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Curator’s Loft
by Wilma Townsend, Curator

Recently, a fine oil painting of one of Canandaigua’s early settlers, Moses Atwater, was given to the museum by Philip and Patricia Parr of Caledonia, NY. Prior to the painting arriving at the museum, it was conserved by Diane Berlyn, Hawk Ridge Studios, Penn Yan, NY using OCHS funds earmarked for collection preservation. On February 14th, the painting was unveiled at a reception to thank both the donors and conservators for their generosity and hard work.

Moses Atwater (1765-1847) and his wife Panthia arrived in Canandaigua from Connecticut in 1791 at the request of Oliver Phelps, as the community was in dire need of a physician. Moses practiced medicine for many years but he quickly became involved in local government and politics. Shortly after he arrived he was appointed justice of the peace. He purchased land on the Canandaigua town square and built a house there; at times the house also served as a tavern and court room. Atwater later served on the board of trustees for the new Canandaigua Academy and was a warden for St. John’s Episcopal Church. When the Ontario County Medical Society was formed in 1806, he was elected the first president. He also was an active land speculator in the region and invested in the development of the mills in Rochester. In 1819, he was elected vice-president of the Ontario County Agricultural Society. In his later years, Atwater was considered a “character.” One historian noted, “The doctor may well be described as a gentleman of the old school, courtly in his bearing, have the most excellent opinion of himself, and queer and epigrammatic in speech, and somewhat contentious.”

When the Parrs purchased the painting in 1972 from an antiques dealer in Pavilion, NY, Phil became interested in learning more about Moses Atwater, the artist Charles C. Green as well as the provenance of the painting.

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What is the Status of the Museum Space Project?

Last year at this time the staff and board were focusing on its museum space issues. The board’s approach to this important matter was to look at the options available to us that could increase our space needs for collections and general storage. It soon became evident that we should also take a comprehensive look at future requirements for education programming and office space needs. The most important element of the three was the immediate need for collections storage space. The question was how much space and whether to buy, rent or build. It was clear that we needed a location that was readily accessible to the curator, which was environmentally controlled and secure. Although a formal study was not undertaken, it became obvious that even with the buy, rent or build choice, space with these characteristics was not that easy to find or fund. So, the staff and two board members worked on better managing space in the current museum building to take some of the pressure off our immediate space needs. It seems to have worked for now.

The Need is Still There

As we worked through the issue last year it was generally felt that before a capital campaign would be feasible, the museum needed to know exactly how much space was needed. That depended on what role we should play in the community. Greater public awareness and a broader base of support in the community is a prerequisite to any fund raising. Raising money needed to build, buy or permanently lease space, and applying for federal, state and foundation capital grants requires a formal museum program as well as a group of people dedicated to running a realistic capital fund drive on behalf of the Historical Society.

Museum Programming

Last year, we updated our strategic plan, increased the number of museum educational events and ramped up our promotional efforts. The museum secured its spot (and signs) on the New York State Path Through History and we got our Blue Star Museum classification. We added “Clash of Empires”, “Family Day”, “Love Your History Day”, “Mother’s Day Exhibit Opening” and “Town of Canandaigua Day” to our regular program offerings. We even had a big outdoor celebration party for the Museum’s 100th Birthday. These brought new people to the museum; not all became members, though.

Our Museum Without Walls

The Historical Society also began a campaign to increase our presence on the internet and on popular social media venues. We reintroduced our internet site with a new design that included an online research system. We now have a YouTube channel, a twitter account, a LinkedIn presence and a Facebook Page with over 2000 followers. Combined and functionally linked, these online efforts now bring history to a greater number in new and diverse audiences, more than ever before. Our online membership system has also had a reasonable level of success.

Reaching New Audiences

By the time this issue reaches you the museum will have released a set of 12 video vignettes that will bring local history stories to the community. They will be uploaded to YouTube and promoted on Facebook and tweeted out through our twitter account. Also, they will be seen on FLTV, Cable Channel 12 and on the museum’s website, www.ochs.org. It is our way of using 21st century social media to promote the Historical Society in an effort to build public support for an eventual capital campaign to solve our museum’s space issue. We hope they will go viral. Our need for developing a museum program has not gone away and is on the “to do” list. Our efforts to date might be a roundabout way of approaching our space problem but we are increasing our public awareness of the museum by “connecting our community with its past”.

