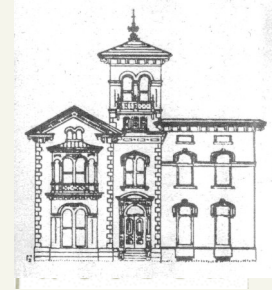


WINTER/SPRING 2018

Oswego County Historical Society



R I C H A R D S O N - B A T E S H O U S E M U S E U M

President's Message

A sincere thanks goes to generous supporters and donors like yourself. As a result the outlook for the Oswego County Historical Society and the Richardson Bates House Museum is very promising.

Ten years ago, the museum faced a dire situation. Major funding from the county and the state had been suddenly cut, and the paid administrative and educational staff positions had to be eliminated, including that of long-time director, Terry Prior. The volunteer board members were forced to decide whether to close the museum or learn how to manage it on their own. It was a daunting proposition; the first heating bill for a winter month was an alarming \$3,000. Strong determination and a love for the historic home spurred them to learn how to give tours, raise money to cover budget, and operate the museum with only volunteers.

In 2018, attendance was up and participation at our events increased, which can be credited to a larger website presence and postings on social media. When visitors were asked how they heard about the museum, most invariably say, "We found you online."

Now in 2019, we are poised to move from "survival mode" to a state of growth. Thanks to successful board efforts in the last decade, fundraising goals are consistently met to cover operating expenses. Several special generous donations have allowed maintenance of the house's 150 year old exterior to continue, including restoration of a sagging cantilevered bay window, repair of rotted trim, and a complete repainting of the exterior. Minor projects have subtly advanced the preservation and beautification efforts: LED lighting in the exhibit galleries and Naomi's bedroom, replacement of toggle switches with authentic push button switches, lace curtains in the Billiard Room, and exterior landscaping. With fear for survival behind us, the current board is looking to the next phase, which is catching up with the digital age.

A new educational unit was finished on our website last year. However, very little of the archival collection: photographs, manuscripts, letters, diaries, posters and maps have been digitized. We own no digitizing equipment or software, making it is very hard to fulfill our mission of sharing and promoting the history of Oswego County to the public. With the goal of acquiring the knowledge and means to digitize our collections, we are optimistic about entering a new era of growth and thriving in the 2020's.

Mary Kay Stone, President

TOUR HOURS:

April—December
Thurs—Sat: 1-5 pm
Other Days: By Appt
315-343-1342

Closed January,
February and March

Members receive free
admission and 10%
off at the gift shop!



Silent Auction — 2019

32nd Silent Auction Held on April 5

A Great Success!

The Oswego County Historical Society Annual “Not So Silent” Auction fundraiser was held on Friday, April 5. More than 135 people were in attendance and made the night a success. All profits from the auction go toward the much-needed general operating support and maintenance costs of the Richardson-Bates House Museum. A unique variety of nearly 200 items were generously donated, including gifts certificates, collectibles, antiques, artwork and more. The Chinese auction featured a dozen themed-filled baskets was another fun feature to take chances on. The live portion of the night brought back the traditional auction experience that provides many quality items with special touches for bid. Fine quality donations of auction items come from generous donors and are very popular throughout the evening. Many thanks go to all the sponsors that made the event possible, and the American Foundry employees and proprietors who also provide an excellent venue service for the evening. Additional thanks goes to all those that attended this year and a brought a friend. See you next year!

For more information about the auction or to make a future donation, contact the museum at 315-343-1342.

Thank you to the following auction committee:

Mary Kay Stone, Auction Co-Chair

Jennifer Bertollini, Auction Co-Chair

Liz Andring

Eva Corradino

Silvia Langdon

Peg McKinstry

Charlene Mitchell

Lyn Patterson

Mary Roman

Meg Schneider

Carol Shannon

Mary Shanley

Justin White

& Payne Horning, Auction Host



Pictured is the silent auction committee volunteers involved in the planning of the 2019 event. Seated from left are Jennifer Bertollini, Peg McKinstry and Lyn Patterson. Standing from left are Silvia Langdon, Mary Roman, Mary Shanley, Justin White, Meg Schneider and Eva Corradino. Thank you to all of the dedicated volunteers!

