



SCHENECTADY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The staff of the Schenectady County Historical Society is pleased to offer a variety of outreach programs to community organizations. These programs are free of charge, although donations to the Historical Society are welcome and encouraged. Below is a current list of programs we are able to offer. If you are interested in booking an outreach program with us, please contact Mike Diana at (518) 887-5073 or email educator@schenectadyhistorical.org.

Aerial Schenectady (Coming Summer 2018)

You may think you know the sights of Schenectady. From its historic architecture to its stunning natural beauty, our county is truly a place to behold. In this presentation, we see Schenectady from a whole new angle. Using the latest aerial drone technology we've compiled a breathtaking series of videos and still images that are sure to astound.

African American History in Schenectady

The first African Americans in Schenectady did not come as free settlers but as enslaved people. Nevertheless, their stories and contributions to this area cannot be overlooked. This presentation discusses the unique challenges faced by African Americans in Schenectady and in doing so, highlights their unique success stories. This is the story of bravery in the face of slavery, faith and community in the face of segregation. Above all this is an American story.

Boomtown: Immigration, Technology, and Urban Schenectady

Humans are always on the move. We seek new opportunities and face challenges as we adapt to changes in the world around us. For tens of thousands of immigrants, Schenectady County offered its own opportunities and challenges. This talk explores why people immigrate and the unprecedented impact of immigration and technology on urban Schenectady.

Changing Downtown: The Rise, the Raze, and the Revitalization of Schenectady

At the heart of a successful downtown are interesting stories and unique buildings that illustrate a character that cannot be found anywhere else. In order to attract others to a city, the community must understand what qualities make them distinct. This program, and the stories in it, trace Schenectady's changing downtown throughout the years. By exploring the city's past and the characteristics that make us unique, we can better understand our present and reveal for ourselves a brighter future.

Changing Waters: The Story of the Mohawk River and Erie Canal

How has the river that stretches from one end of our county to the other changed our lives, and how have we influenced the river over the centuries? You might be surprised to find out just how big of an impact local waterways have on your life! Join our speaker for a journey through the times and tides of the Mohawk River and Erie Canal.

Colonial to Craft Brew: The Local Story of Beer

The first Dutch settlers arriving in New Netherland (today's New York) depended on beer. Now, with the growing craft beer trend, we can truly see what an integral role beer has played in our history. Agriculture, transportation,

technology, politics, and social issues have all played a part in beer's history, and it in turn has affected our own lives.

Finding Your Schenectady County Ancestor

Genealogy research in New York State can often be frustrating and time consuming. This overview of genealogical resources in Schenectady County will guide you towards local resources and repositories to help you research your ancestors from Schenectady County.

The Glens: Schenectady's First Family

The founding of Schenectady witnessed many intrepid settlers whose legacies live on to this day. Even among these illustrious names, the Glens stand out. This presentation recounts the remarkable tale of how Alexander Glen made his way from Kirkaldy, Scotland to the Mohawk Valley in 1659. We'll also see how the kindness and wit of his son, John Alexander, saved many during the Schenectady's darkest hour.

Hauling the World

Schenectady has a vibrant industrial history much of which was driven by railroads. From humble steam-powered beginnings to dynamic diesel-powered titans, locomotives were once the pride of our area. We'll explore rowdy railroad boomtowns and ALCO factories. Together we'll learn how Schenectady became "the City that Lights and Hauls the World."

In Harm's Way

What do you remember about late summer, 2011? Is it the waters of the Mohawk River, rising quickly, reminding us that we are not always in control? Is it the destruction left by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee? This program – built on oral histories and contemporary photography – is a snapshot of that period in time. It's an attempt to capture emotion, and the experience of crisis and recovery in the flooding caused by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. Those who were "in harm's way" or helped in the recovery process share their stories here. These narratives of the storm's devastation and aftermath connect us to the very real experience of flooding, and provide insights into the rebuilding and recovery process.

In Whom We Trust: At the Crossroads of Faith and Community

For Many Americans religion is a critical part of their own identity. Schenectady is home to a remarkable variety of religious traditions. This photo essay looks at these faiths through a social lens, focusing on the human interactions that sustain them. While these many faiths might appear different on the surface, this presentation shows the overarching similarities in whom we trust.

It Came From Schenectady: Science Fiction in the Capital Region

What if you had a superpower? What if you could travel through time? What if machines overtook Schenectady? "What if" questions inspire writers, artists, and filmmakers to create new worlds and imagine alternate realities. This talk explores the "what ifs" that inspired the creations of local science fiction innovators, including Kurt Vonnegut, P. Schuyler Miller, Ray Nelson, Glendora, and Pamela Sargent and the legacy of science fiction in Schenectady County.

Local Eats! What does your food say about you?

Does what you eat represent who you are? Can someone learn about politics, technology, or where you come from by looking at what is on your plate? This program answers these questions by looking at the history and heritage of local Schenectady food traditions.

Making History: The Schenectady County Historical Society

Is history relevant today? How can we bring it to life for people of all ages and backgrounds? In what ways can we promote the vibrant culture of our region? The Schenectady County Historical Society staff and volunteers ponder these questions and more, distilling the region's rich heritage and history into exciting programs and exhibits. Join us as we explore initiatives, ideas, and challenges faced by local historians in the 21st century.

Mysteries of the Mabee Farm: Uncovering the Story of a 300 Year Old Farmstead

The oldest farm in the Mohawk Valley (1705), Mabee Farm is a site steeped in history – and mysteries! From the weathered pine floors in the home of settlers Jan and Annetje, to the hand-pegged Dutch Barn, to the site's elusive 1600s fur trading post, what mysteries lie buried beneath Mabee Farm's soil? Archaeology, research, and deduction help us answer some questions – many more remain unsolved mysteries!

Preserving Family Photographs and Documents

Do you have old family photographs, letters, diaries, or other precious items that you would like to preserve? This presentation will discuss how to properly preserve your family's important documents and photos. It will also provide tips on how to store, display, label, and handle these materials. Preserving these materials will assist family members, now or in the future, to retrace and reconstruct your family history.

Schenectady's Story in Photos and Documents

The Schenectady County Historical Society has documents dating back to the late-1600s and photos from the late-1800s. These collections tell the story of Schenectady County's social life, government activities, recreation, businesses, organizations, and much more. Join us as we explore how these photos and documents relate to the history of Schenectady County.

Stockade Secrets and Scandals

Schenectady's Stockade is a national jewel, boasting the highest concentration of historic period homes in the nation. For over 300 years Schenectadians have called the Stockade home, and the streets are alive today with the stories and legends of Schenectady's past. Discover the history of America's oldest residential neighborhood!

Together Until the End: Schenectady in World War I

Devastating, morbid, and totally unprecedented, World War I changed our world entirely and redefined modernity. Now, over a century later, this program explores the Great War's effect on Schenectady and the people who lived here. The soldiers who fought, the nurses who cared, and everyone at home whose world was reshaped, completely.

Voices from the Haunted Past: Ghost Stories and Folklore from the Stockade

For centuries folks of all backgrounds have lived their lives in the Stockade neighborhood and as folklore has it, some of them never completely left. Stories about spirit sightings and strange occurrences reveal the rich history of this historic area.

Vote Here! Vote Now!

Left or right? Conservative, liberal, or independent? "Vote Here! Vote Now!" explores democracy in Schenectady, and encourages participants to consider and discuss political issues – historical and current. Discover Schenectady's political legacy by learning how vital your voice is in local elections!