

FENTON HISTORY CENTER

museum and research center



2012 Annual Report

67 Washington St., Jamestown, NY 716-664-6256 www.fentonhistorycenter.org

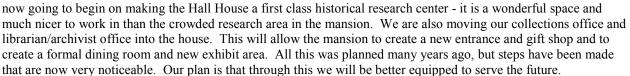
<u>From the President of the Board of Trustees</u>

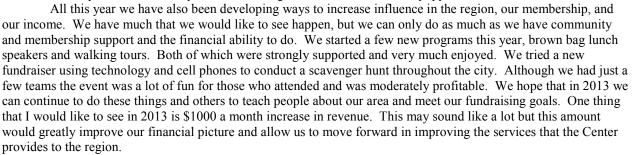
January 15, 2013

Dear Members and Friends,

The purpose of the Fenton History Center is to preserve the past and the materials related to that past. The reason that we do this is so that the future will know from where we came. To preserve the past the Center must constantly look toward the future and how cultural and technological changes are going to make our job different. This past year has definitely been one in which we made strides in reaching our future goals and hopefully 2013 will see more of these take place.

2012 concludes my fifth year as president of the board of trustees and it was a year in which we tried new things and saw some things that we have been planning to take place for five years actually happen. Just this morning I visited the mansion and saw that the research library has made the move to the Hall House next door. Over the last half year all the archival records have been moved into the research center and work is





None of the work that the Fenton History Center does could be done without the support of our members, our community, our staff, our board members, and our volunteers. I want to thank all of you who have contributed and worked to make the things that the Center did in 2012 possible. Each year we meet as a board and discuss the good and the bad and our hopes for the next year. Sometimes we have lofty goals and sometimes we get frustrated, but when we look back on the year it is wonderful to see that positive things are happening. Have we reached the place that we want to be? Not exactly. But we are making progress and I want to thank all of you who are doing what you can to make this progress possible.

As I look forward to 2013 for the Fenton History Center what do I see? I see a continued outreach to the community through brown bag lunch speaker, walking tours of the downtown, Old-Fashioned Days, Lakeview Cemetery tours, Christmas decorations, and other possible events. I see a research center in the Hall House that is helping people discover the history that they need. I see an increase in membership and in volunteers. And hopefully I see a financial picture that shows improving financial health. This year will also mark the 50th anniversary of the Fenton Historical Society and the beginning of our next half century.

The Center's purpose is to preserve the past, but we are always looking toward the future. To shape that future we need you. We need you to continue to be generous with your time and money and we need you to encourage others to become involved. Please tell others about us and bring them with to future events. It is a privilege to serve as president of this outstanding institution and it is my desire to see what we do become even more outstanding in 2013.

Respectfully,

Michael 7. Rohlin

Michael T. Rohlin, President, Fenton History Center Board of Trustees

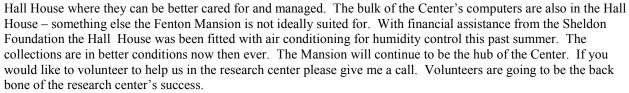
From the Director

Dear Members and Friends,

Interestingly the two biggest complaints museums hear are "Why don't you ever change anything?" followed by "Why did you change that?" 2012 was busy with change, and at the same time doing the same things as usual: saving Jamestown's past while using it to teach future generations.

2012 was a year of building, both literally and figuratively. The Fenton Mansion's exterior received a facelift. The bricks and mortar were repaired and in some cases replaced. After 150 years she was in need of repair. Thanks to the generosity of Fenton members, local foundations and New York State, the Fenton Mansion is ready for the next 100 years.

The Hall House, which the Fenton History Center acquired in 2008 with funds from a restricted New York State Department of Education grant, was renovated to house the research center, & collections and archival management. The Mansion has been freed up of the weight of the research center books, and small collections pieces. They are now at the



The Center expanded adult education programming in 2012. The Brown Bag Lecture series was a great success with interesting speakers and a full classroom the second Wednesday of the month from April through October. The series will continue this year too. If you have a topic you would like to present, or learn about, please let me know. The weekly walking tours really blossomed in 2012. Most of the tour guides were Fenton History Center Trustees. Many new members joined to be able to take part in the tours for a reduced price. This year a new tour will be added to the rotation for a total of five rotating tours throughout the summer months. What a fun and easy way to learn about your community.

