The

Chronicles

of the Ontario County Historical Society

Established 1902



Volume 52, Issue 1 March 2023

To nurture and add value to a county-wide community by preserving and presenting our historic collections in a way that provides accessible educational opportunities and encourages dialogue.

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From the Director's Desk

By Cody Grabhorn

I often think how lucky I am to live in an area that has so many beautiful and meaningful buildings. I am also thankful that many members in our community care enough about the buildings and the stories they hold to ensure that they remain for future generations. One such building just happens to stand across the street from the Historical Society. The building I am talking about is the Congregational Church, which was built in 1812. Today it houses the congregation that was



Cody Grabhorn

founded in 1799. Throughout its history it has experienced numerous expansions and renovations which are evident if you pay close attention. In addition to being a beautiful landmark and home for the congregation, this church building has been an anchor for our community in many ways. If you haven't heard, the congregation has taken large steps to make sure that it continues to serve our community well into our future. To mark their restoration achievements, the church is hosting a Restoration Celebration on March 12, 2023 and anyone is welcome to join.

While I could write a whole article about the building and its changes

over time, I personally find the stories that come from within the building to be just as worthy. Therefore, I would like to introduce vou to Caroline Cowles Richards and Regina Schneider - two members of the Congregational Church. Their stories bring the church to life and help us to contextualize the importance of the building throughout its history. Both Caroline and Regina found it to be a safe haven and as I found out, they had pretty similar experiences even though one was born in 1842 and the other in 2006. Their stories paint a picture of what the church meant to its congregation and I hope they inspire you to think about the rich history



First Congregational Church

held inside of its walls. Of course, if you want the history of the building, that can be found on the church's website.

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Education Update Developing New Educational Programming *By Ben Falter*

Back in November at the membership dinner, I spoke about developing new educational programming for children and teens. One of the challenges with designing such programming is that teachers can often have a difficult time justifying a field trip, as field trips take important lesson time away from other subject areas. So instead of trying to bring school groups to the museum, what if we could bring part of the museum to schools? If you attended the membership dinner in November, you might remember I spoke about traveling trunks as a solution to this issue. The traveling trunk is a type of educational program many museums use—including OCHS in the past. Each trunk is filled with objects from the museum centered around a particular topic. But traditional traveling trunks are just the objects, leaving teachers to do the legwork to find a way to incorporate them



Ben Falter

into their lessons. But what if the traveling trunk could serve not only as a way to get OCHS materials into classrooms, but could also take some of the work load off of teachers? What if, instead of a static trunk, teachers would instead be receiving something of a "lesson in a box?" Enter the History Mystery Traveling Trunk.

With the History Mystery Traveling Trunks, I am taking the basic idea of filling a box with items from the historical society and tying all the items together through building a mystery that students will have to solve by answering questions about the objects and documents within the kit. By answering these questions, the students not only solve the mystery but also engage more deeply with the materials within the History Mystery Trunk. They thus learn more about the topic. Each kit will touch on a specific topic that connects to our county's history as well as state standards so that teachers know that by renting one of these kits they are fulfilling state requirements. With the goal of launching the program in time for the next school year (2023-2024), I have been hard at work designing the first prototype kit, which is based on the Canandaigua Treaty. In December I ran the first internal test of the History Mystery with Cody and Wilma. This first test was vital and since then I have been busy refining the History Mystery Trunk.

For the current step of the History Mystery Trunk program, I am not only refining the trunk based on the internal feedback I received from Cody and Wilma, but I have also been reaching out to teachers, librarians, and other educators to get feedback from them. It is important that these History Mystery Traveling Trunks are actually useful, and the only way I can make sure they will be is by getting feedback from the people who educate students on a day-to-day basis. I have already received a number of responses from schools and libraries interested in talking and working with me to make these traveling trunks a reality. Additionally, we have scheduled time on Saturday, March 4th for me to be at the museum and talk to anyone who stops by and wants to know more and provide feedback about the History Mystery. But the more feedback I can get from educators, the better I can make these History Mystery Trunks. So, if you or someone you know is an educator, scout leader, homeschool parent, librarian, retired teacher, or has similar experience and are interested in helping me improve and perfect the History Mystery Traveling Trunks, please reach out to me at benjamin@ochs.org so that we can talk and create the best educational experience possible!

