

THE YELLOW WASP

Lima Historical Society

August 2023

Pathway of Resistance: The Erie Canal and the Underground Railroad

**By Derrick Pratt, Director of Education
& Public Programs, Erie Canal Museum**



**Thursday, September 21st
7 PM**

**Lima Town Hall
2nd floor - Fully Accessible
7329 East Main Street
Lima NY 14485**

**Co-sponsored by the Lima Historical Society
and the Lima Public Library**

Once again, we have teamed up with the Lima Public Library to present a historical program for Lima residents and the public. Derrick Pratt is the director of education and public programs at the Erie Canal Museum. He will treat us to a talk on the role of the Erie Canal in the Underground Railroad. This presentation will illuminate the experience of African-Americans along the Erie Canal Corridor, with a particular focus on the struggle for abolition. While parts of this story are unpleasant, slavery, racism, and resistance are critical to understanding our society today. We hope you will join us for this interesting and informative talk.

The program will be held on Thursday, September 21st at 7 pm at the Lima Town Hall, 7329 East Main - second floor. The auditorium is handicap accessible via the elevator located at the west side door of the Town Hall. Admission is free.

“BEING COOL”— NEW EXHIBIT AT MUSEUM



Hand fans were once more useful than simply as cooling devices. During the 19th and well into the 20th century, beautiful hand fans made fashion statements, served as status symbols, conveyed secret thoughts, advertised businesses, and spread silent political messages.

Come to the Tennie Burton Museum this summer (open Sundays 2-4 PM) and enjoy a new exhibit of fans from our collections—from extravagant folding fans of satin and ostrich feathers, to silk and paper fans with delicate paintings, to imported fans Europe and Japan, to the more mundane, flat, printed cardboard fans.



LHS Calendar of Events

PLEASE CLIP AND SAVE.

- Thurs. Sept. 14, 2023 *LHS Board meeting at Museum 7pm. Members welcome to attend.*
- Thurs. Sept. 21, 2023 *Pathway of Resistance: The Erie Canal and the Underground Railroad 7 pm*
Lima Town Hall -2nd floor. Co-sponsored by the Lima Historical Society and the Lima Library.
- Sat. Oct. 7, 2023 *Pumpkin Fest – 10 am to 5 pm at Mark Tubbs Park.*
- Thurs. Oct. 12, 2023 *LHS Board meeting at Museum 7pm. Members welcome to attend.*
- Wed. Oct. 31, 2023 *Halloween at the Museum. 6:00 pm. Bring the kids for “frights and treats.”*

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Lima Crossroads Fest: Through Lima's Lens: Images of its Past

We wrapped up the LHS 50th Anniversary celebration with a program at the Lima Crossroads Fest on August 5th and 6th. The featured program was the first public showing of the specially restored 1983 presentation “Positively Lima” in nearly forty years, as well as a running video of historic photos from Lima, put together by Duane Fuller and John Serafin, and the highly informative architectural presentation “Talking Buildings” created by Fran Gotcsik.

All three presentations seemed to be enjoyed by a steady crowd of Lima residents both days—many eager to identify old friends and street scenes in 1983 Lima. Our thanks to all of the hardworking volunteers who made it possible (see listing with photo below). Huge thanks as well to Mike Champlin of DeBergerac Productions who restored the presentation, and to Marty and Cathy Gardner who sponsored the restoration. Plans are underway for a free Fall showing with refreshments at the Lima Town Hall. Everyone in the community welcome. Watch for the announcement on our website or in your email.



Volunteers: Fran Gotcsik, Duane Fuller, Gail Fuller, Kathie Reynolds, Barb May, Martha Sempowski, John Serafin. Not included but no less critical to the effort: Dan Marcellus, Suzanne Marcellus, Elizabeth Osta, Dave Van Arsdale, George Gotcsik, Charmaine Yarka, Anita Layfield, Elizabeth Ose, John Sempowski.

Lima's Elena Reinhardt pulls winning Raffle Ticket for Spinelli's Catered Dinner for Two. Thanks to Elena and to Spinelli's Chef Services. Gretchen and Jim Alday are the lucky winners.

