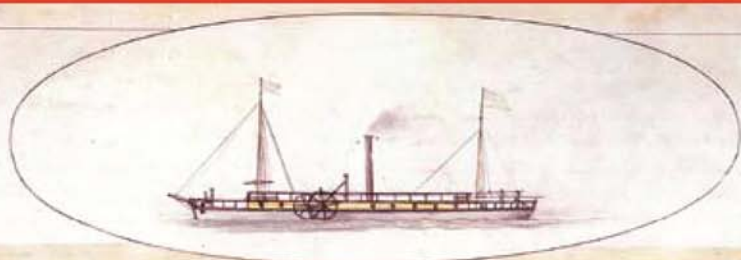


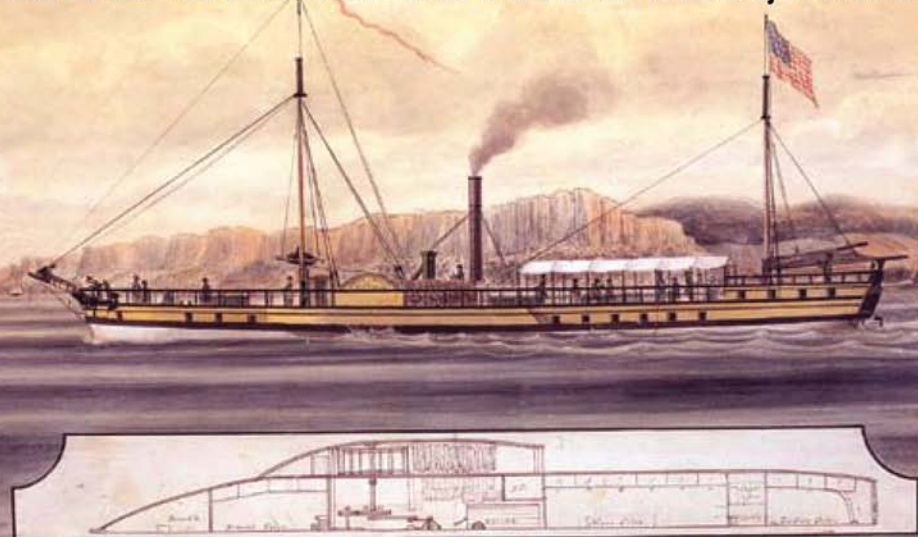
AUTUMN 2007

THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

A Journal of Regional Studies



Robert Fulton's Steamboat and the Modern Era of Commerce



Published by the Hudson River Valley Institute

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MARIST

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From the Editors

This marks the bicentennial year of Robert Fulton's maiden voyage aboard the steamboat that would eventually be called the *Clermont*. Fulton's "invention" revolutionized transportation and commerce, forever changing the Hudson River and its surrounding valley. In commemoration of this anniversary, we open this issue with a fascinating recounting of Fulton's achievements written by his foremost biographer. Next, we explore more recent efforts to expand transportation in the region, focusing on the struggles surrounding construction of a Westchester County parkway. Finally, we offer the first glimpse at a recently discovered Dutch account book documenting the eighteenth-century fur trade in Ulster County.

Continuing our nautical theme, our history forums encourage visits to the Albany Institute of History and Art, which has mounted a compelling exhibit about Fulton and steamboats, and the Hudson River Maritime Museum in Kingston. Another forum article proposes a hike along the shoreline below Storm King Mountain, the haunt of a famous nineteenth-century steamboat captain. As usual, we conclude with a book review and a listing of new and noteworthy titles.

Reed Sparling
Christopher Pryslopski



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The Hudson River Valley Review is anxious to consider essays on all aspects of the Hudson Valley—its intellectual, political, economic, social, and cultural history, its prehistory, architecture, literature, art, and music—as well as essays on the ideas and ideologies of regionalism itself. All articles in *The Hudson River Valley Review* undergo peer analysis.

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Contributors

Eleanor Phillips Brackbill is head of museum education at the Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, State University of New York. She is the author of *Isaac Gedney and the Neutral Ground* and editor of numerous guides for the Neuberger Museum and Synergy: The Museum/School Program, as well as “Nineteenth-Century Landscape Painting and the American Site” for the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Cynthia Owen Philip is an independent historian who has written extensively on the Hudson River Valley. She is the author of *Robert Fulton: A Biography* and the prize-winning *Wilderstein and the Suckleys: A Hudson River Legacy*. A wide array of her articles and essays have appeared in national and local magazines. Her illustrated history *Rhinecliff, N. Y., 1686-2007* will be published next spring.

J. Michael Smith is a native of Beacon, New York, and a resident of Vermont. As an independent historian he has focused on the cultural histories of Munsee and Mohican groups of the Hudson River Valley. He is the author of “The Highland King Nimhamaw and the Native Indian Proprietors of Land in Dutchess County, New York: 1712-1765,” *The Continuance: An Algonquian Peoples Seminar*, (Albany, NY: 2004), and “The Seventeenth Century Sachems or Chiefs of the Wapping Country: Identity and Interaction in the Hudson Valley.”

Kees-Jan Waterman lives in Leiden, the Netherlands. An independent historian, he has provided English translations of Dutch seventeenth- and eighteenth-century documents to the Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, New York. He is the translator and editor of “*To Do Justice to Him and Myself*”: Evert Wendell’s *Account Book of the Fur Trade with Indians* in Albany, New York, 1695-1726.

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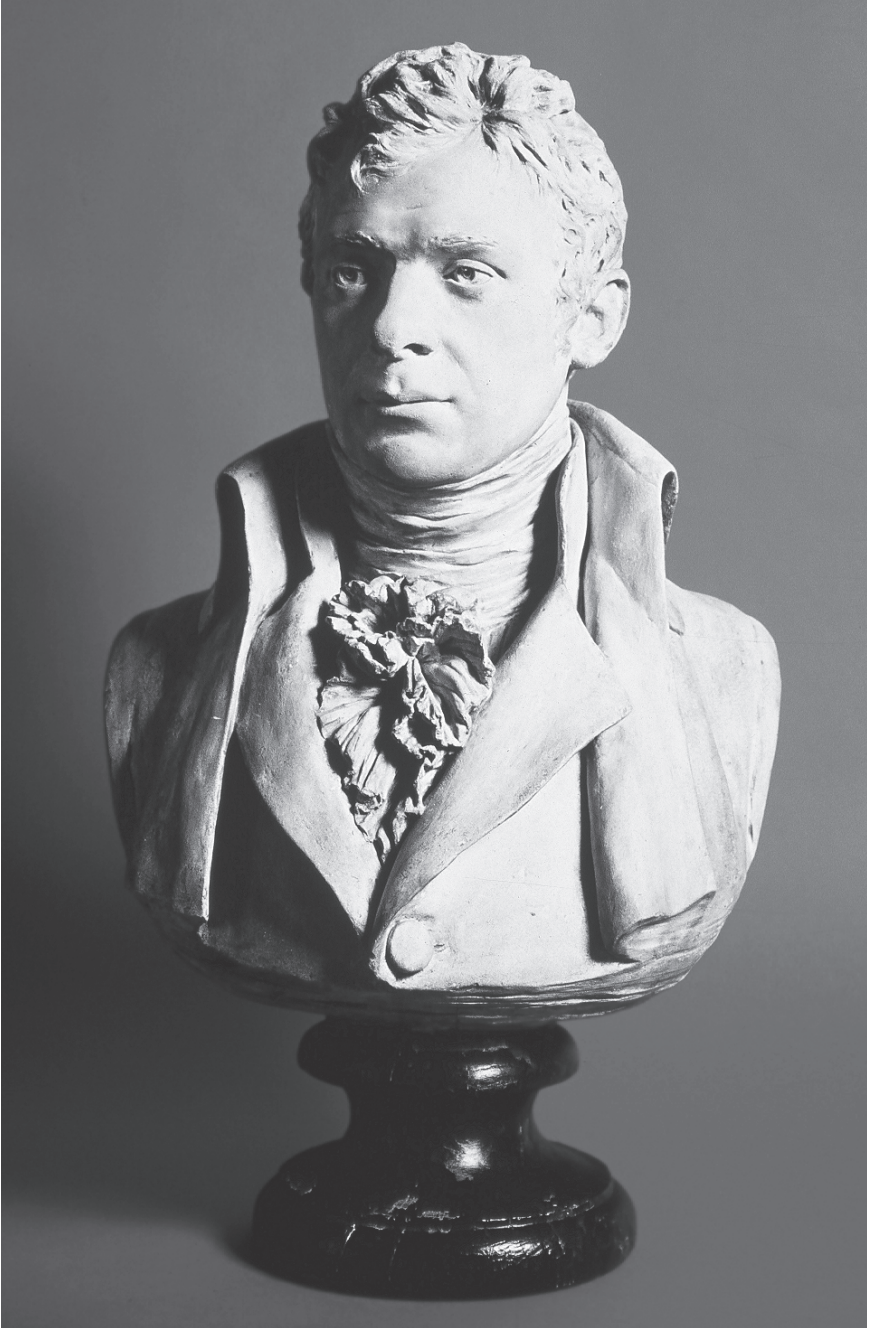
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Clermont: *Three Part Study of a Ship*, Richard Varick DeWitt (1800-1868), 1858, watercolor on paper, ht. 18 in., w. 25 in., framed: ht. 25 in., w. 32 in.; Albany Institute of History & Art, Bequest of Sarah Walsh DeWitt, 1924.1.2



Photograph of bust of Robert Fulton sculpted by Jean Antoine Houdon,
private collection

Robert Fulton, Genius Ahead of His Time

Cynthia Owen Philip

There is no question that artist, inventor, entrepreneur, and impresario Robert Fulton was, like most geniuses, highly complex. Friends, many of them distinguished in their own right, found him spirited, elastic, and amusing. Competitors scorned him as arrogant, deceitful, and overbearing. Nevertheless, his thought and life progressed in a straight line, each event-packed period building on the previous one. Especially at crucial junctures, however, he tended to erupt, often doing himself and his causes real harm. How much his mixed behavior was due to his own being and how much due to the insufficient tools, technologies, management skills, and federal patent laws with which he had to deal is hard to tell. What is certain is that he was a man of his times—and a man way ahead of his times.

The context in which Fulton lived was a heady mix: the Revolutionary War in Lancaster, Pennsylvania; the early Industrial Revolution in England; the Directory, Consulate, and Napoleonic wars in France; then back to England after Bonaparte crowned himself emperor; and finally, having spent over twenty years abroad, a grateful return to the United States just as the country was gearing up for the War of 1812 against Great Britain.

All of these settings would shape his genius. As an inventor and entrepreneur he thought globally. Yet he never forgot the lot of everyday people. Visionary and practical, his goals were lofty: to earn fame for improving the people's daily lives and money for carrying out his ideas. His achievement was great: a system of small canals that provided remote areas access to markets; a fleet of steamboats offering on-time service on American rivers, and, to him his premier project, a system of submarine warfare that he believed would ultimately abolish all war.

Pennsylvania

Fulton was lucky to spend his childhood in Pennsylvania. Born November 14, 1765, on a 400-acre farm in Little Britain, a rural township south of Lancaster, he was the fourth child and the first son of Scotch-Irish parents. When he was

young, the farm seemed prosperous. In 1771, it boasted four head of cattle, two prize horses, and one common horse. The family employed one servant. This wellbeing, however, was an illusion. Within months, his father, overwhelmed by debt, was forced to sell everything at auction. Even the beds and kitchen utensils were sold. It must have been a devastating experience for the six-year-old Fulton. The family returned to Lancaster, where they had lived before his birth. Although he never forgot the rigors of farming, the chance to grow up in that grand bustling crossroads proved a blessing.

Lancaster was the largest inland town in the colonies. A transportation hub, it was connected to Philadelphia, sixty miles distant, by the King's Highway, then little more than a wagon trail, but steadily improving. The Conestoga Trail led to the great western wilderness. Settled initially by Moravians, it was polyglot, with over 4,000 French, Swiss, German, English, and Scotch-Irish inhabitants. Mainly artisans and mechanics, the gunsmiths who produced beautifully engraved barrels were the elite. There was a glassworks and a foundry that manufactured stoves. The sturdy Conestoga wagon was invented and manufactured there. The Juliana Library, the third in the country to be founded, made it a cultural center. Its offerings included such delights as *Tom Jones*, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, and *London and its Environs*, as well as such useful items as *Ward's Young Mathematicians' Guide*, *Mott's Treatise on Mechanical Powers*, and assorted works by Locke, Montesquieu, Addison, Newton, and Franklin. (Fulton possessed his own copy of Euclid's *Elements*.) The library was kept in the house of William Henry, a gifted eclectic who had been the surveyor of a canal between the Susquehanna and Lehigh rivers and had also invented a screw augur and built a model of a vessel propelled by steam. His house was a major social and intellectual center. Fulton, whose father was a charter library member, was a frequent visitor. After his father's sudden death, it undoubtedly became a refuge.

During the Revolution, Lancaster was a designated center for supplying the American armies with guns and provisions. Hessian prisoners were paroled to help out on farms. When the British occupied Philadelphia, Tom Paine, the rousing pamphleteer, and David Rittenhouse, the great astronomer, were among the refugees.

At about fifteen years of age, Fulton was apprenticed to a silversmith in Philadelphia—much against his inclination, he later told a friend. However, he learned money management as well as design and metal working, for silversmiths often assumed the role of bankers, their wares playing the roles of savings, collateral, and even a means of payment. Moreover, just being in Philadelphia, the country's largest city, was a great adventure. Noted for the beauty of its wide,

squared-off streets, its understated opulence, and its alert, politically savvy populace, it was, next to London, the most exciting city in the English-speaking world. An acerbic French observer thought it “the great sink wherein all the speculation of America terminates and mingles.” But a German traveler reported less distinction in rank among its inhabitants than could be found in any other city in the world. Known for charitable institutions, the prison reform and abolitionist movements were already strong. Interest in science was high, as evidenced by the widely attended lectures of the American Philosophical Society. Christopher Colles, an Englishman who built the first American steam engine, taught classes in the application of hydraulics and hydrostatics for building engines and constructing docks, bridges, locks, and aqueducts for inland navigation. Interest in local artists was in its infancy, but painter and showman Charles Willson Peale was already exhibiting his portraits of eminent Americans in a special gallery.

Fulton provided miniature portraits for his master’s lockets and box tops. Somehow he accumulated enough money to buy off his indenture and set himself up as an independent artist with his own shop in a good location. To his line, he added hair-working the making of meticulous pictures from human hair. It indicates his excellent manual dexterity. Moreover, that he chose to work on his own was a first sign of his innate need for independence. Eight extant miniatures, two oil portraits and two landscapes from this period, are attributed to his brush.

However, by 1786 Fulton realized he would have to go to London—the art capital of the world—if he were to make painting a career; there was no advanced instruction in painting in America. He acquired a letter of introduction to Benjamin West, a fellow Lancastrian, who, as the official history painter to George III, was a leader among artists there. The letter is thought to have been from Benjamin Franklin, who had just returned from Europe; it may also have been from Peale, one of the many American artists West had mentored. Fulton arrived in London in early autumn with forty guineas in his pocket. He was not yet twenty-one years old.

England

As soon as he had settled himself, probably in a one-shilling coffee house room, Fulton went straight to West’s combined residence, gallery, and atelier. There is no record of how West gauged Fulton’s talent, or if he offered any direct instruction, although he almost certainly dispensed the advice he never tired of repeating: “Give your heart and soul to art, turn neither to the right nor to the left.” Far more important, he received Fulton into the bosom of his family. Mrs. West became his *petite maman*, their sons his companions. Through the Wests, Fulton had access

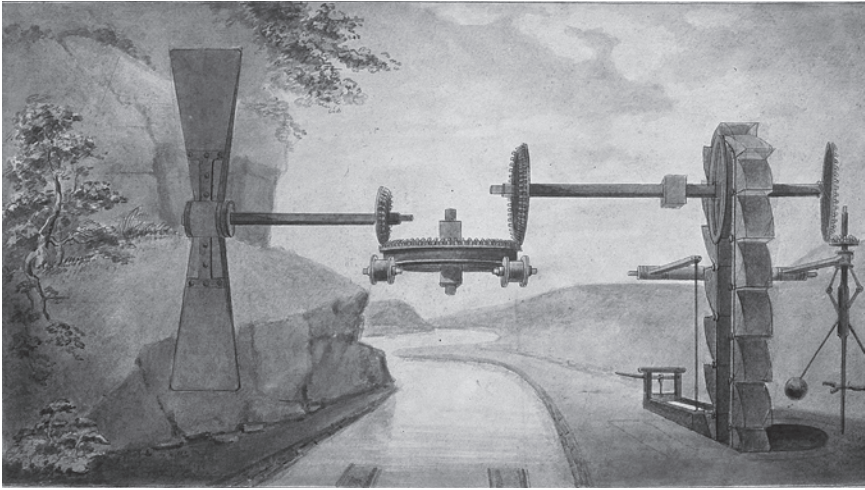
to almost the entire art community.

First he studied with one Robert Davy, whom West had suggested as a good person to show him where to buy art supplies. Later, Fulton was admitted to the Royal Academy schools, but he did not go, another sign he was basically a loner. Mostly he worked on his own. From time to time, he exhibited works in annual shows of the Royal Academy and Society of Artists. These won him an invitation to paint the portrait of Viscount William Courtney at his castle in Devonshire. Much has been made of Fulton's accepting this assignment, for Courtney was the cast-off tart of the famous pederast William Beckford. All that can be said is that there were few, if any, Royal Academicians who did not happily accept commissions from Beckford himself. Reputed to be the richest man in England, Beckford was then in the process of building his extraordinary retreat, Fonthill Abbey.

What is important about this sojourn is that it led Fulton to engineering. He visited the shops of artisans who had made nearby Torquay famous for its inlaid marble. Resurrecting talents he had learned as a silversmith's apprentice and mechanical techniques he remembered from his Lancaster boyhood, he designed a better cutting and polishing instrument. The model he built won a coveted silver medal from the Society of Arts, Commerce and Manufacturers.

Sensing he had at last found his true calling, Fulton singlehandedly undertook to improve the deplorable transportation system of southern England. His was a grand vision. Hardly better than rutted tracks, the roads were steep and narrow. Virtually all goods were carried on the bumping backs of ponies. The hilly terrain and the lack of water made canals with locks, such as had opened the northern districts of England to London markets, out of the question. When in October 1793 he read a survey for a canal to lift sea sand to be used as fertilizer from the beach at Bude in Devonshire, he believed he had made enough progress with his canal ideas to present them to the committee's chairman, Charles Mahon, third Earl of Stanhope. Although Fulton was an utter stranger with scant credentials, Stanhope immediately replied. Thus began Fulton's metamorphosis from Robert Fulton, artist, into Robert Fulton, engineer and inventor.

However, it cannot be emphasized strongly enough, that Fulton did not abandon painting and drawing. Quite the contrary: it was his ability to visualize, then to place the fervent imaginings of his brain on paper, that underpinned his genius as an inventor. The connection between art and invention at that time was strong. In fact, invention itself was spoken of as an art. An engineer was an artificer and a mechanic an artisan. Fulton painted and drew for his work, for pleasure, and, indeed, for solace his entire life. His output in pencil, oil, watercolor, and pastel is truly extraordinary. Much of it is beautiful.



Watercolor engineering drawing depicting gears floating above a canal as well as the machinery that would operate them; published in London, England, 1797; from Fulton Canal Drawings (MG 1508, Box A-2 – NJHS#1855.6.2)

The Remarkable Treatise on Canal Navigation

Charles Mahon was an eccentric. Very rich but a thorough republican, he struck his armorial insignia from the gates of his mansion and forced his daughter to keep turkeys. Even in winter, he slept with his windows wide open. He gave up sugar to protest the exploitation of the West Indies and was cartooned by the razor-witted Gilray as a “Majority of One” in the House of Lords. But first of all he was an obsessive inventor. In their first testy interchange, his relentless message to Fulton was: “I tell you your plan will not do.”¹

Undaunted as well as intoxicated by Lord Stanhope’s attention, negative though it was, Fulton persisted. He went to Manchester to examine the Duke of Bridgewater’s wide canal, which took coal and Josiah Wedgwood’s pottery to London. His own ideas won a consultancy with the nearby Peak Forest Canal Company, a perfect candidate for his system of small canals because of the rugged hills in its path. A fellow lodger at his hotel was Robert Owen; only twenty-three years old, he was among the foremost spinners in England, with a cotton mill that employed 500 workers. Not only was he skilled at implementing labor-saving devices, he also was an idealist who sought ways to enhance his workers’ quality of life. Owen and Fulton took to each other immediately. Owen introduced him to his friends, remarkably versatile men who met to discuss whatever topics were on their fertile minds. Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of the famous

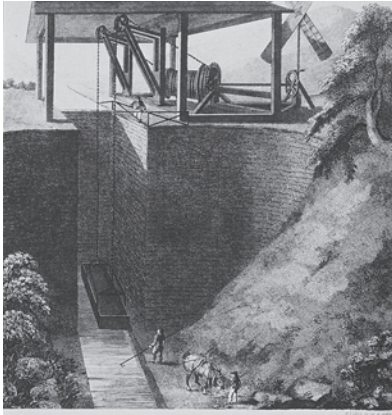


Illustration from Fulton's *Treatise*....

Charles, was the wise elder of the group. A practicing physician and a poet, he also pursued mechanics, experimenting with windmills, speaking machines, seed drills, oxygen motors, flush toilets, “fiery chariots,” and preponderating canal lifts. In one of his poems, he envisioned boats driven by steam. Two other friends were John Dalton, a year younger than Fulton and already launched on his distinguished career as a chemist and atomic scientist, and the twenty-two year-old Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who at the time was rushing

around the countryside seeking converts for a utopian settlement he and the poet Robert Southey intended to found on the banks of Pennsylvania's Susquehanna River. To be befriended by such able, questing men—who were drawn to him because he was an artist and inventor as well as a visionary idealist—gave Fulton a strong endorsement for the new direction he had taken.

Briefly Fulton diverted his attention from canals to steamboats, stimulated by Darwin's interest and the fact that, about this time, one John Smith ran a boat powered by an outmoded atmospheric engine on the Bridgewater Canal at two miles an hour. In November, just before his twenty-ninth birthday, Fulton wrote the renowned British engine builders, Boulton and Watt, asking how much a three- or four-horsepower engine designed to propel a boat would cost. He also peppered the builders with a raft of questions relating to the size and shape of a suitable hull. Boulton and Watt did not deign to answer, and Fulton returned to developing his canal schemes by inventing a canal-digging machine that reduced labor costs. Robert Owen invested in his ideas and the Peake Forest Canal Company rewarded him with 200 guineas to develop them. With these windfalls, Fulton spent the next eight months writing and illustrating *A Treatise on the Improvement of Canal Navigation Exhibiting the Numerous Advantages to be Derived from Small Canals and Boats of Two to Five Feet Wide, Containing from Two to Five Tons Burthen with a Description of the Machinery for facilitating Conveyance by Water through the most Mountainous Countries, independent of Locks and Aqueducts: Including Observations of the great Importance of Water Communications with Thoughts on, and Designs for, Aqueducts and Bridges of Iron and Wood*.

Published in 1796 by I. and J. Taylor, the top architectural and engineering printing house, the *Treatise* is, indeed, all that. Extraordinarily well written, the

reader is swept along with Fulton's unfolding of his conceptual ideas, as well as the you-are-there quality of his concrete descriptions of real-life applications. Even the cost analyses become interesting. Many of the illustrations are charming landscapes complete with people and horses, mountains, trees, and waterways. It is noteworthy that each one is signed "R. Fulton, inven. et delin." —inventor and delineator.

In fact, the *Treatise* contains all the thoughts that would shape Fulton's future. His concern to improve the life of everyman runs through the text; it is delightfully expressed in his plan to have one boatman manage a specific length of canal, so he could always "be convenient to his habitation." But it also is evident in his remarks comparing the cost in grain to feed a family and the greater cost to feed a tow horse.

Of signal importance to his own career was his definition of invention. "In mechanics," he writes, "I conceive we should rather consider them improvements than inventions...as the component parts of all new machines may be said to be old...Therefore the mechanic should sit down among levers, screws, wedges, wheels etc. like the poet among the letters of the alphabet, considering them as the exhibition of his thoughts; in which a new arrangement transmits a new idea to the world."² Fulton would cling to this definition to the end of his life. Inventions were for him not sudden divine illuminations. Rather, they were a concatenated social event. The community of scientists and mechanics, past and present, provided the basic materials; the creative role of the individual inventor was to improve on them by discovering new and useful relationships among them.

This was not a widely accepted theory of invention at that time. In the United States, for instance, a new combination of already patented elements was not patentable. In fact, in a race to secure a patent, the winner was the person who could prove having first *thought* of the invention, whether or not it had been proved viable. Fulton's definition was then, as it is now, true in practice. (Otherwise an extremist might argue that the invention of the airplane belonged to the creator of the Icarus myth.) Over the decades patent law would change, but in those early days, Fulton was among the very few who recognized that patents should be given to inventions that were demonstrably workable.

Elegant as the *Treatise* is, it is not without outbursts of seething personal anger, especially at the persecutions visited on inventors. In the concluding chapter of his presentation of small canals, Fulton throws his gauntlet at perceived detractors and at the same time describes the turn of mind that shaped his actions.

“[M] any a man of worth and demeanor is tormented by the criticism of ignorant insignificance, for men of the least genius are ever the first to deprecate, and the last to commend, and for the obvious reason, they have not sense to know the produce of genius when they see it ...If old systems were invariably to be continued there would be no more scientific improvement than in a bed of oysters.

I therefore look upon it as a duty in every man who has the least pretension to science to investigate every plan, which even has the resemblance of improvement...his judgment should also be put to the test and thus light would appear, as friction brings forth the sparks of latent fire.

I am aware, this challenge to a fair discussion may be construed into self-importance in me, by opposing my opinion of all others: but be that as it may, I deem it indispensably necessary in all improvements of a public nature.”³

It was perhaps as an afterthought of his overflowing mind that Fulton concluded the *Treatise* with a letter to Thomas Mifflin, governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in which he recommended his system of small canals. In it is one of his most innovative contributions, an entirely new method of financing. The canal Fulton envisaged would connect Philadelphia to Fort Pitt, 350 miles distant. Because investment capital was scarce in America, and it was in the national interest to bring the product of the interior to markets on the coast, he advocated that the federal government invest in the first sixty or seventy miles. After that, tolls from the first segment could be used to pay for the subsequent section, and tolls from that for the next. If the work lagged, the state might even contribute funds. Thus, “Canals will pass through every vale, meander round each hill, and bind the whole country in bonds of social intercourse.”⁴

The optimism of the *Treatise* is truly infectious. In a distinct turn-around Stanhope wrote: “Your book about Canals, has set me, you see, *on fire*... So I hope that at last I shall burn to some purpose, provided you keep *on blowing the Fire*.”⁵ This gave Fulton “a pleasure nearly allied to Vanity.”⁶ The monthly periodicals praised the *Treatise*, too. It would become Fulton’s *passe partout*.

Having procured a British patent for his system of small canals, Fulton tried to sell shares in it for living money. But England was in the throes of a severe financial crisis and he found no buyers. Finally, the American speculator John Barker Church, who was about to return to the United States (where as the brother-in-law of Alexander Hamilton he had excellent connections), took a one-quarter interest in it. His agreement was that he would pay Fulton three installments of £500 each. Meanwhile Fulton was to go to Paris, take out a patent there, and exploit it.