What's in the Collection? By Wilma Townsend

As many of you have noticed, some churches have closed their doors due to aging membership and lack of new, younger members joining. When closing, a congregation usually transfers essential records such as baptism, marriage and death records to its affiliated diocese, conference, synod or other religious governing body. Often, remaining documents, photos and sometimes artifacts are disposed of once the church ceases operation.

Recently, the Manchester Methodist Church on State Street, Manchester was closed after serving the community since 1834. As required by the Upper New York Methodist Conference, certain church records were transferred to the Conference Archives. The person in charge of clearing out the church building,



Wilma Townsend

thought to call the museum to see if we wanted any of the remaining records. With the understanding that we would keep only what was most relevant, we took the 6-7 boxes of materials.

What we received told the vibrant story of a small, but very active church. It served a community that

began as a farming and mill town, expanded rapidly at the turn of the 20th century with the arrival of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, and later small businesses and industry. Included in the collection are hundreds of identified

photos of members, church dinners and social events, community outreach, interior and exterior of both church buildings, minute books of various church groups, scrapbooks, church directories, an extensive run of church newsletters for the mid to late 20th century, records for planning and building of a new church in 1949, annual meeting reports. We are most grateful that the Manchester Methodist Church kept their records and photos over the years and are now making their history available to others.



Original Church, built 1843 Charter Members, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Hornsby, 1834



New Church, built 1949 Church Dinner, 1984





From the Research Room

By Doreen Conoscenti

BRIGHAM HALL: After the Asylum

the December issue of The Chronicles we learned that after 106 years, the Brigham Hall Insane Asylum permanently closed its doors in 1961. However, there was much interest in this beautiful property and, in January 1962, a true visionary by the name of Howard J. Samuels took ownership of the buildings, furniture, and other assets. With Americans living longer, he foresaw the need to provide seniors with housing and recreation that "afforded sense of purpose, belonging, and well-being in addition to



physical care." Who was this farsighted prominent Ontario County citizen?

Howard Samuels was born in Rochester in December 1919. After graduating from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he went on to serve in General George Patton's Third Army, becoming a lieutenant colonel at the age of 25. After the war he and his brother, Michael, started a plastics business in an abandoned schoolhouse in Victor, calling it the Kordite Company. They were the first to develop and manufacture plastic clotheslines, then plastic bags, creating a revolution in modern packaging. By 1958, with 2,000 employees, they sold their company to the Mobile Corporation for \$43 million.

The recorded deed for the purchase of Brigham Hall reflects the sale of 94,692 acres at a price of \$221,000. It was noted that the property occupied a complete city block bounded by Clark, Bristol, South Pearl, and West Streets. It was Mr. Samuels' intention to create a low-cost facility that would house both elderly and younger residents. It would be a self-sufficient community which would include all levels of care, where people could transition without having to leave friends or relatives. The cost to construct the facility was estimated to be between \$5 and \$6 million. It was to be called the Grove Home for the Elderly, operating in partnership with Noreen and John Black.

However, in the early 1970s, politics became Mr. Samuels' primary focus and the Blacks took over full ownership of the project. They converted what had been the greenhouse into their private residence. A deed recorded on December 28, 1978 reflects John Black selling a portion of the property, including 50 Grove Drive, to David F. Gerstner for approximately \$150,000. It consisted of one multi-floor building along with two separate structures.

By 1979, New York State had instituted so many regulations on nursing homes, that the Grove Home closed. The Blacks, however, had developed a strategic framework for converting it to luxury apartments. In that same year, the Canandaigua Common Council created the Brigham Hall Historic District in order to preserve, at a minimum, the exterior appearance of the original buildings.

The Blacks, along with a new partner, Bob Schwartz, constructed 31 condominiums which would occupy spaces in the original buildings, calling it Brigham Hall. It included the north and south wings, along with the center hall and administration building. The conversion from the old hospital wasn't easy as it required them to upgrade all plumbing and electricity.

