

## **Romulus Female Seminary**

### **School Activities 2010**

Commencing May 18, 2010 for the spring school field trip season, an immersive, inter-active educational experience will be offered free of charge to students visiting the museum on self-guided tour programs.

The half hour experience will be scheduled four times a day to students and educators by pre-registration. Educators will be notified of this program offering through an insert placed in the confirmation packets, by postcard and via the web page. Lisa Buda, program registrar, will register the classes electronically or by phone, on a first-come-first-served basis, and provide a schedule to Ward-Hovey for facilitation.

The program will be offered Tuesday and Thursday at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m., & 1:30 p.m. to accommodate early opening, and Wednesday and Friday at 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 10 p.m. and 2 p.m. Between these programs, the seminary will remain open for visitation and informal interpretive interaction between the staff person and incoming students.

Each day the program will be geared to a special activity taken from mid-19th-century school curriculum books.

**Introduction:** Scholars will be greeted at the door and divided into boys and girls. Teacher rings bell and scholars proceed to their desks.

Teacher will go over regulations for Romulus Female Seminary.

Teacher introduces daily activity.

**Tuesday:** Geography—locating counties using 1846 New York State Map and naming the county seat.

**Wednesday:** Botany—identification and location of native species using period world map and pastels.

**Thursday:** Readers Theatre—Aesop's Fable.

**Friday:** Calligraphy lesson with pens, nibs, inkwells, wipers.

In response to the recommendations made by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)-funded Interpretive Master Planning process, the museum is embarking on increasing the interactivity of many of its historic venues offered in the village. For the spring of 2010 ten hands-on stations will be added with self-guided school groups in mind. In addition, the 1855 Romulus Female Seminary, heretofore its access limited by a barrier and not staffed, will be opened to feature hands-on activities similar to those that would have been taught in such an educational institution.

Traditionally, the museum has offered guided house tours and craft demonstrations to visiting school children from the greater Rochester area (including Monroe, Genesee, Livingston, Wayne, Ontario and Wyoming counties), predominately elementary students (3rd and 4th grades) with smaller numbers of middle and high school represented. In recent years the museum has developed and increased the number of specialized curriculum based programs for visiting students for an additional fee. However, most groups visiting the museum still tour the site on their own informally learning about history, art, and nature through listening to and watching the museum's interpreters. Increasingly, though these teachers are looking for more hands-on activities that not only meet the New York Learning Standards but are also fun and interesting to their students.

To meet this need, the museum will launch the Romulus Female Seminary (1855) program to provide today's students with hands-on study of art and natural history through a variety of mediums within the historical context of an 1855 academy. Throughout the 19th century, private academies routinely taught botany and drawing in the belief that sketching from nature developed observation and analytical skills, an appreciation of the natural world, as well as promoting "taste" and critical thinking skills.

During the spring school tour season, approximately 2000 students will likely participate in the free program examining a variety of natural objects, including mollusk shells and heirloom plants. Under the direction of a GCVM instructor using curriculum activities actually employed at seminaries, the students will participate in sessions focusing on, calligraphy, botanical drawing, geography or drama.

In between these 30 minute sessions the Seminary will be open for regular walk-in visitation enabling even more students and adults to enjoy the space. During summer months, the Seminary program will engage students enrolled in summer camps, GCVM's summer sampler programs, and children visiting GCV&M with their families.

As many schools are forced to reduce art classes due to budgetary restrictions, the Seminary program will supplement art education, particularly for underserved rural and urban schools, while at the same time exploring the natural sciences.