The Fenton Board of Trustees has adopted the new three-year strategic plan that will support the growth of the facilities and the programming. Fenton members and Jamestown citizens are encouraged to be a part of the plans. Among the plans is an endowment fund for the future maintenance and operation of the Hall House. It is a historic home on it's own and now it is part of the Fenton's campus. Help us take care of it!

Future plans call for an upgraded and appealing gift shop, new and re-furbished exhibits and an engaging orientation room that will help the visitor know more about the Fentons, the Mansion and Jamestown as they tour the Mansion.

The Fenton is celebrating its 50th year "in business" this year. The Center started as a grassroots group that came together to save Gov. Reuben E. Fenton's home from urban renewal and a year later obtained a New York State Charter from the Department of Education to collect and teach our history. The party starts in May. Stay tuned for your invitation!

Please read Trustee Tom Greer's letter about the Walnut Grove Project. This spring we will begin the first phase of the work to study, document and strive to re-create Governor Fenton's home, Walnut Grove.

I feel we are poised to better serve our past and meet the needs of the future with the building that has been done in 2012.

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**, **and visitors** that make the work worthwhile.

I feel we truly are a team!

Thank you to our donors, grant funders and members for their generosity. Help us celebrate our 50th Anniversary this year. I wish everyone a prosperous and successful 2013!

Sincerely.

Joni Blackman



The Walnut Grove Project



In 2012 the Board of Trustees committed to a multi-year three phase endeavor dubbed the Walnut Grove Project. This consists of an historic landscape study, archaeologic investigation and writing of the definitive biography of Reuben Fenton.

The landscape report should be completed in the near future. Over the summer we collaborated with the University of Buffalo to perform an archaeologic survey of the entire property. Over 700 artifacts were recovered, including a number that are definitely Fenton related. A small portion of

the foundation of the Fenton carriage house was identified as well as a foundation in the presumed location of a former greenhouse. The full archaeologic survey report should be available soon.

Excavation will continue this summer on a limited scale until funding is secured for a full archaeologic study. Watch for further updates as we continue to investigate the history of the Fentons at Walnut Grove.

How you can help! If you have written information, photographs or personal recollections of the property that you would like to share, please call the Fenton History Center at (716)664-6256.

Thank you – Tom Greer, Trustee, Board of Trustees



THE FENTON HISTORY CENTER MISSION STATEMENT - 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 and southern Chautauqua County.

THE FENTON HISTORY CENTER VISION STATEMENT - WHERE WE WANT TO BE

As a trusted steward of the community's heritage, the Fenton History Center – Museum & Research Center will champion the preservation and interpretation of regional history by maintaining the foremost historical center of its kind in southwestern New York. Research based exhibits and innovative programming will inspire people of all ages to enjoy, appreciate, and understand the rich history of Jamestown and the surrounding area, as reflected by the FHC's extensive collection and library holdings. The dedicated staff, membership and Board of Trustees will work together to build a strong, dynamic organization and expand the reach and scope of the FHC's activities.

The Fenton History Center will ensure the preservation of the Fenton Mansion, while providing adequate facilities to meet the growing needs of the organization and the people it serves. A superior regional history and genealogy research center will accommodate local and visiting researchers. The facilities will also afford space for state-of-the-art storage, educational programs, collections management, exhibit preparation, and visitor orientation The staff and Board of Trustees will offer responsible and enthusiastic leadership for the future. Professionally trained, the staff will provide direction in the implementation of current best practices. To strengthen the FHC's ability to accomplish its mission, an informed Board of Trustees will provide additional guidance and strive to secure the fiscal health of the organization for years to come.

The Fenton History Center will also reach beyond the walls of the Fenton Mansion to engage area residents, students, visitors, and institutions with an increasing variety of activities. Off-site, traveling, and web-based exhibits will compliment multi-media in-house exhibits. Web-based technology will enhance the services offered by the library and research center. Whenever possible, the FHC will collaborate with other historical agencies, non-profit organizations, schools, and businesses. The FHC will be recognized as an indispensable asset to the intellectual and cultural life of the surrounding community.