The Ontario County Court House has a duplicate of the Atwater portrait. After doing considerable research, he determined that Court House portrait is a copy of this painting. “First, the painting is signed and dated on the reverse by C. C. Green, and he also notes that it was painted from ‘life.’ Second, the painting came with an old, hand-made, solid oak frame with an attached ivory-headed walking stick like the one Atwater holds in his hand. This suggests that the artifact is actually his own walking stick. Furthermore, there was an old typewritten label attached to the frame stating that the frame was made from a rafter of the destroyed Atwater home, supposedly the first frame house in Canandaigua. Third, the frame and portrait were purchased by the antiques dealer at a house sale in Buffalo. An Atwater son, Samuel Tyler Atwater, was living in Buffalo when his father died in 1847. Mrs. Atwater (Panthia Tyler) moved to Buffalo when her husband died, and she died there in 1850. These facts suggest that this painting is the family’s portrait which was taken to Buffalo after the death of Judge Atwater. The Court House portrait is a copy, by an artist not yet identified.” (Philip Parr)

Diane Berlyn with the assistance of her husband Sheldon, undertook the conservation treatment of the painting. The painting was cleaned, the older wax lining removed from the canvas and replaced with synthetic fabric and a lightweight epoxy resin. The areas of paint loss (due in part to a large horizontal tear and multiple abrasions) were filled to match the artist’s style and palette with an acrylic gesso mixture. The painting was finished with a non-yellowing varnish.

The painting will be on display in the Research Room. Please come in to see our newest acquisition!

What’s in the Collection?
by Wilma Townsend, Curator

With the wedding exhibit closing on April 4th, 2015, we will open a new exhibit on May 10th (Mother’s Day) entitled “How Do We Get There from Here? 19th Century Transportation in Ontario County”. People and goods traveled across the region in a variety of ways – by walking and using horse-drawn vehicles on dusty, rutted roads, by packet boat and barges on the canals, by steamboats on the lakes, by train over an ever-growing system of railroads, and by trolley in and around local communities. The exhibit will feature a wide selection of photos, illustrations, train and steamboat models, and artifacts such as a velocipede and a locally made carriage. Be sure to take in this exhibit and watch for upcoming programs at Ontario County Historical Society on travel and transportation.
As I begin my “second semester” as the Historical Society’s Museum Educator, I’ve been reflecting back on the last six months. It has been a wonderful and exhilarating experience. New vistas have opened to me, and, I hope, to all of you. The road ahead seems clear. Since the exhibit theme for the next two years is “transportation,” that is a pretty good metaphor. There are several definitions of the word, “education.” The Oxford English Dictionary includes the phrase, “an enlightening experience.” The education program here at OCHS has provided several new and enlightening experiences since August. There will be a few more this spring and summer. Thank you for supporting them.

Well-known documentary producer and director, Ken Burns has said that he subscribes to William Faulkner's view that “history is not just about what we were before but who we are now.” As your Museum Educator, I have tried to expand my role to serve all of our members, patrons, and visitors. I want to move “education” beyond traditional schooling and offer enlightening experiences to all ages at different times and places. In that way, all of us can see who we are now and how that relates to who we were. Often, that takes the perspective of age. Museum education should be a life-long opportunity taking us beyond books and traditional classes.

The universal theme of education even graced our currency:

This fall we have combined some business education with a very successful fundraiser. It was surely a sweet experience to learn about chocolate and confections in Canandaigua.

Young people have been working on the 2015 theme for National History Day competition, “Leadership and Legacy in History.” Writers of Senior Division papers in Naples have focused on some local leaders rarely covered in history books, but important, nonetheless.

Just a week from when I am writing this, we will have our first “Adventure in Viticulture;” a tour of the new FLCC viticulture center in Geneva. Grape and Wine production has been part of our local culture since the early 1800s, yet it has seldom been included in local history productions. Today, it is a major part of the tourism and agricultural economy of our county and state. Our new “adventures” are a good way to understand who we are now by understanding who we have been.

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Look for our second “adventure” in late spring or early summer.

