

An undated engraving of Joseph Henry from the Academy Archives. The engraving was probably made around 1852, and combined with a signature to create a memento.

COVER PHOTO:

This plaster statue of Joseph Henry by John Flanagan, long graced the Rotunda of Albany's State Education Building until its inglorious loss or destruction when renovations replaced the original interior. This work, a prelude to the bronze model created twenty years later, was a major attraction at the St. Louis Exposition in 1923.



Academy Archives

*L*ate in life, commenting on his failure to patent the telegraph, Joseph Henry said, "I did not then consider it compatible with the dignity of science to confine benefits which might be derived from it to the exclusive use of any individual. In this, perhaps I was too fastidious."

Henry's character is further evidenced by these words: "The only reward I ever expected was the consciousness of advancing science, the pleasure of discovering new truths, and the scientific reputation to which these labors would entitle me."

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CONTENTS

FEATURES

JOSEPH HENRY
A LEGACY OF SCIENCE AND SELFLESSNESS
Travis Manchester
page 3

CELEBRATING THE LEGACY
THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF JOSEPH HENRY'S BIRTH
Travis Manchester
page 5

JOSEPH HENRY AND ALBANY
Marc Rothenberg
page 7

SIX VIGNETTES: HENRY IN ALBANY
Albert E. Moyer
page 8

DEPARTMENTS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF SCHOOL
Lawrence T. Piatelli
page 2

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF
TRUSTEES
Harry P. Meislahn '56
page 2

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION
George D. Mahoney '82
page 2

REPORT OF THE ALUMNI EDITOR
R. Christopher Dempf '77
page 2

NEWS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
Christopher M. Biehn
page 11

REUNION '98
inside back cover

LAWRENCE T. PRATELLI HEAD OF SCHOOL

I am filled with joy and excitement as I write about Joseph Henry. This *Quarterly* is dedicated not only to his memory, but also to his legacy. He brought much to our society and to civilization, both through his work with the electromagnet and his service to others. He is what we all strive to be at The Albany Academy. He epitomizes the qualities of leadership and character we attempt to teach and foster at our school. As we celebrate the 200th anniversary of his birth and his contributions to our society, let us be reminded of the fact that he is but one of many of the Sons of the Academy who have gone on to distinguish themselves in their own way as leaders and role models.

The recipient of the Alumni Association's Award for Distinguished Service for 1998 comes immediately to mind. Henry Slingerland '34 is a man who has allowed himself to be guided through life by his unselfish instincts. Professional success, courageous wartime service to his country, and visionary economic and environmental decisions are milestones in this leader's life's work. He and his wife have opened the West to today's Academy students with the Slingerland Internship, and live content with the knowledge that they have protected thousands of acres of Wyoming ranchland by donating it to posterity. Last year's commencement speaker, Ray Castellani '52, inspired everyone in his audience with the details of a life devoted to helping the most helpless among us. Ray reaches out every day to those in desperate need of perhaps the greatest gifts one human can give another: hope and respect. Our Commencement speaker this year is a man who delivers straightforward commentaries on modern day life and society to millions of readers and viewers. Andy Rooney '38 uses the most advanced electronic and the most widespread print media to deliver timeless truths, and personal integrity and the courage of his convictions are his hallmarks.

I am blessed to witness new leaders developing these qualities each and every day here at the Academy. Who could share in this pleasure more than the alumni, knowing the exceptional young men soon to be entering their ranks? When current students are recognized for leadership, they are reflecting the school's proud traditions even while they add to them. There is not room to list the names of those who, in just this school year, have distinguished themselves as scholars, artists and athletes - but come for a visit, we'll walk through the halls and I'll introduce you to them!

I would like to thank Bob Olcott '44, for organizing the December celebration, the Academy students, who recreated Joseph Henry's experiments, and chair of the Science Department Bob Neudel and Music Director Ken Goold for their participation in the event. Thanks also to the many members of our greater community, who contributed to and attended the celebration. It was a wonderful evening, and a display of all that is good about our school.

HARRY P. MEISLAHN '56 PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dear Friends: Since this issue is dedicated to Joseph Henry, my remarks will be too. They will also be on a subject familiar to you by now, the devotion of our faculty.

One of the aspects of Henry's life that struck me was how close he was to the opportunity to pursue the commercial development of his discoveries. The immensity of this is borne out by the fact that the people who did pursue them became household names, principally Samuel F.B. Morse and Alexander Graham Bell. Henry was asked in his later years why he had never chosen to seek patents, particularly in an era when capitalist business expansion was aggressive and relatively unregulated. His response was that his life was devoted to the advancement and teaching of science and he had no other ambitions.

For 185 years this has been true of the faculty of The Albany Academy. Their devotion has come at a financial sacrifice that can only be repaid in respect and in the joy that comes from working with bright young people.

Just remember when you make your next check out to "Bell Atlantic," that if this school's great teacher and mentor had chosen otherwise, it might well be written to "Joseph Henry." Just a thought.

GEORGE D. MAHONEY '82 PRESIDENT, ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

This issue pays tribute to a great fellow alumnus, Joseph Henry. Henry was given an opportunity to attend the Academy to study math, chemistry, and philosophy. His thirst for knowledge continued long after his graduation with his most notable achievement in the area of electromagnetism. While the world associates Henry with science, we must never forget his overall service to the community as a teacher, director, politician, and engineer.

Last December, Bob Olcott '44 orchestrated a 200th-birthday-celebration in Henry's honor. It brought together Henry scholars as well as future AA graduates interested in Henry's legacy. This tribute to Joseph Henry brings two

thoughts to mind.

First, the Albany Academy Alumni Association will hold its annual Alumni Scholars Dinner, at which outstanding students will receive recognition from alumni, and the association will honor one of its own by presenting the Alumni Award for Distinguished Service. Joseph Henry best represents this event, in that we recognize those present students who excel in almost every aspect of the school and that alumnus who has gone on to excel in his chosen field of endeavor, and demonstrated commitment and service to the community.

Second, we applaud Bob Olcott's continued commitment to resurrect the Archives of the Academy. Joseph Henry, the first Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute, would be somewhat concerned by the present state of his alma mater's archives. Years of photos, books and other fascinating materials, rich with tradition, have been in jeopardy because of inadequate storage. I applaud the Head of School and the board of trustees, for their commitment to protecting the Archives for future generations. Much needs to be done, but the work has begun.

Finally, congratulations to Dave Rider for winning his first of many NEPSAC titles.

