

## The 2022 Helen Wilkinson Reynolds Award: Mid-Hudson Antislavery History Project, Peter Bunten & Rebecca Edwards accepting

**Honors local historians who are an exemplar of the necessary and accurate search for historical truth as practiced by Helen Wilkinson Reynolds.**

Since 2006, the Mid-Hudson Antislavery History Project (MHAHP) has brought together researchers, educators, community leaders, and members of the public to conduct and synthesize research on the history of slavery and antislavery in New York's Mid-Hudson Valley, with a special emphasis on the Underground Railroad. MHAHP is a 501 (c)(3) organization chartered by the New York State Department of Education that shares this history with a wide array of residents and visitors with particular attention to students and youth; and places this local history in the broader context of racial slavery in the New World, the African-American experience, and antislavery legacies today, including the impact of this historic grassroots movement on subsequent struggles for racial and social justice. Two landmark publications are only growing in importance and relevance as time passes. In 2010 MHAHP published the extraordinary book, *Slavery, Antislavery, and the Underground Railroad: A Dutchess County Guide*, under the direction of the late Dr. F. Kennon Moody. In 2007, MHAHP published the *Mid-Hudson Antislavery History Project June 2007 Research Report* by Rebecca Edwards, Dept. of History, Vassar College, Torrie Williams, Ford Scholar, Vassar '08, and Kristina Poznan, Research Assistant, Vassar '08, which is available online. MHAHP has provided a bedrock foundation of research and insights of such quality and scale that will be drawn on for generations and remains engaged with a variety of programs and organizations to advance our understanding of the important local history of slavery and antislavery.



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## Business of Historic Distinction: J. Scheer & Co. Jonathan Scheer accepting

**A business demonstrating the long-standing tradition of service and commitment to local residents**



J. Scheer & Co. specializes in the cleaning, conservation, and long-term preservation of wedding gowns, exhibition couture, and historic costume and textiles. The company draws from museum based protocols to repair, clean, and prepare garment collections for long term storage. CEO Jonathan Scheer has studied conservation science and care of museum collections at the Smithsonian Institution's Conservation Analytical Laboratory, the Art Institute of Chicago, and The Campbell Center for Historic Preservation. He is a graduate of Union College where he was earned a B.A. in history. Quoted in the New York Times, Scheer said, explaining the importance and potential of his work, "Seeing your mother's wedding gown years later promotes family history. It encourages discussions between generations about time, place and cultural and religious customs." Among the photographs in DCHS Collections are early 1930s photos of Poughkeepsie's first dry cleaning business, donated by Jessica Rodd, a descendant of the Gold family of Poughkeepsie. The origins of the business date back to 1910 when Rebecca Cipnic established the New York Steam Cleaning business at 6



Liberty Street. By 1915 the business had been sold to Rebecca's brother Samuel Gold and her brother-in-law Harry Gilman, who renamed the company the New York Steam Cleaning and Dye Works. Circa 1916, Sam Gold bought out his partner. By 1925 the business, then known as United Cleaners and Dyers, had Moe Scheer and Alexander Stall as partners. By the 1930s, the business had dozens of stores in the Hudson Valley stretching from Mamaroneck to Albany, employing over 300 workers as tailors, spotters, finishers and dyers. Moe Scheer's son, Hamilton and wife Barbara, were deeply involved in running the business. It is the current generation, after many, that transformed the historic business into a business of historic preservation. Congratulations to J. Scheer & Co. and the Jonathan Scheer the generations that preceded him.