The leaves have changed color, and the weather is getting brisker outside, which can only mean one thing – we survived through another Saints & Sinners! This event is always a lot of fun for Fenton staff and volunteers, but a considerable amount of work, too.

I want to give a personal thank-you to everyone in our audience who made that work worthwhile by coming out to support the tours. They were a little different this year, but still a great time, and I was grateful to see so many from our community show up to them.

As the tours were wrapping up, a friend of the Fenton came up to me and said, “I had a great time with this event! How can I help out the Fenton after this?” This is my favorite question, and there are lots of great answers to it, so I thought I’d put a few of them here, in case others were also curious.

1. Membership

Being a member of the Fenton gives lots of great perks, including unlimited free access to the museum and the Research Center resources, but it also shows us our support in the community. The more members we have, the more confident we are that we’re doing something right for our area. Memberships start as low as $40 per year (or $30 if you’re a senior!).

As an alternative, we also recently set up a Patreon account, which provides digital rewards for monthly support – great especially for anyone who isn’t getting out as much this year, or who doesn’t live near the Fenton. Find more details here: www.patreon.com/FentonHistoryCenter.

2. Volunteering

We always have more work than our staff can possibly get done at the Fenton – fortunately, we’ve...
November is here, the weather is getting cooler, and the Fenton is getting more festive! The Halloween displays are down, and work has already begun on the Holiday Exhibit. We’re very excited to announce that the theme of this year’s Holiday Exhibit is “The Nutcracker,” presented in partnership with the Chautauqua Regional Youth Ballet. Due to the unprecedented events this year, the Ballet is unable to put on their annual performance of Tchaikovsky’s “The Nutcracker.” As a result, they are able to loan us costume pieces from their performances to help tell the story of the Nutcracker in a new way. Guests will be able to walk through our 1863 Victorian-era mansion and experience the story of the Nutcracker up close. The exhibit opens on Black Friday, November 27th, and runs through January 6th.

There will be more events coming up in December. Watch our social media and website for announcements about those events.

...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

got an amazing group of volunteers that donate their time to help out. We have volunteers that love to lead tours, go through historic collections, do research, and keep our buildings looking great! All of it is important, and all of it helps us out. Whether you have a few hours per week or a few hours per year, any time you spend volunteering at the Fenton will be greatly appreciated.

3. Keep Involved

Contrary to some beliefs, we have more than 1-2 events a year! In fact, even with the special circumstances this year, we’ve been able to keep a pretty full schedule. Read our newsletter, follow us on social media, and engage with as much of it as you can. We love hearing from our audience, whether it be suggestions, feedback, or just saying hello!

4. Donate

The above suggestions are things that you can do anytime to support the Fenton. We will also be sending out our annual appeal letter this month. Community donations are an incredibly important source of funding for us. Regardless of what amount you can donate, it is necessary and appreciated. If you’re interested in seeing more of the great programs and services from the Fenton, please consider helping us out!
In honor of the upcoming Veterans Day, as the Vets Finding Vets Project Coordinator, I would like to share a very special project. First, since Vets Finding Vets was launched on Nov. 11, 2014, it has been my goal to document as many Veterans as possible, through the ages to the present.

Through the research needs of a once local/now NJ writer (Joan Lindquist) who was writing articles about the Fenton family for the Jamestown Gazette, an amazing thing happened. We had already searched our collection for photos of Reuben Earle Fenton, the son of Gov. and Elizabeth Fenton. He was a member of the Fenton Guards, Jamestown’s local militia, and Joan wondered if the Armory might have a photo of Earle in uniform. Good idea!

I contacted SSG James Weaver who was happy to share the early history of the National Guard, as the Fenton Guards became part of the NYSNG when the US became involved in WWI. He brought us scrapbooks and albums of photos for that time period, gave us permission to scan them, and offered to show us the rest of their records. The scrapbooks were filled with wonderful clippings and photos, some of which we have on file, but many that we don’t. We immediately accepted his invitation and now have a long list of items we “need” to scan.

The only disappointing thing is that we did not discover a photo of Earle, although he is mentioned in several newspaper clippings.

