

THE HISTORIANS' EXCHANGE

Association of Public Historians of New York State

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OCTOBER 2015

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A Welcome to the New APHNYS!

A funny thing happened on the way to the May newsletter—we didn't put one out. I had promised you four issues a year, and then in our haste to restructure how we do our outreach, it got lost in the wayside. I apologize to all of you for the error.

But it gave us the opportunity to change some things around. First, I applaud Christine Ridarsky, City of Rochester Historian, for stepping up to assume the editorship of the newsletter. This is a continuation of spreading the leadership of APHNYS to more members. Now that we are solid in terms of membership and finances, we can move to make APHNYS more responsive to our members. I have heard you—you want APHNYS to be there for you, to have material you can use, to promote the importance of your work to your appointing bodies, or just to make sure a historian gets appointed.

Our outreach committee is working toward that goal. We now have a Facebook account (please like us) and a Twitter account (I still am learning that one), in addition to our newsletter and website. Thanks to Ridarsky, Clifton Patrick, (Town of Chester) and Ray LaFever (Town of Bovina), we are moving into the technologies

of the 21st century to be able to deliver more content to you.

We are adding links and resources to our webpage for you to use in your work. We are updating our events, meeting schedules, and historians database more frequently. This is how it should be and can be done now that more people are involved.

We want all of you to feel that you can contact us on whatever medium you use. We cannot be in every municipality across New York, but we can try to help you in ways that better your opportunity to succeed.

One more method will be a monthly message to all historians across the state. You can call it a blog, an email, a blast, or whatever. Some will come from me; some will come from other historians or partners who have a message, a technical skill, an event, or something else that we should read about.

You will read that Bob Weible has retired as New

York State Historian. I learned about Bob's decision before many of you, and APHNYS is taking a proactive position to strongly encourage and work with the New York State Education Department to fill that

position as soon as possible. We are also asking that the Historian's job be separated from joint duties as Chief Curator for the New

York State Museum. We truly need a State Historian whose duties are just that and not combined with too many other responsibilities.

Lastly, it is the season for fall regional meetings. I encourage all of you to participate, to go to one or more across the state. This schedule will change in 2016 when many of our regional meetings will be held in the spring as we move our 2016 annual conference to the fall. We will meet in September in conjunction with the New York State Family History Conference. There will be 600 people at the conference. I urge you to submit conference proposals and to sign up early for the conference to make it our biggest conference of all time!

-Gerry Smith, President



A Message...

So far, 2015 has been a good year for New York historians. To begin with, the meeting at Corning earlier this year was especially successful—and not just because of the record attendance. The formal sessions were as informative as always, and they helped everyone stay on top of current issues, including the upcoming centennial of women's suffrage in New York, new insights into “data mining,” working with educators on new Common Core guidelines, and, of course, historical markers.

As many of you know, the next annual meeting will take place in the fall of 2016 rather than the spring. This is a thoughtful, well-justified move that has my full support. It almost goes without saying, that I continue to be impressed with the leadership of Gerry Smith and the APHNYS board. Gerry's decision to delegate more responsibilities is a good one and a sign of organizational growth.

I was also very pleased to see that APHNYS gain some national recognition when Rochester City Historian Christine Ridarsky spoke about raising the profile of government historians in April at the annual meeting of the National Council on Public History in Nashville, Tennessee. New York's public historians are unique in the nation, and I would encourage more of our APHNYS mem-

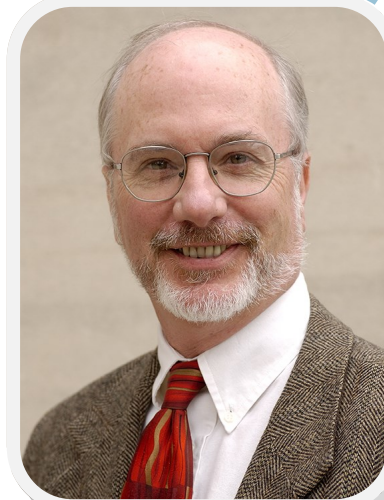
bers to spread the word within the larger historical community.

Another person who has been doing important work for the public history community is Chris Philippo. For more than a year now, Chris has been working as a volunteer in the State Museum to organize and analyze historians' annual reports. His work is now more than 90 percent completed, and he's come up with some interesting findings—for better or worse.