Paris

When Fulton arrived in Paris in the summer of 1797, Napoleon was rounding off his Italian conquests, having already annexed the Netherlands. In addition, the French navy was waging against America what would come to be called the “Quasi-war with France.” Yet, as Fulton wrote an inventor colleague in London, “all is gay and joyous as if there were no war at all.”⁷

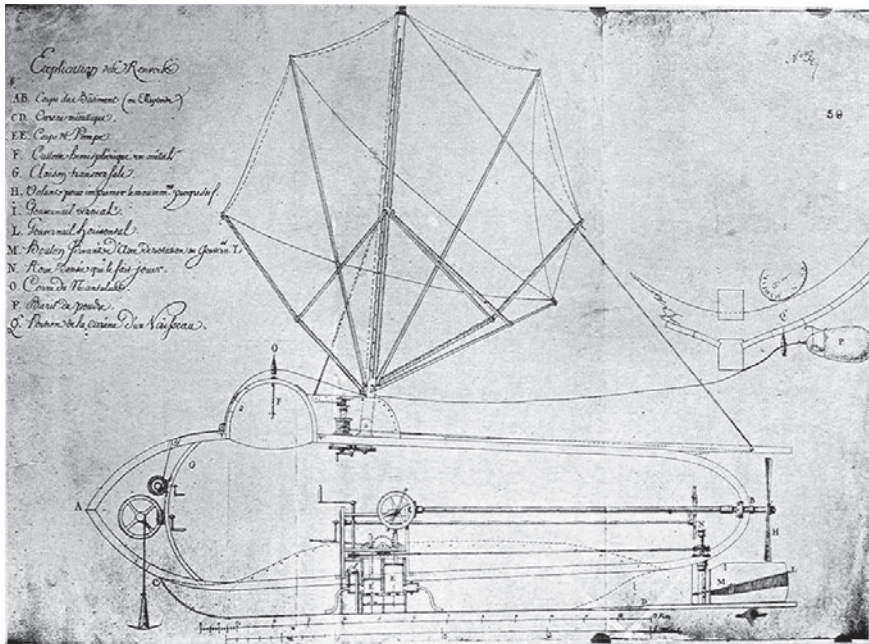
It is safe to say that no other city in the world could have suited Robert Fulton as well as Paris in September 1797. The Terror, with its bloodthirsty guillotining, was over. Governed by the Directory, the city exuded republican hope. Scientists and engineers were considered citizens of the world, rather than a specific country. Its eminent savants gave fashionable free lectures and were personally accessible in their work places. The National Conservatory of Arts and Trades, which processed patents for inventions and displayed models of them for all to see, had recently been installed in the refectory of Saint-Martin-des Champs. Art, too, was a public offering. Paintings of the despoiled aristocrats were hung in the Louvre, formerly the habitat of royalty. “*La propriété du peuple français*”—the property of the French people—every class of citizen was welcome to visit the museum. Art treasures selected as tribute from Italy were then being paraded through France, on their way to Paris, like slave girls of yore.

Socially, the city was ebullient. Women circulated freely with men on an intellectual as well as a romantic level. Uncorsetted, they went about in flimsy low-cut, high-waisted gowns. They were healthy and pink-cheeked. They ate well and bathed often. Waltzing, with the novel requirement that partners put their arms around each other, was all the rage.

Fulton peddled his system of canal navigation in France as he promised Church he would do. His *Treatise* aroused well-placed interest and was translated into French, with nearly 100 drawings; Portuguese (for Brazil); and, by order of the Czar, Russian. However, fond as Fulton was of small canals, this was not his true objective. That was to sell the government what he euphemistically called “a curious machine for mending politics”; it was a system of submarine warfare. His voluminous papers yield no record of when and how he developed it, but, as a fervent believer in free trade, it was the way he had devised to bring it about.

Recognizing that France’s navy was dramatically smaller than Great Britain’s, the Ministry of the Marine gave Fulton funding to build a model. The distinguished committee appointed to evaluate its performance ecstatically reported: “It can do anything a fish can do with its tail and its fins. It is also like a boat and can do anything a boat can do.”⁸ They dubbed it the *bateau-poisson*.

More money was provided to build an operable, large-scale boat. Full of



Nautilus schematics from H. W. Dickinson, *Robert Fulton; Engineer and Artist*, London 1913

confidence in its perfection, Fulton demonstrated it on the Seine before all of Paris in June 1800. He and one helper descended through the conning tower and, without aid of sail or oars, propelled the craft to the middle of the fast-moving current. Then the boat plunged. The multitudes held their breaths, disasters of every grisly nature skittering through their minds. Twenty minutes later it popped up, at a great distance from where it had submerged. Fulton repeated the maneuver. Then the crowd demanded to see how it would sail. In two minutes he and his assistant mounted the specially weighted mast and the canvas. Despite an ill wind and the fast current, the “bateau-poisson” tacked merrily back and forth as if on a jolly outing. He would call his submarine *The Nautilus*.

At the same time, Fulton added to Paris amusements. He built a panorama, using a special device for showing multiple scenes for which he had taken out a patent. (Although French patent law was based on American law, it allowed what they called patents of importation and improvement.) It became so popular he built a twin. Street criers composed ditties to celebrate them. (The charming Passage des Panoramas that linked them still exists near the Bourse.) Fulton also patented a rope-making machine, sorely needed because of the demands of ships’ rigging. It was such a laborious job that a strong man could twist for no more than

four hours. This, too, was a patent of importation and improvement. Part of it he sold to Nathaniel Cutting, an American speculator about to depart France, for whom he promised to develop it.

Enter Chancellor Robert R. Livingston, America's minister plenipotentiary to France. No one knows how he and Fulton became acquainted, but, because Fulton was a well-known figure throughout Paris, it did not take them long to meet and discover their mutual interest in invention. Livingston frankly told him that steamboats were his "hobby horse." Although both his experimental boats were dismal failures, he had just renewed his monopoly for steam navigation on the Hudson River.

What he did not confide was that he had also signed an agreement with John Stevens, his brother-in-law and a first-rate engineer, and with Nicholas Roosevelt, to further develop the steamboat.

Fulton's forays into propelling boats by steam had been at best sporadic, but he was in need of a new project during a lull in his submarine venture. It was obvious to him that Livingston was no mechanic and would need his expertise to make good his monopoly. He went straight to work to win him as a patron.

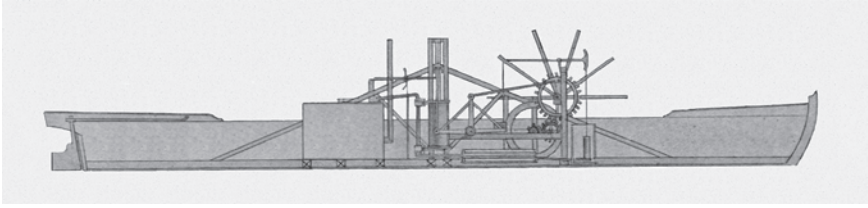
At a spa in the Vosges mountains, whither he had gone with Ruth Barlow (with whom he was living in Paris, along with her husband Joel, in what can only be called an odd *ménage à trois*), he ran a three-foot eight-inch model propelled by springs in a sixty-six foot testing basin he had constructed on a nearby stream. His objective was to find out how much power it would lose as it was propelled through water. Using tables from experiments on the loss to friction of solids run through water conducted at the Royal Navy's docks while he was in London, Fulton was satisfied he had a combination that worked.

Fulton and Ruth made a leisurely return to Paris at the end of the season in a charming little carriage drawn by two white ponies. There he continued to perfect his design, changing the method of propulsion from endless chains to paddle wheels. He and Livingston sparred back and forth about the design. Fulton always managed to win out, because, as Fulton had guessed, Livingston, having no solid ideas of his own to contribute, believed that if he did not give in he might lose his



Oil on canvas portrait of Chancellor Robert R. Livingston (CL.1974.56)

NEW YORK STATE PARKS, RECREATION, AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION



Seine river boat from H. W. Dickinson,
Robert Fulton; Engineer and Artist, London 1913

indispensable services. Finally, on October 10, 1802, they signed a contract that made them equal partners, Livingston providing seed money and the monopoly; Fulton the execution. (Because it dealt with what would happen if one or both died, it set up what amounted to a proto-corporation, almost undoubtedly another of Fulton's novel ideas.) Fulton was now able to build a full-scale boat.

Who made the hull is not known, but it was built to Fulton's exact specifications, seventy-four and a half feet long and eight feet wide. To make the engine and the moving works, he engaged Etienne Calla, the premier model maker in Paris, and the Perier brothers, who had experience running the Boulton and Watt steam pump at the Chaillot waterworks, and had, in fact, visited its foundry in England. Again *tout Paris* was invited to the public demonstration. It took place on the evening of August 9, 1803, in the same vicinity where the submarine had run, below the Periers' Chaillot foundry and across from the Invalides. Fulton tended the engine himself, his taut, six-foot frame standing well above his three helpers. She went against the strong current at over two and a half miles an hour, more than twice as fast downstream—or so an energetic journalist who raced her along the quay testified. Then he gave rides to the assembled scientists, savants, and officials in two small boats towed behind. In a grand finale, he proceeded upstream toward the Place de la Concorde, thrilling the patrons of the swimming school and the public baths who had witnessed the performance from their jasmine-embellished decks. The official newspaper declared the entire performance "*un succes complet et brilliant*."

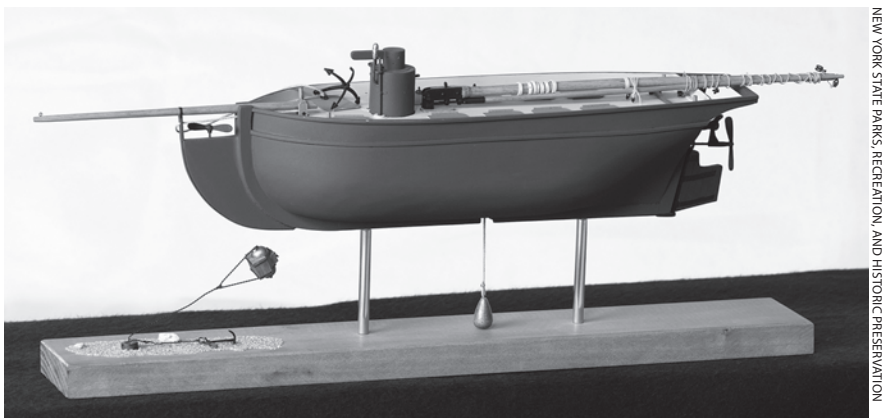
That Livingston did not witness his splendid show was Fulton's only disappointment, if indeed it was. He had gone to Switzerland with his family, purportedly to escape the ninety-degree heat in Paris, but probably to escape exposure and mortification should the demonstration fail. (He had not been present when his earlier steamboats had been tested. In fact, he had directed their building by correspondence.) On Livingston's return, although he was gratified with Fulton's success, he engaged in still more petty sparring. Fulton finally persuaded him that the best next step was that he go to England, order a Boulton and Watt engine,

then sail to New York to start work on their Hudson River boat. Fulton left France for England in April 1804. But he did not leave for America as he had promised. Instead, he spent more than two years trying to convince the British to use his system of submarine warfare.

England II

Fulton arrived in London in May 1804. What followed was undoubtedly the most rancid episode in his ascending career. The British, of course, realized that he was proposing a cutting-edge weapon that would transform maritime war, at that time dependant on the ultimate brutal tactic of broadside and boarding in which decks ran with blood. Most were opposed to the invention because they considered sneaking up ungentelemanly and cowardly. On the other hand, they were aware that the tenuous Peace of Amiens was disintegrating and they could see the French general/emperor's troops amassing at Boulogne to invade their island. Besides, Fulton had improved his system. Of grave concern was his plan to mine their Channel harbors with torpedoes to be exploded by a time-set lock device. Protected only by their widely dispersed warships, they were afraid. Luring Fulton to their side made sense. For his part, Fulton had become cynical about the fate of republicanism in France under the Empire. Obsessed with proving the system he absolutely believed would end all maritime war, he accepted their advances. What Fulton did not count on was the embedded jealousies among their government's individual members.

At first Fulton was fortunate. William Pitt, the Younger, who mingled a strong visionary streak with a love of economy, had become prime minister and was an enthusiast for his system; he believed it would benefit the stronger naval power,



Model of the *Nautilus*

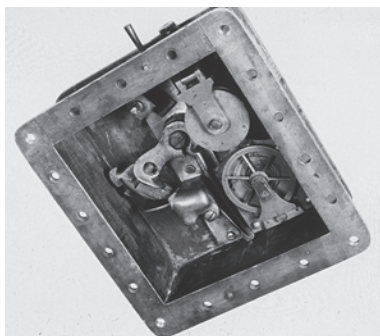
England, and not the weaker, France. After frustrating delays that tried Fulton's patience, Pitt finally signed a contract that made Fulton a rich man. First he was given a salary of £200 a month, plus expenses for superintending the execution of his plan. When he blew up a decked vessel, demonstrating that his system was capable of destroying the enemy's fleet, he would be paid £40,000 and, thereafter, half the value of vessels destroyed. If he or the government desired to terminate participation, he would receive a quarter of the value of all ships destroyed by his torpedoes for a period of fourteen years. Because Fulton demanded it, the contract included an arbitration clause by which, if decided in his favor, the government would pay him £40,000 for demonstrating the principles and revealing his plans. Moreover, he was to be allowed to export the Boulton and Watt engine he had ordered, a privilege that made the company livid when they found out about it. Needless to say, Fulton was elated by the outcome of negotiations. However, he was angered that the British refused without explanation to sanction the building of his improved submarine boat.

The "new Curiosities" that Fulton devised in concert with Sir Home Popham, one of the most scientific seamen of his day (it was he who perfected the naval signaling system), were oblong boxes lined with lead, covered with canvas and tar, and painted sea colors for camouflage. To increase their destructive power, they were laden with tightly packed stones as well as with barrels of gunpowder. The detonating mechanism was a clockwork lock that could be set at varying times, from ten minutes to six hours, and could be put in motion by the removal of a pin.

An attack, delayed by foul weather, was launched against the French fleet at Boulogne on a clear night in early October. The action lasted until four o'clock, when a gale drove the squadron back to England. Lord Melville, first lord of the Admiralty (with whom Fulton dined the following evening at Walmer Castle, the Prime Minister's residence on the coast), had nothing but praise for the expedition. Fulton's gloomy account to the Wests assumed that very few of the 130 boats in the outer harbor were destroyed and the others made their escape.

Nevertheless, Pitt and Melville held firm. But, as Popham had mastered the operation, Fulton found himself left out in the cold. When spring brought another opportunity to try the bombs, the situation was even more complicated. Lord Melville had been impeached for mismanagement of naval funds and was replaced by an eighty-year-old who hated novelty of any kind. Viscount Castlereagh, now the secretary of war and still a staunch supporter, ordered another expedition against Boulogne. It was a dismal failure. Fulton was not invited to join the action; he merely observed it from the beach. To reinsert himself into the action, he

acquired a recently captured 200-ton brig, which he anchored a half mile from Walmar Castle. He blew it to smithereens with one of his torpedoes, much to the delight of a number of distinguished Naval men and government officers he had invited. One observer stated: "The starboard side of the boat was lifted bodily, then went to pieces, the masts, as she sunk, fell over, and crossed each other...and the whole disappeared a misshapen, black mass floating on the surface."⁹ Even Fulton was stunned by the explosion. For a moment, he reflected on the lives it would destroy, but when he was paid £10,000 for its work, he believed with renewed fervor that his system was destined to eliminate maritime war. Castlereagh was so delighted he wrote Lord Nelson to inform him he was sending Fulton and his torpedoes for his use at Cadiz; he had not yet received the news of the successful battle at Trafalgar that culminated with Lord Nelson's death.



COLUMBIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Timing mechanism for one of
Fulton's torpedos**

Trafalgar made Britain supreme on the seas. With nothing to fear from the French navy, it marked a turning point in the war and with it a less than sanguine attitude toward Fulton's system. His unorthodox weapons, still unproven in battle, seemed superfluous. As his relationship with the government went from bad to worse, his dark side rose to the surface. He heckled, he threatened, he nagged shamelessly, all to no avail. He was coldly ignored, a humiliating and utterly frustrating experience. To make matters worse, the star of his chief competitor, William Congreve (later of "rockets red glare" fame), shone brightly. Those who might have helped Fulton began to believe he was a madman. To get rid of him once and for all, it was finally decided to pay him off. The arbitrators he had so carefully written into his contract agreed to let him keep the £10,000 he had received for blowing up the brig and gave him an additional £1,000 above the £4,000 in salary he had earned. Finally, he was accorded £646, twelve shillings, and six pence due on his accounts.

Fulton was not content. But after writing still more abusive letters, he finally conceded that haranguing the government was fruitless. It was time to return home. To the Barlows, who had preceded him to America, he wrote: "My situation now is, my hands are now free to burn, sink, and destroy whom I please. I have or will have ...500 sterling a year, with a steam engine and pictures worth £2,000. Therefore, I am not in a state to be pitied."¹⁰

America

When Fulton reached New York in December 1806, it boasted a bustling population of 80,000 and was growing at a rate of over ten percent a year. To make room for northward expansion, swales and swamps were being filled, rocky outcroppings leveled, and woods cut down. New buildings were springing up on every spare lot. The half-completed City Hall promised to be an elegant architectural jewel, a symbol of New Yorkers' conscious delight in their aspiring, freewheeling way of life.

Forty-one years old and as confident in his abilities as any truly creative genius can be, Fulton dug right into the steamboat project. He wrote two letters to Livingston, who was comfortably ensconced at Clermont, his immense country seat on the Hudson River, tending the merino sheep Napoleon had given him. The first letter asked for information about tides, ice, and volume of stagecoach traffic. The second, twelve pages long and full of calculations, tried, with only marginal success, to prove that putting steamboats on the Mississippi and its tributaries would be infinitely more profitable than putting them on the Hudson.

That done, Fulton sped off to Philadelphia to reunite with the Barlows, with whom he was intending to live again. From there he went on to the Federal City. A sprawling, half-built town, the capitol was rising and the White House grounds were being landscaped under President Jefferson's watchful eye. There Fulton attended a dinner in honor of Meriwether Lewis, who had just returned from his great transcontinental explorations. He also made contact with William Thornton, a good architect, but more important for Fulton, the clerk of the Patent Office. He graciously allowed Fulton to examine the twelve patents for steam navigation already registered. The only one that caused him concern was that of John Fitch, whose boat had run for a season between Philadelphia and Bordentown on the Delaware River. It had been abandoned because incessant trouble with the engine and boiler prevented it from becoming a commercial success. Further, Fitch's manic-depressive behavior scared off investors. Moreover, as Fulton must have known by now, it was Fitch's monopoly for steam navigation on the Hudson River that Livingston had abrogated and replaced with his own. An even more important fact was that Thornton had inherited—or procured—an interest in Fitch's patent. Although their relationship started out on a friendly basis, Thornton would become his most persistent and vicious enemy. Buoyed by self-confidence, however, Fulton chose to put his head in the sand.

Back in New York City, he tackled his not entirely easy partnership with Livingston. He had put years into bringing the design of a steamboat to perfection, he wrote, and had paid in \$5,111 more than Livingston had. Livingston disagreed.

So important was this discrepancy in their recollections, Fulton undertook a bone-jarring three-day stagecoach trip to Clermont to thrash it out face to face. As neither could produce the papers to prove his point, Livingston must have simply caved in. He paid up half of the expenditures, including Fulton's bill at a fashionable New York City boarding house.

Fulton then began building the American steamboat that would transform world transportation. To make the hull, he chose New York's foremost shipwright, Charles Browne, whose yards were at Corlear's Hook on the East River. It was 141 feet long and twelve feet wide, twice as long and proportionately skinnier than his boat in Paris. The roof of the passenger cabin was raised two-feet, "sufficient," he said, "for a man with his hat on." Then he retrieved his engine from the warehouse, where it had lain for over a year, because Livingston would not pay the \$654 in duties. He engaged a first-class ironmonger to make the paddlewheel mechanism, and a coppersmith to make the boiler. Livingston tried to veto using copper because it was so expensive.

With that done, Fulton felt carefree enough to pay a three-week visit to Philadelphia, where he enjoyed the company of the Barlows and sat for a portrait by Charles Willson Peale to be placed in the gallery of praiseworthy Americans he lovingly called the "Temple of Wisdom." Refreshed by this interlude, Fulton was glad to find work on his boat had proceeded at a phenomenal pace during his absence. By the end of May the hull was ready for painting. By July 14 the engine and machinery had been put in place. Only finishing touches on the cabin were needed.

So certain was Fulton that she would run perfectly when launched, that he took off time to advance his system of submarine warfare. On June 22, Britain's warship *Leopard* fired on the U.S. *Chesapeake*, killing three, wounding eighteen and snatching four for impressment into His Majesty's navy. To Fulton it meant one thing: his torpedoes would be needed. They were infinitely cheaper than building an adequate fleet of warships. On July 20, he anchored a 200-ton brig near Governors Island. He intended to demolish it in an explosion fully as dramatic as the one in England. That he did, but not before the 2,000 disappointed spectators that had lined the Battery had gone home to supper. The most popular report of the event was a hilarious satire by writer Washington Irving in his new monthly *Salmagundi*.

Fulton retained his equilibrium. He wrote President Jefferson, urging him to advocate that submarine warfare be organized into a general system of national defense. Reluctant to spend a penny more than necessary to build up a navy, Jefferson wrote back that he favored establishing a special submarine corps.

Putting his finger on the delivery problem, he hoped that Fulton had not abandoned the submarine boat as impracticable; Fulton did not choose to explain why he had. At the same time, addressing him as Colonel Fulton, Jefferson attempted to entice him into designing a canal between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain as part of the defenses of New Orleans. Fulton replied that he wished to remain master of his own movements.

With a free mind, Fulton turned his attention to the steamboat. Flat-bottomed like a skiff, straight-sided like a scow, but with a bow and stern with the graceful lines that, sensitive always to aesthetics, Fulton had asked Browne to provide, she was ready at last for her first trial. It took place on a Sunday, when the impresario in Fulton knew the waterfront would be jammed with eager spectators expecting a fine explosion and even perhaps a drowning. It was also four years to the day from his brilliant success on the Seine. Hands-on as always, he started the engine. The first time it had been worked in a boat, it did its job. He ran a mile up the churning thoroughfare, then down again to test her maneuverability and the power of her paddlewheels. She answered well, which meant he could increase the size of the paddlewheels to give them more thrust. His audience was agape. Fulton was so pleased that he wrote the Chancellor, probably in a wave of teasing exuberance: "Whatever may be the fate of steamboats for the Hudson, my thing is completely proved for the Mississippi and the object is immense—please forward to me 1,000 or 500 dollars as soon as possible."¹¹

Fulton devoted the next week to making fine adjustments to the mechanisms and fixing up the cabin. That Sunday, again with all New York lining the shore, he steamed down the river, around the tricky waters of the Battery to a dock on the North River near what is now Twelfth Street. Livingston at last had displayed faith; on board were his invited relatives and eminent guests. (Typically, he was absent.) The trip was accomplished without mishap.

Bursting with high-flying adrenalin, Fulton set the very next day at one o'clock for his departure to Albany. The weather was predicted to be fair. The tide would turn within the hour. The sun would not set until 6:48, followed by one of the Hudson's long, luminous twilights. The full moon would aid navigation through the narrow Highland waters.

Romantic stories have been written about how numerous Livingston relatives and friends boarded the boat for what would be, for them, a festive ride. Certainly the Chancellor issued invitations with proprietary abandon, for his cousin Helen wrote her mother: "He says it will be something we will remember all our lives and that we need not worry about provisions; his men will see to all that."¹² Fulton, of course, put an end to that party. He viewed the maiden voyage as an experiment,



“Fulton’s patent Steamboat ascending the highlands”

not a gala. Only Fulton, an excellent engineer, and a captain invaluable for his knowledge of the vagaries of the river were aboard.

The excited crowd awaiting the steamboat’s departure was immense. There were as many hecklers as well-wishers. “Fulton’s Folly” she was called. Her long, thin lines, in contrast to the beamy sloops, made her look like a fragile stick. When the chimney began to belch black smoke, bets were on she would be claimed by the devil. Everyone who was not hurling insults and jests held their breaths as she glided into mid-river. Then, after a brief tinkering with the engine, she gathered herself together, steamed upriver, and serenely disappeared from sight. The only immediately unrealized impediment along the way came from boatmen who were scared out of their wits at what they saw as a supernatural fiery monster bearing down on them against the wind and tide. Thumping steadily through the night, she steamed into the long reach past Kingston mid-morning the next day. At exactly one p.m. she tied up at Livingston’s dock. “Time 24 hours, distance 110 miles,”¹³ was the remarkably laconic account Fulton wrote for the press.

It has also been said that the Chancellor put on a great celebration to welcome her arrival. He probably did, although, surprisingly, there is no record

of it. What is known is that the following morning he, his sons-in-law, and an English prelate joined Fulton on the final lap to Albany. For them it was an outing. For Fulton, it was the fruition of long years of striving to be of practical use to his fellow man.

The steamboat brought her time up to almost five miles an hour. There was more celebration in Albany; the fear that the steamboat would destroy traditional river carriage was momentarily brushed aside. The British bishop publicly stated: “she is unquestionably the most pleasant boat I ever went in. In her, the mind is free from suspense. Perpetual motion authorizes you to calculate on a certain time to land; her works move with all the facility of a clock; and the noise is not greater than that of a vessel sailing with a good breeze.”¹⁴

Fulton simply had a placard hung on the side of the boat announcing the steamboat would start for New York the following day, fare \$7.00—twice as much as charged by sloops. His men lay in provisions—bread, sauce, fowls, liquor, and a barrel of water. But the only passengers they attracted for the through trip were two Frenchmen, the distinguished botanist Francois Andre Michaud and a French army officer named Parmentier, sent to the United States by the French Academy to report on the plants and trees of the region (and possibly among those who had witnessed Fulton’s Parisian demonstration).

The steamboat left Albany at nine o’clock the next morning, August 20. At Hudson, the riverbank and framing hills were crowded with people hoping to catch a glimpse of her. Rowed boats filled with men and women tried in vain to keep up; even a five-oared barge that was double-manned failed to do so. Fulton left the Livingston party at Clermont and immediately resumed the run. At West Point, the whole garrison turned out and sent up repeated “Huzzahs.” All along the way excited people came to the waterfront to cheer and wave their handkerchiefs.

Fulton guided his boat into her berth in New York at four p.m. on August 21. Emotionally spent, all he could utter to the press was: “time 30 hours. Space run through 150 miles, equals 5 miles an hour.”¹⁵ Astonishingly, there was no other press notice, except one planted by Barlow. This may have been because Aaron Burr’s trial for treason was on. (He was accused of organizing an army to split the new lands west of the Mississippi valley from the rest of the country.) Or perhaps it was because, irony of ironies, it was an unusual anomaly: an historic event unreported because it was uneventful.

In a hasty note to Livingston, Fulton displayed his characteristic enthusiasm: “funds and spirit,” he wrote, “are now only wanting to do the handsomest and most lucrative things.”¹⁶ To Barlow, however, he reiterated his dreams: that steam

would give cheap and quick access to merchandise on the Mississippi and other great rivers, “laying open their treasures to the enterprise of our countrymen.” And he added, probably with an eye to its publication, “but I will not admit that the steamboat is half so important as the torpedo system of defense and attack, for out of this will grow liberty of the seas, an object of infinite importance to the welfare of America and every civilized country.”¹⁷

Throughout the autumn Fulton ran *The Steamboat*—first called just that, because there was, in the world, no other. Riding her became more and more popular, even fashionable. Only when ice threatened did he lay her up. Over the winter he took her to a protected cove south of Clermont, in Red Hook, where he set up a workshop and, except for the trustworthy engine, completely rebuilt her. He made three separate cabins: one was reserved for women and children and one for men only. In all, they offered fifty-four sleeping spaces. He also installed an up-to-date kitchen that would serve excellent noontime dinners, evening teas with meats, and breakfasts, each costing fifty cents. The deck was finished with one-inch boards. In the vast area allotted to passengers, it was covered with a light olive-green oilcloth, thick as pasteboard. Sheltering passengers from sun and rain was a permanent awning under where they could also dine. Fulton allowed Livingston to register her, for he had paid up his half of the expenses. *North River Steamboat*, hailing port Clermont, were the words he chose. Thereafter, the *North River* was her name. (During Livingston and Fulton’s lifetimes, she was never referred to as the *Clermont*.) In April, she began her first full season. By July, she was carrying upwards of 140 passengers on each run. Her two round trips a week netted a princely \$1,000.

