



Annual Report *of The Historian* for the year **2023**



OFFICE OF
THE HISTORIAN

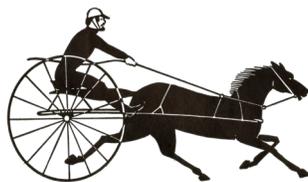
**TOWN OF AURORA & VILLAGE OF EAST AURORA,
ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK**



ROBERT LOWELL GOLLER
HISTORIAN



Top left, Third of July parade; top center, the 1936 *Auroran*, among the East Aurora High School yearbooks included in our summer 2023 Featured Exhibit; top right, new exhibit cases, purchased along with archival shelving and a map drawer with funding from Erie County; bottom, East Aurora High School students researching our collection of digital newspapers.



OFFICE OF
THE HISTORIAN

Town of Aurora & Village of East Aurora, New York

17 January 2024

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

Town Supervisor Charles D. Snyder
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 2023.

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

Goals for 2023 included updating and better organizing the archives, and preparing more of our materials for digitization. I am happy to report that the volunteers and I have made great progress on this, especially thanks to Erie County funding secured through Legislator Jim Malczewski’s office for four archival shelves and a map drawer. This funding, which also enabled the purchase of two new museum display cases, greatly expedited our archival project and will help us better preserve our archival materials and to make them available for public research.

I am also particularly proud of our work with the young people in our community through local Scout programs, East Aurora High School’s Service Learning Day, and walking tours and historical trivia programs with the Recreation Department’s Summer Day Camp program at Hamlin Park.

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 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.

In addition to efforts to promote our mission, 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, remains available on our website, www.townofaurora.com/departments/historian, and in a the brochure rack outside the Historian’s Office at the Municipal Center.

Volunteers & Interns

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

In 2023, our volunteers logged 333.5 hours!

Two volunteers, Lucas Dana and Marian Halperin, once again assisted in the office on a weekly basis, helping with exhibits, photograph and document scanning, organizing files and maintaining computer databases. After several years, our third weekly volunteer left the Historian’s Office in 2023 for full-time employment.

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 once again hosted East Aurora High School students, on May 17 and October 5, as part of their Service Learning Days. On May 17, thirteen students helped organize our vast collection of newspapers in preparation for digitization. On October 5, twelve students helped us catalogue our Roycroft collection.

Our college internship program was suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic, but I am happy to report that two volunteer interns will be joining us for the spring 2024 semester. They will assist in the transfer of physical files to our new shelving system and will help organize our digital, photograph and map collections. I am pleased that many of our former interns have benefitted from their experience in the Historian’s Office. One of our former college interns was recently hired at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.

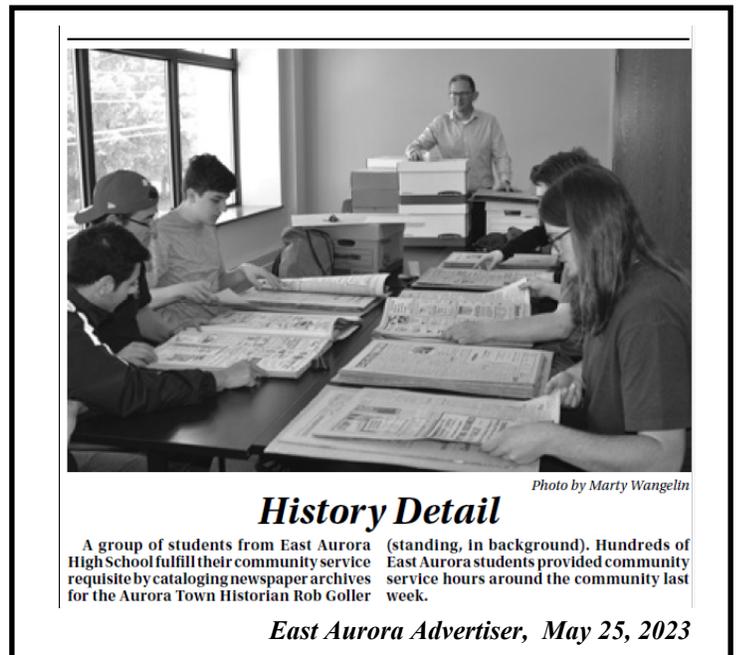


Photo by Marty Wangelin

History Detail

A group of students from East Aurora High School fulfill their community service requisite by cataloging newspaper archives for the Aurora Town Historian Rob Goller (standing, in background). Hundreds of East Aurora students provided community service hours around the community last week.

East Aurora Advertiser, May 25, 2023

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. I am also in the office Wednesday and Thursday mornings and Friday afternoons; these times are generally reserved for volunteers and responding to requests via mail, email and social media. The Historian's Office was open on Wednesdays and Thursdays throughout 2023 without interruption, except for Thursday, March 2, when the office was closed so I could prepare for the annual Historical Society fundraiser, and on Thursday, June 8, for vacation. (The office is closed annually the last week of December for the holidays).

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. While the number of office visits was slightly lower in 2023, the number of requests via email, telephone and social media was significantly higher than those during the previous year.

Details regarding the number and nature of the requests are outlined on the following two pages.

