

The Dust Bin

Newsletter of the Ad Hoc Historians Committee

WINTER 2015



Some interesting web sites:

The Pearl Harbor P-40 Boys on Dec 7, 1941 ~ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zS8HWFwAqa4>

History of Household antiques & housekeeping <http://www.oldandinteresting.com/default.aspx>

Lt. Col Edward Saylor Doolittle Raider <http://allthingsaero.com/military-aviation/museums-military-history/video-doolittle-raider-asks-for-no-funeral>

How to date old pictures with early photo types <http://blog.genealogybank.com/how-to-date-old-ancestor-photographs-with-early-photo-types.html>

The Civil War in color <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2446391/Amazing-Civil-War-photographs-created-colorist-bring-eras-heroes-characters-life-color-time.html>



Roman statue of the Muse Clio from the Vila Adriana

Who are we?

Visitors to the Historians Office are often times bewildered about NYS historians, our purpose and our role. Who are we? — a question that leaves many perplexed. To truly understand the nature of our job and craft, we must share a common vocabulary with which to educate others. This issue of “The Dust Bin” is an attempt to clarify our *raison d'être*. To some, this is all ‘Ho-Hum’ and rather self-evident, but others are perplexed by the terminology. Hopefully this will rectify some of the confusion.

First is a short article on what is an historian, then a brief exploration on the duties of a public historian. Finally, we will cover the New York State definition of a Public Historian.



The many file boxes located in the Niagara County Historians Office present a boring façade to the uninitiated. In truth, they hold unimaginable riches and knowledge about the county's history, places and personalities.

Historians explained — maybe

What is history? In Greek mythology Clio (or Kleio) is the muse of history. A daughter of Zeus, she is often pictured with open scrolls or tablets. All of the muses were considered to be the finest in their field and any mortal challenging them, was destined to be defeated.

The word “history” has quite an impressive genealogy and gives clues to its meaning. Descended from a Middle English word borrowed from the Old French *estoire* which meant “chronicle” or “story”, *estoire* in turn was derived from the Latin *historia*, derived came from the Greek *ἱστορία* (*historia*). The latter meant “learning through research, to inquire”. Finally it can be traced back to the Proto Indo-European word meaning “knowledge”.

The job of an historian is to study and interpret the past, people, families, and societies; to teach and write about it. Natalie Davis, Professor Emeritus of Princeton & Toronto Universities, wrote that one of the delights of an historian is “. . . to see how parts of a community fit together, to see the fault lines of conflict, the arrows of change. . . to delight in making the past live for others.”

Historical study gives the added bonus of allowing the researcher to handle documents and artifacts from the past. It is a tactile connection to those who have gone before. There is nothing quite so thrilling as putting a hand on a wall built in 1727, holding a well-loved carpenter's plane previously belonging to a great-great-grandfather, or viewing a

wedding quilt made in 1851.

History gives us the hope and courage to persist by allowing us to return to former days and to realize the human capacity to survive despite tremendous odds.

Whether an academic or a public historian, both draw on the work of others. They teach each other, research together, and critique each other's scholarship and writings. It is this which keeps them fresh, honest, and sharp.

Someone said that historians do not merely eat, sleep and think history which could be true for some, but most find it difficult to ignore. Clio is a demanding Muse, but for those of us who have been touched by her, very rewarding, just don't take us to a movie set in the past!





“I have read somewhere or other, in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, I think, that history is philosophy teaching by examples”

~Henry St. John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke, *On the Study and Use of History*, Letter 2



Benjamin Carpenter’s headstone from Cold Springs Cemetery, photographed by Anita Reed.

So what *IS* a Public Historian?

Much has been written on the difference between an academic historian and a public historian. Degrees in Public History are even offered at some colleges and universities. In a sweeping nutshell of a generalization, public historians are the people who create history for public consumption, not for the scholastic

community. This includes those who work in museums, historic sites, archives, historic preservation, film and publication. They are seen, heard, and read by a popular audience. To misquote POGO, “I have seen one and they are us.”