This was an immensely busy period. It involved: quarrelling with Livingston about the boilers (Livingston wanted to economize by building them out of wood and leather, lined with lead and covered with a paste concocted of oxblood and egg whites); writing a report on a national transportation system for Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury; trying to figure out a valid approach for patenting the “unique combinations” of his steamboat design; and making preparations for joining the Barlows in the mansion they had bought in Georgetown. Somehow, Fulton also found time to court Harriet Livingston, the Chancellor’s young cousin and the sister of his son-in-law, Robert. Their marriage on January 7, 1808, at her family home, Teviotdale, at Germantown came as a surprise to everyone—perhaps because of Fulton’s propensity for whirlwind action, even to bride and groom. He was eighteen years older than she. Undoubtedly, she was fascinated by his foreign achievements, by the place he had already made for himself in the United States, and by his forceful personality and good looks. Any



Miniature on ivory portrait of
Harriet Fulton (CL.2004.2)

doubts she might have had about his lack of heritage would have been dispensed by his partnership with the Chancellor. Besides, at twenty-four she may also have been ready to dispense with the habit of Livingstons marrying Livingstons, or at least someone in their inner circle. In Harriet, Fulton saw a well-educated young woman and a passably accomplished painter and musician. Not beautiful, she had the admirable Livingston nose and strong chin, which gave her a decidedly patrician air. If his miniature portrait of her is reliable, she also possessed an exceedingly *belle poitrine* and chose gowns that displayed it to good advantage.

He was undoubtedly also attracted to this strong new connection with the Livingston family. With the steamboat reconstruction underway, it made sense to live temporarily at Teviotdale. Fulton's assessment in mid-winter was that the honeymoon and the steamboat went on charmingly.

The only event to mar the idyllic horizon was that on the very day Fulton and Harriet were married, John Stevens, one of the Chancellor's erstwhile partners, contracted to build a steamboat, 100 feet long and sixteen feet wide to be afloat by April 1. A first-class engineer, he counted on his own high-pressure engine to make a steady six miles an hour—all Fulton's boat could attain with sails flying and the tide running in her favor. Called the *Phoenix*, she would ply the Hudson from his property in Hoboken, New Jersey, to Albany in defiance of Livingston's monopoly. Angry, taunting letters flew back and forth, the core of which were Livingston's tirades defending his interest and his honor and Stevens' "Monopolies are very justly held, in every free country, as odious."¹⁸ The controversy compounded when John R. Livingston, the Chancellor's brother (who was projecting his own boat), sided with Stevens. Thereupon, Fulton and Livingston decided they should try weaving John R. into the web by licensing him to establish lines from New York City to Staten Island and New Jersey, a route that offered lucrative connections with the stagecoaches to Philadelphia. Unphased, Stevens ran his completed *Phoenix* from Hoboken to Perth Amboy, New Jersey, at speeds often reaching over five and a half miles an hour. William Thornton was

swift to attempt an alliance with him, promising to notify him as soon as Fulton submitted a request for a patent. Addicted to high living and gambling, seeking bribes was second nature to him.

Fulton struggled long and hard to find convincing phraseology for his patent. Finally, during the first week of January 1809, he submitted his application. Following the argument spelled out in his *Treatise on Canals* that likened the mechanic to the poet making new combinations with the letters of the alphabet, he included the definitions and tables derived from the experiments on the velocity of solids drawn through water made while he was in London and published in 1802. He also included an exhaustive series of calculations based on the dimensions and machinery of his steamboat, all illustrated by fourteen figures, tables, and drawings. In an error that was so foolish it is impossible to fathom, Fulton did not sign the application himself. It was perhaps simply an awful mix-up, but the signature was one Fletcher's, possibly the person hired to copy Fulton's text in elegant script. Whatever its inspiration, that signature would come back to haunt him.

Thornton, who had returned from the countryside (where he had been hiding from his creditors), held Fulton's patent back. On January 16, he filed his own application, and the next day wrote Stevens that he did not think Fulton's claim to a patent was as good as his own. To rectify the impression that statement made, he wrote again a week later that he had only "slightly examined" Fulton's patent. Fiercely independent, Stevens remained aloof.

As if this were not enough, Nicholas Roosevelt, Livingston's other jilted partner, asked Benjamin Henry Latrobe, who had displaced William Thornton as the architect of the national capitol, to intervene with Fulton and Livingston for him. Financially hard-pressed due to a federal suit for having misappropriated funds in a copper transaction, Roosevelt hoped to be bought off. Latrobe should have known better, but Roosevelt had just married the architect's beloved only child; besides, it was his character to act impulsively. He warned Fulton that if he did not honor Livingston's partnership with Roosevelt, Roosevelt would be forced to seek redress. Fulton acknowledged that the monopoly covered only the Hudson River, but threatened to sue whoever infringed his patent. Roosevelt then suggested to Stevens that they build a large boat together, but Latrobe rebuked him, insisting that playing Stevens off against Livingston was a better strategy. Fulton thought he had solved the problem when he sent Roosevelt to Pittsburgh, to build a boat for what had always been his prime goal, the Mississippi River system. It was a decision he would mightily regret.

Meanwhile, Stevens, who was anxious to avoid a lawsuit (it was not his

temperament), elected to take the *Phoenix* to Philadelphia and run her on the Delaware. It was a courageous act, as it required braving the open sea, a feat Fulton himself had not yet envisioned as practicable. For most of the journey, the *Phoenix* was beset with “dirty, squally weather,” but with his engineer son, Robert Livingston Stevens, to help out, she was safely anchored off Philadelphia’s Market Street on the evening of the fourteenth day. Her survival through 241 miles of heavy seas more than justified Stevens’ faith.

Impressed, Fulton laid aside his infringement claim and wished him well. However, he was to have no respite, for Thornton launched an open attack against his patent, then unctuously offered to be his discrete supporter in an amicable suit against Stevens. Fulton did not bite. “I am so situated that I must stand or fall on what I have done,” he explained in a sudden burst of candor.¹⁹ Incapable of proceeding on his own, Thornton then returned to Stevens, who quickly brushed him off once more.

Hearing that the *Phoenix* was overwhelmed by boisterous young men treating her like a tavern and that, built to weather the ocean, she was too clumsy for river work, Fulton decided Stevens’ back was against the wall. Livingston, too, was ready to deliver an ultimatum. If Stevens did not concede, at least privately, that his high-pressure engine had failed and that he was working under the patent, they would give all the Philadelphia runs to strangers. Still Stevens refused to capitulate. It was not until the end of the year that all three agreed to a compromise. Fulton and Livingston would retain monopoly rights on all New York State waters, including Lake Champlain, and also the rights on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. Stevens would get Chesapeake Bay and the Connecticut, Delaware, Santee, and Savannah rivers as well as the run through Long Island Sound to Providence, Rhode Island.

The agreement relied, of course, on the validity of Fulton’s patent. It would be a brief truce. Almost immediately, Stevens applied to the Corporation of the City of New York for a lease to run a ferry from his property in Hoboken to the Bear market in Manhattan.

Fulton allowed himself to be partly diverted from this threat because he was so pleased with his new boat, the *Car of Neptune*. Far more luxurious than the *North River*, she would begin her runs in the autumn, more than doubling the \$16,000 profit the *North River* had brought in. He was also able to ignore for the moment that Stevens, showing no intention of cooperating unless it suited his ambition, was extending his line south from Philadelphia. Moreover, he had taken out a patent for his improved engine.

As if the stage were not crowded enough, still more competitors launched boats

to plague Livingston and Fulton. A group of twenty Albany men built a replica of the *North River* called the *Hope* and ran her in competition against Fulton's boat. These multiple pressures served only one good purpose: they brought Fulton and Livingston together as they had never been before. They wasted no time in taking the so-called Albany Company to Circuit Court, pleading infringement of the patent. The federal judge, (incidentally Henry Brockholst Livingston) remanded the case to state court on the grounds that the satisfaction they were seeking—possession of the boats and triple damages—was excessive. The change in venue would place the burden of argument on the monopoly. In the interim, the Albany Company added the *Perseverance* to its line, prompting price wars and mutually scurrilous attacks on safety and comfort. The *North River*, for instance, was said to be full of bedbugs—and perhaps it was. Certainly, it was slowing down. With Livingston's concurrence, Fulton replaced her with another new boat.

Even more handsome than the *Car of Neptune*, the *Paragon* was a floating palace. She was 170 feet long and her deck was twenty-eight feet wide. A mahogany staircase led to the captain's quarters and the ladies cabin, with its special dining room. Another led into the great cabin. Forty feet long and twenty-five feet wide, it communicated with a bar room. Meals could be served to 150 passengers. There were 104 sofas and berths, the latter wide enough for two persons, if agreeable. The floors were carpeted; the windows were adorned with silk draperies over fringed muslin curtains. Built of cedar and pine timbers, the hull was strong enough to keep her afloat should she fill with water.

That fall Fulton was delighted to hear that the *New Orleans*, the boat Roosevelt had built in Pittsburgh, had begun her 2,000-mile trip to her namesake city. Roosevelt, his wife Lydia (pregnant with their second child), a Newfoundland dog named Tiger, and a crew of six were aboard. They made Louisville in four days. The immense comet that illuminated the night sky along the way was, perhaps, a harbinger of bad news, for low water delayed them for six weeks at the Louisville Falls. From the Roosevelts' point of view, the time was well spent; they were feted by townspeople and Lydia had her baby; however, it signaled that getting past the falls would always be problematical. Once again en route, the whole countryside was shaken by earthquakes and buffeted by hurricane-force winds. The waves rose to terrifying heights. The current was three times its normal speed. When the wind subsided, the calm was so unnatural even the hands spoke in whispers. The Roosevelts' joy was unbounded when, on January 12, 1812, they finally reached New Orleans and were greeted by an ecstatic populace. Their safe arrival radically changed the pattern of western commerce. Suddenly released from its bondage to eastern wagon men, New Orleans confidently expected to become the premier

port of the nation. Fulton, who had for so long awaited this success, was troubled only because he heard of it not from Roosevelt, but through a man who had received a letter from his brother.

In the east, trouble continued to compound. Arsonists torched Fulton's workshops on New York's west side. Stevens was operating a steam ferry, called the *Juliana*, between Vesey Street and Hoboken; according to him, it was the fastest boat on the river. In just one day, she made sixteen round trips, carrying an average of 100 passengers. Philadelphia-based Oliver Evans, a former friend whom Fulton had gratuitously insulted, was building an engine for a Massachusetts canal boat; Evans' son was building a 120-foot passenger boat to compete with Roosevelt's between New Orleans and Natchez.

Fired up, Fulton hastened to complete his new catamaran ferry, the *Jersey*. It was designed to move either end foremost—her paddlewheels were simply reversed to go in the opposite direction. At the same time, the *Firefly*, a small version of the *North River* destined for short trips, was under construction. Next, he would build a boat to run through Long Island Sound to Norwich, Connecticut. In addition, plans for a dry dock and workshop in Jersey City, (an infinitely better solution to repairs than the beach south of Hudson, New York he had used), were on the drawing board.

Stretched to his limits, Fulton was afflicted with an onslaught of face boils so severe that one of his eyes swelled shut. Moreover, his domestic life was far from calm. In the midst of her third full-term pregnancy, Harriet was increasingly exasperated with her husband's unrelenting focus on his work; it simply was not the tradition in which she was raised. True, Fulton had listened to her complaints about living with the Barlows. After first renting two different houses on Chambers Street north of City Hall—hardly the center of the beau-monde—he had at last moved the growing family into a handsome mansion on the corner of State and Marketfield Streets, opposite Bowling Green. In addition, Fulton had allowed her to use the *Paragon* for a “splendid entertainment” in honor of the commander of the H.M.S. *Bramble*. Nevertheless, in one of her few surviving letters, Harriet sarcastically complained to the Chancellor that “in his good nature and thoughtless way,” her husband had given half of the receipts of the *Jersey* to him after he had promised the whole to her for pocket money. “To you it is no object, and if it is,” she went on, “you must make Fulton abandon to you the patentees right in the *Firefly*, or on Lake Champlain or Mr. J. R. Livingston's boat...my heart is so set on it, your generosity must meet my wishes—and I will make Fulton do the same for you.”²⁰ (Note that she does not refer to her husband as Mr. Fulton, as a woman of her breeding would be expected to do, but rather as

plain Fulton, as if he were a hired servant.) It seems certain that her anger had far deeper roots than her pregnancy.

There was good news, however. In the New York court, respected Chief Judge James Kent declared with some passion against the Albany Company, ruling that it would be a “monstrous heresy to annihilate the legislative powers of the state.” The *Hope* and the *Perseverance* were placed under injunction. In a compromise concluding the episode, the *Hope* was sold to Fulton, the *Perseverance* to one Aaron Ogden. (The decision did not mark the end of the legal case against monopolies. It would wear on in protean forms throughout Fulton’s lifetime. As a national issue of highest importance, it wound up in the Supreme Court as *Gibbons v. Ogden*. In 1824, the justices sided with the anti-monopolists. Citing the Commerce Clause of the Constitution, and also Congress’s interest in promoting the progress of science and the useful arts, Chief Justice John Marshall, who wrote the landmark decision, laid the groundwork for the federal structure of our government.)

The remainder of 1812 was discouraging for Fulton and Livingston in different ways. The Chancellor suffered a stroke. Fulton paid little overt heed to his steadily deteriorating powers, probably because it frightened him. Drawing himself still more closely to the clan, he sent Harriet’s young brother John to deal with Roosevelt’s erratic management in New Orleans. This was another poor choice, because John’s worldly experience mainly had been confined to entertaining himself among his kith and kin. Fortunately, at the same time, Fulton strengthened his ties with the Chancellor’s youngest brother, Edward, who was then living in New Orleans and who turned out to be the only Livingston to truly understand not only the steamboat empire Fulton was attempting to build but also how his mind worked. A partner in the Mississippi venture, Edward raised subscriptions among his affluent friends in the city and gave Fulton good advice about their needs as shareholders. He tried his best to keep tabs on Henry Shreve and Daniel French, aspiring competitors for the Mississippi routes. And, he never tired of urging Fulton to visit Pittsburgh, where, he said, everything was inordinately expensive and was, as Roosevelt’s trip had amply demonstrated, often shut off from the lucrative southern reaches by low water at the Louisville Falls. There was no question in his mind that the workshops should be below them.

Fulton never went to Pittsburgh. Instead, he sent Benjamin Henry Latrobe to build boats for the Ohio Company while John built them for the Mississippi Company. Begging for the job because the government had abolished his position as surveyor of buildings, Latrobe seemed to have adequate credentials. He, too, had written on transportation for Gallatin. He also had installed an engine that simultaneously operated the Washington Navy Yard’s forge, bellows, and block

mill. However, it was well known that Latrobe was possessed of a volatile temperament. Vain and irascible even when work progressed smoothly, he collapsed under stress. In addition, Fulton hired one John Devereux Delacy, a speculator and attorney of flamboyant charm who had helped peripherally with the Albany negotiations. His job was to set up a Norfolk and Richmond line.

None of these men—Roosevelt, Latrobe, Delacy, or John Livingston—was equal to the job, as Fulton would soon find out. However, there was little he could do about it. The total absence of trained managers at that time was even worse than the lack of a useful banking system. In the free-wheeling early days of the republic, they simply did not exist. Most entrepreneurs did not need them. But because of the wide-ranging scale of his endeavors, Fulton did. Run ragged, he would pay dearly for being a visionary ahead of his times. With the exception of a few encouraging intervals, the rest of his life could be characterized, as he put it, as “friction without luster.” Although his inventive genius did not diminish, nor did his drawing skills, his ability to weather the storm grew steadily more confused.

For Fulton, January and February 1813 were profoundly melancholy months. Robert R. Livingston suffered a second paralytic stroke. He lingered briefly, then died on February 25. Fulton was devastated. Despite their constant bickering, there had been an overriding pride in their association that kept their partnership from falling apart. In a profound though unarticulated way, both had drawn pleasure as well as “fame and emolument” from it. Within a few hours of learning of the Chancellor’s death, Fulton received word that Joel Barlow, too, had died. Sent to France to negotiate reparations for illegally seized vessels, he tired of dealing with petty functionaries in Paris and pursued Napoleon to Russia, where he had set up a temporary court at Vilna. There he discovered Napoleon had abandoned his army and was already back in Paris. Barlow joined the French army’s awful retreat. Chilled and exhausted, he died in a bleak little village in what is now Poland on December 26. The two deaths left a terrible vacuum. To Edward Livingston he wrote: “Two such friends of such rare talents are not to be replaced in a whole life.”²¹ Depressed, he told Latrobe he was thinking of giving up his steamboats.

That, of course, was only an expression of Fulton’s despair. With the Chancellor gone, he now had to deal with his partner’s heirs: his widow, Mary Stevens Livingston, and his sons-in-law, Edward P. and Robert L. Livingston, who despised each other almost as much as they enjoyed receiving their steamboat profits and, in the process, disparaging Fulton. In fact, they tried to make Fulton their employee by forcing him to take a salary. Fulton angrily refused and

continued to manage operations, as he had always done. But that was not easy. As the Chancellor had made his will before going to Paris, it said nothing at all about steamboats. Nor were there any papers relating to the deals the partners had made with Stevens or any other participants in their enterprises. Moreover, there was no clear accounting of debts and receivables. When the heirs discovered that the Chancellor died owing Fulton \$27,000, they were dumbstruck—and angry.

Uphill though it was, Fulton continued adding to his fleet, steadfastly following his principle of plowing the profits back in. He was pleased when the swift Long Island Sound boat, the *Fulton*, beat both the *Car of Neptune* and the *Paragon*. His dry dock and workshop in New Jersey were progressing well, too. In Pittsburgh, Latrobe had begun the *Buffalo* and John the *Vesuvius*, to be followed by the *Aetna*. Edward P. and Robert L. disapproved and kept up a sarcastic flow of letters. Fulton shot back equally biting replies. Finally, Edward P. informed Fulton that his father-in-law had never had any confidence in the patent and Robert L. returned all of Fulton's letters unopened. None of them should have so profligately wasted his energies. While they were hurling insulting remarks at one another, Aaron Ogden was acquiring a monopoly for all New Jersey waters and was building the *Seahorse* to exploit it. His routes would compete directly with John R. Livingston's.

The War of 1812, which had started the previous June, provided Fulton with some relief. The initial year most of the fighting was along the Canadian border, but by mid-1813, British warships were assaulting American ports up and down the coast. Suddenly, President Madison, who had been cool to submarine warfare, was anxious that Fulton make it part of the nation's defense. Fulton was more than happy to comply. Most of his action was in the Chesapeake region and was not entirely successful. He scored an important triumph, however, when one Elijah Mix, a stalwart young sailor, succeeded in floating a torpedo alongside the *Plantagenet*, a British ship of the line. Although it exploded before it could be maneuvered beneath the keel, the result was "like the concussion of an earthquake, attended with a sound louder and more terrific than the heaviest peal of thunder," according to *Niles Weekly Register*. A pyramid fifty feet in circumference was thrown forty feet high; "its appearance was a vivid red, tinged at the sides by a beautiful purple...it burst at the top [of its trajectory] and with a tremendous explosion and fell in torrents on the deck."²² The *Plantagenet* survived the turbulence, but, thereafter, a seventy-four-gun ship, two frigates, and three tenders carefully guarded her. Having also witnessed the power of Fulton's torpedoes in England, the British would never feel safe in American waters throughout the remainder of the war.

Fulton's nervous energy remained unblunted by a seasonal cold that inflamed his lungs and kept him confined to his bed. He drew plans for an iron-plated vessel that could be submerged so only her sloping decks were above the water. Large enough to contain 100 men, it was propelled by a wheel revolved by a shaft moved back and forth by a cadre of men. Its virtue was that it would be silent and virtually cannon proof. Fulton called her the *Mute*. As if this were not accomplishment enough, he set up a company that would supply New York with coal from yet to be discovered mines along the Mississippi. In addition, he promoted what would become the Erie Canal, then in its planning stage, with a pamphlet of correspondence exchanged with Gouverneur Morris, the president of the canal's Board of Commissioners. He also agreed to serve on the commission in charge of converting the canal just above City Hall into a street. He even designed row housing for it.

So fascinated was he by these myriad projects that it almost slipped by him that Aaron Ogden had petitioned the New York State Legislature to repeal or modify the steamboat monopoly act. Ogden's principal arguments were attacks against Fulton's and Livingston's probity, but he also possessed an assignment of John Fitch's rights, purchased for one dollar from his administrators. (Thornton was one of them.) Ogden prevailed in the first round. The second round dragged on and, although the famous Thomas Addis Emmet superbly represented him, Fulton decided to plead his cause himself. Informing the Assembly that his company was \$77,700 in debt and that it would take four years to break even, he sought their high-minded sympathy by describing how chilling the violation of inventors' just claims was to the spirit of enterprise. To reinforce his claim, he presented what he asserted was a copy of the letter he sent to Lord Stanhope dated November 4, 1793, in which he discussed using side wheels as a means of propulsion. Employing all his persuasive Hibernian theatricality, Emmet concluded with a list of Fulton's achievements, then addressed him directly:

Artful speculators will assuredly arise, with patriotism of their tongues, and selfishness in their hearts. Who calumniating or concealing your merits will talk loudly of your monopoly. Who will present it as grievous burden to the community...Yes, my friend! My heart bleeds while I utter it; but I have fearful forebodings, that you may hereafter find in public faith a broken staff for your support, and receive from public gratitude, a broken heart for your reward.²³

Ogden was denied his petition.

At the same time, Fulton lashed out at his Mississippi contingent. He accused Edward of trying to usurp control of the western waters. Patiently, Edward explained again the disadvantages of keeping the business in New York. The three-month turnaround for correspondence was too great; who, for instance, had the power to fire an employee who might be tempted to embezzle? Furthermore, New Orleans men would never grant a monopoly to a New York-based concern. Moreover, operations at Pittsburgh had gone from bad to worse. John was running alarming overruns, prompting Fulton to write scolding letters pointing out that he had been given the job only to make life easier for his widowed mother at Teviotdale. John and Latrobe quarreled bitterly, Latrobe pinning his delay in building the *Buffalo* to having loaned John materials in short supply. Moreover, having recovered from a nervous collapse so serious that he could not even write letters, Latrobe set himself up in the house construction trade. “[I]f I don’t make money here,” he confided to Delacy, an as yet unrevealed malefactor, “I shall be the only inhabitant of this place who does not.”²⁴ Furthermore, he refused to provide an accounting of the large sums Fulton had sent him. Instead, he now claimed he could not finish the *Buffalo* for the agreed-upon price because of inflation. Growing hysterical himself, Fulton informed him he would honor no further drafts for money. Latrobe pretended to cave in, signing his next letter “Yours very sincerely and much more faithfully & usefully than you believe.”²⁵ But, before the ink was dry, he wrote Delacy, appointing him his attorney in an action against Fulton.

Fulton’s health as well as his pride was affected. His liver and bowels became torpid and he was restricted to a diet of meat and watered brandy. His only salvation was working on a new invention for the defense of America’s harbors, a mighty steam-frigate, which he called the *Demologos*, the Word of the People. On August 25, 1814, British troops burned Washington, a premeditated outrage so savage that even large segments of the English press expressed shock. On September 12, they began their assault on Fort McHenry in which William Congreve’s rockets played so impressive a role and entered our national anthem. On October 29, a bright autumn day, Fulton launched the *Demologos* in a grand celebration. A behemoth dwarfing every other boat in the river, she was christened *Fulton I*. Three weeks later, in another festive parade, the *Car of Neptune* and the *Fulton* steamboat towed her to the Jersey City workshops to be outfitted. The happiness of both events came as much from the people’s grateful hearts, as from Fulton’s consummate ability to stage spectacles.

That December Fulton made a will. It knit his entire life together. He left Harriet \$9,000 a year during her widowhood, \$3,000 should she remarry. She



Launching, at New York City, 29 October 1814. Engraving published by B. Tanner, No. 71 South 3rd. St., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 27 March 1815. It is based on a drawing by J.J. Barralet after a sketch "taken on the spot" by Morgan.

would receive \$500 a year for each child until twelve years of age, then \$1,000 until they were twenty-one. She would have use of the household chattels during her lifetime. The bequests to his brother and sisters suggests he had kept in closer contact with them through the years than extant correspondence implies. His brother Abraham was to receive \$3,000; his sister Betsey \$1,000 plus use of their mother's farm for her lifetime (afterwards it would be sold and the proceeds divided equally among her children); Belle got \$2,000; and to each of the recently deceased Polly's children, he left \$500. All loans to his brother and sisters were cancelled. The remainder of his estate was to go to his children. Sons would get their inheritance at twenty-one or before that if they married. Daughters were to receive only the interest on the capital, for he explained that a girl must be guarded against the misfortune or imprudence of a husband. (By law at that time and far into the future, husbands took possession of their wives' money, even earnings.) If all children died before Harriet, half of his estate was to be used for a national institution for historical and scientific paintings. The other half would be at her absolute disposal.

Sometime in 1814, Fulton began to realize Delacy was not a dutiful aide-de-camp, but a "busy and bold intriguer" who had piled up debts in his name. He fired him. Delacy had banded with Roosevelt who had just received a patent for gases to power every kind of machinery. Latrobe, promising Fulton he would not help these two schemers except in defense of his own work and character, demanded

that Fulton forward money to put the *Buffalo* in operation immediately and retract his accusation that he had speculated with the company's funds. Furious, Fulton tried to attach the boat and shops. Latrobe was too quick for him; he gleefully put the shops in the sheriff's hands as security for debts. Closing a letter in which he threatened Fulton with divine retribution, he admitted his diatribe might seem "imprudent, in as far as it was dictated by my feelings without reference to yours."²⁶ With the same pen, he wrote Delacy offering every help at his command.

Meanwhile, Ogden's *Seahorse* was putting John R. out of business. Determined not to let that happen, John R. petitioned the New Jersey legislature to repeal Ogden's monopoly. Ogden was up to the match. He gathered Roosevelt, Delacy, and Latrobe onto his team and, with Thornton as an offstage manipulator, put out a dragnet for records that would substantiate his claim that Roosevelt's experiments between 1795 and 1798 gave him prior right to the invention of steam navigation. Thornton prepared a deposition that Oliver Evans signed, stating that he, Thornton, had proposed side wheels to Fitch in the 1780s. Then he recruited a newcomer, Fernando Fairfax of Virginia. His major coup was routing out Nathaniel Cutting, who was only too happy to take revenge on Fulton for what he deemed his shoddy treatment in the rope-machine matter. Cutting testified that the American consul in Normandy had told him in 1805 that he had loaned a set of Fitch's drawings to Robert Fulton when he was working on his French steamboat.

In defense, Fulton asked Edward P. Livingston to scour the Chancellor's papers to find clues to his early relationship with Roosevelt. At first, all he could find was a statement that he had settled his accounts with Roosevelt, except for the cost of one engine. Urged to persist, Edward turned up a letter of 1798 in which Roosevelt informed Livingston that his horizontal wheel was impractical and recommended that they use side wheels instead. Still other letters made clear that Roosevelt's recollections were substantially correct. Fulton's scared reaction was to hope that Roosevelt had not kept copies and that they could suppress any they had. Deep down he must have been furious with Robert Livingston for not having been candid about his association with Roosevelt and Stevens. It was as if his controlling hand had reached across the grave to humiliate him.

Sensing the active part Thornton was playing in the affair, Fulton hurried to Washington to put an end to the architect's abuse of the Patent Office for his personal gain. In a forthright letter to Secretary of State James Monroe, he outlined the problem: "If he is an inventor, a genius who can live by his talents, let him do so, but while he is clerk in the office of the Secretary of State and paid by the public for his services, he should be forbidden to deal in patents and

thereby torment patentees involving them in vexatious suits.”²⁷ Monroe, who had received a steady stream of complaints from other inventors, had that very day written Thornton that, as of February 1 of the following year, the officer in charge of the Patent Office would be prohibited from appearing as a party in any claim for a patent right. Thornton’s four page closely written reply protested that such a regulation would deprive him of his inherent right as a citizen to exploit the product of his mind and pointed out that it was his ability to think inventively that made him so effective an administrator of the Patent Office. He concluded with an attack on Fulton, “formerly a *Chevalier d’Industrie*, whose Infamy I shall not fail to publish to the world.”²⁸

True to his word, Thornton widely distributed a pamphlet he had written in 1810 and had recently brushed up and published with the title *A Short History of Steamboats*. In it, he accused Fulton of stealing the plans of David Bushnell, who, during the Revolutionary War, had invented a submersible, although it was an entirely different machine than Fulton’s submarine. Surprisingly, at the end of the pamphlet, he nervously attempted to justify issuing himself a patent just prior to Fulton’s in 1809. (Monroe held firm to his new regulation, but Thornton would remain the clerk of the Patent Office until 1828.)