The new museum exhibit, opening shortly after you read this column, will focus on “19th Century Transportation”. Railroads played a major role in local life and we will have a special Wednesday presentation of a documentary on the American Locomotive Company (Schenectady) and its role in transportation development. I will also be offering another Wednesday program on the development of our county highways from pioneer times to the turn of the 20th Century.

Look for an enlightening experience related to bicycles this summer. We will celebrate John North Willys’ early years as a local bicycle builder and racer and you can learn about the “side paths” built all over the area in the 1890s.

Down the road we’re planning some new experiences in the fall including an antique recipe “cook off,” and a model railroad exhibit showcasing both the real thing and the history of models with a regional connection.

Inquiry is the best approach to any education. How would you like to be enlightened? What would you like to know more about? Send me an email at: educator@ochs.org. Or call the museum.

Dear Mr. Varno,

Enclosed is a donation to the Ontario County Historical Society. The Travelers Club of Canandaigua are appreciative that their papers are archived in your facility. We wish you a successful year rich in history.

Sincerely,
Judy Farnsworth, Treasurer

Dear Ed,

A sincere thank you to you, the Board of Trustees and the staff for the special honor and gift I received at the Annual Dinner on November 7th. It was truly a surprise, a gift we will enjoy and a special evening for Sherry and me. Thanks again,

Regards,
Marc Sulkes

Dear Ms. Townsend,

I was so pleased with the letter and photo of my great, great grandmother, Hipsabeth Cooper’s, sampler. I knew at the time I donated the sampler to the Ontario County Historical Museum that it would be taken care of. I am going to make copies of the color photo and send them to my family. On some level I am sure that Hipsabeth knows that her childhood is still around and safe. I plan to visit the museum this summer with my daughters to view the sampler. Please accept the enclosed check as a donation to the Historical Society to be used for whatever you need. My family and I would like to thank you for preserving this important piece of history.

Debbie Thompson

Dear Ed:

My wife and I visited the Historical Society today. I would like to comment that it was a pleasure to see the wonderful professional displays at the museum. It was very informative and of the highest caliber. You have reached a new level of excellence. Thanks you for presenting this display.

Dave Hewson
President, Tom Walters, at the Annual Dinner, thanks outgoing members of the Executive Committee

A winter for the books — no one at the museum can ever remember the snow piled this high

Museum Educator, Preston Pierce, talks to the Centerfield Homemakers on Civil War financing

Mary Ferris entertains the children visiting the museum before Christmas

President, Tom Walters, at the Annual Dinner, thanks outgoing members of the Executive Committee
Paul Schweigert from B&E Electric replaced every exit sign in the museum to meet state code.

Dr. John Paul on one of his frequent visits to the museum.

1809 Studio's production of the museum's videos.

The Oliver Phelps Fund

**Donor:**
- Mary Jo Lanphear
- Ontario County Genealogical Society
- Suzanne Winslow
- Duannah Barnum
- Carl and Marilyn Eddy
- Charles Gauss
- Roberta Moriarty
- S. Wayne and Elaine Hair
- Dave and Gail Wyffels

**In Memory Of:**
- Helen Fox
- Helen Fox
- Helen Fox
- Jake Repard
- Jake Repard
- Jake Repard
- Jake Repard
- Jake Repard

**In Honor Of:**
- ELF Foundation
- Sherry Sulkes
News and Announcements

- Volunteer, Judy Kiehle, a long time volunteer at the Historical Society has reach a milestone here at the museum … Curator, Wilma Townsend, reports that Judy has entered data for and/or scanned images for over 16,500 collection records.

- Retired Educator, Nancy Parsons, is back. She is currently volunteering with the research for our upcoming exhibit on “19th Century Transportation”. It is great to see her smiling face in the library.

- Dave Hayden is helping out with the development of the new exhibit. He has digitized several images from the publication, “The Artwork of Ontario County.” The exhibit opens on May 10th, Mothers Day.

- The Historical Society is proud to announce that we will have a unique artifact in an exhibit that will grace the new Visitor’s Center at Ganondagan State Historic Site in Victor. The item is the 17th century charge from Louis XIV to the Marquis de Denonville bestowing on him the authority to govern New France. The piece, which includes a wax seal of authority, is dated January 1st, 1685, is written in French on parchment and signed by Louis XIV. We believe that it is a one of a kind artifact.

