

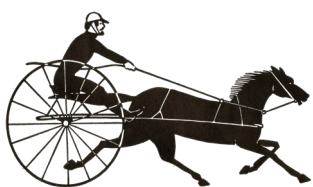
# ANNUAL REPORT

of *The Historian* for the year

# 2021



*Above left: Erie County Trust Co. lobby clock, circa 1902, donated to the Aurora History Museum by the Bank of America.  
Top right: Memorial Day ceremonies in Oakwood Cemetery. Photo by Joe Stapleton  
Bottom right: October 28 volunteer appreciation and open house. Photo courtesy of the Aurora Historical Society*



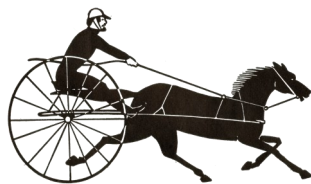
OFFICE OF  
**THE HISTORIAN**

**TOWN OF AURORA & VILLAGE OF EAST AURORA,  
ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK**



**ROBERT LOWELL GOLLER**  
HISTORIAN





OFFICE OF  
**THE HISTORIAN**

*Town of Aurora & Village of East Aurora, New York*

20 January 2022

State Historian Devin R. Lander  
Office of State History  
222 Madison Avenue  
Albany, New York 12230

Town Supervisor James J. Bach  
The Aurora Municipal Center  
575 Oakwood Avenue  
East Aurora, New York 14052

Mayor Peter M. Mercurio  
Village of East Aurora  
585 Oakwood Avenue  
East Aurora, New York 14052

Mr. State Historian, Mr. Supervisor and Mr. Mayor:

Pursuant to Section 57.09 of the New York State Arts and Cultural Affairs Law, which requires the Historian to “make an annual report, in the month of January to the local appointing officer or officers and to the State Historian of the work which has been accomplished during the preceding year,” please find on the following pages my report for 2021.

As always, this annual report serves as a means to share with you (and the community) the activities of the Historian’s Office in 2021, as well as the projects and research conducted by community members using the resources of the Historian’s Office. It also serves as a record for future generations and historians.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact our operations, there were many fewer disruptions in 2021 than in 2020. A highlight of the year was finalizing the historical exhibits in the new Municipal Center on Oakwood Avenue. Thank you again for the town’s support in this effort to make our history more accessible to the taxpayers and visitors.

The year was also marked by a record number of visitors and requests for information, as well as an impressive—and much appreciated—number of donations to the archives. I was also pleased we were able to publicly acknowledge the many contributions of our volunteers.

As always, I appreciate our open dialogue throughout the year, so please do not hesitate to contact me if I can ever be of assistance. I never take for granted the privilege of serving as Historian, and I thank you for your continued confidence.

With Sincerest Regards,

Robert Lowell Goller  
*Historian*



The Aurora Municipal Center  
575 Oakwood Avenue, East Aurora, Erie County, New York 14052  
[www.townofaurora.com/departments/historian](http://www.townofaurora.com/departments/historian)  
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## Major Projects & Themes

Although we had anticipated an end to the Covid-19 pandemic, it remained with us for 2021. However, unlike in 2020, we were able to keep the Historian's Office open throughout the year, and most of the presentations and activities resumed, albeit with additional safety measures. We continue to meet our mission to document and promote the history and heritage of the community; advise local officials, boards and residents on issues related to the history of the town and village; collect, preserve and maintain the archives for the use of the public in their own research; and, in collaboration with the Aurora Historical Society, curate and present the museum exhibits in the Aurora Municipal Center.

In addition to the regular activities of the Historian's Office, there were a few unique projects and themes in 2021:

**FINALIZING AND OPENING THE MUSEUM EXHIBITS...**Although the relocation of the archives and exhibits took place in 2020, in the year 2021 the volunteers and I focused on finalizing the new exhibits in the display cases in the hallway outside the Historian's Office. This encompassed many hours of work determining which artifacts to display; installing the shelving and objects in the display cases; and updating, designing and proofreading signage for each of the exhibits. The museum displays were finalized in the early summer. We also have inaugurated an Exhibit of the Month to highlight a different part of the Aurora Historical Society's collection, as well as documents and photographs from the archives of the Historian's Office. Exhibits of the Month have included recently donated high school diplomas of Edward and Robert Vidler, vintage Christmas cards and a collection of circa 1890s toys from a local family. The "Exhibit of the Month" will be an ongoing feature of the museum exhibits.



**ERIE COUNTY BICENTENNIAL...**Due to the office relocation and other priorities, I was not able to formally join a regional effort in 2020 and 2021 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Erie County. However, in collaboration with other organizations, we were able to participate in bicentennial-themed projects in Aurora. These included the Erie County Heritage Passport program, a collaborative countywide effort that encouraged residents to visit historical sites throughout the county. In collaboration with the Aurora Town

Public Library, the Historian's Office presented in the library's lobby display case a special exhibit of historic Erie County maps from the archives, and a special program, "Aurora's Erie County Connections," at the library on October 7.

**FORMALIZING OFFICE PROCEDURES...**The new space in the Municipal Center enables the Historian's Office to better and more efficiently serve the public. We spent the early part of the year settling in to the new space and updating and publicizing new routines and procedures to ensure the availability—and the preservation—of the archive materials.

