

2017 Annual Report



FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

There have been many changes in 2017 at the Fenton History Center and many planned. We said goodbye to long time Director, Joni Blackman, who resigned to pursue new endeavors and we welcomed new Director, Noah Goodling. Noah has been working in the public history field for the last 8 years, serving at historical institutions in Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Virginia, as well as locally at the Robert H. Jackson Center and the Oliver Archives Center at Chautauqua Institution, before coming to the Fenton. In addition, at the end of the year we said goodbye to retiring Karen Livesy, Archivist and Librarian for 30 plus years. This is a challenging season for the Fenton History Center but we are all excited about the anticipated new ideas, new energy and new collaboration.

Plans for the installation of an elevator at the mansion are moving forward. We are excited that this and other changes will make the mansion more accessible for visitors with disabilities.

This summer we hosted new exhibits – “The Road to the Vote” highlighting the women’s suffrage movement and “Revisit of World War I after 100 years”. For the first time, we hosted a Halloween Event featuring historic decorations and a children’s program and a Sensory Santa event for children on the autism spectrum.

The Genealogy Support Group at the Hall House Research Center continues to grow and entices new members to the Fenton.

We've had more visitors to the mansion and Facebook hits this year than in previous years which is encouraging. If you haven't visited the mansion recently, stop by and see what's new. This is an exciting time for the Fenton History Center.

FROM THE DIRECTORS

Joni Blackman:

Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. - Ralph Waldo Emerson –

This quote inspires me every day. My years at the Fenton were so much more than just a job or a paycheck. Each day spent there had purpose and reason: saving our local stories for future generations, and the perk of being able to work in one of the most elegant homes in Jamestown.

I inherited a well-run museum from my predecessor Christin Stein. I also inherited her vision for the campus expansion and the “Welcome to Jamestown” exhibit. My part in making it happen was literally making it happen; designing the campus expansion, raising the money, rehabilitating the Hall Home building and property, moving the research library, moving and designing the new gift shop, determining the “Welcome to Jamestown” exhibit, raising money again, and finally installing the exhibit. There were many details to figure out along the way – Paula Bechmann, the membership manager, gift shop manager and bookkeeper (and friend) always kept me on track.

This took a decade to accomplish. In the meantime the staff and I worked at raising the community and greater Jamestown region's awareness of the Fenton History Center. We worked at connecting our members and visitors to the local history. It involved every marketing means we had at our disposal. Thank you to Karen Livsey and the collections staff (Norman Carlson, Phoebe Forbes (30 year volunteer textile curator!), Victoria Parker) and Barb Cessna, along with various board members for writing the weekly “Hometown History” articles. They made a huge difference in the community's perception of the Fenton's collections and their intrinsic value. The Fenton staff are the unsung heroes saving Jamestown's stories. Thank them next time you see them.

The collections had to be moved twice during my tenure. Without the above mentioned collections staff and volunteers to work out the details -and to make it happen - it would have been disastrous. The collections are the core of the Fenton mission. They are the objects that tell the story of our community and its people.

The capstone to all of this infrastructure building was the success of the educational programming. From Camp Brown in the summer for middle schoolers to the October Saints and Sinners Lake View Cemetery Tours – each told more of Jamestown's stories. The Brown Bag series each year added to the archive of information. Barb Cessna's enthusiasm for Veteran's and their history brought in another dimension to the public programming. Hiring Jennifer Champ to carry on the work started by Sara Reale and Fran Fair was my pleasure. She had an infectious love of local history. Her vision for exhibits is refreshing. Her down-to-earth way with children makes Jamestown's history come alive.

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The Hall House Research Center's genealogy programming came out of the research staff and volunteer's passion for sharing their research successes. All I had to do was manage the marketing efforts.

Speaking of volunteers...the Research Center would not have operated six days a week without the many dedicated volunteers. I watched them become a family that not only watched out for the Fenton organization, but cared for each other and the staff members as their own family. At the mansion I had two dedicated volunteers that worked on Monday's for years; Don Lauger and Rick Roll. Without their dedication I would not have been able to be a part of the Monday noon Rotary Club. Thank you to all the volunteers that made/make it possible for the Fenton to operate. Thank you to the many actors and press-into-service actors that have made the October Cemetery Tours a premier event. I hope it carries on for years to come. So many stories are yet to be told.

