

Lansing Bicentennial Minutes



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Jan 6, 2017

The Civil War veterans sometimes had to wait a long time to get their pensions, so their back pay reached big sums. John Murphy^[1] went to Ithaca to cash his check and demanded it all in gold. He returned to Ludlowville with gold in every pocket and rather full of liquor. He showed it in the store, was finally persuaded to go home, having to go to Sulfur Springs by Red Bridge and along the creek bank and through the fields. Veterans stood by each other, so Bill Price, on hearing about it, fearing for his safety, got a lantern and followed John. That was easy as there was snow on the ground. Arriving at John's log cabin, he found John had reached it safely.

Jan 13, 2017

Martin Murphy's daughters, Nancy, Mary, and Sally earned money to build a frame house near the log cabin, but Martin said he had lived for years in the log cabin, and it was good enough for him. So, he stayed the rest of his life there, while his family moved into the new home. Martin Murphy and his sons, Jim, Ed, and John dug out a road in Ludlowville using pick, shovel, and wheelbarrow. They took contract for \$500. Before that Tile Yard Hill, Cemetery Hill, and Dug Road were the only roads in Ludlowville.

Jan 20, 2017

Albert Slocum^[2] owned the old Strong farm three miles up Salmon Creek Road in Ludlowville. At the auction following his death (1896), several men stood on top of a big cistern to see better. The top broke and the men had to be pulled from the icy water. Slocum's wife was Roxanna Townley^[3] who died in 1892. Originally from Newark, the Townley family came to Lansing in 1788 from the Wyoming

Valley in Pennsylvania. When a company of French immigrants offered high prices in gold for all the valley land, the brothers sold out and came to Lansing. The land that they sold in Pennsylvania was planned to become an Asylum for Marie Antoinette, and her son, the Dauphin. But they were killed by the French Revolutionaries and never arrived here.

Jan 27, 2017

Near Genoa there was a sawmill with a vertical saw. On one occasion the miller that operated this sawmill was eating his lunch when a passing bear caught scent of food. The bear came in the mill and was fascinated by the moving saw. He went to the saw, hugged it, and was cut in half.

Feb 3, 2017

The Town of Lansing, formed in 1817, was originally part of the larger Town of Milton. Then the name was changed to Town of Genoa in 1808. One of the final resolutions of the Old Town of Genoa came in 1816 when a "Certificate of Freedom" was granted to one Isaac Middleton, a person colored, about 40 years of age. He was a free man as he was born free in Salem, Massachusetts.

Feb 10, 2017

South Lansing, January 12, 1924: Wednesday was a memorable day for the Grangers of this vicinity, when the mortgage of their hall was burned, a sumptuous dinner was served, and officers for 1924 were installed. The building was fully equipped by the women of the Grange, who sold ice cream and baked goods, and who later sold sandwiches and coffee to purchase the gasoline lamps now used on both floors. This Grange building is our present Community Building.

Feb 17, 2017

Quill pens date from the dark ages when bird feathers replaced hollow reeds the Romans used. To make a quill pen, you first had to catch your bird. Goose feathers were favored. Swan quills were best, but who would approach an angry swan? Crow feathers were unbeatable for drawing fine lines. If you were lucky your quill might last a week. For almost 1500 years people used quill pens to write letters. By the nineteenth century, however, steel nibs were well on their way to ousting the trusty quill.

Feb 24, 2017

Junior Prom 1959 - The Junior Prom on May 16 was a successful event with the Esquires supplying the music to the theme, "Apple Blossom Time". The gym was decorated with a two-toned pink and white colored streamers reaching from the top of the gym to the sides, with a pool of water in the center of the dance floor which contained apple blossoms and a revolving reflecting light. Around the outside of the gym were tables with apple blossoms and a candle on each table. Joyce Barron was crowned queen.

