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Stephen A. Douglas Marker to be Erected In the Town of Manchester
by Preston E. Pierce, Museum Educator

Most Americans know Stephen A. Douglas as the political rival of Abraham Lincoln, the “Little Giant” that debated Lincoln in the famous 1858 debates. Mentioned in every high school American History text, those debates over slavery and other issues, put Lincoln on the national stage as a possible candidate for president in 1860. That is pretty much the public understanding of Douglas, even for residents of the Ontario County.

In fact, Stephen A. Douglas was born in Brandon, Vermont, April 23, 1813. When he was 17, his widowed mother, Sarah, married Gehazi Granger and moved to the Town of Manchester, just west of the village of Clifton Springs. Douglas lived there, on the Granger farm, until he entered Canandaigua Academy, then a private boarding school, about 1830. About 1834 Douglas moved to Illinois, worked as a railroad attorney, and entered politics. The Lincoln-Douglas debates were prompted by both men’s campaigns for the US Senate from Illinois. Douglas was considered the “winner” in the short term.

Although Douglas has been honored as a distinguished “graduate” of the Academy, he remained a student there for only a short time. For much of the 19th century, schools like Canandaigua Academy did not have one set curriculum and students remained enrolled only long enough to complete the program that held their interest, or until a good career opportunity developed. Douglas found the opportunity he was seeking when he was offered a position reading law in the office of Walter Hubbell. Most lawyers then, including Lincoln, were admitted to the bar after reading law (apprenticing) in the office of a practicing attorney.

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Q. What is the most common question that appears on a museum grant application….. Give up?

A. Please describe your target audiences and the programs your museum presents to attract them.

The response to the question can offer some insight into our exhibit planning and how we approach programming each year. The answer tells the granting agency whether you understand who your markets are and the quality of targeted programming you offer them. An effective response can be the difference between receiving a grant or not.

In our applications we divide our audiences generally into two groups. We have people that visit the museum and we have an audience that likes to access history online, through email and/or social media. We call the former our “museum visitors” and the latter our “cyber audience”; these are two very distinct groups that have overlapping interests.

Our museum visitors like coming into our building to socialize, hear a speaker, share their interests in history, possibly research a genealogy matter or just linger to take in our exhibits. People are both local and from out of town. Whether from distant places or from down the street, all are appreciators of local history.

Online, we use Facebook to feed a regular stream of local history to our local friends and the world. Throwback Thursday, or TBT as Maureen Baker calls it, is her weekly trip down memory lane. The nostalgia factor often propels the posts into the thousands of views. Our website and online calendar of events at www.ochs.org keeps people abreast of who we are and what’s happening here.

To maintain museum visitation levels, we have found that rotating exhibits lasting six months or so are needed in our galleries. A diversity of exhibit subjects brings new audiences. To develop quality exhibits and the related programming requires significant lead time. New themes and ideas for specialty exhibits make us think in even longer periods of time. Therefore, we welcome visiting exhibits such as the traveling “Lincoln” exhibit and our current “Moto Meter” exhibit.

We are happy to share the news about our latest relationship with the Ontario County Arts Council. They have agreed to team up with the Historical Society to bring three art exhibitions to our north gallery. Our Curator will be working with the Arts Council to accent the exhibits with artifacts from our collections. A series of art education programs will accompany the shows. We believe that the relationship and offerings will bring a new expanded audience of those seeking a unique cultural experience through the doors. Exhibits will open in April, July and October of this year.

How many people currently pass through our doors? It has been difficult to determine because many do not wish to sign in at the front desk. We estimate that in 2017, with the popularity of the “1964” and “Suffrage” exhibits, research room visitors and program/event attendees, that roughly 19,000 people came to the Historical Society. To obtain a more accurate count, a new system was instituted this year that eliminated the guest register system and started a manual daily count through the door.

Museums live and die by their ability to attract and maintain their audiences. Rest assured we are aware of this reality and work every day to creatively bring history and culture to the people.
Hubbell’s law office was rescued from its later role as a shed and chicken coop on Niagara Street through the efforts of Judge Joseph Cribb in 1961. While Judge Cribb had a special interest in preserving the historic Granger Homestead, he also had a particular interest in the Hubbell law office since it once stood in front of his Main Street home when Douglas read law there. Through the efforts of many loyal members of the Granger Homestead Society, the law office is now preserved on the Society’s grounds and you can visit it today.