R. CHRISTOPHER DEMPFF '77 QUARTERLY ALUMNI EDITOR

On October 28, 1928, the 150th year after his birth, a bronze statue of Joseph Henry was unveiled by Albany Academy students in front of their school in Academy Park, to be dedicated by Albany City Mayor John Boyd Thacher 2nd and Academy Headmaster McCormick. Afterwards, the Joseph Henry Society reproduced the experiment depicted in the statue on replicas of the original apparatus. On December 17, 1998, Joseph Henry's Bicentenary was celebrated in the same building. The ceremonies that evening, which also included demonstrations by Academy students of Henry's original experiments, were organized by Faculty Emeritus Robert Olcott II '44, retired chair of the Academy mathematics department, whose great-uncle, also named Robert Olcott, was a member of the statue unveiling committee for the 150th Anniversary celebration. Academy traditions have strong and deeper roots. One quote attributed to Joseph Henry simply yet profoundly shows his devotions as a teacher, and reflects the philosophy that guides all the dedicated Academy faculty over the years: "He has not lived in vain, who leaves behind him...a child better educated morally, intellectually, and physically." We hope readers are inspired by the words, work and accomplishments of Joseph Henry. ✱

Joseph Henry

A LEGACY OF SCIENCE AND SELFLESSNESS

by Travis Manchester

A man of great intellect and supreme character, Joseph Henry is one of the most notable and distinguished persons ever associated with The Albany Academy. At the time of his death, he was eulogized as “the Nestor of American science,” a reference to his genius and exceptional qualities as a counselor and guide to other scientists. Alexander Graham Bell, for one, said that without Joseph Henry, he never would have been able to complete work on the telephone. Henry has been called the greatest American scientist born between the time of Benjamin Franklin and the Civil War. None of these statements is an exaggeration, and the advancements he made in the fields of electromagnetism, meteorology, and communications technology have insured his place in history. Nevertheless, Marc Rothenberg of the Smithsonian Institution recently stated that Joseph Henry was “the most important scientist you never heard of.”

This year, several celebrations were held to rectify this obscurity, which can be at least partially attributed to Henry’s personal and professional modesty. Last December 17, on Henry’s actual birthday, a celebration was held at the Old Academy building (since renamed the Joseph Henry Memorial building) in downtown Albany’s Academy Park. Organized and presided over by Academy alumnus and retired Chair of the Academy’s Math Department Robert Olcott II ’44, the evening featured a demonstration of Henry’s experiments, an original video presentation, music, a short play, and three featured speakers: Professor Albert Moyer of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and the author of the excellent biography, *Joseph Henry: The Rise of an American Scientist*; Marc Rothenberg, editor of the Smithsonian Institution’s *The Papers of Joseph Henry*, a collection of Henry’s own writings; and George Wise, Henry aficionado and communications specialist at the General Electric Research and Development Center. Representatives of the cities of Albany and Schenectady and the town of Galway were on hand to officially declare December 17, 1997, as “Joseph Henry Day.” All were gathered to celebrate the life and accomplishments of this great scientist, which have been an inspiration to many.

Joseph Henry’s humble beginnings bore no sign of the greatness his future would hold. He was born in Albany on December 17, 1797, to Scottish immigrant William Henry and English-born Ann Alexander.

By most accounts the Henry family was impoverished, and after the birth of his younger brother, Joseph was sent to live with his uncle and step-grandmother in Galway to ease the financial burden on his family. There he worked mornings in a country store, and attended school in the afternoons. That school would eventually come to be renamed in his honor, but at the time Henry was considered an unmotivated student, his vast potential as yet untapped.

This would change, as the story goes, the fateful day young Henry chased a rabbit underneath a church. Coming across a loose floorboard, Henry climbed into the church, which, as it happened, was home to Galway’s small library. Finding himself alone, Henry picked up a novel and began to read. Marveling at the adventures awaiting him on the printed page, Henry returned over and over again until he had devoured most of the books the small town had to offer. Biographer Albert Moyer points to the similarity between this tale and that of *Alice in Wonderland*. Chasing a rabbit, young Henry entered the wonderland of knowledge and wisdom.

This newfound love of reading and literature became, in time, a love of storytelling, and, eventually of the theater. Finding an outlet for his creative energies in both acting and playwrighting, Henry joined (and became president of) a local theatrical society after his return to Albany in his early teens (scholars disagree on the exact date). For a time, it seems that Henry considered a career in theater. If he had done so, there can be no doubt that his incredible drive would have led him to success. As it happened, though, Henry’s life was about to take a definitive turn, one that would involve The Albany Academy, and would forever alter the course of history.

While living in his mother’s boarding house, Henry came across a copy of an old science text. He was so enamored of it that the young Scotsman who owned the book gave it to Henry. An interest was sparked in his youth the likes of which he had never felt before, and it gripped his mind with a fervor that would never diminish. However, this new hunger for scientific knowledge was unbridled and lacked discipline, as Henry was no longer receiving formal education.

Henry was an apprentice watchmaker and silversmith at the time, one of several odd jobs he held in his early years. According to one version of the story, he was sent to the Academy to repair a piece of sci-



The presence of a great and guiding scientific genius is caught in this evocative photo of this statue of Joseph Henry, in its prominence above the Reading Room of the Library of Congress in Washington.

entific equipment. However it may have happened, we know Henry came to the attention of T. Romeyn Beck, second principal of The Albany Academy. He ended up aiding Beck and his brother Lewis, both medical doctors, in several experiments. Beck and the trustees of the school were so impressed by the young man's aptitude and intelligence that they arranged for him to attend the school. It was a difficult decision for Henry, as his theater career looked promising, but in the end, he accepted the challenge and enrolled in the school.

Though older than the average AA student (by this time he was about twenty-one), Henry took full advantage of his opportunity, studying mathematics, chemistry, and especially natural philosophy, what we now call physics. In 1822, he graduated after three years of diligent scholarship. But he would not be away from the Academy for long.

He spent the next few years as a personal tutor to several of Albany's most respected families, including that of Stephen Van Rensselaer. The young man next engaged in a brief but successful stint as a surveyor, and considered that as a career before he was contacted once again by T. Romeyn Beck. A science professor had left the Academy, and Beck was hoping that Henry would fill the position. Although reluctant at first, Henry returned to The Albany Academy to teach and, once again, pursue his love of natural philosophy.

It was during these Academy years that Henry made his first great leaps in the field of electromagnetism. Electricity was still a relatively new discovery, and much about it remained a mystery. Henry set out on a quest to solve those mysteries, and brought his students at the Academy along for the ride. He invited his students to take a revolutionary "hands-on" approach, observing and aiding in many of his experiments. One such demonstration of a primitive telegraph, conducted in September, 1830, is immortalized in the stained-glass windows of the present First Presbyterian Church of Albany, in which congregation Henry was baptized.

