



**ROCHESTER REGIONAL
LIBRARY COUNCIL**

Innovation through collaboration

WESTERN NEW YORK ORAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS

In

**Livingston County
Monroe County
Ontario County
Wayne County
Wyoming County**

Compiled by

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RRLC Regional Archivist
Documentary Heritage Program**

**Rochester Regional Library Council
390 Packett's Landing
Fairport, NY 14450**

2009

Introduction

While oral history is often considered one of the “new” means of collecting stories, facts and experiences, it has been practiced for a very long time. Since the 1960s, however, oral history interviews have taken on new significance. They provide a means of empowering people and groups on the fringe of society. Interviews contribute to our wealth of primary sources and often give us our only detailed insight into the lives and actions of family members, neighbors, politicians, business and community leaders. The rapid development of new technologies for recording, transcribing, and preserving oral history interviews have made them even more valuable and accessible.

Many organizations in Western New York collect oral histories. They process, archive, and make them available in a variety of ways. Some of those organizations have contributed the information in this guide. As others contribute to this effort, the guide will be updated. Organizations of all types are encouraged to provide new or updated information on oral history collections in the area.

Send updated information to the Regional Archivist, Documentary Heritage Program, Rochester Regional Library Council, 390 Packett’s Landing, Fairport, NY 14450. Information can be submitted electronically to ppierce@rrlc.org. For the convenience of users wanting to submit additional information, an information collection form is included at the back of this publication.

Oral History Collections

Organization/Repository	Page
Town of Canandaigua Historian's Office (Ontario County)	4
Ecumenical and Interfaith Archives of Rochester (Monroe County)	5
George Eastman Study Center, George Eastman House (Monroe County)	6
Hobart and William Smith Colleges Archives (Ontario County)	7
Macedon Public Library (Wayne County)	8
Marion Historic Association (Wayne County)	9
Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester (Monroe County)	10
Milne Library, SUNY Geneseo (Livingston County)	11
Newark-Arcadia Historical Museum (Wayne County)	12
Newark Public Library (Wayne County)	13
Town of Ogden Historian's Office (Monroe County)	14
Town of Ontario Historian's Office (Wayne County)	15
Pultneyville Historical Society (Wayne County)	16
Dept. of Rare Books and Special Collections, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester (Monroe County)	17
Rochester Institute of Technology Archive Collections (Monroe County)	18
Rochester Medical Museum and Archives (Monroe County)	19
William Pryor Letchworth Archives, Letchworth State Park (Livingston County)	20
Wyoming County Historian's Office (Wyoming County)	21
Inventory Worksheet	22
Collections by County	25

Organization: Town Historian, Town of Canandaigua (Ontario County)

Address: 5440 Routes 5 & 20 West, Canandaigua, NY 14424

Telephone: (585) 394-1120

Email: RHenry@TownofCanandaigua.org, JCarson@TownofCanandaigua.org

Website: Yes, www.TOWNOFCANANDAIGUA.ORG

Hours: Mon.-Fri 8:00 AM-4:00 PM., also by appointment

Open to the public: May be used by appointment with Town Historian.

Restrictions: Cannot be removed from Town Hall

Finding aids available: No

Comments on finding aids: Transcripts housed in large 3-ring binders in Town Clerk's vault.

Catalogue listing: None

Description: The collection presently consists of audio tapes and transcribed hard copies of 19 interviews of long-time residents, concentrating on the first half of 20th Century life in the town. Hard copies are available for a fee.

Organization: Ecumenical and Interfaith Archives of Rochester (Monroe County)

Address: Greater Rochester Community of Churches, 2 Riverside St., Rochester, NY 14613

Telephone: (585) 342-6376 (Rev. Lawrence Witmer)

Email: LEWITMER@aol.com

Website: No

Hours: By appointment.

Open to the public: Yes

Restrictions: Taped interviews are restricted currently pending their transcription and duplication. Contents of the interviews will not be restricted.

