

2024 DETAILED ANNUAL REPORT

GENESEE COUNTY HISTORY DEPARTMENT & RECORDS MANAGEMENT

During 2024, the Genesee County History Department continued to develop the County Archives, the Research Library, and the Records Management Program. Please note that the County Historian is also the Records Management Officer for the County.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

From the County's Comprehensive Plan for Parks, Recreation, and Culture (PRO 1) the History Department is involved in supporting tourism and actively encourages people to visit the County; and within the Government Administration (GA 16), the County Historian continues to interact with area students. To accomplish both goals the Department established and maintains a Research Library and the County Archives, and continues to provide assistance to researchers of local history. The Department's volunteers create indexes designed to improve the public's access to our Department's records, which also has the effect of increasing tourism and strengthening programs for County organizations.

In addition, the County Historian has continued to work towards the improvement of communications with the Tonawanda Indian Reservation (GA 07) through the facilitation of representation and the encouragement of involvement with both the Genesee County Historians Association and the Genesee County Federation of Historical Agencies. The Genesee County Historians Association includes the municipal historians who represent every town, village, and the City of Batavia. The Genesee County Federation of Historical Agencies includes representatives from the various historical societies, museums, and history organizations found in Genesee County. The County Historian provides support and helps to organize the meetings of these organizations in order to coordinate history related cultural events (PRO 2). In an effort to provide support to the Municipal Clerks, the County Historian, as the Records Management Officer, offers assistance with Records Management issues (GA 11). To continually meet with representatives of adjacent counties to discuss areas of common concern (GA 09), the County Historian is an active member of the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York State. In order to remain current in the issues

raised by the practice of local history, the County Historian is a member of the American Historical Association and the Italian American Studies Association.

CURRENT STAFF

Michael J. Eula, LL.M., Ph.D., County Historian/Records Management Officer (37.5 hours per week).

Judy Stiles, History Department Research Assistant (37.5 hours per week).

Ruth Koch, Records Management Clerk (19.5 hours per week).

VOLUNTEERS

Name	Affiliation	Hours	Project
Ruth Newton	RSVP	*	1940S census indexing
Carol Hertel	RSVP	*	19 th century common pleas indexing
Flo Ziarko	RSVP	*	indexing
John Huntzinger	RSVP	*	indexing and clipping of the <i>Daily News</i> and special subjects
Betty Maribela	volunteer	*	family files, <i>Daily News</i> clipping and filing

During 2024, volunteers worked a total of 446 hours through October, which helped to facilitate the public's access to the Department's collection.

STAFF

The current records management clerk, Ruth Koch, was instrumental in the work of the Records Center. She regularly helped in the disposition and acquisition of county records. She was a pivotal figure in the creation of new microfilm rolls and microfiche holdings.

RESEARCH LIBRARY AND COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The public was assisted with genealogical and local history research. One hundred twenty-two people were assisted with a variety of local history and genealogical research questions, along with donations from patrons. Some of these researchers paid for their information, while others received responses via forms that were filled out. Some were referred to the Department's website, which led them to a variety of other historical sources. The Department's website has continued to develop with the kind assistance of the IT Department.

A total of \$3,496 in revenue was collected for the County because of the aforementioned local history and genealogical research questions, along with donations from patrons. This is an increase of \$3,199 from the previous year. It is indicative of how our patrons avail themselves of what is posted to our Department website. The cash revenue was the result of paid requests for information, e.g. genealogy, the costs of copying various historical sources, and donations.

The genealogy collection was maintained, featuring a continued addition of new family files. One hundred eighty-nine donations to the Department included photographs, maps, pamphlets, scrapbooks, books, and yearbooks from local schools, and quilts from local hospital charities. All of these items were added to the County collection and subsequently catalogued, and are available for researchers.

Projects Completed

The Department's website continued to be improved with the expert assistance of Judy Stiles. The objective is to improve access to the entire Department collection. Her meticulous and thoughtful research was instrumental in the completion of numerous projects. New family files were added, along with files regarding other county topics. Part of this effort included the indexing of court records from the years 1818 through 1849. Other court records were also unfolded, placed in files, while, simultaneously, continuing the indexing of over 300 entries that was worked on in 2022. Other projects in 2024 include:

1. The continuation of the Genesee Conference indexing project.
2. One hundred seventy-one new books reviewed and catalogued, among them new volumes on New York State history purchased from a \$3,000 donation, and

one hundred one nineteenth century volumes on New York State legal history donated by the Byron Historical Society to the county.