The hearings before the New Jersey legislature, centered on Roosevelt’s claim to be the originator of “steamboats with vertical wheels,” began on January 14. As counsel for Roosevelt, Delacy submitted all the proofs that had been so diligently collected. Fulton, wrote Roosevelt (who had remained in his home forty-seven miles away), was a “stag at bay.” Fulton interpreted the testimony differently. “Roosevelt has completely ruined himself as far as there was anything left to ruin by his own Injustice, tricks & chicanery,” he exultantly wrote Latrobe.²⁹

After a brief intercession in which Fulton and Emmet noted that the New York populace stood behind them, the hearing resumed with accusations and counter accusations on both sides. Spectators jostled to enjoy the theater. On the evening of the second day Fairfax revealed Nathaniel Cutting’s deposition with a flourish. Fulton could no longer sit still. Although he had not been called as a witness, he demanded an opportunity to speak. At first, Ogden objected on the grounds that he was not a named petitioner. Finally, he backed down. It was then, Fulton’s enemies gloated, that the “proud monopolist” dug his grave.

The following morning, Fulton rose, bristling with virtue. He explained that he had never claimed the rope-making machine as his own, but rather had obtained a French patent of importation and improvement, which was what he had sold to Cutting. Then he boldly presented the copy of the letter, which he said he sent to Stanhope in 1793, that had been so effective in Albany. It passed

among the opposing counsel. Ogden held it to the light and with undisguised joy discovered the paper to be of American manufacture, with a watermark dated 1796. In the electrifying hush that fell over the legislative chamber, Fulton attempted to explain that what he had meant to say was that the document was a true copy of the original draft; because the original had become so tattered, he had destroyed it.

The session wore on late into the evening, with insults and recriminations on both sides. Ogden's team struck at Fulton's invention, proclaiming that its "novel combination" was nothing but a combination "of *gold* and *influence*, of *intrigue* and of *powerful connexions*."³⁰ Fulton exploded. Declaring he did not care how the legislature decided, he said he would seize Ogden's boat if he attempted to navigate the river, and he ordered his lawyers to sue both William Thornton and Nathaniel Cutting for libel.

Accusations continued to flow. The following Monday, Ogden's lawyer pleasantly acknowledged that Fulton had risked his time and money in bringing the present steamboat system into being, but that his services were not those of an original inventor. Yet he had been rewarded with extravagant governmental patronage that allowed him to live in princely magnificence and trample on the rights of others. In his ringing conclusion, he accused him of using false names: Francis in England and Fletcher on his patent, clearly a case of fraud. Finally, his attempt to pass the copied Stanhope letter off as an original draft was, unquestionably, perjury. Emmet was, for once, at a loss and could only babble rapidly.

Still, because the Republicans were in power in New Jersey and Ogden was a Federalist, the legislature decided, without one word of debate, in John R. Livingston's favor. Ogden's New Jersey monopoly would be repealed. It was, perhaps, a victory, but it was very fragile. Not one of Fulton's competitors had lost his enmity.

Although exhausted by the hearings, Fulton could not refrain from visiting the *Demologos*, which was being outfitted at his shops in New Jersey and was the only one of his works he could contemplate with content. By the time he was ready to return to New York, the river was frozen and the ferries had stopped running. Fulton, with Emmet and two friends who had stayed by to keep him company, decided to cross the river on the ice. It broke under Emmet's great weight, plunging him into the water. Fulton dragged him out. Soaked through, the party trudged on. When they arrived at Fulton's mansion, the inventor was so hoarse he could not speak. Yet three days later, over the strong objections of Harriet and his doctors, he called for his carriage and returned to inspect the progress made on the *Demologos*. It brought him great joy. But his infection settled



Miniature on ivory portrait of
Robert Fulton (CL.2004.1)

coffin whose sole adornment was a small metal plaque engraved “Robert Fulton age 49.” To the dull beat of guns fired from the West Battery and from the *Fulton I*, the mourners marched to Trinity Church, where Fulton was interred. No New Yorker had ever been accorded such a splendid burial.

Fulton’s public heritage remained strong. Towns and counties were named after him. Americans gloried in the transportation system he set in motion; it made the country a leader in the global transportation revolution. People still argue exhaustively about who really invented the steamboat, but not until the advent of the airplane was there an invention that so transformed the world both at peace and at war. The airplane, too, was the result of the labors of individuals who worked independently while gleaning from their competitors as much knowledge as they could.

In his eulogy before the American Academy of Arts, delivered shortly after the burial, De Witt Clinton summed up Robert Fulton’s life and being with a poetic passage to which all can agree:

While he was meditating plans of mighty import for his future fame and his country’s good, he was cut down in the prime of life and in the midst of his usefulness. Like the self-burning tree of Gambia, he was destroyed by the fire of his own genius and the never-ceasing activity of a vigorous mind.³¹

Pax Tecum Robert Fulton.

in his chest. On the morning of February 23, 1815, he died.

Friends, colleagues, and even adversaries were stunned by their sudden loss. So, too, was the general populace. Newspapers announced Fulton’s death in notices heavily bordered in black. In hurriedly called meetings, the cultural and trade associations to which Fulton had belonged—the New-York Historical Society, the Literary and Philosophical Society, the Academy of Arts, and the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen—decided to march in his cortege in membership groups. Led by all the federal, state, and city officials then in town, the mourners followed the simple

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Parks and Parkways of Westchester County, NY
in Report of the Westchester County Park Commission, 1925

The Westchester County Parkway that Never Was

Eleanor Phillips Brackbill

Shortly after buying a house in Mamaroneck four years ago, I uncovered a building inspector's letter in an immense pile of papers documenting the sale transaction. It indicated that the house had an entirely different address during the first nineteen years of its existence. To find out why, I went in search of the former address. Four blocks away, I found the answer. While the street of the original address still exists, the house number does not. Where the house should be, according to the pattern of the house numbers, is an interstate exit ramp. A bit of deed research in the Westchester County Office of Land Records confirmed what I had suspected—the impending construction of the New England Thruway had required New York State to condemn the house's original lot in 1955. The following year, a new owner ended up moving the house down the street, around the corner, and up a very steep hill. Apparently, fifteen of the immediate neighbors also had their property condemned and their houses relocated. In September 1956, a front-page photograph in the local newspaper showed three of the houses—including the one that inspired this article—separated from their foundations, poised on rollers, and ready for the move.¹

How wrenching it must have been for those homeowners, and others in the many Westchester County towns divided by the coming of the county's first inter-



Three houses stand ready to be moved. The house in the distance inspired this article (*Mamaroneck/Larchmont Daily Times*, September 10, 1956)

state highways. Ned Benton, publisher of the *Larchmont Gazette*, an online newspaper, asked in 2004, “Did Larchmont and Mamaroneck take the wrong path in 1954 when the New England Thruway was being planned? Did we go along when we could have raised a ruckus?”² In fact, public sentiment toward the building of highways through Westchester County has varied markedly over the course of the last eighty years.

When the Westchester County segment of the New England Thruway—officially designated the New England Section of the New York State Thruway, but more commonly known simply as part of Interstate 95—was built between 1950 and 1958, hundreds of buildings had to be either destroyed or moved. As with other highways constructed throughout the New York metropolitan area, it ripped through neighborhoods already well established. The massive highway-building program of New York State Council of Parks Chairman and New York City construction coordinator Robert Moses displaced 250,000 people from their homes, most in New York City, between the 1920s and the 1960s.

In an interview with his biographer, Robert A. Caro, on the challenges of highway building, Moses commented that often there were “people in the way”³; in a 1964 speech, Moses said, “When you operate in an overbuilt metropolis you have to hack your way with a meat ax.”⁴ As vividly described by Caro, “[Robert Moses] tore out the hearts of a score of neighborhoods, communities the size of small cities themselves, communities that had been lively, friendly places to live, the vital part of the city that made New York a home to its people.”⁵

Less densely populated than New York City, Westchester County nonetheless suffered the loss of hundreds of houses, apartment buildings, and businesses. They were destroyed or, in some cases, moved as the building of Interstate 95 progressed northeastward during the 1950s. The journey to that decade of interstate highway construction, though, began more than 200 years ago.

The History of Highways

Highway building in the United States dates back prior to 1785, when stagecoaches had come into general use and required better roads. Because states at that time had no funds to pay for highways, private companies built turnpikes and collected tolls. By the mid-1800s, railroads had taken over most long-distance travel. Roads deteriorated quickly. Toward the end of the 1800s, the phenomenal popularity of the bicycle focused attention on the inadequacy of existing roads, and in 1880 the League of American Wheelman began promoting road improvement. The so-called Good Roads Movement gained impetus with the coming of the gasoline-engine automobile, first introduced in 1893. That year the federal government

established the Office of Road Inquiry, later the Bureau of Public Roads.⁶ Then in 1916, with over 3.5 million motor vehicles in use, Congress passed the Federal Aid Road Act, also known as the Good Roads Act, establishing a federally funded highway program.⁷

The rapid growth of suburbs between 1900 and 1920 and the increase in the number of automobile-owning families in the early 1920s⁸ contributed to the development of a new concept in highway building—parkways. Though Calvert Vaux, a collaborator with Frederick Law Olmstead in building Manhattan's Central Park, first used the term "parkway" in 1868,⁹ Westchester County actually pioneered the parkway-system concept. Parkway came to be defined as ribbons of parkland containing roads that enabled the populace to travel easily by automobile to recreational parks, allowing them to remain in aesthetically pleasing surroundings for the entire trip. By definition, they excluded commercial traffic and trucks. Having completed 160 miles of parkways by 1932,¹⁰ Westchester County became the model for parkway development nationwide.

Westchester's First Parkway

Westchester's first parkway, the Bronx River Parkway, developed from a need to clean up the Bronx River, which by 1896 had become a virtual open sewer throughout its course in Westchester and the Bronx. Public pressure to alleviate the situation mounted, and in 1906 the state legislature created the Bronx Parkway Commission.¹¹ The commission recommended the building of a parkway reservation along the Bronx River. By 1912, both the county and New York City had authorized the acquisition of land for the project.¹² The commission's annual report that year presented a grand vision for a comprehensive system of parks linked by parkways. It asked, "Who can pronounce too ambitious our forecast for the World's most magnificent outer park system!" It also described a parkway of the future along Long Island Sound, an early hint of a highway that would eventually become the New England Thruway.¹³

The planning and construction of the Bronx River Parkway proceeded from 1907 to 1923, with a brief hiatus during World War I.¹⁴ At the official dedication in November 1925, in a letter read before a crowd gathered for the occasion,¹⁵ Governor Alfred E. Smith noted that the parkway had set "a standard for all parkways in this country" and would be "of enormous benefit to the millions of people who seek fresh air and recreation and who may now travel from the city streets though a continuous narrow park into the open country."¹⁶ A feature article in *The New York Times* described it as "magical," a "near-miracle," and a "long vista of sylvan charm." Accompanying the article were five artful, scenic photographs

worthy of a book on romantic landscape painting.¹⁷ The new parkway even inspired a poem, also published in the *Times*:

We know your way is smooth and firm
And easy to the tire's tread.
But weren't you planned by hand of God
Instead of any human head?...
Next comes a Corot! Mist and all.
With drooping willows, glade and lawn.
I'm sure I see some dancing nymphs
About an impish, piping faun.¹⁸

House & Garden magazine, with a nationwide circulation of over 130,000, featured the parkway in its July 1926 issue. It praised the entire project as “a splendid example of what a well organized and ably administered commission can accomplish in the beautification of a large area....” The parkway tract, and the several others which will follow it as the operations are extended into other sections of the county, abounds in details, which other improvement associations might well emulate. Taken as a whole, they constitute a remarkable example of town betterment through the raising of real estate standards and the stimulation of community pride.”¹⁹ Illustrated with five photographs and architectural drawings of two footbridges, the article extended to the reader an offer to send away \$1.00 for large-scale blueprints so that the charming, rustic bridges could be replicated elsewhere.²⁰ Even before the Bronx River Parkway’s completion, its enormous success, both practical and aesthetic, was evident to all observers.

In the wake of this achievement, and pursuant to an act of the New York State Legislature, the Westchester County Board of Supervisors formed the Westchester County Park Commission, empowered to acquire land, borrow money, issue bonds, and manage and maintain parks and parkways—a broad authority for which there was ample public support.²¹ The commission submitted a report to



HOUSE & GARDEN, JULY 1926

House & Garden showed the Bronx River Parkway and a nearby footbridge in 1926 (“The Way Westchester Does It,” *House & Garden*, July 1926, 101)

the board of supervisors in May 1923 recommending land purchases for the Hutchinson River Parkway, the Saw Mill River Parkway, and four parks.²² The park commission's work got off to a vigorous and impressive start.

In its 1924 annual report, the commission set forth the rationale for the development of a county park and parkway system. The key points included: the growth of suburbs made possible by improved transit; the development of the automobile, with a consequent demand for good roads; a growing interest in town and city planning; and the Bronx River Parkway, which had greatly influenced public sentiment in favor of additional parkways.²³ At the time, the commission believed that the projects it had authorized the previous year comprised a comprehensive park program. But after experiencing pressure from businesses and residents to relieve traffic congestion and fearing that the rapid subdivision and development of land in the southern part of the county would leave little land available for public use,²⁴ the commission planned a dozen new park and parkway projects, the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway among them.

A Parkway Never Built— The Pelham-Port Chester Parkway

A March 17, 1925 article in *The New York Times* reported the Westchester County Park Commission's request to the board of supervisors to purchase 6,000 acres for new parks and forty-five miles of parkways. This included the construction of the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway, which would create a through route from New York City to Connecticut.²⁵ The county eventually built most of the parks and parkways proposed that year, but this is the story of one that was never built, a parkway plan with a long, convoluted, tortured, and politicized demise—and a subsequent gradual reincarnation.²⁶

The thirteen-mile stretch of the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway was to traverse Pelham, New Rochelle, Larchmont, Mamaroneck, Rye, and Port Chester. It would parallel the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad line and the Boston Post Road—one of the country's oldest thoroughfares, and long considered inadequate. Described in the park commission's 1925 annual report as "originally built in separate links from town to town, [the Boston Post Road] was constituted as one continuous road by act of the Legislature, in 1703, directing that 'one Public Common Highway be laid out and kept in repair from New York through that county and the county of Westchester four rods, English, wide, to be forever a Public Road to the Colony of Connecticut.'"²⁷ By the start of the twentieth century, it carried a large number of vehicles traveling between New York City and New England, as well as local traffic, which was increasing rapidly with devel-

opment along the Long Island Sound. The park commission planned the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway to decrease the volume of traffic on the Boston Post Road.

Within months, the commission began buying land to create the parkway's right-of-way. Frequent acquisitions took place from early 1926 through 1927.²⁸ They were newsworthy enough to warrant coverage in *The New York Times* a number of times during 1926.²⁹ By early 1928, however, the momentum seems to have slowed, and various private and civic groups—the League of Neighborhood Associations of the City of New Rochelle, the Association of the Woods of Larchmont, the Planning Board of the City of New Rochelle, the Common Council of the City of New Rochelle, and the Town Board of Mamaroneck—began lobbying for construction to begin.³⁰

Perhaps to assuage the citizenry, the commission had one underpass built in Larchmont. It carried Murray Avenue over the nonexistent parkway.³¹ Completed by the spring of 1930,³² the structure is still in evidence today beneath Murray Avenue. Incorporated into the Memorial Park playground, it now serves as a shuffleboard court. It is the only part of the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway ever actually built.



MICHAEL TORLEN

The unused parkway underpass is today a part of Memorial Park Playground

The Boston Post Road Needs Relief, but Obstacles Abound

A front-page article in the *Daily Times* reported that during the Fourth of July holiday weekend in 1926, 1,400 cars per hour passed through Larchmont and Mamaroneck. It also noted that “at the traffic intersections not on the Post Road, traffic is reported to be normal.”³³ Clearly, the situation on the Boston Post Road was an issue. Park commission annual reports throughout the 1920s cited the urgent need for a highway along Long Island Sound; the same theme appeared in newspaper coverage for decades to follow. For example, the author of a 1937 article in *The New York Times* observed, “to relieve the Boston Post Road, now much overcrowded, the agitation has been renewed” to complete the parkway.³⁴ Thirteen years later, an editorial writer remarked on the ongoing pressure of traffic on the Boston Post Road: “Doubtless there is justification for a feeling that the incongruity of the Model T highway doing the job of a 1950 streamliner leaves Westchester atop a small volcano.”³⁵ The commission continued to conduct studies and produce architectural plans for the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway, but numerous obstacles hindered actual progress.

Impediments to the project’s advancement fell into four categories: construction problems, increasing costs, World War II, and opposition from a variety of government, corporate, and private quarters. Construction and design challenges included the large number of required grade-separation bridges or underpasses, the proximity to the railroad line, and the projected pavement width of eighty feet, which, at the time, would have been the widest in Westchester County.³⁶ The original 1925 estimated cost for land acquisition of 250 acres was \$1 million, a sum that turned out to be (not surprisingly) grossly insufficient.³⁷ Financing became increasingly difficult as the prices of real estate and construction inflated. As early as 1927, the commission stated its hesitancy to recommend expenditures large enough to begin construction.³⁸ After 1929 and the onset of the Depression, it adopted a very conservative fiscal policy.³⁹ In the next decade, due to the war emergency, New York State withheld funds on which Westchester was depending for parkway repairs. The commission indicated it might have to recommend closing the Bronx River Parkway as a result.⁴⁰ If the government could not maintain existing highways, it was unlikely that it would allocate any funds to new highway construction.

Opposition to plans for building the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway took various forms. In 1926, three railroad companies with lines in Westchester lodged a formal protest over a park commission recommendation that the railroads pay one-half the cost of the construction of crossovers.⁴¹ The following year, village

authorities in Port Chester raised objections to the proposed path of the roadway. The park commission agreed it would not proceed on any planned route without village approval.⁴² Late in 1929, the Larchmont Gardens Association and the League of Civic Associations of the Unincorporated Section of the Town of Mamaronock protested the proposed use of the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway by commercial vehicles.⁴³ More strident opposition lay ahead as the entire vision for the highway along the Sound began to change in the 1930s.

From Parkway to Thruway—Out of County Hands

The dream of a highway to connect New York City with New England and relieve pressure on the much-used Boston Post Road went through a conceptual transition from its inception as a parkway in 1925 to the groundbreaking of the New England Thruway in Westchester County in 1950. At the same time, the vision for possible funding sources for it changed, first shifting from a county to a state undertaking, and eventually becoming part of a vast federal system.

An early hint that some believed New York State should take over the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway project appeared in 1929, just before the stock market crash. *The New York Times* reported: “Since the parkway is outlined on State highway maps and follows a State highway route, the county has taken the stand that the state must build the road.”⁴⁴ Perhaps Westchester County leaders were looking for a more equitable distribution of state funds given that in 1929 seventy percent of state funding allocated to the metropolitan region for parks and parkways was going to Robert Moses’ projects on Long Island.⁴⁵ In spite of a recommendation by the New York State Council of Parks that \$1 million of state funds be allocated for construction of the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway in the 1933 budget year,⁴⁶ no aid was forthcoming.

The New York State Legislature soon created the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway Authority, which submitted a loan application to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, created by Congress to aid self-supporting public works projects. Ultimately, the loan was denied.⁴⁷ In the view of the New York State Superintendent of Public Works in 1937, the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway topped a list of ten highways that the state most needed to build.⁴⁸ The same year, the chairman of the Westchester County Budget Committee publicly insisted that the state undertake any new parkway development;⁴⁹ according to the press, county officials generally were resolved not to take on any major highway work at the expense of local taxpayers.⁵⁰ That the state should pay for the parkway’s construction was a recurring theme in newspaper coverage from 1936 through 1938.

By December 1936, the ribbon of parkland once deemed exclusively for pleasure traffic, with the potential for becoming another “vista of sylvan charm,” had become the locus for a “freeway,” defined in a *New York Times* article as a new type of highway “based on a right of way to which abutting property owners do not have access.” The article bluntly asserted, “The Pelham-Port Chester Parkway will be a freeway,” part of an extensive system of new highways around New York City recommended by the Regional Plan Association to ease traffic congestion.⁵¹

Envisioning a “truck toll route” that would be financed through a private authority created by the New York State Legislature, Robert Moses announced fourteen months later: “the railroad right-of-way and Westchester County’s unused Pelham-Port Chester Parkway right-of-way alone would provide a possible route” for an express highway out of the city. The *Times* article reporting his announcement flatly stated, “The [Pelham-Port Chester] parkway project was abandoned because of the depression.”⁵² Now the parkway was to be a truck and bus toll artery.

By 1938, federal aid was becoming part of the funding-source expectation.⁵³ By 1940—with a plan for a national interregional highway system in its infancy—a combination of state and federal aid was squarely part of the vision. World War II brought yet another identity for the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway—a federal defense highway. Creating such a highway meant that state and federal governments would take over building a mixed-traffic road on the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway right-of-way.⁵⁴ In fact, that is what happened.

The 1920s and 1930s—Public Sentiment Pro

Despite the periodic mild opposition discussed earlier, the public’s attitude toward the building of the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway was generally positive in the 1920s and 1930s. Broad support for the development of parklands for conservation and recreation, appreciation of parkways such as the Bronx River Parkway as works of great beauty, and desire for ease of automobile travel all contributed to the early universal positive regard for parkway construction. According to Caro, although “almost all public works arouse some opposition,” until the 1960s the majority of American voters “worshiped public works projects in and for themselves.”⁵⁵

Many people viewed parkways as economic growth stimulators. *The New York Times* quoted one real estate developer in October 1930:

Westchester is one of the few counties in and around New York that has already come out of the building slump into which the entire country was plunged in November of last year....

The chief increase of building activity has been on the Sound shore, in such villages as Rye, Harrison, Mamaroneck and Larchmont. This is largely due to the...impending construction of the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway...⁵⁶

The real estate industry regarded the planned parkway as a residential sales asset. A newspaper article concerning a model home open for public viewing in conjunction with the New Rochelle Chamber of Commerce Better Home Show of 1935 touted the fact that the house “overlooks the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway” in “one of the choice residential sections.”⁵⁷ Even before the Depression, an elaborate sales promotion brochure for the 1927 development of the immediate neighborhood (near what is now my property) included parkway proximity as a major selling point. The development, it stated, “is located in the hub of the new Westchester County Parkway System.” Nearby was the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway—“more or less similar to the Bronx River Parkway, which is one of the wonders of Westchester County.”⁵⁸ After acquiring the land for a subdivision, Harry Rich Mooney had his sales director write an article stating that the developer had deeded a portion of the property to the Westchester County Park Commission “at a nominal price, thereby showing his fine spirit toward the County, as well as securing for his development, or MAMARONECK KNOLLS, as it is called, an immediate link... [to] the parkway system.”⁵⁹ These real estate perspectives indicate that people viewed parkways favorably, but as the depressed economy of the 1930s slowed road construction at a time when automobile usage was increasing and the suburbs were expanding, pressure to alleviate crowded roadways emerged as the single strongest driving force behind support for parkway construction.

The 1940s—Public Sentiment Con

Although widespread support for highways persisted, in the early 1940s people began to raise questions about the wisdom of some aspects of their construction. For the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway, the parkway concept had since given way to the freeway concept, and more specifically to a defense highway concept. Though Westchester residents who lived along the parkway route supported the war effort, they objected to the change in the road's purpose. Words like “betrayed,” “revolt,” and “protest” began to appear in the press. “The residents are strongly opposed to any truck highway plan,” declared the Town of Mamaroneck supervisor. He contended that Westchester residents felt betrayed because the property originally had been purchased to create a pleasure car route, a parkway, not a commercial

truck highway. He also asserted that Robert Moses wanted to create feeder highways for New York City rather than help Westchester solve its traffic problems, and that, if the road were built, property values would drop significantly.⁶⁰

The New York Times called the reaction of the Westchester County Board of Supervisors to the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway plans “a revolt against having expensive parkway plans made public and forced upon them without prior submission for revision.” County leaders were being kept in the dark on project details. “People with life savings invested in homes suddenly” were learning that a parkway was “going to shoot past them,”⁶¹ according to the Yonkers supervisor. Signaling the development of a grassroots movement against Moses’ “mixed-traffic” plans for the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway, the Larchmont Gardens Association held a mass meeting to rally for a parkway limited to pleasure cars.⁶² The objections seemed to quiet during the war, only to be revived as the war’s end approached and plans for road construction were revitalized.

Once again, the issue among protesters was truck traffic and the resulting loss of property values. “The truck road would ‘slaughter real estate values’ and benefit only non-residents,” remarked one town supervisor in March 1944. A number of civic organizations, as well as several individuals, submitted written protests to the county board of supervisors.⁶³ Later in the year, a Rye Neck woman filed a lawsuit in federal court to prevent the county from turning over the parkway land to the state because “use of the property for a ‘thruway’ would injure property values, and at the same time bring on increased taxes for Westchester residents.”⁶⁴ As construction moved across the state line into Connecticut, residents there also began to raise objections. A Westport citizen cited Port Chester as “an example of a town ‘well-nigh ruined’ by main highways and inter-connecting roads.”⁶⁵ Throughout the 1940s, those living near the parkway right-of-way continued to object sporadically to its use for mixed traffic.

A few astute observers began to recognize that in their fury to alleviate traffic conditions, government officials were overlooking the drawbacks to massive road building, particularly when done without adequate planning. Lewis Mumford, a vocal advocate of urban planning and a longtime critic of New York City development, commented in an interview, “A large part of the money we are spending on highways right now is wasted because we don’t know whether we want people where the highways are going. But highways are an impressive, flashy thing to build. No one is against highways.”⁶⁶

Expressing an opposing point of view, Robert Moses wrote dramatically (and for many, persuasively) of the highways he was building: “Our new arteries will give us a better city, more accessible, less congested, more comfortable and convenient

for living and working than it was before, and, as an important incident, we shall have the finest collection of land bridges, intersections, clover leaves, chicken guts, ever conceived, since Daedalus built the labyrinth for Minos of Crete, 'a mighty maze,' as the poet said, 'but not without a plan.'"⁶⁷ Few were against the "impressive, flashy" highways being planned and built everywhere.

Some elected officials even accused other officials of falsely claiming credit for the Thruway for political gain. Republican State Assembly representative Hunter Meighan of Mamaroneck asserted in a newspaper interview in 1954 that "it was the Republican brains that brought up the idea" for the Thruway and "now [Democrats] claim that the Thruway was started by the Democrats after all!"⁶⁸ Despite recurring objections from a few average citizens and outspoken critics like Mumford, a majority of the public continued to support highway building throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s; public officials did as well, both within the county and at the state and federal levels.

New England Thruway Groundbreaking

In 1942, the Westchester County Park Commission passed a resolution approving the county's gift of the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway right-of-way to New York State for construction of a mixed-traffic express highway.⁶⁹ Six months later, the board of supervisors pledged to donate the land to the state after the war.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, Robert Moses had disclosed that the federal and state governments had finally granted modest appropriations to study the project, and highway officials from New York and Connecticut announced they would meet to discuss "post-war reconstruction of the Boston Post Road."⁷¹ By the summer of 1944, the press was referring to the planned highway as the New England Thruway.⁷² The same year, the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944 laid the groundwork for the Interstate Highway System,⁷³ today the Dwight D. Eisenhower System of Interstate and Defense Highways,⁷⁴ of which the New England Thruway was destined to be a part.

