



# DHPS | NY *news*

DOCUMENTING DHPSNY'S ADVENTURES IN THE EMPIRE STATE

FALL 2017

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## LOOKING BACK: Highlights from Our First Year

In early 2016, the **New York State Education Department's Office of Cultural Education** established **Documentary Heritage and Preservation Services for New York (DHPSNY)** to ensure consistent and comprehensive services to the vast network of organizations that safeguard New York's history. **The Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA)** was selected to deliver these services, and over the next few months, DHPSNY Program Coordinator **Anastasia Matijkiw** worked with CCAHA staff to lay the groundwork for the next five years of activity. By the end of 2016, our team had grown to include Archives Specialist **Amelia Parks**, Preservation Specialist **Gillian Marcus**, and Communications Assistant **Jason Henn**. Fully staffed, we began 2017 with a packed schedule of site visits, education programs, and conferences.

### Site Visits

In September 2016, DHPSNY officially introduced its website, and with it, announced an open call for applications for a variety of free **Planning & Assessment Services**. Soon after, our advisory committee and team of field reviewers awarded **Archival Needs Assessments, Preservation Surveys, and Strategic Planning** assistance to 18 cultural institutions across New York State. While every location was fascinating, some extraordinary sites come to mind.

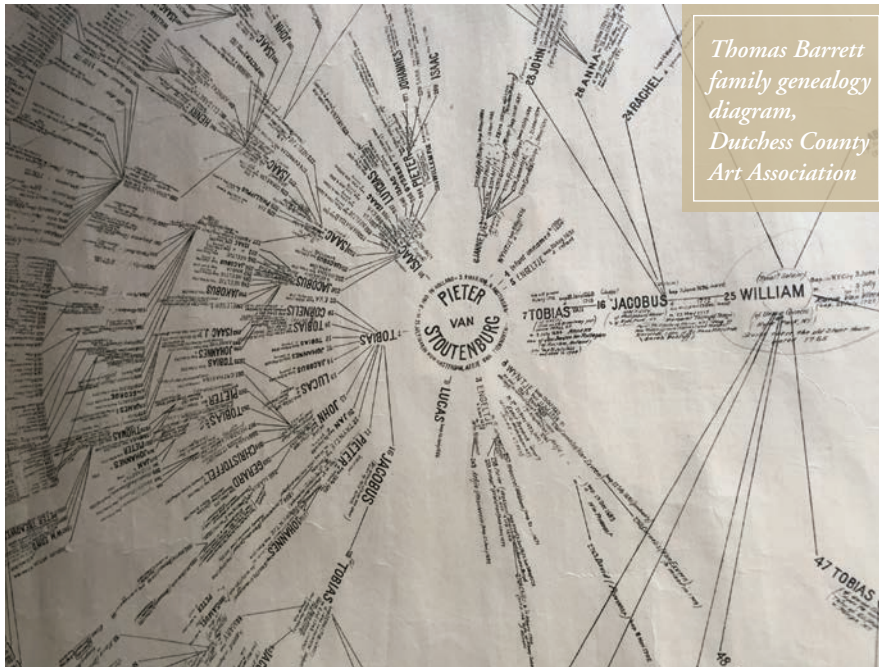
In February, we conducted an Archival Needs Assessment at the historic **Anthology Film Archives** (New York County). Opened in 1970 by a group of key figures in underground film—including current President Jonas Mekas—Anthology's archives feature

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*Our first round of planning retreats wrapped up in May with a trip to the Sodus Bay Lighthouse Museum where the Sodus Bay Historical Society has operated since 1985.*







“the world’s largest collection of paper materials relating to independent and experimental cinema.”

In March, DHPSNY staff conducted a Preservation Survey at the **Staten Island Museum** (Richmond County). The Museum is the oldest cultural institution on Staten Island, and its collections include textiles, maps and atlases, postcards, and a library of over 16,000 books.

Though we serve collecting institutions of all sizes throughout the State, DHPSNY’s services are geared specifically to the needs of small- and medium-sized repositories, and we’re always excited to work with sites such as the **Galway Preservation Society** (Saratoga County) and **Dryden Town Historical Society** (Chenango County). Both are sites run entirely by volunteers, each documenting the rich histories of their surrounding region.

Throughout the spring, we held Strategic Planning retreats at the **North Shore Historical Museum** (Nassau County), the **Historical Society of Middletown** (Orange County), and **Bayside Historical Society** (Queens County). The curriculum for these sessions was developed in partnership with the **New York Council of Nonprofits** (NYCON) and delivered with the help of CCAHA Director of Development Lee Price. Our first round of planning retreats wrapped up in May with a trip to the **Sodus**

**Bay Historical Society** (Wayne County). The Society has operated the Sodus Bay Lighthouse Museum since 1985, with collections ranging from ice harvesting tools to vintage postcards.

