THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

A Journal of Regional Studies

MARIST

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From the Editors

The historical net in this issue of *The Hudson River Valley Review* has been cast especially wide, spanning from the early eighteenth century right up to the twenty-first. The range of topics—from linguistics and engineering to urban geography—is also unusually broad. Taken together, these articles comprise a fascinating tapestry that truly represents the diversity of thought and activity that has always been a distinguishing characteristic of life in the Hudson Valley. Such diversity is what continues to make the region a center for creativity and makes *The Hudson River Valley Review* so much fun to edit—and, we hope, fun and informative to read.

Reed Sparling
Christopher Pryslopski

Letter To the Editors

One note regarding Christopher Pryslopski's intriguing article on the Orange County Government Center. The description of Goshen's main street as "...an historic island in a growing sea of suburban sprawl with endless stretches of red lights, turning lanes, and big-box retail centers" is quite simply well-over-the-top hyperbole—and not justifiable by any real review of the full Goshen area landscape. As a leading anti-sprawl advocate, I know it when I see it. This hyperbole blemishes the article, regurgitates popular PR/media terminology, and certainly is not based on research or analysis.

Back to Rudolph's design: for now I will stay out of the debate on the merits of this example of modernist architecture or its functional use as a public facility. It is unique, but many of us have our own practical frustrations with the building. Its one element that particularly frustrates me, and many others, is that most of the stairwells were not designed or built wide enough to accommodate two people side-by-side. So when someone goes up or down the stairs, they typically have to wait, or go flat against the wall, to allow another person to go down or up. This just isn't practical in a heavily used public building.

David Church, Commissioner
Orange County Planning Department, Goshen

Call for Essays

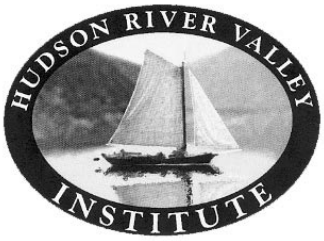
The Hudson River Valley Review is anxious to consider essays on all aspects of the Hudson Valley—its intellectual, political, economic, social, and cultural history, its prehistory, architecture, literature, art, and music—as well as essays on the ideas and ideologies of regionalism itself.

Submission of Essays and Other Materials

HRVR prefers that essays and other written materials be submitted as two double-spaced typescripts, generally no more than thirty pages long, along with a computer disk with a clear indication of the operating system, the name and version of the word-processing program, and the names of documents on the disk. Illustrations or photographs that are germane to the writing should accompany the hard copy. Otherwise, the submission of visual materials should be cleared with the editors beforehand. Illustrations and photographs are the responsibility of the authors. No materials will be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided. No responsibility is assumed for their loss. An e-mail address should be included whenever possible.

Under some circumstances, HRVR will accept materials submitted as an e-mail attachment (hrvi@marist.edu). It will not, however, open any attachment that has not been announced and cleared beforehand.

Since HRVR is interdisciplinary in its approach to the region and to regionalism, it will honor the forms of citation appropriate to a particular discipline, provided these are applied consistently and supply full information. Endnotes rather than footnotes are preferred. In matters of style and form, HRVR follows *The Chicago Manual of Style*.



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Dr. Edward Cashin is the director of the Center for the Study of Georgia History, Augusta State University, and president of Historic Augusta. His many publications include *The King's Ranger: Thomas Brown and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier*, *William Bartram and the American Revolution on the Southern Frontier* and *Paternalism in a Southern City: Race, Religion, and Gender in Augusta Georgia*, co-edited with Glenn Eskew.

Harvey K. Flad is emeritus professor of Geography at Vassar College. His scholarship has focused on cultural and historic landscapes, conservation history, and environmental and urban planning in America. He has published numerous articles on nineteenth-century landscape design theory and practice, especially on the work of Andrew Jackson Downing. He is the recipient of a Fulbright award and the Russel Wright award for environmental preservation. **Craig M. Dalton** is a 2003 graduate of Vassar College with a B.A. in Geography.

