IN A CITY LIKE ALBANY, THERE ARE MANY HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT AND TRULY BREATHTAKING SITES THAT DEMAND YOUR ATTENTION. FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MANSIONS (OUR DEAR TEN BROECK BEING ONE OF THEM) TO OUR IMPRESSIVE AND UNIQUELY GRANDIOSE CAPITOL BUILDING, TO COUNTLESS OTHER PLOTS AND DELICATELY PRESERVED NEIGHBORHOODS MARKED WITH PLAQUES THAT TELL STORIES OF ALBANY’S HISTORY. HOWEVER, WITH A CITY AS OLD AND AS RICH IN HISTORY AS OURS, SOME SITES ARE BOUND TO BE OVERLOOKED. MANY PLACES THAT APPEAR TO THE PASSERBY TO BE SIMPLY A PARK OR JUST ANOTHER OLD BUILDING ARE ACTUALLY BRIMMING WITH HISTORY. THE LES OBVIOUS SPOTS OFTEN CONTAIN THE MOST INTERESTING STORIES.

SOME OF THESE PLACES HAVE BEEN LONG GONE, SUCH AS THE OLD GALLOWS. ALBANY’S PUBLIC EXECUTION SITE WAS KNOWN AS “GALLOWS HILL” AND ACCORDING TO SIMON DE WITT’S “COPY OF A PLAN OF ALBANY, 1794” IT WAS ORIGINALLY LOCATED AT LAFAYETTE PARK AND WHERE THE STATE EDUCATION BUILDING NOW STANDS. WHILE WAITING FOR EXECUTION, PRISONERS WOULD HAVE BEEN LOCKED UP AT THE NEARBY JAIL AT THE INTERSECTION ON STATE AND EAGLE STREETS. THE AREA AROUND GALLOWS HILL WAS PRIME REAL ESTATE AND IN AS EARLY AS 1762, THE CITY BEGAN DIVIDING THESE PLOTS INTO SINGLE-ACRE LOTS. TO MEET THE GROWING DEMAND FOR LAND, LATER EXECUTIONS TOOK PLACE CLOSER TO HUDSON AVENUE, WHERE THE SOUTH MALL ARTERIAL NOW STANDS. THE LAST PUBLIC HANGING WAS AT THIS SITE IN 1827. THERE, JESSE STRANG, THE MAN WHO CONFESSIONED TO THE INFAMOUS MURDER AT CHERRY HILL, WAS EXECUTED. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE MAY NOT REMAIN AT THIS SITE, BUT PERHAPS SOMETHING ELSE DOES. MANY WORKERS BUILDING THE EMPIRE PLAZA REPORTED SIGHTINGS OF A SPIRIT, OFTEN THOUGHT TO BE THE GHOST OF MR. STRANG.

JUST DOWN THE HILL AT 50 HUDSON AVENUE IS A SPOT WITH A MORE TANGIBLE HISTORY. CURRENTLY EMPTY, THIS 19TH CENTURY BUILDING WAS MOST RECENTLY HOME TO THE CAPITAL CITY RESCUE MISSION. IN 1987 THE REVEREND PERRY JONES WAS DOING RENOVATION ON THE BUILDING, WHEN HE DISCOVERED, STASHED INSIDE A THIRD-FLOOR CRAWLSPACE, A SHOCKING CLUE TO THE BUILDING’S SORDID PAST. COVERED IN A BURLAP POTATO BAG HE FOUND AN OLD SUITCASE FILLED WITH NEW YORK CITY NEWSPAPERS DATED OCTOBER 1921 AND TWENTY FULL BOTTLES LABELED “MORFINA,” THE SPANISH WORD FOR MORPHINE. MORPHINE WAS OUTLAWED IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1914 AND WAS QUICKLY SOUGHT AFTER ON THE BLACK MARKET. A QUICK LOOK AT THE BUILDING’S PREVIOUS USE SHEDS LIGHT ON WHAT HE FOUND. IN THE 1920S A CHINESE LAUNDRY AND KNOWN “OPIUM DEN” WAS LOCATED HERE. THE SITE WAS LATER HOME TO A BROTHEL AND A TAVERN THAT “LEGS” DIAMOND WAS

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

EXPLORING ALBANY’S HISTORY: WORTH A SECOND LOOK.

