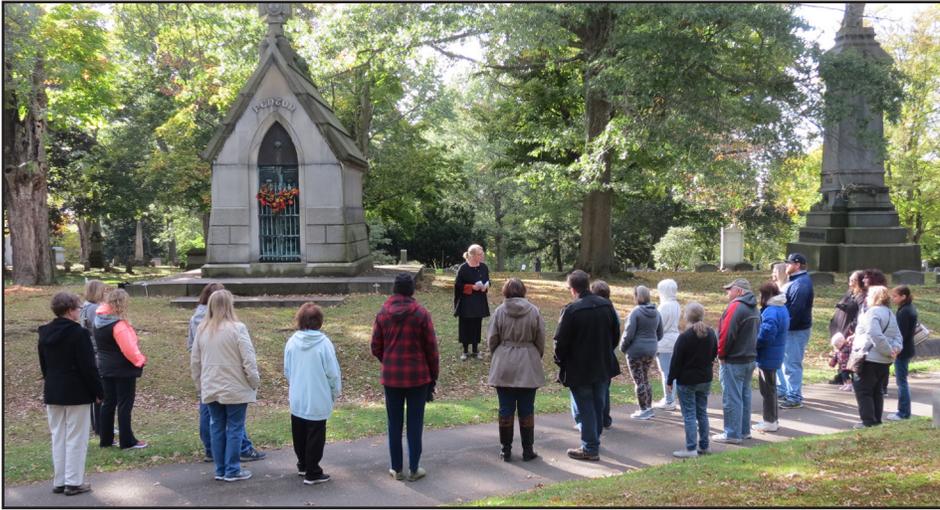


Walnut Grove Press

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The Official Newsletter of the Fenton History Center

Volume 1, Issue 2



Visitors are entertained and amazed by history at the 2019 Saints and Sinners Walking Tours.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

by Noah Goodling, Executive Director

Like many others this year, it seems, I have been shocked by the passage of time in 2020. Day to day, there have been moments that have felt excruciatingly slow, but as a whole, the year has flown by. The strange normalcy of being in our homes combined with the newness of the situation in the world outside has caused me to feel anchored in place and a little unmoored simultaneously.

This combination of the old familiar and the new normal has also extended to the Fenton and our upcoming programming. We have been open to the public since early July, and have enjoyed seeing visitors stop by again to discover the wonderful history of Jamestown; I have been especially gratified by the willingness of our visitors to abide by safety precautions without issue. Beyond the Mansion, we are

planning our wonderful Saints & Sinners tours at Lake View Cemetery, which will occur the first two Saturdays in October (the 3rd and the 10th). The tough decision was made to cancel our popular carriage tours this year, but we will still be holding our walking tours and, for the first time ever, we will have a virtual option as well. Experience all the history and drama that you love from our tours from the comfort of home, or do both and come out, too – there will be different stories for the walking and virtual tours, and you get a discount for buying a ticket to both events.

As we get closer to the end of the year, our focus is on the future. We want to hear from you about what you think that future should look like for us. What do you like about the Fenton? What would you like to see more of? What keeps you coming back? Those

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of you who read this newsletter are our most dedicated supporters, and we want to make sure that we're listening to you. If you have some feedback or ideas for us, please type up a few sentences and send it to information@fentonhistorycenter.org – you can share anything with us (and don't be afraid to tell us we're doing a great job!).

HERO TOURS HELD AT LAKE VIEW CEMETERY

by Barb Cessna,

Project Coordinator, Vets Finding Vets

The weather was with us on Saturday, August 8th, when we embarked on the second of two Hero Tours at Lake View Cemetery.

The first Hero Tour was held at Soldiers Circle, with Hugh Golden as our guide, and was cut short by bad weather, as you may recall hearing about in our last newsletter. The Monument Hill Tour took place in its entirety and we enjoyed a perfect weather day. Hugh's story of the history of Monument Hill, and his in-depth vignettes of several of the Veterans buried there who took part in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Civil War, and the Spanish American War, were

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CURATOR'S CORNER

by Victoria Parker, Curator

It is always busy in the Curator's office! August, 2020, marked the 100 year anniversary of the signing of the 19th Amendment, which gave Women the right to vote in the US. To celebrate, here at the Fenton, we put up our "Why Not New York?: The Road to the Vote" exhibit. This exhibit will be up through September, so if you haven't been in this summer, we encourage you to come visit before it's gone! We are also very excited to be featuring an exhibit straight from the National Archives! This pop-up sized exhibit, entitled "Rightfully Hers" details the history of the 19th amendment and all the work that went into getting suffrage for women at the national scale. This will also be on exhibit through September.

Also in August, the Fenton held our first ever Virtual Paint Night.

We had a good time, and made some great paintings, with a genealogical theme. If you missed it, don't worry! Our next Virtual Paint Night will be the evening of September 17th, at 6pm. We will be painting a beautiful fall scene. This event is only \$20, and the cost includes supplies as well as virtual instruction the night of the event. Paint from the comfort and privacy of your own home, enjoy some great community and conversation, and feel free to "sip" whatever gets your creative juices flowing while we paint.

It's never too early to start thinking about Halloween and Christmas. This year, we are trying some new virtual events that you can enjoy from home! We will be offering our regular in-person Saints & Sinners walking tours of Lake View Cemetery this October, but for the first time this

year, we will also be offering a virtual tour, accessible from your living room or wherever else you want. These virtual tours will feature different stories than the walking tour, so make sure you attend both to get the full experience!