The good news is that the files are now organized and available by appointment to anyone who would like to see them. On the other hand, Chris's and my biggest frustration is the fact that there are only four reports in the files from 1919-1960 (not counting two for the Town of Hyde Park in the State Library's FDR Collection).

Interestingly, State Historian Albert Corey's correspondence notes that 146 reports were filed in 1946. And yet none are currently available. This suggests that these early reports may have been lost or destroyed. More reports were submitted in the early 1960s, meanwhile, but the files include fewer than one-hundred per year (and none in some years) through the early 70s.

Yearly submissions then began averaging over two-hundred a year through 1981. After a significant drop during the next few years, when the records may again have been misfiled and or de-



stroyed, things began to pick up in 1986.

Nearly four-hundred reports are on file for 1991 alone, and numbers increased dramatically in 1993, when State Historian Ken Ames and Acting State Historian Joe Meany began using standard Annual Report Forms. Some of you may remember these forms. Indeed, a few of you still use them—even though I've discouraged their use. The ARF forms mainly record statistics and other strictly factual, quantitative, and administrative information, and I prefer to hear from you in your own words.

Not surprisingly, the numbers of annual reports dropped after Joe retired in 2001, and the State Historian's office was unattended for seven years. When I showed up in 2008, the numbers grew initially and then, surprisingly to me, slowed down. That's too bad, because these reports are important, not just to me and not just to the State but to future historians.

From Our State Historian (cont.)

As I imagine most historians know, our understanding of history changes over time. Your reports consequently hold important information for tomorrow's researchers. They'll want to know the facts, certainly, but they'll also want to know how you understood history yourself and how you made it more meaningful to people in your time. That is, every generation writes its own history, and you are very much a part of this process. As I've said many times in my annual addresses, your work is important.

So...think about the kinds of buildings you are working to preserve in your community. The choices you and your neighbors make help shape the way you remember and understand their past, certainly, but your work will also help provide people fifty or a hundred years from now with a record of what you did, as well as why you did it. And this will help them understand their times as well as yours.

Think also about stories you are telling in your publications and on your web sites. And your historical markers. Are you addressing the changing roles of women and men in your communities? The departure of longtime businesses or the coming of new ones? How did your community commemorate the history of the Civil War during the just-concluded Sesqui-centennial? Perhaps you helped commemorate the men who fought—as people have traditionally done for a century-and-a-half. That's good. Or maybe you used the occasion to help people understand the causes of the war and its connections to public issues today. That's better. As we've all recently learned from the public response to the racially motivated murders in South Carolina, the memory of the war is indeed changing. And so are we all. As William Faulkner once famously wrote, "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

And a Farewell...

Speaking of change, by the time you read this, I will have retired. My last day on the job was July 15. My wife and I will be staying in New York, however, and I'll be continuing to follow the good work that all of you do. I will also stay active in the state and national historical communities, so we may run into each other from time to time and maybe even work together. I hope we do. Before I go, however, let me say that I have greatly enjoyed my seven-and-a-half years with all of you. I've learned a lot from each of you and had a good time doing so. Thanks.

Lastly, let me encourage you to stay in touch with the State History office. I may be leaving, but the office will remain open. You should all keep in touch with—and send your annual reports to the acting State Historian—my friend and colleague Jennifer Lemak, at least until a new permanent Historian is named. Jennifer's e-mail address is jennifer.lemak@nysed.gov; her phone number is (518) 474-5842.

A Note from the Editor

As Gerry mentioned in his article, APHNYS is revamping its communications program with the goal of keeping members better informed and better connected to the organization and fellow historians. Unfortunately, my learning curve in putting together this newsletter for the first time delayed publication even more than any of us expected. I promise to try to do better in the future and to try to get our newsletter back on a predictable quarterly schedule. But to do that, I need your help!

We would like to be able to share more news from our members throughout the state, like the "tidbit" you see below. Have you published a book, sponsored a successful program, been featured in the media, or won and award lately? Please tell us about it! Photographs are welcome, too.

We would also like to make an effort to honor historians who have died. We know we've lost at least three over the past few months, including longtime Schuyler County Historian Marion Boyce (Schuyler County), Spencerport Village Historian Sandra Mitchell (Spencerport Village), and Hamlin Town Historian Robert Kruger (Town of Hamlin). We suspect there have been others. In the future, we are asking regional coordinators, county historians, and APHNYS members to send us information about members who have passed so we can include them in a In Memoriam column.

Finally, I would love to hear your comments about the newsletter. What kinds of columns or features would you like to see? Let me know! Thank you!

