The

Chronicles

of the Ontario County Historical Society Museum and Research Center

Established 1902

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Connecting our Community with its Past

December 2021

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Until We Meet Again! Thank You for Your Support.

By Preston E. Pierce, Museum Educator

With this edition of the "Educator's Corner," I close my time as the Museum Educator. I was appointed in August, 2014 and the past seven years have been some of the most fulfilling of my career in history and education. I want to begin by thanking all of you for your support of the



museum's educational programs and special events. However, all good things must come to an end sometime, and this is my time to say good-bye. That is, good-bye until we meet again--as visitors, members, and volunteers at the Ontario County Historical Society.

There are many words of advice about when it's a good time to "retire." First of all, the time is good when you have a clear vision for the next chapter of your life. Another good time is when you can leave with no regrets and lots of accomplishments that give you at least modest pride. Both of those situations apply to me now, so I hope I am leaving the Society with expressions of good wishes going both ways.

I have several "bucket list" projects on which I have been working for years. Several of them are coming to fruition and now is a good time to finish them. That is particularly true for at least two publications I want to complete for the benefit of the Historical Society, but which take too much time to squeeze in among the duties of the Educator. One of them is a comprehensive history of the "Peanut Line" railroad, including the often-neglected western half between Batavia and Niagara Falls. What is left to complete will require some travel around western New York; locating some critical images; and some editing. Another publication is a history of Canandaigua Lake and the people who have lived, worked, and played along its shore. After many years of research and file building, that book has arrived at a tipping point.

Since 2014, it has been my pleasure, really, to introduce some new programs to the educational offerings of the Historical Society. Each person who has filled the position brings personal strengths and interests. I believe I have taken the educational program of the museum in some new directions; produced some scholarly presentations and publications; and introduced some new activities.

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Among those latter events were "adventures of viticulture," a series of "history rides (with delicious endings); and detailed walking tours through parts of Canandaigua that often escape historic notice. My final tour project breaks new ground and allows visitors and residents alike to visit the many Black history sites in the city.

I am proud of what I've accomplished for the Society, its members, and the residents of Ontario County. In the end, however, I could not have done those things without the loyal and encouraging museum volunteers and the dedicated staff. They have helped me do everything from moving heavy display cases; to tracking reservations, judging student papers, making the complicated parts of National History Day (NHD) competition fit like a perfect jigsaw puzzle; and pointing me to important artifacts in the collection.

As we move into the holiday season and the early months of the New Year, I will miss two events, in particular. For the first time since I became the Museum Educator, I will not be running the "Holiday Rails" train layout. Time simply did not permit it this year. However, look for some new and exciting holiday events at the museum. Just as Finger Lakes Railway, Ontario Pathways, and the Auburn Trail are creating new experiences along our historic rail lines, you will undoubtedly see a new version of "Holiday Rails" down the line.

For two decades, late winter and early spring were the traditional months for National History Day preparations. Curricular changes, teacher retirements, and COVID restrictions brought NHD to a standstill in 2020. The time is not yet right to rekindle the flame. When that time comes, perhaps in 2022-23, I hope to be among the many volunteers who have made NHD competition such a resounding success for local students; my predecessor, Nancy Parsons; and myself. We can all be justly proud of how all who work here, in any capacity, made the Finger Lakes Regional competition a showcase for the state.

The Society has a strong, pragmatic, and hard-working new Director. It will shortly have a new Museum Educator with some fresh ideas that will take the museum, its members, and patrons in exciting new directions. Together, I believe Cody; Curator, Wilma Townsend; the Board; and our new Educator will energize the program as we emerge from the havoc created by the CIVID pandemic. It's an ideal time for all of us to conserve the best of our past; reinforce support for the activities of the present; and move boldly in new directions—wherever they may lead. I will be looking for you among my fellow volunteers!

