THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

A Journal of Regional Studies

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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. All articles in *The Hudson River Valley Review* undergo peer analysis.

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 with endnotes, 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.

HRVR will accept materials submitted as an e-mail attachment (*hrvi@marist.edu*) once they have 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*.

Contributors

Stephen M. Mercier was the editor of a double special issue on John Burroughs for *ATQ: 19th C. American Literature and Culture* (September and December 2007) and contributed a chapter to *Writing the Land: John Burroughs and His Legacy* (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2008). He is a full-time teaching associate at Marist College and recipient of the Hudson River Valley Institute's 2008 Thomas W. Casey Fellowship.

H. R. Stoneback is Distinguished Professor of English at SUNY-New Paltz, where he has taught since 1969. He has lectured widely and published numerous essays on Burroughs, and served for decades on the board of the John Burroughs Association. He is the author or editor of seventeen books and more than 200 essays on American, British, and French literature. A leading Hemingway scholar, his most recent volume of literary criticism is *Reading Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises* (Kent State University Press, 2007). Also a poet of international reputation, his sixth volume of poems—*The Amazing-Grace-Wheelchair-Jumpshot-Jesus Love Poems*—will be published this fall by Portals Press.

Jeff Walker teaches in the Department of Earth Science and Geography at Vassar College, where he has developed a research program focusing on the geology of soils and their importance as a basis for natural and agricultural ecosystems. His recent publications on John Burroughs include a reissue of *Signs and Seasons* (with an introduction and critical commentary; Syracuse University Press) and "The Great Shaggy, Barbaric Earth: Geological Writing of John Burroughs" in *Coming into Contact: New Essays in Ecocritical Theory and Practice* (University of Georgia Press).

James Perrin Warren is S. Blount Mason Professor of English at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, where he teaches courses in nineteenth-century American literature and environmental literature. He also team-teaches a course in field biogeography. His book *John Burroughs and the Place of Nature* was published by University of Georgia Press in 2006.

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Thomas W. Casey.

Thomas W. Casey and Elizabeth Burroughs Kelly in the summerhouse at Riverby

From John Burroughs' "Waiting"

Serene, I fold my hands and wait
Nor care for wind, nor tide, nor sea;
Rave no more 'gainst Time nor Fate,
For lo! My own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

Vol. 25, No. 1, Autumn 2008

Regional History Forum

Regional Writing

Book Reviews

***On the Cover*: Portrait of John Burroughs by Orlando Rouland, Courtesy of Craig Chesek © American Museum of Natural History (AMNH)**

Regional History Forum

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The Hudson River Almanac

John Burroughs wrote his observations of the Hudson River Valley in his journals before they were reworked into articles and essays. This spirit of "Sharp Eyes," the close observation of the natural world throughout our region, persists today in individuals as well as collective efforts like the Hudson River Almanac. *A journal of natural history covering the Hudson from the Adirondacks to Manhattan, it is compiled by editor Tom Lake and has included over 1,700 authors since it began in 1993. In addition to being online and distributed via e-mail, you can order back-issues through Purple Mountain Press, Ltd. (800-325-2665). It is available for $10 plus New York State sales tax and $3.50 for shipping. E-mail address is: Purple@mail.catskill.net*

We've included some selections below to provide an idea of what you will find when you visit the Almanac at http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25611.html.

2002

7/2: New Eagle Nest, Dutchess County: In late afternoon the air temperature had climbed to 95°F. The heat index was 104°F. The eaglet was perched in the nest, tongue hanging out, panting. I was surprised when he bounced across the nest, flapped his wings furiously, raised up a bit (at this point I was silently saying "go for it!") but then stopped, right at the edge, peered down, and then settled in the shade. He would not be leaving the nest today. *–Tom Lake*

2005

5/8: New Eagle Nest, Dutchess County: This was the second day of a screaming north wind, gusting over 20 mph, and the nest tree was doing its usual swaying and leaning. Being a supple white pine, it could easily list 10°. To the Mama and her nestlings, it may have seemed like a carnival ride. There was still no indication if there was more than one baby eagle. Directly under the nest tree I found the carcass of a small striped skunk, eviscerated. Eagles have little or no sense of smell. *–Tom Lake*

