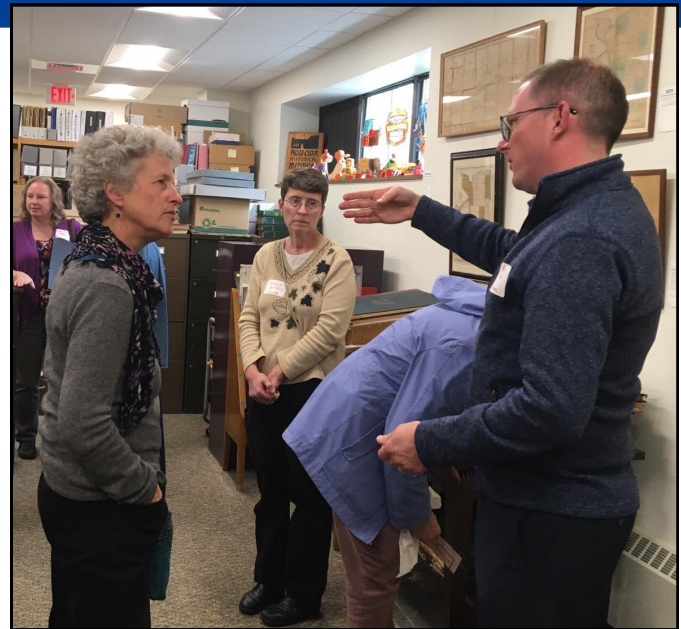


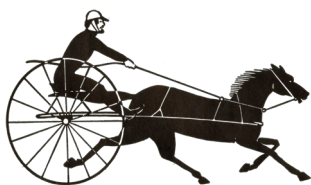


Annual Report of The Historian

for the year
2022



*Top: Fifteen East Aurora High School seniors assisted in the Historian's Office for Community Service Day on May 19.
Bottom Left: Some of the more than 20 local newspapers included in our autumn Featured Exhibit, "Read All About It!"
Bottom Right: Leading a tour during the annual meeting of the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York.*



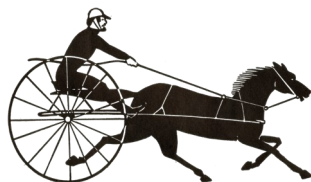
OFFICE OF
THE HISTORIAN

**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

18 January 2023

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 2022.

As always, this annual report serves as a means to share with you (and the community) the activities of the Historian’s Office in 2022, 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.

After settling in to the new Municipal Center, and with the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic behind us, I am happy to report that in 2022 we were able to focus on a number of archival and community outreach projects that had been put on hold in 2020 and 2021.

In addition to maintaining the archives and assisting residents and local officials with historical research, we were able to highlight through exhibits, publications and activities a few important anniversaries: the 150th anniversary of our community newspaper, the *East Aurora Advertiser*; the 100th anniversary of the original library building at the corner of Main Street and Whaley Avenue; and the 50th annual Christmas Carolcade.

We were also honored to host on Oct. 1 the annual conference of the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York, which includes town, village, city, county and Seneca Nation historians from the 11 counties of western New York. The Senior Center was a perfect venue for our meeting, and the group looks forward to meeting here again!

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if I can ever be of assistance. It truly is a privilege to serve 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
historian@townofaurora.com
716-652-7944



Mission

To better focus our efforts and to better share with the public what we do, the volunteers and I in 2022 revised and formalized our mission for the Historian and the Historian's Office:

- To document and promote the history and heritage of the Town of Aurora and Village of East Aurora in a transparent, equitable and politically non-partisan manner.
- To advise local officials, boards and residents on issues related to the history of the town and village.
- To collect, preserve and maintain the archives for the use of the public in their own research.
- To curate and present the Aurora History Museum exhibits at the Municipal Center in collaboration with the Aurora Historical Society.

