



FENTON
HISTORY CENTER



2025 Annual Report

of the Fenton Historical Society of Jamestown, New York

67 Washington Street, Jamestown, NY
(716) 664-6256 www.FentonHistoryCenter.org

Operated by the Fenton Historical Society of Jamestown, NY
Chartered by the Board of Regents of the State of New York

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Gov. Reuben E. Fenton Mansion

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Fenton Mansion, located at 67 Washington Street in Jamestown, New York, is a landmark, lending distinction and elegance to the passing scene. In its continuing mission as the center for education and preservation of a unique local heritage, it is a valuable cultural institution in the city of Jamestown, New York.

The Fenton History Center operates a museum within the family home of Reuben E. Fenton (1819-1885), U.S. Congressman (1853-1864), New York State Governor (1864-1869) and U.S. Senator (1869-1875), and research center, library, and archives in the adjacent Hall House property. The Hall House is accessible by a private redbrick walkway. A private parking lot is available at both locations.

Reuben Eaton Fenton commissioned local Architect Aaron Hall to design and build the Fenton Mansion in 1863. The Fenton family home has served as the local history center in Southern Chautauqua County since 1964 and was formally recognized by the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. The mansion is of the Italian villa style, reminiscent of the mid-19th century.

Present day, the museum embraces its original authenticity by featuring a number of period rooms, its mission to preserve of history at the local and national level and through its educational programming and its dedication to veterans.

Located at 67 Washington Street in Jamestown, New York, the Fenton Mansion houses the Fenton History Center's museum and gift shop.

William Hall House Research Center

In addition to housing an impressive museum within the family home of Reuben E. Fenton, the Fenton History Center owns and operates a full functioning research center, located 73 Forest Avenue in the historic Hall House. The Hall House is situated adjacently from the Fenton Mansion and is accessible by a private redbrick walkway. A private parking lot is available at both locations.

The Hall House was constructed for William Hall in 1846. Hall was a businessman and proprietor in the lumber industry before changing his course to focus on textiles.

At one point in his career, he partnered with William Broadhead and Joseph Turner to create Hall, Broadhead, & Turner Textile Mills. The company later changed ownership to Hall & Company, and later was known as, the Jamestown Worsted Mills.

In 2013, the stately, four-pillared, Greek revival home made its formal debut to the public as the Fenton History Center's Research Center. This location is the home of the Fenton Genealogy Support Group. The Hall House is handicap accessible and service dog-friendly.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Board of Trustees for the 2025-2026 Term

Thomas Goodwill President

Janet Wahlberg Vice President

Paul Bentley Secretary

Sam Papaserge Treasurer

Marie Carrubba Trustee

Angelo Cimo Trustee

Kaycee Colburn Trustee

Hannah Jaroszynski Trustee

James Jaroszynski Trustee

Richard Lundquist Trustee

Sharon Matson Trustee

William Reynolds III City Representative



From Left to Right: Sam Papaserge, James Jaroszynski, Hannah Jaroszynski, Kaycee Colburn, Marie Carrubba, Janet Wahlberg, Paul Bentley, Richard Lundquist, Thomas Goodwill, Angelo Cimo

Not Pictured: Sharon Matson, William Reynolds III

STAFF

Joni Blackman Executive Director

Andrew Kolstee Office Manager

Matthew Tsitso Archivist/Curator

Barbara Cessna Hall House Manager

/ Vets Finding Vets Coordinator



From Left to Right:
Andrew Kolstee, Joni Blackman, Matthew Tsitso, Barbara Cessna

VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to everyone who donated their time in 2025. The following is a list of volunteers for 2025. This includes anyone who regularly volunteers on a weekly basis, event volunteers, and project volunteers.

Rose Mary Allen
Nancy Barkstrom
Paul Bentley
Kathleen Barber
Peter Bentley
Neil Bianco
Joni Blackman
Karlle Blodien
Norman Carlson
Marie Carrubba
Barbara Cessna
Angelo Cimo
Kaycee Colburn
John Collins
Vincent Courtney
Cynthia Dustin
Karl Erb
Jack Ericson
Melvin Feather
Nelson Garifi
Samuel Genco
Judi Goerke
Hugh Golden
Thomas Goodwill
Carly Gould
Sally Greer

Thomas Greer
John Gustafson
Stevan Hatfield
Julie Hull
Karina Izaguirre
Hannah Jaroszynski
James Jaroszynski
Alvan Johnson
Kurt Johnson
Paul Johnson
Marcia Kleinert
Andrew Kolstee
Alex Latone
Wayne Leamer
Karen Livsey
Patricia Lundquist
Richard Lundquist
Aiden Malloy
Patricia Martonis
Vincent Matonis
Sharon Matson
Sue Ellen Nelson
Tim Nobles
R. James Olson
Sam Papaserge
Jed Phillips

Deacon Pierce
Patricia Portale
William Reynolds III
Dennis Robbins
Cynthia Rodgers
Michael Rohlin
Richard Roll
Donna LaMonica Sample
Ashley Senske
Douglas Scotchmer
Carol Shephard
Gene Smith
Loretta Smith
Ann Thorpe
Matthew Tsitso
Barbara Tramonte
Millie Torres-Ruiz
Sherry Vesotski
Gayle Vossler
Glenn Wahl
Janet Wahlberg
James Wahlberg
Fletcher Ward
Remington Whitcomb

76
Volunteers

7,400+
Volunteer Hours

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

JONI BLACKMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Something **great** is about to happen here at the Fenton History Center.

