

May 2020

THE
HISTORY
CENTER
In Tompkins County

History Happenings

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

The History Center Staff Continue Working Remotely



All our staff have continued working their regular weekly hours (with some re-scheduling to meet changed family needs) remotely from their own homes since we closed to the public on March 14th. They've been pursuing a combination of problem solving, future planning, and finally getting around to some projects that normally they wouldn't have the time to focus on.

Ben - Executive Director – Ben has been communicating with all our sponsors, funders, and various grant committees to ensure that our doors will reopen, and our staff continue to be paid during these uncertain times. This task has been monumental in the constantly changing financial landscape of Covid-19. In addition, he and Dave have been re-drafting the fiscal budget for next year in lieu of the massive funding disruptions of this year.

Julia - Director of Youth Education - Among many projects, Julia has been creating our new "History at Home" learning activities - adapting our educational materials for digital use; supporting teachers with resources for distance learning; and keeping our oral history programming going, supporting the Cornell Undergraduate Oral History Fellows, and transcribing interviews for the Story Vault exhibit. thehistorycenter.net/youth-education

Donna - Director of Archives & Research Services - Has been working on multiple columns for our

monthly Then & Now series with Ithaca Journal, updating our Archival Finding Aids, in addition to coordinating and collating all the information, requests, and submissions from our ongoing Tompkins County Covid-19 Archival Collection. thehistorycenter.net/research

Cindy - Curator & Design - Has been working on the graphic design and images for our new "Breaking Barriers: The Lives and Livelihoods of Women in Tompkins County" exhibit. This museum-wide exhibit will be featured in all our tower exhibits, including the Passage through Time Timeline exhibit later this year. thehistorycenter.net/events

Zoë - Marketing & Visitor Experience - Has been managing and ramping up all our social media channels, and community outreach to promote distance learning and socially responsible engagement with local history. She's also been doing the graphic design for the History at Home learning series and updating other materials, but her main project has been beginning design on a brand new website for The History Center!

Eve - HistoryForge Project Coordinator - Eve is excited to announce all the progress being made on HistoryForge, The History Center's digital history project! Our hard working volunteers have finished transcribing all the records for the 1930 census and are now working on the records for 1920. Transcribers are now working entirely remotely, though we hope to resume our biweekly transcription sessions via zoom sometime this month so watch for announcements! In addition, we are starting to train new transcribers virtually, so if you have always wondered what HistoryForge is all about please fill out a [volunteer form](#).

In addition, the HistoryForge team including Eve, Bob Kibbee, Project Manager, and our web developer, the incomparable David Furber (GORGES), have been redesigning the HistoryForge website and database to make it more user-friendly www.historyforge.net. Use it to search for people, buildings, and more. We are looking for local history researchers, teachers, students and others interested in population studies, immigration, race and ethnicity, housing policies, etc., to use HistoryForge and the dataset we've created from the 1900-1930 census for the city of Ithaca. If you're interested, please contact Eve at HistoryForge@thehistorycenter.net.

Dave - Bookkeeper & Office Manager - Has been working closely with Ben to review and revise our finances and needs for this year and next. Juggling a phenomenal amount of changing information and ensuring that our finances continue to run as smoothly as they can under the current circumstances.

Right now, The History Center is able to navigate the immediate economic impact of closing our doors. We are indeed lucky to be able to continue our meaningful work, when so many around us are unable to do so. We are also so appreciative of all the inquiries from our community asking what people can do to support The History Center.

Here is a brief list of actions you can take to ensure the longevity of your local history museum:

- Support The History Center with a small monthly recurring [donation](#)
- Have you visited us recently? Post a review of your experience with us on [Google Reviews](#), [Facebook](#), [TripAdvisor](#), and [Yelp](#)!
- Follow The History Center in Tompkins County on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) at @tompkinshistory
- Share The History Center's digital resources with those who need them - thehistorycenter.net/youth-education
- Contact [Ben Sandberg](#) to book one of the event spaces in the Tompkins Center for History & Culture for your event later this year.
- Download the [PocketSights](#) app to access over 40 self-guided walking and driving tours of Tompkins County! Practice responsible social distancing and share pictures from your experience with us!
- Help us build our COVID-19 Impacts in Tompkins County Archival Collection. Send pictures, video, written reflections and more to Donna Eschenbrenner at archives@thehistorycenter.net
- Help us enter Ithaca census records from the 20th century for our [HistoryForge](#) database project. Contact Eve Snyder at historyforge@thehistorycenter.net to learn more.
- Help us fill our "Breaking Barriers: The Lives & Livelihoods of Women" exhibits this summer by sending us your pictures of "Women Working" in Tompkins County and complete our "Why Vote?" [digital ballot](#). These exhibits will be on display to the public later this year. Send items to

Your support – in its many shapes and sizes – will ensure our ability to successfully navigate the challenges ahead of all of us. We are privileged to have so many caring people in The History Center's family.