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John Evangelist Walsh, former senior editor at *Reader's Digest*, has authored some twenty books of biography and history. One of his two works on Edgar Allen Poe—*Poe the Detective*—received an Edgar Award, and *The Shadows Rise: Abraham Lincoln and the Ann Rutledge Legend*, was a finalist for the prestigious Gettysburg Prize.

THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

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Regional History Forum

Book Review

On the cover: *West Point Looking South* by George Catlin; circa 1828
Courtesy of West Point Museum Art Collection, United States Military Academy

Nathanael Greene

Anthony Wayne

Henry "Light-Horse Harry" Lee

PEN AND INK DRAWINGS REPRODUCED FROM *PICTORIAL FIELD BOOK OF THE REVOLUTION, IN TWO VOLUMES*; BENSON J. LOSSING, HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK, 1850

Three Officers and a Lady: The Hudson Highlands and Georgia During the Revolution*

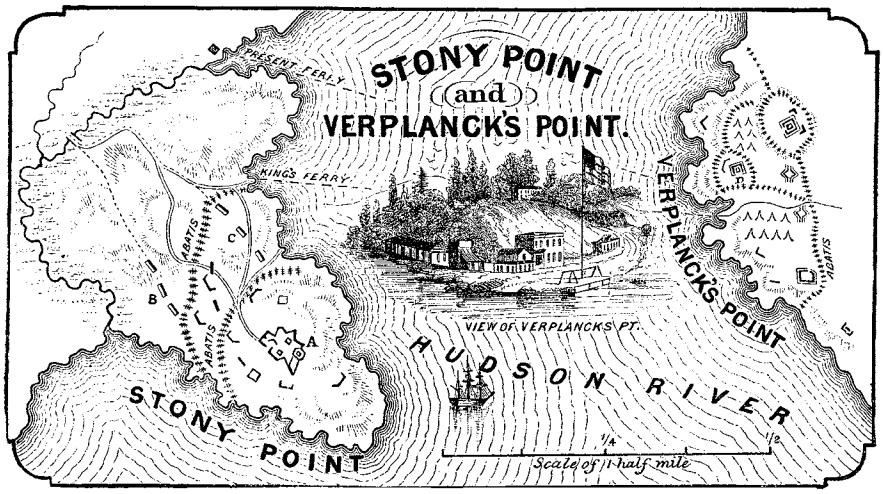
Edward J. Cashin

The three officers in our title are General Nathanael Greene, General Anthony Wayne, and Lieutenant Colonel Henry "Light-horse Harry" Lee. The lady is the beautiful and charming Catherine Greene, known to her friends as Caty (which we shall call her). A proper drama has a stage setting, and for the first act, the stage is the majestic Hudson River Valley, the historic pathway of nations, acknowledged by everyone as the key to the continent. For the second act, the stage is messy rather than majestic—the southern backcountry, ignored by many historians and a puzzle to most.

To give away the ending, the plot is that the campaign to win control of the Hudson Valley was determined in the southern backcountry.

We are today celebrating Wayne's victory at Stony Point, and we will begin with the events of the year 1779. By then, the British thrust aimed at the Hudson Valley had been frustrated at Saratoga, and a British expeditionary force had overrun Georgia and restored royal rule to that state, the only state to revert to colonial status. General Sir Henry Clinton's army occupied New York, and continued to have designs on the great waterway. In order to sever Washington's lifeline across the Hudson at King's Ferry, the British occupied and fortified Stony Point and Verplanck's Point—at either side of the crossing—on June 1, 1779.

Washington hurried from his camp at Middlebrook, New Jersey, to meet the threat, moving by way of Smith's Clove. Nathanael Greene, Washington's trusted Quartermaster General, wrote to Caty on June 9: "We were yesterday down to West Point through all the Highlands. A rougher country nature never formed." Washington made his headquarters at New Windsor and immediately began to plan an attack on Stony Point. He commissioned Major Henry Lee, with his mounted troop, to reconnoiter. Lee's troops secured the area and Lee himself crept so close to the British fortifications that he could hear the sentries pacing along



the stone ramparts. Lee employed a civilian spy to get inside the fort and count the garrison. He reported 772 soldiers and eleven pieces of artillery.

