



**Black Rock**  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Black Rock  
Riverside  
Grant Amherst  
West Hertel

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## The Year in Review-2016

by Doreen DeBoth, Chair

Happy New Year to all our members and friends! This has been such an exciting and productive year for our museum that I decided to update our readers on all of our accomplishments, events and memorable moments that have taken place throughout the year.

Remembering the Blizzard of 77, City Ice & Fuel Co. that was located on Amherst Street, the Buffalo Skating Club and speed skater Katherine "Kit" Klein, and the Ski Dek Center that was on Tonawanda Street were featured in the year's first newsletter.

Michele Graves, exhibits coordinator, installed a colorful display of antique Valentine cards, hearts, vintage handkerchiefs and other related items in February, followed by a Presidents Display that included photos, medals, books, articles and miniature models of all the presidents.



These displays coincided with an exhibit of winners from our first annual "Art as History" contest with grades 6-8 students

from North Park Academy. This is one of two projects that we engage local schools in and introduces students to the important role that art has played throughout history. It also gives students the opportunity to recreate local historical events for greater understanding of their community. Topics included the Black Rock Canal and Lock, Curtiss-Wright Aero & Motor Co., and Railroads.



Left to right: North Park Academy art teacher Dan Bala, Tyrecese Honeycutt, 1st place), Jace Campbell (2nd place), Arianna Hooks (3rd place), Dominic Holland (hon. mention), and Zayvion Jones (hon. mention).

Education and working with area schools is a priority of the BRHS and we thank the West Side Youth Development Coalition at Buffalo State College for funding the project.

An exhibit of all entries followed and despite blizzard conditions on a snowy Sunday afternoon, there was a great unexpected turnout.



Pictured here is Dan Moyer 6th grade special ed teacher at North Park Academy and daughter at the 1st Art as History exhibit that opened Jan.16, 2016.

An Easter display was featured in March/April that included painted eggs from Poland,



vintage hats and glassware, books and handmade figures from Poland. Following this, the St. Patrick and Fenian exhibits continued through July.



Plans for the *150th Commemoration of the Fenian Invasion of Canada* began in October of 2015, meeting at our museum with other cultural groups and historians. We were invited to participate in the *Old First Ward Neighborhood Parade*, had a banner made, and had a great time marching and meeting many people.



Left to Right: Mary Ann Kedron, Evelyn Vossler, Doug Kohler (back), Doreen DeBoth, Richard DeBoth, William Butler, III, and Debbie Lombardo.

With Fenian commemoration plans in full gear, our 2nd quarterly newsletter included a history of the Fenian Invasion. An artifact in the collection is usually featured in every newsletter. The history of Push Ball, the forgotten sport, was featured and a photo of the Push Ball Trophy the Black Rock Cycle Club won in 1913 was included.

In April the Fenian committee held a panel discussion hosted by the Buffalo History Museum: *The Free Ireland Perspective on the Fenian Invasion*, with Timothy Bohan (Historian/Author), James Hill (Niagara Parks Commission), Dr. Timothy Madigan (St. John Fisher College), James O'Brien (Ancient Order of Hibernians, AOH), William Patterson

(AOH), Dr. Bridgette Slavin (Medaille College) with moderators: Douglas Kohler (Erie County Historian) and Edward Patton (Buffalo Irish Genealogical Society, BIGS).

Later that month a lecture: *Fenianism and the Centennial of the Easter Uprising*, was given by Edward Patton (BIGS) and Craig Speers (AOH) to a crowded audience.

As the summer boating season was getting ready to open, we held our first fundraiser of the year, *Breaking the Ice* that was held in early May at Rohalls Corner on Amherst Street.

May also became a memorable month for us as we were asked to host a luncheon for the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Criona Ni Dhalaigh who requested to meet the members of the Fenian committee. Arranged by Senator Tim Kennedy's office, the museum was packed with public officials and historians.



Following lunch, a ceremony at the Fenian Monument took place and the Lord Mayor presented a scroll to me on behalf of the BRHS. This was a great honor and a similar event closely followed as we got closer to the Fenian Commemorations in June.

The Consul General of Ireland, Barbara Jones was our special guest for the culmination



of our months in the planning of the final Fenian events. She arrived for the *"Muster the Troops!" Hool-ey* at the Buffalo Irish Center on Friday evening, shook hands with everyone, and had pizza, wings and Guinness that were provided by Senator Kennedy.



Rush the Growler and Union Volunteers Fife and Drum Corps entertained with songs and music from the era.

The Fenian commemorations continued the following day with a **Living History** with the Buffalo 7th Regiment, Irish Army of Liberation and a **Parade** beginning at Amherst St., moving up Niagara St. to the Fenian monument at the foot of Hertel with Barbara Jones and Tim Kennedy as grand marshals.

At the ceremony, speeches were given and Senator Kennedy presented me, on behalf of the



*BRHS members and Mark Schroeder, Comptroller march up Niagara Street to the Fenian Monument.*

BRHS with a Legislative Proclamation recognizing the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fenian Invasion of 1866 on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and its historical importance and “to express the highest admiration for the Black Rock Historical Society, and for all the individuals who have worked to bring proper attention to a place and time which merits recognition in the great panorama of the history of our State and Nation.” Later a wreath of green and yellow flowers was tossed into the river and a reception for all followed at the museum.



