



Black Rock
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

3rd Quarter Newsletter July-September 2020

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Chartered by the Regents of the University of the State of New York

Our Museum in Action by William Butler

Museum Reopening. After our nearly six-month closure, the BRHS museum reopened to the public on September 10 with new COVID-19 safety procedures in place. We have returned to our normal visiting hours – Thursdays and Fridays, 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. – with group visits and tours by appointment only. In compliance with our reopening safety plan, we can only allow four visitors in the museum at a time and all visitors will be required to wear face coverings and practice safe social distancing. In addition, all visitors will be asked to complete a COVID-19 self-screening questionnaire. To welcome our visitors back, we are planning a grand reopening event in conjunction with our Art Off Pause fundraiser on Friday, October 30, 2020 at 5 – 8 p.m. At this time, guests will be able to experience our new exhibits as well view artworks that are available for auction. Light refreshments will be served. We thank you for your patience and look forward to seeing you soon.

Annual Fundraiser. Please support our museum by participating in our 2020 annual fundraiser. This year, we will hold a virtual online art auction that begins on October 1 and will culminate with the announcement of winning bids on November 5, 2020. Thanks to the generosity of several talented local artists, 30 unique works of art in various media will be available to the highest bidder. The artworks along with more information on the bidding process are detailed on our website: www.blackrockhistoricalsociety.com.



Black Rock Love, Donated by Kevin Bowen

Museum Exhibits. Museum Curator Doreen DeBoth wasted no time in reorganizing and reconfiguring our museum exhibits during the unscheduled pause in our normal museum operations. With the help of volunteers Jeanine Baran, Doug and Richard DeBoth, and Rebecca Torres, Doreen has greatly

improved both the brightness and educational value of our displays. Through the addition of a fresh coat of paint, new shelving and storage space, and illustrative historic narratives, our exhibits detail the accounts of the settlement of early Black Rock, the trauma and heroism of the War of 1812, and the construction of the Erie Canal. Visitors will also be able to view artifacts and documents from heroism of the War of 1812, and the construction of the Erie Canal. Artifacts and documents from past and present businesses and industries, schools and churches, social and cultural organizations, as well as the diverse ethnic groups who have shaped our community will also be on view.



Hail and Farewell! In August, our founding organization – the Black Rock-Riverside Alliance – relocated from our shared space at 1902 Niagara Street to their new offices on 43 Hamilton Street. While we certainly welcome the additional space, we will undeniably miss BARRA's financial and administrative support along with their camaraderie. Best of luck in your new home!

In addition, the past months have brought other historic changes for our museum building at 1902 Niagara Street. In August, John Fatta sold our building to our new landlord, Best Homes of WNY LLC. At this time, our beloved friend and neighbor Marianne Laplante and Angie's Pizza House decided to close after 50+ years in business. We thank both John and Marianne for their years of friendship and support as well as wish them all the best.

Point of Light Award. On July 17, 2020, BRHS Founder and Treasurer Mary Ann Kedron was recognized as the 6822nd George H. W. Bush Point of Light Award winner. This prestigious national award is presented daily by the Points of Light Foundation to celebrate the power of individuals to spark change and improve the world. As President of the Black Rock-Riverside Alliance, Mary Ann, who also chairs the BRHS Preservation Committee, has attained valuable investments for public art and play elements in

Our Museum in Action (cont'd)

neighborhood green spaces, renovation grants for several Niagara Street properties (including 1902 Niagara Street), and funding for community vegetable gardens for Northwest Buffalo residents. Congratulations, Mary Ann!

Cadets Federal Credit Union. Thanks to BRHS Vice President Mark Peszko, we have formed a rewarding partnership with the Cadets Federal Credit Union, 927 Grant Street. Cadets FCU has added the BRHS to their field of membership which awards their new members with an affiliated membership to our organization. Cadets FCU will subsidize the first-year annual BRHS dues for all new credit union members. Thanks to this partnership, the BRHS has realized 53 new members in August-October 2020. In addition, all BRHS members are now eligible to join the Cadets FCU and take full advantage of their complete selection of financial services (www.cadetsfcu.com). Please share this new membership opportunity with your friends and family.



**CADETS
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION**

Towpath Oral History Project. Riverside and Black Rock will forever link our colorful history to the Towpath that once followed the stretch of land between the Erie Canal and Niagara River. The area included cottages and shanties, boat docks and liveries, provisioners and taverns that not only served the transient “canawlers” but also the workers and residents of the tightknit communities - a world that was inexorably lost when New York State condemned the land on



April 1, 1957 to construct the Interstate 190.