Upcoming Events

All in-person events for are postponed until further notice. We have not set a date for when the Exhibit Hall & Research Library will reopen to the public.

- **May 16th & 30th** - Virtual HistoryForge Transcription Sessions over Zoom - Email historyforge@thehistorycenter.net for details.
- **May 20th** - Giving is Gorges - Virtual events throughout the day

Visit www.thehistorycenter.net/events for more information

Youth Education

If our "Stay at Home" directive is lifted *and* it is deemed safe to hold a summer camp this summer, we will be inviting teens ages 13-17 to join us for [Inventor Camp 2020!](#)

Explore innovations of the past, present, and future! Learn about the history of local inventions, take field trips to innovative companies in our region to connect with professional inventors and see innovative work first hand, and work together to build your own machines. No building experience necessary. This camp is open to all teens who want to build creatively!

If you are interested in this camp and would like to stay up to date with information, please email Julia at eightsquare@thehistorycenter.net to be put on an Inventor Camp email list.

Last Month at The History Center...

Mark Your Calendars! Giving is Gorges - May 20th



[Giving is Gorges](#) was established by a collaborative group to celebrate the spirit of philanthropy in Tompkins County and surrounding areas. The purpose of this powerful giving experience is to unite our community members around causes in which they truly believe and help support local nonprofit organizations.

The History Center will be offering a series of virtual events throughout the day on our [social media](#) accounts. Stay tuned for details on:

- Music by Moog livestream shows on May 20th
- Virtual History Scavenger Hunt - Enter for a Chance to Win...(Prizes TBD)

Make sure to like and follow us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#)!

This annual fundraiser is more important this year than ever due to the massive impacts COVID-19 has had on funding supplies and resources for the arts and non-profit field.

We appreciate your support, and will send out additional details in the coming weeks.

[Donate Directly to the History Center](#)

As our community practices physical distancing, we've been trying to connect with our community members more virtually. We've grown our social media platforms on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) (please follow us if you haven't already!), posting local history facts, stories, and pictures daily.

Eve & Bob hosted the first ever virtual HistoryForge Transcription Session, we're looking to offer more of these sessions, and also training opportunities for volunteers who haven't done this work before.

Julia has created 3 series of [History at Home](#) activity sets (All About Tommy, The Ithaca Kitty, Tompkins County Coloring Book) inspired by local history, ranging from crafting to storytelling. These can be downloaded and worked on at home.

[History At Home Activities](#)

[Help with COVID-19 Archival Collection](#)

The History Center in Tompkins County and the Cornell University Archives are collaborating in creating ongoing archival collections related to the impacts of COVID-19. Cornell is focusing on the impacts nationally, while we at The History Center are focusing on the issues locally. To this end we need your help!

[Learn More](#)



[HistoryForge from Home!](#)

Looking for something history-related to do while social-distancing? [HistoryForge](#) combines historic maps and photos with census records of the people who lived in Ithaca, creating a unique way to visualize the history of Ithaca in the early 1900s.

Experienced [HistoryForge](#) volunteers are continuing to digitize census records from the 20th century for the HistoryForge database. We're hoping to finish the 1920 census very soon! Local volunteers have transcribed three complete censuses, 1900, 1910 and 1930. You can search them at the HistoryForge website [now!](#)

We are looking for additional volunteers to help us finish entering records from the 1920 US Census for Ithaca. We will be setting up virtual training sessions to train people on how to input records from home. Individuals, classrooms, or groups interested in this project should contact HistoryForge Project Coordinator Eve Snyder at historyforge@thehistorycenter.net.

SOCIAL DISTANCING MAKING YOU A LITTLE STIR CRAZY?

Take a self-guided PocketSights Tour of Tompkins County!

DOWNLOAD THE **POCKETSIGHS APP** FOR OVER 40 FREE SELF-GUIDED WALKING AND DRIVING TOURS OF PUBLIC ART AND LOCAL HISTORY OF TOMPKINS COUNTY.

PLEASE PRACTICE RESPONSIBLE SOCIAL DISTANCING AND RESPECT FOR PRIVATE PROPERTY.



Then & Now - Ithaca Journal Column - May 2020

Tompkins County Has a Rich History in Maple Sugaring

By Donna Eschenbrenner



Local farmers have tapped maples for years. Groton photographer Verne Morton documented the early 20th century process on farms throughout the area. In these photographs from ca. 1906 we can see different aspects of the process; from tapping the tree, to gathering and transporting the sap, to boiling it into syrup, to “dipping” or making maple sugar cakes, to the high point of the early spring ritual: pouring hot maple syrup it over hard-packed snow and eating it.

[READ MORE](#)

The History Center in Tompkins County

Exhibit Hall, Research Library, Archives, and Staff Offices are located at 110 North Tioga St. (Inside the Tompkins Center for History & Culture) Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

Web: www.thehistorycenter.net

Phone: 607-273-8284

Email: Staff emails can be found [here](#)

Hours: *Currently closed to the public due to the Covid-19 pandemic*

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