

May 2021



History Happenings

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Last Month at The History Center...

There's Your Ready Girl - Screening & Panel

Nearly 40 people joined us on Zoom for "[There's Your Ready Girl: Screening & Discussion](#)" on April 14th. The recording of the event is now available on The History Center's [YouTube Channel](#).

Dorothy Cotton was a bold, highly effective and important civil rights leader, the only woman on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Executive Staff, she led the Citizenship Education Program for eight years. Dr. Cotton lived in Ithaca from the 1980's until her death in 2018.



This event was a collaboration between: [The History Center in Tompkins County](#), [PhotoSynthesis Productions](#), and the [Dorothy Cotton Institute](#), with panelists: Deborah C. Hoard, Laura Branca, and Margo Hittleman.

Donate to support the completion of the full-length documentary about Dorothy's life here: <https://www.givegab.com/campaigns/mov...>

Visit The History Center in Tompkins County for our exhibit *Dorothy Cotton and Sisters of Change: Unsung Heroines Whose Names You Ought to Know* honoring underrecognized women from the Civil Rights movement on display in the atrium of the Tompkins Center for History & Culture on the Ithaca Commons. This is a temporary exhibit, and will be taken down later this year. Schedule a private visit in advance at thehistorycenter.net/schedule. Educators are encouraged to reach out to us for early access to a virtual version of the exhibit.

Upcoming Events - thehistorycenter.net/events

April is Asian & Pacific Islander Heritage Month and Jewish American Heritage Month! Explore the stories of historic Asians in Ithaca, and engage with

learning resources and local historic highlights on our [Asian & Pacific Islander Heritage Month](#) and [Jewish American Heritage Month](#) web pages. Stop by our Exhibit Hall and learn about early residents of Tompkins County in our [Exhibit Hall](#) and on [HistoryForge](#).

Wednesday-Saturday - Every Week - EXHIBIT HALL IS OPEN!

[Hours & Safety Guidelines](#) - Schedule a [private visit](#)! *** Our current exhibits will only be on display for 1 1/2 more months before we transition to our long awaited Breaking Barriers exhibit unveiling in July! Be sure to visit the [Exhibit Hall](#) to see our current displays before they are taken down.***

May 1st & 15th - [Virtual HistoryForge Transcription Sessions](#) - 11am-1pm

Help be a part of building history! THC's digital history project, HistoryForge, relies on volunteers like you. At our bi-weekly virtual transcription sessions we are currently entering records from the 1940 census for the City of Ithaca! **Learn more about the project [here](#).**

Contact Eve historyforge@thehistorycenter.net to join. *If you'd like to work on one of the HF projects in our partner cities: Elmira, Oberlin, and Auburn please reach out to Eve. She can connect you with the coordinators for each site.*

May 20th-30th - [Trap Door](#) - The Cherry debuts a new headphone walking-play: Trap Door. This brand-new work will explore the hidden histories of the Underground Railroad and civil rights pioneers in Ithaca by inviting audiences to notice the streets we travel. How does our city's past unfold as we walk? When, where, and how do sites of struggles for freedom from the time of the Underground Railroad to the present disclose and disguise their narratives? [Buy your tickets in advance](#).

UPCOMING: [Giving is Gorges](#) - 6/23 (donation portal opens on 6/16), [HistoryForge Transcription Sessions](#) 6/5 & 6/19, Exhibit Hall is CLOSED for Exhibit Installation - 6/13-7/1, Breaking Barriers Exhibit Opening July 2nd.

[Breaking Barriers: Women's Lives & Livelihoods](#) [July 2021-February 2022](#)

Proudly Presented by [chloe capital](#)

BREAKING
Women's Lives & Livelihoods
BARRIERS

ONEXHIBIT
EXPLORE WOMEN'S STORIES
JUL. 2, 2021 - FEB. 26, 2022

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

AD

PRESS RELEASE

The History Center in Tompkins County Announces New Exhibit: **Breaking Barriers: Women's Lives & Livelihoods**

Ithaca, NY - The History Center in Tompkins County (THC) is excited to announce its new exhibit "Breaking Barriers: Women's Lives & Livelihoods" will open July 2nd 2021. This exhibit has multiple

components: a temporary (July 2021-February 2022) physical display of [six interactive exhibits](#) at The History Center Exhibit Hall on the Ithaca Commons, selected virtual exhibits available at thehistorycenter.net/virtual-exhibits, and public access to selected interviews from the Women's Voices in Tompkins County: Oral History Collection. The physical and virtual exhibits will open to the public on Friday, July 2nd following two weeks of closure in the museum (June 13th-31st) for the installation of the new displays. Due to COVID-19 we are limiting the number of visitors in the museum and encourage guests to make reservations in advance at thehistorycenter.net/schedule.

