



SCHENECTADY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Brouwer House and its Related Families

by Rebecca Rector

The Brouwer House (c. 1730) is owned and operated by the Schenectady County Historical Society. Today it operates as “Brouwer House Creative,” a space for arts.

The first time I visited the Hendrick Brouwer House at 14 N. Church St. in Schenectady, I was instantly fascinated by its 18th century history – its wide plank floorboards, low ceiling beams, multiple staircases, and large fireplaces. The house is also reputed to have some secret rooms. As a genealogist and history writer, I began to research the house and discovered an interesting history and numerous Dutch family connections among its occupants.

The house, located in Schenectady’s first ward, was built before 1700 by Hendrick William Brouwer, on top of a foundation that was previously the home of Jan Janse Jonkers. Jonkers (1640-1703), also known as Jan Van Rotterdam, had a land lot on the east side of Church Street, about 1665. It is thought that Jonkers’ house was destroyed in the 1690 Schenectady Massacre.

Although some information is available online about the Brouwer house, I wanted to take a deeper look and create a comprehensive story about the house and its many Dutch families. The families discussed below include Brouwer, Borsboom, Carstence (or Karstense), Rosa (or Roosa), and others.

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Note from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Another summer at Mabee Farm brings plenty of flower blooms and fresh produce. We're so lucky to be able to steward this site in its 320th year. As part of that stewardship, we continue to complete important preservation projects on its 18th century buildings. If you've stopped by recently, you may have noticed the construction work going on. This year, we'll be completing masonry and stabilization work on the Stone House, while also restoring all of the Mabee Farm's windows. We're able to complete work like this because of our members and donors. People like you, who see the importance and value of local history in our community.

I only wish this sentiment were shared by our current presidential administration. As you may have heard, this spring, the administration cut funding to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Both of these offices provide(d) funding for museums and libraries throughout the nation, including here at SCHS. Our African American Historical Records Project was funded by an IMLS grant, and the cuts mean we're unsure how to continue this important project. We've also received thousands of dollars in indirect funding through NEH over the last ten years to mount exhibitions, host book clubs, bring historical experts to our sites, and more.

As we navigate these changes at the federal level, we're still optimistic about public support for museums, libraries, and history. We, like millions of Americans, believe that libraries and museums play a vital role in our democracy. They preserve history, provide access to information, advance literacy, promote civic engagement, and offer access to a variety of perspectives. These values are worth defending and fighting for. If you'd like to join the fight, consider writing and calling your members of Congress, and telling them what will be lost if our government continues to defund museums and libraries.

Mary Zawacki Graves, SCHS Executive Director

BECOME A LOCK KEEPER

Just as they did during the days of the Erie Canal, **Lockkeepers** -- our monthly donors -- safeguard SCHS through the ebbs and flows of economic change and enable the stewardship of Schenectady's past, present, and future.

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

Join at schenectadyhistorical.org/support

Letter from the President



Summer is here, and we have shifted into the activities we can only enjoy when the weather is sunny and warm. The historical society has made a shift too as I took over as president in May. When I was asked to take on this position, one of my first thoughts was: do I have the time to take on another volunteer activity that carries so much responsibility? I have to say both Executive Director, Mary

Zawacki Graves and Past President, Mark Vermilyea, along with the Society Board of Trustees, have been wonderful about answering my questions and helping me see just how successful and well managed the Schenectady County Historical Society is. My job will be to make sure the society continues on the path it has followed so well over the last decade.

The environment we find ourselves in, however, is less certain, and it behooves all of us to be vigilant and do what we can to protect our values and the institutions that preserve them. SCHS itself has already experienced this first hand. The speaker planned for our annual meeting, Jaap Jacobs, a preeminent scholar on the history of New Netherland, canceled his visit due to the uncertainty surrounding U.S. visas. This was disappointing for those of us looking forward to learning from his scholarship, but this is just one small consequence of the situation we currently

find ourselves in.

In March, the White House signed an executive order directing the Smithsonian Institution "to eliminate improper, divisive or anti-American ideology from the Smithsonian and its museums, education and research centers and the National Zoo." It is not clear what is meant by anti-American ideology. As a retired teacher, I know there is always a desire among some to focus only on the "positive" events in our history and not dwell on the ones that make us uncomfortable or fail to comport with our assumptions about the past.

SCHS has been willing to explore and educate about just such aspects of our history. Most recently, the Society researched the enslaved people who worked at the Mabee Farm. It is hard to learn about people who left so little in the written record and the Society is to be commended for taking on a project that is difficult, but so important in presenting a complete history of our community. As I take on the role of president, my goal is to continue that important work and support it in every way I can. I invite you to do the same. It is through a united local history community that we will carry on our work to study, learn and educate about the facts of our past.



Suzy Unger, SCHS President

Calendar

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

Tours and More

Wine & Walk Fridays

Through August at 5:30pm | \$6-12

TGIF all summer with our Wine and Walk series! Join us for Friday evening walking tours, and then come back to SCHS for a complimentary glass of wine or beer. Choose from:

July 18: Scandalous Schenectady

July 25: The Gilded Age

Aug 1: Lighting the World

Aug 8: The Stockade Beyond the Pines

Aug 15: The Gilded Age

Aug 22: Sacred Spaces

Walking Tour: GE Realty Plot

July 13, Aug 10, & Sept 21 at 10am @ Steinmetz Memorial Park | \$25

Join Schenectady City Historian Chris Leonard to explore the stately GE Realty Plot. Tickets include entry into one of the homes and snacks on its large front porch.

Kayak Through History

Through July | \$35

Along the river routes, our expert guide will regale you with the history of the area.

Bateau Sunset Cruise

September 19 at 6pm @ Mabee Farm | \$35

Sit back, relax, and take in the sunset. Naturally, each ticket includes a cocktail as a standard ration.

Candlelight Tours

October @ 32 Washington | \$15

Explore the historic Stockade after dark, and discover the neighborhood's haunted past, guided by expert storytellers.

For Kids

Farm Kids Friday

July 11 & August 8 at 10am @ Mabee Farm

Tour the entirety of our farm with special demonstrations of farm crafts. Butter making, barn-building, blacksmithing and meeting the farm animals are just some of the activities available.

Live Music

Howlin' at the Moon

@ Mabee Farm

Our hosts Everest Rising are bringing you a great lineup of regional musicians this summer. The music starts at 7pm, and tickets are \$5 for SCHS members, and \$10 for non-members.

July 11: Black Mountain Symphony

August 7: Honeysuckle

September 11: Belle-Skinner

Festivals

Arts and Crafts Festival

August 23 at 10am-4pm @ Mabee Farm | \$10/car

Join us as 50+ artists and crafters spread out over the Mabee Farm grounds with their eclectic, beautifully handcrafted items. All items are handmade here in our region.

FallFest

October 12 at 11am-3pm @ Mabee Farm

Join us for FallFest, a celebration of autumn and its bounty. Featuring family-friendly activities like pony rides, boat rides, crafts, and a petting zoo, along with live music, and beer and hot cider. Plus, 50+ of our favorite artists and crafters will fill the grounds, selling their eclectic wares.

Workshops and More

Schenectady Wine Society

Oct 16, and Dec 11 @ 32 Washington | \$35

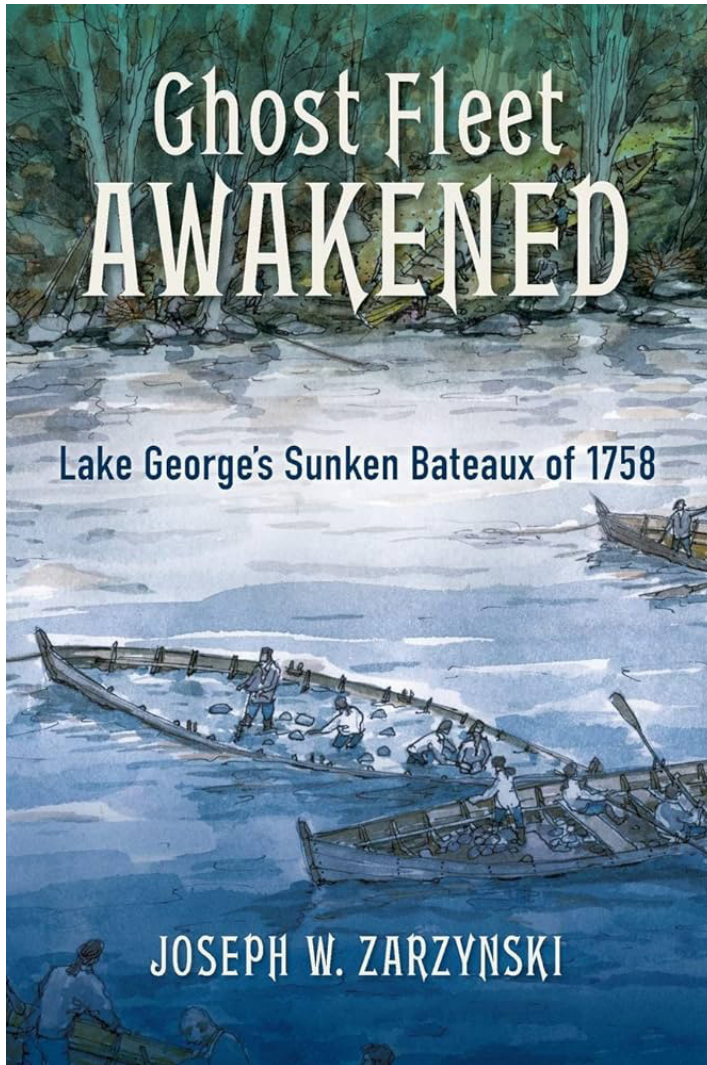
Join our hosts, wine connoisseurs Chris and Buffy Leonard, for wine tastings featuring a smooth and balanced blend of old favorites and new discoveries.

