

# Walnut Grove Press

MARCH 2026

The Official Newsletter of the Fenton History Center VOLUME 7, ISSUE 3

## FENTON WELCOMES NEW EDUCATION COORDINATOR

by **Joni Blackman**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Please welcome Elizabeth Gabalski to the Fenton History Center staff. Liz, as she prefers, is the Education Coordinator. She hails from Frewsburg and loves local history. Executive Director Joni Blackman said, “Liz’s experiences as a substitute classroom teacher, education studies at SUNY Fredonia, teaching music at the Infinity program and tutoring at Striders, will serve her well as she restarts the museum education programming here at the Fenton. I am excited to see where we are this time next year.”

Ms. Gabalski’s first task is to open communication with the local school districts and homeschool groups to determine how the Fenton can help them reach their local history curriculum goals. She says, “I genuinely believe that our local history holds the power to inspire the difference-makers of tomorrow. I very much look forward to collaborating with area schools and



Elizabeth “Liz” Gabalski

educators to create engaging experiences that will connect our students, community members, and visitors to the mansion’s many meaningful artifacts and stories in ways that will resonate with them long after their tours with us have ended.”

For many years, the Fenton taught the Local Lore program. It was a combination of classroom visits by the Fenton

IN THIS ISSUE	
New Education Coordinator	Page 1
Where’s the Clock???	Page 2
Trivia Nights	Page 3
Lectures	Page 4
Blue Star Museum	Page 5
Lucy’s Visit to Jamestown Pt. III	Pages 6-7
Vision 2030	Pages 8-9
Soldier’s Friend Scholarship	Page 10
Vets Finding Vets	Page 11
Fenton Canteen	Page 12
Genealogy Support Group	Page 13
Volunteers Needed	Page 16
Local Trivia	Page 17
Wanted: Maddox Table	Page 17
Membership	Page 18
Our Supporters	Page 19

museum teachers and Fenton Mansion visits by the students for tours about what they learned in the classroom. That program dropped off sharply in the 2010s. Ms. Blackman stated, “The Local Lore program had a significant and lasting impact. We frequently have visitors share which Jamestown resident they portrayed in Local Lore program and how much they appreciate the Fenton Mansion. They remember their local history because of the work done by past museum educators. I know Liz will have the same impact on our area’s children and adults.”



**WEDNESDAYS IN MARCH @ 7 PM**  
**@ Shawbucks** 212 W. 2nd St., Jamestown, NY 14701

# WHERE'S THE CLOCK?!?

by **Joni Blackman**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Since the gift shop was moved to the new entrance of the museum, there has been a large clock on the one wall of the shop. Last week it stopped working. I honestly don't know when it stopped, but I knew it wasn't 3:40 when I looked at it that morning. I changed the batteries, but it still just sat there, no ticking, no movement. I put it in the garbage. That left an empty hook on the empty wall in the gift shop.

Andrew, the much younger-than-me office manager was thinking about what merchandise he could display there. I told him I would miss the clock because I look at it often from my office. Later that day I moved a painting of the Fenton Mansion from the orientation room to the hook and



*The clock in the gift shop, November 12, 2025*

we went on with our day.

Tuesday afternoons we are lucky to have Jim Wahlberg volunteer to watch the gift shop and reception area. It allows Andrew to leave his office and the gift shop to do other things. The first thing we hear is "Where is the clock?" before Jim even has his coat off. I was in a meeting, but

when I heard I laughed and told Andrew, "See, people are going to miss that clock." He of course thought I was daft.

Wednesday morning our volunteer Marcia Kleinert quickly noticed and commented on the lack of the clock. Wednesday afternoon we welcome Ang Cimo to help at the reception desk. He at least got his coat off before he said, "Where's the clock?" Andrew and I both broke out laughing. Not long after that, Barb Cessna came downstairs from her office and asked, "Where's the clock? I can't tell what time it is from a picture."

Those of us over a certain age like an analog clock, the ones with hands and numbers. Andrew's suggestion was a digital clock at the reception desk. Time marches on and we will adapt, won't we?



