

2018 Annual Report



FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, CINDY RODGERS

2018 was an exciting year at the Fenton History Center! In June, we debuted our new Furniture Exhibit, paying homage to one of the most important industries to Jamestown's development and history. Later on, to commemorate Veterans Day and the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, the Military Exhibit was expanded, updated, and dedicated to the late Winslow T. Shearman, a local veteran and a substantial donor to the Fenton.

Some of our events got an update or upgrade as well. Halloween festivities were expanded due to the overwhelming success of our first tours in 2017; this year, staff, Board, and volunteers dressed up to thrill and educate about literary monsters. Christmas looked a little different this year featuring scenes and stories from Louisa May Alcott's classic tale, Little Women. Some of our lucky attendees saw these new Christmas displays during sold-out guided, Candlelight tours (using electric candles, only!). Attendance to the Sensory-Safe Santa event doubled from last year.

Our ongoing Walnut Grove Archaeological Project yielded exciting results this summer when a large brick cistern was found buried on the property by our lead on-site archaeologist, Dr. Tom Greer, and his archaeology volunteers. Seven paintings that were formerly part of the Prendergast Library's collection were purchased by local developer Arnold Duke, and loaned to the Fenton, where they are now displayed at the mansion. New Saturday walking tours on topics like the furniture industry in town, genealogy, and Lakeview Cemetery were developed and hosted. There are many exciting new things to see and do at the Fenton!

The Hall House Research Center was also very busy in 2018. The online catalog, which contains a wealth of information unique to the Fenton's collections, was streamlined for enhanced access and browsing. Accessible through the Fenton's website, this continually-updated catalog lets you start your research from your living room! We continued to offer workshops to help researchers begin and continue on with their genealogical journeys, with sessions on Swedish research and DNA particularly well attended. Remember to check your weekly emails to keep on top of future offerings!

The Board of Trustees would like to thank outgoing members, Danielle DeJoy Moss and Dr. Thomas Greer, for their invaluable service.

There are always new things happening at the Fenton History Center! None of our work would be possible, however, without volunteers, members, donors, and the support of our local charitable foundations. Thank you all for your support.



FROM THE DIRECTOR, NOAH GOODLING

What an incredible year 2018 has been! Looking back over it, it's amazing both how quickly the year flew by and how many wonderful events we managed to pack into the time we had. Though I still feel like the "new guy" occasionally, having a full year under my belt has given me a chance to see the breadth and depth of the programs, events, and people at the Fenton History Center, and to appreciate the warmth and inclusivity of our very unique institution.

One of the goals of my first full year here was to spread that spirit of warmth and inclusivity to as much of our community as possible. If someone wants to see the Museum or Research Center, go to our programs, or hear about the exciting work that we're undertaking, I want to make sure that there are no obstacles in their way. Starting on January 1st and continuing all of this past year, thanks to the generous support of our community, we were able to remove one obstacle by making the Museum free for all children under the age of 18, allowing families to visit without worrying about expense. We also made major strides on removing another obstacle, by getting full funding for a wheelchair ramp, fully equipped with a snowmelt-system, for the Museum, which will be completed as soon as construction is viable in 2019. This will allow our entire first floor to be fully ADA-accessible for the first time; work will continue on plans to install an elevator, in hopes that the whole building can be made accessible. Finally, we held our Sensory Santa event again, expanding our previous efforts to reach fully double the number of people as last year. This event allows individuals with sensitivities to light, sound, crowds, or other factors to visit the Museum in a safe environment, and to have an interaction with Santa if they wish. The expansion of that program, along with a wonderful partnership with the Resource Center in

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town, has allowed us to share our history with some fantastic individuals and families who may not have made it in otherwise. We hope they will come back many times in the coming months and years!



A large part of the reason that I am so excited to bring people into the Museum and Research Center is that I know, with confidence, that the experience they will have here will be exemplary. Many of the people who read this report will be familiar with our staff, so their expertise should go without saying—regardless of that, I am going to say it. The people who work for the Fenton are dedicated, passionate, knowledgeable, ambitious, creative, and driven to creating a premium local history experience that is accessible to all ages and capabilities. Everyone on the staff, despite working full weeks and dealing with occasionally hectic lives, volunteers regularly at our events, or contributes to programming for other historical ventures. If one person gets sick or can't make it to work, the remainder do everything in their power to keep tours and shifts covered. The amount of work that gets done by our small team is incredible, and of great benefit to the community.

