

THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

A Journal of Regional Studies

MARIST



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On the cover:

Gezicht op Nieuw Amsterdam by Johannes Vingboons (1664),
Library of Congress

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Notes & Documents

The Hudson River Valley Institute periodically publishes Notes and Documents to share significant new research and other scholarship that may not otherwise reach its audience.



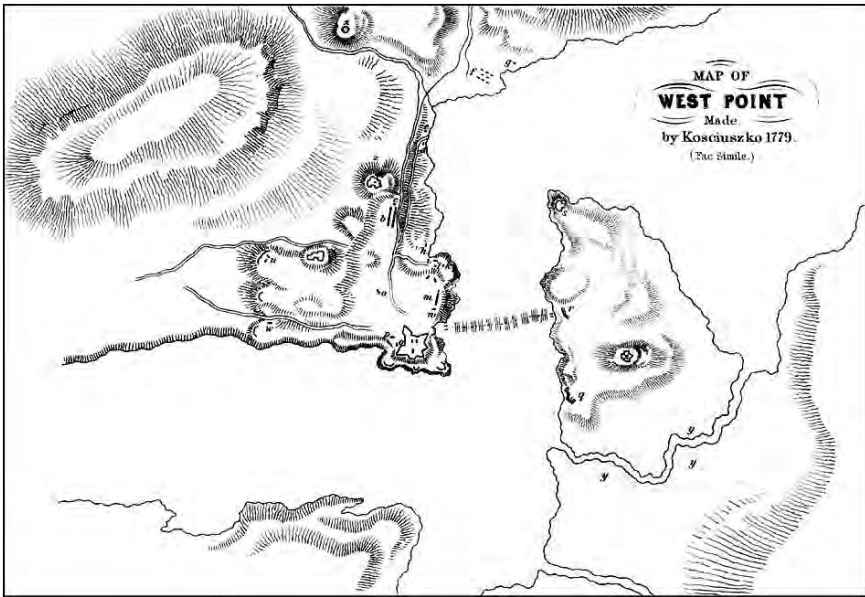
Photograph of the historical marker on Fort Clinton today

Who Planned Fort Arnold?

Merle G. Sheffield; adapted by James M. Johnson

Historians and biographers are always assigning credit or blame to individuals caught up in the great events of history. The contributions of two engineers, Colonels Thaddeus Kosciuszko and Louis Guillaume Servais Deshayes de la Radière, in the construction of Fortress West Point, General George Washington's "key of America," have been debated over the last 236 years. Kosciuszko, the Polish-American hero in the American War of Independence, has generally come out on top. Since 1828, the main fortification at West Point, Fort Clinton/Arnold, has been graced with a monument—and since 1913 a sculpture—honoring him. Kosciuszko's name is closely woven into the whole tapestry of forts and redoubts that guarded the Hudson Highlands during the war. In particular, he was the resident engineer at West Point for a period of two years between his service in other theaters of the war.

Lieutenant Colonel Merle G. Sheffield was a faculty member in the Department of Physics at the United States Military Academy from 1965 to 1971; during my time as a cadet, he became captivated by the role of the other foreign engineer, French Colonel de la Radière. He eventually wrote essays about West Point's Great Chain and boom and la Radière's role in the design of Fort Clinton/Arnold. Based on his research, he



Map of Fortress West Point Defenses from Guide to West Point, and the U.S. Military Academy, with Maps and Engravings (1867) by Edward Carlisle Boynton

decided he needed to clarify who actually planned Fort Clinton: a little-known French-American patriot who gave his life for America's cause. This adaptation of his essay "Who Planned Fort Arnold?" honors Sheffield's historical passion and his service as a soldier and, in retirement, a Peace Corps volunteer. It is a posthumous recognition of his scholarly contributions; LTC Sheffield died in 1991.¹

The reader should understand from the beginning that this is a controversial subject of great interest to a limited number of people. It does, however, highlight how important documentary evidence is in illuminating historical controversies. While some will see this study as an attempt to detract from Kosciuszko's fine record, this is not the case. The authors' interest is to give credit where it is due. La Radière's service with the Continental Army was cut short by his untimely death from consumption on 30 October 1779. He should be honored for what he did, and one of his accomplishments was to draft the plan that would result in the main fort—Fort Clinton/Arnold—and its nearby supporting batteries and redoubt at West Point.

Washington's army suffered from the lack of trained military engineers until Kosciuszko arrived late in 1776 and a number of French officers early in 1777. The need for competent engineers meant that the Continental Congress had to attract Europeans to the Patriot cause. Although numerous soldiers of fortune sought high pay and rapid promotion, qualified engineers were not so plentiful. To fill that void, the Continental Congress directed Benjamin Franklin, Minister to France, to "engage skilful [sic] engineers not exceeding four."² Not yet openly allied with the United States,

France selected Major Louis Le Bègue de Presle Duportail to go to America and serve in the Continental Army. Duportail chose three others to accompany him: Captain de la Radière, Captain Jean Baptiste Joseph de Laumoy, and Lieutenant Jean Baptiste de Gouvion.

After the British ended their expedition in the mid-Hudson River Valley in October 1777, Washington sent la Radière to plan the defenses of that region and to get the work started as quickly as possible. Major General Israel Putnam commanded the troops in the Hudson Highlands Department, while Governor George Clinton oversaw New York State's participation from the temporary capital at Poughkeepsie on the eastern shore of the Hudson north of West Point. The general and the governor both agreed that the new fortifications should be sited at the "west point" of the Hudson. La Radière disagreed and argued for an area to the south, where Forts Montgomery and Clinton had been located before the British destroyed them in their 1777 campaign. The French engineer lost the argument; against his better judgment, he was forced to lay out his fort at West Point. Just as the fort was beginning to take shape in March 1778, la Radière left the post for two weeks and came back to find that Kosciuszko had taken up the duties of engineer. For the next six weeks, a dismal game of "What do we do about this?" was allowed to drag on until la Radière finally left on General Washington's orders.

With these facts in mind, it only remains to say a few words regarding the personalities of the two men before we spell out the documentation that proves the case.



