

Schenectady County Historical Society Newsletter

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

As my three month assignment in Schenectady was coming to a close, I realized that all I had seen of the Schenectady plant was Building 37 and the television station which stood at the entrance to the plant at Edison Avenue and River Road. I made a quick tour of the steam turbine operation and then headed west for another assignment at the jet engine facility outside of Cincinnati.

While the highways in New York and Pennsylvania seem to follow the old Indian trails, many roads in Ohio follow the boundaries of a grid pattern of six mile squares. The grid pattern related to land grants for veterans of the Revolutionary War who wanted to move west. To go diagonally across these grids, highways were laid out zigzagged for six miles south, six miles west, six miles south, etc. I didn't always zig when I should have.

This is similar to the semi-trailer trucks which take the exit 4 ramp in Schenectady and drive down past the Historical Society on Washington Avenue, looking for route 50. Except they have to back out since there is no way they can make the corner at Washington and Front without taking out a few telephone poles.

In Cincinnati I roomed with four jet engine test engineers. The father of one of them was a VP for General Motors, and he got us free tickets for the 1952 Indianapolis 500 auto race. Four hours of sitting in the sun — no wonder they called these seats bleachers! They were also sun burners.

To amuse ourselves we picked different cars to keep track of. Mine was a car powered by a Cummins Diesel. It was the pole car which meant it had the fastest time in the trial races. Surprisingly, it was the quietest car in the race. The Offenhauser engines were much noisier. The Cummins completed 71 laps out of 200 before it had to drop out. The car which led the race for 150 laps had an accident after 191 laps. The winner led the race for 44 laps and was 4 laps ahead of the car which finished second.

I got all this race data from my son who now works for Cummins Diesel and has been an official "observer" at some CART auto races. Last year's winner at Indy was a CART driver.

— **Bill Dimpelfeld**

URGENT NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS

DOCENTS, NEW FACES! Sorry for the loud headline, but we need volunteers for several slots. If you have been toying with the idea of helping out, but figured we probably had all the help we needed, **NOW** is the time to offer your services. Specifically we need hostesses for the Saturday Program. This is a once a month job, the second Saturday of the months from October through May. A hostess would come in early to help set things up for the refreshments and might pour tea or coffee. During the program, the hostesses clean up the dining room

and kitchen. This could be done by a cadre of hostesses (and hosts, too!) on a rotating basis so that no one misses too many programs.

We need people to get out mailings. This involves putting labels on the Newsletter or on envelopes and putting them in order for the Post Office. One person is need to take them to the P.O.

Calendar

Saturday, November 9, 2002 1:30 Refreshments: Program: Guadalcanal Revisited after 60 years
Presenters: John and Sally van Schaick

Tuesday, November 19, 2002 7:30 PM Board of Trustees

Saturday, December 14, 2002 1:30 Refreshments 2:00 Program: Christmas Legends of our Own

Tuesday, December 17, 2002 7:30 PM Board of Trustees

The Newsletter is published six times a year. Deadlines are the second Monday of June, August, October, December, February, April. Please submit material as early as possible. This activity occurs every other month for the Newsletter, and on an on-demand basis for other mailings.

And we need people who can supply refreshments for our monthly meetings. Cookies, cake bars, finger sandwiches. Here again if enough people sign up, goodies could be supplied on a rotating basis.

For further information call Bill Dimpelfeld at 372 0126

WE GET LETTERS ...

Actually this time it was a 9"x 12" envelope labeled "A Composition" written by Mildred Borst in 1913 about Schenectady, her hometown." Attached to it was a blue "post-it" saying ' "Schenectady" written by Mildred Borst for a Grade School class around 1913.' Then it says "I am celebrating my 100th Birthday on August 7, 2002. My name is Mildred Borst Rhea Turner."

At this point we became excited and alert. Mildred Rhea! We knew Mildred Rhea. She and her husband had been pillars of our church in the '50s, '60s and '70s. We sat down to read her composition right away.

The work is 44 pages long — something of a term paper for an eleven-year-old. The handwriting is neat Palmer method on elementary school lined newsprint. The last we looked they were still using the same paper in elementary schools in Schenectady. The book is divided into sections: and is illustrated with pictures cut out of magazines.

A section labeled "Location and Size" states: "Schenectady is in the eastern part of N. Y. state. It is situated on the Erie canal and the Mohawk river. It is smaller than Albany but larger than Troy. The population is near 77,000." And then she drew a little diagram showing the relative positions of the cities and waterways.

