I always appreciate this time of year at the Fenton History Center. While it’s difficult to acknowledge that the end of summer is swiftly approaching (in fact, I don’t think I will acknowledge it for another few weeks...), this is a part of the year that comes with a lot of anticipation for me. We’re hitting full-steam with our planning for the Saints & Sinners tours in Lake View Cemetery, we’re looking ahead to next year’s events and seasonal exhibits, and we’re thinking about all the fun that we’ll have at Halloween and Christmas this year.

Despite the prodigious amount of work that goes into putting together the Saints & Sinners tours, I look forward to the good vibes they bring to the Fenton every year. It’s one of the few programs we run where I get to dust off my historical research skills and really immerse myself in primary source investigation. I got my start in museums on the historical collections and research side, so I appreciate the opportunities that come my way to set aside budgets and strategy documents for a moment and embrace the interesting, inspiring, and sometimes very weird history of our area. We haven’t fully set which stories we’re using yet, but some of the possibilities so far include Civil War soldiers, Jamestown bombing sprees, industrialists, early settlers, fires in scandalous places, and perhaps a murder or two.

The tours are also a great opportunity to connect with many of our volunteers, and to show off the skilled individuals in our community. This event requires the support of dozens of volunteers (if you reading this would like to be involved, please reach out to me at director@fentonhistorycenter.org or by calling 716-664-6256 – we can always use more help!). I am always humbled by the level of commitment our volunteers bring to this event, giving so much of their time and energy to us to learn their parts, embody these figures...
of the past, and/or lead our audiences through the twisting maze of the cemetery. There are also volunteers who help with set-up and tear-down, or who sell tickets and concessions at the main gate. After years of me spending hours each October creating make-shift luminaries from white paper bags, tea lights, and loose gravel, a volunteer in 2019 bought “real” reusable luminaries for us and has set herself to the task of putting them out for me each year, and picking them up afterwards. Gestures like that are a big part of what make this event special for me – I feel incredibly fortunate each year to have such a supportive community here.

Finally, the tours are fun because of the enthusiasm of all of you! Paula, the Fenton’s Office Manager, and I always brace ourselves a little as August begins, as we wait for the deluge of phone calls looking for details about the tours, and seeking to buy tickets. This year, we have decided to do things a little differently. Tickets are currently for sale for the tours, and this newsletter is the first place that we’re advertising that fact – we want to reward those of you who choose to follow our updates so closely with first dibs on tickets. There is a poster further on in this newsletter that has all the dates and times for the event, so please look it over and give us a call at 716-664-6256 if you’d like to reserve a spot. Once we let people know that the tickets are for sale, we will sell out of some spots quickly, particularly the carriage tours, so take advantage of your head start!

I’m looking forward to getting to share more of Jamestown’s unique history with all of you at the Saints & Sinners tours this year. I’m usually bouncing around putting out fires (hopefully metaphorical ones!) during the tours, but if you see me, please say hello and let me know how you’ve been. Programs like this are so wonderful because they bring our community together, and I think that’s something I could use even more than usual this year.

CALL FOR BOARD MEMBERS!

by Noah Goodling
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Fenton is looking for new Board members! Would you like to get involved with the decisions that affect the preservation and remembrance of history in our community? Then this is the right Board for you! Our Board classifies itself as a “working Board,” so anyone selected will be expected to volunteer their time and expertise periodically throughout the year, and those on the Board are required to be Fenton members and over the age of 18. We encourage people from all walks of life, and all levels of experience, so if you have any interest at all, please reach out and let’s have a conversation!

Anyone interested can contact the Fenton’s Executive Director, Noah Goodling, at director@fentonhistorycenter.org, or by calling 716-664-6256.

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The Fenton History Center presents the 16th Annual Saints & Sinners Cemetery Tours and Mausoleum & More Tours at Lake View Cemetery in Jamestown at the corner of Buffalo St and Lakeview Ave. Hear Costumed Actors tell revealing stories about Jamestown's famous- and infamous- former residents.

**Carriage Tours**
Saturday October 9th
3, 4, & 5pm  
and  
Saturday October 16th
6, 7 & 8pm
Tickets $20

**Walking Tours**
Saturday, October 9th  
6pm-10pm  
and  
Saturday, October 16th  
3 pm-6 pm  
Tours starting every 30 minutes

$10 adults presale/$2 children  
(Adults at the gate $12)  
Fenton Members ONLY $5
Join Now!  
Group sizes will be limited!

**Mausoleum and More Tours**
Back by Popular Demand.
Sunday, October 17th, 2021
8 pm
Learn about the "residents" of Lakeview Cemetery's Mausoleums in this behind-the-scenes tour.