Workshop: Felt a Fox

September 20 at 9:30am @ Mabee Farm | \$40

In this workshop, we'll felt an adorable red fox, using wool from our herd. Come join us in making a cute gift for friends, family, or even yourself.

REVIEW: *Ghost Fleet Awakened: Lake George's Sunken Bateaux of 1758*



by Martin Strosberg

Joseph W. Zarzynski, *Ghost Fleet Awakened: Lake George's Sunken Bateaux of 1758*, State University of New York Press, 2019.

Joseph W. Zarzynski's *Ghost Fleet Awakened: Lake George's Sunken Bateaux of 1758* is more about the history of underwater archaeology than it is about the French and British militaries that battled each other for control of North America during the French and Indian War (1754-1763).

But first, what is a bateau, or, what are, in the plural, bateaux? Bateaux are flat-bottomed vessels, from 25 to 35 feet long, that plied the inland waterways in 18th century America. Easily constructed from the wood of abundant forests, they were the workhorses that hauled trade goods, as well as military supplies and soldiers, in a country that had few roads.

Schenectady mass produced hundreds of bateaux for the French and Indian War.

In the French and Indian War, the major invasion route between French-controlled Canada and the British colonies consisted of Lake Champlain, Lake George, and the Hudson River. In the fall of 1758, the retreating British deliberately sank hundreds of their bateaux fleet in Lake George to keep them out of French hands. They hoped to retrieve them the following year from "wet storage." In fact, they did recover many of the bateaux. But 48 remained at the bottom. Zarzynski tells us what happened to them.

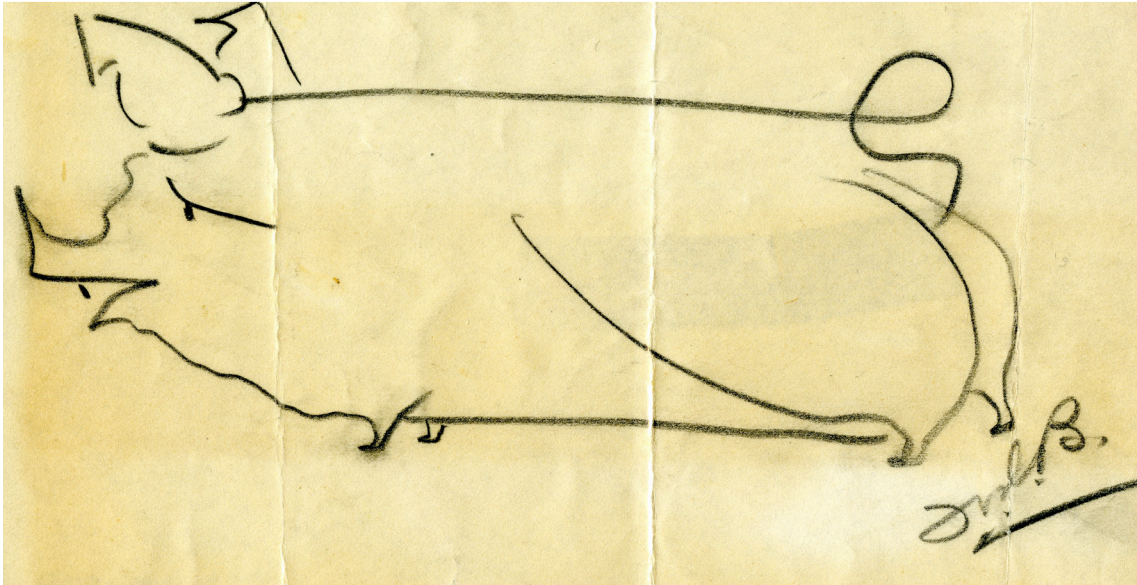
"Lake George's Sunken Bateaux" were first discovered in the late 1800s in the shallow, southern part of the lake near Fort William Henry. However, real exploration did not begin until the development of scuba diving in the early 1950s. Unfortunately, some scuba divers pilfered artifacts and vandalized the sites. In response, New York State reasserted its ownership rights to the lake bottom and the sunken bateaux, and deemed as illegal any unauthorized excavation or removal of bateaux artifacts. Authority to carry out such activity was granted by the New York State Department of Education to the Adirondack Museum. Enter underwater archaeology: the study of the material remains of human activity that lie beneath the surface of water. Many of the techniques of underwater archaeology were pioneered in Lake George by professional archaeologists with the help of recreational divers. The Adirondack Museum funded the recovery of the first bateau in 1960, which was facilitated by the first-time usage of underwater camera technology, developed by General Electric in Schenectady.

Joseph Zarzynski describes in great detail the many efforts, from 1960 to the present, to recover, restore, preserve, and display the artifacts from the sunken bateaux. And he is the ideal person to write this book. A marine archaeologist, experienced diver, and documentarian, in 1987, he was the first director of the Lake George Bateaux Research Team, later known as Bateaux Below. The team was responsible for generating much of the public support and enthusiasm for Lake George underwater exploration after the Adirondack Museum lost interest in 1965. In 1992, volunteer members of Bateaux Below completed the underwater mapping of several shipwrecks in the southern part of the lake, which resulted in their listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Readers of *Ghost Fleet Awakened* cannot help but regard as a labor of love the many years of dedicated service by Zarzynski and his many colleagues on behalf of bringing to public light the remarkable story of the sunken bateaux.

From the Library

SCHS Archives Collection Highlight: Family Documents and Family Photographs



the SCHS Collection Development Plan, and informed by what is already in our collection and what areas of collecting interest the items match. If the Librarian agrees that the items fit SCHS' collecting scope, donors sign a deed of gift transferring ownership of the items to SCHS. The donated items are then added to the appropriate surname folder in each collection.

by Marietta Carr, Librarian/Archivist

When most researchers visit the SCHS Grems-Doolittle Library, their first point of inquiry is our Family Files Collection which contains a variety of materials grouped by surname: obituaries, newspaper clippings, genealogical charts, transcriptions of family bible records, citations of other records sources or sources in genealogy publications, and correspondence detailing research about the family. However, many researchers are unaware of the complementary collections to the Family Files: the Family Documents Collection and Family Photographs Collection.

The original documents and photographs contained in these collections are varied, but they all arrived in the SCHS Library as donations from individuals; piecemeal, incremental additions sent to us as people sorted through their inherited papers or cleaned out the closets and attics of their new homes. Most donors don't know the provenance of these items nor their possible relation to the people who created them, but many hope that these lonely items have some historical significance and that some future researcher will see their worth or find a connection with them.

In the process of receiving these collections, donors will contact the SCHS Library and describe the materials they found. The Librarian determines whether SCHS can accept these possible donations based on the content, format, and condition of the items. The Librarian's decisions are guided by

As the name implies, the Family Photographs Collection contains photographs, daguerrotypes, and tintypes. Many of the surname folders contain formal portraits created by professional photographers, often depicting people in wedding, graduation, and military garb. The candid, unposed, informal photos capture scenes of daily life in our area, including families celebrating holidays, friends sharing silly moments, business proprietors showing off their goods and services, and beloved family pets bringing joy to their humans. The dates for materials in this collection range from the 1840s to the early 2020s.

The Family Documents Collection contains a much wider variety of materials. A complete list of formats and subjects would be too much to include in this article, but the most common types of materials are letters, certificates and diplomas, wills and court documents, military records, political pamphlets, receipts, and invitations. While primarily text-based, the collection also includes sketches, stamps, and greeting and calling cards. For example, the Van Der Bogart folder contains a drawing of a pig from 1920 and a corresponding letter that explains that Dr. G. Van Der Bogart gave many similar drawings to his pediatric patients during his career.

