



# History Happenings

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## Last Month at The History Center...

### *Alex Haley Historic Marker*

On August 8th, The History Center in collaboration with the Alex Haley Memorial Project and local officials unveiled a historic marker outside Alex Haley's birthplace at 212 Cascadilla St. in downtown Ithaca.

Alex Haley is a celebrated author, best known for his 1976 book [Roots: The Saga of an American Family](#), and [The Autobiography of Malcolm X](#).

This marker is the continuation of over 25 years of educational work from the Alex Haley Memorial Project to raise awareness of Haley's Ithaca roots. Other successes from this project have been the naming of the [Alex Haley Municipal Pool](#) at GIAC and accompanying mural by local artist Khalil Bey, and the creation of the Alex Haley Pocket Park beside his birth-home on Cascadilla St in 1993.

This was The History Center's first livestreamed event, and over the course of the day over 2,000 people tuned in to watch part of the program on Facebook! You can watch the whole program on our [YouTube Programs & Events playlist](#) or find it on our [Facebook page](#).



*Mural located at the Alex Haley Pool 408 N Albany St, Ithaca, NY. Artwork by Khalil Bey*

### *Print-A-Kitty Youth Workshop*

On August 23rd we hosted our first ever [Print-A-Kitty](#) workshop over two limited registration sessions!

Laura Rowley of [Illuminated Press](#) used images from our archives related to the [Ithaca Kitty](#) to create wood engravings and photo polymer blocks of the images. Participants learned about the history of the Ithaca Kitty from Zoë Van Nostrand of The History Center, and the history of printing from Laura. Every participant then got to experience inking and pressing each block, creating unique prints on handmade combat paper by local artist [Nate Lewis](#). Participants then explored the Exhibit Hall with the aid of our new Exhibit Hall Scavenger Hunt!

This was our first in-person program since March, and we were grateful to all the participants for their careful following of our new rules regarding sanitation, mask wearing, physical distancing, and separating out used tools from sanitized ones.

Our thanks to the [New York Council on the Arts](#) and the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) for their funding of this program.



*Carefully inking the printing block before it goes in the press.*



*Prints made using wood engraving and photo polymer blocks from Ithaca Kitty archival images.*



*Laura Rowley of Illuminated Press demonstrates how to make a print.*

## Upcoming Events

**Thursday-Sunday Every Week - EXHIBIT HALL IS OPEN!**

[New Hours & Guidelines](#) - Book a [private visit!](#)

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**September 7th - [Roads through History - Ben's 24-hour Bike Marathon](#)**

Pledge to support Executive Director Ben Sandberg as he embarks on a 24 hour bike ride through Tompkins County!

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**September 12th & 26th - [Virtual HistoryForge Transcription Sessions](#) - 11am-1pm**

Help be a part of building history! THC's digital history project, HistoryForge, relies on volunteers like you. At our bi-weekly virtual transcription sessions we are currently entering records from the 1940 census for the City of Ithaca! Learn more about the project [here](#).

Contact Eve [historyforge@thehistorycenter.net](mailto:historyforge@thehistorycenter.net) to join.

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**September 27th - [Corn Husk Dolls Youth Program](#) - 10:30am-12:30pm or 1:30-3:30pm.**

Kids (ages 6-12) & families are invited to make their own traditional Corn Husk Dolls with Seneca artist Penny Miner, and to hear the Haudenosaunee story behind why Corn Husk dolls have no face. Two sessions are offered with a maximum of 10 children per session. [Pre-registration is mandatory](#). **This program is free.**

This program is part of our From Seeds to Wisdom youth series exploring Haudenosaunee culture,

arts, and history.

All participants (children included) must wear masks for the duration of the program. Snacks will not be provided. Contact [community@thehistorycenter.net](mailto:community@thehistorycenter.net) with any questions.

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## October 1st - [Hart Island - Cemetery of Strangers Virtual Program](#)- 11-11:30am

Michael Keene, a New York local history author, has produced a unique online program to present his latest work, titled, "New York City's Hart Island: A Cemetery of Strangers" exploring the individual stories of those buried in NYC's Hart Island over the last 150 years. Tune in to hear the story of Dawn Powell and their connection to medical research at Cornell University! This virtual program is available to anyone who [pre-registers](#). This program is free.

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## Ben is Biking for The History Center!



Pledge to support Executive Director Ben Sandberg as he embarks on a 24 hour bike ride through Tompkins County on September 7th!

Support Ben here: [Pledgelt.org/TChistory](https://pledgelt.org/TChistory)

Ride along virtually with Ben as he bikes as many miles in Tompkins County as he can in a single 24-hour period. Your pledge per mile - whether \$.25, \$.50, or \$1.00 - strengthens The History Center's continued resilience. **This year, Ben is riding county roads to support our postponed exhibit honoring suffragists of Tompkins County.** We can still celebrate the 100 (+!) anniversary

of the 19th Amendment in the summer of 2021 with your pledge! Everyone who pledges will receive video clips and updates throughout the day as Ben bikes, highlighting specific historic sites in Tompkins County.

Before making a pledge, you might be curious about Ben's riding capacity. His current biking record is 140 miles in one day. His September 7th goal is 175 miles, but if the ride goes smoothly, he won't stop there.