Henry's scientific achievements were many, beginning at AA, and continuing after he moved six years later to the College of New Jersey (now Princeton) to become a professor of natural philosophy. He greatly improved upon the electromagnet, which had been invented just a few years earlier. He discovered the phenomenon of self-induction, of which the standard unit of measurement is still known as the "henry." He made possible the first industrial use of electromagnetism in 1831, with a powerful electromagnet used to separate iron ore from rocks at a mining operation in the Adirondacks. He created early prototypes of the telegraph, the electrical transformer, the electrical relay, and electric motor. He conducted some of the first experiments with what scientists later called radio transmission. Though other men, such as Samuel Morse, Michael Faraday, and George Westinghouse would be better remembered by the general public, their contributions could never have come to pass without the groundbreaking efforts of Joseph Henry, who gave us the ability to move power

from place to place, and who shaped our modern understanding of electricity with his early discoveries. Virtually every piece of electrical equipment, from the toaster, to the computer, to the generator, owes some part of its existence to the work of this man.

In 1845, Henry was named secretary and first director of the newly formed Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. James Smithson, an English scientist who had never even been to America, left the U.S. a half-million dollars with which to facilitate "the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." As both a scientist and a teacher,

Henry was perhaps the truest embodiment of this twofold ideal. Taking the responsibilities of his mission to heart, Henry used the Institution's budget to fund other scientists' research, publish scientific journals, and even to set up the earliest forerunner of the National Weather Service. Henry is duly credited with the formation of the infrastructure needed to bring American science into its own as a formidable source of knowledge for the betterment of all.

His stature was such that during the national crisis of the Civil War, Henry served as an advisor and confidante to President Abraham Lincoln. He was handpicked by Lincoln to serve as a founding member of the National Academy of Sciences, of which he later became president. When he died in 1878, the federal government offices were closed so that his funeral could be attended by President Rutherford B. Hayes, as well as

by the Vice-President, the Cabinet, members of the Supreme Court and Congress, and senior military officers. Statues in his memory stand at the Smithsonian, at Princeton, and at the site of the Old Academy here in Albany.

Joseph Henry is remembered as a scientist who managed to keep pace with the better-funded European scientists of his era while teaching seven classes a day. He was a great administrator, and even a politician, as well as a family man. Perhaps Henry's greatest legacy is that of his selflessness, his willingness to freely share his discoveries with the world. Moyer points out that Henry thought "in terms of duty to the nation and science rather than [in terms] of self-fulfillment."

George Wise would add that Joseph Henry serves as an inspiration to all mankind: to the young, as a model of one who succeeded in the face of adversity; and to those who guide the destinies of the young, as a reminder to watch for the great minds of the next generations, and to cultivate them once found.

Selflessness, perseverance, intelligence, and wisdom. These are qualities that make men great; qualities that make Joseph Henry a credit to all of us associated with The Albany Academy. ✚



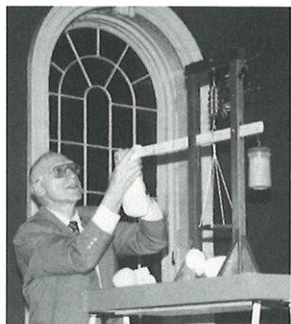
T. Romeyn Beck, Henry's mentor and friend. He and his brother Lewis, both medical doctors, were also educators and leaders in the civic affairs of the city. Romeyn was principal of the Academy from 1817 to 1848.

Travis Manchester is a senior at the College of Saint Rose and is currently interning in the Albany Academy's communications department. He would like to note the following sources used in his research: Albert Moyer's *Joseph Henry: The Rise of an American Scientist*, the Smithsonian Institute's Joseph Henry Papers Project Web site, the SUNY Albany Joseph Henry Bicentennial Web site, *The Times Union*, and *The Daily Gazette*.

CELEBRATING *the* LEGACY

The 200th Anniversary of Joseph Henry's Birth

by Travis Manchester



R. Thayer

Albert J. Read, retired professor at the State University of New York in Oneonta, demonstrating the strength of a Joseph Henry electromagnet.

“We wanted to call attention to a great figure in American science,” says Robert Olcott II ‘44, retired math chair at The Albany Academy, and one of the organizers of some special events this past winter.

Westinghouse, Morse, Edison, and Faraday: each of these men built success, in some part, on the foundations laid by Joseph Henry. Unlike theirs, however, Henry’s is not a household name. Two hundred years after his birth, a group of men and women came forward to change that.

The process began last July with Olcott and several other historically- and scientifically-minded individuals meeting to discuss the upcoming anniversary. Eventually, representatives from The Albany Academy, the Albany Institute of History & Art, the State University of New York at Albany, Union College, the New York State Museum, the Galway Preservation Society, and General Electric joined, as they planned ways to honor the respected scientist, teacher, and administrator.

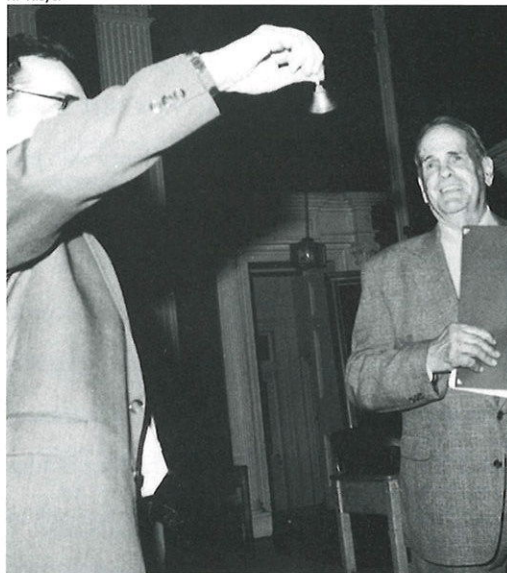
For Olcott, the group’s efforts came to fruition in the Joseph Henry Memorial building on December 17, 1997, the bicentennial

of Henry’s birth. The building in Academy Park, which was once home to the Academy and now houses the administrative offices of the Albany City School District, was the setting of a “people’s celebration” of Henry’s birthday. In that building where Henry attended classes, in the very room where he demonstrated his early telegraph to AA students, Olcott and co-chairman Roy Neal of the Galway Preservation Society presided over the multi-faceted event.

The evening began with official proclamations by representatives of the cities of Albany and Schenectady and the town of Galway, declaring December 17, 1997,

as “Joseph Henry Day” in those three locales. Academy students directed by Ken Goold performed “The Albany Academy March Song.” Students of Joseph Henry Elementary School, under the direction of Gina Greco, performed a short play and sang a tribute to Henry written by Jerry Neal. These were followed by a presentation of the original video, “Joseph Henry: Faces and Places,”

R. Thayer



Faculty Emeritus Bob Olcott ‘44 looks on as AA Science Chair Robert Neudel rings the very bell that signaled success during Henry’s earliest experiments in telegraphy

narrated by Olcott and produced by videographer Don Elliott. This portion of the evening was concluded by a demonstration of Henry's equipment by Albert J. Read, retired professor at the State University of New York in Oneonta, and another by AA students who were guided in their preparations by Academy science teacher Dominick Cammarere and science chair Robert Neudel.