*The gift shop without the clock, March 3, 2026*

# Fenton History Center PRESENTS



WEDNESDAYS IN MARCH @ 7 PM

@ Shawbucks

212 W. 2nd St., Jamestown, NY 14701

**Cost: \$15 per person (2-6 per team)**



This is a fundraiser and the proceeds benefit the Fenton History Center's mission to share and preserve the history of our community.

(716) 664-6256

[FentonHistoryCenter.org](http://FentonHistoryCenter.org)

# FENTON HISTORY CENTER 2026 LECTURE SERIES

FREE and open to the public!

All Lectures Held at on the Third Tuesday at 7:00 PM

**APR 21** George Washington's Connections to Chautauqua Co.  
presented by *Norman Carlson*

**MAY 19** 50th Anniversary of The King of Sweden's Visit  
presented by *Joni Blackman*

**JUN 16** 100th Anniversary of the Presbyterian Church  
presented by *John Smagner*

**JUL 21** Four Wars, Four Branches:  
The Extraordinary Service of Lloyd Peters  
presented by *Barb Cessna*

**AUG 18** Corry Jamestown Manufacturing  
presented by *Karen Livsey and Sam Genco*

**SEPT 15** Lucille M. Wright Museum  
presented by *Dennis Webster*

**OCT 20** Haunted Stories of Western New York  
presented by *Rick DeKay*

#### About the Lecture Series:

The 2026 Fenton History Center Lecture Series features evening lectures held between April and October. These events are free and open to the public. Lectures are held in the dining room at the Gov. Reuben Fenton mansion. They are also streamed via Facebook. Donations are appreciated to support the Fenton History Center's mission to preserve local history and provide educational opportunities.

67 Washington St., Jamestown, NY  
(716) 664-6256 [www.FentonHistoryCenter.org](http://www.FentonHistoryCenter.org)



FENTON  
HISTORY CENTER



As a Blue Star Museum, free admission is available to active-duty military personnel, including the National Guard and Reserves, and their families.

**FREE ADMISSION**  
**SAT., MAY 16, 2026 - MON., SEPT. 7, 2026**  
ARMED FORCES DAY                      LABOR DAY

On May 16, 2026 at noon, visitors are welcome to watch the 72nd New York Volunteer Reenactors practice their drills in the Hall House parking lot.

**FENTON HISTORY CENTER | 67 WASHINGTON ST. | JAMESTOWN, NY 14701**



# COMING HOME

## REMEMBERING LUCILLE BALL'S VISIT TO JAMESTOWN 70 YEARS AGO PT. III

by **Cindy Dustin**  
VOLUNTEER

The things you find when you're looking for something else!

On May 4, 1917, a son was born in Jamestown to Swedish immigrants Gust and Ina Christine Swanstrom Carlson. Floyd William Carlson grew up as the middle child in a large Swedish family at 11 Crown Street. The family attended the old Zion Mission Church.



*Lucille Ball and Floyd Carlson*

When he was a teenager, Floyd became enamored with aviation, maybe because his brother, Milton, was the manager of the new Jamestown Airport. In 1933 when he was 16 years old, Milton gave Floyd his first flying lesson. Thirty days later, he would have his first solo flight and on June 22, 1936, he earned his private pilot's license. He would be a commercially licensed pilot in

May 1937.

Milton and Floyd began working for Buffalo Aeronautical Corporation in 1940. They both gave flight instructions, and Floyd worked as a charter pilot. They were both hired by the new Bell Aircraft Company in 1942 as "Flight Research Engineers," meaning that they were test pilots for the World War II planes

built by Bell. The United States government required that each aircraft be flown and tested by company pilots before they were delivered. Floyd and Milton flew development and production fixed wing airplanes, and they were also involved in the initial development of rocket launchers and jet aircraft flights.