DHPSNY selected its second **Planning & Assessment Services** class in April, awarding services to an additional 19 institutions. By mid-summer, we were back on the road, with surveys at sites including the **Hudson Area Association Library** (Columbia County), the **Adirondack History Museum** (Essex County), and the **Greenwich Free Library** (Washington County).

We conducted an Archival Needs Assessment in July at the **Dutchess County Art Association** (DCAA) (Dutchess County), which operates the Barrett Art Center. Named for founder and local artist Thomas Barrett, the Center holds collections featuring paintings, drawings, photographs, and local ancestry records, including the complex Barrett family genealogy diagram pictured above.

Our summer site visits also included the **Perry Public Library** (Wyoming County) near the famed Silver Lake (purported home of the Silver Lake Serpent). The Library’s local archive offers a thorough view of the greater area’s history, including a digitized collection of local newspapers dating to the late 1800s and the more than 10,000 documents and photographs that comprise the Henry Page Local History Files.

## Education Programs

In fall 2016, our small staff hosted the first of our free educational programs, including a series of webinars and the workshop **Understanding Archives: An Introduction to Archival Basics**, at locations in **Highland** (Ulster County), **Glens Falls** (Warren County), and **Buffalo** (Erie County). This spring, Amelia presented the workshop **Essential Policies and Procedures for Cultural Institutions**, which took DHPSNY staff to the **Broome County Public Library** in Binghamton (Broome County), the **Erie Canal Museum** in Syracuse (Onondaga County), and New York City’s **Explorers Club** (New York County).



Our free educational workshops continued in May with five presentations of **The Process of Processing: A Hands-on Approach**. This interactive workshop introduced the fundamentals of archival arrangement, description, and preservation best practices. Each session culminated in a group activity, with participants working together to process and arrange a sample collection of





documents provided by DHPSNY staff. We began the series with a trip to **Historic Hudson Valley**, located on beautifully sprawling grounds in the hamlet of Pocantico Hills (Westchester County). From there, we headed to the Capital Region to present at **Bethlehem Public Library** (Albany County); the **Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History** in Jamestown (Chautauqua County); the historic mansion and gardens at the **George Eastman Museum** in Rochester (Monroe County); and the **Plattsburgh Public Library** (Clinton County).

June was perhaps DHPSNY's busiest period, with five presentations of the **Disaster Response and Recovery** workshop taking us to **Lily Dale Assembly** in Lily Dale (Chautauqua County); the campus of **Utica College** (Oneida County); Long Island's **Smithtown Historical Society** (Suffolk County); **Fort Ticonderoga** (Essex County); and the **Farmers' Museum-Fenimore Art Museum** in historic Cooperstown (Otsego County). These workshops were especially labor-intensive, with Gillian and Amelia driving around the State in a minivan full of kiddie pools, bags of towels, and a massive expendable collection of books, paintings, photographs, and documents that were sacrificed in our simulated disasters. For the second half of each daylong session, participants were invited to get messy, breaking into groups and salvaging items using their newly acquired understanding of the Incident Command System.



*Mentorship luncheon at Utica College*

## Conferences

Last April, we spent a lot of time in the Capital-Saratoga Region. In addition to site visits in the area, Anastasia was a panelist at this year's **Museum Association of New York (MANY)** conference, which took place at the **National Museum of Dance** and the **Gideon Putnam Resort**. There, Anastasia participated in the panel discussion "Archiving in Museums without Archivists," along with colleagues from the **New York State Archives** and the **Chemung County Historical Society**.

After our June Disaster Response workshop presentation at Utica College, we attended this year's **New York Archives Conference (NYAC)**, where Anastasia formally launched DHPSNY's new **Mentorship** program with an informational luncheon. The turnout was great, and by

late-summer we had assigned everyone in our first class to a mentorship circle designed to connect archives volunteers and professionals at various phases of their careers.

We were also pleased to participate in the July 2017 meeting of the **Society of American Archivists (SAA)** in Portland, Oregon. The yearly gathering of archive professionals offered an opportunity to spread the word about DHPSNY's work on a national level. During the conference, Anastasia co-presented the pop-up session **Forget the Best: Good and Better Approaches to Preservation** with CCAHA Preservation Specialist Samantha Forsko. They discussed how to make preservation a component of any archives program, particularly those with little to no resources.