Events sell out fast! Buy your tickets now.
Tickets available at Fenton History Center- 67 Washington Street
(Rte. 60 and Main St.)- Jamestown NY
For Information and Reservations call (716)664-6256 or visit www.fentonhistorycenter.org
There are only 3 walking tours left this summer! Join us on Saturday August 7th for the Lucy themed tour of Downtown Jamestown led by Fenton History Center Board Member Mike Rohlin. Tour meets at the Fenton History Center at 10 am. On August 21 the new and improved Riverwalk Walking Tour, Led by Fenton History Center Volunteer Amanda Brainard will meet in front of the National Comedy Center and take a tour along the riverwalk. September 4th the Allen Park waking tour will meet at Allen Park at 10 am. The tour, covering the history of Allen Park, will be led by Fenton History Center Board Member Janet Wahlberg and feature some special guest speakers along the way.

A summer Virtual Paint Night is scheduled for Thursday August 26th at 7pm. We will be painting a summer time painting, catching fireflies. Pick up a painting kit at the Fenton Giftshop for only $20 and join us from the comfort of your home via Zoom to paint!

We are looking forward to our fall events! The Saints and Sinners Cemetery Tours are back! October 9th and 16th. Tickets are now available for sale by calling the Fenton History Center at 716-664-6256.

We are also seeking vendors for our Fenton Christmas Market, featuring all hand made or vintage christmas items on November 13th. If you are interested in becoming a vendor at the Fenton Christmas Market please contact me at collections@fentonhistorycenter.org.
FENTON VIRTUAL PAINT NIGHT

For $20 we provide everything you need to paint this, including the 8"x10" canvas. Call the Fenton or stop in to reserve your spot!

Join us via Zoom to paint the picture above

AUG. 26TH 7PM

Call 716-664-6256 to register and stop by the Fenton Gift Shop to pick up your kit!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US AT (716)664-6256
Follow us on social media for more great local history content!
On July 31, 2021, the new website for the Fenton History Center was officially launched! This was the first major upgrade of the website in about five years, which is part of a larger project to modernize and streamline the Fenton’s digital platforms and presence. Ever since joining the Board of Trustees at the Fenton, I have wanted to help upgrade the website, but didn’t find the time until earlier this year when I sat down with Noah Goodling and Victoria Parker and we discussed a lot of opportunities we have for upgrades.

The new website features a modern design that is friendly for mobile devices and includes more photography to provide a more visual representation of the Fenton Mansion and Hall House. There is a new and improved events calendar, which will also allow us to handle event registration and bookings online for the first time. Many of the pages have been streamlined and organized to help visitors get the information they need quicker.

This is just the beginning of the new website, as there are plans to roll out more features to better provide information on local history, information on the Fenton’s education programming, as well as more ways to support the Fenton. The Board of Trustee’s new Communications Committee has discussed a lot of these project. New upgrades to the Fenton’s digital presence will be announced as soon as they are ready!

As this is part of a larger project for modernization and streamlining, I will also mention that recently the Fenton’s logo and color schemes were streamlined, and you may have noticed the use of blue/gold logo on all the Fenton’s social media platforms. These color schemes are also used in the Fenton’s monthly newsletter, The Walnut Grove Press.

In addition to more website features in the future, the Communications Committee has discussed ideas for streamlining email marketing, managing data and information, and other ideas to reach the community regarding historical preservation and educational programming, especially through technology.

Check out the new Fenton website at www.fentonhistorycenter.org and if you have any feedback or anything you would like to see on the website, feel free to contact us using the form on the contact page of the website or email admin@fentonhistorycenter.org!
One of the ways you can support the Fenton History Center is through our Amazon Wishlist. Of course we accept gifts purchased in other places, or monetary donations too!

www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/1PU3BVS0HQ5E0
The Fenton History Center’s Genealogy Support Group serves to support both experienced and amateur researchers. 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. Meetings are also often held via Zoom.

*The upcoming New England Workshops are the fourth and fifth in a series of six on the topic.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Wednesday, August 25, 2021 @ 6:30 PM**  
Holland Land Company Records  
*presented by Karen Livsey*

**Saturday, September 11, 2021 @ 10:30 AM**  
New England Workshop IV: Online Resources*  
*presented by Janet Wahlberg*

**Saturday, September 25, 2021 @ 10:30 AM**  
New England Workshop V: Town Records*  
*presented by Rhonda Hoffman*

**Wednesday, September 29, 2021 @ 6:30 PM**  
WorldCat and Interlibrary Loan  
*presented by Vince Courtney*
This month I’m discussing a class of items we typically reject and do not take into the collection, but something that is of universal interest to both local historians and genealogists: newspapers. We are offered single editions (as opposed to bound volumes) of newspapers frequently. Several times a year we are offered copies of the Jamestown Post-Journal and sometimes Buffalo papers or the New York Times reporting the Kennedy assassination, the moon landing, or, most commonly of all, the end of World War II. We do not take these for three reasons: 1.) we are chartered as the local history museum for Jamestown and southern Chautauqua County and we must allocate our space and efforts to that subject area leaving national topics to those better qualified, 2.) these papers are photographed on microfilm and readily available online and in libraries, 3.) it is effectively impossible, in the absence of very costly, specialized facilities, to prevent newspapers from crumbling to flakes in a few years or decades.