Jillian Altenburg

Endowment to Ten Broeck Mansion

THE ALBANY COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION IS EXTREMELY GRATEFUL TO BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEMBER AND LONGTIME SUPPORTER OF THE ORGANIZATION, ANN SWYER, FOR THE INCREDIBLY GENEROUS ENDOWMENT SHE RECENTLY SET UP AT THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR THE GREATER CAPITAL REGION. MRS. SWYER, WHO HAS CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH OF HER TIME, ENERGY, AND MONEY TO ACHA OVER THE YEARS, GAVE $600,000 TO THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, NAMING ACHA AS THE BENEFICIARY OF THE ANNUAL INTEREST. THIS ENDOWMENT WILL YIELD SEVERAL THOUSAND DOLLARS EVERY YEAR, OPERATIONAL FUNDS THAT WILL BE USED TO HELP PRESERVE THE TEN BROECK MANSION AND SUPPORT PROGRAMMING.

Ann’s generosity has not been limited to financial contributions. She has served on the Board of Trustees for many years and has been an active member of several committees. Her work on the Collections Committee has been instrumental in maintaining and beautifying the Ten Broeck Mansion, while ensuring the historical integrity of the building. Under Ann’s watch, the mansion has received new carpets, window treatments, and paint, keeping with the era the mansion is interpreted. She has also been involved in countless projects dedicated to the upkeep of the mansion.
Executive Director’s Corner

IT’S BEEN AWHILE SINCE WE’VE PUT OUT A NEWSLETTER, but that doesn’t mean that ACHA hasn’t been busy with projects and events. With so much going on, we are trying to reach out to the community and give people a chance to take advantage of our outstanding programming. One way of accomplishing this is by increasing our membership, and we continue to implement incentives for members of ACHA. As one example, I’d like to point out some of the incentives offered to our Corporate/Organization members. For just $200, a small business or organization can join ACHA. With that membership you are entitled to one free use of the Ten Broeck Mansion for an event (a value of over $500). In addition, you receive recognition of your organization in our publications and on our website.

Speaking of our website, I encourage those interested in ACHA’s doings to keep tabs on us by checking out www.tenbroeckmansion.org. The website has undergone a bit of an overhaul in recent months, and I hope our supporters will like it. We also recently received a generous grant from the City Club of Albany to update the information in our brochures, and you will be seeing the beautiful new ACHA brochures both in the mansion and placed around town. It was designed by ACHA volunteer Lisa Richmond, who is a very talented graphic artist.

As always, we can use new volunteers. If you have some free time you’d like to dedicate to the organization, we have space on our committees, can use a few extra pairs of hands at events, and we urgently need volunteer docents to provide tours. Please contact us here at the mansion if you’re interested.

Wendy Burch

Staffing Changes

IN THE WAKE OF THE DEPARTURES OF FORMER STAFF MEMBERS Sara Biggs and Kathy Hughes, ACHA welcomes Jillian Altenburg to the organization. Jillian is a graduate of SUNY Albany, where she majored in History and Urban Planning. Originally from Washington State, Jillian is already committed to her adopted City of Albany and is eager to promote the area’s rich history. During her time at SUNY, Jillian completed internships with both Historic Albany Foundation and the Shaker Heritage site. She is excited to be working for ACHA and has already organized several programs, including the Moscow Ballet Meet and Greet back in November, the Valentine’s Dinner Fundraiser held in February, and the very successful Burlesque show with “Charmed and Dangerous.” She has been involved in every aspect of the operation since she began work here last August. We’re thrilled to have her on board.

Thankfully, we don’t say goodbye to Sara and Kathy completely. Although they have moved on from the day to day responsibilities at ACHA, they still volunteer here at the Ten Broeck Mansion. They both gave such loyal service to the organization over the years that it’s been difficult not seeing them every day. ACHA has been so grateful to both of them for the dedication they have displayed to the organization and its members.

We’ve also had a changing of the guard with our Board of Trustees leadership as well. After two years as president, Keith Bennett has passed the ceremonial baton to Marie Erkes. ACHA is so grateful to Keith for all his hard work leading the organization, and we are confident from all she has done for ACHA so far that Marie’s tenure as president will meet with equal success.

