

**Name:** Melanie Hager Mueller

**Date Report Prepared:** January 8, 2025

**Annual Report for the Year:** 2024

**Name of Municipality:** Town and Village of Afton, NY

**Estimated Population:** 2800

**Address:** 426 St. Hwy. 41, Afton, NY 13730

**Date Appointed Historian:** November 1, 2023

**Phone Number:** 607-242-8180

**Email Address:** aftonhistorian@yahoo.com

**Website/Social Media:** Afton, NY Historian (FB) - [www.aftonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.aftonhistoricalsociety.org) -

**Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Office Hours:** Varies

**Annual Salary:** 2000

**Total Budget:** 1725

**Number of Office Visits (Estimated):** 26 to my Store. 2 in Office

**Number of Phone/Email Inquiries Received/Answered (Estimated):** 18 Phone, 17 emails, many FB communications

**Number of Municipal Meetings Attended(Town/Village Board,County Legislature,Zoning,Planning,etc.):** At least 8

**Exhibits:**

In the Historian's Office there are 2 new display items from the years of Afton School's past, as well as a map of Afton from the 1800's. These items are on loan to the office from the Historian Mel. Hager Mueller's private collection. Flags that were waved by a young girl at the end of a World War 1 are also now on display in the Historian's office. In the Afton Historical Society, a new display showcased "Historical Music" and included music written by an Afton Resident many decades ago.

**School Classroom Lectures/Presentations:**

There has been one presentation to homeschoolers this year. Multiple attempts to establish presentations with the school have not been successful to date. In the 2023/2024 school year, the music teacher was contacted and it was inquired if he would have interest of incorporating the vintage music written by a long ago Afton Resident into the music play list. He was happy to do so, however, he took another job at another school. The new music teacher has yet to be approached to see if they would like to incorporate the music into their music program.

**Public Lectures/Presentations:**

None this year Historian Specific in person. The Afton, NY Historian Facebook page was used to present many

things this year including some of the famous people who lived in Afton. - with the Afton Historical Society, video presentations are being built to run on a donated TV with built in DVD player for visitors to view during open hours and scheduled appointments. We feel this visual will bring more of a connection to visitors and locals who want to learn more about Afton.

#### **Historical Research:**

Including but not limited to: Civil War Era "Stage Coach Road", Afton's Bi-Centennial Celebration, Bumps Creek Steel Bridge, 7 family records for genealogy purposes, underground railroad in Afton, Cemeteries, Outhouse/privy use - building - and history, American Revolution in Afton, Famous people who lived in Afton, research into more than 20 families for historical research into homes, preserving the historical significance of the Bettsburg House, mystery of the "Mad Russian", researching photographs in the Historian's office to ensure accuracy of labeling on unlabeled photos, Afton Fairground Historical research which leads to be a bit difficult due to floods throughout the century. Afton Enterprise Newspaper, Bolster's Barn Dance, and many other smaller projects.

#### **Historical Publication:**

No books published this year. Brochure for the Afton Historical Society created and updated.

#### **Historical Events/Celebrations:**

Research into Bi-Centennial Celebrations continued for preparation for America 250 in 2026 and planning of 2026 events has begun.

#### **Historic Preservation Projects:**

The Afton Historical Society was in great need of repairs this year in order to keep the collections and the building in good condition. Throughout the year, there was a minimum of 297 hours spent at the Afton Historical Society working on repairing the septic system and plumbing within the building as well as repairing the roof to ensure the elements stayed outside where they belong. There were additional hours spent at the Afton Historical Society increasing the heat flow through the building, decreasing the amount of fuel oil used, and making all of the collections handicapped accessible. For the Afton Fair Grounds, I orchestrated the acquisition of lumber needed to repair the Afton Fair Grandstands; one of our communities oldest buildings at our longest running annual event in the community. Historical research into use of the building when originally built began, and continues to ensure accuracy in repairs. Bettsburg. D.A.R. Preserving documents in the office properly and removing items such as staples and paperclips that have begun to rust.

#### **Heritage Tourism Projects:**

For Tourism, the above mentioned projects of making the Afton Historical Society so that all collections are now handicapped accessible, and ensuring the structural integrity of the Afton Fair Grandstands so that it can continue to be used by those who visit Afton from near and far for the events held at the Afton Fair Grounds. Both of these entities bring many visitors into Afton, and we hope they all leave with a smile and grand memories. While not an old vintage building, contractors have been contacted to give opinions on the barn building the Afton Historical Society purchased recently, so that this building can be built to facilitate weekly functions within the community which would bring in more tourism. The final determination on this plan is yet to be seen.

#### **Conference/Workshops Attended:**

0 in person. 3 online. 2 through the D.A.R., and 1 through the America 250 Committee. Being this was my first year as a Historian, it was a learning year. Many of the Conferences and workshops were unknown to me. Additionally I also had a business of my own that limited my ability to travel to some of the ones I was aware of. Thankfully I have learned much throughout the year, and my business has been transferred to an online business instead of a brick and mortar business so that this will be a much better year for attending things.

#### **Other:**

An attempt to create a website for the Afton Historian began, however, the website host that was chosen is not a favorably suited for the job. A different web host is being investigated that will be able to provide the proper needs for the Afton Historian, ease of use, and ability to encourage tourism and research from the World Wide Web world.