

From the Editor...

Summer is here, so they say; what happened to Spring? In fact, the seasons seem to be eccentric and extreme: consider the previous Winter, the likes of which have not been seen in these parts since the early 1970's. Nevertheless, Spring did accompany much activity here at the Hall of Records. Firstly, since our last newsletter, a new Albany County Clerk, Bruce A. Hidley, has been elected to replace the retired long-time clerk Thomas G. Clingan.

Personally, I had the pleasure on April 3 to represent Albany County Archives at the Archival Fair at the National Archives in Washington D.C. Various speakers and vendors displayed the importance of archives in our lives. Especially highlighted was the new George Clooney film, "The Monuments Men", which stressed the importance of archives vis-à-vis the Nazis in World War II.

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Bruce A. Hidley Albany County Clerk

This January Bruce A. Hidley started as Albany County Clerk replacing Thomas G. Clingan, who retired after serving 25 years as the County Clerk. He becomes the 55th Albany County Clerk. The Albany native and long-time Watervliet resident was sworn in on December 27, 2013 by Watervliet City Judge Thomas Lamb at the Watervliet Elks Lodge # 1500. Bruce with over two decades of experience and a wealth of public service as Watervliet City Clerk has hit the ground running in his new position.

After 6 months on the job he has been able to make policy and procedure changes to the Albany County Clerk's Office and the Albany County Hall of Records. Both offices are looking to make changes and upgrades to their current electronic records management systems. Bruce has attended many system demos that would be compatible with Albany County's infrastructure. The upgrades are needed to keep us current in this electronic age. He is working with Albany County Division of Information Services to find a new system for the Clerk's Office and to update the Hall of Records inventory system that will save time and money in the long-term.

Since taking office he has been diligent in his outreach working together with the county and city agencies to promote the "treasures" found in the Hall of Records Archival Collection. He has been committed to making both offices more efficient and more accessible to the general public.

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**Albany County
 Hall of Records
 warehouse**

Hall of Records Tivoli Times July 2014

From the Editor, continued from cover page

Additionally, Patricia Bryce and myself attended two Naturalization ceremonies at the Albany County Courthouse on May 16 and June 20, respectively. It is, indeed, one of the highlights of the varied series the Hall of Records is proud to encompass for the benefit of our public: those of Albany County immigration from 1827-1991. It is a very heartfelt experience to witness the sincere and emotional excitement of these new Americans.

My Dutch friend, scholar, Anja Adriaans, has returned to continue her Albany-Nijmegen research. You may remember, I highlighted her story in the last "Tivoli Times." To facilitate her work, I coordinated with colleague Chris Hunter, Archivist from the Museum of Innovation and Science (MiSci), formerly the Schenectady Museum. MiSci has the equipment to transfer five ACHOR/Dutch LP albums to audio clips on May 16.

Rochester School for the Deaf paid a visit to the Hall of Records May 21. Albany County Clerk, Bruce Hidley welcomed the students and I conducted our Hands-on-History education program for them. The 14 students were shown: census records, civil war records, immigration records, maps and slave manumissions. However, without question, their favorite of our records was our jail mug-shots from the Albany Penitentiary. They also were given a behind the scenes tour of our facility, mainly to see how we preserve our Archival Collection through microfilming, use of acid-free materials and storage of records in our climate controlled and fire-proof vault. This has not been the first visit to the Hall of Records for the school; they visited the Hall of Records in 2005, 2006 and 2012. Hopefully, they find the trip informative and enjoyable.

Records Manager, Brandy Alden held an important workshop for our county agencies on May 6. The workshop was actually a refresher on ACHOR's policies and procedures.

Lastly, on the topic of preservation, we are continuing to microfilm Albany Police Department Blotter for use by our researchers. Precincts 1 (1874-1957, 136 volumes) and 2 (1890-1957, 144 volumes) have been completed. As always, we continue our commitment to the researching public that we will diligently protect and preserve our pertinent past for generations in the future to examine and cherish.

Craig Carlson, *Editor*

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Hall of Records Agency Workshop May 6, 2014

By Brandy Alden

On May 6th the Albany County Hall of Records (ACHOR), Records Center unit hosted a workshop at our facility. The focus of the presentation was on providing refresher training for agencies on Records Center policies and procedures. The workshop was open to ACHOR system users as well as non-users and was open to all Albany City, County and Court employees.

Tours of the facility were provided for interested participants from the County Clerk's Office, Department of Social Services and various Health Department units. There was also a small exhibit set up showcasing supplies and information in honor of "MayDay", a grassroots effort whose goal is to highlight disaster planning and preparation.