While the Family Files Collection can be a gold mine for vital records and set the foundation of good research, it is the treasures in the Family Documents Collection that provide

glimpses into the humanity and daily lives of the people who came before us. One example of this is a collection of letters written to Raymond Denny from soldiers serving in Europe during World War II. These soldiers were Mr. Denny's neighbors and friends who told him about their travels and experiences during the war, but also sent him stamps for his stamp collection. It's a wonder to think about how much Mr. Denny and their shared hobby meant to these men as they faced the struggles of war far from home! Other items in the collection may be more mundane, such as early 19th century receipts for furniture, but they open the door to a better understanding of how people in Schenectady County lived and interacted with each other day by day.

The value of these collections to genealogists and family historians may be obvious, but the materials serve other researchers and purposes as well. Searching these collections, you might stumble on a letter from Vice President Aaron Burr to a Mr. Swartout dated 1802, marvel at how firefighter Henry Yates rescued Anna Willard from a burning building in 1901, or notice the change in uniforms and dress code of GE employees from 1890 to 1990. At SCHS, we regularly use these collections in our blog posts, on social media, and in exhibits, newsletter articles, and programs. One of the activities we offer to school programs is a photograph examination activity. Students look closely at a selection of photos from our Family Photograph Collection and learn how to find clues to date the photo and identify the people, location, or event depicted. Materials in the Family Photographs and Family Documents Collections have inspired short stories, clarified business records, and authenticated neighborhood lore.

On the Collections and Catalog page of the SCHS website, under the Library and Research heading, we maintain an alphabetical list for our Family Files and note which surnames have a corresponding Family Documents or Family Photographs folder. Thanks to the efforts of a team of library volunteers, the Family Photographs Collection has been digitized. Our online catalog contains descriptions and preview images for each surname folder. This spring, our dedicated library volunteers completed an inventory of the Family Documents collection. This lengthy process has resulted in more complete descriptions of each item in each surname folder, which will improve the discoverability and searchability in our online catalog.

To view the originals, please contact the Librarian for a research appointment. If you have documents or photographs that might have historical or archival value, please contact the Librarian to learn more about the donation process.

Image, left: Dr. Van Der Bogart's pig

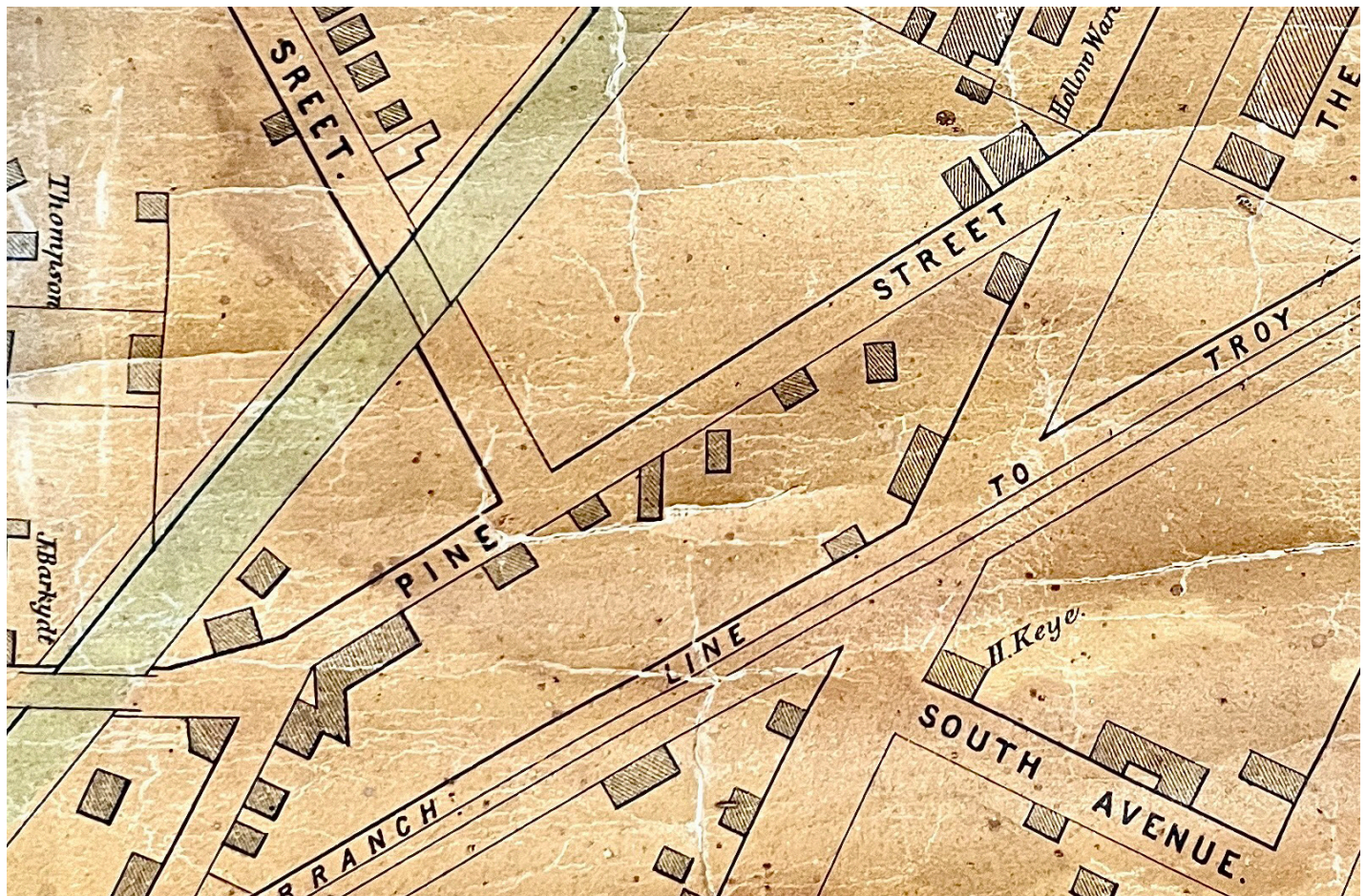
New in the Archives

Thank you to the generous donors who contributed to the preservation of Schenectady County's history by donating their archival materials and research to the SCHS Library!

- Open School Collection donated by Judith Willison, former teachers, and alumni
- Dante Venditti Scrapbook donated by Heather Giorgianni
- Additions to the Photo Collections donated by: Schenectady County Medical Society, Edward Bachand, Briggs McAndrews, Laura Cantini, and Kevin Decker
- West Hills Collection donated by Thomas Packard
- Devereaux Hanson travelogue diary donated by Kevin Decker
- Scrapbook of Pvt. Albert Carmichael, d. 1919, donated by Charles Francis
- Frank Taormina Research Collection donated by Peter Taormina
- GE Turbine Pamphlets donated by Ann Burns
- Additions to Yearbook Collection donated by David Bonitatibus and Paul Pakan
- Saint Gabriel the Archangel Church Directory donated by David Bonitatibus
- Graduation materials related to Bertha Guthan donated by Paul Pakan
- Playbills from local theaters donated by Tom Gifford
- Property maps and deed for 1610 State St. donated by Diane Boehne
- Scripts: "Story Lady," Grace D. Mapes. Radio WSNY, 1949, donated by Linda Mapes

New in the Library

- Leading By Example: Partisan Fighters & Leaders of New France, 1660-1760*, by Bob Bearor
- Familial Ties Across Generations Identify Parents for Nathaniel Atwell of New York*, by Jenny Rizzo Irwin
- The Family Van Antwerp in America, 1656-1900*, collated by Kenneth James Van Antwerp
- New York in 1698: A Comprehensive List of Residents*, compiled by Kory L. Meyerink
- Replanting Cultures: Community-Engaged Scholarship in Indian Country*, edited by Chief Benjamin J. Barnes and Stephen Warren
- Duane Lake: Duanesburg, New York*, by David C. Vincent
- Defending Fort Stanwix*, by William L. Kidder
- New York's Burned-Over District: A Documentary History*, edited by Spencer McBride & Jennifer Hull Dorsey
- Shirts Powdered Red: Haudenosaunee Gender, Trade and Exchange Across Three Centuries*, by Maeve Kane
- Ghost Fleet Awakened: Lake George's Sunken Bateaux of 1758*, by Joseph W. Zarzynski