On June 15, Washington ordered Anthony Wayne to march with his light infantry under absolute secrecy. The men had no idea of their destination as they marched from Fort Montgomery, around Bear Mountain, and through the ravines of the Dunderberg.

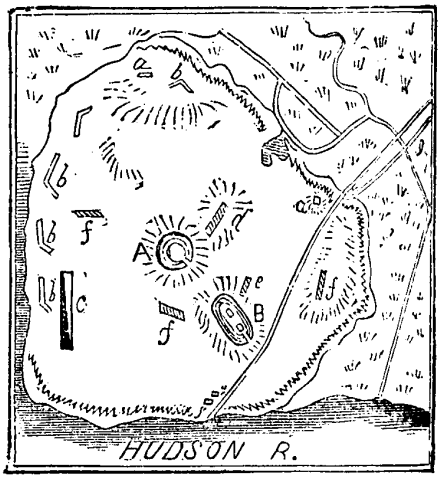
On the evening of June 17, Wayne halted at the Springsteel farm, two miles west of Stony Point, and gave strict orders that the fort would be taken by surprise and by bayonet, no shots fired. At eleven p.m., the men swarmed up both sides of the steep slopes and gained a quick victory. Wayne sent the message to Washington, "The fort and garrison with Col. Johnson are ours. Our officers and men behaved like men who are determined to be free."

Greene wrote to Caty, "Never did men or officers behave with more spirit. They deserve immortal honor." It did not matter that the Americans abandoned Stony Point two days after taking it. The victory was a great boost to morale, and Congress voted medals for Wayne and his principal officers.

On July 26, Washington called a council of officers to West Point to tell them that the enemy had reoccupied Stony Point and reinforced Verplanck's Point. He asked for advice on strategy. Greene wrote his opinion, "The North River I consider as the first object upon the Continent and the communication between the Eastern and Western States essential to the Independence of America." He cautioned against a risky offensive against New York.

Although Congress had overlooked Light-horse Harry's role at Stony Point, Washington did not. He unleashed Lee's mounted troop to do whatever damage

they could. On the Hudson across from Staten Island, a British garrison occupied a narrow finger of land called Paulus Hook. British warships anchored in the bay provided protection. On August 18, Lee staged a risky night assault on Paulus Hook and took the fort without firing a shot. Greene enthused to Caty, "Major Lee has performed a most gallant affair. He has surprised and taken the greater part of the garrison at Paulus Hook. The expedition is thought to be more gallant than Stony Point."



Works at Paulus Hook

On September 26, Washington at New Windsor informed Greene at West Point that a French army under Count d'Estaing approached. Greene should prepare barges for a joint attack on New York. Greene engaged carpenters at Fishkill to begin building boats. He wrote Caty on October 15, "We are in daily expectation of the arrival of Count d'Estaing and the moment he arrives offensive operations will commence against New York." Unknown to Greene—and to Washington—d'Estaing had decided to attack British-held Savannah rather than New York. After a prolonged siege, d'Estaing's French forces and General Benjamin Lincoln's Americans staged a grand assault on the British lines on October 8 but failed to break the lines. Polish volunteer Count Casimir Pulaski was among the dead. The battered French army could do no fighting in New York.

Medal awarded to Lee after raid on garrison at Paulus Hook

The British success in Georgia caused Sir Henry Clinton in New York to shift the focus of his operations from the Hudson Valley to the South. He recalled the garrisons from Stony Point and Verplanck's Point for a major expedition against Charleston, South Carolina. Washington learned of the French defeat at Savannah on November 15, more than a month after the battle. But not until Clinton's transports left New York on December 26 did he abandon his planned attack on New York, and only then did Greene stop building boats. While the British landed in Georgia and proceeded to besiege Charleston, Washington's army went into winter quarters at Morristown, New Jersey, leaving a strong garrison at West Point.

