

Grant Castner, Trenton Photographer: The Delaware River and Canals, 1890-1920

Presentation by Gary Saretzky

Abstract

Grant Castner (1863–1941), a native of Belvidere, New Jersey, moved to Trenton in about 1885. He became an active amateur photographer from the 1880s to the 1920s. In 2019, the New Jersey State Museum acquired more than a thousand of his glass plate negatives and mounted an exhibition of 100 prints, on view from March to September of 2024. One of the founders of the Trenton Camera Club in 1898, Castner was not a casual snap shooter. A serious amateur, he photographed extensively in New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania. His subject matter included the focus of this lecture: the Delaware River, its tributaries, and the canals on both sides of the river. Also presented will be samples from his entire scope of work, such as city street scenes, portraits, the Jersey shore, railroads, industry, still life studies, and more.

Bio

Gary D. Saretzky, archivist, educator, and photographer, worked as an archivist for more than fifty years at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Educational Testing Service, and the Monmouth County Archives. Saretzky taught the history of photography at Mercer County Community College, 1977–2012, and served as coordinator of the Public History Internship Program for the Rutgers University History Department, 1994–2016. He has published more than 100 articles and reviews on the history of photography, photographic conservation, and other topics. With New Jersey State Museum curator Nicholas Ciotola, Saretzky co-authored *Grant Castner: The Lost Archive*, a book scheduled for publication in 2026. His website is saretzky.com.