

**LIVINGSTON COUNTY
DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY
REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING 2016**

DEPARTMENT: County Historian

2016 PROGRAM SUMMARY:

It is a privilege to submit my 13th annual report as County Historian. In 2016, I crisscrossed the county to do numerous programs and provided advice and assistance for the town historians, historical societies, schools and other organizations. To further strengthen the role of local government historians and advocate the role of NYS and local history, I represented this office at several events at the regional and state level as Executive Chair of the Government Historians of Western New York, as a member of the New York State Historical Records Advisory Board, and as a member of the New York History Advisory Group convened by the State Historian.

The continuing support and encouragement of the Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator has enabled the Livingston County Historian's Office to remain one of just a handful in the state with a full time county historian with a research center open to the public every weekday as well as maintain an expansive website allowing access to historical information any time of the day or night.

Every year I look back and am thankful for my dedicated staff who keeps the research center organized and running smoothly. Deputy Historian Holly Watson undertook several large projects this year in addition to maintaining the Historian's web page and assisting a multitude of researchers (see her report attached). Long time clerk Mary Beth Bimber, associated with the office for over 20 years, retired in November. Mary Beth was an extremely loyal and hardworking employee who tackled many of the office's largest indexing projects, answered hundreds of requests for genealogical information, assisted at dozens of meetings and much more. Her absence will be sorely missed. The office also benefited from the commitment of volunteers Doreen DeCamp, Terry Yount, and Alberta Dunn whose combined efforts amounted to approximately 150 hours.

Preserving, interpreting, and celebrating our shared local history in these challenging times in our nation's history presents numerous obstacles as well as abundant opportunities to educate and inspire. I look forward to 2017 with anticipation of maintaining high standards and expanding services to meet the ever-growing needs and curiosity of present and future generations.

I. Office Management, Collection Development

1. Preservation and expansion of historical records collection:

- a. **Public Research Room:** In 2016 approximately **120** people utilized the research room and more than **350** requests for information were received via phone and email. The subject binders were routinely updated with references to current events from weekly newspapers and with documentary materials deemed to have permanent value for local history research.
- b. **Expansion of the County Historian's Web page and Online resources:**
 - i. Web page: Updates and resources were added throughout the year
 - ii. The County Historian's Online Records Index: The search engine now includes approximately **310,000** entries. Series additions in 2016 included: *see Deputy Historian Holly Watson's report attached.
- c. **Archives and Manuscript Inventory, indexing and cataloging updates:**
 - Newly acquired documents, manuscripts, etc. were continually accessioned, arranged, described, and appraised to determine long-term use and protection needs and then housed in archival quality storage containers and enclosures. Donations accepted included numerous archival documents, photographs, and scrapbooks related to people, places, and local historical events. Among the most significant were:

1. Records of the Proceedings of the Superintendents of the Livingston County Poor House, 1829-1865. Transferred from the Central Library of Rochester; transcribed and indexed by Holly Watson.
 2. Livingston County Record of Inmates in the Almshouse 1920-1934. Donated by the Sheriff's Office.
- **Finding aids** created for several series: *see Deputy Historian Holly Watson's report.
 - **Cemetery records**
 1. The Doug Morgan Cemetery digital image survey indexing project was completed for a total of **66,751** images of marked graves throughout the county.
 2. Craig Colony cemetery burials 1909-1979 totaling **2300** entries were added to the online records index.
 - **Volunteer projects**
 1. Doreen DeCamp – finished a multiple year project inventorying the photograph series; expanded and labeled files of the Poorhouse collection series; expanded and labeled archival documents in the Family Folder series; and began labeling documents in the Archival Files series.
 2. Terry Yount – processed 15 cubic foot boxes of Poorhouse vouchers; organized the Blue Devils in Vietnam surveys; and labeled and paged the Vietnam Operation Morale series.
 3. Alberta Dunn – indexed several district school record books including – Livonia District #13 register 1879-1900, Portage District #4 register 1905-1906, Springwater District #4 1866-1896, York District #8 1895-1896, and Avon District #4 1903-1909.

II. Community Outreach and Advocacy

1. **Town Historian's Quarterly meetings** – Throughout the year this office provides guidance and support for the 17 town historians. In 2017, we mourned the loss of Leicester Town Historian, Tom Roffe who died on August 2. His contributions to expanding the history of Livingston County will be sorely missed. We also bid farewell to Groveland Historian Phyllis Dreywood, Lima Historian Doug Morgan, Livonia Historian Dorothy Wilkins upon their retirement after many years of dedicated service to their communities. Quarterly luncheon meetings were held at various locations around the county. All meetings were well attended with an average of 14 out of the 17 towns represented at each meeting in addition to office staff, volunteers, and guests.
 - May 6 – Livingston County Historian's Office
 - July 27 – Hemlock Lake Park
 - October 27 – Livingston County Historian's Office
 - December 15 – North Dansville Town Hall
2. **Special Projects**
 - Edited the narrative and assisted in gathering artifacts and information for the May 1st opening of the *Our Towns: The History of Livingston County in 25 Objects* exhibit installed at the Livingston County Historical Society Museum.
 - Mounted an exhibit for the May 6th opening entitled *The Female Perspective: Livingston County Women who changed the status quo* at Livingston Arts.
 - Finished and installed a permanent exhibit the *Livingston County Historical Timeline by era: from the Iroquois Confederacy to Present Day* at the County Government Center.
3. **Other Meetings/Public Speaking/etc.**
 - January 4 – Attended the organizational meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