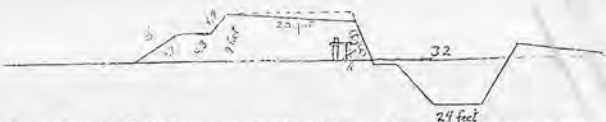
Letter and original plan of Fort Arnold "traced out" by la Radière

There is no doubt that la Radière could not get along with people in general and Americans in particular. On the other hand, Kosciuszko was cordially received and worked extremely well with all ranks.

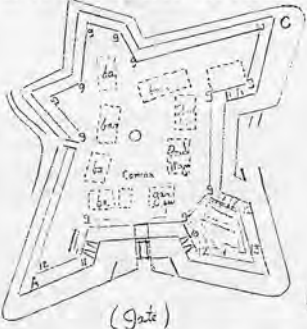
Why has it taken so long to establish the credit for planning this large fort? The answer is linked to the old saying that “Truth is the daughter of time.” Our knowledge of things past often hinges upon chance, whim, and even prejudice. Certain facts are written down, others are not. Remembered facts may be recorded at a later date—or they may not. Memories can be faulty, and documents may be destroyed, lost, or misplaced.

The events of spring, 1778, at West Point left a faint trail for those who became interested in them years later. You might say that time granted another crumb to truth around 1972, when a curious sheet of paper in the possession of a Connecticut family

Transcriptions of the handwritten letter

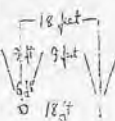


Cube of the breastwork 5 fathoms or 1080 cubique feet. The dith about 32 feet on the top and 24 feet in the bottom, the deepness according to the ground which will be wanted. If we can make this little glacis it would be the best to cover the breast work () so that we can fire early against the {van} up this glacis. Breast work from A in C 20 feet when it will be 9 feet high and a little less when it will be higher. This is no material thing. From A in C the earth must be beaten every foot or 18 inches to make the breast work stronger. None stones must be in the breast work above the banquette. The sticks must be sunk in the ground as in A every two feet. If we have time and fascines enough we must put a rank of fascines perpendicularly to the breast work with sticks in the ground or we must at less put fascines in this manner in

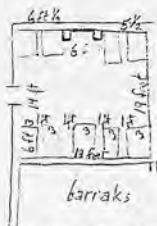


(Gate) *Barkett*

the place where the braces join the posts, three sticks for each fascine at less. We must take care for the ground in all saillant angles because we will get too much ground for them. The embrasures must be 2 feet in the inside and () in the outside and their bottom () from 6 inches since the inside () to the outside (vide the figure. The line of their middle must be perpendicular to the flanc.



The barracks must be two story high. Each room 19 feet by 19 feet the story in the outside. Each room will contain 9 beds about upon the floor and 9 above them so each room will contain 18 beds, 36 men; the two story, 72 men; and in case of great necessity, more. So we want for a garrison of 600 men about 18 rooms of 19 feet by 19 or 9 with storys, or barracks 180 feet long besides the barracks for the officers. I suppose that my barrack will be enough for them and part of these of the quarter master.



I think that we must keep the ground for the pouldre magasin and the store house to put them parallel to the curtain if it is possible, or one as the garde house should (). Each magasin should be 20 feet weidth and 40 feet long in the wid at less. If we had time we could make them bombeproof and so that we could rake use of them like traverse and like citadels.

We must have a gate of 3 or 4 inches thick in which there must be a little door about three feet weidh the great must be 10 feet or 12 and the place through the breastwork about 14 or 16. We must have niquets with sharp above the gate so that the enemy could not put ladder. We must have a cheval de frise upon the bridge 4 feet before the gate and one in the outside of the bridge with some palinados in the two sides of the bridge in it end. So that the enemy would not come early upon this bridge we must cover the bridge at less with an entrenchement of pickets. If we had time we could make one gate on the inside of the breastwork with planks of three inches and loopholls.



With should have a well. If we have not place enough for all barracks we may put some upon the rock in a covered place.

The little parapet round the brinke of the hill must be very small, about so:



Captain Chempion knows the thickness of the other breastwork. That is - about 12 feet and the ditch 18 on the top and deep according to the ground. If we make the redoute he knows the place. We may make the two communication with small parapet if we had not time that is 12 feet thick with palinados.



came to light. It was untitled, unsigned, and a bit hard to decipher, but it was covered with a lot of writing, some sketches, and one large drawing of a fort, obviously Fort Arnold. This plan, and a letter written in 1837 that accompanied it, assures la Radière's rightful credit for the design.³

The faint trail of previous knowledge regarding the plans for the fort comes from many sources and will be outlined here in the briefest manner:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Correspondence</i>
12 January 1778	la Radière to member of Congress "I am going to trace a fort... It is better to fortify less good than to do nothing." ⁴
5 February	Governor Clinton to Major General Horatio Gates, Board of War: "Engineer who has the direction of the works is deficient in point of practical knowledge." ⁵
10 February	Major General Israel Putnam to Congress: "The batteries near the water and the fort to cover them are laid out... I am apprehensive the public service will be delayed by this Engineer." ⁶
24 February	Brigadier General Samuel H. Parsons (acting commander, Hudson Highlands Department) to Clinton: "We have the works going on now, with some order & Spirit. One 1000 sticks of Timber are cutt [sic.] & many got out of ye mountains. I believe I shall this week have them mostly drawn to the Place where the Fort is to be built..." ⁷
5 March	Parsons to Clinton: "La Radiere I am informed intends asking leave to retire from the Post..." ⁸
7 March	Parsons to Washington: "Col. Radiere finding it impossible to complete the fort and ... has desired leave to wait on your Excellency and Congress, which I have granted him..." ⁹
10 March	Parsons to Clinton: "We shall begin to break ground in two days..." ¹⁰
16 March	Parsons to Washington: "I hope to have Two Sides and one Bastion of the Fort in some State of Defence in about a fortnight; the other Sides need very little to Secure them..." ¹¹
21 March	Washington to Major General Alexander McDougall (new commander of the Hudson Highlands Department): "This will be delivered by Colonel de la Radiere..." ¹²
26 March	Clinton to Parsons (still at West Point): "Colo. Kuziazke [sic.] ... will deliver you this..." ¹³