*Browsing the collections at the Marion H. Skidmore Library in Lily Dale with Librarian Mandi Schepp*

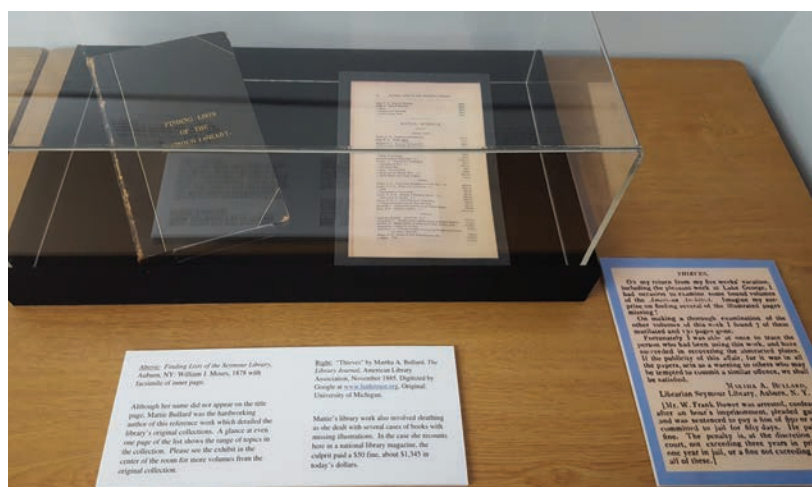


DHPSNY's first year has been fruitful, but it is only the beginning. We will continue to present free programs on new topics and in new locations in the coming years, aiming to cover as much of the State as possible while continuing to increase the total number of sites selected for services.

## INTERVIEW:

# Seymour Public Library's Dori Gottschalk-Fielding

In DHPSNY's first Planning & Assessment Services round, Seymour Public Library in Auburn (Cayuga County) was awarded a Preservation Survey. Conducted in February 2017 by Gillian Marcus, our survey focused on the site's Local History Discovery Center. We chatted with Dori Gottschalk-Fielding, Coordinator for the Library's Mary Van Sickle Wait Local History Discovery Center, about Seymour's collections and how DHPSNY's services helped support a recent grant application.



### Please tell us a little about the Library and the Local History Discovery Center.

The Seymour Library is located in Auburn, New York, and was established in 1876 through a bequest from the estate of local banker James S. Seymour. Since 1903, the Library has been housed in the Case Memorial building, designed in the Beaux Arts style by Carrere and Hastings, the architectural firm that later designed the New York Public Library. In 2016, we opened our new History Discovery Center

which preserves, makes accessible, and interprets the history of the greater Auburn area. Our collection includes books, newspapers, maps, letters, and other documents as well as photographs, postcards, scrapbooks, paintings, and other artifacts.

### What is your favorite document/item in the collection?

We have so many great items that it's difficult to choose a favorite. One of our special collections consists of almost three hundred bound volumes of local newspapers

and several boxes of loose issues dating back to the early 19th century. Interesting items within that collection include issues from the Civil War and the 1835 Auburn Miscellany, a weekly paper from early in Auburn's history.

### How did you find out about DHPSNY?

We learned of the availability of funding for Preservation Surveys in mid-2016 through an email from DHPSNY. Since we were moving our historical collections into



## DHPSNY STATEWIDE SURVEY

# Notes from the First Year

by Lee Price

the new History Discovery Center and wanted to focus more staff time on collections management and preservation, it seemed perfect timing for us to explore this opportunity.

### How was the application process?

It required reflection, planning, and the collection of support materials but overall was straightforward and not too time-consuming.

### The Library's Local History Discover Center recently applied for an NEH Preservation Assistance Grant. How did DHPSNY's site visit and report affect that process?

Our goal for the Preservation Survey was to develop a systematic approach to preservation and to establish preservation priorities. Our consultant, Gillian Marcus, spent over seven hours on site, adapting the structure of the assessment to meet our particular concerns and collection needs. One month after the visit, we received a comprehensive report with guidelines for best practices as well as short-, mid-, and long-range goals. In May, we submitted a proposal to NEH requesting funding for preservation supplies to meet our identified priorities. The requested items included dataloggers, UV-film, a light meter, emergency supplies, and archival rehousing materials. We included specific statements from the DHPSNY assessment in our proposal. Additionally, Gillian assisted us in our selection of the supplies and provided a letter of support for our project. We will be notified in December if our proposal has been successful. We were very pleased with the DHPSNY process and have recommended the Preservation Survey to other collecting entities.

Most DHPSNY services examine micro-situations, for example: what are the humidity and temperature ranges in this particular collection within this unique institution in this town? In contrast, the DHPSNY Statewide Survey offers an opportunity to consider the macro-situation: the view from high above, looking down on the spectacularly varied terrain of New York State's repositories.