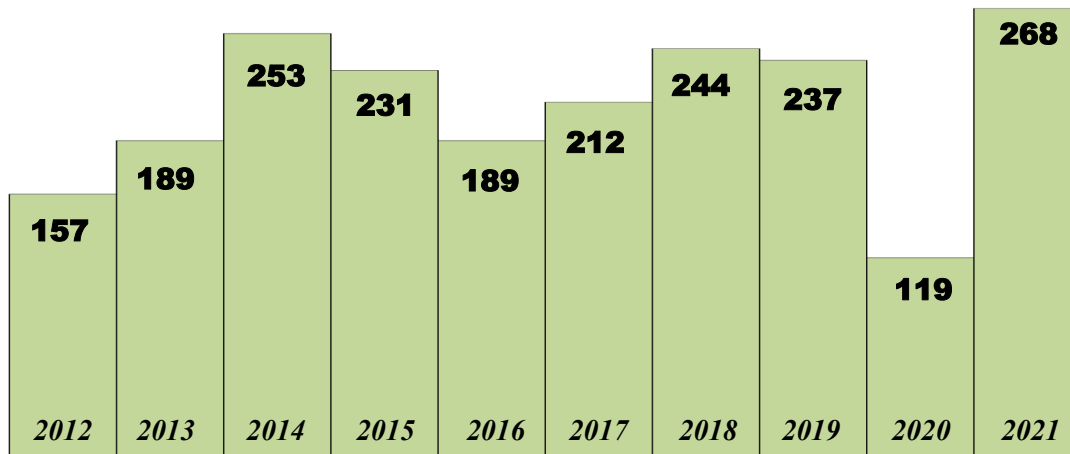
**MORE USER-FRIENDLY SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE...**Although we had already been using the Historian's Office social media and web pages to provide information, with the opening of the new office and exhibit space in 2021, we prioritized adding as much user-friendly information as possible on the website and social media. This has improved efforts to share with taxpayers and researchers the services available from the Historian's Office, the hours of the archives and museum exhibits, as well as the procedures for visiting the office and/or requesting information. The Town Historian's Facebook ("Aurora Town Historian") and Instagram pages continue to be a great way to share photographs, old newspaper articles and other documentation of local history with a much broader audience. A daily posting, which we started in 2016, features a newspaper clipping, photograph or artifact. Photographs and other items from the archives are also regularly featured on the "You Know You're from East Aurora, NY If You Remember..." and "I Love East Aurora History" Facebook pages.

## The Archives

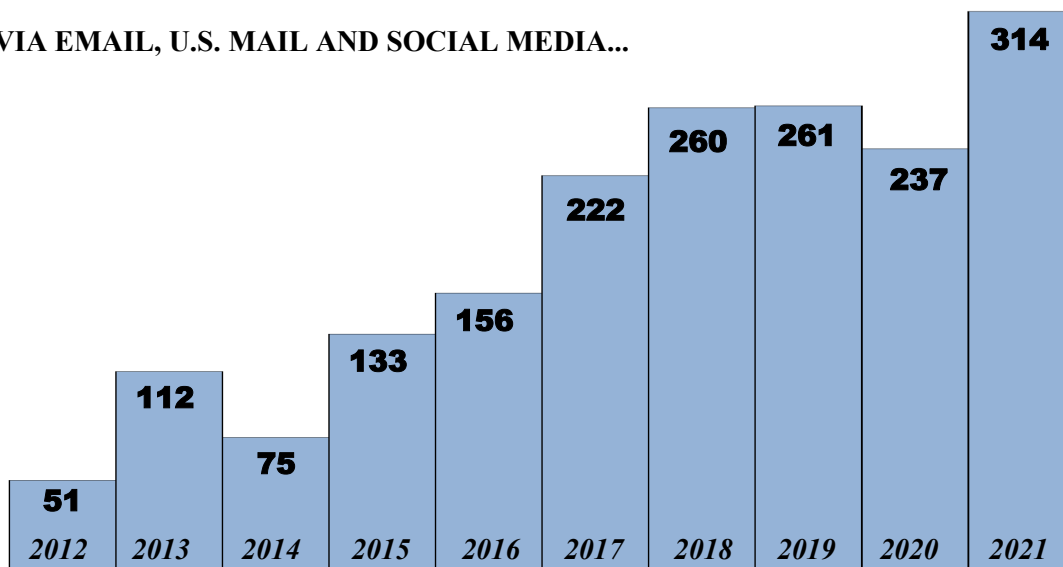
A main function of the Historian's Office continues to be assisting taxpayers and guests with historical research and to maintain the archives. Thanks to additional support from the town, beginning in 2020 the office and archives are open an additional afternoon each week, Wednesday and Thursday, from 1–4 p.m., and by special appointment. After two extended office closures in 2020, one in the spring due to Covid and another in the autumn due to the relocation of the office and museum, we are happy to report that the Historian's Office was open throughout 2021 without interruption.

We continue to keep a log of the number of visitors and requests, and the topics that are researched. After a "slow" year in 2020 due to Covid-19 and the relocation of the office and museum, we had a record year in 2021. Anecdotal feedback from the public seems to indicate that the more visible location in the new Municipal Center has translated into an increase in visits and inquiries. (In other words, more people now know the Historian's Office exists).

