

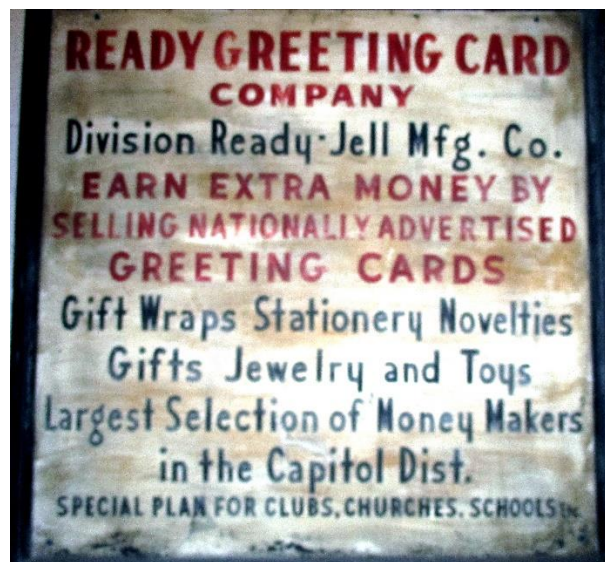
The
Courier
 Bi-Monthly Newsletter
 of the
Lansingburgh Historical Society
June, 2016

From the President's Desk

June is upon us, summer rapidly approaches. This may be an opportune time to reflect on Society accomplishments thus far in 2016. Immediately springing to mind is the dinner and lecture on Russell Sage by Michael Barrett that was hosted by the Historical Society at the Van Schaick Country Club. The food was excellent, the company congenial and the presentation riveting.



Recently completed was the Second Annual House Tour featuring several of the great homes of the Burgh.



Also held during the year's first five months were a very successful merchandise sale and several well attended open houses. A Herman Melville gift shop was opened featuring mugs, pins, steins, books, magnets, teapots and ornaments and is proving a hit.



The Society received a small grant from Troy to be used to restore the garden area at Melville House and took the lead in the clean-up of the two cemeteries at 107th

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Street and 3rd Avenue as well as the placement of flags on the graves of all identified veterans.

With the proceeds from the various events, the Society was able to accomplish the following:

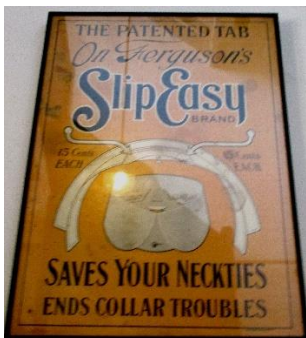
Front doors and hallway have been painted and restored. Second and third floors above the porch are currently being restored, repaired and repainted. Our website is in the process of being refurbished with help from one of our trustee's sons and Go-Daddy.

As always, we could use some help as we begin to rehab the garden. We are in need of all skill sets but most of all we would appreciate people willing to donate a little of time and unafraid of getting a little dirty and sweaty.

Plans have been made to repoint and paint the brickwork on the First Avenue side (River Street in Herman's day) of the Melville House and to repaint the front steps and porch floor.

Your membership dues, donations and support of events make possible these efforts to promote good vibes throughout Lansingburgh and to keep alive the memories of the village's unique past.

John Ward ,



Then and Now

Melville Park on the Hudson

When Herman Melville lived in the house on First Avenue at 114th Street, he could probably sit on the bank of the Hudson River and watch the maritime traffic. He almost certainly had a clear view of the waterway from his upstairs bedroom window.

At some point, many years later, there was a carpenter shop on the river bank at the foot of 114th Street. It later morphed into an electrical contractors shop.



Eventually it was abandoned and with weather and lack of maintenance it, over time, became an eyesore and a hazard to anyone who might enter it.

The title to the building and the land was turned over to the Lansingburgh Historical Society in the early 1970s on the condition the building be torn down and a park created for the citizenry of Lansingburgh to enjoy. The following photo is from the January, 1970 edition of the Lansingburgh Voice and shows the beginning of demolition. Work was completed in 1973 and the park opened.

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Calendar of Events



Today the park is a little gem on First Ave. offering solitude and fantastic views of the river traffic. Full circle!



Kathleen DeRosa

Thursday-June 9 – Dinner at the Veterans of Lansingburgh with speaker Robert Mulligan portraying Civil War veteran, Corporal Tanner.

Saturday- June 11 – Open House at the Melville House from 10am to 2pm.

Saturday – July 30 –9:30am--Herman Melville Birthday Party with speaker Erik Hage, associate professor of journalism, communication and English at SUNY Cobleskill and author of The Melville-Hawthorne Connection, a study of the Literary Friendship. A light lunch and cake will be served.

