

Onondaga historical association's HISTORY

OHA *highlights*

summer 2003

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L to R: James Small, JP Morgan Chase Syracuse joins Nancy Wiggs, VP, JP Morgan Chase Rochester in presenting a \$25,000 check to Paul Pflanz, Onondaga Historical Association Executive Director and Christine Lezner, Onondaga Historical Association Board President

J. P. MORGAN CHASE FOUNDATION PROVIDES PRINCIPAL FUNDING FOR JERRY RESCUE VIDEO PRODUCTION

The J.P. Morgan Chase Foundation awarded OHA \$25,000 as the principal funder for the production of the Jerry Rescue video component of our new Underground Railroad Exhibit. This award made possible the engagement of Lynne Pannell, a local theatrical director and writer and Syracuse Alternative Media who together created a production company that has produced fantastic results as evidenced by the new video production premiering in the OHA Theater in September. This production represents a wonderful partnership between J. P. Morgan Chase, OHA and LOCAL community artists to produce a uniquely Syracuse story. Syracusans can be proud of our heritage of social reform that helped change the nation. And OHA can be justly proud that funds raised locally were spent locally.



Scenes from *The Jerry Rescue* video were recreated by Vershawn Terry (top) and Lynne Pannell for our new Underground Railroad Exhibit.

This issue of History Highlights is made possible in part by these OHA Corporate Supporters:

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Across the page you will find an article describing the progress we have made on the Research Center Retrospective Cataloguing Project. I cannot stress the importance of this project enough. This effort is defining the heart and soul of OHA and it is producing dramatic results. It is because OHA was noticed on the Library of Congress catalogue that the newly opened Constitution Center in Philadelphia contacted OHA to request the loan of our National Women's Suffrage Association's Centennial Autograph Book. The request is for display in their permanent exhibit The American Experience, from mid September 2003 to mid July 2004. This is proof positive that OHA's archives are world class and contain items of major historical significance! They are also items that demonstrate Central New York's considerable role in shaping the course, nature and character of the nation.

This is a tremendous honor for OHA and an equally tremendous opportunity to generate positive publicity demonstrating the value proposition that OHA offers to CNY and the entire United States. This will put OHA "on the map" in the minds of thousands of visitors to the Constitution Center each year (over 50,000 since the July 4, 2003 opening). And it is all because of the cataloguing project that OHA has undertaken.

Hooray for us!!!

Join me in expressing our deep appreciation for our OHA Board members Joanne Lenweaver, Martha Mulroy and Donald Lawless whose terms on the Board of Directors have expired. We thank them for their valued service.


Paul H. Pfloz



OHA "CAMPS" OUT

OHA Education Director Vanessa Johnson again is hosting a series of "camps" at the OHA Museum this summer. These have been extremely successful. The first, "Amazing Spaces" was held July 7-11 for 18 children and involved lectures, field trips and the building of individual and extremely creative model tree houses. Jamie Trevette was guest architect and thanks to volunteers Cindy Kiehl and Claudia Burns. The second camp for the Museum Institute for Teaching Science was held July 14-15 for 8 attendees. We are holding another camp, "Legends, Ghosts and Castles" August 11 to 15. These camps not only provide summer recreation but also provide much needed revenue for OHA and increase our exposure in the community.



OHA DRAMA TROUPE HOLDS BANQUET

The OHA Drama Troupe has really taken hold. We now have an organized parents group led by Deborah Bodie. This group has formed with the intention of raising funds to acquire costumes, support productions and spruce up the activity space used by the Troupe for its productions on the second floor of the Museum building. The Troupe recently completed its latest production, "The Griot" to rave reviews (by parents and all who attended!). A recognition banquet was held at Old Country Buffet July 12. Fun was had by all with awards for contributions by all the children and parents to productions during the last year and prizes for the most outrageous hat. The parents will hold a BBQ 8/17. Call for information.

