

The
Courier
Bi-Monthly Newsletter
of the
Lansingburgh Historical Society
October, 2015



Editor's Ramblings

I hold no office in the Lansingburgh Historical Society and live a fair distance from the Burgh. Although a member, I am unable to offer much to the Society other than assembling this newsletter every other month, designing event fliers, and working on the annual clamsteam.

Witnessing the dedication of the officers and trustees of the Society has been a fantastic experience. They take great pride in Lansingburgh, strive to preserve its history and secure its place in today's America. But there are too few people to do everything that needs doing. Virtually every officer and trustee has multiple responsibilities

I have heard people say the Society is aloof and disconnected from the citizenry of Lansingburgh. There have been efforts to correct that impression and all continue to search for new ways to be more available. But little can be done without an influx of fresh blood and ideas.

If anyone can spare a few hours each month and would love to explore Burgh history, its early citizens and its institutions, get hold of an officer or trustee and let them know. I guarantee they will find something for you to do.

Jim Norton

The Sloop WASP

Among the many types of businesses which enjoyed a heyday in the Burgh was shipbuilding. River commerce up and down the Hudson was important to fishing, manufacturing and agricultural activity as well as for human transport. When the Erie Canal opened the demand for moving goods and people along waterways grew with it. There were numerous shipbuilding and docking sites in Lansingburgh even before the Revolutionary War.

Russell Armington operated a shipyard on the river at the present 113th Street from the 1790s. Recall that there was dockage there in 1777 when following the Battle of Saratoga casualties were transferred to the "flying hospital" at 113th Street from the battle site at Bemis Heights. Adjacent dockage was an important part of a shipyard because the lumber used, white oak, chestnut and locust, were dense woods which were most cheaply transported from their origin by water.

Armington was building sloops, single deck and single mast sailing ships designed primarily for river and coastal trade but often reinforced for carrying very heavy goods like brass cannon and cannon balls. The idea here is that a sloop, properly reinforced, could be outfitted for port and coastal

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defense. In 1789 the US government began a program to register commercial ships belonging to private owners which could be outfitted for defensive purposes as needed. The ships were called privateers and constituted a reserve fleet. The program was called "enrollment" and a few enrollment ports were identified, among them the Port of New York. The jurisdiction of the New York Enrollment Port extended up the Hudson (including Lansingburgh), the Connecticut River Valley, Long Island Sound, and contiguous coast line of southern Long Island and northern New Jersey.

Armington built a sloop in 1813 for Abraham Baker, James Dougrey, John Kennedy and James Wadsworth, all of Lansingburgh. The ship was called the WASP. It was 69 feet in length, 23 feet wide and nearly 6 feet deep. It was heavily reinforced and made from a combination of white oak, chestnut and locust joined by trunnels, wooden nails designed to be driven into prebored holes in the planks. When the ship was launched the trunnels would swell with the moisture, locking them into place. Hudson Valley ships' carpenters and ship builders made a distinctive trunnel with a cylindrical rounded base extending into a octogonal shaft. The angular edges of the octogonal design were meant to temporarily fix the peg in place until moisture swelled the entire trunnel. Elsewhere ship builders fashioned a trunnel uniformly rounded along its length. Trunnel design made it easy to distinguish ships built in the Hudson Valley. Abraham Baker was the WASP's first master at the time of its enrollment.

An article by Frances Broderick indicates that the last owner of the WASP donated one of its trunnels to the Lansingburgh Historical Society in 1985. That trunnel is in one of the wall cases on the south wall of the front parlor in Herman Melville House. The WASP served in the war of 1812, a fact which led her to be sought after by souvenir hunters for many years after.

The WASP had several owners and masters (ship captains) in the years following the War of 1812.

All of them were in Connecticut and served in the Connecticut River trade and the adjacent coast. The last enrollment showed the owners were John and Frank Beattie of Leetes Island, CT. In its final days it was docked at New Haven. The WASP was taken out of service in 1902.