The second half of the evening featured short talks by three distinguished Henry expert, who passed their knowledge on to all in attendance. The first of these was Dr. Albert E. Moyer, author of *Joseph Henry: The Rise of an American Scientist*, the first scholarly biography of Henry published in two generations. A professor of history at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Moyer shared "Six Vignettes," anecdotes from Henry's Albany years.

Marc Rothenberg, the second guest speaker, is the editor of the Smithsonian Institution's *The Papers of Joseph Henry*. An extensive collection of Henry's own writings and correspondence, the seventh volume of the project has just been published. Rothenberg shared his unique insights in a presentation entitled, "Joseph Henry and Albany," which described Henry as both scientist and hero.

The final guest of the evening was George Wise, a longtime fan of Henry's and a communications specialist at the General Electric Research and Development Center. In a particularly inspiring speech, he made note of Henry's genius as a teacher who shared with young minds the excitement of science.

Academy students Sasha Bakhru '99, Taibeen Khandaker '99, Matt Peters '00, Andrew Stone '01, Chris Macomber '01, Alex Duggan '00, Eric Hayden '00, Paul Saraza '00, Paul Turaew '00, Brian Adams '00, Jeff Pagadala '00, Anthony Constantino '00, and Jared Piagione '00 all performed or otherwise helped make the event a great success.

"It came out well," said Olcott. "Everyone was holding his breath until the last minute, but I was repaid for my efforts with the tributes given to this great person who grew up here in Albany."

The Academy's ceremony was not the only one to honor our meritorious alumnus. Earlier that day, there were pictorial stamp cancellations, a book signing by Moyer, and even Joseph Henry coloring books for the kids in Henry's second home town of Galway.

Another event was at Union College in Schenectady, which bestowed upon Henry an honorary master's degree in 1829. From November to January, the college's Mandeville Gallery was home to an exhibit called, "Joseph Henry: An Enduring Legacy," which featured scientific devices of Henry's creation, on loan from the Smithsonian. This exhibit was assembled by Frank Wicks, professor of mechanical engineering at Union, and curated by Rachel Seligman of the Mandeville Gallery.

On December 2, the State University of New York at Albany, whose physics hall is named for Henry, held a lecture series with several prominent Joseph Henry experts. The event, spearheaded by retired professors Jack Smith and Harold Story, featured a presentation by Dr. Frank A. J.

L. James of the Royal Institution in London. Dr. James, an expert on Henry's contemporary Michael Faraday, said during a television interview that it was Joseph Henry who put American science on the map, paving the way for it to become the scientific power it is today. He added that it was intriguing to him that Henry was not so well known today, especially here in his hometown of Albany.

But thanks to the work of each of these dedicated people, perhaps that's not as true today as it was just a few months ago. ❖



Albany Academy students recreate Henry's experiments using a replica of his early telegraphic device. Above: Andrew Stone'01 and Chris Macomber '01; Below: Sasha Bakhru '99 joined by Macomber.



JOSEPH HENRY

and ALBANY

By Marc Rothenberg

In 1954, the National Historical Publications Commission rectified the nation's neglect of its scientific heritage by placing Joseph Henry on a list of Americans whose papers were considered most worthy of publication.



R. Thayer

Marc Rothenberg of the Smithsonian Institution, editor of *The Papers of Joseph Henry*.

In 1966, the American Philosophical Society, the National Academy of Sciences, and the Smithsonian Institution launched the Joseph Henry Papers

Project. Roughly 90,000 Henry documents were collected from repositories around the world, and the most important of these have been selected for publication in The Papers of Joseph Henry. Seven volumes have been published to date, and eight more are projected.

Marc Rothenberg, the second editor to head the project, spoke at the bicentennial celebration in the Old Academy building. The following is taken from his remarks at that event.

The natural question to ask when one is in the city of Joseph Henry's birth on his 200th birthday is: what was the role of Albany in Henry's career as a scientist? The answer, very simply, is that Albany served as Henry's launching pad.

First, Henry learned valuable lessons about life in general. Remember, Henry had a very unstable youth. His father was an alcoholic, and at about age seven his parents sent him to Galway to be raised by his step-grandmother and an uncle. Henry's schooling was rudimentary, as his phonetic spelling attests, and he failed in a number of attempts to find an apprenticeship which satisfied him. In Albany,

he hung out with boys of questionable character, and on at least one occasion, was "nearly put into the watch house" for assault. By his middle teens, both his father and the uncle that raised him, his alternative Galway father figure, were dead. Yet, in his late teens he discovered science, and found his calling. Through hard work, mentors (or alternative father figures) who believed in him, and luck, he became a leader of American culture. He himself once wrote a student that:

The advantage of fortune, of family connection, of favorable introduction, of accomplishments and agreeable qualities, a perfect knowledge of the world—all these may fail to advance you in prosperity.

So what will advance you? Henry's answer, based on his experience in Albany:

Industry, study, perseverance, [sic] a devotion of your days and nights to your profession, whatever it may be, making all other objects secondary, all other pursuits subservient to what you desire.

Second, Albany supplied Henry with the institutional framework he needed to grow as a scientist. Specifically, it provided him with scientific societies.

The first scientific society that Henry was connected to was the Albany Lyceum of Natural History. At first glance, this was an odd organization for a future physicist to join. But Henry was not yet committed to physics. The Lyceum, founded in 1823, focused on four disciplines: geology, mineralogy, botany, and zoology. And Henry's first love was geology. It was a society of young professionals: the average age of the members was under thirty, and two-thirds were attorneys, scientists, or physicians. These were the future leaders of Albany, and many had attended the Albany Academy, where Henry had studied part-time from 1818 through 1821. The members were important companions for an ambitious 24-year-old seeking a career in science, but without a permanent job. He served as curator for the Lyceum, his first experience working with

museum collections.

We know little of what went on at the Lyceum meetings, and almost nothing about Henry's role in the society, but it is safe to say that Henry's work as curator satisfied his fellow members, for when on May 4, 1825, the Lyceum merged with the Society for the Promotion of Useful Arts—a group of the Albany leaders sympathetic to learning—to create the Albany Institute, Henry was elected one of the curators of natural history, a position he held until 1829, when he became librarian.

The Albany Institute was a typical American learned society of the anti-bellum period. At the meetings, the leading professionals and businessmen of the community gathered to learn what was new in science and scholarship in general from the small percentage of those (in the Albany Institute, about 15%) who did actual research. It was at a meeting of the Albany Institute on October 30, 1824, that Joseph Henry made his first scientific address: "On the Chemical and Mechanical Effects of Steam." This paper contains many of the characteristics of later Henry presentations. First, it is evident Henry read everything he could get his hands on. Literature searches were an earmark of his research program. (His belief in the importance of such searches was one of the reasons he worked so hard during his years as Secretary of the Smithsonian to ensure the free exchange of scientific publications.) Second, Henry tested, whenever possible, the conclusions of the literature. He accepted nothing on authority. Third, he wrote in haste. This presentation, never published, would have required a lot of reworking to be publishable, including some recalculation of some of the quantitative examples. Like a number of his papers, including some that were published, this paper appears to have been finished minutes before he delivered it. Finally, the paper emphasized the relationship between basic research and application, a theme that Henry came back to time and time again in his career.

