

OCTOBER 2024



Watervliet Historical Society

SIDECUT NEWS

A quarterly publication of the Watervliet Historical Society Museum



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Contact us!

Watervliet Historical Society Museum

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On The Web

WatervlietHistory.org

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watervliethistoricsociety@albany.twebc.com

On Social Media

Watervliet Historical Society

Hours

Wed - Fri 11:00 AM till 4:00 PM

Or By Appointment

Phone

(518) 272-0715

Officers

Tom Ragosta - President

Joe Slish - Vice President

Marylou Ragosta - Treasurer

Clara Abate/Marie Bolt -Secretary

Board of Directors

Don Eberle

Peggy Germano

Rosemary Nichols

Marylou Ragosta

Thomas Ragosta

Needed!

VOLUNTEERS TO HELP OUT AND WORK
AT THE MUSEUM WHEN IT IS OPEN THERE
IS A LOT OF WORK TO BE DONE

Wanted!

OLD PHOTOS- STORIS- FAMILY PICTUES

HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOKS

ANYTHING RELATED TO WATERVLIET

IF ANYONE HAS ANY ITEMS WHICH THEY
WOULD LIKE TO DONATE OR LOAN PLEASE
CALL OR STOP IN DURING BUSINESS HOURS:
(WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY) 11:00 AM- 4:00PM



Greetings from the President



Unfortunately, summer is almost over but work continues at the Museum/Cultural Center and with it the anticipation of many activities for our Watervliet and local residents. Future use can be for periodic Historical Programs; club and city meetings, utilization for High School and Grammar School activities, theatrical performances, periodic band entertainment, etc. Any further suggestions for its possible usage and or advertising for usage would be greatly appreciated,

The project for placing Meneely Bells at various sites in the city is continuing. As of this date a bell has been placed at the intersection of 23rd Street and 2d Avenue. Two Meneely Bells were removed from the former St. Bridgets Church and the United Methodist Church and sited at 1st Street and 3rd Avenue and at the entrance to Hudson Shores Park. Another bell was placed on the site of the former Meneely Foundry and previously one was placed in the park across from the Stewarts in Port Schuyler. Another bell related project is under way, so stay tuned. The two hundredth Anniversary for the Meneely Foundry is in 2026 and planning for the event is ongoing (1826—2026).



Upcoming Historical Society Events

Member Meeting: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 at 7:00 pm at the Watervliet Cultural Center

Member meeting, Wednesday, November 9, 2024 at the Watervliet Cultural Center. Refreshments will be available.

There will be a **presentation** at the Watervliet Cultural Center, 1501 15th Street, **September 28, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.** The Program is titled "Tales from the Arsenal City and Beyond" by Scott Burke.

Book Sale:

Get your Christmas presents early

Four volumes of Watervliet History

Watervliet Historic Images Watervliet the Canal Days

Watervliet Arsenal City

Watervliet Historic Maps

\$15.00 each or all four for \$50.00

"The Meneely Bells of West Troy" By local Meneely Bell Historian Eugene Burns
\$30.00