Beyond the amount, the quality of the work is also excellent. I've been proud to help debut some wonderful new exhibits and programs at the Fenton this year. At the beginning of 2018, our Shiny Bright Retro Holiday was still in full swing, displaying a huge variety of vintage aluminum Christmas trees, and bringing some great mid-century nostalgia. That success was followed in June by the opening of a major new exhibit at the Fenton, "Made in Jamestown," which tells the amazing story of the furniture industry in Jamestown. This exhibit went in the space that was formerly occupied for over 30 years by the Chautauqua Lake Room exhibit. The story of how that room was renovated, taking down an exhibit that had been "built to last" in the words of one of our volunteers, and made to work as a new, more modular space for this exhibit and more to come, is worthy of its own essay at some point. Suffice it to say that, with the incredible support of our community and its volunteers, and with the expert guidance



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of our staff, the long-running Lake Room was converted successfully into the wonderful furniture exhibit that occupies it currently. We also completed a major renovation of our military room, bringing the important stories it tells into a more modern context; this space was dedicated to the memory of Lieutenant Winslow T. Shearman, in recognition of his service to the community and the Fenton in particular.

I could run on for many more pages regarding the fun times and successful moments that we have shared as staff, volunteers, and community here at the Fenton History Center in 2018, but I'll restrain myself to keep this report concise. Please, if anyone reading this is curious to hear more, stop by my office and have a chat with me! It has been a privilege for me to work with and among the people of this great institution for the last year, and I look forward to working on the impressive list of programs and events that we have planned for 2019 and beyond. No matter how you choose to help the Fenton History Center, whether it be through a contribution of time, money, expertise, energy, ideas, or all of the above, I would like to extend a sincere thank you for your efforts and support.

EDUCATION AND EXHIBITS, JENN CHAMP

I am excited to share with you some of the successful curatorial and educational initiatives that the Fenton History Center created in 2018. I was hired as the Director of Education and Exhibits for the museum in December 2017, and I have three important goals that shape our robust three-year plan:

1. Review all museum exhibits, and create, refresh, and redesign exhibits to promote deeper understanding of our collection and mission, greater interactivity, a fuller range of activities, and increased revenue stability.



2. Find new ways to engage teachers and students and overcome challenges that prevent public schools from attending museum programs.
3. Create new programs to encourage return visitors and stimulate audience engagement that inspires wonder, awe and meaningful personal connections.

The staff and volunteers at the Fenton have worked hard this year to break open these goals. In June 2018, with the help of many volunteers and staff, the

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Fenton installed the new exhibit, “Made in Jamestown: How Furniture Built a City.” “Made in Jamestown” is the first large-scale exhibit in many years. The exhibit focuses on community, history, objects as stories, and dialog to achieve a new feel and look for the Fenton. The former “Lake Room” is now set up to rotate exhibits easily, and we expect to change the exhibition every 1 to 2 years.

In December 2018, a group of volunteers, staff, and community partners formed a committee that will run a regional conference for teachers in the fall of 2020. The conference’s theme is “The 19th Amendment: Women’s Suffrage in Chautauqua County.” The conference will take place at St. Luke’s Church in Jamestown, in late October or early November 2020. The conference is a joint effort between the Fenton History Center, Chautauqua County Historical Society, Jamestown Community College, and Jamestown Public Schools. We are also in consultation with Fredonia State, Lily Dale Assembly, and Dunkirk Historical Society. The conference will give regional teachers access to primary sourced lesson plans, produced by local historical organizations, and increase awareness and access to our rich history in Chautauqua County.

Finally, staff and volunteers at the Fenton have created a number of new programs in 2018, but the one that really connected to goal number 3 was our new Halloween program, “Historic Monster Mash: A Literary Haunted House.” The Fenton Mansion was decorated for Halloween, and people, including many families, tour a “haunted house” peopled by famous Victorian and gothic monsters. The stories we featured have a prominent place in Victorian culture, but most important, these stories are still enjoyed today. We had a wonderful turnout, selling out most of the tours, and watching families create memories together, was priceless!

