

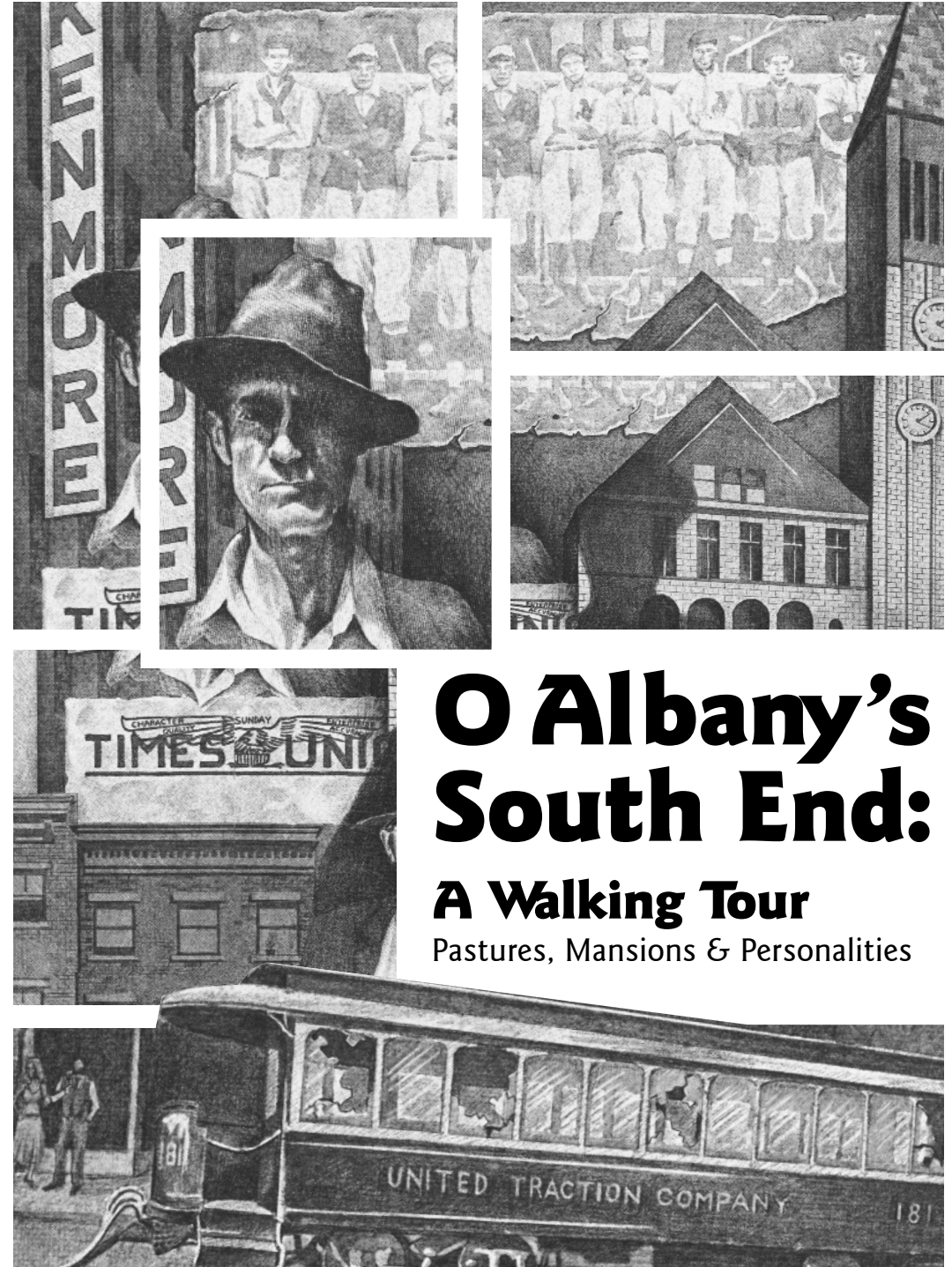


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This guide originally was developed by Judith Botch of Historic Albany Foundation, Miriam Tremontozzi, Director, as part of the *William Kennedy's Albany* project (1984), conceived and coordinated by the Capital District Humanities Program, Kathryn Gibson, Director, and made possible in part by a grant from the New York Council for the Humanities. The guide was updated in 2006 by the New York State Writers Institute in conjunction with *Architecture at Albany*, a year-long exploration of the built environment at the University at Albany and its surrounding community.

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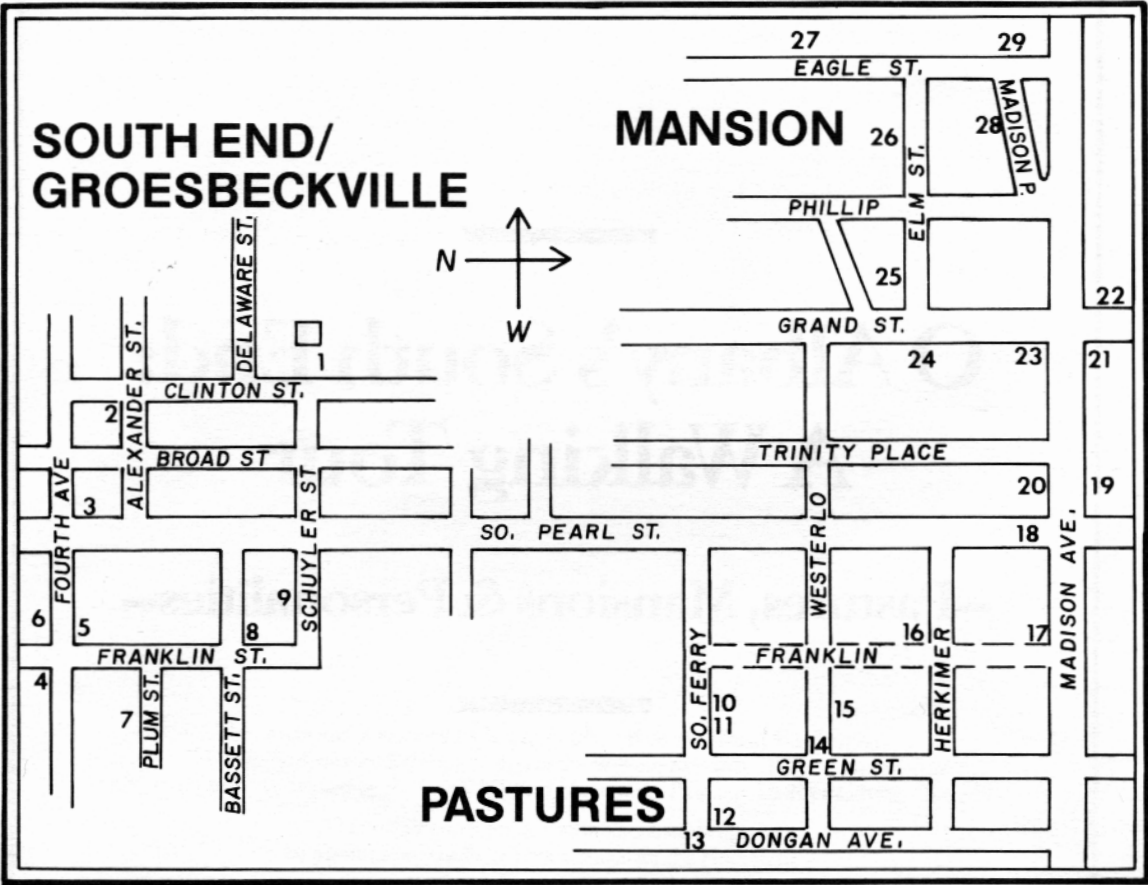