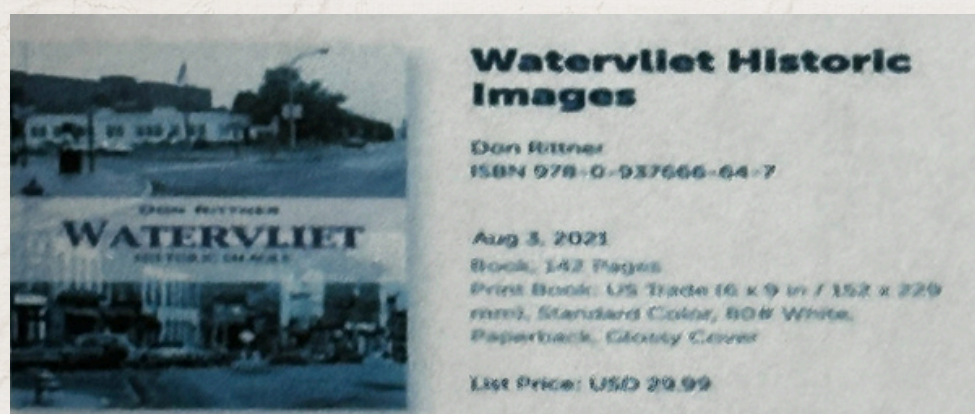
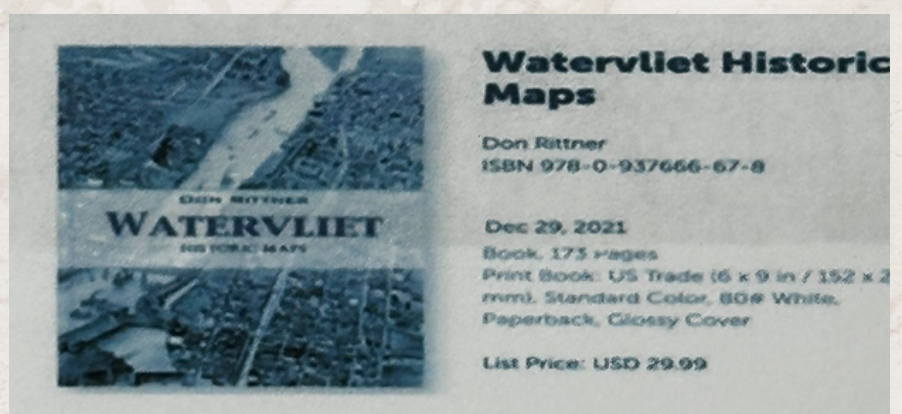
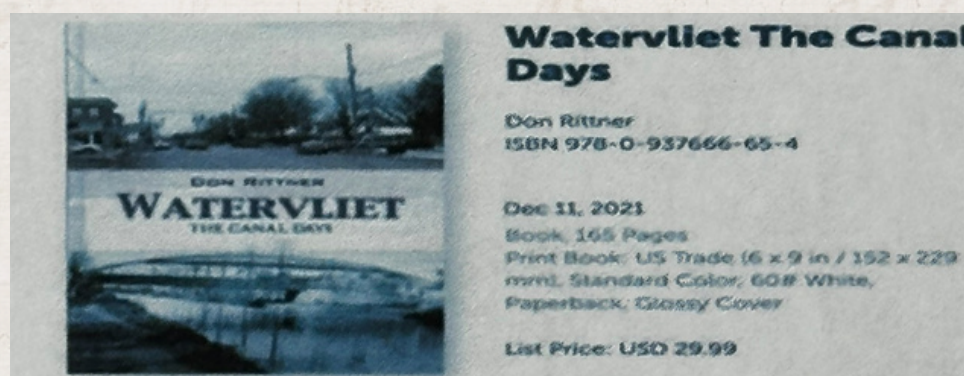
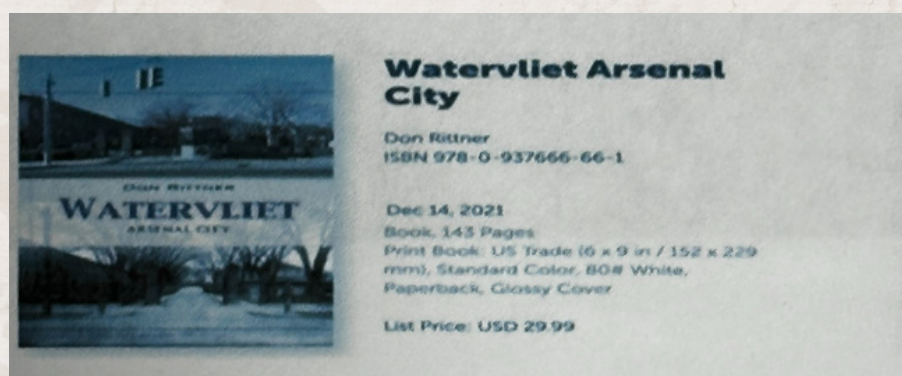
We also have a limited supply of:

Building the Erie Canal/Murder in Rome by Rosemary Nichols

Stolen by Rosemary Nichols

Gettysburg Lost Love by Jeffrey J. Harding

Three Centuries on the Hudson River by W L Staats





Did You Know

Development of the Village of West Troy

In 1793, Philip S. Schuyler founded the Village of Washington in now what lies between Fifth and Eighth streets in present day Watervliet.

