

June, 2023



Lansing Historical Association Newsletter

July 4 Celebrations

The Association will be at the Lansing Park Historic North Cabin July 4 from 11AM to 1PM. Much thanks to Fannie Welch for making this happen.

Join us at the North Cabin on the Fourth of July. We will be happy to see you and give you the opportunity to show what we do. Perhaps you would like to become a member too. We look forward to your stopping by!

THE NORTH CABIN HISTORY

By Louise Bement and Dan Veener

The North Cabin is so called because it was built by a member of the North family in the early 1800's. It is the only log cabin still standing in the Town of Lansing and it has led an interesting life. It originally stood on a corner of the Military Lot #71, this lot being in size 600 acres. The lot was originally patented to Captain Elias Van Benschoten in payment for his services in the Revolutionary War. But as with many other veterans of the war, Captain Van Benschoten did not want to come to the frontier of western New York State to tame the wilderness and so he sold his lot to John Lawrence, a large land owner and speculator in New York lands. Thomas North bought this lot from John Lawrence and built the cabin on the southeast corner of the junction of the Searles and Conlon Road. Thomas North's deed to the property was dated April 5, 1799 and he paid \$1800, or \$3.00 an acre which was the going price of the land at that time. The attached photo is the cabin in 1958 before it was moved to Auburn. In 2010 it was rebuilt at the Park.

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Last log cabin is checked over by the county historian, W. Glenn Norris. The cabin on Conlin Rd. in North Lansing went unnoticed for a long time because of sheathing which covered the original logs. (Ithaca Journal, 17 June 1958)

From a JULY 7, 1919 Journal entry (submitted by Fannie Welch)

LUDLOWVILLE

The homecoming celebration for the service men held here July 4 proved an unqualified success. It was estimated that about 1,500 were on the grounds during the day. At 10 am one of the largest and most varied parades ever held here formed in the village, headed by the Dryden Band, followed by about 30 servicemen, then school children, the firemen and their truck, salt plant employees, Sunday school float of different nations, L. V. Main's car with veterans, a large number of Syrians led by an Arabian prince on a big black horse, the Odd Fellows' baseball team, farmerettes, Dorothy Ford in a float, ending with the Rebekah float. The procession marched around the village and up around Riverside park. Major Ira A. Allen of Ithaca as Marshall of the day. A banquet was served under the shade trees by the water side, followed by an address by S. Bruce Wilson of Ithaca who told of his experiences at Camp Dix. Rev. Robert Shurger of Union Springs told the part the

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Lansing men played in the Civil War and airplane stunts were given by Aviator Paul Wilson of the Thomas-Morse of Ithaca. A 100-yard dash was won by Richard Morgan of Ithaca. James Solomon carried off the first prize in the potato sack race, the second prize went to Charles Babcock of Ithaca. The May Pole dances and flag drill conducted by Curtis Powers entertained a large crowd. The baseball games between the YMCA of Ithaca and the Athletic Club resulted in both the morning and afternoon games being won by the home team. About \$100 was cleared for the benefit of injured soldiers. There were many outside the township in attendance. Surely, everyone enjoyed themselves.



WWI Soldiers, including Leon Sweazey, Andy Morse, Clarence Lyon, Curtis Powers, Harold Johnson, Clinton Rose, Hilton Rollins, Frank Bower.

Lansing High School Graduation

THE SUSAN HOWELL HARING SCHOLARSHIP

In 2009 the Lansing Historical Association established a \$500 scholarship to be awarded to a graduating Senior of Lansing Central School. The person must either pursue a degree in History or have a sincere interest in the subject. They must send a copy of their first semester grades to the association. The association will then send the recipient Lansing Historical Association, PO Box 100, Lansing, NY 14882 <http://www.lansinghistory.com>

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a check for \$500.

The Scholarship shall be called the Susan Howell Haring Scholarship in her honor. She was a Lansing native who taught at the Ludlowville Union School and served as the Town Historian from 1939-1945. Susan wrote a great deal about the early days in Lansing. She was often joined by her earlier classmate and good friend, Isabel Parish. Together they laid a good foundation for our historical research.