In 1943, Bell chose Floyd to be part of the team that was developing a new type of aircraft -- the helicopter. As he became more involved in the engineering of the helicopters, Floyd is credited with developing a brace that corrected a vibration problem in the helicopter rotors. It became

...CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



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known as the “Swedish Yoke.” This would enable helicopters to fly at higher speeds, sometimes in excess of 70 miles per hour.

Tragedy struck the Carlson family and Bell Aviation in August 1946, when Milton Carlson was killed in a crash of the Model 47 helicopter. After this, Floyd, with the full support of the Bell engineering department, began a campaign that led to greater flight safety for all the Bell aircraft.

In 1952, Floyd and his wife, the former Evelyn Newberg of Jamestown, moved their family to Fort Worth, Texas, where Bell Aviation was building a \$3.5 million factory. Bell continued to build helicopters at their Niagara Falls facility and had them shipped to Fort Worth where Chief Pilot Floyd Carlson tested them.

Bell won a competition in February 1955 for the United States Army’s first turbine-powered utility helicopter, which eventu-

ally became known as the “Huey.” Floyd worked for Bell Aviation for 40 years, retiring in 1982. He had logged more than 20,000 flight hours between 28 different models of fixed wing aircraft and 38 models of rotary-wing and tiltrotor aircraft.

Floyd passed away less than two years later in April 1984. He and Evelyn and their three sons had lived in Texas for 32 years. At his funeral was a flyover of five different Bell helicopter models, ending with the “missing man” formation performed with the last helicopter Floyd had flown.

What does all this have to do with Lucille Ball’s visit to Jamestown in February 1956? Floyd Carlson, a Jamestown native from Crown Street, flew the helicopter that brought Lucy and Desi to Jamestown, landing on the athletic field behind Jamestown High School.

The night before the flight, Floyd was a guest contestant on the television show *What’s My Line*,



*Floyd Carlson*

which was broadcast live from New York City. Desi Arnaz was a guest panelist on the show, and with three other panelists, tried to guess Floyd’s occupation. The original program can be viewed on YouTube.

Information for this story is from *Floyd Carlson: The Legacy and Contributions of One of America’s Greatest Rotary Wing Test Pilots*, written by Lieutenant Colonel Paul J. Fardink, U.S. Army, Retired.

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# VISION 2030: HOW IS IT PROGRESSING?

by **Joni Blackman**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Engage** Monthly Donors. Our goal is \$250 by the end of March and we current have \$179.55 from 8 donors.

If you can help us monthly, it will give us some breathing room to expand our programming and pay for the surprise expenses we all experience. The plan is to have \$5,000 a month in monthly giving by the end of 2030.

**Build** the third building - **AND we need a name for this new building. Any ideas?**

So many great things are happening with this project. First, board member Paul R. Johnson is donating his time and expertise to manage this project for us. His generosity will save us dollars and time.

Interestingly, we thought we might have another archaeology dig on our hands until I realized we would be building the 3rd building in the Hall House's pasture area, not where the barn was located. Seen in an 1878 photograph taken from Brooklyn

Square, the barn behind the Hall House looks to be in the wooded area behind the house. I brought up my concerns to the building committee. There was great concern it would halt our plans if we had to organize a dig to responsibly determine what was underground. Luckily, Dr. Tom Greer just happened to be in the Mansion at the time, and since he is the project lead for the ongoing archaeology dig, I asked him if he had any knowledge of the Hall House property. He said, "no, but let me check my records and notes." The next morning, he showed me evidence that the barn was built where the Hall House parking lot is situated, not where we want to build the third building. Whew!

At this point, we have some good solid plans for the new building.

We are planning on connecting it to the Hall House building to create a seamless multi-purpose facility for research, collection storage and workspace, gallery space for visible storage of the large artifacts currently stored off-site, a gift shop and a meeting room with a small catering

kitchen area. PLUS the #93 Trolley will be on exhibit in the new building.

*How much will it cost?* We are still scoping out the costs for the new build in addition to the changes to the Hall House building as we upgrade some of the infrastructure.

**Sustain** the campus and programming

We plan to add funds to our Chautauqua Region Community Foundation endowment funds to support the ongoing costs of the new building.