In addition to this chronology, we have two memoirs written by a participant in these events—Samuel Richards of Farmington, Connecticut. Richards was a lieutenant in one of the Connecticut regiments that crossed the frozen Hudson early in January 1778 to begin work on the fort. In 1832, at the age of seventy-nine, he wrote of those

early days for the benefit of interested West Point cadets:

A week or ten days was spent in erecting temporary huts for our covering... In a short time a site was traced out for a fort by the engineer La Radiere, ... the snow was removed from the spot where the principal work now remains and the rest of the winter was spent in drawing timber and stone for the erection of the fort which was begun as soon as the frost was out of the ground.... Poor Col. La Radiere's delicate health was not equal to sustaining those hardships which were so familiar to the soldiers of the revolutionary army; he caught a severe cold which ended in consumption, of which he died about midsummer following. On the removal of La Radiere, occasioned by his illness the well known Kosciusko came to the post and served as Engineer...¹⁴

The second memoir from Richards, dated 1837, is a letter to the daughter of deceased Revolutionary War veteran Henry Champion. Richards had been asked by Champion's daughter if he could tell her anything of her father's war service. The family that owned this letter and the accompanying plan of Fort Clinton/Arnold apparently were descendants of Henry Champion's.

Then eighty-four years old, Richards replied in part:

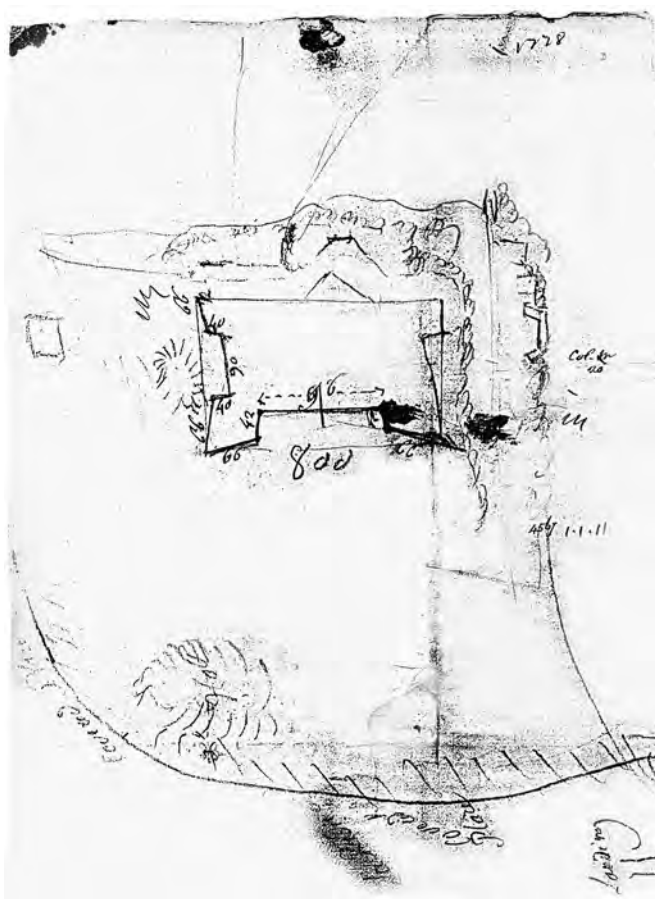
In 1777 I was attached to the company he commanded, in which I continued the remainder of the war.... In '78—February—the regiment moved on to West Point on Hudson river a Col La Radier—a french engineer was appointed to lay out the works; he being recently from a military school in France—possessing the science—but not conversant with the practical part—he succeeded in engaging Kosciuszko to execute the plans he had sketched out in his log hut...¹⁵

From these two memoirs two facts emerge distinctly: The first is that la Radière “traced out” Fort Arnold. The second is that the detailed plan found in 1972 is directly linked to la Radière through Henry Champion.

The Champion plan contains this statement just to the left of the sketch of the fort: “Captain Champion knowes the thickness of the other breastwork. ... If we make the redoubt he knows the place.” It was common for an officer in garrison to be assigned the responsibility for coordinating work to be done on a particular fortification. He acted as a go-between in translating the engineer's design into useful effort by the troops doing the work. Captain Champion signed a muster roll of his company at West Point dated 17 February 1778¹⁶ and the Orderly Book of his company shows that it left Fort Arnold on 26 June 1778.¹⁷ He had previously served in the same unit with Colonel Rufus Putnam, who was chosen to construct the other major fort at West Point, later named Fort Putnam. Champion's name has not been well known in this connection, but he obviously deserves a portion of the credit for the construction of Fort Arnold.

From the chronology, we can see that the planning for the fort and its initial construction was done by early March, about the time that la Radière asked to be excused. Kosciuszko arrived at the end of March, too late for major input. The best date for the plan would appear to be late February or early March, when la Radière was preparing for his departure and leaving the works in the capable hands of Captain Champion while he was gone.

Finally, we come to the difficult question of handwriting. Several experts compared la Radière's penmanship with that of Kosciuszko's and concluded that "the so-called 'Champion Plan' was done by la Radière. Kosciuszko's penmanship is not close enough to question his possible authorship."¹⁸ It is not hard to find material signed by la Radière that is not in the same hand as the plan. He had a clerk to help him, a prisoner taken at Saratoga, and we do not know just what the clerk wrote. There is also at least one example of a letter written by la Radière that was signed by another officer. The "Sketch of Fort Arnold and Water Batteries at West Point" has la Radière's signature on it, although it appears that someone tried to rub it out. Rather than going into more detail in this study, suffice it to say that there is no question in the authors' minds as to the handwriting on the plan. It was done by Louis de la Radière himself.



Hand sketched drawing of Fort Arnold with la Radière's name scratched out at the bottom center. Original in the Alexander McDougall Papers, the Manuscript Department, the New York Historical Society, New York, NY; copied from Reel 2, Special Collections and Archives, USMA Library, West Point, NY.

