



al bany P r e s e r v a t i o n R e p o r t

Albany Preserves!

A series on some of Albany's most prominent restoration efforts...

The New York State Capitol

State Street

Imagine undertaking the renovation of a building whose foundation was laid some 135 years ago, whose construction costs over four decades reached \$25 million (half a billion dollars in today's money), and which suffered a devastating fire in 1911. Then imagine that during the renovations, this 19th century structure must continue to function as a modern workplace for state officials and their staffs.

Such is the task before Capitol Architect Jim Jamieson, an 18-year veteran of New York State's Office of General Services. Jim has overseen the \$40 million Capitol restoration project for the past five years, informed by the master plan crafted by the Commission on the Restoration of the Capitol.

The Past

New York State's Capitol was initially designed by English architect Thomas Fuller, who also designed the Parliament buildings in Ottawa, Canada. However, the Capitol that Fuller envisioned was never completed. In 1876, Fuller was replaced by two prominent American architects, Leopold Eidlitz and Henry Hobson Richardson.

With the change in architects, the exterior design became a



Jim Jamieson, Capitol Architect, showed HAF Executive Director Elizabeth Griffin around the roof re-construction site this fall.

“battle of styles,” in which Italian Renaissance, Romanesque and French Renaissance were blended. However, much of the real beauty of this building lies within.

The Present

Governor George E. Pataki's administration has embarked on several major projects to rehabilitate and preserve the interior of the Capitol, parts of which were severely deteriorated from age and neglect. Major projects that have been completed to date include: restoration of the Governor's Reception Room (Room 269); cleaning and repainting the Assembly stairs; renovation of the Lieutenant Governor's office; plaster repair in the Legislative Law Library; historic painting of public corridors; and the spectacular exterior façade lighting.

One of the most significant projects in progress is the complete rehabilitation of the western portion

of the Capitol's roofs. The roof restoration includes comprehensive engineering work for a new roof and drainage systems, complete replacement of terra cotta ornamental roofing and a detailed, historical restoration of the interior laylight and exterior skylight.

In addition to the Capitol roof rehabilitation project, OGS is also supervising the restoration of the building's exterior masonry façade, which includes hand repointing and other projects to protect and restore the structure.

The project requires great skill with historic materials, knowledge of construction methods of 100 years ago, and the ability to work in high and perilous areas such as dormers, tower roofs, gutters, and upper parts of exterior walls. OGS

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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.

A Moveable Feast

HAF's Annual Fundraiser Slated for March 9

Historic Albany Foundation's annual fundraiser, *A Moveable Feast*, will take place on **Saturday, March 9, 2002.**

This year's gala evening of fine food and drink celebrates our city and state's history as a leader in public policy.

The cocktail reception will be held at the State Street headquarters of **The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government** of the State University of New York.

This five-story Dutch Renaissance Revival building dates from 1900, and was probably the largest rowhouse ever built in Albany. It was purchased by the Research Foundation of the State University of New York in 1965. Restored to its former glory under the supervision of architect John I Mesick, the building's twenty-three rooms are a showcase of architectural styles, and feature a Jacobean fireplace, a Georgian ballroom, and leaded windows of primarily Flemish influence. The Music Room features four lunette wall murals executed in 1906 by local artist Will H. Low (see detail at right).



Guests will then adjourn to historic private homes throughout the city for the main course.

The dessert reception will be held in the **Women's Club of Albany** headquarters on Madison Avenue, a building which still echoes with the voices of women who met here to organize and fight for the right to vote.

The Chicago firm of Stern, Nolan and Stern designed this house and its twin at the corner of South Lake Avenue for the Steefel brothers circa 1882. The brothers

owned the Union Clothing Company at 80 State Street. The brick course, broad windows and porches echo the horizontal line of the Prairie style. Terra cotta quoins and a band of lattice-patterned brickwork reinforce the solid, boxy look. The Women's Club of Albany purchased the building in 1920.

We will once again offer our guests the opportunity to bid on getaway weekends, food and drink, and unique services from interior design to laser eye surgery with the **Fabulous Silent Auction**. Major donors at time of printing include: Amtrak; Albany Massage Therapy Associates; Albany Symphony Orchestra; BarterOne; Capital Rep; Capital Wines & Spirits; Crowne Plaza Albany; eba; Girvin & Ferlazzo; Mary Johnston Interiors; The Desmond Hotel & Conference Center; TLC - The Laser Eye Center; The Morgan State House; The New Yorker Hotel; The Steuben Club; South-west Airlines.

A Moveable Feast gives our guests the opportunity to "go behind the façades" of Albany's historic buildings – public and private.

Participants come from throughout the region to view the amazing architectural heritage of New York's capital city and to enjoy the hospitality of property owners who are caring for wonderful old houses. Most importantly, the evening sustains the commitment of Historic Albany Foundation to preserving history in our midst.