In September 1949, construction began on the Bronx segment of the New England Thruway, while the Westchester portion remained in the planning and contract-bidding stage.⁷⁵ With many Westchester County residents becoming impatient over the delays and uncertainty, the county board of supervisors began waging an all-out campaign to commence construction and thereby relieve traffic on the Boston Post Road, "the second most heavily traveled road in the nation."⁷⁶ At last, by the mid-1950 workers had broken ground in Pelham and New Rochelle,⁷⁷ and the New England Thruway finally began its slow advance through the county. Westchester officially handed over the thirteen-mile-long

property to New York State in February 1952,⁷⁸ completing the transition from parkway to Thruway and from county control to state and federal control.

The 1950s—The Greater Good, Resignation, and Acceptance

By the time construction on the New England Thruway and the New York-Buffalo Thruway, later known as the Major Deegan Expressway, began in earnest, what opposition remained had diminished to resigned sadness in those directly affected. *The New York Times* reported in 1953:

Residents of this city [New Rochelle] and Yonkers, two of the communities hardest hit by the state's new Thruway construction, shook their heads disconsolately today as they told of dislocations in business and social life caused by the loss of shops, offices, factories, homes, churches, parks and local streets in the paths of the Thruways... .

Besides cutting broad swaths through old business areas of New Rochelle and Yonkers, with a loss of 450 structures, the Thruways will cause scattered business dislocations and home demolitions elsewhere.⁷⁹

Two years later, the same author wrote an article entitled “Thruway to Cut a Painful Gash Across Heart of New Rochelle.” He cited 300 homes, churches, and commercial buildings scheduled for demolition and 260 graves from two cemeteries slated for relocation.⁸⁰ (He failed to mention reports regarding the blasting of caves beneath the city where Native Americans had once buried their dead.)⁸¹ In the face of what the New Rochelle City Affairs Committee called the “catastrophic” effect of the construction and another claim that the city was being “needlessly blown to pieces,” the mayor recognized the highway’s long-term value:

Despite present difficulties, he declared, the Thruway is essential to relieve the Boston Post Road of a daily traffic load of 25,000 pleasure cars and gargantuan interstate trucks.

“We’ll have a renaissance in downtown business when the new road is completed next year,” the mayor said.⁸²

Whether or not his prediction was accurate is debatable, but his comments are representative of the attitudes of many during the mid-1950s.

As construction moved northeastward, the state announced various design changes instigating intermittent protest. In 1954, upon learning of plans to construct a cloverleaf interchange that would create eight separate crossings near

an elementary school, the Mamaroneck Board of Education voted to formally protest.⁸³ Eight school-related organizations, as well as the Rye Neck School Board and the Mamaroneck Village Board, added their formal disapproval. Devaluation of nearby property was obviously a concern, but typical of the objections was the one from the Mamaroneck Heights Association, a group representing my house's neighborhood: "While recognizing the 'thruway proper' as a major step in the progress of transportation for the eastern seaboard, the association based its request 'primarily upon the potential hazard to elementary school children.'"⁸⁴ By January 1955, community members had submitted to the Thruway Authority at least six alternative designs to reduce the number of crossings. Indeed, it seems the effort to alter the highway entrance and exit plans near the school was partially successful. Today, the cloverleaf has but five crossings along Mamaroneck Avenue. Among the changes residents could not stop were the two cloverleaf loops that plowed directly through the spot where my house once stood, necessitating its removal.⁸⁵ (see below)



ELEANOR PHILLIPS BRACKBILL

**The house once stood in the area between the two cars,
where today there are interstate entrance and exit ramps**

Though residents directly affected by major highway construction were still asserting their will to try to control certain small design aspects, by this time they had acquiesced to the disruptions and property loss. Even people inconvenienced by the construction on a daily basis accepted, for the most part, the necessity of progress. After four people were injured and a forty-seven-pound rock was hurled 1,000 feet into a vacant house—the results of dynamite blasting to clear rock ledges for the Thruway's roadbed—Mamaroneck village officials and contractors met to

plan an alternative blasting method. For days, residents were subjected to the constant noise of drilling, dust, and dirt. They were required to evacuate their houses before scheduled detonations, sometimes in the middle of meal preparations. One man living directly behind the blast site pointed out numerous cracks in his house to a newspaper reporter, then stated that no matter what the compensation was, his house would never be the same. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that he recognized “that such roads as the Thruway must be built.” The article noted that the man’s daughter “struck a new note when she declared that she did not feel that ‘they have any right to subject people to such indignities.’” Her point of view was the exception rather than the rule.⁸⁶



Mamaroneck family members evacuate their house before a dynamite detonation.
(Mamaroneck/Larchmont Daily Times, September 28, 1956)

The Mohican Path Opens

The New England Thruway officially opened on October 18, 1958; for much of its length, it followed the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway right-of-way. Newspaper coverage noted that despite its name, the fifteen-mile, six-lane superhighway did not actually go through any part of New England, but connected highways in New York City’s Bronx with the Connecticut Turnpike. Governors Averell Harriman of New York and Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut presided over a ceremony held at the border between the two states. An article in *The New York Times* featured a highlighted inset informing readers: “The New York Legislature decided at its latest session to bestow upon” the New England Section of the New York Thruway the “inspiring historic” name, The Mohican Path, in honor of the region’s first residents.⁸⁷ This was quite ironic given the Native American burial sites that had been blasted during the highway’s construction.

“We” 50 Years Ago and “We” Today

Considering Ned Benton’s questions—“Did Larchmont and Mamaroneck take the wrong path in 1954 when the New England Thruway was being planned? Did we go along when we could have raised a ruckus?”—it seems that we did raise a ruckus at times, but not enough of one to alter the course of events. Moreover,

and perhaps more significantly, the “we” of the 1950s was different from the “we” of today. Not only did public attitudes toward the building of highways change in the thirty years from the conception of the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway to the realization of the New England Thruway, but they also have changed in the fifty years since those first interstates tore through established communities all over the United States. Broadly speaking, throughout most of the twentieth century the public’s attitudes toward highway construction have been shaped by government policies and subsidies that favored the development of an automobile-based transportation system and the roads it required.⁸⁸

No area of this country, particularly in the 1950s, was immune to these pressures and to the “march of progress” and its concomitant disruption. Federal and state governments were building highways everywhere, and the public was generally pleased about it. In the 1950s, Westchester County citizens, like their counterparts elsewhere, came to embrace the concepts of the greater good and progress in the modern world. Marshall Berman, in *All That Is Solid Melts into Air*, explores the experience of modernity and how it produced an atmosphere in the mid-twentieth century that repeatedly sacrificed the past and present to make way for the future. He wrote: “The developers and devotees of the expressway world [the modern environment that emerged after World War II] presented it as the only possible modern world: to oppose them and their works was to oppose modernity itself, to fight history and progress, to be a Luddite, an escapist, afraid of life and adventure and change and growth. This strategy was effective because, in fact, the vast majority of modern men and women do not want to resist modernity: they feel its excitement and believe in its promise, even when they find themselves in its way.”⁸⁹ Thus, in assessing a large public work such as the New England Thruway—as well as its progenitor, the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway—we are wise to detach ourselves from the perspective of our own time and consider the prevailing attitudes, values, and circumstances of an earlier time.

Endnotes

1. Paul Byrne, staff photo, *Daily Times*, September 10, 1956, 1.
2. Ned Benton, “Did Larchmont Take the Wrong Path? Planning the Thruway 50 Years Ago,” *Larchmont Gazette*, May 13, 2004, <http://www.larchmontgazette.com/2004/articles/20040513thruway.html> (accessed August 17, 2004).
3. Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 19, 876.
4. Helen Leavitt, *Superhighway—Superhoax* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970), 53. The quote comes from a May 1964 speech before the National Highway Users Conference.
5. Caro, 19.

6. Leavitt, 22-23.
7. David J. St. Clair, *The Motorization of American Cities* (New York: Praeger, 1986), 20.
8. Caro, 144. Caro states that, in 1919, there were fewer than seven million families with cars. By 1923, the number had more than tripled.
9. Phil Patton, *Open Road: A Celebration of the American Highway* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 67.
10. *Ibid.*, 69.
11. Sadly, just one year shy of the centennial of the founding of the Bronx Parkway Commission, it seems that the river is still polluted. In spite of recent efforts by government and community groups in the Bronx to clean it up, a New York State Supreme Court judge in February 2005 ordered the City of Yonkers to stop within fifteen months the flow of sewage that is emptying into storm sewers and then into the river. Lisa W. Foderaro, "In Yonkers, New Pressure to Clean up Bronx River," *The New York Times*, March 14, 2005 (hereafter cited in notes as NYT).
12. Marilyn E. Weigold, *Pioneering in Parks and Parkways: Westchester County, New York, 1895-1945*, *Essays in Public Works History* 9 (Chicago: Public Works Historical Society, 1980), 3-4. The author traces the history of Westchester's parkways and observes that public opinion regarding the building of highways was quite different in the 1920s than in 1980 (*ibid.*, 11).
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15. "Bronx Parkway Officially Opened," NYT, November 6, 1925.
16. Bronx Parkway Commission, *Final Report* (Bronxville, NY, 1925), 78.
17. Diana Rice, "A Magical Parkway Leads Out of City," NYT, August 16, 1925.
18. Georgia Fraser, "The Bronx River Parkway," NYT, July 30, 1925.
19. "The Way Westchester Does It," *House & Garden*, July 1926, 100.
20. *Ibid.*, 100-101, 132. For a discussion of the history of the Bronx River Parkway, see the Westchester County Archives website, "Bronx River Parkway Reservation," <http://westchesterarchives.com/BRPR/BRPRHome.html>.
21. Westchester County Park Commission, *Report to the Board of Supervisors of the County of Westchester* (April 30, 1923), 1 (hereafter Westchester County Park Commission annual report cited in notes as WCPC, *Report*).
22. Westchester County Park Commission, *Report for the Acquisition of Parks, Parkways, or Boulevards* (May 17, 1923), 3-8.
23. WCPC, *Report* (April 30, 1924), 39.
24. *Ibid.*, (April 30, 1925), 19. The commission minutes of December 18, 1924 cite a letter from the Mamaroneck Chamber of Commerce concerning the dreadful traffic conditions on the Boston Post Road. Westchester County Park Commission Minutes, December 18, 1924, item 9, 221, Westchester County Historical Society (hereafter cited in notes as WCPC Minutes).
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- York: Harbor Hills Books, 1977), 444-457, for a more recent discussion of parks, parkways, and highways in the county.
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 28. WCPC Minutes, January 21, 1926 through December 8, 1927.
 29. "Buys \$800,000 Park Lands," *NYT*, January 22, 1926; "Buys Land for Parkways," *NYT*, February 10, 1926; "Tour Park Area in Westchester," *NYT*, November 13, 1926.
 30. WCPC Minutes, February 9, May 3, July 31, and August 16, 1928.
 31. *Ibid.*, July 26, 1928.
 32. WCPC, *Report* (April 30, 1930), 50.
 33. "Holiday Traffic along Post Road Crowds Highway," *Daily Times*, July 3, 1926.
 34. "New York Road Building Lags," *NYT*, October 24, 1937.
 35. "Boston Post Road," *NYT*, March 6, 1950.
 36. WCPC, *Report*, April 30, 1930, 50.
 37. *Ibid.*, (April 30, 1925), 74, 79. The 1932 Report states that total appropriations for 218 acres acquired to date for the Pelham-Port Chester Parkway were \$5,212,403.70 (*ibid.*, (April 30, 1932), 9).
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 50. "Truck Toll Route Favored by Moses," *NYT*, February 6, 1938.
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62. "Plans Protest on Parkway," *NYT*, December 1, 1940.
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66. Betty Moorsteen, "City Can Be Beautiful: Ask Lewis Mumford," *PM*, May 12, 1946.
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68. "Meighan Claims Thruway as GOP," *Daily Times*, October 19, 1954.
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74. President George Bush signed legislation renaming the Interstate system in 1990. "Landmarks in American Civil Engineering: Interstate Highway System," *Civil Engineering* (November/December 2002): 141.
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82. Folsom, "Thruway."
83. "Mamaroneck School Board to Protest Thruway Exit," *Daily Times*, October 1, 1954.
84. "Village Board Joins Fight on Cloverleaf as Protests Mount," *Daily Times*, October 12, 1954.
85. Paul Byrne, staff photo, caption, *Daily Times*, September 10, 1956, 1.

86. Art Dunn, "Mild Thruway Blast Satisfies Officials," *Daily Times*, September 28, 1956.
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89. Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 313. Berman views Robert Moses as "the New York agent and incarnation" of the expressway world.

An Account Book of the Indian Trade in Ulster County, New York, 1712-1732¹

Kees-Jan Waterman & J. Michael Smith

Introduction

Working with scattered and fragmentary primary sources forms one of the most serious challenges to students of European-Indian relations in early New York. This article discusses a recently discovered Dutch account book of the fur trade with American Indians in Ulster County from 1712 to 1732. In anticipation of a full translation and publication of the account book, the readership of the *The Hudson River Valley Review* is presented with observations about the content and significance of the manuscript.² References to pages in the manuscript are provided to facilitate consultation of the original item. In addition, a selection from the translated account book is appended to the article.

The manuscript is the only account book for Indian trade in Ulster County that has been located until now.³ It documents substantial trade with Indians who pertained to Algonquian-speaking groups in and around the Hudson River Valley. Most identifiable natives were Esopus and Wappinger Indians, usually referred to collectively as Munsee Indians—or Munsees. The account book lists a total of 243 accounts of Indians and reports on slightly more than 2,000 transactions.

The accounts contain data on commercial dealings with about 200 Indians in Ulster County; slightly more than 100 appear with their names listed. A large number of Indians make an appearance in the accounts without their name but with links to other named Indians—usually their close kin. This group consists of about ninety individuals. It includes one native man who was described by listing his place of residence and his relation to another individual. He appears as “the savage from kisechton[,] “perraris[s] brother” in October 1725.⁴ The largest subgroup within this pool of ninety natives consisted of women who the book-keeper described merely as the wife of a named Indian man; at least twenty-seven such individuals can be discerned.

Description of manuscript

On the whole, the condition of the manuscript is excellent. Most pages are undamaged and the handwriting is clearly legible.⁵ The bound manuscript contains no identifying statement, name, signature, initials, or other markings. The volume contains 428 pages. With a few exceptions, all entries are in Dutch. The first 317 pages document trade between colonists in Ulster County. On page 318 it switches to records of commercial exchanges between the trader and his Indian clientele. The authors applied numbers in between brackets, [I]-[III], to all pages in that section. The pages that record commercial exchanges with native customers include three empty pages, bringing their total number to 108. This section is written in a different hand than the first section; neither of the handwritings has been identified. The part that documents trade with colonists clearly misses some pages, and a considerable number of pages in this part of the manuscript are badly torn and cut. But there are no indications that pages were removed from the Indian section, and none of the pages in that part show signs of cutting or tearing.

Entries in the account book for trade with Indians are dated between 1712 and 1732, with only isolated occurrences of entries for the years 1712, 1715, 1718, and 1732. No entries have been located for the years 1713, 1714, 1730, and 1731; the one entry that may be from the year 1716 is ambiguous.⁶ The bulk of the accounts show entries from between 1717 and 1729.

The accounts are neatly kept; all verso sides contain accounts with entries that record purchases on credit by Indians. The recto sides always show payments by Indians. In a number of cases they are accompanied by entries with additional acquisitions on credit by indigenous customers. Most accounts are dated, and all were kept in Dutch guilders; accounts of different individuals were separated by horizontal lines. When the trader received a payment, he crossed out the corresponding entries or accounts.

The bookkeeper likely kept track of transactions as he traded. This circumstance led him to jot down brief sentences and statements. In translating the document, the language style of the account book has been maintained as much as possible. Retaining the straightforward nature of the original text conveys the immediacy of the situation in which it was written.

Context

All accounts in the Indian section and most in the part dealing with trade between colonists were kept in the Dutch language. For eighteenth-century Ulster

County, this was not an aberration. In Kingston, the principal town in the area, many official records were kept in Dutch until 1774. In the towns of Rochester and Marbletown, Dutch was regularly spoken through the early nineteenth century. Many private papers were written in Dutch, although English slowly became the dominant language during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. A number of eighteenth-century account books from the region were kept in Dutch. In some cases, both Dutch and French were used in a single account book of colonists in or around the New Paltz settlement.⁷

Although the first entry in the Indian section of the account book presents it as being kept in Kingston, it is more plausible that after some years the account book was maintained in another location in Ulster County. An undated entry that can be placed in or around 1725 shows that the son of an Indian named ‘manonck’ had part of his debt cancelled for “going to Kingston.”⁸ Another undated entry, one that can be placed in 1728, describes the debts of “Sar[,] hendreck hekan[']s wife” as deriving from “her old account in Kingston.”⁹

Nineteen colonists appear in the Indian section of the account book; all resided in various settlements within Ulster County. Of these, six or seven resided in Rochester and six are documented as living in Kingston.¹⁰ This suggests that the account book was used for trade in and around Kingston and Rochester. The unidentified person who kept the account book of the Indian trade recorded eight times the involvement of individuals who he identified by their relationship to someone he refers to as “Your Honor.” As the identity of this trader, merchant, or proprietor of the lands where these transactions took place remains elusive, it is impossible to identify these relatives.¹¹

Significance of the manuscript

For most of the named Munsee Indians listed in the account book an ethnic or band affiliation cannot be precisely determined. Biographical indexing of these names with additional data from Ulster County land deeds and other documents shows that twenty-eight of the individuals mentioned and twelve of their unnamed kin can be identified as Esopus Indians. Most of these are men. Another group of six or seven individuals listed by the trader are similarly identified as Wappinger Indians in administrative and land records from Dutchess County. In addition, one named and eight unnamed of their kin can be recognized.¹²

The account book shows clearly that an active trade was maintained in Ulster County with a sizeable group of Indians. This is contrary to the general perception in the scholarship of relations between Indians and colonists in the region. Most historians have taken the view that local American Indians had retreated

from Ulster County following the Esopus Wars (1659-1660 and 1663-1664).¹³ This interpretation holds that Munsee Indians subsequently dispersed over the wide area inhabited by Algonquian-speaking Indians, a number of them settling in the multi-ethnic villages in the Minisink region, on the upper Delaware River.¹⁴ The fur trade, in this view, continued to be of some importance in relations between Indians and colonists during the 1660s and 1670s, but was quickly replaced by agriculture as the principal economic activity in Ulster County.¹⁵

While many Munsees did indeed migrate away from their traditional homelands, the pages in this manuscript contain evidence that they continued to journey to the lands on which they were once sovereign peoples. Alone or in small groups, Indians came to the trader in Ulster County on a very regular basis up to the end of the third decade of the eighteenth century. Information from the account book also shows that at least a number of Indian customers were originally from the area; in the second half of the 1720s they returned to their ancestral homelands to attend burials of other natives on at least five occasions.¹⁶

Munsee Indians who traveled to Ulster County to engage in trade and perform burial ceremonies acted within an existing framework that also consisted of other activities. Esopus leaders returned regularly to Kingston to ratify the Nicholls treaty of 1665. This tradition lasted until 1771 and resulted in twenty-three diplomatic encounters.¹⁷ Wappinger Indians also met periodically from 1722 to 1743 with Dutchess County officials at Poughkeepsie, where disbursements of presents (mostly currency) were recorded for “Renewing articquils [sic] of Peace with them as Yearly.”¹⁸ Up to 1745, Esopus Indians continued to visit the area around Kingston to trade, though not always to their satisfaction. In May of that year, Esopus sachems complained to the authorities in Kingston that:

their Produce is too Cheap and the Commodities which they want from the Christians Too Dear, and Therefore they Desire that their produce may be Dearer and the Christians Commodity Cheaper.¹⁹

Those sachems included “Sandor, chief sachem of the Esopus” and “under Sachims” Hendrick Hekan and Renuan; Indians with the same names (“Sander” and “hend[rick] hekan”) appear in this account book, the third one is likely to be the individual described as “runup” in the account book.²⁰ Moreover, between 1720 and 1746, Dutchess County authorities recorded payments in twenty instances to fourteen named Indians—mostly Wappingers—who had collected bounties on wolves.²¹ In addition, American Indians usually retained fishing and hunting rights after “land cessions” and thus returned to their original homeland to make use of these rights.²²

It is plausible that some of this trader's customers traveled only modest distances to reach the localities where he traded. Although Robert S. Grumet concludes that "Munsees... were forced to sell more than eighty-two percent of their lands by 1717," large portions of the interior sections of Ulster County were not sold until the mid-eighteenth century.²³ James D. Folts states that while some Munsees were leaving their homelands in the early eighteenth century, various Munsee settlements remained, and a "few native communities persisted near colonial settlements in Orange and Ulster Counties (NY) and Warren County (NJ) until around 1750."²⁴ Differences of interpretation over Indian land grants were a "recurring matter of complaint" during the abovementioned treaty conferences with the Esopus, suggesting that natives who dwelled there were asserting their rights to use the lands for their homes, fields, and gardens.²⁵ Some Indians continued to live at or near their homelands in Ulster County well into the eighteenth century, or had reoccupied lands that were deeded earlier to colonists; in 1776, authorities were instructed to distribute gunpowder to the inhabitants of native communities there.²⁶

Recurring Indian complaints over colonial land grants were common on the east side of the Hudson River, especially in Dutchess County. Wappinger territory had been entirely patented by 1706.²⁷ However, many of these patents exceeded the boundaries contained in the original Indian purchases associated with these grants. Other patents were issued before the lands were even purchased from the Indians. Additional evidence for continued Wappinger presence on parts of their homelands is indicated by a letter of May 28, 1756, by Sir William Johnson "To the Magistrates of the Precinct of Fish Kilns" in Dutchess County about the removal of "River Indians whose families are at Fish Kilns" to settle among the Mohawk.²⁸

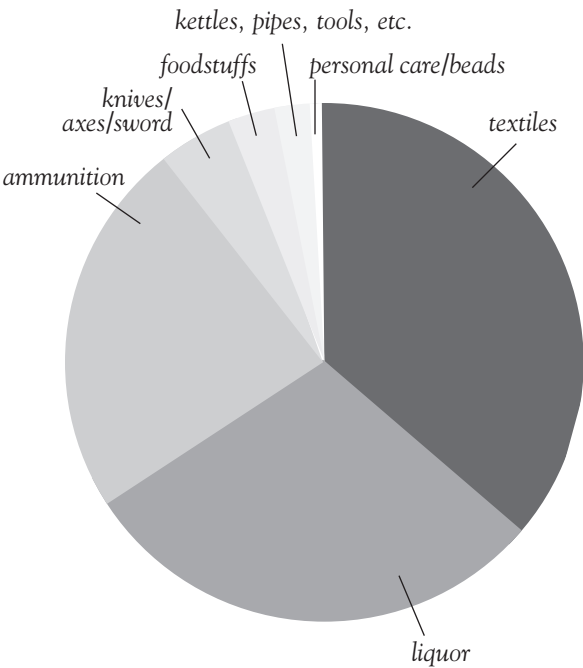
The appearance of around 200 Munsees trading in Ulster County becomes more understandable in the light of the abovementioned circumstances. Availability of this manuscript makes another significant contribution to our understanding of the fur trade. Recently, it has been demonstrated that a respectable part of the fur trade between Indians and two Wendell brothers in Albany during the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century was carried out by Indian women. They participated by maintaining accounts in their own name or functioned as intermediaries in the trade with other Indians. In twenty percent of the cases in the Wendells' account book, women were the main account holders; but they were actively engaged in just under half of all accounts—49.6 percent.²⁹ Information from the Ulster County trade book relays almost exactly the same figures: Native women acted as main account holders on 22.2

percent of all accounts, and they were actively involved in just more than half of all accounts—50.6 percent. Five out of the nine cases that document the occurrences of escorts in this account book involved one or two women (about fifty-five percent).

Contours of the trade

The most promising years for this trader were between 1724 and 1726. The latter year represents the highest level of trade on credit by this Ulster County fur trader. Following that, activities clearly diminished and fell back to considerably lower levels in 1728. While a small recovery occurred in 1729, this also was the last year in which the trader recorded a sizeable number of transactions. The sudden cessation of trade after 1729 coincides with the end of the account book. Close examination of this record of trade with the Indians demonstrates the absence of an explicit trading season. It shows that Indian customers visited the trader year round.

Categories of trade goods



Note: Categories of less than .5% have been excluded.

Entries in this manuscript read as a virtual catalogue of the types of products that Indians purchased from colonists in the American Northeast during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Summarized, data from the account book yield the overview as presented in the graph to the left.

It becomes evident that the Algonquian Indians who traded in Ulster County had a strong preference for products of three types: textiles, alcoholic beverages, and ammunition. As late as May 1745 the earlier mentioned Esopus sachems complained to the Kingston authorities that natives were buying liquor, beer, and cider too easily:

There are So Many Taverns, which is a great reason for their Poverty, and Desire That they may be Remedied.³⁰

The remaining types of goods are extremely diverse, but they represent just over twelve percent of the commodities that the Indians bought.

Although they appear very rarely, some items that were purchased by Indian customers are nonetheless interesting. They include the three instances in which Indian men bought stacks of playing cards. Yet between 1670 and 1680, travelers along the Hudson River observed that card playing had become a regular form of entertainment among the Munsees, adding that the young men especially were fond of it.³¹ Even less expected is the purchase of a saddle by “peghtarend,” an Indian man, in or after 1722. At around the same time, he settled his account by delivering two horses to the trader.³² Finally, we do not know if the native customers who acquired a bell and a silver cup intended to use them for the purposes they were originally made for.

Indians most often paid off their debts, or parts thereof, with peltry. From the recorded payments in which natives satisfied all or part of their debts, eighty-seven percent involved the delivery of peltry, meat, and animals. The Ulster County trader listed beavers in only ten percent of all cases where transactions were recorded as consisting of peltry, meat, or animals. This may be an indication that his Munsee clients were experiencing difficulties in obtaining beaver furs. The largest number of debts and transactions were recorded in [deer] “skins,” “deer,” and “elk” [hides]. Bear hides and raccoons also appear with some frequency.

In other debit transactions by Indians that did not involve peltry, most Indians provided labor and services to the trader (thirty-eight cases). Primarily, Indians performed wage labor for credit against their debts. Men were far more likely to act in this fashion than women; twenty-six of the thirty-two instances concerned men. Typically, these Indians’ wages varied between two guilders for spinning and nine guilders per day for doing fieldwork. On the whole, Indian men earned more credit by providing labor than women but “pitternell[,] kattias[s] wife” earned twelve guilders per day for harvesting flax. One Indian man reduced his debt by twelve guilders by “shooting fire,” perhaps indicating that he shot burning arrows into the vegetation to prepare land for cultivation. Another Indian received sixteen-and-a-half guilders’ worth of rum for which he was not required to pay, provided he would point out a mine the following spring. An entry in another account shows a native man earning a credit of eight guilders for a “plain meal.”³³

The other type of service that Indians provided with some regularity was

travel to various destinations. Only Indian men traveled to destinations in the region in order to earn credit against their debts. “Sander the savage” was particularly involved in this type of service for the bookkeeper. Earnings from such journeys differed considerably from each other, ranging between twenty and forty-five guilders.

The account book shows that the trader and his customers deployed intermediaries, albeit on a limited scale. It documents eight cases of Indians being escorted to the bookkeeper to trade with him. Indian men acted as escorts in five out of the eight instances. In addition, the account book contains one entry showing an Indian man functioning as a guarantor for another Indian man. This occurred on November 7, 1724, when “hendreck hekan” was guarantor for the purchase of a gun by another Indian man, whose identity is difficult to ascertain.³⁴

Another modality that occurred in this trade was that the bookkeeper required seven Indians—two women and five men—to provide security for the goods they acquired on credit. Rum was the product for which Indians most often provided a security. On four occasions, the Ulster County bookkeeper described transactions for which an individual Indian’s payments or debts were recorded as “part” of a larger quantity. Accounts that were evidently shared between Indians appear rarely in this account book. Only one account had two main account holders, documenting one man and one woman in that fashion; three holders were noted in three accounts; all of these concerned a man, a woman, and a son.³⁵ Taken together, accounts with multiple main holders constitute 1.6 percent of all accounts.

