

Annual Report for 2011 Office of the County Historian

March 5, 2012

2011 was a year of significant accomplishments in the Historian's Office:

- **Applied for and received a grant from the Hoffman Foundation for \$8144.00 to complete the preservation, digitalization and binding of our student Hoffman Essay holdings and to scan the 1855 census.**
- **On May 12, 2011, I traveled to New York City where the Preservation League of New York State, at their Annual Meeting, recognized Dr. Judith Wellman, Peter Evans and the Office of the County Historian for publishing excellence. Our cultural resource survey report: Uncovering the Underground Rail Road, Abolitionism, and African American Life in Wayne County, New York, 1820 – 1880 was honored for not only the depth and thoroughness of the content but also for the extraordinary collaborative effort of all the historians, historical societies, museums, churches and other institutions throughout Wayne County.**
- **Deborah Benson, a North Rose Wolcott Central School District Elementary School teacher interned in the office during the summer 2011 months. Among many things, Ms. Benson was able to review every miscellaneous Hoffman Essay in our files to determine content and quality appropriateness so that the preservation project could be completed before year-end.**
- **On November 20, 2011, I traveled to the Rochester Academy of Medicine to attend the Landmark Society of Western New York's Annual Meeting. At this meeting, I received the Paul Malo Award for Historic Preservation Advocacy. This award was made recognizing not one event but rather years of advocacy throughout Wayne County and the region represented by the Landmark Society including serving on the committee that brought and organized their Annual Preservation Conference here in Palmyra and Wayne County. The conference was the largest most well attended affair in the past 24 years that the conference has been presented throughout the Genesee Region.**
- **National Trust for Historic Preservation Annual National Conference Committee awarded the County Historian a grant-scholarship to attend this world-class affair.**

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- **Invited to speak at the New York State History Conference in Cooperstown. I spoke on organizing history in Wayne County to support both the War of 1812 Bicentennial and the Civil War Sesquicentennial commemoration programs and events. This was a multi-person presentation with other public historians from around New York State.**

Other highlights in 2011

- **The department completed the year nearly 20% under budget**
- **We continued to serve the public, other county departments and agencies, our towns and our villages.**
 1. **Assisted over 436 visitors to the office**
 2. **Responded to 197 letters**
 3. **Answered and assisted with 679 telephone inquiries**
 4. **Received over 7898 emails**
 5. **Over 2400 written email replies**
 6. **Over 7700 hits on our website**
 7. **Collected about \$2100 in service fees**
 8. **Received either one comment where a person was not pleased with what we could offer or our level of service. This was only the third negative feedback comment we have received in over 7 years of service to the public. In most case, the public expresses amazement by the level and depth of service we able to provide.**
- **Areas for improvement noted by our customers:**
 - a. **The public finds the stairs up to the office a challenge**
 - b. **Sometimes our research backlog seems excessively long**
 - c. **Many people wish we were open during the lunch hour period**
 - d. **Would like us to accept credit cards (foreign requests have dropped to just about zero because of the difficulty of paying through third party banks)**
 - e. **Our business efforts would be assisted if we could establish blogs and open twitter accounts....etc.**
 - f. **Our customers have requested Wi-Fi connectivity in the office. We hope to add this feature in 2012.**

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- **Serving the Wayne County History Community**
 - a. **Issued six (6) Historian Newsletters in 2011**
 - b. **Organized six (6) Wayne Historian's Organization (WHO) "brown bag" luncheon meetings at locations around Wayne County.**
 - c. **Maintained an up to date events calendar allowing all historians, museums and historical societies to post their events and programs**
 - d. **Member of Planning Dept. consultant selection team for Alasa Farms Preservation Project**
 - e. **Attended fifteen (15) seminars, workshops, symposiums and conferences often bringing speakers and presentations, on timely topics, back to the WHO Meetings**
 - f. **Used the WHO Network to keep everyone aware of important information and opportunities from around the region and the state**
 - g. **Provided resources and information on topics in Historic Preservation assisting local organizations and individuals prepare applications for State and National Register of Historic Places status**
 - h. **Achieved a goal of being present in and supporting each and every Wayne County Town & Village for at least one event or meeting**
 - i. **Spoke or made presentations at fifteen (15) organizations or conferences on a wide variety of topics:**
 - **11 presentations within Wayne County**
 - **4 presentation outside of Wayne County**

The Office of the County Historian was open for the public Monday thru Friday from 9 AM to Noon and 1 PM to 5 PM throughout the whole year. Jane Milem, Clerk & Research Assistant, and I attempted to be responsive in a timely fashion to every question or inquiry presented to the office in 2011. Reports were written and submitted to the Government Operations Committee each month and this was accomplished under budget.

2011 was a successful year.

Submitted by Peter Evans, County Historian