We will hire at least one new employee to work in the new facility.

We will be able to determine what collections need conservation as we relocate them to the new facility. Plus, we are planning on doing a collection inventory this year, which will also inform us of any conservation needs.

The plans to repair the Mansion roof and windows are underway. Thank you to the City of Jamestown.

# VISION 2030

— ENGAGE • BUILD • SUSTAIN —

**GOAL: \$5,000**

**in recurring donations  
per month by the end of 2030**

**Current: \$179.22 from 8 donors**

**March 2026 Goal: \$250.00 in monthly donations**

# SEEKING APPLICATIONS FOR 2026 SOLDIER'S FRIEND SCHOLARSHIP

by **Barbara Cessna**

VETS FINDING VETS COORDINATOR

Tis the season for high school guidance counselors to be working with the seniors to search for scholarships that can help with the staggering cost of further education.

The Soldier's Friend Scholarship, launched in 2022, honors our own Gov. Fenton, who in his youth (late 1830s) was in the "local militia." That was the easy way to say New York National Guard. Its purpose is to be ready if the country was again attacked by an enemy force. Also, because he was referred to as "The Soldier's Friend" during his tenure as a Representative for the Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties beginning in 1853. At that time, he introduced a successful bill that would grant needed relief to survivors of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. During and after the Civil War he worked very hard to alleviate the hardships of the wounded

and families of the deceased soldiers due to the slow slog of bureaucracy.

Since his own Grandpa Owen was a Revolutionary War veteran, both of his fathers-in-law, John Frew and Joel Scudder were War of 1812 veterans, and Uncle Ira Own was a veteran, he grew up in the company of these veterans and many others. He may even have accompanied his grandpa from Carroll to Jamestown on the yearly trip to pick up the small pension sum, and if so, he'd have met the other aged Revolutionary War Vets and witnessed their struggles. Grandpa Owen was very healthy until he died of "old age" at the age of 107 years in 1843! (Oh, to have been a fly on a wall!)

The Scholarship awards \$1000 toward further education or training for a Chautauqua County graduate planning to serve our country as a member of the military, ROTC, or in a supportive civilian capacity. De-

partment of Defense Careers, offered by each branch of the military, encompasses a wide range of skills and these positions are an essential part of keeping our military members safe wherever they are in the world. If the graduate is headed for West Point, for instance, books and manuals are supplied, so the scholarship can be used to purchase whatever is needed to help the transition from living at home to life away from home, (i.e. gas cards, a new laptop because the current one is shared with a brother, new phone, dorm size refrigerator, etc.)

**If you have a high school graduate or undergraduate** in your family who is headed in this direction, alert them to contact us, the school counselor, or the Fenton History Center Facebook page.

The completed applications must be received by 4 p.m. on April 10.

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# ATTENTION VETERANS!

Vets Finding Vets is a free program for Chautauqua County veterans at the Fenton History Center.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ **Research Services.** We provide family genealogy and local history research services, helping veterans discover their roots and also connect with those in which they have served.
- ★ **Fenton Canteen.** A monthly gathering for veterans to enjoy coffee, cookies, and camaraderie. Held the second Saturday each month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the dining room at the Fenton.
- ★ **Buffalo Niagara Honor Flight.** We help facilitate the application process for veterans wishing to participate in the Honor Flight to see the war monuments in Washington, D.C.
- ★ **Quilts of Valor.** Family members can nominate veterans to receive a handmade quilt through this program.
- ★ **News and Events:** We share information about veteran-related events and happenings in the community.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Barb Cessna, Vets Finding Vets Project Coordinator  
(716) 664-6256 | [veterans@fentonhistorycenter.org](mailto:veterans@fentonhistorycenter.org)  
Fenton History Center | 67 Washington Street | Jamestown, NY 14701

The background of the entire page is a close-up, slightly blurred image of the American flag, showing the red and white stripes and the blue field with white stars. The flag appears to be waving or draped.