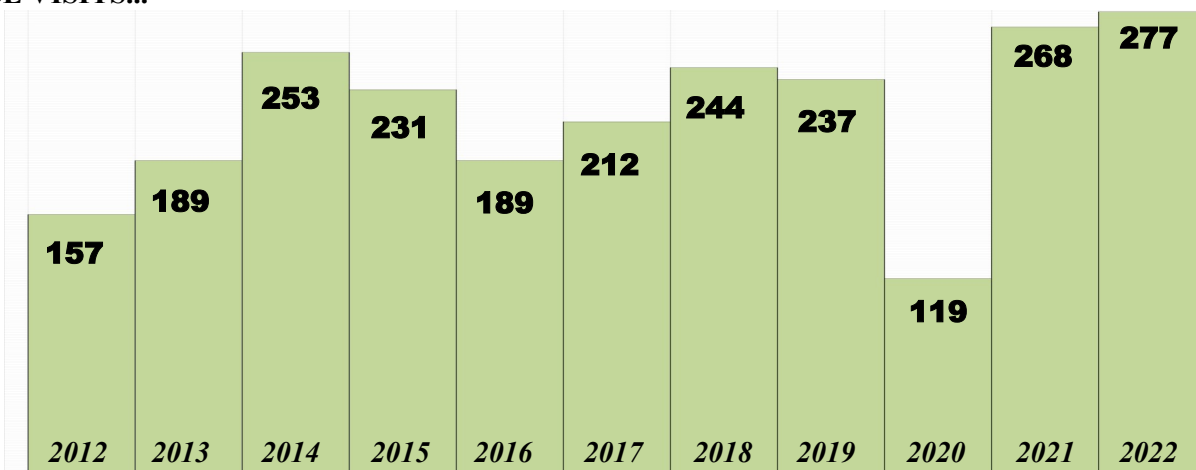
We also updated our “Archive Guide and Answers to Frequently Asked Questions” brochure, which includes additional information about the Historian's Office; the services the Historian's Office does—and does not—provide; and an explanation of the difference between the Historian's Office and Historical Society. This document is available on our website, www.townofaurora.com/departments/historian.

The Archives

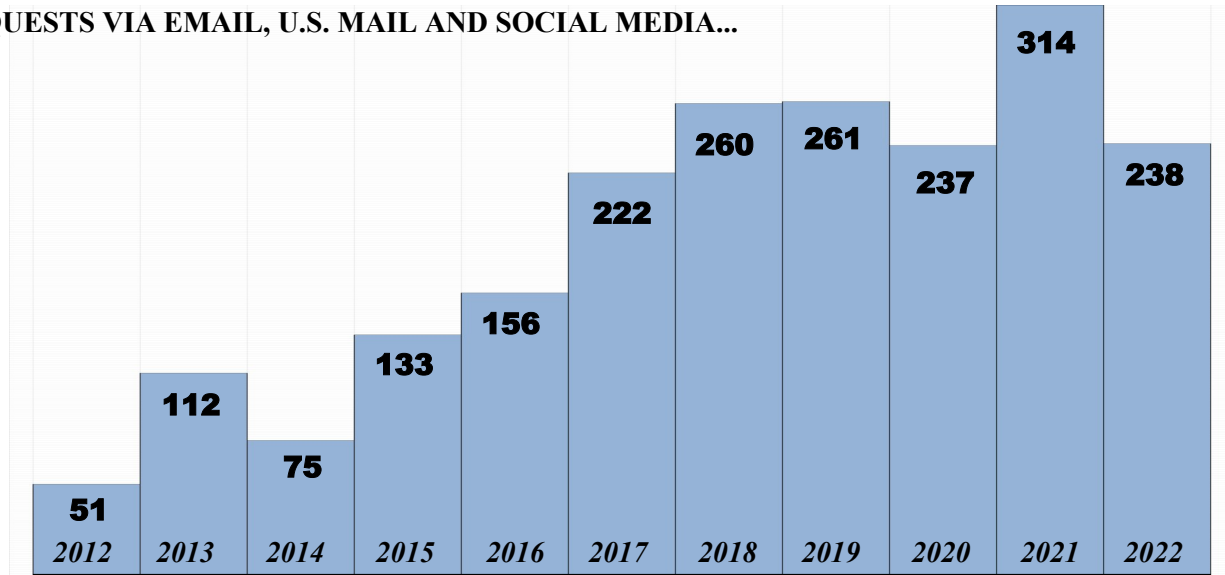
A main function of the Historian's Office continues to be assisting taxpayers and guests with historical research and to maintain the archives. The office and archives are open Wednesdays and Thursdays, from 1–4 p.m., except holidays, and by special appointment on other days of the week. (The office is closed annually the last week of December for the holidays). Wednesday and Thursday mornings are reserved for volunteer time. The Historian's Office was open throughout 2022 without interruption, with one exception. Because I was on call for jury duty, we were open by appointment only on August 3 and 4.

We continue to keep a log of the number of visitors and requests, and the topics that are researched. The 2020 statistics, as well as perhaps those for 2021, were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Otherwise, our numbers have remained consistent over the past several years. The “Office Visits” statistic only includes the number of people who have visited the Historian's Office during regular office hours and special appointments and does not reflect visitors to the History Museum exhibits in the hallway outside the office, which are open during regular Municipal Center hours.