Finally I want to thank the community members who served on the Fenton Board of Trustees. I call many of them friends. They were always willing to lend a hand, write a check and/or share a thought when asked. I could name names, but I would surely miss someone. I truly leaned on the Board members for support and advice.

All of these activities were possible because of the generous members, friends, visitors, sponsors and foundations in Jamestown. One can have all the enthusiasm in the world, but without a vision, hard work and cash – nothing would come of it. I had a great time at the Fenton and hope the same for Noah as he settles into sharing Jamestown's stories with the next generation of residents and visitors.

Noah Goodling:

What an enormous privilege to be welcomed back into this community! I am extremely happy and grateful to be working with the fascinating history of Chautauqua County again. This was the place where I got my first experiences working with archives and museums after I got my degree in history from Allegheny College—first with Jon Schmitz at the Oliver Archives in Chautauqua Institution, and then under the wing of Greg Peterson at the Robert H. Jackson Center. Though I've been away for a few years, traveling and gaining new experiences, Jamestown and Chautauqua County have always retained a special place in my heart, as I know this area to be a place of friends, family, community, culture, and excellent opportunities.

I was exposed to the excitement and fast-paced nature of this job right away, with one of my first responsibilities upon coming in to plan and carry off the Saints and Sinners Cemetery Tours at the end of 2017. It was a wonderful chance to not only get to know some of the stories of this area—some touching, some horrific, some mesmerizing, some just a bit silly—but also to see the unbelievable dedication of our volunteers and the catchy enthusiasm of our community for our venture. Every day we held the event was more beautiful than the last, and, looking at the crowds of community members who came out, I was sure I made the right decision in coming here.

I have continued to be impressed as I settle further into this position. The staff members I work with are dedicated and passionate; the all-volunteer Board that guides us is knowledgeable and committed; the volunteers that help us out every day are enthusiastic and energetic; the people that we get to serve and interact with are generous and curious. Each of these groups individually would be an inspiration; together they form a community of educators, researchers, and lifelong learners that make my job more than a job—it is a calling, and a pleasure. Being able to support and enable this community is a privilege.

I am looking forward to learning more about the ins and outs of this position, getting to experience many more facets of the historical and cultural events of Jamestown, and meeting the interested and concerned people who help make this city and region great. If you have time and we haven't met yet, please stop by my office at the Fenton and introduce yourself, tell me what brought you to Jamestown and what you love about it, and let's get to know one another better. I can't wait.

WALNUT GROVE ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT

The Walnut Grove Archaeological Project continued during the 2017 season. We initially excavated on the west side of the mansion. We found a stone lined well and portions of the foundation of a previous building addition. Our focus then moved to the known location of the Fenton carriage house in the south lawn. We managed to delineate the footprint of this large building by excavating portions of the stone foundation. Over the winter we are working on entering our artifact information into a searchable database. Year seven of the excavation will begin in the spring. Volunteers are always welcome.

--Thomas L. Greer, M.D.

VETS FINDING VETS PROGRAM

Vets Finding Vets has continued to make gains this past year as people are recognizing the program and what we offer. We have gained 23 new members who are interested in researching their family history, and we meet many other Veterans during events, Veteran talks, and bus trips. I continue to be very grateful to CRCF, without whose support in the form of a grant, I would not be able to totally dedicate one day a week to this program. I am also very grateful to the VFV board members (Roland Swanson, Steve Johnson, Tom Jones, Dave Marsh, and Marty Hagstrom) who help guide the program, and who have the program's best interests at heart as it relates to Veterans.

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Vets Finding Vets



This year we made two new additions to our list and have been happy with the responses from our Veteran friends.

We noticed how much the older Veterans enjoyed being around each other during the WWII events, and in an attempt to keep them together, Fenton Canteen was born. We've taken that a step further by adding a small lending library to their possibilities. I have accumulated a few books regarding local Veteran stories, and since they have spent a lot of time inside this winter, it seems like it was the perfect time to introduce this new option. I am still looking for a copy or two of Rolland Kidder's

book "A Hometown Went to War", if anyone has a copy they are willing to give.