A public historian takes

scholarly work and transforms it so it is easily digestible for audiences outside academia. They also research and present their historical knowledge to the general public – hence “Public historians”: the ones who make history relevant, and interesting to others.

The Reid/DePew Cemetery Database

Anita Reid was one of our office's "regulars." A professional genealogist, she could be found in the Historians Office doing research at least once a week, sitting in one of our wooden chairs on which she always placed her personal seat cushion. When Anita died, we were fortunate to receive the majority of her huge genealogical research, much of it stored away in 18 large, plastic bins. While inventorying the contents of each bin, we discovered 9 smaller boxes of CD's totaling close to 60 discs, each containing 300+ photographs of tombstones from Niagara County cemeteries.

Anita had visited cemeteries in Niagara County; photographed every stone, and entered each into a printable database. Unfortunately, Anita died before she had the opportunity to complete her project. What

we had were approximately 18,000 photos that were simply listed as jpg.1, jpg.2, jpg.3, etc. How do you find the photo of the stone for John Jones when there are three CD's labeled Cold Springs Cemetery and each of the up to 350 photos or more per disc is identified only by a jpeg number?

Enter Jim Depew, genealogist and friend of Anita. Jim showed up at our office about three years ago, introduced himself, and offered to go through each disc photo by photo, and enter the information into a database program. As a result of Anita's photography and Jim's hours of painstaking recording, the Historian's Office now has a fairly inclusive list of burials from 31 Niagara County cemeteries, with the added ability to view or print out a

photo of a tombstone. They are:

Budd, Cold Springs, Corwin, Evangelical Protestant, Good Shepherd, Greenwood, Lakeview, Mountain Ridge, North Ridge, St. Charles, St. Michael's Lutheran, Trinity Evangelical, St. Patrick's - Barker, St. Peter's UCC, West Somerset, Wright's Corners, Huskey, Shaeffer, Chestnut Ridge, Stahler, Wheatfield, Dickersonville, St. Mary's, Bear Ridge - Pendleton, St. Patrick's - Lockport (includes Carriage Lane), Mt. Pleasant, Orangeport, Mt. View - Pekin, Hillside - Cambria, St. Andrew's Lutheran - Pekin, St. Peter's Lutheran - Walmore.

And the job and duties of a New York State Historian are?

The big question NYS historians continually ponder is “What am I supposed to do?” Simple question, convoluted answer. The Arts and Cultural Affairs Law which took effect on April 11, 1919, provides guidelines for duties of local historians. These fall into four basic headings.



History always has a few tricks up its frayed sleeve. It's been around a long time.

~ Terry Pratchett

- **Research and Writing**— Historians are to interpret the past through research and writing and to actively encourage research in such records that add to a community's knowledge, understanding and appreciation of its history.
- **Teaching & Public Presentations**— Historians are to disseminate knowledge of local history by speaking and lecturing to community groups, consulting with historical agencies and serving as a resource for teachers.
- **Historic Preservation**— An historian is to be an advocate and resource in historic preservation, not only of the built environment but also with the management and preservation of records with enduring value for historical and other research. They are to work with local libraries, historical societies and other repositories to collect and preserve nongovernmental historical records.
- **Organization, Advocacy & Tourism Promotion**— Lastly, historians are to support Heritage Tourism by organizing, directing and/or participating in historical, civic

and patriotic anniversaries. They are to lobby for and provide resources for historical programs and legislative initiatives to promote community history.

In other words, historians are to be a resource for every jurisdiction in the state; to research and write about their communities. Every historian is appointed by and reports to a local governmental authority. The state historian provides guidance but each historian must take their cue from the wishes of their own community leaders

We are to study our past, and to serve as a community resource in historical matters. Preservation of this history is a priority. Even more important is the unspoken directive to make history palatable and exciting for others who often view it as dry, boring, and of dubious importance. As such, we are charged with the responsibility of being as honest with our research as possible. If we make a conscious decision to ignore certain facts or sources then we lie not only to ourselves, but our community and to posterity. That said, we have one of the best jobs imaginable!

It's that time again!