OCHS Bookstore

Are you looking for a present for someone special? The OCHS Bookstore has some new arrivals that would make for a great gift! Among them are:

The Canandaigua Letters by William Winship

Freedom: A Shared Sacrifice by Marjory Allen Perez

Final Stop, Freedom by Marjory Allen Perez

Rochester's Famed Bragdon Station by Richard Chait



From the Director's Desk

By Cody Grabhorn

Winters of Present and Past

The winter season has arrived here in Western New York, and we are embracing it as much as we can at the museum. We are adapting to a slower season (visitation-wise) by focusing our time on other chores that will prepare us for the year to come. As I watch this change take place here at the museum, I wonder what the winter season looked like for the residents of Ontario County in the past. Luckily, we have a plethora



of diaries in our collection that bring their stories of the winter season to life. One diary in particular intrigued me, and I thought it would be nice to share a few excerpts with you. The Tibbals family lived in Canadice in the late 19th century, and unlike many other diaries that are brief, theirs gives a detailed overview of the whole family's day.

December 8 – Noah at home all day, went into the woods and cut some timber to finish a stable. Emma went to school. I washed some of the ceiling and fixed up the paper in the kitchen.

December 13 – Noah made arrangements to butcher tomorrow, drew water and chored generally. Emma went to school. I washed the window in my bedroom and cleaned the woodwork.

December 16 - Noah salted pork, cut wood, done chores, cleaned. Emma done the housework, I finished rendering lard, baked 5 loaves bread, took ease of butter and fixed Johnny's socks. Weather very cold and wind blowing fearfully.

December 18 – Noah kept 3 fires and carried coals into the cellar to keep it from freezing. Frank helped him about half a day. Emma done the house work, baked 5 pies. I did not do any work only a few chores, feeling quite ill.

December 23 - I stewed pumpkin, baked ginger cookies, baked apples and done house work generally. Severe squalls of snow in afternoon.

Just from these few lines, it is easy to paint a picture in our minds of the busy winter season. Although each excerpt is short, they can offer a vivid image of this household. Maybe you can smell the stewed pumpkin, baked ginger cookies, and baked apples. Perhaps you can imagine salting pork and cutting wood all day long in the very cold and windy weather. Some of you might imagine Emma walking to and from school in the snow. Furthermore, you might have realized that some of the tasks they did then, we still do now. Although we have modern heating, lighting, and appliances today, there are many ways that we can relate to our predecessors. In the end, we live in different times, but we are all connected by our ties to the landscape and weather conditions of Ontario County.

While we aren't busy cutting wood, salting pork, building stables, or baking bread at the museum, we are busy planning for the year to come. Earlier I had mentioned how museum visitation generally drops during the winter season, which gives many people the impression that it is a slow time for us. However, just like the Tibbals, we are staying busy with behind-the-scenes work. As you read this, we are planning programs, exhibits, and events that we hope will attract even more visitors and consequently more supportive members in the warmer months.

All of this goes to show that if we take some time to stop and think about our lives compared to those of our predecessors, we might just find more similarities than we thought existed. In fact, there is one last excerpt that mentions a task that we deeply connect with at the museum. On December 27, Juliatte Tibbals recorded that "Mr. Butler called, [he] was canvassing for centennial history." During the winter of 2021 we continue the work of Mr. Butler by canvassing for the cause of preserving and presenting our history, and we hope that you follow us in the endeavor.

What's in the Collection?

By Wilma Townsend

As many of you may have seen on the news or read online, a remarkable find of a long-lost photographic studio collection was made some months ago in Geneva, NY. David Whitcomb, an attorney and city court judge in Canandaigua, purchased an old building in Geneva in order to expand his law office. When cleaning out the building, he discovered a closed-off attic that contained hundreds of turn of the 20th century studio portraits, photo negatives, frames, and a host of studio props and equipment. Untouched for over 100 years, these were the remnants of the



photographic studio of James Ellery Hale. Regionally well-known, Hale took portrait photos of many Genevans as well as more famous people such as Susan B. Anthony who visited the city on several occasions.



