

## Schuyler County Historical Society 2024 Annual Report

*The Schuyler County Historical Society is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, membership organization with the mission to collect documents and artifacts related to the history of Schuyler County and the area and to ensure their preservation and availability for present and future generations. The Historical Society has offices in its Brick Tavern Museum at 108 N. Catharine St., Montour Falls. The Society's other facilities are the Wickham Rural Life Center, adjacent to the Brick Tavern Museum; the Lee School Museum at 1952 Route 14 South, Montour Falls; and the Lawrence Chapel and Cemetery, 2770 Route 228, Alpine. The Brick Tavern Museum and Wickham Rural Life Center are open year-round, Tuesday through Friday (with evening hours on Thursday). Saturday hours are added in July through October. Admission to the museums is free. The Lawrence Chapel is rented to the public for events.*

### FINANCES

The Historical Society is financially supported by membership dues, general donations, fundraisers and grants. The 2024 budget totaled \$86,142, which included funds for the executive director of museums, who works 35 hours per week and a Museum Assistant at 20 hours per week. The Historical Society received a \$25,000 Tourism Assistance Program grant for 2024 general operations. The TAP grant is managed by the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce. In 2024, the Historical Society received financial support from all eight towns in Schuyler County and all four villages.

### MEMBERSHIP

2023 membership: 330 members, including individuals, businesses and other organizations. Of the total, 57 were first-time members. Supporter – 144, Individual – 14, Family – 52, Business – 15, Supporter – 56, Benefactor/Lifetime – 5, In kind – 44

### FACILITIES

- The application for the Lawrence Chapel to be placed on the State and National Historic Registry was submitted for the September meeting of NYS Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation. Approval for both
- The Board of Trustees spent a significant amount of time cleaning up, clearing and working on the landscaping at Lawrence Chapel and the Lee School.

### PROGRAMMING

- "Watkins Glen: 75 Years of Road Racing," exhibit March 1, 2024 – October 31, 2024.
- "A Stich in Time: Holiday Embroidery" exhibit November 2024 – December 20, 2024.
- Talkin' History, "The Erie Canal" by Dr. Gary Emerson, January 14, 2024
- Talkin' History, "The Chemung Canal" by Dr. Gary Emerson, February 4, 2024
- 1920s Eclipse Party! – Clute Park Events Center, April 8, 2024
- Annual Membership Meeting, April 20. The brief meeting was followed by JC Argetsinger talking about the impact of motor racing in Schuyler County. Premier "Watkins Glen: 75 Years of Road Racing," video.
- *Hattie's War* – by author Peter Serko, May 11, 2024
- The Grande Tour! – 50th Anniversary of the Brick Tavern Museum, June 1, 2024
- Walkin' History! – Watkins Glen Historic Walking Tours, thrice a month, June through August.
- "Seneca Lake Waterway Historic Tour," & Waterfront Festival, June 15 2024.
- "Discovering Whites Gates in Cayuta, NY" by Michael Ariano, July 13, 2024.
- Hector Family-A-Fair information table, August 3, 2024.
- Grand Prix Festival table, September 6, 2024.
- "Lafayette Park: History & Concert!" September 8, 2024.
- Walkin' History! - Burdett Historic Walking Tour Double Header, September 16, 2024.
- Watkins Glen Racing History Walk, October 5, 2024.
- Lee School Museum & Brick Tavern Museum Open House, October 5, 2024.
- Montour Falls Harvest Festival table, and walks, October 5, 2024.
- Montour Falls Cemetery Walk, by Gary Emerson, October 26, 2024.

- Brick Tavern Museum open for Small Business Saturday, November 30, 2024.
- Annual Holiday Open House at the Brick Tavern Museum, December 3, 2024.

## **ADDITIONAL OUTREACH**

- Historical Society members receive the quarterly Journal, a collection of essays about Schuyler County history, and the quarterly Vista, a newsletter about Historical Society activities. Complimentary copies of the publications are distributed to state lawmakers; village and town offices and historians; the Schuyler County Legislature; the Bradford, Odessa-Montour and Watkins Glen school libraries; regional historical societies; and a variety of area organizations.

## **VISITORS, ATTENDEES, RESEARCHERS and VOLUNTEERS**

- Please see the attached sheet for details on the numbers for 2023.

