



Schenectady County
Historical
Society

Newsletter

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Schenectady's Jewish Boys Go to War, as Told through Their Letters Home

—by Harvey Strum



Prologue

For many decades, members of Schenectady's Jewish community have made a practice of commissioning Torah scroll covers that honor friends or family members. In the case shown here, World War II combat veteran and Union College graduate Sidney L. Schwaber (1913-2006) and his wife Edith Paley Schwaber donated the Torah cover shown here to Congregation Beth Israel in honor of their grandchildren. Sidney served in an Air Force Weather Battalion in North Africa at the time that the forces of Field Marshall Montgomery were defeating those of German General Erwin Rommel to lift the siege of Tobruk. Sidney's younger brother Sigmund "Sig" Schwaber (1914-2000) also served in combat during World War II, in his case in the Pacific island campaigns. After discharge from service in 1945, Sidney earned a doctorate in optometry from Columbia University that qualified him to begin practice as Dr. Sidney Schwaber, optometrist. What was once the Schwabers' home on Balltown Road in Niskayuna is close to a new town street, Schwaber Drive, so named in their honor. In retirement, the Schwabers lived in Tampa, Florida, as Edith still does.

Buried in the files of the Schenectady Jewish Community Center (JCC) are dozens of letters written by Jewish boys who joined the military during World War II to the women of the Women's Army and Navy Service (WANS) of the JCC. The letters written from men at military bases in the United States and from soldiers stationed around the world expressed gratitude for small gifts received from, and the human contact of, the WANS volunteers from their hometown, Schenectady. These letters provide insight into the experiences of the men in uniform and of the diverse places they were stationed, as well as their proximity to combat. WANS volunteers answered questions about the friends of the boys in service and sent news of such things as the progress of the construction and dedication of the Grosberg Building at the JCC, adjacent to the original building on Germania Avenue. As of June 11, 1944, it became an enlarged Center that the Jewish community badly needed. More generally, WANS volunteers forwarded news of events in the Jewish community and wartime changes in Schenectady to men in service overseas.

Not everyone in service was male, of course. As a WANS volunteer told Jules Scheinzeit, stationed at a naval training center in December of 1943: "Six of our glamour girls are now being kept by Uncle Sam. We boast of a couple of Army nurses, two WACs, and two SPARs. We send them 'swellegant' perfume."

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and Thursday 5-8

September-June only

MABEE FARM
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10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Letter from the President



The first sign of spring was the election or reelection of officers and trustees at our Annual Meeting of April 12th. I thank our members for the honor of being allowed to serve as president; I am truly appreciative of the opportunity and will try to live up to the examples set by our previous presidents. Merritt Glennon concluded his two years in that office with a flourish, leading the team that successfully recruited two well-qualified persons to fill our vacant positions of Curator and Assistant Curator, Mary Zawacki and Kaitlin Morton-Bentley. Their smiling countenances greet you on page 11. And on their part, Membership filled two vacancies on our Board through election of Karen Bradley and Dale Wade-Keszey, whose bios follow this Letter. A bit about my own prior service is on page 3. I look forward to another exciting and productive year, the 109th in the Society's illustrious history.

-Marianne



Our New Trustees



Karen Bradley, Director of the Schenectady County Public Library, resides in Scotia with her husband David and their three daughters, Sarah, Emily, and Rachel. Over the years, Karen has partnered with many community agencies, non-profits, educational institutions, and museums in providing cultural and educational programs, including SCHS. A number of Public Library programs have been held at Society venues, from *A Midsummer's Night Celebration of Reading* at the Mabee Farm to bringing young teens from the summer writing boot camp to the Society's Museum. Her community involvement over many years has included PTA, Girl Scouts, the Scotia-Glenville Board of Education, the League of Women Voters, and the SCPL Friends of the Library. In looking forward to beginning a new chapter as an SCHS Trustee, she said "We are fortunate to live in an area with such a rich and diverse history."

Dale Wade-Keszey was born and raised in Schenectady. He is a graduate of Mont Pleasant High School, SUNY Delhi, Empire State College, and of Excelsior College, where he received his MS degree in Liberal Studies. He lives in Niskayuna, has been a history teacher for the Mohonasen Central School District for over 17 years, and has been married to his wife Joan, a retired teacher, for 33 years. He is the proud father of their son Brendan, who is teaching English in Europe. He has been an active Mabee Farm volunteer for over 15 years. Over those years, he has been instrumental in bringing over 3,000 Mohonasen students to Mabee Farm educational programs. He was actively involved with the design and planting of the landscape around the newly constructed Franchere Education Center. A lover of music, as well as history, Dale is the lead singer and songwriter for Everest Rising, an acoustic quartet that has played for several fund-raising events at the Mabee Farm. Dale and his wife Joan developed the very popular "Howlin' at the Moon" concert series at the Mabee Farm.

