

2010 Annual Report 2010

The Records and Archives Center continues to be a popular place for storage of permanent and non-permanent records. Between 2005 and 2010, the Center had a net gain of 1999 cubic feet despite aggressive imaging and microfilming. Even more disconcerting is the fact that between 2009 and 2010, RAIMS gained 533 cubic feet after shredding 497 cubic feet. Many of the incoming documents are listed as permanent – which means they can only be destroyed after being converted to electronic and microfilm formats. The County Clerk and Payroll are already striving to become paperless. Both create electronic records and the RAIMS Microfilm Section produces computer-generated microfilm from them. Although the State permits the creation of permanent electronic records under rigid guidelines, constant changes in software and hardware could end in disaster. People would not be happy, if the payroll records or deeds and mortgages would disappear into a void.

The Microfilm Section, consisting of Kris Martin, Robin Cuppernell and Debbie Sawin, imaged and microfilmed 1,032,735 documents. Without this compression of records, the Records and Archives Center would have added an additional 470 cubic feet to storage; all of it for permanent retention. Compression of permanent records is absolutely essential in order to retain sufficient storage space for the future needs of the County. One of the microfilmmers is still working on a backlog of nineteenth century records. This is a preservation task to prevent the use of fragile paper records by researchers.

The preservation of historical records is of major importance at the Department of RAIMS. Ontario County, which was the parent county of all other counties in Western New York, has records going back to its founding in 1789. In order to prevent damage to this valuable research resource, RAIMS microfilms and digitizes these records. For 2010/11, the RMO was awarded a grant of \$64,799 to digitize the bound volumes of the Surrogate Court. Kirtas Technologies has been awarded the contract for digitizing these records and they will be available to researchers, the Surrogate Court and the Unified Court System no later than the middle of 2011.

Routine business of the Department of RAIMS continued at a steady pace. Researchers took advantage of the holdings at the Records and Archives Center either through personal visits or through letters and e-mail requests. The Assistant RMO continued to serve the public until her retirement at the end of the year. The various departments asked Donna McCormick, the RAIMS records clerk, to climb the shelves for 2,884 file retrievals and for 1,835 inter-filings. The latter are documents that need to be added to existing file folders, mostly from the County Clerk, the DA and DSS. Donna is also in charge of shelving incoming boxes, notifying departments when records are due for destruction, and for pulling document boxes to shred the content.

Dr. Hans Finke, as FOIL Records Access Officer (RAO), fields between two and three FOIL requests per day. Luckily most of them are routine such as accident reports for

insurance purposes. However, the more complicated requests from prisoners, vendors, the media and various offenders are taking more and more time, not only from the RAO, but also from department heads, the Sheriff Records Division, the DA and the County Attorney's Office. Kris Thorsness, Assistant County Attorney, field the more complicated legal issues.

The RMO continued to add public records to DocuShare, including BOS resolutions and committee minutes, records management information, County Attorney forms and various other important public documents. All County employees can access the site at <http://docushare.ontario.cnty> . Although some departments are already active participants in adding useful information, more departments need to be involved in the future.

The coming years must see a continued emphasis on digitization and computer generated microfilming within RAIMS. Digitization of records should become a priority within all County departments. Although it would be overly optimistic to say the County will be totally paperless, every effort has to be made to keep paper at an absolute minimum.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my staff for a great job, the departments for their cooperation in records management, the County Administrator and Deputy for always being there when needed, and the Board of Supervisors for

their outstanding support. The Department of RAIMS could not be a model organization without the help of all of you.

The RAIMS Staff:

Records Management Officer and Access Officer – Dr. Hans-J. Finke
Assistant RMO – Mary Jo Lanphear (retired); Rosemarie Switzer (from Jan. 2011)
County Historian – Dr. Preston Pierce
Clerk – Donna McCormick
PT Clerk – Elizabeth Alcivar
Microfilmer – Robin Cuppernell
Microfilmer – Kristine Martin
Microfilmer – Deborah Sawin
Rodent Control Officers – Basil and Bailey

**OFFICE OF THE ONTARIO COUNTY HISTORIAN
ONTARIO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS, ARCHIVES AND
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
3051 COUNTY COMPLEX DRIVE CANANDAIGUA, NY 14424**

February 3, 2011

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNTY HISTORIAN FOR THE YEAR 2010

The 2010 activities of the County Historian included activities in the following categories:

RESEARCH, WRITING, PUBLICATION:

As in previous years, the Historian continued to work closely with the county historical and genealogical societies to update information files on known county burial places concentrating on those known to be abandoned or at risk. The historical marker survey, and the National Register of Historic Sites list for the county, were also updated periodically with input from NYSDPRHP. Working with Cornell Co-operative Extension, the historical marker survey was supplemented with precise GPS grid coordinates for each exterior marker. The entire 200-page marker list, with new and detailed images, was published for the first time in 20 years. The on-going project to edit and document the burial sites of Revolutionary Patriots continued. The new guide, when eventually published, will provide much more accurate documented information than the previous guide published in the 1980s. Increasingly accurate data assists applicants filling out environmental impact statements; contributes to the maintenance of the historical and esthetic quality of our local environment; and contributes enables better compliance with various laws and ordinances.

