

Murals in the Hyde Park, New York Post Office

By Olin Dows

Compliments of Roosevelt-Vanderbilt Historical Association

The mural starts to your left as you enter.

PANEL 1

September 28, 1609. The Half Moon anchors off Crum Elbow Point.

PANEL 2 (over window)

Before 1812. Irate Dr. Samuel Bard tries vainly to persuade Innkeeper Jabez Miller to change the name on his signboard, from "Hyde Park" to almost anything else, "Hyde Park" being the name of the Doctor's country place. In 1812 Miller succeeded in having the Post Office called Hyde Park. The row of cherry trees leads over the hill to Jacobus Stoutenburgh's second stone house.

PANEL 3

Before 1741. Jacobus Stoutenburgh, his sons and slaves clear the land. His log cabin, built in 1723, was the first house in Hyde Park Village – the Kings Highway, then a grassy "wagon" road, passed in front – Jacobus and his wife Margaret Teller had eight children who varied in age, in 1741, from 23-year-old Tobias to 5-year-old Luke.

PANEL 4

About 1795. Richard De Cantillon, Tobias Stoutenburgh's son-in-law, supervises workmen unloading rum, sugar, and molasses from one of his West India trading packets. His landing, site of the present station, was a most active and prosperous enterprise. A man and a woman mend shad nets – logs are poled to shore for the mill – a hay boat is loaded.

PANEL 5 (over ventilator)

July 24, 1835. Dr. David Hosack and Miss Harriet Martineau drive a gig past Bard's Rock where the crew of a whaler rolls casks of spring water to their ship. Dr. Samuel Bard's store and two dwellings face the river. Hosack (medical partner of Samuel Bard and Professor of Natural History at Columbia College) bought this place from William Bard in 1823 and between then and 1830 Andre

Paramentier, a Belgian, said to be the first landscape gardener in the country, redesigned the property for him. It is the present Vanderbilt place.

PANEL 6

In the late 1780's. Dr. John Bard and Dr. Samuel Bard examine their new Italian melons, fertilized with gypsum. The latter's pockets bulge as usual with plants – a flock of wild pigeons fly across the sky. These two men were New York's most distinguished physicians – Dr. John, a friend of Benjamin Franklin and a member of his Club, was the first President of the New York Medical Society; with Dr. Peter Middleton performed the first dissection for instruction, and the first diagnosis and successful operation for extra uterine pregnancy recorded in the colonies. As what was virtually public health officer, he fought yellow fever and recommended the purchase of Bedloe's Island as a quarantine station. Dr. Samuel, who studied in Edinborough, was on his return instrumental in founding the medical school of King's College, later the College of Physicians and Surgeons, was its first Professor of medicine and President. He also was the first to agitate for a hospital. He encouraged the local use of clover as a crop as well as other horticultural improvements and was first President of the Society of Dutchess County for the Promotion of Agriculture (1806). Although Loyalists, the Bards were highly respected by both sides, Dr. Samuel taking care of President Washington in 1789 with Dr. John as consultant.

PANEL 7 (over ventilator)

The Bard Hosack Farm with the Red House (built 1764 by Dr. John Bard, located north of St. James Church, model for the present Post Office). Merino sheep imported to improve local breeds by the Bards graze in the foreground.

PANEL 8

1810 – Dr. Samuel Bard gives first aid to a negro who has been burnt, while his son William holds the lantern and his son-in-law John McVickar supports the wounded man. The latter was rector of St. James Church, the first professor of Political Philosophy (Economics) at King's College (Columbia), and author of an interesting biography of his father-in-law.

PANEL 9 (over ventilator)

The Dickinson grist and saw mill, built before 1797 by Dr. John Bard, the only existing example of early Hyde Park industry.

PANEL 10

1820 – Late for Friends Meeting at Crum Elbow Meeting House (built about 1797). The home on the foreground was built by Benjamin Sheldon, those in the background are Wilbur and Sheldon houses.

PANEL 11 (over ventilator)

1905 – Young Franklin D. Roosevelt and Colonel Archibald Rogers clear out dead wood to prepare for scientific reforestation.

