



ALBANY PRESERVATION REPORT

Albany Preserves!

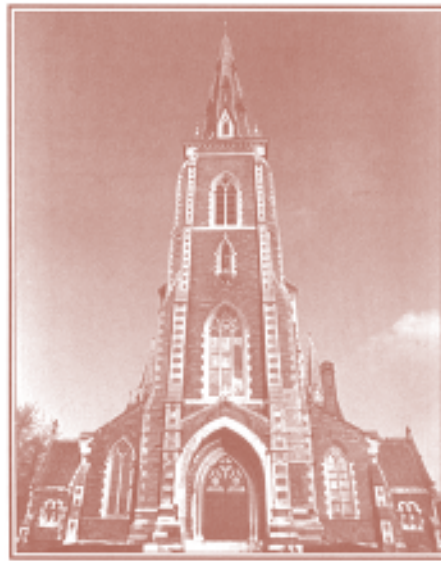
Mayor Jennings leads effort to stabilize historic church

St. Joseph's Church

St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church was designed in 1856 by Patrick Keeley, one of America's most prolific designers of Catholic churches. Keeley was born in Thurles, County Tipperary, Ireland, on August 9, 1816, the son of a builder who had moved to Thurles to construct St. Patrick's College. What training in architectural design young Patrick received is unknown, but it is likely that he learned construction from his father.

At age 25 he sailed for America, settling in Brooklyn where he took up the carpentry trade. Soon, Father Sylvester Malone contacted his acquaintance Keeley regarding a new church he planned to build in the Williamsburgh section of Brooklyn. Together they worked out a plan from which Keeley developed a Gothic design. Its dedication in 1846 opened a new era in Catholic building, and Keeley was besieged with requests for designs of churches and other buildings to serve the rapidly increasing immigrant population.

In 1849, a scant three years after completing his first church, Keeley was called upon to design the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Albany for Bishop McClusky, who was to become the first American



"Set between two parks, St. Joseph's Park on the south and Van Rensselaer Park on the north, St. Joseph's Church is the focal point of the [Arbor Hill Historic] District."

The Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, 1978.

cardinal. He went on to receive commissions for some 20 cathedrals in Chicago, Cleveland, Buffalo, Hartford, Newark, Providence, and Boston. His total output of churches is said to total more than 600, plus a number of institutional buildings, virtually all of which were religiously oriented.

Defining a Neighborhood

St. Joseph's was Albany's third Catholic parish, founded to serve the Irish population associated with the construction of the Erie Canal. The building was completed in 1860, and for over one hundred years, it served a thriving congregation in the Arbor Hill neighborhood.

St. Joseph's is one of Albany's great landmarks, and is considered Keeley's masterpiece. The building defines the neighborhood in which it stands, and its steeple, added around 1910, is the most visible element in Albany's northern skyline. The extraordinary Gothic style building is situated near the eighteenth-century Ten Broeck Mansion, in the center of the Arbor Hill Historic District, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Though the building's architectural merits are not in question, St. Joseph's future is uncertain.

Over the years, the local Catholic population dwindled to numbers unable to sustain the church. It was sold to an individual in 1981 and leased back to the parish. For a few years, the diocese continued to use the church for religious services, but in 1994, the congregation merged with another, and use of the building as a church ceased.

(continued on page 5)



89 Lexington Ave.
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www.historic-albany.org

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Historic Albany Foundation is a private, not-for-profit membership organization working to promote the preservation and appreciation of the built environment in and around the city of Albany.

The Preservation Report is published for members and friends of Historic Albany Foundation with assistance from the New York State Council for the Arts.

Hidden City Home & Garden Tour

Special Guest – Garden Author Laurence Sombke

The 12th annual Hidden City Home & Garden Tour will take place on Thursday, June 20, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. The event is co-sponsored by the Center Square and Hudson/Park Neighborhood Associations, and Historic Albany Foundation.

Here’s your chance to peek inside some of downtown Albany’s beautiful, historic 19th Century homes and secluded urban gardens. All of the homes on the tour date from the mid-to late 1800’s, Albany’s most prosperous years.

A new feature of this year’s event gives visitors an opportunity to *Ask the Garden Expert* for advice on planting, growing and caring for plants. **Laurence Sombke**, author of the *Beautiful Easy Gardens* book series and a regular guest on WAMC public radio, will be available to answer your questions and help solve your gardening problems.

Visitors can stroll Albany’s historic neighborhoods, enjoying the architectural detail and elegance of homes built more than 100 years ago by the city’s most famous architects and builders for the most prominent citizens of the period. See the innovative ways in which city home owners have adapted gracious turn of the (last!) century townhouses to fit their 21st century needs and lifestyles. Each home represents a unique architectural

style and approach to renovation and decoration.