A now-200-page history of Canandaigua Lake, as well as the John N. Willys book, were updated and further edited. The Willys book was made available in draft format to the attendees at Eastern National antique car show sponsored by the Genesee Valley Antique Car Society and the Antique Automobile Club of America at FLCC in June. The Civil War monuments/memorials book was readied for formal publication in time for the Civil War Sesquicentennial in 1011. Publications are provided to the Ontario County Historical Society as part of county support. In addition, the Historian completed a book for Arcadia Publications in their postcard history series, *Canandaigua and Canandaigua Lake*.

At the request of Finger Lakes Community College, the Historian began developing a new curriculum for a course on the “Regional History of the Finger Lakes” to be offered in 2011. Curriculum work included research, acquisition and processing of digital images, and production of 15 PowerPoint lectures.

A major display project on the history of Squaw Island was completed for display at the Ontario County Fair.

Revised and modified PowerPoint programs on Abolition and the Underground Railroad were produced and two entirely new programs were researched and produced; “In Triumph and Tragedy: Abraham Lincoln Travels through Upstate New York;” and “Bounties, Bonds, Banknotes and Taxes: How the Union Financed the Civil War.” The conversion of previously assembled traditional slide programs to PowerPoint programs was continued.

The new guide to local and family history research was updated and expanded for the use of RAIMS researchers. It will be expanded in coming years. Now uploaded to the RAIMS website, the 50 page guide provides detailed user information for major records series at RAIMS.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS:

As noted in previous Annual Reports, the Historian's Office was involved with ever increasing interaction with other levels of government, and

other county offices.

An annual meeting was held with the Town/City/Village Historians. In addition, the municipal historians began a series of meetings at bi-monthly intervals that are now attended by the County Historian to provide advice and assistance. Ontario County continues to enjoy a strong and dedicated group of municipal historians.

The Historian's Office has been a less than half-time office within the Ontario County Department of Records, Archives and Information Management Services (RAIMS) for a decade. As such, the Historian works closely with RAIMS on all projects and is co-located there. To better meet the needs of both RAIMS and the Historian, the Historian continues to attend in-service programs offered by the State Archives Regional Service Officer. The Historian also completed the mandatory "Whistleblowing and Compliance Training."

The Historian maintains membership in the Society of American Archivists; the Organization of American Historians; the NYS Historical Association; the Oral History Association; the National Council on Public History; the National Council on History Education, and several other professional associations related to the field. Those memberships are at no cost to the county.

For many years, the County Historian has been a co-sponsor and regional judge at the annual school-based National History Day competition in the Finger Lakes Region. The other co-sponsor is the Ontario County Historical Society. That work continued in 2010. In addition, the Historian worked with the American Legion to operate the annual Trail of Remembrance essay competition and Armed Forces Day observance in Canandaigua.

The Historian continues to work closely with a variety of heritage groups including the DAR and SAR to promote the study of history and assist their research. He attended a regional meeting of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) in Batavia in February.

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES:

The Annual Report was prepared and forwarded to the state together with those of the municipal historians.

The Historian's office provides on-call research and advice to a variety of people. Many of them simply call the Historian at RAIMS. Fewer calls now originate outside of the county requesting family history. Those calls continue to decline due to the RAIMS Web page, referral to fee-based research at RAIMS and OCHS, and a message on the office telephone requesting family history requests in writing.

Studies developed by the Historian's office, such as the cemetery index, National Register list, and lake tour, and miscellaneous essays are continually updated and uploaded to the RAIMS website making them available to a large audience.

While many municipal historians spend a great deal of time on family history research, state guidelines advise against that activity. Appropriate referrals to the Assistant Records Manager at RAIMS (tasked with fee-based research), or local societies, are made.

The Historian continues to participate actively in the Association of Public Historians of New York State, and its Region 11, with the active assistance of the County Historians of Wayne and Seneca Counties. Working with the County Historians of Genesee, Livingston and Wyoming Counties, the County Historian also serves as a county coordinator for the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York.

Escorted tours were prepared and carried out for the Ontario County Historical Society (Finger Lakes Railway), the Office of Court Administration (Court House), and the Honeoye French Club. Special tour booklets have been prepared for several tours.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES:

The Historian was a featured speaker/presenter in programs for:

Canandaigua Antique Club	Hopewell Historical Society
Boy Scouts of America (Clifton Springs)	Honeoye Historical Society
Bristol Harbor Yacht Club	Legacy residents (Victor)
Canandaigua American Legion Post	Manchester Rotary Club
Canandaigua Rotary Club	NYS Assn. of Counties
Centerfield Homemakers	Ontario County Historical Society
Cross-Winds Wesleyan Church	Ontario County Genealogy
Senior Citizens group	Society Town of Manchester
Finger Lakes Community College	Town of Victor (2)
"Celebrate Our Differences" program	Victor-Farmington Rotary
Genesee Valley Antique Car Society	Victor Historical Society
History Detectives (public television) episode on Jemima Wilkinson	WNY county leadership group