- A special thank you to member, Ron Hanley, for donating a collection of transcribed obituaries. They will be a great asset to our genealogical research needs.

- Marc Sulkes has been recuperating from a leg issue but it has not kept him from helping out with our collection management duties. Marc has been photographing items from the collection for our official collection records. His wife and former OCHS Treasurer, Sherry, has been assisting with thank you letters for the monetary donations the museum has received this year. Thank you to both for their time and dedication.

- We would like to give a hearty “shout out” to Denise Chaapel owner of Sweet Expressions and her husband Tim; former OCHS Board Member, Brett Utter, owner of the Gallery and Frame Shop; photographer, Michele Kisly and vintner, John Brahm, for their generous contributions that made our February 6th, event, “For Love of Chocolate and History” a rousing success. Museum Educator, Preston Pierce, offered some wonderful and sweet stories about Canandaigua’s candy history. Over $2000 was raised for the museum’s education programs. Handouts are still available.

- Watch for the museum’s 12 new history video vignettes. They will be released one-at-a time regularly during the month of March and April on social media outlets. Find them on YouTube and posted on Facebook at Ontario County Historical Museum. If you follow @OCHSMuseum on twitter they will also be promoted there. Cable Channel 12, our local public access television station, will likely be running them in between programming. Finally, we will have links to them posted on our internet site www.ochs.org. We know the public will enjoy them. Subjects range from “The Stewart Sisters” and “Eloise Wilkin” to the “Ice Storm of 1937” and the “Scourge of Debtor’s Prison”. They feature OCHS board members, local historians, volunteers and, of course, museum staff.

- Finally, we mourn the passing of Naples historian and all around great guy, Bill Vierhile. Bill and his late brother, owned an appliance store in Naples and wrote a book chronicling the Canandaigua Lake steamboat era. His mill building was selflessly donated to the Naples Historical Society prior to his sudden death in January. Bill was 88.
Welcome to the “March Madness Sale” at OCHS. Cure those cold weather blues and stop in to check out our HUGE savings in the book store. Some of our featured books are: *A Man Who Could Stand Prosperity - The Story of John North Willys of Canandaigua*, who was an entrepreneur and pioneer in the automobile business. 52 pages with photographs. A great compliment book to our upcoming exhibit on transportation. $4.95

Do you remember the Lisk plant? I am sure several of our members either knew someone or had a family member who made their living working there. One of our best sellers over the years — *Better Lisk Quality*, is an excellent tribute to the Lisk Manufacturing Company's nearly 80 years of manufacturing "anti-rust tin ware" household items. The book presents an impressive company history, features many catalog illustrations, drawings and patents. It is filled with photographs of their employees, building mini-tours, store displays and sales posters. This is a must have book for all of today's collectors of Lisk enameled, copper, galvanized and tin wares. Soft cover 150 pages. March Madness sale price only $1.00.

Interested in DVDs? *West Lake Legacy — Road To Onanda — The History of West Lake Road in Canandaigua*. This video is filled with music and archival images of fun and fancy from Canandaigua's past. $9.95.

Barbara Stahl, and her dedicated Archives Project Team, have compiled an awesome view into the lives of one of Canandaigua’s most notable families. This DVD, *The Workers of Sonnenberg*, gives the reader an in-depth look at all the “workings” inside the iconic stone wall as well as information about their other residences. Included are budget and expense reports, personal diaries, a list of workers names, shared memories from the descendants of some of those workers, holiday gifts from Mrs. Thompson, several rarely seen images, and much, much more. Madness Sale price — $5.00.

Holiday giving may be way in the back your mind, but it’s never too early to plan ahead. Our quantities are now limited for the popular book, *Roseland — Playground of The Finger Lakes*. Originally $59.95, now $40. Additional 10% member discount applies. Also, do not forget our most current publications, *Saving A Masterpiece — The Untold Story of Sonnenberg Gardens*, by Wesley Gifford. $25.95, and *The Complete Guide to Village Life in America*, by Nancy T. Hayden, $19.95. Shipping is available at an additional cost. Stop in or browse online at www.ochs.org.