# **NEXT FENTON CANTEENS**

**AT THE GOV. REUBEN FENTON MANSION**

**SAT. MAR. 14, 2026**

**10 AM - 12 PM**

**SAT. APR. 11, 2026**

**10 AM - 12 PM**

**SAT. MAY 9, 2026**

**10 AM - 12 PM**

# GENEALOGY SUPPORT GROUP

HELD AT THE HALL HOUSE RESEARCH CENTER  
73 Forest Avenue, Jamestown, New York 14701 Phone: (716) 664-6256

## 2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sat., January 10, 2026	12 PM - 10 PM	Library Lock-In
Wed., January 28, 2026	4 PM - 8 PM	Research Night
Wed., February 25, 2026	4 PM - 8 PM	Research Night
Thurs., March 26, 2026	4 PM - 8 PM	Research Night
Wed., April 29, 2026	4 PM - 8 PM	Research Night
Wed., May 27, 2026	4 PM - 8 PM	Research Night
TBD June 2026	TBD	Field Trip TBD
Wed., June 24, 2026	4 PM - 8 PM	Research Night
Wed., July 29, 2026	4 PM - 8 PM	Research Night
Wed., August 26, 2026	4 PM - 8 PM	Research Night
Wed., September 30, 2026	4 PM - 8 PM	Research Night
Wed., October 28, 2026	4 PM - 8 PM	Research Night
Wed., November 18, 2026	4 PM - 8 PM	Brick Walls
Wed., December 30, 2026	4 PM - 8 PM	Christmas Party

**\*contact us if you would like to go!**

### About the Genealogy Support Group

The Fenton's Genealogy Support Group serves to support both experienced and amateur researchers. We offer lectures, workshops, discussions, and research nights. These events are an excellent way to become familiar with the Fenton History Center's impressive collection of resources. Our Research Night expands the hours of operation of our research center to one evening per month.

LEARN MORE:

[www.FentonHistoryCenter.org](http://www.FentonHistoryCenter.org)



**FENTON  
HISTORY CENTER**

# **FENTON HISTORY CENTER**

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# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We are always looking for volunteers for different tasks and projects.  
Below are three major needs for volunteers.

Contact us at (716) 664-6256, [info@fentonhistorycenter.org](mailto:info@fentonhistorycenter.org), or stop in  
and fill out a volunteer form.

## LIST OF VOLUNTEER NEEDS

### GIFT SHOP RECEPTION

We need reception coverage on certain days. This involves starting tours and selling merchandise in the gift shop.



### SCAN LAB

We are in need of volunteers to help with digitization projects in the Scan Lab.  
No prior experience necessary.



### MOWING

We are also in need of volunteers to help mow the lawn at the Hall House Research Center.



### GARDEN

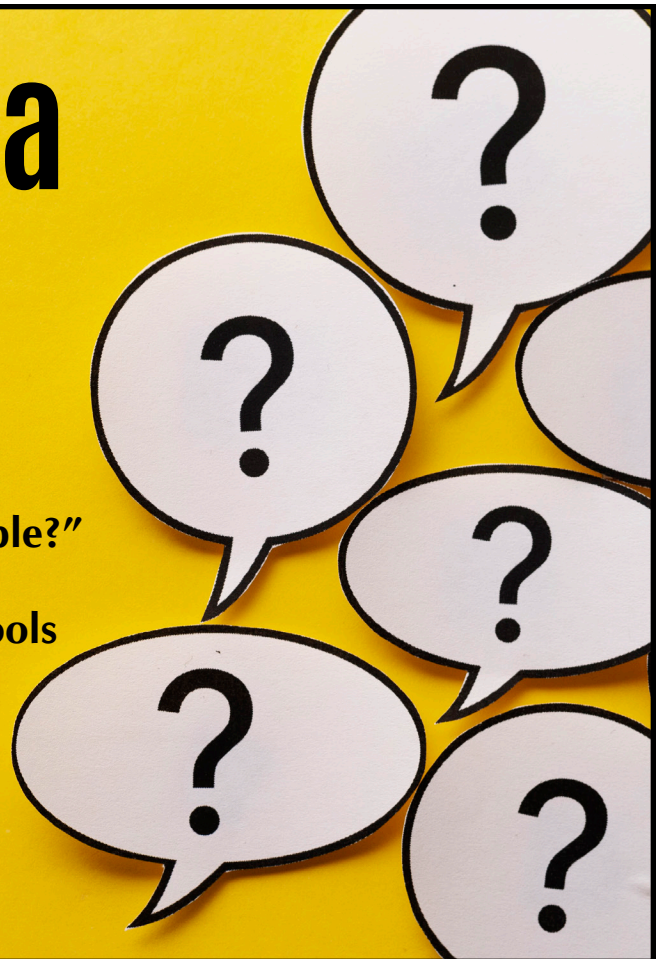
We need volunteers to help maintain the Blue Star Memorial Garden.