Henry remained an active member of the Albany Institute until he left the city for Princeton. What did he get out of this membership? First of all, an opportunity for interaction with professionals and community leaders.



R. Olcott

On two trips to Princeton, Bob Olcott '44 added to the Academy's photographic treasures with pictures taken on the Princeton campus. Here we see the statues of two American giants and men of science, Benjamin Franklin and Joseph Henry, that flank the entrance to Palmer Hall, the former physics building at the New Jersey university.

Henry gained important experience for a man who would spend sixteen years in Princeton telling future businessmen, ministers, and lawyers why the study of science was so important for their respective careers, and thirty more in

Washington interacting with the political leadership of the nation.

Second, the Albany Institute supplied

Henry with an audience. Henry's first major paper on electromagnetism was presented to the Albany Institute in 1827 and published a year later. And perhaps most important, the Institute had a fine library, giving Henry access to, in his own words, "a valuable collection of scientific works and most of the European periodical publications." What it did not give Henry was a critical audience. None of his colleagues at the Institute fully understood what Henry was doing and how significant it was. Scientifically, he was a big fish in a small pond. And there was no other big fish to help smooth his rough edges as a scientist. He outgrew Albany. And he went on to glory, first at Princeton, then in Washington, D.C.

As we know, Henry died in Washington on May 13, 1878. For General William Tecumseh Sherman, Civil War commander and Smithsonian Regent, the death of Henry on May 13, 1878, meant the nation had lost a "hero."

In his eulogy of Henry, delivered during the memorial service for Henry in the Capitol on January 16, 1879, Sherman contrasted the results of Henry's heroism with those of a soldier's. "His [Henry's] conquest was not over cities razed, homes desolated, or the forms of men crushed and lacerated, but over the obstacles of nature, in mastering her laws and har-

nessing them to the uses of his fellow-men. No widows or orphans are left to mourn over his victories, but millions who have reason to rejoice in the increased knowledge and stimulated industry which follows in the wake of his intellectual triumphs."

Sherman's descriptions of the scientist as conquering hero, perhaps all the more powerful because of his own reputation as a ruthless warrior, reminds us on Henry's 200th birthday of his significance to those who knew him. Henry's contemporaries had no doubts that his legacy to American science was multifaceted, enduring, and powerful.

First and foremost, Henry was a "discoverer." His pioneering work on the nature of electricity, magnetism, and the interaction between the two was valued both for its own sake and because it demonstrated how understanding nature could lead to technological advancement. In recognition of his discoveries in electromagnetic induction the unit of inductance was named after him. Almost all his eulogists reminded their audiences that Henry was responsible for a communications revolution as the father of the telegraph.

Second, he was a public servant. As a government adviser, a member of various government boards and commissions, and president of the National Academy of Sciences, Henry served the nation. Most commonly mentioned was Henry's membership on the United States Light-House Board. Again, Henry's research was praised because it led to practical results.

Linked to his service to the public was Henry's personal integrity. Henry died toward the end of the Gilded Age, perhaps the most corrupt period in American politics. That Henry could serve in positions of public trust for over three decades and not enrich himself was worthy of trumpeting. Eulogists could point to Henry and proclaim there were still honest public servants in Washington.

Then there were his thirty-one years as the first Secretary of the Smithsonian. Henry's importance as Secretary was less in the specifics of his program than in the general principles he laid down for the Smithsonian, principles which have been essential for the continuing greatness

of this organization.

There was a fifth and less obvious legacy that Sherman identified. It was a legacy none of Henry's fellow scientists could raise without seeming to be self-serving. But Sherman could speak of it: the elevation of science in the United States to an important career path. Henry's life should be "an example to the youth of our land," said the man of war about the man of science, "to show that honor and fame may be earned in the school of philosophy as well as in the more tempting and active scenes of public life."

Sherman was reminding his audience that one can tell a lot about a nation by whom it chooses to honor, something that is still true today. By commemorating Henry, the nation was encouraging research and study and a career in science, as we are here.

Today, there have been events to commemorate the birth of Henry. Perhaps the most important paid Henry, however, continues to be the research being done across the nation. General Sherman would have thought so. He called Henry the "prototype" of American researchers and concluded that "their stimulated labors in the cause of that science he loved so well will erect to him a monument more lasting than of brass or marble." And so it is, even today. ✦

SIX VIGNETTES: HENRY IN ALBANY

by Albert E. Moyer

Smithsonian Institution Press recently published Albert Moyer's new biography of Joseph Henry. Issued to help commemorate the bicentennial of Henry's birth, Joseph Henry:

The Rise of an American Scientist is an alternate selection of the Library of Science



R. Thayer

Professor Albert Moyer of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, author of *Joseph Henry: The Rise of an American Scientist*.

Book Club (Newbridge). Moyer serves as professor and chair of the department of history at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. He also holds appointments as an adjunct member of the university's Center for Science and Technology Studies and as a research associate at the Smithsonian Institution.

At the bicentennial program held in the Old Academy Building on the evening of Dec. 17, 1997, Professor Moyer presented to the Academy an inscribed, leather-bound copy of the new biography. Beforehand, he also summarized a few pertinent passages from his book. These passages are now reprinted courtesy of Smithsonian Institution Press.

THE ACADEMY An early alumnus of the Albany Academy recalled that its capable staff and imposing facilities reflected the community's strong commitment to education. In particular, as the school took shape in the 1810s, most of Albany's leaders "were Dutchmen, and to them the cause of education went hand in hand with the cause of religion—both were equally dear." Housed in a stately, spacious, sandstone building dedicated in 1817 near the city's center and staffed by a respected faculty that included up to six professors and tutors, the Albany Academy attracted boys from the municipality's middle- and upper-class families. Boys who were at least eight years old, whose parents could afford the \$10.00 quarterly tuition, could enroll in the Academy's English School; this was an elementary division that covered basic reading, penmanship, grammar, and arithmetic along with a smattering of geography, history, and bookkeeping. More advanced "scholars" could pay \$12.50 per quarter to enroll in the five levels of the classical and mathematical departments; here they could approach college-level proficiency as they mastered Latin, Greek, belles lettres, geography, geometry, algebra, and natural philosophy. Academy leaders recognized that few comparable schools emphasized subjects involving mathematics and physical science and, moreover, that residents of the region could make practical use of training in accounting, navigation, surveying, astronomy, and mechanics. Therefore, under the guidance of principal T.

Romeyn Beck, a physician with wide scientific interests, the school paid special attention to mathematics and physical science. In fact, about the time that Henry enrolled, the trustees approved the addition of chemistry to the curriculum, and Dr. Beck himself initiated a series of affiliated chemistry lectures open to the public at a charge of \$5.