DHPSNY launched the first of five annual Statewide Surveys on January 23, 2017, sending a list of questions to a database of libraries, archives, museums, historic sites, historical societies, and local government archives. Every effort was made to target the list to the appropriate contact person, whether it be a Board President at an all-volunteer historical society or a Special Collections Librarian at a major university.

By the close of the survey in late February, 378 institutions had responded, providing the raw data for an in-depth look at the state of collections care in New York in 2017. These responses offer a snapshot of that state, answering such questions as:

- What percentage of items have been fully accessioned?
- How are the collection storage and exhibition environments?
- Do staff follow Board-approved collections management policies?
- Are collection items digitized?
- Is there an emergency plan in place that addresses the collections?

The analysis of this data will be used in a variety of ways. In the broadest terms, DHPSNY can benefit from the analysis in determining those subject areas where collecting institutions might benefit most from our technical support or educational programming. DHPSNY will use information gathered to decide future workshop topics

and other services. Additionally, DHPSNY's partners at the New York State Archives Documentary Heritage Program and the New York State Library Conservation/Preservation Program will use the data for insight into existing or emerging collections care needs.

Initial analyses tabulate three response types: type of organization (museum, library, historical society, etc.), region of the state (using the regional categories of the Regional Library Resources Councils), and size of organization based upon the annual operating budget. The data are analyzed in the aggregate, and all survey responses are completely confidential.

As with all multi-year survey projects of this type, the first survey establishes the baseline. The next survey, tentatively planned for November 2017, will offer opportunities to crystalize the data from the first survey and begin examining the longitudinal data—comparing shifts in the responses over time. In the third year, DHPSNY will convene a series of regional focus groups to gain important first-person insights from collecting institutions. With the final surveys, the full value of the longitudinal approach should become apparent, as a picture emerges of New York's collecting institutions changing over time.

If your organization did not receive a survey back in January, please contact DHPSNY at [info@dhpsny.org](mailto:info@dhpsny.org) with your organization name and the preferred contact—ideally the person with the most direct knowledge of your collection care systems. The quality of the survey—and, even more importantly, the accuracy of the analysis—increases with each new participant.

And, of course, many thanks to the organizations that completed and submitted their surveys. Please participate again when the next survey is disseminated in November. Your input will help institutions across the State.



# Planning, Survey, and Assessment Sites across New York State

AWARDED SEPTEMBER 2016 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2017

## *Archival Needs Assessments*

- **Adirondack History Museum/Essex County Historical Society**  
Elizabethtown, Essex County
- **Alexandria Township Historical Society**  
Alexandria Bay, Jefferson County
- **Anthology Film Archives**  
Manhattan, New York County
- **Canisius College**  
Buffalo, Erie County
- **Chenango County Historical Society**  
Norwich, Chenango County
- **Dryden Town Historical Society**  
Dryden, Tompkins County
- **Dutchess County Art Association**  
Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County
- **Empire State Aerosciences Museum**  
Glenville, Schenectady County
- **Galway Preservation Society**  
Galway, Saratoga County
- **Greenwich Free Library, IVH Gill Room**  
Greenwich, Washington County
- **Hudson Area Association Library**  
Hudson, Columbia County
- **International Percy Grainger Society**  
White Plains, Westchester County
- **José Limón Dance Foundation**  
Manhattan, New York County
- **Lackawanna Public Library**  
Lackawanna, Erie County
- **Marion H. Skidmore Library, Lily Dale Assembly**  
Lily Dale, Chautauqua County
- **National Museum of Dance**  
Saratoga Springs, Saratoga County
- **New York College of Podiatric Medicine**  
Manhattan, New York County
- **Niagara County Historical Society**  
Lockport, Niagara County
- **Oyster Bay Historical Society**  
Oyster Bay, Nassau County



*Carousel Society of the Niagara Frontier*

- **Roger Tory Peterson Institute**  
Jamestown, Chautauqua County
- **Schuylerville Public Library**  
Schuylerville, Saratoga County
- **South Street Seaport Museum**  
Manhattan, New York County
- **WCNY (Public Broadcasting Council of Central New York)**  
Syracuse, Onondaga County

## *Preservation Surveys*

- **Carousel Society of the Niagara Frontier**  
North Tonawanda, Niagara County
- **Explorers Club**  
Manhattan, New York County
- **Fort Ticonderoga Association**  
Ticonderoga, Essex County
- **Greater Astoria Historical Society**  
Long Island City, Queens County
- **Lake Placid Olympic Museum**  
Lake Placid, Essex County
- **Perry Public Library**  
Perry, Wyoming County
- **Schaffer Library, Union College**  
Schenectady, Schenectady County
- **Seymour Public Library**  
Auburn, Cayuga County
- **Staten Island Museum**  
Staten Island, Richmond County