Finding aids available: Yes

Comments on finding aids: Taped interviews are being transcribed. Printed versions of interviews will be available.

Catalogue listing: No

Description: Recorded interviews focus on the experiences of religious leaders in responding to the 1964 riots and subsequent racial unrest in Rochester, NY in the 1960s and early 1970s. Included in the interviews are leaders of the Rochester Area Council of Churches and its Board for Urban Ministry, the United Church Ministry (a partnership of African American churches), and various other local religious groups. They discuss at length their experiences relating to their invitation to Saul Alinsky's Industrial Area Foundation to organize Rochester's Black community and to interpreting this action to the churches and the wider community. Included are stories about organizing FIGHT and its confrontation with Eastman Kodak Company over employment practices. The interviews (individual and group—about ten hours) were conducted by the Rev. Lawrence Witmer, former Executive Director of Genesee Ecumenical Ministries, mostly in 1995.

Organization: George Eastman Study Center, George Eastman House (Monroe County)

Address: 900 East Ave., Rochester, NY 14607

Telephone: (585) 271-3361 ext. 242

Email: KCONNOR@geh.org (Kathy Connor)

Website: www.eastmanhouse.org [Click on yellow tab at top “Collections,” then scroll to “Eastman Legacy.”]

Hours: Mon-Fri 9:00 AM-5:00 PM. Closed Noon-1:00 PM.

Open to the public: Yes

Restrictions: No

Finding aids available: Yes

Comments on finding aids: Simple lists in binders in the GES. Call Curator, Kathy Connor or email her.

Catalogue listing: No

Description: The collection includes audio tapes that relate specifically to George Eastman, George Eastman House and the history of Rochester. There are also training and tour tapes, Eastman House organ music, and miscellaneous recordings related to Dryden Theatre. The collection also includes DVD with interviews related to Eastman friends and relatives; Mr. and Mrs. Harper Sibley; the Hansen legacy; Gen. Edward Peck Curtis; M. Herbert Eisenhart; Celebrate Rochester; and the Lobster Quartet.

Organization: Colleges Archives, Hobart and William Smith Colleges (Ontario County)

Address: 334 Pulteney St., Geneva, NY 14456

Telephone: (315) 781-3009

Email: lbenedict@hws.edu

Website: <http://academic.hws.edu/library/archives/>

Hours: Tue-Thur 9:00 AM-2:00 PM; Fri 9:00 AM-Noon. Subject to change. Call for appointment.

Open to the public: Yes

Restrictions: For use in Archives only. Includes transcripts.

Finding aids available: No

Comments on finding aids: [None]

Catalogue listing: <http://voyager.hws.edu/>

Description: Feminist oral history. Interviewees are all William Smith College alumnae.

Organization: Macedon Public Library (Wayne County)

Address: 30 Main St., Macedon, NY 14502

Telephone: (315) 986-5932, ext. 3

Email: dvirkler@pls-net.org (Darlene Virkler, Lib. Dir.)

Website: No (will be linked to Macedon Public Library website at www.macedon.pls-net.org)

Hours: Mon, Tue, Wed, Thurs 10:00 AM-8:00 PM; Fri 10:00 AM-5:00 PM; Sat 10:00 AM-3:00 PM; Sun 1:00-4:00 PM.

Open to the public: Yes

Restrictions: No. Materials circulate like any other items in the library collection.

Finding aids available: Yes

Comments on finding aids: There are hardcopy summaries of the interviews. These are not transcripts, but general summaries.

Catalogue listing: None

Description: This is a varied collection, with longer, “biographical” interviews of older residents of Macedon; interviews focusing on specific topics such as the making of maple syrup and the history of local burying grounds; historical/social events such as the reunion of the graduates of Macedon High School; and shorter interviews with younger residents on contemporary topics.

Organization: Marion Historic Association (Wayne County)

Address: 3827 N. Main St., Box 22, Marion, NY 14505

Telephone: (315) 926-4436

Email:

Website: No

Hours: No regular hours.

