

From the Editor...

ACHOR is 30 Years Old

- ◆ Albany County Hall of Records is 30 years old this year. Wow, time has flown by! In celebration of our anniversary, we will be hosting an open house on October 17, 2012. Our next issue of Tivoli Times in October will highlight the history of the Hall of Records. Stay tuned.
- ◆ Last year the Albany County Clerk's Office moved back home to the Court House after their five year hiatus on Russell Road due to the Court House renovations.
- ◆ This edition of the *Tivoli Times* introduces us to Joseph T. Hogan, historian and president of the Clarksville Historical Society.
- ◆ Our vast Albany Common Council collection from 1686-2000, includes some amazing laws which will certainly be titillating as we look back.
- ◆ Best wishes to John Esek on his retirement from the Hall of Records.

Craig Carlson, *Editor*

ccarlson@albanycounty.com

Hall of Records to Celebrate 30th Anniversary on October 17, 2012

Albany County Hall of Records will celebrate its 30th anniversary on Wednesday, October 17, 2012 from 10AM-2PM.

All interested chroniclers of history are invited to the open house at 95 Tivoli Street, Albany, New York. Speakers will give the annals of the Hall of Records, exhibits will be on display, and tours of the facility will be available. Light refreshments will be included.

We are very proud of our accommodations which include Archives, Micro-Imaging and Records Center and would be most happy to have our public partake in our celebration. You are cordially invited to join us in October.

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Clerk's Office is Home Again

By Thomas G. Clingan, Albany County Clerk

After five and a half years “in exile,” the County Clerk’s office returned to our home in the Court House on 11/11/11. We are back in the same space we occupied from 1916 to 2005: room 128 on the first floor and several vault areas on the basement level. A new space, room 92, was added for our Court Records staff. All of the office space is dramatically improved by new windows, lighting, HVAC and other amenities. Every floor has handicapped-accessible restrooms and all four elevators are now usable by the public.

The only public entrance to the Court House is at the Lodge Street end of the building, where a new café has been added. Most of the building is now used for State Supreme Court chambers and court rooms; the Sheriff’s office, Surrogate Court and County Legislature chamber are also located here. The most spectacular spaces are the restored court rooms, including one constructed within the former Law Library; a new library was also built on the fourth floor.

Everyone knows that moving is hard, but it’s especially hard to do while still doing your everyday work – and you have mountains of records that have to move along with you. I can’t say enough about how well the staff of the County Clerk’s office worked together to bring us back home. People really went “above and beyond” their regular work to make our relocation a success. Since moving back involved even more challenges than when we moved out, we picked a three-day weekend (Veterans Day plus Saturday and Sunday) and the movers actually began tearing everything down on Thursday afternoon. County Information Services was with us every step of the way to assure that both our computers and our phones would be up and running when our doors opened on Monday November 14, and we had wonderful co-operation from the General Services staff as well.

We had learned from the first move (May of 2005) the value of having expert moving advice. The County Executive and County Legislature hired a “move management” company to plan and organize our relocation, and we were fortunate to have Nancy Fabretti of ORM handling these thousands of details. I can’t overstate the value of having someone who does complicated moves for a living as part of our team. I didn’t even know that such specialists existed before our first move, but now I wouldn’t move without one.

Relocating involves a million details, starting with an inventory of everything you’ve got. Planning what has to be done “at both ends” to prepare for the move has to start months in advance. You need someone to create layout plans of where everything and everyone will go – and then to modify these plans whenever something changes. Flexibility is necessary because something will always change along the way. And “staging” is a very important consideration; what gets packed up first is not necessarily what should be unloaded first. Movers have their own way of doing things (another area where the move manager proved to be a critically important player.)