The scholarship is funded by LHA membership dues and donations. This year's scholarship award will be presented June 21 at the High School.

Old Computer Technology

An LHA trustee (Bill Martin) has done an excellent job on connecting to a solution to convert old floppy discs through a connection with members of the Cornell Math department. Louise Bement, past Historian and President until her death nearly a year ago, was an early adapter of computers for her teaching and historical work. In the process of evaluating Louise's office files, Bill found approximately 30 floppy disks apparently containing unique copies of her correspondence and history work.

Using the Math department's equipment, we were able to copy nearly 500 files from Louise's 5-1/4" computer disks, with more to go. This yielded several historical articles, about Lansing that either Louise or her historian predecessors had compiled. Future newsletter articles which were rescued from Louise's computer disks, will be appearing in print for the first time.

History of the Ludlowville Union School

In 1895 the Ludlowville Union School was built by, we think, Clinton Loop Vivian and his architectural firm: Vivian and Gibb. We think this because the tower of the school is a tower of the design that Vivian built. A man named David Rash who was doing his doctorate at Cornell was sure that this tower was built by Vivian, but could not prove it.

Grant Halsey taught Ludlowville school four years in the dual role of instructor and disciplinarian with a registration that often totaled sixty and counted all ages in the group. [It Happened In Lansing by Isabelle Parish, 1964.]

In 1895 the Union School was of four rooms and the old school was moved out of the way and set up on blocks. The new expanded school was called Ludlowville Union Free School, No. 9.

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Clifford Edwards came in 1896 as principal and stayed six years. In 1903 Mrs. Anna Ford Bowers was hired for the first three grades and Miss Isabelle H. Wood for the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. There were two teachers for the seventh and eighth grades and high school.

In 1919 J. Paul Munson came as principal and was here for three years. In 1928 the new school on the main road was built. That school is now our middle school. On January 3, 1931 teachers and students moved into their new school with Lawrence Clark as the principal.



1911 Union School

In 1946 it was voted to form Lansing Central School. Between 1948 and 1957, under principal Clark Carnal a separate shop building was built and an addition was built along the Ludlowville road. (The attached photo is the class of 1953. Nice to see many are here for the 70 year reunion.)

In the fall of 1958 the elementary school was built and Mrs. Martha Nelson was named principal. At that time an auditorium and three high school rooms were added to the high school.

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Union School, Class of 1911



Lansing School graduating seniors, Class of 1953. 1st. Row: M. Sturm, R. Robinson, A. LaLonde, M. Lotito, M. Nedrow, R. Nedrow, C. Nadalin, F. McFeaters, M. LaLonde, M. Horvath. 2nd Row: R. Wiiki, W. Sweazey, C. Bower, B. Davis, L. Swayze, B. Hart, M. Mohn, L. Malley, J. Hradisky, N. Stockton. 3rd. Row: F. Frady, R. DiGiacomo, J. Weaver, R. Hagin, Mr. MacDonald, J. Marchell, J. Trinkl, C. Eastman, S. Varga, J. Tvaroha.

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LHA Programs APRIL 20 “Building Bridges”

Our April program was well attended in the Town Hall. Bob Parker, Joe Darrow and Tom Kirby had visited the site daily, while the bridge was being built. Bob provided a beautiful slide show that he narrated. John Howell showed some original pictures of the bridge that was opened in 1930.

The following was presented by Town Historian Fannie Welch:

In 1926 the NYS Division of Highways saw a need for an easier way for the farmers of Lansing to get their produce to market. After much discussion and input from those effected, the American Bridge Co. of Elmira, NY won the bid. Roscoe Beebe had graduated from Cornell University in 1892 and got his first job as an engineer with American Bridge to design and manage the construction of the new bridge. Incidentally, Beebe had grown up in Lake Ridge. When completed, the cost was \$114,000.