Mar 3, 2017

In 1954 Cayuga Rock Salt owned Ludlowville Falls and several acres of land surrounding the falls. (They had bought the property earlier as a possible future waterpower site.) The International Salt Company also owned another former dam site a short distance upstream from the Falls (the Red Bridge area). The International Salt purchase appears to have been intended to block any future

development of the Falls by the Rock Salt, and also for their own future power use. The two companies' ownership of the two Salmon Creek sites continued for many years with neither company willing to sell to the other nor were they interested or able to proceed with any waterpower development. In 1954 The Rock Salt was contacted by the Town (Russ Lane, Supervisor) to see if they would be willing to deed the property to the town for a town park. Rock Salt was happy to do so, provided the land would always be used as a park. In this way Ludlowville Park became our first Town Park. A couple of years following the Rock Salt transfer of land, International Salt deeded its land around Red Bridge to the Lansing Fish and Game Club and this became the Rod and Gun Club that we know today.

Mar 10, 2017

A game played during recess at the one room schoolhouse was, "Anty Over". The children would get on either side of the building and throw a ball over the roof. They would call, "Anty over!" when they threw the ball. If it was caught on the other side that side scored a point.

Mar 24, 2017

The South Lansing School was originally built on Conlon Road. When it burned the children attended the Grange Hall while waiting for the "new school" (now the Lansing Community Library) to be built in 1925. There were no school buses in those days and all the children walked to the district schools which were located so that almost all the children walked under a mile. The Field School, which is the only remaining one room schoolhouse in Lansing, was nearby on the corner of Route 34 and Van Ostrand Road. At one time Lansing had 23.

Mar 31, 2017

In 1957 the drama club of the high school put on the play, 'The Valiant' with these actors: David Wicham, Tom Frady, Steve Dunn, Joanne Horvath, Marty Trinkl, and David Bowman. The student director was Nancy Maine. Dramatic readings were given by: Janette Larson, Faye Ann Ferris, Carolyn Cochran, Wanda Holden, and Ralph Lobdell. In another vein; Herbert Milliman, James Phillip, Evan Phillips, Thomas Frady, and Ralph Rose were making fudge and other goodies in Mrs. Juracka's Home Economics class.

Apr 7, 2017

About 1880 Dick Howell built a boat, the 'Clayton', with M.E. Sperry. They bought the complete set of patterns from a man in Geneva. "We just laid them on the timber and cut out the pieces", Dick explained. It took all winter to build it on the beach at Ladoga Park near Myers. Reynolds and Lang in Ithaca built the machinery for the 'Clayton' which Dick ran for about ten' years.

Apr 14, 2017

Some of the boys who left Lansing to fight in World War II in 1941 are: Aub Cratsley, Jr., Don Wagner, Jim Hercinger, Mike Saleem, Jess Solomon, George Issac, Al Kastenboder, Bill Minturn, Bob Cratsley, Bud Holden, Ed Kowalski. They are pictured in front of The Corner Cupboard as they wait for the bus to take them to the camp where they would be given physicals and be inducted into service for their country.

Apr 21, 2017

Algerine Road was probably named for an Algerine, or one who acted 'like an Algerine pirate', referring to the Barbary pirates from Algiers on Africa's North Coast. The use of this term in Lansing surely implied that the people living on Algerine Road were thought to act illegally. Before the road took the name Algerine, it was known as Cooney.

Apr 28, 2017

The N.N.P. Lyceum, a study group in Lansing, presented a program January 6, 1869, on the resolution "That the right of suffrage should be extended to women." After an interesting debate, listened to by an appreciative audience, the judges decided that "woman now occupied her proper sphere." This decision brought a fiery criticism from Mary A. Wager, a newspaper writer from New York City. She described herself as being a "Tompkins County Child" as she had been born on Algerine Road. She said, "It is a pity that that humble village could not be scooped up out of the hollow in which it grovels and be set upon a hill where the sunlight of progress and common sense could vitalize it."

May 5, 2017

Through thick and thin, winter cold and summer heat, Everett V. Nobles for 42 years carried rural mail out of the Ludlowville Post Office until December 1, 1955, when he retired. He had seen his route grow from 20 miles in 1913 to 68 miles at his retirement. In 1953, when additions were added to his route, he covered more miles than any other carrier in the state. He estimated he traveled a total of some 650,000 miles, leaving mail at 350 roadside boxes. He started his rounds with horses and even after he got a car in 1914, he relied on his horses during the winter months.

