Upcoming Events:

3rd Annual Holiday Gala at 677 Prime: Thursday, November 2nd, 6:00pm— Love food? Love history? Love Albany? Join us as we celebrate 75 years of ACHA and this year’s honoree, Susan Holland, Executive Director of the Historic Albany Foundation. Tickets available at tenbroeckmansion.org.

Holiday House Events at Ten Broeck Mansion: Through December—Enjoy the beautifully decorated Ten Broeck Mansion and celebrate the holiday season throughout December at our Holiday House events! The kick-off kicks off with First Look on December 2nd at 6pm. Other events include a Children’s Story Hour with Sinterklaas, Candlelight Tours, a Holiday Tea, concerts by the Musicians of Ma’alwyck and Heldereg Madrigal Singers, and presentations about the history and persona of that most famous jolly old elf, Santa Claus! For a full schedule of events and to purchase tickets, please visit tenbroeckmansion.org or call (518) 436-9826.

HELP US PRESERVE A RICH HERITAGE

The Albany County Historical Association (ACHA) is a non-profit, private, and educational organization. The ACHA’s mission is to preserve, present, and promote the rich history and culture of Albany County. Membership proceeds go towards educational programming and preservation of the historic Ten Broeck Mansion.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

We cordially invite you to join the ACHA and enjoy the many benefits of membership, including free admission for Mansion tours and lectures, newsletters and advance notice of upcoming events, discounted ticket prices to a variety of events, and much more! Please visit our website for complete membership opportunities—www.tenbroeckmansion.org.

- Student $25
- ACHA Partners $25
- Individual $40
- Family $50
- Patron $100
- Sustaining $250
- Benefactor $500

Membership: NEW ( ) RENEWAL ( )

Amount Enclosed: __________

Name: ________________________ Email: ________________________ Phone: ________________________

Address: ________________________ City: ________________________ State: __________ Zip: __________

Make checks payable to Albany County Historical Association, 9 Ten Broeck Place Albany, NY 12210

ALBANY COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Ten Broeck Mansion, 9 Ten Broeck Place, Albany, NY 12210 518-436-9826 www.tenbroeckmansion.org

BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

ALBANY COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

PROSPECT

Letter from the Past: A Startling Discovery Reveals a Historical Connection

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the construction of the Erie Canal. While searching the Albany County Historical Association’s collection database, I came across an envelope of letters from the correspondence of Thomas Worth and Olcott, a prominent resident of Ten Broeck Mansion. The letters offer a glimpse into the personal life of a fascinating Albany figure. Olcott was a wealthy and successful banker and philanthropist who was active in local politics. He moved up through the ranks at the Mechanics and Farmers Bank, starting in 1811 as a clerk and becoming president of the bank in 1836, a position that he held until his death in 1880.

Olcott and his wife, Caroline Dwight Pepoon Olcott made Ten Broeck Mansion their home in 1850 and named it Arbou Hill. The mansion would remain in the Olcott family for the next one hundred years. An advertisement for the property mentions that the house offers “a commanding view of the Albany Basin and the Erie Canal,” highlighting the canal’s importance to the neighborhood.

The letters date back much earlier, though, going as far back as 1820. At that time, Olcott was living in Albany near the Mechanics and Farmers Bank, where he had been employed for nine years. He and Caroline would be celebrating their second wedding anniversary in the coming August, as well as anticipating the birth of their first of fourteen children, Thomas.

In May of 1820, Thomas Olcott received a remarkable letter from his father-in-law, Daniel Pepoon. It opens with the exclamation, “Tompkins is Down!!”—a reference to Daniel Tompkins, who had just lost the race for governor of New York to DeWitt Clinton.

Pepoon and Olcott benefited from different candidates in this momentous election. Daniel Pepoon takes the opportunity to engage Olcott in some good-natured gloating because his candidate, Clinton, had won. Clinton’s success was tied to his support for the Erie Canal project, then in its second year. The Erie Canal was an ambitious and costly project that was a long time in the making, but it was popular with the public. Clinton’s rivals would scoff at the canal and mock him by deriding it as “Clinton’s Ditch.” Opponents like Daniel Tompkins and Martin Van Buren would try to block its progress.

The letter to Thomas Olcott hints at his political leanings—it suggests how prescient he may have been upon hearing of the election results. Pepoon writes:

“...I must say that in any other disappointment but that of the election, I should directly sympathize with you, but as it is I cannot in the present falsify an opinion I hold of the rival candidates.”

The letter struck me because of the historical context it provides as we celebrate the canal bicentennial. Although the letter was not written by Olcott, it gives me a sense of him through the warm regard and playful tone in which his father-in-law addresses him. Pepoon is candid about his own declining health in the closing lines of the letter:

“The operation alluded to has been performed, and if I visit you (which I hope to do), it will be for a very short time.”

The fact that Daniel Pepoon died not long after composing this letter makes it all the more poignant. We are fortunate to have a hand-written document that connects Ten Broeck Mansion with the construction of the Erie Canal in a way that illuminates the political events of the time and the people who lived here.

— Karen Giordano, Education Coordinator

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— Karen Giordano, Education Coordinator
**Executive Director’s Corner**

As I’m sitting down to write my first newsletter note as ACA’s Executive Director, I’m treated with the view of a large green space behind our office at King’s Place and, through the tall trees gently swaying their golden leaves in the fall sunshine, I can just see the back of the Ten Broeck Mansion. I can’t help but wonder how lucky I am that this is where I get to work every day! Being the newbie is always a bit daunting, but since I began at ACA in July, I’ve been so very lucky to have the support of our rock star staff - Karen and Aaron put their hearts and souls into the work they do here - as well as our wonderful Board of Trustees and volunteers who have made me feel right at home. I also do like to take this opportu-nity to thank Jillian Altenburg, former Executive Director, who graciously provided the guidance and insight that comes with working for an organization for six years. I really enjoyed my time working with her before she began her next adventure as a new mom.

