



SCHENECTADY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Schenectady's Immigrant Communities in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century

by Maddie Pelletier, SCHS Summer Intern

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, thousands of immigrants came to Schenectady to live and work. Many of their descendants still live in the area today. As new arrivals starting completely afresh in a foreign country, these immigrants faced the challenges of a new environment like learning a new language and creating new communities, while often facing hostility from some of the established citizenry. Systems that were in place to support citizens sometimes failed immigrants. Thus, Schenectady's immigrants created support systems within their own communities. Established immigrants would often provide newer immigrants with financial, emotional, and legal support, which facilitated their settlement in Schenectady and allowed immigrants and their children to prosper.

Some of the first Italian immigrants to come to Schenectady were 2,000 men hired to lay track for the New York Central Railroad. In 1874, the Evening Star reported 50 such laborers living on Nott Street, and went on to assure readers that Italians were known to "work hard, keep sober, and to diligently attend to their own business," perhaps reflecting an effort to alleviate public suspicion towards these new residents. Reporting on a group of Italians who resided on Fonda Street, the Evening Star reassured readers that they "mind their own business" and that "after being here long enough they fall in with customary ways to sufficient extent to spruce up some." Other articles, however, poked fun at Italians moving through Schenectady. A group of organ grinders was mocked for failing to successfully make a profit in Schenectady, with the Evening Star reporting both their lack of success and their accent, with a supposed quote by one musician that they "no get no one dolleyar."

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Letter from the President

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Newsletter Contributors:

John Angilletta, Bill Buell, John
F. Gearing, & Martin Strosberg

As I write this in early December, we have a beautiful coating of snow on the ground, and the cardinals on our backyard feeder make the perfect winter scene. When you're reading this, who knows? I remember cycling on the bike path last January and February because it was free of snow. I recently read an article in the Appalachian Mountain Club magazine about their tracking of the winter season length going back decades; they concluded that the northeast has "lost" 19 days of winter in the last century, and Massachusetts 27 days of snow cover. I know that my father always put on our snow tires before Thanksgiving, and it was rare to not have a significant snowfall before Christmas. Times do change!



My journey through life took a significant detour this fall, as I was diagnosed with tonsil cancer in late August. As I write this, I'm nearing the end of the treatment, which is typically highly successful in effecting a complete cure, but also quite difficult, with many unpleasant and challenging side effects including significant difficulty in swallowing and therefore eating. It's definitely the hardest thing I've ever been through, and has caused me to think a lot about my future and how I'll spend my time. It's also expanded my view of the world around me: how many people I see during my average day out and about have been through something similar, or even harder? I know I'll come out of this with new perspectives on life and new ideas on how to make mine more impactful and enjoyable. For the near term, I just look forward to eating normally and gaining back my weight!

I've been reading a lot - most recently finishing *The Paris Library*, about an American library in Paris and the challenges it met (as well as support from the Nazi occupiers) in staying open during the World War II occupation. It's fiction, but many of the characters and much of the story are real. I've started *American Prometheus*, detailing the life of Robert Oppenheimer and the inspiration for the recent movie. It's almost 600 pages of small print so I'm taking it a chapter at a time. I hope you find time to enjoy a few good books, historical or not, this winter.

As always, I look forward to many of SCHS' upcoming programs this year, including walking tours, invited speakers, and especially volunteering for the school programs in the spring. I even signed up for a painting class at Mabee Farm! The claim is that I'll leave with a painting of a landscape scene that I've done, with help. We'll see what happens -- perhaps mine will be the proverbial polar bear in a snowstorm. I hope that you and your family enjoy some of the wonderful array of offerings that the staff creates each year.

I wish you all a lovely rest of winter -- whether it feels like it or not! I hope to see you at the **SCHS Gala honoring artist Len Tantillo on April 9**, or at the **SCHS Annual Meeting on May 4**.

Mark E. Vermilyea

Mark Vermilyea, SCHS President

Note From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I recently had the honor of having an opinion piece published in the *Daily Gazette*.

Rather than do a poor job paraphrasing what I already wrote, I'll just paste my opinion piece here. Let me know what you think. Better yet, let the County Legislature know what you think. Do Schenectady's museums deserve public funding? Personally, I think they do. But I might be biased:

"The recent news about miSci's possible closure is troubling — not just for miSci, but for Schenectady, and for the people who live here. Our leaders have transformed Schenectady into a vibrant city in the last decade. It's impressive. But there is still work to be done.

Our leaders need to do a better job of supporting the museums and cultural resources that make Schenectady a truly thriving city. Part of the problem with supporting them is that our Schenectady museums receive little to no public funding.

Why should public funds be used to support museums? Let's look at the data:

The American Alliance of Museums (AAM) notes that "Support for museums is robust regardless of political persuasion." According to the AAM:

- 96% of Americans would approve of lawmakers who acted to support museums." It seems Americans really value museums in their communities:
- 97% of Americans believe that museums are educational assets for their communities.
- 89% believe that museums contribute important economic benefits to their community.
- 96% want to maintain or increase federal funding for museums.

Museums are also economic engines. Erika Sanger is the executive director of the Museum Association of New York and works hard to advocate for New York's museums. To use her words, "Too many of our museums operate in a culture of scarcity, struggling to pay bills and wondering each year how they will keep their doors open. Museums need support to ensure the protection of their collections, to strengthen their roles as community education partners chartered by New York State's Education Department, and to grow their role as economic engines generating \$5.37B to the state's economy."

A local museum has the power to change lives.

Let's take the Schenectady County Historical Society and Mabee Farm Historic Site as an example. Every year, we see over 23,000 visitors, including 3,000 school children. We present programs that educate, entertain and inspire. We provide vital spaces for social interaction, reflection and the opportunity to engage freely with new ideas.

Our programs help make Schenectady a better place to live. We do this without steady or substantial public support. Schenectady's libraries and theaters receive tax dollars; why not our museums?

Still not convinced museums are deserving of local funding? Here are a few more facts from AAM:

More people visit art museums, science centers, historic houses or sites, zoos, or aquariums than attend professional sporting events.

Children who visited a museum during kindergarten had higher achievement scores in reading, mathematics and science in third grade than children who did not.

The American public regards museums as highly trustworthy—ranking second only to friends and family.

Plus, the American public considers museums a more reliable source of historical information than books, teachers or even personal accounts by relatives.

In determining America's Best Cities, Bloomberg placed the greatest weight on "leisure amenities," including density of museums.

I'm proud to call myself a Schenectadian. I can't imagine living anywhere else. And, along with so many others, I believe firmly that museums are essential to the fabric of Schenectady.