Other practices can be gleaned from the pages of the account book. Throughout, the bookkeeper used the Dutch currency, consisting of guilders and stivers. This was fairly typical for account books in Ulster County during the early eighteenth century.³⁶ The bookkeeper of this account book used English pounds in only nine instances—either to state the total debt of an Indian or to record the purchase of a gun. On one occasion, the debt that resulted from the purchase of a gun was recorded in Spanish pieces-of-eight (the “peso”). Three other accounts also feature the use of that currency (listed as “dollar”).³⁷

Indians’ debts with other traders in the area also were recorded in the account book; such debts occur nine times. All but one of the Indian debtors were men; two of the seven creditors were women. Only one colonist was recorded more than once with Indians being indebted to him; the unnamed man is described as “the smith.” Entries of this kind were usually concerned with small debts; typically, the Indians’ arrears were between two and six guilders. Two debts clearly stand out in this regard. The account keeper’s mother stood to receive 280 guilders (also

recorded as £6:10) for a gun she sold to “Winhas[,] sawagonck hend[rick’s] son,” and “pitter tappen” expected “mack[,] pansogh[s] son” to pay 240 guilders (no amount in £ given), also for a gun. But the account book provides no indications that the bookkeeper ever paid these Indians’ debts.

Prices and values

Price levels of commodities that Indians bought from the trader in Ulster County showed no tendency to change over time; no substantial shifts are recognizable during the years in which the bulk transactions were recorded, 1717 to 1729. Goods and labor that Indians applied to ease or pay off their debts present us with more complications. In establishing the value of a pelt, weight and quality are paramount. Elk skins, for instance, earned Indians credit in a range between twelve and thirty guilders. The same situation applies to cases in which a customer delivered “one deer” or “one deerskin” to the bookkeeper. Finally, several accounts contain entries that recorded receipt of various types of peltry but report only the total credit for that transaction, without specifying the value of the specific furs.

Still, the exchange rates allow for a brief analysis of the Indians’ purchasing power in their dealings with this trader in Ulster County. Evidently, a native customer was expected to deliver one otter skin for one pound of gunpowder, three bars of lead, or six pounds of lead. One fisher fur would fetch him or her one ell of duffels or slightly more than one gallon of rum. To purchase one stroud blanket on credit left the Indian customer with a debt that was equivalent to between two and four bear hides, or about five pounds of beaver fur. One raccoon would pay off the debt for one bottle or one “kan” of rum; one pound of deer or elk skin would cover the debt for one pint of rum. The purchase of a gun on credit presented the customer with a debt of several hundred guilders. To settle that type of debt, a customer would have to deliver around two dozen pounds of beaver fur, or more.

Other aspects of this significant source await further study and analysis. The account book can yield useful data to plot a number of variables though time. The authors intend to compile tables and graphs of such aspects in order to enhance perceptions of the parameters that characterized the fur trade in Ulster County during the first decades of the eighteenth century. Moreover, the account book contains fascinating information on Indians with Dutch given and surnames, Munsees with both Dutch and Indian names, and the roles of native leaders in commercial exchanges with the trader.

Edited translation of pages [1] through [10] from the account book of the Indian trade in Ulster County, New York, 1712-1732, being a section of the Account Book, 1711-1729 [in Dutch], Philip John Schuyler Papers Volume 11 (reel 30). Published by permission from the Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

*Translated by Kees-Jan Waterman; edited by Kees-Jan Waterman
and John Michael Smith*

Editorial method

The layout of the pages in the manuscript has been retained as much as possible.

<i>text</i>	original language, as in ms.
cr	crossed.
[text]	remarks between brackets reflect editorial comments on, for instance, the lay-out of the original text. On occasion, the brackets contain additions to the original text.
[text?]	where the original text is difficult to read, illegible, or illogical within its given context, text with a question mark between brackets reflects an editorial suggestion.
text	words or entries, scratched out in ms.

Glossary

Dufel/duffel	a coarse or thick woolen cloth.
Ell	a standard Dutch linear measurement, used primarily for measuring cloth. Roughly equivalent to 68 centimeters or 27 inches.
f	abbreviation of <i>florijn</i> , see guilder.
Floret	silk ribbon.
Gall	abbreviation of gallon.
Guilder	Dutch monetary unit, consisting of 20 stivers.
Hend	also <i>hendr</i> . Abbreviated form of common first name in Dutch, Hendrik/Hendrick.
<i>Kan</i>	Dutch liquid measure; one quart.
Penneston	here also <i>pinneston</i> ; a type of woolen cloth, named after the place in England where it was produced.
pt	abbreviation of pint.
qt	abbreviation of quart.
Sept	abbreviation of September.

1717	Kingston August 21	
	manonck ³⁸ the savage	
	on remainder on strouds	f 8/
	on 1 knife f3 1 Piece [of fabric]	
	1 pair of stockings	" 27/
	on beads f4: 2 lb gunpowder	" 16/
	on 1 pair of children's stockings	" 3/
	on 1 duffel blanket	" 28/
	on 1 bottle of rum 1 pt of rum	" 4/
	on 1 gun for 5 pieces-of-eight	" 60/-
	if he keeps it	
	on 4 ells of strouds	" 60/
	on 1½ ell of dufels	" 17/
	on 9 lb of lead	" 9/
		<u>f231</u> ³⁹

[entries on the remainder of page, from 1718 down, cr=satisfied]

1718	december 15 balanced account with manonck	
	and they remain indebted in all	f111/-
1719	on 2 ells of blue textiles	" 16/
	on 4 pt rum f8 on 2 small axes	" 20/
	on 2 stroud blankets	" 90/
	on 1 lb gunpowder	" 6/
	on 1 pair of stockings	" 6/
		<u>f249/</u>
	june 28 on remainder on rum consumed	" 9/
1721	on 3 ells of silver ribbon	" 33/-
	to his son 2 kan rum	" 5/
	on 28 <i>kan</i> rum	" 70/-
	on 4 <i>kan</i> rum	" 10/
	on 2 boxes with paint	" 5/
	on 1 <i>tromp</i> ⁴⁰	" 1/-
	on 1 shirt and 2 pairs of buttons	" 30/-
	to his son 1 coat	"[empty]
	on 1 coarse blanket f34 on ⁴¹	" 34/
	on 2 <i>kan</i> rum that the other savage ⁴²	" 6/-

september 27		452/
1721	on 4 gall rum	40/
		f492/
	his son on 1 qt rum	" 3/
	on 1 ell of strouds by his son	" 20/
	on slices of meat	" 12/
1722	on 1 coarse blanket	" 33/
	sept. 20 on 2 qt rum on 2 occasions	<u>" 6/</u>
		f566/-43

[last date is repeated at the left side of the page: sept. 20]

(319) --Credit-side, but also contains some debts--

1718	december 15	
	Cred[it] by Jan van Kampen ⁴⁴	f120/-
	have paid them for their other wares	
	+ balanced account up to then	
	[entries on the remainder of the page, from 1719 down, cr]	
1719	september 4	
	Cred[it]	
	by debora ⁴⁵ in addition	f 12/-
	for 7½ lb beaver	" 42/
	for 7 deerskins	<u>" 54/-</u>
		108/-
	his son still has 1 stroud blanket coming to him	
	that he has paid	
1721	sept. 27 for 11 lb dressed skins	f 71/-
	for 3 skins	<u>" 14/</u>
		f193/
1722	for 1 pig	f112
		f305/-
	her oldest son for 4 lb beavers	<u>" 28/-</u>
		f333/-
1724	sept 2 on remainder on white baize	f 14/-
	on 1 knife f2:10 his wife	" 2/10
	on 1 lb gunpowder f6 on 4 lb lead	" 10/-
	manonck on 1 coarse blanket	" 28/-
	January 10 on 1 shirt for his son Jacob ⁴⁶	" 12/-
	on remainder on white baize"	<u>4/-</u>
		<u>f 70/10/</u>
	their son Jacob Cred[it] for beaver	<u>" 10/-</u>
	on 2 lb gunpowder and lead	" 16/
	on 1 axe + rum gelyt ⁴⁷	" 3/-
	in addition see after 49 ⁴⁸	
	hend hekan ⁴⁹ 's son on gunpowder and lead	" 7/-
	their oldest son on 2 ells of baize	" 12/-

[all accounts on this page, cr=satisfied]

1717	august 20 Sammetie[,] Sametie ⁵⁰ 's son At balancing the Account on 14 <i>kan</i> rum f40 on 1 ell of strouds	f 15/ f 58/
1717	august 21 annondo ⁵¹ 's daughter Catrijn on various goods <u>on 8 <i>kan</i> rum</u>	f 50/ " 24/
1719	august 17 on 5 <i>kan</i> rum again january on 20 <i>kan</i> rum on pair of stockings on 1 lb gunpowder on 11 <i>kan</i> rum on 12 <i>kan</i> rum on 1 shirt and 1 frock on 16 <i>kan</i> rum	" 15 " 60/- " 5/- " 6/- " 33/ " 36/ f155/ " 16/ <u>" 39/-</u> 210/
1721	sept on 6 <i>kan</i> rum on 10 <i>kan</i> rum	" 15/- <u>" 25/-</u> 250/
1724	on 6 <i>kan</i> rum	<u>f 12/</u> f262/
1724	January 10 on 11½ <i>kan</i> rum ditto 31 on 10 <i>kan</i> rum on 1 pt rum f1:10	" 23/- " 20 <u>" 1/10</u> f306/10
1725	august 5 on 23 <i>kan</i> rum on remainder on 1 dufels blanket on 1 stroud blanket	"[40, cr] <u>" 10/</u> "316/10 " 45/

[empty upper half]

[the entire account, cr]

	Cred[it] for 1 dollar ⁵² 1 mink ⁵³ for 1 pig[,] settling the account	[empty]
1719	Cred[it] for 1 pig for 6 martens [Se]pt for 1 raccoon for 1 beaver for 1 fox for 1 deerskin	f 60/ " 36/ " 4/ " 12/ f112/ " 5/ f117/ « 16/ f133/
1724	January 10 for grease and skins	" 20/- "153/-
	January 31 for 4 lb dressed skins by Jan roos—the savage ⁵⁴	" 32/- " 12/- f197/
1725/6	march 13 for 11 lb dressed skins for 9 lb deerskin	" 77/- " 9/- 250 283/- 133 117
	361 <u>283</u> 78	262 <u>153</u> 109

1717	august tiet the savage woman's Daughter on 1 stroud blanket	f 50/ f 50/
1717	august nanoghqaurij ⁵⁵ at balancing the account on 1 kettle f40 on 5 ells of penneston his wife from older times on 2½ ells of penneston	f 67/ " 75/ " 13/ <u>" 17/10</u> 172/10
[remainder of the page, from 1719 down, cr=satisfied]		
1719	september 16 Kattener ⁵⁶ on 1 knife and shot	f 0 ⁵⁷ /-
1724	sept 12 on 4 kan rum by manonck's son on remainder on 1 bottle f4 on remainder on his wife's stockings	f 10/- f 4/- f 1/-
1725	on 4 lb lead on 1 pint rum f1:10 another pint rum on 1 pt rum f1:10 his wife on 1 colored shirt	" 4/- " 3/- " 1/10 <u>" 24/-</u> f 47/10
	on 1 lb gunpowder on 4 lb lead	" 6/- " 4/-
	may 15 to his wife 6 kan rum that he has paid ⁵⁸	<u>" 18/-</u> [empty] /10
1726	July 22 ⁵⁹ on 1 stroud blanket on 4 kan rum at the burial	f 45/- <u>" 12/-</u> <u>Remains f85:-</u> <u>f085/-</u>

1726	sept 10 then balanced accounts with him and he	
	and his wife and [sic] 33 guilders	f 90
	on 1 stroud blanket at his daughter's	
	burial	" 40/-
	on ¾ of one ell of strouds f14 on	
	2½ ells of colored textiles f20	" 34/-
		f164/-
	april 20 on 1 pt rum f1:10	" 1/10
		f165/10

Page [6]
(323) --Credit-side--

[upper part of page is empty]

⁶⁰ 1717	Cred[it] for various	f 91/-
	for 2 bear hides	" 28/-
		119/
		54

[the following entry, cr]

⁶¹ 1719	Cred[it] for skins to [sic]	
	comes his part of the skin	f 6/-

[the nine lines in this account, cr=satisfied]

<u>1715</u>	antony ⁶⁶ [,] hester ⁶⁷ 's son	
	on 1 stroud blanket	f 45/
	on 1½ ells of cotton	" 10/
	on hat and ribbon	" 14/
<u>1719</u>	July 19 on 1 ell of strouds	" 18/-
	on 4 lb lead	" 4/-
	_____ [thin line] _____	

	on 1 duffels blanket	f 27/
	on 1 knife	" 1/10
	on money f8: on 1 coarse blanket ditto on	
	1 coarse blanket	" 80/
	_____	f108/10

	Martie the savage woman	
	on 4 <i>kan</i> rum	f 12/
	on 5 ells of baize on 2 occasions	" 36/-

[the account below, cr=satisfied]

	June 20	
<u>1719</u>	naris the savage	
	from older times	" 4/
	on 2½ ells of baize	" 19/-

[empty space]

[the account below, cr=satisfied]

<u>1717</u>	blandina ⁶⁸ [,] hend daughter	
	on remainder on 1 stroud blanket	f 22/
	on 2½ ells of fris ⁶⁹	" 28/

[the account below, cr]

Cred[it] for 1 deer and 2 turkeys	f 30/
for 1 deer f16	f 16/
for 2 deer quarters	" 6/
for 2 skins f 26 on 3 ½ lb beaver	" 46
	" 68/
for 1 dollar ⁷⁰ ditto	22/
	90/

[empty space]

[the entry below, cr]

Cred[it] for cuts of hare f 18

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Endnotes

- 1.. A section from the Account Book, 1711-1729 [in Dutch], Philip John Schuyler Papers Volume 11 (reel 30), at the Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. The authors wish to thank the New York Public Library for permission to publish the selected translation that appears at the end of this article.
2. The authors are presently preparing an annotated edition, with analytical introduction.
3. The Cottin Ledgers, 1707-1721, has records of bartering "wheat and peltries" between the French merchant Jean Cottin and "local farmers, hunters and trappers," but such exchanges occurred after colonists had obtained the peltries by hunting or trapping or through trade with Indians; Sally M. Schultz and Joan Hollister, "Jean Cottin, Eighteenth-Century Huguenot Merchant," *New York History*, 86 (Spring, 2005), 134, 145.
4. For this instance, see the account on [79]. "kisechton," more commonly known as Cochection, was a multi-ethnic Munsee community located at the upper-Delaware River straddling the New York and Pennsylvania border.
5. Images on the microfilm of the manuscript that one can order from the New York Public Library shows a number of smudges on the pages, and almost every image creates the impression that

the upper edges of all pages suffer from damage by fire and/or water. This constitutes a distorted impression of the actual quality of the original.

6. See the last account on page [7].
7. Thomas S. Wermuth, *Rip Van Winkle's Neighbors: The Transformation of a Rural Society in the Hudson River Valley, 1720-1850* (Albany, N.Y., 2001), 15, 43. As part of a translation project, Kees-Jan Waterman provides translations of eighteenth-century Dutch records from the holdings of the Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz. A number of these are being brought online through the Hudson River Valley Heritage project (www.hrvh.org). For the use of French and Dutch in one account book from New Paltz (Roggen Ledger, 1750, 1795), see Hollister, "Account Books and Economic Life," (http://www.hhs-newpaltz.org/library_archives/exhibits_research/early_newpaltz_history/hollister.html; accessed May 25, 2007).
8. See the second account on [68].
9. See the second account on [91].
10. Colonists who were referred to with generic names ("the smith") or were listed with only their first name or surname have not been identified. In addition, the racial identity of at least one individual remains uncertain ("rutsen"). Excluding the above mentioned persons, a group of nineteen individuals remains. Besides the residents of Rochester and Kingston, one or two lived in Marbletown, one in Hurley, and one in Foxhall manor. Three people lived in Ulster County, but the records do not specify their hometown.
11. Persons identified as "Your Honor's" mother, brother, sister, and daughter are excluded from the nineteen colonists discussed above.
12. Comparisons of Indian personal names recorded in the account book with known Esopus individuals are based primarily on the following sources: Ulster County Deed Books, vol. AA-EE; New York Book of Patents and Deeds, vol. 5; Minutes of the Ulster County Court of Sessions, 1705-1712, 1712-1720, and 1737-1750, Ulster County Records Management, Kingston, New York. A complete list of these and other sources will be included in an appendix to the annotated edition, identifying Esopus and Wappinger Indians noted by the trader.
13. Most recently, this view was expressed by Paul Otto. Although he did not specifically date his observation, he remarked that "most Munsees eventually retreated from the region [along the Hudson] altogether [...] and their leaving was a means to protect their worldview and cultural identity," *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter in America: The Struggle for Sovereignty in the Hudson Valley* (New York / Oxford, 2006), 18, 176.
14. Herbert C. Kraft, *The Lenape: Archaeology, History, and Ethnography* (Newark, NJ, 1986), 232-233. James D. Folts somewhat qualifies this interpretation, but asserts that "around 1700, the upper Delaware watershed became the new home of Minisink Indians [...] and of Esopus Indians moving west from the mid-Hudson Valley," and "by 1712, the Esopus Indians were reported to have moved to the East (Pepacton) Branch of the Delaware River," "The Westward Migration of the Munsee Indians in the Eighteenth Century," in Shirley W. Dunn, ed., *The Challenge: An Algonquian Peoples Seminar* (Albany, N.Y., 2005), 34.
15. For the fur trade in and around Kingston in the 1660s and 1670s, already described as "no longer a major economic factor," see Allen W. Trelease, *Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1960; repr., with an Introduction by William A. Starna, Lincoln, NE, 1997), 186-188, quotation on 186. Wermuth asserts that "by the late seventeenth century, the fur trade was moving north and west" from Ulster County and concludes that the fur trade continued in Kingston and other localities in that county as a "by-industry" only until the end of that century, *Rip Van Winkle's Neighbors*, 13-14.
16. The bookkeeper described such instances using the preposition *op* ('at'), indicating that the recorded transactions occurred during or just before or after the actual burial. Based on travelers' journals and archaeological evidence, Otto has concluded that the Munsees continued native funeral practices well into the eighteenth century, *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter*, 173. Evidence

- from this account book indicates that such ongoing practices also applied to the location of at least some burials.
17. Kenneth Scott and Charles E. Baker, "Renewals of Governor Nicolls' Treaty of 1665 with the Esopus Indians at Kingston, N.Y.," *The New-York Historical Society Quarterly*, 37 (1953), 251-272; Robert S. Grumet and Herbert C. Kraft, "Munsee," in Peter Eisenstadt, ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York State* (Syracuse, N.Y., 2005), 1023-1025.
 18. *Book of the Supervisors of Dutchess County, N.Y., 1718-1722* (Poughkeepsie, N.Y., 1911), 52, 122, 211, 257.
 19. Scott and Baker, "Renewals of Governor Nicolls' Treaty of 1665," 268-270; quotation on 269.
 20. For the latter, see the first account [59] and the note there.
 21. See Table 2., on 52-73, in J. Michael Smith, "The Highland King Nimhamaw and the Native Indian Proprietors of Land in Dutchess County, New York: 1712-1765," in Shirley W. Dunn, ed., *The Continuance: An Algonquian Peoples Seminar* (Albany, N.Y., 2004), 39-76. A handful of similar cases, where the names of the Indians were not recorded, are excluded from the total of twenty cases.
 22. See, for instance the New Paltz purchase of May 26, 1677, stating that "the Indians shall also have fully as much liberty and license to hunt all kinds of wild animal[s] and to fish, as the Christians," Edmund B. O'Callaghan and Berthold Fernow, eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols. (Albany, NY: 1856-1887), 13: 506. The authors want to thank Dr. L. Hauptman for providing this observation.
 23. Robert S. Grumet, "The Minisink Settlements: Native American Identity and Society in the Munsee Heartland, 1650-1778," in David G. Orr and Douglas V. Campana, eds., *The People of the Minisink: Papers from the 1989 Delaware Water Gap Symposium* (Philadelphia, PA, 1991), 185 and the map on 177. See also Robert S. Grumet, 'Esopus,' in Peter Eisenstadt, ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York State* (Syracuse, N.Y., 2005), 527.
 24. Folts, "The Westward Migration of the Munsee Indians," 31, 33.
 25. Scott and Baker, "Renewals of Governor Nicolls' Treaty of 1665," 261.
 26. *Ibid.*, 271.
 27. Smith, "The Highland King Nimhamaw and the Native Indian Proprietors of Land in Dutchess County," 43.
 28. James Sullivan, et al., eds., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 14 vols. (Albany, N.Y., 1921-1965), 2: 477-478.
 29. Kees-Jan Waterman, "To Do Justice to Him and Myself": Evert Wendell's Account Book of the Fur Trade with Indians in Albany, New York, 1695-1726 [in print].
 30. Scott and Baker, "Renewals of Governor Nicolls' Treaty of 1665," 269.
 31. Transactions involving playing cards appear on [81], [95] and [97]. For the travelers' observations, see Otto, *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter*, citing Daniel Denton (1670) and Jasper Danckaerts (1679-1680), 170, 172. A Moravian visitor of the village of Shamokin on the Susquehanna River noticed in 1745 that, to his chagrin, Delawares there were more interested in their card game than in his mission, James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York, 1999), 86.
 32. See the debit and credit accounts on [51] and [52].
 33. For the specific cases mentioned here, see [70], [108], [76] and [44].
 34. See the account on [61]. For a note on "hendreck hekan" as a prominent native man, see page [2] of the attached translation.
 35. The account with two main holders appears on [35]; the ones with three on [63], [64] and [67].
 36. See paragraph 2. "Context," above, various account books in the archives of the Huguenot

Historical Society, New Paltz, N.Y. (such as the Roggen account book, 1751-1795; account book, Johan Jacob Roggen, 1751-1771; account book, Jannetje DuBois, 1773-1796), and Schultz and Hollister, "Jean Cottin, Eighteenth-Century Huguenot Merchant," *New York History*, 86 (Spring, 2005), 147.

37. For the first appearance, see the first account on [1].
38. This "manonck," his wife, and two sons reappear on pages [67] and [68]; these page numbers have been allocated in editing the account book. The activities on those accounts span the period between March, 1725 and October, 1726. "Manonck" himself appears in accounts on [4], probably dating from sometime after 1717, and [99], dating from November, 1726. His burial is mentioned on [83] and referred to on [101]; several of his sons are mentioned throughout the account book.
39. This total is incorrect; it should have been 232 guilders.
40. A *tromp*, in this context, can be a part of a horn, a gun barrel, or a Jew's-harp. Considering the low price of the item, the latter is the most likely possibility.
41. The remainder of this line is empty.
42. Sentence ends abruptly; *hat* "had" would be expected here.
43. This debt is among the highest in the account book.
44. The tax assessment of Ulster County in January, 1716/7, listed Jan van Kampen, Sr. as living in Marbletown and Jr. as residing in Rochester. It is unclear which of the two was recorded in the account book, see Ulster County Tax Assessment List, 1716/7, Ulster County Clerk's Office.
45. It is possible she reappears in an account of almost six years later on [73], as "debora[,] maggell[']s wife or wido[w]."
46. A son of "manonck."
47. *Opleggen*, of which *gelyt* may be derived, in commercial exchanges is "to raise" or "to lay onto/on top" (of a price for instance).
48. In this manuscript, the pages are not numbered, and the page number used in this reference cannot be checked. It is the only internal reference of this kind in the account book. For other appearances on "manonck" and his relatives, see the first note on [1].
49. An Indian called "Cacawalomin Alias Hendrick Hekan" was among the native proprietors of lands in Ulster and Albany Counties that were deeded on June 6, 1746, to Johannes Hardenberg, Robert Livingston and company, Ulster County Deed Books, EE: 64, Ulster County Clerk's Office. Grumet lists this and other occurrences of this sachem in colonial records that span the period 1699-1758, "The Minisink Settlements," 205. In 1730, he was involved in a dispute about land boundaries around Mamakating, *ibid.*; for an appearance of that locality in this account book, as *mamme kattin*, see [83]. This Hendrick and various of his relatives appear with regularity in this account book.

It is possible that "Harman heakan," who conveyed land to English Governor Thomas Dongan on the West side of Hudson's River, running south-southwest from the New Paltz tract in September 1684 was related to this Hendrick, New York Book of Patents and Deeds, New York State Archives, Albany, 5: 82-84.
50. This Indian man's name reappears on [7] as "Samtie," where it is used to identify his daughter, wife of "warangau."
51. His name also appears on [63] and [107], as "nanado" and "nanondo," in all cases to identify the same daughter. Together, the accounts cover the period between August 1717 and an undisclosed month in 1727.
52. Probably, the Spanish "peso" or "piece of eight." Such coins consisted of eight "reales."
53. The nature of this transaction remains obscure, and no credit was recorded for the Indian woman.

54. One of five native men who are listed with full Dutch names in the account book. He reappears as “Jan Roos[,] domeni[']s son” on [63], and “Jan Ros” on [70]. Entries on accounts on [69] and [70] describe his wife as the daughter of “abraham or kwakasagh.”
55. He reappears in a later account from the same year on [13], as “nawoghquarry.” In September 1727, an Esopus Indian named “Nanoghquay/ Nawaquay” confirmed past payments by Johannes Hardenbergh for lands within the latter’s patent, see Deed Mss., Senate House State Historic Site, Kingston, N.Y.
56. He reappears in an undated account (later than September 1724) on [58], where he paid the debt of “pensogh’s wife,” and on [67], where “manonck” or one of his relatives bought strouds for him in April 1725. His burial is recorded on [73], where it was dated July, 1726. In the present account, however, he appears to be trading in September of that year, and possibly also in April, 1727.
57. A “4” was changed into “o.”
58. The charges for this rum were not crossed out.
59. The date has been wiped away.
60. These credit transactions pertain to the account of “nanoghquarij” on the other side.
61. These credit transactions pertain to the account of “Kattener” on the other side.
62. Very likely, this is the same individual as “Werengagh,” who endorsed a deposition before Poughkeepsie Justice Barent Van Kleecq on December, 16, 1721, testifying that he had been one of five Indians who had sold lands along the “wall kill or Palls Creek” in Ulster County to Robert Sanders, twenty-one or twenty-two years earlier, *Book of the Supervisors of Dutchess County, N.Y.*, 47-48.
63. For an earlier appearance of this native man, see [3].
64. 1716 has been overwritten by 1717, or vice versa.
65. “Ankerop” appears as “Ancrop” in a document that records placenames in the New Paltz patent. In December 1722, “Ancrop” “afirmed” that the Indian names in the original patent were “the right Indian names of the said places,” New Paltz Town Records (1677-1932), Huguenot Historical Society Archives New Paltz, N.Y. (also available through www.hrvh.org). He does not reappear in the account book, but his son (named “arronshagkie” or “ankerop’s son”) has an account on [105], covering the period between May, 1727 and the same month of the following year.

An Indian called “Moonhaw the right Ancrop” was among the native proprietors of lands in Ulster and Albany Counties that were deeded on June 6, 1746, to Johannes Hardenberg, Robert Livingston and company. The “Land which the Said Moonhaw or Ancrop now hath in his possession under the Patent of Rochester” was excluded from the purchase, Ulster County Deed Books, EE: 63-65, Ulster County Clerk’s Office.
66. An Indian named “antonym” also appears on [21], but it is not certain he is the same individual, although this seems likely. Also see the next note.
67. Hester has no accounts of her own, but another son of hers appears as “Jores” and “Jors” on [21], [22] and [55].
68. She also appears on [62], [72] and [87]. Together, the appearances cover the period between an unknown month in 1717 and October 1726. On [62], she is listed as the wife of “mocka[']s brother.” She had connections with both “hendreck hekan” and “hendreck sawagonck.”
69. This refers to *fries*, a coarse woolen fabric.
70. Probably, the Spanish “peso” or “piece of eight.” Such coins consisted of eight “reales.”

An Act for the further encouragement of Steam-Boats on the waters of this state and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the people of the state of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly That whenever Robert R. Livingston and Robert Fulton and such persons as they may associate with them shall establish one or more boats or vessels other than that already established they shall for each and every such additional boat be entitled to five years prolongation of their grant or contract with this state; Provided nevertheless that the whole term of their exclusive privileges shall not exceed thirty years after passing this act.