May 12, 2017

Lansingville was first known as Teetertown, named after Conrad Teeter who came here around 1807 to join his brother, Peter Teeter, who came in 1795. Conrad had tavern there which made it a 'town center'. When the tavern was sold in 1828, the name was changed to Lansingville. The first Teeter to arrive here was Henry Teeter who came in 1791. He also built a tavern, but it burned in the spring of 1804. His wife was consumed in the flames and Henry died about six months later from injuries sustained in the fire.

May 19, 2017

In the early 1800's Daniel Buck traded a red shirt and a yoke of oxen to his brother-in-law, Rufus Herrick for Military Lot # 80 in the Town of Milton. A Military Lot was 600 acres of land, so that was a pretty good deal, I would say. Daniel helped to build Dug Road down to Ludlowville which was the nearest market. Since Lot # 80 is over by the intersection of VanOstrand and Buck Road that would be a pretty long road to dig! But with this road they could draw four-foot lumber to Ludlowville and sell it for 50 cents a cord.

May 26, 2017

Tilman Bower and his wife came here in 1794 and settled on the Lansingville Road one quarter mile south of the Old German School, which was also used as church on Sundays. This was a common

practice in pioneer days. The Old German Cemetery is behind this small original school/church building located very near the Groton town line. Of his sons, John and Honteeter settled near their father, but Samuel, Adam, and George made their homes across Salmon Creek near North Lansing.

Jun 2, 2017

Music for a picnic in Merrit's Grove in King Ferry, July 3rd, 1873, was provided by the Ludlowville Coronet Band. The grove was lighted by lamps suspended from trees, and beautifully decorated tables were supplied abundantly with substantial and delicate provisions.

Jun 9, 2017

In North Lansing the Methodist and Baptist churches united to build a church which was to be dedicated at a special meeting. Some of the Methodists had a meeting (unknown to the Baptists) and dedicated the church as a Methodist one. Things remained this way for a while, then the Baptists withdrew and built their own church. This split the congregation, even families, as each member attended his or her own church.

Jun 16, 2017

There is a house in North Lansing that once held the first telephone exchange. The telephone service was established in 1902 by Rudolphus Miller and was known as the Farmer and Village Telephone Company. It was discontinued when Bell Telephone bought Miller out. The telephone operators ran the exchange from the second floor of the house.

Jun 30, 2017

The Cayuga Lake Railroad was chartered in 1867. Contracts for construction were let in 1871. Building the track brought in many laborers, and the foreman of this section was Frank Gallagher. Gallagher's Pond, the marina in Myers Park, is dedicated to him. In 1872 the first train rocked its way from Athens, PA to Cayuga Village. Foreclosures in 1874 and again in 1877 caused the road to be sold to the Geneva, Ithaca, and Sayre RR, a part of the Lehigh Valley RR system.

Jul 7, 2017

In 1794 Samuel Baker brought his family from Peekskill to Lunenburg by sloop, and by bateau up the Mohawk River to Oneida Lake, thence up the Seneca River and Cayuga Lake to land at Heddens Point (Lake Ridge). From there they trudged up the hill to Teetertown (Lansingville) to the cabin which he had prepared for them in 1793.

Jul 14, 2017

The Erie Canal opened this area to markets on the east coast. To handle the trade warehouses were built at Collins Point, Nortons, Myers Point, Lansing Station, Lake Ridge, Atwaters, King Ferry, Aurora, and Union Springs. One can still find the foundations of these large warehouses if they know where to look.

Jul 21, 2017

The mystery of Myers Road is solved. No one knew when the road was improved by the sweeping curve through the sand pit. This was because the road was built by the county but turned over to the

town. "Lansing News", published by the Town of Lansing in 1985 reports that in the fall of 1985 "that portion of road through the old gravel bank is being turned over to the town upon its completion. Relocating the road eliminates the dangerous curve at the bottom of the road. A plus for the town is the income being generated from the sale of the gravel in the old bank."

Jul 28, 2017

In 1856 Senator William H. Seward introduced a bill in congress that the United States should take possession of any guano islands outside the jurisdiction of foreign nations. (Guano was a good source of fertilizer needed by our farmers.) America quickly claimed dozens of islands in the Caribbean and Pacific. During World War II several islands, including Johnston and Midway, were important military bases.