Colonel la Radière has his place secured in the annals of West Point. A plaque installed on the scarp of Fort Clinton credits him with the fort's planning. In addition, a street in the Academy's Stony Lonesome Housing Area is named for him. It is fitting that la Radière be remembered, as he died au camp du général Washington and is buried somewhere in New Windsor. He gave his life for his adopted country, leaving behind Fort Clinton, Sherburne's Redoubt on present-day Trophy Point, and the water batteries along the Hudson as his legacy.¹⁹

Endnotes

1. Merle Sheffield tenaciously sought in his lifetime to get La Radière and Champion their due; for his tentative argument upon which I have built, see his unpublished "Who Planned Fort Arnold?", Sheffield Research File, Box 6, Merle Sheffield Papers, Special Collections, USMA Library, West Point, NY
2. Resolution of Congress, 2 December 1775, in Worthington C. Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 34 vols. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1905-1937, 3: 400-401.
3. Merle Sheffield Papers, Special Collections, USMA Library, West Point, NY
4. Quoted in Elizabeth S. Kite, *Duportail: Commandant of Engineers in the Continental Army, 1777-1783* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1933), 2, 19, 31. Kite included the correspondence from Duportail to Benjamin Franklin; I changed Radière to La Radière because that is the way he personally signed his letters; see La Radière to COL William Malcolm, n.d. [1778], Massachusetts Historical Society.
5. George Clinton to Major General Horatio Gates, George Clinton, *Public Papers of George Clinton, First Governor of New York 1777-1795 – 1801-1804*, ed. Hugh Hastings, 10 vols. (New York and Albany: State printers, 1899-1914), 2:712.
6. Major General Israel Putnam to Congress, *Papers of the Continental Congress and Journals of the Continental Congress*, 10:204.
7. Samuel H. Parsons to Clinton, 24 Feb. 1778, *Public Papers*, 2: 789 and 803.
8. *Ibid.*, 2:859.
9. Washington to Parsons, 7 Mar. in Charles S. Hall, *Life and Letters of Samuel Holden Parsons* (Binghamton, NY: Otseningo Publishing Company, 1905), 153-155.
10. Parsons to Clinton, 10 Mar., *Parsons*, 149-50.
11. Parsons to Washington, 16 Mar., George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799: Series 4. General Correspondence, 1697-1799, 1157.
12. Washington to McDougall, 21 Mar., *ibid.*, 113.
13. Clinton to Parsons, 26 Mar. 1778, *Public Papers*, 3: 85-86.
14. From a two-page hand-written document dated April 1832 entitled "West Point" and signed by Samuel Richards. Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT.
15. From a typed copy of a letter to Mrs. Maria Watkinson from Samuel Richards signed at Farmington, 17 June 1837. Original is privately owned. Copy provided the author through the courtesy of The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Connecticut.
16. Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT. Captain Henry Champion Sr. (1723-1797) served in Colonel Samuel Wyllys' 3rd Connecticut Continental Line. He was from Colchester, Connecticut. His record during the American Revolution indicates he was a very capable officer. He joined the Revolution as a 2nd Lieutenant on 1 May 1775. During 1776 he was the adjutant of the 22nd Connecticut Regiment. He later served also as the 1st Connecticut Brigade Major. He was the acting major of Colonel Meigs' regiment during the successful storming of Stony Point on 15 July 1779. He led a detachment of 46 rank and file light infantry during the early morning attack. He resigned his commission on 1 March 1780 and was appointed the Commissary General of the Eastern (Connecticut) Department.
17. *The Record of Connecticut Men, War of the Revolution*, edited by Henry P. Johnson, Hartford, Connecticut, 1839.
18. Alan C. Aimone, Dr. Kip Muir, and the authors analyzed the handwriting on the plan and compared it to Kosciuszko's, 11 January 1990. Champion Plan is the plan for the construction of the soon-to-be-

named Fort Arnold and had to have been drawn early in 1778 before McDougall's first visit. While the previous authors surmised that the handwriting was Kosciuszko's, it appears to be that of La Radière; he wrote his "y" and "g" with a curl at the end of the tail while Kosciuszko placed a curl at the end of his "d." Work was well underway on the fort before the Pole arrived at West Point. La Radière, not Kosciuszko, put primary emphasis on the fort on the plain. In Jan. 1778, Champion's regiment moved to West Point "and later began the construction of permanent works there." In the summer of 1778, the regiment moved to White Plains. The winter of 1778-79 was spent at Redding, CT, and during 1779 the regiment was under Heath on the east side of the river; Henry P. Johnston, ed., *The Record of Connecticut Men in the Military and Naval Service During the War of the Revolution, 1775-1783* (Hartford: The Case, Lockwood & Brainard Company, 1889), 168-69. Thus, Champion was at West Point and would have been mentioned in the plan for the period January through June or July 1778. In addition, the plan contains the sentence, "If we make the redoubt he [Champion] knows the place," which clearly refers to Sherburne's Redoubt. Since Sherburne's Redoubt was begun on or about 11 April, during or shortly after McDougall's first visit to West Point, then the date of the plan would have to be prior to 11 Apr. and after 27 Jan. 1778. See McDougall's Diary, 7-12 Apr., in McDougall Papers and McDougall to Parsons, 11 Apr., McDougall Manuscripts File, No. 7525). La Radière had made this plan to flesh out his earlier sketch used to trace out the fort on the ground. Troops had been building according to this pattern since their arrival at West Point. La Radière would even convince McDougall to prepare a final plan that he could supervise, 10 Apr. 1778, McDougall Diary.

19. See la Radière's sketch of these works, "Sketch of Fort Arnold and Water Batteries at West Point," n.d., New York Historical Society in Alexander McDougall Papers, Reel 2, Special Collections and Archives, USMA Library, West Point, NY.; Des Hayes de la Radiere, Gilbert Bodinier, *Dictionnaire des officiers généraux de l'armée royale: 1763-1792*. (Paris: Ministère de la Défense, Etat-Major de l'Armée de terre, Service historique, 1982).

Beneath Clouds

we are no heaven, but the long grey face of evening
beckons my boat,
rudderless, without oars, paddles

I hear the wind in the tops of pines,
a monotone rushing I am in love with
beyond flesh or word

When the broad gesture of a cloud
smothers the sickle moon, you can
reach out, and something

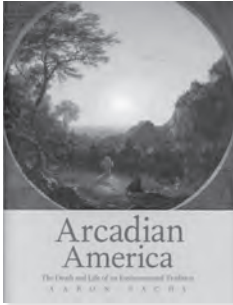
that knows you better than you know yourself
will claim you, and the night
with all its rustlings

its kiss, black and deep, will drench
you and deliver you
to the other side

until you wake to the comforting
careless twitter of pre-dawn birds
arranging and scattering the new day

Raphael Kosek

Book Reviews



Arcadian America: The Death and Life of an Environmental Tradition, Aaron Sachs. New Haven Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2013. (484 pp.)