For more information, or to receive an invitation, please visit our web site at www.historic-albany.org, or call the Foundation at 465-0876.

Albany Underground

First in a series of articles on Albany archeology

During the past 30 years, many public and private buildings encompassing a city block or more have risen within and just outside the city's 17th and 18th century stockade lines. Archeology conducted in advance of the construction of these buildings has revealed a fascinating array of early buildings, deposits, and waterfront and other features beneath the modern landscape. These remains provide an intimate glimpse into how the people of Albany transformed this part of the North American wilderness into a prosperous city.

Before the mid-1990s, there was little organized effort to search for evidence of the city's rich archeological past. From time to time, colonial



The State University Administration Parking Facility site on Maiden Lane in the summer of 1999.

life at several 18th century tavern sites in the Pine Bush was explored as well as the remains of the 1830s Mohawk & Hudson Railroad, New York's first economically successful railroad. Excavations also occurred at Schuyler Mansion and Cherry Hill, two of the city's most famous house museums. Among the early efforts were excavations at Fort Orange, the Dutch West India Company's trading station built in 1624. Situated along the route of modern-day Broadway, the site is now buried beneath the I-787 ramp to Rensselaer. Remains of 18th century military barracks and the city's 17th and 18th century water system were also exposed in lower State during the installation of utilities.

During the mid-1980s, new construction included KeyCorp Plaza and the Pepsi Arena on South Pearl Street and the KeyCorp Parking Garage between Beaver and Hudson streets. In 1986, the remains of the 17th century Dutch Reformed Church almshouse were found on Norton Street. The almshouse find was especially important because it confirmed that the remains of early Dutch houses were preserved beneath 19th and 20th century buildings. In 1987, the remains of many early city residents were found when the KeyCorp Parking Garage was built over the site of the old Dutch Reformed Church Cemetery between Beaver Street and Hudson Avenue.

As Albany's revitalization gathered steam during the 1990s, several large, new buildings were



The 18th century distillery at Quackenbush Square on Broadway in March 2001.

proposed in the earliest parts of the city along Broadway and State Street. The first was the Dormitory Authority Office Building in 1996, followed by the NYS Department of Conservation Office Building in 1998, the State University of New York Administration parking facility on Maiden Lane in 1999, and the Quackenbush Square Parking Expansion in 2000-2001. Meanwhile, the NYS Comptroller Building rose to dominate State Street. The archeology at each of these sites revealed unique and fascinating treasures that illuminate the city's development from the 17th century onward.

In future issues, we will explore the 18th century stockade and waterfront, the houses of 17th century to 19th century city residents, the Fox Creek, Rutenkill, and Maiden Lane culverts, the 18th century distillery at Quackenbush Square, and improvements in public health and the quality of urban life.

*by Jay W. Bouchard
Hartgen Archeological Associates*

Our Members Love a Challenge!

Historic Albany Foundation Secures \$10,000 Matching Grant

Sincere thanks to everyone who made Historic Albany Foundation's Annual Appeal and Membership Drive a success. Special thanks to long-time supporter Matthew Bender IV, who agreed to match – up to \$10,000 – every dollar we raised through new memberships or additional gifts. The continued support of all of our members is enormously important in accomplishing our goals of supporting policies that rely on common sense, respect historical integrity and balance practical needs with preserving our heritage. *Thank you all very much.*

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Historic Albany Foundation member and supporter Norman S. Rice led a tour of **Albany Rural Cemetery** last fall. Located in Menands, the cemetery is the final resting place of such notable figures as the 21st President of the United States, Chester A. Arthur; Albany Mayor Erastus Corning II; architects Philip Hooker and Marcus T. Reynolds; and sculptor Erastus Dow Palmer.

Living Preservation Workshops

Spring 2002 Series

Historic Albany Foundation is sponsoring another series of practical workshops for homeowners – **Living Preservation** – this spring. These hands-on workshops, scheduled for Saturday mornings, are made possible in part by a grant from the New York State Council for the Arts, Architecture, Planning & Design program.

The workshops are free and open to the public, but reservations are required. For more information about presenters or programs, visit the HAF web site at www.historic-albany.org. To make a reservation, call the Foundation at 518-465-0876.

Boiler and Heating System Repair and Replacement for the Historic Residence

March 2, 2002 • 10 AM to Noon
Call for location

This seminar, held in a typical row house with the usual heating system problems, will explore the concepts of heating systems for buildings of moderate size, and will include high-tech energy- (and money-) saving solutions to common heating problems. Energy audits, insulation, window integrity, exterior thermostatic regulation, individual radiator thermostats, burner design, boiler design, and related areas will be covered. Be prepared for a basement boiler tour.

