer their time and services. The research center volunteers averaged 138 hrs. per month!

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June Gala



The 2015 Pizza Challenge



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DEDICATED volunteers help clean up the basement after a sewer pipe replacement!