In a section called "Old Houses" she describes the Sanders house which we now refer to as the Glen Sanders Mansion. "The Sanders house was owned by one of the earlyiest (sic) settlers. The old furniture is still there. To go there take the Scotia car to the end of the dyke. It is a white building."

In a section called "Modern Houses" she writes: "Many of the pretty houses of the twentieth century are on Wendall (sic) Ave. Here are the homes of G. E. Emmons and C. P Steinmetz grounds are lighted by the Steinmetz lamp which he invented . Route Union Ave Car."

Sadly, the Emmons house and Steinmetz house are no longer with us. But the Sanders Mansion still exists in a remarkably altered state.

This composition was well written and very detailed. It probably represents fifth grade work. Any fifth grade teacher of today would be proud to display this sort of class work by a competent student.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT

Wanted!

Someone to do filing in the library. Our librarian can never catch up.

Great opening for volunteer with unsatisfied clerical lust! Call librarian at 374-0263

Wanted!

Someone to do data entry on one of our wonderful computers. You do not have to be a computer geek; you just need enthusiasm for the work of the society plus the ability to follow directions. Call librarian at 374-0263

Wanted!

A real extrovert to organize boat and bus trips. There are wonderful places to go around here, but all the board members are maxed out and we need fresh blood, verve, muscle and know-how to plan trips. Call office at 374-0263

Continued on page 8 2

WE SEND LETTERS, TOO . . .

A Letter to Stasia Berdy

Dear Stasia,

How you were missed this last walkabout. You have always been in charge of the kitchen and everything that allowed the people to enjoy free coffee, tea, punch, donuts and cookies from 10 AM to 4 PM during the Walkabout. This year Ann Karl had a busy time working with not enough help. Ann Karl worked so well with you, Stasia; we are finding it difficult to get anyone half as committed as you to take your place. We all miss seeing you, especially me - you were the one I shared my ups and downs with, and they were many. Not only did you reign Queen of our kitchen for the Walkabout but throughout the year and Ann provided the Society's monthly meetings with an inviting spread of refreshments, and — I've just remembered who did all the addressing and mailing out of our Newsletter each month — of course, our Stasia!

We thank you also for all your work and planning during your years with the Ladies' Auxiliary; you more than anyone helped to give us the new staff kitchen. You are the most organized person I know, Stasia, and also the most generous of giving of your talents and time. We miss you very much and our thoughts are always with you.

Love and appreciation,

-Jo Mordecai

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS IS LOOKING FOR YOU. . . Get to know your neighbor!

There are, as you have undoubtedly noticed, many immigrants from other countries living in our community. Idiomatic expressions can be very confusing. "Give us a ring!" Volunteer to help someone learn to speak and understand English. Call Literacy Volunteers at 372-9819.

OVERHEARD AT THE WALKABOUT. . What is a Stockade and where is it? What a gorgeous house! (The Historical Society Museum.) How nice of you to serve us on your silver service and china cups and saucers (and not paper cups). The coffee is so welcome after our long bus ride from Dutchess County.

Those old Delft tiles in the fireplace in the dining room aren't made any more in those designs. What color is the paint in the dining room? Peach? Did all this furniture belong to Dora Jackson? Did you know that there will be a trip to Nijkerk (sp?) two years from now? You ought to come visit us.

THE MABEE FARM

First of all, Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! to all the volunteers that made our success in our various activities this fall possible **-Scott Haefner**

Scott has been with the Society for so long we thought he was ours forever like the furniture in the Glen-Sanders room. For the past six years he has served notably as site-manager at the Mabee Farm, doing everything from leading tours around the Farm to keeping the grass mowed. He has, with his historical knowledge, deep interest and generous gift of time, been a critical force in the development of the farm He has played a nearly indispensable role in the success of the Mabee Farm Project.

But greener pastures are luring him away from us. Over the past year he has finished his degree and is now moving on to further his career. He will be here until the end of November. After that it's off to Fort Johnson. But Scott has promised that he'll show up from time to time, and we'll hold him to it. We want to thank him for all he has done and wish him well in his new position. Good luck, Scott! School tours a success Richard Lewis has stepped in and is spearheading our educational programs. He is working to get our program registered with BOCES, enabling schools to receive financial aid for transportation for appropriate field trips. He is also trying to arrange for us to make a presentation explaining our programs to the Capital District Social Studies Coordinators on November 2.

So our educational program is launched. The first group was the Glenmont 4th and 5th grades. It went well; the students were attentive and well behaved; the teachers were pleased and response was good.

