OCHS Welcomes New Executive Director

By Marci Diehl

When I moved to Canandaigua with my family in 1989, I was thrilled to be coming home again after five years in Florida. But very soon, our life became difficult. The miracle was that Canandaigua opened its arms to me in support and friendship, allowing me to not only survive, but thrive. And my love for this community and region has never ended. I’m no stranger to Canandaigua – my family has roots here going back over 100 years as cottage owners.

I have always loved history. I believe history should be valued for its stories and lessons, listened to, and learned from. I believe it must be relatable and connect with people of all ages. I believe that people need to know that they are part of a living history, that we each carry our history forward. I think education, creativity, and imagination can engage broader audiences.

History was a part of my life growing up. There were discussions at the dinner table, and visits to museums wherever my family traveled. Our bookcase was full of history books. In grammar school, WW2, submarines, and the Crusades fascinated me. Later on as an adult, the architecture of the 18th and 19th century homes became a special interest.

When we came to Canandaigua, we bought a 1903 Hogan-built Victorian house in the city, with plenty of room for our four sons. Later, I lived in a pre-Civil War house bordering the Granger Homestead. In 2000, I bought a 1910 house in the Sonnenberg neighborhood and revamped the exterior back to its original Edwardian style.

For thirty years, I wrote for magazines and newspapers as an essayist and article writer. Meanwhile, I built my own business in media and marketing.

Lately, I thought about making a change of direction in my career. I was ready for something new. But I wanted a job that I could come to happily every day. Something that was fulfilling and interesting, working with great people. I hoped it could be close to home in Canandaigua. Nothing came along that felt right. Then, in a chance meeting at breakfast, a friend recommended I apply for the position of the OCHS Executive Director.

When I called Ed – whom I had known for twenty years – to ask about the opening, I found out I had just 24 hours left to apply! I submitted my resume package right at the deadline.

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The Educator’s Post
By Preston E. Pierce, Museum Educator

A Hero Walking Local Streets Unrecognized for Thirty-Three Years

This year, for the first time in our local history, perhaps, Memorial Day will pass without much of the usual ceremony. There will be no parade, and official gatherings have been cancelled or extremely regulated to promote “social distancing.” That many people may actually forget about the reason we have Memorial Day is hard to accept. However, the number of parade spectators who actually go up into Woodlawn Cemetery (Canandaigua) is always a small percentage. This year, that number may fall even lower. By the time this edition of the “Educator’s Corner” reaches you, we will know the answer to that, and the day will have passed one way or another. I hope that everyone who reads this will have made a trip to a local cemetery to honor the fallen veterans of the Civil War and all the conflicts that have followed. Of course, if you didn’t get there on Memorial Day, it is never too late!

There are many heroes all around us. The last two months have made that abundantly clear. Yard signs proclaiming them are springing up all over the county. There are also many heroes in our cemeteries. Many of them served in the armed forces—some, a long time ago. Time moves on, and sooner or later, we will start forgetting our heroes. Sometimes, they are forgotten in their own lifetimes and they walk among us un-noticed and un-recognized. With Memorial Day (and the memory of the Civil War) at hand, I offer a good example of a hero forgotten for many years.

A few weeks ago, as I was doing some research that had nothing to do with Memorial Day, or the Civil War, serendipity happened. I was looking through microfilm of the Ontario County Times for 1896. A one-paragraph article, without headline, in the March 18 (p. 3) issue somehow caught my eye. “—William H. Raymond, of this village, last week, received from Washington a bronze medal…” The article did not use the term, Medal of Honor, but that was clearly what it was. I was not familiar with Raymond’s name, but I did recognize his regiment, the 108th New York Volunteers. The rest of the article quoted the inscription on the reverse of the medal and the letter that accompanied it. The gist of the citation was “most distinguished gallantry in action at Gettysburg, Pa., July 3, 1863.” I immediately set about to find out more about this local hero that I, for one, did not recognize.