"Women continue to break ceilings and have continuously increased representation across communities. While we appreciate the obstacles they have overcome and the achievements women have made, it is important to look back and explore the stories of those women who have been overlooked. This exhibit celebrates the lesser-known stories of these pioneers in hopes of empowering those who visit." - THC Curator & Design Specialist Cindy Kjellander-Cantu

Breaking Barriers: Women's Lives & Livelihoods explores the lives of women in public and private spheres across the centuries through six interactive exhibits: Haudenosaunee Influence on Women's Rights (Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation), The Overlooked History of Women Working (HistoryForge), Serial Style (Wharton Studio Museum and Cornell Fashion + Textile Collection), Women's Social Clubs and Organizations, and Overcoming Barriers to Vote: Woman Suffrage Movement in Tompkins County. These exhibits will connect visitors with the rich and varied lives of women in Tompkins County through exploring the stories, artifacts, and community legacies they left behind.

The Breaking Barriers exhibit is presented and made possible by Chloe Capital. Despite recent progress, less than 2% of female funders receive venture capital investment. Chloe Capital is investing in the next generation of women entrepreneurs and innovators across the United States. The company's mission to decrease gender and diversity gaps in entrepreneurship and venture capital is a natural fit to celebrate women changemakers in Tompkins County. Find out more about Chloe Capital at www.chloecapital.com.

The History Center in Tompkins County is proud to partner with the following women-owned businesses in Tompkins County to support this exhibit: [AdrinA-Dietra](#), [Hound & Mare](#), [Pickleball Mania](#), [The Second Knob](#).

About The History Center in Tompkins County

The History Center in Tompkins County (THC) is a generation-to-generation education and research center focused on engaging the public with the history of Tompkins County (located in the ancestral and contemporary lands of the Gayogohó:nq' Nation) and the Finger Lakes region. THC helps people use the tools of history to understand the past, gain perspective on the present, and play an informed role in shaping the future. The History Center is located within the Tompkins Center for History & Culture, a collaborative visitor center and event space on the Ithaca Commons home to twelve independent non-profits and community organizations.

###

New Tours Exploring Tompkins County History

Thanks to a grant from the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) and collaborations with community partners, we're very excited to share three new self-guided tours exploring Tompkins County history! These tours are available on the free [PocketSights](#) app which can be downloaded to any "smart" device. You can explore these tours and over 40 others available locally at thehistorycenter.net/tours.

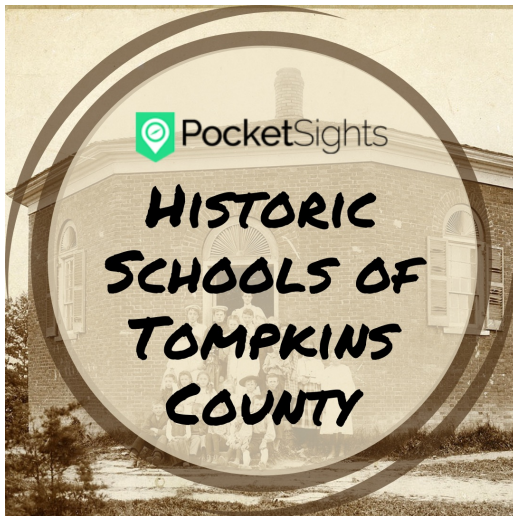
Historic Ithaca staff created the [Historic Schools of Tompkins County Driving Tour](#) highlighting twelve historic school locations across Tompkins County, with historic images from The History Center photograph collection.



In collaboration with [Ithaca Murals](#), History Center staff and volunteers spent much of the fall researching and writing accompanying histories for nearly twenty public murals in Tompkins County with the [History & Art Downtown Walking Tour](#), and the [History & Art Driving Tour](#).

[Ithaca Murals](#) has spent over a decade encouraging and creating artist opportunities in public spaces to tell stories of the diverse people who live in the community, prioritizing the leadership of artists of color, artists with jail experience, low income & working class artists, women, youth, the LGBTQAI+ community, and other artists of traditionally marginalized identity groups. Our research for these murals included delving into the history of [Karen refugee](#) communities in Tompkins County, [Toni Morrison's](#) experience as a student and later professor here, [histories of industry in the West End](#), and highlighting two Haudenosaunee murals downtown, [one of which](#) is being torn down in the coming weeks as part of the Green St. Parking Garage renovation. The breadth of this project was huge and many of the stories behind the art were sparsely documented in the public record. We only just scratched the surface of public art in our community that touches on local history (of the twenty murals we highlighted, another 40 with history themes were identified), and we look forward to expanding efforts to document the history explored in our community's public art in the future.