Then, on the third and fourth of October, the Mabee farm hosted a Colonial Experience day for over 250 middle school students from the Mohonson District. Six different "stations" were established around the Farm: the students were divided into small groups of around a dozen; a group would have twenty minutes at a given station, then, upon hearing a horn blast, the group would move to the next station. Stations included John Ackner and his blacksmith shop, a native American flint-knapper; butter making (a real hit!), a reenactment, and the role of women in Colonial days.

There will be two more such tours this fall. From the feedback from the teachers we'll be able to refine the program and improve them for next spring. The school visits will be a major part of our education program.. It will require much time and effort on our part. Anyone wishing to volunteer, please call Stanley Lee at 377-7948 or Richard Lewis at 346-6809. Blacksmith shop

The siding and the roof are done. John Ackner is completing the doors and will hand gorge the hinges soon. He worked in the shop on his portable forge for both school visits and the fall festival. Fall festival

The Fall Festival was a success in spite of the weather. Enough demonstrators showed up to make a good showing; several were new to the event and that helped. We made almost \$500 by keeping expenses down. Thanks to all who helped. Andrea and Kim did a great job with all the advance work. A special thanks to them.

-Stan Lee

THE STREET WHERE YOU LIVE...

How did the street you live on get its name? The Yet-to be-Named Committee of the Historical Society has embarked on an effort to compile a history of street names for our City and our Towns. Often these names are given to streets by the individuals who developed them. Frequently the developer names the streets after members of his or her family. Wright Avenue and Morris Avenue are examples of this practice. These streets were named by Schenectady's foremost real estate developer, Henry Schermerhorn De Forest. Both were named after his daughters, Beulah De Forest Wright and Pearl De Forest Morris.

Do you know how your street or other streets in the city or town where you live got its name? Please include yourself in this project. Share your knowledge with us — you'll be given credit for your contribution, and all of us will be richer for what you have told us.

Contact Virginia Bolen at the Historical Society, 374-0263 or Frank Taormina at 374-9655.

Museum Notes -Jo Mordecai, Coordinator of Exhibits

Colonial Christmas

This coming Christmas season we will celebrate with a Colonial Christmas: lots of fruit, vegetables, nuts and pine cones, with evergreens, will grace the Vrooman Room. "Colonial" does not always mean the early Dutch, who celebrated earlier in December, but the English, Irish and others who were part of the making of the New America during the 18th Century. I hope the whole house will look beautiful for all of you and this Christmas will be full of happiness and joy.

The Stockade Walkabout — 2002

I would like to thank all of my docents who were so wonderful giving tours of our rooms on September 28th, the 2002 Stockade Walkabout, and serving refreshments in the dining room. You put on a good show and I appreciate your willingness to help.

Docents of Rooms and Door, and Refreshments: Ed Reilly, Bill Dimpelfeld, Bill Milton, Bob Sager, Ann Ross, Sally and John van Schaick, Scott Haefner, Cindy Seacomb, Elliess Riemer; Phyllis Hill, Ann Christman, Richard Lewis, Beryl Grant, Olive Berner, Jeff Parry, Dorothy Dietrich, Wilma Corcoran, Rose Dixon, Carolyn Veeder, Yvonne and Richard Matthews, Nihia Heeney, Gioia Ottaviano, Ann Coggeshall, Cathy Heagerty, Vaughn Nevins, Elsie Maddaus, Johanna Woldring. Cookie Providers: Sylvia Hasgood, Elliess Riemer, Sally van Schaick, Carol Lewis, Irma Mastrean, Ann Ross, Ann Karl, Stasia Berdy, Cathy Heagerty, Beryl Grant, Linda Remers And a very special Thank You to Ann Karl who did extra duty in the kitchen for nine hours, and who always gives her all!

John van Laak, member of the Society and well-known organ player, is making a compact disc of his performance of traditional Christmas music, played on his four manuel pipe organ. This organ, the largest in a private home in New York State, used to be in the old Colony theater on upper State Street. Watch for further announcements or ask at the Society Office after Thanksgiving (and see our website under Books, etc.)

