



LANSINGBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Annual Report

1982-1983

President's Message

The Lansingburgh Historical Society has been involved in a number of varied activities during the past year. Members enjoyed some especially informative programs at our nine monthly meetings. Society Historian Frances Broderick arranged a series of attractive historical exhibits at the Headquarters, ranging from a display of antique fans to an exhibit on the Bolton Brewery. We were fortunate to acquire by both gift and purchase some outstanding pieces of Lansingburgh memorabilia. The Society's manuscript collection was completely arranged and reboxed using acid free materials. Professional conservation measures were undertaken to properly preserve both the manuscripts and works of art. The appearance of the meeting rooms was enhanced by the additional furnishings donated by the Bethesda Home and by the purchase of a brass chandelier appropriate for the decor. The main entrance and windows were further secured by the installation and repair of locks.

Additional work on the Society's 197 year old building must be undertaken in the near future. Major reconstruction is necessary to stabilize the southeast corner of the structure; the back roof must be replaced; proper lighting must be installed in the attic museum so that it can be properly utilized. Such expenses cannot be incurred on the Society's limited budget, where income consists primarily of rent receipts and membership dues. Donations from concerned organizations and individuals are vital for proper repairs and maintenance of this historic structure, built nearly two centuries ago by Rensselaer County's first Postmaster.

Supplemental income must be generated if the Society intends to acquire both artifacts and manuscripts relating to the history of Lansingburgh---the 1843 map mentioned elsewhere in the Newsletter, for instance, cost the Society \$275.00. Professional conservation of panoramic views and maps also requires substantial expenditure---if this is

not undertaken, however, these items cannot be used for display and educational purposes and may physically deteriorate. The Society receives no public funding, therefore support from the private sector is vital for this organization to continue in preserving and interpreting Lansingburgh's rich heritage and making it available to the public.

Regular membership in the Lansingburgh Historical Society amounts to only \$5.00 per year (sustaining membership can be obtained for \$25.00 per year), so at this time I would like to extend a personal invitation to any concerned individuals to join the Society as a member or make any donation which would aid us in fund raising or development of our collections. Persons who might be able to assist the Society in fund raising activities are also invited to suggest way in which such assistance can be rendered. This is the time to help the Society grow and to share in the exciting two hundred year old heritage of the community of Lansingburgh.

Byron D. Noak, President



Northwestern view of Lansingburgh

ACQUISITIONS

The Lansingburgh Historical Society is pleased to announce some significant manuscripts and artifacts acquired during 1982-3. With the assistance of Wm. E. Fitzgerald III, the extremely rare 1879 panoramic view of Lansingburgh by Galt and Hoy was purchased. Apparently the only copy of this view not in private hands, it nicely compliments the Burleigh panoramic views owned by the Society. Through exchanges executed between our organization and other institutions and private collections, we have acquired Burleigh views of Schaghticoke, Hoosick Falls, Granville, Altamont and Mechanicville. Two outstanding 19th century maps were acquired this past year. We purchased the 1843 "Map of the Confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers" published in Lansingburgh by Luther Bliss, and received the 1860 Map of Lansingburgh by John Bevan as a gift from the well known local historian H. Irving Moore.

A chart listing locations of fire call boxes dating from c. 1900 was also donated by Irving Moore and an attractive engraved award certificate presented to Lansingburgh brush makers Benjamin and King by the County Agricultural Society was given by Bill Fitzgerald. The Society received a number of photographs from the Pine and Kellogg families of Lansingburgh from Jim Pine, as well as family photographs from Mary Gagnon. The most recent manuscript acquisition was an 1843-1846 record book of the Rising Sun I.O.O.F. Lodge, donated by Irving Moore.

A whimsical folk-art landscape painted by Foesstenkill artist Joseph W. Bidley was purchased recently, and the parlors of the Headquarters were enhanced by the addition of furnishings from the Bethesda Home. Especially notable pieces include three marble top tables, a Victorian self-rocker, a lady's Victorian slipper chair, Bristol and Billeek vases, a candelabra with prisms and a jardiniere on matching pedestal. The Virginia H. Greenwood memorial fund was used to purchase an attractive brass chandelier for the parlor.

