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**SAMA-ALTOONA TO EXHIBIT VINTAGE PHOTOGRAPHS OF
WILLIAM H. RAU**

Altoona – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Altoona is pleased to announce the opening of its latest exhibition, *William H. Rau: The Rise and Fall of the Main Line Canal*. On view January 16 through April 25, the exhibition will feature 33 albumen and sepia-toned photographs from the Altoona Area Public Library Collection that capture the harmony of nature and the industrial landscape along the Pennsylvania Railroad, from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh.

The photographs in the exhibition have been selected by guest co-curators Stan Snyder, SAMA-Altoona administrative assistant, and Julie Fether, Project Coordinator at Penn State Altoona’s Center for Community-Based Studies. The photographs will take the viewer on a non-stop trip from Harrisburg to beyond Johnstown, displaying the scenic splendor along the railways that passengers would have enjoyed more than a century ago.

Although the Pennsylvania Main Line of Public Works canal system halted most travel in 1854, there was still active canal travel through sections from community to community – mainly within the Juniata River Division between Harrisburg and Hollidaysburg. It is during this time that the Allegheny Portage Railroad was abandoned and the PRR Horseshoe Curve route took precedence. But Rau loved those canals. Many photographs are of his “openings” – a 19th Century term used to describe the landscape and landscape photography – where the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers merge at Duncan’s Island and travel through the hauntingly beautiful Juniata Valley, following the PRR and the dying remnants of the canal.

The selection of photographs on display in *The Rise and Fall of the Main Line Canal* illustrates the transition of transportation in Pennsylvania – from evolution to revolution – at a vibrant and turbulent time of industrialization. The triumph of the PRR over the canal system was a simple means of “progress,” but more than that it symbolized the Great Transformation of America. Rau’s photographs poignantly capture the modernization of travel across Pennsylvania as a gateway to the West.

“The commissioned work of William H. Rau completed for the Pennsylvania Railroad in the late 19th Century is extraordinary,” said Fether. “To have this priceless collection housed here in Altoona, the heart and soul of Pennsylvania railroad history, is a great gift to the community. It is vital to continue to exhibit the collection showcased with a variety of themes to better illustrate and understand the rich history of the area as well as Rau’s photographic innovations of that era.”

William H. Rau was perhaps best known as the official photographer for the Pennsylvania Railroad. He was first commissioned by the Railroad in 1891 to document the scenic views along the mainline in order to promote the Railroad and increase passenger traffic. His photographs not only glorified rail travel and the progress made by the Industrial Revolution, but also helped legitimize photography as a major art form.

The Museum will celebrate the exhibition with a Lunch a l’ Art on March 26. Speaking will be *William H. Rau: The Rise and Fall of the Main Line Canal* co-curators Snyder and Fether. Cost is \$15 per person or \$14 for SAMA members. Please call (814) 946-4464 for reservations.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Altoona is located in the Brett Building at 1210 Eleventh Avenue. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday. The Museum is a handicapped-accessible facility and is open to the public free of charge. Parking is available in the garage across the street or in metered spots in the lot at the rear of the Museum. For more information, call the Museum or visit www.sama-art.org.