The Fenton will be unveiling the nuts and bolts of the Vision 2030 Campaign at the Annual meeting on Sunday, February 1, 2026 at 2 p.m. The campaign is not only to raise the funds to expand our sorely needed third building for work and gallery space, but also to expand our monthly fundraising capability. The Fenton History Center is at a place where the organization needs to grow into the needs of the community. I know you will be there to help.

You have been hearing about the Fenton Mansion's roof replacement need for years. Working with the Mayor's office, Parks Department and the Department of Public Works, a plan has been put in place to fund the million dollars plus project.

This past year the Publications Committee was able to make some ground on the long-awaited biography of our namesake, Governor Reuben E. Fenton. The book will be a reality by the 2026 holiday season. I believe you will be very surprised when you read it. He was influential wherever he served, from his hometown of Frewsburg to Washington, D.C. and across Europe. The Governor has affected our lives, even 150 years later.

Another important project gaining steam is the Chadakoin Valley History Project. Local historian Patricia Graves has the

connections and skills to uncover the history of the Black population in Jamestown. Her focus is from the 1930s forward, however she has already uncovered other important facts from earlier times. The Fenton is the project's non-profit business partner and collections manager. Volunteers are scanning materials (in the Fenton's impressive scan lab) gathered by Ms. Graves' team to build an online repository of Jamestown's black residents and their contributions to our city and region. The materials will be archived here at the Fenton for future generations.

Thank you to the members of the Board of Trustees for their time and dedication to the Fenton's mission. All the members were engaged throughout the year attending meetings (99% attendance rate!), committee meetings, workdays at the mansion & research center, assisting at events and bringing new sponsors to the table. They are a great group that works well together.

I must commend our small but mighty staff for their hard work and dedication to our mission. With the support of many volunteers, we have made great headway in our collections management, day-to-day programming and overall efficiency. From Barbara Cessna's Vets Finding Vets events that bring veterans together and gather their stories to Matthew Tsitso's work organizing a large backlog of donations to Andrew Kolstee's technology leadership and attention to detail – we are meeting our strategic goals. And having a good time!

81
Programs

2,500+
Program Attendees

320+
K-12 Students

31
Paid Research Requests

293
Donors

274
Library Visitors

1,117
Museum Visitors

I look forward to a tremendous year ahead. We will be adding an educator to our staff, reaching more children and adults, teaching about our local history. We will be making our Vision 2030 come alive for the entire community's benefit!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

THOMAS GOODWILL, PRESIDENT

We've closed out 2025, and it's a good time to take stock of what we've accomplished. Our day-to-day operations are noteworthy on their own: cataloging, scanning, cleaning, repairing our collections, assisting researchers, providing services to veterans, and more.

2025 saw the continuation of cemetery tours and walking tours. The Saints & Sinners cemetery tours have completed two decades, and has grown so much that we created a committee to help share the load.

We managed to raise enough funds to allow for the placement of a headstone for an early Jamestown historian, Arthur Wellington Anderson. That one was of personal interest to me, since I'm known to haunt cemeteries, and firmly believe that everyone should be remembered with a marker.

You may have noted that we're STILL working on the biography of Governor Reuben Eaton Fenton. The project grew over the year, and our Publications Committee chose to do it RIGHT, rather than FAST.

We reviewed and updated our Employee Handbook, and changed two part-time employees to full-time employees with



benefits. The Board felt it only right to elevate their status.

We continue to follow the outline provided by our Strategic Planning Committee, to enable and guide us to reach our goals. The summer was the 80th anniversary of a devastating tornado in Jamestown, so we developed a display in commemoration of the event. We now have a permanent video display on the topic.

The summer also provided the opportunity to thank our wonderful volunteers with a picnic. These volunteers keep us in operation (see above) and go above and beyond. There was a massive clean-out at the Fenton Mansion, as junk had accumulated in the basement. Much cleaning and waterproofing has

been done at the Hall House as well. Over a TON (literally!) of archive boxes were moved from the second floor to the dry basement.

In August, the Fenton participated in a county-wide History Fair, held at the Fluvanna Community Church.

Our outdoor activities, like gardening, and lawn-care, and even archeology, have been put on hold for now, but we still have things humming indoors!

We're looking ahead to an exciting 2026!

COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT REPORT

MATTHEW TSITSO, ARCHIVIST/CURATOR

In 2025 the Fenton History Center accessioned 280 collections. Additionally, this past year 153 items were deaccessioned. In working with Cindy Dustin and Barbara Tramonte, they found items in the textile collection that do not fit the collections policy or were damaged.