Open to the public: Yes

Restrictions: The oral history materials are housed by the Town Historian.

Finding aids available: No

Comments on finding aids:

Catalogue listing: No

Description: The small collection, including video tapes, is housed with the museum files.

Organization: Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester (Monroe County)

Address: Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, Archives, 500 University Ave., Rochester, NY 14607

Telephone: (585) 276-8997

Email: lharp@mag.rochester.edu (Lu Harper)

Website: Yes, <http://mag.rochester.edu/library/>

Hours: Archival materials are accessible by appointment only.

Open to the public: No

Restrictions: The archive holds a copy of an Archives of American Art interview with Gallery director Gertrude Herdle Moore and her sister, Curator Emeritus Isabel Herdle. It also holds oral histories of the Gallery's Women's Council, a volunteer organization, and micro-cassettes of interviews Elizabeth Brayer did with Gertrude and Isabel when she was writing the Gallery's history, *MAGnum Opus*.

Finding aids available: No

Comments on finding aids:

Catalogue listing: No

Description: The archive holds a copy of an Archives of American Art interview with Gallery director Gertrude Herdle Moore and her sister, Curator Emeritus Isabel Herdle. It also holds oral histories of the Gallery's Women's Council, a volunteer organization, and micro-cassettes of interviews Elizabeth Brayer did with Gertrude and Isabel when she was writing the Gallery's history, *MAGnum Opus*.

Organization: Milne Library, SUNY Geneseo (Livingston County)

Address: 1 College Cir., SUNY Geneseo, Geneseo, NY 14456

Telephone: (585) 245-5194

Email: argente@geneseo.edu

Website: Yes, <http://library.geneseo.edu/>

Hours: Sun 10:00 AM-1:00 AM; Mon-Thur 7:30 AM-1:00 AM; Fri 7:30 AM-9:00 PM; Sat 10:00 AM-9 PM. Oral histories in the Special Collections available Sun Noon-10:00 PM; Mon-Thur 9:00 AM-10:00 PM; Fri 9:00 AM-4:00 PM; Sat Noon-5:00 PM. Call for summer break hours.

Open to the public: Yes

Restrictions: Some interviews may be borrowed for 2 weeks;; others are in-library use only. Some are in locked collections and retrieved by librarian for in-library use only..

Finding aids available: No

Comments on finding aids: N/A

Catalogue listing: GLOCAT (Milne Library online catalog) and SUNY Connect (SUNY union catalog).

Description: The collection includes Livingston County residents' reminiscences of life, persons and events, especially of towns/villages of Geneseo, Groveland, Avon and Leicester, from late 19th Century through mid/late-20th Century; Geneseo Normal School, SUNY Geneseo; salt mining and miners; Genesee Valley Hunt; Great Depression; World War II, including German POW camp in Geneseo; immigrant experiences; agriculture, farming, rural life; Abbey of the Genesee; prominent persons including the Wadsworth, Carroll, Fitzhugh and Chanler families, Carl Schmidt; *Livingston Republican* (newspaper); and Shakers.

Organization: Newark-Arcadia Historical Museum (Wayne County)

Address: PO Box 289, Newark, NY 14513

Telephone: (315) 331-6409 [museum]

Email: arcadiahistory@peoplepc.com

Website: None

Hours: Sat 1:00-3:00 PM (year around); Wed 7:00-9:00 PM (Jul-Aug)

Open to the public: No

Restrictions: None

Finding aids available: Not yet.

Comments on finding aids: [None]

Catalogue listing: [None]

Description: The collection consists of several interviews with older local residents on local history.

Organization: Newark Public Library (Wayne County)

Address: 121 High St., Newark, NY 14513

Telephone: (315) 331-4370

Email: [None provided.]

Website: [None provided.]

