

History Happenings

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April 2020 - *We've got a new newsletter look! Let us know how you like it!*

A Message from Ben Sandberg

On behalf of everyone at The History Center, we hope our newsletter finds you and your families healthy and safe. Like each of you, the quickly evolving spread of COVID-19 has reshaped every aspect of [The History Center in Tompkins County](#). We've had to cancel exciting programs, postpone and readjust exhibits, and adapt our finances to weather the sudden impacts and community change. Thankfully, our incredible board and staff have embraced our new world with ingenuity, flexibility, and a commitment to our local friends and family. They have exemplified the community characteristics that make Tompkins County so special. I cannot fully express my deep appreciation for the entire group of volunteers, staff, and community members who have supported the museum through this extraordinary time. Although it's always important to express gratitude, it is more important now than ever before. Thank you to everyone who has offered advice and guidance, charitable contributions, and words of hope. We count ourselves lucky to have so many caring people here in Tompkins County.

Unfortunately, we are only beginning to understand the impacts of our current health and economic crises. Our friends at the [Museum Association of New York \(MANY\)](#) have been diligently working to understand these impacts on museums across the state, and advocate on our behalf. In blunt terms, museums face an uncertain future. In New York State, all museums are closed indefinitely, thousands of staff have been let go, and more will assuredly follow. At the national level, we have heard shocking estimates that up to 30% of American Museums will not be able to reopen after our current crisis has been resolved. The uncertainty of what comes next will have deep and dramatic impacts on our organization, our industry, and the arts as a field.

*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 on [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. We will be adding activities to our [History at Home](#) activity series for school age children every week. Contact Julia Taylor at eightsquare@thehistorycenter.net with any questions.
- 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 Cindy Kjellander-Cantu at design@thehistorycenter.net

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. Stay safe, stay connected, and wash your hands!

With deep affection,



*Ben Sandberg - Executive Director
The History Center in Tompkins County*

Upcoming Events

All planned events for are postponed until further notice in accordance with guidelines from New York State officials for community health and safety. We will look to re-scheduling programs when local officials announce it is safe to to re-open public spaces and host community events. The Tompkins Center for History & Culture building remains closed to the public.


Visit www.thehistorycenter.net/events for more information

Youth Education

History is everywhere, including at home! Director of Youth Education - **Julia Taylor**, has been hard at work re-imagining what engaging youth with local history can look like during this unprecedented time. Over the coming weeks, we'll be sharing fun activities for kids of all ages to do at home. We'll post these "History at Home" activities on our [website](#) and on social media (@tompkinshistory) as they become available.

Our first collection "[All About Tommy](#)" is a series of 4 activities that can be done at

Help with New Archival Collection



THE HISTORY CENTER
in Tompkins County

Requests Help in Documenting Covid-19 Impacts in Tompkins County

VISIT
WWW.THEHISTORYCENTER.NET/RESEARCH TO
LEARN MORE

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](#)

home to engage children with the history of the Tommy Plane on display in our Exhibit Hall, which was originally built in Ithaca by the Thomas Morse Aviation Corporation around 1918.

History At Home Activities

Last Month at The History Center...



Our first annual **"It's Time to Tune-up Tommy"** event on March 10th drew over 30 people to see Don Funke and other Ithaca Aviation Heritage Foundation (IAHF) conservators pickle Tommy's engine.

Heritage Ambassador & History Center docent Roger Segelken performed his role as a living history Thomas Morse Aviation Corporation flight instructor (he has been developing this role for our elementary school field trips). IAHF conservators then removed the propeller and cowl from the front of the plane, drained all the existing oil in the engine, and then re-filled it.

Don Funke who spearheaded the restoration explained in detail many aspects of the 14 year restoration process that went into making Tommy flight worthy again.

YOUR OPINION MATTERS!