Exhibits and Programs – May and June 2014

For more information, please check our website, www.schenectadyhistorical.org, or call us at (518) 374-0263 and listen for the option describing Programs. Please call (518) 887-5073 regarding programs at the Mabee Farm or Franchere Education Center. Admission to exhibits and programs is free for Society members and \$5 for non-members unless otherwise indicated.

EXHIBITS

@ 32 Washington Avenue

Portraits of Schenectady

Portraits of Schenectady citizens from the 19th and 20th centuries, chosen for their vibrancy and historical relevance. Works of local artists Ezra Ames, John Wilkie, and H.M. Mott-Smith are included, as well as four sets of husband and wife portraits.

@ The Mabee Farm

Opening May 3 – *Nostalgia*

Irma Mastrean's artwork evokes a sense of longing for the past and a sense of anticipation for the future. An empty home reminds us of its past occupants, but sits expectantly waiting for new tenants. The last storm of winter brings a fresh blanket of snow, but also the hope for spring. Two dozen of Mastrean's paintings offer visitors a chance to see the familiar through her eyes.

Through June 28 – *The Story of Shoes: Walking Working, and Dancing through the Ages*

A bride steps into satin heels on her wedding day, a farmer pulls on his wooden clogs to head out into the fields, a businessman laces up his shoes before going to the office. The *Story of Shoes* showcases the stories hidden in our soles.

PROGRAMS

Saturday, May 10 – 2:00 p.m.

***Anne Northup, Wife of Solomon Northup,
Overcame Adversity***

Speaker: David Fiske

Location: 32 Washington Avenue

PROGRAMS - continued

Wednesday, May 14 – 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Howlin' at the Moon Concert

Performers: Hilltown Ramblers

Location: Dutch Barn, Mabee Farm **Cost:** \$5

Saturday, May 17 – 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

***Volunteer College: Entering Photographs into
PastPerfect***

Location: 32 Washington Avenue

Cost: Free for current or prospective volunteers

Saturday, May 17 – 2:00-4:00 p.m.

"Nostalgia" Exhibit Reception

Location: Franchere Center

Saturday, June 7 – 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

& Sunday, June 8 – 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Revolutionary War Reenactment

Location: Mabee Farm **Cost:** \$5 adults; \$3 children age 5 to 12; free for children under 5.

Friday, June 13 – 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Howlin' at the Moon Concert

Performers: Running the River

Location: Dutch barn, Mabee Farm **Cost:** \$5.00

Saturday, June 21 – 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

***Volunteer College: A Day in the Life of a SCHS
Volunteer***

Location: Franchere Center

Cost: Free for current or prospective volunteers

Saturday, July 12 – 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Howlin' at the Moon Concert

Performers: 13 Feet of Bluegrass

Location: Dutch barn, Mabee Farm **Cost:** \$5.00

A Profile of our Newly Elected President, Marianne Blanchard

Marianne Blanchard had a 30 year career in banking, having worked at Trustco Bank, Ballston Spa National Bank, and Capital Bank. She was a long-time volunteer for Mohawk Pathways Girl Scout Council, serving as a Troop Leader, Association Chair, Board member, and Board chair. She worked for Mohawk Pathways Girl Scout Council as Membership Director and as Executive Director prior to the council's merger into Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York. She was also an active member of the Scotia Glenville PTA board, at both Lincoln School and as co-chair of the SG Junior High PTA. Marianne has been a member of Glenville Rotary for 19 years, and was previously a member of Schenectady Rotary. Born in Rotterdam and growing up on Schermerhorn Road, Marianne has a strong interest in local history. She began service to SCHS as a volunteer in the Gremis-Doolittle Library and joined the Board in 2009, where she has served on the Finance Committee, the Mabee Farm Committee, the Nominating Committee, and the Accessions Committee. She has lived in Glenville for 38 years with her husband, David. They have two grown daughters and three grandsons.



A 1935 meeting of Schenectady's Jewish War Veterans of World War I. The Historical Society would appreciate hearing from readers who can identify any of these men.