After closing the back cover of Aaron Sachs' new book, *Arcadian America*, a reader will most likely struggle to find a category in which to place it. Is it a straightforward environmental history of the nineteenth-century United States, an intellectual history of developmental traditions in ante- and postbellum America, a condemnation of our present post-capitalist commercialism, or a memoir that examines Sachs' own relationship to mortality? *Arcadian America* dallies in each of these themes, but refuses to be bound by niche compartmentalization; pages veer off to discuss paintings, literature, philosophy, and ghost stories. Sachs' work breaks the standard "academic book"-mold and attempts to create a holistic image of early environmental thought in America that, he believes, should animate our current view of man's place in nature. Antebellum environmental thinkers, whom Sachs terms "Arcadians," sought to find "repose" in nature, a replenishment of the soul in direct contrast to the burgeoning market revolution that gained momentum around them. But Arcadians did not intend this repose to take place as infrequent sojourns; instead, they viewed the wilderness/civilization divide as non-existent. Humans could exist and thrive in wilderness, and in fact would lose their identity if they strayed from their natural roots.

Central to Sachs' argument is the prominence of death and cemeteries in early American environmental thought. Rather than marking a real-world demarcation between life and death, cemeteries, as envisioned by antebellum environmentalists, emphasized the rhythms of the natural world. Sachs studies Mount Auburn, the Boston-area antebellum cemetery, in depth, both in text and with his own boots. The cemetery's planners envisioned families wandering through the wooded copses, finding opportunities for reflection and relaxation among the headstones, trees, and ponds. Interspersed throughout the historical narrative, Sachs' own search for the grave of a brother who died in infancy adds immediacy to the text. Humans possess a desire to remember the dead, and the juxtaposition of the Mount Auburn planners' conceptions of remembrance and the modern cemetery where Sachs finally discovers his brother's grave helps drive home the striking shallowness of modern society that he portrays.

Sachs charts the geographic borders of the Arcadian ideology running from New England to the Hudson Valley. Traditionally viewed as the home of American philosophical transcendentalism and literary romanticism, the region also marked the first wellspring of the American industrial revolution. Intellectuals and artists witnessing

the rapid changes to both society and nature that the advent of market-based lifestyles inaugurated rejected what they saw as brash commercialism and the loss of community identities. One of the heroes of Sachs' narrative, Andrew Jackson Downing (native of Newburgh and America's original landscape architect), envisioned communal parks as a democratic locale, a reinforcement of the Jeffersonian ideal of agrarian republicanism, simply updated for the age of steam engines and the Erie Canal. Washington Irving and Thomas Cole added their artistic talents to the intellectual fervor, using pen and brush to create a world in which nature's power manifested itself in landscapes of headless horsemen and blasted trees.

And yet surrounded by the life-giving and soul-rejuvenating bounty of nature, death still interwove itself through the Arcadian ideal. Downing developed landscape plans for cemeteries in the Hudson Valley, while Irving contemplated the death and afterlife of Native Americans and Cole's last painting centered on a cross-shaped headstone in the midst of a storm-ruled scene. Throughout his work, Sachs focuses on what he terms the "border region," the murky metaphorical region between life and death, civilization and wilderness, and community and individual. Rather than a place to avoid, Sachs and the thinkers he focuses on find inspiration in this gray place-in-between. An observer of nature's awesome power and redemptive grace, Sachs sees himself as part of a Cole painting, standing just outside the tree line, yet still dappled by its shade.

Arcadian America's longest chapter, "Stumps," is also its best, a heartrending sojourn through war, death, and transformation. Having made the case that American Arcadians viewed wilderness as redemptive, Sachs portrays the Civil War's Battle of the Wilderness as representative of the scar the conflict created in the nation's psyche. The war's industrialized violence ruptured the relationship between man and the republic's natural world. Stumps, represented through both felled trees and felled men, symbolized the sublimation of nature's power over the new American touchstone of progress. Paintings of the expanding western frontier no longer contained the aforementioned "place-in-between." They were replaced by acres and acres of stumps as homesteaders, attempting to put the war behind them, moved to dominate nature through hard work and technological improvisation. The war's physical scars, the missing limbs, necessitated a new call-to-arms, as an upsurge in prosthetic advances evinced another form of progress in the postbellum era. Where man had damaged nature, be it to tree or man, he possessed the new-found ability to reform it to his own predilection.

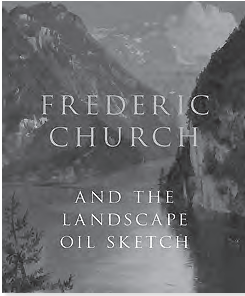
Always present amidst the text, death and cemeteries played a key role in the near-demise of the Arcadian mindset. Death during the Civil War became less a point in the natural rhythms of life and more a schism of loss in American society. The antebellum search for repose through the contemplation of death became transformed, as those that lost loved ones sought to understand and conceptualize death to assuage their loss. No longer did planners of towns and villages see cemeteries as integral to the communal dynamic of these spaces; they moved them to the periphery of the burgeoning burgs on the disappearing western frontier. Gone are the cemeter-

ies that incorporate natural elements, like Mount Auburn; in its place, one finds the stark white headstones and grid patterns of rationalized progress. Sachs spends a large amount of his narrative in cemeteries, and he contrasts the welcoming natural spaces with the coldness of modern burials. By charting his experiences with life and death, Sachs pulls the reader into his own narrative, detailing the trauma of aging and birth in his life alongside his intermittent wanderings to placate guilt and redeem his soul.

The book concludes with biographical studies of Gilded Age torchbearers of the Arcadian tradition. Rather than searching for the figurative border regions from generations before, they instead proposed land reform, denounced natural-resource exploitation, and decried income inequality. The book's latter portions feel more formulaic and depend on the drama in Sachs' life to move the narrative along. He does reserve the book's last few chapters to reach the bombastic heights of commercialist criticism that he hints at in the book's introduction. Sachs makes it clear that he sees the present day as a clear extension and grim caricature of the immediate postbellum era and its disavowal of the Arcadian ideal. The modern world's rejection of death as an ever-present reality, need for immediate commercial satisfaction, and lack of a cultural foundation that unites the natural world with the human all signify the alienation of the modern American from the world around her.