*Barbara Jones, Consul General of Ireland*

Awards for the 3rd Annual **History in Your Neighborhood** essay contest were presented to students at Riverside HS in May. The purpose of the contest is to give students the opportunity to become familiar with local historical events and improve and enhance their writing skills.



*Brittany Mecca (vice principal, Ella Dunne (principal) with 3rd place winner Stephanie Santiago, 1st place winner Emilie Vitaris, Octavia Tillman, Jasmine Smith, 2nd place winner Tyrae Winger, and Halle Washington (absent from photo- Daryana Martinez-Morales).*

The theme for our exhibit at the **Discover Amherst Street Festival's** headquarters in June was Raggedy Ann & Andy, celebrating their 100th year. The exhibit then moved to the museum.



The **4th of July Riverside Parade** is always fun and some of our members marched and handed out our walking and biking historic trail maps to the viewers standing along Tonawanda St.

Our 3rd Quarter Newsletter included articles on the history of the Black Rock Cycle Club, the history of Bicycling in Buffalo, and a recap of Fenian commemorations.

In August we participated in the first **D District Community Day** in Riverside Park with an exhibit of vintage roller and ice skates that was enjoyed by all ages. We also had coloring for kids and adults, candy, fun tattoos and a variety of games.

This was our first year participating in the **Celtic Festival** in Olcott, NY and it was a great opportunity to connect with other groups and individuals. During the two days we were there, we had approximately 300 people stop at our tent to see our exhibit and talk about the BRHS.



*William Butler, III, volunteer and Michele Graves, exhibits coordinator at the Celtic Festival in Olcott.*

October featured the 2nd annual **Rocktoberfest** organized by the Grant Amherst Business Association, that included a shuttle bus to take patrons to a number of taverns in the area. Before keg tapping that began the event, other groups were invited to display their wares.



*Mary Ann Kedron, president of the BRR Alliance and Doreen DeBoth, Chair of the BRHS in vintage German attire at Rocktoberfest.*



1902 Niagara Street Buffalo  
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**Museum Hours:**

Friday 10:00am-4:00pm  
Saturday 11:00am-3:00pm

For any inquiries please contact us  
at  
[info@blackrockhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@blackrockhistoricalsociety.com)

**Find us online!**

[www.blackrockhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.blackrockhistoricalsociety.com)



**The BRHS**

**Seeks Volunteers**

Your expertise, interest and/or love of history are good reasons to volunteer.

Students, seniors and everyone in-between are welcome to volunteer in various areas of interest: office/computer, education, outreach, maintenance, etc.

You can strengthen your community, learn about preservation, and meet new people. Every volunteer can make a difference. To volunteer, contact us via email on our website or call 716-510-4007.

**Artifact Donations**

If you think you may have items or photos that tell the story of our area. you can bring them to the museum, or we will gladly pick them up ( call 716-510-4007).

**We are now seeking Erie Canal related items for 200th anniversary displays.**

The first speaker in our *Fall Speaker Series* was Rick Jamison, Councillor of the Seneca Nation who discussed the Unity Island name change and how devastating any derogatory terminology can be to whole nations of people. He was followed by historian and author Edward Patton who showed high resolution photos of Black Rock from the 1930's to a packed audience. Ending the series was Warren Hoy, manager at DuPont's Yerkes Plant on River Road. He related the history of the plant, showed samples of their products and talked about their plans for the future.

After working throughout the year to get a new *Unity Island* historic marker replaced, the installation ceremony finally took place on November 4th thanks to funding from Seneca Nation President Maurice John, US Congressman Brian Higgins, County Legislator Peter Savage III, and North District Councilmember Joseph Golombek Jr.. It was a memorable event that will begin to repair the damage of the island's previous name that was disrespectful and bigoted towards all Native women.



A museum cannot function without funding, therefore we launched a *Founding 500* fundraiser project. Letters were sent to approximately 300 businesses in the area asking them to donate \$100. In return, they would receive a ceramic plaque designating them as a founding member that can be displayed at their business. We also held the last fundraiser of the year in November at Resurgence Brewery on Niagara St.

Attendance in November increased dramatically with tours of students from the Buffalo Arts Studio's Jump Start Program and two groups from Riverside HS.



*One of the groups from Riverside HS on a tour of the museum.*



*Left to right: Doreen DeBoth, Delia DeLeone Olmo (3rd place), Tiara Pagan (2nd place), Saw Freeman (1st place), Kerry Chiado (art teacher), Jazmin Mendez (hon. mention), Ella Dunne (principal), Bawi Kahn (hon. Mention) at Riverside HS.*

The year concluded with an awards ceremony for our *2nd annual Art as History* contest at Riverside HS. Another will take place in late January at Our Lady of Black Rock. 'Envisioning the Scajaquada' was the topic and students made a tremendous effort to address the problems surrounding the creek. The contest was sponsored by the Ronald McDonald Foundation and the West Side Youth Development Coalition. An exhibit of works from both schools is currently on exhibit and will continue through February 28, 2017.

As you can see, we've had a wonderful productive and very busy year thanks to our dedicated volunteers and supporters. We look forward to new events, increased membership, an expanded collection, and will continue to preserve the history of Northwest Buffalo. We also have a new website where upcoming events, photos, etc. are available.