The tour also highlights the talents of creative city gardeners, who have turned limited spaces into tranquil urban gardens that seem far away from the hustle and bustle of busy downtown streets.

All of the homes and gardens on the tour are within walking distance. For those who prefer not to walk the entire route, the **Albany City Trolley** will run in a continuous loop throughout the historic district. Free rides to ticket holders will be available throughout



the evening, with commentary by a resident tour guide.

Tickets are \$12 per person prepaid by June 10, \$15 per person after that, and are available at Ben & Jerry’s ice cream shop at 250 Lark Street in Albany through the night of the tour. For more information call Frances Tarlton at (518) 436-7630. Or, visit the “Hidden City Garden Tour” section at www.historic-albany.org.

Can’t make it on June 20?

On Thursday, June 27th, Ten Broeck Mansion and HAF will co-sponsor a home and garden tour in the Ten Broeck Triangle neighborhood. The event will feature a reception at the Mansion, and runs from 5-8 p.m. Tickets are \$12 by June 17, \$15 after. For more information, contact the Mansion office at 436-9826.

Cocktails at the Mansion

A Special Invitation for Foundation Members



On Thursday, June 6th, Historic Albany Foundation members will have a rare opportunity to look inside one of Albany's most important older homes. That's when HAF members will be welcomed at a special "Friend-Raiser" reception at the Executive Mansion – the official residence of New York's governors since the late nineteenth century – at 138 Eagle Street in Albany.

This special event – to which attendance will be strictly limited – affords HAF members a rare inside look at the Executive Mansion and its beautiful grounds. Tours will focus on the architectural history of the house, its furnishings and artwork. Guides will also note some of the unique people who have lived at the mansion as well as special events in the history of the State that took place there. This cocktail reception and tour – for which reservations are absolutely required – is open only to HAF members and will begin at 6:00 p.m.

The Executive Mansion displays Italianate, Second Empire and Queen Anne styles, and remains one of Albany's most remarkable residences.

Thomas Olcott constructed the Executive Mansion around 1856 as a private residence. The Italianate-style house had a gabled roof, an impressive wrap-around porch and elaborate wooden detailing. Since the state did not provide its

governors with an official residence, Governor Samuel Tilden rented this house from Robert L. Johnson, who had purchased the house from Olcott. The home was remodeled in the 1860s in the then-fashionable Second Empire style. A mansard roof with dormers was added, as well as a tower and a stone entrance portico.

In 1877, under Governor Lucius Robinson, the state purchased the property from Johnson for use as the Executive Mansion. Isaac G. Perry was commissioned to overhaul and expand the mansion in 1886. He completely changed its appearance, adding Queen Anne details.

Please help us kick off our *Out & About* series, and make plans to bring a friend and join us on June 6th for what promises to be a memorable evening for Historic Albany Foundation.

This event includes a cocktail reception and guided tours of the mansion, with emphasis on the art collection. The suggested donation is \$25 per member – new members may join for a combined cost starting at \$60.

Out & About

Out & About gives interested, involved Foundation members the opportunity to share and advance our passion for preservation, our love of learning, and our curiosity about our community.

- Go behind the scenes
- Get up close
- Get the real story

The history of our community is woven through the people, places and things that we see every day. *Out & About* celebrates the legacy that is a living, active presence in our neighborhoods, and encourages others to nourish it for generations to come.

You're always welcome to bring a guest or two to *Out & About* events. By becoming members of Historic Albany Foundation, they will not only support the mission of the Foundation, they'll also receive invitations to upcoming events.

Join us ...

Out & About!

Where: Governor's Mansion
138 Eagle Street

When: Thursday, June 6
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Parking: Limited parking is available at the Governor's Mansion, and at the lot adjacent to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

A Feast for the Record Books!