Arcadian America wanders much like the walks that Sachs describes in his book. As he meanders, so does the reader, moving from page to page through centuries of time and thought. Rather than a thesis-driven exploration of a particular idea, era, or theme, Sachs' work feels like a journey, but not one taken by the reader. Instead, as one turns the pages, they have the sense that they are being allowed to tag along with the author as he plumbs his inner psyche and external relationships. For someone whose waking thoughts seem to be consumed with death, Sachs seems like a generally likeable companion. For those hoping to read about early American environmentalism, *Arcadian America* will provide the opportunity as long as they have the patience to contend with the author's own life and rambling hikes. The better audience would include readers starting their own spiritual journeys or contending with loss in their own lives. Either way, *Arcadian America* offers more than just a glimpse into days gone by. It's also a look into the future and, if you allow it, into your soul.

Andrew J. Forney, *United States Military Academy*



***Frederic Church and the Landscape Oil Sketch*, Andrew Wilton; with contributions by Katherine Bourguignon and Christopher Riopelle. London: National Gallery Company, 2013. (72 pp.)**

The Terra Foundation for American Art is collaborating with the National Gallery, London, on a series of focused exhibitions aimed at bringing American masterworks to British audiences. The first exhibit, *An American Experiment: George Bellows and the Ashcan Painters* (2011), was followed by *Through American Eyes: Frederic Church and the Landscape Oil Sketch* (2013). Church (1826-1900) was selected as the greatest American exponent of the landscape oil sketch. At the National Gallery, *Through American Eyes* was complemented by *Through European Eyes: The Landscape Oil Sketch*, an exhibition of European oil sketches from the Gere Collection, placing the work of the American Hudson River School painter in a broader international art historical context. The Scottish National Gallery loaned Church's *Niagara Falls from the American Side* (1867) and then hosted the exhibition after the its London run.

The catalogue essay by Andrew Wilton gives an excellent summary of Church's artistic career, connecting it to events and influences in late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century British art. He discusses the major works by Church, giving art historical, scientific, and political context. Asserting that Church is one of the most "accomplished exponents" of the oil sketch, Wilton compares him to the great British landscape artist and oil-sketch master John Constable (1776-1837), going on to state that both men explored their emotional ties to nature. Wilton recognizes the monumental canvases Church produced from his sketches as filling a gap left after the death of the great British Romantic painter J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851). The author cites specific examples of the transatlantic interchange of paintings and prints to illustrate the influence of Turner and John Martin (1789-1854) on Church and his teacher, the British-born father of the Hudson River School, Thomas Cole (1801-1848). Turner's seascape *Staffa, Fingal's Cave* (1832) was in the collection of American James Lenox in 1845 and is often understood as an influence on Cole, Church, and other Hudson River School artists. Wilton discusses the less-explored similarity of Pre-Raphaelite painter John Brett's *Glacier of Rosenlaui* (1856) to Church's *Heart of the Andes* (1859) in their adherence to the directive of British art critic John Ruskin (1819-1860) to capture natural detail. Wilton credits Ruskin as an influence on Church's career through his encouragement of accuracy in depicting nature and his promotion of Turner as the genius of modern landscape painting, making him someone worthy of emulation.

Wilton articulates the importance of the landscape as defining America and illustrating or promoting the concept of Manifest Destiny. While American artists were encouraged to study the works of the great European artists, they also were tasked with

capturing what was wild and fresh about the New World. Wilton selects *Twilight in the Wilderness* (1860) as Church's final statement on the promise of this world, in conflict with the impending American Civil War.

In his desire for scientific accuracy, Church followed the advice of German naturalist Alexander Von Humboldt (1769-1859) to visit Ecuador and create a visual record of the flora and geology. The author posits that *The Andes of Ecuador* (1855), Church's masterpiece from his first visit to South America, was influenced by the scale and atmosphere of the engraving of Turner's *Lake of Lucerne from Brunnen* (c. 1844).

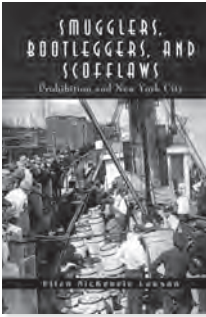
The author concludes with a section on Church's Olana, his home and designed landscape in the Hudson Valley. Wilton selects the Church quote penned in Rome, "The Tiber is not the Hudson," to articulate the significance of the Hudson Valley for Church—his early days with Cole, the forty years he spent creating Olana, and the views from Olana as a favorite subject for sketching. The essay offers a lovely, concise look at Church's career with some new specific connections to European works of art.

The catalogue entries, and by extension the works chosen for the exhibition by Catherine Bourguignon and Christopher Riopelle, give visual insight into Church's career. The exhibition and catalogue cover twenty-eight works, primarily from the collections of Olana and the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution. As explained by Wilton, the works vary from the more complete and finished sketches that Church hung on his walls at Olana to the quick, often unfinished references to rapidly changing weather that were part of Church's visual archive. In addition to the sketches, the curators included a few studio works, *The Iceberg* (1875) and the previously mentioned epic *Niagara Falls from the American Side*. For diversity of media, they also included a photograph of Niagara Falls enhanced with oil paint by Church—referencing the invention of photography in 1839 and the role it would play as an aide-memoire for landscape painters—and a copy of the very popular lithograph of Church's *Our Banner in the Sky* (1861) over-painted perhaps by the artist himself.

The sketches and entries trace Church's travels through North America with studies of the Maine Coast, woodlands, and icebergs. Trips to more exotic locales—Ecuador, Labrador, Jamaica, and the Middle East—are represented by depictions of volcanoes, icebergs, tropical foliage, and the ruins of Petra, in present-day Jordan. Europe is illustrated with castles and mountain lakes. Cloud studies and sky effects captured from Olana show Church's lifelong pursuit of changing light and moving clouds.