Some artifacts acquired during the year include a sampling of shirts and collars manufactured at the United Shirt and Collar Company (donated by Jim Pine), a charming Bolter Brewery calendar, a Defreest stoneware root beer bottle, a hand-carved wooden bookstand made by Emilie Adams, and other Lansingburgh related pieces. Space does not allow a complete listing of gifts in this Newsletter, but the Society is truly appreciative for each item we have received during the past year.

The significance of historic photographs is well illustrated in this pair of photos of the Warren T. Kellogg home at 450 Second Avenue in Lansingburgh, taken before and after late Victorian renovation.



CONSERVATION

Conservation of the Society's holdings was a primary concern during the year 1982-3. Textile items have been rearranged and reboxed by Historian Frances D. Broderick. All works of art have been given professional conservation, the Joseph Ridley landscape, view of Lansing's Ferry and Oliver T. Eddy floral panels having been restored by a prominent New England conservator. Most of the broadsides and other flat paper items, including the panoramic views and the Bliss 1843 map, have been encapsulated in mylar so that they may be properly displayed and at the same time protected from damage and deterioration. Other manuscript items have been placed in acid-free folders and storage boxes. Duplicate copies of three maps in poor physical condition were deaccessioned and income from their sale used to reimburse in part conservation expenses. Although most of the Society's manuscript holdings are in excellent condition, the three 1891 Lansingburgh Burleigh views and three important local maps are in need of proper but costly paper conservation---contributions from members and friends of the Society are necessary for this to be accomplished so that these maps and views can be preserved for future display and use.



A RELIC OF THE LAST CENTURY---This remarkable early photograph of the 1791 Lansingburgh fire pumper was discovered recently in a local home. The original glass plate negative is now owned by the New York State Museum, who may finally be able to reconstruct missing parts of this wonderful early pumper.



In the near future Sports Illustrated will feature an article by Steve Wulf of Troy our famous baseball team of the late 1860's, the Union "Haymakers."

THE MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

The manuscript collection of the Society was extensively arranged and conserved last year. A summary listing of manuscripts was prepared in conjunction with a field visit by Bob Englert of the New York State Historical Resources Center of Cornell University; entries for the Society's holdings will appear in a forthcoming Guide to Historical Resources in Rensselaer County. All manuscripts were placed in acid-free folders and boxes, while broadsides and other flat paper items were encapsulated in mylar. Certain items not related to Lansingburgh were deaccessioned. The Society donated to the New York State Library a few order books from the M.L. Filley Stove Works of Green Island; the State Library recently purchased the major part of this collection at auction. Society Historian Frances Broderick prepared a scrapbook recording Lansingburgh's 1971 Bicentennial celebration; an additional copy of this scrapbook was donated to the Troy Public Library. She is presently preparing a scrapbook in similar format of articles written about the history of Lansingburgh.

A COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY was approved by the Trustees of the Society at their March meeting. The policy places emphasis on the acquisition by gift, purchase or bequest of artifacts and manuscripts related to the history of Lansingburgh, and is intended to further upgrade the Society's collections.



Detail of a section of one of the 1891 L.R. Burleigh panoramic views of Lansingburgh.

PANORAMIC VIEWS

Panoramic views, often called "birdseye views," were an extremely popular lithographic representation of American communities in the latter part of the 19th century. Highly detailed and surprisingly accurate, a panoramic view depicted a community as it would have appeared from an imaginary high vantage point. Lucien R. Burleigh of Lansingburgh was one of the country's most prolific view publishers during this era. A Plainville, Conn. native, Burleigh moved to Lansingburgh in 1883 and soon established his business in Troy, publishing views there up to the turn of the century.