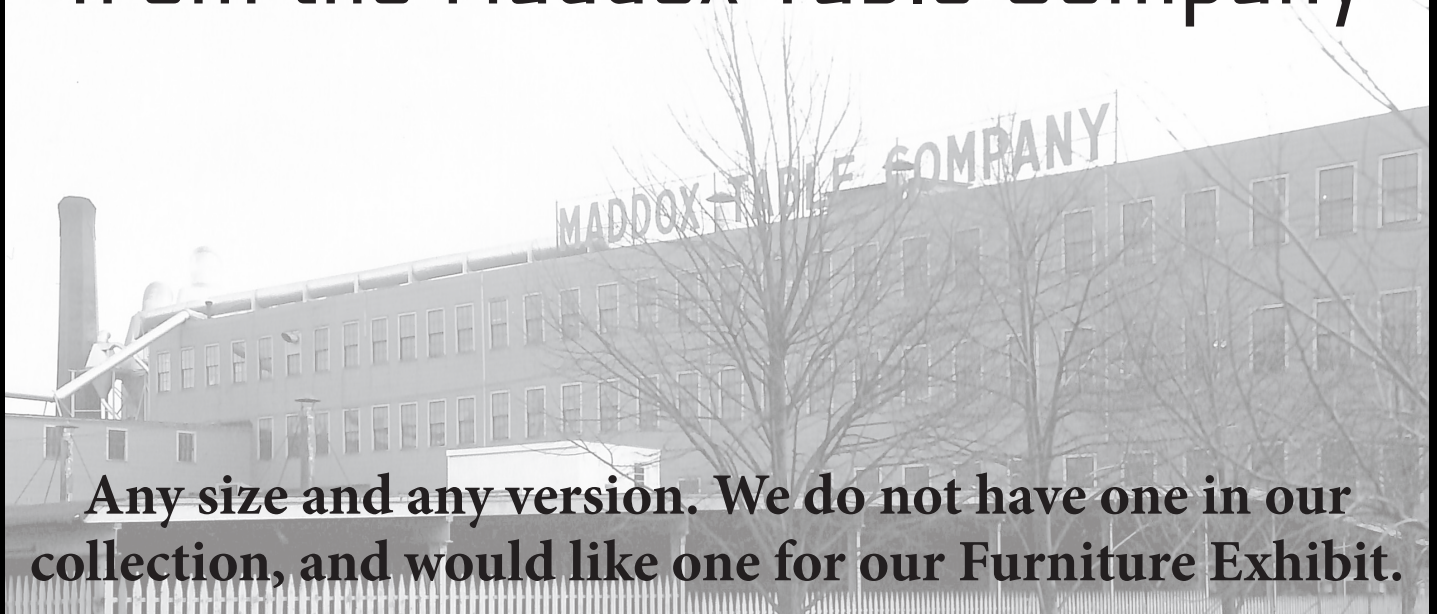
# Local Trivia

- Q1. What carbonated soft drink was originally known as "Brad's Drink?"
- Q2. In 1886, what was the population of Jamestown?
- Q3. What was a regular Saturday potpourri featuring the comings and goings and doings of "The Nice People?"
- Q4. What is Jamestown's Zip code?
- Q5. Who was the superintendent of schools when the Jamestown teachers went on strike?