Caty Greene joined her husband at West Point and went with him to Morristown. (Winter encampments were notoriously miserable for the foot soldiers, but the best times of the war for officers' wives.) Caty was especially close to Martha Washington and Lucy Knox, the vivacious wife of Major General Henry Knox, commander of the Continental Army's artillery. She had met both at the first winter encampment, at Valley Forge, in 1777. There, Caty and Nathanael had occupied a large house that quickly became a social rendezvous. She had learned French well enough to charm and make a lasting friend of Lafayette. She would later send her first son, George Washington Greene, to be educated in France under his care. Anthony Wayne was so smitten with Caty that he seemed to forget that he had a wife back in Philadelphia.

The second camp, at Middlebrook, in the winter of 1778 followed the example of the first. Washington had insisted that Caty join them and bring her three children. (She had intended to do so, anyhow.) She came by way of Peekskill and King's Ferry. The Greene's house again became an oasis of cheer in an otherwise grim winter. Wayne put in an early appearance, bringing his friend, Henry Lee. Caty's biographer wrote that "Light-Horse Harry" was a man of such dash and verve, and so splendidly uniformed—that Caty had picked him out as the kind of soldier little girls dream of." Caty, a consummate flirt, charmed him, too.

Greene's twenty-five-year-old wife loved dancing. As it happened, so did George Washington. And they particularly enjoyed dancing with each other. While encamped at Middlebrook, Washington bet Caty that he could outlast her on the dance floor. She took the bet. The good-natured Nathanael reported to a friend, "They danced upward of three hours without once sitting down."

So it is understandable that Caty wanted to accompany her husband to the camp at Morristown in 1779, even though she was seven months pregnant. The solicitous Nathanael ordered a quarter cask of Madeira "as Mrs. Greene has nothing to drink." In the midst of his demanding duties as quartermaster, he found

time to ask a subordinate to trace some of Caty's belongings that had gotten lost along the way: "Mrs. Greene is anxious about her band-box." Caty gave birth to Nathanael Ray Greene on January 31 and quickly recovered her health, her figure, and her role as social arbiter.

Since we are not above indulging in gossip, we will mention a scene Caty thought scandalous at one of her Morristown parties. It seemed that George Olney, a relative of Nathanael's, disapproved of drinking. He withdrew from the men's company and joined the ladies, showing his displeasure. The men took notice and suggested that they capture Olney away from the women and make him take a drink. Washington entered into the spirit of the moment and led the charge into the ladies' chambers. Olney, who seems not to have had much of a sense of humor, resisted. His wife, with even less a sense of humor, clung desperately to him. Washington playfully took her hand away from her husband. In a rage she screamed, "Let go of my hand, or I'll pull every hair out of your head!" That ended the gaiety. Caty was furious at Mrs. Olney for insulting her friend the commander and for ruining the party.

The return of Clinton's army from the South prompted a return of Washington's army to the Hudson Highlands. The British had taken Charleston, and resistance collapsed all over the Carolinas and Georgia. Leaving Lieutenant General Charles Cornwallis in command of an army of occupation, Clinton sailed back to New York. He had not abandoned his designs on West Point, even though in June 1780 he staged a diversionary raid into New Jersey that was repulsed by Greene and Wayne. Clinton's real strategy would soon become evident.

On August 14, Greene wrote Caty that he had resigned his commission as quartermaster. Since he was out of a job, he added: "let me conjure you by the bonds of affection—to contract your expenses as much as possible." He confessed that he was discouraged by his critics in Congress. He received a sympathetic letter from General Benedict Arnold, then in command of West Point, who nursed his own grievances against Congress. Greene responded with the news that Horatio Gates, Arnold's old rival at Saratoga, had been disastrously defeated by Cornwallis at Camden, South Carolina, on August 16. It was "a deadly wound to his glory," he wrote. At the time, Greene did not guess how Gates' defeat would affect him.

From September 17 to the 28th, Washington left the Highlands to confer with the Count de Rochambeau, who had landed in Rhode Island with 6,000 French reinforcements, about a joint attack on New York. Greene assumed command of the American army camped at Tappan. On September 25, Greene received a shocking report from Alexander Hamilton at Verplanck's Point: "There

has just unfolded at this place a scene of the blackest treason." British Major John Andre had been captured in civilian clothes with proof of Arnold's treason found on him. Arnold managed to escape aboard a British vessel. While Wayne's troops guarded Andre at Tappan, Greene presided over his trial and conviction. Andre died bravely by hanging on October 2.