Raymond was born in the Town of Penfield, May 30, 1844. He grew up there doing farm work, for the most part. In 1894, Raymond wrote a brief biographical sketch that speaks loudly for the kind of soldier he became. He “Enlisted July 22, 1862, in Company A, 108th New York Volunteers, as private. Was promoted corporal at Camp Palmer, Va., about September 1, 1862, first sergeant November 1, 1863, second lieutenant February 15, 1865, and first lieutenant May 28, 1865. Was taken sick after the battle of Gettysburg, went into camp hospital August 4, 1863; was taken to Washington, D. C., about August 20th, and assigned to Armory Square Hospital. Returned to duty December 10, 1863, rejoining the regiment near Stevenburg, Va. Was slightly wounded at the Wilderness May 6, 1864, and captured, with the field hospitals, by the rebels, remaining a prisoner seven days, when I made my way to Fredericksburg, our then base of supplies, from which place I rejoined the regiment at Spottsylvania, having been absent twelve days. I was present at every engagement in which the regiment took part except those of the campaign ending at Mine Run.” Imagine, three major battles, wounded, taken prisoner, escaped, and returned to his regiment several times!

Later in life, William H. Raymond was an energetic supporter of Republicans and organized a military-style marching unit in Monroe County that campaigned for local, state, and national candidates. By 1900, the US Census report shows William H. Raymond living on Wood Street in Canandaigua as a “car inspector”, probably for one of the railroads.

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I’ve come into the organization at a historic point. We must deal with a global pandemic, and the shuttering of the museum and library, with all the uncertainty and anxiety that brings. Besides the imminent departure of Ed Varno, the museum has lost the much-loved, indispensable Maureen Baker.

We are living history in each day. Someday, God willing, we can look back and this time will be a part of some future exhibition.

But not right now. There’s much work to be done.

Ed and I have been on Zoom calls with MANY, and regional groups, figuring out how we will go forward when it’s time for our Tier 4 (a designated “attractive nuisance”) to reopen.

Ed, Wilma, and I have worked on our New York Forward Re-Opening Safety Plan, making sure we follow all State Department of Health and CDC guidelines for re-opening, so that we can assure – to the best of our ability – that our visitors, volunteers, and staff are safe and comfortable in our museum.

This plan is in four levels, from Closed, to Back to the New Normal. It will have to be fluid and flexible, depending on Governor Cuomo’s guidance on how COVID-19 levels out, or spikes. It will include a thorough, pre-emptive cleaning by ServPro, using an EPA registered, hospital-grade disinfectant. We’ll have free masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes available at the reception desk. There are many more requirements in place.

The plan in detail will be posted on our website and be available to the New York State Department of Health (DOH) or local health and safety authorities in the event of any inspection. I welcome you to go over it yourself.

Our first priority is our staff and volunteers. Then we will know our visitors will feel and be safe.

I’m grateful to the Board for placing their trust in me. Following in Ed Varno’s footsteps is my challenge. I joke that I’m attending “the University of Ed.” He is a fun, patient, instructive, wise teacher, and I cannot imagine not having this time with him before he retires in July.

I know I have a legacy to preserve. I will do everything in my power to live up to the high standards that Ed and the Board have set. I ask your support in this going forward. I hope you as members will stay with me. I’ll surely need the knowledge and expertise the staff and volunteers hold.

I’m also thrilled to have the Ontario Arts Council sharing our exhibit space on the north gallery. I think people will love the art exhibit already mounted for our opening, plus their whimsical additions to the “Cow to Consumer” exhibit.

And of course, Wilma will once again mount another major local history exhibit “Coming to America! Ontario County Immigrants.”

We have so much to look forward to when we reopen.

The other night, for the first time, I closed the museum by myself. Wilma and Ed had already left for home. I gathered my things in the office, shut doors and turned off lights as I went downstairs. As I got ready to arm the alarm and leave, I thought: I feel at home here already.

It was just the beginning of my third week.

Whether it was serendipity, fate, or answered prayers – here I am, marveling at finding just what I was looking for.
Curator’s Loft
By Wilma Townsend

New Exhibit
Although the museum has been closed to the public for the past several weeks, we have been busy working on our upcoming exhibit “Coming to America! Ontario County Immigrants.” In this exhibit, you will learn about the history of immigration to the United States and Ontario County. You will meet the diverse groups of people who came to settle here since 1789, including the English, Irish, Italians, Germans, Dutch, Greeks, Russian Jews, Syrians, Vietnamese and Laotians. Each town has its own mix of immigrants with their own stories to tell. So, when we reopen, please come in and immerse yourself in Ontario County’s immigration experience.

