

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

PLEASE MAKE A GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION TO THE ACHA! Operating funds are derived principally from membership and contributions. Support Albany's rich history. Preserve the Ten Broeck Mansion.

to use as a gift. Annual Corporate memberships are also available at \$500. This membership includes one free use of the Ten Broeck Mansion for a company event and free Mansion admission for fifteen employees.

**MEMBERSHIP**—Think of making a birthday or anniversary gift membership in ACHA, Become or recruit a member. Membership in the Albany County Historical Association is your gateway to lectures, exhibits, beautiful gardens, the Ten Broeck Mansion, summer concerts, trips and all sorts of special events from Holiday House to the Haunted Mansion. If you are already a member, set a goal of recruiting one or two new members each year.

All levels of membership bring you free admission to the Ten Broeck Mansion, the ACHA newsletter, reduced rates on trips and certain events, and a 10% discount at seasonal shops. The Contributor level brings four complimentary passes. The Patron level brings the above free entry, discounts and six complimentary passes. The Sustaining level adds a discounted rental of the Mansion and gardens. The Benefactor level receives in addition preferred parking at designated events, and a family membership



**A Thought: Do you have any old items lying around your attic or basement? Why not sell it on ebay and donate the proceeds to the ACHA?**

**ENDOWMENT**—Whatever other annual gifts or donations you make to the ACHA, consider a special gift to the endowment fund. Only by increasing the endowment can the Ten Broeck Mansion face a secure future and the ACHA expand its future mission to be a vibrant umbrella organization providing resources, interaction, and coordination for all the local historical societies, sites and events within Albany County. Your gift to the endowment, whether it is \$10 or \$10,000, will go on giving in perpetuity.

**PLANNED GIVING**—Remember ACHA in your estate planning. Whether it is a simple bequest, a charitable remainder trust, or some other estate vehicle, have your financial or estate planner work the ACHA into your financial solutions. Your privacy is paramount and anonymity will be carefully respected, but if you are planning an estate gift or trust involving ACHA, please let the president of ACHA know so that the organization can plan its future more effectively.

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership: NEW ( ) RENEWAL ( ) Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student/Senior	\$ 25	Individual	\$ 40	Family	\$ 50
Contributor	\$ 75	Patron	\$ 100	Sustaining	\$ 250
		Benefactor	\$ 500		

Make checks payable to: ALBANY COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
Ten Broeck Mansion, 9 Ten Broeck Place, Albany NY 12210

## ALBANY COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

# PROSPECT

TEN BROECK MANSION, 9 TEN BROECK PLACE, ALBANY NY 12210 518-436-9826



WINTER 2008

## A WONDERFUL ADVENTURE: POST WAR 1940'S WINTER LIVING AT THE TEN BROECK MANSION

by Mary Alice Brankman

“DON'T WAKE THE BABY!” That was eleven year old Carol Johnson's admonition to Albany firemen as they hauled their fire hoses through the back door and up the stairway of the Ten Broeck Mansion to extinguish a chimney fire on the evening of St. Valentine's Day in 1948. The fire had started in the chimney of the fireplace in what is now called the rear parlor and at that time was the living room for the Johnson family who were living in the Mansion. The Johnson parents, Russell and Marion, were attending a Valentine dance at the Aurania Club. Carol, sister Gayle and baby sister Linda were celebrating at home with another family who were also living in the Ten Broeck Mansion that winter.



Sisters Carol Murphy and Gayle Faughnan briefly lived in the Mansion during the winter of 1947/1948

“We thoroughly enjoyed it! It was a wonderful adventure.” That's the sentiment expressed by two local women who, as children, lived in the Mansion for several months. Carol Murphy and Gayle Faughnan recently returned to the Mansion and told the story of that adventure.

The timing was critical. During the immediate post World War years, the entire country was experiencing a housing shortage and Albany was no exception. The Johnson family moved from their small apartment due to their increasing family size. For the summer of 1946 they lived in their camp on Warner's Lake in the Helderbergs. By the fall, the family was unable to find an apartment and they moved in with friends. In addition to a housing shortage, many apartment owners did not want to rent to families with children. The next summer, 1947, they were back at Warner's Lake and still unable to find an apartment. In the fall,

the girls had to attend school and the family badly needed a place to live. Russell Johnson worked at the Mechanics and Farmers Bank. Douglas Olcott, then President of the Bank, invited them to stay at the vacant Ten Broeck Mansion

Both women recalled vividly that winter when they were 11 and 9 and had “the run of the spacious house”. Their free time at home in the Mansion was spent searching for tunnels and hidden passages in the rooms, halls and basement and pretending to be statues standing or sitting in the niche near the top of the circular stairway. Carol and Gayle lived in the Ten Broeck Mansion in the fall of 1947 through the spring of 1948 with their parents Russell and Marian as well as their baby sister, Linda. At the

same time, two other families were living in the Mansion as well. The other families that the girls recall living in the Mansion that winter were friends or associates of Russell Johnson who had similar stories of being unable to find suitable housing that year.