Thank you to the following auction sponsors:

Canale Insurance & Accounting Services

Eagle Beverage Company

Eastern Shore Associates

Fred's Auto Parts

Furlong Properties

Hahn Welding Supply

James Tesoriero Charitable Fund

Laborers Local 633

Laser Transit

Pathfinder Bank & Employees

Port City Copy Center

Scriba Electric

Shanley Law Offices



Pictured from left to right are Gerald Petro, event antique appraiser and Ted Sivers, event auctioneer, as they admire a framed watercolor painting of the Selkirk Lighthouse in Oswego County painted by late Oswego artist Jeanne Kraft. Also being admired is a Civil War watercolor print by Don Gillespie and a unique Waterford crystal lamp. These were among the many items available for bid at the auction. Thank you to both auctioneers for their assistance in making the auction a success.

City of Oswego Gives Generous Gift to Repair Roof

A bit of serendipity graced the historical society with a Christmas wish last year. Mayor Billy Barlow happened to visit the museum during our Holiday Open House and was reminded what a lovely community asset we have in this remarkably intact historic house museum. On visiting the second floor, however, he was dismayed to see the extensive water damage of the elaborate plaster ceiling around our famous stained glass skylight. Museum staff has been dealing for decades with repeated roof leaks in the area above the central hallway. A clear plastic tarp permanently covers the stained glass skylight to protect it from water. The stained glass is actually in the floor of the attic, not on the roof. The roof above it is one of the most unusual architectural designs in the city. A low, flat rectangular central portion collects rain-water from the four gabled roofs surrounding it and only one drain empties the water in a pipe to the basement that connects to the sewer. In the center of this rectangular drainage basin is a small greenhouse-like structure that has a clear glass slanted roof that allows natural light into the attic and through the stained glass directly below it. Especially in the fall, the drain clogs with leaves and water pools in the basin and in lows spots. Attempts have been made over the years to seal this seamed copper basin, but water always finds a way, and staff has been chasing leaks around with buckets positioned in the attic for years. Two years in a row, new leaks or overflowing buckets let water penetrate to the second floor ceiling. A permanent solution was sought, but the cost was almost half of our yearly operating budget. When Mayor Barlow heard the story, he persuaded the Oswego Common Council to grant a one-time special gift of \$15,000 to the Historical Society to preserve and protect the museum's architecture and collections from this dangerous situation. The board of trustees is extremely grateful to the Mayor, the Councilors and the City of Oswego for this kind and generous gesture.



Pictured above is the skylight on the roof of the Richardson-Bates House Museum. This is located in the center of the main roof below the four gables of the house that meet in the middle. The lower part of the picture shows the drain pipe that drains rain water into the house down to the basement and into the sewer system. Leaks have come into the attic for more than a century, but for the first time in recent memory, water has entered into the second floor of the main house.



Picture left is the lavish stained glass skylight that graces the second floor and provides natural light to the main entrance hall on the first floor through the staircase. The central hallway is a room without windows and in the 19th century this was a way of providing natural light during the day. It was also was a way to impress the guests with the grandeur of the main entrance to the house. The stained glass skylight is bordered with detailed plaster molding and floral motifs. Due to the recent water damage, more funding will be necessary to repair parts of the damaged plaster ceiling and molding.

2019 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The Oswego County Historical Society is partly funded through fundraisers, small grants, in-kind donations and tour admission fees. The membership drive remains the major support system for the museum to insure the maintenance of the historical society's building and its programs and services. The annual letter with membership form included was sent in February and thank goes to all who have renewed. The goal is to reach all of our contacts that enjoy the services and programs that are provided to preserve our local history. A newly designed website also provides the option to join or renew membership online through a secure PayPal system. It is not necessary to have a PayPal account in order to pay online. This is a easy system for those who prefer to join electronically. A donation option is also available for those who would like to support a particular project. The website also has a PDF of the membership form that can be downloaded at any time to print and return by mail. Joining as a new member or renewing membership can be submitted any time during the year by filling out a form. All the necessary information is on the website and any assistance needed with the membership application can be provided by contacting the museum during regular hours on Tuesday - Friday between 1 - 5 pm. If you have not renewed yet this year, it is never too late. Thank you for your continued support.