Ceramic Tile Replacement & Repair

March 16, 2002 • 10AM to Noon
Historic Albany Parts Warehouse
89 Lexington Avenue

L'esperance Tile Works is nationally recognized in the field of ceramic tile restoration and reproduction. This seminar will focus on the maintenance and renewal of traditional tiled areas of the home, and will also include a survey of the history of ceramic tile.



Last fall's Preservation Workshops were well attended. Call 465-0876 today to make a reservation for the spring series.

Beautifying City Neighborhoods

March 23, 2002 • 10 AM to Noon
Westminster Presbyterian Church
85 Chestnut Street

Our speaker will discuss her efforts, since appointment in 1998 as City Gardener, to enhance the neighborhoods and parks of our city with appropriate public space horticulture, and what neighborhood associations and block captains can get done with city assistance.

A Conversation about Gardens and Landscape in the City

April 6, 2002 • 10 AM to 12 Noon
Westminster Presbyterian Church
85 Chestnut Street

Our speaker is a landscape architect and owner of Helderledge Farm. He was an early frontiersman in the preservation of Center Square. The "conversation" will be mostly about the idea of the garden as a space for people, with a little bit on horticulture, and will be mostly one-way, though questions will be allowed.

Vintage Kitchens: Refurbishing/Remodeling an Antiquated Kitchen

April 20, 2002 • 10 AM to Noon
Call for location

This workshop, held in a beautifully restored private residence, will illustrate what is involved in updating an old

kitchen without losing the room's architectural integrity. Re-use of some existing cabinets, appropriate new cabinets, new appliances, lighting and color will all be addressed.

Basic Plumbing Techniques

April 27, 2002 • 10 AM to 12 Noon
Historic Albany Parts Warehouse
89 Lexington Avenue

Sweating a copper water supply pipe or connecting a sink with PVC and don't know how to do it? This is the workshop for you! Class size is limited so reserve your place early. Hands-on workshop for the following skills: Copper plumbing basics, plastic drain pipe basics, sink installation basics, taught by a licensed master plumber.

Preparation and Application of Horsehair Plaster

May 4, 2002 • 10 AM to Noon
Call for location

Horsehair plaster was widely used locally from the 17th to the early 20th century. This workshop will demonstrate the preparation and application of horsehair plaster in a local residence. Material sources and mixture options will be explored, actual plastering will be demonstrated. This is a workshop for hands-on experience: wear suitable work clothing and expect to get your hands dirty.

publicly bid the repair work, awarding the contract to Titan Roofing, Inc. of Chicopee, Massachusetts in the Spring of 1997.

The consulting engineering firm of Simpson, Gumpertz, & Heger was also engaged to provide a comprehensive survey and report on the conditions of the roofs and entire building exterior. Their goal was to rehabilitate the roof as a weatherproof system. They designed the roof rehabilitation on OGS' behalf.

To date, the entire western façade has been repointed. Repointing on the Capitol involves the removal of all the existing silicone sealant and replacement with new historically accurate mortar, both by hand. OGS contractors must follow Federal Interior Department guidelines for historic masonry preservation and rehabilitation, so no power tools are used in the process. The mortar being installed is of an historic mix - sampled, tested, and duplicated from an older part of the building where the original mortar was still intact, never modified or exposed to the effects of acid rain or pollution.

While many of these projects were initiated to improve safety or modernize the building systems, they also afford an opportunity to restore other integral parts of the Capitol's historic fabric. All work has been designed, engineered and implemented with the highest standards of construction, historic preservation and long term sustainability.

The Future

According to Kenneth J. Ringler, Jr., Commissioner of the New York State Office of General Services (OGS), "Each piece of the Capitol's restoration is a vital part to bringing it back to its historic splendor. We have a responsibility both to the taxpayers and the building's historic nature to make the repairs and changes necessary to ensure the Capitol's long-term integrity. It is our duty to carry out this restoration to preserve the Capitol for future generations."

In many ways, the future of the Capitol can be found by returning to the past. As part of the ongoing restoration, the streetlights surrounding the Capitol are being replaced with replicas of the original circa 1899 lights. The forty fixtures, which are expected to be in place by March 2002, will be placed on both sides of the streets adjacent to the Capitol and will provide an historic environment around the building.

One of Capitol Architect Jim Jamieson's favorite moments was finding the names of three workers — one each from Albany, Schenectady and Troy — etched into the very top of the finial on the southwest corner of the roof. These workmen left their names after completing repairs following the great fire of 1911.

"I hope that 100 years from now, people will also look back on the work we're doing, and say, 'they really knew what this building was all about,'" said Jamieson.

Tours of the New York State Capitol are available daily at 10:00 AM, 12:00 noon, 2:00 PM and 3:00 PM through The Plaza Tour Program. For more information, call the OGS Visitors Center at (518) 474-2418.