3. The continued indexing of *Daily News* articles on a variety of topics.
4. The continuation of research regarding the impact of President Harry Truman's Fair Deal and the Cold War in Genesee County.
5. The continuation of research pertaining to the media depictions of President George Washington in Genesee County antebellum newspapers.
6. The continuation of the updating of the History Department website and the inclusion of links to new indexes.
7. The checking and correcting of the work of volunteer researchers.
8. Continuing work on a second book on Genesee County history, entitled *Hidden History of Genesee County*.

New Projects Started and Completed

The History Press published *Historic Chronicles of Genesee County*, released on April 15th of 2024.

Public Relations (Promotion of Local History)

Throughout 2024, the County Historian offered regular presentations and tours in order to advance the cause of local history. The following took place:

1. The continued creation of subject notebooks designed to facilitate public access pertaining to local history, such as the impact of developments during the Great Depression on Genesee County, along with such subject notebooks pertaining to the impact of other national trends discernible in Genesee County between 1860 and 1920 – such as presidential elections.
2. A regular schedule of public talks on such topics as the Preparedness Drill of 1956 in Batavia at the Batavia Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, among other talks and venues. The County Historian also gave a number of talks regarding the conceptualization, research, and writing of *Historic Chronicles of Genesee County*.
3. Appearances on the radio regarding Genesee County History Department activities.
4. Active participation in the Genesee County Federation of Historical Agencies.

5. Active participation in the work of the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York.

In 2024, tours of the History Department facility took place. Some provided an opportunity for a community leader to see what the History Department and its collections have to offer. This gave such leaders as the Chair of the Erie County Genealogical Society an opportunity to see how a neighboring County History Department functions.

Records Management

Below is a summary of Genesee County Records Center Activities for 2024:

Transfers	Requests	Dispositions of one-cubic foot boxes
714 cubic foot boxes	260	698

Total Number of Boxes Currently Being Stored in the Records Center is 6,342. The Records Center has a total capacity of 7,077 boxes. This leaves a current balance of 735 available storage spaces.

Microfilm Lab/Records Center

Two hundred twenty-seven rolls of film were created. File copies for the Veterans Department regarding county veterans became part of the microfiche file. The dispositions for 2024 included records stored in one cubic foot boxes. Because of filming, the Records Center does not have to store as many cubic feet of records as would otherwise be the case.

Microfilm

The inventory of microfilm storage was updated. The number of rolls completed is a consequence of a decrease in the hours of the Records Clerk, who was primarily engaged in this work. This is the consequence of previous budget cuts. The furlough of Department staff in 2020 also contributed to a long-term decline in the amount of film rolls edited and added when compared to earlier years.

Disaster Management Plan

The Vital Records Listing for all County Departments is complete and includes a Vital Records Chart of Volume per Department and building. The Building Site Survey was updated, and building floor plans were maintained on the Intranet to provide as much access as possible.

In 2024, the County Historian participated in the following Committees:

1. The Genesee County Historians Association met periodically during the year via emails and telephone communications. The County Historian and the Association leadership coordinated these meetings. The meetings addressed projects worked on by the municipal historians, all of which promoted an interest in local history. This also met public demands.
2. The Genesee County Federation of Historical Agencies completed its thirteenth year of existence. There was one meeting in 2023.
3. The Genesee County Historian remained an active member of the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York (GAHWNY). There was one meeting in Batavia, and this included a full day meeting and training sessions. These sessions attracted approximately 130 historians, and were designed to promote research in, and the preservation of, western New York history.
4. The County Historian is a participating member of the GIS Focus Group. This group discusses the effects of various technologies on County functions, and the History Department's plans to incorporate historical maps into its Department website.

I wish to express my appreciation to:

1. All of our volunteers, without whom the Department would not have been able to complete and commence so many research projects.
2. The Genesee County Departments and the Records Management Advisory Board for their support of Records Management.
3. The Legislators of Genesee County for their guidance, assistance, and support with both historical projects and Records Management.
4. The IT Department for their consistent support and guidance with the website and with microfilm and power-point equipment.

5. The Genesee County Historians Association for their enthusiasm, expertise, and continuous support and hard work. Their financial support played a pivotal role in the accomplishment of Department objectives.
6. Those who donated historical materials to the County. Their generous gifts are much appreciated. It is because of their donations that the History Department continues to grow and mature. These donations provide much needed research materials for our visiting researchers and an interested public.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Eula

Genesee County Historian & Records Management Officer

January 2025