ZEALOUS CATALOGUING BRINGS THE OHA ARCHIVES TO LIFE



Phil McCray (center) and friends take a break from their cataloguing at the OHA Research Center.

We are now halfway through the OHA Research Center Retrospective Cataloguing and Public Access Project, a massive undertaking that will revive over 2000 cubic feet of manuscripts and archival records, historic maps, over 100,000 photographic images, a 26,000 folder reference collection, genealogical records, and rare newspapers.

The Research Center Retrospective Cataloguing and Public Access Project is the first step in increasing accessibility to our archives. OHA embarked on this project a little over a year ago after the hiring of an archivist, Phil McCray and upon the award of \$150,000 from Onondaga County, which OHA must match.

The key to Onondaga County's attic and its rich treasury of archival resources is bibliographic access to the collection descriptions, which is provided online by the New York State Archives and the Library of Congress. We currently have almost 1000 catalogue records on line (nysl.nysed.gov (NOT WWW) Choose HDI, Enter Onondaga Historical Association [852]).

The Research Center continues to expand service to historians, genealogists, and students. Now, the first year of the project has allowed new kinds of public uses. Jamesville-Dewitt High School honors students (right) have spent many hours at the Archives using primary documents in their study projects. Syracuse University architecture professors have identified OHA as the chief resource of historic records for the studies of their architectural students. The new Redfields Restaurant at the Marx Hotel acquired historic images of downtown and the Canal to embellish its rooms. And the Constitution Center's request (see Director's Message) brings new recognition and prestige to OHA.

The Research Center project is vital to OHA's mission because, we must know what we have and have it properly catalogued for it to be of any practical use.

Moreover, OHA curators now have a wealth of materials from which to draw as they prepare exhibits and conduct our educational programming. The increase in use has been and will continue to be significant. In 2001, perhaps a dozen researchers used primary material. Immediately after the Retrospective Cataloguing and Public Access Project began, and throughout 2002, over four hundred individuals used primary material. The staff at the Research Center expects as many as 2000 patrons to use primary materials in 2003, in addition to the 4000 who consult the Reference Collection annually.

This project has indeed confirmed that OHA's collection of historic materials is a particularly splendid resource for the county's citizens, one of the richest collections of regional documentary material in New York State.

Research Center attendant Mike Martin assists Jamesville-Dewitt High School student





President Christine Lozner accepting Board Resolution from William Burrows.

OHA PRESIDENT COMPLETES TERM

It is with a sincere expression of the Association's greatest affection and appreciation that we announce that on June 25, 2003, Christine B. Lozner stepped down as president of the Onondaga Historical Association Board of Directors after six years in that office. Christine joined the OHA board in 1993, served as Board First Vice President from 1995 to 1997 and was elected Board President in 1997.

Since becoming president, Ms. Lozner has overseen and initiated many changes and improvements in the association's operations policies and procedures. Among the most significant of these efforts was providing leadership that resulted in much clearer direction for the Association and a new, much more relevant and compelling mission statement. This institutional development work marked the beginning of a shift that put emphasis on communication, education and outreach to the community.

Ms. Lozner has also labored long and tirelessly to raise funds for OHA, particularly for the recently completed Underground Railroad exhibit "Freedom Bound: the Story of Syracuse and the Underground Railroad". She has also worked annually to secure underwriting for the "Our Glorious Workplaces" fundraiser and to secure the locations for each year's event.

William Burrows presented Christine a framed Board Resolution commemorating her service to OHA and Director Pflanz presented a combined proclamation from Mayor Driscoll and County Executive Pirro declaring June 25, 2003 as "Christine B. Lozner Day In Syracuse".

Christine will not be far from OHA as she is still on the Board and Executive Committee and will contribute to OHA for years to come.

History Highlights

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J. Warren Young, President

Paul H. Pflanz, Executive Director

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Visit our website at: www.cityhistory.org or email us at: ohamail2002@yahoo.com

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OUR GLORIOUS
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SAVE THIS DATE!

Saturday
November 15, 2003

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