

## 2022 - Year in Review at The History Center

1 message

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Thu, Jan 12, 2023 at 8:44 AM

### 2022 at The History Center in Tompkins County

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## 2022 at The History Center

As we reflect on our first three years in the Tompkins Center for History & Culture, our story continues to be one of growth, expansion, and discovery. This year we welcomed more visitors, grew our collections, and collaborated with more community partners than ever before. From facing down historic floods, to everyone who joined us for [Vintage Baseball](#) at Taughannock Park, our friends who discovered the handwork of traditional Haudenosaunee crafts, and to every person who spent long hours in our [Research Library](#) delving into our expansive archival collections - WE THANK YOU.

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Working at The History Center has exposed me to so many new perspectives and icons of national and worldwide movements. The environment encourages learning and conversations about these topics that usually go unseen in history books. As someone new to the area, seeing the impact of the region on national history including Prohibition and LGBT groups is impressive.

UNDERGRADUATE FEDERAL  
WORK STUDY PLACEMENT -  
FALL 2022



Some major highlights - We sold the [LAST ITHACA KITTY](#), were voted the

[Best Keeper of Local Knowledge](#) in Ithaca, opened our first ever exhibit on Asian immigrants in Tompkins County, and made immense progress in improving our collections for [accessibility](#) and engagement.

Thank you for sharing the adventure with us! - *Ben, Donna, Cindy, Eve, Dave, and Zoë* (and our many FABULOUS volunteers & student workers!)

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## Our exhibits this year...

**The History Center welcomed over 5,000 visitors to our Exhibit Hall in 2022!** History Center staff hosted over 50 events, and led more than 65 guided tours throughout the year in addition to curating five public exhibits. Our programs explored aspects of local history from Haudenosaunee crafts, to Rural Clock Maps, and speak-easies in downtown Ithaca. What was your favorite local history experience in 2022?



[reCOUNT: Facing our Census](#) was on display at The History Center in Tompkins County from April 1st-December 30th 2022. reCOUNT offered a new way to engage with the census. Instead of an overwhelming set of numbers and data aligned in tables and charts, the exhibit built human connections to **the people behind the statistics**. This unique census exhibit showcased the power and potential growth behind [HistoryForge](#), The History Center's flagship digital interactive platform for understanding local history.

### Short Term - [Exhibit Hall Displays](#)

- [True Crime - A Haunted History Special](#) (On display September & October 2022)
- [Tompkins County Veterans](#) (On display November & December 2022)

### UPCOMING EVENTS MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

#### EXHIBIT HALL IS CLOSED

**January 1st-February 2nd for Winter Recess.** Join us for the public opening of [Knot Sew Fast: Patchwork of Tompkins County](#) on February 3rd for Gallery Night! 5-8pm on the Ithaca Commons.

**January 2023 - [Archives & Research Library](#) open by appointment only.**

**Fri - February 3rd - 5-8pm - [Gallery Night](#)** - Join us for **OPENING NIGHT** of [Knot Sew Fast: Patchwork of Tompkins County!](#)

**January 7th & 21st- [HistoryForge Volunteer Transcription Sessions](#)** - 11am-1pm @Tompkins Center for History & Culture

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#### SAVE THE DATE:

- **2/3/2023 - [Knot Sew Fast: Patchwork of](#)**

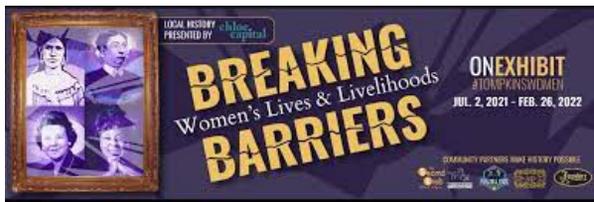
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## [Unfolding: A Timeline of Sexual Assault Activism in](#)

[Tompkins County](#) - in collaboration with the [Advocacy Center of Tompkins County](#) - was on display for May & June 2022 in the CAP ArtSpace located inside the [Tompkins Center for History & Culture](#). Unfolding featured [Clothesline Project](#) artwork by

survivors of sexual and domestic/relationship abuse in Tompkins County displayed alongside a timeline of victim/survivor support and prevention efforts in Tompkins from the 1970's to the present day.