- **Ticonderoga Historical Society**  
Ticonderoga, Essex County
- **Town of Henrietta**  
Henrietta, Monroe County
- **Village of Lancaster**  
Lancaster, Erie County

## *Strategic Planning*

- **Bayside Historical Society**  
Bayside, Queens County
- **Big Springs Historical Society**  
Caledonia, Livingston County
- **Hadley-Lake Luzerne Historical Society**  
Lake Luzerne, Warren County
- **Historical Society of the Town of Middletown**  
Margaretville, Delaware County
- **Lincoln Center for Performing Arts**  
Manhattan, New York County
- **North Shore Historical Museum**  
Glen Cove, Nassau County
- **Northport Historical Society**  
Northport, Suffolk County
- **Sisters of Charity, New York**  
Bronx, Bronx County
- **Smithtown Historical Society**  
Smithtown, Suffolk County
- **Sodus Bay Historical Society**  
Sodus Point, Wayne County



## QUESTIONS FOR OUR TEAM

### Gillian Marcus

**L**earn more about each member of the DHPSNY team, starting with Preservation Specialist Gillian Marcus. Gillian travels to sites across New York State, conducting Preservation Surveys and Condition Surveys and presenting educational programs.



#### What's your background? What prepared you for life at DHPSNY?

I studied fine art as an undergraduate and then went on to get a Master's degree in paper conservation, both in England. After graduating, I worked in private conservation labs and at Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum in New York before coming to CCAHA as the first NEH Preventive Conservation Fellow. I think my time as a Fellow in the Preservation Services Office at CCAHA helped to prepare me for the travel demands of working for DHPSNY; aside from learning how to conduct site visits, I also learned to always keep a suitcase packed and to hoard travel tubes of toothpaste!

#### Tell us about an interesting site visit you've conducted in New York and what made it special.

There's something to learn from every site I visit, but I actually got to ride a 1916 carousel at the Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum while the museum was closed for the winter. That's something that doesn't happen very often.

#### What's the best side trip you've made on your DHPSNY travels?

DHPSNY Archives Specialist Amelia Parks and I went to the House of Frankenstein Wax Museum in Lake George; it's a kitschy, old-fashioned house of horrors. It was ridiculous, but it did make us scream.



*Preservation Specialist Gillian Marcus leads a Disaster Response workshop at Utica College*



## About us

A statewide program of the New York State Archives and New York State Library, **Documentary Heritage and Preservation Services for New York (DHPSNY)** provides free planning and education services to support the vast network of repositories such as archives, libraries, historical societies, museums, and other institutions that safeguard and ensure access to New York's historical records and unique library research materials.

## Connect with us

Visit [dhpsny.org](http://dhpsny.org) for more on our free programs and services and to sign up for our monthly email newsletter, which features our recent activity and important updates on application deadlines and upcoming programs.

Contact DHPSNY staff for answers to archives- and preservation-related questions, help with applications, or to make suggestions for future programs at [info@dhpsny.org](mailto:info@dhpsny.org) or (215) 545-0613.

## Our partners

**Documentary Heritage and Preservation Services for New York (DHPSNY)** is a collaboration between two long-running New York State Education Department programs dedicated to service and support for archival and library research collections throughout the State: the New York State Archives Documentary Heritage Program and the New York State Library Conservation/Preservation Program. DHPSNY is a program of the New York State Education Department, with services provided by the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts.





# DHPS|NY

DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE  
& PRESERVATION SERVICES  
FOR NEW YORK

264 S. 23RD STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103

## DHPS|NY *by the Numbers*

With approximately 4,500 collecting institutions in New York State, DHPSNY's goal is simple: to reach every single one with free programs, services, and other important resources. Whether or not everyone applies for DHPSNY's free Planning & Assessment Services or attends a free webinar or workshop, we want each repository in the State to know that we are here and available to help. To that end, we have made great progress getting the word out in our first year.

45 institutions awarded  
free Planning &  
Assessment Services

823 education  
program  
attendees



14,931 miles traveled in  
New York State by  
DHPSNY staff

4,369 unique  
website  
visitors

26,377 page  
views

Thank you for making DHPSNY's first year  
a great success! With your help, we hope  
these numbers will continue to grow.



+    = 65,561

Because of your interactions with DHPSNY on our website and through social media, our message has made more than 65,000 total unique impressions on the professionals and volunteers around the State who help care for and safeguard New York's historical records.