One of the popular programs offered each year is the walking tours of historic districts in Oswego, guided by County Historian Justin White. The 2018 tour featured the Kingsford Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places

MUSEUM NEWS

Interested in becoming a volunteer? Contact the museum during regular hours or stop by and fill out a volunteer form.

Time and weather had taken a toll on the Richardson-Bates House elaborately carved front entrance by the summer of 2018. Parts of the walnut panels were worn to bare wood; sections were cracked and areas black with mold from absorbed water. The details such as the carved lion heads and rope molding were in dire condition. Thanks to a very generous grant from the Heritage Foundation of Oswego, which covered the costs of the refinishing, it was possible to have the entire entryway refinished during the late summer. Master craftsman Ernie Terpening, of Terpening Woodworking LLC, sanded the doors, the arch and surrounding sides down to bare wood and finished it with several coats of varnish that, with care and maintenance, will last for many years.



**F R O N T D O O R S
R E S T O R A T I O N**



**REMEMBRANCE OF THE CENTENARY MEMORIAM
OF DR. MARY WALKER**



**Dr. Mary Edwards Walker
(1832–1919)**

Dr. Mary Edwards Walker was born on November 26, 1832 at the Walker family farm on Bunker Hill Road in the Town of Oswego. She is nationally recognized as the first and only woman ever awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for her heroic medical services during the American Civil War. In Dr. Walker's proudest moment, President Andrew Johnson presented her with the medal as the nation's highest military honor on November 11, 1865. Dr. Walker lived her life in the moment and never stopped her tireless efforts to create equality and civil rights for women. She was a pioneer as one of the very first female physicians in the United States, graduating from the Syracuse Medical College in 1855. She was a crusader in dress reform, social equality and the suffrage movement. Her death occurred on February 21, 1919, one year before the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution which granted American women the right to vote. A permanent display this year is part of the recognition of the 100th anniversary of the death of Dr. Walker, and her legacy as a pioneer in the women's rights movement.

S P R I N G G A L L E R Y E X H I B I T

A new spring exhibit in the Temporary Gallery is on loan from the Local History & Genealogy Division, Rochester Public Library. Presented is a five panel display entitled "Women Who Made a Difference." Each display features suffragettes, the important female figures in the fight for women's rights. Senna Handley, Museum Assistant, created a poster to connect this display of suffragettes to Dr. Mary Walker, the local hero who made a major difference. The historical society is also proud to have been gifted original artifacts, documents and photographs from her family descendants. Items from the Dr. Walker collection are also included. Dr. Walker disagreed with many of the women in these Rochester exhibits on how to achieve the vote. You are invited to come and view the new exhibit and learn about her unusual status in the women's right movement!

J O I N I N O N T H E G A R D E N P R O J E C T

There are many ways to help with the ongoing improvements to the exterior grounds of the Richardson-Bates House. The historical society is seeking volunteers and donations to help support this project. A new fence is needed for part of the border of the property, so donations toward that cost will be appreciated. In addition a plan to add flower boxes onto the 1910 garage will build on the repair work that has been done to the building. Also, an extremely unique 19th century octagonal rubbish shed is in dire need of restoration. Plans are needed to create a feasible way to restore that structure. The grounds need regular cleanup, so the garden committee is always glad to add more members and volunteers. Donation toward the cost of topsoil, roses and annual flowers will be necessary to make this an ideal spot for the public to enjoy. For more information stop by during regular hours, call by phone at 315-343-1342 or email at ochs@rbhousemuseum.org.