Most inquiries continue to relate to house and property histories and genealogy. Requests for property histories often involve homeowners seeking historical information as they prepare for improvements to their homes.

—**More than 100 of the requests and visits in 2023 involved assistance to other government agencies, schools, and civic and educational organizations.** For instance, the architectural firm working on plans for the capital project at the East Aurora Middle School requested photographs, school yearbooks and other archival material related to the former high school building on Main Street. The Historian's Office has provided research assistance to the Griffins Mills Presbyterian Church and to Explore Buffalo, which conducts walking tours of East Aurora's Main Street. Members of Boy Scout Troop 513 utilized the archives in preparation for their 100th anniversary celebration, and the South Wales Community Hall utilized the archives in preparation for its 100th anniversary fair in August. We also assisted in research for the East Aurora Educational Foundation's Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame.

—**Nineteen requests came from local businesses seeking historical information about their buildings or for scans of historical photographs to display.**

—**Four requests related to reviews by the village Historic Preservation Commission.**

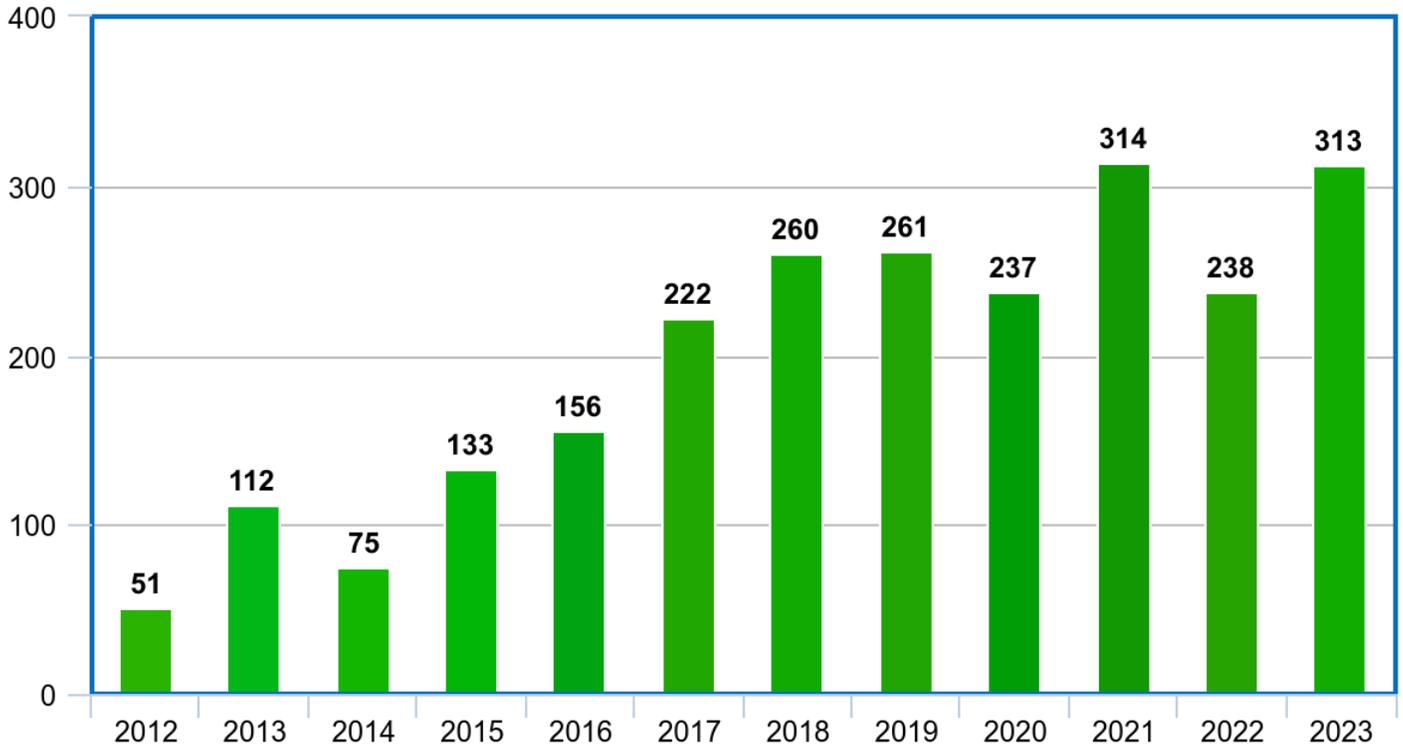
—**Four town historians and two historical societies reached out for advice and/or assistance with organizing the historical archives in their communities.**

One of the more unique research requests was for maps of East Aurora's railroad tracks and accessory buildings in the late 1800s and early 1900s for use in building a replica model train set! Also, a number of visits and inquiries related to making donations to the archives.