We look forward to further growth in 2019, and can’t wait to see what a New Year brings.



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HALL HOUSE RESEARCH CENTER, BARB CESSNA



The Fenton Research Center remains the “go-to” source for genealogy and local history. That being said, our total of paid research requests has steadily declined as internet resources have become easily accessed from home computers and ipads. This year’s totals were very close to matching last year’s totals, which was a pleasant surprise.

Experienced researchers know they must verify the online hints or risk “barking up the wrong tree”, and we are very fortunate to have amazing pockets of very unique records and resources to help them do just that. The Ancestry and ArkivDigital paid subscriptions are the perfect internet resources for us, as not everyone has a local family they need to research. Both are also very helpful in following even local families back in time. Since Jamestown has had such a prominent population of Swedes, Arkiv makes it possible for researchers to follow their families in Sweden. We are also very blessed to have dedicated volunteers who have various areas of expertise, which compliments all of our resources.

The Library Committee keeps the Genealogy Support Group’s monthly meetings from becoming “just” meetings by infusing intriguing topics which compels our members to keep coming. The Committee also zeroed in on workshops more this year, using the popular topics, and this gives us the opportunity to give more personalized help. The Workshops have been well attended and have been good fundraisers for the Hall House fund.

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We are considering a project to highlight portions of various archival resources online in order to bring more attention to some of our overlooked collections. For instance, a wonderful Civil War collection of Soldier/Veteran cabinet cards which belonged to Henri Le Fevre Brown, could appear in the form of a surname index. These photos include many of the members of Co B of the 72nd Regiment - from early individual photos in uniform to the same Veteran as he aged. Several died during the war, and the early photo is a miracle find. An online index of the names of these Soldier/Veterans would be of great interest, we hope!

Thank you all for your dedication to our mission throughout the year!



COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT, NORMAN CARLSON AND VICTORIA PARKER

126 separate donations were accepted and accessioned in 2018, many of them multiple item donations of artifacts, archival items, photos, and textiles. This compares to 159 in 2017, 184 in 2016 and 142 in 2015. Contrary to previous practice, library items are no longer separately numbered and counted.

76 additional found-in-collection items were accessioned. Seven additional items were accepted and recorded into the Fenton Use collection. Over 900 previously undigitized paper records were

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entered into the PastPerfect program by Cassie Spillane. Nine backlogged items from previous years were also accessioned and cataloged.

118 objects, 114 photos, six archival items, and eight items were further processed into stage two of PastPerfect.

12 temporary custody items and collections were taken in and either accessioned or returned. Most of the returned items were taken for scanning or photographing. Four loans were taken in including the paintings displayed in the mansion meeting room and a Union National chair in the furniture exhibit. We also borrowed an extensive clipping file from the Post-Journal containing material about thousands of Jamestown residents who died prior to 2000. Wayne Leamer has completed the work on one and a half of the 14 drawers bringing it up into the letter C. He is creating search-able PDF files. A name index to these files has previously been prepared by Linda Anderson and our research volunteer, Kathy Barber.

Eight boxes of dangerous nitrate negatives were disposed of.

Two numbers were deaccessioned because of double numbering discovered.

The 1968 and 2000 photo albums of all the intersections of downtown Jamestown, missing for two years or more were recovered.

The Library catalog was converted into PastPerfect and we made the upgrade to PastPerfect 5.0 in April of 2018. Since then the Library Catalog has been made available through the PastPerfect Online site. Vincent Courtney has been volunteering weekly to work on cataloging our backlog of library materials and make them accessible to the public.

Over 9000 scans were completed in 2018 including approximately 4065 photographs. The photograph categories People, Individual; People, Groups; and People, Organizations were completed and returned, and the Transportation, Land; Transportation, Air; and Jamestown Categories were scanned and are in the process of reorganization at the end of the year.



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VETS FINDING VETS PROGRAM, BARB CESSNA

Vets Finding Vets continues to make strides in reaching more Chautauqua County Veterans, and looking back at 2018 is very gratifying.

Here is the year in a nutshell:

VFV hosted 5 Veteran talks – regarding their experiences or those of Veteran family members, 4 of these were held at the Mansion.