James Ellery Hale

In September 2021, an auction in Canandaigua was held to sell the entire collection. Because OCHS collects artifacts, photos and archival items representing the county's history, it was determined that funding reserved for select collections acquisitions would be used to purchase a selection of photos and studio equipment at the auction. An OCHS member also generously made a financial donation to defray some of the costs. With a list of items of interest gleaned from the auction house lots, Executive Director Cody Grabhorn went to the auction, bid, and won 22 items. Items purchased included 17 photos of men, women and children, a studio backdrop, a drying rack for glass plate negatives, a chemical mixing tool, and two studio props – a footstool or booster for children, and a Mission style chair which came with a photo of a woman seated in the chair.

In 2023, OCHS plans to present an exhibit on local studio photographers and their work. The items noted above from Hale's studio will be featured in it. As part of the preparation for this exhibit, we will apply for a conservation treatment grant to conserve and stabilize the studio backdrop. We are delighted and grateful that we were able to purchase representative items for the James Ellery Hale Photo Studio and look forward to presenting them to you in an upcoming exhibit.



Above: Drying Rack

Right: Corner of Backdrop

Far Right: Examples of Hale's Photography





An Immigrant's Story

By Betty McMahon, Volunteer Researcher and Genealogist

In the course of researching owners of a historic home on North Main Street in Canandaigua, we came across a story that captured our imagination. How did Ludwig Mayer, and the woman who was to become his wife, escape Nazi Germany?

Ludwig Mayer was born in Himbach, Hesse, Germany in 1905 into a Jewish family He graduated from Frankfort on Mein Medical School and opened a practice in Budingen, a medieval city not far from Himbach. He worked there between 1933 and 1937. The year he began his medical career, Hitler came to power in Germany.

Beginning in March, 1933, the Nazi government began adopting laws restricting the rights of Jewish citizens. They excluded Jews from civil services and



social welfare services. In April, the number of Jewish students who could enter schools or universities was reduced. Jewish doctors were forbidden to treat non-Jews. That was followed by laws against Jews being admitted to medical schools. By 1935 Jews were stripped of their citizenship and any rights that were attendant on that citizenship. By 1936, travel even within Germany became difficult. Everyone had to register with the government and obtain papers to always carry with them, produce them on demand, and live within the restrictions imposed by those papers. In 1937, Jews were required to register all of their assets with the German government.

Living in Germany was difficult for everyone in the 1930s. The country was suffering through the Great Depression like many other nations. It was especially difficult for Jewish people. And Dr. Mayer was a member of the Democratic Fraternity in Germany. That made him a double target. At that point, in 1937, Ludwig Mayer determined to leave Germany while his passport was still good and come to the United States. It is unknown how Ludwig managed to get to Hamburg from central Germany and from there, obtain an airplane reservation to the United States. On 28 September 1937, his plane landed in Miami, Florida.

Because of the growing fear of German power, allowing German men to enter the U.S. was restrictive. Because of this, Dr. Mayer entered the U.S. on a visitor's visa. He then flew to Cuba and returned to the U.S. under the Cuban quota system. That allowed him to declare his intent to become an American citizen.

Johanna Margarete Seibold was born in Vilbel, Hesse, Germany in 1909. It is a village not far from Himbach. She and Ludwig had apparently met while in Germany. She also decided to come to the United States. Johanna Margarete traveled by luxury ocean liner, the United States Lines, embarking at Hamburg and arriving in Manhattan on 5 August 1937, several weeks before Ludwig landed in Miami. She had \$90.00 left. Although her stated destination on her passport was Chicago, Illinois where her cousin lived, she apparently never left New York City. Her real intent was to meet Ludwig Mayer there.

