

The  
*Courier*  
Bi-Monthly Newsletter  
of the  
Lansingburgh Historical Society  
August 2015

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**50th Anniversary**

**Lansingburgh Historical Society**

In December 1968 the trustees of the Lansingburgh Historical Society received their charter from the Board of Regents of the New York State Education Department. The newly formed organization was heavily committed to building a membership base, starting collections, researching and documenting the history of what had been the Town and Village of Lansingburgh, recording the genealogy of the people and reporting all this to the public which it serves. Later, property was acquired on First Avenue which had been the home of a youthful Herman Melville for about eight years. Still later the remains of an old ship builder's shop and grounds were added to become the Melville Park.

A central character in all this work, the pusher, the driver, the initiator, the defender, and the recorder who kept it all together and kept it going was **Frances Dotter Broderick**. Officially and unofficially at different times she was the Lansingburgh historian. It was Frances who spent the hours in libraries and court houses shaking out facts relevant to the people, places and events which shaped the Burgh. It was she who wrote the letters, made the pleas and fought the battles with local

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officials to make things happen. Not to diminish the input that supported her effort – Warren J. Broderick, her husband and a practicing attorney, Benjamin Romp a local insurance agent, Richard Zeller, Kathleen Tivnan and other local educators, business people, Warren F. Broderick a student historian and writer to be. But it was Frances who was the driving force which got things done.

It is to **Frances Dotter Broderick** that we dedicate this edition of the *Courier*.

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Frances & Warren J. Broderick

## Frances Broderick

### Her Beginning, Her Life, Her Talents

Frances Triscilla Dotter b. 1908 grew up in Cohoes, NY, the daughter of William Francis and Mary Ann Daley Dotter. She had five siblings. Mary Frances b. 1895, Sarah Ann b. 1895, Marguerite Helen b. 1897, Henrietta Cecilia b. 1900 and Vincent Edward b. 1913. Her father was an ice dealer in Cohoes. Solomon Dotter, Frances' paternal grandfather came from Luzerne County, Pennsylvania in the heart of coal country. Her paternal grandmother, Sarah Ann Hanratta Dotter was born in Canada.

Frances' maternal grandfather, Jeremiah Augustus Daley was born in Pennsylvania but served in the 65<sup>th</sup> and 67<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry during the Civil War. He had been a prisoner at Andersonville, the dreaded Confederate States prison in Georgia. He later lived in Cohoes and earned an invalid pension from his wartime experience. His wife Mary Ann Gaul Daley was an immigrant from County Clare in Ireland.

Frances Dotter attended Cohoes public schools and the Holy Names in Albany. She trained as a secretary at the Allen School of Commerce and had been a legal secretary in Troy before her marriage to Warren Joseph Broderick in 1937. Mr. Broderick was an attorney in Troy and had been a founding trustee, president and did legal work leading to the awarding of the charter for the Lansingburgh

Historical Society.

Before and during her involvement with the historical society, Mrs. Broderick was a professional genealogist studying families in the Troy area and throughout Rensselaer County towns. The notes she accumulated at a time before the internet, email and word-processing are extensive, occupying some 39 archival boxes. This priceless resource is preserved for genealogical and historical researchers at the New York State Library in Albany.

Mrs. Broderick was probably one of the best local authorities on the Abraham Jacob Lansing family. The Lansing home near the present 109<sup>th</sup> St. was destroyed in the middle 1900s. She had a replica made of an early Dutch house which she furnished with items scaled to size. What has been referred to as "the doll house" is displayed in the front parlor of the Herman Melville House.



Lansingburgh Manor by Frances D. Broderick 1982

Frances Broderick was the author of several pamphlets and self-published books about Lansingburgh. Most useful to genealogists and historians in the area is *The Burial Grounds of Lansingburgh, Rensselaer County, New York* (1965). The work begins with a history of Lansingburgh cemeteries. She devotes separate sections to what were readable stones in 1965 in the Lansing family burial site adjacent to the home, the Lansingburgh Village Burial Ground, Trinity Churchyard and the Old Catholic Burying Ground. Entries include additional remarks about those