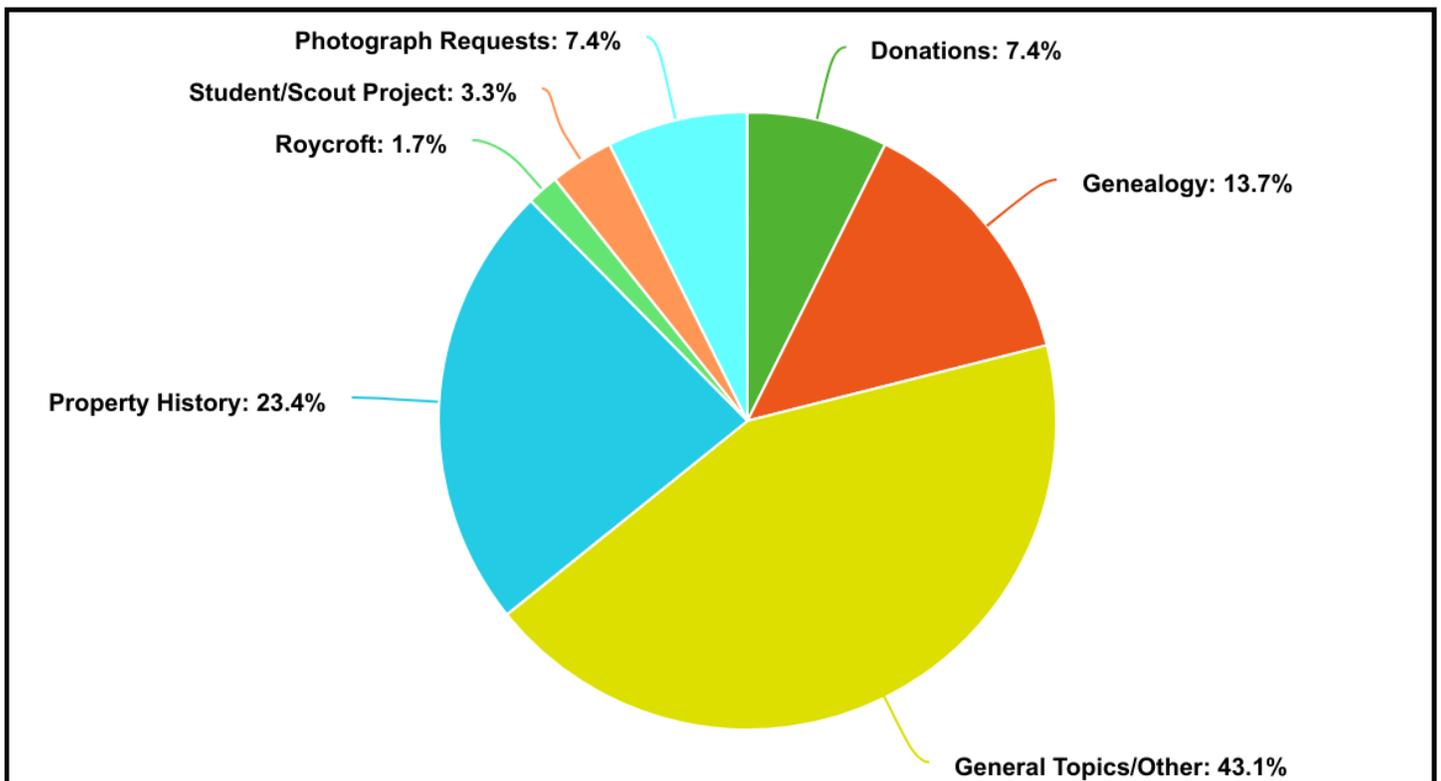
We have also assisted visitors wishing to research materials and documents held in the Aurora Historical Society's collection, particularly documents related to the Roycroft. When an inquiry is made to the Historical Society, the appropriate materials are temporarily transferred to the Historian's Office, 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.

Three requests intended for the "other" Aurora in Cayuga County were referred to the historian in that community.