Hours: Whenever the library is open the materials may be borrowed by anyone holding a valid library card from the OWWL (Pioneer Library) System. Library hours are Mon-Thurs 9:30 AM-9:00 PM; Fri 9:30 AM-6:00 PM; Sat 9:30 AM-5:00 PM. Items may be delivered via interlibrary loan to any library in Ontario, Wayne, Wyoming or Livingston Counties.

Open to the public: Yes

Restrictions: Whenever the library is open the materials may be borrowed by anyone holding a valid library card from the OWWL (Pioneer Library) System. These materials may also be delivered via interlibrary loan to any library in Ontario, Wayne, Wyoming or Livingston Counties. Loan periods vary by library, but are typically three weeks.

Finding aids available: No

Comments on finding aids: [None provided.]

Catalogue listing: Items may be found in the catalogue at owl.org though the bibliographic records are somewhat skimpy.

Description: This tiny collection is a series of recordings on cassette tape by local residents of their memories from the early 20th Century in Wayne County, particularly in the Newark/Arcadia area. Topics include such titles as: "School in the old days," "History of transportation in Wayne County," "Teaching in rural schools," and "Trolleys in Wayne County." There are multiple narrators under the same titles, as each narrator tells of their own personal experience.

Organization: Town of Ogden Historian's Office (Monroe County)

Address: 269 Ogden Center Rd., Spencerport, NY 14559
Copies of materials are also at Spencerport Depot and Canal Museum.

Telephone: (585) 594-8947 [home]; (585) 617-6127 [office] Carol Coburn

Email: [None listed.]

Website: ogdenny.com

Hours: Town Hall 9:00 AM-5:00 PM (Sep-Jun); 8:00 AM-4:00 PM (Jul-Aug)
Spencerport Depot and Canal Museum times vary. Call for appointment.

Open to the public: Yes

Restrictions: Materials must be viewed on site at the Town Hall or museum.
Arrangement can be made for loan of a copy.

Finding aids available: No

Comments on finding aids: Finding aids will be developed as DVDs are added to the archives database.

Catalogue listing: No

Description: The office is collecting reminiscences of local citizens, stories handed down and first hand accounts by people who live in Ogden. All of the above categories are considered as topics. New topics will emerge as the project grows.

Organization: Town Historian, Town of Ontario (Wayne County)

Address: 1850 Ridge Rd., Ontario, NY 14519

Telephone: (315) 524-8671, (315) 524-9127

Email: historian@ontariotown.org

Website: No

Hours: By appointment

Open to the public: No

Restrictions: Collection not advertised or loaned. Tapes can be used in the office by arrangement.

Finding aids available: No

Comments on finding aids: N/A

Catalogue listing: None

Description: About 75 cassette tapes of oral interviews. A few are transcribed. About 20 typed oral interviews. Most are general oral histories about remembrances of the Town of Ontario. There is an on-going project to transcribe tapes and transfer them to CD.

Organization: Pultneyville Historical Society (Wayne County)

Address: PO Box 92, Pultneyville, NY 14538

Telephone: (315) 589-8160

Email: LYoungman@aol.com

Website: No

Hours: Upon request

Open to the public: Yes

Restrictions: Oral history materials are intended to be used for historical research and dissemination of historical information only and not benefiting any one person, group or business. Materials can not be used in profit making activities without the consent of the Board of Trustees. Original tape recordings may not be removed from PHS except for indexing and transcribing activities. Listening must take place in the archive or administrative office under the supervision of the Curator or member of the oral history committee. Transcripts may be available by hard copy or digitally for researchers for a fee approved by the board. Society members doing research may have a copy of the transcript free of charge. Members or non-members eligible for transcript copies must sign a *Permission to Use Transcript Form* which defines conditions for use of the transcript. The narrator and his or her family may listen to the tapes of the interview and/or have a copy of the transcript free of charge.