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**Business Histories Highlighted**

Board of Trustees members, Greg Russell and Dave Hayden, have embarked on a history project highlighting local businesses on downtown main street Canandaigua. Working together, they select one downtown business at a time, and begin to research all the previous businesses that occupied that storefront – often the second and third floors as well. They utilize a variety of sources; Ontario County Historical Society photo archives, city directories, maps, census reports, newspapers, and of course they ask the village elders when they need a first-hand account. The project results in a pictorial history of the business. It is presented to the store owner upon completion. Thus far, two stores have been featured; F. Oliver’s Oils and Vinegars at 129 South Main Street and Uncle Sam’s Antiques (USA) at 94 South Main Street. There are two additional business histories in the works and hopefully more to come. These volunteer efforts reflect a desire to expand local history sharing with our invaluable downtown businesses.

*Note: This is a volunteer-based project. The printing and framing of these histories is funded through the membership promotion budget of the Ontario County Historical Society.*
The OCHS Organization

Staff
Edward Varno  Executive Director
Wilma Townsend  Curator
Preston Pierce  Museum Educator
Ernie Maiorani  Accountant
Maureen Baker  Receptionist
Barb Hill  Part-time Receptionist
Karen Strapp  Webmaster*
Bruce Stewart  I.T. Administrator*
Betty McMahon  Research Coordinator*
Gene Rogers  Building Support*
Linda Alexander  Librarian*
Darlyss Boates  The Chronicles Editor*
*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. Closed on major holidays.

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.

1840 Inn On The Main  JSJ Decorating
Aberle Eye Care  Mayflower Gardens Ltd.
CIG Insurance Agency  Mitchell Pierson Jr. Inc.
Campus Gate Lodge  Northside Apartments
Canandaigua Carpets Inc.  Patty's Place
Canandaigua Federal Credit Union  Potter HVAC and Metal Fab. Inc.
Canandaigua National Bank  Randall Farnsworth Auto Group
Edelweiss Properties  Renaissance - The Goodie II Shoppe
G.W. Lisk Company  Ryan's Wine & Spirits
Granger Homestead Society Inc.  Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion
Saralinda Hooker  Star Cleaners
J.D. Chapman Agency Inc.  Velmax Inc.
James Rose Outdoor Services  Wegmans Markets
Johnson-Kennedy Funeral Home Inc.

We Welcome These New Members

Ralph Brown
Donald Ditter
Brandon Jackel
David Keefe
Virginia H. Koch
Nicole Mahoney
Michael P. McCabe
Sibyl J. Mose
Mrs. Marty Potter
Cross Country Adventure

Board member, Rob Lillis and his wife, Carole, recently were recognized for a cross country adventure they took in Rob’s 1973 MG. The two drove from Boston to Newport Oregon (5,170 miles) through 11 states during the summer of 2013. They dubbed it the “While We Still Can Route 20 Tour” Rob told the story to a capacity crowd to the Wood Library on October 15th.

The trek was recognized by 55 Plus Magazine. The fire engine red MG made the cover of the magazine along with Rob and Carole. It was an adventure considering the car had only 95 horsepower and was prone to having issues.

Congratulations to Bob and Carol for a feat we all respected.
### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 13:</td>
<td>8 a.m. — “Finger Lakes National History Day Competition” at the museum; awards at noon; public is invited</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 8:</td>
<td>7 p.m. — Monthly History Talk at the museum; Preston Pierce, Museum Educator presents “The Development of Highways in Ontario County”; no charge, donations welcome</td>
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<td>April 15:</td>
<td>7 p.m. — Open chat for local history teachers with Museum Educator, Preston Pierce; at the museum; refreshments and pizza will be served</td>
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<td>May 9:</td>
<td>5 -7 p.m. — Annual OCHS Benefactor’s Reception; private preview of our new Transportation Exhibit</td>
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<td>May 10:</td>
<td>11- 2 p.m. — Mother’s Day Open House and public opening of new Transportation Exhibit</td>
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<td>May 13:</td>
<td>7 p.m. — Monthly History Talk at the museum; “The History of the American Locomotive Company”, a WAMU film; discussion to follow</td>
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<td>May 16:</td>
<td>11 a.m. — “Town of Canandaigua Day”; Town of Canandaigua history and OCHS sale of book store overstock</td>
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<td>May 23:</td>
<td>7 p.m. — “Adventures in Viticulture II” – tour of Arbor Hill Grapery and Winery; call the museum for details and to register; limit 20</td>
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