3 Events – topics were Veteran Suicide, a look at 6 Local WWII Vets with compelling stories, and a High School graduation and party for a WWII Veteran!

2 bus trips –

- Dunkirk Lighthouse – which has a huge amount of Veteran photos, relics and war related items from all time periods.

- D-Day Conneaut – a great living history trip, well loved by those who have been there before.

Honor Flights for mostly WWII and Korea Veterans, but Vietnam Vets are accepted also.

- April Honor Flight – 8 Vets

- Oct Honor Flight – 5 Vets (sent in 14 applications though)

Patriot Guard and Brothers By Choice Riders have been present to see the HF Veterans off on their “trips of a lifetime”, and it has been a great addition to the festivities.



Honor Flight - Departure Fenton History Center
October 20, 2018

We have had 2 HF Reunions – getting together 17 past HF Vets (from all 3 flights we have been involved with) who desperately love seeing each other.

The Honor Flight applications and preparations take a lot of time, but the benefits to the Vets and everyone's hearts will keep me doing this till I die.

I was invited to speak about Honor Flights on 2 occasions – at Jamestown Morning Rotary and the Rosch Center at LSS, was invited to share VFV info at Bergman Park on Labor Day and JCC on Veteran's Day.

Our monthly Fenton Canteen has reached 108 Veterans (not all at one time!) this year, and we were so honored to meet the CEO of the National Honor Flight Network. He has local roots and was going to be in Jamestown for Veteran's Day weekend, so his parents called to ask if he could come to talk about HF. ABSOLUTELY! He had a good crowd, and he and everyone else had a great time.

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Goals for 2019 are:

Our first goal is to have Fenton Canteen in the meeting room at the Fenton Mansion once the new ramp is in place!

It is always my goal to spread the talks and events to cover Modern, Vietnam, Korea and WWII Veterans, but more often than not we fall into great stories or opportunities having to do with older Vets. Since they are in their 80's and 90's – time is of the essence and hearing them tell their own stories is always preferable, but I do continue to look for younger Vet stories. As with older stories, these are a unique opportunity to document Chautauqua County's rich Veteran history.

I am drilling down harder on Vietnam Vets and also am specifically looking for WWII Nurses, WACS and WAVES. Know any?

We have begun building a group of people interested in being an Honor Flight Guardian for those of our Vets who don't have a family member to accompany them. Three have signed up and 2 more are in the process, and the next flight isn't until May 4th!

Also, at the December Honor Flight Reunion Luncheon, we met the president of the AMVETS Riders, who has offered their services to provide escorts for Honor Flights from Jamestown to Buffalo and reverse. He is also promising some of them will be HF Guardians!

The Chautauqua Region Community Foundation has already supported the Vets Finding Vets program since 2015 with 2 grants, and I am hopeful they will do so again this spring. The grant pays me for Wed's 7 hours, and I pay for my supplies and VFV needs through that pay. No bus trips or events are included in those hours to pay me unless they take place on Weds.

The Modern Warfare Memorial website, begun a year ago, is not a Vets Finding Vets project, but the people I meet and work with add to my contact list. We are hopefully wrapping this up in the next few weeks, and the photos and descriptions of these young soldiers have already been included in the new Military Exhibit.



Although my contacts with these families have been heart wrenching, as they are all still in varying stages of mourning, that contact has truly been my honor. Once the web designer finishes his work on the site, we will have an evening get together with all of the families. Most of them do not know each other, and this will be a good way for them to meet and get to know each other's sacrifices for our

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country by seeing the website first hand. Jamie Probst from Hospice plans to come and talk to them a bit about grief counseling. My hope is that they will continue to get together periodically and be their own best support group.

