

Annual Report 2009

Department of Records, Archives and Information Management Services (RAIMS)

FY 2009 saw the staff return to a more normal environment after a challenging 2008. The work routine was broken up with some exciting changes in the microfilm/imaging section of the department and the introduction of Docushare to the County.

The microfilm section saw a major change in work flow through the introduction of two industrial type scanners. The scanners have made it possible to change from mere microfilming to scanning permanent records and then creating computer-generated backup microfilm with the Kodak Archive Writer. This method combines the convenience of electronic access to records with the safety of microfilm. Despite the fact that there was a learning curve with the new equipment and work method, the staff produced slightly more than one million images on microfilm. In a special project, CDs were produced for FLCC and the Surrogate Court.

Mid-year saw the introduction of the County-wide Docushare access to records routinely used by most departments. Docushare is a software program by Xerox that permits the creation of a more efficient work environment. Records on Docushare can be searched, thus reducing the time spent in finding specific references or documents. Docushare is an ongoing project and it requires a cultural change that has just begun in 2009. Among the many records already available on Docushare, there are the Board of Supervisors Resolutions from 1987 to the present, BOS Committee Minutes, various regulations and laws, "how to" instructions, the CO-2 Retention Schedule, and the County newsletter. As departments become more familiar and comfortable with Docushare, more public records and restricted records should make Docushare the hub of everyday work.

One of the major services of the Department of RAIMS is, of course, the storage and retrieval of records from all departments. By year's end, RAIMS stored a total of 14,556 cubic feet of records. The major storage users are the County Clerk (2436 cf), Unified Court (2020 cf), DSS (1589 cf), DA (1220 cf), Sheriff (1113 cf), Treasurer/Finance combined (1177 cf) and County Attorney (781 cf). The major challenge is that from these departments virtually all records are permanent and storage increases approximately 5% each year. The County cannot continue to rely on paper records in the future unless there is a willingness to have substantial storage costs. There has to be a cultural change that accepts the compression of permanent records through a combination of scanning and computer generated microfilm.

During FY2009 there were 3,308 retrievals of records, with 1258 going to the County Clerk. Retrieval can be forwarded to departments by FAX, Courier Services or Buildings

and Grounds. There were also 2769 interfilings. Interfilings are usually a small number of records that have to be placed into existing files and cubic boxes. It is one of the most time consuming jobs in records management. RAIMS had a net gain of 393 cubic feet of records over FY2008, despite compression of records and destruction of files that were beyond the retention period. The retrieval clerk was certainly kept busy and at times was helped by other staff members.

The <http://raims.com> web pages remain a popular research tool for historians from all over the United States. There were 1.6 million “hit” on the web. The Department had 495 researchers on site and 128 research inquiries from all over the nation. These were handled by the Assistant RMO.

THE STAFF:

Dr. Hans-J. Finke, Director, Records Management Officer, Records Access Officer
Mary Jo Lanphear, Assistant Records Management Officer
Donna McCormick, Records Management/Retrieval Clerk
Dr. Preston Pierce, County Historian
Elizabeth Alcivar, Part-time Administrative Clerk

Microfilm/Scanning Section:

Robin Cuppernell, Microfilmer
Kristine Martin, Microfilmer
Deborah Sawin, Microfilmer

Rodent Control:

Basil, Rodent Control Officer in Training
Bailey, Rodent Control Officer in Training



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

January 17, 2010

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNTY HISTORIAN FOR THE YEAR 2009

The 2009 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 compile a comprehensive information file 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. The on-going project to edit and document the burial sites of Revolutionary Patriots continued. The new guide will take several years but 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 and contributes to the maintenance of the historical and esthetic quality of our local environment. Such improved data and updated files contribute greatly toward 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 Civil War monuments/memorials book was finally completed. These books continue to await funding and will be published by the Ontario County Historical Society working with the county.

A major display project on the history of the dairy industry was researched and completed for display at the Ontario County Fair. The Historian also contributed to a display on World War II aviation history at the Gorham Historical Society. That display included a published essay for the event program.

Revised and modified PowerPoint programs on Abolition and the Underground Railroad were produced. A special media program was researched, produced, and presented at the annual conference of the Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region in February. A second program on archaeology in Ontario County was presented to the Lewis Henry Morgan Chapter (NYS Archaeological Soc.) in Victor in May. A requested journal article was also researched and written for the LHM Chapter. A similar program, modified to be specific to the community, was presented to the Honeoye Historical Society in September. The conversion of previously assembled traditional slide programs to PowerPoint programs was continued.

A biography of Geneva author, Sarah H. Bradford, was published in December. It was funded through the Ontario County Historical Society. A second article on the "Dewey House," one of the oldest on the East Side of Canandaigua Lake, was written for the Canandaigua *Daily Messenger*.

A new guide to local and family history research was produced 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 were provided with technical and research assistance. Ontario County enjoys a strong and dedicated group of municipal historians.

The Historian's Office has been a part-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 completed a two and a half year, 18 semester hour program leading to a Graduate Certificate in Archival Studies through East Tennessee State University. The Historian has also attended in-service programs on "Preservation of Historical Records," "Managing E-Mail," and "Preservation of Electronic Records" offered by the State Archives Region 7 Service Officer. The Historian also completed the mandatory "Whistleblowing and Compliance Training."

The Historian supported the Town of Bristol with a special display and program at the annual "Bristol Days" celebration, held on Flag Day in 2009. The history of the American flag, and associated banners, was researched and a series of twenty five 24x36 inch panels, hand out sheets, and other materials were produced for display. The panels can now be borrowed and used by schools, municipalities and historical societies throughout the county. The annual family history research workshop, sponsored by the Bristol Town Historian, was also supported. Ten boxes of reference books and materials were transported to Bristol and the Historian spent nearly half a day providing on-site research assistance.

A PowerPoint-based historical program on "Victorian Victor" was prepared for a special celebration jointly sponsored by the town and the Victor Historical Society.

Working with Boy Scout Troop 32 (Canandaigua) and the Canandaigua Town Historian, a historical marker, long in storage, was re-erected in an appropriate place. It commemorates the destruction of the Canandaigua Indian village in 1779.

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 2009. 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.

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 huge 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 it's 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 new professional group called the Government Appointed Historians of Western New York.

Escorted tours were prepared and carried out for the Ontario County Historical Society (Finger Lakes Railway) and the Office of Court Administration (Court House). Special tour booklets have been prepared and were presented in conjunction with the rail tours.

One major oral history interview was conducted with a Victor resident concerning his service in World War II. It conforms to the requirements of the Veterans Oral History Project of the Library of Congress and will be deposited there.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES:

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

Canandaigua American Legion Post
Canandaigua Rotary Club
Cross-Winds Wesleyan Church Senior
Citizens group (2 times)
Manchester Rotary Club
Delta Kappa Gamma, Canandaigua
Historic Brighton
Hopewell Historical Society
Honeoye Historical Society

Humanities Dept., Hobart-William Smith
Colleges
Lewis Henry Morgan Chapter (NYSAS),
Victor
Ontario County Historical Society
Ontario County Genealogy Society
Quail Summit Retirement home
(Canandaigua, NY)
Underground RR History conf., Schnectady
Victor Historical Society