2006

4/13: Eagle Nest NY62, Dutchess County: At dawn, Mama was alone in the nest. She was in her incubating posture, hunkered down. After a while she stood, stretched, and moved to the side of the nest with a view out to the river. I saw movement on the other side: A small, skinny, wobbly, fuzzy-headed nestling peered over the lip of the nest, a 4 day-old baby bald eagle! *–Tom Lake*

5/31: Eagle Nest 124, Westchester County: This new bald eagle nest, designated NY124, is now the southernmost on the tidewater Hudson. Pete Nye climbed the tree, a huge white pine, to the nest at least 115' off the ground. He found raccoon scat on a horizontal limb near the top, evidence of an earlier predator. To prevent this from happening again, we applied a "predator guard" around the 12½' circumference of the tree. These are a broad and slick band of sheet metal tacked in place just above the ground that raccoons, opossum and others cannot get above.

There were two chicks: a female estimated to be about 7½ weeks old, and a male about 6½ weeks. The remains of 2 huge white catfish were also in the nest, among the favorite foods of eaglets. Pete lowered the male chick down to us in a special bag. The second eaglet was too large to be lowered, so she was banded in the nest.

We took the male eaglet out of the bag and put a soft hood on his head to calm him. If raptors cannot see, they often remain still. This was not a true falconer's "hood,"but rather a child's soft sock with the toes cut out. I held the eaglet, his huge yellow, sharp-taloned feet in one hand and the other applying gentle pressure to his chest to keep him in place. I could feel his rapid heartbeat against the palm of my hand. As I looked down into his dark, blinking eyes under the hood, I thought: If he meets with good fortune he will fledge in a month, spend the next four years learning to be an eagle, exploring, making contacts with other birds, eventually finding a mate for life, nesting, and rearing his own young, for the next 30 years.

We finished our task: a blood sample, some measurements like the hallux (rear) talon to estimate its sex, the length of the 8th primary feather to estimate age, and a few others—an impromptu physical. It was hot and humid on the forest floor—the eaglet panted, his tongue pulsed, he reached up and took my fingers in his beak and gave a small squeeze. It was time to return him to the nest in the tree top. Once back in place with the other nestling, in less than an hour life in the forest canopy would resume its normal pace. The female, banded in the nest, is R85. The male, banded down below, R84. *–Steve Joule, Chris Desorbo, Pete Nye, Tom Lake*

2007

9/13: Haverstraw Bay, Westchester County: Margaret Eberle was just going for a leisurely walk along the river but as she glanced down at the pebbles and cobbles along the shore she spotted what looked to her like an Indian "arrowhead." The projectile point (spear point) was what archaeologist's call a Sylvan Side-notched, meticulously chipped from gray chert, probably dating to about 4,000 years ago, and at least two millennia before bow and arrow technology came to the Hudson Valley. The artisan who made this spear point was an ancestor of those who greeted Henry Hudson in 1609. These were Algonquian speakers, related to the Lenape, Munsee, Wappinger, and possibly Mohican people who lived in the area around Haverstraw Bay. *–Tom Lake*

9/18: Town of Wallkill, Orange County, HRM 57: In two years we will celebrate the September 1609 arrival of Henry Hudson, marking 400 years of Western culture in the Hudson Valley. Today we held two spear points in our hands that had just showed up in one of our excavation screens. The two styles, a Rossville and a Vosburg, suggested that Native People had visited the south end of this hilltop, overlooking the Wallkill River, off and on for 3,000 years. For us, this air of antiquity created a perspective for the deep time of the Hudson River Valley. *–Tom Lake, Kris Mierisch, Tom Wilson, Jeanette LeClair*

