LANSINGBURGH SLOOP HELPED BUILD STATUE OF LIBERTY

Many of the granite blocks used in the pedestal and seawall of the Statue of Liberty were transported from a Connecticut quarry to Bedloes Island (Liberty Island) by a vessel built in Lansingburgh. This information was recently provided by Ellen Beattie Hare of Old Saybrook, Ct., a great-granddaughter, and Robert Beattie of Belfast, Me., grandson, of John Beattie, owner of the granite quarry at Leetes Island, Ct.

The vessel, the Wasp, was constructed at Lansingburgh in 1813, according to the ship's enrollment, filed in 1866 at Bridgeport. The Wasp, a single-masted sloop, 100 feet long with a 90 foot boom, was probably built at the Hawkins shipyard at 113th St. and First Avenue. It replaced an earlier Wasp, built in 1806 at Lansingburgh by Orlando Merrill, and sunk in 1812. The second Wasp was used in the American Navy in the War of 1812, and thereafter to transport goods on the Hudson River.

The Wasp was purchased by John Beattie in 1869. While the boat originally carried 72.5 tons of cargo, its hull was strengthened by Beattie to carry 100 tons, and was equipped with a stern hoisting engine. Beattie's quarry also supplied stone for the abutments of the Brooklyn Bridge and interstate boundary markers. The contract for the Statue of Liberty pedestal and seawall was awarded in 1882.

Among the other vessels owned by John Beattie, which were used to transport the granite blocks to Bedloes Island, was a sloop the John S. Gilmore, constructed, probably also at Lansingburgh, in 1865. The last block of granite in the pedestal was swung into place on April 22, 1886, and the jubilant workmen showered silver coins from their pockets in the mortar.

The quarry at Leetes Island was in operation until 1918. The Wasp was abandoned in the early 20th century and her remains still rest in the salt marshes off Hoadley's Point, Connecticut, in the Long Island Sound.

The 1893 photograph of the Wasp, below, was supplied by John Beattie's descendents. The sketch, by John Leavitt, is reproduced courtesy of Mystic Seaport Museum.
LANSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER AND ANNUAL REPORT: 1985-6

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 of the Society are:

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

Trustees, in addition to officers listed above, are Agnes Ernest, Maurice Corbin, Helena English, Shirley Parker, Barbara Carlo, Rita Darfler, Lois Norton & Helen Ciavardoni. The Society’s headquarters is open by appointment, by calling 235-7647, 235-7828, 235-4099 or 235-4041.

EXHIBITS

"LANSBURG POTTERS AND THEIR WORK" was on display at three locations in 1985-6 in Lansingburgh. It featured jugs, crocks and bottles as well as photos of a pottery dig and some artifacts. The exhibit drew much-needed attention to an industry which flourished between 1790 and 1858. This exhibit remains on display at the Society headquarters through the end of 1986.

"HISTORIC OAKWOOD CEMETERY" is the subject of the travelling exhibit for 1986-7. It can be seen at the Marine Midland Bank, Norstar Bank and the Lansingburgh Branch of the Troy Public Library. Featured will be historic photographs, archival records of the Cemetery and related memorabilia. Some are on loan through the courtesy of the Troy Cemetery Association. Oakwood Cemetery, established in 1848, is now recognized as one of the nation's largest and most significant landscaped "rural cemeteries." It has been placed on the State and National Registers of Historic places.

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

The monthly programs for 1985-6 were:

Sept.: Carl Grimm: Thailand
Oct.: Molly Lowell: Archaeological Adventures in Peru
Nov.: James Kelly: Pre-statehood Alaska
Dec.: Christmas party & auction
Jan.: Linda Ellett: Tiles
Feb.: John DeMarco: Collecting Books
Mar.: Margaret Coffin: Broadway, Saratoga Springs
Apr.: Warren Broderick: Oakwood Cemetery
May: Ruth Kittell: Australia

The remaining programs for 1986 are:

Sept. 11: Margaret Coffin: American Country Tinware
Oct. 16: Carl Grimm: The South Pacific
Nov. 20: Joseph Zarzynski: Champ, the Lake Champlain Monster
Dec. 18: Christmas party & auction

Programs for 1987 are being arranged. Contact Program Chairperson, Kathleen Tivnan, with suggestions for programs, at 235-7647.