Audio and video tapes, CD and DVD disks may be viewed by members and the public under the supervision of the Curator with the exception of conditions governing oral history tapes. These materials may be replicated for a charge providing that such replication is permissible by copyright laws. Materials replication will be performed by the Curator or the Curator's designee. Materials in this part of the collection will not be loaned or removed from the premises of the Society.

Finding aids available: [None listed]

Comments on finding aids: Alpha File of interviews on CD and hard copy transcripts. The transcripts are coded with "key words."

Catalogue listing: None

Description: The focus for this collection of about 60 interviews is on the experience of living in the Town of Williamson, NY during the 20th Century. All interviews are of lifetime or longtime residents.

Organization: Dept. of Rare Books and Special Collections, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester (Monroe County)

Address: Dept. of Rare Books and Special Collections, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627-0055

Telephone: (585) 275-9337

Email:

Website: Yes

Hours: (Academic year) Mon, Tue, Thur, Fri 9:00 AM-5:00 PM; Wed 9:00 AM-8:00 PM; Sat 11:00 AM-3:00 PM. (Summer) Mon-Fri 9:00 AM-5:00 PM. Call ahead with questions and for information about holiday closings at (585) 275-4477.

Open to the public: Yes

Restrictions: Restrictions to the use of individual oral histories are indicated on agreement forms at the beginning of each transcription. Restrictions vary.

Finding aids available: Yes

Comments on finding aids: The finding aids are available on the UR website. Not all collections have finding aids, but those that do not are “in process.”

Catalogue listing: Dept. website, not in UR Voyager catalog.

Description: The oral history collections basically fall into the following two groups: University of Rochester related interviews consisting of interviews with former University faculty, administrators and others; and Rochester community related interviews. Examples of the latter are the Rochester Jewish Oral History Project and the Rochester Black Freedom Struggle Oral History Project.

Organization: Rochester Institute of Technology Archive Collections (Monroe County)

Address: Wallace Library, 90 Lomb Memorial Dr., Rochester, NY 14610

Telephone: (585) 475-2557

Email: raswml@rit.edu

Website: <http://library.rit.edu/depts./archives>

Hours: Mon-Fri 9:00 AM-Noon; 1:00-4:30 PM; also Wed 6:00-9:00 PM

Open to the public: Yes

Restrictions: None

Finding aids available: None

Comments on finding aids: A two-part list of 36 interviews is available.

Catalogue listing: None

Description: The first group of tapes consists of interviews with various individuals associated with RIT (deans, trustees, faculty, consultants and department heads). The tapes were made between 1972 and 1976. The second group of tapes are from individuals associated with the School of Photographic Arts and Sciences. Those tapes were made between 1979 and 1980 (deans, faculty and former students).

Organization: Rochester Medical Museum and Archives (Monroe County)

Address: 333 Humboldt St., Rochester, NY 14610

Telephone: (585) 922-1847

Email: Robert.dickson@rochestergeneral.org

Website: Yes, <http://www.rochestergeneral.org/archives>

Hours: Mon-Fri 9:00 AM-4:00 PM

Open to the public: Yes

Restrictions: No restrictions other than normal protection against copyright infringements. The oral history materials are for scholarly and educational purposes.

Finding aids available: Yes

Comments on finding aids: Oral history summaries have been created for the RGH interviews and the archive is in the process of creating summaries for the Genesee Hospital Archives oral histories. The completed summaries are on line at the website.

Catalogue listing: Some interviews are listed on the website. No other catalogue.

Description: There are three separate oral history collections: the Baker-Cederberg Collection from the Rochester General Hospital; the General Hospital Collection; and the Emergency Medical Services collection. These oral histories have a predominant medical association, primarily from the Rochester medical community.

Organization: William Pryor Letchworth Archives, Letchworth State Park (Livingston County)

Address: William Pryor Letchworth Archives, 1 Letchworth State Park, c/o Leonora Brown, IPA, Castile, NY 14427

Telephone: (585) 493-3637

Email: leonora.brown@oprhp.state.ny.us

Website: No

Hours: Mon-Fri 9:00 AM-5:00 PM by appointment only

Open to the public: Yes

Restrictions: The oral history materials in the collection must be used under supervision of staff. Typed transcripts have been made of all recordings. Use of materials for publication must be approved by the Park Manager and “Letchworth State Park, NYSOPRHP” must be credited.

