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## History Comes Alive

Posted by **Mark** on September 15th, 2011

### Utica Phoenix News

On Saturday, September 10th, Utica was transported back to centuries gone by for the magnificent celebration “History

Comes Alive.” The event, inspired by Karen Day, Landmarks Society Trustee and Programs Committee Co-chair, was hosted to re-live this remarkable era in United States history, and to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War.



However, if all visitors thought was in store for them was presentations and hum-drum lectures, they would have been gleefully mistaken. Music and an elegant private collection of Civil War Era Ball gowns were on display in the mansions, open to the public.

Guests strolled the grounds, enjoying desserts and drinks on the lawn, as well as visiting the homes of Roscoe and Julia Conkling and Samuel and Flora Remington. While viewing the elegant collection of ball gowns owned by Mark Tillson Jr., guests could take the opportunity and listen to a full schedule of professional speakers, bringing attendees back in time.

The event also proffered an enormous amount of “real-life” re-enactments, featuring full period dress, speeches, and interactions with the crowd. For The Good’s Cassandra Harris- Lockwood presented as Sojourner Truth and Kay Lanaux appeared as Harriet Tubman.

The liveliness and authenticity of the character impersonations and speeches added an indelible quality to the event which could not have been captured otherwise.

Presentations of historical value were also offered. Dr. Milton C. Sernett of Syracuse University presented “Abolition’s Axe: Beriah Green, Whitesboro’s Oneida Institute, and the Struggle for African-American Freedom,” and Dr. Jan DeAmicis of Utica College presented “Oneida County’s Underground Railroad.”

Rounding out the event, and bringing it back to the present, Pamela Jardieu spoke on the Landmarks Society and the restoration of the Rutger St. Mansions. Future plans include 2 fully-restored house museums and a possible partnership with MVCC to provide educational opportunities.



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