To memorialize this precious history for future generations, the Black Rock Historical Society is reaching out to longtime Riverside and Black Rock residents who may be willing to share their memories of life on the Towpath. If sufficient grant funding is approved, a short documentary film will be produced. Individuals who may wish to be interviewed for

this oral history project may contact the BRHS at info@blackrockhistoricalsociety.com or by calling 716-913-5447. Documents, photographs and family stories are also welcome.

Fall Speaker Series. Program Director Jeanine Baran has assembled a stimulating group of speakers for our 2020 Fall Speaker Series. This year’s lineup includes:

Richard Hamell (Associate Professor Emeritus of Geology from Monroe Community College) – *The Significance and Spiritualism of Wampum*

Robert Jones (Cattaraugus Territory Counselor, Seneca Nation of Indians) – *Horatio Jones and the Jones Tract*

Rick Falkowski (Historian/Author) - *Historic and Influential People from Buffalo and Western New York in the 1800s*

Angela Keppel (Urban Planner/Historian) – *The Origin of Buffalo Street Names*

Understandably, COVID-19 health and safety precautions have resulted in a virtual experience for this year’s presentations. Videos for each speaker were recorded and will soon be available on the BRHS YouTube channel – BlackRockHistory. Although this year’s program represents a deviation from our normal evenings at the museum, we are hopeful that these recorded talks will reach a wider and more diverse audience. We hope you will enjoy them in the comfort of your homes and we welcome your thoughts.



Rick Falkowski



New Acquisitions:

Battle of Scajaquada Creek Diorama. Ray Ball Jr. demonstrated both his artistic skills and passion for U.S. military history in the creation of an evocative diorama showing the surprise attack by British troops at the Scajaquada Creek Bridge. After the Battle of Lundy's Lane, 600 men crossed the Niagara to destroy "the enemy's depot of provisions and stores at Buffalo" and "capture the guns and dispersion or capture of his troops at Black Rock." On August 3, 1814, Major Ludowick Morgan, commanding 240 riflemen of the combined 1st and 4th Regiment, ordered the dismantling of part of the bridge that formerly crossed Scajaquada Creek. Despite being vastly outnumbered, the volleys from the American rifles found their targets with deadly accuracy and those British troops who were not killed at the bridge were successfully repelled.



*Battle of Scajaquada Creek Bridge
Courtesy of Raymond Ball, Jr.*

Fenian Soldier's Jacket and Cap. Ray Ball, historian and re-enactor with the 7th Buffalo Regiment, Irish Army of Liberation, has also loaned to the museum his regimental cap and green jacket that would have been worn by a Fenian Brotherhood soldier. Both items are on display in our Fenian Invasion exhibit.



Courtesy of Raymond Ball, Jr.

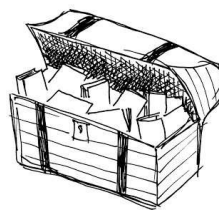
US Hame Co. Photos. Mark Peszko has added to our collection for the U.S. Hame Company formerly located on 135 Tonawanda Street. Mark has donated copies of two photographs of factory workers from the 1920's that included his grandmother, Sophie Guzowski Peszko.



Sophie Guzowski Peszko (left)



U.S. Hame Co. Workers



We are always in search of photographs, documents and artifacts that tell the history of Black Rock, Riverside, Grant-Amherst and West Hertel. Please contact us if you would like to share your family story.

New Acquisitions (cont'd) :

Heitzmann Family Archive

Carol Gilbert of Williamsville, NY has generously donated family archive photographs and documents from the lives of her grandfather and great-grandfather, Black Rock's Frederick and Leopold Heitzmann. Leopold owned the Heitzmann Hotel located at 206 Dearborn Street. After his father's death, Frederick ran the hotel for 23 years until its sale in 1923.

As director and secretary of the Black Rock Savings & Loan Association, Frederick played a substantial role in the development of the Black Rock neighborhood. He also was the first chairman of the City of Buffalo Board of Social Welfare and subsequently elected Erie County Commissioner of Charities & Corrections. An outdoors enthusiast, Frederick was a founder and long-time president of the Buffalo Trap & Field Club as well as a charter member of the Black Rock Cycle Club.



Frederick L. Heitzmann



Heitzmann Hotel, 206 Dearborn Street, c. 1910

Samuel Wilson Home, 1966 Niagara Street

by Mary Ann Kedron, MBA, PhD

The Black Rock Historical Society has been working with Preservation Buffalo Niagara resurrecting a project from 1996 affectionately known as the 1850 Project. Back in 1996, our friends John Conlin, Edward Patton, and Paul Redding embarked on a project to identify remaining pre-1860 buildings in Buffalo. Earlier this year, Preservation Buffalo Niagara acquired the inventory with the intent of identifying those buildings that still exist and have sufficient integrity and significance to qualify for local landmark status and/or listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Two Black Rock buildings included on this list are 189 Dearborn Street (1853) and 91 East Street (1855).