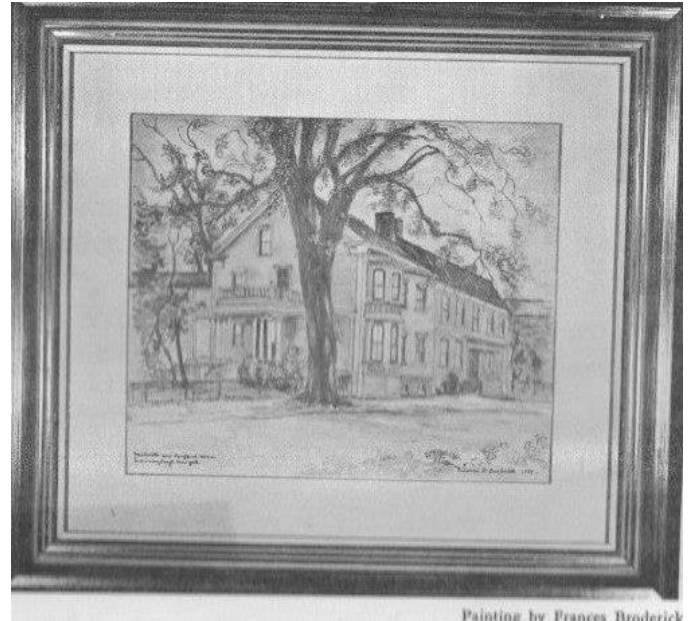
interred taken from newspaper clippings and other sources. She produced a similar list, which is not part of the book, on burials in St. John's-On-the-Hill, the older part of St. John's Cemetery on Gurley Avenue. These resources have been used extensively in the historical society's project begun in 2010 to catalogue gravestones in the Lansingburgh Village Burying Ground and the Old Catholic Cemetery. Mrs. Broderick's book and a survey of gravestones done in 1915 by a local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution are the only surviving record of who was buried in the period from 1771 to 1900 in the Burgh. No early plot maps or burial records exist.

She produced a guide for a self-guided walking tour of Lansingburgh buildings and sites which is currently being updated for use in guiding visitors to the Herman Melville House. Near the time of the Lansingburgh Bicentennial in 1971 she collaborated in writing, *Lansingburgh, NY 1771-1971* which is still used to orient local visitors to the history of this community. Also, near the time of the national bicentennial she wrote a number of newspaper articles in Troy newspapers calling attention to people and places in our region's history.

Frances Broderick resurrected the *Lansingburgh Declaration of Independence*, a document much like those written in other towns across New England and the Mid-Atlantic region, announcing their independence from the rule of George III and Parliament. These several declarations eventually led to the Second Continental Congress adopting and signing the Declaration of Independence for the thirteen colonies in July and August 1776, essentially making them united independent states. The historical society has periodically hosted a public reading of the *Lansingburgh Declaration of Independence*.

Many historical society patrons have admired the watercolor painting of the Herman Melville House which hangs in the society headquarters. This was painted by Mrs. Broderick. It has been used to produce a souvenir postcard of the Melville House.

It has also been used in one version of the historical society letterhead. She also executed other smaller watercolors.



Painting by Frances Broderick

Frances Broderick did much to bring about the Lansingburgh Historical Society and to preserve and present the history of this region and its people. To commemorate her service, the trustees voted recently to name the gardens adjacent to the Herman Melville House, the Frances Dotter Broderick Garden. This year the garden space around the recently rehabilitated porch has been planted. More of the garden space behind the house will be redeveloped in future years as funds and volunteers become available.



Section of the Frances Dotter Broderick Garden

## Help

We could use your help as a volunteer gardener in the worthwhile Frances Dotter Broderick Garden at the Melville House. We are also in dire need of someone to do routine light maintenance at the Herman Melville House. Things include sweeping the porch deck, changing a bulb when needed, general cleaning, and anything the average home owner might do in day to day maintenance of a home. Email us or speak to any trustee about your interest in gardening, maintenance or any of the many things with which we need help.

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## Events and Programs

**August 1, Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Herman Melville Birthday Party, 9:30AM to 2:30PM at Melville House, 114<sup>th</sup> St. at First Ave.** – Dr. Laurie Robertson-Lorant, author of *Melville: A Biography* (1996) and *The Man Who Lived among the Cannibals: Poems in the Voice of Herman Melville* (2005), will speak on the life and work of Herman Melville. Dr. Robertson-Lorant will speak at 10:30AM. Refreshments and Herman's birthday cake will be served.

**August 16, Sunday, Date Change, 1:00PM, 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Clam Steam, Steak & Chicken Roast at Lansingburgh Vets club Pavilion** – Jointly sponsored by We Were Burghers Once, and Young and LHS. Raw and steamed clams, hot dogs, hamburgers, sausage & peppers, chowder, beer and soda served all day. Complete steak or BBQ chicken dinner. There will be a 50/50 raffle. Send reservation requests to Marcia Chalifoux at 1108 "O" Street, Troy, NY 12182. State steak or chicken preference. Only reservations with payment are accepted. This is a fantastic event. Don't miss it!

