



History Happenings

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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2021 at The History Center...



When we took a step back to reflect, review, and remember our projects over 2021 we found ourselves in deep appreciation for work completed, stories saved, collaborations made, and histories examined.

A lot of work goes on behind the scenes, especially preserving donations that become collections and are later used for exhibits and research opportunities. Many of our staff have worked a hybrid remote and in-person experience . Other staff have balanced our weekly public and in-person Exhibit Hall hours and events with growing virtual engagement and coordination of public safety concerns.

We're very grateful to all of you for joining on this journey to share, preserve, and learn about the many facets of Tompkins County history. We hope you'll join us in new history adventures in 2022!

Thank you for sharing the adventure with us!

- Ben, Donna, Cindy, Eve, Dave, and Zoë (and our many FABULOUS volunteers)

SUPPORT LOCAL HISTORY

Breaking Barriers: Women's Lives & Livelihoods

[Breaking Barriers: Women's Lives & Livelihoods](#) opened on July 2nd, highlighting underrecognized areas of women's history in the region, from the Haudenosaunee influence on early suffragists, the overlooked history of women working, women's social clubs and organizations, to the industries that women worked in during the early 20th century. The exhibit design and curation was done in collaboration with many vital [community partners](#) under the coordination and curatorial oversight of [Design & Support Specialist Cindy Kjellander-Cantu](#).

Over 2,400 visitors have come to explore these exhibits in person, and hundreds more have followed our weekly [#TompkinsWomen](#) history posts on social media, and engaged with our virtual exhibits ['Overcoming Barriers to Vote'](#) and ["Sisters of Change"](#) online, and our monthly [Breaking Barriers](#) programs.

Some highlights of our 2022 Breaking Barriers programming that highlighted women's lives and contributions to U.S. and Tompkins County History.

Enormous thanks goes out to our docents, student workers, and Exhibit Hall volunteers for supporting our open hours all year long! We truly could not do it without you!

Special thanks to: Bill Demo, Ruth Groff (aka Martha Van Rensselaer), Roger Segelken (aka the Flight Instructor), Karen Salino, Rhonda Gilmore, Leanza Kopa, Claire Deng, Kethry Larsen, Trisha Curtin, Rebecca Doyle, Raia Gutman, Cathy Moore, Brigid Higgins, Jonathyn Thornton, Isaiah Gutman, Olivia VF Chaudhury, Hannah Stedman, Sophia Crook, Ian Durso, Kate Delaney, Zach Raphael, Stevie Malenowski, and Zhiyuan Zhou.

[PLEASE REACH OUT IF YOU'D LIKE TO VOLUNTEER WITH US IN 2022!](#)

[Breaking Barriers: Women's Lives & Livelihoods](#) will officially close on Saturday March 12th. The Exhibit Hall will be closed to the public March 13th-31st as we install our new exhibit [reCOUNT: Facing Our Census](#) which will open on Friday, April 1st 2022. Details about the new exhibit will be available in 2022.

[A busy year behind the scenes in the Research Library & Archives](#)

Despite pandemic constraints, 2021 was a rich and productive year in the [Archives and Research Library](#). We served almost 600 people in our library and by email and phone from ten different states across the US, including Florida, Iowa, Washington, Tennessee, Georgia, Minnesota, New Jersey, and more. We created a brief [video honoring the Council for Equality](#), Ithaca's own Civil Rights organization from the 1960s. A generous [grant from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation](#) helped us to revise and update our [archival collections finding aids](#), those essential tools for researchers.

We worked with numerous local partners to research and showcase Tompkins County's diverse history: The [Village of Freeville](#), [United Way](#), [Discover Cayuga Lake](#), [Ithaca Asian American Association](#), [Finger Lakes Land Trust](#), [The Ithaca Voice](#), [WSKG](#), [WRFI](#), [The Cherry Arts](#), [Civic Ensemble](#), [Caroline History Club](#), [St. John's Episcopal Church](#), [Friends of Stewart Park](#), and the [Human Services Coalition](#). We also facilitated research for [Cornell University Historic Preservation and Planning](#) students studying the local built environment.