See page 18 for answers.



## **WANTED: A Table** from the Maddox Table Company



Any size and any version. We do not have one in our collection, and would like one for our Furniture Exhibit.

# FENTON HISTORY CENTER MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- Your membership is vital for keeping the museum and research center running!
- Memberships run January - December. Memberships purchased between September 1 and December 31 are good through December 31 of the following year.

## MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Unlimited complimentary admission to the Governor Reuben Fenton Mansion.
- Unlimited access to the Hall House Research Center.
- Reduced fee for Fenton events and programs unless specified.
- A 10% discount to the museum gift shop.
- Members only e-mail updates.

## GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- Student \$15
- Senior (age 62+) \$30
- Veteran \$30
- Individual (under age 62) \$40
- Family \$75. Includes 2 adults. All children in the household under 18 are included.

## SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- Supporting \$120. Includes 4 complimentary admission passes for guests.
- Friend of Fenton \$250. Includes 6 complimentary admission passes for guests.
- Representative's Circle \$360. Includes 8 complimentary admission passes for guests.
- Senator's Circle \$500. Includes 16 complimentary admissions for guests, lunch with Executive Director, and a behind the scenes tour of the Gov. Reuben Fenton Mansion for up to four people, a free book from our gift shop, and a Fenton branded t-shirt.
- Governor's Circle \$1,000. Includes unlimited complimentary admissions for guests, lunch with Executive Director, a behind the scenes tour of Gov. Reuben Fenton Mansion for up to four people, a behind the scenes tour of Hall House Research Center for four people, a free book from our gift shop, and a Fenton branded t-shirt.

You can also process your membership payment online and have the option to set your membership to automatically renew each year. Thank you for your support!

**FENTONHISTORYCENTER.ORG/MEMBERSHIP**

**Trivia answers from page 17.**

(A1) Pepsi Cola (A2) 10,000 (A3) Tea Cup Talk  
(A4) 14701 (A5) Bryan Shaddick

Thank You to Our Supporters!

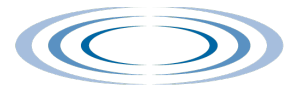
*Ralph* **SHELDON** *Foundation, Inc.*

# THE LENNA FOUNDATION

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MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR GENEROSITY

## Support the Fenton through recycling!



Bring your plastic and aluminum beverage containers to Southside Redemption Center in the name of the Fenton History Center. Proceeds will directly benefit the Fenton History Center. Plastic and aluminum must be separated. Just drop them off in the name of the Fenton and that's it!

### Southside Redemption Center

1752 Foote Avenue  
Jamestown, NY 14701

Mon-Wed 9 AM to 5 PM  
Thursday 9 AM to 2 PM  
Friday 9 AM to 5 PM  
Saturday 10 AM to 4 PM



FENTON HISTORY CENTER

STAFF MEMBERS

Joni Blackman Executive Director
Andrew Kolstee Office Manager
Barbara Cessna Hall House Manager, Vets Finding Vets Coordinator
Matthew Tsitso Collections Manager
Elizabeth Gabalski Education Coordinator

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LEARN MORE

Fenton History Center Museum
67 Washington Street
Jamestown, New York 14701
Hours: Mon. - Sat. 10 AM - 4 PM
Hall House Research Center
73 Forest Avenue
Jamestown, NY 14701
Hours: Mon. - Fri. 10 AM - 4 PM
(716) 664-6256
www.fentonhistorycenter.org



Fenton History Center's amazon

Wishlist

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

Admission Prices

Includes entry to Gov. Reuben Fenton Mansion & Museum and William Hall House Research Center
Members.....FREE
Adults (18+)..... \$10
Children (under 18) .....FREE
Veterans (with military ID) ..... \$8
Seniors (62+, first Tuesdays only) ..... \$5
Active Military and Family (May 16-Sept. 7, 2026).....FREE

Become a member today and your admission to the museum and research center is free!