### OFFICE VISITS...



### REQUESTS VIA EMAIL, U.S. MAIL AND SOCIAL MEDIA...



A majority of inquiries continue to relate to genealogy, house and property histories (including six formal inquiries related to projects of—and applications under review by—the Village Historic Preservation Commission), and student histo-



ry projects. Additionally, the Historian's Office provided research assistance to the Erie County Legislature regarding the history of the Town of Aurora's Winterfest for use in a proclamation; provided information to the Erie County Fair regarding the location of the fair in Aurora in 1850 and 1854; at the request of the East Aurora Union Free School District, conducted research and compiled a list of former superintendents; and continued to assist with the development of a curriculum for a class at East Aurora High School on the history of East Aurora. At the request of Highway Superintendent David Gunner, we conducted research into the history of flooding problems along Tannery Brook, which was used as part of successful grant applications for culvert replacements in the village. Also at the request of the Highway Department, we conducted research into the history of the dam in West Falls for future grant applications and upgrades.

## State Funding to Fully Cover Two Culvert Replacements in Village

"I think the history [of Tannery Brook] made it a compelling argument and pushed it to the front of the line," Gunner said. "[Sentz, Deveso and Goller] did a great job with the grant....it was a great team."

*East Aurora Advertiser,  
23 December 2021*

## Donations

The Historian's Office does not have a budget to acquire documents, photographs, etc. However, generous donors ensure that our collection continues to grow. We once again received a number of donations to the archives in 2021, all of which are logged, numbered and acknowledged. Thank you to all the donors for providing these items for the benefit of our community and researchers, and for entrusting the Historian's Office with the care of these historically significant items:

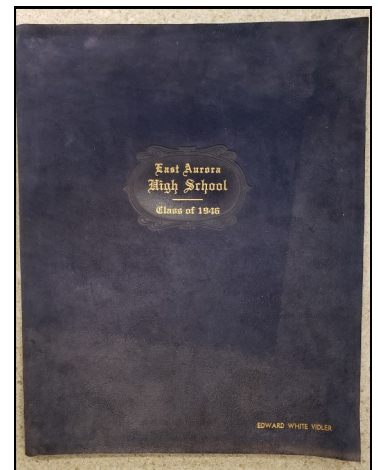
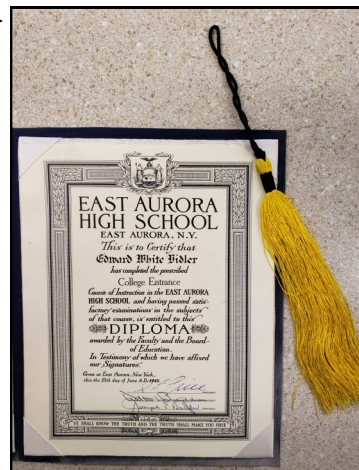
—Copies of the 1947, 1948 and 1951 East Aurora High School yearbook, and a November 5, 1954 letter from Herman G. Fisher regarding construction at the Fisher-Price Campus. (Donation #2021-01 through 04).

—Memorabilia from the 1968 Town of Aurora Sesquicentennial. (#2021-05 and 06).

—A set of East Aurora Bottling Works Simon Pure playing cards. (#2021-07).

—From the Vidler family, the East Aurora High School → diplomas and related graduation documents of Edward White Vidler, Class of 1946, and Robert S. Vidler, Jr., Class of 1942. (#2021-08 and 09).

—With the closure of the Bank of America branch at Main and Church Streets in July, the bank donated three oversized scrapbooks containing photographs and documents related to the banks in the building throughout the years, including the First National Bank of East Aurora, the Erie County Trust Co. and Liberty Bank. The scrapbooks cover the years 1910-1933, 1933-1955, and 1955-1961. (#2021-11 through 13).



—A booklet, "The Counties of New York State," published by the New York Telephone Co., 1948 (#2021-14).

—Donated by the author, *Life in the Farmhouse by the Ponds*, a memoir of life on Girdle Road near Sinking Ponds, by Penn R. Watson IV. (#2021-15).

—A copy of *Elbert Hubbard: The Sage of East Aurora*. (#2021-16).

—From the estate of Ebee James, a 31- by 51-inch framed painting of Cicero Hamlin's horses Belle Hamlin and Justina. Artist D.W. Smith. (#2021-17).

—Photograph, 32 by nine inches, of the Darbee-Cleveland annual family reunion, 29 August 1925. (#2021-20).

—An oversized topographical map of East Aurora and vicinity, 1950 edition, was transferred to the Aurora Town Historian's Office archives from the Oneonta Historical Society. (#2021-10).



In addition to the two-dimensional documents donated to the archives of the Historian's Office, we assisted with the donation of three-dimensional artifacts to the Aurora Historical Society for exhibit in Municipal Center:

—A buggy box that belonged to Dr. Jabez Allen, an early East Aurora physician, donated in honor of Curtis and Deloran S. Allen, Jr., by the family of Suzie Allen Meyer. Pasted on the inside of the lid is an advertisement for the doctor's son, Jabez Allen, Jr., who was a drug salesman in East Aurora. "Mrs. Dr. Allen" shipped the box via American Express to family members in Kansas, likely just before or after the doctor's death in July 1885. The box remained with the family until it was donated to the museum. The family donated these items to the museum after reading in *The Buffalo News* about our exhibit on Dr. Jabez Allen and other early doctors. With a little re-arranging of our exhibits, the box and accompanying documents have been added to the display dedicated to early medical care in our community.