Ludwig returned from Cuba in September, 1937 and on 9 October 1937, Ludwig and Johanna were married in Manhattan. Within the next few months, both signed declarations of intent to become American citizens, identifying their race as Hebrew. They lived in Manhattan for the next few months.

Cont. on p. 9

Your Historical Society



Halloween Open House

Membership Annual Dinner





"Light the Lawn" Granger Homestead



Kid Kindl is Back!

Join us December 11th from 10AM to 3PM for fun holiday activities for kids. You can listen to Christmas stories read by Mrs. Claus in the Pioneer Kitchen. You can even have your photo taken with your family and Mrs. Claus. Since Santa won't be there, you can write a letter to him that Mrs. Claus will hand

deliver it. If you are feeling crafty, you can make an ornament for your tree. Also, if you or your kids have not finished shopping for the holidays, you can choose gifts to purchase (25 cents/item) for family and friends.





Arts Corner

By Judi Cermak, President OCAC

One thing leads to another....

I always look forward to each Thursday. This is the day I volunteer at the Historical Society, and I never know who will stop in, call or what projects need to be worked on. Recently a friend stopped in and gifted me with a Fiber Arts magazine from 1985. Why did she save this? I know why she gave it to me because the Arts Council and Historical Society are collaborating on a fabric and fiber exhibit for 2022. But this old magazine, black and white photos on yellowing pages, what use could it be? As I thumbed through it I became intrigued with many articles. A few of the artists I knew, like Anni Albers a weaver, but Kiyomi Iwaya was new to me. Using my iPad, I checked her out. Beautiful images of her silk construction in color heightened my interest to reread the article from 1985. One thing leads to another. Building on the past can be the inspiration for creating new work. Here at the Museum this opportunity is available through workshops, exhibit and events. All you need to do is come in.



New Design on Something Old

The Curator's Loft

By Wilma Townsend

We are now preparing for our next major exhibit: Fibers of Our Lives: From Practical Craft to Decorative Art in Ontario County. This exhibit will be held in conjunction with the Ontario County Arts Council's exhibits, programs and workshops on art created with all variety of fibers including wool, silk, cotton, flax, and other natural fibers. Our exhibit will focus first on the basics of creating various fibers. For example, how does a sheep's fleece or harvested flax become yarn, thread, or cloth to make necessary clothing, quilts, bedding and other household items? Also, what types of handwork were used to make practical items unique and beautiful? How did the industrial revolution



Quilt made by Mary C. Whitney

transform how such items were made? Local artifacts and their stories will be featured in the exhibit including spinning wheels, swifts, quilts and coverlets, needlework art, lace, and clothing. Interactive spaces will give you the chance to try your hand at weaving, cross stitch, knitting and crocheting.



If you have something that you feel would be of interest for this exhibit and would like to lend it to us, please contact me at curator@ochs.org or 585 394-4975.

Our current exhibit *Our Family Companions: The History of Pets in Ontario County* will be open for you to enjoy through early April 2022.



Lace Collar made by Elizabeth Taylor

Sampler made by Minerva Peck

News and Announcements

Covid-19 and Masks—Due to the rise in cases of the Covid 19 Delta Variant, we are suggesting that visitors wear masks while inside of the museum.

Holiday Hours at the Museum—The Museum will be closed December 24th, 2021 through January 3rd, 2022. We will reopen at 10AM on Tuesday, January 4th.

Welcome to our newly elected members of the Board of Trustees: Alana Bernhardt, Gloria Dancause, Kathleen Hendrix, and Jeanna Savage. All will serve three year terms that expire October 31, 2024. With the retirement of David Hewson as Vice President, we welcome Charles Parkhurst as our new Vice President. We say fare well to David Hewson and Fritz Cermak after three years on the board. If you or anyone you know are interested in serving on our board of trustees, we would be happy to talk to you.

We want to thank all the volunteers who assisted with our museum's programming this past year. Without them we could not offer the services we do.