Years before the German invasion of Poland in 1939, Jews in Schenectady worried about the ramifications of events in Europe. The Capital District hosted several chapters of the pro-Nazi German-American Bund. In 1935 each of the tri-city Jewish communities formed chapters of the Jewish War Veterans to combat the Bund, fight local anti-Semitism, honor those who served in World War I, and show the patriotism of the local Jewish communities. News of the Kristallnacht of November 9-10, 1938 led 500 people to gather at Union College to protest Nazi policies. They called for the American government to pressure the British to admit Jewish refugees into Palestine. Dixon Ryan Fox, President of Union College, chaired the meeting. Speakers included Reverend Michael Frasca of the Italian Presbyterian Church and Rabbi Aaron Wise of Agudat Achim. Later, the Schenectady Federation of Churches drafted a telegram sent to President Franklin Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull asking them to use their influence to pressure Germany to stop persecuting Jews.

Once the United States entered World War II there was a burst of activity to support the war effort and denounce German persecution of European Jews. Residents organized a new Jewish Welfare Board in 1943 to coordinate fundraising and community events to support the war, such as fund drives for Saving Stamps and War Bonds. Women staffed USO clubs and organized dances for men home on leave. Congregations invited Jewish soldiers from outside the area to attend services. On Wednesday evenings Agudat Achim, then on Nott Terrace, held services for Navy cadets at Union College.

WANS volunteer Dorothy Zuckerman informed Corporal Israel Marks at the Army Air Force navigation school, of the new USO Center in town, "since it's one of Schenectady's biggest events in quite a while." Dorothy added that "many of our fair maidens are busy planning programs for the Center and acting as hostesses." She wanted to make clear to the boys in uniform that the girls back home were doing their part at the home front. "Don't get the idea that all we're doing is dancing!" Women rolled bandages, knitted sweaters, acted as nurse's aides, gave blood, and sold bonds and stamps. Members of the community served on civilian groups, like the Schenectady War Council.

In December 1942 Rabbi Benjamin Miller of Ohab Zedek described the Chanukah lighting of candles as "symbolic of the Jewish hope that their people may be rescued from the oppressive measures of Hitlerism." In April 1943, Rabbi Aaron Wise of Agudat Achim wrote to Father John Reilly, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic church, that Schenectady's Jews at the end of Passover would join in a period of "mourning for the Jewish victims of Nazi barbarism." Father Reilly and several Protestant ministers endorsed a day of compassion to honor the Jewish victims of Nazi policies.

In their letters, servicemen discussed their meeting Jews in foreign countries, the plight of European Jewry, attendance at religious services, and interaction with other Jewish servicemen. Jacob Sahr, writing from Camp Robinson in Arkansas in June 1943 thanked the JCC for sending him a prayer book because "I pray now more than in civilian life. Maybe army life has something to do with it." He noted that "There are quite a few Jewish boys from New York City in my company and we have good times talking about everything concerning our Empire State."

Jacob's brother, "Eatze" Sahr, stationed in New Guinea, informed his friends at the JCC in May 1943 that he "met a lot of Jewish families while in Australia." He spent the Jewish holidays with Australian families, and "it was sure good to know that our religious holidays are still being kept all over this world in spite of the war."

Writing from England, Willie Friedman told Francis Weidenfeld of WANS that "all the Jewish lads and officers are donating their rations to Jewish refugee children in the vicinity. It will be a real Chanukah party for them." Willie went to services for the Jewish High Holidays in 1943 in London and, "never attended more impressive services." On Yom Kippur he attended with an English Jewish woman and wrote that "my lady friend introduced me to two members of Parliament, officers in the Royal Air Force."

Frequently, the men also told the WANS volunteers of their life in service. Writing to Sadie Flax (Later Sadie Schneider) on the staff of the JCC, Al Shapiro said that he had been stationed in the South Pacific, but was now reassigned. His work was “highly secret in nature. Suffice to say I know when the coming offensives are to be in the Pacific—but for God’s sake don’t tell anybody I even know that.” In December 1944 Al Shapiro told the girls of WANS that he was in Australia getting supplies to American troops up north “where the temperature was 95 in the shade while you in Schenectady shiver and shake.”

Jason Tepper, in the U.S. Army military police, worked as chief clerk at a German Prisoner of War Camp in 1944-45. He observed the former German soldiers’ “defensive reactions to accusations of their past crimes” and to “their overbearing arrogance.”