But let's make sure they have a place here forever.

Investing in our local museums is an investment in the vibrancy and well-being of Schenectady. Investment in our museums enhances our cultural identity, boosts our economic development and, above all, ensures our museums will be here for a very long time to come."



Mary Zawacki, SCHS Executive Director

REVIEW: *Forget It, Jake, It's Schenectady: The True Story Behind "The Place Beyond the Pines"*

by Martin Strosberg

The title of David Bushman's book, *Forget It, Jake, It's Schenectady: The True Story Behind "The Place Beyond the Pines,"* requires an explanation. The first half of the title is based on an iconic quote from Roman Polanski's 1974 film noir, *Chinatown*, starring Jack Nicholson as Jake, the hard-bitten private eye who confronts a bewildering and cynical crime-ridden world symbolized by the Chinatown of 1930s Los Angeles. Substitute "Schenectady" for "Chinatown." The second half of the title includes *The Place Beyond the Pines* (i.e., Schenectady), which is the name of a 2012 movie starring Ryan Gosling and Bradley Cooper. The co-writer of the movie script is Niskayuna native Ben Coccio. His script was inspired by the articles he read as a teenager in the *Schenectady Gazette* documenting the scandal, corruption, and criminality of the Schenectady Police Department (SPD). We learn more about the genesis of Coccio's movie in his forward to Bushman's book.

Author David Bushman is a storyteller. And Greg Kaczmarek, disgraced former Schenectady Police Chief, provided ample material for his fascinating book. By chance, in 2018, Bushman met Kaczmarek, who at the time was making a living as a Lyft driver. In the backseat of the Lyft, Bushman listened to Kaczmarek hold forth. Like the Ancient Mariner and his rhyme, he felt compelled to tell his saga. Furthermore, Kaczmarek asked Bushman to write a book about his life. Intrigued, Bushman agreed, but with the proviso that he would maintain full control over the book's content. Kaczmarek agreed. For both, it was a very consequential Lyft ride.

Bushman's narrative of the life and times of Greg Kaczmarek provides a disturbing glimpse into a slice of time in Schenectady history when the city was at its low point. Kaczmarek, a 27-year veteran of the SPD, served as police chief of the 150-member force for six years, from 1996-2002. It is this period that receives special attention. We read about one eye-popping scandal after another: drug distribution and possession, extortion, racketeering, and more. Six

officers went to prison. One committed suicide. The SPD, subject to many investigations including one by the FBI, and ridiculed in the media, had indeed become notorious. Bushman's accounts of police corruption were backed up by extensive research. He reviewed court documents and interviewed dozens of the key players: police officers (including most of those who had been convicted), politicians, lawyers, and journalists including former *Schenectady Gazette* columnist Carl Strock. Of course, Kaczmarek served as the main informant. Needless to say, versions of the truth frequently differed. Bushman did his best to unravel the multi-layered and confusing accounts. After all, this was "Chinatown".

Kaczmarek himself was never charged with any wrong-doing while chief, although he was suspected of using cocaine. However, in 2008, 6 years after he retired, he and his wife were convicted of selling cocaine.

Perhaps nothing illustrated to the general public the rot in the SPD more than an incident in 1997 when a busload of drunken off-duty cops, participating in a traveling bachelors' party, celebrated by throwing eggs and beer bottles at passing cars. This escapade, well-covered by the media, resulted in a public relations disaster for the department.

While Bushman does not attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors responsible for the debased culture of the SPD, he does weave together in his narrative some of the contributory strands (discussed below) that led to the downward spiral, which started decades before Kaczmarek took command.

Schenectady, like many cities in the U.S., did not readily embrace the reform principles of municipal governance. These principles included: run the city like a business with competent managers; take politics out of administering basic city services, e.g., roads, sanitation, social services, fire, and police; hire and promote workers based on merit, not party affiliation or cronyism; consider questions of

administration as technical questions best answered by professionals. On the contrary, loyalty to the political party boss and patronage often ruled the day.

The decline of GE, beginning in the 1970s, knocked Schenectady on its knees economically with a resulting loss of jobs and tax base, out-migration of population, and degradation of housing stock. Drugs, despair, surging crime, and racial tensions followed. Many rust-belt cities suffered a similar fate.

Fostering the culture of corruption was the cozy, not-so-secret relationship between the politicians and police and certain criminal elements. Long-time Schenectady residents may remember DiCocco's Luncheonette at 1505 South Street, and its infamous gambling establishment in the back room. The enterprise was run by Legs DiCocco, reputed Schenectady crime boss since the 1950s. DiCocco's 1989 funeral was attended by thousands, including the political elite of Schenectady.

Efforts to reform the SPD, including those by Chief Kaczmarek, were often thwarted by the police union, the Police Benevolent Association (PBA). Many considered the politically connected PBA the real power center of the department.

One notable attempt to clean up the mess at the SPD was the hiring of Charles Mills by Mayor Karen Johnson to serve as commissioner overseeing departmental operations. His previous job was assistant chief of the NYC transit police. Mills, praised as an experienced professional, served from 1991 to 1994 until forced out by Mayor Frank Duci.

Bushman's book is not about today's SPD, a point that deserves emphasis. All agree that it has improved significantly. Tellingly, interest in the past remains high. Bushman recently (October 21, 2023) spoke to a packed house at the Schenectady County Historical Society. Emotions ran high. Even though most of the events covered in the book occurred two decades ago, the dark days of Schenectady's past will not be soon forgotten.

David Bushman, *Forget It, Jake, It's Schenectady: The True Story Behind "The Place Beyond the Pines,"* Columbus, Ohio, Fayetteville Mafia Press, 2023.



**BECOME A
LOCK
KEEPER**

Supporting local history has never been so sweet!

The Schenectady County Historical Society has partnered with Villa Italia for a special promotion of our monthly donor program, the **Lockkeepers**. Lockkeepers who choose to give at least \$10 per month to SCHS will be granted a one-time \$10 gift card to Villa Italia, as well as an ongoing 10% discount on future in-store purchases through the end of 2024.

When you become a **Lockkeeper**, you know that each month, your gift directly supports the educational and preservation efforts of SCHS.

To join, please visit
schenectadyhistorical.org/support

Calendar of Events at SCHS

We're always adding new programs to the calendar! For full event details, and to get tickets, please visit schenectadyhistorical.org/events

Gala Honoring Len Tantillo

Gala Honoring Len Tantillo

April 9 at 5:30pm @ SCCC | \$100

Honor the work and contributions of renowned historical artist Len F. Tantillo as we enjoy a delicious meal prepared by the talented students of the SCCC hospitality program, accompanied by a selection of wines. Mr. Tantillo will discuss his forthcoming painting of colonial Schenectady, and we may be treated to a sneak peek! Mr. Tantillo's impressive body of work comprises over 300 historical paintings and drawings. Many of his works are housed in prestigious collections around the US.