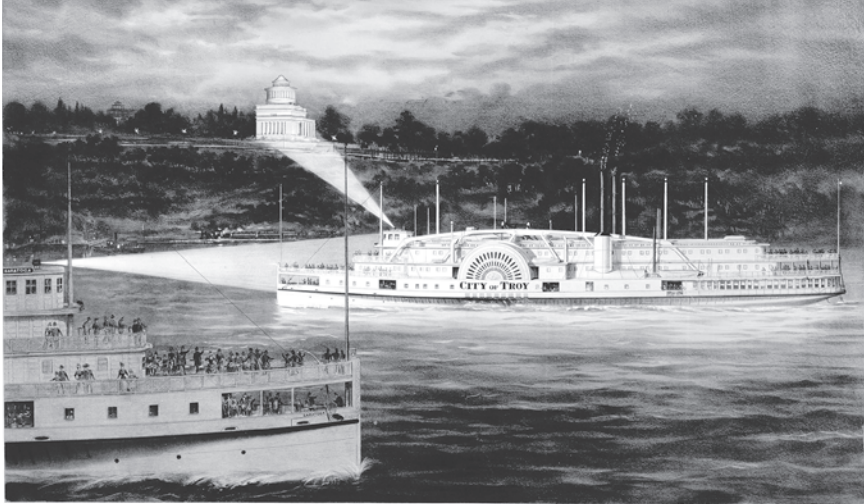
And be it further enacted That no person or persons without the license of the persons entitled to an exclusive right to navigate the waters of this state with boats moved by steam or fire or those holding a major part of the interest in such privilege shall set in motion or navigate upon the waters of this state or within the jurisdiction thereof any boat or vessel moved by steam or fire and the said person or persons so navigating with boats or vessels moved by steam or fire in contravention of the exclusive right of the said Robert R. Livingston and Robert Fulton and their associates or legal representatives shall forfeit such boat or boats and vessels together with the Engine tackle and apparel thereof to the said Robert R. Livingston and Robert Fulton and their associates.

And be it further enacted That the penalties so incurred may

An Act for the Further Encouragement of Steamboats on the Waters of This State, NYS Senate; Signed by Chancellor Livingston and Robert Fulton; 17 March 1809; handwritten document on folded paper; ht. 16 1/2 in. w. 11 3/4 in.; Albany Institute of History & Art; Ludlow Family papers; FH810

Regional History Forum

Each issue of *The Hudson River Valley Review* includes the *Regional History Forum*. This section highlights historic sites in the Valley, exploring their historical significance as well as information for visitors today. Although due attention is be paid to sites of national visibility, HRVR also highlights sites of regional significance. Please write us with suggestions for future Forum sections.



Troy Line; Published by Charles Hart (1847-1918); 35 Vesey Street, New York; c. 1878; hand-colored lithograph; framed: ht. 32 in. w. 40 in.; Albany Institute of History & Art; A.J. Hull Collection of Prints and Drawings; 1944.17.7

Full Steam Ahead: An Exhibition Honoring Robert Fulton and the Era of Steamboats on the Hudson

Amanda Hurlburt, Marist '08

With today's bustle of gas-powered transportation, one can gaze out across the Hudson River and see nary a passing boat. On occasion, a freighter or cabin cruiser will make their way up the Hudson, while the of oars from the shells of collegiate rowing teams often break the water's early-morning stillness. Today, we are more likely to travel about in motor vehicles, trains, and airplanes. Food and other goods are transported in similar fashion. But it was not so long ago that the

nation's waterways provided the means for the fastest and most efficient form of transportation. In the northeast, there was the Hudson River, the region's main highway since the reign of the Algonquin, Mahican, and Iroquois tribes. In 1609 Dutch explorer Henry Hudson sailed up the river looking for a passage to the Orient; it would mark the beginning of two centuries of heightened commerce. With the first Dutch settlements along the Hudson's banks in the seventeenth century, ferry service began. Throughout the eighteenth century, the river supported a fleet of sloops and whaling ships.¹ During the Revolutionary War, American forces used it to ferry troops and supplies.² By the mid-nineteenth century, its use had reached a new height. The vessel of that era was the steamboat. In 1850, over 150 vessels traveled up and down the Hudson, ferrying as many as a million passengers.³ Freightliners transported coal, ice, lumber, stone, and cement, as well as agricultural goods such as grain, livestock, dairy products, fruit, and hay.⁴ Horns blared. Flags snapped in the breeze. And a symphony of steam engines was audible up and down the river's banks.

The Albany Institute of History and Art's new exhibit, *Full Steam Ahead: Robert Fulton and the Age of Steamboats* seeks to bring this colorful past back to life with numerous objects and artifacts from the steamboat era. The Institute is no stranger to promoting interest in the history and culture in the Upper Hudson Valley. Its ties stem to the founding of the Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Arts, and Manufactures in 1791.⁵ The primary dedication of the society was the development of new agricultural techniques; for some time the organization's name was simply shortened to the Agricultural Society.⁶ But under Robert Livingston, the future partner of Robert Fulton in the river's first successful steamboat enterprise, the society grew more specialized, renaming itself the Society for the Promotion of Useful Arts.⁷ Agriculture was still the focus, but a dedication to the arts gained prominence. The society bounced around the state capitol in the early 1800s, acquiring books for a small library and a handful of glass cases to display the mineral collections of its members. With the formation of the State Board of Agriculture in 1815, the society's need for an agricultural basis dropped considerably. By 1824, the society had expanded to the nearby Albany Academy building, merging with the Albany Lyceum of Natural History. Thereafter, it was known as the Albany Institute.⁸ Over the next hundred years, the institute gathered heirlooms, paintings, and other artifacts. In 1907 the organization moved into its current home on Washington Avenue, one block west of the capitol.⁹ The two-story building by the architectural firm Fuller and Pitcher is constructed of brick and Indiana limestone. It sits 100 feet back from the street, nestled amongst trees and in close quarters to brownstones and similar

Beaux-Arts structures.¹⁰ In 1926, the institute officially adopted the title “Albany Institute of History and Art.”¹¹

Now, the institute welcomes 20,000 children and adults annually.¹² Its galleries, auditorium, and nearby brick annex (the former Rice mansion and current home of the Laurence McKinney library and the Bryn Mawr Bookshop), set the stage for family programs, lectures, teachers’ workshops, art and history education classes, films, and gallery talks.¹³ For those out of reach of Albany, the museum offers access to its collections via video conferencing and virtual field trips.¹⁴ And from the humble glass cases of mineral collections and a few sparse shelves of donated books that marked the institute’s first steps toward becoming a museum, the AIHA’s holdings are now nationally recognized as the best collection documenting the life and culture of the Upper Hudson Valley region from the late seventeenth century to the present.¹⁵ The curatorial collections include more than 20,000 objects, including 1,600 paintings, 1,200 ceramic pieces, 4,000 prints, 1,100 drawings, and 500 pieces of furniture.¹⁶ Additionally, the library holdings include over 85,000 photographs, 1,000 linear feet of manuscripts, 140,000 volumes, and 125 periodicals.¹⁷ The Institute houses five permanent exhibitions: *19th Century American Sculpture*, *The Landscape That Defined America: The Hudson River School*, *Traders and Culture: Colonial Albany and the Formation of American Identity*, *Sense of Place: 18th and 19th Century Paintings and Sculpture*, and *Ancient Egypt*. Colonial Albany silver, limner portraits, furniture, ceramics, textiles, and manuscripts can



JOHN WHIPPLE PHOTOGRAPHY

Albany Institute of History and Art

be found throughout the museum.¹⁸ But the highlight of any trip to the museum this year will likely begin with the new steamboat exhibit.

The exhibition commences in the third-floor Square Gallery. As visitors crest the marble staircase surrounded by salmon-colored walls and white marble statues, they will figuratively stand in the age before steam, a time when travel and freight transport were difficult and expensive. Though the Hudson had long been used as a means of trade and commerce, it had its limitations, and no vessel could yet keep up with the growing demand. Throughout the eighteenth century, residents of the Hudson River Valley relied on sloop and stagecoach, the fastest transportation available. Still, transit time for any great distance took at least several weeks, often several months. There would be no rail service until the 1830s. Dirt roads were seasonally impassable, and rivers and tributaries offered one-way travel.¹⁹ Though by the turn of the nineteenth century a sloop could travel roughly five to six miles per hour with the tide, it still had to anchor when wind and tide conditions were unfavorable.²⁰ Women and children rarely traveled long distances.

As the Society for the Promotion of Arts, Agriculture and Manufactures gathered books and searched for a more permanent residence, a man named Robert Fulton studied abroad in Europe. For some years prior to the turn of the nineteenth century, he tinkered with art and mechanics, submitted proposals for submarines, and toyed with mines and torpedoes. Ultimately, he developed a relationship with Robert R. Livingston, then U.S. minister and plenipotentiary to France.²¹ At that time, Livingston possessed a legal monopoly for a steam-powered boat that could run on the Hudson, but only if he could construct a boat that could run at least four miles an hour.²² He tried the endeavor twice before but was stymied by the mechanics.²³ When Livingston and Fulton met in 1802, they discussed plans to build a steamboat that could run from New York City to Albany. Their goals and skills seemed a perfect match. Fulton had the firm grasp on mechanics, which Livingston lacked. He would assist Livingston in the construction of a boat that could meet the four-m.p.h. quota for his monopoly. Fulton also was familiar with a number of prominent French scientists. Livingston, on the other hand, had the financial means and the political clout to make Fulton's mechanics a reality. For Fulton, who had struggled monetarily, this was a welcome opportunity for paid employment.²⁴ They began working together immediately.²⁵ Through some finagling, they convinced the British government to grant them an export license for an engine from Boulton and Watt, a pivotal acquisition. From then on, Livingston handled the finance and patent, and dealt with customs, while Fulton completed theoretical work and experiments, supervising the construction of the engine and boat.²⁶ They planned for the enterprise

they hoped would change river travel forever.

As visitors to the exhibit stand at the glass doors marking the entrance to the Square Gallery, they will hear a soundtrack of whistles and calliopes. (Some of this period music is derived from recordings available at *steamboats.org*).²⁷ Even the most tentative visitor, standing uncertain in the threshold, cannot help but lean closer, pry open the door—and step into the age of steamboats. A quote from Robert Fulton creeps across the three facing walls: “As the component parts of all new machines may be said to be old...the mechanic should sit down among levers, screws, wedges, wheels, etc. like a poet among letters of the alphabet, considering them as the exhibition of his thoughts; in which a new arrangement transmits a new idea to the world.” Below this quote, the workings of the basic steam engine are first introduced with the mechanical drawings and watercolors by Albany artist/draftsman Richard Varick DeWitt (1800-1868). These drawings illustrate the complexity of the engine, the mechanics of which Livingston could little comprehend. The delicate ink washes on rag paper feature handwritten notations and specifications.²⁸ In 1806, Fulton arrived back in the States to work on the hull of the burgeoning vessel, the *North River Steamboat of Clermont*. When construction was finally completed in the spring of 1807, the vessel’s dimensions measured 140 feet long, sixteen feet beam, and seven feet depth of hold, with twenty-eight inches draft of water.²⁹ On August 17, 1807, the steamboat set sail from a dock in New York City near the State Prison in Greenwich Village (The prison would close twenty years later, with the opening of Sing Sing upriver).³⁰ A small crowd gathered to watch from shore, a jumble of faces splashed with surprise, fear, skepticism, relief, even jealousy. Fulton watched from the deck as his craft completed the first successful steamboat voyage of any substantial distance, chugging along at a respectable five miles an hour. The thirty-two hour trip to Albany passed without serious incident, the boat only stopping briefly for a few minor repairs. Soon after, Fulton wrote to his friend and mentor Joel Barlow that:

The morning I left New York there were not perhaps thirty persons in the city who believed that the boat would even move one mile per hour, or be of the least utility...and although the prospect of personal emolument has been some inducement to me, yet I feel infinitely more pleasure in reflecting on the immense advantage my country will derive from the invention.³¹

Within weeks, the *North River Steamboat* was set to ferry passengers up and down the Hudson. The fare for a trip from New York to Albany was seven dollars. (Current visitors to the Albany Institute of History and Art can enter the exhibit for only eight dollars.)³² And though the *North River Steamboat* has long since

made its final trip up the Hudson, studies by DeWitt on display in the Square Gallery provide an accurate depiction of the vessel. In *Three Part Study of a Boat*, DeWitt shows the *North River of Clermont* as it first appeared in 1807, and after remodeling in 1808. A series of insets provide a privileged glimpse that most regular passengers would not have been privy to.³³ The primary oval inset depicts the original vessel, the middle provides the remodeled boat with covered paddle-wheel, and the bottom inset shows the engine and interior of the boat.³⁴

Paintings across from DeWitt's works offer a new perspective on the *North River Steamboat*. In depictions by E.L. Henry and Robert Havell, Jr., the faces of onlookers along the banks are biased with time and nostalgia. In Havell's 1840 oil painting *The Steamer Clermont*, a crowd cheers during the boat's maiden voyage. In Henry's 1910 rendering of *The Clermont Making a Landing at Cornwall* (most likely inspired by the 1909 Hudson-Fulton Celebration), there is a similar level of Romanticism, though the reaction of the crowd is a little more diverse.

In actuality, reactions to this new steamboat were mixed. Resistance came from a handful of Hudson River sloops. Jealous captains seeking reparations for lost profits rammed the steamboat, repeatedly putting it out of service.³⁵ Other captains emphasized the danger of steamboat boiler explosions. A sloop ticket from 1809 (featured in a case below the paintings) promises the traveler the most reliable passage with provisions.³⁶ Certainly, many people were fearful of the large and noisy steamboat and opted for transit by other means. It is said that when sailors of other crafts first found themselves alongside of the steamboat, "gaining upon them in spite of contrary wind and tide, [they] actually abandoned their vessels and took to the woods in fright."³⁷ As the boat moved along the river at night, some onlookers prayed, calling it a "monster moving on the waters defying the winds and tide, and breathing flames and smoke."³⁸ But a number of people praised the speed and efficiency of the "Steam-Boat," and its representation in art, news, and journals continued. By 1808, only a year into the *North River's* service, a poem had already been written about it. The work is attributed to Fulton's friend Joel Barlow, an American poet who helped Thomas Paine publish the first part of *The Age of Reason* in 1795. The poem, *The Steam Boat*, is scrawled on a sheet of paper today taped together and yellowed with age. "It is the work of fiendish genius/ Nurtured in this western clime,/ Where free-born millions hence delighted/ Shall feel th'inventive power sublime."³⁹

But despite mixed reactions and minor setbacks, Livingston and Fulton could finally rest easy by March of 1808. In the case beneath DeWitt's drawings sits a New York State document extending the monopoly first granted to Livingston in 1798. It gives both partners full reign on the Hudson: exclusive rights to all

steam navigation. This meant they now had authority to seize the steamboats of competitors and wield penalties for injury or destruction done to their own.⁴⁰ The river was cleared for their steamboat dominance.

The right-hand corner of the gallery features engravings of men pivotal to the steamboat enterprise. An engraving by Alonzo Chappel depicts Fulton; one by Asher B. Durand shows Barlow.⁴¹ There are also similar miniatures of Richard Varick DeWitt, Daniel Drew (later owner of the *People's Line*), and Robert R. Livingston.⁴² Visitors may pause in front of a May 6, 1814, letter to the *Albany Argus* in which Fulton advertises the freight service of not only the *North River Steamboat*, but also two newer vessels: the *Paragon* and the *Car of Neptune*.⁴³ Along with the earlier designed *Richmond* and future designs for the *Chancellor Livingston* (unveiled in 1816), the Fulton-Livingston steamboat enterprise was on its way to becoming a small fleet. But Fulton would never live to see the vast armada that was to come. A case in the Square Gallery contains an unassuming letter from Robert L. Livingston to his brother, John. Dated February 24, 1815, it reads:

[I] have received the melancholy news of the Death of poor Fulton. He caught a severe cold about a fortnight since in New Jersey, John R. Livingston having prevailed upon him to accompany him to Trenton—he died yesterday morning his loss will be severely felt both by his friends and the public.⁴⁴

The next decade passed with the unveiling of several new steamships: *Demologus* (later launched under the name *Fulton the First*), the *DeWitt Clinton*, and the final debut of the *Chancellor Livingston*.⁴⁵ As visitors move into the adjacent Round Gallery, they will be greeted by letters, photographs, and the works of “port painters,” a group of New York marine artists who painted steamboats on canvas in the style of the Hudson River School painters. (Many of these paintings were later made into prints by Currier & Ives.) The gallery features steamboat portraits by James Bard, Fred Pansing, Joseph B. Smith, Antonio Jacobsen, and Charles Parsons and his son, Charles R. Parsons. They are commonly considered the leading marine artists of the era.⁴⁶

Rates cheapened with the overturning of the Fulton-Livingston monopoly in 1824. The landmark court case, *Gibbons v. Ogden*, spurred an age when steamboats were made faster, more efficient, increasingly elegant, and in greater numbers. In 1824 the *James Kent* could make the journey to Albany in less than half the time of the *North River Steamboat*'s maiden voyage: fifteen hours and thirty minutes.⁴⁷ Two years later, the transit time was cut by another three hours. Passages were

made both day and night with the addition of sleeping cabins. As visitors to the exhibit move along the walls of the Round Gallery, they enter into a new area of steamboat travel. An earthenware plate honoring Chief Justice John Marshall, presiding judge in the *Gibbons v. Ogden* case, is one of the many artifacts celebrating the beginning of this whirlwind. This kind of earthenware, produced by English potters Enoch Wood & Sons, was commonly used in the dining rooms of the new independent and passenger-oriented steamships.⁴⁸ Dinner, dessert, and soup plates all featured the standard dark-blue transfer-printed shell border in the tradition of Staffordshire china.⁴⁹

By 1863, the Hudson River Day Line offered new luxury in passenger transport on the Hudson. Amidst art displays and chamber music, commuters and tourists took in the majesty of the Hudson. Day Line promotions included the slogan “strictly first class—no freight.”⁵⁰ As modern historian and author Donald C. Ringwald writes in *Hudson River Day Line: The Story of a Great American Steamboat Company*: “No one had seen America until he had seen the Hudson River, and no one had seen the Hudson River properly unless he had done so from the deck of a Day Line steamer.”⁵¹ The Round Gallery contains oil paintings of these magnificent vessels. Also on display are guidebooks such as Disturnell’s *Railway and Ship Guide*, published by the American News Company in 1865. It features maps and information on fares, distances, and steamer departure times. The 1860s were the golden age of steamboat travel, the era of dinner parties, cotillions, and brass bands. All of this was offered with the elegance of first-class hotels for nominal fares. In the center of the Round Gallery is a mannequin wearing a ball gown restyled from a wedding dress. It was considered the height of high fashion in the grand saloons on board “palace steamers.”⁵² A mere century before, women and children seldom traveled alone. Now children ten to twelve years of age would meet friends on deck. Women attended social gatherings on board, and now possessed the means to visit friends and relatives up and down the river. As rail and steam services became widely publicized and accessible, travel became commonplace.

But just as the steamboat rose from obscurity, so too did it fade with the coming of the twentieth century. The gallery slowly comes to an end with a black and white photograph from an unknown photographer. The pictured steamboat, the *C.W. Morse*, seems almost weary. At 427 feet long and four stories tall, it once was one of the longest side-wheel steamers on the river.⁵³ Eventually, it was sold at auction and dismantled for scrap. The steamboat era disintegrated with the growing use of automobiles and railroads in the 1920s and ’30s, and with the increasingly passenger-oriented air travel system that developed in the late

1940s and early '50s. Internal combustion engines and electric power came to dominate the travel industry.⁵⁴ Steamboats became something of a novelty in the 1920s, and the once grand and powerful Hudson River Day Line struggled to find passengers for day-trip excursions to Bear Mountain and Indian Point Park. By the Depression, the Day Line filed for bankruptcy. Despite a brief reprieve during World War II, it was forced to end service on December 31, 1948.⁵⁵

Today, there are few remaining artifacts from the steamboat era. One can still board the 220-foot steamboat *Ticonderoga* in Shelburne, Vermont. It was salvaged from Lake Champlain after service ceased in 1953 and grounded as an addition to the Shelburne Museum. It has since become a National Historic Landmark.⁵⁶ The Arabia Steamboat Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, features cargo and other artifacts recovered from the steamboat *Arabia*, which once traveled the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and sank in 1856. Online, the curious steamboat enthusiast may explore several virtual exhibits; *steamboats.com* features hundreds of steamboat photos, links, and other historical data. But when it comes to the history of steamboats on the Hudson, a trip to this exhibit provides the best perspective. It ends with a quote from Mark Twain: "The steamboats were finer than anything on shore. Compared with superior dwelling-houses and first-class hotels in the valley, they were indubitably magnificent, they were palaces."⁵⁷

Ruth Greene-McNally, the curator in charge of this exhibit, tends to agree. When asked what one thing she wanted visitors to come away with after viewing the displays, what sense she wanted them to retain about the era, she said that it was "a vivid sense of steamboat transportation in its 'heyday' and the social significance of commercial steamboat service. For the first time, everyday citizens could afford to see the country and own the view of the plentiful Hudson River Valley, and they were able to do so in style."⁵⁸

Endnotes

1. The Hudson River Maritime Museum, Hudson River Whalers http://www.hrmm.org/hudsonny/hudson_whalers.htm.
2. Rebecca Haynes, "Explore The Hudson Valley's Rich History," Hudson River History Tour, <http://www.hudsonriver.com/history.htm>.
3. Ibid.
4. Ruth Greene-McNally, "Exhibition Outline," the Albany Institute of History and Art.
5. The Albany Institute of History and Art, "History of the Albany Institute," <http://www.albany-institute.org/HTML/history.htm>.
6. John J. McEneny, *Albany: Capital City on the Hudson*. (Sun Valley, CA: American Historical Press, 1998), 131-133.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY KORNEL A. KRECHOWIECKI

Most of old Bay View Avenue has deteriorated, leaving a path marked with stones, branches, and fallen trees

Hidden History at Storm King Mountain

By Kris A. Hansen

Along the Hudson River at Cornwall-on-Hudson, nature has been healing the wounds of an embattled past. There is history hidden by the shore, but to discover it necessitates a short journey back to a bygone era. An old, dirt-covered school bus turnaround stands along Bay View Avenue (Route 218) just before the Storm King Highway's southward ascent up the mountain. The turnaround provides entry onto—not a hiking trail, but the remains of an abandoned public street that once was an extension of Bay View Avenue leading down to the Hudson River's shore.

This road, long deserted by traffic and neglected of human care, is scarcely accessible except to the adventurous. Shaded by dense tree growth, it descends deep into the woods, following the edge of a drop-off, until the roadbed largely disappears into a dirt path strewn with leaves and pebbly rock. Along this path, unkempt from natural washout, holes, and many fallen trees, a natural wonder-

land almost fifty years in the making reveals itself. Autumn is a particularly picturesque time here, as golden leaves float gently down to earth and carpet the landscape with their bronze hue. Deer, wild turkeys, and an occasional coyote make a crackling sound as they scurry across this landscape.

As the steep slope levels off, the path begins to vanish underneath thick overgrowth. The old avenue almost disappears, but through the brush ahead a small, unnamed meadow comes into view. The sudden glare of sunshine stuns the eyes with brightness. The meadow is easily traversed as the terrain becomes flat and clear of rocks. The size of the meadow is apparent; its perimeter is lined with lofty trees probably planted by nature long ago. A wisp of breeze rustles the leaves to create the only audible sounds to be heard in such a beautiful yet isolated place. In the end, nature won, reclaiming for the present a mountainside of untouched beauty.

In 1873, writer-historian Lewis Beach described the beauty of Bay View Avenue:

This is a most beautiful Drive. It appears to the best advantage at sun-set. Commanding a fine view of the water its whole length, it needs the quiet, subdued shadows of evening to bring out the beauties of the scene in their full force... The road is pleasantly winding and unpleasantly short. No one that ever tried it but complained of its limited extent. It leads to the point of Storm-king and is not over a mile in length...¹

Today the thick tree growth along old Bay View Avenue obscures clear vistas of the river. However, beyond the meadow and through the trees the first glimpses of it come into view. The now undetectable Briggs Road once intersected with Bay View²; today there is no longer a clear path to finish the trip to the shoreline. The terrain offers space to roam among the tall trees and to explore near the rocks and see the river.

At the Hudson's shoreline can be found a clue that history dwells here. Hidden across the railroad tracks, imbedded into rock and washed by the river tides, is a metal geodetic marker inscribed "Hubbard 2."³ The U.S. Geological Survey's Earth Science Information Center says it has no information concerning the inscription. However, maps, land records, and census records show that a man named Edward Hubbard lived



The "Hubbard 2" geodetic marker set in a rock at the Hudson River's edge



The old Hubbard's Point juts out into the Hudson River

in this area. The marker may indicate one of the points on his property.

Hubbard was a Hudson River steamboat pilot who moved from Newburgh to settle in Cornwall with his family sometime between 1848 and 1850.⁴ An ordinary working man, his life was filled with pain and sorrow. He lost his first wife, Sarah, in 1848, most likely in childbirth; his infant daughter died three months later.⁵ He was destined to

lose another wife and several more of his young children during his lifetime.

In 1852, during his residence in Cornwall, Hubbard suffered still more grief. While piloting the new and very popular steamboat *Henry Clay* downriver on July 28, the craft suddenly burst into flames near Yonkers. Fires raged onboard as more than eighty people perished. Shortly after the disaster, Hubbard and the ship's other officers were charged with manslaughter.⁶

The criminal charge hung heavy over Hubbard's head. If convicted, he faced ten years in prison, leaving his second wife, several children, and many extended family members without his support. As a result of witness testimony at the trial, held in New York City in October 1853, Hubbard was completely exonerated of any wrongdoing. He returned to Cornwall a hero, the result of his life-saving actions at the time of the disaster.⁷ However, Hubbard did not live the life of a hero. He maintained an unassuming existence, providing for his large family by continuing to pilot Hudson River steamboats.

With the cloud of the trial lifted and a future seemingly more certain, Hubbard and his second wife, Laneretta, purchased ten acres of land at the base of Storm King Mountain.⁸ The seller was Christopher Miller, a partner of Hubbard's in a ferry service running between Cornwall and Cold Spring. Their relationship was so solid that Hubbard named one of his sons after Miller.⁹

Located an easy distance from Cornwall Landing, a frequent steamboat stop, Hubbard's property was one of several homesteads in the area. For recreation in the mid-nineteenth century, these neighbors watched the never-ending stream of steamboats filled with eager passengers bound for far-off places like New York City or Albany. Nearer to home, a regatta could fill a summer's day. Local young men from both the Hubbard and Ward families were known to enjoy scull races¹⁰ on the river, while their families and friends watched from shore. The elder Hubbard enjoyed a row on the river himself, but at a more leisurely pace. Nathaniel P.

Willis, the noted writer who resided in Cornwall (and the man who renamed *Butter Hill* to the more ominous *Storm King*), reminisced:

Our boatman was Hubbard, the renowned ferryman between Cornwall and Cold Spring and the indispensable guide to the Highlands and their histories and mysteries...Hubbard telling us something we wanted to know at every dip of his oar...pointed out a fine eagle, swooping around the shoulder of Storm King, as we glided slowly through the water at the monarch's feet...Hubbard, as you know, has been the pilot on the river through trying scenes..."¹¹

Those trying scenes had been tempered for the pilot by his family and his home on land bordered by Storm King Mountain on one side and washed by the waters of the Hudson River on the other. Jutting out a bit into the river, the property was known for years as Hubbard's Point. An old map of Orange County clearly indicates the name "E. Hubbard" at a spot along the Hudson's Cornwall shore.¹²

The remains of a stone foundation near the end of old Bay View Avenue may possibly mark the location of Hubbard's house. Over the years the precise location of his property has been lost; poring through land records proved a formidable task. It must be noted that the method of surveying during that time did not aid in the search. Markers and landmarks were often living pieces of landscape or moveable objects. Such practices were evident in the land records of Hubbard's purchase, in which cedar trees and piles of rocks were employed as boundary markers:

All that certain lot piece or parcel of land situated in the town of Cornwall county of Orange bounded as follows beginning at a cedar tree on the bank of the Hudson river...running thence up the river as the river runs ten chains to a stone heap near a rock at or by the river thence...to a small cedar marked then south...to a stake + stone heap..."¹³

Piles of stones are still clearly visible, but there is no way to confirm with certainty that these mark Hubbard's land, or if they were actually official markers. However, Hubbard did live on this land and became father to several more children here.