Three days later, Greene applied to Washington for command of West Point. Washington obliged. Greene made his lodgings at the Beverly Robinson house in Garrison and immediately sent for Caty to join him. He looked forward to a comfortable winter there.

He had just settled down to his new command when Washington named him to succeed Gates as Continental commander in the South. He could not even wait for the arrival of his wife. "My dear angel what I had been dreading has come to pass," he wrote to her. "I had been pleasing myself with the prospect of spending the winter here with you." He went as far as Fishkill hoping to meet her. "My longing eyes looked for you in all directions." he wrote again. She did not come, and he left West Point on October 21.

Greene asked for Lee's mounted troops (now referred to as Lee's Legion) and Wayne's Pennsylvania Light Infantry to go south with him. Washington agreed that Lee could go, but he could not spare Wayne. Greene made his way southward from Philadelphia by way of Annapolis, Mount Vernon (where he was entertained by Martha Washington), Richmond, Hillsborough, and Salisbury, finally reaching Gates' camp at Charlotte, North Carolina, on December 2, 1780. Greene expressed shock at the condition of the troops in a letter to Caty. "I arrived on the 2nd of this month and been in search of the army I am to command, but without success, having found nothing but a few half-starved soldiers who are remarkable for nothing but poverty and distress." He cautioned Caty not even to think of coming to join him.

The only organized body of troops between Greene and Cornwallis' victorious army at Winnsboro, in the center of the South Carolina upcountry, was that of veteran Daniel Morgan, who had come out of retirement after Gates' defeat at Camden. The British held the South with Cornwallis' formidable army, and with a string of garrisons stretching from the coast to Augusta, Georgia. Greene had little confidence in his decimated army, but hoped to rely on partisan bands that acted independently of each other. Many of the partisans lived by indiscriminate plundering, and had formed the habit—distressing to Greene—of killing their prisoners.

Facing insurmountable odds, Greene searched for a strategy. A letter from one of the partisan leaders gave him his plan. Benjamin Few of Georgia asked

for help from the Continentals. He believed that the people of the Georgia backcountry would resist the British if encouraged by the approach of an American army. Greene immediately seized upon the idea. On December 16, he wrote to Few: "In order to give support to your exertions and spirit up the people in that quarter I propose to send General Morgan with a large detachment from this army to act on the west side of the Catawba."

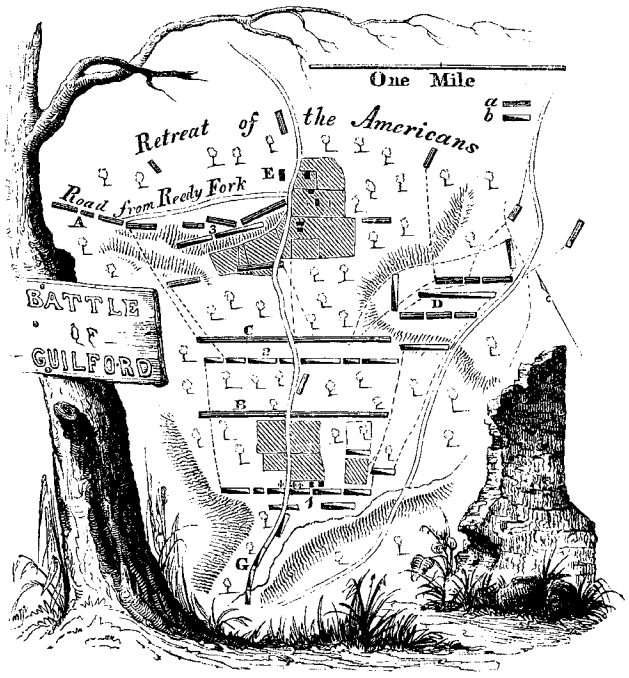
On the same day, Greene ordered Morgan to march into western South Carolina: "The object of this detachment is to give protection to that part of the country and spirit up the people." Morgan commanded 320 infantry from Maryland and Delaware, 200 Virginia militia, and ninety dragoons. Greene expected him to be joined by Georgia and South Carolina partisans, but a leading partisan, Thomas Sumter, felt slighted by not getting the command and refused to cooperate.