Tours and More

Snow Moon Walk & Tavern Night

February 24 at 6pm @ Mabee Farm | \$10 or \$5 for members

Join us this night of the full Snow Moon for a candlelight walk through the woods of the Woestyne. Afterwards, we'll make a fire in the Inn's historic fireplace, and storytellers will share colorful tales from our area. Warm drinks will be served.

Walking Tour: Stockade Sacred Spaces

April 20 at 10am @ 32 Washington Ave | \$5-\$13

Schenectady has long been home to peoples of many faiths, and the various churches of the Stockade stand out for their beauty and storied history. In this tour, we'll explore these spaces and hear their stories from the people who keep them sacred today.

Secret Stockade

Saturdays May 11, June 8, July 13, Aug 10, and Sept 14 at 2pm at 32 Washington | \$28

Tickets include museum admission, a guided neighborhood tour, exclusive access to two Stockade homes and gardens, and coffee and pastries at Arthur's Market.

Black History Month

A History Lost

February 6 at 12pm @ SCCC | Free

Schenectady's Black residents faced many obstacles as they sought to establish a place for themselves in the 19th century. This presentation seeks to shed light on this little known chapter of local history. This program will be presented by SCHS Historian, Michael Diana, at SCCC in room Stockade 101.

Tour: Lost Voices of Mabee Farm

February 10 at 11am @ Mabee Farm | \$5-\$10

In this tour, we try to see the Mabee Farm as its enslaved residents would have known it and to try to understand the experiences of hundreds of other enslaved people in Schenectady's history.

Walking Tour: The Disappearing Neighborhood

February 24 at 12pm @ SCPL | \$5-\$13

In this tour, we will explore what was -- in the 19th century -- a thriving Black neighborhood that then vanished. This tour meets outside the SCPL Branch on Clinton Street.

For Families

Winter Family Day at Mabee Farm

February 23 at 10am | \$10 / free for members

Spend the winter break with us! The Mabee Farm will host special winter activities. Baking on the hearth, colonial crafts and even a behind-the-scenes tour of our artifact collections.

Mabee Maple Day

March 2 at 10am @ Mabee Farm | \$10 / \$5 SCHS member

In this family-friendly program, you'll learn the maple process for yourself from colonial techniques to later innovations. And of course, we'll be able to taste the results!

Workshop: Colonial Ice Cream Parlor

March 30 at 10am @ Mabee Farm | \$10 / SCHS members free

In this family-friendly class, we'll teach you how you can make a frozen custard the old fashioned way. And of course you'll get a taste!

Libations

Drink the Seasons: Tiki Night

March 8 at 6pm @ 32 Washington | \$33

Led by historian John Gearing, we'll sample a variety of historic tiki libations.

Schenectady Wine Society: Syrah

April 3 at 6pm @ 32 Washington | \$33

Wine connoisseur Buffy Leonard and city historian Chris Leonard will lead us on a tasting and history tour of their favorite Syrah wines.

Malt 'n Moonshine at the Mabee Inn

April 27 at 2pm @ Mabee Farm | \$21

A simple malt beer and some classic Mohawk valley moonshine are on the menu!

Calendar of Events at SCHS

Music and Festivals

Howlin' at the Moon

Our full moon concert series returns to The Barn at Mabee Farm this summer, and our hosts Everest Rising are bringing you an incredible lineup of regional musicians. The music starts at 7pm, and tickets are \$10.

May 23 featuring The Mammals

June 20 featuring Big Fez and the Surfmatix

July 18 featuring Goodnight Moonshine

August 15 featuring TBD

September 19 featuring Belle-Skinner

Workshops

Workshop: A Schenectady Valentine

February 13 at 6pm @ 32 Washington | \$5-\$10

The Museum will be open late for date-night! Join us as we delve into our archives of historic love letters to tease out the passion penned on the pages. So inspired, guests will hand craft a valentine of their own. We'll have chocolate and wine!

Workshop: Felt a Spring Animal

March 16 @ Mabee Farm | \$40

In this workshop, we'll felt an adorable spring animal, using wool from our herd. This craft makes a great gift for friends, family, or even yourself.

Workshop: Spring Paint pARTy

April 13 at 10am @ Mabee Farm | \$35

Instructor Karen Anthony will teach us to paint a colorful spring scene. No artistic experience necessary — you will be lead step by step to produce your very own masterpiece!

Annual Meeting

SCHS Annual Meeting featuring "The Enduring Myths of the American Revolution" with Chris Leonard

May 4 at 2pm @ Mabee Farm | \$10 / free for members

City of Schenectady Historian Chris Leonard will give a talk after a brief SCHS business meeting. Refreshments served.

Winter Speaker Series

February 7 at 7pm

Women in the Dark: Female Photographers in the US, 1850–1900 with Katherine Manthorne

February 21 at 7pm

Calvinists and Indians in the Northeastern Woodlands with Stephen Staggs

February 28 at 7pm

Taverns in Upstate New York with Gerald Baum

March 6 at 7pm

Lifestyles of Enslaved and Freed Peoples in the Hudson Valley with Myra Armstead

March 9 at 2pm

IN-PERSON AT SCHS: *Finding Women's Voices in the Archives with Jane Wilcox*

March 13 at 7pm

Skeletons in the Cabinet: Memory and the Human Remains Attributed to the Schenectady Massacre of 1690s with Andrew Robert Beaupre

March 17 at 2pm

IN-PERSON AT 32 WASHINGTON *Preserving Family Papers and Photographs: Digitization and Digital Preservation with Marietta Carr*

March 20 at 7pm

Theodore Burr's Two Early 19th Century Schenectady-Scotia Bridges: New Evidence with Ron Knapp

March 23 at 2pm

IN-PERSON AT MABEE FARM: *Mainstream Radicalism: Labor Organizing in Schenectady 1886-1906 with Catherine Haag*

March 27 at 7pm

Visualizing Equality: African American Rights and Visual Culture in the 19th Century with Aston Gonzalez

IN-PERSON AT MABEE FARM: April 20 at 2pm

Spring on an 18th Century Farm with Paul Supley

Volunteer Spotlight:

Dan Brudos



by John Angilletta

Dan Brudos began volunteering with SCHS less than two years ago, but in that short time he has made a significant impact on our school programs and special events. I mention the school programs at the Mabee Farm because of Dan's past experience as a school teacher.