From "Map of the City of Schenectady," 1850

The Old Neighborhood at Pine Street

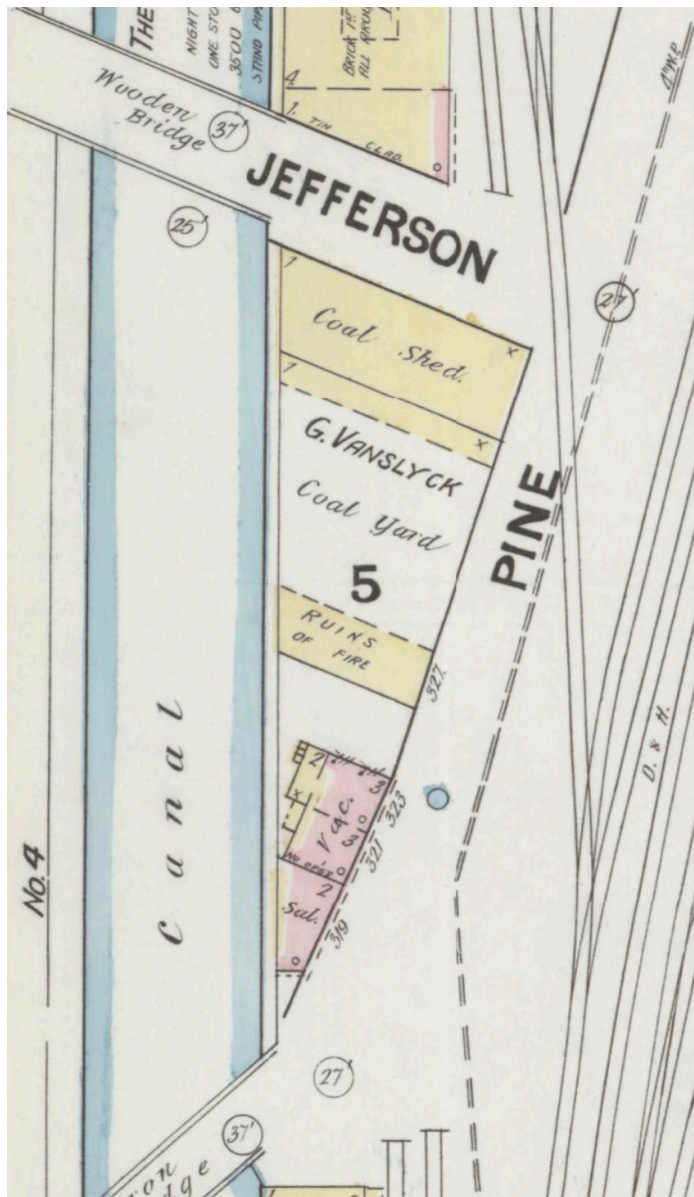
by John Gearing

Schenectady's Pine Street almost seems like a "street to nowhere." Running from Jefferson Street, Pine passes behind Morrette's King Steak restaurant, then along the back side of the Country Farms convenience store before ending at the little bit of Green Street that extends east from Green's intersection with Erie Boulevard. A small triangle of land sits within the boundaries of these streets, totally occupied today by Morrette's and Country Farms. But what happens if we turn back the clock?

SCHS' 1850 map of Schenectady shows only two small buildings on the little triangle. One faced the intersection with Green St and Maiden Lane, as it was then known, while the other was set back from Pine and appeared to face the Erie Canal; Erie Boulevard today. The rest of the triangle was blank, empty land. The map also shows the seeds of Schenectady's industrial blossoming. Two railroad lines diverged as they crossed Union Street; one curved past a complex of machine shops and a roundhouse that occupied the entire block bounded by John, Front, and Green Streets. The other curved toward the east, parallel to Pine Street, passing in front of the Norris Locomotive Works.

Fast forward to 1889. The intervening decades had seen the dawning of a golden age of railroading as an ever-expanding web of railroad service covered the nation. Works in Schenectady built many of the locomotives needed to drive this expansion. In addition, 1886 saw the Edison Machine Works (later known as General Electric) begin operations in Schenectady. As a result, by 1889, there were a dozen sets of Delaware & Hudson Railroad tracks running along the east side of Pine Street. Many led to the locomotive company or to other factories, while others continued out of the city headed for distant terminals. As for the Pine Street triangle, it had seen some changes as well. A two-story brick building housing a saloon on the ground floor occupied the "point" of the triangle at the intersection with Green at 319 Pine Street. Adjacent to it were two three-story brick buildings listed as 'vacant' (321 and 323 Pine Street). Beyond an adjoining empty lot stood the ruins of a wooden building (327) that had been destroyed in a fire. These buildings all faced Pine Street, with the Erie Canal behind them. The rest of the triangle was taken up by G. Van Slyke's coal yard and shed, which covered the majority of the triangle.

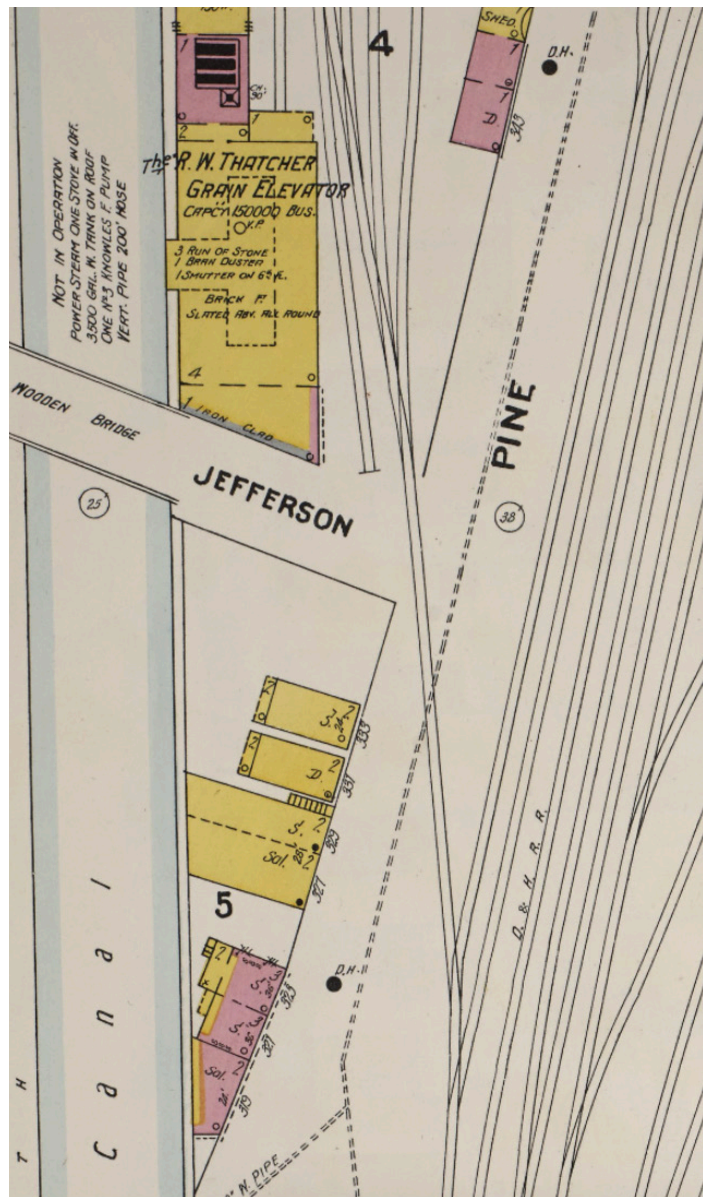
Between 1890 and 1900, Schenectady's population increased by nearly 60 percent, and by 1910 it was more than double



From "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Schenectady," 1889

the number in 1900. As a result, Schenectady experienced a building boom. Along Pine Street in 1900 the saloon still occupied No. 319, but the vacant buildings at 321 and 323 now had stores on their ground floors, with rental units on the upper floors. And while the vacant lot next to 323 remained, the ruined building at 327 had been replaced by a two-story wooden structure that housed a saloon on its ground floor, and living space above. Vanslyke's coal yard was gone. Filling part of its former space stood three more two-story wooden buildings – two with stores on the ground floor, and one purely residential.