Aug 4, 2017

A big project in 1985 was the enlargement of the too small box culvert and the elimination of a dangerous narrow curve on Holden Road. The result was a straightening of 400' of road. The project was paid for with consolidated Highway Improvement Funds (Chips). Also this year 1.3 miles of DeCamp Road was paved with stone produced by the screening plant. Projected projects for the year included rebuilding Buck Road from 34 to Conlin, resurfacing of Buck Road from Conlin to Brickyard Hill, and the resurfacing of Triphammer Terrace and Armstrong Road.

Aug 11, 2017

In 1984 the Highway Department started installing wire baskets filled with gabion stone along the south creek bank in Lansing Park in an effort to stop the erosion of the bank. A gravel bar was also removed in the middle of the creek which should lessen the threat of flooding in the spring. The Highway Department also put up new playground equipment purchased by the Family Forum. Included in the project were swings, a merry-go-round, a slide, and a fun house.

Aug 18, 2017

The first steam shovels to work in the quarry above Portland Point came in 1913. They were shovels that had been used to build the Panama Canal. They were what we call today, 'Government Surplus'. Bernard Ruzicka worked the smaller shovel. He and another man would have to carry the rails ahead of the shovel when it was to be moved from one place to another. The rails were sections of 6 foot rails with three ties on them. When the shovels worked in Panama they had regular train tracks to travel on.

Aug 25, 2017

In early times North Lansing was known as Beardsley's Corners; South Lansing was Libertyville; Lansingville was Teeter Town; East Lansing was Benson's Corners; the location of 'The Girls School' was called Sage; Portland Point was Norton's Landing; the Burdick Hill area was Forest City; Lansing Station was Countryman's or Woodworth's Landing. Lake Ridge was Heddens.

Sep 1, 2017

In the 1930's the Rock Salt baseball team was the New York Champions. The catcher was 'Jello' Burke. Eddy Hefferon was shortstop. Bob Wickens was third base. Paul Smith was pitcher. Jack

Shannon was the manager. 'Tiny' Inman was also a pitcher on the team and he had a chance to go 'Pro' but he stayed with the team he knew. Matt Christopher was about 16 when he started to play with the Rock Salt team. Other players were: Ross Sweet, 'Stosh' Brzostowski (mascot), Carlton and Carlon Tarbell, Matt McKeon, Ted Cobb, 'Mac' McDermott,'Doc' Chamberlain, Eddie Heffron, "Catcus' Milliman, and 'Deke' DeKay.

Sep 8, 2017

French Missionaries came to the Salmon Creek valley in 1750 and came to the site of Ludlowville. There, where the warriors usually camped, they found a the whole chancery court or archives of the Cayugas, painted or hanging in the trees. Their Cayuga guide gave them a lengthy explanation of it all. "When the Great Warriors go to war against the Catawbas they make a painting of themselves. On their return they add to their deeds in a painting, showing what scalps they have taken and what they bring back with them in the shape of treasures, bracelets, wampum, and the like." The trees all around were full of figures and curious symbols, carved and painted on the bark, telling of battles fought and won, of scalps brought back and prisoners taken.

Sep 15, 2017

The pews in the Asbury church were freshly varnished when Bill Robinson, a hired man at the home of Cecil Tarbell, came to worship on Sunday. He wore an extremely threadbare pair of blue serge trousers. Plenty of time had elapsed since the pews had been varnished so it was felt they were usable. But Mr. Robinson found it necessary to withdraw from the church, holding his hat over that area once covered with a good deal of material, now stuck to the pew. On the following Sunday parishioners brought newspapers for their protection and later the ladies found it necessary to scrub the pews to remove the newsprint.

Sep 22, 2017

Before the Ludlowville Presbyterians and Methodists had church buildings of their own, they each held services in the log schoolhouse. The Presbyterians held their services first and the Methodists gathered for worship after after the former group had finished its services. Church members were not as tolerant of differing beliefs as they are now, and the followers of John Calvin delighted in prolonging their services while the disciples of John Wesley cooled their heels, if not their tempers, outside. There was always competition between these two churches, and I have letters written by a Presbyterian, making fun of the stained-glass windows that the Methodists were so very proud of being able to install in their new church.