Dan joined our ranks after teaching third and fourth graders in the Schenectady school system for 27 years. Our school program is tailored to fourth graders which is when students learn about American history. Dan's love of local and regional history is very much in evidence when he is leading our school groups, especially the station we have on barn building. The fact that Dan built his own house in Rotterdam gives him particular insight into the construction of a Dutch barn.

Dan loves showing students how all building and basic

farm work in colonial times was accomplished solely by human and animal labor. He also likes to point out how much the weather and soil were intertwined with the crops grown in the early days of the Mabee Farm. He finds all aspects of farm life interesting, and has even raised his own herd of cattle. He said that he would like to try his hand at blacksmithing in the future.

Dan is married with two daughters. Aside from his teaching credentials, he is also fluent in German, and has even deciphered a pre-WWII diary in the library. In his free time, Dan enjoys being active outdoors, woodworking, making stained glass, and traveling.

SCHS is fortunate to have such an accomplished volunteer as Dan, and we hope he stays with us for a long time!

From the Library

Note from the Librarian

This winter season in the library, we're working on processing new materials, enhancing the descriptions of our archival collections, and continuing to develop our HistoryForge mapping project and the African American Historical Records Collection. I hope you'll join us in researching and preserving Schenectady's history!

- Marietta Carr, Librarian/Archivist

Recently Published Books Added to the Library

***Theodore Burr and the Bridging of Early America* by Ronald G. Knapp and Terry E. Miller**

The first book-length work focused on Theodore Burr, one of America's most prominent nineteenth century bridge-building pioneers, this book narrates the significant role of covered bridges, associated turnpikes, and bridge-builders in the westward expansion of the new nation. Check out the chapter examining the wooden bridge (known as the Burr Bridge) which connected Schenectady and Scotia, 1808 to 1874.

***The Black Woods* by Amy Godine**

From the 1840s into the 1860s, three thousand Black New Yorkers were gifted with 120,000 acres of Adirondack land by Gerrit Smith, an upstate abolitionist and heir to an immense land fortune. Using stirring stories from archival sources, this book chronicles the robust story of these Black pioneers and their descendants who carved from the wilderness a future for their families and their civic rights, thus returning these trailblazers to their rightful place in the Adirondack and NY narratives.

***The American Liberty Pole* by Shira Lurie**

Liberty poles – tall wooden poles bearing political flags and signs – were a central fixture of the widespread debate over political expression during and immediately following the American Revolution. This book is the first comprehensive study of this cultural phenomenon, illustrating the influence of ordinary citizens in shaping American political culture.

New Blog Posts

***Schenectady in the Green Book* by Elijahjison Powell**

As part of his work as a Sankofa Youth Ambassador, Elijah Powell takes a closer look at the entries for Schenectady County listed in the 1940s editions of the *Negro Motorist Guide*.

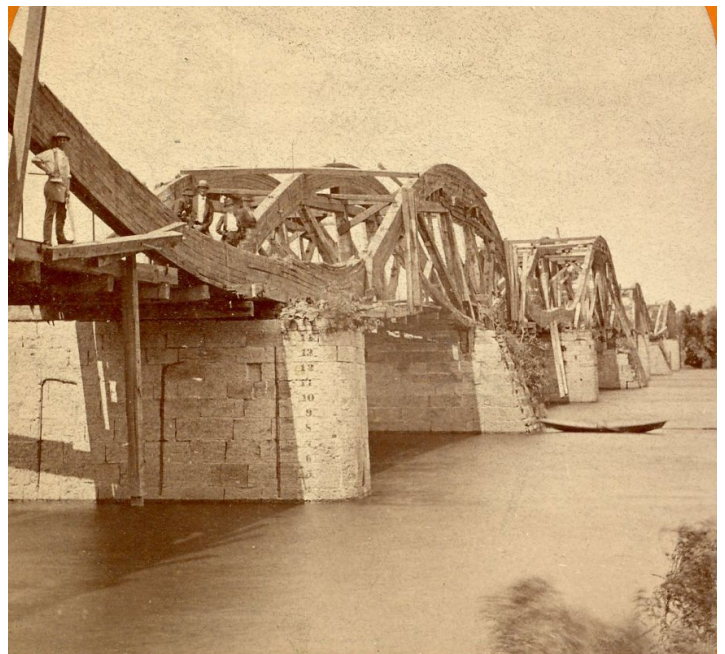
***Special Projects and Partnerships* by Marietta Carr**

Our librarian, Marietta Carr, takes a look back at the special projects and partnerships that took place in the library this year.

***Schenectady's Other Workplace Novelist* by George Wise**

George Wise examines a lesser-known fictionalized narrative of working at GE, Idwal Jones' *Steel Chips*, published in 1929.

Image: Old Mohawk Covered Bridge, aka Burr Bridge, during demolition in 1874.



Schenectady Skating Revival



By John F. Gearing, Esq.

When Old Man Winter's frosty breath settled on Schenectady in early December of 1876, the Mohawk River froze. Although the popularity of ice skating had waned over previous years, the sudden availability of good ice on the Mohawk sparked a renewed interest in this winter pastime. Many Schenectadians strapped on their skates and took to the ice. But soon snow blanketed the ice and the skating season appeared to be over almost as soon as it had begun.

That is, until two enterprising citizens, Henry Y. Teller and John H. Smith, decided to create a skating rink on the river between Washington Street and Governor's Lane. "Garry" Myers and his team of horses cleared away the snow and used an ice planer to create a smooth skating surface – a sort of horse-drawn Zamboni! The rink was reported to cover 2 1/2 acres – the size of 6 1/2 NHL ice hockey rinks – and to extend 2/3 of the way across the river. Newspaper articles of the day advised the public that the size of the rink provided for both "plain and continuous" (e.g. lap skating) and "fancy skating." There was seating for participants to change into their skates, or to take a break from skating. Kerosene torches were set up around the rink's perimeter to permit evening skating. The skating park was well-received, often filled with skaters of all ages and sexes. Day and season passes were sold.

The operators requested that visitors not bring sleds onto the ice, perhaps responding to hazards caused by skaters attempting to pull young children on sleds behind them as they glided along. The other restriction of note was asking boys not to play "jubiloo" "at the

close of the day and after dark," noting that games of any kind could be played when the rink was largely free of skaters. The author is unclear as to the exact nature of "jubiloo," but notes that there were several types of stick and ball games played on ice in North America before the first ice hockey game was played in 1875 in Montreal.