An OPEN HOUSE will be held on Saturday, September 13th, from 10 AM to 4 PM. A PORCH SALE will be conducted that day, and those wishing to donate items for the sale can contact Society officers this summer. Rita Darfler (235-3068) and Helen Ciavardoni (235-7330) are in charge of the sale. The antique & collectible RAFFLE will be held the same day; chances are $1 each and are available at the Brownstone, Sally's Variety Outlet, or from Society members. There are 5 prizes.

TOURS of historic Lansingburgh are being planned for fall and spring. A tour of central Lansingburgh will feature the Society headquarters, Lansingburgh Academy and church edifices. Special tours with such themes as adaptive reuse of industrial buildings and gardens on city lots are also anticipated. For suggestions and additional information contact Society President Kathleen M. Tivnan. Volunteers to assist in conducting tours are requested.
A number of important items were added to the Society's collections during the past year. Major purchases included a Bolton's Brewery tray, 5 coin silver spoons made by the Smith family, a sampler wrought in 1833 by a Lansingburgh girl, a decorated tin document box made at the Filley shop, 3 stone-ware DeFrested bottles and records of the Village Fire Department, 1844-1861.

Significant donations included 17 postcard views of the flood of 1913, from Mrs. Francis Rifenburg, Poughkeepsie; miscellaneous Town records, from the Treharne family; 13 manuscript items relating to early merchant Jonathan Burr, from an anonymous donor; 3 scrimshaw items, from Dr. Byron Evans, Saratoga Springs; an 1835 token from Walsh's general store, from Edward Davis, Charlestown, N.H. and an 1873 Charter of the Village, from Mrs. Edward Moylan, Coral Gables, Fla. Other donors included Frances Broderick, Donald Murray, Jack Sticklemeyer, Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Dequaire, James Hoffman, Allan Dixon, Edward Blechner and Elmo Mollnow.

The Society is interested in acquiring artifacts and manuscripts to better document Lansingburgh's tinware, rope and cordage, brewing, oil cloth, stoneware, scale manufacturing and gun making industries. We also need works of art by Martin Ferrill, Charles Beauregard and David S. Pierce to round out our art collection. While the Society gratefully receives items donated, our collections fund allows for the prompt and businesslike purchase of items of "primary historical significance."

The Society has assisted research conducted by Alan Lane of Honeoye, N.Y., into early Lansingburgh plane makers. "S.E. Jones" was identified as Samuel E. Jones, who worked in the period 1787-1790. His advertisement in the Northern Centinel & Lansingburgh Advertiser is shown at the right. The "sign of the jointer" advertised his shop. Another plane maker, "C. Allen," was identified as Caleb Allen (1777-1854), whose occupation as "Tool Cutter" was documented by an 1814 Lansingburgh Jury List owned by the Society. Caleb apparently worked for some time, as the 1850 Census lists his occupation as "carpenter." Mr. Lane believe that Allen learned his trade as an apprentice to Samuel Jones.
MELVILLE'S FIRST MARITIME STORY

"The Death Craft," a horror-filled Gothic story about a young sailor's encounter with a ghost ship, appeared in the newspaper Democratic Press in Lansingburgh on Nov. 16, 1839. Signed only "Harry the Reefer," this intriguing piece of short fiction, while known for the past 40 years by some scholars, has only recently been identified as Herman Melville's first sea story. "Their Snowy Whiteness Dazzled My Eyes," by Society Vice-President Warren F. Broderick, which appeared in the March 1986 issue of the Hudson Valley Regional Review, draws many parallels to language and imagery in Melville's works.

The milieu in which Melville worked in Lansingburgh is presented, as well as Herman's already proven connection to that 1839 newspaper and its Editor, William J. Lamb. Significant parallels between "The Death Craft" and Melville works are discussed. In particular, Melville introduced the concept of "ghastly whiteness" five times in "The Death Craft," 12 years before it would be immortalized by the publication of Moby Dick, Melville's most famous novel.

JOIN THE LANSINGBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

No application is necessary! Just send $5.00 for regular membership, $25 for sustaining or $100 for life membership, to us at P.O. Box 219, Lansingburgh, NY 12182. You will be notified in writing of each monthly program and of special events, and will receive the Newsletter and other mailings. Members who join after Sept. 1st will be credited with the additional half-year's dues.

The Bicentennial History, Cookbook, Society notepaper and some other publications and souvenirs are still available upon request.

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