ROUND THE COUNTY

Bellevue -Bob Sager

In 1905 the Van Dyke Sager family had moved into their "new" home on Westinghouse Place and Guilderland Ave. (still standing). The third floor cupola room was occupied by their son Clinton (my father). Spencer Moore was about five years older than Clint, but they became fast friends, and spent time together in the cupola room. They got the idea it would be fun using their sling shots to knock off the high hats of GI workers going by on their bicycles. This was great sport until they inadvertently hit one man in the eye. The boys were hauled to the police station, and Dad received a reprimand as the younger boy, but Spence Moore had to report to the Police Station weekly, like a form of probation. Spence Moore went on to graduate from the Sheffield School of Engineering at Yale, married and had a family in Connecticut. Sadly he died at age 36 in 1925 while his parents were still living.

Scotia-Glenville -Elsie Maddaus

Elsie devoted a Sunday afternoon to advertising the Schenectady County Historical Society and Mabee Farm at the annual Riverwalk on the bikepath at the Community College. She and your editor kept track of our encounters: One hundred and one people stopped long enough to find the answer to this question: "Do you know where the Schenectady County Historical Society is located?" Six people knew.

Duanesburgh -Richard W. Lewis, Jr.

Life in the hills of Duanesburgh and Schoharie was never easy; in fact, for many, it was something to be suffered through until the Second Coming. In this view, the child was often too pure for this sinful earth and "lucky" to have died before becoming "tainted." The verse on the gravestone of Catholina Vanderpool, who died in 1838, at age 4, contains one version of this belief. She was too pure for earthly love, Strength to our hearts was given To yield her in her childhood's light, To a brighter home in heaven. The parents of two-year-old Romeyn Wood are addressed in this verse: So calmly so sweetly his loved form now lies But his spirit is wafted to his home in the skies. Weep not dearest parents his sufferings are past He is home with the Saviour, he is happy at last.

Princetown - Irma Mastrean, Town Historian

Cheeseman's Tavern, built in 1784, was located on the Great Western Turnpike (Route 20). It was a stop for drovers on their way to Albany markets. A marvelous sight was that of great droves of turkeys traveling the road by day and roosting in the trees by night. Cheeseman was known as the "shinplaster banker" because he issued paper money for the convenience of travelers and his neighbors. This tavern was known locally as "The Bank" long after the origin of the name had been forgotten.

ANNALS OF PATHOLOGY

CHOLERA by Frank Taormina

(Every age seems to have its own disease. We live in a world facing a variety of pathogens from AIDS to West

Nile Virus. Our grandparents told tales of the Spanish Influenza of 1918-1919. During the nineteenth century, the disease was cholera, which visited Schenectady at least four times. Frank Taormina has explored this topic for us.)

Among the episodes which make up the history of Schenectady is a series of cholera epidemics which occurred several times in the nineteenth century, first in 1832, in 1849, then again briefly in 1854, and finally, hopefully for the last time, in 1866. Cholera is, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, an "acute bacterial infection of the small intestine, caused by *Vibria cholerae* and characterized by massive diarrhea with rapid and severe depletion of body fluids and salts . . . The vibrio enters the body via the mouth, usually in contaminated water or foods, and causes an infection in the mucous membrane lining the lumen of the small intestine. . . . After an incubation period of 12 to 28 hours, the disease usually starts with an abrupt, painless, watery diarrhea that may amount to a volume of 15 to 20 liters or more in 24 hours. . . . As dehydration increases, the person become stuporous and comatose and may die in shock. The disease ordinarily runs its course in two to seven days."

This excerpt from an article in the Encyclopedia Britannica, published in the late 1990s is substantially more than anyone in the whole world knew about cholera in the nineteenth century when the disease started mysteriously in India in 1817, and in 15 years made its way around the world to the United States, leaving death and havoc in its wake and terrifying people wherever its arrival was anticipated.

The number of people who died of the disease in Schenectady during each of the epidemics mentioned above is difficult to ascertain. In 1832 "In all, 42 people were mentioned in the Cabinet (a local newspaper) as having died of cholera between July 18 and September 19 out of a population of 5000. Another nine died in Rotterdam . . . cholera deaths were concentrated near the river and the canal. . . Ferry, Front, Water and Dock Streets all had more that their share of fatalities." In 1849, while there were, apparently, deaths in the city from cholera, none were reported in the local newspapers. In 1854, a spectacular event took place on Franklin Street:

Schenectady Cabinet, July 25, 1854 GREAT MORTALITY. —In a single family, in Franklin street, the following persons have died within the space of a fortnight: Thomas Phillips and wife, and two sons and two daughters; the mother-in-law and a sister -in-law of Mr. Phillips; also, the wife of Mr. Conner and two children — making eleven in all. Their disease is said to have been the cholera, or something akin to it. Besides these, we do not learn of more than four who have died of reported cholera the present season. With these exceptions, the general health of the city may be considered good for the season of the year. The locality in Franklin street has a reputation for being fatal in other complaints than those which caused the death of the eleven persons referred to.