This year we took in two very large collections. The first large collection was a donation from the now closed Jamestown Business College. The donation included photographs, yearbooks from 1969-1997, two 1950s scrapbooks and assorted ephemera items. Thank you to Chrissy Conklin, who organized the donation and was generous with her time to meet with the Fenton staff and volunteers so JBC's lives on in our collection. The JBC collection would not

have been processed in a timely manner without our summer intern, Mike Bowles. Mike came to us from the University of Oklahoma. He needed to do a museum collections practicum to complete his graduate school requirements. He was in the area because he was an assistant coach for the Jamestown Tarp Skunks. Mike was a great addition to the collections team. He was efficient and thorough.

The second large donation was about 1,000 postcards of Jamestown, Celoron and other localities. Fenton Board President and postcard/photograph collector Tom Goodwill processed the collection. Also donated within this giant collection was over 500 photos from Victor Norton. Thank you to Bill Rappaport for such a valuable collection and

280
Collections Accessioned

153
Collections Deaccessioned

3
Incoming Loans

3
Items Loaned

Tom for his dedication.

Finally, thank you to all the collections department volunteers. Barb Tramonte and Cindy Dustin have transformed the textile department. No more stray boxes of past donations – everything is cataloged and in its place.

Remington Whitcomb, a new volunteer this past fall, has been a great help organizing, accessioning and cataloging, careful labeling, photographing, and creating records. He's an MLB All Star! Our volunteer's impact and hard work is truly nothing short of magnificent.



In 2025, work progressed on the A/V upgrades for the dining room, where we have our programs. We had received money from donors from the 2024 Give Big CHQ and the the Ralph Wilson Foundation to fund this.

For years, when there would be a presentation at the Fenton that required A/V, we would often need to drag out a projector screen, projector, and projector cart for it to be placed. For larger crowds, the projector cart with a laptop was not ideal, as it often blocked those who sat directly behind it, limiting the number of ideal seating.

After attempting to find a projector solution, we ultimately decided to put up a large screen TV, with an anti-glare screen cover, which worked perfectly. There was no need to drag out the projector equipment. Special thanks to Tom Greer, Rick Roll, and Neil Bianco for assisting with this project, despite three attempts at a workable screen protector. Janet Wahlberg's presentation on John Henry Mann was the first program to use the TV.

For the rest of the project, we now have a new sound system and a new camera. A few more details need to be worked on to get the entire system fully functional. Additional thanks to Rick for drilling holes, helping me run cables, and mounting the new camera.

The other ongoing project is

the A/V upgrade of exhibits. The largest part of this project is the installation of stanchions throughout the building to provide an audio tour to replace the QR codes. Joni and I determined the locations of these stanchions. The project is currently ongoing. Special thanks to Tom Greer for constructing the stanchions.

Another major IT update this year was the result of a problem. A tree fell on our fiber cable line, first weakening, and then completely wiping out the internet at the Hall House. Despite an attempt to repair the line, the internet was too weak, and it required a complete replacement of the fiber line, resulting in the Hall House internet being faster than ever.

On the marketing side, the Fenton now has text messaging available through our email marketing provider, MailChimp.

Additional IT notes include be-

ginning regular backups of the PastPerfect database, and review of all the old computer equipment at the Fenton.

44,147
Website Page Views

20,829
Unique Website Visitors

159,888
Facebook Views

8,627
Facebook Engagements

4,916
Total Facebook Follows



FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

ANDREW KOLSTEE, OFFICE MANAGER

The Finance Committee met monthly to review the Fenton's financial activity for each preceding month. Moving the Board meeting to the second Wednesday of each month has been especially helpful, as it allows adequate time to prepare accurate month-end financial reports early in the following month.

While the Fenton's overall financial position appears strong, particularly due to the significant surplus in 2025 and the year-end balance, it is important to emphasize that a substantial portion of these funds is restrict-

ed for specific purposes and therefore not available for general operating use. Many of these restrictions are tied to grants and designated fundraising efforts. As of year-end, more than \$94,000, representing 87.62% of total funds, is restricted. This includes more than \$36,000 raised through fundraising and grants to support the hiring of an Education Coordinator in 2026, approximately \$11,000 reserved for the Chadakoin Valley Project, and numerous other restricted funds designated for specific purposes.

Finance Committee Members:

Sam Papaserge, Treasurer
Thomas Goodwill, President
Joni Blackman, Executive Director
Andrew Kolstee, Office Manager

Several major financial items during the year relate to special projects and facility improvements.

These include funds received and expended for the Chadakoin Valley Project, the History Expo, and dining room A/V upgrades.

2024 End Balance \$48,146.69

Total Revenue \$327,351.27

Total Expenses \$267,892.39

Net Income \$59,458.88

2025 End Balance \$107,605.57

Restricted \$94,286.22 (87.62%)

Unrestricted \$13,319.35 (12.38%)

2025 FINANCES

ANDREW KOLSTEE, OFFICE MANAGER

PROFIT AND LOSS JANUARY 1, 2025 - DECEMBER 31, 2025

REVENUE

Events and Programs	\$ 28,484.62
Fundraising Campaigns	\$ 17,900.25
Donations (Restricted, Unrestricted, In-Kind)	\$ 90,038.99
Endowment Funds	\$ 28,200.50
General Admission	\$ 7,245.78
Sales (Merchandise)	\$ 7,485.64
Services (copies, research fees, photo services)	\$ 1,276.89
Corporate Memberships	\$ 5,500.00
Regular Membership	\$ 20,903.03
Grants (Foundations)	\$ 78,550.00
Grants (Government)	\$ 29,000.00
<u>Miscellaneous (apartment rent, interest, etc.)</u>	<u>\$ 12,765.57</u>
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 327,351.27