←—The 1902 hall clock that graced the lobby of the bank at the corner of Main and Church Streets for decades was re-located to the Aurora History Museum in late May. With the impending closure of the Bank of America branch, the bank donated the clock to the Aurora Historical Society, which operates the History Museum in collaboration with the Aurora Town Historian's Office. It is believed that the clock originated in the East Main Street home of Abbott S. Griggs, who served as the first president of the First National Bank of East Aurora and later the Erie County Trust Co. (Additional information about this clock is contained in the description included on the next page of this report). Special thanks to the local manager of the Bank of America branch for helping ensure that the clock remained in East Aurora, and to the Aurora Historical Society for funding the re-location of this important part of East Aurora's history. The clock fits perfectly in its new location inside the Historian's Office.



# Erie County Trust Co. Lobby Clock

## Seth Thomas Hall Clock No. 27, Thomaston, Conn., circa 1902.

The First National Bank of East Aurora, chartered by the federal government under the National Banking Act, was built at the corner of Main and Church Streets in 1911-1912. It became the Erie County Trust Co. in May 1916, which it remained until 1961, when it was consolidated with Liberty Bank of Buffalo. After that, the bank changed names along with subsequent buyouts/mergers of Liberty Bank, which included Norstar, Fleet and Bank of America.

The clock located just inside the Historian's Office graced the lobby of the bank for many decades. It is pictured below in the bank at Christmas 1958. According to a family member, the clock originated at the East Main Street home of Abbott S. Griggs, who served as the bank's first president until his death in 1917, and it was

moved to the bank lobby after the death of his wife Evelyn Riley Griggs in 1956.

The clock was donated to the Aurora Historical Society in 2021, when the Bank of America closed its East Aurora branch.

The Seth Thomas Clock Co. was founded by Seth Thomas (1785-1859) in Connecticut in 1813. One of the most recognized and long-lived clock companies, it remained in business until 2001.

This clock is No. 27 in a series of "hall clocks" manufactured by the company at the turn of the 20th Century.

It chimes each quarter-hour. Take a listen!



*Donated by Bank of America*



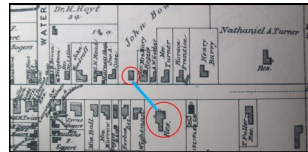
## Publications and Research

**MONTHLY NEWSPAPER COLUMN...**A major, but often overlooked, part of New York State's mission for municipal historians is conducting and sharing research. In an effort to accomplish this mission, I have continued the monthly "Historian's Corner" newspaper column, which is featured on Page 2 of the *East Aurora Advertiser* on the last week of each month. The article also is featured on our social media pages and website. As a result of the research conducted for these articles, we continue to uncover new information about the history of several aspects of our community, as well as correlations to current events.

Topics of the monthly "Historian's Corner" column in 2021 included:



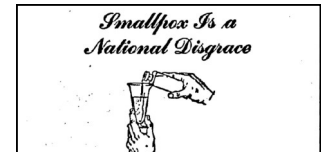
**January:** EA Waited A Week to Watch 1933 Inauguration of FDR



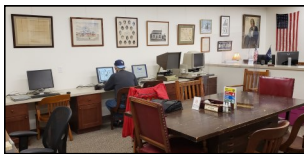
**February:** Was There A Secret Tunnel Under Main Street?



**March:** No Church on Church Street? Puzzling Street Names Explained



**April:** East Aurora's Great 1914 Debate Over Whether to Vaccinate



**May:** History Preserved Since 1950 in Historian's Office Archives



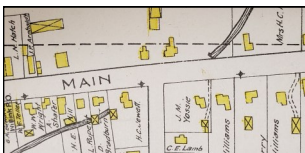
**June:** Locals Found Ways Around Village's 1940 Fireworks Ban



**July:** 'Principal' Reed Stepped Up To Lead Without the Title in 1906



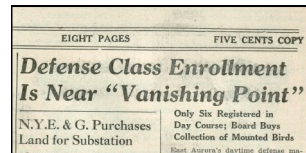
**August:** Signs of Elm Street's History are Hidden in Plain Sight



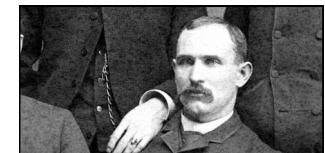
**September:** Main Street Culvert Woes Date Back To At Least 1899



**October:** One Question Nearly Kept Women From the Polls in 1941



**November:** Pearl Harbor Spurred Complacent East Aurora Into Action



**December:** Democrats Make History, But It's Not a First in Aurora

## Volunteers

The Historian's Office benefits greatly from the generosity of volunteers, and the success of our efforts can be credited to their dedication. We simply could not do all that we do without them! In 2021, our volunteers logged 414.5 hours!