And just in case a cemetery tour isn't enough frightful fun for your October, we will be celebrating Halloween at the Fenton again this year! On October 23rd, we will feature our Virtual Monster Mash: a Historic Haunted House in the beautiful Fenton Mansion, showing off some of our favorite literary monsters from history. This is a family friendly event and will be spooky, but not bloody or gory, and no jump scares. We promise!



The Fenton Halloween tours are fun and a little creepy, but suitable for all ages.

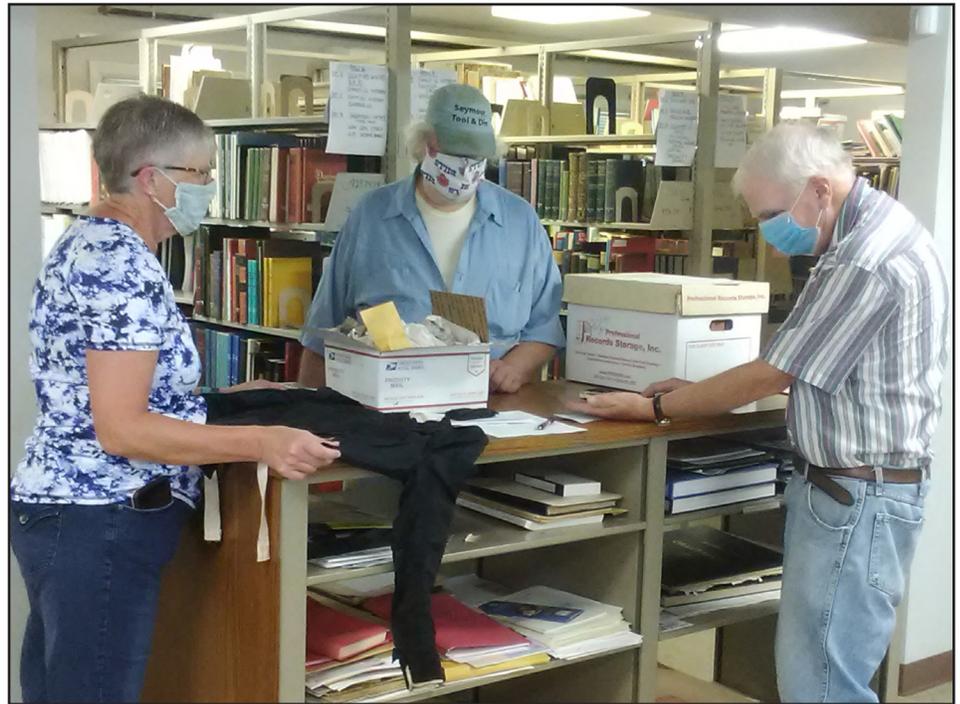
COMMUNITY TREASURES

by Norman Carlson, Collections Manager

Perhaps the only factor that has consistently remained an issue in Chautauqua County, from the first French exploration in 1739 to today, is transportation, and particularly roads. In 1802, when there were only two roads in the county, complaints about the one along the lake were so sharp that the State of Connecticut sent a party out to fix it so their residents could use it to go to New Connecticut in Ohio; they did a poor job. From the moment the Erie Canal was finished in 1825, until the railroad arrived in Jamestown in 1860, a southern tier state road was our dream. It was 1996 when the last local section of the Southern Tier Expressway was finally expanded to four lanes.

We just received a copy of the 1916 Automobile Blue Book. It includes a two-page ad and application form for the Jamestown Automobile Club which had been “reorganized” the previous year. Considering that 1896 or ‘97 marked the first time an automobile was even seen in Chautauqua County, and the first ones owned in Jamestown dated from 1900, it reveals an impressively rapid change. On page 997 I find an assessment of the local roads:

“Fair to good dirt and gravel roads emanate from here to Erie, Pittsburgh, Warren, Oil City, and Central Pennsylvania. The roads around the lake are mostly improved gravel and provide a



Cindy Dustin, Wayne Leamer, and Norman Carlson collaborating on a project at the Hall House.

delightful round trip. The trunk line east to Elmira and Binghamton has been recently improved and in dry weather is to be recommended.”

A map donated in 2013 provides a comparative glimpse 102 years earlier. The map was hand-drawn and updated in 1814. It was intended to show the major roads between Jersey Shore, Pa. and Buffalo, N. Y. They were few and new. There is extensive text commentary on their condition, mostly passable or not passable. Some are passable only seasonally, or only by horse and rider, but not wagon.

I recently wrote about the family of Adolphus and Sarah Stow

Fletcher who immigrated by ox-drawn wagon to Ashville from Worcester, Massachusetts in 1818, a distance of 500 miles. It took them exactly five weeks. Today it is considered a seven and a half hour journey. And Sarah had commented on July 20 about the lake road, “The traveling has been excessively bad – the road such as I could scarcely believe it practicable for a carriage of any kind to get along.” Even with the occasional pothole these days, the roads of 2020 are a technological marvel compared to where we’ve been!



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Hours: Mon. - Sat. 10 AM - 4 PM

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wonderful and enthralling for our Veterans and their guests.

We also felt fortunate to be joined by George Schwob. His grandfather, George Schwob, Sr., was a Veteran of the Spanish American War, and after he returned from his service, donated many hours

of the rest of his life to playing Taps for hundreds of Veteran funerals in Jamestown. He is also buried on Monument Hill. Our own Fenton Board President, Rick Lundquist, dressed in a Civil War uniform, presented Taps for an especially touching ending to a special afternoon.