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

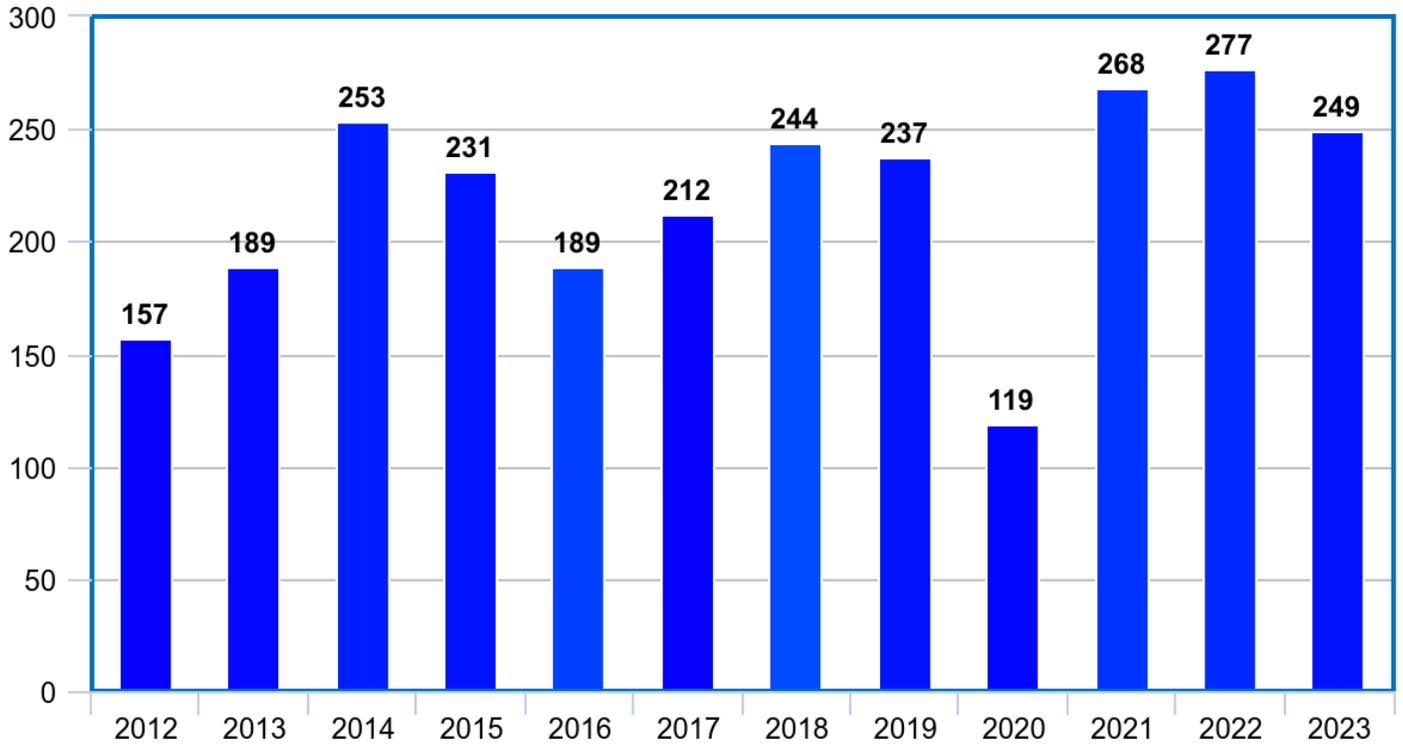


CATEGORY BREAKDOWN OF REQUESTS VIA EMAIL, U.S. MAIL AND SOCIAL MEDIA...



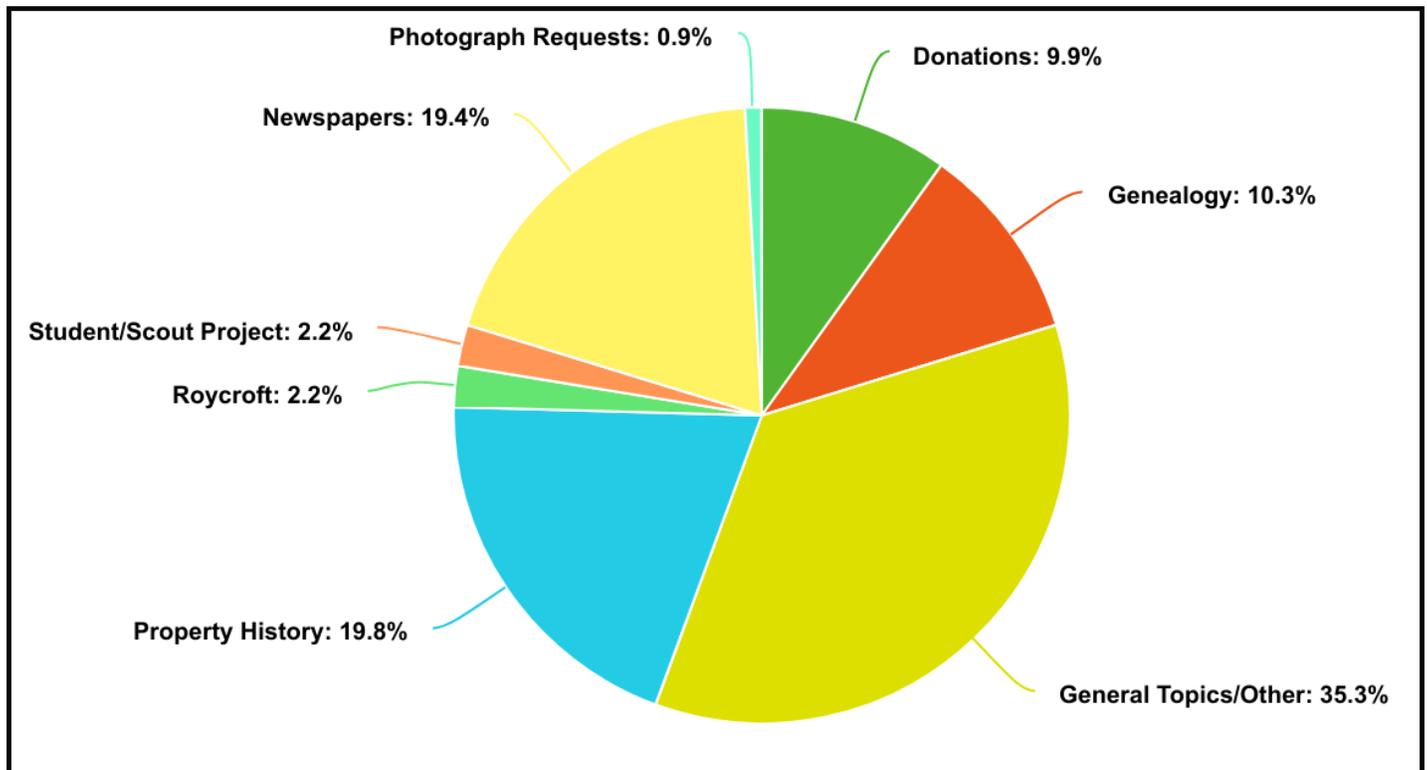
General Topics/Other include various general inquiries. The Jewett covered racetrack and Sun-Diet Sanatorium have been popular topics. Others during 2023 included the Hamlin Outdoor Playground (HOP), the East Aurora Driving Park on South Street, the origin of street names and the origin of the Parkdale Elementary School song.

