

NEWSLETTER

LANSINGBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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April 2013

We are saddened to report the death of Gordon W Brown who passed away on April 4th, 2013. Gordon was a member of the historical society since 1982 and a member of its Board of Trustees since 2004. He spear headed our major fund raiser events, he led the cemetery restoration project, was active in the rehabilitation of the Herman Melville House, and helped the society in countless ways. Our condolences go out to his wife Suzann and to their children Loree and Geoffry.

COPRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

We continue to make new friends for the historical society as we work at trying to determine what is best for its continued growth, for the care and preservation of Melville House and for improvement in the appearance of the house and grounds. Attendance and support of our fund raising events is much appreciated. The architect employed to advise us in the restoration and preservation of Melville House has recommended that the aluminum storm sash once installed on the exterior of windows be removed so that the original green trim around windows will be visible and the 1870's appearance of the house will be preserved. He further recommended that interior storm sash be installed. Much of that work has been done this past late fall and winter. The downstairs apartment was cleaned, painted and interior storm sash installed prior to a new tenant moving in on March 1st. Both apartments are now rented. A window on the first floor on the west side has some damage to the frame and the floor beneath the radiator. As soon as the heating season is passed the extent of the damage will be assessed and estimates taken for the repairs. The trustees and officers have discussed improvement and maintenance of the grounds. Cornell Cooperative Extension has been contacted to help in locating someone who has experience with historic house landscaping and plantings. At some point in the future we may be asking for donations of recommended plant material to add to the gardens. Discussions are being held about future fund raising projects. As always we invite your participation in all of our activities. We look forward to hearing your ideas about any aspect of your historical society. Finally, we invite you to volunteer your time to serve on a committee, to serve as an officer or to help us by sharing relevant interests and talent.

EVENTS AND POGRAMS

SATURDAY APRIL 13~ BAKE SALE 9AM to 2PM at Melville House Baked goods baked by our members at various prices and Bicentennial Cookbooks with Historic recipes will be for sale at 50 cents each.

TUESDAY APRIL 30~ 7:30 PM at Melville House Lois Tucker of Berwick, Maine, acknowledged expert in the field of American painted tinware, will give a slide presentation

on that subject, featuring tinware made by the Filley family in Lansingburgh for 50 years in the mid-nineteenth century at 499 Second Avenue. Examples of their work will be on display that evening.

SATURDAY MAY 11~ USED BOOK SALE. 9 AM to 2 PM rain or shine.

Sale is held inside & under cover. Hundreds of quality used books and ephemera priced from 50 cents to \$20. Troy, Rensselaer County, and local history, New York State history and literature, Herman Melville, Americana, art, antiques and collecting, natural history, gardening, selected popular fiction and nonfiction, local post cards & other ephemera; trade cards, vintage holiday and other gift cards. No junk or ex-library books-only quality hardcover and soft cover books. Proceeds benefit the historic 1786 Herman Melville house restoration. If you wish to donate books for the sale call 235-4041.

THURSDAY MAY 16th 7:30 PM at Melville House Christine Hadsell of Burlington, Vermont and Curtains without Borders will give a slide presentation on painted curtains and other theater art generally created between 1880 and 1940, emphasizing painting techniques, research, and preservation. One of the most famous of these scenic artists was Charles Huiest who had a residence and studio on Third Avenue in Lansingburgh.

THURSDAY MAY 30th 7:30 PM at Melville House The Tri-City NY Paranormal Society will present **A Spirit Circle**, a séance to channel paranormal activity. Reservations are required and participation is limited to twenty people. A fee of \$10 will be charged. All proceeds will benefit the restoration of the historic Herman Melville House.

SUNDAY JUNE 2nd OPEN HOUSE 1 PM to 4 PM, at Melville House. In conjunction with the New York State Path through History Weekend, we are holding an open house. Historical society officers and trustees will answer questions on the restoration of our headquarters, the history of Lansingburgh, and especially on Herman Melville. The attic museum will be open. Light refreshments will be served.

James Knox Polk Pine

David Marsh

On the east side of Second Ave. between 120th and 121st Sts. stands a block long brick factory building built by one of America's titans of the shirt and collar industry. James Knox Polk Pine was born in 1841 and raised in the Town of Hoosick in Rensselaer County, the son of James and Sarah Ouderkirk Pine. In 1860 he took a job as a clerk in Troy with Coon and VanValkenburg, manufacturers of detachable shirt collars. Two years later Pine began his own collar business, later merging with another shirt and collar manufacturer. By 1880 he was the senior partner in a shirt and collar business with Myron Hamlin in Troy. Hamlin died that same year leaving the company to the surviving partner, James K P Pine. The block long factory building at 750 Second Avenue was built by Pine in 1884 to house his businesses.