HAF's most successful fundraiser to date

The Moveable Feast Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in our most successful Moveable Feast ever! Ticket sales and silent auction income combined for net proceeds of well over \$20,000. The success of this event enables us to continue to promote the preservation and appreciation of the built environment in and around the city of Albany through public education, provision of design and technical assistance, community projects, advocacy for endangered buildings, publications, tours, and lectures. *Thanks to all who participated!*

Benefactors

Mrs. Wendy Brandow • Hon. Neil D. Breslin • Mr. & Mrs. George McNamee • Mr. & Mrs. William F. McLaughlin • Gov. George E. Pataki • Mr. & Mrs. David A. Wier

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Hosts:

Michael Bergan & Frances Tarlton • Jay W. Bouchard • Tom Clark & Stephanie Richardson • Douglas Cohn • Richard Conti & Steve Snow • Mr. & Mrs. Mike D'Attilio • Marci David • James Davies • Doug Ebersman & Christine Rant • Jim Cohen • Marin & Wendy Gibson • Michael Gilhooly • Jeffrey Gordon & Alice Oldfather • Worth Gretter & Carol Bullard • Dixie Hathaway & Robert Malone • Marian & Martin Hull • Charles Kuhtic • Caroline Mason & Dr. Appleton Mason • Terry McCormick & Erlinda Rejino • Colin McKnight • Bill & Kate McLaughlin • Henny Newhouse • Carol Phillippi • John & Jennifer Quinn • Bill Rusch • Neil Shapiro & Judith Place • James Tierney & Susan Kirchheimer • Carol & Dwight Wallace

Cocktail /Dessert Reception Contributors

Albany Marriott • Albany Pump Station • Bella Napoli • Big House Grill • Bleeker Café • Clayton's Caribbean Restaurant • Crowne Plaza • Daniel's Café • Debbie's Kitchen • El Loco • El Mariachi • Grandma's Pie Shop • Jillian's • Krause's Homemade Candy Londonderry Café • My Linh • Nicole's • Peaches Café • Quintessence • Saso's Japanese Noodle House • Shades of Green • Sodexo • The Daily Grind • The Gingerman • The Larkin • V&R Restaurant • Vellano's • Victory Café • Yono's

Committee

Colleen Ryan, Chair; Jim Campbell, Marci David, Elizabeth Griffin, Chuck Kuhtic, Nancy Peters, Jackie Ring, Susan Seymour, Penny Vavura, Clare Yates

Special Thanks

Noreen Bobear, Milli DiBlasi, Michelle Kelafant, Tony Opalka, About Town Party Rentals, Capital Wine & Spirits, General Business Supply, Seagroatt Floral Company, and all of our wonderful volunteers!



Dinner hosts Mr. & Mrs. Mike D'Attilio take a sneak peek at the silent auction display at the Rockefeller Institute at 411 State Street.



Historic Albany Foundation members, supporters and volunteers enjoyed the dessert reception at the Women's Club of Albany headquarters on Madison Avenue.



Chris Eastman, Mac Mowbray and Eric Hoppel share a laugh at the champagne and dessert reception.

St. Joseph's Church

(continued from page 1)

Redefining a Structure

The church was purchased from Albany's Roman Catholic Diocese by local restaurant and nightclub owners Elda and Mario Abate after standing abandoned for nearly a decade. Unfortunately, over a year, little was done to prevent further deterioration.

Late last year, the Abates were barred from the building until interior stone columns could be shored up and other necessary repairs made to stabilize the structure. These emergency repairs cost some \$150,000. On February 5, 2002, State Supreme Court Justice Thomas W. Keegan ruled that the city of Albany can bill the Abates for the cost of emergency stabilization.

Historic Albany Foundation commends Mayor Jennings and the city of Albany for stepping in to prevent the imminent collapse of this church. As Fred LeBrun noted in a December, 2001 column in the Times Union:

And yet there is hope, both for most of the extraordinary interior design and for – finally – a preservation effort to save St. Joseph's from collapsing from water damage through its roof, as engineers tell us it is in grave danger of doing.

The original Meneely bells are in place; the 16 magnificent stained-glass windows are intact, as are most of the 31 giant, hand-carved angels flying from the hammer-beam ceiling. Restoration would be costly, but not impossible.

For more information on future preservation efforts at St. Joseph's church, contact Elizabeth Griffin at Historic Albany Foundation.

Join Us on a Treasure Hunt!

Residents of Albany's neighborhoods across the city will soon be invited to join the activities of a special HAF project called *Albany's Treasure Hunt*. This effort is being organized by the City Issues Committee.

Everyone is well aware of the magnificent historic buildings and sites in Albany's downtown area. Unfortunately, much of the rest of the city, especially its residential neighborhoods, can seem overshadowed by these historic riches.

As Albany progresses into the 3rd millennium, there is a growing realization that many city features dating from the first half of the twentieth century are, in fact, historic. *Albany's Treasure Hunt* will encourage residents to identify all types of places, buildings, natural features or memories connected with these sites that are little known and off the beaten track. The sites we're interested in might not be tourist attractions, but are important because they connect us with the past. From the shores of the Hudson River to the ancient Pine Bush, there's a wealth of special places and things in each of the city's fifteen wards that make Albany a unique historic city.