FENTON HISTORY CENTER STAFF

Noah Goodling, Executive Director

Victoria Parker, Collections Assistant/Museum teacher

Norman Carlson, Collections Manager

Barbara Cessna, Head of Library; Vets Finding Vets Program Coordinator

Phoebe Forbes, Volunteer Textile Manager

Paula Bechmann, Office Manager & Housekeeping

Jennifer Champ, Director of Education and Exhibits

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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| | | 2018 | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------------------|
| | | Actual | Budget |
| General Operating Income, unrestricted | | | |
| Municipal Assistance | \$ | 16,000.00 | \$ 16,000.00 |
| County Assistance | \$ | 10,000.00 | \$ 8,000.00 |
| Fundraising | \$ | 23,401.60 | \$ 43,300.00 |
| Donations | \$ | 17,566.94 | \$ 19,219.78 |
| CRCF Fund and interest | \$ | 19,257.21 | \$ 17,597.18 |
| Memberships | \$ | 19,923.01 | \$ 24,500.00 |
| Gift Shop sales | \$ | 4,744.23 | \$ 7,000.00 |
| Memorials | \$ | 52,576.70 | \$ 250.00 |
| Earned Income | \$ | 12,638.85 | \$ 13,650.00 |
| Grant Funding | \$ | 47,220.75 | \$ 75,000.00 |
| Hall House operating expenses | \$ | 6,750.00 | \$ 7,500.00 |
| Total | \$ | 230,079.29 | \$ 232,016.96 |
| Expenses, Unrestricted | | | |
| Payroll Expenses, Administration | \$ | 70,374.09 | \$ 75,599.44 |
| Insurance includes health | \$ | 10,871.08 | \$ 14,305.56 |
| Supplies | \$ | 1,528.97 | \$ 1,050.00 |
| Printing | \$ | 404.77 | \$ 1,000.00 |
| Telephone/Internet | \$ | 1,763.97 | \$ 2,020.32 |
| Postage | \$ | 412.96 | \$ 1,300.00 |
| Gift Shop | \$ | 1,848.82 | \$ 1,500.00 |
| Advertising & Fundraising | \$ | 5,847.22 | \$ 5,100.00 |
| Maintenance & Repairs | \$ | 7,111.23 | \$ 5,432.04 |
| Hall House utilities, maintenance | \$ | 7,748.95 | \$ 7,410.00 |
| Education Dept. | \$ | 29,474.58 | \$ 34,217.00 |
| Collections Dept. | \$ | 32,260.98 | \$ 32,057.00 |
| Exhibits Dept. | \$ | 4,497.77 | \$ 36,000.00 |
| Research Ctr. | \$ | 7,815.21 | \$ 5,750.00 |
| Vets Finding Vets | \$ | 10,708.54 | \$ 2,575.00 |
| **Misc. website, miscellaneous | \$ | 4,761.52 | \$ 6,700.60 |
| General Operating Expense | \$ | 197,457.66 | \$ 232,016.96 |
| Net Gain/(Loss) | \$ | 32,621.63 | |

*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 13 people volunteer their time and services.
The research center volunteers averaged over 180 hrs. per month!

Board Officers 2018

Cynthia Rodgers,
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Michael Rohlin,
Vice President

Andrew Kolstee,
Secretary

Angelo Cimo, Treasurer

Danielle DeJoy Moss

Richard Lundquist

David Painter

Kurt Johnson

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Thomas Greer, M.D.

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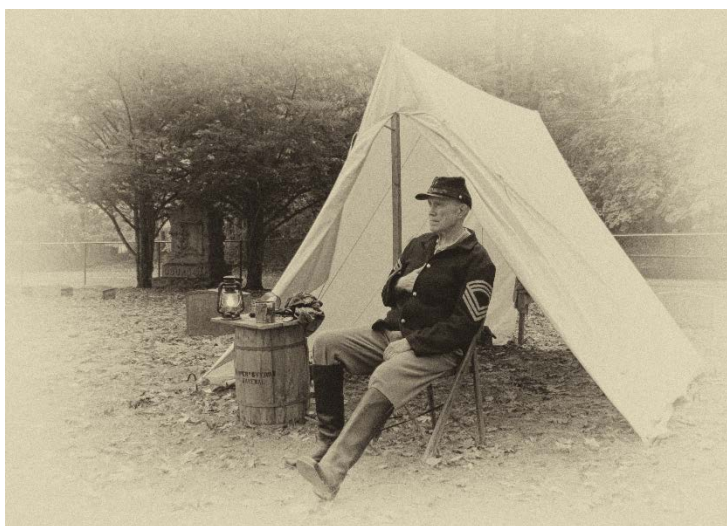
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Harry Blose
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Amanda Brainard
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Norman Carlson
Barbara Cessna
Jennifer Champ
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Ang Cimo
John Collins
Vincent Courtney
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Hugh Golden
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