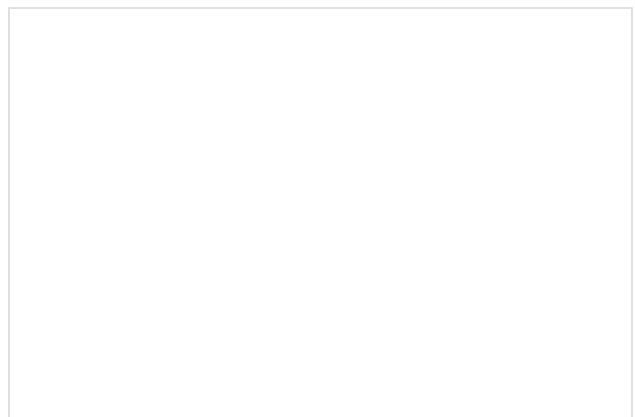
Ben Sandberg first fell in love with local history through his passion for biking. He has done a number of bike tours around the United States, in addition to many long days in the saddle. His routes frequently are planned to stop at historical societies and local history museums. Moving through a community at biking speed gives a deep appreciation for the people, the landscape, and the built environment. Through biking in his early 20's, Ben realized that we live surrounded by local history that shapes our lives in often unnoticed ways. He is excited to more deeply understand our whole county through this endurance test on September 7th, 2020.

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## Exhibit Hall is Open!

Our Exhibit Hall has been open since August 13th, and we've had visitors nearly every day since re-opening!

We've been able to observe strict sanitation



and physical distancing practices, and feel confident that The History Center Exhibit Hall is one of the safest experiences you can have downtown.

Book your visit at



[www.thehistorycenter.net/schedule](http://www.thehistorycenter.net/schedule) and click on the link to the right to hear Executive Director Ben Sandberg talk about our re-opening on the [WHCU Ithaca Morning News Radio Show](#).

Book Your Visit



## Ben Sandberg, History Center in Tompkins County 8- 17-20...

Ben discusses the reopening of the history center.

[Read more](#)  
[soundcloud.com](https://soundcloud.com)

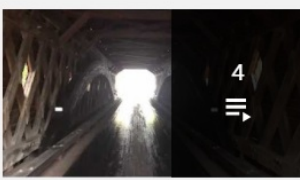
## [Explore Local History with The History Center YouTube Channel Playlists](#)

As we continue to expand and grow digital access to our programs and [teacher resources](#) we've begun expanding our video collection as well. In this vein we've spent some time organizing, adding, and creating playlists on our YouTube channel to facilitate learning and exploring local history through videos created by various community partners and organizations.

Our staff have added over 100 videos to more than 20 themed playlists on our channel exploring the history of Tompkins County; from the [manumission of Peter Webb](#), the [covered bridge in Newfield](#), Steve Henhawk presenting on the [Gayogohono language](#), to archival footage of the [1969 occupation of Willard Straight Hall](#). We'd love to add to and expand to the playlists highlighting the history of specific towns and hamlets; if you have any videos you'd like added to these lists please contact [community@thehistorycenter.net](mailto:community@thehistorycenter.net).

We are hoping to consistently add videos of our presentations and programs to this channel, which you can view at your leisure in our [Programs & Events](#) playlist.

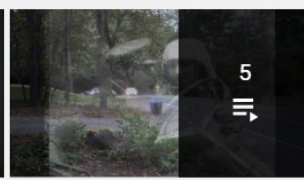
You can also [subscribe to the channel](#) to be notified when new videos are added.



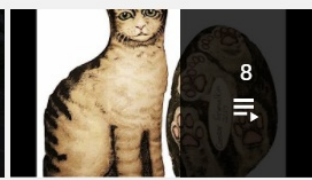
**Newfield NY - History**  
Updated today  
[VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)



**Caroline NY - History**  
Updated today  
[VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)



**Cayuga Heights NY - History**  
Updated today  
[VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)



**Ithaca Kitty**  
Updated today  
[VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)

Explore our playlists for information about the history and rich heritage of Tompkins County



**Archival Footage**  
The History Center in Tompkins Co...  
Updated today  
[VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)



**Programs & Events**  
The History Center in Tompkins Co...  
Updated today  
[VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)



**Exhibits & Artifacts**  
The History Center in Tompkins Co...  
Updated 5 days ago  
[VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)



**Tompkins County History**  
The History Center in Tompkins Co...  
Updated today  
[VIEW FULL PLAYLIST](#)

## Who can you find on HistoryForge?

### 212 Cascadilla Street - The Birthplace of Alex Haley



In preparation for the [unveiling of the Alex Haley historical marker](#) at 212 Cascadilla St, HistoryForge Project Coordinator Eve Snyder dug into the history of the building on [HistoryForge](#) to see who else had lived at [212 Cascadilla Street](#) when Haley was born there.

Alex Haley was born on August 11th 1921, at the time his family rented a room at 212 from the family of [Mr. Lewis T. Payne](#). Mr. Payne was an African-American man who worked as a janitor at Sigma Phi Epsilon from at least 1913 to 1929 (the last time the address of his place of employment appeared in the city directory). His wife [Mazie Madeline Payne](#)

died in a tragic train accident returning home from NYC on December 23rd 1915. Mrs. Payne had been the head designer for the firm of Floersheimer & Co, dealers in women's wear in New York City, and had returned from Paris only three weeks prior to her death. She is buried in Lakeview Cemetery in Ithaca.

The Payne family lived at 212 Cascadilla Street from at least 1913-1931. The Payne family migrated to Ithaca from North or South Carolina (different states are listed on different census years), traveling through Maryland and New York City and arriving in Ithaca by 1913.

#### 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](http://www.thehistorycenter.net)

Phone: 607-273-8284

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

Follow us on social media

@tompkinshistory



**Hours: Thursday-Saturday 10am-5pm, Sunday 10am-3pm\***

*\*Please note all our hours have changed due to COVID-19 and may be adjusted on a week to week basis depending on local health recommendations.*

[Contact Us!](#)