Carl Labovitch reported to Thelma Stark at the JCC in December 1944 that he was “somewhere in the Central Pacific” and “there were still Japanese soldiers on the island, many in caves a half mile away from where I am writing this. Because of snipers, we have to be pretty careful all the time. We still sleep with a carbine 45 right close at hand.”

Expressing similar experiences on some unknown South Pacific Island in September, 1943, Sgt. Sheldon Smolky wrote that “it’s pretty rough here. The Japanese attack frequently. We have foxholes here and believe you me we really use them.”

Herman Garbowitz, stationed on the front lines in Italy in November 1944, told a WANS volunteer, “I still am up in combat, but am fine and dandy. We have been going ever since my outfit broke the Gothic line.” Herman could see the Po Valley, and “it’s quite a thing to see your enemy working around, or in his positions.”

On a lighter note, Sig Schwaber, at Camp Lee in Virginia with several other boys from Schenectady reported that “Jewish girls down here are sociable and pretty, but we poor soldiers are restricted so much we don’t have time to take the situation in hand.” He requested that the JCC send him a few “in the form and shape of WACs.”

In March 1943 Sadie Flax informed Sig Schwaber that her uncle Ben had been discharged from the army because “he was one of those over 38’ers of whom the army was evidently glad to get rid.” But her twin brothers were expecting to leave for the service in a couple of weeks. Writing again in October she told Sig of the new USO “humming with activity—they have three dances a week.” Corporal Israel Marks asked Sadie about the “old basketball gang.” One of the highlights of the JCC had been basketball rivalries between JCCs in the Capital District, but

Sadie reported back in June 1943 that “there will be no basketball for the duration.”

Public school sports continued as Lorraine Pearlman informed Sheldon Smolky of the annual Nott Terrace - Mont Pleasant football battle. As Muriel Friedman told Jules Scheinzeit in September 1943, “Your old home town is growing more and more like a boom town every day, with more and more defense workers taking over. And sailors! State Street on a sunny day looks like New York when the Fleet’s in.”

A somewhat more critical Shirley Siegel responded to Avron Cohen, stationed at Ft. Monmouth, NJ in May 1943, and commented on the “new roving mobs of Rover Boys: beg pardon, naval aviation cadets, mobs on bulging buses, monotonous food in restaurants...you know, the same old place.”

In late 1944, Jeanette Kaufman informed Samuel Silverman, a member of an Army Air Force bomber squadron: “I am sure you’ve heard of our two murderers—Rossi and Stender were convicted of second degree murder.”

In June of 1945 Lorraine Pearlman, now in uniform as a WAVE stationed in Washington, summed it up for the women: “Till the last battle is won, the last boys gone home, there will always be WAVes and WACs fighting for you down here.”

V-E Day, May 8, 1945, led to widespread celebrations in Schenectady and memorial services in each of the churches and synagogues in the city. Agudat Achim held services for the Jewish community to commemorate the end of the war in Europe. Three years later, in May 1948, the Jewish Community dedicated the plaque shown below to the Jewish boys from Schenectady who did not come home. Jewish War Veterans Post 106 conducted a special memorial service at Congregation Ohab Sholom-Bnai Abraham on May 23 to honor the nine Jewish men from Schenectady who were killed in action in World War II.