O Albany's South End:

A Walking Tour

Pastures, Mansions & Personalities

Albany's South End



Map Legend

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Schuyler Mansion | 11. 63 South Ferry Street | 20. 114-120 Madison Avenue |
| 2. German Evangelical Protestant Church | 12. Former St. Paul's Episcopal Church | 21. 143 Madison Avenue |
| 3. 371-373 South Pearl Street | 13. Dongan Avenue | 22. 57-65 Grand Street |
| 4. Foley Row | 14. Green Street | 23. St. Anthony's Church |
| 5. St. Anne's-St. John's Church | 15. 48-66 Westerlo Street | 24. 78-92 Grand Street |
| 6. Public Bath No. 2 | 16. St. John's Church of God in Christ | 25. 8 Elm Street |
| 7. Plum St. Public Housing | 17. 96 Madison Avenue | 26. 46-68 Elm Street |
| 8. Former School No.1 | 18. South Pearl Street | 27. Executive Mansion |
| 9. Mt. Zion Baptist Church | 19. Lombardo's Restaurant | 28. 6-10 Madison Place |
| 10. 65 South Ferry Street | | 29. Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception |

Glossary

Cornice—The exterior trim of a structure at the meeting of the roof and wall.

Dentil—One of a band of small, square, tooth-like blocks under a cornice.

Dormer Windows—A window projecting from a sloping roof.

Drip Molding—The outermost projecting molding around the top of a door or window.

Fanlight—A semicircular window over the opening of a door.

Federal Style—A style which prevailed from the Revolution to the 1830's. Typical features include a gable roof with dormers, arched entranceway, and fanlight, sidelights and columns flanking the doorway.

Finial—An ornament which terminates the point of a spire or roofline.

Flemish Bond—In brickwork, a bond in which each course consists of headers and stretchers laid alternately, each header centered with respect to the stretcher above and below it.

Frieze—A decorative band below the cornice.

Gable—The vertical triangular portion of the end of a building having a double sloping roof.

Georgian—The prevailing style of the 18th century in Great Britain and the North American colonies; so named after the four King Georges (1714-1820).

Gothic Revival—A style popular during the 1840's and 1850's. The design was applied only rarely to rowhouse construction. Its distinguishing features include: pointed arch windows and Gothic tracery.

Greek Revival—A style prevalent in the U.S. during the 1820's and 30's, but appearing as late as the 1850's. It is usually identifiable by its symmetry and a prominent classical Greek Temple front. In rowhouse design the temple front is omitted, but other features remain including: low-pitched or flat roof, smooth flat surfaces, absence of external ornament, and a recessed doorway flanked by pilasters and sidelights.

Italianate—A common rowhouse style during the third quarter of the 19th century. It features elaborately ornamented, projecting cornice and lintels.

Lintel—A horizontal structural member over an opening which carries the weight of the wall above it.

Modillion—A horizontal bracket or square console situated under a cornice.

Moorish Arch—A rounded arch whose curve is a little more than a semicircle.

National Register of Historic Places—The official list maintained by the Department of the Interior of the nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation .

Oriel Window—A projecting window that begins on an upper story of a house and is supported by corbels or brackets.

Pavilion—A prominent central portion of a facade.

Pointed Arch—An arch with a point at its apex, characteristic of Gothic architecture.

Pilaster—An engaged pier or pillar.

Rusticated—A descriptive term for cut stone having strongly emphasized recessed joints and smooth or roughly textured block faces.

Sidelight—Rectangular, paned glass flanking a doorway.

Stepped Gable—A gable having a stepped edge.

Toplight—A paned glass transom.

Tracery—Curvilinear openwork shapes of stone or wood creating a pattern within the upper part of a Gothic window.

The City

“(Albany) was a primeval and savage wilderness to the early settlers . . . just as the Far West would be to the westering American pioneers of the nineteenth century. It had a history as long before the Revolutionary War, in which it was a key city ... as it has had since that war. It was always commercially important, first because of the Dutch fur trade . . . and because of the Hudson River. Later it became the eastern terminus of the Erie Canal, and still later a railroad center, which made it a cattle town, a bit of the Wild West in the old East. It was a city of foundries and lumber, and its sinful ways made it the hottest town between New York and Montreal. . .”

“Being a state capitol, Albany has also been a springboard to the presidency: Martin Van Buren, Millard Fillmore, Grover Cleveland, Teddy and Franklin Roosevelt among those who made it. . .”