**September 12, Saturday, 10:00 AM to Noon, Open House at Melville House** – Volunteers will be present to show you the house, discuss its history, talk about Lansingburgh history and tell you about Herman Melville's life here.

**September 20, Sunday, 1:00PM** – Champlain Canal Cruise on the Caldwell belle (paddle Wheeler). Narrated Cruise on the historic Hudson/Champlain Canal waterway. The peaceful and scenic area was central to the Battle of Saratoga, "Turning Point" of the Revolutionary War. Rain or shine our journey begins at 1:00PM, lock C5, Rtes. 4 & 32N, Schuylerville, NY. The cruise will head south, pass the Saratoga Battlefield and return at 4:00PM. Those wishing to carpool can meet at Melville House at 11:45AM. Light refreshments available on board and you may bring a bag lunch. Cost is \$35 for adults, \$30 for seniors and \$20 for children. Send your check for a reservation to Lansingburgh Historical Society, P.O. Box 219, Troy, NY 12182 by September 15.

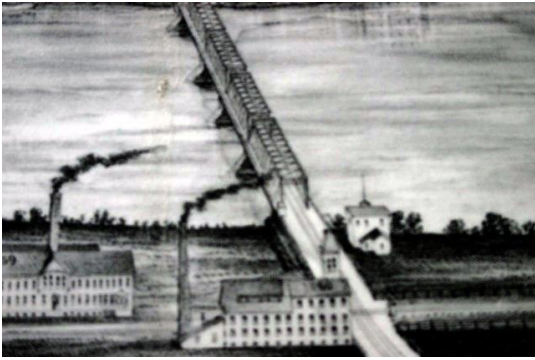
**September 26, Saturday, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, 11:00AM** – There will be a rededication of the **Lansingburgh Village Burying Ground at 107<sup>th</sup> St. at 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.** There will be a reading of the history of the cemetery, a tribute to several Lansingburgh people buried there, the placement of floral tributes and a remembrance of the several Lansingburgh veterans who lie there. In the afternoon at **1:00 PM** there will be a luncheon at the **Veterans of Lansingburgh, First Avenue above 121<sup>st</sup> St.** We will celebrate the 50 years of the historical society remembering the life and contributions of Frances Dotter Broderick, a founder of the society, historian and genealogist of the community. We have invited living founding members and others who have served the society over the years. Come join us at these events. While both events are free, we will ask for donations to help support the work of the historical society.



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# Then & Now

## 112<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge



Original Lansingburgh – Cohoes Bridge

The second bridge to cross the Hudson north of New York City (first being the Lansingburgh – Waterford Bridge) was built in 1880 and connected Lansingburgh and Cohoes at 112<sup>th</sup> Street.



112th Street Bridge and toll station

It was built by the Cohoes and Lansingburgh Bridge Co. with Thomas Knickerbacker as president. Tolls were charged to cross the wrought iron with wood deck span. The bridge remained in service until it burned on March 4, 1920. The heat was so intense it melted the steel work. A temporary foot bridge was built to replace it. That bridge swayed in the wind and people were leery of using it.



1920 Foot Bridge



112<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge many of us were familiar with

A new concrete drawbridge was completed in 1923 and was a free bridge. Those growing up in the 40s, 50s, 60s and 70s remember this span. It was always a thrill to see it open for river traffic.



Aerial View of 1923 Structure

In May 1996, the 73 year old bridge was blown up and a new Lansingburgh – Cohoes Bridge built.



Bridge Demolition May 1996

That bridge is still in service!



Current 112<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge

Our membership year begins on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Those joining in January, February or March extend their membership through the next membership year. Consider upgrading your Regular Membership to a Sustaining Membership or either of those to a Life Membership. Encourage friends to join. Regular Membership \$15/year, Sustaining Membership \$40/year, Life Membership \$150. Student/Senior Membership \$5/year. Corporate/Professional Membership \$200/year.

Donations are always welcome! . **Rates currently in effect since 1 July 2014.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_ City & State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Regular \_\_\_\_\_ Sustaining \_\_\_\_\_ Life \_\_\_\_\_ Student/Senior \_\_\_\_\_ Prof./Corporate \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \_\_\_\_\_

Send to Lansingburgh Historical Society, P.O. Box 219, Troy, New York 12182-0219

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