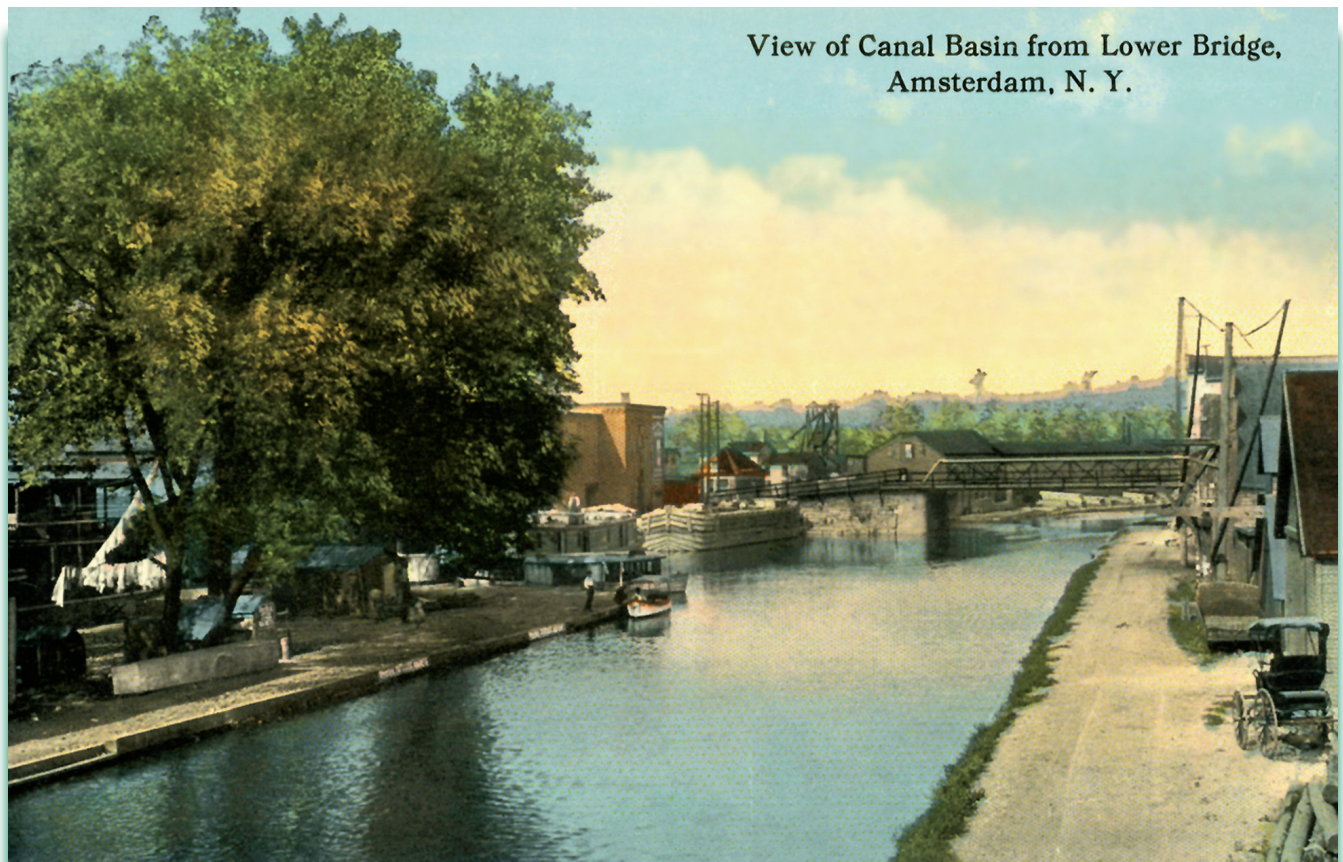


More of
Amsterdam's
SOUTH SIDE



From Port Jackson to Via Ponte

Historic Amsterdam League

This supplement to the booklet *Amsterdam's South Side: From Port Jackson to Via Pointe* contains articles, stories and images which were not included in the printed version due to space limitations or late submissions. The article on Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church is included in its entirety.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church The Parish of St. Joseph, St. Michael, Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Although the present Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church wasn't erected until 1961 the history of the Parish began with the organization of St. Joseph's Church in 1884 by a group of German immigrants. Father Edward Hipelius, pastor, celebrated Mass for them in the Hibernian Hall on East Main Street until a church was erected. After a successful campaign to raise funds the church was built, Byzantine architectural style, by H. C. Grieme and was decorated by Ertle of the Munich School. Bishop McNeirney dedicated St. Joseph's Church on April 19, 1885. The Church thrived for many years even including a school, which was established in 1886 and replaced by a new structure in 1892. The school was staffed by the Franciscan Sisters of Syracuse. It closed after graduating the final class of twenty-seven students in June 1968.

In 1979 St. Joseph was merged with St. Michael the Archangel and Our Lady of Mount Carmel. After realizing much needed repairs, the second oldest Catholic Church in the City of Amsterdam was brought to a close in 1984 and in 1986 was demolished. The former school is now home to Catholic Family and Community Services.