*Have a green thumb
and want to
volunteer? Consider
joining the garden
committee to grow the
Memorial Garden
Project!*



The beautiful spring garden of daffodils and tulips has blossomed thanks to the Oswego Garden Club and SUNY Oswego Rugby Team Partnership.

Annual Meeting

The Oswego County Historical Society
Cordially Invites You to Attend the
Annual Meeting & Keynote Presentation

Sunday, May 19, 2019 at 1:30 pm

Oswego Public Library
Community Room
120 East Second Street

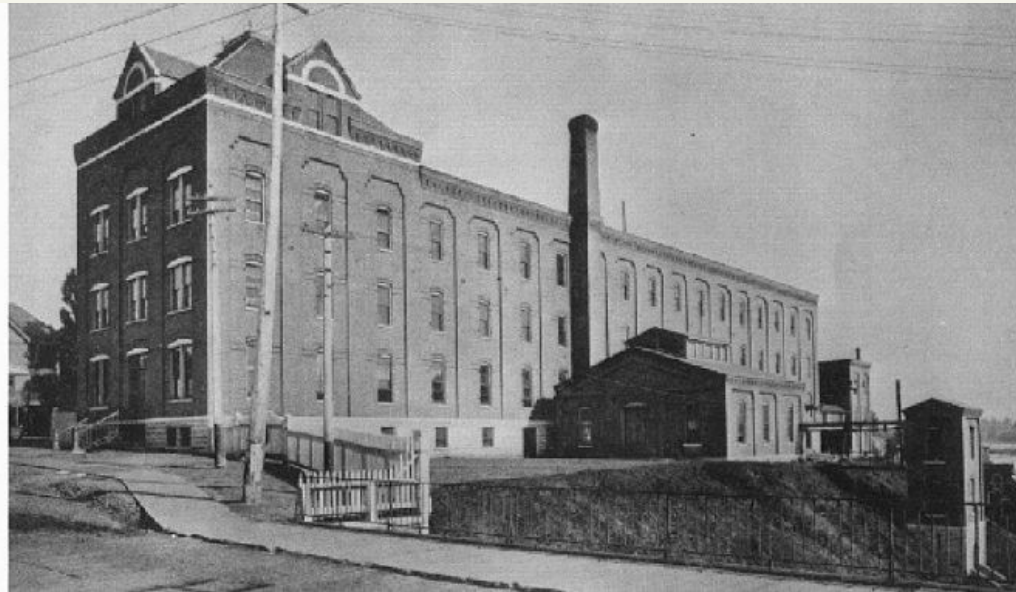
A brief membership meeting followed by a
keynote presentation of -

Oswego's Legacy - Lost to the Ages"

By Author and Oswego Native
Dr. Robert Perkins, Retired Educator and School Administrator

Please join us for an engaging presentation based on the historic research of the new local history book "Oswego's Legacy: Lost to the Ages." This is a literal and visual look at fifty of Oswego's major industries from 1870 – 1920. The program will provide a glimpse of the city's vast industrial complex as well as the many talented personalities who influenced Oswego's legacy. The book will also be available for sale and signing at the annual meeting.

Free and Open to the Public—Refreshments to be served



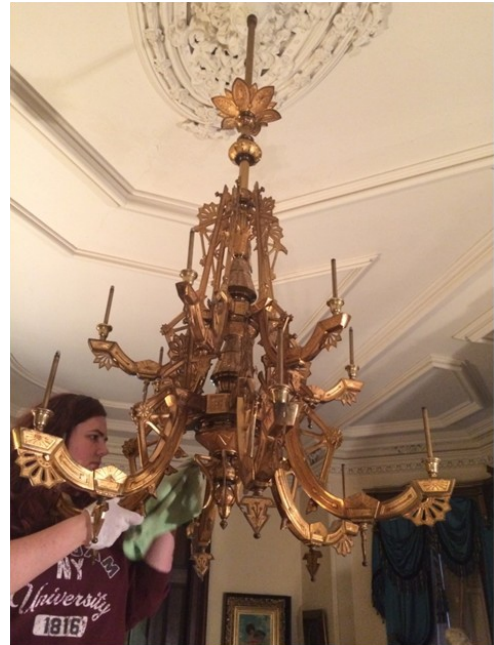
Historic Photograph of the Oswego Shade Cloth Company formerly located at East First and Utica Streets.
Organized in 1872, this was the first factory in the United States to manufacturer home window shades.

