

Lorenzo

by Lynne Belluscio

Monday I traveled to Cazenovia to share some stories about the changes that took place in the American kitchen between 1820 and 1920. The title of my talk was "If You Can't Stand the Heat, Get Out of the Kitchen – A Hundred Years in a Hot Kitchen and Why My Grandmother Called a Frying Pan a Spider."

I spoke to the docents of Historic Lorenzo, the home of Col. John Lincklaen. It is now a New York State Historic Site and it is a wonderful place. I often wonder if Herman LeRoy imagined to build such a place here in LeRoy for his upstate mansion. When LeRoy House was built, there were no other homes on the south side of the road. LeRoy House was set on a huge piece of land, with a view of the creek and the town park in front and spacious gardens in back.

But unlike Lorenzo in Cazenovia, the Wadsworth home in Geneseo and the Granger Home in Canandaigua, LeRoy House was set close to the road. Never the less, I imagine that the LeRois had a sense of grandeur much like their friends.

John Lincklaen was born in Amsterdam, Holland in 1768 and came to the United States in 1790. (Jacob LeRoy's grandfather came from Holland in 1740.) Two years later, Lincklaen traveled into the unsettled area near Cazenovia and wrote in his journal: "situation superb fine land."

He (like Joseph Ellicott) became the land agent for the Holland Land Company. He envisioned a "great commercial city in the wilderness." (I am of the opinion that Herman LeRoy felt the same way about the 86,000 acres of land that he owned in LeRoy.)

In 1803, Lincklaen began plans for his house at the south end of Cazenovia Lake. His first house was destroyed by fire, so when work was begun on his second house in 1807, it was built of brick with brick on the interior partitions as well as the exterior walls. He and his wife moved into the mansion on October 8, 1808.

(Jacob LeRoy didn't arrive in LeRoy until 1822, but he may have been aware of John Linck-



laen's spacious home.) In 1816, the economy was strong and land values were high and the Holland Land Company was ready to sell off its unsold property and offered it to Lincklaen, who assumed a quarter million dollar debt to acquire the land.

John Lincklaen died in 1822 and his wife put Lorenzo up for sale, but no one was interested in buying. In the meantime, the Erie Canal opened in 1825 and there was cheaper land to the west. Lorenzo remained in the Lincklaen

family, and became a summer home. The last family member died in 1967 and the New York State Historic Trust took title to Lorenzo complete with furnishings and archives.

When I consider that LeRoy House, has but only two pieces of furniture and only a handful of papers from the LeRoy family, and a teapot, a sugar bowl and a recipe book of Charlotte LeRoy, I have to admit that I am most envious of the folks at Lorenzo. They have ledgers and receipts

for the building and the furniture. They have sets of china, and toys and coverlets. It is truly amazing.

Right now they have an exhibit about dining and food. The tables are set with original china from the Lincklaen family. (The faux food is something to see!) If you are looking for a great day trip, Cazenovia is a beautiful place to visit and there is great shopping and wonderful restaurants. It's only 30 minutes south of Syracuse on Route 20.



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