Above all, the catalogue and exhibition bring Church to a new audience and place him in the broader context of the European oil-sketching tradition. In his short essay, Wilton deftly brings forward key American concepts and European influences and artistic connections for the British reader. For an American audience, the book works equally well as an excellent introduction to Church and his oil sketches.

Evelyn Trebilcock, Curator, Olana State Historic Site



Smugglers, Bootleggers, and Scofflaws: Prohibition and New York City, Ellen NicKenzie Lawson. Albany: SUNY Press, 2013. (174 pp.)

In 1955, Richard Hofstadter wrote confidently: “To the historian... the story of Prohibition will seem like a historical detour, a meaningless nuisance, an extraneous imposition upon the main course of history. The truth is that Prohibition appeared to the men of the twenties as a major issue because it was a major issue...”¹ Dozens of films, Broadway shows, and popular television series later, historians and others could be forgiven for agreeing only with the first part of Hofstadter’s analysis. In popular culture, Prohibition appears to have been more of an experiment, or a quirk, than a subject for close scholarly inspection. But in her new book *Smugglers, Bootleggers, and Scofflaws*, Ellen NicKenzie Lawson mines a fantastic trove of little-used sources to detail the experience of Prohibition for three distinct but related groups of then-criminals in New York City. Over the course of her book, Lawson builds a credible, detailed argument for the serious study of resistance to Prohibition.

Lawson’s primary contribution is her use of the Coast Guard Seized Vessel Records from 1920 to 1933 to reconstruct the stories of the vast army (perhaps navy would be a more accurate term) of liquor smugglers. Comprised of ninety archival boxes of files organized by the names of seized vessels, the records remained confidential until the 1990s. In them, Lawson finds detailed information on 250 captured rum-running vessels that ferried booze from Canadian, European, and Caribbean supply ships anchored on “Rum Row” to Long Island, New Jersey, Staten Island, Brooklyn, and directly to Manhattan. While the United States had convinced Canada and Great Britain to extend the legal limit of U.S. territory to twelve miles offshore in 1924, this extension clearly did little to limit the supply of rum, whiskey, and vodka. The floating warehouses supplied every taste. Lawson relays captivating stories of the cat-and-mouse games played by rum-running captains and the Coast Guard, with healthy doses of pirates, gangs, and innovative new technologies—radios, planes, and submarines. She resurrects several characters worthy of their own episodic television series, including Gertrude Lythgoe, the “Queen of Rum Row.”

Lawson’s discussion of bootleggers yields fewer revelations than her work on smugglers. However, she makes a compelling argument about the process through which Prohibition spurred the development of organized crime in America. Essentially, three large, ethnically distinct liquor-smuggling groups grew out of gangs on the Lower East Side, the West Side, and Little Italy. These newly rich and sophisticated syndicates then diverted legally produced liquor, together with smuggled liquor from Rum Row and homemade concoctions, to nightclubs, speakeasies, and other popular drinking

1. Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), p. 289.

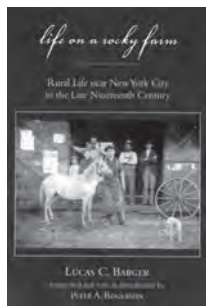
spots. Jewish, Irish, and Italian mobsters ran the trade, and ensured a steady supply of both liquor and violence.

In the final section of her book, Lawson shifts from supply to demand. She writes dramatically of the 500 nightclubs and 30,000 speakeasies that comprised America's largest liquor market. Once again, there is no shortage of colorful characters, like Don Dickerman, whose Pirate's Den on Minetta Lane featured waitresses dressed as pirates, a talking parrot, and re-enactments of Treasure Island by the staff. Lawson also makes tangible the density of clubs. On one block of West 52nd Street alone, thirsty patrons could find Jean Billiams, Club 21, The Onyx, the Dizzy Club, and thirty-five other establishments. There were clubs for everyone from opera patrons to construction crews, and in every neighborhood from the Bowery up to Harlem.

The book's summary is an interesting attempt to link smugglers, bootleggers, and scofflaws to broader American resistance movements, including the defense of the First Amendment, the tradition of smuggling, and the growing respect for diversity. With this final connection, Lawson brings us back to Hofstadter and the rural/urban conflict he saw as the root of so much tension and so much progress and reform. While the stories of swashbuckling smugglers and gangs of hoodlums make great fodder for popular entertainment, Lawson does a fine job of reconnecting their exploits to the longer and continuing narrative of popular resistance as a prominent feature of American life.

Timothy Houlihan, St. Francis College

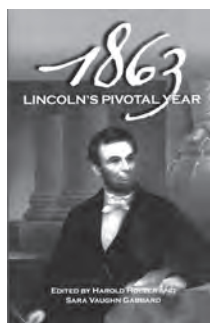
New & Noteworthy Books Received



Life on a Rocky Farm: Rural Life near New York City in the Late Nineteenth Century

By Lucas C. Barger, Transcribed by Peter A. Rogerson
(Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2013)
190 pp. \$19.95 (paperback) www.sunypress.edu

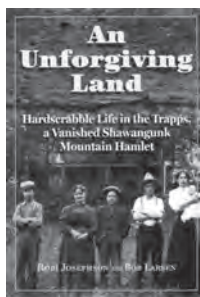
Despite being just fifty miles from New York City, life in Putnam Valley, New York, at the turn of the twentieth century was worlds away from that of the big city. Originally written in 1939, Barger's book captures the challenges and rewards of living off the land in an industrializing society. It documents the many ways farmers made money through handcrafts and nature, the differing roles of men and women, and the importance of various indigenous species to rural survival.



1863: Lincoln's Pivotal Year

Edited By Harold Holzer and Sara Vaughn Gabbard
(Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013)
216 pp. \$32.95 (hardcover) www.siupress.com

The year 1863 played a crucial role in the legacy of Abraham Lincoln, the Civil War, and the direction of the United States in general. This collection of ten essays highlights many of the key events of that year, including the battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg, and the response to the Emancipation Proclamation. Complete with over twenty images, a timeline, and full versions of both the Gettysburg Address and the Emancipation Proclamation, the book provides many new perspectives on one of the most volatile periods in American history.