Cont. on p. 5

Each unit would be unique, ranging in size from 600 to 1500 square feet. Every attempt was made to retain the Victorian charm of the Hall – including the brick walls, tin ceilings with their crown moldings, the fireplaces with handsome mantels, stained glass windows, natural carved woodwork, a spiral staircase, and even a few of the original chandeliers. They created an attractive brochure which offered "thirty-one manor-house condominiums designed for spacious living." All suites were uniquely beautiful with large rooms maintaining much of the period ambience of this imposing building constructed in 1855. Kitchens and bathrooms would be state of the art. It was described as a park-like setting and included an exercise room, sauna, and gardens. By 1990 all 31 condominiums had been sold with prices ranging from the high \$50,000s for smaller units, and nearly \$90,000 for the larger ones.

Today, the property consists of those Brigham Hall condominiums, nine Heritage House apartment rentals, along with individual homes. The former greenhouse is now privately owned with the lower level offered on Airbnb as "a two-bedroom apartment in a beautiful historic district."

One hundred sixty-eight years have gone by since Doctor George Cook first proposed his vision for Brigham Hall: The design of this institution is to surround patients with all of the comforts of home while, at the same time, every effort is made by medical and moral means to promote their restoration". Even after the asylum's closing, many hundreds of people have found their own peace and tranquility by living in this beautiful treasure tucked away on a hill in our city of Canandaigua. Doctor Cook would indeed be proud that his vision continues to thrive well into the 21st century.

OCAC Creative Connections

By Joyce Kowba, OCAC President



As the new President of the Ontario County Arts Council, I will be taking over the Art Corner, now called the OCAC Creative Connections. The Arts Council looks forward to continued collaborations with the Historical Society to bring the arts and history to the community in many different ways.

Currently we have a wonderful exhibit, "Seeing Red", in the North Gallery. We had a spectacular opening on January 14 with members and guests wearing red to celebrate. Many of the guests also viewed the South Gallery exhibit, Fibers of Our Lives, with positive comments. Stop in and see how area artists have interpreted the theme of Seeing Red in their choice of medium. We also have another member exhibit (no theme, just great art) at Wood Library which opened February 4th.

The OCAC Irish Night fundraiser is back! Proceeds from this fundraiser go to support our Grants and Scholarship programs. So get your Corn Beef and Cabbage mouths watering as Chef Rob Lillis creates a great meal. Ralph Minervino and his Almost Irish Band will serenade us with Irish music and Rob will delight us with jokes. Irish Night will be held Sunday, March 12, 3:00-6:30 at the Elks Lodge, 19 Niagara St. in Canandaigua. Tickets (\$25) can be purchased in advance at www.ocarts.org. Please join us for an evening of delicious food, music and laughter while supporting our community.

Don't forget our Drop In and Draw dates at the Historical Society - March 11, 25, April 8, 22 and May 6, 20 from 11:30 - 2:30. OCAC teams with the Historical Society to draw artifacts selected by the museum. Of course, you can always just come in and draw whatever you'd like. These dates are open to the community and are a great chance to hone your drawing skills as well as meet and chat with fellow drawing enthusiasts. If you would like to get an introduction to various media of art, consider our Meet the Media workshops offered four Thursdays in April. All our events and more are on our website, www.ocarts.org.

Finally, look for our next exhibit, "For the Birds", to open - no fooling - April 1st in the North Gallery. But more on that next time!

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From the Director's Desk—continued from page 1

In its 224 years, the Congregation has had quite a few pastors, and each brought their own personality, goals, and ways of preaching. Caroline wrote that Dr. Daggett was known by his parishioners as a predictable preacher. She explained that knowing his patterns allowed his congregation to have a sense of comfort. On the other hand, Regina explained that current Pastor Dawn Garrett-Larsen creates a sense of curiosity about what the next sermon will be. While some things seem to be different when it comes to the pastors, there is at least one thing that they have in common - they were well loved and respected as leaders. In fact, on Dr. Daggett's ten-year anniversary as pastor of the congregational church, Caroline wrote, "He is the only minister that I ever had, and I don't ever want any other." While she did see other pastors in her lifetime, there was a certain respect and admiration for Dr. Daggett. Likewise, Regina grew up with Pastor Tom and holds him in high regard especially for being approachable. Now that Pastor Tom left, Regina admires Reverend Dawn for the way she creates an open space where all feel welcome.