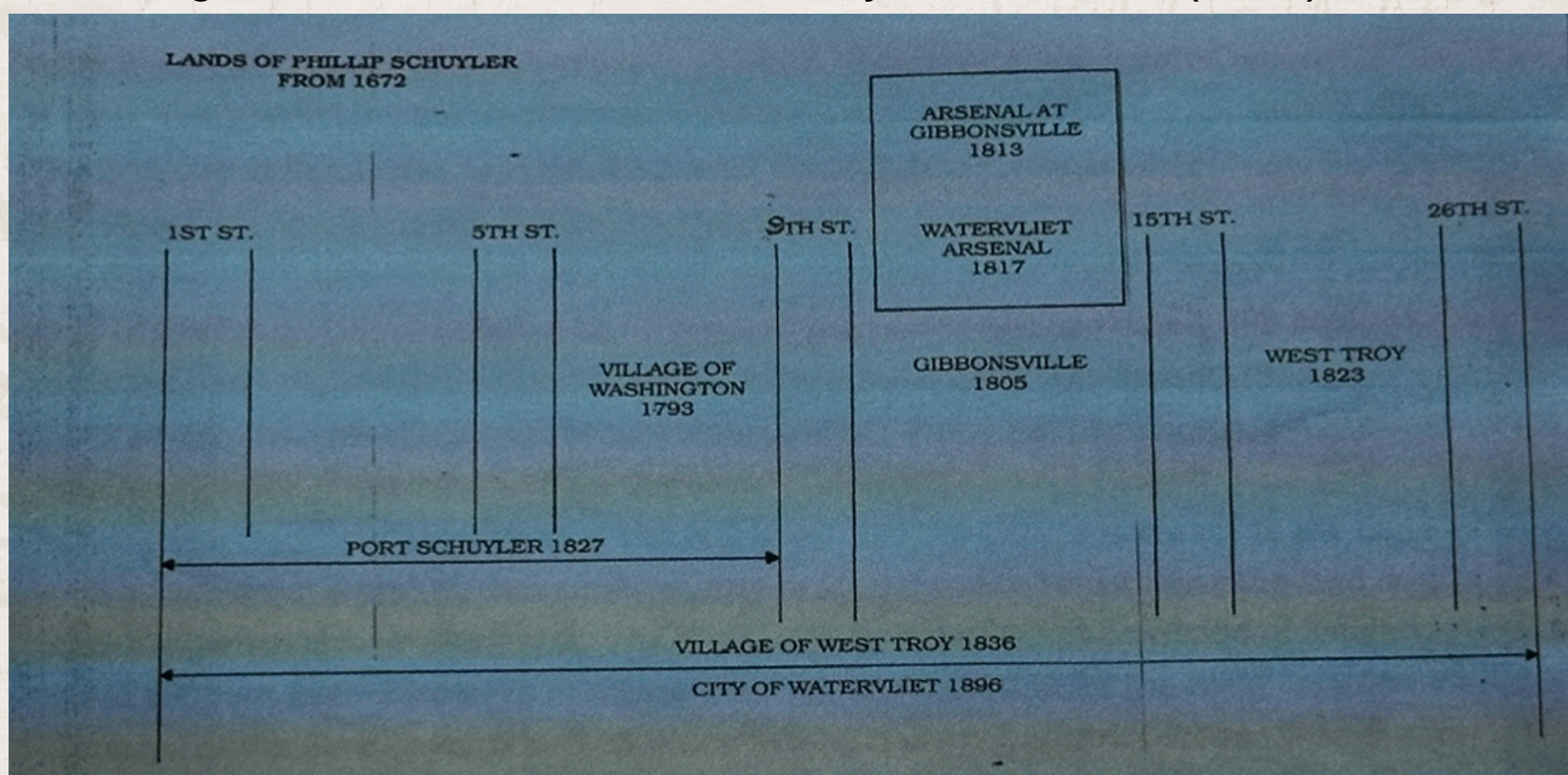
In 1805 an entrepreneur, James Gibbons, purchased land from the Schuyler family between what is now Eighth and Fifteenth Streets. He called his new land Gibbonsville. The Village continued to grow leading to its incorporation in 1824.