According to the sisters, the Mansion was empty of furnishings at the time that their family moved in with the exception of twin beds in the bedroom over what is now the Interpretation room. The sisters occupied that bedroom. Their family brought their own furniture with them as did the other families living in the Mansion. Carol and Gayle's parents used the bedroom across the hall, the current Exhibit room. Another family, the Stitts and their daughter Alexandra, used the front two bedrooms on the second floor. A third family lived in the basement where the gentleman “took care of the furnace”. *Continued inside*

## Mozart Meets Salieri

THE ALBANY COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION is partnering with Historic Albany Foundation and the Lake George Opera at Saratoga to present “Mozart Meets Salieri” on March 1st at 2PM. The concert is being performed at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany's Emerson Community Hall at 405 Washington Ave in Albany. Our goal is to raise funds for all three

organizations, while promoting opera in the Capital Region.

In 1786, Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II created a musical competition in which famed composers Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Antonio Salieri both took part. Mozart pitted his *The Impresario* against Salieri's *Prima La Musica e Poi La Parole*. These two operas will again compete, this time before an audience in Al-

bany, New York! The March 1st concert will feature both operas performed in English, and will be appropriate for true opera aficionados as well as newcomers.

The cost of the event is \$30 per person for advance reser-



there! Albany. We hope to see you

ervations and \$35 per person on the day of the event. Reservations can be made by sending a check payable to ACHA to the Mansion at 9 Ten Broeck Place in

Non-Profit  
Organization  
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Permit #909  
Albany, NY

THE ALBANY COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
TEN BROECK MANSION  
9 TEN BROECK PLACE  
ALBANY NY 12210



## ALBANY COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

TEN BROECK MANSION  
9 Ten Broeck Place  
Albany NY 12210 518-436-9826  
achadirector@onecommail.com  
www.tenbroeckmansion.org  
Hours Open for tours May-Dec. Thurs-  
day & Friday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Saturday - Sunday 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

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bany, NY 12210. The Association is a  
private, not-for-profit membership organiza-  
tion that seeks to preserve, present and pro-  
mote the rich history of the county.

## Executive Director's Corner

2009 HAS BEGUN AND MARKS AN IMPORTANT TIME FOR ALBANY COUNTY. This year we will be celebrating the Quadracentennial, the anniversary of Henry Hudson's historic journey to the area in 1609. Be on the lookout for a series of programs commemorating this event throughout the year. You can be sure that the Albany County Historical Association will participate in and certainly support many of them.

Like most of the country, I know many of us are concerned about the state of the economy and are inclined to spend money only on what they consider essential. Allow me to plead the case for the preservation of our history. The Albany County Historical Association is committed to programming that promotes the history and culture of our area through tours, lectures, concerts and exhibits, as well as special events like Living History Day, Haunted Mansion, and Holiday House. One of our most worthwhile and well known programs, Archaeology Camp, which teaches hands on history to young people, will be in its 9th year this year. All of these programs are in danger due to lack of funding. If you believe, as we do, that these programs, as well as the preservation of the historic Ten Broeck Mansion, are important, then I hope you will find the means to continue to support them. I would argue that preserving our history for future generations is essential. We welcome any assistance you are willing to give, whether it be through volunteering, financial contributions, or participation in the many events sponsored by the ACHA. I know we can count on the generosity of the community to keep our organization thriving through this difficult economic time.

*Wendy Burch*

## Adventure Continued

The Johnson family's living arrangements were spacious but makeshift. On the first floor, they recall that the butler's pantry was used as the kitchen, where their mother cooked over a hotplate. The Interpretation room was their dining room and the rear parlor was their living room. On the first floor, the two front rooms, the dining room and the front parlor, were unoccupied and vacant except for a rug in the dining room.

In a memoir written for his family, Russell Johnson recalled the night the family moved into the Ten Broeck Mansion. They had no lamps so he had to string up a single bulb on a cord over the stairway so they could see to move in. He recalled the shadows that were thrown eerily on the walls by that single light. Later that evening, with his family barely settled, he had to leave them to attend a meeting at the DeWitt Clinton Hotel. In that memoir, he also recalls the Valentine Night fire when he and his wife were called at the Aurania Club. They were assured that the fire was taken care of and there was no damage so he and his wife returned to the party, to the surprise of all. Carol, Gayle and the Stitts family returned to their party of ice cream and cake and baby Linda slept through it. The only tragedy of the evening occurred when Gayle sat on her dish of ice cream which she had left on the chair in the excitement.

Thanksgiving was probably not celebrated in the Mansion as neither sister could remember it and couldn't imagine their mother cooking for many people over the hotplate in the kitchen. However, both clearly recall Christmas with a tree in the corner of the family living room.

Both women recall walking along Ten Broeck Street toward Clinton Avenue with their father to catch a bus in front of the White Tower to attend St. Theresa's School.