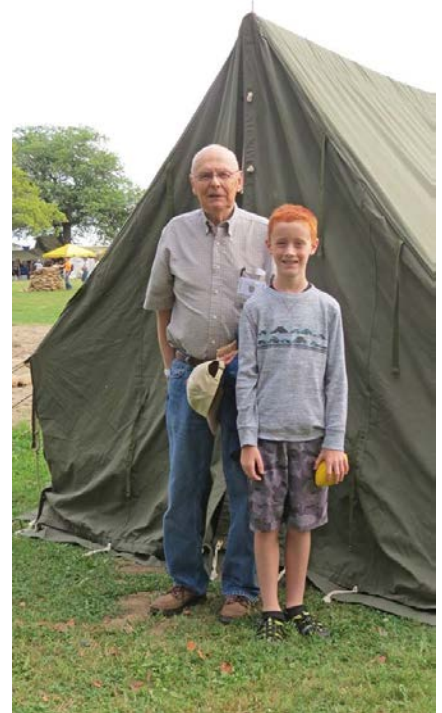
The other addition this year was an Honor Flight. It was evident, even before we went to Washington, that this was a keeper. Veterans have been so grateful to finally find a way to get to the memorials at Washington, and the registration forms are difficult for them to navigate alone. Buffalo/Niagara Honor Flight is very easy to work with, and their goal is to provide the best trip of a lifetime for WWII and Korea Veterans. They did just that when we went for our first Honor Flight in Sept. I was honored to be the Guardian for one of the Veterans who didn't have a family member to go with him. I recommend that to anyone, it was an awesome trip - we all agreed. There were three WWII Veterans, and one Korea Veteran, plus one Guardian who was a Vietnam Vet. The next trip comes up April 14, and there are seven Veterans signed up and eagerly awaiting their big day.

There were 152 people who came to the various talks given by Veterans, which includes the Brown Bag

Lectures and talks taking place at other venues that we were invited to. Our Events were attended by 321 interested people, two bus trips included 85 Veterans and guests, and 84 for Fenton Canteen.

This year, we were fortunate to receive the Chautauqua County Veterans Memorial Database from its previous location at Jamestown City Hall. We've discovered some wrinkles in it and are working to alleviate those issues, but we are overjoyed to receive it.

Along that same line, we are working with other Veteran organizations to bring a badly needed website to fruition. This website will honor the Chautauqua County men and women in uniform who have lost their lives from Desert Storm on. The web designer is a Veteran of Desert Storm and is very committed to building the best memorial site possible. Stay tuned for upcoming announcements, as this website project is just beginning, but the goal is to have it ready by Memorial Day.



--Barb Cessna
VFV Project Coordinator

A Tribute to a Distinguished Career – Karen Livsey

Written by Janet Wahlberg

At the end of December Karen Livsey retired after more than 30 years of service to The Fenton Center. She began her work at The Fenton in 1986 as a volunteer and soon moved along to share her gifts as a Librarian, Archivist and Researcher. Due to her efforts, the Hall House has an excellent collection of resources available to the public for use in genealogical and historical research. Over the years the entire region has enjoyed her Hometown History columns, her participation in the Saints and Sinners tours, the Walking tours of Jamestown and hearing her speak at various local groups and Societies.

Karen's skills as an archivist, librarian, and researcher began over 40 years ago and continue to be honed. Her membership in the Swedish American Genealogy group takes her to the annual SAG conference in Salt Lake City where she works on research in not only Swedish genealogy but also Italian research, and the genealogy of many of Jamestown's earliest settlers. In addition, she attends

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several conferences each year that add to her skill level. All this work on her part as well as her encyclopedic knowledge of our area will make her nearly impossible to replace.



FENTON HISTORY CENTER STAFF

Joni Blackman, Director (Past)

Noah Goodling, Director (Current)

Paula Bechmann, Office Manager & Housekeeping

Norman Carlson, Collections Manager

Barbara Cessna, Researcher and Vets Finding Vets Program Manager

Phoebe Forbes, Volunteer Textile Manager

Melissa Mee, Volunteer Social Media Manager

Karen Livsey, Librarian/Archivist (retired)

Victoria Parker, Collections Assistant/Museum teacher

Jennifer Champ, Education Director/Curator

Museum Teachers: Julie Hull, Geselle Koehler

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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.

NEED UP TO DATE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS AND EVENTS?