- January 12 – Attended a workshop on the Local Records Management Improvement Fund Grant program at the Government Center
- January 19 – Presented a power point program researching family history for the Avon Free Library.
- January 21 – Presented a power point program about the County Historian’s Office for the County Department Head meeting at Hampton Corners.
- January 30 – Presented a new power point program entitled *The Golden Age of Capitalism* and the impact on Livingston County in the post-World War II era.
- February 10 – Attended the State of the County presentation at the Board of Supervisors meeting.
- February 10 - Attended the Nunda artist Rose Shave exhibit at the Lockhart Gallery, Geneseo.
- February 24 – Friends of Livingston County History planning committee meeting
- March 16 – Attended the Friends of Livingston County History spring program at the Livingston County Historical Society.
- March 29 – Conducted a tour of Murray Hill for a SUNY Geneseo class.
- April 3 – Attended the Nunda Historical Society Museum opening day event.
- April 14 – Presented the *Impact of the Vietnam War on Livingston County* program at the Henrietta Library.
- April 17 – Attended the Springwater Bicentennial opening event at the Springwater Fire Hall.
- April 19 – Attended the County Department Head meeting at the EOC.
- April 27 – Attended the Volunteer Recognition ceremony at the Board of Supervisor’s meeting.
- May 10 – Presented a program on the development of Livingston County for the Springwater-Webster’s Crossing Historical Society at the American Legion in Springwater.
- May 17 – Attended the dedication ceremony of the Spa Apartments located in the former Clifton Springs Water Cure in Clifton Springs.
- May 18 – Presented a power point program on Geneseo for the Garden of Life at the CNR.
- June 14 – Presented a power point program entitled *Homegrown Inventions & Innovations* for the West Sparta Historical Society at the West Sparta Town Hall.
- June 22 – Attended the employee recognition ceremony at the Board of Supervisor’s meeting.
- July 21 – Attended the County Department Head meeting at the EOC.
- August 12 – Participated in the dedication ceremony of a new grave monument in honor of Revolutionary War hero Captain Daniel Shays at the Union Cemetery in Scottsburg.
- August 16 – Conducted a tour of Murray Hill for the County Youth Services summer employees.
- September 11 – Presented a power point program entitled *The Female Perspective: Women Entrepreneurs in Livingston County* for the Livingston County Historical Society.
- September 14 – Presented an update of the County Historian’s activities and plans for upcoming commemorations at the Board of Supervisors meeting in conjunction with the unveiling of the *Historical Timeline by era* exhibit.

- September 28 – Presented a power point program on the *Importance of Historic Preservation in Planning* for the combined Mt. Morris Town and Village Planning Board at the Mt. Morris Town Hall.
- October 13 – Presented an overview of Livingston County history for the Dansville Lion’s Club 75th anniversary dinner at the American Legion in Dansville.
- November 3 – Participated in the Veteran’s Day Local Authors Read event at the Central Library of Rochester with the *Blue Devils in Vietnam* authors.
- November 16 – Attended the 2017 budget presentation at the BOS meeting.

III. Professional and Educational Development

1. Government Appointed Historians of Western New York - This regional organization was formed in 2009 to provide assistance and support to officially appointed local government historians for 11 counties in Western New York. The organization maintains a membership database, a website (GAHWNY.ORG) and sponsors two biannual meetings with a variety of educational and training programs.

- Founding member, appointed treasurer (2008-2010), Elected treasurer for 2-year term (2010-2012). Elected Executive Chair September 2012 for 2-year term (2013-2014); re-elected Chair September 2014 for 2-year term (2015-2016).
- April 23 - Coordinated the Spring meeting in Batavia
- September 24 – Coordinated the Fall meeting at the United Methodist Church, Geneseo
- October 13- Coordinated the Fall Executive Board Meeting, East Aurora.

2. New York State Advisory Board participation

- May 3 and October 18: New York State Historical Records Advisory Board – New York State Archives Partnership Trust, Cultural Education Center, Albany
- December 6: New York State History Advisory Board convened by the State Historian, Cultural Education Center, Albany

2017 PROGRAM SUMMARY:

1. Prioritizing and processing series collections for digitization.
2. Commemoration of the centennial of American involvement in World War One.
3. Commemoration of the centennial of the passage of woman suffrage in New York State.

