

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## PRESS RELEASE

### Albany Public Library Collection of Historic Albany Photos Now Online

ALBANY, NY—Albany Public Library (APL) has a rich and varied collection of historic Albany photos that is now available to view online through New York Heritage Digital Collections, a free online portal designed for researchers and history buffs. The site—[nyheritage.org](http://nyheritage.org)—is now showcasing two small APL collections: “Views of Albany” and “Urban Renewal in Albany.”

“Albany Public Library is joining other public libraries, museums, and archives collections in New York State by adding a curated selection of items from our Pruyn Collection of Albany History to New York Heritage. Our content will be accessible by more researchers, scholars, and history buffs and will eventually be discoverable on the Digital Public Library of America,” said Chris Sagaas, head of reference services at APL. “We are excited that anyone with internet access can now see some of these wonderful old photos that capture key occurrences of Albany history.”

“Views of Albany” showcases a selection of black and white photographs that are mostly from the early 20th century. This collection shows the homes, churches, businesses, weather events, transportation, streets, and people of Albany’s past.

“Urban Renewal in Albany” is an album of photographs and captions that was handmade in 1976 by Florence L. Powell, a historical research assistant for the city of Albany. Powell’s album is composed of before-and-after pictures of the Clinton Square area during the urban renewal era. The scrapbook documents the demolition of buildings, the reshaping of streets, and the construction of Interstate 787 and the Leo W. O’Brien Office Building.

The photos shared online on the New York Heritage site are just a sample of APL’s full Pruyn Collection of Albany History, which is housed in the Albany History Room at the Main Library and includes documents about urban renewal, the South Mall construction, city and state government, and African American history. The Pruyn Collection is comprised of thousands of books, photographs, city directories, newspapers, documents, census records, city council minutes, maps, and more.

“The guiding principle behind the digitization project is to share the library’s wonderful collection outside the doors of the Main Library. We will continue to digitize parts of the Albany history collection and post the photos online to broaden the audience for these amazing pieces of Albany history,” Sagaas said.

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The project was spearheaded by Sagaas' Reference Department, with help from the Capital District Library Council (CDLC). APL intern Ben Himmelfarb, who will receive master's degrees in information science and history from the University at Albany in May, worked on scanning the photos, researching the background, and populating the metadata content visible online. Himmelfarb worked closely with APL Local History Librarian Ellen Gamache and eLibrarian Deanna DiCarlo. CDLC staffers Susan d'Entremont, regional archivist and digitization project coordinator, and Ilka Morse, digitization field trainer, provided valuable assistance.

For more information, please call Albany Public Library's Reference Department at 427-4303 or email [localhistory@albanypubliclibrary.org](mailto:localhistory@albanypubliclibrary.org).

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*Albany Public Library (APL) educates, entertains, and empowers our community. APL operates seven award-winning branches serving the residents of Albany. Each month, about 75,000 people use the libraries to borrow materials, attend programs, access computers, and research information. More than 90,000 books, DVDs, and other materials are circulated each month. Visit APL online at [www.albanypubliclibrary.org](http://www.albanypubliclibrary.org). And, look for the free "Albany Public Library Mobile" app for Apple and Android devices.*

