



Village Historian's Report for 2014-5

Pictures always supply a great deal of information for both the casual viewer and the historian. An unusual amount to work this year has revolved about photographs of an earlier time that have been found as families sort through their own collections or as different images appear on the internet.

Identifying locations of buildings and scenes brings any photograph to life. My research about these photographs has expanded our knowledge of various village locations and events.

This year the village replaced its photo display at Veterans Park with an outstanding picture of veterans marching in a Fayetteville parade in their military-issue uniforms shortly after the end of World War Two. A second picture now on display is of Limestone Plaza about 1930.

Photographs are also at the heart of displays I do at the Fayetteville Free Library. The 2015 Spring photo reminds everyone of the beautiful pink crabapple trees planted by the Garden Club along Genesee street and elsewhere in the village. Other displays have been an 1908 Christmas tree, a picture by Ida Kimber of snow-laden trees on Genesee Street, the BIG fish caught by local fishermen and pictures relating to the creating of Green Lakes State Park.

I gave slide programs about Green Lakes to both the Onondaga Garden Club at the Golf Clubhouse and at Maple Downs for residents there. I have also met with Laura Tully, Green Lakes superintendent, who has the responsibility for maintenance and signs along the Canal in this part of the state.

The Erie Canal and the Fayetteville Feeder are enjoying some well-deserved interest. An "Erie Canal Working Group" of Onondaga and Madison county officials and residents is now meeting regularly to coordinate activities along the canal locally and I have distributed copies of the Fayetteville Feeder folders at these meetings.

Recently my earlier research into homes designed by Charles Umbrecht was useful in answering questions from a writer doing a magazine article about the Fayetteville architect. More than 10 Fayetteville homes on Center, Elm and Genesee streets were remodeled by Mr. Umbrecht, who worked steadily during the 1930s and 1940s. His work is marked by detailed woodwork, usually done by his own hands, and metal grillwork to lend distinction to facades.

President Grover Cleveland's life in Fayetteville continues to fascinate visitors. This year I gave a personalized tour of Cleveland family locations to a researcher from Florida who is working on sister Rose Cleveland's many years in a beachfront home in Naples.

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The Onondaga Historical Association's "Ghost Walk" in Fayetteville drew an appreciative audience. The performers are very careful to maintain historical accuracy and that involves many questions – who was the police chief in 1920, did he carry a gun, where was the jail (lock up) and what did it look like and many more details about local residents.

During the year I answer many questions from local residents and officials. Details about early doctors, early churches, early homes and the village's namesake, General LaFayette, have been recent topics. I am also always glad to cooperate with students and authors needing specific information for academic research. This year, a major inquiry was about the Salt Springs Road (1790) from Chittenango through Fayetteville to the north side of Syracuse which used some of my research about early roads.

I have also supplied seasonal "Just Yesterday" items for the village newsletter and web site and answered questions relating to earlier days sent to the Village Clerk's office.

Throughout the year, village officials are very helpful and cooperative when I have needed assistance. I am honored to be Fayetteville's unpaid village historian.

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Barbara S. Rivette, Fayetteville Village Historian