Submitted by Amie Alden, Livingston County Historian
March 27, 2017

Annual Report form: Jan.-Dec. 2016

Name: Holly C. Watson

Overview:

General responsibilities included:

- Answering the phone, directing calls and resolving questions;
- Assisting visitors in the research room with queries and fulfilling online research requests;
- Attending quarterly staff meetings;
- Tidying the research room, work area, and storage areas as needed;
- Assisting with the management of donations and accessioning new acquisitions, creating accession sheets, and describing items and specifying locations in master inventory;
- Maintaining an online presence on the County Historian's website with announcements, links, photographs, and lists of resources.

Other related activities:

- Attended local history lectures, including "Avon Spa Era" by Maureen Kingston; "Cuylerville" by Tom Roffe, "The Story of Thanksgiving" by Christopher Bensch, and "The Golden Age of Capitalism" by Amie Alden.
- Attended the New York State Family History Conference held jointly with the annual conference of the Association for Public Historians of New York State (APHNYS) in Syracuse, September 15-17.
- Attended the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York (GAHWNY) Spring Conference and the GAHWNY Fall Conference;
- Attended an historical tour of Wells barns around Scottsville and Avon, NY on October 22

Projects – be specific and include statistical information

Completed projects

- Finding Aids - Created finding aids for collections and series; involved stating date range, extent, abstract, subject lists, biographical or provenance notes, and contents list for each collection or series. The following finding aids have been completed:
 - Troop M, N.Y.N.G. Records
 - Newspaper Series
 - Sullivan Campaign Records
 - Douglas Morgan Cemetery Photograph Survey
 - Van Dorn Papers
- Accessioned Livingston County Newspaper Collection – collection was received from the LCHS in September 2015; inventoried original newspaper books and issues, secured in appropriate archival storage solutions, and labeled shelves for long-term storage. Collection is composed of 147 oversize boxes and several unboxed bound oversize books.
- Reorganized Archival Files series - housed materials in all new folders (arranged by town and subject), labeled the folders, and added them to the master inventory; 424 folders.
- Reorganized and relabeled items in the Sullivan Campaign miscellaneous ephemera box.

- Completed indexing various small record groups, entering them onto the County Historian's Online Records Index to improve accessibility of information. Completed the following indexes in 2016:
 - Rev. C. H. Boynton record of marriages, Geneseo, 1902-1904 (22 names)
 - Rev. C. L. Bown record of marriages in Liv. Co., 1843-1881 (63 names)
 - Finished indexing Geneseo St. Mary's Church baptism records from 1857-1935 (approx. 1,648 names)
 - Geneseo St. Mary's Church marriage records from 1859-1955 (approx. 1,134 names or 567 marriages)
 - Caledonia First Presbyterian Church membership and baptismal records, 1805-1886 (765 entries)
 - Completed indexing Oakland Lodge Register, 1855-1875 begun by Mary Beth (total of 246 entries)
 - Geneseo Poor House record book, 1829-1867 (1,824 entries)
- Transcribed Geneseo Poor House record book, 1829-1867 (246 pages)
- Added a new Craig Colony photograph album on the County Historian's website, with 10 featured photos
- Uploaded digitized images of the entire 1902 Livingston County Atlas to the website
- Re-boxed Family File Archival Documents Collection after volunteer Doreen labeled new folders for collection contents; 10 half-cubic foot boxes shelved and labeled; also updated Location column on inventory for this series
- Completed indexing Doug Morgan's Cemetery Photograph Survey; in 2016, typed 9,475 individual records from Springwater – York for a grand total of 66,752 photographs.

Research Requests

- Responded via email to 103 research requests received by email or phone
- Fulfilled 64 research requests received through the CivicPlus "Request Research" form
- Recorded 87 requests from visitors in the research room during office hours

Projects In Progress

- Indexed Newspaper Accessibility Project
 - Typed entries from hard-copy Indexed Newspaper Collection into online database for ease of patron access to records. Newspaper references concerning births, deaths, marriages, and other notices spanned the surnames McGainer to Ramsey, and totaled approximately 6,760 entries
- Churches of Livingston County Compendium
 - Collected information from various sources in the Historian's Office, online, and from Town Historians to make a comprehensive list of religious organizations and buildings past and present in Livingston County. Between November 11 and

December 31, 2016, sketched out chronologies of churches in Caledonia, Leicester, Mt. Morris, North Dansville, Nunda, Ossian, Portage, Sparta, Springwater, West Sparta, and York. Created maps of church locations for many of these towns.

Comments – optional

I felt that this year was a productive one, with a number of larger projects completed. Having these under control, the office is even better equipped to efficiently answer questions and assist patrons with research. Consistent work on the website and online resources provides a crucial interface with patrons from non-local areas and provides information without excessive demands on staff time.

My quarterly goals included completing projects, tweaking systems, and keeping the office efficient and orderly; I feel these were met each quarter and by years' end I feel that the office has improved.