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK FOR THE MOST UP TO DATE INFORMATION

VISIT OUR WEBSITE WWW.FENTONHISTORYCENTER.ORG

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		2017	
		Actual	Budget
General Operating Income, unrestricted			
	<u>Municipal Assistance</u>	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00
	County Assistance	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 8,000.00
	Fundraising	\$ 76,922.28	\$ 79,833.02
	Donations	\$ 30,897.16	\$ 44,412.20
	CRCF Fund and interest	\$ 22,819.28	\$ 17,597.18
	Memberships	\$ 22,555.26	\$ 17,300.00
	Gift Shop sales	\$ 2,309.00	\$ 7,000.00
	Memorials	\$ 275.00	\$ 50.00
	Earned Income	\$ 39,726.73	\$ 22,075.00
	Hall House operating support	\$ 5,200.00	\$ 7,900.00
	Total	\$ 220,704.21	\$ 220,167.40
Expenses, Unrestricted			
	Payroll Expenses, Administration (incl. all taxes)	\$ 83,293.44	\$ 82,833.48
	Insurance	\$ 15,760.48	\$ 13,472.43
	Supplies	\$ 1,288.26	\$ 950.00
	Printing	\$ 1,725.27	\$ 1,500.00
	Telephone/Internet	\$ 2,038.35	\$ 3,320.00
	Postage	\$ 1,119.14	\$ 1,300.00
	Gift Shop	\$ 1,997.73	\$ 4,000.00
	Advertising & Fundraising	\$ 8,561.96	\$ 7,050.00
	Maintenance & Repairs	\$ 4,365.98	\$ 4,617.12
	Hall House utilities, maintenance	\$ 6,773.10	\$ 6,039.84
	Education Dept.	\$ 20,110.71	\$ 24,340.34
	Collections Dept.	\$ 41,016.02	\$ 46,801.54
	Exhibits Dept.	\$ 1,116.35	\$ 1,500.00
	Research Ctr.	\$ 8,173.04	\$ 12,875.80
	Vets Finding Vets	\$ 4,693.36	\$ 3,999.96
	**Miscellaneous	\$ 13,217.41	\$ 5,566.89
	General Operating Expense	\$ 215,250.60	\$ 220,167.40
	Net Gain/(Loss)	\$ 5,454.11	\$ -

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

**Miscellaneous includes all unexpected costs to the Museum, and some expenses that are hard to categorize

SERVING THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM

For every paid staff member 14 people volunteer their time and services.
The research center volunteers averaged over 180 hrs. per month!

Board Officers 2017

Cynthia Rodgers, President

Michael Rohlin.,

Vice President

Andrew Kolstee, Secretary

Clarence Carlson, Treasurer

Danielle DeJoy Moss

Richard Lundquist

David Painter

Kurt Johnson

Connee Brown

Guy Ditonto

Steven Johnson

Thomas Greer, M.D.

Angelo Cimo

Volunteers 2017

Education

Julie Hull
Sara Reale
Victoria Parker
Gesele Koehler
Steve Johnson
Todd Langworthy
Brian Teagarten
Mike Rohlin

Textiles

Phoebe Forbes

Library/Research

Tom Jones
David Marsh
Norma Marvell
Kathy Barber
Sharon Terwilliger
Candy Larson
Gene Smith
Sue Ellen Nelson
Steve Hatfield
Janet Wahlberg
Frank Walzer
Karen Livsey
Patricia Lundquist
Christine Ahlstrom
Barb Cessna
Peter Bentley
Cindy Rodgers

Events

Gene and Loretta Smith
Rick & Patty Lundquist
Sara Reale
Clair Carlson and Gayle Sheets
Tim Warnick
Deacon Pierce
The Rohlin Family
Sam Genco
Art and Andy Osterdahl
Tom and Sally Greer
Bruce Johnson
Kris Stoeltzing
Jim and Janet Wahlberg
Julie Hull
BOCES, Workplace Experience Program:
Dennis Wright, Patrick Wright
Bonnie DeJoy
Doug Hoisington
Mat Hagberg

Collections Management

Loretta Smith
Victoria Parker
John Collins
Sue Ellen Nelson
Steve Johnson
Steve Hatfield
Scott Lawson
R. Wayne Leamer
Ashley Senski
Jerry Nelson
Henry Blose

Julia Eppenheimer
Norman Carlson
Gary Nelson
Traci Langworthy
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Melissa Mee
Jennifer Champ
Rick Roll
B. Dolores Thompson
Shannon Bessette
Amanda Brainard
Dan Zabala
John Gustafson
Dave Painter



Thank you Art, John, Tom and Jim for all your painting expertise.

