



The Advocate

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Cazenovia Heritage
P.O. Box 103
Cazenovia NY 13035

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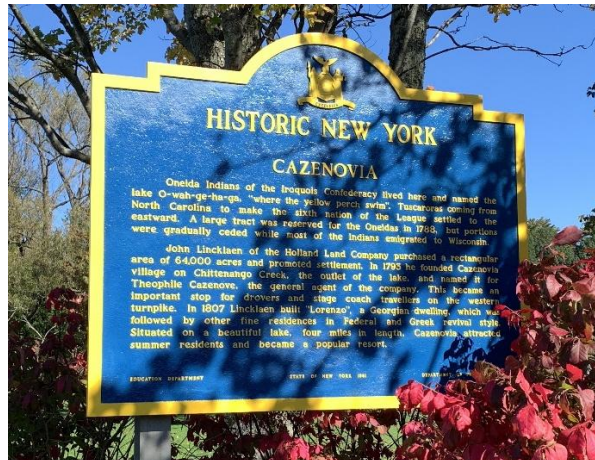
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*"Sign, Sign, Everywhere a Sign . . ."*¹

Two years ago, we reported on the volunteer efforts of Dale Bowers, Roger Cook, Jerry Munger, and Bob Ridler who set out to restore and paint the NYS historic markers in the Town and Village of Cazenovia. Like sampling a bowl of peanuts, it was hard to stop at just a few. After completing Cazenovia's signs, Dale and Roger set off to restore those in neighboring Towns of Nelson, Fenner, Morrisville, Hamilton, and then on to those throughout Madison County. And when those were done, a few outside of Madison County.

As of today, the team has refurbished over 125 markers using their own time and funds. Almost universally, their efforts have been welcomed by property owners and local governments, sometimes with a slice of home-made pie, sometimes with a donation, and always with thanks. Local TV news WIXT Channel 9 caught up with them a year ago and spread the word.

Most recently, Dale and Roger took on the large marker at the south end of the lake on Route 20. After wire-brushing the old paint and rust, the sign was cleaned and re-painted in the official paint colors, requiring delicate skill with the extensive text. Hats off for this great example of community service!



¹ Surely you remember this hit from the Five Man Electrical Band?

Highlighted Resource: Stories Untold

Located on the Gianforte farm at the corner of Peth and West Lake Roads is what appears to be a settlement period structure, likely over 200 years old. Recently, the building was offered for sale -- ideally for dismantling, re-location, and re-assembly -- and an offer has been made. Cazenovia Heritage offered to photograph and document the house before it was dismantled. It is believed to have accompanied a larger house (no longer standing) on the plot.

Despite modifications made in the 19th and 20th centuries, the one-and one-half story building revealed an early square rule frame, with hewn, lapped and pegged rafters, predominantly made of beech. The roof boards have no wane, and are quality sawn. Transitional plaster lath is evident, as is a former center chimney. A portion of the upstairs have hand-planed floorboards over 20 inches wide.

A history of the occupants over the years is unknown and would be a good research project for anyone with historical curiosity!



Row 1: North Elevation on Peth RD; West elevation

Row 2: Floor outline of original central chimney; roof framing at ridge at original chimney location

Row 3: Hewn Post (one of eight) and Roof Plate; Hewn Beech rafter and roof plate

View from the Cupola

Think Nationally, Act Locally

Most of us have heard of the destruction of the White House East Wing for a ballroom; of covering the gray granite Eisenhower Executive offices with white paint; the remake of the public Potomac Park into a private golf course using the rubble from the East Wing as landfill and cutting down 400 trees; painting (or attempting to paint) the Reflecting Pool blue; the potential demolition of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; and now, the gargantuan proposed Arch, which will obliterate deliberate historic viewsheds and desecrate longstanding cultural landmarks.

Less known are the Trump Administration's plans to demolish the architecturally significant Weaver Federal building, the New Deal-era General Services Regional Office Building, the 1919 Liberty Loan Building, and the 1940 Cohen Federal building, the latter filled with priceless murals dating from its start as the home of the Social Security Board.¹

And maybe fewer still have heard of the proposed changes to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The Act was created to ensure that Federally funded projects "take into account the effects of their actions on historic properties." Under the proposed changes, consultation with local governments, communities, and experts would no longer be required; Federal agencies would no longer be obligated to propose actions to mitigate, avoid, or minimize harm; public comment periods would become optional; and cultural landscapes will no longer be considered historic properties. The changes are being proposed as a means of getting around the safeguards currently required for the above-mentioned demolition projects.

And maybe even fewer still are aware that the sweeping and damaging new Federal rules would create the environment that has existed up to now in the Town of Cazenovia. The Town of Cazenovia has no regulations concerning the demolition specifically of historic resources; no notification or public hearings are required; no review of alternatives; and no requirement for negotiated mitigations. So it is heartening that as of June, two new laws have been drafted and proposed to ensure public participation and a voice in these decisions. One law calls for a thoughtful review process governing proposed demolitions of National Register-listed properties and of those designated as Local Landmarks. A second law provides the criteria and process for property owner nominations of Local Landmarks. These laws were drafted by a Town Board committee, which included members of the public, and are a direct result of advocacy by Cazenovia Heritage.