The relationship with their pastor is not the only thing these two girls had in common. While dress attire for church has changed over the years the experience of dressing up and being excited about new church clothes remains the same. In 1854 Caroline shared an experience in her journal that may not be too unfamiliar from our own experiences. She wrote, "This morning we had on our new white dresses that Miss Rosewarne made and new summer hats and new patten leather shoes and our mitts." You can almost feel the sense of excitement about these new church clothes while reading her entry. Fast forward to the twenty-first century and young girls and boys are doing the same. When I spoke with Regina during our zoom call, a smile appeared when I asked her if she has any memories about getting new clothes specifically for church events. She briefly reminisced about special Easter dresses and Christmas outfits.





It wasn't just their own fashion that they paid attention to in church. From the pew that Caroline's family rented, they could see many of the church members. Caroline, as well as others noted in her journal, liked to admire the rest of the congregation from their family pew. In 1855 she commented on Polly Peck's ability to "get herself up in style." On another occasion Caroline's grandmother said, "she loves to look at the beautiful white heads of Mr. Francis Granger and General Granger as they sit in their pews in church" because it is what it means in the bible where it says, "And the almond tree shall flourish." While people don't rent their pews like they did when Caroline attended, Regina let me know that families still have their specific pews that they like to sit in. Regina also explained that there are certain members of the church that she looks up to and has learned from.

What strikes me with all of this is that these two members of the congregation, although more than 150 years apart, found this same church to be such an important place. They found a safe space where they experienced a good childhood and role models in this historic building where so many memories were created. With this renovation, the church will be here as a tie to the past and as a place to make future memories too. That is another reason I wanted to share the perspective of a contemporary member of the Congregational Church. Not only does Regina's story show how this building has served in a similar manner for over 200 years, it also reminds us that what we do today will become history tomorrow. Likewise, the renovation of the church is new today, but fifty years from now, we will look back and say, I remember when they took the steps to ensure that this building would be around for us in 2073. Now, we just need to wait for another Caroline and Regina to share their stories and add to the legacy.

To celebrate the momentous occasion, the Congregational Church will host a Restoration Celebration on Sunday March 12, 2023. Worship service begins at 10:30 and the reception will follow. All are welcome to participate and take in the views of this beautiful building.

The Curator's Loft By Wilma Townsend

Coming soon is our new exhibit entitled "Let's Go Have Fun! Glimpses of Recreation in Ontario County, 1900-1965." It will open May 26, 2023. We will be featuring activities that people did for fun in the early to mid-20th century such as swimming, skiing, biking, baseball and other sports, spending time at a cottage, going to summer camp, going to Roseland, going to the movies, theater or concerts, listening to the radio, watching TV, playing board games, and the list goes on. The exhibit will be chock full of recreational artifacts such as skis, bathing suits, sports equipment, parts from a 1930s cottage, an amusement park ride, an early radio and TV, games, theater posters. Also included will be lots of photos of people and places where recreational activities occurred.

If you haven't been to the museum to see our current exhibit "Fibers of Our Lives: From Practical Craft to Decorative Art" be sure to stop by soon. This exhibit will close April 28, 2023.





Your Historical Society





Upper Left: Wilma preparing the "Fierce Determination" exhibit at Wood Library.

Upper Right: Jenny Goodemote, Connie Fredericks-Malone, Cody Grabhorn, Jim Malone, and Alexis Lawrence at the opening reception of the "Fierce Determination" exhibit.

From our Collection

Lower Left: Ice Skates circa 1955, for our upcoming

Recreation exhibit.

Lower Right: Valentines Day Cards





Historical Society Corner—Gorham Historical Society

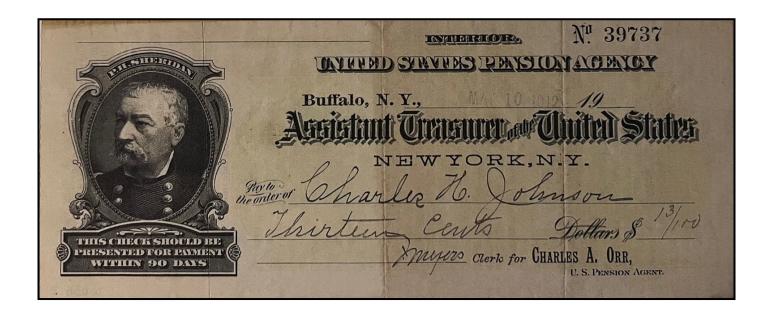
By Beth Rasmussen

Have you ever read something and then questioned it? Have you ever questioned something and then proceeded to dive into a rabbit hole in order to seek the answers for your questions?