OFFICE VISITS...



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



Most inquiries continue to relate to house and property histories (about 22 percent), genealogy (about 9 percent), and student history projects. While most requests for information and assistance were from individual taxpayers and re-

Town Seeks Village Support In Road and Bridge Repairs

Goller was able to provide the department with information about Alfred Brotherhood and intentions by a past Village Board to have that area as two-lane street and bridge.

"You wouldn't think a highway superintendent would need a historian," Gunner said in his praise of Goller, who also assisted the department in getting the \$1.8 million grant money. "I can't tell you how much I appreciate having him here."

East Aurora Advertiser, October 6, 2022

searchers, more than 50 requests were for assistance to other government agencies, schools, civic and educational organizations. The East Aurora Union Free School District requested information on the history of the "union free" designation; the American Legion requested a photograph of a former commander, which we were able to provide from the archives; the village Tree Board sought information about early tree species in the community; the Orchard Park Historical Society requested information related to proper archiving techniques; and the Aurora Historical Society and Roycroft Campus requested information throughout the year to assist with inquiries to their organizations. We also logged four referrals to or from the village Historic Preservation Commission and, at the request of the Highway Department, we conducted research into the history of the East Fillmore Avenue bridge, which is slated for reconstruction.

We have also assisted visitors wishing to research materials and documents held in the Aurora Historical Society's collection, particularly documents related to the Roycroft. When an inquiry is made to the Historical Society, the appropriate materials are temporarily transferred to the Historian's Office, where a researcher can come in during office hours. The Historian's Office is more conducive to research than the Historical Society's facilities, and this arrangement has proven more efficient and secure.

The information requests also included 19 media inquiries in 2022. Most of the inquiries came from the two local weekly newspapers and *The Buffalo News*. These included providing information on the history of various buildings and houses in the community, confirming dates and providing photographs from the archives to accompany news articles.

Website and Social Media

The Town Historian's Facebook ("Aurora Town Historian") and Instagram (auroratownhistorian) pages continue to be a great way to share photographs, old newspaper articles and other tidbits of local history with a much broader audience. A daily posting, which we started in 2016, features an interesting 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...", "I Love East Aurora History" and "I Love West Falls History" Facebook pages. The posts reach several thousand people on Facebook each day, as well as on Instagram. The posts are a great way to share with the community the vast amount of history contained in the drawers and boxes and on the shelves of the Historian's Office, as well as to share with a wider audience the services offered by the Historian's Office.

I also have made an effort to expand the information and resources available on the Historian's department page within the town's website (www.townofaurora.com). We have included sections on researching the records, exploring the museum exhibits, volunteering, services offered by the Historian's Office and links to the social media pages. The page also provides links to other helpful research resources. A card catalogue, maps, cemetery lists and other information will be added in the near future to help researchers prepare for a visit to the Historian's Office and to enable more people to conduct research at home.

Volunteers

In 2022, our volunteers logged 444.5 hours!

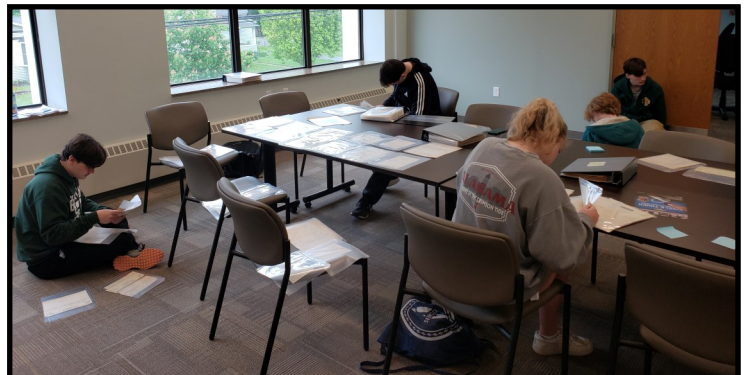
The Historian's Office benefits greatly from the generosity of volunteers, and the success of our efforts can be credited to their dedication.

Three volunteers, Lucas Dana, Justin Jagodzinski and Marian Halperin, once again assisted in the office on a weekly basis, assisting us with exhibits, photograph and document scanning, organizing files and maintaining computer databases.