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Clerk's Office is Home Again

By Thomas G. Clingan, Albany County Clerk

Complicating the issue were some large pieces of equipment that we use here every day: big racks that hold older bound volumes of records, and a “high-density” file storage system that needed to be re-installed at the Court House, filled with files, and be working when we opened on Monday. Records were moved on large, wheeled carts clearly labeled to assure that they ended up on the correct shelf. Miles of plastic wrap protected files and equipment during the move itself. Color-coded labels made it easier to be sure that things ended up in the right spot.

I think the second move went easier than the first – though we actually had more to move. Some of that was undoubtedly experience gained from the first move, but we also made good decisions in the months before the final relocation about records that we should move permanently to the Hall of Records (who are another group of County employees critically important to the success of our move.)

The stress and labor of a major office relocation is usually a once-in-a-lifetime experience, so we had more than our share by moving twice in 66 months. But just like any other challenge, it also shows you that people will rise to the occasion, and demonstrate that they are capable of remarkable efforts. The people of Albany County – and I as County Clerk – are really fortunate to have these men and women working for us in County government.

As County Clerk, I must also thank the County Executive and County Legislature for all their efforts to see that this fine Court House is restored to its former glory, and able to serve future generations of Albany County residents. It's good to be home again.



Albany County Clerk's Office, 2012

By Craig Carlson

Joseph T. Hogan Tivoli Times Interview June 27, 2012

You are, of course, the President of the Clarksville Historical Society. Could you give us a brief background about yourself?

In 1982, I started my own business, Joseph T. Hogan, Appliance & Electric Service, with 2012 being my 30th year. From 1982 to 1990, I also worked part-time for the United States Postal Service as the Postmaster Relief at the Clarksville, New York Post Office. I volunteer as the superintendent of the Onesquethaw Union Cemetery (1999 to present.) I am a life member, past trustee and past president of the New Scotland Historical Association (2001-2003.) In 2000, I was a contributing writer of the book, New Scotland Township. I am a charter life member, one of the founders, incorporator, trustee, and the first president (2004-2012) of the Clarksville Historical Society. I am the first and present Clarksville Historian. I was elected Vice President of the Clarksville Historical Society in June 2012.

When and where does the Clarksville Historical Society meet?

The Society meets at the Clarksville Community Church. Our annual meeting is held on the first Wednesday in June. We have six programs per year on the first Wednesday of April, May, June, September, October and November. Clarksville Heritage Day is held on the first Saturday in August. Our Board of Trustee meeting is on the first Wednesday of every month, except program months we meet the second Wednesday.

Is the Historical Society still doing quality programs? I remember speaking to the Clarksville Historical Society in 2006. The society had a real good turnout and they did a great job of displaying Clarksville's history?

In the first eight years we have had 50 programs. On June, 2012 we had a special program celebrating Clarksville Post Office's 200 years of service to the community. We continue to do six programs a year

You are also the Clarksville Historian? You definitely stay busy within your community? Do these roles overlap or complement each other?

Actually, they are two complete different jobs. The first eight years of my presidency was setting up a not-for-profit organization and the society's structure and procedures. The way I put it, I needed to lay the tracks and get the train running down those tracks, so people would find it easy to get on board. The historian's role is a lot of work, but very rewarding. Rural history is very difficult to find.

What part of your role as president or historian do you enjoy the most?

As president, setting up the society was very enjoyable. It is just like running a business. The role of Clarksville Historian is like being Sherlock Holmes, the hunt is the best part and finding the answers is very rewarding.

Clarksville Historical Society does a nice job with their annual Heritage Day and Car Show. As an attendee the last few years this is a real community event. Would you tell us how the community gets involved? How do you reach out to the various constituencies?

The Clarksville Heritage Day, a celebration of life in Clarksville, was created to bring the community and surrounding area together, at least once a year. It is also the society's major fund raising event. We invite surrounding artisans, organizations and vendors to participate in our event.

Carlson's Corner for Questions: Joseph T. Hogan, President Clarksville Historical Society

By Craig Carlson

The Clarksville Historical society is an active group and had some nice field trips for their members last year, including visits to President Ulysses S. Grant State Historic Site and the Hall of Records? Is there any upcoming events or field trips you like to mention?