“Geographically this Albany exists 150 miles north of Manhattan . . . It is centered squarely in the American and the human continuum, a magical place where the past becomes visible if one is willing to track the multiple incarnations of the city's soul. (You) confront even a single street corner and there emerges an archetypal as well as an historical context in which to view the mutations of its trees, its telephone poles.” (*O Albany*, p 5-7)

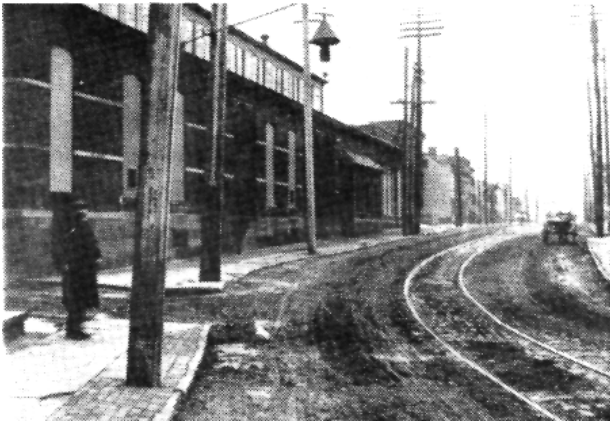
On this walking tour you will learn a part of Albany's story not by reading a book, but by “reading the human landscape.” You will have a chance to see and touch a small part of the past by following the tour's suggestions about how to interpret history through material culture and informed imagination You will walk through three historic districts (South End/Groesbeckville, the Pastures, and the Mansion). They were once one large, continuous and interactive, yet highly diversified urban neighborhood.

The South End

The South End was where Albany began its first serious expansion and industrial development. Its history spans many generations and includes tales of colonial aristocracy, nation building, entrepreneurial capitalism, political intrigue, immigrant and ethnic culture, urban development, decline and revitalization; in sum, the experience of American life.

South End/Groesbeckville Historic District

Development. The South End/Groesbeckville Historic District was developed in the mid-19th century. Groesbeckville, a small unincorporated village, abutted the South End at Third Avenue and was annexed to the City in 1870. General Philip Schuyler owned much of the land now in the historic district. About 1761 he built his home here (Schuyler Mansion), overlooking the Dutch Church pasture. Schuyler’s estate was subdivided and streets were laid out after his death in 1804. Buildings first appeared along South Pearl Street in the 1820’s and 1830’s and on parallel and intersecting streets over the next two decades. The main north-south streets (South Pearl, Clinton, and Broad) curve gently to the south, adding color and variety to the district.



So. Pearl Street looking south from Third Avenue

Many of these immigrants were small businessmen—grocers, cigar makers, sausage manufacturers, and bakers—but most worked as laborers or skilled craftsmen in iron foundries, railroad shops, or breweries along the riverfront. In the South End “Irish-German tensions seem to have been largely a matter of ethnic distance, for they really had much in common—a love of song and strong drink and many also shared the Catholic religion.” (*O Albany*, p. 256-7) German families still reside in this area as do a number of black families who migrated from the South following both World Wars.

Architecture. A range of 19th and 20th century architectural styles prevail in the South End District. The most distinct are local adaptations of *Greek Revival* and *Italianate*. The modest residential design speaks of the area’s working class origins. Commercial structures along South Pearl Street, many now abandoned, represent the former vitality and the mixed residential and business character of the neighborhood. A pattern of owner-financed construction in the mid-19th century resulted in a considerable variety in the styles, materials, and degree of refinement exhibited here today.

Notice the silhouetted rooflines and interior walls of demolished buildings exposed on many side walls throughout the South End. From such evidence you can begin to imagine how the district might have looked in the 19th century.



Area now the site of the Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza. Looking south toward the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception.

Photo Credits:
Collection of the McKinney Library, Albany Institute of History and Art
Historic Albany Foundation
Drawings and research assistance by Douglas Sinclair, Historic Albany Foundation

► **Proceed West on Elm Street to No. 48-68 Elm Street**

26) 46-68 Elm Street (1858). This eleven building brick row was also built by James Eaton and was designed in the *Italianate* style. It features very tall proportions, narrow projecting *pavilions* on the entire three-story height of each building and a facade capped by a simple *dentilled cornice*. The pavilion is surmounted by a slight *gable*, giving the impression of a free-standing tower typical of detached *Italianate* villas. The *Italianate* was one of the most popular rowhouse styles up to about 1880. It generally featured squarer proportions than those exhibited here, heavy *bracketed cornices* and decorative, projecting *lintels*.

► **Proceed West on Elm Street to Eagle Street**

27) Executive Mansion (West Side of Eagle St.). The New York State Executive Mansion was built in 1856 as a private residence. It was purchased by the State for use as a permanent governor's mansion during Samuel Tilden's administration, which began in 1883. In 1887 the house was extensively remodeled according to designs by Isaac Perry, the architect who supervised the completion of the State Capitol. Each governor made his own mark on the Mansion. Teddy Roosevelt turned the top floor into a gymnasium; Alfred E. Smith had a zoo, which included a bear and elk; F.D.R. built a swimming pool in the greenhouse, and Nelson Rockefeller installed a fall-out shelter.

► **Proceed North on Eagle Street to Madison Place**

28) 6-10 Madison Place. This magnificent *Gothic* row was built by David Orr between 1845 and 1848. The design may have been directly influenced by noted architect Andrew Jackson Downing. The houses were built as upper class residences but, surprisingly, were not undertaken on individual commission. Instead, upon their completion, Orr advertised them for sale in the local press. "For sale . . . The buildings cover the lots in front and . . . are 52 feet deep with 8 feet Piazza in the rear, and iron balconies in front; are three stories high above the basement story, below which is a subcellar; all arranged in the most convenient manner and fitted up with a Bathing establishment, Kitchen Range and Boiler, Water closets, Marble Wash Stands, Hot Air Furnace, Bells, Speaking Tubes, and Gas Pipes." The distinctive Gothic features of these buildings include: *pointed arch windows*, and *Gothic tracery* and ironwork. No. 6 was partially damaged in a recent fire that gutted the eastern portion of this historic row.

29) Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The full development of the Gothic style is exhibited in the Cathedral building. The church was built between 1848 and 1852 during a time referred to as the "Glorious Decades of Catholic Albany." From 1839-1869 nearly a dozen church buildings were erected throughout the city by the Roman Catholic Diocese. This impressive cathedral was designed by Patrick Keeley and uses Connecticut Brownstone. The towers of the Empire State Plaza provide an awesome backdrop to the churches' magnificent spires.

► **Begin at the head of Schuyler Street**

1) The Schuyler Mansion is a fine example of *Georgian* architecture. The central brick house is all that remains from Schuyler's time. Many accessory buildings—smoke house, carriage house, barn, etc.—have been removed. Philip Schuyler is descended from some of Albany's earliest settlers. He was named a delegate to the Continental Congress and commissioned a major general during the Revolution. The house was a center for his military activities at that time and George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Benedict Arnold were among his visitors. The St. Francis de Sales Orphan Asylum was located here from 1868 until the State purchased the house and began its restoration in 1914.



Schuyler Mansion

► **Proceed South on Clinton Street to Fourth Avenue**

As you proceed, notice the yellow building at the corner of Delaware and Clinton Streets (No. 55-53 Clinton St.). This structure had operated continuously as a bakery (a typical small business of immigrant neighborhoods) since its construction in 1854 up until the late 1980s.

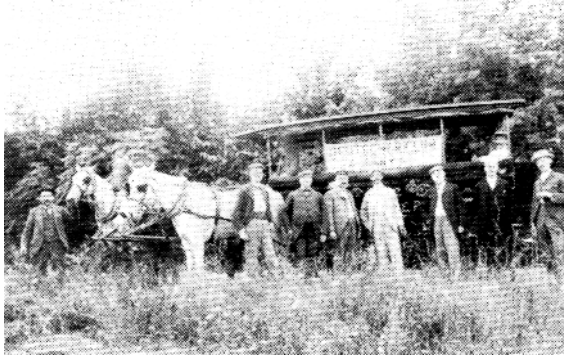
2) German Evangelical Protestant Church. A tall slender spire makes this church a distinctive landmark of the South End skyline. Now operating under the auspices of the United Church of Christ, it was built for the German Evangelical Protestant Congregation in 1881. The importance of religion in the social and spiritual lives of the immigrant is demonstrated by this and numerous other church buildings throughout the district.

Diagonally across from the church on the corner of Alexander and Clinton streets notice the tar marks delineating the *gable* roofline of an early 19th century building. Further west on Alexander Street lived one of the most significant scientists of the 19th century, Theobald Smith (Schmidt). Born at 54 Alexander Street in 1859, Smith "worked his way through Cornell playing an organ, earned his M.D. from Albany Medical College, and as a pathologist taught at Harvard; but he made his mark with the discovery (announced in 1892) that a cattle disease called Texas fever was transmitted by the cattle tick. The notion that insects could transmit disease was brand new and would, in time, set other scientists on similar quests." (*O Albany*, p. 243-4)

► **Proceed to Fourth Avenue and then continue East on Fourth Avenue to South Pearl Street**

3) 371-373 South Pearl Street. In 1885, Gustav Wikert built this three-story building (now boarded up and painted white on the top two floors) as a saloon, replacing one destroyed by fire the previous year. Saloons defined a large part of the immigrant's social life and in Albany's South

End they became shared ground for both Germans and Irish. “But the Germans had a formal musical tradition the Irish lacked; and so, though singing was apt to erupt in any saloon, the back rooms in the German bars came to be used by the singing societies for rehearsals. (In Wikert’s saloon) for instance, there was an assembly hall where the Eintracht Singing Society was spawned . . . It grew to be one of the largest, with a membership in 1886 of 38 active, 175 passive, and three honorary members. It ran picnics at Dobler Park—all the food and beer you could swallow for a dollar, all day long.” (O *Albany*, p. 247) The Albany Knitting Company operated out of this site during the 1920’s and 1930’s.



A German club outing

The vacant corner lot adjacent to 375 South Pearl was run by John (Black Jack) O’Connell, father of long-time Albany Democratic party head Dan O’Connell. “Black Jack (an Irishman) was as fluent in German as his sons were to become in politics. The saloon closed in 1919 upon the arrival of Prohibition, but someone ran it as an ice cream shop for a time, and then another O’Connell son, Patrick, ran it as a tire store. Eventually Dan turned it into Democratic party headquarters—Little City Hall, it was called—and it functioned as that until 1971, when it closed forever. Dan then had it torn down, rather than rent it or sell it to strangers.” (O *Albany*, p. 246)

► Proceed East on Fourth Avenue to Franklin Street

4, 5, 6) The larger scale and finer architectural detail of the public and institutional structures at this intersection contrast sharply with the district’s modest residential properties such as the **one-story frame row** on the east side of Franklin Street built in 1851(4). Except for **St. Anne’s-St. John’s Church** erected in 1867-68 (5), the buildings at this intersection date from early in the 1900’s. **The Public Bath** (6), an idea implemented on a large scale late in the 19th century, is still open today and services a number of neighborhood residents.

► Proceed North on Franklin Street to Bassett Street

The next several blocks will offer a number of striking visual contrasts. The variety of land use and architecture at one glance pulls you back into the 19th century, at another thrusts you into the starkness of mid-20th century urban renewal.

7) **Public housing units** on the south side of Plum Street reflect sensitive planning and compatible design. They differ considerably from the hi-rise towers further east on Green Street, typical of public housing construction in the 1960’s.

and still exhibits aspects of its early *Federal* design, including the *stepped gable* and quarter round windows in the west façade, which are presently bricked up. “Modernized” in the late 19th century, the building now features Italianate elements, such as a *bracketed cornice*, projecting *lintels*, and an *oriel window* above the newer main entrance.

