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From [Office of the New York State Museum Historian](#) on 2023-01-23 16:18

Details

Plain text

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Name: Linda S. Schwab

Date Report Prepared: January 23, 2023

Annual Report for the Year: 2023

Name of Municipality: Village of Aurora

Estimated Population: 250 (exclusive of college)

Address: PO Box 24, Aurora, NY 13026

Date Appointed Historian: June 1, 2012

Phone Number: 315-246-1130

Email Address: historian@auroranewyork.us

Website/Social Media: auroranewyork.us; Village of Aurora Historical Society on Facebook

Office Hours: By appointment at present

Office Hours: 15

Annual Salary: \$1250

Total Budget: \$1750

Number of Office Visits (Estimated): 5

Number of Phone/Email Inquiries Received/Answered (Estimated): 50

Number of Municipal Meetings Attended(Town/Village Board,County

Legislature,Zoning,Planning,etc.): 18

Exhibits:

At present the Historian and the Historical Society lack exhibit space. We did hold three interactive events: two at an historic building owned by the Village and overseen by the Historical Society (an Arbor Day event, and another featuring heritage crafts) and one at a Village festival (history of "Aurorafest"). A fourth small display was prepared for the centennial of the Wells College Golf Course, and a fifth, on Lake Sturgeon and their likely role in the legend of a "lake monster," loaned to the museum in a neighboring village.

School Classroom Lectures/Presentations:

None. I am still trying to work with Southern Cayuga Central School, to no avail so far. Several events involving college students; see below

Public Lectures/Presentations:

March 14: Alternative Spring Break (Wells College) Conversation on Aurora History March 23: follow up to the above, with a student club, on Aurora's African-American history June 4: assisted with Village history walk for Wells College Reunion July 24: A brief introduction to Aurora history with Q&A for bike tour group September 29: "On This Corner," held at Aurora

Free Library, on the building that occupied the corner before the Library, its long history and mysterious arson

Historical Research:

Continued work on African-American history of Aurora. On life in Aurora ca. 1890-1910, a particularly lively period (in a Wild West way) for Library event and connected to other local buildings and people.

Historical Publication:

Oral presentations only

Historical Events/Celebrations:

[April, Arbor Day; see above] May 30: Memorial Day, this year at St. Patrick's Cemetery, readings from "In Memoriam, 1872" July 4: assisted with the annual reading of the Declaration of Independence

Historic Preservation Projects:

This category took by far the largest part of my time; literally uncounted hours. Most of the Village of Aurora is part of a National Historic District, and the Village is revising its Zoning Law. I served as consultant to the Community Preservation Panel, the board that works most closely with preservation issues. This involved study of the new (2014) State Model Law as well as how similar communities handle it in their zoning laws, in addition to much research on related topics (e.g. "demolition by neglect" and conservation of Setting, in the Sec. of the Interior's Guidelines). I assisted the Panel in dividing up the tasks and putting the results from each person into a common format for group discussion, evaluation, and editing. In addition, attempted preservation of the 1806 house, called the "Chimney Corner," drags on, with an owner unwilling to undertake a structural survey of this vacant and deteriorating building, an important early Masonic site.

Heritage Tourism Projects:

Continuation and completion of my part of a new County brochure on "Following the Freedom Trail in Cayuga County." April: prepared a self-guided walking tour of Aurora's notable trees. The July 24 presentation to a bike tour group was for the YMCA's "Bon Ton Roulet," a large and popular event that rotates among locations, brings visitors not only from the area but around the country, and involves Cayuga County Tourism.

Conference/Workshops Attended:

Jan 9: "Redating the Iroquoian History through Archaeology" (Virtual Lecture), Jennifer Birch, University of Georgia, hosted by the Westchester Chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America and the Rye (NY) Free Library Reading Room. March 13: "Cahokia: Choices and Changes in North America's First City in the 13th Century" (Virtual Lecture), hosted by the Westchester Chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America. (The Haudenosaunee retained a tradition of encounter with a Mound-Builder people, of which the Cahokia of present day Illinois are an example.)

Other:

The ongoing situation of the Village of Aurora Archives (and collection) is distressing. In accord with Arts & Cultural Affairs 57.07, the Village of Aurora Historical Society (AHS) was assigned an oversight role in a still-valid Memorandum of Understanding, which it exercises through its Collections Committee and Trustees. My duty as Historian, working with the Records

Management Officer (Clerk), is also clearly laid out in 57.09. Working with AHS, I arrived at a storage strategy for the more than 1/3 of the collection that needed to be moved out of the Bank by Dec. 31. This was not easy as there is no dedicated Village Hall. At each stage, in my monthly reports to the Village Board, I updated them on progress. The move, scheduled (with considerable difficulty) for Dec. 20, was canceled by the Mayor, who two weeks earlier had thanked us for finding a solution. On Dec. 19, he expressed the intention of taking over the project, in clear contravention of both the MOU and State records management. We are seeking mediation through a proposed meeting including the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, the Clerk, AHS Officers, and myself. As of this date, there has been no response.