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Arlene Frederick	Gerald Kammerman	Susan Spring Meggs	Rick Reynolds
Stuart Freeman	James Kane	Reba Mehan	Nancy Rheingold
Jeni Friedland	Ann Karl	Dominick Mele	Joseph Rice
Cartter Frierson	Francis Karwowski	Jo Ann Menzer	James Richmond
Robert Gaesser	Jean Katz	Ellen Messick	Steven Rider
Joseph Gallagher	Shannon Kelly	Roger Michael	Colin Riley
Heather Garside	Kevin Kesby	Peter Modley	Elizabeth Ringlee
Ralph Gasner	Elizabeth Khasiev	Eleanor Monlea	Robert Ringlee
Jean Gauer	Wayne Kimball	Leonard Monte	Shirley Rivest
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Gail George	Sharlene King	Alexandra Moore	Kathie Rockwell
Carl George	Ronald Kingsley	Pauline Moran	Lillian Roe
Matthew George	Gloria Kishton	Debra Enright Moyer	Herbert Roes
Jeannette Gerlaugh	Marilyn Kohls	Barbara Hayes Muhlfelder	Michael Rogozinski
David Giacalone	Pat Korosec	Keith Munro	Paul Rosenberg
Donald Gleason	Ella Krajewski	Michael Munson	Betty Rowland
Steven Goldberg	Darla Kranick	Perry Ann Myslivy	Sonia Rubenstein
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Paul Gorgen	Barbara Kuban	Althea Nelson	Mary Ann Ruscitto
Beryl Grant	Sue Lainhart	Christie Noble	Paul Ryan
Hershel Graubart	Ted LaMontagne	Ida Nystrom	Angelo Santabarbara
Barbara Green	David Lamoreaux	Patrick O'Brian	Chandra Santiago
Donald Lee Griffin	Rita Lancefield	Patricia O'Clair	Helen Ann Saunders
Marion Grimes	Ruth Larson	Francis O'Connor, Jr.	Gordon Schaufelberg
Matthew Grumo	Mark Lasek	Kathryn L. Opdyke	John Scherer
Elaine Bradshaw Guidice	Edward Le Viness	Michael Ostermann	Martha Scherer
Jean Daley Gwynn	Timothy Lederach	June O'Toole	Shirley Schleier
Catherine Haag	Alice Leonard	Jenny Overeynder	Alexandra Schmidt
Claire Hamilton	Constance Leonard	Dorothy Packard	Kathleen Schoolcraft
Audra Hanley	Jerry Leonardo	Barbara Palmer	Rebecca Schott
Jayne Hanson	Carol Lewis	Christine Pangburn	Elinore Schumacher
Diane Harper	Bonnie Liebers	Edward Pangburn	Bridget Schwabrow
Clifford Hayes	Jean Lindsay	Nancy Papish	Jane Scrafford
Agnes Hedden	Thomas Locke	Joan Parslow	Kathleen Scutt
Gerald Helgeson	Ed Kruesi Lorraine	Jonathan Peace	Kathleen Secker
Paul Hooker	Joan Loveday	Dave Peck	Van der Bogert Shanklin
Malcolm Horton	Chadwick Loveland	David Pecoraro	Warren Sheldon
Jodi Horton	Katharine Lowe	Mary Pedone	Earl James Shirkey
Sylvia Hosegood	Robert Mabie	Leesa Perazzo	Patricia Shoemaker
Philip Hourigan	George Mabie	Patrick Perkins	Pete Simmonds
Laurie Hoyt	Catharine Mabie	Linda Perregaux	Charles Slavin
Lori Hudson	John Maddaus	Ann Perry	Henrietta Slosek
JoAnne Ivory	Elsie Maddaus	Robert Petito, Jr.	Patricia Smith
Susan Ivory	Linda Malgieri	Marilyn Pfaltz	Deanna Smith
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Raffele Tedeschi	John W. Van Laak	Walter Wheeler	James Zayicek
Peter Ten Eyck	Holly Van Schaick	George White	Jean Zegger

In this May-June issue, as is done each year, the Society recognizes those members who joined or renewed their membership during the past fiscal year. Without their generous support, we would not be the Society we are today. With prudent management of our resources, we will continue to not only grow, but thrive, so that many more will enjoy and appreciate the role Schenectady and its people have played in their community, their state, and often in our country and the world. We start our new fiscal year with thanks, and hope that you will continue your support during the coming years.

There are other ways to help us too. Members often make supplemental donations to address a specific need. Our fund drive to support renovation of the roofing and façade of our headquarters at 32 Washington Avenue in the Stockade continues. Others may find it easier to authorize a specific monthly contribution. This donation, transferred automatically each month via credit card, goes directly to support our programs and mission. To join this prestigious buck of the month club, please copy or clip and mail the form below. If you have questions, please call 518-374-0263, option 5, and ask for assistance. Contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law. We thank you for your generosity and support.

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New Materials in the Library

BOOKS

New World Dutch Studies: Dutch Arts and Culture in Colonial America, 1609-1776 by Albany Institute of History and Art, gift of **Michael Wachowicz**

Amsterdam (Images of America) by Kelly Yacobucci Farquhar, gift of **Michael Wachowicz**

Montgomery County (Images of America) by Farquhar and Haefner, gift of **Michael Wachowicz**

The Amazing Impossible Erie Canal by Cheryl Harness, gift of **Michael Wachowicz**

Things That Go Bump in the Night by Louis Jones, gift of **Michael Wachowicz**

The New York State Capitol and the Great Fire of 1911 by Mercer and Weiss, gift of **Michael Wachowicz**

The Life and Works of Thomas Cole by Louis Legrand Noble, gift of **Michael Wachowicz**

The Fall of the House of Walworth by Geoffrey O'Brien, gift of **Michael Wachowicz**