Samuel Wilson Home, 1966 Niagara Street

But for us that is only part of our story. The process has identified so much more for the BRHS Preservation Committee to work on. To our delight, we have identified so many more buildings to evaluate. One of those buildings is 1966 Niagara Street, located between Hamilton Street and Austin Street on the west side of Niagara Street. Identified as a building in the 1872 map of Lower Black Rock (C. M. Hopkins & Co., 1872), it is believed that the building existed prior to 1870.

The building remains a preeminent property along Niagara Street that dates back to the village of Black Rock and the thriving Erie Canal. It is a two-story residential Federal-style building circa 1860 with modillions and brackets under its eaves. Its rectangular three-light attic windows have stone sills. The first and second floor windows are flat-headed with

stone lintels and sills and six-over-six light sashes except in the front where they have been altered. The 1865 City of Buffalo directory identifies the building's owner as Samuel Wilson who was listed as a bookkeeper at the Erie Mills. T. C. Wilson was the owner in 1872. In 1870, Mr. Wilson was 68 years old and living with his daughters, Jarett, Cordelia and Mary.

Much more research on the building remains. The Preservation Committee has contacted the its current owner and will likely look to find an exact build date for the building. What happens after that we will see. Even if nothing else happens it so exciting to add this bit of knowledge to our history archive. Every day we find out how important our community was and remains in the building of Buffalo. If you think you might like to work on projects like this, please come and join us at the Black Rock Historical Society as a volunteer.

Julius Kovach, Riverside's Violin Virtuoso by Rebecca Torres

Today, we applaud Riverside High School alumnus and violin virtuoso, Julius Kovach. After his graduation, Julius attended the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. He played for one year with the Rochester Philharmonic under Erich Leinsdorf before joining the Buffalo Philharmonic and Buffalo Symphonette in 1950. Julius was a violinist with the BPO for 44 years as well as the Librarian for the BPO for 25 years. Following his retirement, he was a violinist and Concert Master for the Amherst Chamber Ensemble for many years. Julius Kovach died in December 2010 at the age of 85.



Julius Kovach

Founding 500

The Founding 500 is a special group of donors who have each donated \$100 to support the BRHS. Through their generous donations, we have been able to enhance our collection and exhibits as well as finance our daily operating expenses. Their donations also help us demonstrate our level of community support as we apply for much needed grant funding. In addition to recognition in our newsletter and on our website, all donors receive a BRHS Founding 500 ceramic plaque that may be hung on a wall, set on an easel, or used as a trivet. We thank the following Founding 500 businesses, organizations, and individuals for their support:

- ◇ Believe in Black Rock
- ◇ Black Rock Pharmacy
- ◇ Black Rock-Riverside NHS
- ◇ Kenneth & Kelly Boos
- ◇ William Butler
- ◇ DiVal Safety Equipment, Inc.
- ◇ Warren Glover
- ◇ Stephen Golyski
- ◇ Gondola Macaroni Products
- ◇ Gothic City Antiques
- ◇ Michele Graves
- ◇ Niagara Frontier Council for Social Studies
- ◇ Christine Kroetsch
- ◇ Steven Lakomy
- ◇ James Lee
- ◇ Angus MacLeod
- ◇ Mary Ann & Joseph Kedron
- ◇ Niemiec Builders Supply Inc.
- ◇ Rebecca E. Pickering
- ◇ Rohall's Corner
- ◇ Judi Stanley
- ◇ Evelyn Vossler
- ◇ Michael Zielinski
- ◇ Rebecca Torres





Black Rock

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Welcome, New Members!