On May 19, the Historian's Office hosted a group of East Aurora High School students as part of Community Service Day. Fifteen students assisted in organizing photographs, as well as business and family files in the archives. On June 15, we hosted an additional student who was unable to attend the first Community Service Day. One of the high school seniors, Ryan Zaff, asked to also volunteer over the summer to assist with and learn more about archive management.

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 was suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, I am inquiring to local colleges in the hopes of resuming this program in the summer or autumn of 2023.



High School Seniors Participate in Community Service Day

Sixteen volunteers got to spend the day with historian Rob Goller and another 10 were busy at Hamlin Park.

East Aurora Advertiser,
May 26, 2022

Yes, historians are really cool!

By 2 p.m., all the seniors were back at school, chowing down on hot dogs and hamburgers prepared in the snack shack adjacent to the athletic field. I heard good reports from Camp Ska-No-Ka-San, from Officer Cartwright, from Knox and from the historian's office. "That guy is really cool," said a senior, referring to Goller.

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 2022, all of which were 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. As more people discover the Historian's Office, the number of donations continues to grow. Due to space constraints, the Historian's Office is only able accept materials related to the history of the Town of Aurora, Village of East Aurora and surrounding area. We do not generally accept "three-dimensional" artifacts (furniture, etc.), but are happy to refer donors to the Aurora Historical Society or another organization in the community that considers these types of donations for their museum exhibits. The donations to the Historian's Office this year included several copies of East Aurora High School yearbooks, family photographs and papers. Other donations are highlighted below:

—A scrapbook related to the East Aurora Fire Department, 1966-1968.

—A congratulatory lawn sign for East Auroran Kaitlin Hawayek and Jean-Luc Baker, ice dancers at the 2022 Winter Olympics.

—An 1880s-1890s milk delivery account book belonging to farmer P. Hale, including receipts from the Richardson and Beebe Cheese Co. in East Aurora and Barnes Grocery Store in Buffalo.

—A photograph that once belonged to William B. Taber of Cowlesville, of the former Christian Church building at 826 East Main Street.

—Framed watercolor painting of horse Mambrino King by artist Marlene J. Coles. The painting hung in the home at 100 North Willow Street, where Mambrino King is buried, and was donated by former residents Tony and Carol Kuckacki.



—Current and proposed views of the Roycroft Campus, before and after the reconstruction of Main Street circa 2007.

—A quart-sized Aurora Bottling Works bottle. Pint-sized bottles had previously been donated; this is the first quart-sized bottle added to the collection.



In addition, the following books were donated to the archives:

—*Gow: A Father, A Son, A School*, by David Whitcomb Gow about his father Peter Gow and The Gow School.

—*Profiles Volume II: Historic and Influential People from Buffalo and Western New York—The Early 1900s*. Donated and signed by the author, Rick Falkowski.

—Bound copy of *East Aurora: My Hometown*.

—*Elbert Hubbard Speaks*

—*Grover Cleveland as Buffalo Knew Him* by Charles H. Armitage, published 1926.

—*The Story of Elbert Hubbard: Art and Glory* by Freeman Chapney.

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 generally 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. This year we were also able to highlight a few milestones in the community, including the 150th anniversary of the *East Aurora Advertiser* and the 100th anniversary of the original library at Main Street and Whaley Avenue.

Topics of the monthly “Historian’s Corner” column in 2022 included:



January: ‘Handsome’ Bank Clock Chimed In 100 Years Ago



February: Small West End Building Housed ‘Tiniest Drug Store’



March: Four Women Make History With Village Board Majority



April: Intellectual Inquirers Brought Lively Debate to the West End



May: Closing of The Park Grocery Signaled The End of an Era



June: East Aurora Has A Rich History of Short-Lived Newspapers



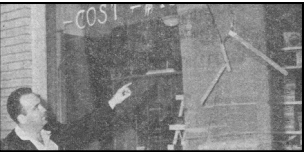
July: After 100 Years, Hamlin Park Flagpole is Showing Its Age



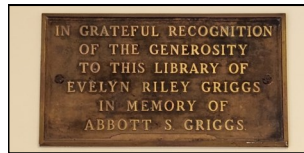
August: Who Put the ‘East’ in East Aurora?



September: Whatever Happened to *Advertiser* Papergirl Vera Wood?



October: Halloween Pranksters Took a World War II Break



November: A Gift from Griggs Gave Library a Home 100 Years Ago



December: 1900 ‘Snowvember’ Rivalled 2014 and 2022 Storms

In addition to the monthly column, the *Advertiser* on June 23 published an op-ed column on the importance of community newspapers to the preservation and study of local history. I also wrote an article about the history of the Christmas Carolcade, which was published in a special section in December in commemoration of the 50th annual event in 2022.