## **COLLABORATIONS and PARTNERSHIPS**

- The Historical Society continues to collaborate with Finger Lakes Media, owner of the Watkins Review & Express, to digitize and make available to the public issues of the Watkins Express, Watkins Review, and Watkins Review & Express.
- The Historical Society Executive Director sits on the executive committee of the Seneca Lake Scenic ByWay.
- During 2024, the Historical Society partnered with the Village of Watkins Glen and the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce to present, "A 1920s Eclipse Party!"
- The Historical Society continues to partner with Montour Falls & Watkins Glen Libraries whenever possible for programming.
- The Historical Society partnered with WGI, IMRRC, and CRL Photography for "Watkins Glen: 75 Years of Road Racing."
- The Historical Society reignited our partnerships with OMCS and WGCS for educational programming.
- The Historical Society hosted a teenager in the Schuyler County Youth Bureau's Summer Youth Employment Program.
- We also supported through our programming: Sunset View Creamery, Fulkerson's Wintery, Havana Glen State Park, Lake Grove Park, Logan Landmark, the Montour Falls Fire Department, Seneca Lake Events Center at Clute Park

## **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS**

- We implemented a new Strategic Plan in April of 2024.
- We received \$792,000 from the NY Forward Montour Falls grant for the \$1.3 million capital project. We will break ground in late fall 2025.
- We received a grant from the Community Foundation to build a handicapped-accessible ramp into the Lee School and a small grant from Watkins Glen Montour Rotary for festival set ups.

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES and STAFF**

President Barbara Cullen Chapman (2024-2026)  
Vice President Jane Leszyk (2023-2025)

Secretary Joyce Hill (2023-2025)  
Treasurer Eric Gergel (2024-2026)

Trustee Kelly Povoro (2024-2025)  
Trustee Gary Emerson (2024-2027)\*  
Trustee Jean Hubsch (2024-2025)  
Trustee Ennie Lattin (2023-2026)

Trustee David Lisk (2023-2026)  
Trustee Kyle Colunio (2024-2027)  
Trustee James Jensen (2024-2027)  
Trustee Marty Evans (2023-2026)

Executive Director of Museums Heather O'Grady-Evans  
Museum Assistant Dawn Foster

\*Gary Emerson is Schuyler County Historian



## Schuyler County Historical Society Visitation/Social Media Data Analysis Yearly Comparisons

Year	BTM Visitors	Events	Researchers	Research Requests	Volunteer Hours	Website	FB/IG	You Tube
2015	396	68	111	34				
2016	468	246	137	52				
2017	342	331	43	26		NA	NA	NA
2018	183	197	27	11		NA	NA	NA
2019	650	850	155	77	1800	NA	NA	NA
2020	330	340	76	71	900	NA	NA	NA
2021	610	350	116	103	1650	1500	NA	1837
2022	525	1000	75	80	2000 Value of 1 Hour: \$35.71	1800	Reach - 79,000 Followers - 3725 New - 400 Visits - 5,500	423
2023	1003	1025	121	124	2222 250 ** Value of 1 Hour: \$37.29	Views - 3,666 Visits - 1,461	Reach - 89,600 Followers - 4,147 New - 413 Visits - 7,666	1379
2024^	1308	1645 215* *students	156	135	2566^ 250** Value of 1 Hour: \$37.29	Views - 12,259 Visits - 5,212	Views - 211.2K/2.7K Reach - 131.6K/400 Followers - 4,256/266	1594
2025								

^ The 2024 numbers are calculated through the end of 12/31/2024.

\*\* Hours volunteered to make items for raffle and sale in the gift shop

Notes:

**I. 2015-2022 Average Visitation: 438**

2024: 1308 – 198% above average and 30% over 2023

**II. 2015-2022 Average Event Attendance: 298**

2024: 1860 Up 524% over the average and up 82% over 2023

☞ Talks: 327

☞ Walks: 320

☞ Receptions/Open Houses: 185

☞ Events: Eclipse, Annual Meeting: 238

☞ Festivals: 850

☞ Schools: 215

**III. 2015-2022 Average Researchers: 93**

2024: 156 up 68% over the average and up 29% over 2023

**IV. 2015-2022 Average Research requests: 57**

2024: 135 up 137% over the average and up 9% over 2023

**V. 2019-2023 Average Website Visitation: 2,322**

2024: 12,259 up 428% over the average and up 234% from last year\*

\*Website visitations resulting in more than 5 clicks/minutes of interaction was 5,212

**VI. Social Media Data**

2022: Facebook Followers - 3,725

2023: Facebook Followers – 4,147

2024: Facebook Followers – 4,266

2022: IG Followers - 25

2023: IG Followers – 253

2024: IG Followers – 266

2022: YouTube Video Views – 423

2023: YouTube Video Views – 1,379

2024: YouTube Video Views – 1594

**VII. Average Annual Volunteer Hours: 1,714**

2024: 2566 up 50% over the average and up 15.5% over last year