Our building expansion project is progressing even though Covid has slowed it down. The committee led by Geoff Astles has recently met with architects and conservators to discuss possible designs for the existing and new spaces.

We will be sending out an Annual Operations Appeal in December. The letter will explain how your donations will help the museum continue to be a benefit to locals and tourist to our area.

The Historical Society and the Ontario County Arts Council continue to work together to create educational experiences within and outside of our museum walls. One activity we are most proud of was our Mini-Makers week, which taught eight children about history and art. During this four day project each child learned how to make art supplies in a historic way, such as paper, ink, and a folio. The materials that they created were then shared with the public in an exhibit inside of the museum that displayed their items alongside similar artifacts from our collection. These types of hands-on activities and exhibitions created by our community will be continued in the next year and we look forward to the fun memories they will help to create.

The theme for 2022 is Fibers and Fabrics. The Historical Society will have a year long exhibit with programming that compliments the exhibit. The Arts Council will have numerous exhibits throughout the year and their programs will also be related to the overall theme.

Finally, on behalf of the staff, volunteers and board of trustees of the Historical Society, we want to thank you for your financial and emotional support this past year. We wish you a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous 2022.

We Welcome These New Members

Ellen Parsons Robert Taylor Susan Besaw Rachel McDermott Susan Wemett Julie Blue

Jeanna Savage Patty Coates Mr. & Mrs. John Sullivan

Cont. from p. 5

In July 1938, the Mayers moved upstate to Manchester, NY. Dr. Mayer established his medical practice in the village and they remained in Manchester until 1941. Andrew E. Ryan, postmaster in Manchester, was one of the witnesses for Dr. Mayer, signing an affidavit supporting his application for citizenship.

In January, 1941, the Mayers moved into 148 North Main Street in Canandaigua. Dr. Mayer set his practice up in his home, not unusual at the time. Patients rang the doorbell and entered. Dr. Mayer met them in the foyer and conducted them into the dining room which was his examination room. Johanna may not have been thrilled with this arrangement as by September, 1940, they had a baby girl, Anne. Three years later, they added a son, Ludwig P. Mayer. Dr. Mayer began remodeling the basement to contain his medical practice.

In 1944 Dr. Mayer was granted his final citizenship papers in a naturalization ceremony in Canandaigua conducted by Supreme Court Judge, Fred D. Cribb.



Dr. Ludwig Mayer, Canandaigua, 1943

After the war in Europe was ended, Johanna's parents traveled to Canandaigua to visit Canandaigua, 1943 their daughter and her family. It was 1949 and they had not seen each other in twelve years. Although Johanna and Ludwig wanted the Seibold's to stay, they had a son who still lived in their hometown in Germany – and it was their home. Before they returned, however, they were interviewed by C. F. Morgello from the *Daily Messenger*. The contrast between life here and in Vilbel was great. At home they had utility services for a limited time each day. Cooking and washing were limited to those times when they had electric or gas power. They were amazed at all the lights and good roads here. The shelves in grocery stores were filled; at home there was rationing and shelves were often empty. That reflected the post-war shortages in Germany. At home, Philip Seibold had to grow his own tobacco in his garden; here he could buy cigars that were "pure gold."

By 1950, Dr. Mayer joined four other doctors in establishing a medical group. They purchased a three-story brick house on North Main Street originally built by Mark Sibley in 1845. Each doctor continued their own practices but shared nursing and secretarial services and took turns being "on call." This was an important step up as each of these doctors had been practicing in private homes prior to this arrangement. (The building is currently the Wood Library.)

Although Johanna had seen her parents, there was no mention of a similar visit from Dr. Mayer's family. Perhaps they did not survive the war. We don't know. We do know that in 1952, Dr. and Mrs. Mayer and their children, Anne and Ludwig, took a two-month trip to Europe which included a trip to Germany.

Both of the Mayer children attended college and married. Anne Mayer Tefft made her home in Lansing, Michigan and Ludwig Mayer and his wife settled in Williamsville, NY.

