

The
Courier
Bi-Monthly Newsletter
of the
Lansingburgh Historical Society
September, 2016

From the President's Desk

As summer begins its slow fade out, it is good to reflect how nice this year's season has been. We enjoyed wonderful evenings, abundant gardens, spectacular flowers and a number of great events.

Of particular note was a talk on Mr. Russell Sage by Michael Barrett, LHS trustee and Executive Director of the Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway. The event was held at the Van Schaik Country Club and Mr. Barrett's presentation and the dinner served by the club were superb. Also in the month of April was an Earth Day cleanup at the Village Cemetery at 109th Street and 3rd Ave. Labor was provided by LHS trustees and volunteers.

May witnessed the second annual Lansingburgh House Tour. It started with an open house at the Melville House and proceeded to tour some of the most beautiful homes in Lansingburgh. A "Burgher Bash" was held at the Veterans of Lansingburgh in June. Following dinner, Mr. Robert Mulligan gave a fascinating portrayal of Civil War veteran, Corporal Tanner.

On July 30, Erik Hage, author of *The Melville-Hawthorne Connection, a Study of the Literary Friendship*, addressed a packed house at Melville's birthday party. Victorian attire was worn by many with brunch and cake enjoyed by all. The above



picture shows Mr. Hage and the trustees of LHS on that day. In August we had our 4th Annual Clamsteam. Food was great and the day a fun one.

But we are not done yet! There will be "Open Houses" at the Melville House on September 17, October 8 and November 12 and then on September 24, we will be going to Pittsfield, MA to visit Arrowhead, a home where Melville lived while writing *Moby Dick*. We will meet at Melville House and carpool. Anyone interested in going (or driving) should email Kathleen.derosa@yahoo.com

On Oct 2nd, Michael Barrett will lead a tour of Oakwood Cemetery from 9am till noon. Use Oakwood Ave. entrance. We will have a picnic if weather permits. Finally, on Nov. 10 we will host our annual holiday party and auction from 6-9pm.

We are also in the midst of painting, repairing and sprucing up your 230 year old house so that it may be preserved for another 230 years. It is a daunting task, physically and financially. Donations, memberships and attendance at events helps. Consider upgrading or renewing your membership status. If you have a chance, come visit us and see the difference a new coat of paint has made. Thank you all for your support. We can make the Burgh a better place!

John Ward

The Family of Pelatiah James Marsh of Grafton and Lansingburgh

Pelatiah James Marsh had a home with his wife Lelia Tracy Marsh at 94 Second Avenue. He was the son of Rev. Prentiss Witter Marsh, a Congregational minister who was born in Hebron, Connecticut. Pelatiah was named after his grandfather who moved his family from Lebanon, CT to Williamstown, MA around 1800. Spending only a few years there, the elder Pelatiah then moved his family to Grafton, New York. The Rev. Prentiss had only two children Pelatiah James Marsh and Lucy Ann Marsh, both born in Grafton.

Pelatiah was the eighth generation in this Marsh line in North America dating from 1635 when John Marsh, a seventeen year old from Braintree in Essex, England arrived in New Towne (now Cambridge, MA). Religious infighting and persecution soon caused John to join a band of other new arrivals to follow the Rev Thomas Hooker in a move to the lower Connecticut River Valley where they established a community on the flood plain near the present Windsor, CT. As the story goes, John had met Miss Anne Webster on the sea voyage from England. She was traveling with her father John Webster and family. The Websters joined the Hooker group on the move and were among those who settled in Connecticut. John Webster was a magistrate and later became Governor of the Colony of Connecticut. John Marsh married Anne Webster. They had eight children together, all of them born in what was to become Hartford, CT. In 1660 John Marsh moved his family upstream on the Connecticut River to what is now Hadley, MA.

When the Rev Prentiss Marsh died in 1853 his wife Laura Tilly Marsh left Grafton with the two now adult children and lived in a house in Watervliet. As Pelatiah went on to Union College in Schenectady, Lucy began working in one of the many collar factories that made Troy famous.

By 1860 Pelatiah had finished law school and had established a small law practice in Lansingburgh. He married his first wife, Eliza Bailey, in 1862 and he had acquired their home at 94 State Street, as Second Avenue was known before 1900.

They had one child, James Prentiss Marsh. James attended Union College and graduated from Albany Medical College 1885. He was attending surgeon at Samaritan Hospital for many years. Dr. Marsh first made their home on Fifth Avenue at the corner of Fulton St. (1858 Fifth Avenue). It was there that he and his first wife, Elizabeth Bailey Marsh, raised their only child, Lucy E Marsh. Lucy married Harold Gilson Haskell, a graduate of the University of Vermont Medical College. In 1923 Lucy and Harold went to Europe with the intent of him continuing medical studies there. Dr. and Mrs. Haskell lived in Sand Lake. In retirement Dr. Haskell became known in this region for his farm where he raised breeding stock

Elizabeth Bailey Marsh died in 1918. A few years later he acquired a large home at 12 Whitman Court just off Pawling Avenue. His daughter and son-in-law lived in the same house with him. He married his second wife, Susan Agnes Ruthven at about the time he acquired the Whitman court property. Agnes was born in Scotland, attended the New York State College for Teachers in Albany and until their marriage taught in Troy Public Schools. She became a US citizen by that marriage. They had no children. Dr. and Mrs Marsh continued to live in the Whitman Court house until their death. He died in 1941 leaving an estate valued at more than \$700 000 for which Agnes was the principal heir. Agnes died in 1955.