22) 57-65 Grand Street (NW corner of Grand and Madison) (1840). This row was built by David Orr, a major contractor in the area who constructed some of the district’s most outstanding buildings. These five buildings were the last of the high style *Greek Revival* groups built in the Mansion district. Although there are similarities among rowhouses of all styles, characteristics which distinguish the *Greek Revival* are: very flat surfaces, enlivened only by slightly projecting sandstone sills, recessed doorways with *pilasters* and sidelights, a brick *frieze*, *dentiled cornice*, and a flat roof.

23) St. Anthony’s Church. This church was built by the Italian community in 1908 and was designed, appropriately, in the *Italian Renaissance Revival* style. The church closed in 1974 following an exodus from the neighborhood in the 1960’s. For many years the blocks around the church would be closed off for the annual Italian Festival.

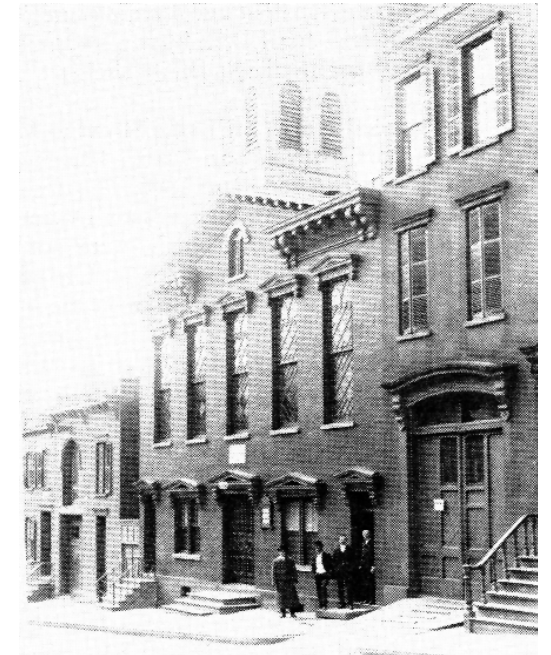
► Proceed South on Grand Street to Elm Street

24) 78-92 Grand Street. This eight building row on the east side of Grand Street was built in 1853 by James Eaton, a prominent Albany contractor. The unusual *Gothic* detail here features *drip molding* about the windows and a tall *finial* at the center of the row. The row represents a shift in style in the mid-19th century from classical to more romantic forms such as the *Gothic* and *Italianate* (styles which will be discussed below).

► Proceed West on Elm Street to Number 8 Elm Street

Notice the elegant and unaltered cast iron storefront at 77 Grand Street dating from the 1870’s.

25) 8 Elm Street (1869). This structure was built originally as the Church of the Evangelical German Association. As the picture here indicates, a church steeple has been removed. In keeping with the changing ethnic composition of the neighborhood, St. Anthony’s Church purchased the building in 1910 for use as a school. The structure is now used by the Free School Association of Albany.



Former Church of the Evangelical German Association; 8 Elm Street



► **Proceed West on Madison Avenue and stop across from Lombardo's Restaurant**

19) **Lombardo's Restaurant.** This restaurant has been an institution in the neighborhood since the 1920's. "Lombardo's then, still vital, always busy, is an anomalous monument to the lost age, a place that looks very much as it did thirty-five or forty years ago." (*O Albany*, p. 234) It was started as a saloon in 1916, turned into a speakeasy during Prohibition, and then turned into a restaurant and bar when beer came back.

20) **114-120 Madison Avenue** (Capitol City Lodge). Purchased by the Sons of Italy as a meeting hall in the 1920's, it has now been taken over by a black Masonic lodge.

► **Glance East down Madison Avenue toward the river**

Now mostly taken over for arterial access, "Madison below South Pearl Street, even as late as 1941, could have been a street in Italy: Calsolaro's barbershop, John Virgilio's tailor shop,

Leonardo Derenzo's grocery, Stefano Giacoppe's meat market, Orazio Milazzo's shoe-repair shop, Rocco Padula's beverage depot, and dozens of families with similar names." (*O Albany*, p. 234)

► **Proceed West on Madison Avenue to Grand Street**

Before crossing Trinity Place, glance down that street to your left. The church building on the west side of the street (Trinity Episcopal, ca. 1848) was an early design by James Renwick, architect for St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. Trinity Institution, next door, is an important South End social welfare agency that shaped the neighborhood group movement as early as the days of the War on Poverty in the 1960's. It remains an important institution today.

► **Pause at the intersection of Madison Avenue and Grand Street**

21) **143 Madison Avenue** (NE corner of Madison and Grand) (ca. 1833). This building was owned by the Dutch Barent Bleeker family for over a century. Philip Van Rensselaer, descendant of the patroon, lived here for a time. The structure was originally built as two separate dwellings

8) **Public School 1.** A study in contrast, this 1889 school building initially seems quite ponderous, but closer scrutiny changes that impression. The delicate ironwork and *Moorish* design about the entranceways are among the most outstanding architectural details found in the city of Albany.

► **Proceed North on Franklin Street to Schuyler Street and then West on Schuyler Street to South Pearl Street**

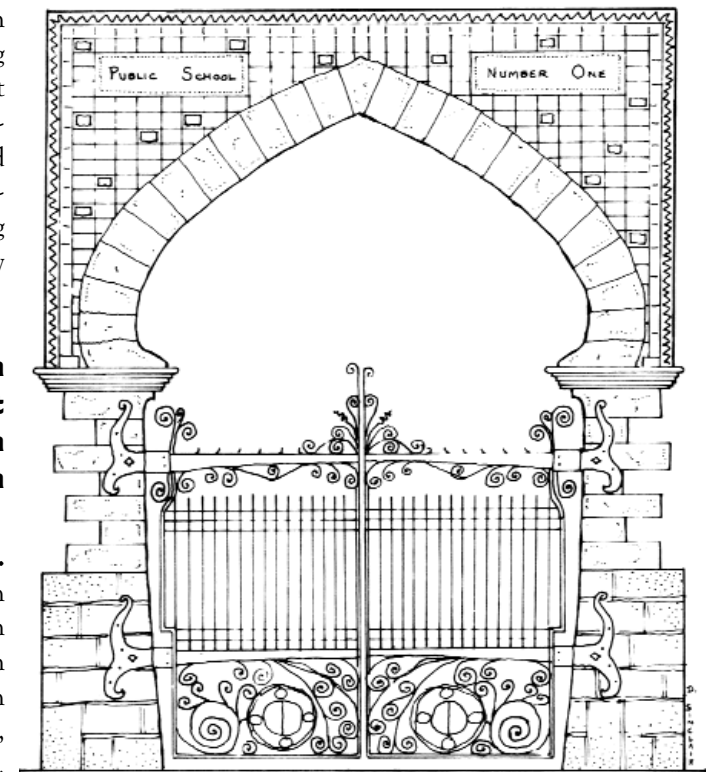
9) **Mount Zion Baptist Church.** The Fourth Reformed Dutch Church (German) built this structure in 1892. Two brothers of German extraction and residents of the South End, Charles and John Heidrich, designed and constructed the edifice.