Ithaca Murals is currently fundraising for a rejuvenation and reawakening of the [Underground Railroad Mural](#) on Green Street, we encourage everyone to donate to support their effort to highlight Black history and Black community artists [here](#).

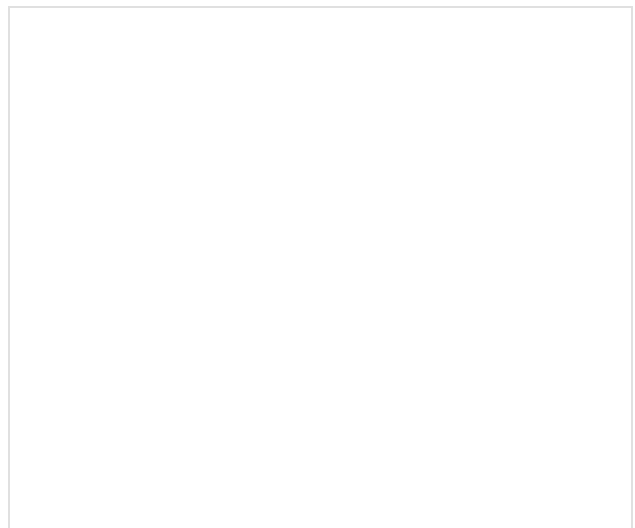


(You can access these tours through your computer, but take our word for it, the PocketSights app is better!)

[History Center Highlighted in Podcast Series: Amended in Action \(WRVO Oswego\)](#)

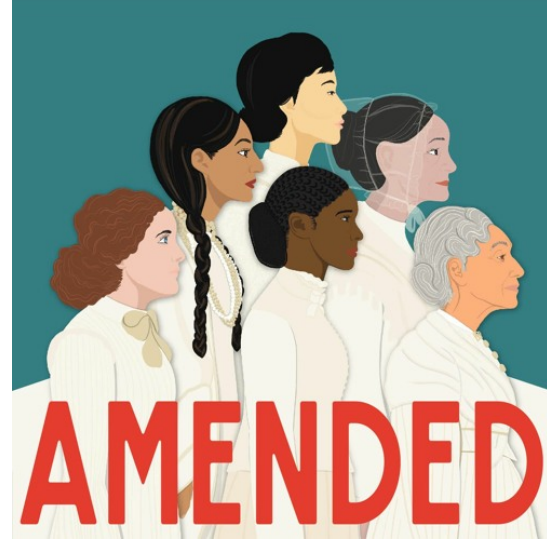
In late February Michael Riecke from WRVO Public Media reached out to us with interest in doing a story on some of our current exhibits for a series introducing listeners to efforts underway in central New York and the Finger Lakes that challenge injustice, illuminate truth, and raise women's voices.

This series, "Amended in Action" is a collaboration between [Humanities New York](#) and [WRVO Public Media](#) and was created to complement the podcast series,



“Amended” which explores the rich, complicated, and underknown stories of the American suffrage movement.

Excerpts from interviews with History Center staff: Donna Eschenbrenner, Cindy Kjellander-Cantu, and Zoë Van Nostrand aired as part of [Episode 3](#). Our interview runs just under 17 minutes and highlights a lot of the exciting work and projects we've been pursuing over recent years. Please give it a listen on The History Center's [SoundCloud channel](#) or through [WRVO's portal](#).

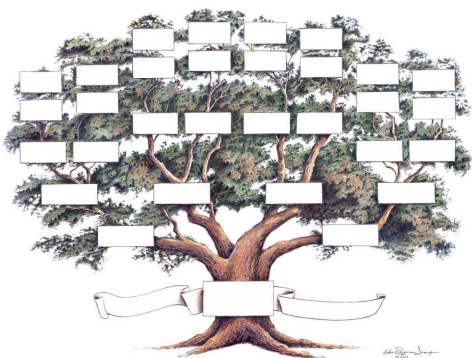


Amended in Action - Episode 3 - The History Center in...

"Amended in Action," a collaboration between Humanities New York and WRVO Public Media, was created to compliment the podcast series, "Amended." Host Michael Riecke introduces listeners to efforts underway in central New York and the Finger Lakes ...