OFFICE VISITS...



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.

CATEGORY BREAKDOWN OF OFFICE VISITS...



MEDIA INQUIRIES....The information requests also included 20 media inquiries in 2023. Most of the inquiries came from the two local weekly newspapers. These included interviews, providing information on the history of various buildings and houses in the community, confirming dates and providing photographs from the archives to accompany articles.



Elma Home Bureau Active for Over a Century

Aurora Town Historian Robert Goller said that there were active home bureaus prior to the 1960s in East Aurora, West Falls, Marilla, Strykersville, South Wales, Wales Center, Porterville and Elma, among others. There is an Erie County Home Bureau that is still active, and it lists 15 local chapters.

Archived articles from the historian's office say that in January 1969, the West Falls Home Bureau met at the West Falls Fire Hall to learn how to make lampshades. The Marilla Home Bureau also met that month at the Marilla Town Hall for a lesson in needlepoint and the South Wales Home Bureau met at the South Wales Community Hall to make braided rugs.

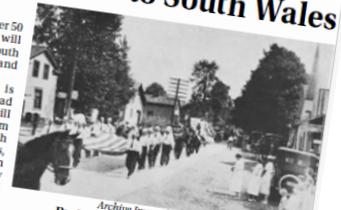


The W.H. Geth tent at the 1921 South Wales Fair. Archive Image from the Aurora Town Historian

The Fair Returns to South Wales

by Shelly Ferullo
Editor

For the first time in over 50 years, a community fair will be taking place at the South Wales Community Hall, and everyone's invited. The community hall is located at 6387 Olean Road in South Wales. The fair will take place on Aug. 5 from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. with exhibits, food, games, prizes, live music and vendors on display. The community fair is for all ages and it will be doubling as a 100-year anniversary party for the building.



During the 1920s, the fair in South Wales also featured a parade. Archive Image from the Aurora Town Historian

South Wales Community Fair to return East Aurora Historian helping fair execute old-fashioned style

by ELIJAH ROBINSON
Reporter

The South Wales Community Fair will be making a comeback this year. It will take place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 5 at 6387 Olean Road in South Wales. The return of this fair coincides with 100th anniversary of the opening of the South Wales Community Hall, where the fair is being held. The fair is being held to raise money for renovations and barbershop quartet, and local vendors selling handmade products are just a few of the things on offer. Boy Scouts added that local hot dogs and hamburgers. In bringing back this fair, Crawford said the hope is that it replicates the community feel of what it once was. "That place was a hopping place for many years, and it brought the community together, so with this fair, I think that's our goal, to bring everyone



Submitted Image

The outside of 741 Ellis Drive has a front porch.

Village Cottage Offers Opportunity

Who is ready for a project? This 900-square foot cottage on Ellis Drive off of Olean Road in East Aurora could use someone with ambition. Real estate agent Matthew Foss, from Trank Real Estate, said that it could be bulldozed to the ground or it can be restored: the

choice is up to the buyer. It could even be purchased to salvage the original architecture before building something new. It is priced at \$75,000. The cottage was built in 1827 and it is considered to be one of the oldest standing buildings in East Aurora.

It was moved to its current location in the early 1900s. The structure does not have running water. The last time it was inhabited it was used as an antique shop. It is located at 741 Ellis Drive and sits on .06 acres. For more information, contact Foss at 716-208-6099.



Photo from the archives of the Aurora Town Historian's Office. The cottage for sale on Ellis Drive was built nearly 200 years ago, according to the real estate listing.

Past In Pictures



Archive Image from the Aurora Town Historian

Who Remembers?

Several images from the former one-room schoolhouse in South Wales on Emery Road, also known as Wales-Aurora School #8, were recently donated to the office of the Aurora Town Historian, and Historian Robert Lowell

Goller is asking for assistance in identifying the students. This photograph is from the 1933-34 school year. Goller can be reached by emailing historian@townofaurora.com or calling 716-652-7944.

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 continue to be 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 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.

We also continue to expand the information and resources available on the Historian's department page within the town's website (www.townofaurora.com). We continue to update 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. With the help of our volunteers in 2024, a digital card catalogue, maps, and other information will be added to help researchers prepare for a visit to the Historian's Office and to enable online research of more of our records.

Donations

Generous donors ensure that our archival collection continues to grow. In 2023, we once again received a number of donations to the archives, 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. Due to space constraints, the Historian's Office is only able to 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 consider 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, and newspapers. Other donations are highlighted below:

—"Snowvember Again," personal recollections of the November 2022 snowstorm by Alison Hyde.

—Receipt books from Logan & Youngers on the southeast corner of Main and Olean Streets.

—Five copies of a poster for the Indoor Country Fair at the West Falls Fire Hall on April 12, 1929.