In November 1972, Dr. Ludwig P. Mayer and his wife, Johanna, sold their home at 148 North Main Street. They moved to Ocean Boulevard in Pompano Beach, Florida. After 40 years, Dr. Mayer had retired. They did not cut all ties with Canandaigua, though. They purchased a cottage on East Lake Road where they could spend summers and see old friends.

Dr. Ludwig Mayer died in June, 1998 at the F. F. Thompson Hospital in Canandaigua. Johanna died a few months later in December, 1998 in the same hospital. Their funerals were held at the First United Methodist Church and they were buried in Woodlawn Cemetery.

Theirs was a story of courage and determination and achievement; the story of an immigrant couple who successfully pursued a better life for themselves and their children. We loved this story! So, the next time you drive down North Main Street, you may wonder what other interesting stories might lay behind those stately facades.

The OCHS Organization

Staff

Cody Grabhorn **Executive Director**

Wilma Townsend Curator Preston Pierce Educator

Barb Hill Part-time Receptionist TLC for Coaches Webmaster Betty McMahon Research Coordinator* **Building Support*** Gene Rogers Linda Alexander Librarian*

*Volunteer

We wish to extend a special thanks to all of the volunteers who donate so many countless hours in support of the Historical Society.

Address correspondence to:

Ontario County Historical Society 55 North Main Street

Canandaigua, New York 14424

We are open Tuesday through Friday 10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

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Please "Like" us on Facebook! Just go to www.facebook.com and search for the Ontario County Historical Society.

Business Members

We wish to thank the business members listed below for their continued support. Please consider them when purchasing goods and services. In addition to these business members, we also appreciate the small donations we receive from dozens of local businesses in Ontario County each year.

Aberle Eye Care

Allen County Public Library

B & E Electric

Bella Rose Bed & Breakfast Bristol Mountain Winter Resort CJ Meder Library - Periodical Dept. Canandaigua Insurance Agency

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Village of Clifton Springs Historian

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West Bloomfield Town Historian

Willow Bend Farms Wizard of Clay

Membership Benefits in the Ontario County Historical Society

Receive Regular Museum Mailings — Keep Up-to Date on all Society Activities

Reduced Admission to Society Events and Fund Raisers, including Tour of Homes

(admission to the museum is always free)

Free assistance in the Museum's Rare Documents/Genealogy Library

Membership in Time Travelers, a National Museum Benefit Program



10% savings on Museum Books Shop purchases

Subscription to our quarterly newsletter, CHRONICLES



Ontario County Historical Society	Members	Membership Application Form	
Name(s)	Email	Phone	
Exactly as it will appear on the Membership Card			
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Optional Alternate Winter Address from/ to/	ZIP	Cash Check Credit Card VISA/MC	
General Membership Support: Sr. Citizen \$30; Individual \$35; Family \$50; Friend \$7 Centennial Club Level	5	Card Number Exp Date/; VC Code	
Centennial \$100;Benefactor \$150;Heritage Circle \$25Please accept my additional gift of \$ I am interested in making an endowment gift; please contact me.	0; Director \$500+	Signature:	
Total Membership: \$ + Additional gift: \$	_ = Total \$	OCHS; 55 No. Main St. Canandaigua, NY 14424	

The Chronicles

Calendar of Events

Holiday Exhibit: All December

Kid Kindl: December 11, 2021, 10AM to 3PM

OCAC Textures Exhibit Opening Reception: January 15, 2022, 3 to 5PM

Needle Felting Workshop: January 15, 2022 (OCAC)

Retro Night at the Museum - Vinyl Record Party: January 22, 5 to 8PM

Fabric Journal Workshop: February 12, 2022 (OCAC)

NOTICE: If your address changes seasonally, please let us know the alternative address and the effective dates.

Or Current Resident



55 North Main Street Canandaigua, New York 14424



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