To profit from the construction of the Erie canal which ran completely through present day Watervliet, A West Troy Company (based in Troy) sought to develop the area extending from the Gibbonsville boundary at 15th Street to present day 26th Street. They purchased this land on November 12, 1823 and established the unincorporated Village of West Troy.

In 1827, the Port Schuyler Company purchased land south of the Watervliet Arsenal that included land between present day 1st Street to 8th Street and included the Village of Washington. The new unincorporated village was called Port Schuyler.

Port Schuler, Gibsonville and West Troy all benefited from the activity of the Erie Canal. In 1836 the three village merged and incorporated into one village, West Troy

The new village was the forerunner of the City of Watervliet (1896).





Pieces of Watervliet History

Prior to 1836 the current City of Watervliet consisted of three villages. Washington which later became Port Schuyler from what is now from 1st Street to 8th/street, Gibbonsville from 8th to 15th Streets and West Troy from 15th Street to 26th Streets.

In this newsletter we will revisit the Village of Gibbonsville which of the four mentioned above was the only one incorporated before 1836.

James Gibbons was a prominent influential and progressive merchant and speculator in real estate in the Albany area. He seized the opportunity presented to him in 1805 to purchase the farm commencing at what is now 8th Street extending to 15th Street from John S. Schuyler. He had it surveyed and laid out into lots and named this area Gibbonsville which at that time contained about fifteen houses.

Some interesting facts:

- In 1813 the U.S. Government purchased from James Gibbons 12 acres of land in Gibbonsville commencing at 13th Street southward for an arsenal as a result of the War of 1812. In 1828 the Government made a second purchase of 30 acres from James Gibbons widow. The Arsenal from 1813 to 1817 was known as the Arsenal at Gibbonsville". In 1817 the name was changed to the "Watervliet Arsenal" because it was located in the Town of Watervliet.
- The first church was erected at Gibbonsville in 1814 known as the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Washington (first village formed in the current City of Watervliet in 1793 between what is now 6th and 8th Streets by Philip Schuyler). This church was located where 959 Broadway is now. Philip Schuyler and Andrew Meneely were elders.
- The first post office in the Town of Watervliet was in Gibbonsville at what is now Broadway and 14th Street and known as the Watervliet Post Office.
- The Gibbonsville cemetery was located on property now owned by the Watervliet Arsenal in the area of the South End of building 10. The grave stones and approximately 300 bodies were removed and reburied in Section 100 of the Albany Rural Cemetery around 1918
- By 1824, the time that Gibbonsville was incorporated, there was one church, seventeen mercantile firms, three hotels and a shipyard in full bloom
- In 1823 as a result of the building of the Erie Canal and the side-cut entrance to the Canal at what is now 23d Street from the Hudson River, two factions wanted to purchase the land north of 15th Street known as the Bleaker Farm. The West Troy company which consisted of 8 individuals and James Gibbons both wanted to purchase the land. In retaliation for the West Troy Company's purchase of the Bleaker Farm for \$45,000 which he could not afford, Gibbons did not allow his streets to extend north of his village into what became West Troy, which explains why avenues on either side of 15th Street do not line up today, Fifteenth Street, the boundary line between the two villages once had two different names. Gibbonsville referred to it as Division Street, while West Troy knew it as Buffalo Street.
- Gibbons built his own residence on the river at the foot of Buffalo (15th Street) which he named the Rock House.
- Gibbons had done more to build up what is now the City of Watervliet into a lively community 1805-1807 than the Schuler's had done in over a century.