In June we went to Old Stone Fort. Tentatively, in July-NYS Museum and in August-Cooperstown.

Your duty as Clarksville Historian often brings you to the Hall of Records for research. Is there any part of our archival collection that you like or reference the most?

Deeds! After you look at enough of them, you can paint the big picture, I have learned a lot of information about Clarksville from reading deeds, besides the old oak tree and the stone wall that are long gone. I have also learned a lot from the city directories.

You as historian and the member of the historical society really play an underrated role in the community. Don't you feel it is very important to document, preserve and promote the history of Clarksville?

Our mission statement is in our first newsletter, The Limestone Volume 1 Number 1, February 2005. As historian I think it is all important to the community.

Lastly hobbies? Last book you read?

It used to be motorcycles and camping, now it is traveling around the United States and Canada to visit historical sites. Also, collecting local history and woodworking. Last book I read was Hudson Valley Ruins.



Sandy Slingerland, Pat Trotta and Joseph T. Hogan from Clarksville Historical Society tour ACHOR September 27, 2011. Albany County Hall of Records Photo Collection.

Early Albany Common Council Laws: “For Good Order, Peace and Health”

By Ginny Farinacci

Ever since Governor Dongan’s Charter gave the Common Council members the ability to “make, ordain and establish” laws in 1686, they have been doing it over and over again, and for everything imaginable. This government body, originally called “the Corporation of the City of Albany,” seemed to control every aspect of city life, from paving roads and appropriating money for their improvement to approving the appointments of certain people to city positions.

The Albany County Hall of Records holds the Common Council Proceedings from 1686 to the year 2000. We are familiar with the kinds of laws that are formulated today, but a look at earlier records shows how they reflect the needs and circumstances of those times. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Common Council was more concerned with the sale of slaves, authorizing payment to lamplighters or night watchmen (see image on page 7) and purchasing whale oil to light the lamps of the city. In 1829, a law was passed to prohibit masquerading in the city (a person needed to know for sure who else might be walking down the street.) Some early laws were just practical, stating how long fish could stay on the docks, regulating the scales that weighed bread and hay, and deciding how often streets should be swept. It was allowable to own dogs and “swine” but, under pain of a fine, you had to keep them from “running at large through any city streets.”

Early petitions to the Common Council include the 1812 petition of Christopher Monk for “remission of a fine for watering his horse at the public pump” and the petition of carriage makers “to leave carriages and sleighs in front of the shop, as long as they do not block the road.” In 1792, Obadiah Cooper petitioned the Common Council to “erect a ferry across the Hudson River from Greenbush to the city of Albany. “ Council members had a responsibility to the people they represented, so petitions often led to laws, like the “law for establishing a ferry from Greenbush to Albany” in 1805. As for early Common Council resolutions, we can only guess the reason for an 1812 resolution calling for the “temporary suspension of chimney sweeps.”

In today’s more sophisticated society, laws and ordinances still comprise the bulk of the Common Council’s work, but the subject of these laws becomes more technical and varied (like revitalizing neighborhoods and granting easements to steel corporations.) Whatever the topic, we can be sure it is handled with the city in mind, or in the words of the Charter: “for the preservation of good order, peace and health, for the safety and welfare of its inhabitants and the protection and security of their property.”

[Note: ACHOR holds Common Council Proceedings, including laws and ordinances and reports of city departments, from 1686 to 2000. There are also 10 cubic feet of pre-20th century laws, resolutions and petitions. Later resolutions and petitions are included in the volumes of Proceedings. Other functions of the Common Council, like appointments and resignations, bonds, and claims of citizens, can be found in the Proceedings, as well as in mixed boxes of Common Council records.]