TWENTY-SOMETHING A letter of recommendation that Dr. Beck wrote for Henry in 1826 reveals ongoing confusion about Henry's age in this era of meager birth records.

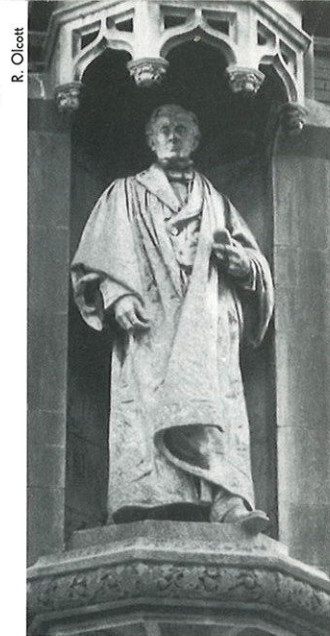
Curiously, in this 1826 letter, Beck pegs Henry's current age as about twenty-three. This figure underestimates his true age of twenty-eight by an even greater margin than Henry's more customary two-year reduction. But Henry's and, moreover, Beck's misconceptions clarify why an institution for boys so readily enrolled a young man actually in his early twenties. School records indicate that Joseph studied at Albany Academy from about 1819 through 1822, or from about age twenty-one through twenty-four. However, Henry probably assumed that he enrolled at about age nineteen or, if Beck's misreckoning corresponded to Henry's own misconception, at about age sixteen—well within the usual range for students. Muddled as his age might be, Henry was at last a regular student in a new-fashioned school. And as it turns out, Beck and his Academy staff had a great deal to offer the eager young man....

STUDY HABITS An anecdote passed down among Albany relatives and friends attests to Henry's diligence as a student. Living probably with his mother or perhaps his aunt Margaret Henry while attending the Academy, his habit was to get up during the night and work on unsolved problems that were keeping him awake. For this purpose, he maintained a whitewashed wall in his room on which, by candlelight, he would write with charcoal. When finished, he would rinse the wall with water and then cover it with a fresh coat of lime whitewash, ready for the next night's challenge. No matter the story's truth, by the middle of the Albany Academy's summer quarter in 1822, Henry had immersed

himself deeply in the theories, practices, and applications of mathematics, chemistry, and physics. Through dogged application to courses, textbooks, and journals, the twenty-four-year-old student and intermittent teacher was preparing himself for fuller participation in the regional community of technical educators and practitioners.

PROFESSOR HENRY Hoping to build on his success leading a survey party for a proposed "Great State Road" across southern New York, Henry was disappointed in 1826 after failing to land a job with the *Topographical Engineers of the U.S. Army*.

Henry was determined, however, to follow a career in civil engineering, particularly surveying. He had, as he recalled in later decades, become "enamored with the profession of an engineer" and found it "very pleasant & congenial employment." Though the Army position dangled beyond his reach, his reputation from the road survey continued to spread and he began to receive tenders of other commissions. Offers were pending to become either an engineer on a canal project in Ohio or a director of a mine in Mexico. But in April a job opened closer to home. The professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at the Albany Academy resigned because of a personal scandal involving "a female of low character." Beck urged Henry to apply for the vacant position. Henry demurred, as he later disclosed . . . , not only because it was "against his wishes for he preferred engineering" but also because a close friend actively sought the position. Through Beck's influence, however, the academy trustees elected the reluctant Henry to the position, with duties commencing the following September at an annual salary of \$1,000.



Silversmith, actor, man of science, teacher, physician, and engineer had all been options, but an unexpected Academy resignation settled the twenty-eight-year-old's uncertainty about a career. . . In an era of U.S. history when few persons made science their occupation, when even fewer went into natural philosophy, and when still fewer broke into science from modest socio-economic backgrounds, Henry was beginning his life's labors as a rarity among rarities.

ALBANY REACTIONS The students appreciated Henry's efforts. George Carpenter, a pupil from 1826 who later tutored at the Academy, recalled: "In disposition he was most kind, in manners courteous and agreeable; his face was remarkably handsome, his finely chiseled features being lighted up with mild, blue eyes. He was a favorite with the pupils, always ready and willing to aid them in their studies, winning their esteem and affection." H. N. Smyth reminisced that Henry's willingness to help extended even to "a dull boy" such as himself who was having trouble with Dr. Beck's course in English literature during the academic year 1830-1831. "My composition was heart rending," he recollected, "and as they were submitted to and supervised by Doct. Beck little consideration for my short comings was extended. I had however the sympathy of Prof. Henry, who sat by me and aided me with ideas and phrasiology [sic]." As a young student, Smyth felt that Prof. Henry "was the realization of all that was manly, generous, sympathetic and kind as an instructor. . . ." Yet another student, Alexander Bradford, fondly remembered that Henry "rose with the sun to instruct his pupil, eager after knowledge. . . ." Local citizens also seemed to appreciate his public presentations. After Henry moved to Princeton, he told his new students an anecdote about his first, open Albany talk on galvanism. Though the talk had been "attended by a large Assembly of the Elite from Albany & its surroundings," a merchant friend in the audience nonplused Henry. The merchant told him afterwards that whereas the presentation was interesting and good, it contained "nothing especially new." A few weeks



The Henry Family, caught in a restful interlude. Joseph and his wife, Harriet, and their three daughters, May Anna, Helen Lousia, and Caroline, were a devoted family. In a charming photo supplied by Marc Rothenberg from the Smithsonian collection, the Henrys are pictured here with croquet mallets, in their Washington years, the early 1870s.

later, however, a lecture on the same topic by a traveling speaker from New York City completely enchanted the merchant. Henry recalled that his own talk conveyed the latest information clearly but with "little ornamental flourish"; in contrast, the visiting speaker gave an amateurish discourse but packaged it in eloquent language. "So young gentlemen," Henry reportedly advised his Princeton students, "you see if you would be considered profound, you must not be too plain."