Pine married Clara M Adams of Troy in 1865. They had three daughters Kate b. 1868 , Bessie b. 1874, and Clara Louise Pine b. 1876. There were two sons Charles LeRoy b. 1866 and Warren Adams Pine b. 1880. James K P Pine purchased the Lansing home on the west side of Second Avenue just north of 124th Street. It was converted to a beautiful spacious Victorian home called the Abby with garden and grounds overlooking the Hudson River at the rear. Later Charles L. Pine, the son, built a smaller home adjacent to

that of his father and mother. Today all the houses on the block are gone and the land is occupied by a small strip mall.

In the spring of 1890 Pine combined his firm with four other Troy shirt and collar manufacturers- Sanford and Robinson, S. A. House & Sons, Beiermeister & Spicer, and Marshall & Briggs. They all agreed to keep the same brands and labels and their ownership would be in proportion to the premerger value of the individual companies. The value of the new company, United Shirt and Collar Co., amounted to \$2 million in 1890. Management of the corporation was at 750 Second Avenue in Lansingburgh. It was best known for the Lion brand of women's shirts and collars but also made sleepwear for men and women and a variety of children's clothing. Pine began as treasurer of the company, then vice president and by 1906 he was president. His son Charles Leroy Pine was also an officer of the company.

The Troy Carriage Works was started by James K. P. Pine in 1882. The original plans for the Pine building at 750 Second Avenue called for the north end of it to be the home for the Troy Carriage Works, a manufacturing plant for surries, buckboards, sleighs and fine carriages. The company also did repairs and upgrades of all kinds on horse powered vehicles. Around 1903 Gary Dormandy, an employee of James K P Pine at the carriage works, began design of a car body for a four cylinder air cooled engine automobile for use by the Pine family. There were four of them built between 1903 and 1905; all of them red. As United Shirt and Collar grew, the Troy Carriage works was moved to 745 Third Avenue at the corner of 121st Street. J K P Pine continued to be President of the carriage works and Myron J Adams was the Secretary and Treasurer.

James K P Pine was involved in other parts of the business community in the Troy area. He was a founder of the Peoples Bank of Lansingburgh. He was a director at Troy Savings Bank and an officer of the National City Bank of Troy. He owned a part of the Record Publishing Company which published Troy newspapers. James Ostrander who began making fire brick in Troy in 1855, continued through three generations of Ostrander ownership before closing in 1926. It was known as Ostrander and Sons Fire Brick and Troy Fire Brick Company. Fire brick production was a companion to the manufacture of stoves and the iron foundries in Troy. James K P Pine owned a large share of the Ostrander company.

In the mid-1880s James K P Pine established a business relationship with Henry D Schoonmaker of the Wyoming National Bank in Casper, Wyoming. The bank loaned money for oil exploration and production in the Wyoming oil fields. With Schoonmaker's advice Pine became an investor in various oil companies (Royalty Oil, New York Oil, Midwest Oil, and others) many of which began small and were consolidated into larger firms. Charles Leroy Pine continued to manage his father's oil stocks well into the middle of the Twentieth Century. Charles' son, James P Pine was also involved in the management of the Pine oil stocks. Consolidated Oil Co. which was one of the last producers of Wyoming oil did not go out of business until the 1960s when technology had made foreign oil deposits more attractive to investors.

James K P Pine was a member and elder of the Presbyterian church for many years. He was a Thirty-Second Degree Mason, a trustee of the Troy Young Women's Association, and a member of the Troy Club. He was a successful business man who brought much to Lansingburgh, Troy and the wider American community.

In closing it's important to mention that James' son Charles Leroy Pine continued much of his father's business success. Charles married Grace Eddy Kellogg, an accomplished local artist who did mostly charcoal sketching. The historical society owns one of her works which is displayed in Melville House. Charles and Grace had two children. James P Pine continued his father's and grandfather's Wyoming oil investments. Ruth K. Pine married Dr. Henry Dawson Furniss. Ruth attended the Emma Willard School and studied writing at Columbia University. She achieved some fame writing and publishing a number of short stories and novels.

The historical society own a number of photographs and a few copies of documents relating to James K P Pine, his family and home, and his businesses. As noted it owns a charcoal sketch by Grace Eddy Kellogg Pine, his daughter-in-law.

IT'S MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

Our membership year begins in April. People who join 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 your friends to join.

- Regular Membership is \$5.00/ year
- Sustaining Membership is 25.00/year
- Life Membership is \$100

Donations are welcome at any time!

**Mail to: Lansingburgh Historical Society
P.O. Box 219
Troy, NY 12182-0219**

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Donations welcome! You may include it with your membership.