Gift from Japan
Even during this time of world crisis, others from around the world have thought of us. Recently, the museum received a box of carefully wrapped and beautifully handmade face masks from Kikuko Nishimoto of Japan. In an email to me, Kiku (her nickname) explained that her mother was making them, and she was shipping them to those who might be in need of them. Such a kind and gracious gesture – we sincerely appreciate her thoughtfulness and concern for us!

See Picture on p. 6

Kiku visited our museum 6-7 years ago as a PhD candidate to do research on Marcius Willson (1813-1905). Willson was a prolific writer of history and education, as well as a publisher of school readers. His work had an influence on Japanese education. He lived in Ontario County in the 1840s and 1850s, and for a time was principal of Canandaigua Academy. While she was here, she was delightful to work with and we hope that our records helped her with her studies.

Mail Box

Dear Ed,
Congratulations on your upcoming retirement from the OCHS!
Thank you for serving our community with persistence, energy, and ideas. They sure will miss you over there!
Your retirement is well-earned and we wish you all the best. Enjoy your next adventure!

Sincerely,
Cathy and Rich Bush

Dear Mr. Varno,
Thank you so much for giving me lots of support and advice on my History Day project. I am so glad that we got to meet up and talk about Virginia Hall.
Although I made it to States (kind of) I am very disappointed that the competition got cancelled.

Sincerely,
Quin Fitzsimmons
Remembering Maureen O’Connell Baker

Since 2005, she was the smile that cheerfully greeted you at the front desk of the museum. She was the help you were looking for … even by phone. She knew just about everybody who grew up in Canandaigua.

Her friends were countless. Whether they lived here or were visiting from afar, they came into the museum just to visit with her or reminisce about youthful escapades. She loved to research and write. Her viral posts - using historic images she would locate in the collection - were responsible for building The Historical Society’s Facebook followers from 0 to over 4000 friends.

Maureen was our friend and colleague. She was a quick study on any subject and was always willing to take on new tasks. She vacuumed the galleries, tidied the employee room and was the go-to Procurement Officer for anything you needed. Being our museum receptionist was the dream retirement job she hoped to get. She was always the first to arrive at work and loved working on Saturdays. Her work area was organized and neat. Maureen was true friend and a valued co-worker who you could depend on.

Maureen O’Connell Baker lost her battle with Cancer on April 10, 2020. She was almost 65. We will miss her addictive laugh. If you are quiet and listen when the museum building is empty you can still hear it.

Ed Varno

The Oliver Phelps Fund

Thank you to the following who donated IN MEMORY OF Maureen Baker

Judy Monahan
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Fritz & Judy Cermak
Ontario County Genealogy Society
Grace Boudway
Nancy & Mike Parsons
Wilma Townsend
Your Historical Society

Deep cleaning of the museum

Colorful Protective Masks sent by Kiku from Japan

Cow to Consumer Exhibit

Participants of the FLCC-sponsored Community Podcast

Memorial Day 2020

Closed until further notice :~((

New OCAC Exhibit: “Colors of Our World”
Viral Leanings
By Mandy Hagadorn, Board Marketing Committee

The OCHS is excited to announce a new social media platform for the museum – Instagram! With our highly visual and educational exhibits this is a great way for us to show off what our staff has been hard at work on and entice more visitors to come learn about the amazing history of Ontario County. We are also happy to say that our Board of Directors now includes Mandy Hagadorn, a local resident who is leading this new marketing initiative by heading our new Marketing Committee. She will be working closely with the OCHS to come up with strategic marketing initiatives to help us gain visibility and hopefully get more foot traffic through the museum as well as educate guests about our many available resources. You can find us on the web at www.ochs.org, on Facebook by searching Ontario County Museum.(@ontariocountyhistoricalsociety) and on Instagram @ochsandmuseum.

Eunice Newton Foote of Bloomfield
By Leif Herr-Gesell

There is a “lost” figure of national importance from Ontario County who has perhaps only one or two local peers on the national stage in the 19th century. Her socio-political and scientific achievements not only resonate today, but within international scientific circles she is garnering much deserved attention.

Who is this mystery woman? Eunice Newton Foote is a Bloomfield name you have likely never heard. Eunice is arguably as significant in the pantheon of American women as Abigail Adams, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Blackwell. Her accomplishments, however, should not be limited to a list of women as she stands tall beside the likes of Samuel Morse, Eli Whitney, Jonas Salk and a very long list of Americans of either gender in both science and technology.