Yes, it's that time again — time to write your 2015 year end report. Let your municipality know what wonderful deeds you have done, the historic riches you have discovered, articles and books published, events planned, and how many researchers you have aided! A copy of your annual report needs to be sent to your governing body, the Niagara County Historian, Catherine Emerson and the State Historian, Robert Weibel. I'm sure he will be glad to hear from you!

Robert Weibel
New York State Historian
New York State Museum
3021 Cultural Education
Center
Albany, NY 12230



And the difference is...? Ad Hoc & Municipal Historians

The Association of Municipal Historians of Niagara County (AMHNC) is a private organization consisting of appointed historians representing the municipalities within Niagara County.

“The purpose of the Association is to assist the Members in interpreting and documenting the past and to support each historian in the performance of their duties.”

---By-Laws of the AMHNC

The Niagara County Ad Hoc Historians Board is appointed by the county legislature. In May 1990, the Niagara County Legislature first appointed an Ad Hoc Historical Committee. Its purpose was to “report to the Niagara County Legislature and the NYS Government those historical signs in need of repair, replacement, and also future markers as the board shall deem it appropriate”

Reorganized in 2003, the Ad Hoc Historians Board no longer fell under the Senior & Youth Services Committee but under the authority of the Community Services Committee of the Legislature. It’s purpose is to “. . . serve as advisors to the Legislature regarding matters of preservation and celebration of Niagara County history, and

to serve as advisors in the selection process of the Niagara County Historian. (Resolution AD-003-03, March 18, 2003)

Members of the Ad Hoc Committee include Keith McNall Chairman of the Community Services Committee, the Niagara County Historian, the Deputy Niagara County Historians, and duly appointed Niagara County Municipal Historians. They serve a one year renewable term after being duly sworn-in by the County Clerk.



The Niagara County Historian is appointed by the County Manager. Administratively, the Historians Office falls under the umbrella of the County Clerk’s Department. The Niagara County Historian is the point person for the Legislature when there are questions concerning preservation and celebration of Niagara County history.

When questions arise that need addressed by the AMHNC, the County Historian contacts the president of that organization or another delegated member of the group. If it is a matter of the Ad Hoc Historians Board, the Historians contact the individual municipal historians involved. Membership in either group is not obligatory and is up to the discretion of the individual historians and their governing body.

Lewiston gets donation of Townsend Collection & 1815 Map

When the Napoleonic Wars between Great Britain and France made trade on the Atlantic Ocean untenable, Jacob Townsend and his partners moved their shipping business Townsend, Bronson, & Company, to the Great Lakes area in 1810. Unfortunately, the trouble followed them.

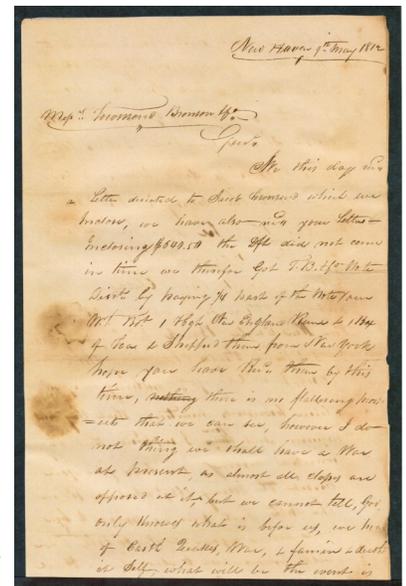
Jacob settled in Lewiston. He was preparing to bring his family to the village when the British attacked in 1813 burning the length of the Niagara Frontier from Fort Niagara to Black Rock. Townsend didn’t relocate his family to Lewiston for another two years, in 1815.

Descendants of Jacob Townsend have recently donated to the Lewiston Museum a number of personal letters, business documents relating to Jacob’s business in Lewiston, Oswego, and Blackrock, and an original 1815 Map of the Village of Lewiston. The majority of the collection dating from 1811-1816, is ordinary business letters, but some have personal details. A few letters were written by Sheldon Thompson, Jacob’s Black Rock partner and the first elected mayor of Buffalo. Some are duplicates of letters sent, for Jacob’s business records. One letter in particular shows the optimism,

or at least the hope, that our country would not be involved in another war so soon after the American Revolution. A letter from Jacob to his colleagues expresses his opinion that “I do not think we shall have a war at present, as all classes are opposed to it.” The letter was dated May 9, 1812, just one month before the declaration of war.