—Paper bag from the Robert John Ltd. Store, which was located at 662 Main St.

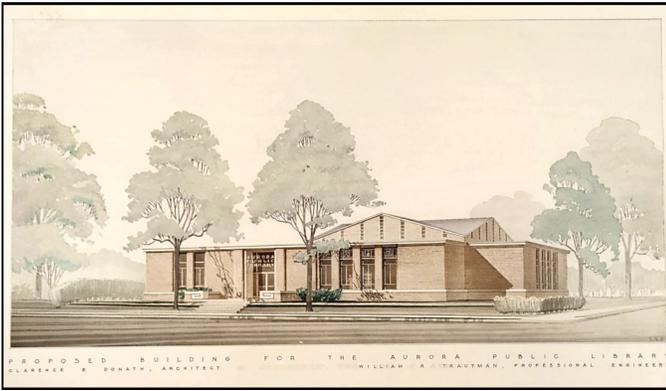
—Wedding portrait of Harold C. Mindler and Estella Newer, Sept. 17, 1929.

Everybody Come
— TO AN —
**Indoor
Country Fair**
IN WEST FALLS FIRE HALL
Friday, April 12, 1929
LATE AFTERNOON and EVENING
AMONG OUR NUMEROUS ATTRACTIONS ARE
Light Lunch Counter - Fancy Work
Baked Goods, Candy and Ginger Ale
Strong Man, Fat Lady, Antiques
Snake Charmer, Fish Pond
Animals, etc. on exhibition
FUN, FROLIC AND MUSIC EVERY MINUTE
West Falls Home Bureau

—Four class photographs from the South Wales School, 1932-1933, 1933-1934, 1934-1935, and one undated, from the collection of Jim Barber.

—East Aurora High School yearbooks, 1951, 1952, 1973, 1974, 1975 and 1976. (We did not previously have a copy of the 1974 yearbook). Additionally, various Class of 1947 and Class of 1952 reunion materials.

—1950 Town of Aurora dog license tag, found at the Reed Hill subdivision off Route 20A.

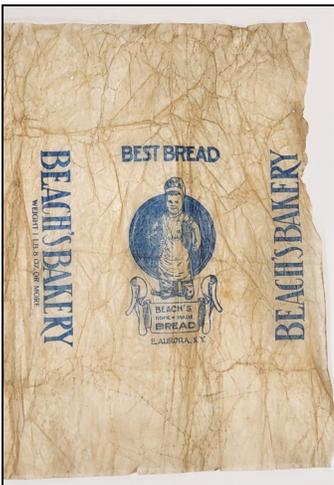


—Architect’s rendering of the new Aurora Town Public Library, early 1960s; transferred from the Aurora Town Public Library.

—Elbert Hubbard’s scrapbook, published 1923; inscribed as a Christmas gift, December 25, 1932.

—A copy of the November 7, 1918 issue of *The Buffalo Evening News*, featuring the headline, “Peace,” signifying the end of World War I; discovered in a wall of a house on Knox Road.

—A circa 1930 photograph of the U.S. Postal Service building on Main Street (the Aurora Sewing Center building today).



← —A bread wrapper from Beach’s Bakery, which was once located on Olean Road.

—A photograph of the Aurora Women’s Club 30th anniversary luncheon, February 25, 1924, at The Roycroft Inn.

← —Two undated photographs of the East Aurora Fire Department on parade.

—St. Matthias Episcopal Church membership directories, 1989, 1997, 2006, 2016.

—Ribbon for the East Aurora Active Hose Co. from the Southwestern Association of Volunteer Firemen Convention in Salamanca, August 3-5, 1915.

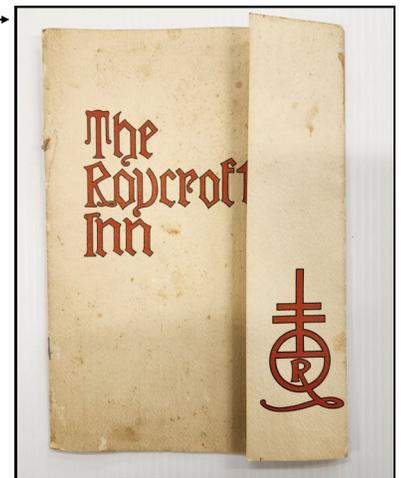
—VHS tape and thumb drive containing an audio interview with Harold Becker, of Sweet and Center Roads, 1999. The Becker Farm was located where East Aurora High School is located today.

—Knox Farm State Park Farmhouse Demolition Report; transferred from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

—Photograph of R. Andrews, runner-up at the 1924 championship at the East Aurora Country Club; transferred from the Gowanda Area Historical Society.

—Framed map of the Village of East Aurora and pages from the 1880 Erie County Atlas.

→ —Menu from The Roycroft Inn during the Vince Holland era; printed by S-G Press.



—Three boxes of *The New York-Pennsylvania Collector* magazine, 2007-2023, published in East Aurora.

—Three photographs and a newspaper clipping related to the dedication of a new East Aurora Fire Department pumper truck, March 1934.



FEATURED EXHIBITS...

