

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, June 4, 2018

The Dorlanders of Chester County: Not exactly a household name in Chester County like Brinton and Darlington, an American Indian with dark skin named Hollander Dorlander lived with his family in one of the small buildings at Savery's Mill, just south of Parkerville on Street Road (Route 926). Born about 1875, Hollander had a black and very intelligent wife named Laura, probably 15 years his junior, and two children: Francis and Hollander Jr. (nicknamed "Holy"), who were born during World War I days.

Each member of the Dorlander family was extremely intelligent, but they were locked into a society, even in Pennsylvania, where black people were restricted to certain trades and social situations. In the 1930s, they could not stay at white hotels, eat at white restaurants, and more important, work at white trades. For many years, Laura and her children, not lacking in talent, had to be satisfied with domestic work, and all of them worked for my mother in the big house in the years following the construction of our new kitchen in 1934.

Laura Dorlander was a large, strong woman who was an excellent cook. She worked at Auburn Heights longer than her children, but her daughter Francis would wait on the table for special dinner parties, and once she went to Rehoboth with us for a few weeks. Holy was also a good waiter, and it was handy to have him around for spring housekeeping. Laura lived in the apartment over the garage (the present FAHP office) when she was with us, and Holy lived in the tiny playhouse that is now presented as West Yorklyn Station on the Auburn Valley Railroad. Working at other jobs, he had saved his money and had bought an Indian four-cylinder motorcycle when he occupied the tiny playhouse about 1939. (Even though "top of the line," the Indian was more affordable than a Ford, Chevy, or Plymouth of those days.)

Laura never considered her employment at Auburn Heights as a permanent job, and she would leave for several months to work elsewhere and care for her aging husband. On average, through the late 1930s, Laura worked for my mother about six months each year. She also cooked for the women of the Kennett New Century Club during the five-day trapshooting tournament staged by my father in early August each year. As World War II approached, my mother convinced the New Century Club women that they should hire Laura for five consecutive days at \$10 per pay, considered a high wage for domestic work at that time. About this time, the Dorlanders moved from Savery's Mill to a small farm property west of the "Eagle" (Uwchlan).

During the post-war years, I often picked up Laura or took her home when she lived near the "Eagle." The last times, I took my mother just to visit. She was still well but could no longer handle the heavy kitchen work. I don't know what happened to Francis and Holy, but as the color barrier gradually came down, I know they made out well.