Administrative - Accounting	\$ 6,969.41
Administrative - Telecommunications	\$ 3,541.35
Administrative - Information Technology	\$ 5,612.12
Administrative - Postage, Shipping, and Delivery	\$ 2,091.48
Administrative - Printing	\$ 6,711.28
Administrative - Professional Development	\$ 76.59
Administrative - Office Supplies	\$ 2,158.95
Advertising and Marketing	\$ 12,424.26
Special Projects and Miscellaneous	\$ 24,496.63
Museum Store Expenses (merchandise, supplies)	\$ 7,131.59
Dues and Subscriptions	\$ 4,341.96
Maintenance	\$ 18,905.83
Event Expenses	\$ 8,606.35
Collections	\$ 12,237.27
Insurance	\$ 7,080.02
Loan Repayment / Interest / Fees	\$ 150.00
Hall House Utilities & Taxes	\$ 8,288.71
Payroll	\$ 136,412.86
<u>Expansion Expenses</u>	<u>\$ 655.73</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 267,892.39

2025 BALANCE\$ 59,458.88

2025 DONORS

Everything the Fenton History Center does would not be possible without the support from our donors and supporters! Thank-you to everyone who donated and supported us throughout 2025!

\$25,000+

Chautauqua Region Community Foundation
Ralph C. Sheldon Foundation
Ralph Wilson Foundation
Dr. Thomas and Sally Greer

\$15,000 - \$24,999

City of Jamestown

\$10,000 - \$14,999

Janet & James Wahlberg
County of Chautauqua

\$2,000 - \$4,999

Gustafson-Lanphere Charitable Trust
Hultquist Foundation
Carnahan-Jackson Foundation

\$1,000 - \$1,999

Thule Lodge #127
George C. Fowler Charitable Trust
John J. Haskins
Lucas Walker
Melvin Feather
Ahlstrom-Schaeffer Electric Co.
American Legion Auxiliary #327
Mike and Becky Darroch
Jean Vandewark Olson Stowell
Genealogy Research & Education Fund

\$500 - \$749

Barbara S. Ellis
Blue Star Mothers of American
Lake Erie NY Chapter 4
Chautauqua Co. Joint Veterans Council
Chrome Riders
The Creche of Jamestown, NY
Sandra Hatfield
Lake Chautauqua Memorial
VFW Auxiliary Post 8647
Michelle McCray
Melanie Reffner
The Norden Club
Silver Creek American Veterans
John Smagner

Barbara Tramonte
John Zabrodsky

\$250 - \$499

Kenneth and Sheila Bartanen
Thomas and Sally Cheney
Steven and Darcy Cramer
Tamara Dickey
Griffith III and Carol Jones
Mark Fischer
R. J. Loomis Enterprises
Sharon Matson
Sons of American Legion #434
Summit Wealth Management

\$200 - \$249

American Legion Auxiliary #1280
Todd & Linda Anderson
Fessenden, Laumer, & DeAngelo
Lind Funeral Home
Joan V. Lindquist
Stanley & Sara Lundine
Dennis Robbins

\$150 - \$199

David & Sandra Brown
Ruth S. Chipman
Paul R. Johnson
Howard Lalonde
Joan Marcello
Karen Peterson-Dennerlein
Burnetta McCargo Leeper

\$100 - \$149

Kimberly Achterberg
Kathleen & Robert Barber
James & Beth Barnes
Barbara Beck
Beth Bige
Joni Blackman
Suzanne Campbell
Marie Carrubba & Douglas Scotchmer
Barbara Cessna
Chautauqua County Visitor's Bureau

The Connelly Family

In Memory of Barbara Fenton Reynolds Connell
Russell & June Diethrick
L. Bruce & Joan Erickson
Keith & Jean Fairbank
Fredonia Memorial Squadron 59
Sons of the American Legion
Mark Forbes
Gary Greenland
Thomas & Pamela Goodwill
J. Mathews & Lane Hagberg
Edward Hanson
Katherine Hirschfeld
Marcia & Andrew Kleinert
Andrew Kolstee
John & Rhonda LaMancuso
Ruth Lundin
Richard & Patricia Lundquist
Suzanne Morton
Lynette O'Pray
Joyce Olson
Gregory & Cynthia Peterson
Sara Reale
William III & Deborah Reynolds
Cynthia Rogerson
Marcia & Amy Rupp
Michael Sheehan
Chloe Smith
Carol Sorg
Natalie Sowa
Carole Stevens
Thomas & Susan Stuart
Jerome & Kay Swanson
Linda Voltmann Swanson
Kimberly Wick
James Wolinsky

\$50-\$99

Allen Park Women's Club
Sally Austin
Rodney Beckerink
Jacqueline Benson
Paul & Judith Bentley
Joyce Bess
Lawrence & Leah Brattain