Three volunteers, Lucas Dana, Justin Jagodzinski and Marian Halperin, once again assisted in the office on a regular basis. On October 28, we had the opportunity to formally thank them during an evening that included a volunteer appreciation event at the Aurora Historical Society meeting and an open house at the Historian's Office and History Museum. Additionally, each was presented a proclamation from the Town of Aurora. The proclamations, included on the next three pages of this report, outline the specific contributions of these dedicated volunteers.

In addition, Joseph "Potts" Stapleton continues to visit the office on a weekly basis and has digitally scanned a number of photographs and articles from the collection, many of which continue to be well received on Facebook.

The Historian's Office usually makes arrangements to host a college intern during a semester or over the summer; this program has been suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we did have the opportunity to host groups of East Aurora High School students, who completed community service hours on April 28 and May 26.





# A PROCLAMATION



## COMMENDING JUSTIN JAGODZINSKI FOR HIS DEDICATED VOLUNTEER SERVICE TO THE AURORA TOWN HISTORIAN'S OFFICE

**WHEREAS**, in January 1950, the Aurora Town Board and East Aurora Village Board established an official historical archive, under the auspices of the Office of the Historian, to gather, preserve and make publicly available important documents and materials related to the community's history; and the success of this archive has relied heavily on the generosity and expertise of volunteers; and

**WHEREAS**, for the past several years Justin Jagodzinski has been volunteering on a nearly weekly basis in the archives of the Aurora Town Historian's Office; and

**WHEREAS**, Justin Jagodzinski's efforts have resulted in the preservation of a few thousand original newspapers; the digital cataloging of several thousand index cards containing information about the residents of East Aurora and Aurora in the 1800s and early 1900s; the tedious cataloging and alphabetization of numerous files in the archives; the cataloging and renaming of digital files; and the transcription of the Office of the Historian's 70-year donor log from a handwritten ledger to a digital format; and

**WHEREAS**, his volunteer assistance was particularly appreciated in preparation of, during and after the relocation of the archives and museum in 2020 from the Southside Municipal Center on Glead Avenue to the Aurora Municipal Center on Oakwood Avenue; and the smooth relocation would not have been possible without his assistance;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, on behalf of the residents of the Town of Aurora, we do hereby make this public proclamation of thanks and commendation to Justin Jagodzinski for his service to the Historian's Office and to the preservation of our community's history for the benefit of researchers and future generations.

Signed on this Twenty-Eighth Day of October,  
in the Year Two-Thousand Twenty-One,  
and entered into the record of the Aurora Town Board  
on the Eighth Day of November,  
in the Year Two-Thousand Twenty-One.

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**James J. Bach**  
*Aurora Town Supervisor*

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**Robert Lowell Goller**  
*Aurora Town Historian*





# A PROCLAMATION



## COMMENDING LUCAS DANA FOR HIS DEDICATED VOLUNTEER SERVICE TO THE AURORA TOWN HISTORIAN'S OFFICE

**WHEREAS**, in January 1950, the Aurora Town Board and East Aurora Village Board established an official historical archive, under the auspices of the Office of the Historian, to gather, preserve and make publicly available important documents and materials related to the community's history; and the success of this archive has relied heavily on the generosity and expertise of volunteers; and

**WHEREAS**, since 2014 Lucas Dana has been volunteering in the archives of the Aurora Town Historian's Office and has logged several hundred volunteer hours since the day he first walked in the office to inquire about volunteering; and

**WHEREAS**, Lucas Dana's now weekly efforts have resulted in the scanning of hundreds of photographs, the cataloging of East Aurora High School yearbooks, the careful preservation of documents related to the history of the Town of Aurora and Village of East Aurora, and the tedious and careful proofreading of each and every label in the exhibit cases of the Aurora History Museum; and

**WHEREAS**, his volunteer assistance was particularly appreciated in preparation of, during and after the relocation of the archives and museum in 2020 from the Southside Municipal Center on Gleed Avenue to the Aurora Municipal Center on Oakwood Avenue; and the smooth relocation would not have been possible without his assistance;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, on behalf of the residents of the Town of Aurora, we do hereby make this public proclamation of thanks and commendation to Lucas Dana for his many years of service to the Historian's Office and to the preservation of our community's history for the benefit of researchers and future generations.

Signed on this Twenty-Eighth Day of October,  
in the Year Two-Thousand Twenty-One,  
and entered into the record of the Aurora Town Board  
on the Eighth Day of November,  
in the Year Two-Thousand Twenty-One.

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**James J. Bach**  
*Aurora Town Supervisor*

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**Robert Lowell Goller**  
*Aurora Town Historian*





# A PROCLAMATION



## COMMENDING MARIAN HALPERIN FOR HER DEDICATED VOLUNTEER SERVICE TO THE AURORA TOWN HISTORIAN'S OFFICE

**WHEREAS**, in January 1950, the Aurora Town Board and East Aurora Village Board established an official historical archive, under the auspices of the Office of the Historian, to gather, preserve and make publicly available important documents and materials related to the community's history; and the success of this archive has relied heavily on the generosity and expertise of volunteers; and