Because of its heavy reinforcement it was used to move granite blocks from quarries in the Connecticut Valley. Among these was a quarry on Leetes Island which produced blue, pink and white granite widely used in bridge abutments (the Brooklyn Bridge and the Harlem River Railroad Bridge), state boundary markers in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, seawalls in New York Harbor and most notably the base pedestal on which the Statue of Liberty was set after it arrived at Bedloe's Island in New York Harbor.

The Statue of Liberty was a gift from the French people to the people of the United States. The place chosen for the presentation of the statue was an island in the lower end of New York Harbor, Bedloe's Island, now known as Liberty Island. Fort Wood on the island was to have a concrete and steel framework constructed in its center. The granite pedestal was erected in that position. Because of the weight of the statue, the base pedestal had to be very substantial. Granite was the material chosen. John Beattie, a Scottish immigrant and former California gold miner, acquired a 400 acre quarry on Leetes Island, CT. Stone cutters from Italy, Sweden, Norway and the British Isles harvested stone there for various building projects in the Greater New York City region. Beattie was awarded the contract for the statue pedestal. The granite blocks were loaded on sleds drawn by oxen and hauled to the loading site at Hoadley Point on Leetes Island in New Haven County, CT. There the WASP was outfitted with a motorized stern hoist to lift the blocks on to the ship's deck. The WASP was towed by various tow boat owners. A tow fee was charged according to whether the tow was with or against the tide. Obviously the large number of middlemen and subcontractors generated a lot of employment which complicated the project and

inflated the cost. The last of the pink-gray granite blocks was moved into the pedestal on April 22, 1886.

Unfortunately the WASP fell into disuse and decay and was taken out of service in 1902. Parts of it were scavenged for decorative and reminiscent purposes. During World War I the WASP's wood was scavenged for firewood as it lay at Hoadley Point.

Russell Armington died in New York City in about 1831 while living there with his son. Sadly, the burying ground where he rested was dug up and the remains scattered in other locations which were never documented.

John Kennedy married Mercy Newell of Sturbridge, MA in 1812. Their son, John Kennedy Jr., drowned at age 10 in the Burgh in 1825. John Jr. is buried in the Village Burying Ground.

James Wadsworth married Harriet Delevan, daughter of Stephen and Hannah Delevan. Their infant son Henry Wadsworth died in 1813 at 2 months of age. Harriet died March 30, 1814 at age 23 years. Henry and Harriet are buried in Trinity Churchyard at 115th Street and Fourth Avenue.

James Dougrey b. April 26, 1781 was the son of John Dougrey of Lansingburgh. He married Clarissa Bontecou, also of Lansingburgh, in March 1806. Their son James Jr. married Frances Elizabeth Moulton of Troy in 1831. Frances was the daughter of Howard and Elizabeth Turner Moulton. She attended the Emma Willard School. James Jr. and Frances had six children. Clara and George Dougrey died in infancy. John, James Sr., Clarissa, James Jr., and Frances are all buried in Trinity Churchyard in Lansingburgh.

David Marsh

TO ARTILLERYMEN.
FOR SALE,
Two Military Hats,
With Trimmings, Feathers, &c. Also,
A Sword and Belt.
The above articles will be sold CHEAP for CASH.
Apply to Francis Adaircourt, at the Office of the
Farmers' Register, Lansingburgh.
[April 28, 1807.]

Events and Programs

October 4, Sunday, 1:00PM, Albany Rural Cemetery, NY Route 32 in Menands – Michael Barrett will lead a tour of famous Americans buried in the cemetery. Enter the Cemetery from Route 32. Park in the gate house parking area.

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

November 12, Thursday, 6:00PM, Holiday Wine and Cheese Party – An evening of good cheer with a raffle and an auction.

November 14, Saturday, 10:00AM to 2:00PM, Open House and Bake Sale at Melville House – Volunteers will be present to show the house, discuss its history, talk about Lansingburgh History and talk about Herman Melville's life here. There will be a wide variety of tasty treats for sale at this event prepared by Society members and friends.

