

Dongan Charter Day Parade

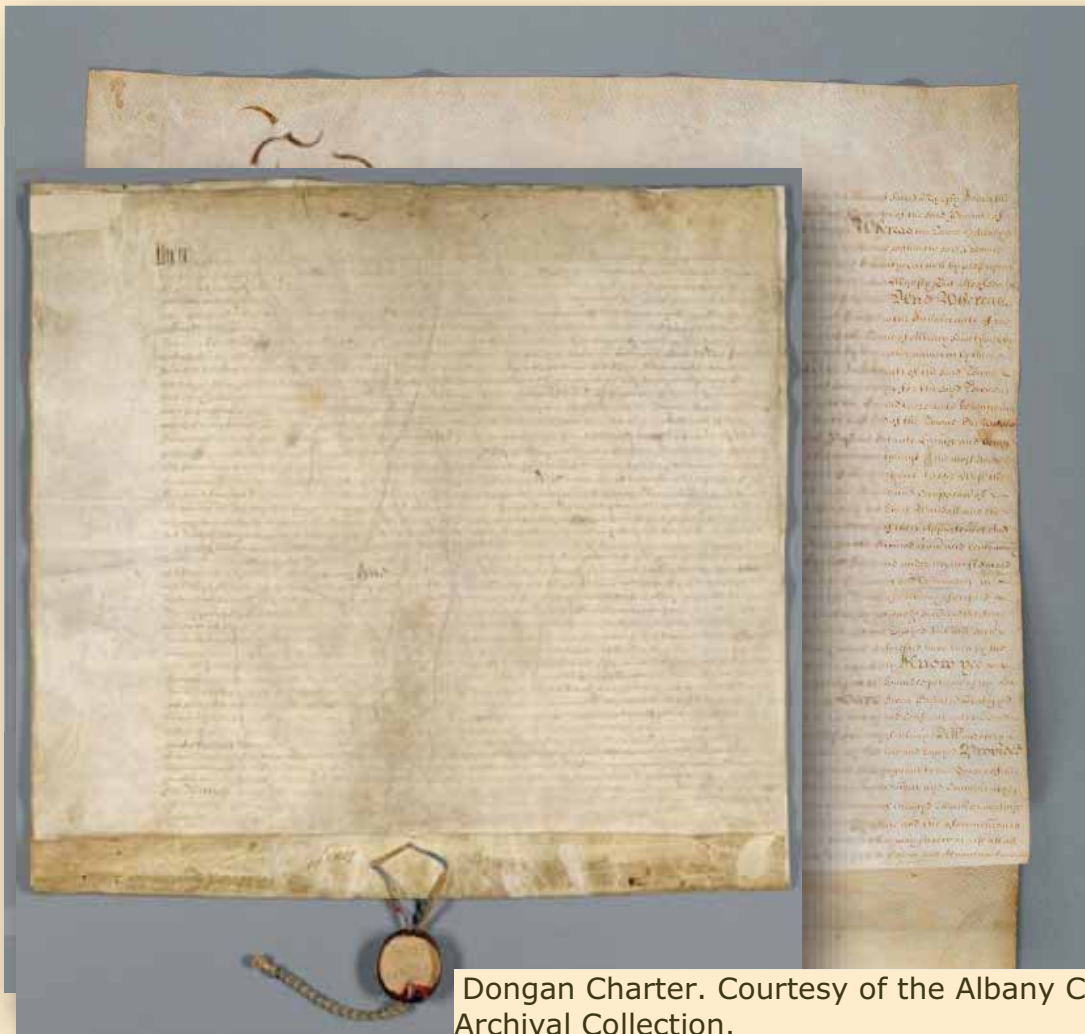
July 22, 2016

On July 22, 1686, Thomas Dongan, Governor of the Province of New York, granted Albany a city charter. The Dongan Charter strengthened the tie between Dutch Albany and the British provincial government of New York while establishing Albany as its own self-governing municipality. The Charter also legally established Albany as a separate entity from the Manor of Rensselaerwyck which surrounded it and set up a structure of that would guide the future development of the community. Albany's long-term economic security was further secured by granting the Mayor, Alderman and Commonalty of Albany the right to purchase and then patent large acres of land; to buy and sell land outside of their domain and to grant leases. The Charter recognized Albany as a regional marketplace, giving the city the right to set up a public weigh house, establish regular market days

for the barter and purchase of needed goods and to regulate trade with the local American Indians.

Albany became the second city in provincial New York to receive a charter, preceded

by New York



Dongan Charter. Courtesy of the Albany County Archival Collection.

City in April 1686. In force for over 300 years, the Dongan Charter is still relevant and vital to Albany's self-governance. In 1998, Albany adopted a new Charter, one containing provisions that centered more on the current needs of the city, yet still incorporated the basic tenets of the original document. The most recent version of the Charter can be found at <http://ecode360.com/12064948>.

2016 marks the 330th anniversary of the granting of this "living" document. Throughout the years, celebrations marking its importance have included a wide range of activities including commemorative events, official publications, a designated, "Charter Day" and parades.

In 1936, Albany celebrated the 250th anniversary of the Dongan Charter. In his Message to the Common Council, Mayor John Boyd Thatcher II stated "1936 has been an unusually busy anniversary year... with parades that brought thousands of people to the city."

