

Additional SCHS Outreach Presentations

Aerial Schenectady

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

Always be a Lady: The Pioneering Career of Elizabeth Gillette

At the turn of the 20th century, Elizabeth Gillette made her move to Schenectady. At the time, she was only the second woman to practice medicine in this small American city. Over the course of her long career, Gillette would defy not just the professional but the political boundaries of her gender. This presentation details her many accomplishments and remarkable personality.

The Battle of Wolf Hollow: Unravelling an Enduring Legacy

Shortly after Schenectady's founding, a great battle occurred to the west of the fledgling town. In a shady, secluded ravine, a deadly ambush changed the diplomatic balance of the region. The Battle of Wolf Hollow, fought between the Mohawk people and a coalition of Algonquins has long been misunderstood. This presentation seeks to discuss the truth of the bloody affair.

Buried: Finding the Lost Black Cemeteries of Schenectady

History can so easily disappear if not carefully maintained. This problem has been particularly pronounced for Schenectady's historic black cemeteries. For years, the Schenectady County Historical Society has struggled to relocate a burial lot for enslaved people at the Mabee Farm Historic site. A recent archaeological project has uncovered answers that will surprise and shock you!

Schenectady Spirits: Local Tapsters and Taverns

Alcohol has played a prominent role in Schenectady's story. From colonial roots to today's craft brew revival, these potent beverages have invited commerce and controversy. This presentation discusses this long and intoxicating history.

Finding Your Schenectady County Ancestor

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

George Lunn: Schenectady's Socialist Mayor

At the dawn of Schenectady's "Golden Age," the city strained under the pressure of explosive growth. Established institutions and political parties failed to satisfy the demands of the city's burgeoning population. Enter a charismatic preacher with revolutionary ideas. In the 1910s, George Lunn and his Socialist Party transformed our city. This presentation discusses his enduring legacy.

The Glens: Schenectady's First Family

The founding of Schenectady witnessed many intrepid settlers whose legacies live on to this day. Even among these illustrious names, the Glens stand out. The grand mansion on the bank of the Mohawk River is testament to the influence of this aristocratic family. From their enigmatic Scottish origins, to their dramatic Massacre intervention to their Revolutionary exploits, this presentation recounts the history of one of Schenectady's first families.

In Whom We Trust: An Exploration of Faith and Community in Schenectady

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

It Came From Schenectady: Science Fiction and the Electric City

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

The Mohawk Colored Giants

In the early 20th century, Schenectady was home to many professional sports teams. But none attracted as much attention or achieved as much as the Mohawk Colored Giants. This presentation discusses the short yet sensational seasons of this team in Schenectady as well as the segregated conditions in which the Giants lived and played.

The Pine Bush: A Historic Enclave

Between Schenectady and Albany you'll find a beautiful and rare landscape. Derided as "forlorn, miserable and unsatisfactory," the Pine Bush was left untouched for more than three centuries. This presentation discusses the unique history of this unique natural area and how modern society threatens to erase it forever.

Proctors Theatre: From Vaudeville to Broadway

For the past century, Proctors Theater has been a central fixture of downtown Schenectady. This presentation explores how its history reflects the story of our city: its heyday in the first half of the twentieth century, its decline in the 1960s and 70s, and its modern revitalization through grassroots support.

A Schenectady Holiday

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Most of us have traditions and holidays we observe around year's end. But how have past generations in Schenectady celebrated the Holiday Season? This presentation explores the surprising answers to this simple question.

Schenectady in the Civil War

The 1860s witnessed the bloodiest conflict in American history as various southern states seceded from the Union. The ensuing Civil War would devastate communities, change millions of lives, and ultimately alter the course of our nation's history. In this presentation, we'll see how this conflict impacted the people and society of Schenectady County.

Stronger Through Effort: The History of Rotterdam

Rotterdam has always been a key part of Schenectady County's history. From its origins as an agricultural hub to its early ties to GE, this presentation explores how the town has evolved over the last 350 years. Learn about how Rotterdam earned its reputation as "a nice place to live."

Together Until the End: Schenectady in World War I

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

True to its Name: A History of Union College

Originally built in the Stockade in 1795, Union College was the second university established in New York State and was the first without any religious affiliation. This program explores the peaks and growing pains this prestigious institution has experienced, including a discussion of some famous (and infamous) alumni.