Frank Taormina discusses program with Elliessa Riemer

Note that the person writing this article tries to reassure the reader (a) that everything else is really all right - "the general health of the city may be considered good for the season of the year," and (b) don't be surprised that it happened on Franklin Street, it is a dangerous place to live, -"The locality in Franklin Street has a reputation for being fatal in other complaints . . ."

Again in 1866-67, while cholera was present in the City, the newspapers did not record any deaths from the disease.

There are several aspects of this experience with cholera to reflect on. First, both Robert Wells ("Facing the King of Terrors") and Charles E. Rosenberg ("The Cholera Years") point out that local officials down-played the existence of the disease in the community, wherever it occurred. Cholera was bad for business. Suspicion of its existence frightened prospective customers, hence the newspapers which depended for their livelihood on the local merchants often "covered-up" the facts (Wells, p 44) concerning the presence of cholera in the community. This possibility is certainly made stronger by a report issued in 1858 by Livingston Ellwood, the city physician, who was pleading to the city council for stricter regulation of sanitation in Schenectady. Ellwood asserted that

"the cholera at its last visitation... carried off two hundred persons in the short space of four months. (Wells, p. 112)

Repeatedly, in what we read, despite the fact that the actual microbe that caused the disease was not identified until 1882, the assertion is made that the disease is somehow related to or caused by "filth", and that to avoid getting cholera, one must cleanup the "filth" gather it up and cart it off to someplace where it will not threaten the people by its presence. One can imagine that "filth" meant the manure produced by horses, cows, pigs and chickens and other domestic animals. It probably referred also to the custom of emptying the chamber pots in the gutter in front of the house. In human affairs, problems frequently do not get attended to and solved until they get so bad they may actually be life threatening, as was the case with cholera. It is not too much to say that the experience with cholera was the inspiration for improvements in public sanitation which, in the long run, created healthier communities for all of us. Increasingly, as the threat of cholera loomed, people became convinced that legitimate role of government was to regulate the lives of citizens to prevent the accumulation of life threatening "filth" in and around human habitations. This had not always been the case.

Bibliography

Rosenberg, Charles E. "The Cholera Years, The United States in 1832, 1849 and 1866", The University of Chicago Press, 1962, 1987 Wells, Robert V. "Facing the King of Terrors" Death and Society in an American Community 1750 -1990" Cambridge University Press, 2000

[Library Potpourri](#) -Virginia Bolen, Librarian

New and available for sale: The Cemeteries of Duaneburg and Princetown - \$18 (plus \$2 if you need it mailed). The 2003 Calendar - see our web page for a view of this informative and attractive calendar.

Available for \$10 (plus \$2 for mailing). For \$1 more, we will include the 2002 calendar with 15 black & white photos of Old Schenectady. Order right away for Christmas or New Year's. See the web site for a list of our other offerings.

Research at Grems-Doolittle Library: Research at Grems-Doolittle Library is rewarding. We have a large variety of sources to use (see list below for a sampling) and our librarian, Virginia Bolen, is available to guide your efforts and help you make the best use of the time you spend here. Often other researchers and Society members who happen to be present at the time of your visit will offer you assistance and suggestions to move your research along.

A list of some of the materials you may find useful in your search: Family surname files Family histories (published and unpublished) Census records (1800-1930 for Schenectady, including State censi.

All New York State Federal censi for 1850 and 1900 (excluding NYC)

1930 census for Schenectady, Albany, Rensselaer, Columbia, Saratoga, Schoharie and Montgomery counties
Naturalization records for Schenectady County Poorhouse records for Schenectady Church and cemetery records for Schenectady and other counties, City directories, Maps, Early tax lists, Newspaper transcriptions of deaths and marriages for the 1800s, Obituaries, Schenectady City School District scrapbooks, 1930-1985 Mabee Farm documents, Schenectady County histories.

Whether you're a longtime researcher or just contemplating starting your family research there is something here for you. Come and check us out. Members are always free and visitors can spend the day for a modest fee of \$5.00

DUES DUE TO RISE Starting January 1, 2003, Society dues at the family level will be \$40.

NEW ACQUISITION Gift of George Wm. Juno, Sr.