Eunice was born in Goshen, Connecticut in 1819 and came to Bloomfield with her family in 1821. Her father Isaac was not a scientist like his namesake, but he and his family prospered here and apparently Isaac and his wife Thirza valued an education for their daughters and sons, of whom they had twelve, and especially his little Eunice who was the second youngest.

Eunice Newton attended secondary school in Troy Female Seminary, Troy, NY, where she studied science and other subjects. The seminary had developed a unique science program under the guiding hand of Amos Eaton a famous American botanist and natural scientist, as well as a champion of higher education for women. Eaton believed that the failure of women in scientific endeavors was not due to the "perversion of female genius" as he put it, but due to a lack of opportunity. Women he believed as early as the 1820s, were the intellectual equals of men! Eunice seized the opportunity and studied science at the Seminary during 1836 and 1837.

Eunice returned home to Bloomfield in 1837 and resumed living at the family farm with her much older sister Amanda, who was now in charge of the homestead. Though little is known of the courtship it is obvious that Elisha Foote was clearly taken with the younger woman and kept up his end of the romance for three or four years after they met. Elisha Foote and Eunice were married in Bloomfield in 1841 and moved to Seneca Falls.

Elisha was a forward leaning man who shared Eunice’s passion for science and technology. Facts from later years point to an extremely close marriage of two like-minded people. Both Elisha and Eunice would hold US patents, both were strong and active supporters of the Abolitionist Movement and Universal Suffrage, and both

We Welcome These New Members

Kelly Gilligan
Helen Kordela
Jacqueline Berzini
Mr. Justin Bailey

Continued on page 11
News and Announcements

- Topping the news this issue is the indefinite closure of the museum that began on March 17th due to the Corona Virus Pandemic. We have not let this closure detract from our work. We secured a federal PPP CARES Act forgivable loan that enabled us to fund staff and other costs during the closure. Staff worked from home for the first 30 days and then returned to the museum to install new exhibits and to plan for the eventual reopening. Watch our web site www.ochs.org and Facebook page for any announcements or live programs from the museum.

- Preparation for the re-opening has been no easy task. In addition to regular business activities we had the museum professionally cleaned and sanitized. We are writing a re-opening plan required by the State. It will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval in June.

- During the museum’s closure, three new exhibits were put up and are waiting for visitors. In addition to the Ontario County Arts Council’s new exhibit, “Colors of Our World” we have a new salute to our county’s dairy industry, “Cow to Consumer.” Last but certainly not least is our new local history exhibit on immigration. It is appropriately named, “Coming to America! Ontario County Immigrants.” We look forward to sharing these great displays and our educational programs with our visitors in a freshly cleaned/sanitized building.

- Be prepared the next time you come to the museum. When we reopen, hand sanitizer and face masks will be required until public health concerns dictate otherwise. A hand sanitizing station will be in our foyer and masks and mask disposal points will be provided to visitors as needed. Use of the Research Room will be restricted to “by appointment only” and the cost will increase to $10/day for non-OCHS members. The museum will also closed for lunch hour (12 – 1). We want everyone who comes to our museum to feel safe. It is our hope that we can soon return to some semblance of normal here at our community’s place of history.

- President Chris Hubler reports that the transition to a new Executive Director is proceeding as planned. Marci Diehl came onboard May 1st and will be in training with Ed and the staff until July 23. The Director’s e-mail address will not change. Please feel free to reach out with any museum matter.

- The untimely passing of our front desk Receptionist, Maureen Baker in April, left a hole in our staff. We see this and the closure of the museum as an opportunity to reflect on possible staffing scenarios. One could be to have the front desk occupied by a volunteers three times a week with a new full- time assistant to the Director being hired to fill in at the front desk the other days and assist in some administrative functions. The Board will be presented with these options for consideration.

- If you are interested in talking to us about volunteering at the front desk or discussing a paid administrative position with the historical Society feel free to contact us by phone or e-mail.

- We have decided that we can safely hold our 2020 Garden Tour on July 18. It will be an outside event at which social distancing can be easily accomplished. We have already received several event Patrons. The Garden Party for event Patrons will be held at the historic Morgan Samuels Inn in Hopewell.

- This an historic time in our lives. We invite members to send us personal stories of the pandemic for inclusion in the September issue of CHRONICLES. Be safe.
Perhaps one reason William H. Raymond has not been remembered locally is that he was not a native of Ontario County. He moved here from Fairport sometime in the late 1890s.