Chautauqua County’s first great local historian, Elial T. Foote, tried to collect complete runs of all the newspapers in Chautauqua County in the 19th century. The collection came to the Prendergast Library not long after it opened in 1891 and there it stayed for many years. The Journal, itself, had kept copies of its back issues but the early ones were lost in the great fire of 1861. Many local historians used the library collection intensively. Helen McMahon, author of the much admired 1958 Chautauqua County: A History, read every issue of most of the 19th century and took notes. Several of the mid 20th century local lake and rail historians such as Martin Arend, Victor Norton, Sr., and VanDyke Underwood combed the volumes and hand copied everything of interest to themselves. Clayburne Sampson, Rupert Loucks, Malcolm Nichols, and Jack Ericson studied them from a more wide ranging perspective.

In the 1960’s the library had the collection microfilmed. After that, it had no further interest in the bulky and difficult to preserve originals. The filming apparently was not exhaustive and both the workmanship and technical capabilities of the equipment were not up to modern standards. For whatever reasons, most of the smaller and shorter run 19th century county papers are lost. Of those papers that are preserved, clippings, whole issues, even months or whole years are sometimes missing. Online outlets, for whatever reason, may lack pages, issues or even years of papers that are available on microfilm. This on top of the fact that, the fabulous “Old Fulton” newspaper site notwithstanding, many whole communities are not represented at all because they were not collected by Foote or were published after he left the area. A year and two months of the mid 20th century Jamestown Sun are missing on microfilm. Fenton has bound volumes of August and November, 1963, otherwise the Jamestown Star is utterly gone. Prendergast Library has, on microfilm, the Jamestown Post from 1915. It began publication in 1902. None of the Post is online. No Lakewood newspapers have ever been microfilmed and I’m sure the same is true for several other 20th century short run small town local papers.

From 1979 to 1982, under auspices of the Chautauqua County Historical Society, a major project of finding and filming rare and scattered copies of Chautauqua County newspapers was undertaken. This scooped up stray and little known sheets from across the county and made them widely available on 147 reels of microfilm. There were some strange things about the project: papers filmed from outside the listed publication date range and such. Items Foote had apparently not collected were found. But the Jamestown Post, the Sun, and the Star, just for example, were not filmed or even mentioned. To my knowledge, none of these mi-

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microfilms has been placed online. The masters were placed at Ashville BOCES where they were recently rediscovered and sent to the New York State Library. A full set of reading copies is at Patterson Library, Westfield.

Fenton also has some actual issues of the several Jamestown Swedish language papers and a larger collection on microfilm containing most of these papers.

The American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts has a major mission of housing and preserving (under the best conditions), American newspapers up to 1876. Sixteen years ago we conveyed our considerable collection of earlier original bound volumes to them in return for well done microfilms. Long before that our volunteers extracted genealogical information from the collection into a large card file. For a number of years there was a national program to locate and preserve early newspapers. New York’s program was particularly vigorous. The Chautauqua County Genealogical Society has been active in extracting and indexing both Jamestown and smaller locality newspapers.

The Optical Character Recognition programs used to search newspapers online, at best, are not as skilled at reading as an intelligent human being. When faced with stained, discolored, or torn papers, scratchy film, and older fonts, they are abysmal.

Fenton has quite a few bound newspaper volumes, both 19th (After 1876) and 20th century from a variety of sources. About once every five years we get something we keep because it is not available anywhere else. Recently we received three bound volumes: the Post Journal for parts of 1944 and 1945, and the Evening Journal for half of 1892. The 1944 and 1945 issues are available on microfilm and online. The 1892 volume is being examined carefully. It is available on microfilm and was part of the CCGS human extraction project but it is not available online. We wish we had volunteers who could check it against the microfilm for quality and any missing issues or clippings. The pages are very delicate and in poor condition but they are alive with the throb, passion, tragedy and joy, surprise and humor of the human saga.

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**Fall 2021 Genealogy Workshops**

The New England Genealogy Workshops will continue in the Fall with the following programs.