I did when I read a newspaper clipping regarding a young boy, only 16 years old, from Gorham that enlisted with the Company C 15th New York Calvary and is recorded for having served for a period of two years and six months. During that period not only did this mere boy participate in a number of battles, but it was reported that he had the opportunity to meet President Abraham Lincoln while on parade. And, as a result of this meeting, he was invited to visit President Lincoln in the White House at a later date.

This is where the questions started abounding: Did this really happen? How does a young lad from Gorham, NY meet the President on a large parade field? When and how did he gain that connection?

Off down the rabbit hole I go...Private Johnson gets to meet and shake hands with the President of the United States of America. Charles H. Johnson must have been a likable sort, because according to newspaper reportings of Private Johnson's story, he was not located near the front of the parade line when the President's carriage arrived. Upon the President's arrival, along with Secretary Stanton, Secretary Hollock, and Mr. William H. Lamport, it was Lamport that caught Private Johnson's attention for he was also a well known resident of Gorham. Seeing Lamport, Private Johnson gained permission from his captain to move from his place in the parade lineup to a place up close to the President's party. It is then reported that Lamport acknowledges young Johnson and introduces him to the President and the Secretaries.



News and Announcements

March 4th History Mystery Day - We will be hosting an open house on Saturday March 4th for anyone to test out our History Mystery Trunks. If you or anyone you know would like to help us form our educational offerings, please feel free to join during museum hours on this day!

Virtual Speaker Series - Join the Ontario County Historical Society virtually for our last educational and entertaining talk in our winter series about fibers and textiles. This speaker series was organized to celebrate our current exhibit, "Fibers of Our Lives." Links for this last talk can be purchased for \$5.00. More info and tickets can be accessed on the homepage of our website, OCHS.org.

Vinyl Record Night is back! - Vinyl Night is back again with a twist! Instead of listening to a playlist created by us, we want you to pick your favorite albums from a list of 60! More info and tickets are available under upcoming events on our website.

Seeking Education Volunteers - As we plan more educational programs, we will need more volunteers to help execute them. If you or anyone you know is interested in volunteering, please email Benjamin@ochs.org.

Our 2022 exhibit "Fibers of Our Lives: From Practical Craft to Decorative Art" is open until the end of April. This exhibit is held in conjunction with the Ontario County Arts Council's exhibits, programs, and workshops on art created with a variety of fibers including wool, silk, cotton, flax, and other natural fibers.

Our 2023 exhibit "Let's Go Have Fun! Glimpses of Recreation in Ontario County, 1900-1965" will be opening May 26. An opening reception will be held on that day from 4 till 6:30.

Did you know you can use your IRA via Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) as a way to help OCHS?

Investors age 70 ½ and older can use distributions from their traditional IRAs (not employer sponsored plans) to make donations directly to qualified charities, such as the Ontario County Historical Society, even though the new RMD age has been increased to 72. Such distributions are not taxable. If you are in RMD territory, you can reduce your adjusted gross income (and taxable income) dollar-for-dollar by the total of QCDs in any one year up to \$100,000 per tax payer. This is particularly advantageous if you do not itemize deductions.

We Welcome These New Members

Judy Desalvo John Poisson

Thomas Jameson Caroline Shipley

Leonard Kataskas Joseph West

Joyce Kowba

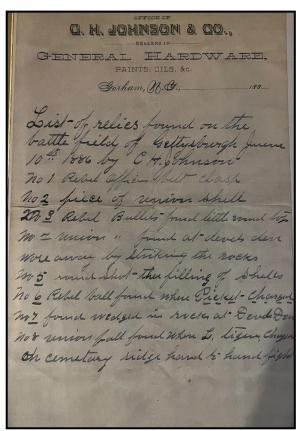
Historical Society Corner Continued from page 9

More questions: Who is William H Lamport? How does Charles know him? How does a man from Gorham get to ride in the carriage with a president and view the troops?