Sep 29, 2017

From 1882 until 1887 Sig Santelle's canal boats carried a circus with tents, animals, and performers from place to place in New York State on the canals and lakes. At times, to give the horses and elephants exercise, they were brought out of the stables and hitched to the canal boats to do their stint in drawing the boats along the canal. On the big lakes like Cayuga the company schooner towed the boat. When the railroads took over the traffic of the canal, the circus switched to the faster and more diversified transportation, allowing them access to towns and areas not possible to reach by boat. People in Ludlowville still remember when the circus came to their small hamlet and the elephants were washed in Salmon Creek.

Oct 6, 2017

There were no Carp in Cayuga Lake before 1893. It seems that James Tupper had a farm along a tributary to the lake. He damned the stream and made a pond which he stocked with 25,000 English and German Carp Fries. In 1983 a heavy rain broke the dam sending the swirling waters and carp down the stream, into the inlet and then to the lake. Within 15 years the carp had so multiplied that fishermen caught about 1500 pounds of them every day! They were shipped to the market in NYC where they were made into gefiltefish, a combination of whitefish, pike, and carp. When Ithaca wanted to clean out "The Rhine" and area of squatters at the inlet, the town fathers outlawed the selling of fish from the lake. Today you can" catch 'em, but you can't sell 'em".

Oct 13, 2017

Nearly every winter Cayuga Lake is frozen over at both ends. Before our present method of making ice thousands of tons of it would be shipped to New York and other places each winter. Cutting ice was the big money maker during the winter months. The lake seldom freezes all the way of its length, but in 1963 thousands of ducks were caught in the ice. Students skated on the ice in 1904 and teams were driven across it in 1885. During the 1912 freeze up a total of six people skated the length of the lake from Ithaca to Cayuga - single file and many feet apart so that only one person would be on thin ice at any given time.

Oct 20, 2017

Lake Ithaca was a large lake that filled the basin that holds Cayuga Lake today. Lake Ithaca was 600 feet above the present level of today's lake. It was a cold and muddy lake with ice bergs floating on its surface. I live above the lake on Myers Road. The gravel banks here are the base of the original Salmon Creek before it cut its way back to the falls at Ludlowville. Instead of shale or clay in our soil, we find stream washed stones and pebbles. The falls in Ludlowville form what is called a 'hanging valley'. The valley of Salmon Creek hangs above the falls in Ludlowville and the lower valley has steep gorge walls.

Oct 27, 2017

The cloudburst and flash flood of July 1935 came after a five-day heat wave. Some scattered showers occurred July 7; July 8 brought thunderstorms and slight flooding; by nightfall of July 8 nearly four inches of rain had fallen. Overnight came the cloudburst during which Ithaca measured 9 1/2 inches of rain. Cayuga Lake rose 4 1/2 inches. All the creeks flowing into the lake became raging torrents. At Portland Point water was 10 feet deep. Four people were drowned when the bridge they were standing on in Myers was swept away. The last big flood in this area was in 1972. Because Cayuga Lake is the reservoir of the lakes to the west, it remained at a high flood stage for six weeks. There was a shortage of pumps to pump out basements of the cottages along the lake. When a new shipment of pumps came into the Ithaca Agway store, they were sold right off the truck.

Nov 3, 2017

The Asbury Red Church was built in 1811. The area had taken the name of Asbury when Bishop Francis Asbury, the first bishop created by the Methodists in the United States, visited the "red

meeting house“ in 1797. When it burned in January of 1844, the present church was constructed. The last Methodist service was held at Asbury Church in October of 1963. There was a small Methodist church in Myers. It had a enthusiastic group of women who put on church suppers in the large basement to help pay the church expenses. People came from miles around and many were turned away on occasion. There was no running water at the church. Imagine hauling in enough water to cook the food and wash all those dishes! The last record of a service held there is that of June 26, 1946.

