

# Historic Amsterdam League

*The Key to the Future is the Past*

## Newsletter



April 2014

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Annual Membership Meeting

City Hall Lobby  
Wednesday, April 16, 2014  
6:30 pm

#### Trustees Meeting

*All are welcome!*  
City Hall Annex  
Wednesday, May 21, 2014  
6:00 pm

#### Historic Marker Ceremony

Shuttleworth Park  
TBA

#### Rockton Tour

Shuttleworth Park  
Saturday, June 7, 2014  
10:00 am - 3:00 pm

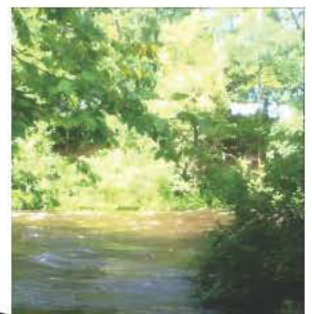
### Shuttleworth Park to Get a Historic Marker

The sign directing visitors to Shuttleworth Park lists "Home of ..." to nine groups or activities. That is today. Known in the past as Crescent Amusement Park, Jollyland and Mohawk Mills Park, the park will be honored this year with a NYS Historic Marker.

The park has always been a beautiful site for those wishing a quiet place of natural beauty with gently-flowing waters of the North Chuctanunda Creek. Many people can be seen picnicking or walking the winding trails.

At other times, the park has been a venue for more organized sports and activities. Of course, the baseball field and stands have transformed through the years supporting a wide variety of teams and leagues of all ages and calibers. Most recently, it is the home of the Amsterdam Mohawks, offering a welcoming environment for family fun. It is time to recognize this gem within our city.

The Historic Amsterdam League has as one of its objectives: "To suitably mark places of historic interest." This we will do when the marker is erected this spring. Additional funding for the marker is made possible by a generous donation by the Amsterdam Beautification Corps.



IF THE KEY TO THE FUTURE'S THE PAST  
THEN OUR MEMORY OF IT MUST LAST  
THE HISTORIAN'S ROLE  
IS TO ACHIEVE THAT GOAL  
SINCE TIME TENDS TO GO BY MUCH  
TOO FAST ~Tom Pikul

LOOK FOR HAL BOOKLETS,  
POSTCARDS AND CALENDARS  
AT THE BOOK HOUND &  
OLD PEDDLER'S WAGON!  
GREAT GIFTS!



Collection of Gerald R. Snyder

We hope you will join in the marker unveiling and take time to read the inscription anytime you pass it by. We hope you also will join us in our Rockton Tour based at Shuttleworth Park on June 7th.

We support the Shuttleworth Park Foundation, which also will be celebrating the park's history in May and with more projects. Congratulations!



# HISTORIC AMSTERDAM LEAGUE

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President - Gerald R. Snyder  
Vice-President -  
Dorothy Domkowski  
Treasurer - Elizabeth Clough  
Secretary - Nicholas Zabawsky

## TRUSTEES

Debra Baranello  
Dorie Polacko  
Marie Villa  
Robert von Hasseln  
Daniel T. Weaver

## YOU Turn The KEY

You are the one...you turn the key! As you may know, the Historic Amsterdam League's motto is "The key to the future is the past." But without you, the key remains just an inanimate object.

With you, as a current member and participant in HAL's activities, the key revives Amsterdam's history so we can appreciate our physical, cultural and natural heritage. Together, we then can **preserve, promote and protect** what we value in Amsterdam.

The funds raised through our various activities are used in the "p" actions identified in this newsletter. Join or renew your membership today! Better yet, become involved in any of our activities and share **your** ideas with us!

## "Ghosts of the Past" Came to Life

In October, eight prominent "residents" of Green Hill Cemetery emerged from their quiet resting places to tell of their key life events. Three HAL Reporters led over 200 curious guests on candle-lit paths. Back at City Hall, others listened to stories of local hauntings and spooky happenings. Still others mused at what mystics foretold in their lives, while some opened their palms for readings. Several witches served up their delicious delights and special brews. In the end, everything returned to "normal" for all.



## Christmas with the Sanfords



The Amsterdam City Hall lobby became a Christmas showcase thanks to the creativity of Liberty art teacher Amy Devendorf and her talented students. They made Amsterdam-themed decorations and then hung them on the on the nine-foot Christmas tree. Natural hydrangeas and festive gold bows adorned the beautiful staircase and large wreath hanging in the window above.

As Stephen Sanford (Jerry Snyder) and John Sanford (Rob von Hasseln) gave tours of their former home, visitors listened to the Amsterdam High School Select Chorus sing Christmas carols then enjoyed the wandering fiddle player Tom Pikul and engaging vocalist Jeri Lynn.


Visitors bought the unique Christmas ornaments with the money then given to the Liberty Art Program. The annual HAL calendars, this year focusing on area churches, also were sold making wonderful holiday gifts for those who love and appreciate Amsterdam depicted in historic pictures.



## Max Reid Awards

In 2012, the Historic Amsterdam League initiated the Max Reid Awards, named after W. Max Reid. Reid was a local funeral director, historian and author. The "Maxie" Award recognizes local individuals and businesses who have done an outstanding job of preserving and presenting their structures.