In 1894 St. Michael the Archangel Church was established on the South Side of Amsterdam to minister to the influx of Italian immigrants, with Father Joseph DiDonna as pastor. They celebrated Mass at 23 Minaville St. in what was probably a home. The Albany Diocese purchased the building in 1894 for their use as their church. The dedication took place on May 31, 1896.

The church prospered from the beginning, but soon after many parishioners started to work in the factories on the North Side of Amsterdam and started to move their homes to the North Side as well. Also, having outgrown the present building, they purchased the former Zion Church at 86 Grove Street in 1909. In 1922 they purchased the James H Schuler homestead on Grove Street. A large house on the property became a residence for the priests and in 1931 a new church was built next to it.

St. Michael's Church also merged with Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Joseph's in 1979 but remained open until after a study of Amsterdam Churches was made in 2009 by the Albany Diocese. A final Mass was said on February 2, 2009. The church was closed and later sold to the World Peace and Health Organization.

When St. Michael's moved to the North Side of the City the Italians still living on the South Side of the Mohawk River found it a hardship. They had no means of transportation and found it difficult to attend Mass and to participate in parish activities. In 1911 they petitioned the diocese to reopen the former St. Michael's Church. Although at first denied they continued their efforts and began to hold services in the old church on Minaville Street. In 1913 after many struggles and hardships they constructed a new church on the corner of Florida Avenue and Minaville Street, under the title, Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

A major building fund raising effort began in 1959 and a new church was built on property donated by the St. Anthony Society of the church. Ground was broken for the present church in April of 1960 and the project was completed. Bishop William A. Scully dedicated the new church on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1961. A school was also built at the back of the church and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet staffed the school. In 1973 the Sisters announced they would no longer be able to staff the school. Since the school could not operate financially with all lay personnel, it graduated its final class in 1973.

In 1979 the merger with St. Michael's and St. Joseph took place and became the Parish of St. Joseph, St. Michael, Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The journey continues as the parishioners work to become one after a long history from which the present parish has evolved.

~Gilda Libertucci

Amsterdam Despatch

At a time when the hauling business was changing from horse-drawn to motor, 1916, the Daly family moved from the New York City locale to Worcester, Massachusetts and operated the Bay State Trucking Company. (My father claimed that he and his dad were the first to haul a load of sugar from Boston Harbor to Worcester by truck.)

John Daly married Gertrude Loughlin in Worcester. John worked as a truck driver to New York City and Philadelphia. He met Tony Carrella, manager of Mohawk Valley Despatch, who persuaded John and his family to move to Amsterdam, where manufacturing kept the truckers very busy. So by 1932 Amsterdam Despatch was incorporated, offices were at 23 Schuyler Street.

By 1936 the trucking company moved to Upper Church Street. At this location, the building afforded a small living space, office space and garage for the trucks. Also, important to John was the barn, where he kept a pony. Having grown up with horses as an integral part of the business, John never lost his love of them. The photo of the Daly family includes Anne on a pony, Jackie (myself) in my Dad's arms, Bertha and John and Gert.

This photo was taken very close in time; a photograph was taken of the extra long truck-bed that was necessary for the "Wheel of Life" carpet, manufactured at Mohawk Carpet Mills, that Amsterdam Despatch so proudly delivered to the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City. Other terminal destinations during the thirties were Philadelphia, Baltimore and Utica. The tractor trailers were amply filled by the numerous industries of the area and returned with raw materials. These routes were granted to Amsterdam Despatch as grandfather rights when the Interstate Trucking Commission began to regulate the trucking industry.

Simultaneously, another intervention to the trucking industry was the labor union. A driver, Nick Robilotto, was shop steward for the Teamsters at Erie Street. He went on to become the President of the Capital District Teamsters Union.

During this time a young man would hitch a ride (so to speak) in the cab of one of the Amsterdam



The Wheel of Life Carpet manufactured at Mohawk Mills begins its journey to the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. (JM)

Despatch trucks leaving for New York City. He was on his way to American Academy of Embalming and Mortuary Research. John Betz received his license in 1939, joined Van Buren and embarked on his own in 1946. Today the firm he began, is known throughout a wide area.

Amsterdam Despatch purchased 91-101 Erie Street in 1940. The office and most of the trucks relocated there. The property afforded ample parking, docking and office space. Bob Harvey, of Harvey Signs, designed the windmill logo on the red trailer. Painted bright red it would be difficult not to see the straight jobs picking up the local products which were transferred to the equally attractive over-the-road tractor-trailers.

I must honestly tell of the stench that surrounded the property one or two days a week. The Amsterdam Hide and Tallow building was located to the north of the truck yard, closer to the river. They accepted the bones and skins of all animals and processed them on their property.

The memory I have of my childhood revolves around the interaction my family had with the people who worked for Amsterdam Despatch. They weren't considered employees, they were family. Nick Robilotto, one of the first drivers hired, would often drive Bertha to school for my mother. A story my mother liked to tell was about one of the first young men hired for the office. As World War II broke out, the help put together a money pool for the first male drafted. It turned out to be Stephen Bilinski, who went on to be a retired Lt. Colonel in the Army and a college professor. Stephen died March 31, 2011 at 91 years old. The warm connection that Stephen Bilinski had for the Dalys is evident in that he mentioned them in his obituary.

~Jacqueline Murphy