The 1815 map of the village and select letters are on display at the Lewiston Museum, 469 Plain Street, Lewiston.

~ by Pam Hauth,
Village of Lewiston Historian



First page of Townsend letter dated May 9, 1812,

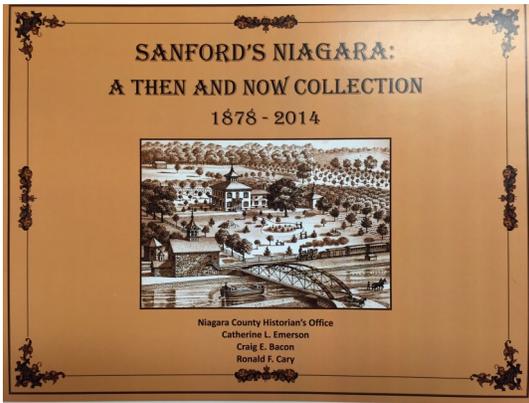
Sanford's Niagara: A Then And Now Collection 1878-2014

The Niagara County Historian's office has announced the publication of a new book that takes readers back almost 140 years to an era when Victorian architecture, steam powered machinery and large, prosperous farms were common sights in Niagara County. The 246-page pictorial publication is a reprint of the Sanford 1879 History of Niagara County, N.Y. with Illustrations Descriptive of Its Scenery, Private Residences, Public Buildings, Fine Blocks, and Important Manufactories, and Portrait of Old Pioneers and Prominent Residents; a volume that offered 19th century readers an impressive array of detailed drawings that showed prominent area homes, farms, industrial works and landmarks.

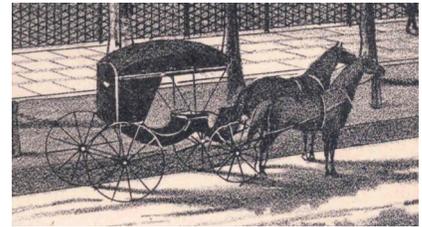
The 2015 edition is not just a reprint of the original work. Over the past two years, Historian's Office staff members have researched the locations of the original scenes that stretch from Somerset to North Tonawanda and Royalton to Porter. Once the location of an original drawing was identified, Historian's Office staff photographed the scene as it appears today. Contemporary readers can thus compare how the Niagara County landscape has changed over the years in a "then and now" format.

Several of the illustrations depict scenes that have changed little in 136 years, such as the James M. Morse residence in the Town of Wilson. Others like the Edwin Whitcomb farm in the Town of Hartland reveal how the forces of industrialization, suburbanization and social and economic change have greatly altered the local landscape. Captions provide historical information on the scenes and the people who were associated with them.

Sanford's Niagara: A Then And Now Collection 1878 - 2014 is priced at \$26.95 including tax, and will be available for purchase at The Niagara County Historians Office, Ticklebridge Co-op, The Dory, Old Fort Niagara Gift Shop, The Book Corner, Lewiston Museum and other area locations.



Niagara County Historian's Office
Catherine L. Emerson
Craig E. Bacon
Ronald F. Cary



Get a Pomeroy Foundation Marker for your community!

The next grant round for The William G. Pomeroy Foundation's Historic Roadside Marker Grant Program in Regions 10-12 is officially open and they have expanded the timeframe for the traditional grant program, and added a new theme program that will change each year!

- **Expanded Timeframe:** Commemorating historic people, places or things within the timeframe of 1740 -1914.
- **2015 Theme:** Commemorating your community's participation in the WWII effort during the years 1942-1945.

Application may be submitted for more than one marker within each program, or for both programs. You can still apply if you have received funding in the past.

They have funded over 220 markers in 42 counties within NYS. The William G. Pomeroy Foundation strongly believes that Historic Markers play an important role in local historic preservation by preserving history, educating the public, and fostering historic tourism which in turn can provide much needed economic benefits to the towns and villages where the markers are placed.