Topics of the workshop included: the function of Records Center, what is expected of participating agencies and why, we discussed the procedure for destruction of records.

Some of the questions asked by agency users were regarding the use of retention schedules. All records that are stored here at ACHOR are assigned a retention period before the item is stored in the warehouse. The retention period assigned to all of the records at ACHOR was produced by the New York State Archives and Records Administration designed to assist NYS local governments with their records management program. Retention periods are assigned based on the type of record regardless of format. For example, a "case file" has many different codes depending on what agency created it and what information it contains.

Along with helping to describe a record a retention period also determines how long a record must legally be kept. Destruction is a major piece of every records management program. Records that have met their retention must be destroyed in a timely fashion in order to maintain proper records management practices as well as to protect the creating agency from legal action. Destroying eligible records frees up space for new records and records that must be kept permanently.

Our goal at ACHOR is to promote effective and efficient records management practices throughout the lifecycle of all of our City, County and Courts records.

- **For more information on records management contact Records Manager, Brandy Alden at 487-5145 or balden@albanycounty.com**
- **For Archival records assessment contact archivist/Deputy Director, Craig Carlson at 487-5141 or ccarlson@albanycounty.com**

Albany's Common Council during the American Revolution

By Michael Maloney

Established in 1684 by the Dongan Charter, the Common Council acts as the legislative body of Albany and had the responsibility for enacting civil laws and city infrastructure. This role has remained relatively unchanged over time and the Common Council transacts the more mundane aspect of city government, such as passing legislation to approving improvements to city streets, approving leases, appointing positions within city government, and keeping the city with a sufficient supply of water. Even during the years leading up to the American Revolutionary War, the Common Council would focus more on the needs of the residents of Albany, than on any war effort. This would soon change as the Albany Committee of Correspondence, Safety, and Protection sought to challenge the loyalists that ran Albany's Common Council.

British influence in the Common Council was obvious and many in Albany were growing weary of the power that the British held over city government. The Royal Governor appointed the most important positions in Albany's government, and although voters of Albany were able to choose their aldermen, the governor chose the mayor, recorder (deputy mayor), sheriff, and town clerk. The mayor was also the head of the Common Council, and was required to ensure that the city was being run in accordance with British policy.

In 1774, the Albany Committee of Correspondence, Safety, and Protection was created to oppose the Intolerable Acts which were recently passed by the British Parliament, but they soon came to focus on identifying enemies of the Revolution and keeping troops supplied. The Albany Committee had elected representatives from Rensselaerswyck and other outlying districts in Albany County, where the Common Council was mainly based. By May 10, 1776, the Committee had experienced enough British influence on their government and decided to seize the records of the city, although city clerk Stephen DeLancey still had access to the records. They also ordered Mayor Abraham Cuyler and other suspected loyalists to formally sign an association agreement in opposition to the British Government. The council refused to sign this agreement, and the Committee prepared a jail for loyalists.

Instead of trying to hide their relationship to the Crown, Mayor Cuyler, Clerk Stephen DeLancey and other loyalists in Albany met at Cartwright's Inn to celebrate the King's birthday. The Committee was offended by this act and ordered city and county records to be taken by Jacob C. Ten Eyck and Henry Bleecker. The loyalists were placed under arrest and sent to jail, and the functions of the City Council were taken over by the Committee. The Committee would meet daily and would deal with various issues relating to the war and the City of Albany. In 1778, the State of New York appointed chairman of the Committee John Barclay as the new mayor of Albany. The final meeting of the Committee took place on June 10, 1778 and the Common Council, under new leadership, resumed its legislative functions for Albany.

***The Hall of Records has Albany Common Council Minutes from 1686-2000, and are available to the public in our search room, Monday-Friday, 8:30AM-4:30PM.**

Carlson's Corner: Albany County Clerk Bruce A. Hidley

By Craig Carlson

- 1. You have been Albany County Clerk for a few months now; how do you like the job?** People quite often ask me how I like the job? I respond I don't like the job, pause for a moment, then respond I love this job!
- 2. You are following long-time Albany County Clerk, Thomas G. Clingan; how has the transition been going for you? Is it what you expected?** Tom, as you know, served with pride and distinction for 25 years as our County Clerk. With Tom's support and guidance, the transition has been going very smoothly. As the new County Clerk, this job is everything I expected and more.
- 3. Can you tell us a little about yourself/background?** I've been a resident of Albany County all of my life. I graduated in 1977 from Cardinal McClosky High School. I also graduated from Hudson Valley Community College with a degree in Criminal Justice. I have been married to the former Helen Moulton for over 31 years and currently reside in Watervliet.