Senator Stephen Douglas was a strong advocate of Manifest Destiny; expansion of railroads; and “popular sovereignty” compromise on the slavery issue. In fact, Douglas became a slave owner through his wife’s inheritance. It was Douglas, not Henry Clay (who usually gets the credit), who actually got the Compromise of 1850 through Congress. He also proposed the controversial Kansas-Nebraska Act. Douglas was one of several Democrats to challenge Abraham Lincoln in the 1860 presidential election. During his campaign, Douglas visited Clifton Springs in September, 1860. The Messenger reported that 25,000 people attended his rally there. A strong advocate for preservation of the Union, he supported Lincoln after the election until he died June 3, 1861, just months after Lincoln’s inauguration. An impressive monument to Douglas was erected in Chicago, near Lake Michigan, in 1878. That monument also serves as Douglas’ tomb.

Stephen A. Douglas was not the only member of his family to enter public service. His sister, Sarah, married Julius N. Granger. She was the Postmaster of Clifton Springs during the administrations of Presidents Chester Arthur and Grover Cleveland. She died in Clifton Springs in 1897. Sarah (Douglas) Granger also lived on the family farm for many years.

Matthew Uttaro, a Life Scout from Troop 30 (Canandaigua), has taken on the task of erecting a historical marker at the Gehazi Granger farm on Stephens St. Ext. where Stephen Douglas lived after his mother moved the family to Manchester. It is somewhat costly to erect a well-made historical marker. Consequently, the Ontario County Historical Society is acting as the fiscal agent for Uttaro’s marker service project. He is also soliciting donations to cover the costs of the marker and its mounting. Anyone who would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the marker project can send a check made payable to the Ontario County Historical Society, 55 N. Main St. Canandaigua 14424. All donations go into a special marker fund and 100% of all contributions will be used to pay for the marker and its installation.

The new Douglas marker at the Gehazi Granger farm, together with Douglas’ portrait in the county court house, his Distinguished Graduate plaque at Canandaigua Academy, and preserved Hubbell Law Office at Granger Homestead, will serve as an important reminder of Ontario County’s important role in national politics in Douglas’ time.
In doing research for our upcoming exhibit “Over Here and Over There: Ontario County in World War I” opening May 19th, I found numerous letters from soldiers to loved ones at home that were printed in the local newspapers. Below is a selection of them – most try to be light-hearted with comments about army food and accommodations, but clearly, they all miss being away from home.

**Ontario County Times**, September 12, 1917
John S. McMillan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Roy H. McMillan of this city, writes to his parents from “Somewhere in France” that he is well but hungry for candy. Readers of *The Times* will remember that Mr. McMillan, who is only sixteen years, enlisted with the U.S. Marine Corps soon after the declaration of the war and was a member of the first expeditionary force to reach the other side. The following extracts from his recent letters do not contain much information concerning movements of troops, etc. but convey the gratifying news that he is in good health and spirits.

Dear Father and Mother, brothers and sisters:
I have not received any word from you yet but am hoping to hear from you soon. The other day I wrote a nice, big three page letter, but received it back as it would not pass the censor, so I have decided to write only short notes from now on.

I am feeling pretty well, but my stomach has not been acting very well lately. I suppose it will feel better in a few days.

I wonder how the Breen boys are and if you ever hear from them any more. Please remember me to them if you do, and also all my other friends and relatives, especially Grandpa and Grandma. Well, I guess I will close now and go and take a bath. Love to all.
John

**Ontario County Times**, September 26, 1917
Our well known young Italian citizen, Samuel Lemma, writes to his brother Tony, as follows:
Camp Dix, Sept. 14, 1917

Dear Tony – Hope you are all well. I am the same. I like it fine. We drill from eight to nine hours a day. I get some of the easy jobs. I was in headquarters today. The food is better than I get home and well cooked. Nice bed to sleep on, shower bath.

I wish I could tell you all about the camp, but it would take too long. I got in the artillery, the best in the army. They showed me how to use the field gun today. I do the loading and setting and another fellow does the driving and cleaning. My company is the best in drills, and so on. I got my uniform today, but they are the summer suits. They are short of clothes, so we will get the woolen ones later on.

If I come up again before we go to France, I’ll bring my dog back for the captain wants it. We’ve got some already.

Tell mother not to worry about me for I am O.K.
Well, we certainly got a nice sendoff alright. We took the sleeper after we got on the train. Stopped at Philadelphia and Harrisburg.

Well, I am tired and taps will sound in three minutes, so I’ll say good night.
SAM
Battery E, 307 Field Artillery, Camp Dix, Wrightstown, N.J.