Pelatah's first wife died in 1866 leaving him with his four year old son James Prentiss Marsh. In 1869 he married Lelia Evilline Tracy, the daughter of Allen Dale and Mary Hotchkiss Tracy, farmers in Parma, Monroe County, New York. Mary Ada Marsh was born of that marriage in 1870 and George Tracy Marsh in 1874. The Tracy line originated in New London County Connecticut. Lelia besides being a wife and mother was involved with Pelatah in the real estate brokerage business. Her name appears with his and with others on a number of land sales to the State of New York when the state was acquiring land for the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserve. More on that later.

Mary Ada Marsh never married. She lived at the mansion on Second Avenue and took care of her aging father until his death in 1911. After that she moved to Providence where her brother George Tracy Marsh had a law practice and was writing outdoor adventure novels. While in Providence in 1920 she lived with a friend named Irene Butler with whom she had traveled to Europe. By 1930 Miss Butler had passed away and Mary Ade was living alone with one house servant. In 1940 at age 75 she was a long term patient in Butler Hospital in Providence. She died in 1943.

George Tracy Marsh, the youngest son of Pelatah and Lelia, graduated from Yale in 1898. He was a lawyer with a practice in Providence, RI but late in his life wrote a large number of adventure novels and poems. Most of these centered in wilderness country in northern Ontario and Quebec. He married Eva Corliss Weeden with whom he had one child, Carol Marsh, who became an actress. I will be submitting another article about the interesting life of George Tracy Marsh for a coming edition of *The Courier*.

David Marsh

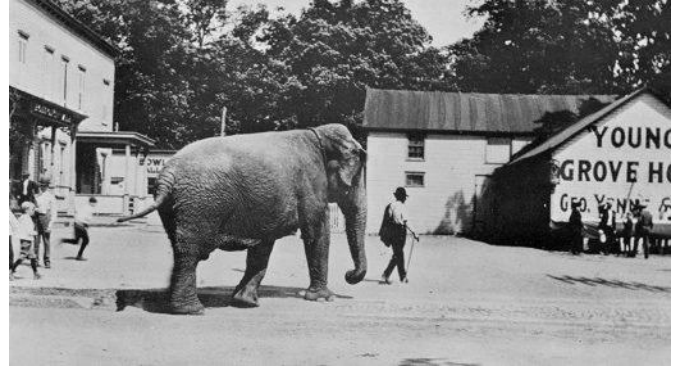
The above article by LHS member David Marsh will continue in the next edition of the Courier!

Then & Now

The West side of 5th Avenue at 108th Street was a busy one in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, especially in the winter when the cutter races (called “Brushes”) were held there. On the SW corner of 108th Street was Chris Dahl’s (later Penny’s) and on the NW corner was the Smith Harlow Hotel. People would gather here to watch the races while others would sit in the hotel’s glass enclosed front porch partaking of the same activity.



Across the street, on the east side of 5th Avenue was the entrance to Rensselaer Park while across from the Smith Harlow Hotel was the entrance to Young’s Grove picnic area and circus grounds across from Dahl’s (Penny’s). This would also be a busy place for a good part of the year.

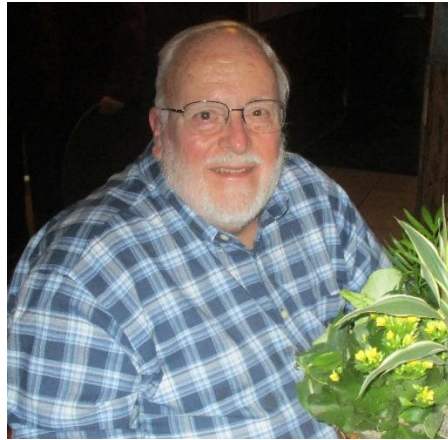


Today on the SW corner of 5th Avenue and 108th Street is the Commodore Cleaners, in business since 1927. The Smith Harlow on the NW corner suffered an explosion and fire and was demolished after WW1. A building which first served as a car dealership, furniture store and currently Aaron’s Furniture Rental replaced it. On the NE corner of 5th Avenue once stood the 5th Avenue Diner, well known to many of us but today a vacant lot. The Coca Cola plant once occupied the SE corner. One could see the bottles moving on the assembly line as they walked by. It became a CVS Pharmacy in the early 1980s and is now a furniture store.



Kathleen DeRosa

Two Long Time LHS Trustees Recently Retired We Thank Them for Their Myriad Contributions



David Marsh

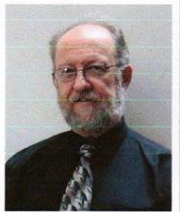


Peg Parnell



Recent Events in Photos

Russell Sage, the Money King
a lecture by Michael P. Barrett



A Captivating Lecture and Dinner

Lansingburgh Historic Homes Tour



Robert Mulligan



Birthday Party



Clamsteam

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 _____

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Regular _____ Sustaining _____ Life _____ Student/Senior _____ Prof./Corporate _____ Donation _____

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