The application forms, helpful hints, and a description of the programs are available on the website at www.wgpfoundation.org under NYS Historic Grant Program, then Historic Roadside Marker Grant Program Section. Under the 'How to Apply' section of the drop down menu there will be a marker image for each program. Just click on the image to get to the proper page.

Important Deadlines for Both Programs:

- 02/02/15 - Material available online
- 03/13/15 - Deadline to submit email to Verify Primary Source. Please email proposed marker inscription to info@wgpfoundation.org and list the primary source documentation you have assembled to verify the historic accuracy of your text.
- 04/01/15 - Application deadline
- End of Q2 2015 - Awards granted

Please remember about the grant signage program to commemorate public properties or districts that have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Applications for this program can be found on the website as well, and will be accepted anytime throughout the year. Please contact Paula Miller if you have any questions. She can be reached at [\(315\) 476-3000](tel:(315)476-3000) x2576.



Some Quick Tips on Photographic Identification

Here is a quick guide to help date photographs.

Daguerreotype is the one of the earliest forms of the photographic process. They were one-of-a-kind images, shiny like a mirror, and subject to tarnish. For this reason the images were encased to protect the likeness. Samuel Morse (of Morse Code fame) brought the process to the United States in 1838.

Ambrotype images are on glass plates and have a 3D look. They are lustrous prints with a

subtle gradation of tones from light to dark.

Tintype images are on a blackened iron plate and attract a magnet. *They were available well into the 20th century, but generally as novelty.

Carte de Viste likenesses are on a thin card measuring about 2 3/8" -4", the size of a visiting card. Popular because of their small size, these inexpensive photographs could be put in a envelope and sent to friends and relatives.

Cabinet Cards were essentially the same as the Carte de Viste in their design and photographic processing, only larger. They were mounted on a 4 1/4 x 6 1/2 card that included intricate logos and information on the back advertising the photographers services.

Photo Type	Appeared	Most Popular	Waned
Daguerreotype	1839	1842 - 1856	1857 - 1860
Ambrotype	1854	1855 - 1861	1862 - 1865
Tintype	1856	1860 - 1870	1872 - 1878*
Carte de Visite	1859	1860 - 1880	1880 - 1889
Cabinet Card	1866	1875 - 1900	1901 - 1903

Hats off to Larry Hasley!



Julia Reinstein, Town of Cheektowaga Historian was honored for her long and devoted service to all the Historians across New York State when Andrea R. Shaw, President under Region 8 of the former Association of Municipal Historians of New York State (AMHNYS) declared October 7, 1989 to be Julia Reinstein Day. Julia had worked tirelessly to organize both the Region 8 and the State Municipal Historians Association, continuing to promote history until her

death in 1998. In concert with her motto "Historians in Pursuit of Excellence – Building a Legacy", the Historians of Western New York have continued the annual tradition of recognizing historians who have continued to build on the legacy left by Julia Reinstein. At the Annual Fall Meeting of the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York (GAHWNYS) worthy recipients are presented with the Julia Reinstein Career Achievement Award. This last fall, Town of Lockport Historian Laurence Hasley was so honored for his service. Since the first bestowed in 1989, only three others from Niagara County have been awarded: Lorraine Wayner, Town of Somerset/Village of Barker Historian in 1998, Don

Ames, Village of Youngstown Historian in 1999, and Dorothy Rolling then Niagara County (now Town of Niagara) Historian in 2002. The hallmarks of excellence in these Public Historians is their knowledge, proficiency and professional integrity.



Who says Historians don't have a sense of humor?

The Runnymede meadows are located on the banks of the Thames River, County of Berkshire, England. The land is currently owned and preserved by the National Trust. A bus load of tourists stopped at Runnymede

and gathered around their guide who explained, "This is the spot where the Barons forced King John to sign the Magna Carta." One of the men in the front of the group asked, "When did that happen?" The guide

responded "1215". The man looked at his watch and exclaimed "Gee, hey everybody – we just missed it by a half hour!" (Groan.)



Magna Carta Island looking towards Runnymede.