**WHEREAS**, since 2016 Marian Halperin has been volunteering on a weekly basis in the archives; and

**WHEREAS**, Marian Halperin's generous volunteer efforts have resulted in the careful transfer from folders to acid-free binders—and the indexing—of numerous collections within the archives of the Aurora Town Historian's Office, including the materials related to Moog, Fisher-Price Toys, Railroads, President Millard Fillmore, the Hamlin and Jewett horse farms, the Emery family and Emery Park, the Sun-Diet Sanatorium, more than 15 binders of Roycroft-related material, and—most recently—the cataloging by street of every photograph and document related to the Town of Aurora and Village of East Aurora's houses and buildings; and

**WHEREAS**, in all, Marian Halperin has sorted, catalogued and indexed more than 22 linear feet of material; and

**WHEREAS**, Marian Halperin's expertise; her outgoing personality; her love of history, and her vast personal knowledge of our community's past make her a true asset to the Historian's Office;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, on behalf of the residents of the Town of Aurora, we do hereby make this public proclamation of thanks and commendation to Marian Halperin for her service to the Historian's Office and to the preservation of our community's history for the benefit of researchers and future generations.

Signed on this Twenty-Eighth Day of October,  
in the Year Two-Thousand Twenty-One,  
and entered into the record of the Aurora Town Board  
on the Eighth Day of November,  
in the Year Two-Thousand Twenty-One.

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**James J. Bach**  
*Aurora Town Supervisor*

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**Robert Lowell Goller**  
*Aurora Town Historian*

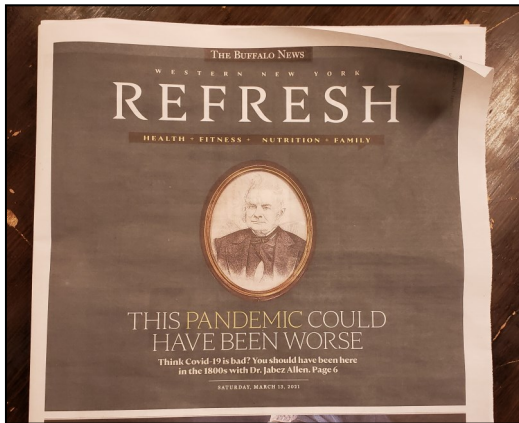


# Media Inquiries

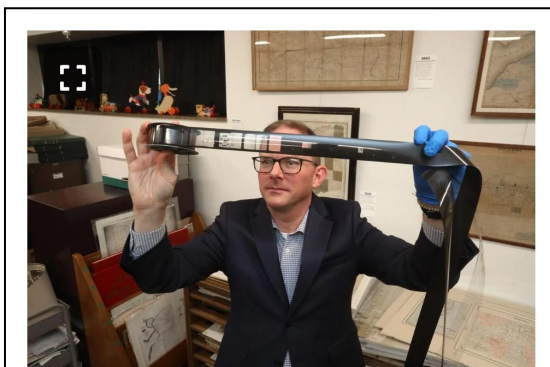
The Historian's Office responded to 19 media inquiries in 2021. Most of the inquiries came from the two local weekly newspapers and included questions ranging from the history of windmills in the Town of Aurora and the origin of the name West Falls to requests for photographs from the archives to accompany news articles.

The Historian's Office also received a request for information from *This Old House* magazine, and a request for information from *The Buffalo News* on the history of the bank at Main and Church Street following news of the Bank of America's decision to close the local branch.

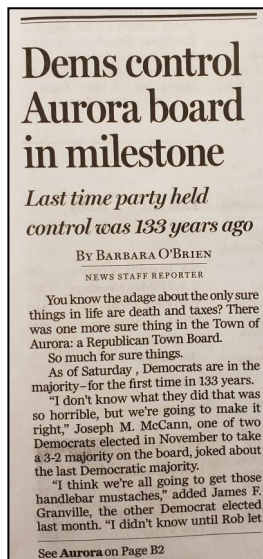
In February, I was interviewed by *The Buffalo News* for a March 13 feature in the "Refresh" supplement on early East Aurora physician Dr. Jabez Allen and pandemics of the 1800s. Photographs of our historical exhibits on early medical care in East Aurora were featured with the article, along with Dr. Thomas C. Rosenthal, M.D.'s book, *Bloodletting & Germs*, a historical fiction account of the challenges faced by Dr. Allen. Thanks to a donation from a family member a few years ago, the Historian's Office archives include a collection of Dr. Allen's papers, medical school diploma and other family artifacts, which were used in the author's research for the book.



In December, I was interviewed by *The Buffalo News* regarding my research into the history of the last time Democrats held seats—and a majority—on the Aurora Town Board.



Aurora town historian Robert Lowell Goller checks microfilm of the East Aurora Advertiser.  
John Hickey / Buffalo News



## The Historian's Events and Activities of 2021

**JANUARY...**The Office of the Historian assisted Aurora Girl Scout Troop 30404 in the creation of a history-themed scavenger hunt throughout the village. The scavenger hunt was featured on the Historian's social media pages and web-site.

**JANUARY...**Assisted Janine Ortman and Explore Buffalo with research for a walking tour of the village launched in spring 2021: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=6iwR684W8ew](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6iwR684W8ew).

**FEBRUARY 22...**Hosted a virtual tour of the archives and museum with East Aurora Boy Scout Troop 599. Due to Covid restrictions, the tour of the historical exhibits and discussion were held via Zoom. The discussion included a history of Boy Scouts in East Aurora and ways the troop members could record their history.