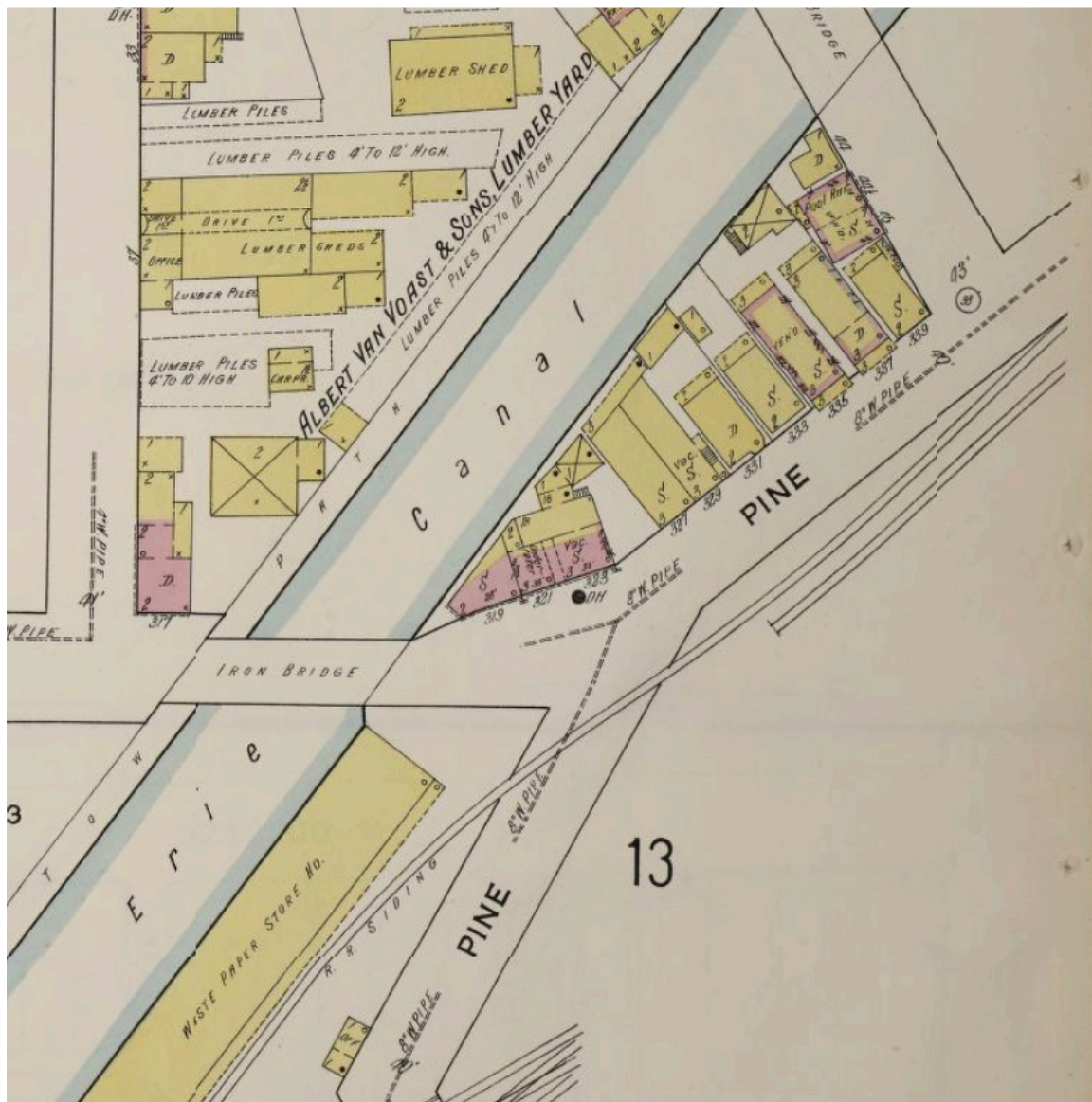
By 1914 the Pine Street block had developed further. The saloon on the point had been replaced by a store. There was an undertaker at 321, and the store at 323 was vacant. Both buildings now sported wooden additions at the back that extended the full depth of the lot, with 323 having two outbuildings as well. The buildings at 327, 333, 335, and 339 all had retail shops on their ground floors, although the shop



From "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Schenectady," 1900

at 329 was vacant. Numbers 335 and 337 were three-stories and had brick facades, while the others were built of wood. A wooden two-story dwelling had been built in the back yard of 337 Pine Street, as well. Shopkeepers' families typically lived above their stores and had residential tenants on the third floor, if there was one. The building on the corner of Pine and Jefferson (339) had a store, and along the Jefferson Street side of the triangle there was another store, a pool hall, and apartments.

The 1914 map suggests a vibrant mini-neighborhood — but who lived there? The Federal census for 1910, along with the city directory, suggests some answers. The census shows well over 100 people lived on that little triangle of land pressed up against the canal by Jefferson and Pine Streets. Everyone was Italian or Italian-American, and almost every adult was first generation. The many grocery shops along Pine Street likely carried the Italian foodstuffs their neighbors needed to prepare familiar meals. Almost every man from the triangle



and to other parts of the city. In 1917, the section of the Erie Canal that ran through the city was filled in, and Erie Boulevard constructed. In 1932, one of the buildings on Pine Street was sold by the city for \$37 for unpaid property taxes. By 1947, the stores, pool hall, and apartments that had stood along the “base” of the triangle had been replaced by Morrette's King Steaks, which has been an icon on the Schenectady restaurant scene ever since. No one lives on Pine Street today – there are no houses.

Author's Notes:

During the research for this article, it became evident that neither the Grems-

From "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Schenectady," 1914

worked at ALCO. One man worked on a farm. Families varied in size, from two to five children, and parents were sometimes barely into their twenties. Many families had boarders, single Italian men of various ages who worked at ALCO. Some families only had two boarders, one had eight. Often, single men boarded as they saved money to be used for their family's passage to the United States.

In 1914, the Pine Street triangle held fourteen buildings, seven stores, a pool hall, and an undertaker. It must have been a busy neighborhood, full of life, dreams, and at times, sadness. It is easy to imagine children playing in the street, the click of billiard balls coming from the pool hall, and people socializing outdoors in nice weather. In those days, North Centre Street passed under the railroad, intersecting Pine and Green Streets, and creating a walking corridor leading to downtown. The triangle was part of the “Italian colony” that dominated the population statistics of the 3rd Ward. It was home, but it was not to last. Over the coming years the “colony” began to disperse, moving up Goose Hill toward Van Vranken Avenue,

Doolittle Library, nor the Efner Center, nor the Daily Gazette's archives held any photographs of Pine Street made during the time covered in the article. We would be grateful to anyone who might have either photographs or family memories they might wish to share with the Society.

For more information on Italian and Polish immigration to Schenectady, see Dr. Robert Pascucci's book, “Electric City Immigrants: Italians and Poles of Schenectady, N.Y., 1880-1930” in SCHS' Grems -Doolittle Archives. The first 50 pages are available at www.schenectadyhistory.org

Sanford Fire Insurance maps are generally available to view online without charge. The Library of Congress has a selection of such maps for Schenectady.



Around the County with Bill Buell

by Bill Buell, County Historian

When we hear people refer to the “best and the brightest” in the General Electric Company’s long history, we usually think of scientists such as Edison, Steinmetz, Alexanderson and Langmuir, to name a few.

But outside the scientific realm, there were other long-time employees at the Schenectady plant who excelled at their jobs and enjoyed wonderful careers in their chosen profession. Men like Harold M. Mott-Smith, Walter L. Greene, and Richard Costello will probably only be familiar to the most avid GE historians, but they are three talented people who made huge contributions to the company and the community it served.

If you haven’t heard of Mott-Smith, then you’ve at least seen some of his paintings. The most famous is probably his image of the 1922 photograph of Edison and Steinmetz tinkering with electronic equipment. Steinmetz would die the following year – way too early at only 58 years old. And Edison passed away in 1931 at the age of 84. That’s when Mott-Smith felt

compelled to turn the black-and-white image of Steinmetz and Edison – their final meeting - into a beautifully colored version.

Mott-Smith’s rendition was ready for GE’s 1932 calendar, which since 1925 had been featuring brilliant paintings by Mott-Smith, Greene, and others. In fact, the 1932 edition was one of GE’s most popular, with over 100,000 copies distributed across the U.S. and around the world.

The original painting is in the collection at miSci (Museum of Science and Innovation), while SCHS also has a number of Mott-Smith’s paintings, including a portrait of Revolutionary War General William North of Duanesburg.

Mott-Smith was born in Hawaii but always had a strong connection to Schenectady, having married Jennie Yates, a member of one of our city’s most prominent families dating back to before the American Revolution.

Mott-Smith, who along with living in Hawaii grew up



in Washington, D.C. and Boston, was a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he studied engineering and chemistry. But before beginning his senior year he left school and headed to Paris to study painting.

With the blessings of his parents – Mott-Smith's father was a

U.S. diplomat – he lived in France for nearly three years before returning to the U.S. Back in the country, he married Jennie Yates and after some time in Hawaii, they returned to the mainland in 1912 and ended up in Schenectady with Mott-Smith landing a job with the GE art department.

Called "Motty" by his friends, Mott-Smith joined forces with Walter L. Greene, the manager of the department since 1903, to paint calendars and other colorful promotional materials that made Schenectadians proud to be part of the city's major workforce.

Mott-Smith retired from GE in 1939, but still did occasional artwork for the company. Also quite an accomplished cello player, he died in 1941 at the age of 76.

The city was buzzing with activity throughout much of Mott-Smith's

time at GE, and it was during this period that GE did its best to endear itself to the community that, during World War I, was approaching a population of 100,000. Along with the calendars, there were plenty of colorful advertisements.



It was a time when courting the good will of the people was of the utmost importance to the GE brass. The wonderful calendars and the beautiful display ads played a big part in this effort, as did the dozens of magazines GE produced – again with colorful ads – detailing how all of its appliances would dramatically lighten the load of the American housewife. Washers and dryers, irons, toasters and refrigerators were among those GE products that would make life easier and provide more leisure time for the average family.