SSG Weaver did show us another collection of records, some of which are over 100-year-old enlistments as far back as 1914 (so far)! Since we couldn’t possibly scan all of these enlistments, Cindy Dustin and I have been working together to document these enlistments via Excel. One very exciting document directly involved the Fenton, a total surprise and very welcome sight to see. As it turns out, the National Guard sends payroll hours into NYS for any drills, parades, field service, etc, falling under their official guidelines. See the attached document that shows their involvement in a very special parade and escort service to the dedication of the Gov. Fenton Statue, held on the Fenton grounds on July 4 (the Gov’s birthday), 1934. This statue was a deathbed wish of Earle Fenton’s, and in her will, his wife Lillian Hayden Fenton saw to it that Earle’s wish would be granted. Read Joan’s “Fenton Women II” article by following this link (see pages 6 and 17).


It works well for two people to work together in the Excel documentation and two people have offered their time so far, but if anyone else would like to help with this, or help in the scanning process, please contact Barb or Norm. We’d like to power through so it doesn’t drag out too long. We are so appreciative to the Armory staff, and their eagerness to also know what they have!

This is even a great COVID-19 project because so many VFV programs and events have fallen by the wayside. As always, my huge appreciation to the Community Foundation for grants that fund my VFV hours is boundless.

Stay safe everyone!

Barb Cessna
The Nutcracker
2020 Christmas Exhibit

The Fenton History Center is partnering with the Chautauqua Regional Youth Ballet to present The Nutcracker Holiday exhibit.

From E.T.A. Hoffman's "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King" to Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" Ballet, this classic holiday story is a Christmas tradition for many. Learn more of the story, get a close-up look at some of the costumes used locally in the CRYB's Nutcracker, and experience the holiday tradition in a new way!

Holiday exhibit opens on Black Friday November 27th, and runs through January 6th.

Museum Hours are:
Monday through Saturday 10-4
Admission:
$10 adults
Children Free!
Fenton History Center Members are always free!

Fenton History Center
67 Washington Street
Jamestown NY, 14701
716-664-6256
www.fentonhistorycenter.org
Consider the Fenton History Center when you do your Christmas shopping this year! We have put together an Amazon Wishlist with a few items. Of course we accept gifts purchased in other places, or monetary donations too!

www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1PU3BVS0HQ5E0

Genealogy Support Group

The Fenton History Center’s Genealogy Support Group serves as a support to both experienced and amateur researchers by acting as an educational offering our members. Meetings feature invaluable lectures, discussions and are an excellent way to become familiar with the Fenton History Center’s impressive collection of resources. The Support Group typically meets on the last Wednesday of each month at the Fenton History Center in the historic Hall House building, located at 73 Forest Avenue in Jamestown, New York. Doors open at 6, and the meeting begins at 6:30 with a brief business meeting followed by a program. Program topics and speakers are subject to change.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, November 7, 2020 @ 10:30 AM
DNA Workshop Part II - Presented by Andrew Kolstee

Wednesday, November 18, 2020 @ 6:30 PM
Researching War of 1812 Veterans - Presented by Sandy Johnson

Saturday, November 21, 2020 @ 10:30 AM
DNA Workshop Part III - Presented by Andrew Kolstee

Wednesday, December 30, 2020 @ 6:30 PM
Christmas Party
Genealogy Support Group Presents:

DNA Workshops

a 3 part series

Oct 24, Nov 7, and Nov 21,
10:30 to 12:30.

$20 per session or $50 for all 3 sessions
$25 for all 3 sessions for Fenton History Center Members.

Please call the Fenton History Center to reserve your spot.
716-664-6256.

Workshops are being held both in person and on Zoom. In person participants are asked to wear a mask during the workshops. Space is limited.

DNA Part 1: Introduction
This class is focused on introducing autosomal DNA, including testing companies such as AncestryDNA, FamilyTreeDNA, 23andMe, and MyHeritage.

DNA Part 2: Using DNA Results in Genealogical Research
This class is focused on strategies to get started with analyzing your DNA results, and introducing you to the terminology and basics of DNA analysis. Learn how to use your DNA results, chromosome browsers, review your matches' number of centiMorgans and be introduced to websites that help with DNA analysis, such as GEDmatch.

