

Historians gather in Buffalo

I enjoyed reading the recent Sunday edition of *The Citizen* to see what my friends/fellow historians are doing. Beverly Sayles, the Victory historian, was busy on April 18 with photo scanning day at her town hall. More than 150 photographs were shared for her records.



Laurel Auchampaugh

Joni Lincoln of Conquest also had a busy weekend with many things going on so I understand why they both could not attend the annual Association of Public Historians of New York State (APHNYS) conference in Buffalo over the weekend of April 18, 19 and 20. Eileen McHugh, Auburn city historian and director of the Cayuga Museum, and I were the only two representing Cayuga County in attendance. We sat together at the awards banquet on Monday night. Beth Batlle of Skaneateles received her registered historian's certificate award. I was pleased to see that Dawn Roe, the village of Port Byron and town of Mentz historian, was listed on the awards program as winning the Edmund J. Winslow Local Government Award for Excellence.

This award honors a public historian in recognition for excellence in one or more public history projects or publications. Dawn has not been the town historian very long, and I was grateful that her tireless effort and professional zeal was recognized. She is also from Cayuga County! Congratulations Dawn!

The state historian, Robert Weible, in his "State of the State's History Address" mentioned Dawn Roe and her memorable achievement of coordinating with many people including Hildene, the Abraham Lincoln family museum, to bring the Lincoln Bible back to the little village of Port Byron after an absence of 149 years! All schoolchildren in Mentz got to see it in the high school auditorium.

We have 23 towns in Cayuga County, and I sincerely hope more Cayuga County historians will plan on attending the conference next year in Elmira. It is not a long drive, and we can plan on sharing transportation. I have gone with the historians from Onondaga County by train each year — last year to Albany and this year to Buffalo. Our group from Region 9 has literally crossed the state from east to west, just as the Erie Canal did in 1825!

The Erie Canal's final stopping point was a slip on the waterfront in Buffalo. The remains were discovered several years ago. It is now being preserved, thanks to the passionate effort of preservationists who did not want to see it destroyed. This site was one of the historic places we visited on our preconference tour in Buffalo.

Our hotel, the Hyatt Regency, was located on Pearl Street in the theater district, and many of the city of Buffalo's amazing architecture built in 1901 during the Pan American Exposition were within walking distance. We could see Lake Erie from our hotel room.

A memorable visit to Buffalo City Hall was our first scheduled tour early Sunday morning. A stained glass window hangs over the Council Chambers. Depending on the time of day, the sunburst pattern can be viewed as either sunrise or sunset. Our group next took the elevators to the 25th floor. We then walked the rest of the way up to the 28th floor on several flights to the "Windows on the World." We stepped out into the mist and fog and walked around the outside, viewing the sprawling city of Buffalo in every direction.

By evening, our tour school bus took the large group of historians to Niagara Falls on the American side. On our way, we were informed we were passing Love Canal, a former housing development which became the infamous Hooker Chemical polluted site. The cause for environmental awareness was championed by a young mother who discovered not only her child but many children in a radius of several blocks had cancer. She spoke in Auburn just this month about her experience. The former housing development is now covered with acres and long blocks of green meadow grass.

I attended my selection of sessions the conference offered in the three days I was there. They were "Historic Preservation 101: An Introduction to the Benefit of Local Preservation Planning," "The Historian and the Landmarking Process," "Bringing the War of 1812 to Life," "Preserving and Presenting Tragedy in the Community," "Websites, E-mail, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and More," "Becoming a APHNYS-Registered Historian: Recognition for Your Great Career," and lastly, "A Glorious Acquisi-

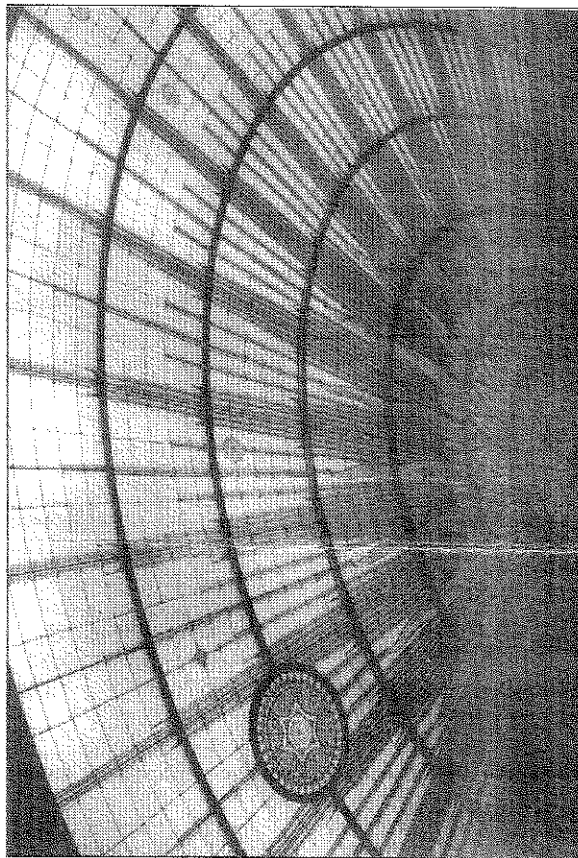


Photo provided
A stained glass window hangs over the Council Chambers in Buffalo's City Hall.

tion: The Siege of 1759 at Fort Niagara."

I wish that other Cayuga County historians could gain as much as I do from these educational sessions. The camaraderie we share with our peers and the information we receive is valuable to aid us as historians in our locality.

If you are a historian reading this, please remind your town clerk about your dues to the Association of Public Historians Of New York State. This association works hard for all of us to recognize our work as local historians and see that it is appreciated. As a member, you will receive all publications about future conferences and the many sessions/speakers involved offering us all further educational opportunities.

Also, it is not too late to make a 12-by-12-inch quilt square representing your town for the State Quilt Project. So far our region (9) has the most quilt blocks submitted.

Please e-mail the APHNYS at aphnys@caphill.com for more information about the quilt project. The dues registration form is also on this site for your local town clerk. The fee for a small municipality is not large — the same as a modest yearly magazine subscription!

For those who are following the 100 years of Scouting in the United States, and the Owasco Boy Scout connection, I am continuing to interview and meet with scout leaders and former scouts. This endeavor has now evolved into a series. I cannot cover the fabulous stories without allowing more time. The two display cases at the Owasco Town Hall featuring Scout memorabilia is also a work in progress.

Laurel Auchampaugh is the Owasco historian and can be reached at the Owasco Town Hall from 1 to 4 p.m. Tuesday afternoons or at owascohistorian@centralny.twcbc.com

The Citizen "Lake Life" Section 5/2/10



Photo provided
A bust of Millard Fillmore is located just inside the front entrance of Buffalo City Hall. He was Cayuga County's only former president and later made his home in Buffalo.