One of GE's top mottos during the first half of the 20th century was "progress is our most important product." Not bad. But in the early 1970s, Richard Costello began injecting the advertising department with some new life and ideas. Later in the decade, he came up with the phrase that to this day remains forever linked with the company: "GE, we bring good things to life."

From 1979-2003, it was GE's official motto and a part of every television, radio and newspaper ad the company produced. Costello's catchy phrasing helped him become chairman of the Association of National

Like Mott-Smith, Greene was immersed in the advertising side of the business. Greene, you could argue, was every bit as talented and as prolific as Mott-Smith. Born in 1870, his career at GE came to a close in 1940. During his time at GE, Greene also did occasional pieces for the New York Central Railroad, painting a series of works that highlighted the 20th Century Limited. The Twentieth Century Limited – an express passenger train that went from New York City to Chicago, passing through Albany and Schenectady – was almost always carried by powerful steam locomotives built in Schenectady at the American Locomotive Company.

Like Mott-Smith, many of Greene's works have been on display at museums around New York and the Northeast, including the Albany Institute of History and Art and the Arkell Museum in Canajoharie. Greene was born in Schenectady, attended Boston College, and like Mott-Smith, spent time in Paris for about two years painting and studying art. He returned to Schenectady in 1903 and began his career at GE. He passed away in 1956 at the age of 86.

Advertisers in 1995 before leaving GE in 2002.

When Jefferey Immelt succeeded Jack Welch as the head of GE in 2003, the company came up with a new slogan, "Imagination at work." Again, not bad, but it is Costello's message that we can all hear in our heads still today when we drive by Building 63 and see the huge GE sign. The world has changed, and yes, things aren't what they used to be. But it does remind us of the company's great history and just how important it was to this area and the entire Capital Region.

Image, page 10: "Thoroughbreds" by Walter L. Greene, c. 1927, from the collection of the Albany Institute.

Image, page 11: "Edison and Steinmetz" by Harold M. Mott-Smith, 1931, from the collection of miSci.

Image, page 12: "General William North" by Harold M. Mott-Smith, early 1900s, one of several portrait by Mott-Smith in the SCHS collection.



Welcome, Madeline!

by Mary Zawacki Graves

“I’m an education person,” says Madeline Olesky when I sit down to chat with her about her professional journey from South Florida to upstate New York. Madeline joined the SCHS staff this winter as our new Program Assistant. In her role, Madeline provides vital support to our expanding public programs while also assisting in numerous capacities at our three historic sites. With SCHS’ annual visitation hitting 40,000 last year, it was definitely time to welcome another educator to our staff, and we’re thrilled that Madeline accepted the role.

Initially, museums weren’t on Madeline’s radar. She pursued a bachelors in psychology with a focus in neuroscience at the University of Florida (“go Gators!”), planning to get a PhD and go into academia and research. After working in a research lab, however, Madeline discovered that she wanted to do something different.

During her last year of undergrad, Madeline worked at the Cade Museum, a science museum in Gainesville. Her role as educator meant working with visitors in the galleries, doing outreach, and leading field trips. She quickly moved up the ladder at Cade, becoming a lead educator for their pre-k program. “It was a lot of fun, but I had to sing a lot,” she jokes.

In 2021, Madeline moved back home to South Florida to take a job at the Cox Science Center, also working in education. For her, it was a “full circle moment,” since it was the same science museum she had visited as a child, initially inspiring her love of science and learning. After a year at Cox, Madeline

was accepted into the Cooperstown Graduate Program (CGP) here in upstate New York, which, she emphasizes, is “well-known in the museum world for producing good museum professionals. It was basically a two year museum retreat.”

At CGP, Madeline benefited from the tutelage of her professors as well as the camaraderie of her fellow students. In particular she notes the influence of professor Brian Alexander, whose administration classes were “difficult but valuable” and taught her “how to make museums function and how to sell ourselves as [museum] professionals.” She also expanded her professional experience to include work in history museums. “At CGP, we learn a little bit about everything. A lot of the projects we did were with history museums or historical societies, which gave me an interdisciplinary approach to museum work.” Madeline believes her experience as a science educator is transferable to history museums like SCHS. “It’s harder to learn the skills than it is to learn the information. Knowing how to be an educator, how to be engaging, how to manage a group are all skills I can bring to SCHS.”

Education is truly central in Madeline’s museum philosophy. “Education really should be the main point of museums. At the end of the day, if we’re not connecting with the public and telling stories in engaging ways – what’s the point?” She elaborates: “I really like being able to meet with people of all ages, and find different ways to reach those audiences and achieve our mission of making stories matter. Getting people to think about history, science, or art in a new way – and then use that knowledge to rethink their own lives or engage with their own communities.”

Reflecting on her journey to becoming a museum education professional, Madeline says, “In undergrad I got really lost; I realized I didn’t want to go down the neuroscience route. But looking back on my life, I’d always been an ‘educator,’ even before museums. In high school I was a tutor. It just took me a while to realize I could do education full time [in a museum.]”

So, when the position at SCHS came up, Madeline eagerly applied. The variety of duties associated with the role were particularly attractive to her. “I’m an education person, but I liked that there was a mix of doing other stuff, doing a little bit of everything. It will be helpful to have that varied experience going forward. And SCHS itself does a lot of programs and reaches a lot of people. [SCHS] is innovative in how we reach the public and different audiences.”

She’s learned a lot about Schenectady since she started. One of her favorite things? How many stories are here in Schenectady, especially “all the stuff to do with GE, industry, and innovation. So much has happened here, and history is still happening, and the town is still evolving.” Looking ahead, Madeline is particularly excited to find ways to integrate science and nature into SCHS’ public programs. And as part of the Rev250 committee, she feels it’s an especially interesting time to be doing history education in America. “There’s a lot of avenues we can take to be part of that.”



Bill Buell, Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara, and Carol Lewis at the gala.

Celebrating Bill Buell and Carol Lewis at our 2nd Annual Gala

We had a wonderful night at our April 22 gala as we celebrated the accomplishments of Bill Buell and Carol Lewis.

Joining us that evening as our special guests were Congressman Paul Tonko and Assemblyman Santabarbara, who both voiced their support for local history. We were thrilled to bring everyone together as we toasted Bill and Carol and thanked them for their hard work as SCHS volunteers over the last two decades.

Thanks to everyone who joined us, and a very special thanks to the Honorary Committee:

B. Donald Ackerman
Jeremy Allen
Carol Borthwick
Daniel Bradt
Kathleen Burke
Sylvie Briber
Robert Carney
Keith Cramer
David and Kristi Dariano
Gail Denisoff
Alden and Gay Doolittle
Karl and Carol Felsen

Tom and Nancy Gifford
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Vaughn Nevin
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John and Cynthia Seacord
John Spring
Congressman Paul Tonko
David Trestick
Richard and Suzanne Unger
Mark Vermilyea
George Wise
John Woodward



Inside the New England Air Museum

The Places You'll Go: NARM Edition

by Audrey Jones

"I'm ready for an adventure!" As the winter greys of upstate New York lingered on, this thought came to the forefront of my mind. I decided it was time to plan a small getaway as spring approached and figured this was a prime opportunity to take advantage of my SCHS membership benefits through the North American Reciprocal Museums. I asked my husband one question: "north or south?" After some consideration, he answered "South." With a general direction in mind, I began to consider the town or city that would hit each of our interests. The final destination picked? Mystic, Connecticut.

We packed our bags and headed out. Two hours into our trip we made our first NARM stop at the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks, CT. Featuring three separate hangars, we explored the development of aircraft and flight from its infancy as a novel recreational activity to its current status as an integral component of American society and global relations. Transportation, warfare, natural disaster rescue and relief aid were all greatly impacted by the introduction and growth in flight reliability and safety.

Amongst the museum's impressive array of aircraft, the personal stories of innovators, pilots, airline workers, and manufacturers left a lasting impression. Exhibits highlighted the unique experiences of female New England aviators, the Tuskegee Airmen, and Russian immigrant, Igor Sikorsky. Each faced their own unique set of social and political obstacles to accomplish their desired goals, but their ability to remain resilient in face of setbacks and discrimination enabled them to reach the skies. Through their own words and donated memorabilia, the passion and motivation of each individual's interest in flight shone through.

In addition to interacting with exhibits, we had an opportunity to step inside a select number of aircraft on display. The up-close and personal look inside multiple aircrafts was eye-opening from their varying sizes to the degree of technology or amenities present given their specific functions and purposes. And while I knew that I did not possess the necessary skills to operate a plane or helicopter, the museum does offer flight simulators for museum-goers to test their abilities as a pilot. As we drove away from the air museum after our visit, I left with a greater understanding and appreciation of the

tireless work undertaken by men and women throughout New England to advance aerosciences.