Teller soon became sole operator and maintenance supervisor. There were frequent snow storms that winter, and often high winds that caused drifting, and Teller worked long into the night with gangs of men, clearing snow from the rink so the ice would be available to his next day's patrons. He succeeded admirably – the skating park was open nearly every day until near the end of February, excepting a short January thaw. "Moonlight carnivals" were held on nights when the skies were clear and the moon was near full. At the end of the season, over a dozen men and women received kudos in the "Evening Star" for their skating prowess.

With the coming of Spring, Teller announced the improvements he had planned for the next winter's skating park. These included a warming hut for patrons to hang their coats and wraps and change into skates, and a more efficient method of clearing snow from the rink, along with an increase in ticket prices. With the success of the Mohawk skating park, a revival of Schenectady's "skating furore" was underway.

Sources

Schenectady *Evening Star*, Friday, Dec. 15, 1876 p.4
Schenectady *Evening Star*, Friday March 2, 1877 p. 4

Image: Cutting ice in Mohawk, east from Mohawk Bridge, Feb 8, 1906, from the Grems-Doolittle Library collection.

A Visit from Lt. Governor Antonio Delgado



Finally, the Lieutenant Governor concluded his visit with a stop at the Brick House, the 1760s structure situated just steps away from the Mabee Farmhouse. The Brick House's significance lies in its role as housing for the enslaved African Americans who lived at Mabee Farm before enslavement ended in New York State in 1827. It stands as one of the few structures in the state directly linked to the experiences of the enslaved.

Recently, architects and engineers have assessed Mabee Farm Historic Site and have noted over \$76,000 in necessary preservation work for the Brick House alone. To maintain this tangible link to a significant chapter of history, it is imperative that we preserve the integrity of

this structure, including stabilizing a structural lean, rebuilding the basement door and stairway, and many necessary cosmetic improvements.

Despite these structural concerns, the Lieutenant Governor carefully traversed the basement entry and stairs, where he experienced firsthand the sincere need to repair and preserve access to this space. Once inside, Mike Diana shared stories of the enslaved individuals who once lived in the space, including the story of Cato, an enslaved man who attempted to self-emancipate in 1799, but was ultimately unsuccessful. Cato's story, and many others, can help people of all ages learn about the experiences of the enslaved here in Schenectady, and they deserve to have even greater light shed on them through the preservation of the physical space of the Brick House and more.

The Lieutenant Governor concluded his visit to Mabee Farm by thanking SCHS staff for "keeping this history alive for future generations of New Yorkers." We would like to extend our thanks to the Lieutenant Governor and his staff for their time and commitment to our community, and for drawing attention to the efforts and future plans of the Schenectady County Historical Society. We hope you will visit again soon.

Visit www.schenectadyhistorical.org to learn how you can help preserve the Brick House.

by Caroline Brown

SCHS was recently honored by a visit from New York's Lieutenant Governor, Antonio Delgado. The Lieutenant Governor and his staff arrived on a very rainy, late October afternoon and dove right into getting to know the Historical Society and Mabee Farm.

His first stop was sitting down with Librarian Marietta Carr and Elijah Powell, Sankofa Youth Ambassador. Marietta shared about the ongoing and vital African American Historical Records Project, the goal of which is to grow public awareness and access to an expanding collection of archival material related to Schenectady's Black Community. Elijah spoke about his experience working with Sankofa Youth Collective studying Black history, conducting community outreach, and interviewing local leaders as part of the AAHRP.

Next, the Lieutenant Governor visited the Mabee Farmhouse, the oldest building in the Mohawk Valley. In the house, he encountered Historian and Director of Education Mike Diana conducting a school program with a group of Schalmont high school students. The Lieutenant Governor was pleased to greet the students from Schenectady, stating that he himself was once a "Schenectady kid." Mike spoke with him about the abundance of school programs that SCHS offers, as well as their impact on the nearly 4,000 Capital Region students who attend SCHS school programs annually.



Image, front page: A young GE shop worker in the 20th century.

Image, above: Maska, a Polish theater group active in Schenectady in the 20th century

Continued from page 1

Italians were not the only ones treated discourteously by the press during this time period. Polish immigrants faced discrimination in the news as well. During the depression year of 1893, Polish immigrants disproportionately suffered; in one article their pastor, Father Dereszewski, explained to the press that Polish families were starving, and one person was described as "a woman, whose name the reporter could neither pronounce, spell nor understand..." The reporter's mocking tones stood in sharp contrast with the desperation of the group.

Italians were sometimes portrayed as criminals by the media, and criminal offenses perpetrated by immigrants were sensationalized in reports. In the May 19, 1880 edition of the Evening Star a monkey owned by an Italian organ grinder ("a dark skinned signor") bit a child, whose father responded by kicking the immigrant. The organ grinder was arrested, jailed, and fined. In an 1884 article called "Stefano Loves Susan," the Evening Star told of an elopement between an Italian man and native-born woman. The Italian man was charged with abduction, and the girl was sympathetically reported as "infatuated with her dusky skinned neighbor." Arrest

reports in the paper failed to attempt to use the real names of the perpetrators, with Italians being called "Giuseppe something-or-other" or a "Frank "Red-eye," purportedly as close to the real name that reporters could understand.

Sensationalized headlines highlighted the accented English of immigrants, with articles entitled "Me Kill-A You" and "Me Take-A You Life." In police reports, immigrants were often numbered instead of named, and some were even given fake "traditionally Schenectadian" names such as "Mike Van Veit" or "John and Mary Yates." Many were simply called "Italian John" or "Polander Jane," their nationality evidently their entire identity and something to be ridiculed in the eyes of the police. The reality of the situation was that crimes committed by Italians and Poles tended to be overreported due to police and media bias. Although Italian and Polish immigrants had slightly higher rates of crime than other groups, this was due to many men coming to the United States in search of employment, and thus a larger number of adult males, who committed by far the most crime out of any demographic. Crime rates amongst adult males of all nationalities were the same, according to the 1910 crime report.

Soon upon their arrival to Schenectady, many immigrant communities established newspapers, perhaps seeking an alternative to the hostility many faced in existing media outlets. Many of these papers were bilingual, serving portions of the community who could not read the conventional papers. There were multiple generations of German newspapers, starting with the *Deutscher Anzeiger* in 1873, then the *Das Deutsch Journal*, the *Herold*, and finally the *Schenectady Herold-Journal*, first printed in 1917. Italian-American papers included *The Record*, *Il Corriere di Schenectady*, and *The International*. The Polish community, too, had its own newspapers, *Tygodnik* and the *Gazeta Tygodniowa*, which made a point of enthusiastically supporting Polish businesses and organizations, such as the *Maska Dramatica*, a Polish theater troupe. The *Record* was a paper published in Italian and English from 1925-1932. Its creator, Ettore Mancuso, explained that these ethnic newspapers were enthusiastically read and that the reader “reads it from beginning to end. His family reads it. Often it is passed to others. It gets a reading such as the daily newspaper can never expect to get.”