The 2017 tour season has come to a close, but that doesn’t mean things aren’t busy over here in Arbor Hill! We just finished our three-night SOLD OUT Haunted History Pub Crawl with Historic Albany Foundation and our very first guest coming on up the 16th at 6:30 Prime! This year we’re celebrating 75 years of ACHA and honoring Susan Holland, the Executive Director of Historic Albany Foundation, for the incredible protection and advocacy work she does in the City of Albany. For more information and to purchase your ticket, please visit tenbroeckmansion.org. And of course, Holiday House events will kick off on December 2nd with our “First Look” event and continue with several wonderful concerts, lectures, and activities for all ages in the beautifully decorated historic mansion. We’re also already looking forward to 2018 - when we’ll be focusing on the theme of cooking and kitchens in Albany County. The Program and Education Committee has already scheduled some fabulous events for next year and we’re cooking up (get it?) some programs you will want to look forward to meeting you at some of our upcoming events! Thank you for your continued support of ACHA.

Samantha Hall-Saladino
samantha@tenbroeckmansion.org

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**Education Coordinator’s Corner**

I am quickly approaching my first anniversary as education coordinator here at ACA. It was a busy year; I got to work with four amazing interns on a variety of projects, including our new school program and the Heritage New York online digital collection. Another highlight was getting to know all of the decors who lead tours of Ten Broeck Mansion. I learned so much from them and am looking forward to working together next year. It was fun leading tours for the public and hosting our first school group this fall.

I started my career in New York City, working at the Frances-Tavern Museum as an education coordinator, and also at the Museum of the City of New York as a museum educator. I received my Master’s Degree in Museum Education from Bank Street College of Education in 2007. I was able to do both field internships in museums and student teach in fourth and seventh grade classrooms for my degree. It was a valuable experience.

I have always been passionate to work in an historic house museum like Ten Broeck Mansion and use the building and its collection to teach young learners about local history. School classes are among the biggest audiences for historic house museums like this and so often seeing more come through our doors in the coming years!

It has been a first great year working with so many wonderful interns and volunteers, not to mention my fellow staff members. I’m looking forward to all the projects to come!

Karen Giordano
karen@tenbroeckmansion.org

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**Meet our Interns**

Name: Sarah Siddiqui
Hometown: New Delhi, India
Current Enrollment: MS in Information Science at the University of Albany

**TEN BROECK MANSION**

Tours are on the hour.

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**Sneak Peak! Archaeology at Ten Broeck**

This summer, students from the SUNY archaeology program came to Ten Broeck mansion for an excavation. While the official analysis of the objects they found is still pending, we were able to get an early look at some of the items they discovered. The archaeologists focused their work on the sites of two rear outbuildings depicted on a historical map of the property. These outbuildings have always been structures at which enslaved persons may have worked or lived, both.

One notable item found in the excavated piece of blue and white decorated china. Though further evaluation is needed, SUNY archaeology professor Michael Lucas, thinks that it is most likely a late 18th century transfer print plate depicting an English landscape. Transfer-print was a process of printing an image from an etched metal plate to tissue paper and then to the biscuit fired piece. That piece would then be fired again with a glaze to create the final product. This plate was manufactured in England most likely between 1810 and 1830.

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**Ask ACHA**

Q: Are the decorative spindles on the exterior of Ten Broeck Mansion under federal protection?

Yes, they are original to the building, a part of the late 18th century neoclassi-cal design. The spindles are actually considered false balusters. Similar features were used in the design of the first New York State Capitol building, built from 1790 to 1810. However, spindles which no longer stands, was designed by Philip Hooker, to whom the design of Ten Broeck Mansion is also attributed.

Answer generously provided by Walter Wheeler, Hartgen Archeological Associates.

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**Call to the Public for Help in Curating the 1812 Room**

We are on the verge of installing new wallpaper in the 1812 Room. It is going to be furnished as a ca. 1840 bed chamber of a retired officer from the War of 1812. We have some items on hand, but we need more to complete the space. Donations of decorative arts or textiles for decorating the bed will be sold so an overall centerpiece from the 1840’s should be a furniture piece. An American eagle or similar design would be appropriate. Funds for reproduction of wallpaper and the hangings and wall-to-wall carpeting are also needed. If you have a unique piece you would like to see immortalized in a museum, please contact the Albany County Historical Association at 518-436-9826.

Left top, the 1812 Room currently. Left bottom, the 1812 Room in the 1950’s, Right, examples of appropriate coats of arms and decorative arts for 1840s interpretation.

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**Docent Field Trip**

This summer, we took the Ten Broeck docents on the road! The docents and I went on a field trip to Saratoga State Historic Site, where Jessica Serfilippi, our former education intern, gave us a tour of the mansion. A point of particular interest was a portrait of Elizabeth Ten Broeck’s cousin, Catherine Schuyler. We were excited to see a family resemblance.

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**Albany Facts with Brahman the Beaver!**

Hi Brahman the Beaver here with a fun fact about Albany! Did you know that the famous Mount Vernon estate served as Governor of New York, he would get his daily exercise by running up the front steps of the Capitol—a little bit different. It was rumored that reporters who wanted an interview with him would have to beat him to the top of the steps. What do you think; could you beat Brahman in a race?

(Sources: Amazing Albany Facts, Albany.org)