**Ontario County Journal**, January 11, 1918
ATTENDS FUNERAL OF SOLDIERS IN FRANCE
East Bloomfield Boy is Guard at Impressive Military Ceremony – Nothing so good as U.S.A.
Mrs. W. E. Wheeler, of East Bloomfield, has received the following interesting letter from her son, who is with the American troops in France:

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Dear Folks:

Another week goes by. Time sure does fly over here in some ways and then in others it drags like the dickens. I got your letter, written November 5th, the other day, along with several others from home. Everyone spoke of voting on the license question soon and now I’ll be wondering for a month or so how it came out.

Our battery is remarkably lucky to have extra good quarters this winter; we are in a small town and have the best billets of any outfit I know of. You know I am working in the office this winter and have a dandy room with three other fellows in the town mayor’s house where the office is located. We have a nice marble fireplace and really it is way better than most of the French houses. Our food is very good and if I could be home every weekend and I would not have a darn thing to kick about. I heard yesterday that gasoline costs $2 a gallon here, so I don’t think I would drive much if I had a car here. The other day, I got an American half-dollar from one of the fellows, and now I show it to everyone I see. Believe me it sure looks good in comparison to the French stuff. You hear people talk about French this or that, but believe me, there isn’t a single thing French that is as good as the corresponding American thing, if I am a judge.

I’ll have to tell you about one thing that I think I can boast over. You undoubtedly read that in the first attack on the American troops, three doughboys were killed. Just think, I attended that funeral; was one of the most impressive sights I ever saw. The graves were at the bottom of a long green slope, behind a ruined chateau. (I might say that at that time we were quartered in a dungeon of that chateau.) At one side of the graves the French infantry and artillery guard was lined up, on another side the American guards and opposite the French guard, some French people. They all formed a hollow square about a hundred fifty feet across the French and American officers and the soldier priest forming the fourth side. The priest sure looked odd in his long black gown, steel helmet, boots and spurs. Both French and Americans took part in the service, the French general making a long speech. Our infantry fired a salute and all the soldiers marched in front of the graves and out of the enclosure. The caskets were covered with evergreen, flags and flowers and some of the men took pictures of them before. I will try to get some of them if I can.

Today is payday and everyone is happy again. We did not draw any last month, owing to so much moving around, so it is doubly welcome. There is nothing in this town that one may buy except beer and chocolate. You know how much beer I use and the Hershey chocolate has spoiled me for this junk. When I get back to good old U.S.A., I’ll be satisfied to stay.

Ray L. Wheeler

Ontario County Journal, May 10, 1918
WHERE PEOPLE NEVER SMILE
All Young People at Front and Children Seem Hungry – In Little Town.
Howard T. Murphy, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas E. Murphy, Hubbell Street, has written from France that he is quartered in a little town at present.

The buildings are all of stone and are built to last, and most of the people look as old as the buildings. One never sees a young fellow there. They are all at the front and none but the very young or very old are left behind. We had quite a trip through France and it is a pretty country. Every inch of ground is used for something. There are gardens planted right beside the railroad tracks and every yard has its little garden. The people never smile and I suppose we wouldn’t either if we were in the same situation.

No one seems to be dressed very well and I don’t think they get more than enough to eat. The kids that hang around when we eat are glad to get anything. I guess the boys start smoking at the age of two or three years because no matter how small they are they are asking for cigarettes and tobacco. The funniest of all to me is the trains. A box car is about as large as the dinky back home and they only have four wheels. An American engine would pull about 200 of them without any effort.

Mr. Murphy’s address is Co. L. 38th Inf. A. E. F. via. New York.

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Your Historical Society

Dave Hayden entertains 13 Fox Rochester's Ashley Dorsbocher in a live promotion segment

Women's Leadership Council of the United Way gathered to celebrate our exhibition on the New York State Suffrage Centennial

The holiday model railroad town brought in children of all ages

Moto Meter Exhibit

Moto Meter Education Seminar led by Francis Clax
Viral Leanings
by Maureen O’Connell Baker, Social Media Coordinator

On a recent Saturday in February, two older gentlemen, with smiles as big as the moon, enthusiastically announced they were here to see the new exhibit on Moto Meters. Smiling back at them, I directed our visitors to the exhibit gallery, but not before asking where they were from and how they heard about it. One mentioned that his son notified him about the exhibit which had been posted on our social media Facebook page, Ontario County Historical Museum. His son is one of our many Facebook “followers” and saw our post. He knew this exhibit was something his dad must see.