2025 DONORS

Sharron Burak & Jennifer VanNauker
R. Craig Butler & Rebecca Haines

Jeff Carlson
Wendy Chadwick Case
Henry Danielson
Michael Dobbins
Kathleen Horner
Terrance & Kathy Horner
Melvin Feather
David Goebel
Patricia Graves
Sue Intihar
Kathleen Jackson
Hannah Jaroszynski
James Jaroszynski
Janice Johnson
Sandra Johnson
William Johnston
Carl & Judy Koch
Marlene & Donald Kolstee
Sherwin Little
Shannon Martin
Karen McElrath
Dennis & Sally Myers
Daniel & Donna Nagle
Thomas Nelson
Bruce Otto
Helen Ann Peterson
Andrew Robinson
Susan Seamans
Maury Spillane
John Sherwood
Sally Teater
Samuel & Becky Teresi
Three Sixty Graphics
Rhonda Thompson
Mary Turney
Jill Votmann
Frank Walzer
Dennis Webster
Curt Westrom
Connie Wright
Emily Wolinsky

Up to \$49

Carol Abell
Bruce Anderson

Christopher Anderson
Grace Anderson
Susan Anderson
Jane Babinsky
Marion Beckerink
Peter Bentley
Kathryn Benware
Margaret Bermudez
Shannon Bessette
Connee Brown
Dianne Brown
Sharon Cannon
Angelo Cimo
Chloe Clarkson
Mary Beth Coon
John & Elaine Crossley
Gail Dash
Andrea DiMaio
Guy & Ellen Ditonto
Kathleen Ebersole
Constance Ecklund
Kimberly Ecklund
Tucker Edwards
Todd Eklum
Elizabeth Frederick
Roger Gilbert
Noah Goodling
Carol Hallberg
Julia Hanley
Grace Henry
Vincent & Barbara Horrigan
Julie Hull
Karen Ingeman
I-86 Truck & Auto Service
Donna Ireland
Tory Irgang
Karina Izaguirre
Roland & Jane Kidder
Kimberly Knox
Sharon Krauthofer
Tom Krzeminski
Nancy Johnson
Elizabeth Jones
Susan Jones
Mary Laird
Traci Langworthy
Jaime Lauffenburger

Lena Leeper
Bonnelle Lindquist
Kristan McMahon
Music for Your Mouth
Justin Nelson
Phyllis Newman
Tracy Norris
Caitlin O'Reilley
Rosalee Owen
Kenny & Grace Pavlock
Katie Peterson
Douglas Pickard
Shelley Pickard-Piazza
Sherwin Potwin
Range Ranch
Susan Rapp
Bonnie Rappole
Marilyn Riotto
John & Phyllis Robertson
Jason Sample
Steve Sampson
Ashley Senske
Gene & Loretta Smith
Marsha Smith
Kimberly Snyder
Karen Sowa
John Phil Strand Jr.
Catherine Swanson
Christine Swanson
Ann Thorpe
U-Take the Cake
Janet Lee Prusik Urbanick
Leslie Vattimo
Marlene Volpe
Patricia Visser
Mary Waxham
James Weaver & Galena Duba-Weaver
Kari Wendel
West Main Merchantile
Hunter Williams
Michelle Williams
Ted Wyberanec

HALL HOUSE RESEARCH CENTER

BARBARA CESSNA, HALL HOUSE MANAGER

This year has been a very busy year, even more than usual, because of preparations for the Chautauqua County History Expo, and ongoing current research and preparation for the Gov. Fenton Biography.

In the midst of the usual activities of the Research Center, the Library Committee has focused on organizing several areas so that our storage and archival room spaces are utilizing what has been wasted space and some pretty unsightly temporary holding areas. Although the organizing is still in progress, it has made a huge difference.

This year there has also been a greater focus on daily cleaning and taking care of materials that were used in order to prepare the room for the next day.

About halfway through the summer, we received more paid research requests than usual. It wasn't long before we were over our heads just when there were History Expo meetings, volun-



teers on vacation, and the usual number of summer walk-in researchers. This continued into the fall and led to some badly needed changes to our procedures to handle all of our daily duties along with timely research on requests. Another researcher or two would be a great addition, so let us know if you have spare time in your schedule! Of course, it isn't as much fun as getting to the bottom of your own genealogy mysteries, but you'd be surprised at how rewarding it feels to help others with their mysteries.

We continue to work with Karen Olson, who so generously donates annually in memory of her genealogy-loving mom, Jean Stowell, and the research visits they made here together. This funding helps us buy genealogical volumes and with programming that helps fill out our resources and genealogical events.

mention the recent loss of Wayne Leamer, a regular visitor and true friend who voluntarily filled most of his free time with all things genealogical. He often came in to say "do you have a copy of this here" or to report on finding an amazing trove of genealogical info. He shared those finds with us and others and always included a just-finished-index to make the "find" more accessible. Wayne was always eager to help with a conundrum; always pleasant, kind, and determinedly seeking answers to help family genealogists tackle the holes in their family history. He will be greatly missed. Our sincere condolences to his family, *The Chautauqua Genealogist*, of which he was the editor, and his many friends.