The language barrier between immigrants and conventional papers created a devoted readership for these new publications, and the creators and readers were often from the same small community. Papers reported on world news, but also covered events specific to the community. They also supported the rest of their community through promotion of immigrant businesses and by highlighting prominent members of the community. The *Record* encouraged Italian Schenectadians to spend their money in Schenectady, and to support Italian businesses in Schenectady. An article from July 18, 1930 reminded readers that “all our shopping, whether it be for goods or for men, should be done in Schenectady.” On September 12th of that year, local real estate broker M. Suraci Licenziato was featured in an article urging readers to use his services. In the June 20, 1930 issue, a Signora Sophie A. Palermo is highlighted: she had just graduated from college and would be continuing her studies at the Sorbonne in Paris. She promised to visit Italy on the way. The front page of the same issue featured “Our Graduates,” five Italian-American Union College graduates. The use of “our” highlights how *The Record* presented itself as a voice of the Italian-American community.

As in other cities, many of Schenectady’s immigrant communities gravitated to the same neighborhoods, mostly aligned by nation of origin. For example, many members of the German immigrant community lived on Albany Street and the surrounding streets. Immigrant communities could be overcrowded and impoverished. A 1903 inspection of Italian and Polish tenements reported on by the *Union Star* revealed the conditions within, alleging filth and general conditions that “begged description.” “Men, women and children were huddled in small rooms, dirt and filth were everywhere present,

and the stench that emanated from the place was almost unbearable. Ragged, dirty, unkempt children were running hither and thither, some crying.” The inspector took a patronizing approach to these conditions, and treated the immigrants as responsible for their own poverty. However, in *The Citizen* on July 7, 1911, socialist leader Hawley VanVechten questioned this narrative and explained the low wages families were forced to survive on, realizing that these families did not live in squalor out of choice. Immigrant communities were not only restricted by poverty; discrimination even toward wealthier members of the communities was common. Refusal to rent to Italians and Poles was legal and common. In 1905 a man of Irish descent refused to rent to Italians or Poles in an Italian neighborhood, and ended up in a fight with those who came to try to rent.

Housing discrimination extended outside of immigrant neighborhoods as well. When building a new plot of two-family homes, land developer James Felthousen required each to have a clause in the deed that restricted them from being sold to “polish or italian [sic] person or persons and that no liquor shall be sold on said premises.” Prospective buyers were assured that this development east of Van Vranken Avenue would be free of the “new” immigrants. A 1917 ad in the *Union Star* offered free trolley rides to Maywood Gardens, a new group of building lots along State Street, “for Americans” only, continuing to specify that the land would be sold only to “white Americans of English speaking, German or French descent,” and that “no lots will be sold to colored people or undesirable foreigners.” While immigrant communities may have chosen to stay in their traditional neighborhoods, they were sometimes blocked from moving away from those neighborhoods.

Nearly all immigrant groups moving to Schenectady built community and established sources for mutual aid. Monetary help, legal assistance, translation, and assistance in housing and job searches were all crucial needs for newcomers to the city, and often remained inaccessible to immigrants even after years of living in the United States. Important members of the community (known as *promenti* in Italian communities) assisted those who came after them, and communities of immigrants from all origins created mutual aid and social societies, building a support system and thus helping people to live more comfortably. Ludwig and Angela Gapczynski, the first Polish immigrants to arrive to Schenectady in 1855, fulfilled the roles of banker, interpreter, bail bondsmen, notary public, and steamship agent for Polish people coming to Schenectady.

Pasquale DeMarco was one of the first permanent Italian residents of the city, and fulfilled a similar role for incoming Italians. Originally he was a barber, but as his business expanded, he hired others to run his shop, and focused his efforts on assisting other immigrants. DeMarco acted as a translator, helping people send



Image: Italian immigrants and their children in Schenectady.

letters to their families and communicate with their employers. He would also buy lira when prices were low and exchange it for dollars, thus eventually expanding into the creation of a bank behind his barber shop. He would even travel to New York City to meet immigrants coming to Schenectady and assist them on their way. DeMarco introduced Schenectady's first Italian pastor, Father Bencivenga, in 1902. DeMarco was so important to the Italian community that upon his death on August 29, 1930 his obituary took up almost the entire first page of *The Record*.

This tradition continued widely through the establishment of fraternal mutual aid and social groups, which fulfilled the desire for community, and helped ease the transitions and hardships that came along with immigration to the United States. One of the first such societies in Schenectady was the Hungarian Benevolent Society, which in 1895 sent a request to the state department of insurance for approval to carry out benevolent work on behalf of the members. According to the society's 60th anniversary booklet, they knew that "there is strength in unity," and that through

joining together, a support system could be created to ensure the wellbeing of members and others in their community.

The first Italian organization of this kind in the city was the *Societa' Unione Fratellanza*, established in 1892. By 1900 it had gained 40 members. Soon thereafter, the second Italian society, the *Societa' Giuseppe Garibaldi*, was formed. The *Societa'* was a political club associated with the Republican party, reflecting the growing political strength of immigrant groups in local politics. Presidents of these societies were often very important in their communities. As the Italian population grew, more societies were formed, often aligned with specific regions of Italy.

The Abruzzese Society was formed in 1912 for immigrants from the Abruzzo-Molise region. Members paid a monthly fee in order to receive benefits in times of need. Benefits were paid in the event of injuries, and upon their death, their families also received compensation. All members were required to attend funerals or face a fine. At this time, Italian immigrants

often worked dangerous, unskilled labor jobs, and to be injured or die on the job was not uncommon. Thus, the aid that the society gave was vital, keeping families fed and housed when members could not work. Every Abruzzese Society "Sickness Certificate and Diary" states that "when a brother is sick he cannot go out of the house without permission," in both English and Italian. Each form shows that a doctor visited each sick member weekly during their convalescence. These benefits were an effort to prevent sick and injured members from going out of the house and injuring themselves further at work. One member had a tonsillectomy, and from January

15 to February 17, 1934, he was paid \$9 weekly. Another member's ailment is listed as "nail puncture of foot." He also received the \$9 weekly for two months, replacing his missing paychecks. The Abruzzese Society also helped other Italians immigrate to the United States, and helped write affidavits of support for those hoping to

join friends and family in Schenectady. In 1930, Donato Colangelo wrote an affidavit with the help of the society, in order to bring his daughter Caterina to the United States. His effort was notarized and supported by Ettore Mancuso, founder of *The Record*, also a member of the Society. Like the Hungarian Benevolent Society, the Abruzzese Society and other fraternal organizations were reflections of an understanding that immigrant groups were stronger if they acted as a unified community.