The next rabbit hole... finding the connection between Lamport and President Lincoln.

William H. Lamport was a farmer in Gorham. He was well respected and called upon to serve the area through public service in many different ways. In 1840, he was elected school inspector of the town of Gorham and in 1845-46 he was elected as town supervisor. In 1849-53, he was elected Sheriff of Ontario County. Following this in 1855 he served one term as a NYS assemblyman for the 1st Assembly District of Ontario County. Finally in 1871-1875 he served two terms as the 25th and 26th Districts in the US House of Representatives. Being, a public figure from 1840 on and a member of the farming community, it is very reasonable to assume that Lamport would have been very recognizable and acquainted with young Johnson. But his dates of public service don't match up for being acquainted or connected to President Lincoln.

Final rabbit hole...the family connection. William H. Lamport had a son William T. that enlisted in the 126th Infantry of NYS Company D. William died at Union Mills, Virginia on Dec. 19, 1863. This would have corresponded to the first of two times that the Company C 15th New York Cavalry would have been camped outside Washington DC to protect the Capitol. So it can be inferred that because of William H. Lamport's political service and the death of his son in Union duty, that he was shown the respect of President Lincoln and invited to accompany him to observe the parade of another New York division from his region of the state.

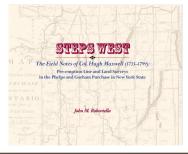


"List of relics found on the battle field of Gettysburg, June 10th, 1886, by C. H. Johnson"

Please feel free to stop by the Town of Gorham Historical Society Museum any Wednesday from noon to 4pm to investigate the relics that Charles H. Johnson collected from his Civil War duty that can be found in our collection.

In the Bookstore

Come get your copy of our latest addition to the bookstore! Steps West: The Field Notes of Col. Hugh Maxwell (1733-1799) Pre-emption Line and Surveys in the Phelps and Gorham Purchase in New York State, which was written by local author John Robortella. Steps West is available for purchase at \$29.95 in our bookstore!



The OCHS Organization

Staff

Cody Grabhorn **Executive Director**

Wilma Townsend Curator

Benjamin Falter Director of Education Barb Hill Part-time Receptionist Judi Cermak Part-time Receptionist* Kathy Cooper Part-time Receptionist* Research Coordinator* Betty McMahon

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.

Board of Trustees

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585-394-4975 Phone: Webpage: www.ochs.org Email: Cody@ochs.org

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.

B & E Electric

Bella Rose Bed & Breakfast Canandaigua Botanical Society Canandaigua Insurance Agency Canandaigua National Bank Canandaigua Federal Credit Union Canandaigua Fire Department Canandaigua Record Exchange Canandaigua Travelers Club Charlotte Julienne Dancause & Sons Inc.

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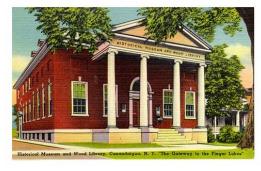
Membership and Benefits

The Ontario County Historical Society 55 North Main Street Canandaigua, NY 14424

Name(s)	Email
Phone Alternate Phone	
Address	
Business Address	
General Membership:Sr Citizen \$30In	
Centennial Club:Centennial\$100Benefactor	\$150 Heritage \$250 Director\$500+
Business:Small \$100Business \$250	Corporate \$550 President/CEO \$1000+
Additional tax-deductible donation of \$	
Method of Payment:CashCheck #ExpVC	Credit Card M/C or Visa No
Signature	

Member Benefits

- Subscription to our quarterly newsletter
- · Free access to our research room
- 10% off in museum gift shop
- · Discounts on certain events and programming



Calendar of Events - Call or visit our website for more details

- March 4—History Mystery Traveling Trunks trial day with Director of Ed. Ben Falter
- March 11, 25 OCAC Drop In and Draw 11:30-2:30
- March 16 Virtual Winter Speaker Series 7 PM
- March 18—Vinyl Record Night 6-8 PM
- April 8, 22—OCAC Drop In and Draw 11:30-2:30
- May 24—Answers and Ales Trivia at Young Lion Brewing Company 6 PM
- May 26— "Let's Go Have Fun" Opening Reception 4-6:30 PM

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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