VOTE 

Community Assistance with Upcoming Exhibits

We had planned a museum wide switch in our display exhibits to a series we are calling **"Breaking Barriers: Women's Lives and Livelihoods."** This museum wide exhibit change was scheduled for this summer, however due to public closure of the museum space and cancellation of programs we aren't able to generate some of the community content we had planned to become part of the exhibits later this year.

There are two exhibits in particular we would like to have community input for. **"Why Vote?"** will be displayed in tandem with an exhibit honoring the centennial ratification of the 19th amendment, which granted white women in America the right to vote. We have created digital ballots to collect answers from the community on why they choose to vote, or choose not to. These ballots will be on display in the museum through the fall election, and later this collection will become a part of The History Center archives. These ballots are available in JPG and fillable PDF form at www.thehistorycenter.net/events. Please send completed ballots to design@thehistorycenter.net

Digital Ballots

"Women Working" is a new exhibit in which we'll display the history of women's work lives in this region over the centuries, and we'd love to include your pictures!

What does working from home (not limited to paid/compensated labor) look like for you now? Do you have any pictures from your regular workspace for comparison? What changes or modifications have you made, are there challenges or improvements? Send us your reflections and pictures to design@thehistorycenter.net. In addition to potentially being included in the museum exhibit later this year, these images will become part of The History Center archival collection about the impacts of Covid-19 in



[HistoryForge from Home!](#)

Looking for something history-related to do while social-distancing? Have you heard of our digital history project, [HistoryForge](#)? 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.



MUSEUM ASSOCIATION
OF NEW YORK

ADVOCACY ALERT!

Urge Your Legislators to
Include Museums in COVID-19 Relief

The [Museum Association of New York](#) is working with the [American Alliance of Museums](#) (AAM) and other museum associations to make the case for museums in this time of crisis. New York State's museums contribute \$5.37 billion to the NYS economy and support over 61,000 jobs. Museums of all sizes and disciplines are closed. Everyone will experience extensive loss of earned income from restricted attendance and canceled events.

Please call your Congressional delegation today and ask for at least \$4 billion for nonprofit museums in COVID-19 (coronavirus) economic relief legislation to provide emergency assistance through June.

Tom Reed II
202-225-3161

Representative for New York's 23rd congressional district
Since Jan 3, 2013 (next election in 2020)
Republican
@RepTomReedOfficial

Donate Directly to the History Center Here

SOCIAL DISTANCING MAKING YOU A LITTLE STIR CRAZY?

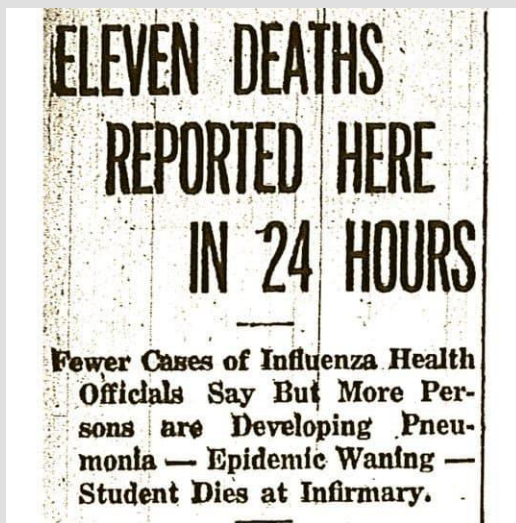
Take a self-guided PocketSights Tour of Tompkins County!

DOWNLOAD THE **POCKETSIGNS 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 - March 20th 2020



How Ithaca Responded to the Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918

By Donna Eschenbrenner

The History Center published this article in the Ithaca Journal in 2018, on the 100th anniversary of the Spanish influenza epidemic, and we have been asked to reissue it as people worldwide grapple with the dangers of coronavirus. In an effort to protect our staff, volunteers and patrons, The History Center is now closed, but we are still working to preserve and share local history.

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

Follow us on social media
[@tompkinshistory](#)

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*



Contact Us!