The City Issues Committee will produce a census of those treasures Albanians cherish the most. If you would like to help protect the benchmarks that distinguish a city that has spanned more than three centuries of living, contact Carol Wallace at cwallace66@aol.com, or by phone at 518-462-1550.

Historic Home Tax Credit

Assemblyman Ron Canestrari has introduced legislation which would provide an income tax credit for people who renovate historic homes.

Assemblyman John J. McEneny is a co-sponsor on the bill, which was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Vincent Leibell of Westchester County.

The legislation would provide an income tax credit of up to 25 percent for rehabilitation of homes listed on the state or national Registers of Historic Places, and certain other homes located in historic districts. In some cases, homeowners also would qualify for the tax credit by purchasing a rehabilitated historic home.

Similar legislation has been introduced at the federal level and was recently endorsed by the National Conference of Mayors.

To track the status of this bill, visit the New York State Assembly online at www.assembly.state.ny.us, click on Bill Search & Legislative Information, and type in the bill number, A 10490a.

If you would like to be notified of action on this bill, please join HAF's e-mail list. The easiest way to do so is to enter your e-mail address in the box at the bottom of our web site, then click on the purple button. It's the best way to get the latest news from HAF.



Albany Underground

A Picket Fence in Albany's Front Yard: The French and Indian War Stockade

In 1754, the French and their Native American allies began a series of attacks against British settlements across the North American continent. Within two years, the fighting escalated into the French and Indian War. Albany was one of the northernmost settlements in the British colonies of North America at the time. The French were aware of the city's political and strategic importance and set their sights on its capture. But despite the best efforts of capable commanders, Albany remained beyond French control. Through a series of sharp skirmishes and pitched battles on and around Lake George and Lake Champlain, along the Mohawk River and the shores of the Great Lakes, British and colonial forces succeeded in keeping the city secure.

Throughout the war, Albany was a critical martialing point for troops and supplies, as well as a staging point for military campaigns against the French. The flow of troops and military supplies from New York City and from England was a financial windfall for the city's merchants. At the same time, Albany tradesmen and farmers realized handsome profits by

supplying the colonial and British armies with locally made goods and rum, in addition to produce, grain, and livestock.

Maps dating from the 1650s through the 1750s show the stockade encircled Albany and connected to Fort Frederick at the top of State Street Hill. A few 18th century renderings of the city also show the stockade and fort. The French and Indian War ended in 1763, the stockade fell rapidly into disrepair, and was removed altogether by 1770. In 1999, the first evidence of the 250-year-old city wall was revealed on the long-buried original Hudson River shore. The stockade is one of New York's most important French and Indian War military sites.

While the archeology was under way in downtown for the SUNY Administration's parking garage north of the old D&H building and just east of Dean Street,

archeologists found a 300-foot section of the French and Indian War stockade line. The discovery was very exciting since the old maps indicated that the stockade actually ran along Dean Street. Other military features were integrated into the stockade, such as a redoubt, a demilune, and two gates leading to the Hudson River shore. Thousands of long-lost artifacts used by 18th century city residents and the soldiers who defended Albany littered the ground surface near the stockade and along the old

riverbank. The finds were unprecedented in the city.

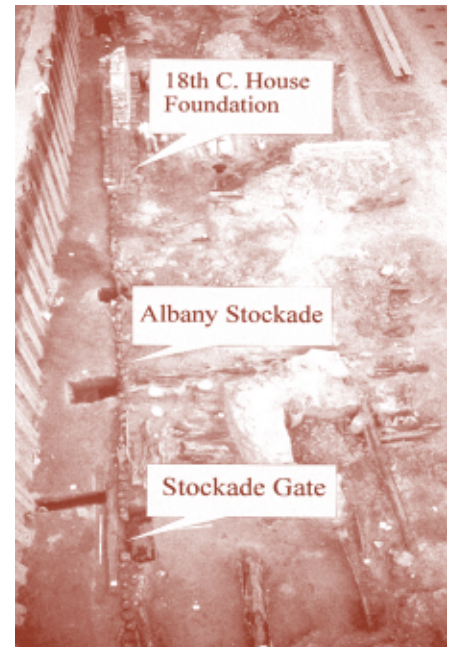
The stockade extended completely around the city and was built of 12-foot long pine logs sharpened at one end and flattened at the other. The log's flat end was placed at the bottom of a three-foot deep trench while the sharpened end at the top shed water. It took thousands of 12-inch diameter sharpened logs to complete the stockade. Two gaps in the stockade line south of Maiden Lane marked the location of gates near the demilune, which housed a cannon and the redoubt.