Saturday – Aug 20—1:00pm till ?--4th Annual We Were Burghers/LHS Clamsteam at the Veterans of Lansingburgh. Persons wishing to attend should get their tickets early from Kay DeRosa.

Saturday—Sept 10—Open House at the Melville House from 10am to 2pm.

Saturday—Sept 24—Trip to Arrowhead, the home where Melville lived (more info forthcoming).

Sunday—Oct 2 —9am to noon—Michael Barrett will head a tour of Oakwood Cemetery.

Saturday—Oct 8—Open House at the Melville House from 10am to 2pm.

Thursday—Nov 10—Holiday Party and auction.

Saturday—Nov 12—Open House at the Melville House from 10am to 2pm.

Peebles Island

The November, 2015 article by Warren Broderick on Peebles Island and the family that owned it continues below:

Augustus may have flirted with Helen Melville, but he seriously courted her sister, Augusta, and they are referred to as being engaged in 1847 when they attended Herman Melville's wedding to Elizabeth "Lizzie" Shaw in Boston on August 4.¹¹ Maria Melville left Lansingburgh in 1849 and moved to New York City to board with her unmarried son and daughters in her son Allan's crowded house on Fourth Avenue which had also become the home of the newlyweds



The Cluett, Peabody and Company Bleachery on Peebles Island, c. 1940. Courtesy of the Rensselaer County Historical Society, Troy, NY.

Anthony A. Peebles now devoted most of his time to managing family finances and overseeing activities on Haver Island. In 1865 Maria Peebles bequeathed legal title to Haver Island to her son who had been assigned the duty of managing the island some 20 years earlier.¹² His account book, in the collection of the Lansingburgh Historical Society, details rent collection from tenants and documents the erection of houses there as early as 1846. The Melvilles visited Haver Island on occasion. On May 17, 1842, for instance, Maria Melville wrote her son, Allan, that "Augusta and Tom [Thomas Melville, Augusta's younger brother] took Mr. Fly [Eli Fly, a family friend] in a boat to the little falls, they had a pleasant excursion, and returned about ½ past one having been gone two hours and a half." Five years later, on May 17, 1847, she wrote Augusta that "Augustus call'd to take Herman out to the island."¹³ The "little falls" refers to Buttermilk Falls, a cataract and whirlpool located between Peebles and Van Schaick islands.

Anthony A. Peebles was very successful in commerce and involved in many

Board of Supervisors in the 1870s and was noted as a breeder of fine horses.¹⁴ In 1862 he married Mary Louise (Louisa) Parmelee of Lansingburgh. Mary was a graduate of the Lansingburgh Academy who became a noted author of children's literature under the pseudonym, "Lynde Palmer."¹⁵

Anthony's mother, Maria (Van Schaick) Peebles, died on March 5, 1865 in Lansingburgh. Maria Peebles was keenly aware of the priceless Peebles and Van Schaick family heirlooms she had inherited and their historical significance. Back in 1848 she had donated a rare and valuable 1746 engraving of "A South Prospect of Ye Flourishing City of New York . . ." to the New York Society Library.¹⁶

Anthony Augustus and Mary Louise Peebles remained very close friends with members of the Melville and Gansevoort families. When Frances Priscilla Melville died in 1885, the family, under the direction of the executor, cousin-in-law and Albany attorney, Abraham Lansing, began the arduous three-year task of settling her estate which included the famous Gansevoort mansion in Northumberland, New York, and its voluminous contents. Anthony Peebles volunteered to oversee the inventory of her personal property listing farm stock, tools, and supplies, as well as furniture and other precious family heirlooms to be dispersed among her numerous heirs.¹⁷ Anthony Augustus was assisted by Edward Van Schoonhoven, a cousin and neighbor from Lansingburgh, who photographed the mansion inside and out along with its contents. In the carriage house they found a type of horse-drawn carriage known as a "phaeton" that had been acquired by General Gansevoort at the time of the American Revolution. Anthony Peebles and Abraham Lansing were instrumental in having the historic carriage refurbished at the Troy Carriage Works in Lansingburgh for display at the Albany 1886 Bicentennial celebration. This historic wheeled pleasure vehicle on exhibit at the Long Island Museum was clearly the inspiration for the one featured in Herman



Photograph of Buttermilk Falls (or "Little Falls") on the Mohawk River, ca. 1900. Courtesy of the Waterford Historical Museum and Cultural Center.

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 _____

Send to Lansingburgh Historical Society, P.O. Box 219, Troy, New York 12182-0219

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