The Lives They Left Behind by Darby and Stastny, gift of **Michael Wachowicz**

Childhood Pleasures: Dutch Children in the Seventeenth Century and *Summer Pleasures, Winter Pleasures: A Hudson Valley Cookbook* by Peter Rose, gift of **Michael Wachowicz**

The Prison Diary and Letters of Chester Gillette by Sherman and Brandon, eds., gift of **Michael Wachowicz**

Beaver City: A Story of Katy and Karl's Albany by Billie Touchstone Signer, gift of **Michael Wachowicz**

How to Climb Your Family Tree: Genealogy for Beginners by Harriet Stryker-Rodda, gift of **Michael Wachowicz**

Romany Rhymes and Domestic Ditties by Catharine Jackson Alger, gift of **Louisa Alger Watrous**

DOCUMENTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

6 photographs of G.E. building interiors related to marble/slate works, gift of **V. Russell Patience**
Sketchbook of Grace A. Buck (ca. 1932); Blank G.E. diary, 1963; Car invoice from Cummings Motors (Schenectady), 1960; Schenectady Savings Bank quarter saver (ca. 1960);

DOCUMENTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS, cont'd

Schenectady Insuring Agency 1968 calendar; Program from Mont Pleasant High School Class Dinner (1937); Program from Draper School play (1922); Ephemera: "Farewell Reception to Jack by his Friends" [John Callahan of Scotia](1908); Ephemera: "Farewell Dinner Given by Charles Gates to His Friends before Departing for the West" (1909); Ephemera: "Farewell Dinner given by Henry Eisenach, Jr." (1909), gift of **Deb Crosby**

Finding Aids Online

A finding aid—a detailed description of a collection and an outline of its contents—is key to locating materials within archival collections. The Grems-Doolittle Library now has finding aids for a number of our collections online, available to browse or search from the comfort of your home. Each finding aid is available in PDF format. On the page www.schenectadyhistorical.org/library/collections, simply click on a link to open a finding aid. You can then browse the finding aid or use your web browser's "find" or "search" function to search the finding aid for keywords or names. In addition to finding aids for specific collections, you can also find indexes to collections on microfilm and research guides for a number of topics. If you have questions about any of our collections or need help, please contact our Librarian/Archivist, Melissa Tacke, at 518-374-0263, option 3, or send email to librarian@schenectadyhistorical.org.

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Following the Schenectady County Historical Society on Facebook is a great way to keep up-to-date on upcoming events and exhibits, learn about updates to the Grems-Doolittle Library Blog, and connect to news about the Society. To find our Facebook page, simply search for "Schenectady County Historical Society" on Facebook, or click on our Facebook link on the Historical Society's website: www.schenectadyhistorical.org.

Welcome to our New Staff Members!



Mary Zawacki
Curator



Kaitlin Morton-Bentley
Assistant Curator

Photos by Ann Aronson

Mary Zawacki was born in Westchester County. She attended SUNY New Paltz, spent a semester in **Besançon**, France, and graduated with a B.A. in History and French in 2009. After graduation, Mary taught English to high school students in Jonzac, France and was awarded her M.A. in Museum Studies from University of Newcastle in England in 2011. In addition to positions as Collections Manager at the FASNY Museum of Firefighting and as Education and Program Assistant at the Adirondack Museum, she served as Curatorial Assistant at the Tyne & Wear Archives & Museum in northern England. Mary has also served as a consultant for the Conference on New York State History, developing a background in event planning, collections management, and exhibit design. Mary lives in Albany with her husband Eric, two cats, and one very mischievous dog. She enjoys hiking, biking, and photography, and is a regular volunteer at a local animal shelter.

Kaitlin Morton-Bentley grew up in Rhode Island and got to know upstate New York while earning her Bachelor of Arts degree at Skidmore College. She returned to Rhode Island to earn a Master of Arts in American History and a second Masters in Library and Information Studies, both at the University of Rhode Island. After interning with the Newport Historical Society, she moved to the Boston area to earn a Certificate in Museum Studies at Tufts University. Kaitlin and her husband Daniel returned to the Capital District in 2012 following her work in both library and museum settings. She began working for the Historical Society in April of last year, first as a volunteer and later as Interim Assistant Curator. Kaitlin and Daniel live in Niskayuna and welcomed the arrival of their baby daughter Leonora in December. Kaitlin is very happy to be joining the Historical Society staff and is looking forward to her work as our new Assistant Curator.





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