By 2010 the State decided it was time to replace the bridge. For several years they had kept doing repairs until it was time to replace it. For 20 months beginning Nov 2020, we had to detour through Myers or Ludlowville to get to the other side of Salmon Creek while the State had the new one built. It is 500 feet long, 40 feet wide and 120 feet above the creek. It is expected to last seventy-five years. The State paid \$18.4 million. With the completion of this structure we can consider a ride on the Cayuga Wine Trail of even the Scenic Byways ... HAPPY TRAILS!

Ithaca Speedway (submitted by Bill Martin)

The Association received a question posted on its website from Scott requesting information about an automobile race track that was built in Lansing in the 1950s:

Hello, would you have any information, photos, etc. about the old Ithaca Speedway which opened for a very short time maybe in the early 50's. Years ago I seen some info about it that a woman owned and operated it. I have an old satellite photo where it's located to the right of Route 34 and below Waterwagon Road near now a shooting range or gun club. Any info would be appreciated.

Newspaper articles from the time mention the Ithaca Speedway, which was apparently a short dirt track with no banking, a very minimal pit area, and basic bleacher-style spectator seating. It was constructed in 1951 by Marjorie and Ernest Marble, a couple from Endicott, at a reported cost of \$31,000 for building the track and related facilities, the equivalent of \$353,000 today. Ernest Marble had worked for worked for IBM in Endicott. Small advertising notices placed in the Endicott-area newspapers show that

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Ernest operated his own bulldozer business. Ernest perhaps did much of the track construction work himself using his own equipment.

According to newspaper accounts, the Marbles insisted that they would run races on Sundays, prohibited under local blue laws of the time. Undaunted by legal opposition and an interest in bringing car racing to Lansing, the Marbles poured great effort and money into their project.

It is not clear how much racing ever took place at the Ithaca Speedway of the races scheduled. Heavy rains over three weeks turned the dirt track into a quagmire, forcing the Marbles to cancel all scheduled races. The rains basically destroyed the dirt track, at least beyond the Marbles' financial ability to repair it. There are no references to the Ithaca Speedway after July, 1951. The Marbles gave up whatever plans they had and sold the property a short time later to a sportsmans club.

An account of the Ithaca Speedway in a post on *dirtrackdigest.com* :

... Nowhere did I see a mention of the one event staged at the Ithaca Speedway on June 29, 1951 and it was won by Bucky Dew. Ithaca Speedway was located on the Lansing Road (NYS Rte. 34 I think). The track's opening was delayed numerous times by troubles with the NYS Blue Laws (State Police actually showing up and stopping the scheduled Sunday events, then by bad weather finally it did get open on that Friday night, The unique thing here is the track was being operated by a lady, Mrs. Marjorie Marble who said after the initial event that she'd had enough and didn't run any more shows. Through all this three of the local tracks (Chemung, Glen Aubrey and Five Mile Point) all opened for the first time.

Incidentally, George "Bucky" Dew (1927-2016) from Trumansburg was a lead volunteer in the restoration of the Tommy Scout trainer aircraft project several years ago.

I looked for "Ithaca Speedway" and found the picture of Marjorie Marble painting her sign. Although the race track did not appear to be a big operation, the track and grandstand must have been extremely expensive to set up just for a couple of races. If this project had panned out, it certainly would have changed Lansing's character.

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NO RACING OR JAIL? – Undisturbed by threat of impending arrest, Mrs. Marjorie Marble goes on with preparations for opening of Ithaca Speedway today. She has been advised that she'll be arrested if the track opens in violation of the state's blue laws. Mrs. Marble, 28, is co-owner of track with husband Ernest Marble. (Binghamton Press and Sun-Bulletin, June 24, 1951)

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Join us at the North Cabin on the Fourth of July. We will be happy to see you and give the opportunity to see what we do. Perhaps you would like to become a member too. We look forward to your stopping by!

Next Association Board meeting – July 25, 2023 4:00PM. Lansing History Building

<https://www.lansinghistory.com>

Yearly membership \$10.00

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