

Town Historian 2016 Annual Report – Donna Herendeen

2016 was a year for accomplishments and projects for the town historian. Time spent on research (in and out of office) increased since 2015. Time sheets were kept and submitted to town supervisor. The Historian's work time has tripled in two years going from 20 to over 60 hours in a single month.

As chairperson of the Historic Preservation Commission, the town historian continues to work with Andrew Purdie, Victor High School teacher, Ray Henry (Canandaigua Town Historian) and Victor high school students on the barn project. The progress of the project is solely dependent on number of students participating in the project and their school schedules. Thus progress is slow.

As chairperson to the Vietnam War Commemoration committee, the town historian states that the committee's fund raising goals to erect a veterans memorial in Farmington was reached. Materials were selected for the foundation and flags, poles and lighting were ordered. Work will begin and be completed in 2017. Veterans luncheons will continue be held every month until the committee disbands at end of 2017. At that time all documents pertaining to the 3 year project will be turned over to the town and stored as archival material. It is unknown whether the town will continue hosting the luncheons.

The Historian continued writing articles about local history for the Daily Messenger, a local newspaper. The Historian prepared programs for the Victor-Farmington Kiwanis Club and the Ontario County Genealogical Society. In 2016, the Kiwanis Club presented the Historian with a Helping Hands award for her work with the veterans and veterans' memorial. The Historian, serving as a Town representative, attends the 1816 Farmington Quaker Meetinghouse monthly meetings. The Historian presented a display depicting original pioneers of Farmington at the 1816 Meetinghouse bicentennial even. She acknowledged descendants of original pioneers with a Farmington Pioneer button.

At the Historian's request, the Ontario County Genealogical Society and many volunteers inventoried two of Farmington's inactive cemeteries, Powers and Hathaway. The cemeteries are of historical value since many of the original pioneers are buried in them. Many of the headstones have fallen, broken or are missing. Most grave sites were identified. Work is planned to straighten and/or repair few of the older headstones. The next step is to map the cemeteries using the 1988 and 2016 inventories. The cemeteries are maintained by the town.

The Historian applied for (and received approval) a grant from the William Pomeroy Foundation for a Legends and Lore marker to be placed in Pumpkin Hook.

During the year, much time was spent on research at the Ontario County Historical Society (OCHS), the Ontario County courthouse and Ontario County Records Archives (RAIMS) to prepare for the Woman Suffrage Bicentennial. Your Historian was invited to join the Ontario County Historical Society Woman Suffrage project (funded by a grant) which involves local historians doing research on suffragists from their towns. Your Historian has collected information and pictures of over 30 local women who voted in 1917 plus doing a thorough research about suffragist Phoebe Hathaway. Phoebe was a granddaughter of Isaac Hathaway, one of the town's original settlers. The Historian plans to publish her findings in a pamphlet upon the completion of the county project.

The Historian attended three NYS archives seminars, the annual APHNYS conference held in Syracuse, quarterly meetings of town historians facilitated by Preston Pierce, County Historian, APHNYS regional meeting in Brockport, and the OCGS conference on "Researching Genealogy, Procedures and Using Social Media" at the LDS center in April. An application for "Registered Public Historian" was submitted to the APHNYS.

Family histories from the Popenhusen, Aldrich, Padgham and Powers families were collected and archived. The Historian continues to respond to genealogical requests. The Historian will be busy in 2017 moving the contents of her office from one room to a larger one. A fire safe walk in closet for storing archival materials will be located in the historian's new office. Family histories will be indexed and placed in binders to be made available to the public for research.

In 2017, the Historian, Town Clerk and Town accountant will begin preparing a grant request for assistance for digitalization of archival documents and backup and storage of the work.

Two books “Temperance Meeting Minutes 1833-1876” and a day log of Lewis Allen’s time spent as town justice have been digitalized. A working copy of each book was produced for researchers use. The originals are stored safely in the town vault.

The Historian and John Robotello will work on developing and publishing a self-guided driving tour guide of Farmington’s history for visitors.

Work is always done by the Historian with one thought in mind.....what is best for the community and the people who live in it now and in the future. Her work can only be accomplished with the grateful support she receives from the town officials and employees. The Historian wishes to give a special thank you to the Highway and Parks Departments for the wonderful job they do in maintaining the cemeteries and keeping the lines of communication open.