The Lansingburgh Historical Society owns a significant collection of Burleigh panoramic views, donated a few years ago by Lucien's son William S. Burleigh. The collection has been upgraded through exchange of views with the New York State Library and Library of Congress, enabling the Society to acquire views of Mechanicville, Schaghticoke, Hooick Falls, Altamont and Granville. We are interested in obtaining both original and reproduction views of New York State communities, made by L.R. Burleigh. The Society also plans to compile a complete listing of all Burleigh views. A complete checklist of all New York State views is presently being compiled by John Repe of Cornell University's School of Architecture. Anyone with information on the location of any panoramic views of New York State communities is asked to contact Society Vice President Warren F. Broderick.

LANSINGBURGH ARTISTS

The Lansingburgh Historical Society is anxious to obtain information on any Lansingburgh artists and their work; we are particularly interested in David S. Pierce, a portrait painter and Martin E. Ferrill, a folk artist, both of whom worked in the 1870's and 1880's. Warren Broderick has located 16 oil paintings on wooden panels executed between 1840 and 1865 by Oliver Tarbell Eddy, a little known but accomplished portrait painter. A member of the branch of the Eddy family which was involved in a number of local manufacturing enterprises, Oliver apparently executed these paintings while visiting numerous relatives in the Lansingburgh-Troy-Waterford area. Portraits of Troy merchant Richardson Thurman and wife Catherine VanBuskirk, owned by the Rensselaer County Historical Society, have been attributed to Eddy. The pair of still lifes---thistles and autumn wild flowers---owned by the L.H.S. have been restored this past winter to their original appearance. All recently located Eddy paintings have been registered with the Smithsonian Institution's Inventory of American Paintings.



"Country Dance," 1883, by Lansingburgh folk artist Martin E. Ferrill (National Gallery of Art)



LANSINGBURGH STONWARE

Information is being compiled on Lansingburgh potters and their work by Society Historian Frances Broderick. Identifying and photographing additional pieces of stoneware marked "Lansingburgh" is important so that the full scope of the quantity and variety can be understood. Potters known to have worked here were: John Haggerty (1795-1820); George Lent (1825-1840), Pliny Thayer (1841-1855), Eleazer Orcutt (1843-1847) and James Reiley (1855-1858). Stoneware bottles were made in great quantity for D.W. DeFreest, a Pleasantdale root beer bottler of the late 1800's. Stoneware pieces are known to be marked with the names of early Lansingburgh grocers. Photographs and information relating to newly discovered pieces are being forwarded to stoneware historian William Ketcham of Rye, N.Y., for his compiling material for a projected revision of his popular book on New York Stoneware.

LANSINGBURGH AUTHORS

The Society is seeking copies of works by local authors to upgrade our library. These authors include George T. Marsh, Carolyn S. Bailey, Rev. Wm. Arthur, Horatio G. Spafford, "Lynde Palmer" (Mary L. Peebles), John Shirley and Herman Melville. We need additional books on Melville's life and literary career as well as copies of his novels Typee and Omoo, which were written while he lived in Lansingburgh.

Troy and Lansingburgh Railroad Company barns on 2nd Avenue below 102nd Street, photographed in the early 1870's by James Irving (New York State Museum)

RENSSELAER PARK

Dick Zeller, Society Treasurer, is presently researching the colorful history of this popular Lansingburgh horse racing and amusement park and hopes to eventually publish a book on the subject. Any persons who can contribute information or loan photographs of Rensselaer Park for use in his publication should contact Dick at 235-4099.



EARLY TRANSPORTATION RECORDS

Trolley and horse-car enthusiasts will be pleased to learn that records of the Troy and Lansingburgh Railroad Co. and the Lansingburgh and Cohoes Railroad Co. have come to light this past year. In storage since 1973, records of the United Traction Company and a number of predecessor companies, though the assistance of the Capital District Transportation Authority and New York State Archives, have been transferred to the Albany Hall of Records (City & County Archives). The complete record book of the T. & L. RR. Co. for 1860-1892 was preserved, as well as books of bond or stock registers. The Hall of Records intends to move into its new facility in Albany's south end in the near future. For additional information about these records and their archival holdings contact Executive Director Robert Arnold or County Archivist Neil Hanson at 462-8571.