During the last year, HAL members decided what the award would physically be. A mold is being made and the actual awards will soon be cast and then given to those selected and new award nominees and winners will be chosen.



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## Rockton: The Forgotten Ward

Why is Rockton "the Forgotten Ward?" Why a "Rockton Y?" Did the Underground Railroad travel through Rockton? What other mills, besides THE Mohawk Mills, operated in this area? Did the NY Yankees really play in Amsterdam? Did a constable really die here? What were the favorite corner taverns, grocery stores or coffee shops? What was the Rockton tragedy? Those and other questions will be answered as the Historic Amsterdam League once again focuses on another section of the city.

On Saturday, June 7, 2014, HAL invites all to a day to explore and learn about a part of "our" Amsterdam. A new historic booklet and six new postcards will be available, the fourth in a series. Shuttleworth Park will be the basis for all the day's activities. Mark your calendar and join in the fun! Rain or shine.

*Some of the most favorite and interesting sections of HAL's historic booklets of Amsterdam are the "Sidebars." These short pieces tell the personal stories or reflections of people growing up and living in these neighborhoods. If you have such a experience, please share it with us! Contact Dorothy at 843-3461 or any HAL member. Good writing is not necessary only good memories!*

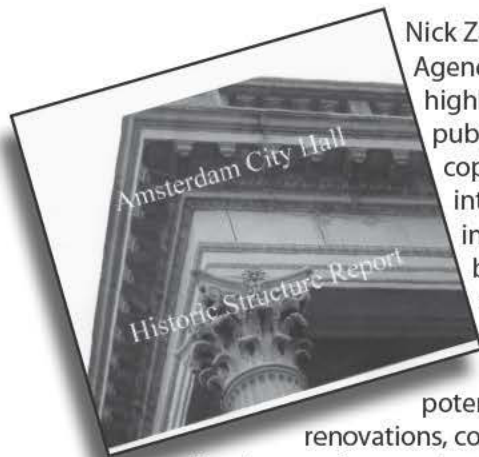
## Architectural Study of City Hall

City Hall, the former home of industrialists Stephen and John Sanford and their families, is a treasure. When talk began of abandoning the building and moving city government functions elsewhere, HAL adopted a resolution opposing such a move.



The city issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development of a Historic Structure Report (HSR) on City Hall as part of an effort to renovate the building in a historically appropriate manner. The Preservation League of New York State awarded a grant of \$7,500 to support the cost of a report. In 2012, Landmark Consulting LLC, a historic preservation and architectural firm based in Albany, NY was commissioned to develop the Historic Structure Report on Amsterdam City Hall. Last year, the firm delivered their very comprehensive report.

With this report, the city and residents have a guide for "future efforts to secure support for the building's preservation, and provide an outline for public education about the Sanford Mansion's role in Amsterdam's cultural heritage."



Nick Zabawsky, Director of the Urban Renewal Agency and HAL Secretary, presented highlights of the structural report at a HAL public meeting. He also has made CD

copies for those who are interested. The report includes a history of the building including each room, assessments of structural and architectural elements,

potential treatments and renovations, complete architectural

drawings and many photographs. It is wonderful piece of work. Contact Nick at Orion Management if interested.

## Clock Tower

OK, how many times have you driven up Market Hill and glanced at the clock on the Clock Tower Building and wished it was giving right time (or, if you remember, that it was lit)? HAL President Jerry Snyder went beyond wishing. He and the owners met to discuss "getting the clock moving again." HAL trustees agreed to explore the project.

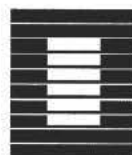
Michael Kuyt, C. C., a principle in the American Clock Tower Company based in Rochester, NY., who specializes in clock tower restoration was consulted. Kuyt completed a report of the current condition and recommendations for restoration of the clock at the Clock Tower Building.

Given the current age and condition, complete restoration of the clock would be a major and costly undertaking. What is needed are some interested and excited people to undertake fund-raising activities (fun, of course, e.g., "Rock Around the Clock"). If you want to see the clock ticking, contact any HAL member!

## Chuctanunda Booklet

"Touring the North Chuctanunda Creek," by John Naple, is being updated. This popular and well-used booklet guides us up the Chuctanunda Creek from the Mohawk River to Shuttleworth Park. Of course, several key landmarks along the way have changed and a new edition is needed. So, by the summer, you can get the revised copy in time to take the hike for its physical and historic exercise.

### ORION MANAGEMENT COMPANY



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# Historic Amsterdam League

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What are you going to do to secure Amsterdam's future?

*The history of Amsterdam informs, defines and inspires us. It opens us to our past ...creates new perspectives ...brings us to the future we long to create.*

Become a member of the Historic Amsterdam League today!

*Bring your membership form to the April 16th meeting!*

## Historic Amsterdam League

### New & Renewal Membership Application

*Please Print*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interest: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Class:

☐ I wish to renew my membership. ☐ I wish to become a member of HAL.

☐ \$200.00 Life ☐ \$20.00 Regular ☐ \$15.00 Student (24 or younger) ☐ \$15.00 Senior (55 or older)

Make checks payable to: **Historic Amsterdam League**

Mail to: **Amsterdam Historic League, PO Box 132, Amsterdam, NY 12010**