2024 HISTORIANS ANNUAL REPORT

In January, I received some filing cabinets from the remodeling project at town hall. Boxed up contents of shelving units in the local history room and put the filing cabinets in their place. Remarked cabinets and filled them with boxed materials.

I had been working on the Oath project since the previous fall, and we finally got it finished. I presented the results to the supervisor in February with the hope that we could get the names and dates on 5 plaques that represented the 5 elected positions of town officials. That part of the project will be addressed again in the future.

Printed out tax assessment records from 1841-1858 and put them in labeled binders. Now the collection of tax records in paper form covers from 1819-1960. They are an excellent source for family research and previously not readily available.

Started labeling more maps and stored them in the map cabinet. Over several months worked with Theresa Brosius, Carolyn Gotowko, and Maureen Weber on subject files, separating newspaper articles from other documents to avoid acid transfer.

Phil and Vinnie from the town parks department brought me 4 more filing cabinets that I cleaned, set in place and filled with materials. Did the same with some of the shelving units.

Over a several month period, I scanned 60 issues of the Bellringer magazine from 1941-1945 that was produced by Bell Aerospace. They contain all kinds of news about Bell and its’ employees over that 5 year period. I presented the results to Walter Gordon who is the archivist of their vast collection on a thumbdrive. They may display it on their website so the general public can view it. Walter discovered a spreadsheet that a former Buffalo librarian put together around 2000 that lists the names of the persons in the magazines that can be shown as well.

For display from Memorial Day through Veterans Day the Parks Department and I hung 100 Hometown Hero banners throughout the Town of Niagara. We added several in the Factory Outlet Mall with more to be added next year.

Received a large collection of Witmer family materials from descendant Jim Depew including 2 framed pictures of Joseph Witmer and his wife Catherine from the 1890s. Joseph was born in the Town of Niagara in 1812 shortly after his parents settled here from Pennsylvania. The collection includes many photos, documents and books related to the Witmer family.

With the help of the parks department, Jeff Manning, Theresa Brosius and myself spent a great deal of time working at Witmer Cemetery in preparation for workshop. On July 13th, we held the workshop as a hybrid event for 50 people. In the morning at the community center, we had several presentations by a local librarian, a cemetery administrator, and representatives from the NY State Department of Cemeteries followed by lunch. The afternoon session took place at Witmer Cemetery and that consisted of a tour that hilited the restoration efforts over the last 5 years, headstone cleaning and repair, along with information on combatting invasive species such as Japanese knotweed that plagued Witmer Cemetery for decades. It is currently under control courtesy of the Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation Department. They have been coming several times a year for over 4 years eradicating several patches.

On October 25th, I gave a presentation on family history research at the community center to a group of people.

I have shared an office with senior programs director, Joe Proietti since becoming historian in 2016. Joe is leaving at the end of this year and Paige is taking over the program and the office. I will be relocating across the hallway. Please come by and visit me with any questions about the Town of Niagara and I will be happy to help you. My cell # is 716-297-4429.