

Onondaga historical association's HISTORY

OHA highlights

fall 2004

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All Aboard!

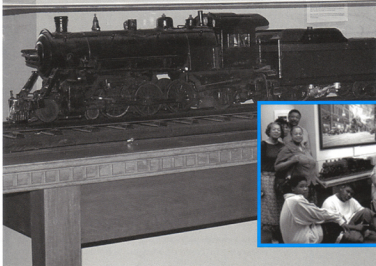
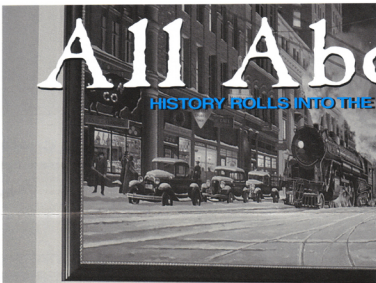
HISTORY ROLLS INTO THE HEART OF NEW YORK...

The surviving children of Grant and Gertrude Vanderpool recently loaned a model train created by their father in the 1930s to OHA's museum. The mini exhibit consists of a steam locomotive and three cars resting on two sections of track, and is located in the transportation section of OHA's permanent county history exhibit, Onondaga County: The Heart of New York.

Grant Vanderpool, a sign painter and father of seventeen children, created the miniature locomotive in Syracuse in 1934. The economic fallout from the Great Depression put Mr. Vanderpool out of work, so he devoted much of his time between 1930-1934 to designing and creating the train set.

The model maker spent countless hours drawing trains at the railroad station, making wooden patterns from which to make iron casts, and milling the flat parts. He received help from his many friends, some of whom he described as "the best mechanics in town."

Originally purchased for his son Ronald, the train was modified when Wesley asked his father to
-con't on back cover-



The Vanderpool family gathered at the museum.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

This issue of History highlights celebrates a wonderful achievement for OHA, the opening of the new exhibit "Freedom Bound". The public reception has been enthusiastic, the publicity provided by The Post-Standard and other media has been fantastic and now we must turn the exhibit to the community's, and OHA's, advantage. We will do this for the community through our education programming and community dialogues and for OHA by launching a massive membership drive and our annual Lion's Share Appeal. Please encourage any in your circle of friends that are not members to join or contribute to OHA, you are our best ambassadors!

This brings me to a related point, volunteers. We need more volunteers badly. In order to capitalize on the tremendous interest generated by the new exhibit, we need help. In this time of difficult economic conditions, volunteers are our only option to stretch staff. We need people to do everything from answering phones, to act as museum guides, to work as carpenters, painters, general handymen to help refurbish spaces in the building and perform other custodial duties. We could also use people in our local history education program, to help us with our cataloguing project in the Research Center and people to help out with or give lectures, walking tours, lunchtime programming. Not to mention OHA is in need of a Volunteer Director.

OHA enjoys a loyal and generous membership. I ask those of you that are able to be generous with your time, talents and skills as well. Thank you.


Paul H. Pflanz



OHA LIVING HISTORY

On September 20, 2003, OHA participated in the slave ship Amistad America's visit to Oswego Harbor by providing our Drama Troupe in costume to entertain visitors to the ship. Various presentations were offered relating to the Underground Railroad period and materials promoting OHA's new exhibit "Freedom Bound" were distributed. Our performers interacted with visitors and were featured on the stage. Director Pflanz participated in the opening ceremonies. The OHA Drama Troupe parents group led by Debra Boddie arranged our participation.

Vanessa Johnson, OHA Education Director also presented a interactive dramatic tour of Oakwood Cemetery. "The Soft Whispers of Ancestors - Abolitionists Buried in Oakwood Cemetery"

on September 28 using the performers from the OHA Drama Troupe to portray Rev Jermain Loguen, Edmonia Highgate, Rev. Samuel May and other abolitionist and Underground Railroad figures.



Top: The OHA Drama Troupe poses in front of the slave ship Amistad.

Left: Parent Debra Boddie supports Drama Troupe onstage.

Above right: Parent Jennifer Straluhde, daughter Katlin and volunteer Linda Pflanz hand out OHA information to visitors.



Members of the Nelson and Henderson families gather at the reception for the "Freedom Bound" grand opening celebration.

Continued from page one

Through a highly immersive experience, the exhibit tells how slaves made the decision to escape, leaving behind family and the only world they knew, for a chance for freedom. This wonderful story illustrates the courage and determination of these fugitives led by a man named Frank Wanzer who had to fight their way out of Virginia to escape the slave catchers. Visitors meet local abolitionists led by stationmaster Rev. Jermain Loguen. The exhibit interprets the character of the African-American community in the Syracuse area before the Civil War showing the vital role this group played in the success of local Underground Railroad activities.

The second major element is a dramatic, first-person video interpretation of the watershed Jerry Rescue of 1851, a Syracuse anti-slavery event that resounded throughout the country, even inside the very walls of the White House. This dramatic presentation is told through the person of Lucy Watkins as interviewed by a reporter of the Syracuse Standard in the 1880's.



OHA/Exhibit Hours

*Wednesday - Friday 12-4
Saturday & Sunday 11-4*



Top: Elsie Phillips makes a donation to the OHA on behalf of the Underground Railroad Committee of the Southwest Community Center

Above left: OHA Executive Director Paul Pflanz and Syracuse Mayor Matt Driscoll comment on the successful debut of the "Freedom Bound" exhibition.

Left and above right: Guests enjoying the interactive and visually dramatic aspects of the exhibit.



L to R: Tara Ross, Robin Moore, Kemper Matt, Jr., Louis Steigerwald, Board President Young, Domenic Iacono, James Gettman absent when photo was taken.

NEW OHA OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

At OHA's June 2004 Board Meeting, OHA elected a slate of officers for the new year and also elected new board members to fill vacancies and expiring terms. J. Warren Young was elected president, Stephen Rogers First Vice President, Jim King Second Vice President, Thomas Riley Treasurer and William Burrows Secretary. New Board members elected are James Gettman, Domenic Iacono, Kemper Matt, Jr., Robin Moore, Tara Ross, and Louis Steigerwald. OHA wishes to thank retiring Board members Sanford Belden, Irwin Davis, Joyce Jones and Charles Tracy for their years of loyal and dedicated service.



ALL ABOARD!

...son's from front cover... build him a toy locomotive similar to those he saw at Suburban Park. Other Vanderpool children shared the excitement of riding the train around the house and yard. Charles, the youngest child, orchestrated the loan by placing the locomotive and cars on long-term loan to the museum. "It's a wonderful family legacy," said assistant director, Tom Hunter.

A special thanks to volunteers John Murray and Dave Cuculich for crafting the train showcase!

Holiday Model Train Display: OHA will again have members of the CNY Chapter of the National Railway Historical Association running an O-Gauge model train display from Light up Syracuse to First Night.

History Highlights

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Subscription is available as a benefit of membership.

Onondaga Historical Association chartered by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York. Its programs are supported, in part, by funds provided by Onondaga County, New York State, the City of Syracuse and our members.

J. Warren Young, *President*

Paul H. Pflanz, *Executive Director*

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Visit our website at:

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