Community Newspaper is an Invaluable Historical Resource
 by Robert Lowell Goller
 Town and Village Historian

East Aurorians rely on the *Advertiser* for local news. But in the Town Historian’s Office, we rely on it for local history. The *Advertiser* is nearly always the first stop on any research journey in the Historian’s Office.

Here are just a few reasons why:

—Past issues of most community newspapers, but especially of the *Advertiser*, contain probably the most comprehensive record of local births, marriages and deaths. New York State did not require official government Vital Statistics records until the 1890s, and in many cases these official records of births, marriage and deaths are light on details. Church records are either non-existent or hard to come by. However, many newspaper obituaries provide biographical details that death certificates do not. Marriage announcements provide information about the wedding day—even details about what the bride wore—that a genealogical marriage certificate does not.

—The local newspaper provides important context for major events. Want to know what everyday life was like in East Aurora during the Great Depression or World War II? Take a read through a vintage issue of the *East Aurora Advertiser*. In many instances, the information on the inside pages is just as important to understanding history as the major headlines on the front page. In our technologically advanced world today, sometimes it’s easy to forget that

since 1880, using the digital and microfilmed archives of the East Aurora *Advertiser* in the Aurora Town Historian’s Office. As a result of this information, I was able to discover that the 1888-1889 term was the last during which Democrats held a majority.

It’s no exaggeration to assert that without the local newspaper—and the subsequent preservation of each issue—many details of our community’s past would be lost. Collaborative efforts over the past half-century have ensured the continued preservation of this history.

Beginning in 1975, an effort was launched to microfilm all the existing physical editions of the *Advertiser* dating back to the first issue in 1872.

In 2011, with significant initial contributions from the Aurora Historical Society and Badger & Gunner Insurance, the Historian’s Office began converting these microfilms to a digital format. With additional contributions, the digitization project is ongoing, and includes plans to complete the entire run of the *Advertiser*, as well as other short-lived newspapers, including the *Aurora Standard* of the 1830s.

The *Weekly Times* of the early 1880s and *The Orbit* of the 1960s. In addition to digitizing more newspapers, the Historian’s Office is also making plans to provide greater accessibility to the digital collection. Newspapers are now digitally searchable on a computer rather than a tedious microfilm machine, and individual articles can be shared with the click of a mouse.

The First Carolcade

The first Carolcade was held in East Aurora on December 18, 1900. It was a festive event where carolers sang in front of homes and businesses. The event was organized by the East Aurora Historical Society and was a major success. It has since become a tradition, with the Carolcade being held every year in December.

The Carolcade is a unique tradition in East Aurora, and it is a wonderful way to celebrate the holiday season. It is a time when the community comes together to sing and enjoy the music. The Carolcade is a tradition that has stood the test of time, and it is a testament to the spirit of East Aurora.

History Museum Exhibits

Part of the mission of the Aurora Town Historian's Office is to present the Aurora History Museum at the Municipal Center in collaboration with the Aurora Historical Society, which owns most of the three-dimensional artifacts. The Historian's Office is open Wednesdays and Thursday afternoons, and by appointment, however the historical exhibits may be viewed any time the Municipal Center is open. Thanks to the Town of Aurora for providing the space to exhibit this wonderful collection of our community's history! Our guest book in the museum shows visitors from East Aurora and Western New York, as well as some from across North America, including Canada, Florida and California.

FEATURED EXHIBITS...

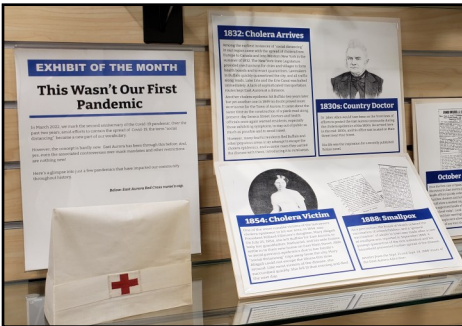
In addition to maintaining the permanent exhibits, we have initiated a series of temporary "Featured Exhibits" to highlight artifacts and documents in our collections, as well as unique aspects of our community's history. We also share images from the Featured Exhibits on our social media pages. The Featured Exhibits of 2022 are highlighted below:



Vintage Valentines

January 7 - February 17

Many of the cards in this special exhibit, some more than 100 years old, were donated to the archives of the Aurora Town Historian's Office by former Historian Amy Adams Forden (1893-1978). They include three-dimensional greetings, postcards and cards with fringe, which was a popular feature in the late 1800s. One unique card even features a mirror!