The simple joys in Hubbard's life turned to grief again in 1860 when he lost his second wife.¹⁴ Shortly afterward, Christopher Miller, who held the mortgage on Hubbard's property, also died. Hubbard was forced to sell his home.¹⁵ He purchased a house on Cornwall's Hudson Street and moved there with his third wife, Sarah Jane.¹⁶ By this time, his older children were grown; some had



“The Hudson river near Storm King,” by the 1890s, the railroad had created a cove just south of Hubbard’s Point, a portion of an old road is visible at the bottom of the image

married and set off to start their own lives. During the remainder of his life, Hubbard was known simply as “Captain.” When he died in 1893, *The New York Times* published a simple obituary: “Capt. Edward Hubbard, one of the oldest of Hudson River pilots, died at his home, in Cornwall, Thursday.”¹⁷

The land once known as Hubbard’s Point experienced many changes in later years. It eventually made its way into the hands of a man named Dean; for a time, it became known as Dean’s Point. (Local residents still refer to it as such.) The

fact that it was previously known as Hubbard’s Point had been lost to history.

Sometime after the mid-nineteenth century the community at the fringe of Storm King Mountain became home to a vibrant summer-resort industry. Hudson River School paintings and the writings of N.P. Willis enticed vacationers from New York City to flock to Cornwall for a sojourn far from the steaming metropolis. Grand Victorian homes that graced the Hudson River along the length of Bay View Avenue were converted to boarding houses or hotels.¹⁸ In time, properties such as Hubbard’s were sold, divided into smaller parcels, and resold several times over.

In the 1880s, the railroad cut around Storm King Mountain along the river’s edge and across the former Hubbard’s Point.¹⁹ Miles of track were laid, making it possible for freight trains to make their way through the Hudson Highlands. Chugging engines sliced through the mountain silence, bringing soot and smoke. Opportunities were lost and found. A new boat landing by Hubbard’s Point never came to pass,²⁰ perhaps a sign of times to come. However, a new railroad depot was constructed at Cornwall-on-Hudson (which had separated from Cornwall). It was so popular that it eventually was expanded.²¹ Soon, Cornwall Landing became a railroad hub for the shipment of Pennsylvania coal.²²

In the early twentieth century, the land at the base of Storm King Mountain, especially around Hubbard’s Point, experienced another change. Plans were drawn to bring the New York City Aqueduct through Cornwall by way of Bay View Avenue, passing directly down to the old Hubbard’s Point property and then across the Hudson River by tunnel. Excavation and drilling, shafts and tunnels, and tracks for a narrow-gauge rail line peppered the landscape with the debris of

demolition. Curious onlookers came to check on the progress.²³

During the 1920s the new Storm King Highway was completed, offering improved transportation in the Hudson Highlands.²⁴ However, this modern venture could not stop what was perhaps inevitable—the area around old Bay View Avenue ultimately fell into ruin. Any remaining homes, vacation hotels, and boarding houses were demolished in what became the final insult to this mountainside community.

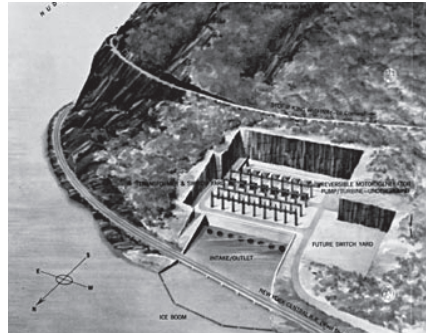
In the 1960s, Consolidated Edison planned to install an 800-foot-long powerhouse at Storm King Mountain, with a huge reservoir atop it.²⁵ The company brought in roaring bulldozers whose hungry blades tore into the once pastoral mountainside, altering the landscape forever. Old survey markers were consumed by massive earth-moving machinery as cedar trees fell to the earth and piles of rocks were turned over into the dirt. The sounds of destruction rang through the Highlands as more of Bay View Avenue history was erased.

Following seventeen years of litigation this land was returned to the people. Con Edison was forced to stop its project. Unfortunately, what remained at the base of Storm King was a desecrated and severely altered landscape. Some of this land fell under the stewardship of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC)²⁶, which designated it as Storm King State Park. The rest of the land along the old section of Bay View Avenue remained a part of Cornwall-on-Hudson.

During subsequent decades, nature worked to reclaim its place on the mountain. New growth and trees sprung up on the awkward piles of earth that were left to rest where they had been moved by machinery. Animals returned to make their homes or to win back their migration paths. Slowly a living forest emerged.

The meadow that was crossed to arrive at the old Hubbard property is unnamed. However, its location could invoke such a name as “Hubbard’s Point Meadow.” North of this meadow, in plain sight, is a huge rock. Driven into its top is an old iron property stake. At some point, this evidently marked the boundary of one of the land parcels along Bay View Avenue. This rock sits just below another quiet meadow, which could fittingly be called “Bay View Meadow” because of its proximity to old Bay View Avenue.

Between the meadows, there is no easy path to follow, since much of what



MARIST COLLEGE ARCHIVES.
THE MARIST ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY PROJECT

**Proposal for a 800-foot-long powerhouse
at Storm King Mountain (detail)**



The “Shore Road Meadow” is the largest of the three meadows

was easily traversed long ago is now overgrown with brush and trees. A few prickly bushes seem ready to inflict pain upon those who dare to enter; patches of poison ivy in some spots add to a trekker’s challenge. The meadows do not appear to be naturally created but manmade, most likely due to the bulldozing that had been done in the area.

On the north side of “Bay View Meadow” there is an entrance to another abandoned thoroughfare, Shore Road. Through the thick brush, it becomes evident that this road nearly paralleled the railroad tracks. Old stone and brick foundations, a rusted fire hydrant, a fallen telephone pole, and vestiges of what may have been an icehouse sit by the road, serving as reminders that this land once was populated. Beyond the steep ridge along the roadside, sunlight glints off a small pond near the railroad tracks.

For a brief section, Shore Road comes clearly into view, its edges lined with tall shade trees forming a canopy that allows just enough daylight to flicker through to illuminate the way. The gloom makes it easier to envision the time when families like the Hubbards, Wards, and Clarks walked down the road into Cornwall Landing, itself a mere memory.

There is one more meadow to cross, conceivably called “Shore Road Meadow.” Wild grass, some shrubs, and a handful of young cedar trees dot its landscape. Shortly after exiting this meadow to the north, caution must be exercised. Shore

Road ends abruptly right at the railroad tracks, where long freight trains often can be seen. A white stone marker next to the tracks reads “N.Y. 52,” indicating that this spot is exactly fifty-two miles north of New York City. Located south of this marker is the tract once known as Hubbard’s Point.

Today, the land at the base of Storm King Mountain holds little resemblance to a time gone by and a life long past. Although it is impossible to know where the old property lines had been drawn, it is probable that some of Hubbard’s Point and neighboring parcels near the old abandoned Bay View Avenue now sit safely for posterity in the north end of Storm King State Park. Although these lands have been extensively altered by man, history remains there.

To learn about Storm King State Park, visit www.nynjtc.org/index.html or contact the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, Bear Mountain, NY at 845-786-2701.

Kris A. Hansen is a native of the Hudson Highlands and the author of the book *Death Passage on the Hudson: The Wreck of the Henry Clay*, (Fleischmanns, N.Y.: Purple Mountain Press, Ltd, 2004).



The marker “N.Y. 52” along the railroad tracks marks the distance from New York City at exactly fifty-two miles

Endnotes

1. Lewis Beach, “Town of Cornwall: Bay-View Avenue,” in *Cornwall* (Newburgh: Ruttenbur & Sons Printers, 1873), 98-99. (Courtesy of Janet Dempsey, Cornwall Town Historian)
2. The locations of Bay View Avenue, Shore Road, and Briggs Road are found in land records for the Village of Cornwall-on-Hudson, section 109-1-1, dated 9-11-67.
3. Geodetic marker at Designation: Hubbard 2 Reset, LX 1302, www.ngs.noaa.gov.
4. Federal Census records for 1840 Newburgh, Orange County, New York, and for 1850 Cornwall, Orange County, New York.
5. “Vital Records Taken from the *Newburgh Gazette*,” Orange County Genealogical Society.
6. Kris A. Hansen, *Death Passage on the Hudson: The Wreck of the Henry Clay* (Fleischmanns: Purple Mountain Press, Ltd, 2004), 39-40, 112, 167.
7. *Ibid.*, 135-136, 138, 163.
8. Land records for Orange County, New York, Year 1853, Liber 126, p. 29.
9. “Vital Records Taken from the *Newburgh Gazette*,” Orange County Genealogical Society.
10. Erene Ward Norsen, *Ward Brothers: Champion of the World* (Vantage, 1958), 17. (Courtesy of Janet Dempsey, Cornwall Town Historian)
11. Nathaniel P. Willis, “The Convalescent,” in *Out-Doors at Idlewild* (New York:Charles Scribner,

- 1855), letter 11 written July 1855 to Morris, printed *Home Journal*. (Courtesy of Janet Dempsey, Cornwall Town Historian)
12. The name "E. Hubbard" can be found noted on a map presently on display at the Newburgh Free Library Local History Room, Newburgh, NY: *Map of Orange County, New York, 1850/1851*, from actual surveys by J.C. Sidney C.E. author of *Twelve Miles Around New York* (Newburgh, NY: Newell S. Brown, Publisher), map submitted 1851, entered according to an Act of Congress in the year 1850/1851 by Robert P. Smith in the clerk's office in the District Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Also Hubbard's Point is mentioned in a news item of the *The Cornwall Times*, 13 March 1880.
 13. Land records, Orange County, New York, Year 1853, Liber 126, p. 29.
 14. Old Town Cemetery records, North Section, No. 1, Newburgh, NY.
 15. Land records Orange County, New York, Year 1866, Liber 193, p. 470-473.
 16. Land records Orange County, New York, Year 1867, Liber 198, p. 368-369 and Federal Census records for 1870 and 1880 Cornwall, New York.
 17. "Obituary Notes," *The New-York Times*, 14 January 1893.
 18. Janet Dempsey, with Colette C. Fulton and James I. O'Neill, "Bay View Villa," *Cornwall, New York: Images From The Past 1788-1920* (Cornwall: Friends of the Cornwall Library, 1994), 84.
 19. Janet Dempsey, with Colette C. Fulton and James I. O'Neill, "West Shore Depot," *Cornwall, New York: Images From The Past 1788-1920* (Cornwall: Friends of the Cornwall Library, 1994), 70.
 20. *The Cornwall Times*, 13 March 1880.
 21. Janet Dempsey, with Colette C. Fulton and James I. O'Neill, "West Shore Depot," *Cornwall, New York: Images From The Past 1788-1920* (Cornwall: Friends of the Cornwall Library, 1994), 70.
 22. Janet Dempsey, with Colette C. Fulton and James I. O'Neill, "The Coal Docks," *Cornwall, New York: Images From The Past 1788-1920* (Cornwall: Friends of the Cornwall Library, 1994), 71.
 23. Janet Dempsey, with Colette C. Fulton and James I. O'Neill, "The New York City Aqueduct," *Cornwall, New York: Images From The Past 1788-1920* (Cornwall: Friends of the Cornwall Library, 1994), 131.
 24. Janet Dempsey, with Colette C. Fulton and James I. O'Neill, "The Storm King Highway" *Cornwall, New York: Images From The Past 1788-1920* (Cornwall: Friends of the Cornwall Library, 1994), 138-140.
 25. "The Scenic Hudson Decision: Timeline," Marist Environmental History Project <http://library.marist.edu/archives/mehp/scenicdecision.html>.
 26. Land records Orange County New York, Year 1981, Liber 2218, p. 132-137.

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PHOTO: SEYMOUR WEINSTEIN/ALL PHOTOS FROM HUDSON RIVER MARITIME MUSEUM

Cornell Steamboat Co. tugboats at Kingston, 1947

Hudson River Maritime Museum

Kate Giglio '07

On this weekend afternoon in October, two brothers visiting the Hudson River Maritime Museum zip back and forth, under and around several boat hulls, old steamboat bells, and rows of vibrant storyboards. As they ruthlessly spin a captain's wheel that looks at least 100 years old, I cringe a little, then almost jump to pull one boy back from incessantly ringing another bell. But their enthusiasm stops me—and I realize these artifacts are as durable as their legacy.



The weathered brick museum building, featuring vibrant scenes painted on its windows, huddles near Kingston's East Strand. It houses the most comprehensive assemblage of Hudson River maritime artifacts and information anywhere. Indeed, the museum is really the only place dedicated to the Hudson's maritime past—and it shows. Antique tools, aging photographs, yards of spliced line...all of it is labeled as meticulously as a display in the Smithsonian.

A small lobby gives way to cozy rooms focusing on nearly every aspect of sailing or boating on the Hudson. There are paintings, prints, photographs, vessel blueprints, and ship models, as well as a research library.

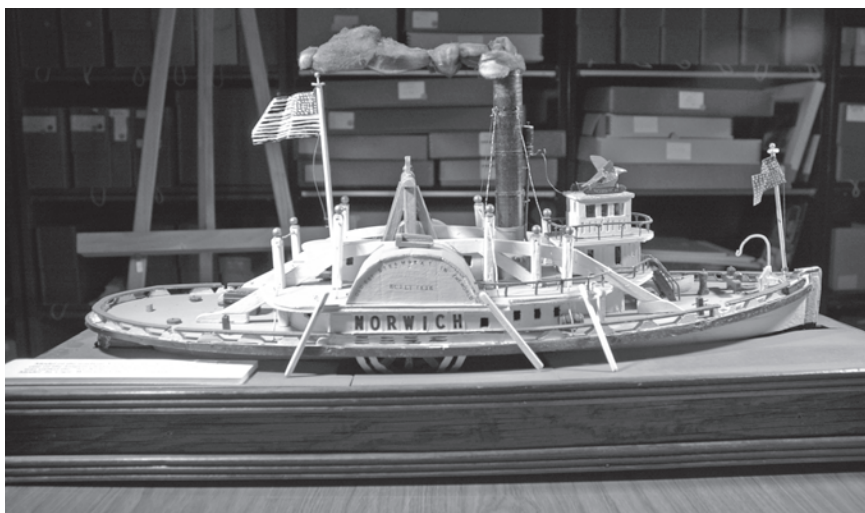


The Mary Powell in the Roundout, c. 1900



*The 1909 replica of *The Half Moon* trails behind *The North River* during the Hudson-Fulton Tercentennial Commemoration*

Through a set of double doors, one finds a warehouse-like display of small boats and various relics. A waiting-room bench from the old ferry building in Newburgh looks larger than life, positioned across from a tiny replica of the steamboat *Hendrick Hudson*. Antique bells, wheels, and rudders are scattered across the space. Also on display are a lifeboat from the famed steamboat *Mary Powell*, a lighthouse tender, and several ice yachts. Outside, the 1898 steam tugboat *Mathilda* looms above the many Sunday visitors milling around the docks



Steamboat models from the Hudson River Maritime Museum's collection

on Rondout Creek. Next to it sits a 100-year-old shad boat.

The museum was founded in 1980 by members of the Steamship Alexander Hamilton Society, the National Maritime Historical Society, and local historians. But its history dates nearly four centuries earlier—to 1609, when Henry Hudson declared Rondout a prime spot for a trading port. From that point on, the Hudson River would be an artery of commerce, teeming with all kinds of vessels, and Rondout (later to become part of the City of Kingston) would be the major port



Shad boat



Model schooner

between New York City and Albany.

Some days, replicas of historic ships dock near the museum. The slave ship *Amistad* visits periodically from its home base in Mystic, Connecticut, reminding visitors of the West African people who were captured and brought across the Atlantic. At other times, the *Clearwater* can be found bobbing beside the museum, its staff eager to discuss the Hudson's environmental welfare.

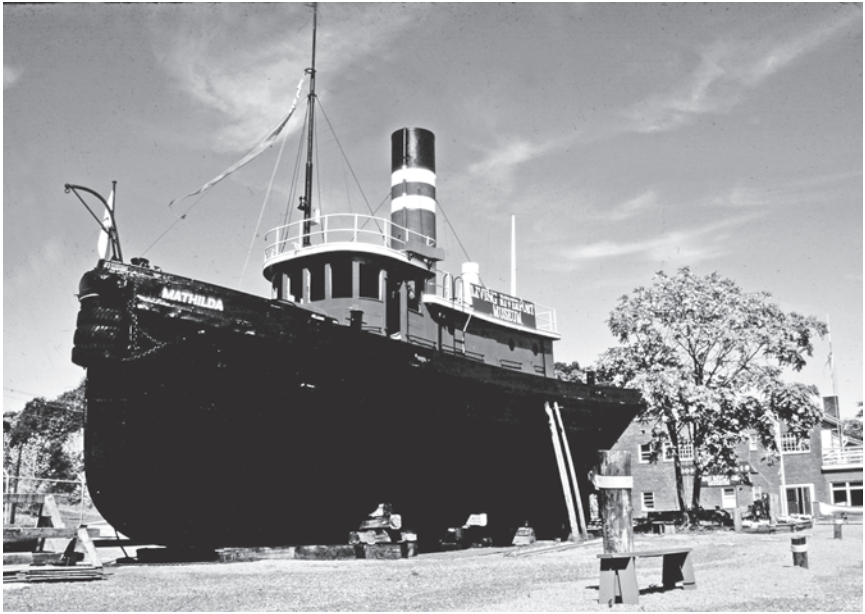


Drafting tools and ship's plans



Replica ship *Amistad* at Kingston, 2006

Each year, the museum hosts a special exhibit focused on a specific river-related theme. This year's is "Racing the Wind: Two Centuries of Iceboating on the Hudson River." Throughout the year, the museum also features many activities and events to enrich the public's understanding of both the history of the river and the Rondout area. These include a series of lectures. Recent featured topics were the building of the sloop *Woody Guthrie*, Hudson Valley Indian history, and



1898 steam tug Mathilda at the Hudson River Maritime Museum

a behind-the-scenes look at the museum's ship- and boat-building exhibit.

Besides such temporary exhibitions, the museum houses several permanent collections. The Donald C. Ringwald Hudson River Steamboat collection, The Cornell Steamboat Company collection, Feeney Reliance Marine Boatbuilding collection, the Ray Ruge Iceboating collection, and the Staples Brick Company collection are just a few examples, many of which include photographs, prints, paintings, ephemera, and artifacts such as gauges, bells, and tools. Plans are in the works to open the 1898 steam tug *Mathilda*, which has graced the museum's grounds since the autumn of 1983.



The Hudson River Maritime Museum is open May through October from noon to 6 p.m., Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. More information can be obtained by logging onto www.hrmm.org or calling 845-338-0071.

Book Review

Donna Merwick. *The Shame and the Sorrow: Dutch-Amerindian Encounters in New Netherland*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press (2006). 332pp.

Paul Otto. *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter in America: The Struggle for Sovereignty in the Hudson Valley*. New York: Berghahn Books (2006). 225pp.

Donna Merwick, senior fellow at the University of Melbourne and author of *Possessing Albany: The Dutch and English Experiences, 1630-1710* (1990), and Paul Otto, associate professor of history at George Fox University, present two distinct sides to Indian-white relations in New Netherland between 1609 and 1664. Merwick's work focuses on Dutch West India Company policies and is significantly European centered; except for his final chapter, Otto stresses events that transpired in the Hudson Valley. The two books complement each other, offering information and insights not found in the other. Otto's last chapter makes comparisons with the Dutch-controlled Cape Colony, while Merwick, employing many more Dutch-language sources, brings out comparisons with the extensive Dutch empire in Asia, including Goa and Batavia.

To Merwick, the Dutch West India Company initially recognized the sovereignty of the Indians, a point that she claims separated the Dutch from other European colonizers. She insists that the company's dealings at first were not as conquistadors; its operations were carefully managed and were specifically intended to prevent violence. Merwick contends that the company's officials did not intend or desire to "reorder the native's construction of realities. They felt no metaphysical obligation to bring them to a Netherlandish worldview." Things were to change, and not simply as a result of increased population and the advance of frontiersmen in New Netherland. To Merwick, the brutality of Kieft's War (1640-1645) and later conflagrations such as the Peach War (1655) and the two Esopus Wars (1659-1664) occurred not just because of local factors such as the personal limitations of Governor Kieft and his administration of the colony. She maintains that Dutch society in the Netherlands became overly materialistic, seeking greater and greater profits from its overseas empire, leading Hollanders to look the other way when colonial officials acted corruptly, lied to the Indians, and/or intentionally provoked racial tensions and wars. By the late 1630s onward, these colonial officials demanded tribute from the Indians, failed to regulate the actions of European settlers, and hired mercenaries (including John Underhill, "hero" of the Pequot War) to fight and massacre Indians in New Netherland.

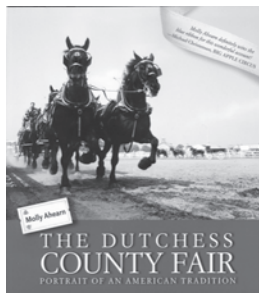
This is the meaning of Merwick's book title, namely a policy that tragically succumbed to greed and resulted in wars and dispossession of native peoples. Instead of an idealized portrait of Holland's golden age in the first half of the seventeenth century, Merwick sees a society that has fallen to temptation in its overseas adventures, resulting in militarism, intolerance, and anti-pluralism. Strangely, in presenting the tragedy, she never provides information or insights about the victims, namely the Munsees and Mahicans. Moreover, she never discusses the multiethnic (not just Dutch) reality of the colony that was a factor in shaping New Netherland's destiny, including its relations with the Indians.

In contrast, Otto recognizes the cultural diversity of the colony and, despite a paucity of documents, he reconstructs the Munsees' rapidly changing world of the seventeenth century. Otto describes the Munsees as diverse native peoples who varied in their relations with and accommodation to the colonists. Instead of writing in vague terms about the four Indian wars in New Netherland, Otto documents the body count. At least 1,600 Munsee men, women, and children perished in Kieft's War. Unlike Merwick, he states that Dutch Indian policies were not unique, but were "typical of European-Indian relations elsewhere." In contrast, he adds that governors from Verhulst to Stuyvesant never recognized Munsee sovereignty over the Indians' natural resources; however, he also shows that the Dutch had few qualms about miscegenation and did not focus their efforts on Christianizing. Otto recognizes the multiethnic reality of European existence in New Netherland. Unlike Merwick, he mentions Thomas Chambers, the prominent Englishman and founder of Wiltwijck (Kingston), and his role in precipitating the First Esopus War.

Much of what Otto presents is already familiar to scholars of Native American history since he draws much from the extensive writings of anthropologist Robert Grumet. However, his book could be useful to a general audience since it is better written and updates Allen Trelease's *Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century* (1960). His treatments of Hudson's interaction with the Indians and the Dutch purchase of Manhattan, his up-to-date portraits of the Dutch governors and their Indian policies, and his accurate ethnographic descriptions of the Munsees could be especially useful to teachers at different levels. Yet, the definitive work on the native peoples of the Hudson Valley and environs still needs to be written. One can only hope that the long-awaited book by Robert Grumet—based on his thirty-five years of research—will fill this gap in Native American history.—*Laurence M. Hauptman, SUNY New Paltz*

New & Noteworthy Books Received

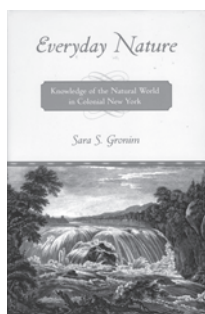
Ann Panagulias



The Dutchess County Fair: Portrait of an American Tradition

Text and photographs by Molly Ahearn (Hensonville, NY: Black Dome Press, 2007). 128 pp. \$15.95 (paperback).
www.blackdomepress.com

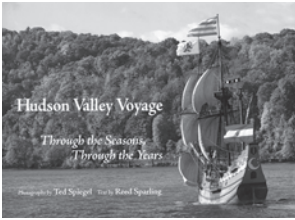
Photography is truly one of the greatest pragmatic and aesthetic inventions of the nineteenth century. Here, it aids in the unique spinning of the tale of Dutchess County's annual celebration of the beauty of agriculture and community, from its modest beginnings with a \$157 matching grant from the New York State Legislature to today's 142-acre extravaganza. The fortunes and hard knocks of the event, if not the county, were as intricate as the finest patchwork quilts displayed at the fair. The bottom line thwarted the ideals of "The Farm" as venues shuffled between bucolic Washington Hollow and bustling Poughkeepsie until reaching its permanent home in Rhinebeck. The fair is what "buy local" is all about: reaping the very best of agrarian life, in product and deed.



Everyday Nature: Knowledge of the Natural World in Colonial New York

By Sara S. Gronim (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press). 272 pp. \$44.95 (cloth). www.rutgerspress.rutgers.edu

This enlightening account of colonists' conundrums is as much about human nature as it is a history of the gradual integration of innovations according to one's own interests in the mastery of Nature itself. Although the concept of "hand of God" acceptance regarding contagion and catastrophe slowly waned, most colonists were content with what they knew for themselves, their own experiences trumping trust in science or expertise of indigenous dwellers. Providentially, the citizenry bred the odd maverick to ensure the supremacy of our species; data was disseminated via encyclopedias and almanacs, as well as through organizations such as King's College (now Columbia University) and the Society for the Promotion of Arts, Agriculture and Oeconomy [sic], founded in 1754 and 1764, respectively.



Hudson Valley Voyage: Through the Seasons, Through the Years

By Reed Sparling with photographs by Ted Spiegel
(Fishkill, NY: Involvement Media, 2007) 159 pp. \$36.95 (hardcover). www.hudsonvalleyvoyage.com

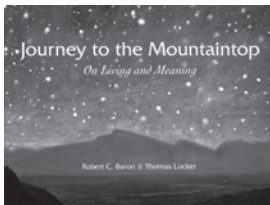
In this veritable Dutch Treat, the book's creators split their contributions right down the middle. Mr. Spiegel provides a photograph for each sense (and, obviously, season), while Mr. Sparling—coeditor of *The Hudson River Valley Review*—crafts a tutorial for every sensibility, the former beguiling, the latter in turns thought- or giggle-provoking. For good measure, the tome is liberally spiced with actual accounts and historical documents. If calling it a “coffee-table book” you must, accompany your prejudice with a cup of Java and a dozen *olykoeks* for dunking while daydreaming of your next ramble.



New York State Police Troop K

By Frank Goderre (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007). 127 pp. \$19.99 (paperback). www.arcadiapublishing.com

Upon occasion, corruption comes on the heels of progress; bigger and better highways with faster and fancier automobiles drove crime from the Big City to the small town. The unflagging, five-year effort of two women, Katherine Mayo and Moyca Newell, led to the establishment of the New York State Constabulary—today's State Police. The evolution of this soldier-policeman, paying homage to Lafayette's Guard Nationale and Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders, is easily grasped in this pictorial album illustrating Troop K's tireless service to Major George Fletcher Chandler's “forgotten man.” Alas, while preserving the peace, Troop K was an accessory to a regrettable act of vandalism. The splendid Washington Hollow Exhibition Hall, constructed in 1867 for the Dutchess County Fair, was razed in order to erect the troops Barracks upon the site in 1970.



Journey to the Mountaintop: On Living and Meaning

By Robert C. Baron and Thomas Locker (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2007). 48 pp. \$25.00 (hardcover). www.fulcrumbooks.com

Reading between the lines, above all the virtue of companionship is exalted in this labor of love. By all means, take the time to scale literal and figurative heights. Then get out your pen, set up your easel, sing about it, dance about it, but for Heaven's sake, please share your sublimely creative musings with a friend!

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