Donations to the collection this year included materials from [Club Essence](#), an African American women's group from the 1970s to the early 2000s; records of Ithaca's iconic Corner Bookstore; [genealogy materials](#) from numerous local and regional families; stereoviews of local scenes; records of the [New York National Farmers' Union](#); materials from the [Lehman Alternative Community School](#) from one of its own students; an extensive collection of World War II items belonging to [Robert Nobles](#) of Ithaca, and more.

More than a dozen volunteers and interns generously donated their time, effort, and expertise to facilitate all of this essential work. They include Nancy Leeming, Mary Tomlan, George Dillmann, Gene Endres, Elisabeth Shea, Janet Wagner, Alison Maceli, Ashley Miller, Alex Black, Shailja Gaur, Margaret McKinnis, Katherine Esterl, Raia Gutman, Maya Matunis, and Jessica Golden. We are more grateful to them than we can say.

Donna Eschenbrenner
Director of Archives & Research Services
archives@thehistorycenter.net

Explore and learn more about our collections at www.thehistorycenter.net/research

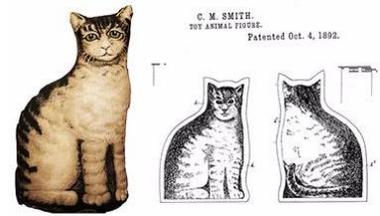
[UPCOMING EVENTS](#)

[January 1st - 18th - Exhibit Hall is CLOSED for Winter Recess.](#) Private Appointments available for both museum and [Research Library](#) during January. Please contact - director@thehistorycenter.net or archives@thehistorycenter.net to arrange.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- [1/22 - It's Alright to Be Woman Theatre - Film Screening w/ Talkback](#) - 1:30-3pm @ the CAP ArtSpace inside the Tompkins Center for History & Culture
- [1/25 - Building the Past: Celebrating Ithaca's Neighborhoods in Photographs](#) - 10am-11am - Virtual Lecture - Registration Required
- ['Women's Wisdom' Documentary Screening & Panel](#) - February TBA
- [Print-a-Kitty \(Reschedule\)](#) - February TBA
- [2/11-2/28 - Ithaca Loves Teachers](#) Events & Programs - TBA
- [3/5 Time to Tune Up Tommy](#) - 3-4:30pm @ Exhibit Hall with the Ithaca Aviation Heritage Foundation
- [3/12 - FINAL day of 'Breaking Barriers: Women's Lives & Livelihoods'](#)

Thanks to the tireless work of volunteer seamstress Deb Siegert, the Downtown Visitors Center, and our new [online store](#), dozens of Ithaca Kitties have found homes across the United States, and [the story of Caesar Grimalkin](#) and his inventors continues to grow! Contact us about [sewing Ithaca](#)



HistoryForge grew, and Grew, and GREW

HistoryForge has been an ongoing project for nearly seven years, with big dreams for increasing community engagement with local history and exciting applications locally and nationally. With grant support from the [National Historical Records & Publications Commission](#) and [South Central Regional Library Council](#) in 2020 and 2021 we were able to make huge strides in growing the Ithaca database, and expanding the project into new communities.

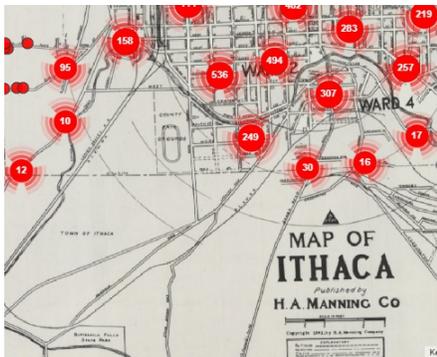


2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Volunteers put in 1,967 volunteer hours to build HistoryForge in the City of Ithaca.

Transcribing and reviewing 19,332 census records, including:

- Completing the [1940 census](#).
- Starting the 1880 census.
- As a result, we now have five complete data sets of the U.S. census for the City of Ithaca spanning 1900-1940. These are all available under Data at [HistoryForge.net](#).



Beginning the process of translating the old street numbering system for houses and buildings in the City of Ithaca to the new system instituted in 1899.

- Adding the old (pre-1899) street numbering system to the building records greatly expands HistoryForge's [building record database](#) creating a central database that connects Ithaca's old street numbers to the new (post-1899). This will:
- Connect the records from the 1880 census to the 1900-1940 census records through the [buildings](#) on HistoryForge.
- Allow Ithaca residents easy access to most street name and numbering changes for their homes so they can more easily trace its history.