FENTON HISTORY CENTER STAFF

Joni Blackman, Director
Paula Bechmann, Office Manager & Housekeeping
Norman Carlson, Collections Manager
Barbara Cessna, Researcher
Frances Fair, Education Director

Museum Teachers: Julie Hull, Gesele Koehler, Sara Reale

Phoebe Forbes, Volunteer Textile Curator

Karen Livsey, Librarian/Archivist

Jeanne Oag, Event Coordinator





FINANCIAL REPORT 2012

General Operating Income, unrestricted		Actual	Budget
Municipal Assistance	\$	16,000.00	\$ 16,000.00
County Assistance	\$	6,900.00	\$ 7,600.00
Fundraising	\$	27,805.01	\$ 49,250.00
Donations	\$	4,966.14	\$ 6,200.00
CRCF Fund and interest	\$	13,100.18	\$ 11,080.00
Memberships	\$	16,685.00	\$ 31,900.00
Gift Shop sales	\$	5,723.61	\$ 3,000.00
Memorials	\$	1,200.00	\$ 700.00
Earned Income	\$	23,684.67	\$ 26,900.00
Total	\$	116,064.61	\$ 152,630.00
Expenses, Unrestricted			
Payroll Expenses, Administration (incl. all taxes)	\$	62,798.35	\$ 65,598.00
Insurance	\$	5,023.87	\$ 5,600.00
Supplies	\$	1,125.27	\$ 1,000.00
Printing	\$	1,896.28	\$ 1,500.00
Telephone/Internet	\$ \$	1,909.75	\$ 1,700.00
Postage		1,073.78	\$ 1,200.00
Gift Shop	\$	2,585.34	\$ 1,300.00
Advertising & Fundraising	\$ \$	7,192.18	\$ 6,200.00
Maintenance & Repairs		4,094.28	\$ 5,400.00
Education Dept.	\$	13,039.73	\$ 16,764.00
Collections Dept.	\$	14,151.31	\$ 16,765.00
Exhibits Dept.	\$	411.01	\$ 2,000.00
Research Ctr.	\$	8,211.14	\$ 9,053.00
Miscellaneous	\$	4,454.84	\$ 4,625.00
General Operating Expense	\$	127,967.13	\$ 138,705.00
Net Gain/(Loss)	\$	(11,902.52)	\$ 13,925.00

The **loss** at the end of the year is due to a shortfall in fundraising returns and minimal membership recruitment.

The Fenton History Center has three restricted endowment funds at the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation totaling \$152,949.00.

Thank you to all of our members!! Your support is our future.

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.
- 675 people used the library and archives for genealogical and historical research
- Researchers responded to 34 written, 33 e-mail, and 1,478 phone research requests from around the world
- 8,199 unique visits to the library/archive website pages

<u>Librarian/Archivist</u> Karen E. Livsey Researcher Barb Cessna **Volunteer Researchers**

Sharon Terwilliger Kathy Barber Del Mee Harold Bennett Marty Hagstrom

PRESERVING THE COMMUNITY'S PAST



One of the greatest donations to the Fenton collection is a Garfield family (Busti) diary with a contemporary record of the outbreak of the Revolutionary War.

- > Caring for a collection that is the community's cultural heritage.
- 167 separate donations were accessioned and processed in 2012. These collections included approximately 1,800 separate artifacts. 592 collections from previous years were also accessioned, including a 1,900 piece photograph collection from a local real estate office.
- On-going physical maintenance of the Fenton Mansion is a fundamental activity with the brick restoration project being completed by the end of the fall
- With the invaluable help of volunteers and other staff members most of the on-site collections were moved to the Hall House for better storage conditions.
- 2 items were added to the Education collection, 7 items were taken in as loans, 3 items were loaned out for copying.
- 10 requests for photograph reproductions from the FHC collection with 44 photographs processed.
- 2 items were deaccessioned.

Collections Manager Housekeeping Textiles

Norman P. Carlson Paula Bechmann Phoebe Forbes

Volunteers Loretta Smith, Don Lauger, Kate Wescott, Anna Wager, Romana Schaeffer, Pat & Bill Locke

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE THROUGH EDUCATION



Museum Teacher Gesele Koehler leads a holiday tour of the Fenton Mansion.