Our first NARM stop focused on scientific innovation, but our next NARM destination celebrated the power and beauty of artistic expression. Located in Old Lyme, CT, the FloGris Museum is a historic home and art gallery. The 19th century home of Florence Griswold served as a colony for American Impressionist artists at the turn of the 20th century. The artists who took residence in her home found inspiration from the Connecticut landscape, and in part, their artwork was a response to the growing industrialization throughout the country. The house itself became a work of art as resident artists were invited to paint panels on the doors and walls of Griswold's home. It was breathtaking to walk into a dining room filled with over 20 different panels of impressionist paintings.

Weather prevented us from walking the nature trails on the grounds, but we enjoyed viewing the artwork of various mediums created by artists, both historic and contemporary in the John & Heidi Niblack Gallery. The various mediums on display, including photography of William Earle Williams, encouraged museum goers to consider spaces in Old Lyme and throughout the country where untold or undertold stories

of Africans and African Americans exist. Both beautiful and thought provoking, the artwork throughout the site conveyed how artistic expressions can respond to historical legacies and serve as a conduit for contemplation and conversations on the current state of a society.

Overall, I was grateful for the opportunity to visit both museums on our trip. They introduced me to stories of men and women with differing backgrounds than myself that I would not have known otherwise, and they made me consider perspectives outside of my own. The educational work these museums undertake in their communities is encouraging and I hope that you have an opportunity to visit these wonderful museums –and more – for yourself.

Editor's Note:

SCHS members who join at the Sponsor level or higher receive the benefit of free admission to a mosaic of 1,442 top-notch arts and history museums, botanical gardens, zoos, children's museums, science centers, and more throughout North America. Using NARM on a roadtrip, vacation, or even locally is a great way to explore more cultural destinations – for free! Visit schenectadyhistorical.org/membership to learn more.

Volunteer Spotlight: Susan Graves



by John Angilletta

In 2021, Susan Graves retired after over thirty years of teaching primary school, primarily in Guilderland. In retirement, she was looking for new challenges, hopefully in an educational capacity. Fortunately for us, her future daughter-in-law, SCHS Director Mary Zawacki, suggested that she join the ranks of our volunteers. Susan quickly got involved, and has made a big impact with our school programs at Mabee Farm. She also helps

out in the flower gardens, resulting in some magnificent rose blooms this past summer.

The Mabee Farm school programs serve over 4,000 students annually, and introduce regional 4th graders to rural life in colonial times. The pupils learn about farm animals, barn building, homesteading, and more. For many students, their favorite part is butter-making, and Susan has become our go-to volunteer for that activity. The students help churn the butter themselves, and then they get to sample it.

Susan's interest in history was sparked when she herself was in 4th grade, and her teacher brought her class on a field trip to the Stockade. There, she visited the historic buildings, and even got to go inside her teacher's 18th century home. Susan continued to explore history while she studied at St. Rose, working as a tour guide at the NY State Capital and the Empire State Plaza in Albany.

When asked about her favorite part of volunteering, Susan replied that it was seeing the faces of the 4th graders as they learned about life in the 1700s. She also enjoys the beauty of the Mabee Farm, and meeting her fellow volunteers and sharing stories with them.

In her free time, Susan is an avid tennis player and tries to play as much as possible. She also loves to read and paint with watercolors. She has enjoyed creating art since her days as an art major in college, and has even painted landscapes of Mabee Farm.

SCHS and the Mabee Farm in particular are very fortunate that Susan with her years of teaching experience decided to join our volunteer ranks. We hope to have her with us for a long time.



Portrait of Schenectady patriot Christopher Yates, attributed to Maunsbach. In the SCHS collection.

A Call to Arms: Schenectady's Committee of Correspondence

by Michael Diana

In 1775, rumors of a catalyzing crisis had reached Schenectady. By this point, there had long been disputes between Britain and the American Colonies. In January of the previous year, many people in this town had taken to the streets to raise a Liberty Flag, a statement of vague but spirited resistance to the distant dictates of Parliament. In New York City, popular resistance to British policy had manifested in riotous, violent confrontations between citizens and redcoats

(British soldiers). Tensions had finally come to a head on April 19th, as the first shots of the American Revolution were fired at Lexington, Massachusetts. Shortly thereafter, local townspeople formed the Schenectady Committee of Correspondence to chart Schenectady's course through the coming conflict.

On May 6th, 1775, this "Committee of Correspondence, safety and protection," was formed by ten men "unanimously Chosen" at a meeting of the "freeholders and Inhabitants"

of Schenectady. Among this select group were many familiar Schenectady patricians such as Henry Glen, John Sanders, and Christopher Yates. The Committee was not some new or unique innovation. Indeed, similar bodies had sprung up across the American colonies in most settlements of significant size. Albany had created its own Committee of Correspondence in January of 1775, and after the Battles of Lexington and Concord, urged Schenectady to do the same. And so, the Schenectady Committee did not act alone but more as a deputy body to the Albany Committee, coordinating local action and taking guidance from the larger settlement.

Perhaps the most important function of the Committee of Correspondence was, unsurprisingly, correspondence. While today we take for granted the instant transmission of information across the globe, even the most urgent news traveled at a slow pace in the late 1700s. Indeed, a message could only travel as fast as it could be physically carried, with ample opportunity to be lost along the way. In the 1770s it might take three or four days for a ship to travel between New York City and Albany, and another day at full gallop to travel the 20 miles overland to Schenectady. And so, the Schenectady Committee spent much of its time simply reading and responding to letters and missives from friendly contacts throughout the colony. While this makes for monotonous reading in the 21st century, it was a vital task for its time.

In the process, the Committee would do its best to separate fact from fiction. Throughout 1775, anxious Schenectadians heard rumors of loyalist actions that might endanger this increasingly revolutionary town. Of chief concern were loyalist groups aligned with the Johnson family of Tryon County. While the famous Sir William had recently passed away, his son John and son-in-law Guy still owed their power and prestige to the King of England and were known loyalists. The Johnsons maintained significant influence amongst the Mohawk people as well as the rest of the Haudenasee. On the 20th of May, the Committee began to investigate rumors that Guy Johnson might push down the Mohawk River with a band of loyalist and native warriors. While these rumors were premature, the Johnsons did famously take up arms against the American Revolution in later years.

Another function of the Committee was adjudicating who was, and who was not, sufficiently loyal to the cause of the American colonies. At its inception, the Committee could hardly be described as “revolutionary”, as the Declaration of Independence had not yet been drafted. But in Schenectady, as well as Albany, there was ample popular discontent with the “Ministerial plan” of parliament. However, the minutes of the Committee make clear that there were many people in Schenectady who were staunchly loyal to the king and Parliament, or at the very least, hostile to this new body that had assumed power in Schenectady. One of the Committee's first priorities was to solicit all freeholding men within the town to take an Oath of General Association, in support of the “Cause of American Liberty.” Anyone failing to do so could find their movements curtailed or their own private mail intercepted and searched for incriminating information. For

instance, in April of 1776, the Committee refused to allow James Ellice permission to travel, and even drafted a letter to Philip Schuyler to warn him of their suspicions.

People deemed to be “enemies of the country” could find themselves arrested, questioned or even jailed by the Committee of Correspondence. In certain instances, the inquiries of the Committee could delve to the petty depths of drunken tavern insults. For instance, in January of 1776, the Committee interrogated one George Ramsay for calling William Murray a “traitor and a rebel.” Ramsay admits to having done so, but only to aggravate Murray. Ramsay was apparently not punished for this, but others who openly expressed support for Parliament faced more severe consequences. In February of 1776, the Committee found Joseph Kingsley guilty of such “Unwarrantable Expressions” and sentenced him to be imprisoned in Albany. A few days later, George Ramsey was also found to be a “high offender” against the American cause and sent to an Albany jail. Both men were also fined to cover the financial cost of their internment. Through such methods, the Committee ensured that whatever loyalist minority remained in Schenectady would be a silent one.

Finally, the Committee was responsible for organizing militia companies militia for local defense. The initial muster took place on May 26th, 1775, with the goal of raising 180 men divided amongst three companies. Again, as this was still early in the course of hostilities, the initial forces raised served more as a local police force than a well-drilled fighting force. The men who served in these early units might still have obligations at home that would distract from their martial duties. At first, the Committee struggled to arm and supply them with shot and powder. Lacking proper uniforms, their rank was signified merely by a colored ribbon pinned to their chest. As the Revolution gained momentum, Schenectady's militia would learn the hard lessons of experience.

When the Committee of Correspondence first met in Robert Clench's tavern on May 6th of 1775, we might wonder if they could foresee the ultimate significance of their actions. We might further wonder at the exact means by which Schenectady's election happened and we might be somewhat skeptical if the men chosen truly reflected a “unanimous” will of the people. But this election, whatever its virtues or shortcomings, represents the first such exercise in the history of this city. As the Committee assumed for itself the powers of a de facto government, Schenectady began to break with the institutions and mentality of its colonial past. They took the first tentative steps down the unending road to a more representative, more fair form of government. It's a journey that we as Americans still walk today.

