

The
Courier

Bi-Monthly Newsletter

of the

Lansingburgh Historical Society

October, 2014

From the President

The Lansingburgh Historical Society Board of Trustees and the membership offer condolences to Liz VanBuren and her family on the death of Martin VanBuren, her husband, who died in late August.

While I missed the second annual Clamsteam on August 16, I am told by many who attended that it was another great success. Liz VanBuren read a statement honoring Kay DeRosa for her continuing hard work and service to both We Were Burghers Once and Young Group and the Lansingburgh Historical Society. The food was great, the day fine and those that attended enjoyed the company of old friends and new acquaintances. The historical society is \$1,000 richer because of the generosity of We Were Burghers Once and Young. Many thanks to Jim Norton, Kay DeRosa, Marcia Chalifoux, John Ward and all who helped with this project.

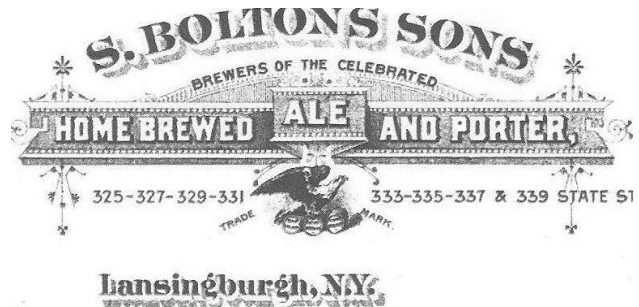
The Champlain Canal Cruise on September 20 was a new fund raising event for the historical society but one that those attending would become an annual event. The *Caldwell Belle*, a paddle wheeler, took us on a gentle relaxing three hour excursion from its mooring at Lock C-5 in Schuylerville along the canal waterway past part of the Saratoga Battle Field, through bird habitat (bald eagles, herons, ducks and cormorants) and beautiful

Cont. Pg. 2, Col. 1



Samuel Bolton the Lansingburgh Brewer

Members of the Samuel Bolton Family operated a brewery in Lansingburgh from about 1865 until about 1920. They arrived in Lansingburgh in about 1849. At that time Samuel Bolton was 33 years old and his wife Elizabeth Dugdale Bolton was the same age. Their children at the time were Joseph age 9, William age 8, Crumby age 6, Mary age 4, and Elizabeth age 2. Samuel and Elizabeth came from Clitheroe, Lancashire, England where all of the children mentioned were born. Two other children were born in Lansingburgh, Alice Bolton in 1849 and Samuel Bolton in 1852.



Samuel was the son of a block printer. Upon arriving in Lansingburgh the family was destitute and Samuel began working in the Powers oilcloth factory printing on oilcloth. Like many people of the time he made small amounts of his own ale at home which soon became known to friends and neighbors who liked the product and tried to buy it

Cont. Pg. 2, Col. 2

President

Cont. from Pg.1, Col. 1

upper Hudson farmland. We even saw a “native” alligator. There were only a couple of views of the dredging operation now going on in the region. Most people brought picnic lunches to enjoy on board. We far exceeded our expected participation on this cruise and everyone who came along enjoyed the experience. The operators of the *Caldwell Belle* are a kind and generous group. We are most grateful to Thila Bell for her efforts in bringing this program to the historical society members and friends.

ICC Construction of Waterford which has done a lot of work on properties in the Burgh was the low bidder on the porch project. Work will begin soon.

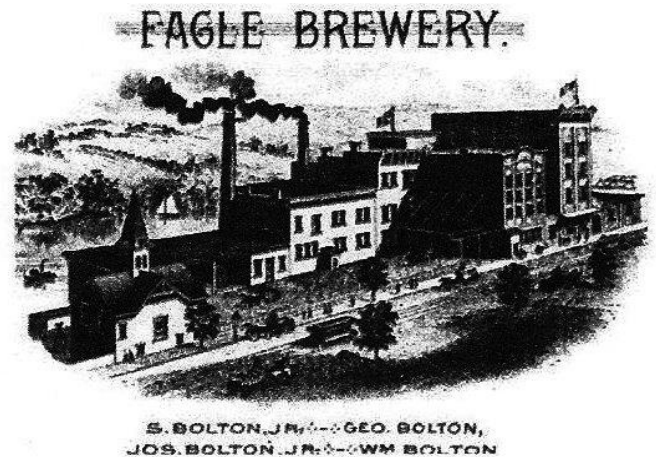
The Lansingburgh Historical Society is in search of volunteers. We have a couple of vacant positions on the Board of Trustees. One position became vacant recently when David Saehrig lost use of his family home on 114th Street in a fire. We are looking for people with certain skill sets that will complement those of others already serving on the board. In particular we need (1) someone with interest in the Melville House building and grounds to head the committee which coordinates that (2) someone with business accounting or bookkeeping experience to serve as the Assistant Treasurer/Auditor (position required under the NYS Board of Regents Rules under which historical societies operate) (3) Someone with an interest in historical or genealogical research, writing, editing and teaching (4) someone with office management and organizational skills. Willingness to use emailing and word processing is helpful. Even if you have the skill sets and are not interested in being a trustee, we want to talk to you. Contact any LHS trustee or send a note to lhssecretary@gmail.com telling us the skills you want to volunteer and letting us know how to contact you.