An Unforgiving Land: Hardscrabble Life in the Trapps, a Vanished Shawangunk Mountain Hamlet

By Robi Josephson and Bob Larsen
(Delmar, NY: Black Dome Press, 2013)
303 pp. \$24.95 (softcover) www.blackdomepress.com

The Trapps mountain hamlet in Ulster County is a unique location with a rich and intriguing history. Nestled high in the rocky Shawangunk Mountains, the Trapps community exhibited subsistence living with few resources for nearly 150 years, between the post-Revolutionary era and World War II. Now listed on the national and state registers of historic places, the community's location is protected by the Mohonk and Minnewaska State Park preserves. *An Unforgiving Land* enhances the legacy of the Trapps by not only telling its story, but also providing a timeline, family tree, and instructions on how to visit its remains.



The Angola Horror

By Charity Vogel (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013)
296 pp. \$26.95 (hardcover) www.cornellpress.cornell.edu

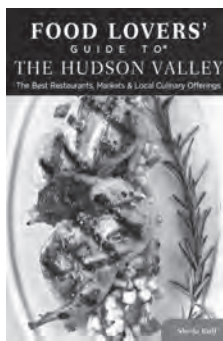
The development of railroads in New York State dramatically changed the landscape of transit for both cargo and people. While many of the contributions of rail travel were positive, *The Angola Horror* tells the story of the 1867 derailment of a New York Express train and the destruction that followed. Using newspaper stories, numerous archives, and countless other sources, Vogel describes the wrecked train cars, under-equipped rescuers, and the impact this early train disaster had on the future of the railroad.



The Color of His Blood

By J.F. Lewis (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2013)
310 pp. \$29.95 (hardcover) www.iuniverse.com

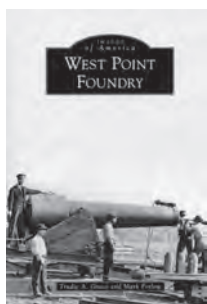
This historical novel intertwines the challenges of survival during the American Revolution with the many complicated emotions that define human interaction. As the characters face increasingly dangerous challenges, the conflict of choosing allegiance in a blossoming new nation shows that no man or woman was really ordinary. From authentic battle descriptions to the struggle for liberty, Lewis's novel has something for everyone.



Food Lovers' Guide to The Hudson Valley

By Sheila Buff (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2014)
272 pp. \$16.95 (softcover) www.globepequot.com

The Hudson River Valley is filled with some of the nation's best culinary specialists, food festivals, and wineries. *Food Lover's Guide to The Hudson Valley* highlights opportunities to explore restaurants, farmers' markets, and shops specializing in everything from cheese to fine teas. Providing reviews for each restaurant, as well as key information for all farms and shops, Buff has created a well-organized, essential resource for residents and travelers who desire fine fare.



Images of America: West Point Foundry

By Trudie A. Grace and Mark Forlow
(Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2014)
128 pp. \$21.99 (softcover) www.arcadiapublishing.com

The West Point Foundry in Cold Spring, New York, served as one of the first industrialized sites in the country. Strategically located across the Hudson River from West Point, the foundry built cannons and steam engines among other items, and even supplied iron to construct numerous lighthouses. Filled with hundreds of photos and informative captions, this contribution to the *Images of America* series successfully captures the contributions, local impact, and legacy of this industrial powerhouse.

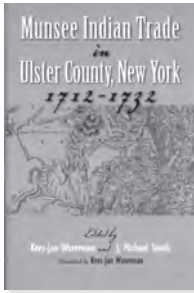


In the Shadow of Kinzua:

The Seneca Nation of Indians since World War II

By Laurence Marc Hauptman
(Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014)
424 pp. \$45.00 (hardcover) www.syracuseuniversitypress.syr.edu

The legacy of the Seneca Nation in New York State spans many centuries and continues to evolve. In this detailed account, Hauptman explores this Native American nation's history since World War II, and the complicated role that the Kinzua Dam has played in the maintenance of tribal lands. Despite challenges from the state and federal governments and forced relocation, the Senecas remain a strong and prominent people who make the most of whatever challenges they face.



Munsee Indian Trade in Ulster County, New York 1712-1732

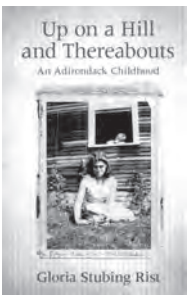
Edited By Kees-Jan Waterman and J. Michael Smith

(Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2013)

232 pp. \$34.95 (hardcover) www.syracuseuniversitypress.syr.edu

Through the recent discovery of a long-lost Dutch account book, the trading relationship between Dutch residents and Native Americans in Ulster County during the early eighteenth century can now be interpreted in ways never before possible. By translating the account book and providing insightful historical context,

Waterman and Smith make a valuable contribution to the available literature. The book also provides information on trading practices, pricing, and identities of native patrons.



Up on a Hill and Thereabouts: An Adirondack Childhood

By Gloria Stubing Rist (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2013)

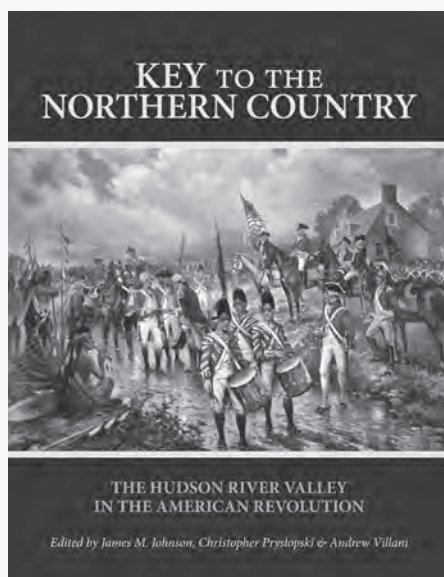
341 pp. \$24.95 (softcover) www.sunypress.edu

Life in the Adirondack Mountains during the Great Depression presented many challenges and obstacles just to survive. Rist offers a unique and refreshing perspective on Adirondack life, recounting the stories and lessons that filled her childhood spent in the mountains. Each character and event comes to life through Rist's simple and concise method of storytelling. With short chapters

and accompanying photos, *Up on a Hill and Thereabouts* paints a complete picture that harkens back to a simpler time in American history.

Andrew Villani, The Hudson River Valley Institute

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Edited by James M. Johnson, Christopher Pryslopski, & Andrew Villani

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