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[Breaking Barriers: Women's Lives & Livelihoods](#) opened July 2021 and closed in March 2022. *Breaking Barriers: Women's Lives & Livelihoods* explored the lives of women in public and private spheres across the centuries through six interactive exhibits: Haudenosaunee Influence on Women's Rights ([Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation](#)), The Overlooked History of Women Working ([HistoryForge](#)), Serial Style: The Business of Being Irhttps://www.tcpl.org/ene Castle ([Wharton Studio Museum](#) and [Cornell Fashion + Textiles Collection](#)), Like-Minded Neighbors: Women's Social Clubs and Organizations, and Overcoming Barriers to Vote: Woman Suffrage Movement in Tompkins County.

## [Tompkins County](#) -

OPENING DAY at The History Center

- [Ithaca Loves Teachers - February 16th-28th](#) - The History Center will be offering its **annual local history book give-away, one-on-one consults** (by request) for how local educators can integrate our **history resources and exhibits in their classrooms**
- **2/23 - Open Spaces Cider tasting** for teachers at the Tompkins Center.
- **February TBA - Antique Quilt Appraisal** (By Appointment) with Cathy Klimaszewski
- **3/3 - Gallery Night - Vintage Sewing Machine Demo** with Wendy Skinner of SewGreen @ Tompkins Center
- **3/16 - Introduction to Modern Sewing Machines** with Cady Fontana at the TCPL MakerSpace (Registration required)
- **3/25 - CHAT - Women of Newfield** with Rosemary Rowland

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## [HistoryForge - A Year of Discovery & Expansion](#)

## *In 2022 HistoryForge Volunteers...*

- Transcribed the [1880 census](#) for the City of Ithaca
- Determined the old [pre-1899] street numbers for many of [Ithaca's buildings](#) and added them to our building records
- Began transcribing the 1950 census in the City of Ithaca
- Started expanding HistoryForge into [rest of the county](#)

## *HistoryForge by the Numbers*

Total records transcribed between January 2022-12/23/22

**1950 Census:** 10,965 (Will be available in 2023)

**City of Ithaca:** [5,611](#)

**Town of Ithaca-Forest Home:** [265](#)

**Caroline:** [1,885 \(completed\)](#)

**Newfield:** [748](#)

**Dryden:** [974](#) (Will be available in 2023)

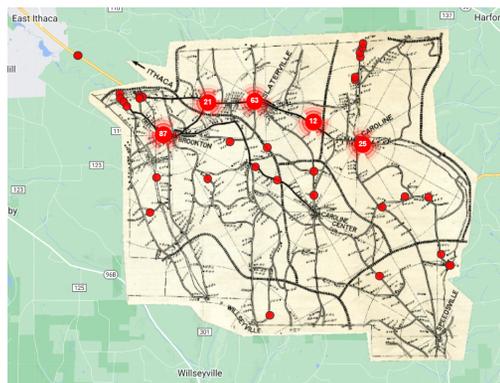
**Ulysses:** [1,482](#) (Will be available in 2023)

## ***HistoryForge Tompkins: Taking history sleuthing to a whole new level!***

One of our long-term goals, expanding [HistoryForge into the rest of Tompkins County](#), has become a reality through our recent [NEH grant](#).

Because house numbers were not adopted by most of the communities in the county until the late 1950s, in addition to transcribing census records, HistoryForge workers will need to determine the addresses of rural residents from those historic censuses in order to map them.

To determine how best to do this we started in the [Town of Caroline](#) (scroll map to view), with the help of the members of the [Caroline History Association](#). The [1940](#) and [1950](#) censuses for the Town of Caroline have been transcribed and volunteers from the [Caroline History Association](#) are currently working on the 1920 census.



In addition to Caroline, transcription of the 1950 census has started for the towns of Dryden, Ithaca, Newfield, and Ulysses. If you would like to volunteer to transcribe the 1950 census in Tompkins County please fill out a volunteer form here: <https://tompkins.historyforge.net/volunteer>

To see the records that have been transcribed from the 1950 census so far: <https://tompkins.historyforge.net>

- Select [Data](#) on the top right of the page
- From the dropdown menu select [1950 US Census](#)
- This will show you the results for the entire county. To see what has been done in a specific locality:
- Select [Filter](#) (above the results on the left)
- Then click [Select field name](#)
- Select [Locality](#) (the first option in the dropdown menu)
- And check the box for one of the towns listed above.