See Common Council image on page 7

An ordinance for establishing
a Night Watch —

Be it ordained by the Mayor Aldermen and Commonalty of the city of Albany convened in common council and it is hereby ordained by the Authority of the same that from & after the publication of this ordinance fifteen Watchmen shall from Time to Time be employed to keep a Night Watch in this city on such Terms as the said Mayor Aldermen and Commonalty shall direct & appoint, to watch in Rotation at the Hospital in a Room to be appointed by the said Mayor Aldermen & Commonalty for that purpose — that is to say — five of the said Watchmen — every Night.

ACHOR'S John Esek Retires May 30, 2012

By Patricia Bryce

John Esek started working for the Albany County Hall of Records on April 15, 1994, when we were located at 250 South Pearl Street.

A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, John served in the United States Navy from 1962-1969 in the Atlantic and Pacific Submarine Forces. During this time, he was an electronic technician and operated and maintained a Submarine Nuclear Power Plant at sea.

John worked as an engineering laboratory technician for 23 years for Mechanical Technology Incorporated. A major part of his job was assembly and testing of prototype machines and newly designed bearings, seals and many other mechanical devices. He found the work interesting and enjoyed working there for many years.

During the 18 years that John worked for the Hall of Records, he was a Microfilm Aide in the microfilm unit. He estimates that he has filmed over one million documents, most of which were on 35mm microfilm. John has done a very good job over the years due to his ability to adapt easily to computers and new technology. He was able to perform quality control on thousands of documents by comparing the original to the scanned image on the computer.

John has a great love of music and performs in the Blessed Sacrament Church Choir. He likes to play guitar and he owns a digital piano which he is learning to play. John enjoys studying music theory, reading and writing poetry. On a number of occasions, John mentioned, when he retires he will continue writing his "screen play" and try to get it published. He told me "if I sell any of my writings or become a famous singer, I will certainly tell you about it ahead of time."

On Tuesday, May 29, 2012, we held a retirement luncheon for John at the Hall of Records. All of his coworkers decided to host a "Pot Luck Luncheon" making sure to include some of John's favorite dishes on the menu, including stuffed cabbage, scalloped potatoes and of course we had chocolate cake and carrot cake to go with his favorite ice cream maple walnut.

However, as nice as the food selections were, John had one surprise that he never expected and that was to have his sister, brother and sister in law here to celebrate his retirement with him. It was the first time he had seen his family in quite a while and was very excited that his coworkers thought to include them. We were all very excited for John and happy that we were able to keep the surprise from him until it was time to bring his family out to see him. It turned out to be a very emotional day for everyone. The best part was seeing the look on John's face when he finally realized his family was standing in front of him.

They had driven from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, just to be with him on his final day of work. After the luncheon they spend many hours just catching up on family news before they headed back home to Pittsburgh.

ACHOR Staff

Patricia Bryce
Deputy County Clerk

Craig Carlson
Deputy Director

Camisha Smith
Records Manager

Brandy Alden
Records Manager
City of Albany

Lori Dudek
Warehouse Supervisor

Meredith Cherven-Holland
Archivist

John Paul Ciejka
Assistant Archivist

Virginia Farinacci
Deputy Archivist

Robert W. Arnold III
Consultant



John Esek and family on his last day of work May 29, 2012.
Albany County Hall of Records Photo Collection.

The Albany County Hall of Records is a capital resource for the agencies of the local government it serves and to the citizens of the City and County of Albany. The Hall of Records is jointly funded by the City and County of Albany and is under the jurisdiction of Albany County Clerk, Thomas G. Clingan. Our purpose is to preserve, promote and make available the recorded history of Albany County to its citizens in the most efficient and cost effective way possible. We want to say thank you to all the people, past and present, who have made the Hall of Records an invaluable asset to our county.



Albany County Clerk Thomas G. Clingan thanks John Esek for his service to Albany County Hall of Records and wishes him the best in his retirement on May 29, 2012. Albany County Hall of Records Photo Collection.