The photos below show the parade of people and floats that commemorated this occasion:



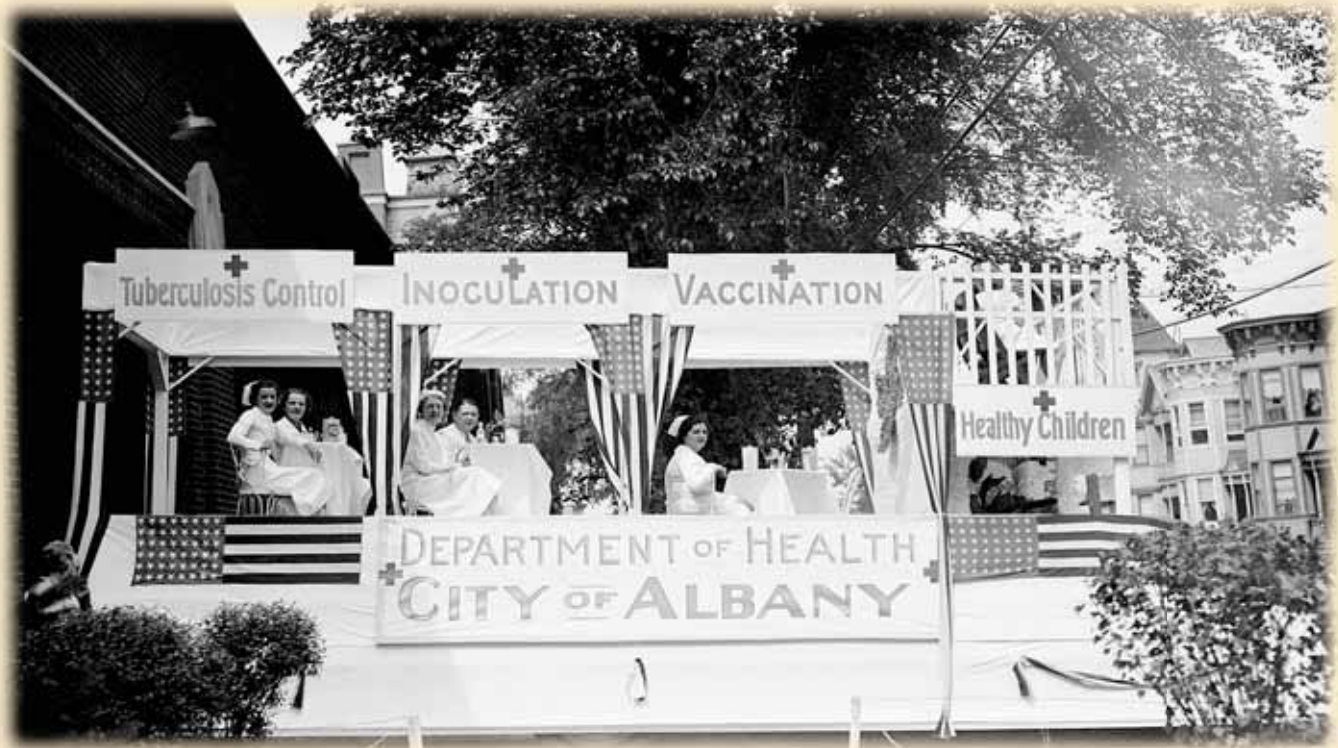
05-04808_706. All of Albany came out to join in the four days of parades and celebrations that marked Albany's 250th anniversary as a chartered city. Courtesy of the Albany County Archival Collection.



05-04808_704. Mayor John Boyd Thatcher (front, left) led the parade in celebration of Albany's 250th anniversary as a chartered city. Courtesy of the Albany County Archival Collection.



05-04808_705. Float depicting the Albany City seal under the city's original seal. Across the bottom is Albany's motto, Assiduity, "continuous personal attention to a task." Courtesy of the Albany County Archival Collection.



05-04808_708. The City of Albany Department of Health chose a float depicting disease control to represent them in the 1936 Dongan Charter Day parade. Courtesy of the Albany County Archival Collection.



05-04808_724. The Bureau of Streets Department constructed this float to represent State Street in 1614, when the original site of Albany consisted of farms and a fort. Courtesy of the Albany County Archival Collection.



05-04808_715. Members of Albany's Police Department marched proudly in the Dongan Charter Day Parade. Broadcasts and newsreels of the civic and military parades allowed people across the nation to join Albany in celebrating. Courtesy of the Albany County Archival Collection.



05-04808_717. Fire Horses pulled wagons before fire trucks were used. Along with the old fashioned apparatus, these fire horses wait for a spot in the Dongan Charter Day parade of 1936. Courtesy of the Albany County Archival Collection.



05-04808_719. Haganan & Company. Bakers, 877-885 Madison Avenue, had stores located throughout the city. Their float depicted baking methods of 1686 and 1936. Courtesy of the Albany County Archival Collection.

The United States Congress even authorized the minting of half dollar coins created from a design by Albany native Gertrude K. Lathrop.



Wikipedia. "Dongan Charter." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dongan_Charter.

Today, the original Dongan Charter is stored in the archives of the Albany County Hall of Records (ACHOR) where it resides in an environmentally-controlled vault. The Archives of the Albany County Hall of Records protects and preserves records documenting Albany County's rich history. Our Search Room is open to the public, Monday - Friday, 8:30AM-4:30PM.