**MARCH...**Due to the suspension of in-person meetings and training due to the pandemic, the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York invited me to record a training video regarding ways historians could document the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in each of their communities as well as encourage their residents to assist with the documentation effort. [www.gahwny.org](http://www.gahwny.org).

**MARCH 3...**Interviewed for East Aurora resident Stacy Grinsfelder's podcast, "Tales from Old Houses." We discussed methods for researching the history of an old house and the role of the Town Historian in local government and research. [www.truetalesfromoldhouses.com/town-historian-robert-goller](http://www.truetalesfromoldhouses.com/town-historian-robert-goller).

**APRIL...**The Aurora Town Public Library invited → the Historian's Office to share an exhibit in the library's lobby exhibit case. "This Isn't Our First Pandemic" featured a timeline of epidemics and pandemics—including cholera, smallpox, 1918 influenza and scarlet fever—and their impact on East Aurora and the Town of Aurora.



Photograph by Marty Wangelin

← **APRIL 28...**Hosted a group of East Aurora High School students as part of community service volunteer day. The students assisted in organizing the photograph collection.

**MAY 26...**Hosted a second group of East Aurora High School students, who completed their community service hours.

**MAY 27...**Oversaw the relocation of the Erie County Trust Co. lobby clock from the Bank of America building on Main Street to its new home in the Historian's Office. (See the Donations section of this report for additional information about this project).





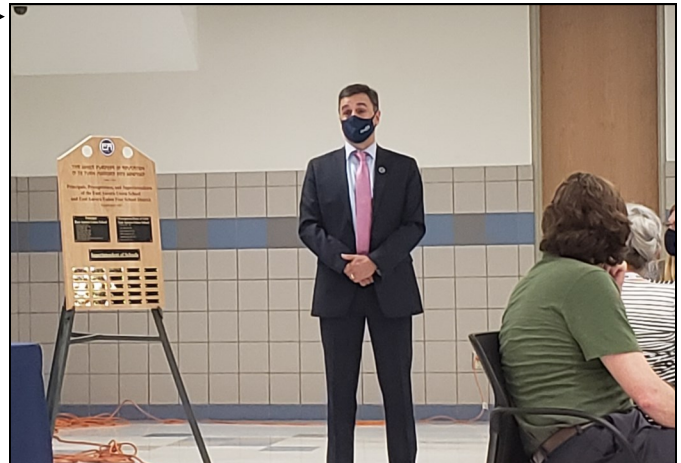
← **MAY 29...**Attended the grand opening of the Holland Historical Society's new museum and archives.

**MAY 29...**Attended the re-dedication of the G.A.R. Civil War Monument in Oakwood Cemetery. In the 1880s, members of the local chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) thought it fitting to erect a monument in Oakwood Cemetery to honor Civil War veterans. The women of the G.A.R. auxiliary put on the play "The Spy of Atlanta" on Feb. 12, 1886, to raise funds for the veterans' memorial. The effort was a success, and the monument was dedicated June 4, 1886, a few days after Decoration (Memorial) Day,

because the holiday fell on a Sunday. The American Legion, V.F.W. and community members still gather around the G.A.R. Monument to honor veterans each Memorial Day. The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War recently raised funds to refurbish the monument and replace the orb at the top, which had been missing for several years. The Aurora Town Historian's Office provided research assistance for this project.

**MAY 31...**Was invited to deliver an address at the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial Day ceremonies at Oakwood Cemetery.

**JUNE 9...**Was invited to speak at the East Aurora School Board meeting, where Superintendent Brian D. Russ was presented with a plaque containing the names of his predecessors in honor of his 10th anniversary as superintendent. The Historian's Office, with the particular assistance of volunteer Lucas Dana, had the pleasure of conducting the research using the newspaper files and other archives in the office to compile the list of previous district administrative leaders dating back to the formation of the public school district in 1883. Before the office of superintendent was created in 1925, the district was led by the school principal and preceptress (dean of girls). The plaque will hang outside the Superintendent's Office.



**JULY 7...**Led two historical walking tours of South Grove Street, Main Street, Walnut Street and Prospect Avenue for the young attendees of the Town of Aurora Recreation Department's Summer Day Camp. This was the second summer we offered historical programs for the Summer Day Camp.

**JULY 21...**Was invited to spend the morning at the Recreation Department's Hamlin Park Summer Day Camp sharing photographs and the history of Hamlin Park with the young participants. We presented two sessions, and the participants showed great enthusiasm for our great park and its history, and they had lots of questions and stories to share!

**JULY 24...**Presented an overview of the history of Griffins Mills and the Griffins Mills Presbyterian Church as part of Griffins Mills Heritage Day. The event, sponsored by the Friends of Griffins Mills, included events at the church, Griffins Mills Cemetery and the mill site on Cazenovia Creek.

**JULY 27...**Was invited to a planning session at Revive Wesleyan Church at Main and Maple Streets to discuss the history of East Aurora and Aurora with the committee working on the re-opening of the church.



**AUGUST 11-22...**Planned and executed two exhibits in the Historical Building at the Erie County Fair. This year the Historian's Office exhibit paid tribute to Frances A. Little, an East Aurora Red Cross volunteer who, while caring for influenza patients during the 1918 pandemic, became a victim of the flu herself. In addition to the Historian's Office exhibit, due to fewer historical societies participating this year amid the ongoing pandemic, Jason Gonser and I were happy to be asked to contribute a second exhibit to the Historical Building. We were thrilled that our personal collection of ToyFest commemorative toys and posters took second-place honors.

