

Rossiter's Riverside Retreat

Date: Monday, March 15, 2021 at 6:30pm

Click [here](#) to watch the recording of this program

Program Description

Author and historian Carol Santoleri hosted the illustrated presentation, “Rossiter’s Riverside Retreat” on Zoom. This program was co-sponsored by the Gunn Historical Museum and the Steep Rock Association.

In the late 1880s, Ehrick Rossiter (1854-1941) recognized the inherent beauty of Washington, Connecticut's Shepaug River Valley and began buying up riverside land, including a renowned cliff known as Steep Rock. He wound carriage roads through the valley's fields and forests to link scenic overlooks, river crossings, and picnic spots, creating a rustic retreat called Steep Rock Park. A decade later, a young man named Joseph West (1876-1952) began photographing the park. Over the next 25 years, he took over two hundred pictures of the river, trails, and overlooks, creating glass plate negatives that are now in the collection of the Gunn Historical Museum. Historian Carol Santoleri spent several years in an effort not only to identify the landscape in West's photographs, but also to track down the exact spots where he set his tripod. Focusing on "then and now" comparisons that span over one hundred years, her presentation brings the history of one of the most picturesque and conservation-worthy landscapes of Litchfield County to life.

About Carol Santoleri

Carol Santoleri, landscape historian, photographer, and author of *The History of Steep Rock Association: The Jewel in the Crown* (2020), brings both an artistic eye and a research-based perspective to her work. She has a fine arts degree in landscape architecture from Rhode Island School of Design, a master's degree in early modern landscape history from Columbia University, and six years of experience as a curatorial research assistant at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

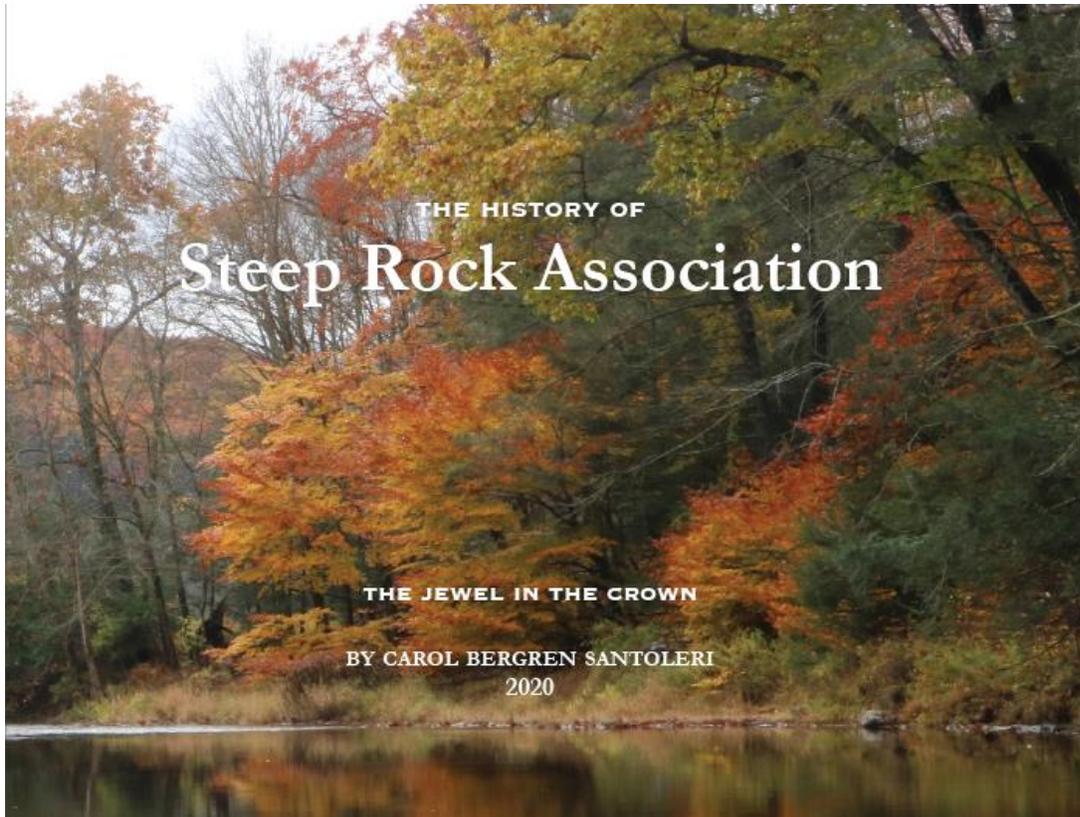
All proceeds from the sale of her book (available at the Hickory Stick Bookshop and www.steeprocksoc.org) go to support Steep Rock Association.



Shepaug River Now: Clam Shell Loop at culvert looking south. Photo by Carol Santoleri.



Shepaug River Then: Clam Shell Loop, May 1902. Photo by Joseph West. From the collection of the Gunn Historical Museum.



The History of Steep Rock Association book cover



Carol Santoleri