LANSINGBURGH ACADEMY CENTER

Since it opened in 1980, the Center has acquired three permanent tenants; Camp Fire Incorporated, Head Start and the Lansingburgh Branch of the Troy Public Library. These organizations as well as other community groups have sponsored a number of valuable public programs. It is worth noting that a rope has been installed so that the tower bell made by the Jones Foundry of Troy can be rung. The Center's huge annual flea market will be held this May 7th at Fowers Park. For details contact Lois Norton at 235-0978.

FEDERATION OF HISTORICAL SERVICES

The Federation moved into its new headquarters in the R.C.C.A. building at Troy's Washington Park in August of 1982. The Federation had worked out of rooms at the Shaker Museum in Old Chatham since its establishment five years ago. Its membership totaling over 200 includes local historical societies, museums, historic sites, local historians and concerned individuals. Under the guidance of Director and L.H.S. member Molly Lowell, the Federation serves the historic community in Rensselaer, Columbia, Greene and Albany Counties and adjacent areas of eastern New York. Among their services are the quarterly newsletter, F.H.S. Roundtable, the 1980 Handbook to Historic Resources in the Upper Hudson Valley, workshops on a variety of relevant topics and consultation services for local historical agencies. Persons or organizations interested in joining the Federation or learning about their services should write or visit their headquarters, 189 Second Street, Troy, N.Y. 12180 or call (518) 273-3400.

LANSINGBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER & ANNUAL REPORT: 1982-3

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 for 1982-3 are:

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

Trustees: the Officers given above; also Alice Elett, Helena English, Barbara Carlo, Lois Norton, Vivian Hopkins, Maurice Corbin

The Society's headquarters is open by appointment by calling 235-5868, 235-7647, 235-4041 or 235-4099.

The United Shirt and Collar Company, shown below in a Barlow insurance survey sketch, will celebrate its 100th birthday in 1984. An example of adaptive reuse of a historic industrial building, it now is the home of Standard Manufacturing Co. (courtesy of Herrimack Valley Textile Museum)

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LANSINGBURG,
 N.Y.



HISTORICAL RECORDS IN EDUCATION

The Lansingburgh Historical Society participated in "Rensselaer County History Day," held on March 25th at the 57 Second Street building of the Rensselaer County Historical Society. Artifacts, manuscripts and books from our collections were on display on the Society's table at the Fair; interpretation of these items and explanation of L.H.S. activities were handled by Kathleen Tivnan and Warren F. Broderick. Over 150 persons, including a number of local teachers, attended the Fair, which was highly successful in bringing together those teaching history and those possessing local historical resources. An introductory talk on teaching local history and uses of historical records in the classroom was delivered by Kathleen Roe of New York State Archives.

We are exploring the possibility of preparing an educational packet for use in Lansingburgh schools. Production of such a packet would coincide with the commemoration of the Bicentennial of the Regents of the State of New York; the State Education Department has already stated that one of its primary goals for this Bicentennial will be the increased

emphasis on the use of local historical materials in elementary and secondary schools in the State. Another goal will be developing students' interest in the history of schools in their own community. Ample graphic materials (broadsides, billheads, photographs, maps and prints) relating to Lansingburgh can be found in both public and private collections; if properly produced an educational publication on the history of Lansingburgh could serve as a model for other communities in the State to follow. Persons interested in the preparation and use of this publication should contact Society Vice President Warren F. Broderick.

TAX PAYERS!

Remember that the Supervisor of the Town of Lansingburgh has the handling of from \$6000 to \$8000 every year; School and other monies; for which he gives no security.

**VOTE FOR WILLIAM A. FLACK,
a responsible man.**

**LANSINGBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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FIRST CLASS MAIL