

Wayne County NY, Historian's Fall Letter

Has any body noticed, it is now dark when you (I) wake up in the morning and I mowed lawn last night after getting home from Lyons and I had to stop by 7:15 because I could no longer follow the line of my previous pass. Somehow this always seems to come as a shock to me when I wake up to the fact that summer is actually gone.

Life this summer was not out of the usual mold...it was totally different from any I can recall. First, during July and August my wife had cataract surgery on each eye, then two hurricanes managed to find their way into New York State and both did their thing that hurricanes do....blow, drop water and cause flash flooding. This time it happened in spades to the Catskill Mts/Mohawk River Region and in the Southern Tier along the Susquehanna and Delaware River Basins.

More about that theme later. And lastly, Sue-Jane and I had another grandchild, a boy this time, so we rushed off to Silver Spring, MD to inspect this new child and, of course, see that mom was OK. Mainly, we just entertained the almost 3 year old and kept her engaged so mom, dad and new baby could get settled in at home. What fun!

So, if summer really is over that means we are now into the fall bevy of activities:

- Meetings w/ Programs, Annual Meetings and Harvest Suppers
- Farmer's Markets, Ghost Walks and Cemetery Tours
- Pie Baking & Sales and Eating Contests plus Flea markets and Garage Sales....and then November Open Houses at our Museums

Fall also signals the return of regional and state level programs and conferences:

- Oct 5th WHO Meeting in Wolcott kicks off the season
- Oct 5th John Westerberg will be discussing 40 years of Yankee Peddler Book Shop reminiscences at Gates Hall in P'ville
- Oct 11th Sodus Point POW Program at the Fire Hall w/ 3 speakers
- Oct 13th Seaway Trail Roundtable discussion at "The Grill" in P'ville
- Oct 14th&15th both Newark-Arcadia and Williamson -P'ville H.S. are sponsoring cemetery walks
- Oct 17th "Oral History" w/ Preston Pierce 5:30 – 7:30 w/ free pizza at RRLC Training Center in Fairport
- Oct 19th NYS Archives Month Celebration & Program Rochester Library 9 am – 3 pm in Kate Gleason Auditorium Program: "From Maps to Apps"
- Oct 19th – 22nd Nat'l Trust for Historic Preservation Conference in Buffalo
- Oct 28th Copyright Workshop at RRLC Office in Fairport
- Nov 28th "How the Union Army was Formed" w/ Preston Pierce w/ free pizza at the RRLC Training Center in Fairport
- Next WHO after Oct 5th is on Dec 5th at the County Museum of History

I find it nearly impossible to keep track of all the things happening here in Wayne County during the month of October. One good way to check on me is to look one of the two calendars available on the County Historian's website: www.co.wayne.ny.us then go to the historian's homepage and look for calendars.

Remember, WHO is your organization, I simply offer a level of facilitation. Attendance at the last couple meetings has been on the light side (about 20). Some of you I haven't seen in over a year. If there is something we should be doing different to bring you out regularly please tell someone your thoughts. If you find the speakers I bring in a nuisance and waste of your time....tell me. Oh, one additional note, Bradley McCreary, Exec Dir Sodus Point Lighthouse Museum has resigned. Now that his mother has passed away and he is in the final stage of clearing her estate here, Bradley is planning to return to England shortly after the first of the year. I, for one, will greatly miss him.

Of Special Note:

- 1. Butler Historical Preservation Society celebrated the Sesquicentennial of the Butler Methodist Episcopal Church on Aug 14th. With over 500 people attending the event throughout the day. (I felt terrible missing that event but had about 4 commitments that particular day). In am so glad it was a success.**
- 2. On Aug 31st a group of citizens gathered at the Huron Town Hall for the purpose of determining the interest and energy level around the formation of a historical society. I attended to add encouragement and to answer any questions. It is my understanding that they have looked at constitution and by law structure of some neighboring societies and are moving forward. If they contact any of you please give them all the support you are able. I believe Linda Yancey is the Chair or President designate until a formal structure is in place. Carol Flint, Huron Town Historian, was present and supportive but felt she could not assume any type of leadership role.**
- 3. On Sept 20th, I made a presentation to the governing board of the 1st Baptist Church of Williamson. They are exploring the process to prepare a State and National Register of Historic Places application. Of course, this is the first step generally necessary to qualify for grant money either through public or private sources. Since they are already a "not for profit" there is no tax credit benefit as there would be for a business or private residential property.**
- 4. Inventory of War of 1812 Vets buried in our cemeteries. I am seeking any lists for any cemetery**
- 5. Late Breaking News – Wolcott Historical Society, Marj Perez and the Office here in Lyons all made the National TV Scene on PBS "History Detectives". The piece they were working on last spring made it to airways last week.**

Returning to the theme brought up in my second paragraph...the disaster and destruction of the recent hurricanes. I have driven through the Catskill Mountain Region four (4) times since Irene struck. Our trip to Silver Spring, MD took us into the southern tier and then along the Susquehanna River all the way to Harrisburg, PA. All I can say without belaboring the point is "the devastation is real" without question. Through a number of state networks, I have become aware of museums and historical societies who lost everything...i.e. first floor of buildings totally submerged. Many of our Wayne County Emergency personnel, Red Cross and fire companies responded by sending people and equipment to the affected areas. Of the many areas involved, I chose to work with the Tioga County Historical Society in Owego, NY which is on the bank of the east branch of the Susquehanna River between Binghamton and Elmira. They need many things but the easy way is to simply take up some collections at your next event, meeting or other gathering. I will gladly give you an address or other contact mechanism. You can choose who you donate to. It doesn't matter they all need all the help they can get and I am not sure museums and historical societies as not for profits even qualify for FEMA aid. In most cases, their traditional support base is struggling themselves right now. In Middleburg, NY 75% of the villages structures were flooded. People not only lost their homes, cars and belongings but they lost the jobs, as well in many cases, because their place of employment is also gone. It is pretty hard to go help your local historical society when you are struggling to stay afloat yourself. Let me know how you want to help. Whatever or whoever works for you is fine with me.

What have I missed.....seems like I've lost track of something important?

See you in Wolcott, or at one of the many meetings or perhaps in a cemetery somewhere.

All the best,

Peter

Office of the County Historian Wayne County NY

Peter Evans, Historian