Living History Day May 2012

The Eagle Scout Project

YOUnger ACHA VOLUNTEER Sam Levitt has chosen the Ten Broeck Mansion to benefit from his Eagle Scout project. Sam is working on refurbishing the outdoor benches in the Ten Broeck gardens. After coordinating with the master gardeners, Sam has arranged to fix up the old benches by painting the frames and replacing the wood with Trex, a long lasting wood alternative. Sam has recruited several volunteers for the project, and the work is moving forward. As part of the project, Sam has had to solicit support from the community. If anyone would like to contribute to the project, you can send funding to the mansion, and the staff will pass it on to him for the cost of materials. Everyone is invited to come and try out the new benches while enjoying the beautiful gardens. Thanks to Sam and congratulations!
UPCOMING EVENTS

GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP
Saturday, September 22, 9-11 am.

PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION
Saturday, October 27, 3 pm-1 am.

Halloween themed “HARVEST FESTIVAL.”
Sunday, October 28, 1-4 pm.

HOLIDAY HOUSE CHAMPAGNE PREVIEW PARTY.
Thursday, December 6, 5:30-9:30 pm.

HOLIDAY TEA.
Saturday, December 8, 1-2:30 pm & 3-4:30 pm.

OPEN HOUSE.
Saturday, December 15, 12-3 pm.

OPER A SARATOGA.
Sunday, December 16, 2-4:30 pm.

HOLIDAY MADRIGALS.
Saturday, December 22, 1:30-4 pm.

For more details our upcoming events www.tenbroeck-mansion.org or call 436-9826.

Exploring Albany’s History: Worth a Second Look. Continued from page 1

known to frequent. To this day, no one knows exactly how this illicit stash of drugs ended up at 50 Hudson Ave.

Speaking of Mr. Diamond, where he took his final breaths may be the most unassuming of all. A wooden house on Dove Street between Jay and Hudson, it doesn’t look any different than its neighboring buildings. Without a plaque or sign very few people who pass it every day would realize that it’s where Albany’s most notorious gangster met his demise. On December 18th, 1931 Jack “Legs” Diamond was celebrating a recent acquittal on kidnapping charges. After hours of partying he returned to one of his Albany hideouts, a small room in a shabby boarding house. Just a few moments later, two gunmen burst into his room and, finding him unconscious on the bed, fired three shots at point blank range into his head. This was the fifth and final assassination attempt on Diamond. Landlady Laura Wood heard the killers afterwards, arguing on the stairs about whether they should return to Diamond’s room and “finish the job.” One shooter complained, “That guy ain’t human and it will take a lot to get him for sure.” The other replied, “Oh hell, that’s enough.” The murderers were never caught, however many people were suspected including his wife Alice, who he was often unfaithful to. Her grief at his passing seemed genuine, but when viewing his remains she was quick to proclaim her innocence to the detectives at the scene.

The eclectichistory and tales of Albany are deep-seeded in its landscape and architectural make-up. In a city that can trace its history back to 1614, when it became an early European settlement, no building, street corner or cobblestone can be overlooked. Whether you’re touring Albany on a Saturday afternoon or simply walking the streets to work, make sure to take it all in. More often than not, there’s something buried deeper underneath.

ANNUAL APPEAL

The Albany County Historical Association solicited for its annual appeal in June, and many supporters heeded the call. As of this writing, the appeal has raised $6,997 to be used towards programming, operations, and the upkeep of the Ten Broeck Mansion and grounds. It is with deep appreciation that we publically acknowledge the following generous donors:

Donna Bartlett
Edward Belemjian
Keith Bennett
Elizabeth M. Bergan
Helen L. Black
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Carl Wirh
Dick Wright

Scene from July’s Archeology Camp excavation on the former Elkins property, part of the Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region.
HELP US PRESERVE A RICH HERITAGE

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

We cordially invite you to join ACHA and enjoy the benefits of membership, including free admission to the Mansion, newsletters and advance notice of upcoming events. Two Free admissions to the Holiday Tea* (with advance reservations) are available at Patron level and above.

Name: ____________________________ E-mail: ____________________________
Address: __________________________ Phone: ____________________________

Membership: NEW ( ) RENEWAL ( ) Amount Enclosed $ ____________________

- Student/Senior $ 25
- Individual $ 40
- Patron $ 100
- Family $ 50
- Sustaining $ 250
- Benefactor $ 500

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIPS

- Small Business $ 200.00
- Corporate Benefactor $ 500.00

Complimentary use of Mansion for 2 hours with Small Business Membership and 4 hours at Corporate Level
*reservations required – maximum 2 tickets

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