Another reason that Raymond isn’t remembered locally is that he served in the 108th New York Volunteers, the “Rochester Regiment.” That regiment’s record was every bit as impressive as that of more local regiments like the 33rd, 126th, or the 148th New York Volunteers. However, it was the “Rochester Regiment,” after all.

On Cemetery Ridge at Gettysburg, there is a monument erected in 1902 by the survivors and friends of the 108th NYV. Today, it is close to the well-known Cyclorama. The monument to the 126th NYV is nearby. Another monument to the 108th can be found at the Genesee Country Village in Mumford.

We have no idea why William H. Raymond had to wait thirty-three years to receive the Medal of Honor for his bravery. In fact, a good many Civil War soldiers waited three decades or more. In some cases, it was the result of paperwork that went missing for years. In some cases, later awards were the result of advocacy by veterans’ groups like regimental associations and the Grand Army of the Republic.

1522 Medals of Honor were awarded for valor during the Civil War, although many, like William H. Raymond’s were delayed for years. It says something about the medal and public recognition in the 1890s to see it referred to simply as a “bronze medal” in the Canandaigua paper. The Democrat & Chronicle did little better, calling it a “valuable medal” while it did mention “distinguished gallantry.”

William H. Raymond died in 1916 while he was living in Washington, DC. For some time, he had been living there with his wife, Olive, and daughter Sara, and worked as a clerk in a private office according to the 1910 US Census. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery, originally created as a burial place for Union Civil War veterans.

His grave is marked by the special stone designed for recipients of the Medal of Honor.

A Complete Military History and Record of the 108th Regiment, N.Y. Volunteers, published in Rochester in 1894, can be downloaded, free, from Google Books.

The State Military Museum website has several other suggestions for further reading about the “Rochester Regiment,” some of which you can read on-line. Wood Library (or any other public library), or the Meder Library at FLCC, could help you obtain the rest of the listed articles and books.
The OCHS Organization

Staff
Edward Varno                Executive Director
Marci Diehl                Executive Director in Training
Wilma Townsend            Curator
Vacant                   Receptionist
Preston Pierce            Educator
Barb Hill                 Part-time Receptionist
Webmaster                TLC for Coaches
Betty McMahon            Research Coordinator*
Gene Rogers              Building Support*
Linda Alexander          Librarian*
Taryn Windheim           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. (Currently Closed)

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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.

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Willow Bend Farms
signed the Declaration of Sentiments at the original 1848 Women’s Rights Convention. Eunice was appointed to the “Editorial Committee” of the Convention, a position of leadership alongside Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

In 1856, Eunice conducted rigorous scientific experiments and authored a paper describing the effects of Co2 in trapping atmospheric heat. At a time when women were not allowed to speak publicly, Eunice was unable to read her own paper to the gathered scientists of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Fellow well-known scientist, abolitionist, suffragist and friend, Joseph Henry offered to read Eunice’s paper to the assembled gentlemen of the AAAS. This is significant. The AAAS learned of Eunice’s work three years before the experiments and papers of British scientist, John Tyndall who is commonly credited with discovering the greenhouse gas effect were known. Eunice also carried out experiments in “Atmospheric Electrical Excitation.” This effort was nearly five decades in advance of similar work that would be carried out by Nicola Tesla.

Elisha and Eunice had two daughters, Mary and Augusta. The family moved to Washington, D.C. when Elisha was appointed Commissioner of Patents by the Lincoln administration. Their daughter Mary met and married Senator John Henderson, the Missouri Senator who introduced the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Eunice Foote has recently been recognized in the scientific community her life’s work resulting in her name being submitted as a candidate for induction into the Seneca Falls Women’s Hall of Fame. We are proud that this Bloomfield resident and scientist is now being recognized by educators and historians alike for her early and lasting scientific work on the origins of climate change.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Museum Re-Opening
Garden Tour Patron Party
Garden Tour (Call for tickets)
Opening of Coming to America! Ontario County Immigrants Exhibit
Opening of Colors of Our World Art Exhibit
Opening of Cows to Consumer Exhibit
Ed Varno Retires

TBA *
July 16
July 18
TBA *
TBA *
TBA *
July 23

*Waiting for Go-Ahead from the Governor’s Office per COVID-19 guidelines.

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

OR CURRENT RESIDENT