— Christine L. Ridarsky

Tidbits from around the state...

Perinton Historian Bill Poray was featured in a CBS news story in August after helping to identify a young woman who appeared in recently discovered 70-year-old Kodachrome home movies. His research revealed that the film had been recorded by a young man who eventually perished in World War II. Poray located the woman in the film and learned how the war had cut their love story short. To see the CBS report, visit www.cbsnews.com/videos/long-lost-home-movies-reveal-one-couples-love-story/.

Do you want to see your news in the next Historian's Exchange? We would love to include it! Send news items to Christine.Ridarsky@libraryweb.org.



Association of Public Historians of New York State

2016 ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE

Syracuse, NY - September 15-17, 2016

Register NOW for Early Bird Discount!



The Association of Public Historians of New York State is pleased to announce that the 2016 Annual State Conference will be held in Syracuse on September 15-17, 2016, in conjunction with the New York State Family History Conference. APHNYS members will have the opportunity to attend NYSFHC sessions at no additional cost. Accommodations and most conference sessions will be held at the Holiday Inn—Liverpool.

Please note the change in timing, as APHNYS has historically held its annual conference in the Spring. The move to a Fall conference will reduce conflicts between our conference and others normally held in the Spring, such as the Museum Association of New York and the New York Statewide Preservation Conference, and provide new opportunities to partner with organizations such as NYSFHC.



Due to the popularity of the NYSFHC and a limit on the total number of attendees the conference venue can accommodate, we are encouraging APHNYS members to **REGISTER EARLY**, both to ensure that they are able to reserve a spot and also to take advantage of an early bird discount. You may register for only **\$55** before **November 30, 2015**. After that, registration increases to \$65 until May 31, 2016, and \$75 after that.

The APHNYS conference draws between 175-200 Local Government Historians and supporters of local history from across the Empire State. NYSFHC draws hundreds more.

Use the form on the next page to register.

Look for additional details in coming months!





APHNYS CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

September 15-17, 2016, Syracuse, New York

Name: _____

Guest registrant name: _____

(Guest registrants of the APHNYS conference may only attend the APHNYS sessions.)

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

APHNYS Region: _____

Historian or Deputy for: _____

(Circle one: Town Village City County Borough)

Please check all that apply:

☐ I am a newly or recently-appointed Public Historian.

☐ I have been a member of APHNYS since _____.

☐ I am a Registered Historian.

☐ This will be my first visit to Syracuse.

Lecture Choices:

The APHNYS 2016 will run concurrently with the NYS Family History Conference. APHNYS registrants may attend any of the NYSFHC conference lectures at no additional cost, but will not receive the NYSFHC syllabus. The NYSFHC syllabus will be available for purchase at the NYSFHC booth in the exhibitor hall.

Membership:

For those who have yet to renew for 2015 or wish to join APHNYS for 2016, be sure to complete and mail in the membership form found on our website:

www.aphnys.org If paying for 2016, indicate that on the form.

Dues for Historian and/or Co-Historian are based on Community's population:

0 – 1,000	\$25.00
1,001 – 4,000	\$30.00
4,001 – 12,000	\$35.00
12,001 – 100,000	\$40.00
100,001 – 200,000	\$45.00
200,001 – 1+ Million	\$50.00

Dues for the following categories are as follows:

Deputy and/or Assistant Historian \$25.00

Affiliate Member..... \$25.00

(Affiliate Membership is for any cultural agency, educational institution, corporation, historical societies, museums, or individual interested in NY State history and the work of the public historians of NYS. Affiliate Members shall be non-voting members and shall not hold office)

For the 2016 conference, Affiliate Members who join as Affiliate members on or before September 15, 2015, will be eligible for the member registration fee.

Friday Afternoon APHNYS Excursion/s (destinations to be determined):

____ TBA (cost \$30) Limited to 40 attendees.

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Conference Registration

First Rush—postmarked/registered before Nov. 30, 2015

APHNYS Member \$55 \$_____

APHNYS Guest \$25 \$_____

Early Bird—postmarked/registered before May 31, 2016

APHNYS Member \$65 \$_____

APHNYS Guest \$30 \$_____

Regular—after May 31, 2016

APHNYS Member \$75 \$_____

APHNYS Guest \$35 \$_____

Registration total (lectures) \$_____

Meals:

Thursday Dinner & Program \$45 \$_____

Friday Breakfast \$25 \$_____

Friday Lunch & Lecture \$32 \$_____

Friday Dinner & Program \$45 \$_____

Saturday Breakfast \$25 \$_____

Saturday Lunch & Lecture \$32 \$_____

Excursions & Membership:

Friday APHNYS Excursion 1 \$30 \$_____

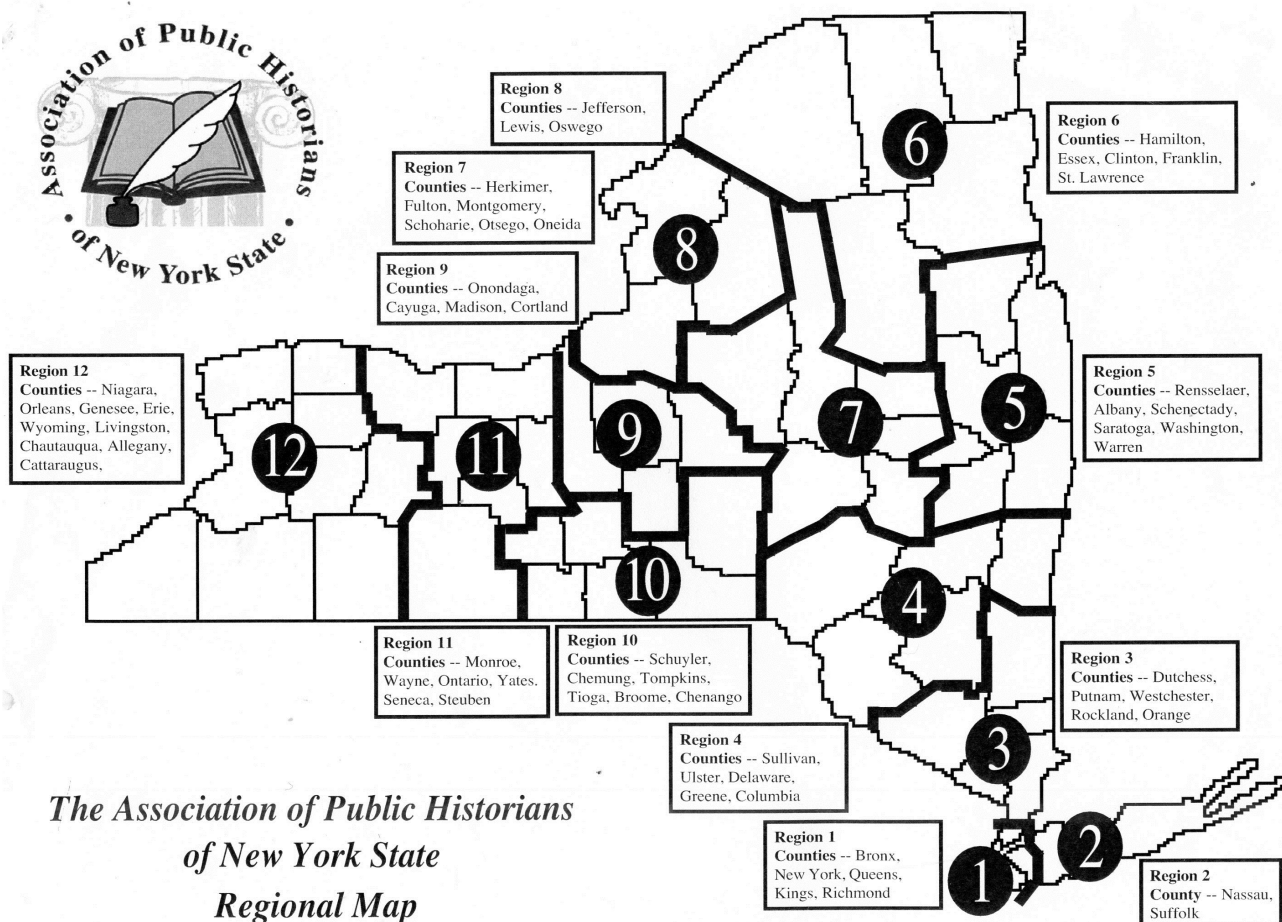
Friday APHNYS Excursion 2 \$30 \$_____

Membership Fee (see chart on left) \$_____

FINAL TOTAL \$_____

NOTE: IF ATTENDEES MUST CANCEL DUE TO EMERGENCIES PRIOR TO 72 HOURS OF THE CONFERENCE, ALL FEES WILL BE RETURNED EXCEPT REGISTRATION FEES. IF CANCELLED LESS THAN 72 HOURS, MEAL COSTS ALSO CANNOT BE RETURNED.