[Read more](#)
soundcloud.com

[Tompkins County Genealogy Family File Listing Online](#)



Over the winter we had our volunteers spend some time creating a digital list of all the family files available in our collections. This list is now available to search on our website at [The History Center in Tompkins County - Genealogy Family Files](#) (thehistorycenter.net/Genealogy-Files).

This was a big change for us from having visitors come in person to look through our printed binders for family names, but a needed advancement as more family researchers connected with us online about tracking their family lineage through our collections. The actual files can still only be accessed in our Research Library, but we're excited to keep

getting more of our [Archival Finding Aids](#) online to improve access and understanding of our collections.

If you have your own genealogical research on Tompkins County families that you'd like to contribute to our family files please connect with us at archives@thehistorycenter.net.

[Trap Door - New Walking Play Inspired by Local History](#)

[The Cherry](#) debuts a new headphone walking-play: Trap Door. This brand-new work will explore the hidden histories of the Underground Railroad and civil rights pioneers in Ithaca by inviting audiences to notice the streets we travel. How does our city's past unfold as we walk? When, where, and how do sites of struggles for freedom from the time of the Underground Railroad to the present disclose and disguise their narratives?



Trap Door will be directed by Cynthia Henderson, and the lead writer is National Book Award finalist poet Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon, one of the Cherry's most regular and beloved collaborators. Writes Van Clief-Stefanon, "Meandering these streets, one might happen upon a landmark site or a name easily recognized. But how many stories go untold? Which ones have slipped into gaps in history? What place do such silences hold in shaping a community?" Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon used The History Center's [archival resources](#) to inform her work on this significant part of our history.

Trap Door will be the Cherry's third headphone walking play, a form perfect for social distancing. Combining text, dialogue, music, and sound design to create an unforgettable theatrical experience on foot with downtown Ithaca as its backdrop, Trap Door will break open the form in new and exciting ways.

Buy Tickets for TRAP DOOR

[The Tompkins County Historical Commission Call for Essays](#)

The Historical Commission invites you to reflect on 2020 and what the year meant to you, brought to you, or took from you. Essays of up to 1,500 words (or up to five pages) will be welcomed and can be mailed, handwritten or typed, to the County Historian at 125 East Court Street, Ithaca New York 14850. They can be sent via e-mail to historian@tompkins-co.org Those essays sent online will be acknowledged. Essays will be accepted until June 1, 2021, and each must be headed with the following sentence: *I give the Tompkins County Historical Commission the right to place this essay in an archive or include for one-time use in a publication or public format.* (Sign your name and give the date.)

City Nature Challenge

CITY NATURE CHALLENGE IS ORGANIZED BY



CALIFORNIA
ACADEMY OF
SCIENCES



NATURAL
HISTORY
MUSEUM
LOS ANGELES COUNTY



PALEONTOLOGICAL
RESEARCH INSTITUTION

April 30 – May 3
2021

Join community scientists in
450 cities on 6 continents to help
document global biodiversity!

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2021-ithaca-ny>



SCAN ME

Finger Lakes - National Heritage Area Feasibility Study

Public Comment until June 1st



The National Park Service is **conducting a study** to determine the feasibility of designating the Finger Lakes region of New York as a National Heritage Area (NHA). This **website** is intended to familiarize the public with the feasibility study process and share what the study team has learned about this special place. As you scroll through these pages, please consider what you value about the Finger Lakes region and how it is a unique place within the cultural and historic fabric of the United States of America. The National Park Service study team needs your help to better understand the cultural heritage of the Finger Lakes and needs your opinions on the appropriateness of designating and managing a National Heritage Area if it is created.

This is a hugely exciting opportunity for our region, and if passed would have long lasting impacts in 14 counties, and for hundreds of cultural and historical institutions like The History Center in Tompkins County and Historic Ithaca. The National Park Service is offering a public comment period through June 1st, and we'd like to encourage all members of the public to take some time in the next six weeks to submit a public comment on why the history and heritage of our region deserves to be highlighted and preserved.

[READ MORE](#)

The History Center in Tompkins County

Exhibit Hall, Research Library, Archives, and staff offices are located at 110 North Tioga St. (Inside the **Tompkins Center for History & Culture**) Ithaca, N.Y. 14850

Web: www.thehistorycenter.net

Phone: 607-273-8284

Email: Staff emails can be found [here](#)

Hours: *Wednesday-Saturday 10am-5pm**

**Please note our hours have changed due to COVID-19 and may be adjusted on a week to week basis depending on local health recommendations.*

Follow us on social media
[@TompkinsHistory](#)



[Contact Us!](#)