Finding aids available: No

Comments on finding aids: The park is in the process of building a research library for the archival holdings and everything is in temporary storage. Finding aids will be created later. The collection of oral histories is very small and has not been catalogued.

Catalogue listing: Not yet.

Description: The collection includes 13 taped and transcribed interviews of Civilian Conservation Corpsmen. There are also 11 taped and transcribed interviews of employees of the park and descendants of friends and employees of Mr. Letchworth.

Organization: Wyoming County Historian's Office

Address: 26 Linwood Ave., Warsaw, NY 14569

Telephone: (585) 786-8818

Email: None

Website: No

Hours: By arrangement

Open to the public:

Restrictions: Unstated.

Finding aids available: No. Not published.

Comments on finding aids: A printed index is available from the County Historian's Office that is divided by subject and person (interviewee).

Catalogue listing: None

Description: The collection includes taped interviews collected 1976-1977 by Mitchell Alegre. The interviewees were all aged 50 and over. The topics covered are wide-ranging and include agriculture, ambulance and fire service, service at Attica Prison, holiday celebrations, childhood experiences, military service, farming, education, public health and welfare and historical events and local reactions.

ORAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS Inventory Worksheet

The purpose of worksheet is to collect information on the existence, location, access to and restrictions on the oral history collections in Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Wayne and Wyoming Counties. The information collected will be used in a guide to the oral history collections that will be published in hard copy and on the Internet by the Rochester Regional Library Council. Please answer the following questions:

What is the official name of the repository where your oral history collection is housed?

What is the mailing address of the repository?

What is the telephone number of the person responsible for the repository?
Please include area code in ().
()

What is the email address of the person responsible for the repository?

Does the repository have a website on the Internet? Yes No
If so, what is the web address?

What are the hours of operation of the repository where your oral history collection is stored? Are they different from the hours when the oral history collection is available for use?

Is your oral history collection open to the public? Yes No

Are there any restrictions on the use of the oral history materials in your collection? Please describe briefly.

Are there any "finding aids" (indexes, etc.) for the oral history files in your collection? Yes No

Comments on "finding aids:"

Is your oral history collection listed on any on-line catalogue such as those of the Pioneer Library System, the Monroe County Library System, WorldCat, or an on-line catalogue of a college and individual library?

If so, what catalogue?

Please describe the holdings of your oral history collection. Does it have a specialized focus such as veterans' interviews? An ethnic group? A religious congregation? A political experience? A municipality? A sports group? A community or region? A factory or employer or business? A form of recreation? A social issue?

Thank you for your assistance.

Please return this inventory form to:

**Dr. Preston E. Pierce
Regional Archivist
Documentary Heritage Program
Rochester Regional Library Council
390 Packett's Landing
Fairport, NY 14450**

This form can also be faxed to: (585) 223-7712)

This form can be emailed to: ppierce@rrlc.org

Collections by County

Livingston County

Milne Library, SUNY Geneseo
William Pryor Letchworth Archives, Letchworth State Park

Monroe County

Ecumenical and Interfaith Archives of Rochester
George Eastman Study Center, George Eastman House
Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester
Town of Ogden Historian's Office
Dept. of Rare Books and Special Collections, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester
Rochester Institute of Technology Archive Collections
Rochester Medical Museum and Archives

Ontario County

Town of Canandaigua Historian
Hobart and William Smith Colleges Archives

Wayne County

Macdeon Public Library
Marion Historic Association
Newark-Arcadia Historical Museum
Newark Public Library
Town of Ontario Historian's Office
Pultneyville Historical Society

Wyoming County

Wyoming County Historian's Office