It is heartening . . . for the first time in the Town's history, the Town is willing to consider a common-sense framework when undertaking demolition of historic properties.

As we wring our hands and despair at what is occurring at the national preservation level, we are encouraged that for the first time in the Town of Cazenovia's history, the Town is willing to consider a common-sense framework of minimal requirements when undertaking demolition of historic properties. The drafted laws have yet to be presented to the Town Board for finalization and passage, given other Board legislative matters. We hope that you, along with Cazenovia Heritage, will continue to press for adoption with our Town elected officials. And what perhaps cannot be prevented at the national level can nonetheless be remedied locally.

¹ Danile J. Roche, "The Architect's Newspaper," 10 Dec 2025

Bits 'N Pieces

- Art & Architecture: The Caz Arts organization is hosting a free Art History series by Chris Kukenberger with the first program focusing on *Greek Revival Architecture in Cazenovia* on November 7th at 2:00 at Jephson Building B, Albany Street. Free but registration is required: https://cazarts.com/carpenters_barn-classes.html
- The *Wall Street Journal* reported that pet owners are splurging on animal friendly interior design, in what is being called “barkitecture,” featuring marble baths, custom dog houses, cat hideaways, and pampered feeding stations. The features may increase a property’s re-sale value according to Zillow home trends data. [WSJ, 5/29/26]
- Looking for a good book for the upcoming winter months? *Stan and Gus: Art, Ardor, and the Friendship That Built the Gilded Age*, by Henry Wiencek, may be just the thing. The book explores two figures of the early 20th century, the architect Stanford White and his collaborator and sometime lover, the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. The *New York Times* review of the book can be found here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/30/books/review/stan-and-gus-henry-wiencek.html>
- Preservation League of New York announced the completion of *Working to Preserve New York State: Economic Impacts and Workforce Training in the Preservation Trades*, which contains detailed analysis of the preservation trades workforce in New York State. This first-time comprehensive report was completed by a team from Cornell University’s College of Architecture, Art, and Planning, led by Dr. Jennifer Minner, Director of the Just Places Lab. The full report can be found here: https://www.preservenys.org/blog/working-to-preserve-new-york-state?blm_aid=113090



Advocacy Updates:

Gothic Cottage Restoration: Awaiting the Town Board’s issuance of the Request for Proposal and selection by the Town of the project manager for the specifications phase.

Village National Register District Expansion: The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has provided the nomination to the Village Historic Preservation Commission for review at its 10/26 public meeting, 6:00 PM, Village Hall; Please attend to show your support! Additionally, a public meeting of property owners within the proposed expanded District is scheduled for early November. A decision by the State Preservation Office is targeted for year-end.

Downtown Revitalization Grants: Potential projects are being reviewed by the local “Leadership Committee” and include a “Small Projects” fund to enable restoration work on historic buildings in the DRI boundary. Additionally, Cazenovia Heritage has proposed funding for Heritage Tourism marketing, beginning with state-wide promotion of the 1850 Cazenovia Convention. The next meeting is 10/27 from 2:00-6:00 and is open to the public.

Planned Development Districts (“PDD’s”): This concept is one we’re watching at the Town Board, due to its potential deleterious impact on community character. The proposed law was introduced in June and calls for the creation of mixed-use, high-density zoning on 50-acre lots anywhere in the Town. In our view, as proposed, this law would sacrifice agricultural and scenic rural lands for suburban development. We feel any discussion on housing goals and zoning should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and involve the Village, and that current zoning tools are adequate to manage growth. A Town Board Committee is discussing how to proceed.

Demolition Review and Local Landmark Laws: Drafts are with the Town Attorney and Board for review and final drafts (see View From the Cupola).

Why Old Places Matter

Over a five-year period, Tom Mayes, deputy general counsel for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, explored the role of historic places in everyday life. His study resulted in the popular series, *Why Old Places Matter* that subsequently was compiled into a marvelous book of the same title. Although people often feel very deeply about the old places of their lives, they don't have the words to express why. His book brings these ideas together for us and articulates why old places are meaningful to people and their communities. Over the next several issues of *The Advocate*, as reminders of what we already knew but perhaps have forgotten or failed to recognize, Tom's discoveries will be highlighted here, along with some extracted key take-aways. The book is available at the Cazenovia Public Library and can be purchased from The National Trust and Amazon.

Continuity: "Old places provide people with a sense of continuity . . . that helps people feel more balanced, stable, and healthy."

Key takeaways:

- Being part of a continuum in a changing world
- Rootedness; provides a connection to place
- Brings relevance of the past to give meaning to the present and future

Collective Memory: "Old places help us remember. Old places... trigger memories people already have, give specificity to memories, and arouse curiosity about memories people don't yet know."

Key takeaways:

- Memory is linked with places and provides key triggers for both individual and collective memory and identity
- "Old buildings are like memories you can touch," architect Mary DeNadai

Mayes, Thompson M., *Why Old Places Matter: How Historic Places Affect Our Identity and Well-Being*, Roman & Littlefield, Publishers, ©2013-2018



We're Growing, Grow with Us! Volunteer Your Skills!

As our programs have grown and our projects get more complex, we're looking for some folks to work with communications, software, historic and architectural research, and video development. If that sounds like you and you are able to commit time, send an inquiry to Cazenovia Heritage from our website using the "Contact" tab.