A Recent Acquisition Creates a Curatorial Mystery and Reveals Some Interesting Local History



During the Crossroads Festival, an ex-Lima resident, Susan Knop Gobien, arrived at the LHS venue at the Town Hall with a large box of Knop family treasures that she wished to donate to the Tennie Burton Museum following her mother Barbara Knop's move south from the family's longtime home on West Main St. The item illustrated at the left generated a great deal of musing and speculation among members of the museum committee. First, what was it and of what material were these unusual dangling objects and the large engraved pendant composed?

An internet search on this serpentine brass chain indicated that it was likely a pocket watch fob—a chain secured at one end to a man's vest with a pocket watch attached to the other end, and hanging out of a pocket holding the watch. After WWI when wrist watches came into common use, pocket watches became less common as an item of men's attire.

But the highly polished dark purple ornaments on this one looked like it had probably belonged to a woman. The jeweled initials on the pendant—JK—suggested Juanita Knop (1900-1970) buried in Oakridge Cemetery with her husband Herbert Knop (1889-1975). They had purchased the West Main St. home in the early 1930's when son, Frank

Knop, was a child. It was the home where Frank and Barbara later brought up their family. Daughter Susan remembers hearing that the item had once belonged to her great-grandfather, Henry Knop, perhaps given to his son's wife, Juanita, for reuse as a necklace.

But what of these ornaments? An internet image search triggered an old recollection and a consultation with Brian Nagel of the Genesee Country Village and Museum who identified the material as probable *tagua* nuts or "palm ivory", which can be dried, polished and carved. Excavations along the Genesee River near downtown Rochester by Brian during his time at the Rochester Museum & Science Center uncovered a puzzlingly large quantity of these nuts. Research revealed that the Rochester Button Company located close to their excavations had relied on the import of a huge volume of *tagua* nuts as raw material for button-making during the 19th century heyday of the company when it employed around 500 employees and was one of the country's largest producers of buttons. It was in the 1920's, as less costly plastic came into use that palm ivory was eventually replaced. According to one source (<https://www.woodworkersjournal.com/turning-tagua-nuts-natures-faux-ivory/>), the nuts vary considerably in size up to the size of a "chicken egg," and it continues to be carved as inexpensive jewelry today.

Many Thanks !!

It would not be possible to keep Lima's museum open for the people of Lima, without our docents and the gift of their time on Sunday afternoons throughout the summer. With great appreciation, we thank John Bailey, Duane and Gail Fuller, Fran and George Gotcsik, Steve Kruk, Elizabeth Osta, Harvey Palmer, Colleen and Deb Plimpton, Courtney Rowe-Lenahan, John Serafin, and Charmaine Yarka.

LHS Membership Renewals

LHS annual memberships are based on the calendar year (Jan-Dec), so we normally include a dues notices in the fall *Yellow Wasp*. At present, however, a Board committee, is reviewing our membership levels and dues structure, which has remained untouched for many years despite inflation and the escalating costs of maintaining the museum. We will soon be announcing proposed changes for a more streamlined structure and a more efficient system of renewal notification.

Lima Pumpkin Fest October 7th 10am to 5pm Mark Tubbs Park

Members of the Lima Historical Society will be joining in this community-wide fall event. We will be selling pies and slices of pie with all proceeds to benefit the Mark Tubbs Park. If you would like to help, please contact us through our LHS website.

Pest Control at the Museum

As many of you may have noticed, we have had an ongoing problem with skunks under the museum and squirrels in the attics. We would like to reassure our members that this seemingly intractable problem has been, and is, being given serious attention. We are presently seeking additional bids for contractors to seal up all possible entry points, clean the attics and eliminate the residual skunk odor.

1850 Rochester St.
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Lima Historical Society

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www.limahistorical.org

The Lima Historical Society's traditional Navy Blue

Positively Lima Tee Shirts

are once again available for sale. Go to
LHS website: www.limahistorical.org to order one or two.

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