- **Part IV: Online Resources for New England Research** (Sept. 11, 2021)
- **Part VI: Resources of the New England Historic Genealogical Society** (Nov. 20, 2021)

**Non-Members:** $20 per session or $100 for all 6 sessions*

**Members:** $10 per session or $50 for all 6 sessions*

All sessions are held in-person at the Hall House Research Center and on Zoom. Each session begins at 10:30 a.m. and is finished by 12:30 p.m. In-person participants are asked to wear a mask during the workshops. Space is limited. Please call the Fenton History Center at 716-664-6256 to reserve your spot.

* Recordings of the first three sessions, “Formation and Settlement of New England,” “Migration Out of New England,” and “Local Resources for New England Research” are available to those who paid for the workshops individually or all 6 sessions as a whole.
Many of our members know that one of VFV’s most popular events has been the twice annual Honor Flight through the Buffalo Niagara Honor Flight hub. In the fall of 2019, it was announced that May 16th, 2020, would be the next flight.

Since I am always “recruiting” with the next Honor Flight in mind, I was already forming a list of interested Veterans and whether they had filled out and returned their applications or not. I scan and email the applications to my HF Veteran coordinator, and then mail a hard copy to cover all of the bases.

By February 2020, that sinking feeling of impending doom was hanging over everyone involved, but especially the Veterans who were excitedly waiting for May 16 to arrive. They were all devastated when we received the news that the flight was postponed until fall of 2020. Of course, that flight was postponed until spring of 2021, and then that flight was postponed until fall. We have a date of Oct 9th, and we are hopeful that the Covid-19 variant will attack itself and go away.

As it stands now, only the Veterans and their guardians who had received word that they had made “the list”, are scheduled for this flight. The HF Network has needed to follow restrictions for optimum caution for keeping everyone safe. We will need to distance and therefore, only 4 of the 10 Veterans who have been waiting is actually on the flight. The two WWII Veterans will be able to go only if there are any cancellations.
Walking Tours

$10 per person
$5 for Fenton History Center members
Children 17 & under: FREE

Masks and social distancing are heavily encouraged for these tours. For more information or to reserve your spot, call 716-664-6256.

Virtual Brown Bag Lectures

This year’s lectures focus on underserved and underrecognized populations in and around Jamestown and Chautauqua County.

August 11th: Noah Goodling, Executive Director of the Fenton History Center, on George Lawn and the Original Human Rights Commission.
September 8th: Deb Long, President of the Jamestown/Warren Deaf Club, on the history of the local deaf community, and advocacy for it.
October 13th: Tom Greer, Fenton Archaeology Director, on the 2021 archaeological dig results.

Second Wednesdays of the month at noon
Held via Zoom and Facebook Live
Now Available in our Giftshop:

History In a Box Club kits contain all you need for some good, history-inspired fun. **Spring 2021 Aviation Themed** boxes are available for only $20 in the Fenton Gift Shop. **Summer 2021 boxes coming soon!**

Recommended for age 7 and up for reading comprehension, or younger with adult guidance.
Protest and Pride: The LGBTQ+ Community in Chautauqua County

Introducing the 2021 feature exhibit. Learn about the history of the LGBTQIA+ community in Chautauqua County and hear stories from community members about their experiences in Jamestown and Chautauqua County.

Exhibit opens March 31st 2021 and runs through October of 2021

Visit us Monday through Saturday 10-4
Admission $10 adults
Members and Children 17 & under free!

Fenton History Center
67 Washington St
Jamestown NY 14701
www.fentonhistorycenter.org
Many of you know Joni and all that she has done for the Fenton History Center. Even though she has moved on to new frontiers, she still gives a ton of time to the Fenton. Why I volunteer at the Fenton History Center. Many of the current activities at the Fenton got their start under her direction. Thank you for all that you have done and all that you continue to do. And now to hear from Joni.

The Fenton holds a special place in my life. It is the place that gave me my professional start. I believe strongly in the mission of saving our past. I may not be a collector, historian, or archivist, but I know the value of all the hard work, ingenuity and teamwork that goes into making a small-town historical society successful.

While I have since moved on to other positions, I like to help where I can. If I can lead a walking tour, assist with the Saints and Sinners Cemetery Tours, or create a finding aid for one of the many collections in the special collections – I will. It takes a boatload of volunteers to make a Society work. Everyone fits in somewhere. Everyone is needed.

My current project, which was sidelined by the pandemic, is organizing, and creating a finding aid for former Mayor Teresi’s photograph collection from his years in office. It was interesting to see the variety of groups that he met with, the years of Boy Scouts who sat behind his desk on Government Day, and the weddings he performed over the years. There are also many images of his work with the New York Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officers where he served as President. I look forward to meeting with Mayor Teresi to discuss the missing information and finishing the project.

Joni Blackman