

Region V Spring Meeting Minutes

May 31, 2008

Hartford, Washington County

The Region V Spring meeting took place on Saturday, May 31, at the Baptist Church in Hartford, Washington County. Loretta Bates, Washington County Historian, was our host for the meeting. The meeting was a great success; there were thirty one attendees including Historians from Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Warren, and Washington Counties. In addition to the historians present, representatives from the Crandall Library and the New York State Cultural Education Center were also in attendance. Thank you all for making the trek out to scenic Hartford!

Awards for driving the farthest distance to the meeting:

I am going to call it a tie between Bob Duchow, Historian for the Town of Westerlo, and Ralph Miller, Historian, and Erin Bradt, Deputy Historian for the Town of Berne. They traveled for approximately **1 hour and 45 minutes** to get to this meeting – what dedication!

Thank you:

A huge thank you goes out to Loretta Bates, Washington County Historian, for arranging the meeting location, the food, and the tour of the Civil War enlistment Center. Loretta, your efforts made this meeting a huge success!

Another thank you goes out to the Church. The church allowed us to use the space for free, and their members provided our refreshments and lunches. All of the attendees thoroughly enjoyed the lunch!

Thank you, Pete Swano, for opening the Museum, and guiding our group through the enlistment center.

Minutes:

Our first presenter was Dr. James Harrison, chair of the History Department at Siena College. Dr. Harrison presented on Siena's Center for Revolutionary Era Studies (CRES). Siena created this new center to help elevate interest in and create an academic concentration in the Revolutionary War period. Dr. Harrison stated that Siena students have shown tremendous interest in the program. It is an interdisciplinary curriculum, and is designed to give students more than a degree; it trains students to be historians. Students in the CRES program are required to complete an internship to receive their degree. Many of these students have interned at the Saratoga National Park. Dr. Harrison would also like to expand these internships to include the offices of the municipal historians. He then asked the Historians for ideas on how their program can provide the link from academics to practical applications. As of September 1, there is a full-time program director, Dr. Jennifer Dorsey.

Our next speaker was Brian Buff. Brian gave a PowerPoint presentation on the story of Thomas E. Murray, born of Irish immigrants in Albany, and who rose from poverty to become one of New York's greatest Horatio Alger stories—rivaling Thomas Edison in number of patents and the race to find the most-efficient technique for harnessing the power of electricity to light New York's communities. The presentation also told how this remarkable story was found buried in a New Hampshire barn, brought back home to Albany, and preserved for future generations.

Nancy Adgent of the Center for Gravestone Studies presented on *Waking up Cemetery Tours*. Nancy Adgent is an historian and Project Archivist for the Collaborative Electronic Records Project. Her presentation used case studies from Tennessee and New York and explained how infrequently used resources could enhance the visitor's experience. These research sources included manuscripts, government records, online documents, and published works. A bibliography of selected research sources was also provided. Nancy provided great ideas on how to refocus cemetery tours to tell stories about women's history, the local effects of warfare, ethnic history, architecture, fraternal organizations, and much more!



To end the day, the group toured the Hartford Museum and Civil War Enlistment Center with Pete Swano. At that building, the men of Hartford enlisted in Co. E. 123d Regt. New York State Volunteers. The building is the only Civil War Enlistment Center remaining in New York State. The museum exhibits tell the story of the 3000 mile, three-year journey of service to the Union, and focus on the enlisted men, their equipment, their stories and the battles they fought

Announcements:

Lauren Doherty, Historian for the Town of Day, Saratoga County, was married on June 6 to Jason Roberts. Congratulations, Lauren!

Fall Meeting Announcement

The Region V Fall Meeting will be held on Saturday, October 25 from 9:30 to 3:00 at the Shaker Heritage Society in Colonie. The preliminary agenda includes John Scherer as our featured speaker. John will present: "A Shaker Legacy: The Watervliet Shakers and the New York State Museum." In addition to John's presentation, Jennifer Lemak, Senior Historian at the New York State Museum, has agreed to present her research: Promise Land: Albany's Rapp Road Community. At the close of our meeting, John Scherer will lead us on a tour of the Shaker site. We are still in the process of creating a skills workshop for this meeting. Please save the date, and look for additional information on our Region V webpage.