Research Center Committee Members:

Janet Wahlberg, Chair
Joni Blackman
Barbara Cessna
Jack Ericson
Andrew Kolstee
Sharon Matson
Richard Roll
Matthew Tsitso

I would be remiss if I did not

HALL HOUSE RESEARCH CENTER

JANET WAHLBERG, RESEARCH CENTER COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Hall House has had a very busy year. The Genealogy Support Group's Fenton Travelers took a trip to the Buffalo Library in June and enjoyed a wonderful day of researching with their head librarian Rhonda Hoffman.

The Research Committee is in the process of reworking the workshops that they present and plan to add nationally known speakers. Jack Ericson donated Robert Anderson's The Great Migration Newsletters. This project will be financed by the Jean Vandewark Olson Stowell Genealogy Research & Education Fund. This same fund allowed us to purchase books to complete our Mayflower Silver Collection.

There was a great deal of organizing accomplished throughout the Hall House this year. Shelving was added, allowing many boxes of artifacts and special collections to be placed in an organized and safe manner while awaiting the attention of archivist/curator Matthew Tsitso. Matthew Tsitso along with Andrew Kolstee, our office manager, spent extensive time in the basement rooms organizing and cleaning in preparation for badly needed additional storage space. Karen Livsey has spent many hours sorting and organizing much of the backlog, as have Remington Whitcomb and Matthew Tsitso. Karen's expertise and historical knowledge of the collections has been invaluable

in this process. Cindy Dustin and Barb Tramonte have worked diligently in sorting and archiving the backlog in the textile collection. Many other volunteers are working on processing various collections and processing the research requests and welcoming the clients that come in.

The Scan Lab has been expanded and is constantly busy with some of the many projects that need scanned and digitized. Our Director, Joni, has organized a group of the Hall House volunteers and employees to create a volunteer orientation booklet. We are looking forward to a busy and interesting 2026.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

ANDREW KOLSTEE, OFFICE MANAGER

The Fenton's membership numbers ended up above 400 once again. There were a total of 428 members this year, which includes 51 new members. The year-end number was 422 members, due to the deaths of 6 members.

We had 5 corporate memberships this year. Corporate memberships include member slots, a number of visitor passes, sponsorship spots, and advertisement opportunities.

CORPORATE MEMBERS

BENEFACTOR

Media One Group/WJTN

AMBASSADOR

Rodgers Land Surveying

ASSOCIATE

Allied Alarm Services

FSC Systems

Shawbucks

428
Total Members

51
New Members

5
Corporate Members

VETS FINDING VETS

BARBARA CESSNA, VETS FINDING VETS COORDINATOR

When Vets Finding Vets (VfV) first came to be, on Nov. 11, 2014, it was to give a free one year membership for Chautauqua County veterans needing to access our genealogical resources or various online websites through our Research Center. I had witnessed the profound effects on Veterans when they found information regarding their family Veterans, it is especially profound when they never knew of the Veteran. It is not, however, limited to family veterans. All Family Genealogy is included and we are happy to provide help and support as needed. This perk isn't much of a stretch to be offered by the Fenton since there were Soldiers and veterans around before and after the

mansion and grounds were purchased by the city in 1919. With the addition of other VfV activities over the years, participation in this first great perk has waned, but we are there willing to do our part.

This year marked the 4th year of the newest addition, the Soldier's Friend Scholarship – our way to keep Gov. Fenton's name alive in the present day. This \$1,000 scholarship for graduates and undergraduates is funded by Patriotic Bingo, which usually takes place in February and October. This unique scholarship seeks out individuals who are headed to the military or a military related field. If the graduate is headed to West Point, like the 2025

recipient, books and manuals are provided, so they are free to use the \$1,000 for a new laptop, phone or other necessities required in order to live away from home. This year marked the most applicants to have returned the filled-out application, and the October Patriotic Bingo was the most successful yet!

The monthly Fenton Canteen is held on the second Saturday morning and has been popular since its inception in 2017. This is a chance for veterans to meet and enjoy each other's company. There are occasional speakers, as we had in December when Jamestown resident Jack Ander-

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 17



April Honor Flight April 5



Quilts of Valor in Brocton May 17



Purple Heart Ceremony Brocton August 16



Quilts of Valor Jamestown August 18

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16...

son shared his time in the Navy during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Quilts of Valor ceremonies are always very patriotic and special events, and since we have a local group of quilters who are very dedicated to this niche, we can hold the events for a larger group of veterans.

The Honor Flights to Washington, D.C., are the most popular Veteran activity that Vets Finding Vets has been involved with. Working closely with Buffalo Niagara Honor Flight since the fall of 2017, we have participated in 17 flights and helped 96 veterans (18 World War II, 26 Korea, and 52 Vietnam) apply and succeed in being on one of the flights.

Several guardians are also veterans themselves. Since COVID ended, there are three flights a year – April, June, and October. We are very thankful to also be able to provide transportation to and from Buffalo for Chautauqua County veterans through Veterans Services.