During their time at home, they played in the yard and Gayle remembered that the greenhouse was her special favorite. She loved the smell of the plants and the dirt. Since their time at the Mansion was fall and winter, they don't have any memories of the gardens other than sledding across the yard to the drive way with their father. By May of 1948, the Johnson family had found an apartment on the corner of Allen and Myrtle Streets and moved from their short adventure at the Ten Broeck Mansion.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**March 1, 2PM: MOZART MEETS SALIERI.** Enjoy a concert performed by the Lake George Opera. Advanced Reservations: \$30, Admission Price at the Door: \$35

**March 14, 1:30 PM: LECTURE: FAMOUS GRAVESITES OF NEW YORKBY PETER SHAVER.** Lecture sponsored by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

**March 21, 2 PM: DANCE CLASS PRESENTED BY THE HOMESPUN COMMUNITY DANCERS.** Learn some of the dances that would have occurred at the Mansion in times past. Reservations requested. Cost: \$15.00

**May 2, 12 PM to 4 PM: LIVING HISTORY DAY**

**May 30, 10 AM to 3 PM: HISTORY WALK OF RENNELAERVILLE** presented by Anthony Brankman.



MANY THANKS TO THE HOLIDAY HOUSE COMMITTEE chaired by Marie Erkes for this year's success. Committee members Lois Conklin, Jean Joel, Carol Felsen, Eric Johnson, Al Zeppieri, Sue Denninger, Tony Brankman, Ursula MacAffer and Deanna Egan did a fabulous job planning and conducting events, attracting more visitors to the Mansion than ever before. We held our traditional events such as the Champagne Preview Party, Holiday Tea, Open House, New Year's Day Open House and the Twelfth Night Dinner, while the Helderberg Madrigal Singers and Lake George Opera at Saratoga returned for a second year. The Mansion hosted over 135 guests at the preview party alone this year, thanks in part to the popularity of our honoree, City Gardener Judy Stacey. Judy has long been a friend to the Mansion and its gardens, and we wanted to use this year's preview party to recognize some of her many contributions. We also participated in Historic Albany Foundation's Holiday House Tour and sponsored a Children's Story Hour. We were able to add to the agenda a lecture on our theme of 'The Gilded Age' by Rensselaer County Historian Kathy Sheehan. Ms. Sheehan spoke about the era in the Capital District. This year's shop did an excellent business, with a variety of items on sale by both new and returning vendors. We are especially grateful to those members who

donated hand-crafted items for sale. The talents of our different decorators enhanced the elegance of the Mansion, and we really appreciate all their efforts. Finally, a very special thank you goes to Karl Felsen for ensuring that Sinterklaas was present at so many of the events.

## Twelfth Night Dinner

INTIMATE DINNERS HELD IN THE MANSION'S FORMAL DINING ROOM are very popular among visitors to the Mansion, none more so than the Twelfth Night Dinner which is the final Holiday House event. For the third year, volunteer Bill Bouchard, with the assistance of Herb Clark, have treated diners to a full-course gourmet meal, complete with after dinner aperitifs. One of the attendees to the dinner, Joanne Justice, writes "I would like to extend kudos to Bill Bouchard for the Twelfth Night Dinner he and his "staff" prepared and served at the Ten Broeck Mansion on January 3rd. My husband, Kevin, and I and the couple who attended with us thoroughly enjoyed the experience of leisurely dining in such a remarkable historic atmosphere. The menu, from the French green bean and barley soup to the tortiere to the brandied fruitcake (my personal favorite) was exceptional. What a splendid...and delicious...way to begin the New Year!

## Volunteer Spotlight

THOSE WHO HAVE ATTENDED FUNCTIONS at the Ten Broeck Mansion have probably encountered longtime volunteer Sue Denninger. Sue has been instrumental in ensuring the success of many of the Mansion's events. Visitors to Mansion receptions, most notably the annual Holiday Tea, have had the fortunate opportunity to sample Sue's excellent cooking. She prepares the food and organizes all kitchen activity. As a member of the Holiday House Committee, Sue has coordinated the Cookie Walk and Bake Sale for several years. She also spends a great deal of her free time preparing handmade items for the Mansion's Shop. Her jams and jellies are particularly popular.



Sue has been volunteering at the Mansion for twelve years, ever since she won a membership to the Albany County Historical Association from PBS. Her first experiences as a volunteer here originated at the Sunday afternoon Train Collectors Shows that at one time had been held frequently at the Mansion. Sue fondly remembers getting to know Gertrude Olcott and hearing stories about the Mansion in earlier times. She also credits the Mansion with her 'one minute of fame'-when she was featured on the six o'clock news to the delight of her friends. We are very grateful to Sue for all she does at the Mansion, particularly as her position as Manager of Transcription Services at Albany Medical Center leaves her little free time. Many thanks to Sue for all her hard work and dedication!



## Happy 90th Birthday, Mattie!

FORMER NEIGHBOR AND LONGTIME FRIEND to the Ten Broeck Mansion Mattie Blassengale recently reached her 90th birthday. We celebrated with Mattie here at the Mansion with a lovely lunch in the formal dining room. Members and volunteers joined Mattie and the staff at the luncheon where memories and anecdotes from Mattie's past were shared. For many years Mattie lived on Ten Broeck Place and in addition to volunteering at the Mansion she sought to ensure that the Mansion and its grounds remained in good condition by reminding visitors to respect this important Albany landmark. We are indebted to Mattie for conveying to visitors the historical significance of the Mansion and being tireless in her dedication to preserving it. Happy birthday, Mattie!