During the winter months, I enjoy bowling, and in the summers months, golfing. My wife and I enjoy our summer camping in the Adirondacks. I am a member of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church of Mary in Watervliet where I lector mass when needed.

- 4. People probably don't realize the importance the County Clerk plays in safeguarding our recorded history. Can you tell the reader what the County Clerk is entrusted to do?**
Record citizens most important documents: property records, civil and criminal court records and various other recordings.
- 5. You oversee the Albany County Clerk's Office and the Albany County Hall of Records, is there a favorite record series you have?**
Fascinated by the treasure of records stored at the Hall-i.e. Dutch records collection that we recently sent out for preservation funded by New York State Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund Grant.
- 6. You are very involved in several fraternal organizations. Would you name them and tell us your involvement in each?**
In my free time, I'm extremely active with the Watervliet Elks Lodge # 1500. I ascended to the office of State President of the Elks in May of 2007. At the Grand Lodge Convention in July 2012, I was appointed Area 1 Chairman of the Government Relations Program in charge of 7 states. I am also Vice President of the Conference of Private Organizations which works with the New York State Legislature for Bills of Importance to our fraternal orders.

I am also actively involved with the William F. Fennelly Division 1 Ancient Order of Hibernians. I currently serve as Division Treasurer, a position I've held for 8 years. In April of 2013, I was elected Albany County Division President, a position I hold to this date. I am a card carrying 3rd degree member of the Latham Knight of Columbus.

Carlson's Corner: Albany County Clerk Bruce A. Hidley

By Craig Carlson

7. Hobbies

Bowling, fishing, golfing, and watching New York Giants and New York Yankees games.

8. Lastly, I heard from a former boss of yours that we both know (Watervliet Mayor Robert Carlson) and he mentioned you are a committed public servant? Please tell us how you worked with Mayor Carlson for over a decade?

It was an honor for me to work under the administration of Mayor Carlson. I had the pleasure to serve as his City Clerk for over a decade years. During his administration, I served on numerous committees representing the City, as well as being his Clerk to the Council. It was a real pleasure to work with Mayor Carlson; he taught me many ways of caring for the public, which made my run as County Clerk that much easier. Mayor Carlson was a tremendous supporter of mine; more importantly, Mayor Carlson is my friend.



Bruce A. Hidley speaking after being sworn in as Albany County Clerk at the Watervliet Elks on December 27, 2013.

Hall of Records Photo Collection

Albany Public Works Negatives, 1930-1949



Figure 1. Reservoir workers ca. 1930



Figure 2. Broadway Waterfront 1931

Images from the Archives...

By Meredith Cherven-Holland

In William Kennedy's, *O Albany*, we see Albany through the author's mind as if we are walking street-by-street through the neighborhood. The stories and recollections offer a picture of this city during a period of time spanning the Depression, Second World War and the building of the South Mall. A world now mostly lost to the effects of time and rapid changes in population, urban expansion and advancements in science and technology. Fortunately, the photographic record offers a glimpse of these changes as well as a frozen moment in time. At the Hall of Records, a unique collection of images from the first half of the 20th century is available for visitors to explore.

The collection of black and white negatives offers wonderfully detailed images of the city's streets and environs. It consists of approximately 6,874 negatives of scenes in and around the city of Albany between 1930 and 1949. Created by several city agencies including the Engineer's Office, Department of Public Works, Building Department, City Assessor, Corporation Council and the Works Progress Administration (WPA), these images were filed and maintained by the City Engineer's Office in a systematic effort to document construction, renovation, repair and demolition work. Common Council reports from the 1930s indicate that the city of Albany sponsored the cost of construction and equipment and the federal government (WPA) sponsored labor costs. Detailed information about most of these construction projects can be found in ACHOR's collection of Council's reports for each year.

These unique images give us a lost view of Albany's built environment during an era of rapid change. They document construction, alteration, renovation and demolition of streets, public buildings and spaces (schools, fire stations, lakes and parks) as well as commercial buildings, dwellings, waterfront structures, railroads, and waterworks. Predominant subjects include Albany's riverfront, downtown shopping districts, public parks, sewer and water projects as well as more mundane projects such as side walk and culvert repairs. The construction of public schools, hospitals, and fire stations document a growing city with the influx of several immigrant populations before and during the time period. In contrast to this period of growth, the negatives also record the demolition of early landmarks including churches and theatres, important as benchmarks of social history in various parts of the city and residential neighborhoods. A finding aid is available for browsing ACHOR's research room.

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Albany NY-Hudson Avenue,1931. 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, Bruce A. Hidley. 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 NY- Hudson Avenue,1931. Albany County Hall of Records Photo Collection.