With the shift in population following World War II, the congregation constructed a new church in the New Scotland Avenue area of Albany, selling the Schuyler Street church to Mount Zion Baptist, a black congregation. Rev. James U. Smythe, pastor of Mount Zion Baptist during the 1960's, was an active civil rights leader in the South End and is noted for instituting Albany's first adult education program for blacks, one taught by nuns from nearby St. Anne's Catholic Church.

At the intersection of South Pearl and Schuyler streets note how the area is changing from a commercial district to a more residential locale. The cast iron columns of the 1870's storefront of 311 South Pearl Street have been incorporated within the new facade of that building.

► **Proceed North on South Pearl Street to South Ferry Street—Pause at the head of South Ferry Street**

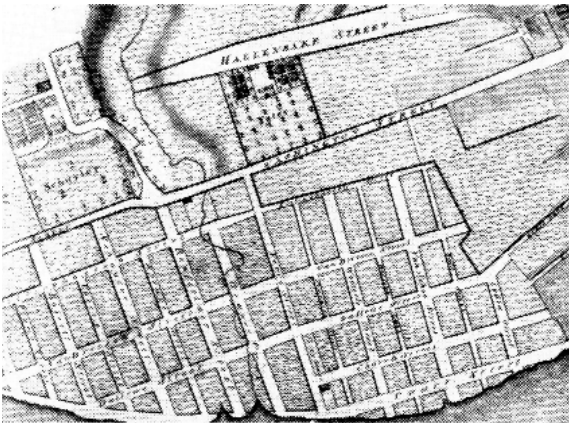
Newer public and commercial buildings seen here reflect urban renewal by demolition, a popular practice in the 1960's and 1970's. In contrast, increasing attention to preserving the nation's past over the last decade has led to many large-scale historic preservation efforts such as that before you in the Pastures Preservation (*National Register*) Historic District.



Moorish arch—Former School #1

Pastures Preservation Historic District

Development. The Pastures Preservation Historic District is Albany’s oldest existing neighborhood. Originally, located outside the stockade of Fort Orange, the area encompassed Albany’s colonial era communal pastureland. The Dutch Church acquired title to the land in 1687 but it was not until 1785 that the city successfully petitioned for its development in order to relieve increasing population pressures. Today, with the predominance of open space here, it is difficult to



1794 Plan of the Pastures

imagine that in the original plan no sections were reserved for public parks or squares and a maximum number of lots were derived from each block. Streets in the Pastures were laid out about the axis of South Ferry Street which originally led to the Greenbush or “south ferry,” the city’s oldest and principal means of crossing the river until the late 19th century. Many buildings here date from the first two decades of the 19th century; others from the 1820’s and 1830’s when Albany’s population doubled as a result of burgeoning commercial growth associated with the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825.

People. When the Pastures underwent development in the first half of the 19th century, Albany was still very much a “walking city.” Small businesses, large factories, homes, and boarding houses characterized the landscape. Rich, poor, and middle income resided close to one another on adjacent blocks or in rowhouses next door. “In the course of its inhabited existence, the area was never exclusively poor or rich, nor did it ever exist exclusively as a ghetto for any one ethnic group. School No.15 once held 1000 students; its churches and synagogues were among the city’s best attended. Its residents have included Governor Joseph Yates; Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, the founder of Reform Judaism in America; Anthony N. Brady, the multimillionaire; William S. Hackett, the O’Connell organization’s first Democratic mayor; and a host of prominent Irish, Jewish, Italian, and black families representing most of the city’s businesses, trades, and professions.” (*Albany: Capital City on the Hudson*, p. 78)

Architecture. Investors built the Pastures on speculation using journeyman artisans. The homogeneity of style and repetition of detail within the rowhouse form relate directly to the speculative nature of the district. At the time the Pastures first came under development, the Federal style was in vogue. Later the *Greek Revival* had taken root. Both high style and local adaptations of these styles appear throughout the district.

Mansion Historic District

Development. Until the early 19th century the Mansion Historic District was considered a “suburb” of Albany. For many years, the country estate of James Kane, located at Trinity and Ashgrove Place, defined the area as a delightful resort for all ages and ranks. Albany’s population having doubled in the 1820’s, reached over 24,000 by 1830. The population doubled again by 1850 to more than 50,000. Speculators and builders saw the financial opportunities in an area such as the Mansion District because of its proximity to the downtown and the newly developed Pastures. The neighborhood underwent major subdivision in the 1840’s and again in the years following the Civil War. Most of the district’s architecture dates between 1840 and 1875 though many later structures are found on Madison Avenue. The Mansion District typifies the early residential urban enclave, which in many cities preceded the development of street-car suburbs. Commercial uses here have been confined to major thoroughfares such as South Pearl Street and Madison Avenue or to the neighborhood’s peripheral areas.



Italian Festival band

People. The Mansion District was a mixed income neighborhood from the first with the more affluent clustered on Madison Place. Middle income residents— small businessmen, managers, and manufacturers—resided on all streets north of Myrtle Avenue. Irish laborers, mechanics, and ironworkers rented homes in the far southern end of the district. The area’s most distinctive and still-visible association has been with the early 20th century Italian immigrant. Albany’s “Italian Core” centered on Madison Avenue where Italian credit unions, banks, small businesses, churches, schools, and clubs knit the community together much as their counterparts served the German district further south. Much of the Italian community dispersed following construction of the Empire State Plaza and population shifts in the 1960’s. Yet their influence is still apparent here in businesses and shops along Madison Avenue.