2008

5/20: Green Island, Albany County, HRM 152: Just after 9:00 p.m., the sky in the east took on a silver glow that precedes moon rise. The tide was halfway out and ebbing. A thousand dimples out on the river marked the presence of shad, river herring, and many other fish This was the night of the full moon in May, the Corn Planting Moon to many Native people. It was going to be a quick glimpse, however, as a thick gray cloud bank was poised just above the horizon to capture the moon. *–Tom Lake*

6/28: South Mount Beacon, Dutchess County, HRM 60: The sun was struggling through the summer haze to the northeast. To be here by dawn, I had to begin my hike before first light. At 1635 feet, this is the highest point in the valley between the Catskills and the sea. Twenty pairs of vulture eyes watched me from the iron work of the old fire tower. It was still too early to lift off. Three ravens were silhouetted in the sky to the east.

A cool southwest breeze dried my shirt after the long hike. On the way up I was disappointed to find that many of the hiking trails of my youth had grown over, vanished. Few people walk here anymore; many are on ATVs. The woods

were alive with the flute-like song of the wood thrush and the plaintive call of the eastern wood pewee: "Pewee? Pewee!" The approach to the summit was bracketed by mountain laurel in full bloom and it had attracted at least one male ruby-throated hummingbird and two monarchs.

This is a special place where striped maple dominates the understory and American chestnut trees still grow, although never very tall. The largest I found had a circumference of eight-inches. It was here, a decade ago, that I came upon the largest bobcat tracks I have ever seen. They were bobcat-bordering-on-puma size, set in the muddy ground. She was not far off, either, as water droplets from her stride had not yet evaporated off the rocks. Today, a doe and her two tiny fawns galloped over the rocks and disappeared into the bright green forest. *–Tom Lake*

7/19: North Germantown, Columbia County, HRM 109: I was snorkeling near midday in the shallows just upriver of the DEC boat launch. The ebb tide brought clouds of young-of-the-year striped bass and herring, swirling into the scattered beds of wild celery. As I drifted, shoals of banded killifish flushed from their cover and dozens of tessellated darters scooted off across the sandy bottom. One of my favorite summer moments is enjoying the exquisite view of the electric blue damselflies from underwater. They hover overhead in twos and threes just off the surface, sunlight refracting and reflecting from a thousand facets—from insects to water ripples to my face mask. The air was 95°, the river was 84°F., a real sauna. *–Tom Lake*

Under contract to the state Department of Environmental Conservation, the Hudson River Almanac project is coordinated by Tom Lake with additional support from the Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley Inc.; the Hudson River Foundation for Science and Environmental Research; and the J. P. Morgan Kaplan Fund publication program.

To contribute observations to the Hudson River Almanac, write to Tom Lake, 3 Steinhaus Lane, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590-3927, fax 845-297-8935, or e-mail trlake7@aol.com.

Regional History Forum

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

The Hudson River Sloop *Clearwater*: Sailing to Save the River

Richard J. Langlois

The bell chimes twice, cutting through the air to tell the crew of the sloop *Clearwater* that lunch is ready. They retreat below deck, where sounds of laughter and talk escape from the cabin. Waves break against the ship's dark-green underbelly, gently rocking the hull and those aboard. A breeze flows across the hardwood deck, its polished finish timeworn by forty years of weather and passengers. A looming mast casts a shadow across the foredeck, standing 108 feet tall. The three canvases used to sail lay still. Lengths of wrist-thick rope lay neatly coiled around the side of the boat, sun-washed to a light brown, cared for by crews of volunteers past and present. Movement is heard from below deck as the crew cleans up, gathers themselves, and prepares for the day ahead. Later, they will sail to Newburgh, but for now there is music from Waryas Park, as the people of Poughkeepsie gather around the forty-year-old vessel. Captain Patrick Flynn issues a few last-minute orders to the crew as the children waiting by the dock can no longer hold back. They rush aboard this environmental icon of the Hudson River.