This Wasn't Our First Pandemic

February 23 - April 4

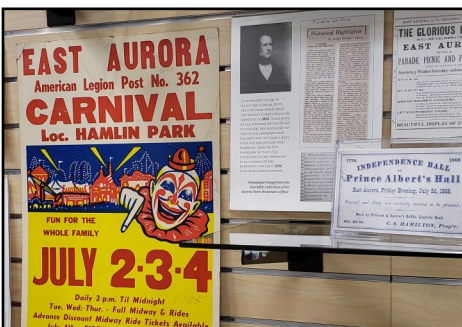
March 2022 marked the second anniversary of the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. The term "social distancing" became a new part of our vocabulary. However, the concept is hardly new. East Aurora has been through this before. And, yes, even the associated controversies over mask mandates and other restrictions are nothing new! This exhibit offered an updated glimpse into just a few pandemics that have impacted our community throughout history.



The Diary: Two Centuries of Written History

April 6 - May 31

We know what happened in East Aurora in 1873 because 21-year-old Helen F. Persons kept a diary. And we know details about the construction of the house at 110 Pine Street in 1878 and 1879 because its first owner, Dwight Spooner, kept a journal. These are just two of the many diaries preserved in the archives of the Historian's Office and featured in this exhibit. Diaries provide accounts of marriages, deaths and births that were not always documented elsewhere.



Parade, Picnic & Fireworks: The Fourth of July in East Aurora

June 2 - July 31

Independence Day observances in the Town of Aurora can be documented as early as 1830, and they were most likely held even earlier. In this exhibit, we featured just some of the artifacts from the archives that symbolize the evolution of the local event over the years, from a short procession, speeches and the recitation of the Declaration of Independence in the 1830s; to the Hamlin Park carnival of the mid 1900s; to the "old-fashioned" celebration of today.



Read All About It!: A History of East Aurora’s Newspapers

August 11 - November 15

Most of East Aurora’s more than 20 newspapers dating back to 1835 were short lived. In commemoration of the *East Aurora Advertiser’s* 150th anniversary, original editions of East Aurora’s newspapers over the years—some of them very rare—were curated from the archives of the Historian’s Office and donated from private collections. Our goal was to have an original copy of every newspaper published in the Town of Aurora. We are missing just a few.



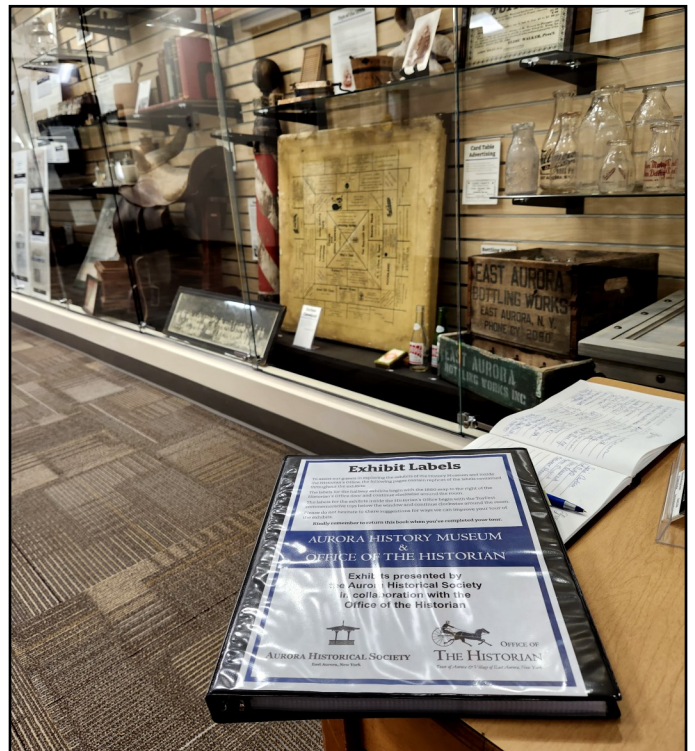
50 Years of Carolcade

November 17 - January 17, 2013

In commemoration of East Aurora's 50th Christmas Carolcade on December 17, this exhibit featured photographs and unique, never-before-seen original items from the first 49 Carolcades, gathered from the Vidler family, the archives of the Aurora Town Historian’s Office and the personal collection of Town Historian and Carolcade master of ceremonies Robert Lowell Goller.