DNA Part 3: Chromosome Mapping and DNA Charting
Mapping your DNA is a crucial part of DNA analysis. Learn how to take the data from various DNA websites and use it to map your chromosomes with DNA Painter and be introduced to a strategy for mapping Ancestry.com DNA matches without a company chromosome browser.
The world is far, far different from what you think it is in many ways, big and small. Psychologists, neuro-scientists, and physicists are among those starkly aware of this disturbing fact. Historians can tell you the past was far, far different from what you think it was. I’m fond of saying that any production – a book, either novel or nonfiction, a movie, a painting, a documentary – tells you more about the time it was produced in than the time it is telling about. Anybody who doubts that only has to read a history of Chautauqua County, for example, written in the 19th century and one written in the 20th century. Even the county history update written in 1978 as a supplement to a 1940 set, just 40 years earlier, is starkly different in layout, subjects, priorities, and categories, attitude, style, and a dozen other factors.

I often spot what we call anachronisms in movies (baled hay behind Bonnie and Clyde, a car radio that didn’t need a warmup in Sea Biscuit). Re-enactors break the spell with cell phones or wrist watches, cigarettes, or tennis shoes. Some things nobody ever gets right: rough lawns, horse manure and consequently flies everywhere, and frequent missing teeth. If you don’t see them, it isn’t the real 19th century or earlier.

A recent donation includes a program booklet from the November 6, 1926 Warren – Jamestown high school football game. One page contains a table listing the 19 members of the Jamestown squad along with their height and weight. I went on line to a site called Maxpreps.com and found the corresponding information for most of the 33 members of the 2019 team. In 1926 the players ranged in height from five feet five inches to six feet. There were two six footers on the team. The 2019 players range from five feet seven inches to six feet four. The weights of the young men on the 1926 team ran from 138 pounds to 190 pounds. In 2019 the lightest member was the same weight as the heaviest man in 1926, 190 pounds. The 2019 teammates ranged up to 310 pounds. The size of people is dramatically different from what it was just under 100 years ago, not to mention the way we talk, dress, spend our time, carry ourselves, our body language with elders, the opposite sex, and peers, our political, religious, and moral assumptions and attitudes; our work habits and aspirations, our food preferences and eating patterns, our hygiene and health, and a thousand other things that neither the richest Hollywood director nor the most fastidious museum exhibit designer can even think of, much less duplicate.
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: KATHLEEN BARBER

by Kathleen Barber, Volunteer

I was born in Haverhill, MA and graduated from Haverhill High School. After high school, I earned my BA degree in English with a minor in German from Lowell State College (now U Mass Lowell). The next year I attended graduate school at SUNY Albany (now University at Albany) where I received my MA in English.

Briefly I taught English at my alma mater in Lowell, Massachusetts before marrying my husband, Bob, and moving to Jamestown, his native city. After our fourth child entered first grade, I taught English (several courses online) and Student Success Seminars at Jamestown Community College for 19 years.

While balancing work and family, I somehow managed to co-author three genealogy articles with Janet Delorey who was an amazing genealogy research mentor for me. Our first article was published in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register, the second in Maine Genealogist, and the third in The American Genealogist.

Many years ago, while doing personal family history research at the Fenton History Center I became aware that the library was looking for genealogy research volunteers. I met with Karen Livsey, the research librarian at that time, and she invited me to volunteer. The wide variety of queries that we receive fascinates me. Working with the staff and other volunteers, learning more about our community’s history, discovering additional resources, and assisting others with their research is very rewarding.

Over the years, I have been privileged to serve as a volunteer for several other local organizations including the YWCA Board of Directors (10 years, 3 years as president), the YWCA Board of Trustees (about 20 years), the Babe Ruth World Series Host Support Committee (co-chair several times), and the Fortnightly Club (member and secretary), etc.

In 2007, Bob and I retired. Since then, we have traveled extensively in the United States and abroad. Exploring nature, increasing our knowledge of history, marveling at archeological wonders, and learning about other cultures inspires us. We both enjoy photography and have presented slide shows and discussed our trips with the Audubon Community Nature Center’s First Friday group several times.

Kathleen Barber