Fraternal societies did not just support their community through mutual aid. They sponsored a multitude of social events for the whole community. One of the first recorded expenses of the Abruzzese Society in 1915 was the purchase of a banner and badges for parades and picnics. Societies would invite each other to their events, thus preserving "old world" traditions, and building a wider social support network in a new country. The Fratellanza held an annual summer picnic at Brandywine Park to which other Italian fraternal societies were invited. The festivities began with a

parade through Italian neighborhoods, past City Hall, and then on to the park for Italian food, music, and games. The Garibaldi Society was well known for their annual masquerade ball. Italian holidays and festivals were publicly celebrated, such as the anniversary of the capture of Rome by the Kingdom of Italy. The death of King Umberto in 1900 was met with a prolonged memorial service, and money was raised in response to the 1906 eruption of Vesuvius. Clearly, immigrants maintained a connection to their homeland in the hopes of retaining Italian roots in American-born descendants.



These social events and cultural festivals were some of the longest lasting impacts of these fraternal societies, often lasting into the 1960s and 70s. Carnivale was celebrated with a dinner and raffle by the Abruzzese Society until well into the 1980s. Interestingly, the 1957 Carnivale dinner was held in the Polish National Association's hall. In 1954, the *Schenectady Gazette* reported the Hungarian Grape Festival being

celebrated with traditional food, dancing, and dress. In Schenectady today, there are still Italian festivals, though you might argue that the "traditional" fare and festivities have long since become Americanized.

Indeed, while some immigrant traditions have died out, and while people may have moved out of their traditional ethnic enclaves, the immigrant communities of the 19th and early 20th centuries had a lasting legacy, which still shapes Schenectady today. Immigrants created an impactful community and support systems from scratch in a brand new, often challenging world.

Works Cited are available at <https://schenectadyhistorical.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Pelletier-Works-Cited.pdf>

Image: Manco's on Jay Street in Schenectady.

Frank Taberski: Schenectady's Billiards King

by Bill Buell, Schenectady County Historian

In 1924, Babe Ruth won the triple crown, hitting .378 with 46 home runs and 124 RBIs. Walter Hagen won two major golf championships, the U.S. Open and the PGA, and Bill Tilden captured his fifth consecutive U.S. Open tennis title.

In Schenectady that year, citizens of the Electric City were wondering when their hometown hero, Frank Taberski, would stop pouting about rule changes and reclaim his rightful place as the best pocket billiards player in the world.

Unbeaten for three years from 1916 through 1918, Taberski vacated his world title in 1919 and instead opted on a lucrative exhibition and vaudeville circuit that only increased his profile and financial status.

But by 1924, he was being pressured to resume his “professional” career and take on the young man who had replaced him as world champion: Ralph Greenleaf. It was a matchup all sports fans were waiting to see, and every bit as important to the public as the exploits of Ruth, Hagen, and Tilden. Indeed, 100 years ago, pool was extremely popular, and while this was the case all over the U.S. and Europe, in the city of Schenectady it was king. There were nearly a dozen billiard halls in the county, half of them right in the downtown area. A century ago the “City That Lights and Hauls the World” was at its peak in terms of population; the post office suggested with its unofficial census that Schenectady

was home to more than 100,000 people. Immigrants from Europe had been flooding into the city throughout the first two decades of the 20th century, looking

for jobs at the General Electric Company and the American Locomotive Company. Many of them, like those workers already here, enjoyed relaxing with friends, having a drink, and playing some pool.

While Schenectady could boast of having its own world champion throughout the first half of the Roaring Twenties, when pool was king, Taberski had indeed lost his title in 1919 when he refused to defend his crown.

An Amsterdam native born in March of 1889, he had moved to Schenectady as a child, and as a teenager began developing his pool game at establishments such as Clinton Pocket Billiards Association at 152 Clinton Street, Crescent Billiard Parlor at 458 State Street, or the United Billiard Center at 432 State Street, now home to Proctors. In 1915, Taberski headed to New York City to compete in the World Championships, finishing third. For the next three years, however, he

proved to be unbeatable, becoming the first player to successfully defend his crown in 20 consecutive matches through 1918. But, as good as he was, he wasn’t a fan favorite due to his slow and deliberate style of play.

During this time, Taberski developed a rivalry with Ralph Greenleaf, 10 years his junior. This is according to Kansas City attorney Sam Korte, who looked closely at Taberski’s career for his 2020 book, *Greenleaf: Pool’s*



Images: Frank Taberski, courtesy National Polish-American Sports Hall of Fame

Greatest Champion.

"Pool was one of the most popular sports in America during that time, and a Taberski-Greenleaf match would have been front-page news in the sports section, just like the NFL and baseball are today," said Korte in a recent phone conversation. "Taberski during that three-year stretch from 1916 through 1918 was unbeatable. So there was a time when he was just untouchable. He used strategy for the most part, playing a lot of safety shots, while Greenleaf relied on brilliant shot-making. That often made Taberski boring to watch, while Greenleaf became a darling of the fans and the press."

After Taberski defeated Greenleaf in 1919 for the world title, he "retired" from that competition due to the rule changes he wasn't happy with, deciding instead to stick with the exhibition and vaudeville circuit. As a result, Greenleaf began building a resume that some said made him the best pool player ever. He would go on to win the world title 18 times between 1919 and 1938.

While the focus of Korte's book was obviously on Greenleaf, he came away from his research with a deep appreciation of Taberski, both the man and his game.

"I rank him in the top ten all-time among pool players, but he was certainly not popular with the fans or the press," said Korte. "That's because of his slow style of play, and because Ralph Greenleaf was the media darling and much loved by the public. Taberski also complained about new rules that were instituted into the game, and often agitated about other things as well. He told the press how he didn't feel Greenleaf was the real world champion because he never beat Taberski. Greenleaf's response was, 'so come and play me.'"

When Taberski stopped fussing about the rule changes – mostly the implementation of a three-minute shot clock he could only blame himself for – he defeated Greenleaf to regain the world championship in 1925. The two would face off a number of times in other formats, with Greenleaf enjoying a small edge overall in head-to-head play.

"They both put up some impressive numbers," Korte said of Greenleaf and Taberski. "I think they had kind of a love-hate relationship with each other. It was good for Greenleaf to have that type of competition early in

his career, a player the caliber of Taberski, and I think [Taberski's] slow style of play probably drove Greenleaf crazy. It's hard to say if Taberski did it on purpose or if that was just the way he liked to play."