Architecture. All major 19th century styles are represented in the Mansion District. A number of buildings employ elements of both the *Greek Revival* and *Italianate* styles, but there are some highly refined examples of these individual styles. There are also unusual examples of the application of *Gothic Revival* decoration to rowhouse construction. *Italianate* is the most widely represented style in the district and it is present in many levels of sophistication. The rowhouse predominates here as it does throughout Albany’s historic core. Typical of mid-late 19th century speculative development are long rows of five or more structures found throughout the area.

were laid in the *flemish bond* style. Over each square window is a paneled *lintel*. Oval windows framed in stone are in the center bay of the east facade on the first story and the *gable*. Note the elaborate detail in the doorway.

► **Proceed West on Madison Avenue to South Pearl Street**

18) South Pearl Street. “The main stem of the Jewish neighborhood was South Pearl Street . . . (and) ‘everything was on South Pearl . . . the fish market, the meat markets, the bakeries . . .’”

“There were Bryer’s, Bookstein’s, and Strauss’s—all kosher meat markets; Zimmerman’s and Blumberg’s kosher delicatessens; Simon’s and Schenkel’s and Brown’s and Zuckman’s bakeries; Kessler’s and Naumoff’s drugstores. There were Jewish newsrooms where Jews bought the *Daily Forward*, the *Tagblatt*, the *Day*, the *Amerikaner*; and in the same store they bought prayer books and prayer shawls. There was Teitelbaum’s glass store, Alexander’s crockery shop, Boochever’s furs, and Waldman’s department store. Harry Hellman opened the Fairyland Theater and later the Royal, and Samuel Sucknow showed silent movies at the White Way at South Pearl and Herkimer streets, with his daughter, Naomi, playing piano until business picked up, and then he’d hire a regular pianist.” (*O Albany*, p. 224)

► **Pause at South Pearl Street**

West of South Pearl Street to Eagle Street is the Mansion Historic District, an area also listed on the *National Register of Historic Places*.



So. Pearl Street looking north near Hudson Avenue.

► **Proceed East on South Ferry Street to Number 65**

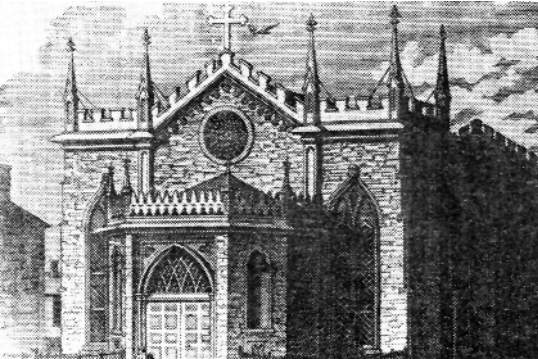
10) 65 South Ferry Street. Robert Boyd, a wealthy Albany brewer, built this three story home about 1827. The structure exhibits many features typical of high style *Federal* rowhouse design. These features include: a marble (or stone) *rusticated* basement, a high stoop, three bays or vertical divisions with a doorway to one side, a recessed doorway decorated with columns, *toplights*, and *sidelights*, *flemish bond* brick work, six-over-six window sash, barely projecting stone *lintels* and sills, a *modillion cornice*, a gable roof, and (sometimes) *dormers*. Notice that many of these details were applied to more modest rental properties such as those at 67-77 South Ferry Street, built in 1817. Additional features exhibited in this row include arched entranceways with *fanlights* and splayed stone lintels.

By the mid-19th century many German Jews of orthodox faith had settled in the Pastures. Number 77 South Ferry Street served as a meeting place for a “reform” splinter group led by the famed Isaac Mayer Wise in 1851. East European immigrants swelled the Jewish community after the turn of the century. Shunted by the well-established congregations, the largely impoverished new arrivals formed their own societies. In 1911 the Russian immigrant Agudath Achim society renovated and expanded Number 71 South Ferry Street for use as a synagogue. Note the Star of David in the circular window of the main facade.

11) 63 South Ferry Street. Numbers 59, 61, and 65 South Ferry Street were built about the same time (1827-32). They exhibit many similarities such as: basic form, a high basement, and a three-bay wide facade. But notice the subtle differences in number 63. The proportions of the windows are noticeably narrower. The details are heavier and bolder, the *lintels* over the windows and doors project further, the *cornice* is a more prominent feature of the facade and the roof is flat. This building was erected in 1860, thirty years later than the others. The features of number 63 are typical of the *Italianate*, a style that will be seen in abundance further in the tour in the Mansion Historic District.

► **Proceed East on South Ferry Street to Dongan Avenue**

12) Former St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, subsequently St. John’s School, and presently a homeless youth shelter managed by Equinox, Inc. Noted Albany architect, Philip Hooker, designed this church in 1829 for the English and Yankees who were settling the neighborhood. The building was extensively renovated in 1908, and all of the Gothic elements (pictured right) were removed.



Former St. Paul’s Episcopal Church; rendering of original design.