LARGE-PRINT LABELS...

Although we have done our best to maximize the readability of the labels located throughout the historical exhibits at the Aurora Municipal Center, "eye level" isn't the same for everyone. To assist visitors to the History Museum and Historian's Office, in 2022 we introduced large-print versions of the exhibit labels. The labels are now available in a book located outside the Historian's Office and on our website. Museum visitors can also download the labels to a mobile device by scanning QR codes displayed on signs in the Municipal Center. Special thanks to our Historian's Office volunteers, whose assistance made implementing this improvement possible.



The Historian's Events and Activities of 2022

FEBRUARY 2...The leak from the roof sent water through the ceiling of, among other areas of the Municipal Center, the storage room of the Historian's Office. Luckily the leak was caught early enough to prevent damage to the materials that were in the storage room.

FEBRUARY 14...Visited East Aurora High School to speak with the newly formed local history class. In 2021 and 2022, the Historian's Office assisted social studies teacher Kirk Schranz with the curriculum for the class devoted to the study of East Aurora history.



FEBRUARY 25... Hosted at the Historian's Office members of the Orchard Park Historical Society and shared ideas regarding archiving techniques

and procedures. The Orchard Park Historical Society reached out to learn more about Aurora's archive in their effort to prepare a public archive for Orchard Park in the Jolls House Museum.



JULY 3...With the assistance of my nieces and nephews, participated in the Town of Aurora Independence Day parade.



JULY 7...Led two historical walking tours of Prospect Avenue, Center Street and Oakwood Avenue for the young attendees of the Recreation Department's Summer Day Camp. This was

the third summer we offered historical programs for the Summer Day Camp. We also learned about the history of the 1922 flagpole at the entrance to the park and discussed the best way to bring its dilapidated condition to the attention of village officials. (See letter at the end of this Annual Report).

JULY 18...Was invited to spend the morning at the Recreation Department's Hamlin Park Summer Day Camp sharing a Powerpoint presentation of photographs and the history of Hamlin Park with the young participants.

AUGUST 4...Attended a ceremony and open house at 710 Main Street in honor of the *East Aurora Advertiser's* 150th anniversary. From publisher Grant M. Hamilton, I accepted a time capsule that was placed in the Municipal Center exhibit case, to be opened in 2072.



AUGUST 10-21...Planned and executed an annual exhibit in the Historical Building at the Erie County Fair. In recognition of "transportation" as this year's Historical

Building theme, the exhibit, "The Many Shapes of the Circle," invited guests to take a look "around" at the colorful history of the traffic circle's many shapes over the years. "The Circle" has been an unofficial landmark at the Village of East Aurora's west end since 1936, but folks might be surprised to learn that it hasn't always been a circle. And although it is officially known as Willink Square, named after the village that once surrounded it, the intersection has never been a square! (This exhibit is scheduled to be on display again in the History Museum at the Municipal Center January 19-May 30, 2023.) Special thanks to Jason Gonser for his technical assistance with this exhibit.

SEPTEMBER 22... Portrayed President Millard Fillmore for the Aurora Historical Society's monthly speaker series. In the program, "The Early Life of Millard Fillmore in His Own Words," Millard Fillmore Presidential Site curator Kathleen Frost and I recited Millard Fillmore's memoirs, which outline his early life in central and western New York State.

SEPTEMBER 27 & 28... Prepared for two community service days for East Aurora High School students. Because many students were scheduled to complete their community service at outdoor locations, this event was cancelled due to the inclement weather forecast.



OCTOBER 1... After two years of cancellations due to the pandemic, the Aurora Town Historian's Office was honored to host in East Aurora the annual conference of the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York. More than 50 town, village, city and county historians from the region spent the day at the Aurora Senior Center, followed by a tour of the historical exhibits and archives of the Aurora Town Historian's Office, which had re-located to the Municipal Center on Oakwood Av-

enue two years earlier. The conference program presenters, Rochester City Historian Christine Ridarsky and Peter Rachleff, a founder of the East Side Freedom Library in St. Paul, Minn., discussed ways historians can better meet the challenge of preserving and sharing the history of the entire community, "including people who don't look like us or who have experiences very different from our own." GAHWNY represents government and Seneca Nation historians from the 11 counties in Western New York.



NOVEMBER 12... Virtually presented my program "Battle Over the Ballot," for the Roycroft Campus fall history series. The program discussed East Aurora's role in the women's suffrage movement.