Greene's decision to send his only fighting force to the west, leaving no protection between him and Cornwallis, has been called "the most audacious and ingenious piece of military strategy of the war." Greene explained in a letter to Washington that "Cornwallis could not come at me or his posts at Ninety-Six and Augusta would be exposed."

Morgan accepted the assignment with relish. In his reply he suggested, "Could a diversion be made in my favour by the main army I should wish to march into Georgia." Greene encouraged him to move toward Augusta if he could do it. But Greene could not put on a diversion because his main army was a fiction.

Morgan's unexpected march west took Cornwallis by surprise. The British general countered by dispatching his best fighter, Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton, to oppose Morgan. The result was a smashing victory for the Americans at Cowpens on January 19, 1781. Morgan wrote Greene, "I should be exceedingly fond to make a descent into Georgia, but am so emaciated that I can't undertake it." He thought Andrew Pickens of South Carolina could do the job. In fact, Pickens would do just that, but not yet. Georgia had to wait because Cornwallis meant to destroy Greene's little army, and Greene needed all the help he could get.

Greene sent out calls for the militia of North Carolina and lower Virginia to join him as he retreated before Cornwallis. Fortunately, Harry Lee's Legion had arrived to act as a rear guard, burning bridges and delaying the enemy. Nearing the Virginia state line, Greene's army had swelled by the addition of 2,000 militia. He had 1,600 regulars, only 300 of whom were veterans. He finally turned to fight Cornwallis at Guilford Courthouse. After two hours of the hardest fighting in the Revolution, Greene withdrew from the field in good order.



Plan of the Battle of Guilford

Greene lost the battle, but won the campaign. Cornwallis had to withdraw to the sea for supplies. When Cornwallis then turned to Virginia, Greene made another crucial decision. Instead of opposing the enemy, he would let him go, then turn his attention to the British outposts. He told Harry Lee, "Cornwallis has gone North and the rest will be a war of posts." He knew it would not be easy. In a letter to Congress he told how the outposts at Camden, Ninety-Six, and Augusta controlled the countryside around them, writing, "The enemy have got a firmer footing than is generally accepted."

With Morgan incapacitated by rheumatism, Greene sent Andrew Pickens and Georgian Elijah Clarke to lay siege to Augusta. (Again, Thomas Sumter refused to have anything to do with the operation.) On May 12, Pickens wrote Greene that the Augusta garrison was too strong and could not be taken without the help of regulars. Greene turned to Lee: "You will march immediately for Augusta. Cooperate with Pickens." Lee covered seventy-five miles in two days. Greene complimented him: "For rapid marches, you exceed Lord Cornwallis and everybody else."

Lee, Andrew Pickens, and Elijah Clarke conducted a hard-fought two-week battle for the town of Augusta. Even hard-bitten fighter Harry Lee expressed amazement at the savagery of fighting. "They exceed the Goths and the Vandals

in their schemes of plunder, murder and iniquity, all this under the pretense of supporting the virtuous cause of America." He warned Greene, "If you do not take on yourself to govern this state til civil government can be introduced, you will lose all the benefit from it."

Greene accepted the responsibility. While the battle for Augusta was in progress, he wrote to Pickens, "The idea of exterminating Tories is not less barbarous than impolitick, and if persisted in, will keep this country in the greatest confusion and distress." He warned that he would administer capital punishment to anyone guilty of "private murders."

On June 5, a triumphant Lee notified Greene that "the capital of Georgia with a large extent of territory is recovered." Greene had heard that peace negotiations had begun in Paris and that there was a possibility of losing Georgia to the negotiators. He sent one of his aides, Georgian Joseph Clay, to Augusta with orders to hold elections for a new government. "A legislature is necessary to give you existence not only in America, but in Europe much more than here," he stated. He also wrote the Georgia delegates in Congress: "Georgia has been an object of my attention and I hope to afford her in future all the support that the peculiar situation in this department will admit."