THE STAGECOACH *Joseph wed his cousin Harriet Alexander, in Schenectady at the Reformed Dutch Church, May, 1830. Because the couple had yet to establish their own household in Albany, Harriet remained in her mother's home in Schenectady while Joseph returned to Albany for each week's normal teaching duties. Although they could visit each other by taking advantage of the stagecoaches plying the turnpike between Albany and Schenectady, their first brief separation stirred in Henry a "sense of loneliness [sic], a feeling of anxiety."*

A slightly later separation also stirred pas-

sions. As the first month of their marriage drew to a close, Joseph implored Harriet to follow through with her plan to visit him in Albany: "Do not disappoint me for you know that I possess but little of the virtue called patience and two weeks is by far too long an absence for a person of less ardent feelings than myself." Apparently, on occasion, Joseph also stayed in Schenectady and relied on a morning stagecoach to get to the Academy by the required time of 9:00 a.m. One morning the coach failed to pick him up and Joseph, pleading the urgency of his predicament, persuaded another coachman to make a special trip to overtake the errant vehicle. Traveling rapidly, the driver successfully caught the coach and transferred Joseph, an unusual action that surprised the other passengers. Joseph's embarrassment was compounded a little later, however, when yet another speeding driver caught and hailed the coach, announcing that he had a warrant for the arrest of one of the passengers. All eyes turned to Joseph, but the fugitive turned out to be a sleeping man next to him. ✚

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

Christopher M. Biehn, Director

THE GIFT OF GIVING

In this issue of the Quarterly we point with pride to the contributions made by a great man, not only to the Academy, but to the world. Joseph Henry's story is a particularly striking example of an Academy education: a young man's talents are recognized and nourished at the Academy, and the fruits of his labors in later life incalculably enrich communities near and far. Henry's education was funded by generous mentors, and he returned the favor by generously spreading knowledge to the world—as an educator as well as a scientist. This generosity is perhaps the Academy's greatest tradition, one that is continued every day by members of the Academy family. Contributions of money ... encouragement in the form of praise and constructive criticism ... shoulders put to the wheels of individual and joint endeavors ... insights and guidance arising from professional expertise unselfishly shared. Valuable time, attention, and resources, all freely given by those who wish to protect the legacy and assure the future of the Academy and its students. For all of this, we are rightfully grateful.

THE ACADEMY ARCHIVES

Preparations for the celebration of Joseph Henry's Bicentenary celebration led to a comprehensive, time-consuming examination of related materials stored in the Academy Archives. This research for information about one extraordinary individual was undertaken by

Room 0-8, home of the Archives, as pictured in the Fall 1981 Quarterly.



A. Sabisch

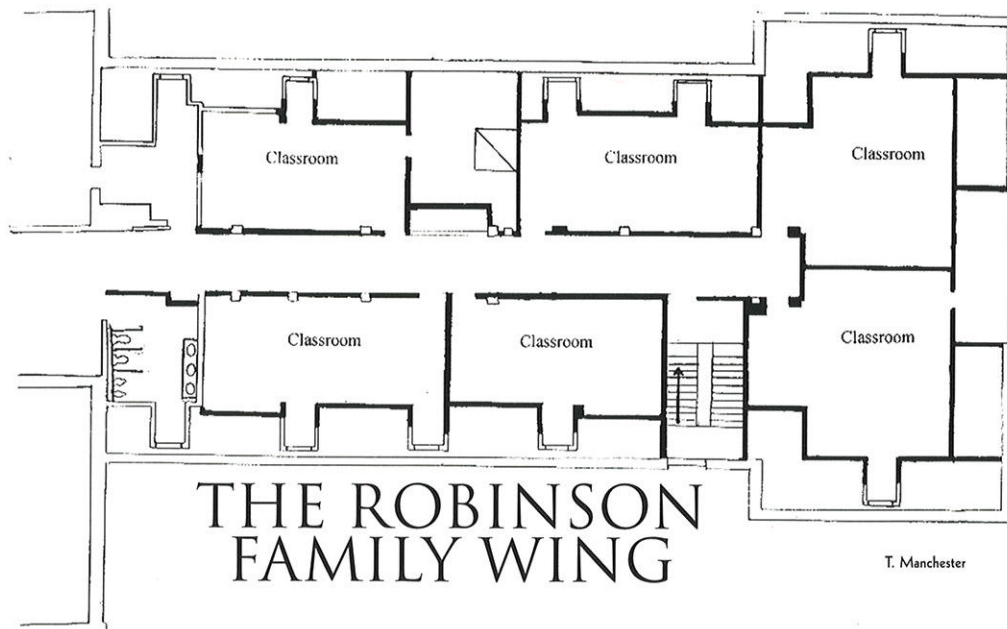
another extraordinary man, alumnus and faculty emeritus Robert Olcott '44. He brought to the task skills of scholarship finely honed over a lifetime as an educator, and the unflagging perseverance of a true son

of the Academy. The excellence of the tribute to Henry last December 17 speaks of Bob Olcott's achievement, one earned under far less than ideal circumstances at the Old Academy, which was nevertheless the ideal location, the very place Henry's original experiments were conducted.

Protecting the heritage of history and scholarship that has been gathered into the Archives of the Academy, which in recent years has been sustained by the efforts of Bob Olcott, was originally the work of another man long associated with the Academy. Alfred Sabisch enriched the school immeasurably as a teacher, coach, athletic director, and inspiration from 1931 (when the New Academy, the Marcus Reynolds building on Academy Road that we now occupy,) opened to his retirement in 1971. In retirement, he harnessed the interest and trapped the collections of Academy colleagues such as faculty members David Midgley and James Colton, and his wife Ruth Colton, who was the alumni secretary at the Academy for years, in a dedicated effort to create the Academy Archives. His gifts as a photographer enriched that undertaking and endowed us with many great treasures.

In past decades, the archival storage space at the Academy was moved several times, when difficult determinations for space allocations did not prioritize that purpose. Two years ago, Bob Olcott made a gift to the Academy's Legacy Campaign to establish a permanent home for the archives and to provide equipment essential for preserving important, and fragile, documents, photographs and artwork. Alumnus and Trustee Matthew Bender '49 provided additional funds, in order to ensure that the finished space would provide not only appropriate storage, but also serve as a place where scholars, alumni, parents, faculty, staff and all students of the Academy's history could have access to the materials.

Thanks to the generosity of Bob Olcott and Matt Bender IV, the Academy Archives will be restored in the spirit of the original, as it was envisioned, planned, and created by Al Sabisch, aided in critically important ways by E. Wayne Harbinger '55, AA team physician, who served at the time as archives liaison and historian for the Alumni Association, and Kenneth Brock, a professional archivist who ably guided space and equipment considerations. The plans to restore the Archives to its former location on the Buttery level of the Reynolds building, in the northeast corner, will begin with a complete examination of the space, and thorough research into recent archival and preservation advances that could enhance the project. The anticipated date of completion of the project is the fall of 1998.



THE ROBISON FAMILY WING

Returning the Archives to its first home became a possibility because that space was freed by a gift from other generous members of the Academy family, alumnus and trustee Richard Robison, Class of 1948, and the Robison Family Foundation. By providing funds for the major interior reconstruction of the top floor in the North Wing of the Reynolds building, into new classroom and meeting spaces, their latest gift has also freed space throughout the building.