13) **Dongan Avenue.** Now totally demolished, “Dongan Avenue had had for some years the reputation of being one of the lifelines of the red-light district. It was such a lowly street that in 1965 the city did not even collect its garbage. ‘The Tenderloin was above Bleecker, up to Beaver Street’ (After World War II) the Tenderloin . . . had become the Gut, clearly a loss in poetic allusion, and was highlighted by one street—Green Street—whose name since the 1930’s had carried the connotation of the whole red-light district.” (*O Albany*, p. 156-8)

► **Proceed North on Dongan Avenue to Westerlo Street then proceed West on Westerlo Street to Green Street**

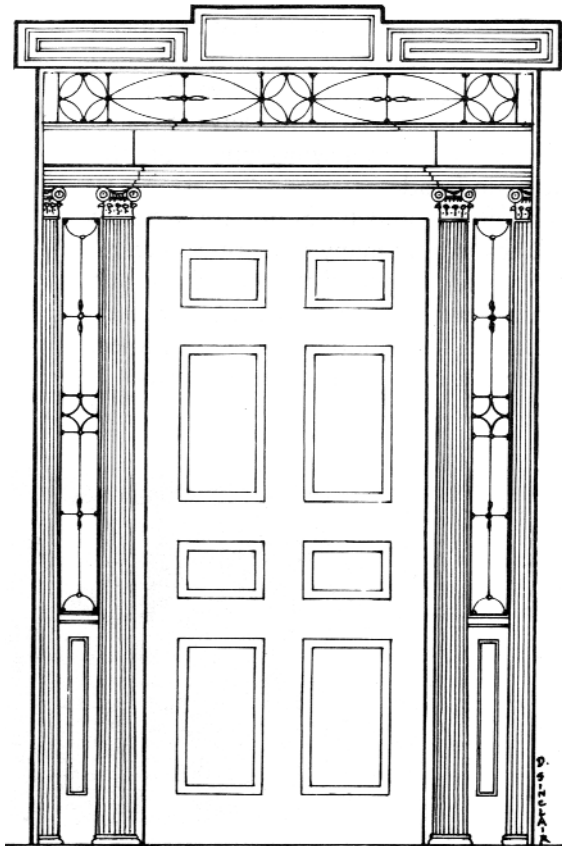
14) **Green Street.** “Green (Street) runs parallel to Dongan Avenue . . . It had been the street of the Irish (they built St. John’s Church on it, the city’s oldest Irish parish . . .). [Note: The church, on Green St. between Westerlo and John Sts., is presently vacant and unmarked.] The Italian neighborhood later wove itself through the old Irish streets (a somewhat reputable Italian doctor inspected the girls weekly to keep down disease), and the girls were of an ethnic mix. After World War II the nightclub business waned, the frenzy of wartime pleasure seeking cooled,

Governor Dewey moved his state police into the neighborhood to raid gambling and vice, causing the clientele to grow wary, and the town, for the first time in living memory, decided to lay low.”

“The ethnic and racial mix vanished in the 1950’s and the houses became solidly black.” (*O Albany*, p. 158)

► **Proceed West on Westerlo Street to No. 48**

15) **48-66 Westerlo Street.** These buildings represent the best example of *Federal* style row-house architecture remaining in the city. Note that virtually all characteristics mentioned about numbers 59-77 South Ferry Street are present in this row. No. 52-58 Westerlo Street were built in 1829 probably under the design influence of Henry Rector, architect of the Court of Appeals building. No. 52 was recently damaged by fire. The structures were owned by Rector and later by Seth Geer, builder of the famed Collonade Row in New York City. The remainder of the Westerlo Street row was completed by 1830 or 31.

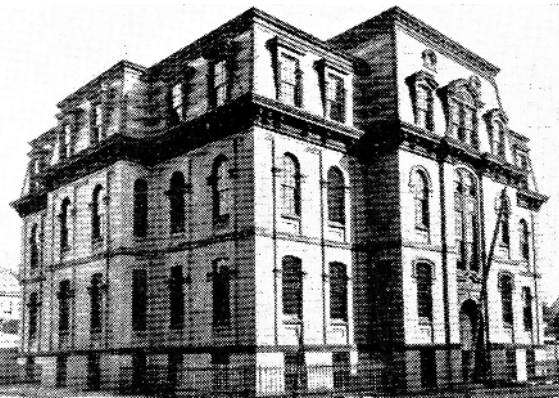


Detail of doorway at 66 Westerlo Street

► **Proceed West on Westerlo Street to Franklin Street and then North on Franklin Street to Herkimer Street. NOTE: Franklin Street has been partly converted to a pedestrian thoroughfare.**

16) **St. John’s Church of God in Christ** (SW corner Franklin and Herkimer). This building was constructed as a temple for the Congregation Beth El Jacob in 1907. St. John’s Church of God in Christ, a black congregation, took over the property a number of years ago.

By the 1960’s, the Pastures had evolved into one of Albany’s poorest black neighborhoods and housing had become a major concern. Black activist groups formed throughout the area in pursuit of improved conditions as well as civil rights. “Better Homes” was one such group. They met in another church building around the corner at 40 Franklin St. “Membership was initially impressive, forty to fifty at the early meetings, blacks and whites, old and young, Catholic and Protestant. Housing was the prime topic—getting the landlord to make repairs. Rats and roaches were always under discussion, as were trash collections, broken streets, empty houses where winos gathered, whorehouses, day-care centers, play grounds, and poll-watching—the latter a particular sore spot with the neighborhood politicians.” (*O Albany*, p. 167)



Former School 15 (demolished), corner Franklin and Herkimer

City officials, under the auspices of Urban Renewal, subsequently took on the social problems of the Pastures. Their solution was to relocate families, demolish the worst structures, and “pre-serve” the remaining (about 90 buildings in total). By the early 1980’s “old fashioned black street-lamps were being installed to light up the evening, houses were being auctioned off to lower-, middle-, and upper-income buyers, mini-parks were being built, and shaded blocks and walkways were taking shape. Who could remember when the area looked so pretty? Perhaps in all its years it never did. Millions were being spent to create these streets as the Pastures, the city’s newest and oldest and most ironic neighborhood.” (*O Albany*, p. 174-75)

► **Proceed North on Franklin Street, partly a pedestrian thoroughfare, to Madison Avenue**

17) **96 Madison Avenue** (now Angel’s Café B & B, SW corner Madison and Franklin). As you leave the Pastures this house reminds you once again of the early aristocratic traditions of the South End. In 1810 Abraham Ten Eyck, described in early records as a “gentleman”, sold this property to a well-known hardware merchant, Spencer Stafford, who built this house in 1811-12. Stafford’s contemporaries described the structure as “the most elegant private residence of its size in the city.” After Stafford’s death in 1819, the building was rented to various individuals including Joseph Yates in 1823-24, then Governor of New York State. The bricks of the exterior walls