

History Programs

by Robert Lowell Goller

Aurora and East Aurora Historian



Robert Lowell Goller is available for presentations to local civic clubs, community organizations, schools and retirement communities. Please email historian@townofaurora.com for more information or to make arrangements. All the presentations are about an hour, including time for questions, but can be adapted.

NEW PROGRAMS FOR 2017

The Pioneers of Aurora

Discover why the earliest residents of Aurora—Native Americans and early pioneer settlers—came to our community and the challenges they faced. See some of their hand-made be-

longings and find out how their decisions have impacted our lives in Aurora today, more than 200 years later.

Becoming Your Own Historian

Every family, every home and every community has a story; but we all struggle to curate the massive number of papers, photographs and other items piled unorganized in boxes in our attics, closets and basements. Learn how to collect, curate and preserve the history of your family, home and community, and how to document and preserve your own story for future generations.

A Tale of Two Villages

Before 1874, the Village of East Aurora was two distinct communities. Examine the events that led to the merger of them into one village and the great debate over what to name it.



ROYCROFT RELATED

A Tempest in the Village Teapot

An examination of Roycroft founder Elbert Hubbard's love-hate relationship with the Village of East Aurora. Elbert Hubbard was a controversial and eccentric character, whose personality and writings were often at odds with the leaders and residents of the small village in which he founded the Roycroft.



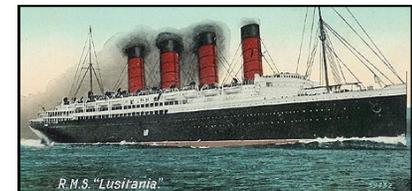
Who Were the Roycrofters?



Elbert Hubbard attracted hundreds of creative types to his Arts and Crafts community on South Grove Street at the turn of the 20th Century. Some, like famed artist Alexis Fournier, were invited. Others simply showed up, in the hopes of landing a job at the Roycroft, a place where putting “head, heart and hand” into one’s work in equal measure was encouraged in a world otherwise dominated by the assembly-line mentality of the Industrial Revolution. This presentation discusses what it was like to work at the Roycroft and shares the stories of some of the personalities—both famous and not-so-famous—who made The Roycroft Campus and Village of East Aurora their workplace and home.

East Aurora After Lusitania

An examination of the intriguing transitions at the Roycroft and in East Aurora following the deaths of Elbert and Alice Hubbard aboard the RMS Lusitania on May 7, 1915.

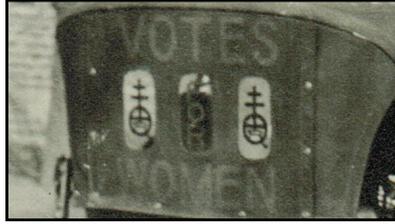


Why Did Elbert Hubbard Pick East Aurora?

Of all the places Elbert Hubbard could have picked to establish his Roycroft Campus, why did he choose East Aurora? And why did he pick South Grove Street? This presentation discusses the possible answers to those questions and how Hubbard’s decision to locate The Roycroft Campus (and purchase a lot of land) on South Grove Street impacted the community of East Aurora.

The Politics of Elbert and Alice Hubbard

Alice and Elbert Hubbard were not afraid to jump into a political debate. Discover how the Roycroft leaders' politics and social advocacy on issues such as women's suffrage shaped the Roycroft philosophy, drew controversy and put the Roycroft on the political map.



TOWN OF AURORA RELATED

Does East Aurora Legally Exist?

For nearly a century, no one had any reason to question the existence of the Village of East Aurora, but for a few weeks in February 1968, East Aurorans were worried that their village might not be real. Learn about the uproar that followed a judge's decision that called into question the village's legal existence.

The Little House That Could

The 13th President of the United States began his legal and political career while living in East Aurora. Discover how his honeymoon cottage, built in 1826, went from near destruction to National Historic Landmark status.

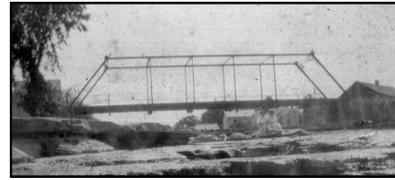
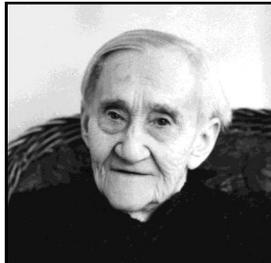


Abolition in Aurora

This presentation examines the Town of Aurora's unique role in helping runaway slaves reach freedom in Canada and explores the validity of some of the local Underground Railroad stories that have been told over time.

Aurora and the War of 1812

The Town of Aurora was in a unique geographic position during the War of 1812. Learn the stories of some of the war's veterans, discover how the war impacted the early settlers and the development of this small community, and find out why the War of 1812 was significant to the naming of King Street more than a century later.

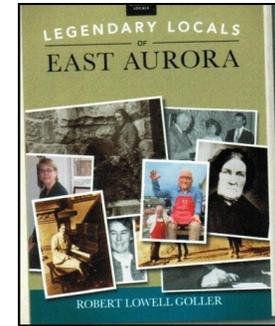


The History of West Falls

This small hamlet on the southwestern edge of the Town of Aurora has a unique history of settlement, several name changes and industrial and economic development.

Who Is the Historian & What Does He or She Do?

Did you know that President Franklin D. Roosevelt was also his town's official historian? New York is the only state in the U.S. to require municipal historians by law. Learn about the origins of the Historian's Law, on the books since 1919, and the resources available from the Historian and the Historian's Office.



Legendary Locals

Aurora Town Historian Robert Lowell Goller discusses his 2014 book, which tells the stories of some of the community's more interesting citizens—both past and present. In addition to sharing the stories of some of the individuals included in the book, Goller will also answer questions about the process of—and challenges related to—writing a book about local history. He is also the author of *Aurora Revisited*, published in 2011.

Have Another Idea?

Want to know more about a history-related topic that's not listed? With some advanced notice, programs on other topics related to the history of our community can certainly be arranged. Town Historian Robert Lowell Goller also is available for less formal meetings or question-and-answer sessions with your group or organization.

Contact the Aurora Town Historian's Office:

historian@townofaurora.com or call (716) 652-7944.