



LANSINGBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter Annual Report

1985-1986

LANSINGBURGH SLOOP HELPED BUILD STATUE OF LIBERTY

Many of the granite blocks used in the pedestal and seawall of the Statue of Liberty were transported from a Connecticut quarry to Bedloes Island (Liberty Island) by a vessel built in Lansingburgh. This information was recently provided by Ellen Beattie Hare of Old Saybrook, Ct., a great-granddaughter, and Robert Beattie of Belfast, Me., grandson, of John Beattie, owner of the granite quarry at Leetes Island, Ct.

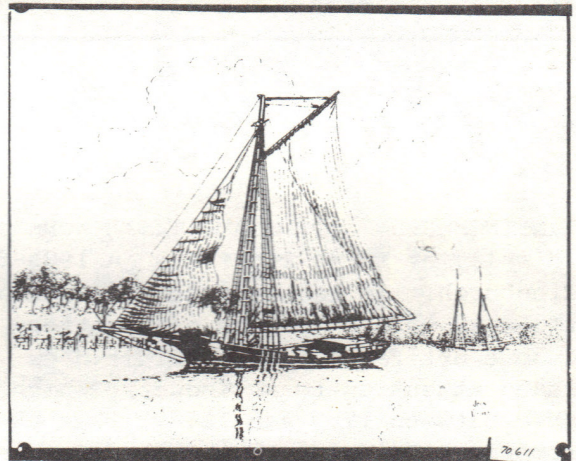
The vessel, the *Wasp*, was constructed at Lansingburgh in 1813, according to the ship's enrollment, filed in 1866 at Bridgeport. The *Wasp*, a single-masted sloop, 100 feet long with a 90 foot boom, was probably built at the Hawkins shipyard at 113th St. and First Avenue. It replaced an earlier *Wasp*, built in 1806 at Lansingburgh by Orlando Merrill, and sunk in 1812. The second *Wasp* was used in the American Navy in the War of 1812, and thereafter to transport goods on the Hudson River.

The *Wasp* was purchased by John Beattie in 1869. While the boat originally carried 72.5 tons of cargo, it's hull was strengthened by Beattie to carry 100 tons, and was equipped with a stern hoisting engine. Beattie's quarry also supplied stone for the abutments of the Brooklyn Bridge and interstate boundary markers. The contract for the Statue of Liberty pedestal and seawall was awarded in 1882.

Among the other vessels owned by John Beattie, which were used to transport the granite blocks to Bedloes Island, was a sloop the *John S. Gilmore*, constructed, probably also at Lansingburgh, in 1865. The last block of granite in the pedestal was swung into place on April 22, 1886, and the jubilant workmen showered silver coins from their pockets in the mortar.

The quarry at Leetes Island was in operation until 1918. The *Wasp* was abandoned in the early 20th century and her remains still rest in the salt marshes off Hoadley's Point, Connecticut, in the Long Island Sound.

The 1893 photograph of the *Wasp*, below, was supplied by John Beattie's descendents. The sketch, by John Leavitt, is reproduced courtesy of Mystic Seaport Museum.



LANSINGBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER AND ANNUAL REPORT: 1985-6

This Newsletter is an official publication of the Lansingburgh Historical Society, 2 114th St., P.O. Box 219, Lansingburgh, Rensselaer County, New York 12182. The Society was founded in 1965 and has a permanent charter from the Regents of the State of New York. Officers and Trustees of the Society are:

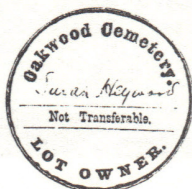
President: Kathleen Tivnan
Vice-President: Warren Broderick
Secretary: Byron Moak
Treasurer: Richard Zeller
Historian: Frances Broderick
Corresponding Secretary: Harriet Finnegan

Trustees, in addition to officers listed above, are Agnes Ernest, Maurice Corbin, Helena English, Shirley Parker, Barbara Carlo, Rita Darfler, Lois Norton & Helen Ciavardoni. The Society's headquarters is open by appointment, by calling 235-7647, 235-7828, 235-4099 or 235-4041.

EXHIBITS

"LANSINGBURGH POTTERS AND THEIR WORK" was on display at three locations in 1985-6 in Lansingburgh. It featured jugs, crocks and bottles as well as photos of a pottery dig and some artifacts. The exhibit drew much-needed attention to an industry which flourished between 1790 and 1858. This exhibit remains on display at the Society headquarters through the end of 1986.

"HISTORIC OAKWOOD CEMETERY" is the subject of the travelling exhibit for 1986-7. It can be seen at the Marine Midland Bank, Norstar Bank and the Lansingburgh Branch of the Troy Public Library. Featured will be historic photographs, archival records of the Cemetery and related memorabilia. Some are on loan through the courtesy of the Troy Cemetery Association. Oakwood Cemetery, established in 1848, is now recognized as one of the nation's largest and most significant landscaped "rural cemeteries." It has been placed on the State and National Registers of Historic places.