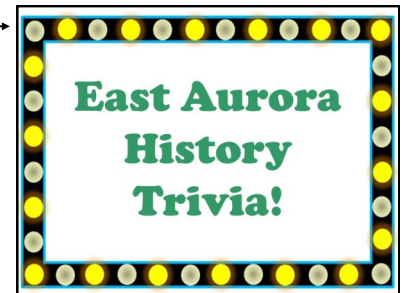


← **SEPTEMBER...**In recognition of the bicentennial of Erie County, and at the invitation of the Aurora Town Public Library, presented a special exhibit in the library's lobby display case of historic Erie County maps from the archives.

**OCTOBER 7...**In recognition of the bicentennial of Erie County, was invited to present a new program, "Aurora's Erie County Connections," at the Aurora Town Public Library. The program, sponsored by the Friends of the Aurora Town Public Library, signaled the return of in-person programming at the library and explored the many ways East Aurora and Aurora influenced the formation of Erie County and its history over the past 200 years.

**OCTOBER 19...**At the invitation of the Aurora Town Public Library, developed and presented "East Aurora Trivia: Family Edition," a fun, socially distanced Powerpoint game show designed for kids 8 and older and their families. We are planning to offer this event again in 2022.

**OCTOBER 28...**At the Aurora Historical Society meeting and volunteer recognition, presented a program on the relationship between the Historian's Office and the Historical Society since the founding of the Society in 1951. The event at the Senior Center was followed by an open house at the new museum and Historian's Office inside the Municipal Center.



**NOVEMBER 4...**Presented the program, "Becoming Your Own Historian," at the Aurora Town Public Library. The program, which I first presented in 2020, shared ways to safely collect, curate and preserve the history of one's family, home and community.



## Budget

There are three main areas of the Town Historian's budget:

### Office Expense—\$500 (+)

In 2021, we once again used a large portion of this budget line for acid free, protective sheets and binders, in our ongoing efforts to transfer more and more documents into acid-free binders. We also used part of the budget to purchase signage for the new exhibits in the Municipal Center.

### Expense and Travel—\$200 (-)

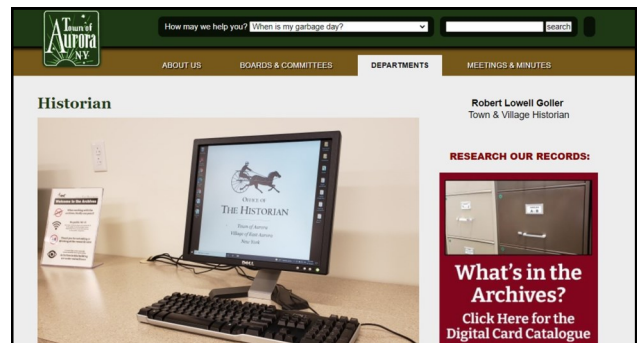
Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all in-person events and training, including the annual conference of the Government Appointed Historian's of Western New York, once again were cancelled. A large portion of these funds in 2021 once again were transferred to the Office Expense line to purchase additional supplies and equipment for the new office space.

### Historian's Salary—\$15,000

Thank you for the town's continued financial support of the Historian's Office. I extend particular appreciation for the additional support beginning in 2020, which allowed us to open to the public one additional day per week. I average 19 to 20 hours per week, which includes my duties as the town webmaster.

## Goals for 2022

**FINALIZING A DIGITAL CARD CATALOGUE...** With the finalization of the exhibits of the Aurora History Museum in 2021, the volunteers and I in 2022 will prioritize the completion of the cataloging of the archives within the Historian's Office. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers and interns in recent years, each shelf and drawer in the archives has been numbered and catalogued. Our goal for 2022 is to finalize a listing of every subject folder, binder and book in the archives (and the location of each within the archives). This will be included in a searchable digital card catalogue that will be available on our website, which will allow researchers to search the archival collection in advance of visiting the Historian's Office.



**DIGITIZATION OF NEWSPAPERS...** Due to Covid-19, this goal was not accomplished in recent years. Thanks to generous monetary donations, we plan to complete the digitization of the *Advertiser*, as well as digitize other newspapers, including the *Aurora Standard* from the 1830s, the *Weekly Times* from the 1880s, *The Orbit* from the 1960s, and begin digitizing the *Shopping Guides* from the 1930s-1970s. (Digitizing photographs and other documents in our collection remains an ongoing project).

**DOCUMENTING HISTORY OUTSIDE THE HISTORIAN'S OFFICE...** Although the Historian's Office maintains a vast collection of documents, photographs, maps and other material related to the history of the Town of Aurora and Village of East Aurora, it is certainly not the only repository for local history. Many civic clubs, religious organizations, veterans groups and other entities in our community have vast collections of their own. In another holdover goal from 2021, we hope conditions in 2022 will allow us to at least begin a process of bringing together these organizations to catalogue the archival resources that exist in our community, assist these organizations in preserving their collections, and—for those interested in participating—developing a master list of these resources.