The October Flight was a first ever for Buffalo Niagara Honor Flight (BNHF) and Vets Finding Vets, as BNHF hosted its first all female veterans flight, and therefore, our first as well. Of course, a lot of fingers were crossed, as we headed off to Buffalo during the government shutdown. There were so many areas where the flight could come to a grinding halt, from

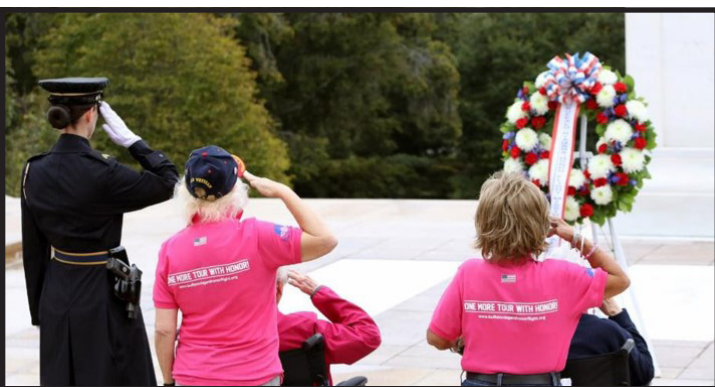
TSA at the airport to anything on the National Mall. However, our ladies had a wonderful time, with many special moments and only one memorial was closed. It may have been undergoing some scheduled maintenance as everything else was accessible, and even the weather behaved.

The annual Honor Flight Reunion, held at a veteran organization centrally located in Chautauqua County, was held this October at the Cassadaga American Legion. Previous Soldiers Friend Scholarship recipient, Eric Hamilton, was the speaker at the well-attended reunion.

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



Honor Flight All Lady Vets @ Baltimore Airport Oct.10



Lady Vets participating in Wreath Laying Ceremony Oct. 11



Honor Flight Reunion



December Canteen

VETS FINDING VETS, CONT.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17...

In between these main activities, there were speaking engagements at nursing homes, for Veteran Posts, and the Brocton Vets 4 Christ group. I manned a VFV table for three veteran events, attended several veteran funerals, and accompanied one World War II Honor Flight Vet to meet children who make cards for Vets to open during their Honor Flight experience.

All in all, as Project Coordinator of Vets Finding Vets, I have too much fun. We are all looking forward to what surprises 2026 will bring.



Honor Flight Vets June 7



Mark Isaacs receiving Purple Heart at home



Quilts of Valor



Chautauqua Region QOV quilters and presenters

MUSEUM STORE REPORT

ANDREW KOLSTEE, OFFICE MANAGER

In 2025, several books have been added, including new books recently published, as well as local and state history books that have never been sold in the store before. In the late part of the year, we introduced a larger variety of products, adding several puzzles and games. The intention moving forward is to continue to expand the variety of products in the store.



\$7,485.64
Total Store Sales

\$7,131.50
Total Store Expenses

\$354.14
Total Store Net Income

HISTORY EXPO

In August 2025, the Fenton History Center participated in the Chautauqua County History Expo; all four members of staff and three members of the Board served on the organizing committee.



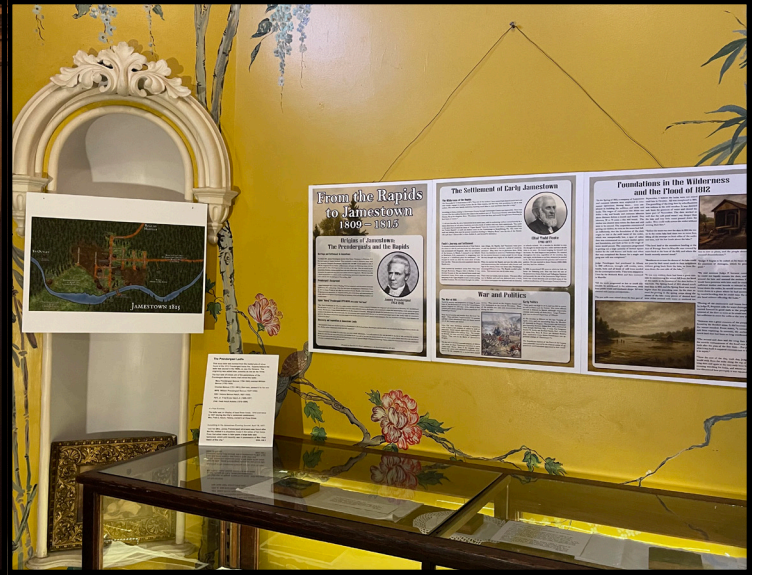
Members of the Chautauqua County History Expo Committee
(left to right) Joni Blackman, Executive Director at the Fenton; Tom Goodwill, President of the Board at the Fenton; Janet Wahlberg, Vice President of the Board at the Fenton; Sharon Matson, Member of the Board at the Fenton; Barb Cessna, Hall House Manager/Vets Finding Vets Coordinator at the Fenton and Carroll Town Historian; Norman Carlson, Chautauqua County Historian, Chair of the Committee; Matthew Tsitso, Archivist/Curator at the Fenton; Jason Sample, President of the Chautauqua County Historical Society; Andrew Kolstee, Office Manager at the Fenton; Pam Brown, Harmony/Panama Town Historian; John Brown, President at Harmony Historical

County Historian Norman Carlson
at the County Historian's exhibit.