Please make checks payable to APHNYS
and return this form to:
APHNYS 2016 Conference
P.O. Box 2985
Setauket, NY 11733



Regional Coordinators Around The State

- Region 1:** Sharon Wilkins, Manhattan Deputy Historian, swilkins@manhattanbp.nyc.gov
- Region 2:** Zachary Studenroth, Town of Southampton Historian., zstudenroth@southamptonny.gov
- Region 3:** Suzanne Isaksen, Town of Montgomery Historian, sisaksen@townofmontgomery.com
- Region 4:** Ray LaFever, Town of Bovina Historian, bovinahistorian@gmail.com
- Region 5:** Krissy Saddlemire, Village of Schuylerville Historian, krissysaddlemire@yahoo.com
- Region 6:** Vacant
- Region 7:** Richard Williams, Town of Kirkland Historian, apulia@verizon.net
- Region 8:** Justin White, Oswego County Historian, whitej@oswegocounty.com
- Region 9:** Matthew Urtz, Madison County Historian, matthew.urtz@madisoncounty.ny.gov
- Region 10:** Gerald Smith, Broome County Historian, gsmith@co.broome.ny.us
- Region 11:** Peter Evans, Wayne County Historian, historian@co.wayne.ny.us
- Region 12:** Barbara Durfee, Town of Sheldon Historian, sheldonhistorian@aol.com



Association of Public Historians of New York State

2016 Dues Notice/Membership Application

Membership Year: Jan. 1-Dec. 31 Membership Dues Amount: *See Chart Below*

PLEASE TYPE or PRINT CLEARLY AND FILL OUT COMPLETELY!

Membership Category:

☐ Historian ☐ Co-Historian ☐ Deputy Historian ☐ Assistant Historian ☐ Affiliate Member

Appointed for: ☐ County ☐ Town ☐ Village ☐ City ☐ Borough ☐

Other _____

Name of Municipality: _____ County: _____

Affiliates also list your county

Date of original appointment _____ (estimate if not sure)

Are you a New Historian? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, name of Prior Historian _____

Member's Name: _____

Member's Mailing Address: _____

Municipal Billing Address: _____

Member's Phone w/Area Code: _____ Fax: _____

Email (please print clearly): _____



*We **strongly** encourage Historians have an email address in order to receive APHNYS messages. All information is sent by email. Those without email will receive only dues notices and conference information.*

Date: _____ Amount Enclosed: _____ Check # _____

APHNYS does hereby certify that the items of the account are true and correct; that no Federal or State taxes for which the municipality is exempt are included; and that no part of the same has been previously paid. APHNYS' fiscal address for receiving dues, conference payments, etc. is APHNYS, PO Box 2985, Setauket, NY 11733. Regular correspondence should be sent to APHNYS, PO Box 366, Chenango Bridge, NY 13745. **If a person is appointed historian/deputy historian for more than one community, dues are to be paid for each community.** If you have questions, email us at APHNYS@yahoo.com or call 607-595-1571. Please return completed form with check **made payable and mailed to:**

➡ ➡ **APHNYS** ← ←
PO Box 2985
Setauket, NY 11733

Dues Structure

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(607) 595-1571
www.aphnys.org
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APHNYS Leadership

OFFICERS

President - Gerald R. Smith

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Chenango Bridge, NY 13745
(607) 595-1571
aphnys@yahoo.com

1st Vice-President - Rosemarie Tucker

Town of Groton Historian (Region 10)
101 Conger Blvd.
Groton, NY 13073
(607) 898-5035
roseingrotonny@gmail.com

2nd Vice-President- Matthew Urtz

Madison County Historian (Region 9)
138 North Court St.
Wampsville, NY 13163
(315) 366-2453
matthew.urtz.@madisoncounty.ny.gov

Treasurer - Barbara Russell

Town of Brookhaven Historian (Region 2)
Brookhaven Town Hall
One Independence Hill
Farmingville, NY 11738
(631) 451-8038
brussell@brookhaven.org

Secretary - April Staring

Town of Vienna Historian (Region 7)
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North Bay, NY 13123
(315) 762-4262
historian@tovlookup.org

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historian@co.wayne.ny.us

Raymond LaFever

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Judithlittlejohn@gmail.com

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historian@thetownofchester.org

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Sharon Wilkins

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swilkins@manhattanbp.nyc.gov