PROGRAMS & EVENTS

The monthly programs for 1985-6 were:

Sept.: Carl Grimm: Thailand
Oct.: Molly Lowell: Archaeological Adventures in Peru
Nov.: James Kelly: Pre-statehood Alaska
Dec.: Christmas party & auction
Jan.: Linda Ellett: Tiles
Feb.: John DeMarco: Collecting Books
Mar.: Margaret Coffin: Broadway, Saratoga Springs
Apr.: Warren Broderick: Oakwood Cemetery
May: Ruth Kittell: Australia

The remaining programs for 1986 are:

Sept. 11: Margaret Coffin: American Country Tinware
Oct. 16: Carl Grimm: The South Pacific
Nov. 20: Joseph Zarzynski: Champ, the Lake Champlain Monster
Dec. 18: Christmas party & auction

Programs for 1987 are being arranged. Contact Program Chairperson, Kathleen Tivnan, with suggestions for programs, at 235-7647.

An OPEN HOUSE will be held on Saturday, September 13th, from 10 AM to 4 PM. A PORCH SALE will be conducted that day, and those wishing to donate items for the sale can contact Society officers this summer. Rita Darfler (235-3068) and Helen Ciavardoni (235-7330) are in charge of the sale. The antique & collectible RAFFLE will be held the same day; chances are \$1 each and are available at the Brownstone, Sally's Variety Outlet, or from Society members. There are 5 prizes.

TOURS of historic Lansingburgh are being planned for fall and spring. A tour of central Lansingburgh will feature the Society headquarters, Lansingburgh Academy and church edifices. Special tours with such themes as adaptive reuse of industrial buildings and gardens on city lots are also anticipated. For suggestions and additional information contact Society President Kathleen M. Tivnan. Volunteers to assist in conducting tours are requested.

COLLECTIONS

A number of important items were added to the Society's collections during the past year. Major purchases included a Bolton's Brewery tray, 5 coin silver spoons made by the Smith family, a sampler wrought in 1833 by a Lansingburgh girl, a decorated tin document box made at the Filley shop, 3 stone-ware DeFreest bottles and records of the Village Fire Department, 1844-1861.

Significant donations included 17 post-card views of the flood of 1913, from Mrs. Francis Rifenberg, Poughkeepsie; miscellaneous Town records, from the Treharne family; 13 manuscript items relating to early merchant Jonathan Burr, from an anonymous donor; 3 scrimshaw items, from Dr. Byron Evans, Saratoga Springs; an 1835 token from Walsh's general store, from Edward Davis, Charlestown, N.H. and an 1873 Charter of the Village, from Mrs. Edward Moylan, Coral Gables, Fla. Other donors included Frances Broderick, Donald Murray, Jack Sticklemeyer, Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Deguirre, James Hoffman, Allan Dixon, Edward Blechner and Elmo Mollnow.

The Society is interested in acquiring artifacts and manuscripts to better document Lansingburgh's tinware, rope and cordage, brewing, oil cloth, stoneware, scale manufacturing and gun making industries. We also need works of art by Martin Ferrill, Charles Beaugard and David S. Pierce to round out our art collection. While the Society gratefully receives items donated, our collections fund allows for the prompt and businesslike purchase of items of "primary historical significance."

The Society has assisted research conducted by Alan Lane of Honeoye, N.Y., into early Lansingburgh plane makers. "S.E. Jones" was identified as Samuel E. Jones, who worked in the period 1787-1790. His advertisement in the *Northern Centinel & Lansingborough Advertiser* is shown at the right. The "sign of the jointer" advertised his shop. Another plane maker, "C. Allen," was identified as Caleb Allen (1777-1854), whose occupation as "Tool Cutter" was documented by an 1814 Lansingburgh Jury List owned by the Society. Caleb apparently worked for some time, as the 1850 Census lists his occupation as "carpenter." Mr. Lane believe that Allen learned his trade as an apprentice to Samuel Jones.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE FIRST WARD SOCIAL CLUB.

Organized January 8th, 1865.

Constitution.

ARTICLE I. § 1.—The name and style of this Association shall be the "First Ward Social Club," of the village of Lansingburgh.

ARTICLE I. § 1.—The officers of this Club shall consist of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Five Trustees, a Librarian and one Janitor, all of whom shall be elected at the annual meeting, by ballot, except Janitor, who shall be appointed by the President at the first regular meeting of each month.