Nov 10, 2017

Barney Moore (1845-1916) was mentally disabled fellow who lived in Ludlowville in the summertime and at the County Home across the lake during the winter. He loved to attend funerals. Sometimes his memory helped the cemetery officials if there was a question about where a person was buried and there was no stone to mark the spot. He had his own coffin made and stored in the attic of the local store. One time some young boys were prowling around in the attic and heard a noise and, looking over in a corner, they saw a person rise up from a coffin. The apparent ghost was Barney. He had gone up to see if the coffin fit and had fallen asleep in it.

Nov 17, 2017

In 1799 Thomas North purchased all of Lot # 71 (600 acres) in the Town of Milton (now Lansing). There he built the log cabin which is now at the entrance to Myers Park. Thomas Jefferson North was born April 5, 1813, in the cabin. He married Jane Elmira Townley of Lansing in 1837. They moved to Ohio where their first son, James E. North was born in 1838. During the winter of 1838-39 Jane returned to Lansing where Frank J. North was born. Later that spring she returned to Ohio where Luther Hedden North, the third son, was born. Frank and Luther were at Fort Kearney on the Platte River in 1860 when the Pony Express rider came through from the west. Both boys tried to get a job as Pony Express riders but were told that they were not taking anyone under 20 years old.

Dec 1, 2017

In the early nineteenth century in Lansing people made their own house and barn paint. Lead was bought in bars twelve inches long by two inches wide, soaked in vinegar until soft, then dried and powdered. Six to ten pounds of this powder were mixed with linseed oil and poured into an iron cauldron to be worked smooth with a pestle. When of proper consistency, turpentine and powdered color were added. Red oxide (rust) was cheap and easily procured from the iron tools and implements around the farm, and so most barns were painted red. Sometimes blood from slaughtered animals was used as the color.

Dec 8, 2017

Daniel Thayer of Ludlowville invented the first mowing machine which he called the” Meadow King“. ^[4]He sold all the rights to the Gregg firm in Trumansburg for \$10,000. His mower soon came into the possession of the McCormicks who put it on the market under their name and made a fortune from the sales. One reason the McCormicks were so successful in selling the mower is that they lived in an area of large flat fields where the mower worked at its greatest efficiency. In the smaller, hilly fields of this area it was often more efficient to mow by hand. Many hands made light work, with the farmers gathering at each other's farms to make teams of mowers across the field.

There is a counting song from that time:” One man, two men came to mow the meadow. Three men, four men came to mow the hay. They mowed the hay and took it away on a beautiful summer's day. Five men, six men came to mow the meadow, seven men, eight men came to mow the hay. “etc. When one got to a high enough number, the song reversed the numbers. It was fun to count backwards from 10 men or more. ”ten and nine and eight and seven and six and five and four and three and two and one“ and take a big breath to finish the song. “They mowed the hay and took it away on a beautiful summer's day.“



Illustration for the Meadow King Mower, invented by Ludlowville farmer Daniel Thayer.^[5]

Dec 15, 2017

In Ludlowville torchlight processions were held during presidential years just before the election. The march was introduced by drummer boys wearing fancy home-made paper caps, vigorously beating snare drums, in time or out; it didn't matter. Behind them came two men carrying a billowing banner on which were enlarged pictures of the presidential candidate and his running mate. Then followed a line of old and young men holding signs with slogans of the party and its candidates. They alternately shouted and sang silly, unkind, and usually untrue quips about the opposing representatives. The fascination of it all was not alone in the lights, the noise, and the marching. It was also in the ridiculous incongruity of the presence of those dignified members of the church and community tramping along so pompously and shouting those foolish sayings. Trailing behind them, as close as they dared, were the little boys of the village imitating the swagger before them, and catching and repeating as much as they could of the shouting, “Tippecanoe and Tyler too!”

Notes

^[1]John Murphy (1848 - 21 Apr 1907) was a son of Martin Murphy (1810 – unknown) and Joanna Murphy (1818 – unknown). All buried in Old Pine Grove Cemetery.

^[2]Albert Slocum (1812 - 1896) was born in England.

^[3]Roxanna Townley Slocum (14 Oct 1823 - 1892) was born in Ludlowville.

^[4]An instruction manual can be found at <https://digitalcollections.lib.iastate.edu/>

^[5]The Meadow King Mower was patented in 1868, including patents US76001A and US53198A, as a “Cutting apparatus having oppositely movable cooperating knife-bars.”