In addition to maintaining the permanent exhibits, we continue to display 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 2023 are highlighted below:

The Shapes of the Circle

January 20 - May 31, 2023

To improve transportation in recent years, traffic engineers have converted intersections to roundabouts in many Erie County communities. In East Aurora, however, this innovation is nothing new. “The Circle” has been an unofficial landmark in East Aurora 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, it’s never been a square. It started out in the early 1800s as nothing more than a dirt convergence of some of East Aurora’s main roads. It later became informal ovals, then grass triangles, and—after automobiles grew in popularity—the intersection was converted into a circle as part of a Depression-era Works Progress Administration initiative in 1936. Though transportation engineers consider it a “roundabout,” folks in East Aurora simply call it “The Circle.” This exhibit, an encore of our 2022 Erie County Fair exhibit, invited viewers to take a look *around* at the history of The Circle’s many shapes over the years.

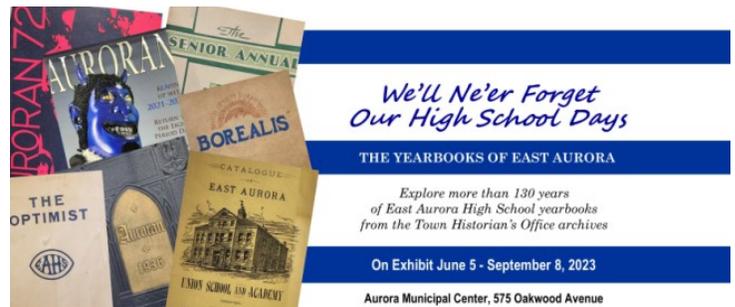


We’ll Ne’er Forget Our High School Days:

The Yearbooks of East Aurora

June 5 - September 8, 2023

All thanks to donations from graduates and their families, the collection of East Aurora High School yearbooks in the archives of the Aurora Town Historian’s Office dates back to the earliest days of the East Aurora Union School District in the 1880s. The East Aurora High School “yearbook” has taken many forms throughout the years, and it hasn’t always been called the *Auroran*. It has evolved from a brochure-sized school “catalogue,” to the “Senior Number” of the high school student magazine each June to the more modern high school yearbook of today. Regardless of its name or format, the annual yearbook has become an important historical record of East Aurora High School and all those who attended it. This exhibit featured many of the East Aurora High School yearbooks from our collection.



With Our Compliments:

A History of East Aurora Swag

September 25, 2023 - January 26, 2024

Swag might be a modern term, but businesses have been giving away promotional products for more than a century. Collected in this special exhibit are just some of the East Aurora “swag” preserved in the archives of the Aurora Town Historian’s Office and in the collection of the Aurora Historical Society. Local businesses seemed to never miss an opportunity, particularly at Christmastime, to offer a token of appreciation to their customers that just so happened to include the business’s name and/or logo: Everything from a spoon that served as a “stirring reminder” of Fox’s Delicatessen to calendars, pens, memo books, pocket mirrors, thermometers, yard sticks, rulers and matchbooks. In addition to offering free products, businesses also have a long history of adding their names to the merchandise.



The Historian's 2023 Events, Speaking Engagements & Activities



JANUARY 26...Led a tour of the Municipal Center historical exhibits for residents of Orchard Heights Senior Living facility.

FEBRUARY 15...Met at the Historian's Office with newly appointed Erie County Legislator Jim Malczewski to discuss the services offered by the office and the Town Museum.

MARCH 2...After a two-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic, volunteered again as "President Millard Fillmore" and the secret singing guest at the Aurora Historical Society's fundraiser.



MARCH 23...Presented my program, "A Tale of Two Villages" for the Aurora Historical Society's monthly Speaker Series. In recognition of the Village of East Aurora's 150th anniversary in 2024, the program highlighted the history of the villages in our town, dating back to the incorporation of the Village of Auroraville in the 1830s and the Village of Willink in 1849.



APRIL 1...The *East Aurora Advertiser's* annual April Fool's edition reported that I was leaving. No, I am not moving to the "other" Aurora!

APRIL 10...Was invited to speak at the Orchard Park Historical Society's meeting about role of town and village historians, and offered advice as the Town and Village of Orchard Park embarked on the appointment of a new town and village historian.

APRIL 29...Served as a guest speaker at the Erie County Historical Federation's meeting at The Whistle Stop in Alden. The organization, consisting of historical societies throughout Erie County, invited me to speak about the role of town and village historians in our communities. I also shared ways historical organizations can better preserve their archives and make them available to the public.



MAY 17...Hosted 13 students for East Aurora High School's Service Learning Day. The group spent the morning in the archives at the Municipal Center helping us further catalogue our newspaper files in preparation for digitization. They also conducted research using our digitized newspaper collection and discovered the "old-fashioned" microfilm readers!



JULY 3... Participated once again, with the assistance of my nieces and nephews, in the Town of Aurora Independence Day parade along Main and South Grove Streets.

JULY 11...Led two historical walking tours of South Grove Street, Linden Avenue, Sycamore Street and Prospect Avenue for the young attendees of the Recreation Department’s Summer Day Camp. This was the fourth summer we offered historical programs for the Summer Day Camp.

JULY 11...Met with the board of Baker Memorial United Methodist Church to share advice and answer questions related to the potential restoration of the Tiffany windows in the church.