David Marsh

Bolton

Cont. from Pg. 1, Col. 2

from him. Gradually he was able to build a small business and by 1870 his brewery business had grown considerably. The 1870 US Census (industry schedule) showed production amounting to 1996 barrels of ale and 23 barrels of porter per year. His brewery was consuming 5000 bushels of malt and 5000 lbs. of hops. 1870 is the first census year in which he identifies himself as an ale manufacturer. Son William, then 28 years old, listed his occupation as brewer in that same year.



William and Crumby both served in the Civil War and William is said to have been a prisoner of war for several months. He never married and was the first of the sons to get in the family business. Later Joseph and then Samuel Jr. came into the brewery when Samuel Sr. died. William and Samuel Jr. worked in the management end of the business. Joseph had trained as a blacksmith with a carriage maker. When he came into the business he dealt with the actual brewing and production.

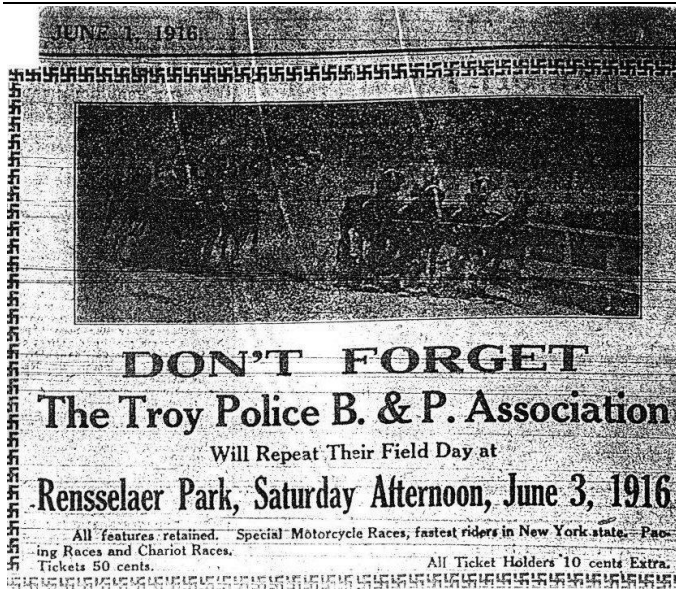
Samuel Jr. had an interest in investment and owned real estate, banking stocks and generally diversified his earnings in the stock market. In the early part of the 20th Century the stock market did not do well. A New York Times article dated May 10, 1901 states that Samuel Bolton Jr. committed suicide in the brewery in Lansingburgh by jumping into a large vat of hot ale. It speculates that the reason for

Cont. Pg. 3, Col. 1

Bolton

From Pg. 2, Col. 2

the suicide was losses he accumulated in the economic decline. That left the family business in the hands of William and Joseph. At some point it became known as the Eagle Brewing Company. It had ties to the Edward Tracy malting business.



Calendar of Events

Thursday, Oct. 2 @ 7:00 pm – Don Rittner will speak about famous inventors of the area. He is a historian, archeologist, environmental activist, educator and author residing in Schenectady. In 2004 he was named official Schenectady County Historian, responsible for providing guidance and support to municipal historians. He has since been named Schenectady County Historian. He has published 30 books on history, science and technology, including a volume on Lansingburgh which is available for purchase at the Melville House.

Saturday, Oct. 4 – The Burgh House Tour is cancelled for this year.