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| ◇ Brett Adamczyk | ◇ Nawar Al-Baghdadi | ◇ Charles Amato |
| ◇ Michael Baker | ◇ Denise Baretta | ◇ Christopher Bennion |
| ◇ Lillian Bright | ◇ Diana Lynn Broyles | ◇ Mallory Bumpers |
| ◇ Nicole Camarre | ◇ John Castiglia | ◇ Michael Ciminelli II |
| ◇ James Clewell | ◇ Michael Cohen | ◇ Samuel Cornish |
| ◇ Fredrick Dalley | ◇ James Davis | ◇ Michael Davis |
| ◇ Donald Debo | ◇ Ralph Dollinger | ◇ Nicolo Franzese |
| ◇ Destiny Gaw | ◇ Ricky Gentner | ◇ Brian Hahn |
| ◇ Dorothe Hall | ◇ Chad Heath | ◇ Keith Hoerner |
| ◇ Nathan Hopkins | ◇ Michele Hill | ◇ David Kolze |
| ◇ Louis Kubala | ◇ Kelly Lilienthal | ◇ Anthony Hughes |
| ◇ Joanne Maier | ◇ Catherine Stahr McBride | ◇ Joanne Marie Liszuckas |
| ◇ David Meadows | ◇ Jered Menter | ◇ Payton McKelvey |
| ◇ Gary Miles | ◇ Joan Miles | ◇ Andrew Merkel |
| ◇ Kathryn Marie Murphy | ◇ Marina Oldin | ◇ Jon Minear |
| ◇ Mary Jo Sobus | ◇ Susan Solly | ◇ Rose Marie Poole |
| ◇ Louis Trembley | ◇ David Watson | ◇ Abraham Taluy |
| ◇ Robert Trabert | ◇ Michael Wagner | ◇ Donna Wallace |
| ◇ Justin Webster | ◇ Shawn Wrock | ◇ Peter Wysocki |

Thank You, Founding 500 Donor!

- ◇ Michael Zielinski

Thank You for Your Donation!

- ◇ Councilmember Joe Golombek/NW Buffalo Community Center
- ◇ Warren Glover
- ◇ Rick Falkowski
- ◇ Fatta Foundation
- ◇ Robert Palmer
- ◇ Riverside Review
- ◇ Michael Zielinski

Thank You for Renewing Your Membership!

- ◇ Black Rock-Riverside Neighborhood Housing Services
- ◇ Doreen DeBoth
- ◇ Dorothy Rife

Thank You, Collection Donors!

- ◇ Ray Ball Jr.
- ◇ Chuck Bobreck
- ◇ Charlie Chapman
- ◇ Carol Gilbert
- ◇ Mark Peszko



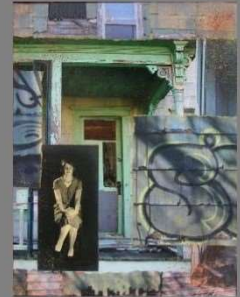


ART OFF PAUSE

a virtual online art auction **October 1 - November 5, 2020**

to benefit the Black Rock Historical Society.
Bid and meet the artists at our grand reopening on
Friday, October 30 from 5-8 PM,
refreshments provided.

How to bid: visit our website at www.blackrockhistoricalsociety.com then click on **Art Off Pause**.
Choose the art work you would like to bid on, then send your bid along with the title and number of the work to
info@blackrockhistoricalsociety.com. We will send you a conformation and update you on the latest bid.
Bidding begins at \$75.00 and in \$5.00 increments.



Artists:

Jeanine Baran
Kevin Bowen
Eugene Cunningham
Doreen Boyer DeBoth

Douglas DeBoth
Eileen Graetz
Joseph Korona
Elizabeth Leader
Junko McGee

Paul Molesky
Marge Price
Margaret Root
Tracy Sawicki

Bob Schulman
Robert Schultz
Carol Siracuse
Ann Steivater

Deborah Stewart
Mary Weig
Max Willig
Celeste Zachritz
Elizabeth Zbytek

Thank you for participating in the auction. If you can't, you may send your donation to the BRHS at:



1902 Niagara Street • Buffalo, New York 14207



Black Rock
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1902 Niagara Street
Buffalo, New York, 14207-2775

Hours

Thursday & Friday 11 am – 3 pm
Group visits/tours by appointment

Find us online:
www.blackrockhistoricalsociety.com

 @blackrockhistorical

**The BRHS
Seeks Volunteers**

Your interest and love of history are the best reasons to volunteer! Students, seniors, and everyone in-between are welcome to share your various areas of interest. Every volunteer can make a difference.

To volunteer, contact us via email (info@blackrockhistoricalsociety.com) or call 716-913-5447.

Artifact Donations

We continue to seek historic objects, documents, or photographs that tell the story of our community.

Please call to schedule an appointment or discuss your finds.
(call 716-510-4007).



*We wish to extend our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Rick Gemison (1954-2020).
(2019 BRHS Speaker Series)*



MUSEUM ASSOCIATION
OF NEW YORK



Submissions:

Are you knowledgeable about historic people, places and events in the Black Rock, Riverside, Grant-Amherst or West Hertel neighborhoods? We always welcome members to submit articles to the BRHS newsletter. If you wish to include your stories in our next newsletter, please provide your submission via email (info@blackrockhistoricalsociety.com) no later than December 15, 2020. Thank you.