

HISTORY

The area was part of the Rensselaerwyck manor, established in 1630. The first known European resident is known to have been here by 1630. Rensselaer was originally called *Greenbush*, meaning pine trees. In 1686 the County of Albany was formed which included this area. In 1791 the County of Rensselaer was set apart from Albany. In the same year, the Town of Rensselaerwyck was established with the name changed in 1792 to the Town of Greenbush. The Village of Greenbush within the town of Greenbush was incorporated in 1815. In 1897, Greenbush was chartered as a city, and its name was changed to Rensselaer. Its limits were extended in 1902 by the annexation of the Village of Bath on the Hudson and part of the western part of the town of East Greenbush. In 1932 the Port of Rensselaer was built. This area has had industrial activity for over 350 years. Rensselaer has been one of the most important railroad centers on the continent. Rensselaer is home to historic Crailo.

Additional sources: The City Clerk has records related to the City of Rensselaer, Bath on the Hudson and Greenbush. These include official minutes, births, deaths, marriages, and government operations. There are also records in the Treasurers and Assessors office. Other depositories include Rensselaer County Historical Society, Rensselaer County Clerk's Office, New York State Library and Archives, Albany Institute of History and art, and others.

Rensselaer City History Research Center



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appointment





The Rensselaer City History Research Center is under the direction of the City of Rensselaer Historian. It is open to the public. It was formed by donations, purchases and loans from the City of Rensselaer Historical Society. There have been various and generous donations. Funding has come from the City of Rensselaer, Assemblyman Ron Canestrari, and private sources

Published histories. The collection includes the published histories for Rensselaer County and area. There is a copy of Sylvester's History of Rensselaer County both printed and searchable CD. Landmarks of Rensselaer County, The Valley of the Hudson by Nelson Green, and Troy and Rensselaer County by Hayner are also included as is The Capital Region of New York State by Kimball and the Hudson and Mohawk Valley by C. Reynolds. Histories of Albany city and county are also in the collection. There are books on the Hudson River and regional history. The books: Three Villages /One City and Rensselaer Past and Present are especially about the City of Rensselaer.

Manuscript materials There are included the records of Rensselaer Mother's Club 1930-2008, receipts and bills from Stewart's Drug Store 1911-1921, diary of a railroad worker, store account book., Benjamin Akin papers late 18th century to 1860s. The Sullivan Funeral Home records and Rings Fire Co records are here to be found. There are scattered materials relating to city activities such as sewer planning documents

and Bath village tax records. There are also the records of the Eastland Park Association and the family papers of the Thatcher family.

Published genealogy material. Considerable genealogy information can be found in The Capital, and the Yearbooks of the Albany Dutch Settlers society. There are also cds of births and vital records.

School records. The records of the Boards of Educations of the various schools and districts are in manuscript form and begin in 1814. There are also programs, newsletters, some report cards, reports and miscellaneous school materials. Yearbooks from both Rensselaer High School and St. John's Academy are present.

Other published material. Other published materials include newspapers: The Eagle, Transcript, Independent, Rensselaer County Review, Greenbush Area News as well as the complete run of the Beacon and other scattered newspapers of the 19th century. The papers of the New Netherlands Project, New York State history, Dutch colonial history, Native American history, genealogy, American history and biography are represented.

Other items. There are included dissertations and theses, maps, photographs, scrapbooks, and many other items. Also to found is a cd of the Records of the Town of Greenbush beginning in the 18th century.



Church records. Copies of Church records are available for the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Lutheran and Congregational Churches. Additional material on these and other churches includes programs and a manuscript of a Ladies Aid Society.

Fraternal and community organizational records. Copies of the records of the Masonic lodge beginning in 1816 are included. Records of the Oddfellows beginning in 1848 are in the collection. Additional material from fraternal, political and community organizations can be found in the files.

City directories. Rensselaer was often included in the City Directories of Albany. The collection contains such directories for the years 1874-2002.

Vertical files. The vertical files are arranged alphabetically by subject and include various subjects related to the city. There is considerable information about the fire companies and the railroads in the files.

Microfilm. The microfilm collection includes microfilm of New York State Census 1855, 65, 75, 1905, 1915. Several newspapers are also on microfilm. There is also a film of a Greenbush Town Justice records and Schodack 18th century store.