The men stayed about an hour admiring the numerous, shiny, early 20th century automobile temperature gauges with related documentation, and shared their stories with me. It was a “Moto Meter” conversation which was as entertaining as it was informative! Soon they were on their way back to their homes in Steuben County.

I watched them head down the front steps, and suddenly the light bulb glowed in my brain… our promotion efforts appear to be effective. The continued expansion and sharing by our cyber audience was a key factor in these two men and their visit to our museum. Social media is a wonderful tool. It not only helps us expand and become more visible, but it also brings to us fresh faces from many various locations. Like us on Facebook; share our posts. Grow our audiences.

Books of Interest
by Maureen O’Connell Baker

Announcing a New Historical Society Publication

A Walking Tour & History of the Hamlet of Cheshire, Town of Canandaigua
Canandaigua Town Historian, Ray Henry, has documented the history of the Hamlet of Cheshire. The book is based on interviews of several residents of the hamlet, one of the early settlements in the town. Using historic photographs, the story takes the form of a walking tour that chronicles the homes, businesses and personalities who resided in this once bustling place. Aided by a map of the hamlet, Ray takes you for a walk back in time. You meet several historic figures including Sibley Nott, a Cheshire native who was a Civil War Veteran, Justice of the Peace and a town councilman. You will learn about the school houses, taverns, Academy Grange and the history of all the homes, past and present. This is a book for people who love local history, have an active interest in Canandaigua town history, and even those who drive through this quaint hamlet located on NYS Route 21, on their way to other places and wonder about its past.

Special thanks to the Town of Canandaigua for assisting in the publication of this local history book.

Wire bound, 71 pages with color illustrations; Cheshire hamlet map included. Available online; at the Historical Society or… Call or e-mail to order. (585) 394-4975 — newsfromoch@gmail.com

$21.50 + $7.50 S/H

ISBN 09-41198-47-2
News and Announcements

• We are pleased to inform our readers that the Historical Society and the Ontario County Arts Council have joined together to have a series of three art exhibits this year at the Museum. Each will be accompanied with three art education programs. The art shows will be in the Museum’s North Gallery and the education seminars will be in the lower level educational room. Watch your mail and social media for more details.

• We read with interest that the Bristol Historical Society and the South Bristol Historical Society have recently combined. They will now operate under the name Bristol Hills Historical Societies. For more details visit www.bristolhillshistsoc.org.

• If you have ever wanted a past issue of The Chronicles we have them now in digital format. Special thanks is extended to Darlyss Boates, our The Chronicles Editor, who came to the museum and scanned the 37 years of our newsletter. We started the publication in 1971. We would like to acknowledge volunteer Betty Lyon who prepared the documents making the work a bit easier for Darlyss. Now, we are working on a digital search system that will enable visitors to www.ochs.org to research the dozens of The Chronicles articles online.

• Our line up for summer exhibits and programming is all but complete. We will have three new exhibits, “Over Here and Over There: Ontario County in WWI”; “Francis G. Clax Moto Meter Collection”; and “Art in Bloom”, the first of three art shows presented by the Ontario County Arts Council. Of course, there will be educational programming to enhance the information in the exhibitions. The Museum will be a great venue to visit and show your guests this summer. History and culture make a wonderful partnership.

• We want to thank Daisie Nichols, the owner of The Icon Salon located on Lakeshore Drive in Canandaigua. Daisie and her staff held a reception for our community celebrating our partnership with the Ontario County Arts Council. The event was held on March 8th and attracted over 100 guests.

• For the 18th year, the Historical Society has been the Finger Lakes Regional Coordinator for National History Day. The event was held at the Congregational Church across from the Historical Society on March 24th. Special thanks is given to Rev. Thomas Herbeck and his staff for accommodating us this year. Thanks is given to our members who donated to the event. All students receive one of our famous “I Am History” t-shirts, and special subject award gift cards are also given as prizes to students by the event judges. volunteers and teacher dedication made this event a success too.

• May 1st marks the start of our summer season. The Museum extends its hours on Wednesdays until 9:00 p.m. Visitors often like a stroll through our Museum after dinner and visiting researchers can stay on and continue the work they began during the day. Convenient? Yes!

• We welcome a new member of our Board of Trustees, John Berndt. John has retired as the Executive Director of the New York State Wine and Culinary Center. He is an important addition to our Board Member team. He will be placed on the ballot in October for a full three-year term.