RUM, TEAS, &c.
TEN Hhds. choice St. Croix RUM,
12 Ditto Boston ditto, 10 do. MOLASSES,
85 Chests Hyfon. Hyfon-skin and Bohea TEA,
3 half pipes L. P. Teneriffe WINE,
5 barrels American GIN,
12 bags Pepper and Allspice,
Loaf, Lump, and Brown SUGAR,
Coffee, Cotton, Indigo, Snuff, Tobacco, Powder,
Shot, Codfish, Shad, Tar, Pitch, Rosin,
Coarse and Fine SALT, &c.
ALSO,
30 tons Swedes and Russia Iron, assorted, from 3 inches
flat to 4 inch square and round,
Sterling Swedes and English blistered Steel,
Spike and Nail Rods,
Cart, Waggon and Chair Boxes,
4d, 6d, 8d, 10d, 12d, and 20d Cut Nails,
8d, 10d, 12d, and 20d Cut Brads,
6, 6½ and 7 feet Mill-Saws, 10,000 REED POLES,
For Sale very low for Cash or approved credit, by
GARDNER & KELLOGG,
Who will pay Cash for
FLAX-SEED, WHEAT, RYE, &c.
Storing and Freighting on their usual terms.
N B Six Merino BUCKS for Sale or to Let by
A. GARDNER.

Then & Now

Village Burial Ground

The old Village Burial Ground, located on the corner of Third Ave. and 107th St., was established on a tract of land that belonged to the Lansing family. The 200' by 200' lot showed as planned for a burial ground in the survey done in 1771.



It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

There are soldiers interred there from the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the US Civil War as well as a number of prominent early Lansingburgh residents. Burials in Lansingburgh were ended by ordinance from the City of Troy around 1901. Flags have been placed for the veterans for the cemetery rededication held on September 25, 2015.



For the past few years the Lansingburgh Historical Society, with the help of many volunteers, has been working on cleaning up the site; mapping the cemetery, cleaning and raising stones that were tipped and securing and laying new stones provided by the US government for veterans. A new sign, flag and solar light have been provided.



Kathleen DeRosa

Lansingburgh Gazette Sept. 1808

The trustees of *Lansingburgh Academy* have the pleasure of informing the public that they have at length procured an *Usher* in said academy, every way qualified for the station he is designed to fill, under the Rev. Samuel Blatchford, the Principal: And they take this opportunity of informing the public that the arrangements already made, and the system of instruction adopted, are well calculated to insure its success, and to recommend it to public patronage. The trustees are authorized to state that the academy has never flourished better, in point of improvement in the various branches of learning taught therein, than at present. They would also observe the academy will admit of but a few members more, to complete its number.

Troy Gazette April 1806

On one recent cold winter's night, a Hibernian having remained out late with a drinking party, could not gain admittance on returning to his lodgings. After wandering about some time, without seeing any person, and being nearly frozen, he let out a large cry of "*Fire! Fire! Fire!*" – Many people soon rushed out of their houses demanding "*where? Where?*" "*By Shaint Patrick (replied Paddy) I canno' tell; if I could, I'd quick be after getting till it, so I would.*"

Lansingburgh Gazette Sept. 1813

To the Public – Robert Anderson, Junier Contractor U.S. Army, is a base **Villain**, a **Liar**, and a **Coward**. James Butler

Lansingburgh Gazette July 1813

Whereas my wife Esther has behaved herself in an improper manner, and has eloped from my bed and board; this is to therefore warn all persons from harboring or trusting her on my account, as I will pay no debts of her contracting after this date.

Israel Warner



Recent Memories

The Gala



Melville House visit from Rob and Jane Judson Johnson. Jane is a direct descendent of David Judson, prominent early Lansingburgh resident and entrepreneur.



3rd Annual Clamsteam



Canal Cruise



Our membership year begins on April 1st. 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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