EXHIBITS



19th Century Pottery Exhibit



From the Rapids to Jamestown Exhibit



Tornado Exhibit Opening, June 2025

The Fenton History Center featured five temporary exhibits in 2025. First, there was the 19th Century Pottery exhibit, supplemented by an talk on pottery in April by Vince Martonis. In May, the Rapids to Jamestown exhibit showcased the early history of Jamestown, including featuring the newly acquired Prendergast silver soup ladle.

In June, it was the 80th anniversary of the 1945 Jamestown tornado. Tom Goodwill prepared a video and presented it. Later in the year, the 125th anniversary of Creche was highlighted. Finally, the annual holiday exhibit's theme was, "Celebrations of Winter."



125th Anniversary of Creche exhibit

HOLIDAY EXHIBIT



SAINTS & SINNERS CEMETERY TOURS

In October 2025, the Fenton's 20th Annual Saints & Sinners Cemetery Tours were held at Lake View Cemetery, raising over \$18,000 and 660 tickets sold for our carriage, walking, and mausoleum Tours.



\$18,214.03
Raised

660
Tickets
Sold





38
Tours

4 staff and
35 volunteers
to make this possible



LECTURE SERIES & BOOK SIGNINGS



Celtic Music Program, March 2025



*Vincent Martonis speaking on pottery, April 2025.
He has written three books on local potters and pottery.*



Dennis Upton portraying Joseph Ellicott, June 2025



Bob Johnston speaking about the #93 Jamestown Trolley Car Project



*Chris Carosa, author of History Unleashed:
Lafayette's Remarkable Tour of the Greater
Western New York Region, February 2025*



*Rod Beckerink, author of Around Clymer,
May 2025*



*Wendy Lewellen, author of Good Soles,
July 2025*

TRIVIA NIGHTS AT SHAWBUCKS



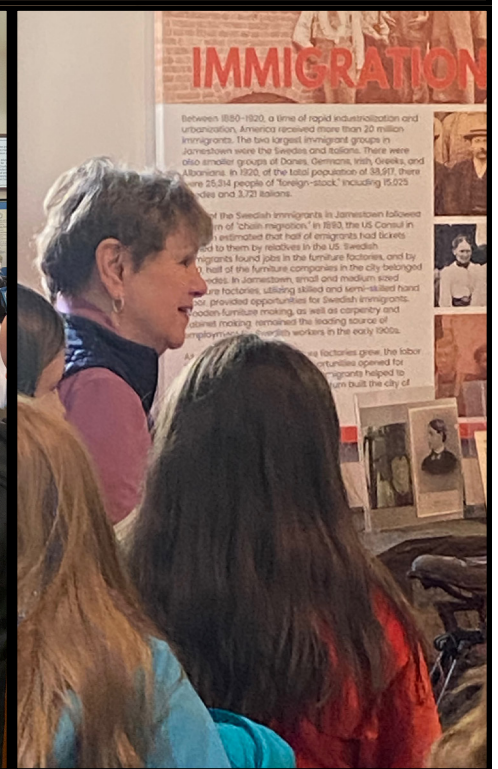
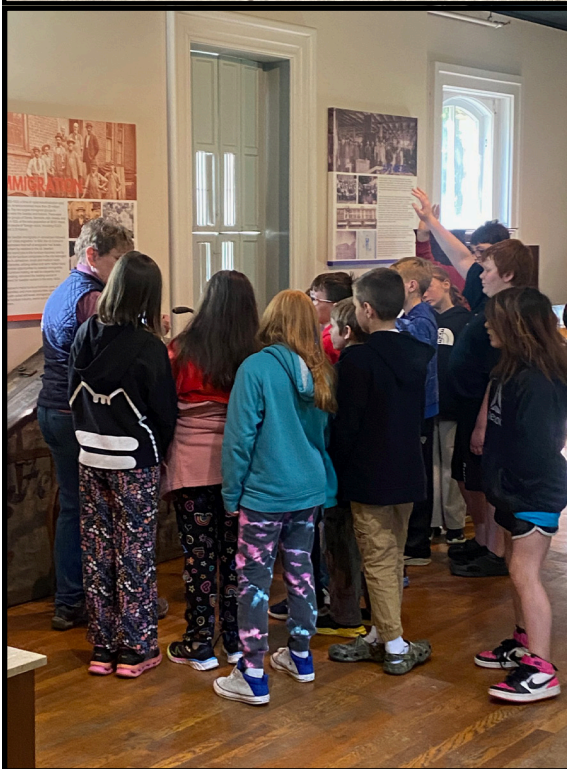
RELIVE JULY 1865



HOLIDAY CRAFT FAIR



MORE PHOTOS



Learn more about the Fenton's past events and reports by visiting the blog on the website as well as the archive of past issues of the *Walnut Grove Press*, the official newsletter of the Fenton History Center. Visit www.FentonHistoryCenter.org

In Memoriam

William J. Canby

Robert H. Munson

Anita G. Chadwick

John A. Nord

Lillian G. Chapman

Sara W. Reale

Cheryl A. Collins

G. William Samuelson

Helen M. Gilbert

John C. Schupp

Peter C. Flagg

Barbara A. Strychalski

Anne C. Kohl

Carolyn M. Volk

R. Wayne Leamer