According to some media reports, Taberski also played with a constant smile on his face that may have annoyed many of his opponents. The press gave him a handful of nicknames, including "the Inexorable Snail," "the Sloth," "the Silent Pole," and "the Grey Fox." But despite the lack of adoration he received from sportswriters and fans across the U.S., he was always well thought of by his fellow Schenectadians.

"I think as a person, the people who knew him respected him," Korte said of Taberski. "He was handsome, very well-dressed, treated other people with respect and never engaged in any bad behavior that I could find. There's nothing to suggest that he was anything other than a very good person."



Taberski had his own pool hall in the 1920s right behind Proctors, and on April 10, 1927, Taberski's Bowling and Billiards opened at 138 Broadway. It remained in business as Broadway Recreation until a fire destroyed the building in 1968. Taberski, meanwhile, played world class pool until he was hurt in an automobile accident in 1937. He died in 1941 at the age of 52. He was inducted into the Billiard Congress Hall of Fame in 1971.

Taberski at times hosted some of the world's best pool players. In January of 1930, Greenleaf came to Schenectady for a special challenge match at 138 Broadway. Taberski beat him three games in a row.

I wish I could have been around for that one.

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Part II: Advocacy and the Inevitable Politics of History

by Michael Diana

In our previous newsletter, I discussed how history is inherently political. Make no mistake, there are best practices for researching and presenting history. However, even the best historians cannot make meaning out of a set of perfect historical facts, without injecting their own value judgments and politics into the narrative they're creating. Not so long ago, I was approached by a student at Union college who was writing a thesis about how historical societies handle politics. He wondered if SCHS could specifically advocate for issues in local and national politics. After all, everyone agrees we should learn from the past when planning for the future, so doesn't that make our Historical Society uniquely qualified for political advocacy?

I'll admit I've often been tempted, when some hot button issue comes up, to use my platform at the Historical Society to do precisely that. I could imagine devising a program to weigh in on the Schenectady mayoral race, or composing a pithy Facebook post to tell our audience what I really think about the latest Supreme Court decision. But then I come back to reality. Despite the fact that I, Michael Diana, can obviously perfectly prescribe the socially optimal course of action in every case whatsoever, there are very real reasons why a small museum like ours is ill-equipped to be an overtly political organization.

When it comes to political advocacy – whether that be progressive, conservative or what have you -- our historical society is uniquely disadvantaged to do that kind of work. A lot of this comes down to the issue of who gets to decide what policies our organization would promote. Thankfully, our organization is pretty large with more than 800 members paying dues. It's obviously impossible that all of them would agree on any single issue. We don't have any mechanism in our by-laws to have all of these people meet in some meaningful quorum, debate an issue and then vote on a proposal to publish to the broader community. Even if we did, I don't think such a thing would work in practice. There would be too many conflicts of interest, too many burnt bridges, and honestly just too many headaches organizing all of that.

So then, if not the membership as a whole, perhaps a smaller committee like our board of directors could make executive decisions as to any potential political

activities. But surely, that wouldn't work either. It can be surprisingly difficult for even a dozen people to come to a consensus in a controversy. More importantly, the board should be focusing their efforts on more useful things like keeping our finances in order and providing support for the long-term operations of the organization.

So perhaps we could cut out all the transactional costs and entrust our political operations to one person. Maybe it could be the board president, Mark, or the executive director, Mary. Or maybe it should be me – as the educator, perhaps I should be empowered to make concrete political statements. But of course, none of us have the right to unilaterally speak on behalf of the whole Schenectady County Historical Society and all its constituent members. And surely our members would be upset if we assumed that power for ourselves. They may very well neglect to renew their membership or boycott our programs. If we alienate people, our organization could easily fail.

The tension in rallying a large group of people and distilling their views into one clear message is a problem inherent in corporate advocacy of any kind. Political parties, lobbying groups, and political groups of all kinds have to find ways of distilling the conflicting sentiments of many into one concrete course of action. And obviously they solve it by a variety of means. Their existence is testament to that. So if they can manage that, why can't we? My answer would be that the Schenectady County Historical Society can't afford to fail. If a random political advocacy group is rent asunder by schism and infighting, it is no permanent loss. The former constituents can leave the failed organization and take their beliefs and passions to another one. For instance, when the national Whig party floundered in the mid 19th century, its members abandoned the sinking ship to caucus with the Democrats or newly formed Republican parties.

However, given the nature of our organization, we cannot afford to fail ever. Much of our mission at the Schenectady County Historical Society centers on sharing, celebrating, and preserving Schenectady's history. And for a lot of that, our organization is uniquely equipped. Sure, if we had to close our doors tomorrow (perhaps because I ran my mouth), another organization could cobble together tours of the Stockade. But the preservation of Schenectady's past, is no trivial matter. Tens of thousands of artifacts, countless historic

documents, and three entire historic properties have been entrusted to us for indefinite safe-keeping. If our organization ceased to function tomorrow all of these things would be quickly scattered, lost, or destroyed. And that would represent a permanent loss to the community that cannot be recovered or rebuilt. Because whether we interpret our collections for perfectly progressive agitation, for conservative self-congratulation, or for anything in between, our collection contains irreplaceable "truths" about our past. It certainly doesn't represent the whole "truth" of the past, but it's as much of the truth as we're likely to ever have access to. Even in a worst case scenario where we interpret these artifacts and documents in an actively harmful way, by preserving them we still leave open the possibility for future generations to see them in a clearer light. And thus our organization cannot afford the divisions that an overtly political organization risks. Preservation is expensive work, and we rely entirely on private individuals in the community to support that work. We need to cast as wide a net as possible to attract as many people as possible to support our work. And thus we have good reason to refrain from overt political advocacy.

Museums are widely trusted by the public, but to remain so they must walk a tightrope. If you wear your politics on your sleeve, eventually the people who disagree with those politics will just stop showing up. And then you're not actually educating anybody. You've simply created an echo chamber, filled with a small audience that comes to you to confirm what they already thought about history, and to feel good about how clearly morally superior they are. But, by putting the politics aside, SCHS can engage a wider audience of people from disparate political backgrounds. And, thus, we can challenge people to see their community in a new way. And maybe from there, they'll be prepared to make meaningful change.

Note from the Executive Director: The one political area that SCHS does not and cannot remain neutral on is in advocating for public funding for museums. Please see my note on page 3, or my opinion piece in the Daily Gazette at https://www.dailygazette.com/opinion/guest-column-allow-public-funds-to-support-museums/article_450afe38-b3e9-11ee-836f-978746be94e4.html for more on this.



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