*by Matt Kirk
Hartgen Archeological Associates*



A 1758 powder horn shows Albany, Fort Frederick, the stockade, and the Hudson River.

(Powder horn image from the Folk Art of Early America: The Engraved Powder Horn by J. Dressler, 1996.)



The SUNY Administration Parking Garage archeological site with Dean Street on the left. The Albany stockade and a four-foot wide gate were found along with the foundation of a post-1770 house. The stockade remains were buried about ten feet below Dean Street.

Advocacy Update

399 South Pearl Street: Demolition of the rear addition at 116 Broad Street was recently completed in hopes of halting the deterioration of the original structure.

HAF continues to try to find a buyer for this property, which represents the last in the portfolio of our original revolving fund.

41 Ten Broeck Street: This historic home's fate remains up in the air, and was a topic of heated discussion at the Ten Broeck Triangle Preservation League's meeting on April 12.

Since August of 2000, the 157-year-old building at 41 Ten Broeck Street has stood half-demolished. County Legislator Wanda Willingham recently introduced legislation to stabilize the facade, but the bill remains under review. If an agreement can't be reached outside court, a ruling on whether the county should repair or demolish the facade is expected in late June or July.

HAF, Society of Architectural Historians Announce Spring Programs

Historic Albany Foundation and the Turpin Bannister Chapter, Society of Architectural Historians invite HAF members and supporters to participate in the Spring, 2002 program series. Talks are at 6:00 pm, preceded by a reception at 5:30. All lectures are free and open to the public, and are co-sponsored by the School of Architecture, RPI.

Tuesday, May 28 Program on St. Joseph's Church

Located in Albany's Ten Broeck Triangle, this building has been the subject of recent news reports. Closed decades ago by the Catholic Church, and stripped brutally of many of its elegant furnishings, the Church is still a wonderful Landmark. Can it be saved? 6:00 p.m. at the Albany Heritage Area Visitors' Center in Quackenbush Square.

Saturday, June 15 Self-driving tour of Lenox, MA

We will be visiting Shakespeare and Company at their new home, the mansion Spring Lawn, designed by Guy Lowell, at 70 Kemble Street, and we will also see Ventfort Hall, now being restored as "the Museum of the Gilded Age." The tour includes grounds and buildings, including the imaginative Theater adaptive reuse by English Architect Ian McEwen. Cost: \$12.00 per person. Please mail your check to Ned Pratt, 43 Second Street, Troy 12180 by June 11. Meet at Spring Lawn at 10 AM. For directions or questions, contact Ned Pratt at 271-6647 or by e-mail at nedpratt66@aol.com .

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Each time an historic building is lost to deterioration or demolition, a piece of our history is lost as well. Your membership in Historic Albany Foundation will help to promote, preserve and protect the architectural heritage of the City of Albany.

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS

Active	\$35
Supporter	\$50
Patron	\$100
Neighborhood Business	\$100
Donor	\$250
Corporate Member	\$250
Benefactor	\$500
Albany Advocate	\$1,000

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Address _____

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Preservation Connection

Call for Nominations


Each year, Historic Albany Foundation presents **Preservation Merit Awards** at our Annual Meeting to recognize outstanding preservation efforts. We are seeking nominations for preservation projects which have protected Albany's architectural heritage. **Deadline for nominations is Friday, June 28.**

Guidelines:

- All nominated buildings must be within Albany County.
- Projects must be completed.
- Since a Preservation Merit Award is viewed as Historic Albany Foundation's endorsement of a project, awards can only be made where proper preservation techniques have been adhered to.

- Preference will be given to projects which have inspired other preservation efforts.
- Individuals or organizations may be nominated for superlative preservation efforts or for continuing contributions.
- Special awards may be given for circumstances which do not fall into the above categories.

To submit a nomination, please send the name, address and phone number of the nominee – as well as your name, address and telephone number – to Historic Albany Foundation at 89 Lexington Avenue, Albany, NY 12206, or e-mail to HistoricAlbany@aol.com.

Historic Albany Foundation is planning an **Annual Meeting** and awards ceremony in **September**, at a location to be announced. 

Call for Volunteers

Historic Albany Foundation is working with the **City of Albany, Albany County, and downtown Neighborhood Associations** on a major initiative to combat the blight of vacant and abandoned buildings.

Please contact Historic Albany Foundation with the address of any problem buildings in your neighborhood. We will compile a master plan, and determine ownership, tax delinquency (if any) and the possibility of foreclosure.

HAF is also looking for owner-occupants to rehabilitate and live in these buildings. We can help! Please call HAF at 518-465-0876. 