• Finally, we note the passing of former Board Member, John W. Martin II, on February 20, 2018. John loved the history of our area and was a big fan of the Syracuse Orange and the Baltimore Orioles. We appreciate all donations that have been made to the Historical Society in his name.
What’s in the Collection?

by Wilma Townsend, Curator

A few years ago, we received a fortuitous donation from James E. Hicks, Minneapolis, MN, of the World War I Army uniforms, photos and copies of service documents of Corporal Claude Ritchie Hicks (1897-1919) of Hall, NY. Many of these items will be on display in our upcoming exhibit, “Over Here and Over There: Ontario County in World War I”, opening May 19th.

Claude Ritchie Hicks, enlisted in 3rd NY Infantry, Co. M, New York National Guard and served on the Mexican border in the summer of 1916. After the US entered WWI, he enlisted in the 77th Coast Artillery Regiment and was overseas for eight months. In October 1918, during the smashing of the Hindenburg Line, he was gassed and spent several weeks in an army hospital in France. Following his recovery, he returned to the US, but in March 1919 he died of pneumonia. He is buried in the Seneca No. 9 Cemetery. He was married to Helen Doris McCarrick but had no children. His parents were Abram and Margaret Ritchie Hicks. He had a brother Floyd Hicks (1895-1977), who was the grandfather of the donor.

Mail Box

Dear Ed,
Thank you for letting us tour the “1964” exhibit. Dave (Hayden) was full of interesting stories. The exhibit was superbly done and kudos to Dave and Greg (Russell)!

Gratefully,
The Valley Garden Club
P.S. The Museum and staff are so welcoming.

Hi:
Praying you are all well; miss you.
Good luck with your appeal. Thank you for keeping history alive.

Sue and Bill Stehling

Dear Mr. Varno,
I want to thank you for your time, willingness and energy spent on judging the D.A.R. Good Citizen entries. I am very grateful. Emily Cook is going on to the State competition. She is from Victor. Wishing you and your family the best,

Sincerely,
Laurie

The Oliver Phelps Fund

Thank you to the following donors:

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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., Wednesdays until 9:00 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
Aberle Eye Care
B & E Electric
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Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion
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We Welcome These New Members

Mr. Jeffery Anthony
Ms. Oksana H. Fuller
Mr. John A. McAlpin
Ms. Erica McCain
Mr. Dave Monahan
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Nyerges
Ontario County Journal, September 20, 1918

FIRST TRIP OUT ON AN AMBULANCE

Wagoner John L. Kelly, of the 105th Ambulance Company, under date of August 14, tells how funny (?) it was to have a nine-inch shell break back of him.

Our company has seen some real action, as we have working with different companies up at the front line stations. One bunch came last night and they had some stories to swap! I was up a couple of times carrying messages, and don’t doubt anything they told. Coming back from one of my trips I received my baptism of fire, and, believe me, it was some funny feeling that crept over me! Was passing through what was once a good-sized town when “Jerry” dropped three nine-inch shells. The first one struck about 50 feet back of me. The shrapnel from it passed over my head just as I dropped to the ground. The other two struck about the same distance apart ahead of me. It didn’t take me long to get out of that town.

Some of the company are going up to the advanced dressing stations, but the drivers stay here. We won’t have anything to do until night, then work until daybreak. It will be my first trip up in an ambulance, and if things are as lively as they were last night we will probably have a hot old time. The Huns were dropping shells all around us during the night and most of the morning. Didn’t get much sleep, as we are close to some of the big guns, and when they let out it would lift our heads from the floor.
March 8:  6:00 - 9:00 p.m. — “Iconic Art and History” — Arts Reception at Icon Salon
March 17:  3:00 p.m. — “1964” Exhibit closes
March 19:  2:00 - 4:00 p.m. — Current Events Club at Museum
March 21:  6:30 - 9:00 p.m. — Moto Meter Seminar #2 — “Moto Meters and Automobile Development”
March 24:  8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. — “Finger Lakes Regional History Day Competition”; Congregational Church
April 7:  3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. — Opening Reception OCHC Art Exhibit “Art in Bloom”; North Gallery
April 18:  6:30 - 9:00 p.m. — Moto Meter Seminar #3 — “Moto Meter History and Legacy”
April 21:  “Votes For Women” — “Suffrage” exhibit closes
May 16:  6:30 - 9:00 p.m. — Moto Meter Seminar #4 — “Moto Meters: How Do They Work?”
May 19:  3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. — Opening Reception — “World War I” exhibit in South Gallery