PANEL 12

1846 – The Reverend Reuben Sherwood and two vestrymen, Archibald Rogers (grandfather of the Colonel in the last panel) and Augustus Cowman discuss plans for the St. James Church. Cowman (publisher of two papers in Poughkeepsie) went abroad to study church architecture in England and designed, supervised the building, and materially assisted in the financing of this church on his return. Sexton Richard Jenkins leaves the Rectory porch with a pot of Downing's tastefully toned buff paint.

PANEL 13

1870 – The weekly Saturday trip to exchange farm produce for town goods passes Israel Carter's Sharp Tool Factory. John Greene Briggs and Isabel Gibbs DeGroff ride on the hay wagon. Farther along Crum Elbow Creek is the Cudner Mill.

PANEL 14

Before 1850 – Irish workmen building the Hudson River Railroad drink and sing. North and South Irish worked together until too many fights developed. The tracks laid from Albany to New York City joined at Poughkeepsie in 1850.

PANEL 15

1870 – William Meier (head of Hyde Park's caviar industry) pulls up an oversized sturgeon helped by Abe Atkins (drowned later when the Mary Powell capsized his boat). Fish are being disemboweled on the beach and caviar being made in the shed. The Norwich (1823) docks on her way to New York (The layout of this dock comes from a survey made in 1845 by George Van Vliet.) – On the hill the houses from left to right: Langdon House (originally built by Samuel Bard about 1800. Torn down by Frederick Vanderbilt 1895) and water wheel – Jacobus Stoutenburgh's second stone house (before 1768) – the first hotel – the first store – Church of the Stoutenburgh Religious Society (1789) flanked by the colored and white schools. Later buildings: The Hotel (burned 1879) – Horning House – Fire House Tower (1902) – Town Hall (1891) – James Roosevelt Memorial Library (1926) – Methodist Church (1834) – Former Baptist Church (1846) – St. James Rectory (after 1836) – Regina Coeli Church (1863) – Stone House (before 1780) – Crumwold Hall (1889, architect Richard Morris Hunt) – Stone House (before 1776) – Gerald Morgan House (about 1812, remodeled by McKim, Meade & White, 1911) – Mrs. James Roosevelt (1826, added between 1845-67, remodeled by Francis L. V. Hoppin) – Mrs. J.R. Roosevelt (1804).

PANEL 16

1886 – Jacob Buckhout discussed the "Icicle" with its owner John Roosevelt while Archibald Rogers joins them. In the middle ground the latine rigged "Hawk" built for Franklin D. Roosevelt by George Buckhout is just starting out – while the Rogers' "Jack Frost" takes a hard tack on one runner. In the left background the "Icicle" and the "Jack Frost" have just beaten the New York Central Express on a two mile course. In the right background and over the window is the "Bessie" built by Samuel Rogers (1897) and a group of modern ice boats – one, the "Arrow" owned by the present Commodore of the Hudson River Ice Boat Club Kunze Todd. The Poughkeepsie Bridge (built 1888) and the Mid-Hudson Bridge (dedicated in 1930 by Governor Roosevelt) can be seen in the distance.

PANEL 17

1850 – The Union Corners Race Track – James Roosevelt in his breaking cart calls to a fiend – Daniel Whigg, in blue coat, trots by watched from the pother side of the fence by Martin Van Buren and James K. Paulding (his former Secretary of the Navy and popular novelist) – while the owner of the track, John Albert Stoutenburgh, rings the bell in the judges stand. The peanut wagon in the foreground contains yellow cans and a bottle of Daniel Whigg's "Whirlbone Linament" equally good for man and beast. In the background, the William Stoutenburgh house (1750) – the Union Corners Hotel (1820) and the old Red School House.

PANEL 18

June 11, 1939 – Picnic at the President's Cottage for the King and Queen of England who are at the two center tables under the porch with the President – Mrs. James Roosevelt – Secretary of the Treasury and Mrs. Henry Morgenthau, Jr. and Governor and Mrs. Herbert Lehman.

PANEL 19

1939 – The President and the Hyde Park School Board discuss plans for the Roosevelt High School in Benjamin Haviland's yard. From left to right: Benjamin Haviland, who sold his land on which the school now stands – Raymond Hill – and Samuel Matthews – Frank E. Botsford – the late Arthur E. J. White – Alexander Horton – The President – Ralph R. Smith and Thomas Qualters (bodyguard). Fala, the President's Scottie, watches chickens.