Albany Heritage



The Stadt Huys

Historic Albany Foundation is participating in the *Albany Heritage* project to commemorate the 350th Anniversary of the Dutch founding of Beverwyck.

Organized by Warren Roberts, Department of History; John Pipkin, Department of Geography and Planning; John R. Logan, Department of Sociology at the University at Albany; Miriam Tremontozzi, Special Assistant to the President; and Dr. William Hedberg, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, the group has created a web site to provide information about the project. You can visit the site at www.albany.edu/mumford/heritage/.

Working groups have been formed to concentrate on specific areas of the project, including: Colonial Albany; the Built Environment; Arts; Social and Economic History; Politics; Transportation and Urban Development; Education; and State Street Exhibit / University Art Museum.

A calendar of events is being developed for this year-long celebration. The calendar will be posted on the web site, and individual events will be publicized in local media.

For more information about this project, contact Karen Norton, norton@albany.edu.

Advocacy Update

41 Ten Broeck: *The fate of this 155-year-old row house remains in jeopardy as the Court of Appeals refused to hear an appeal from Albany County early in January.*

The county, which foreclosed on the building when the owner fell behind on taxes, tried to demolish the building in August of 2000, but Historic Albany Foundation stopped the wrecking crew with a court injunction.

HAF and the city of Albany have argued successfully that the county did not have the authority to tear down the building without getting approval from the Historic Resources Commission and the city Department of Buildings and Codes. The Appellate Division found that the county has to follow the same procedures that any other property owner does.

Members of the Ten Broeck Triangle Preservation League are encouraging the county to repair the

damage to the façade, demolish the remainder of the building, and market it for sale. They fear that demolishing this five-bay structure across from St. Joseph's Church and putting up a chain link fence will bring down property values in the entire neighborhood.

St. Joseph's Church: *Historic Albany Foundation commends the City of Albany for stepping in to prevent the imminent collapse of St. Joseph's Church.*

This extraordinary Gothic style building is situated near the eighteenth-century Ten Broeck Mansion, in the center of the Arbor Hill Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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. In more than a year, little has

been done to prevent further deterioration.

The courts have now barred the Abates from the building until interior stone columns are shored up and other necessary repairs are made to stabilize the structure. These emergency repairs will cost an estimated \$150,000. On February 5, State Supreme Court Justice Thomas W. Keegan ruled that the city can bill the Abates for the emergency stabilization.

School 10: *Brighter Choice Charter School has taken title to the building, and the construction addition is under way.*

Thanks to everyone who worked with Historic Albany Foundation to help save this turn-of-the-century example of civic architecture from being razed to provide parking for a drive-through drugstore.

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
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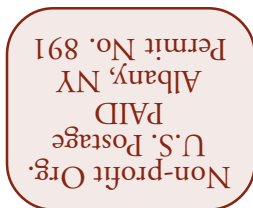
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www.historic-albany.org



Preservation Connection

Historic Albany Foundation is delighted to introduce a new part-time staff member. **Michele Irwin** recently joined HAF staff as Executive Assistant / Development Director.

Michele grew up in Chatham, NY, and recently returned to the Albany area from the West Coast. She previously served as a development associate for **Historic Seattle**. She attended Vassar College, and is currently enrolled in the Masters in Public History Program at the University at Albany. ☺☺

Historic Albany Foundation is pleased to report that the **City School District of Albany's Facilities Plan** was approved by Albany voters on December 11 by a 2 to 1 margin.

In addition to HAF's support,

the plan also enjoyed the endorsement of the Council of Albany Neighborhood Associations (CANA), NAACP, and PASS (People Advocating Smaller Schools).

Phase I of the project, which includes design, State Education Department review, and bidding and awards is underway. Actual construction is expected to commence in the spring of 2003. ☺☺

HAF is collaborating with Tom Griner and the City of Albany **Community Development Program** to find a suitable buyer for our property at **399 South Pearl/116 Broad Street**. We hope to remove the rear addition which is contributing to the deterioration of the original structure on South Pearl, and market the building for sale. ☺☺

On Saturday, February 9, **HAF co-sponsored** a conference about the

Capital Region's participation in the Underground Railroad, entitled **Telling the Untold Story: *The Underground Railroad Movement in Albany and the Surrounding Region.***

The program featured workshops, a panel discussion, and a litany of songs remembering some of the fugitives whose names are known and who passed through the Capital Region.

Other sponsors included the Albany NAACP, New York African American Research Foundation, and the M.C. Lawton Club.

For additional information and registration, contact: The Underground Railroad History Project; Box 10851; Albany, NY 12201 or call (518) 432-4432. Visit their web site at www.ugrworkshop.com