Mr. Juno recently donated to the Schenectady County Historical Society an oil on canvas landscape by Jerome Barhydt, 19th century Schenectady artist. The painting depicts a nostalgic and idyllic scene of the old wooden covered bridge that crossed the Mohawk River and led travelers from Schenectady to Scotia. Small boats are moored along the coast and people walk along the rocky shore. The painting has been in the Juno family for years, and the Schenectady County Historical Society is grateful to Mr. Juno and extremely pleased to add this painting to its collection.

Are there any Schermerhorns out there? Two exceptionally fine, but badly in need of attention Sexton paintings are in our possession. Portrait of Myndert Schermerhorn by Samuel Sexton, 1852, 34" x 27" Oil on canvas, preprimed no frame. The portrait has been cut down on top, right side and at the bottom, and 1/4" on the left side. There are no evidences of previous treatment. The canvas shows neglect and mishandling with resulting dents, small puncture, scratches, drips and general rim abuse. There is a thick film of dirt, very little varnish. The stretcher is in poor shape. Treatment for preservation will involve lining, cleaning, a new stretcher, repair of minor flaws, compensation and varnishing. Is there a frame? Appropriate security within a frame matters to me.

Portrait of Mrs. Schermerhorn by Samuel Sexton 34" x 27" Oil on canvas, preprimed no frame

This portrait has been trimmed only along the top edge, It also has no evidence of previous treatment, but it has been stored at some point (upside down) in dampness and has a serious development of mold, especially in its upper portion. The canvas shows neglect and edge abuse but has not experienced as many planar disruptions as its mate. With both portraits the varnish appears to have been slight and the dirt is embedded in paint. This stretcher needs to be replaced too. Preservation treatment involves cleaning, lining, new stretcher, minor compensation, varnishing . . . resecuring within frame?

- Ona Curran

7 DOCK STREET by Bill Dimpelfeld

The Albany International Airport has an art gallery which you may have missed seeing. In addition to the showcases, modern sculpture, and enlarged 19th century photomurals which line the corridors leading to the flight gates, there are observation windows and an art gallery on the third level of the airport terminal. While you have to be a ticketed passenger to get to the corridors which are beyond the security checkpoints, the third floor gallery is still open to the general public by stairs or elevator from the outer lobby. And parking is free for those who have come to the airport to visit the gallery.

From September 30,2002, to February 16, 2003, the gallery is featuring selections from 45 museums, historical societies and historic sites which are served by the Albany airport: from Blue Mountain Lake, NY, to Stockbridge, Mass. It should be an eclectic collection. Our offering is an oil painting of "7 Dock Street," a warehouse on the Erie Canal in what is now downtown Schenectady. Our "defense" of this selection follows.

7 Dock Street

Runoff water from Ice Age glaciers cut a path through the Appalachian Mountains. This path is now known as the Mohawk River. In Colonial times the river provided a relatively flat passage from traffic from the Eastern

Seaboard to the fertile land along the Great Lakes and on into the basin feeding into the Mississippi River. The next natural cut through the Appalachian Range is the Potomac River in Maryland. Ocean-going ships can travel unhindered up the Hudson River to a point north of Albany. But boat traffic on the Mohawk in Colonial times had to contend with many rapids and waterfalls. These obstacle required frequent time-delaying portages. The level of water in the river was also unpredictable, varying with weather conditions.

The development of the Erie Canal in the early part of the 19th Century expedited travel by eliminating the portages and maintaining a contained channel for the water. It also allowed for the use of larger vessels. Along its eastern end the canal followed the Mohawk. Streams which normally fed the river were diverted to maintain the level of water in the canal. Railroads and improved roads have made the Erie Canal obsolete. There is a large spring and fall migration of pleasure crafts between the Great Lakes and Florida. A barge is a rare sighting. In this area the invention of lift-gate dams has made the river into a series of lakes. The boating traffic has reverted back to its river bed and the towpaths have become bikeways.

In Schenectady the path of the canal is now the very wide Erie Boulevard. The former buildings of the American Locomotive Company were the eastern gateway to the city, and the General Electric Company building were the western gates. In between many warehouse and other businesses lined the canal. One of the typical warehouses is depicted in the painting of 7 Dock Street.

This painting is intriguing to me because of the sign which is shown mounted to the left front of the building. The sign depicts the front of this warehouse including a sign mounted on the left front. Does that sign include another depletion of this building?

Contributors during August and September 2002 Without You We Are Nothing!

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W. G. Broughton Charitable Foundation
Rotary Club of Schenectady Foundation
Schenectady Foundation
Walter S. Quinlan Foundation
Wright Family Foundation, Inc.

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