In addition, HistoryForge:

- Digitized 359 historic photographs of houses and other buildings from the History Center's archives such as
- The Greek American Fruit Co at [120 W State St.](#)
- The Henry L Hinkley House at [409 E Buffalo St.](#)
- The Woodruff Row Houses at [318-324 N Tioga St.](#)
- The North Side House at [206 Third St.](#)

This project also resulted in the creation of two new collections on New York Heritage Digital Collections as the [Residence & Business Photographs of Tompkins County](#), and the [Southside Community Center Photo Collection](#).

- [Added five new historic maps layers](#) for Tompkins County.
- Collaborated with institutions in other communities to start HistoryForge in [Auburn NY](#), [Elmira NY](#), and [Oberlin OH](#).

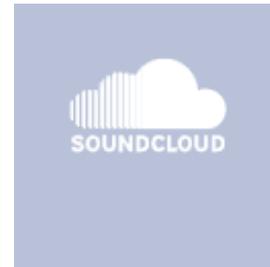
Voices of Our Shared Past - Processing and Improving Accessibility to our Oral History Collections

Concerted efforts in year one of the '[Building Capacity, Creating Sustainability, Growing Accessibility](#)' grant from the Institute of Museum & Library Services and the Museum Association of New York brought huge advancements to the organization and resources of the '[Oral Histories of Tompkins County Collections](#).'

Oral History 2021 Highlights:

- Creation of seven identity/topic themed oral history collections
- Eight project [Oral History Finding Aids](#) created
- Completion of 27 transcripts of recorded interviews
- Creation of a physical transcript collection in the [Archives](#).
- Community partnerships resulting in NEW collections from: [Civic Ensemble's ReEntry Theatre](#) and [Cornell's Public History Initiative Fellowship](#).
- Creation of our first interactive oral history exhibit "[Stop and Listen to HERstory](#)"
- Completion of the 8-year [IAUJC](#) project '[Oral Histories of Holocaust Survivors Who Settled in Tompkins County](#)' and the associated Holocaust Survivors Curriculum Guides

Enormous gratitude goes out to our Oral History volunteers for their work this past year: Raia Gutman, Sophia Shi, Olivia VF Chaudhury, Lily Mueller, and Kethry Larsen.



Oral Histories of Tompkins County by The History Center...

[Read more](#)
soundcloud.com



With Great Work Ethic Comes...Many Grant Projects!

Our work over the past year would not have been possible without the extensive support of multiple grants. We are deeply grateful to the many coordinators from generous organizations whose collaboration made so much of our work possible this year. Special recognition appreciation to our phenomenal director Ben Sandberg for his many late nights spent on grant writing.

For more details on our current grant projects explore thehistorycenter.net/grants.

Our gratitude goes out to our grant coordinators at

Dozens of updated and newly completed Finding Aids on a wide range of

THE GLADYS KRIEBLE DELMAS FOUNDATION





NHPRC for extending our expansive [HistoryForge](#) grant into 2021 to accommodate schedule shifts due to the pandemic in 2020.

collections are now available online at thehistorycenter.net/Finding-Aids and are an invaluable resource for researchers in our archives!

Transcripts, Finding Aids, virtual exhibits, and so much more has been made possible in processing our [Oral History](#) collections thanks to IMLS and Museum Association of New York.



Institute of Museum and Library Services Rescue Plan & Humanities New York Recovery SHARP funds were awarded to fund ongoing collaborative efforts with the Ithaca Asian American Association, Southside Community Center, and Latino Civic Association to review and expand our existing collections on underrepresented communities in Tompkins County history.

We only just scratched the surface of all the work accomplished this year! We'd love to tell you more about our projects, upcoming exhibits, and local history initiatives.

[Please reach out to us!](#)

Local history is made possible through your support and engagement.

GIVE TO LOCAL HISTORY

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
[Gayogohó:nə' Territory](#)

Web: www.thehistorycenter.net

Phone: 607-273-8284

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

Museum Hours: *Wednesday-Saturday 10am-5pm*

Research Library & Archives: By appointment. [Contact](#)

Follow us on social media

[@TompkinsHistory](#)

Follow [#TompkinsWomen](#) for posts from the Breaking Barriers exhibit!



SUPPORT