



# The Advocate

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### *An Old African Saying*

“If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go with others.”

The past several months have shown how far we can go when we go together.

Cazenovia Heritage folks have worked with the Village Board, the Village Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), business owners, the public, and owners of buildings along Albany Street to take action on the deterioration of the historic commercial buildings -- and we’re seeing results.

There is more to come next Spring -- see inside for details.

Another example of going together? Cazenovia Heritage recently received the **2022 Pat Earle Award** from the Preservation Association of Central New York -- something that would not have happened without you going together with us -- with your enthusiasm, support, and engagement. As stated by PACNY’s President, Andy Roblee, “the growing influence and leadership of this group is highly praised and applauded by PACNY.” Thank **you**, Cazenovians!

And still more: 2023 plans are solidifying and indicate that ***we will go even farther by going together.*** Watch for upcoming announcements!



**Enjoy Our Programs?** Then, please, become a member! Your membership allows us to provide free monthly programs, all year round. <https://www.cazheritage.org/support.html> Already a member? Thank you!

Also, with our new automated system, receipts for memberships and donations are now being emailed, saving the postage costs.

## ***Highlighted Resource: Zephaniah Comstock House, “Gateway to Cazenovia”***

This Federal style farmstead on Route 20 East -- with its symmetrical, two-story, five bay, center hall plan -- is set on a small rise from the road. The center entrance is flanked by fluted pilasters and sidelights, and is important as an example of rural Federal-style architecture. Bordering the “hard line” boundary, the Comstock House marks the gateway between the Village and Town, and recalls Cazenovia’s prominence as a prosperous agricultural region.



Zephaniah Comstock was born 1792 in Connecticut. Arriving in Cazenovia, he bought 130 acres from Simeon Marshall in 1818. There he lived with his wife, Sarah, and 3 children. By 1860, he and his son, Julius, had prospered and had a successful farming operation. Around this time, a Victorian-trimmed front porch was added (see photo below). When Zephaniah died April 1878, the farm was left to Julius. When Julis died sometime before 1900, his daughter Mariah and son-in-law, Edward Smith then moved in with Julius’s widow, Martha.

Martha and the Smiths continued to farm and live there until they sold it to William Gaugherty in 1910. In 1912, Gaugherty sold the property to Henry Burden, a wealthy landowner responsible for placing the telephone and electrical wires underground on Albany Street. During this time, a large two-story wing on the west side of the house was added (shown in 1932 photo at right).



In 1932, Francis and Dorothy Townsend moved in, first as renters in the back wing of the house, then buying the property two years later. They established a large chicken farm, and each of the several hen houses had its own unique name. In the mid-to-late 1930s, the Townsends returned the house to its Federal roots, removing the Victorian porch and the west wing, and replaced the rear wing with a smaller room where the eggs were graded. An apple orchard grew on the west side of the house. The Townsends held the farm for 44 years, until 1978. During this time, the Townsends took in boarders, several of whom or their descendants still live in Cazenovia.

The Townsends sold off 128 acres in 1978, leaving the house on 2 acres. Jan and Richard Enders bought the house, where they lived for 28 years and raised five sons. As the last owners, the house has become known locally as “the Enders' property.” In 2011, Jan recalled the two parlors downstairs “with paneled wainscoting and sunflower corner blocks in the window casings, and matching fireplace mantels.” Upstairs were four bedrooms. Chestnut floors continue to hark back to the time of one of Cazenovia’s more well-to-do gentleman farmers.

The house was sold to a developer -- New Ventures Assets Co. -- in 2006, who demolished its historic barn and has since rented it to a local business.



## ***The View from the Cupola***

In case you missed the recent *Republican*, the Town Board has determined that any plans for new Town Offices should be able to accommodate a potential consolidation with the Village. It also assumes (at least for now) that only offsite locations can be considered, based on an (unstated and undocumented) assumption that under a consolidated government, operating from the existing two municipal buildings would be unworkable. Should no offsite location be determined to be feasible, the Board may revisit staying at the Gothic Cottage.

[Pause. Cue sound of a collective Sigh]

With the need to allow for potential physical and governmental consolidation, this is now a different project from where we were a year ago.

It seems reasonable that sometime within the next 25+ years, consolidation may be necessary. So we can agree that a plan should consider this. We do wish, however, that it had been stated upfront a year ago, or five years ago.

That it wasn't stated, highlights the importance of developing and documenting specific requirements. The hardest and most important part of any project is developing requirements. When building a house, better to agree upon the number of bedrooms and bathrooms you need before you start designing, let alone looking at locations.

Yet here we are.

At this logical juncture, the Board of Cazenovia Heritage recommends that the Town engage a project manager to manage the identification and formal adoption of documented requirements; to identify alternatives; and to manage a formal evaluation process – something that has been sorely lacking and would not only improve outcomes but do so more efficiently and objectively.

It also recommends that the Board undertake a request now for a state grant for preservation work that must and can be done regardless of whether the offices remain at the Gothic Cottage or move offsite.

And lastly, Cazenovia Heritage recommends that the Town engage a consultant to determine how best to protect and preserve the Gothic Cottage – both inside and out -- in the event the Town decides to move offsite. Better that the public have this information sooner, rather than later, even if it should prove unnecessary.

We believe adoption of these recommendations by the Town will keep the public better informed, maximize transparency, and ensure objectivity in decision-making on what is still a long road ahead.

## ***Upcoming Programs – Mark Your Calendar Now!***

**Coming Up Fast:** On Saturday, **November 5<sup>th</sup>**, Carl Stearns will continue his two-part series on architectural styles with *Part II: Late Victorian through Post-Modern*. The presentation will be held at **2:00 PM** at the Public Library. Free and open to the public.

**And this should be fun:** Thursday evening, **December 15<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM**. Get in the holiday spirit by enjoying some spirits: Join us, along with Matt Urtz, County Historian, and Mike Basla, Proprietor, at **“The Madison County Distillery”** on Route 20 East where they will describe the history of distilleries and breweries in Madison County. Free and open to the public.

## ***Funstuff:***

Hats off to member Linda Osborne who created Caz Heritage cookies for the Scalandre event, using edible frosting paper and an edible printer.



And, you can now follow us on Facebook and Instagram!



## Advocacy Update: Renew Albany Street



The owners of some of the buildings along Albany Street took steps this summer to improve their appearance with fresh painting. Cazenovia Heritage sent each a *Thank You* note and encouraged on-going pro-active maintenance. While these cosmetic changes are welcome, there remain other more serious concerns, and other buildings (such as the brick Dwyer building) have yet to react to our Spring letter.



Cazenovia Heritage asked members of the Historic Preservation Commission to join us in a walking tour on both sides of Albany Street to identify concerns. This was completed over the summer, and a prioritized list per building was prepared. Cazenovia Heritage is in the process of sending individual letters to each deficient building owner, asking that they undertake such corrective measures in the coming months. The items noted are not cosmetic. In some cases, they halt the permanent damage currently underway; others are potential public safety concerns. Several of the building owners do not live in the Cazenovia area or even in the state of New York and may be unaware. Or, the business owners, themselves, may be reluctant to raise the issues with the owners. Regardless, the property owners must be held accountable.



On a related issue, we were pleased to see the announcement of the potential acquisition of the Widewaters/Napa buildings by a local developer. A conceptual design of a replacement building was presented to the Village Planning Board in early October. This was not a full site plan review, was very preliminary, and is dependent on state funding; however, it is an opportunity to improve this long-neglected site, and for each of us to participate in future discussions.