Museum Collections News

As Museum Assistant Senna Handley starts her second year at the Richardson Bates House Museum, she has taken cleaning tasks at the museum to a level of detail that possibly has not been seen since Naomi Richardson's Irish servant girls roamed the formal rooms with feather dusters. She has thoroughly cleaned the woodwork and furniture, meticulously removed any grime from marble statues and fireplaces. This is often accomplished with Q-tips to gently get into ornate details. Senna has restored the luster of metal fireplaces, along with silver and brass artifacts with museum grade metal polish. She has also discovered and vacuumed pine needles from crevices in woodwork and on chandeliers from the greenery that decorates the museum at Christmas. Every room's carpet has been thoroughly and carefully vacuumed through a screen to preserve the delicate nap of the 150 year old Oriental rugs. Another project that she has tackled has been the removal of old UV light filtering film that was bubbled and clouded from age on the windows of the period library. The goal is to be able to financially replace the UV light protectors soon as natural light has a destructive effect on fabric, carpet, paintings and paper.

Collections Care

Several new additions have been donated and accepted into the permanent collection this past year. These items continue to preserve and highlight the remarkable history of Oswego County. The society was formed more than 120 years ago, and since then has been collecting artifacts, documents, photographs and ephemera to preserve the community history. Currently dedicated volunteers are working to upgrade the catalog of the entire massive collection into a museum grade software called Past Perfect. This will allow better accessibility needs for the continued care of the collections and improve collections research needs. Recent visits from two professional museum consultants were provided through grants from the Documentary Heritage Preservation Services of NY and the Greater Hudson Heritage Network. These evaluations offered recommendations on storage and collections management policies for archives and artifacts housed within the museum. These new surveys will assist with current and future planning for the overall care of the museum archives and artifacts, along with eligibility for grants. Among the new items that were generously gifted to collection have come from descendants of the Richardson-Bates family. This included the 1876 Reed & Barton silver coffee pot used by the family for five generations. The coffee pot is monogrammed with and "R" for the family name. It has been beautifully cleaned by the museum assistant and is on display in the family period dining room. Please stop by to see the new additions to the displays in the museum.



Pictured above is Museum Assistant Senna Handley carefully cleaning the original circa 1867 gold gilded gaslight chandelier in the Drawing Room



Picture above is OCHS board trustee Justin White admiring and examining the Richardson family silver coffee pot, one of the newest additions to the museum collection. It is now on display in the dining room.

U p c o m i n g E v e n t C a l e n d a r

May

Oswego County Historical Society
Annual Meeting, Sunday, May 19 at 1:30 pm
Oswego Public Library, 120 East Second Street
Guest Speaker — Dr. Robert Perkins, Author
Presentation Titled:
“Oswego’s Legacy: Lost to the Ages”

Yard Sale — Saturday, May 25, 9 am - 1 pm

June

Riverside Cemetery Guided History Tour
Sunday, June 9 at 1:30 pm
Begins at Page Memorial Chapel at main entrance
Located at 4024 County Route 57, Oswego
Free & Open to the Public
Sign-up required— Call 315-343-1342

July

Day Away Historic Sites Bus Trip to Seneca Falls, NY
Wednesday, July 10 - Contact Museum for Details

August

Summer Family Fun Day
Sunday, August 18, 1 - 4 pm
Richardson-Bates House Museum Lawn

September

Walking Tour of Montcalm Park Historic District
Sunday, September 15 1:30 pm
Begins at corner of West Sixth & Seneca Streets
Free & Open to the Public
Rain Date—TBA



OSWEGO
COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
135 East Third Street
Oswego, New York
13126