Meanwhile, Greene's army had fought at Camden and Ninety-Six and lost both engagements, but in both cases the British abandoned their posts and withdrew from the backcountry. While Georgia was being restored to the union, Washington remained at Newburgh, planning to attack New York. He dutifully forwarded letters from Greene to Caty. Despite Greene's protestations that the southern battlefields were no place for a lady, Caty decided to go south anyhow. The journey took two months, including a long visit to Martha Washington at Mount Vernon and balls in her honor in Fredericksburg and elsewhere.

One of the first actions of the newly elected governor of Georgia was to ask Greene, by now Georgia's godfather, for troops to drive the British out of Savannah. Greene responded by sending Anthony Wayne, who had just arrived. "General Wayne marches tomorrow with a considerable body of horse to take command in your state," he told the governor. Greene urged Wayne to "put a stop to that cruel custom of putting people to death after they have surrendered."

A month later, Wayne reported, "The duty we have performed in Georgia was much more difficult than that of the children of Israel. They had only to make bricks without straw. We had to make Whigs out of Tories." Wayne's campaign to drive the British out of Savannah succeeded despite all odds. His victorious troops marched into the city on July 12, 1782.

So between them Harry Lee and Anthony Wayne had rescued Georgia. With

a touch of satisfaction, Greene wrote Georgia's governor, "Be assured I shall always be happy to afford Georgia every aid in my power. Her interest has always been near my heart and I shall be attentive to her future safety."

With the British evacuation of Charleston on December 14, 1782, the Revolution ended. It is fitting for our story that Anthony Wayne first marched into the port at the head of Lee's Legion. (Lee was away in Virginia.)

The last months of the war were relieved for Nathanael Greene—and for a number of other officers—by the presence of Caty. "I am now under petticoat government," Greene wrote a friend. Caty organized a gala ball to celebrate the liberation of Charleston; then she and Nathanael went to Savannah to receive the grateful plaudits of Georgians. Even better than plaudits, the state gave them the state's largest and richest confiscated plantation, Mulberry Grove. For good measure, the state presented Wayne with the neighboring plantation, Richmond.

Washington's long-planned attack on New York proved unnecessary because Cornwallis' army in Virginia proved a better objective for an allied operation. Washington won New York at Yorktown. Greene's campaign in the South won the war.

And so Nathanael Greene became a Georgia planter, and Anthony Wayne a Georgia Congressman. Wayne's wife never joined him, and Savannah gossips whispered about Wayne's frequent visits to Mulberry Grove.

Our story should conclude with that happy ending, but a few postscripts must be added. First: Nathanael Greene did not long enjoy his family and new life. He died in 1786 at the age of forty-four.

Second: Anthony Wayne, in his short term in Congress, managed to secure a handsome pension for Caty—over the objections of South Carolina Congressman Thomas Sumter.

Third: When Washington made his southern tour in 1791, he made a point never to stay at a private residence, but he stayed two days at Mulberry Grove with Caty Greene.

Fourth: Caty and a guest named Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin at Mulberry Grove in 1793. That invention fastened slavery upon the South and foreshadowed another war.

Fifth, and finally: Light-horse Harry Lee died in 1818 and was buried at Caty Greene's plantation in Georgia.

The exploits of Nathanael Greene, Anthony Wayne, Harry Lee—and especially those of George Washington—made Georgia more inclined to join with her sister states in a stronger federal union, and made New York more accepting of Georgia. It is ironic that Caty's Greene's cotton gin nearly tore that union apart.

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The Hudson River Valley Institute serves scholars, historical societies, elementary and secondary school educators, the business community, environmental organizations, and the general public. While conducting its own research, the institute is also an information hub facilitating and disseminating information and research on the Hudson River Valley. To help accomplish this, the institute is taking advantage of Marist's recognized leadership in applying information technology to teaching and learning. Marist College is fully committed to having the Hudson River Valley Institute bring a new level of scholarship and public awareness to bear on the scenic, cultural, economic, and historic resources of the Valley.

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