§ 2. The President, Vice President, Secretaries, Treasurer and Trustees, shall, when elected, constitute a Managing Committee, and have the control and management of all the affairs of the Club, a majority of whom shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and in case any vacancy shall occur in such committee by death, resignation, or neglect of any member to serve, the same shall be filled by the majority of the members present at any regular meeting at which a lawful quorum is present.

§ 3. In case the officers herein provided, shall, from any cause fail to be elected at the annual meeting, an election may be held at any subsequent meeting of which the members shall have received due notice.

§ 4. The members of the Club, for the time being, shall at their becoming members of the Club, be considered the owners of the property of the Club, upon the condition that on the termination of membership, from any cause, his right, title and interest to the property of the Club, as well as his interest in the funds and affairs of the club shall cease upon the termination of such membership, and shall also operate as a release to the remaining members of the club of all such right, title and interest.

§ 4. It shall be the duty of the Recording Secretary to keep a full and complete record of all the proceedings and transactions of the Club and of the Managing Committee, to send notices of special meetings, and to notify any member of his appointment to office.

§ 5. It shall be the duty of the Corresponding Secretary, by the advice and direction of the Managing Committee, to receive and answer all communications addressed to the Club, to record everything transpiring within the jurisdiction of the Club, with day and date thereof, except such as is the duty of the Recording Secretary to record, as prescribed in Section 4th of this Article.

ARTICLE II. § 1.—The presiding officer shall preserve order and decorum, and shall decide questions of order without debate.

§ 2. Every member, in speaking, shall arise in his seat and address the Chair. And no member shall, at one rising, occupy the floor for a longer period than ten minutes.

§ 3. One third of the active members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, except that relating to the property of the Club.

ARTICLE III. § 1. Any member of the Club who shall refuse or neglect to pay any assessment, levied by the members of the Club, shall, after the expiration of six days from date of such levy, be notified by the Secretary, either verbally or in writing, and if after the expiration of eight days from the date of such notification, such member shall still refuse to, or neglect to pay his assessment, he shall be immediately expelled, unless he shall show sufficient cause for non-payment of such assessment.

§ 2. Any member guilty of immorality, whereby the good name of this Club may be affected, shall be notified by the Secretary to appear before the Managing Committee, and show just cause why he should not be expelled or



SAMUEL E. JONES, Joiner & Tool-Maker,

TAKES this method to inform the public, that he carries on his business at the corner of Queen-Street, opposite Mr. Thomson's tavern, where gentlemen may supply themselves with JOINERS TOOLS of all sorts, of the best kinds, as cheap as those imported from Europe. Cash or Country Produce will be received in payment.

Lansingburgh, June 30.

MELVILLE'S FIRST MARITIME STORY

"The Death Craft," a horror-filled Gothic story about a young sailor's encounter with a ghost ship, appeared in the newspaper *Democratic Press* in Lansingburgh on Nov. 16, 1839. Signed only "Harry the Reefer," this intriguing piece of short fiction, while known for the past 40 years by some scholars, has only recently been identified as Herman Melville's first sea story. "Their Snowy Whiteness Dazzled My Eyes," by Society Vice-President Warren F. Broderick, which appeared in the March 1986 issue of the *Hudson Valley Regional Review*, draws many parallels to language and imagery in Melville's works.

The milieu in which Melville worked in Lansingburgh is presented, as well as Herman's already proven connection to that 1839 newspaper and its Editor, William J. Lamb. Significant parallels between "The Death Craft" and Melville works are discussed. In particular, Melville introduced the concept of "ghastly whiteness" five times in "The Death Craft," 12 years before it would be immortalized by the publication of *Moby Dick*, Melville's most famous novel.

LANSINGBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2 114TH STREET (P.O. BOX 219)
LANSINGBURGH (RENSSELAER COUNTY)
NEW YORK 12182

JOIN THE LANSINGBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

No application is necessary! Just send \$5.00 for regular membership, \$25 for sustaining or \$100 for life membership, to us at P.O. Box 219, Lansingburgh, NY 12182. You will be notified in writing of each monthly program and of special events, and will receive the Newsletter and other mailings. Members who join after Sept. 1st will be credited with the additional half-year's dues.

The Bicentennial History, Cookbook, Society notepaper and some other publications and souvenirs are still available upon request.

For the *Democratic Press*.

The Death Craft.

A calm prevailed over the waters. The ocean lay gently heaving in long, regular undulations like the bosom of Beauty in slumbers. Pouring forth a heat only known in torrid climes, the sun rode the firmament like some fiery messenger of ill. No cloud disturbed the serenity of the heavens, which of the palest blue seemed withered of their brilliancy by the scorching influence of his rays. A silence, no where to be experienced but at sea, and which seemed preliminary to some horrible convulsion of nature, lashed the universal waste.

FIRST CLASS MAIL