Brouwer Family

William Hendrick was born in 1630 in Brabant, Netherlands, and arrived in New Netherland by 1657 where he was a shoemaker and brewer in Beverwyck. According to FamilySearch his wife was Elizabeth Aertson Drinkvelt. In 1657, he purchased a brewery in Greenbush, which he sold in 1664. William then died in 1668, and as mentioned in Albany's Grantor Deeds-Court Minutes, an inventory of his estate was ordered by his wife. The Dutch Reformed Church paid money for his burial and for his widow in August.

His son, Hendrick William Brouwer, was born in 1652 in Amsterdam, Netherlands. He married Maritje Pieterse Borsboom in 1692 at the Albany Dutch Reformed Church. Maritje had been previously married to Teunis Carstense with whom she had a son Benjamin, who later took the surname Van Vleck. Hendrick and Maritje soon moved to Schenectady (still part of Albany County), where Hendrick was a fur trader. Their children include Johannes (baptized 1693, Albany Reformed), Elizabeth (baptized 1695, Schenectady Reformed), Pieter (1697), Jacob (1700), Eva (1702), twins Cornelius and William (1704), and Hendrick (1706).

Hendrick wrote his will in December 1706. In it, according to Wikitia.com, he was "in my full senses and understanding, but weak in body." Hendrick left his estate to his wife during her lifetime and in case she should marry again, "an inventory shall be taken of the property and my wife shall be holden to give security for same in order that after her decease, the same shall go to all my children and my wife's son Benjamin by a former marriage to share equally with my children." Hendrick died soon after. A copy of his will is printed on page 68 of "Forts and Firesides of the Mohawk Country" by John J. Vrooman, available on Internet Archive.

It must have been a difficult time for Maritje, as she had just given birth and now her husband was gone, leaving her alone with nine children. Maritje and the children probably continued to live at the 14 N. Church St. house. On January 9th, 1737, a handwritten deed was executed from Maritje and her Brouwer children to her son, Benjamin Van Vleck. This deed is in the collection of SCHS' "Pearson Street Books", and available online through New York Heritage. Benjamin built a house of his own, which is now 18 N. Church St. The map on the 1737 deed shows that Benjamin Van Vleck's house stands next to that of Cornelius Brouwer. The Brouwer House later passed to Cornelius' son Hendrick (1731-1801), then to Hendrick's son Hendrick (1772 - ?).

The 1790 census of Schenectady's first ward lists a Henry [Hendrick] Brouwer with three males over 16, two females, and one slave. The Pearson Collection contains a bill of sale for a "negro man" named Yat from Hendrick Brouwer and Maria to Harmanus Bratt for 30 pounds, dated March 7th, 1780. This Hendrick Brouwer and his wife Maria were first cousins – he was the son of Cornelius Brouwer & Cornelia Barheit; and she was the daughter of Cornelius' brother Hendrick Brouwer and his wife Elizabeth Van Eps. See the Brouwer Genealogy

Database (scroll down to Hendrick Brouwer 1652-1707 for the beginning of this group of Brouwer families).

Another hand drawn map in the Pearson Collection shows two sections of the Brouwer property, side by side on Church Street, with dates and names of the owners. On the corner of Church and Front streets is the Yates property. Next to them is the house of Hendrick Brouwer:

- passed on to Benjamin Van Vleck in 1737
- to Teunis Van Vleck (Benjamin's son) in 1776
- to Jos. Yates in 1796
- to widow Rebecca Yates in 1798 (Rebecca, née Fonda, was the wife of Joseph's son Nicholas Yates who died in 1795).

Next door (same property) is:

- Cornelis Brouwer 1737, 1776 (The 1776 date is unclear, as Cornelis died in 1765)
- Hendrick Brouwer (son of Cornelis) passed it to Hendrick Brouwer Jr. in 1796; when Jr. died in 1801 the property passed to
- J. Rosa in 1802

The latter was James Rosa, whose family (spelled Roosa) was from Hurley in Ulster County. Census records show that James Rosa lived in Schenectady's first ward from 1810 to 1860. James was 82 years old in 1860, blind, living with his son Henry, a coal merchant, and his family. James died in July 1861. The house was owned by the Rosa family for over 100 years, known as the Rosa house during that time. It was sold in 1919 to the Canivet family, then to the Kindl family in 1969, and finally donated to the Schenectady Historical Society in 2017.

Borsboom Family

Maritje, the wife of Hendrick Brouwer (1652-1707), was the daughter of Pieter Jacobse Borsboom (1630-1687). Pieter was born in 1630 at Katwijk aan den Rijn, Zuid-Holland, Netherlands, and was at Fort Orange (Albany) by 1639 according to Jonathan Pearson's "A History of the Schenectady Patent in Dutch and English Times." Pieter's occupation was a brickmaker (steenbakker); he owned a brickyard in Albany which he sold in 1661. The next year, he moved to Schenectady where he was one of the first settlers in the village. Pieter also traded in beaver pelts. The book "Schenectady County, New York: its History to the Close of the Nineteenth Century" by Austin Yates mentions that "[Pieter's] house lot in the village, 200 feet square, was the northwest quarter of the block bounded by Front, Washington, Church and Union streets. He also had two farms allotted to him on the Bouwlandt (farmland)."

Pieter Borsboom penned his will in 1686, leaving land on the south corner of Front and Washington streets to his four daughters – Anna (wife of Jan Pieterse Mebie of Mabee Farm), Maritje (wife of Hendrick Brouwer), Fytie (wife of Marten Van Benthuyzen), and Tryntie (wife of John Oliver). Before 1738,



*Image, front:
The Brouwer
House in
spring 2025.*

*Image, left:
"James Rosa's
House" (the
Brouwer
House), in the
19th century.
From the SCHS
collection.*

Tryntie's quarter was purchased by Maritje who then sold it to her son Benjamin Van Vleck.

From findagrave.com, Pieter Borsboom's wife was a woman named Grietje. Some sources state that she was a Mohawk woman of the Wolf Clan, though Ancestry.com lists her as a daughter of Barent Von Rotmers of Germany, which is probably incorrect. WikiTree.com offers two speculations for her possible Mohawk ancestry, one of which was a deed granted from the Mohawks to Jan Mebie (husband of Anna Borsboom) in 1697, in consideration that Anna was related to the family of the Indian Castle. This is also stated in <http://jnchurchyard.com/jpmland.html>. Indian Castle (or Christian Castle) was a mission church in Herkimer County. Grietje apparently died in 1719, possibly in Schenectady. Her ancestry remains uncertain.

Carstense (Karstense) Family

"Scandinavian Immigrants in New York, 1630-1674" by John O. Evjen mentions that Carsten Carstensen arrived in New Amsterdam on the ship "Rensselaerwyck" in 1637 from Flekkero, Norway. Carsten, often called "de Noorman," was a poor farm laborer and mill hand, and a member of the Albany Dutch Reformed Church. The Court Minutes of Fort Orange & Beverwyck indicate that he requested a land lot in 1654. As Carsten was poor, Albany Reformed Church paid money for the "maintenance of Karsten de Noorman's children" in September 1668. Carsten died in 1679, leaving two children: Teunis, age 19 (born about 1660) and Elisabeth, age 14 (born about 1665). There is a written memorial for him at Albany Rural Cemetery, though he could not be buried there as the cemetery was founded in 1841.

Carsten's son Teunis settled in Schenectady and married Maritje Borsboom about 1688. Their son Benjamin was born that year. Benjamin later took the name Van Vleck, possibly derived from his father's birthplace in Flekkero. Their Schenectady house was on the corner of Church and Front streets. The Schenectady Reformed Church book indicates that Teunis Carstensen borrowed 120 (guilders?) in 1689 and paid it back that same year. Teunis' name was on a list of those who escaped the Schenectady Massacre in 1690, as mentioned in a Schenectady Reflector article of June 26, 1857, online at NYS Historic Newspapers.

Teunis died in October 1691, according to findagrave.com. He and son Benjamin also have written memorials at Albany Rural Cemetery. Berthold Fernow's "Calendar of Wills", Albany, shows that the administration of Teunis Carstensen's estate was granted to his widow, Maritje, on October 8, 1691. Maritje went on to marry Hendrick Brouwer in March 1692, and we are now back to the beginning of the Brouwer family history.

Next time you are visiting the Brouwer House, either to take a tour or to purchase some soap or candles in the Sweet Sprig gift shop, think of the many generations of people who lived in this house and its adjoining properties. Consider the intricate family relationships that evolved here, and the unsolved mysteries the house is home to.

Rebecca Rector is a professional genealogist, writer and researcher based in Troy, NY. Visit her website at rbinforesarch.com.

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