DECEMBER 22... Attended what is believed to have been East Aurora's first-ever public menorah lighting, in front of Vidler's 5&10.



Budget

There are four main areas of the Town Historian's budget, three of which fund the operations of the Historian's Office:

Office Expense—\$500

In 2022, we once again used a large portion of this budget line for acid free, protective sheets and binders, in our ongoing effort to transfer more and more documents into acid-free binders. We also used part of the budget to purchase proper storage boxes for the archives, protective equipment for use while processing sensitive documents and donations, and signage for the exhibit space in the Municipal Center.

Expense and Travel—\$200

This budget line was used for membership costs and training. Due to the annual meeting of the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York taking place in East Aurora, there were no travel costs associated with my attendance at this event in 2022. I also take advantage of virtual trainings.

Historian's Salary—\$15,300

Thank you for the town's continued financial support of the Historian's Office. I average 19 to 20 hours per week, which includes my duties as the town webmaster.

Historical Society Contract—\$3,000

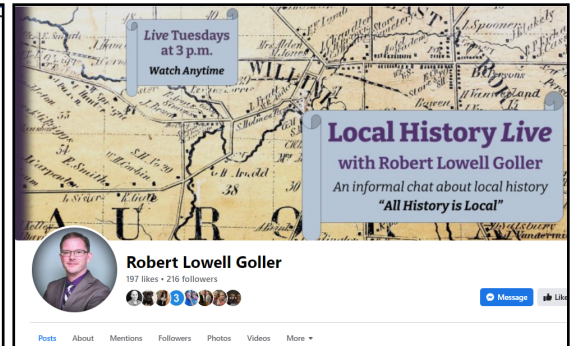
Although included as part of the Town Historian's budget, the \$3,000 in this budget line is transferred to the Historical Society to fund the organization's educational efforts and operations at its two museum buildings.

Goals for 2023

THE ARCHIVES & DIGITIZATION... Updates to the archives and the completion of the digital card catalogue will be our priority in 2023. I have developed a "wish list" of items (maps drawers, newer shelving, etc.) that would help us provide better storage for the archives, and I have begun identifying potential grant opportunities. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers and interns in recent years, unidentified materials have been identified and catalogued. We now come to the point of being able to complete a listing of every subject folder, binder and book (and the location of each within the archives). This will be included in the searchable digital card catalogue on our website, which will allow researchers to search the archival collection in advance of visiting the Historian's Office. Completing this task—at long last!—will be our priority throughout 2023. With donated funds still available, we also plan to digitize more newspapers and other documents and make more of our digital archive and databases available on our website.

Outside Historical Activities

Outside of my duties as Town and Village Historian, I continue writing, historical research and consulting projects. One of these projects, launched in October 2022, is a livestream history discussion, "Local History Live." The discussions can be seen live each Tuesday at 3 p.m., or watched any time later on my Facebook page.





26 July 2022

Mayor Peter M. Mercurio
 Village Administrator Cathie Thomas
 585 Oakwood Avenue
 East Aurora, New York 14052

Dear Mayor Pete and Cathie:

I recently had the pleasure to lead a series of history walking tours of Hamlin Park and the surrounding neighborhood for the children of the Recreation Department's Hamlin Park summer day camp program. One of the stops on the tour was the flagpole at the park entrance near the corner of Prospect Avenue and South Grove Street. The children discovered a dedication plaque that just happens to be 100 years old, "Gift of E.A.H.S. Class of 1922," which led me to conduct research into its history. Attached please find my latest monthly newspaper column and other background information, which was the result of this research.

However, in addition to discovering the flagpole's history, the children also noticed its current, embarrassingly poor condition: Much of the pole's silver paint is chipping away; the rope is tangled high above the ground among the branches of an encroaching tree; and even if a flag could be flown from the pole, the over-grown bushes around it wouldn't allow someone to easily raise a flag anyway.

On behalf of our concerned young constituents, I am writing in the hopes that some resources could be allocated, perhaps as part of the park's master plan improvements, to repair the flagpole and clean up the area around it to enable a flag to properly fly from it again.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information or further assistance with this project.

Sincere Regards,



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Letter sent to village officials after young participants at the Town of Aurora Recreation Department's Hamlin Park Summer Day Camp discovered the dilapidated condition of the flagpole at the entrance to the park. A gift of the Class of 1922, the flagpole originated at the East Aurora High School on Main Street and was moved to Hamlin Park a decade later.