Thursday, Oct. 16 @ 6:00 pm – Tom Martin, author and blogger, will read his fiction novel “Murder in the Burgh”. Nov. 22 was a sad day for many Americans but there was another November in 1886 and it takes the combined efforts of Chester

A. Arthur, Herman Melville and Theodore Roosevelt to solve a 50 year old murder mystery. Melville is a 16 year old who wants to go to sea but is stuck in Lansingburgh. Tom Martin was born and raised in the Burgh in the house where many of the books scenes take place.

Friday, Oct. 31 – Halloween Party has been cancelled.

Thursday, November 13 @ 6:00 pm at the Herman Melville House we will host our Annual Holiday Party. We will auction a number of items that are suitable for holiday gift giving: small antiques, collectibles, Christmas books, and holiday ornaments. All proceeds will be used toward the Melville House preservation fund.

Thursday, Nov. 20 @ 7:00 pm at the Melville House, **J. Thomas Allison** will give a talk on steamboats on the Hudson River including those which served Lansingburgh, Troy and Albany. He is author of “Hudson River Steamboat Catastrophes Contests and Collisions” The History Press 2013.

If you have a particular idea for an event or program for the coming season or if you desire information on any event, call the society at (518) 235-3501 or e-mail lhssecretary@gmail.com.



Then & Now

Troy Waterford Bridge

The original bridge, called the Union Bridge was built in 1804 and was the first bridge to cross the Hudson, north of New York City. The bridge was owned by the Union Bridge Co. whose president was Thomas Knickerbacker. The day it opened was a holiday and a procession formed at the Johnson & Judson Hotel in the Burgh that marched to the bridge, crossed it into Waterford where a dinner was provided at the Van Schoonhoven Hotel on 2nd Street. There was a 17 gun salute acknowledging the 17 states in the Union at that time.



Original Bridge



Inside original Bridge



Trolley exiting Bridge



Original Bridge Burning

The bridge was designed by Theodore Burr and constructed with three trussed arches from wooden beams held together with wooden pegs and strips of iron. The piers were constructed of stone and concrete. It was an open bridge at first but a cover was added in 1812. The bridge was considered an engineering wonder at the time.



Bridge after Fire



Bridge Today

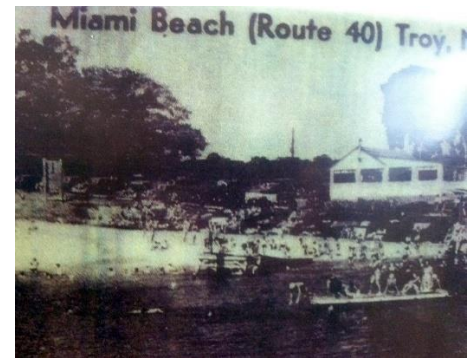
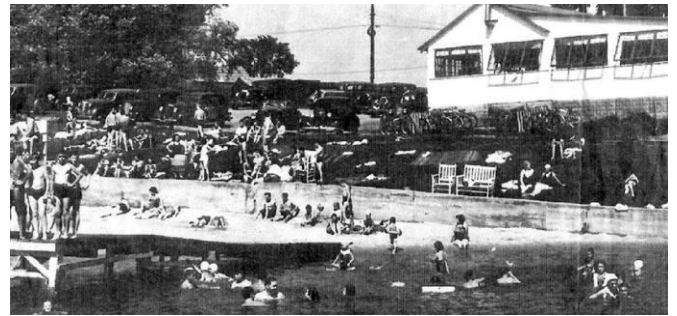
It was built for horse drawn wagons and trolleys and later electric trolleys. Tolls were charged; \$.03 for a carriage with 4 horses, \$.125 for a wagon with 2 horses and \$.02 for each foot passenger. Eventually it became the property of the state and tolls were eliminated.

The bridge burned on July 10, 1909. Possible cause was faulty insulation in the flooring. A new bridge was built of steel upon the original piers and is the bridge still in use today.

Kathleen DeRosa

Blast from the Past

Miami Beach



Images of Recent Historical Society Events

We Were Burghers/LHS Clamsteam



Canal Cruise



Join the Lansingburgh Historical Society

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/year, Senior/Student Membership \$5 year, Professional/Corporate Membership 200/year.

Donations are always welcome! **Rates effective 1 July, 2014.**

Name----- Phone-----

Mailing Address----- City----- Zip-----

Email-----

Regular----- Sustaining----- Life----- Senior/Student----- Prof./Corp.----- Donation-----

Send to Lansingburgh Historical Society PO Box 219 Troy, New York 12182-0219

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