Construction has begun on the Robison Family Wing, where, in September, 1998, the classrooms of the Middle School will be consolidated. Plans for the Robison Wing call for six classrooms and a meeting area large enough for parent meetings and student assemblies. Lavatories and an interior staircase connecting the third floor with the Library level are also included. The Robison family, and the Robison Family Foundation, have a rich history of philanthropic giving, and the Academy has been fortunate to be among their beneficiaries. The Robison Track at the Academy is another visible sign of the generosity of the foundation, and the plaque between the north entrance of the school and the track pays thanks to Barbara R. Sporck, Betty V. and James A. Robison, Ellen B. and Richard G. Robison '48, and Elissa R. and W. Harry Prout, who form the foundation. When Head of School Larry Piatelli identified the urgent need for creating a classroom complex that would create a cohesive Middle School community and support the educational goals of faculty and students, Richard Robison '48 and the Robison Family Foundation answered the call. The under-utilized attic space that formerly housed the rifle range was the ideal location, and the project moved forward. In creating new space, this project greatly increases available space on every level of the Reynolds building for worthy academic and related purposes, such as the Archives.

THE STANDISH NATATORIUM

Realization of the potential inherent in every boy's mind and body is at the heart of an Academy education. For many years, the Academy held a unique advantage in being able to offer students the opportunity to train and excel as swimmers. And students did just that, establishing themselves and the school as leaders in the sport. As time passed, however, the adequacy and efficiency of the facility declined due to age, advancements in the manufacture of indoor swimming facilities, and the proliferation of pools in schools and community centers. When a financially

advantageous opportunity to build a state-of-the-art natatorium arose in the 1980s, the Academy's board of trustees bravely risked the necessary debt. As a result the Academy community has had the benefit of this magnificent facility. The debt was a heavy load to bear in years of rising demands for funds for essential maintenance, imperative technological investment, and faculty enrichment. Nevertheless, the pool has always been recognized as a valuable and necessary asset.

J. Spencer Standish '42, alumnus and trustee emeritus, has stepped forward with a magnanimous gift that recognizes the intrinsic value, not only of the natatorium, but of an education that respects the whole man. His gift will allow the Academy to retire the pool debt. In tribute to him, the facility will be known as the J. Spencer Standish '42 Natatorium, and formally named as such in ceremonies to be held in September, 1998, celebrating the conclusion of the Legacy Campaign. The gift is part of a larger group of gifts labeled "Trustees Challenge." Spencer Standish's gift, along with gifts from many other trustees, now serves as the foundation, and inspiration, for the matching million dollars that will be solicited from alumni and parents as we work to successfully complete the \$7 million goal of the Legacy Campaign.

THE REA HISTORY PROJECT

In a perfect complement to the projects above, alumnus C. Woodrow Rea, Class of 1966, has stepped forward to fund a comprehensive history of The Albany Academy, to be published in conjunction with a forthcoming alumni directory. The project, which is slated to be completed in the Spring of 2000, will include a photographic and narrative history of the Academy as well as a detailed directory of alumni, complete with fax and e-mail addresses.

And so the Academy moves forward by embracing the oldest, most grand of its traditions. The generosity of the entire Academy family strengthens the mind, body, and spirit of each boy who enters our doors, ensuring the growth of tomorrow's Joseph Henrys. ✚

REUNION '98

Friday and Saturday, June 5 and 6, 1998

ACTIVITIES ON CAMPUS, FRIDAY, JUNE 5

- 12 Noon** Head of School's Luncheon at Leonard House
For all members of the Class of 1948 and the Class of 1973
Spouses and guests will be included in the invitation
Special Guided Tour of the Robison Family Wing
for the Gold and Silver Reunion Classes
- 1:00 p.m.** Half-hour Guided Tour of the Robison Family Wing
Open to All Returning Alumni
- 2:00 p.m.** Competitive Drill, immediately followed by the Alumni Parade;
which will be immediately followed by Group Reunion Photos, taken by
Classes (*beverages will be served*).
- 3:30 p.m.** Tree planting Memorial Service for Thomas O. Gamble, Jr. '80
- 4:30 p.m.** Annual Alumni Meeting in the Chapel
- 5:30 p.m.** Cocktails in the Standish Natatorium
- 6:30 p.m.** Lobster Bake under the Tent in the Quad for all Returning AA and AAG
alumni and alumnae and their guests

ACTIVITIES ON CAMPUS, SATURDAY, JUNE 5

- 10:00 a.m.** Bagel Breakfast with the Head of School, the President of the Board,
and the President of the Alumni Association
- 11:00 a.m.** Tour of the School and Campus, including the Robison Wing, the Standish
Natatorium, and Renovated Classrooms and Laboratories

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The Class of '77 enjoyed a large turnout at their 20th Reunion Dinner at Albany Country Club.

First Row, l to r: Bob Higgins, Jim Elaqua, Jim Mulderry, Ed Deberri, Joe O'Connor, Bill Juresak, Ted David. Second Row: Mike Ryan, George Stasior, Phil Steck, Greg Bucher, Lyle Seltzer, Eric Feltman, Eric Reintsema. Third Row: Rick Schrade, Paul Lewis, Chris Dempf, Wes Jakovic, Tim Alston, Makey Towne.

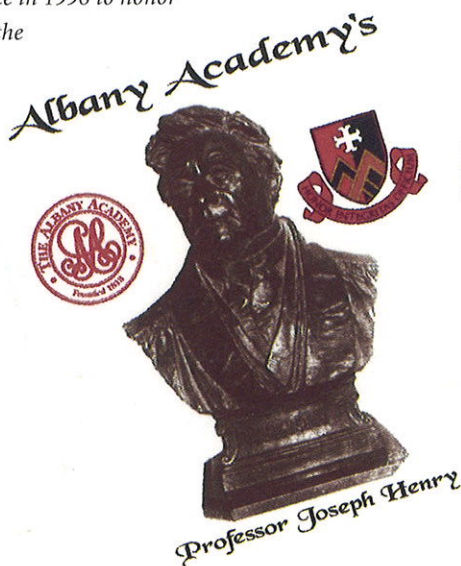


Individual Class Reunions are being planned by Reunion Classes for Saturday afternoon and evening.

Mark your calendar now and plan to join classmates, friends and faculty as we share memories of the past and joys of the present. If you can help, please call your class secretary or the office of institutional advancement at 518-465-1461, ext. 125. Frank J. Williams '73 Rust Environment & Infrastructure, Inc.

The cachet pictured here was created to mark the 200th anniversary of Joseph Henry's birth on December 17, 1897. The cachet, or envelope bearing printed artwork connected with this special event, also bears a stamp connected with the event. On Dec. 17, 1998, the stamp was canceled with the distinctive cancellation created by the Postal Service for the event. Such cancellations are destroyed thirty days after the date of first use, thereby making cachets with canceled stamps collector's items.

The Joseph Henry cachet is composed of a reproduction of the bust of Joseph Henry (commissioned by the International Association of Electrical Engineers, and now in the Museum of the City of Turin in Italy), in the upper left corner, flanked by the seal of the Academy and the shield from the Academy's coat-of-arms. The stamp is one issued by the Postal Service in 1996 to honor the 150th anniversary of the Smithsonian Institution, and the cancellation is the one created by the Postal Service to mark the Joseph Henry Bicentenary.



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REUNION '98 FRIDAY & SATURDAY JUNE 5 & 6
Details on inside back cover!