

Historian's Newsletter

August 2011

June was probably the most intensely busy month on record for your County Historian.

- Five in-class sessions teaching Jr Achievement to 2nd Graders in Williamson
- Presented at the NYS History Conference in Cooperstown
- Participated in a Nat'l Trust Workshop in Albany
- Meetings at Kirtas Technology to complete the Sanborn Map Project
- Attended the Museumwise Conversation program at RMSC
- WHO at Clyde-Galen Historical Society – thank you
- War of 1812 talk at Sodus Point Fire Hall as a participant not presenter
- Rt 104 Webster to Sodus Trail Study Meeting
- Program presented at Blossom View Nursing Home
- NYS Archives Disaster Planning Workshop here in Lyons
- Interviews to select consultant firm for Historic Structures Report on Alasa Farms buildings....and these were just the major items happening besides the routine

Fortunately, the month of July was much more sane, to say the least. We went away for a family get together over the 4th weekend and it turned out to be 10 days. Weather and company were perfect. After the running chaos of June the break was really welcomed.

On June 29th, Deb Benson, a North Rose Wolcott Elementary teacher began volunteering in the office for the summer. She has already gone through and cataloged all the unpublished Hoffman Essays in preparation of that scanning and publication project later this fall. Next she will be inventorying and cataloging all our Civil War and other war related publications, references and documents for our project out lined in last month's newsletter. Are you all busy cataloging your Civil War materials so that you can participate in Preston's regional indexing project? When this index gets published, how will you respond to people when they ask why Sodus or Marion or whoever isn't represented in the index of the war? This is your chance and Preston is willing to do the publication work if you simply collect the data for him.

Those of you working on cemetery projects keep up the good work. Don't forget that I will gladly send you a template in MS Excel for data entry of this cemetery information. This is the quickest and easiest way to provide searchability plus fast sharing of the information. I am thrilled to learn from BJ Meeks of Newark that the NY State Facility and Dept of Social Services has decided turn over all burial records for the cemetery there to the Town of Arcadia. BJ is now entering the data into an Excel spreadsheet we provided. When she completes this task, we hope to make the information available on our website.....keep your fingers crossed. Another group is working on a couple older cemeteries south of Marengo on the Seneca County line.

I am still thinking about the coming bicentennial for the War of 1812 and how we can commemorate both the events and the men and women who served during this western NY conflict. One thing everyone can do is inventory all their cemeteries for veterans of this war. My guess is that about half of the soldiers who served have a burial place as “unknown”. This shouldn’t be. So this is a project every town could work on and then we will be able to recognize all the additions in 2015. All the newly located burials could be recognized with markers and flags.

Another idea I had to commemorate the War of 1812 was to begin to build a lake schooner using materials and techniques similar to what might have been used in the 1810 – 1820 time period. The conflict on Lake Ontario was mainly an arms race to see which side could construct the most naval vessels so as to secure an “on the water” advantage over the enemy. These efforts “see sawed” back and forth with neither side ever achieving a clear advantage. This resulted in lots of posturing and maneuvering on the lake with neither side ever achieving anything resembling a victory at sea (lake). About all that ever happened was a few gun boats and armed schooners being captured or changing sides from time to time. In a number of cases, it was the same boats that went from one side to the other and back again. I thought it might be fun and interesting to build a replica gun boat or schooner to symbolize this effort and action on the lake. I don’t think the purpose would be to necessarily complete a boat just work at building a boat over a three or four year period. The project would be a focal point for discussion about the war effort on Lake Ontario and be a demonstration project for shipwright and ship carpentry skills of the day.

Do any of you know of a skilled craftsman who might like to guide this project? I thought about BOCES Technology Center but they don’t tend to be active during the summer months. Any other ideas would be appreciated. Perhaps it could be on a trailer that went from town to town and school to school. As I said, thoughts please.

Oh, I almost forgot, I applied for and received some monetary assistance to attend the National Trust for Historic Preservation National Conference in Buffalo October 19 – 22. Go to www.PreservationNation.org and look for the conference information. This is a very rare opportunity having this conference in our backyard, so to speak.

I was going to make some comment about the weather but then decided against it since it is all anyone seems to be talking about these days....keep cool.

Peter

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