JULY 18...Led “East Aurora History Trivia” for the Recreation Department’s Hamlin Park Summer Day Camp. I previously developed the trivia game for a program at the library in 2021.

JULY 19...Led a tour of the Historian’s Office archives for leaders of the Clarence Historical Society, who were seeking advice for the preservation and storage of historical records in their community.



AUGUST 9-20...Planned and executed an annual exhibit in the Historical Building at the Erie County Fair. The exhibit, “Freedom of the Press,” featured original copies of more than 20 East Aurora newspapers, including the first, the *Aurora Standard*, in 1832.

OCTOBER 5...Hosted 12 East Aurora High School students, who were among those participating in the school's Service Learning Day throughout the community. The group spent the morning in the archives at the Municipal Center helping us further catalogue our Roycroft collection. They also had a chance to explore our digitized newspapers and to look for pictures of their parents and grandparents in our collection of high school yearbooks!

OCTOBER 7...Attended the annual conference of the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York at the Batavia Country Club. GAHWNY represents government and Seneca Nation historians from the 11 counties in Western New York. Programs discussed the roles of town and village historians in the preservation of historic buildings and structures; and ways to make exhibits accessible to more diverse audiences.



NOVEMBER 17...At the invitation of the building owner, I toured the third floor of the Emerson Hall building on Prospect Avenue and learned of the owner’s development plans for the apartment building, which once served as a dormitory for the Roycroft; a base for the military home guard during and after World War I; and the Working Girls Home, a home for young women with developmental disabilities.

Budget

There are four main areas of the Town Historian's budget, three of which fund the operations of the Historian's Office. The Historian's Office also received additional funding from Erie County in 2023:

Office Expense—\$1,000

In 2023, 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. About half of this budget line in 2023 supplemented the \$5,000 in funding from Erie County to purchase new shelving units and a map drawer.

Expense and Travel—\$200

This budget line was used for membership costs, mileage to out-of-town events and attendance at the annual meeting of the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York in Batavia.

Historian's Salary—\$15,912

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 does not fund the Historian's Office operations and is transferred to the Historical Society to fund the organization's educational efforts and operations at its two museum buildings.

Funding from Erie County—\$5,000

Funding from Erie County obtained earlier this year by the office of Legislator James Malczewski enabled the Historian's Office to purchase two new display cases, as well as much-needed new map drawers and archival shelving. For some time these items have been on our wish list to enable us to better preserve and exhibit the community's historical archives. In the new year, our wonderful volunteers and interns will assist in transferring our archival files from old, hand-me-down file drawers to more appropriate archival shelving. Thanks to the taxpayers of Erie County and to Legislator Malczewski for helping us preserve, protect and present the history of the Town of Aurora and Village of East Aurora!

Goals for 2024

THE ARCHIVES & DIGITIZATION...Thanks to the efforts of volunteers and interns in recent years, unidentified materials have been identified and catalogued. In 2024, the interns, volunteers and I plan to complete the transfer of materials to the new shelving units and finish a searchable digital card catalogue, which will allow researchers to search the archival collection in advance of visiting the Historian's Office. With donated funds still available, we also plan to digitize more newspapers and other documents.

COMMEMORATING THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE VILLAGE AND THE 60th ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBRARY BUILDING...Through already-scheduled exhibits and presentations, the Historian's Office will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the village becoming East Aurora in 1874. Working collaboratively with the Aurora Town Public Library, exhibits and presentations are planned to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the library building, which was constructed at Main Street and Whaley Avenue in 1964.

WORKING WITH FOREST LAWN...With the merger of Oakwood and Griffins Mills cemeteries with the Forest Lawn Cemetery Group in 2023, the Historian's Office is in the beginning stages a collaborative effort to provide residents and researchers more efficient access to cemetery records.

Outside Historical Activities

LIVESTREAM PROJECT...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 weekly discussions continued throughout 2023, and they can be seen live each Tuesday at 3 p.m., or watched any time later on my Facebook page, as well as on a YouTube channel that I launched in 2023. I am also scheduled to publish a book in 2024 as a result of my research.

MONTHLY NEWSPAPER COLUMN...As part of my research projects, I have continued a monthly “Historian’s Corner” newspaper column, generally published the last week of each month in the *East Aurora Advertiser*.

Topics of the monthly “Historian’s Corner” column in 2023 included:



January:
Slip and Fall On Walnut Street Ice Proved Fatal for Artist Fournier



February:
‘Burglar-Proof’ Bank Drew Curious Crowd 100 Years Ago



March:
Wartime Debate Was Sparked When Women Went to Work



April:
‘The Circle’ Has Taken Many Different Shapes



May:
World War II Honor Roll Was ‘Worth Waiting For’



June:
Auroran Debuted in 1936, But It Wasn’t EA’s First Yearbook



July:
Shoppers Caught in Crosshairs of ‘Closed Wednesday’ Conflict



August:
A Royal Endorsement for East Aurora Cheese?



September:
Did Fisher-Price Founder Take a Rooftop Ride on Pres. Fillmore’s House?



October:
Awaiting a New Chief, Two Patrolmen Took Turns Leading the Force



November:
Larkin’s ‘Self-Serve’ Style Revolutionized Local Shopping



December:
After Losing Battle to Keep Route 20, EA Settled for ‘20A’