- ➤ Helping schools meet curriculum goals and providing resources for lifelong learning.
- 10,336 members and non-members took part in various educational programs for all ages; bus tours, Fenton Institute, History Detectives Club, student summer camps, and community events.
- 65 programs were presented to area school students, community groups and special programming for all ages.
- This year the summer campers toured Jamestown two remaining Theaters and learned about the City's rich theater past using the "From Stage to Talkies" exhibit. They performed a memorable vaudeville show!
- The Fenton Education department taught in 8 of the 16 public school districts in Chautauqua County, at the GA Learning Center, and JCC and the Homeschoolers group.
- Over 2,400 members and friends participated in the Fenton events:

Doors Open 2012, the new Brown Bag Lecture Series, the new Walking Tours, Finding Jamestown Scavenger Hunt, Old-Fashion Day, Blue and Gray Civil War encampment, Saints and Sinners Lake View Cemetery Tours and Mausoleum & More Tours, & the "Dear Santa ... exhibit.

<u>Education Director</u> Frances Fair <u>Museum Teachers</u> Gesele Koehler, Julie Hull, Sara Reale

Museum Teacher Julie Hull teaches about Victorian times in the Drawing Room.

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.

"From Stage to Talkies: Jamestown's Theaters"

was about the buildings that bring out the nostalgic feelings of your first movie, your first stage play – over 23 theaters were in Jamestown in the first few decades of the 20th century!



"Dear Santa..." highlighted the evolution of the Santa figure. Exhibits about Santa were placed throughout the Mansion among the traditional festive



Visitors: on-site 3,631 via website 13,408

Give the gift of membership, One size fits all.

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 for Your Support

GRANTS

Operating and Programming Grants:

Chautauqua Region Community Foundation \$9,185

Johnson Foundation \$5,000 R.C.Sheldon Foundation \$20,050 Jesse Smith Darrah Foundation \$3,500

GOVERNOR'S CIRCLE \$1000+

City of Jamestown Chautauqua County George C. Fowler Fund Mr. & Mrs. Robert Plyler Mr. Carl Hagberg Mr. & Mrs. Rod Drake

Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, Reg & Betty Lenna Fund

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Media One Group, WDOE/WKIX, The Post-Journal, The Dunkirk Observer, The Warren Times, Westfield Republican, The Chautauqua Star, The Word, The Jamestown Gazette, The Coffee Exchange, Axiom Business Machines, Jeff at Labyrinth Press Co., Dan Gates at the Frame & Glass Shoppe, Jack Ericson, Tom Goodwill, Bill Lucas, Jim and Ann Buffone, Streetwise Creative Group, Doug Hoisington for Earth Spark, Tops Markets, Harrington Sandberg Architecture & Engineering, Adrienne Ploss, The City of Jamestown Parks Department, Lake View Cemetery Association, Downtown Jamestown Development Corporation, Gary Lynn, BOCES, Jamestown Public Schools, Walgreen's.

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

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SERVING THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM

For every paid staff member 12 people volunteer their time and services.

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Dennis Wright

Robert Plyler Ashley Senske Bonnie Wilson Gary & Betty Dickenson Marilyn Meyers Jim Goodling Don and Gale Lauger The Fenton Staff

Saints and Sinners Lake View **Cemetery Tour Actors & Guides** Lucy Tours @ Lake View Cemetery Fireball Run

Greg Rabb Martha Zenns Marlene Mudge Kate Armbruster Glenn Wahl Skip Anderson

Rick & Patty Lundquist

Ann Thorpe Deacon Pierce Sam Genco Merle Szydlo Traci Langworthy Jennifer Champ Barbara Krudvs Josef Genco Matt & Nolan Kraft Bob Terreberry Hugh Golden Norman Carlson

Patty Lefford Steve Johnson Sue Turnquist

Francis Fair Gesele Koehler

Other David Anderson **Doug Hoisington** Lane Hagberg

Pat & Bill Locke

Julie Hull

Annual Business Meeting

The Annual Business Meeting of the Fenton History Center will be held at 7:30 pm on Wednesday, February 6, 2013 at the Fenton Mansion, 67 Washington St. Jamestown. All current members of the Fenton Historical Society are invited to attend. The membership will be electing Officers to serve the 2013-2014 term.



The Museum Shop

Valentine's Day Cards Valentine's Day gifts

Many Local History Books - Wooden Toys
Children's Books - "Celoron Park" by T. Goodwill

"Jamestown: Postcard Series" by Karen Livsey and Dorothy Levin "Historic Chautauqua County, a Bicentennial History" by Doug Houck Members receive a 10% discount!

THE JAMESTOWN COVERLET MAKES A GREAT WEDDING GIFT!