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## Research & Preservation Work in the Archives

2022 was an amazing year for our [Archives and Research Library](#), with **more than 700 users making the most of our archival resources**, as well as extraordinary donations for the [collections](#). We served people from more than 12 different states researching topics as varied as [genealogy](#), local commercial history, flooding throughout the county, Haudenosaunee history and culture, the Underground Railroad, local transportation and social justice, and the history of Ithaca City Cemetery, to name just a few.



### ***Research Projects***

A high point of our year was the successful resumption of our intensive research initiative with Ithaca College students after a two-year hiatus due to Covid. Almost every year since 2005 we have conducted innovative research projects with [Prof. Michael Smith and his \*History of American Environmental Thought\* classes](#). Students are taught how to be historians, and given in-depth introductions to our [archival collections](#) and guidance on best practices for researching. Focusing on various topics of local environmental significance such as energy use, water concerns, public health, agricultural history, and industrial development, students did research in our archival collections and then prepared a final project outlining their findings.

We also worked with a second Ithaca College class based on the same research model. This new group's focus was on local history, exploring the Ithaca community in a study of *Regenerate History*, that is, the kind of history that the community might draw upon to help it move forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We were delighted to be engaging with Ithaca College students again in this fun and fruitful research process and look forward to continuing this research collaboration in the coming years.

## ***Donations***

Dozens of donations to the archives included the history of [Ithaca's Tang family](#) and their storied restaurant Asiatic Garden; also a rich collection of correspondence from the [Scott family of Lansing](#). Our most significant donations this year were pieces from the [collection of artist George Rhoads](#), and materials from local environmentalists.

[George Rhoads](#), painter and sculptor, was best known as the creator of numerous "audiokinetic" sculptures, or ball machines, whimsical moving sculptures that have become popular in science museums, airports, shopping malls, corporate headquarters, and hospitals around the world, including here at [Ithaca's Sciencenter](#). Part art, part engineering marvels, these amusing and fascinating works have engaged millions. We are working with family members and colleagues of Rhoads to document his life and work, and we have so far received numerous archival materials including business records, photographs, paintings and other artwork, as well as the sculptor's plans for his creations. More is to come in the new year.

Thousands of activists worked hard to prevent hydrofracking in Tompkins County and



greater New York, and we have been working with local luminaries from this group to document their work. Several of them have donated archival collections, including reports, photographs, lawn signs, posters, correspondence and more highlighting the groups and individuals and their hard work in the lead up to New York State's ban of hydrofracking in 2014. We look forward to continuing our work with local "[fracktivists](#)" in the coming year.

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## ***Our Thanks to our Grant Funders!***

Our work in preserving Tompkins County history is made possible through our generous local history family, and through specific grant funded projects and initiatives. In 2022 our largest projects were supported by the following organizations and foundations:

- [HistoryForge: Mapping Census Data to Visualize Local History](#) - Grant coordinated by the National Endowment for the Humanities, special recognition for our project under the '[A More Perfect Union](#)' initiative.
- [Preserving Community Oral Histories](#) - Grant coordinated by the American Historical Association
- [Building Capacity, Creating Sustainability, Growing Accessibility](#) - Grant coordinated by the Museum Association of New York
- [Finding Aid Project](#) - Grant awarded by the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation
- Three [Recovery & Rescue Plan Grants](#) - Awarded through the New York State Council of the Arts, Humanities New York, and Institute of Museum & Library Sciences



THE GLADYS KRIEBLE DELMAS FOUNDATION



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

AMERICAN  
HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION

The History Center in Tompkins County  
Exhibit Hall, Research Library & Archives  
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**Web:** [thehistorycenter.net](http://thehistorycenter.net)  
**Phone:** 607-273-8284  
**Email:** Staff emails can be found here  
**Museum Hours:** Wednesday-Saturday 10am-5pm  
CLOSED JANUARY 2023  
**Research Library & Archives:**  
By appointment Contact