The Hudson flows from New York Harbor to Albany (in either direction, depending upon the Atlantic's tide) over a span of 150 miles. The estuary's composition of fresh and salt water provides all sorts of creatures and observers with a unique yet delicate ecosystem. Failure to protect this ecosystem could result in the species' extinction. One group in particular watching over the river and its denizens is Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc. It was founded in 1966 by folksinger/songwriter Pete Seeger. At the time, the Hudson River's beauty was just surface-

deep. The river itself was being destroyed from below by pollution. Deposits of waste had caused it to become "rank with raw sewage, toxic chemicals, oil pollution, and bacteria too anoxic to support fish life" (*www.clearwater.org*).

Seeger aimed at saving the Hudson by halting the pollution and raising awareness. "You can't expect people to fight for a cleaner river until they learn to love it," he has said. Clearwater organizers feared that simply raising awareness through word of mouth would not be enough to bring about the necessary changes to clean the river, so the organization built the sloop *Clearwater* in 1969 with the notion that if they could give people an incentive to come to the river, they would want to help. Two thousand people were present when the sloop left port for the first time from South Bristol, Maine (*www.clearwater.org*).

The following year, Seeger and his friend and fellow musician Don McLean sailed the *Clearwater* to Washington, D.C., where a press conference and impromptu concert were held for the House of Representatives; the goal was to raise awareness for polluted waterways such as the Hudson and emphasize the need for aid to clean up the damage. Two years later, the Federal Water Pollution Control Amendment of 1972 was signed. It introduced a permit system for regulating point sources of pollution (*www.waterboards.ca.gov*). In 1977, this law became known as the Clean Water Act; it "continued requirements to set water quality standards for all contaminants in surface waters. The act made it unlawful to discharge any pollutant into navigable waters; funded the construction of sewage treatment plants; and recognized the need for planning to address the source of pollution" (*www.epa.gov*). Clearwater has continued to fight for legislation to protect the Hudson and all other wetlands from pollution, and has collaborated with groups such as the Hudson River Watershed Alliance and Town of Poughkeepsie Wetland Protection (*www.clearwater.org*).

Though legislation helped reduce the damage being done to the Hudson, pollution present before these initiatives still lingers. PCBs are a group of synthetic, oil-like chemicals of the organochlorine family. Until their toxic nature was recognized and their use was banned in the 1970s, they were widely used as insulation in electrical equipment (*www.clearwater.org*). Five hundred pounds of PCBs discharged for more than 30 years from General Electric plants in upstate Hudson Falls and Fort Edward get washed downriver every year, explained Manna Jo Greene, environmental director of Clearwater. While the threat of PCBs to humans is not direct, it seriously affects wildlife, primarily fish, and crippled the Hudson River's fishing industry. With some forty separate PCB "hot spots" along the river, the Hudson was until recently the nation's number-one Superfund site, with a cleanup area stretching 200 miles. The first phase of the cleanup process is

complete; phase two, to begin next year, will require the dredging of contaminated areas.

It has been because of efforts of organizations like Clearwater that, after nearly forty years, the Hudson's remediation is being addressed. Clearwater also offers a number of educational opportunities for communities throughout the Hudson Valley to become more aware of the issues and dangers threatening the river. "The problem goes below just the surface [of the Hudson River]," said Captain Flynn. "People need to be made aware that there is life down there and that it is worth protecting."

The sloop *Clearwater* weighs in at seventy tons, can sleep a crew of eighteen, and carry up to fifty passengers. Those aboard sail from Albany to New York Harbor and Long Island Sound. The design of the ship replicates the Dutch sloops that carried cargo up and down the Hudson in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, the *Clearwater* functions not as a cargo ship, but as a mobile icon for educating people about the Hudson River.

Many of *Clearwater*'s passengers are students from local schools. "We do three-hour education sails with students, usually fifth- and sixth-graders. In the history of *Clearwater* we have had over 450,000 students aboard the sloop!" said Captain Flynn. This, he added, is the biggest effect *Clearwater* has had,—that so many people have been touched, been made aware, and educated by the organization to what damage has been done to the river that gives them so much. "We are trying to undo a lot of the myths," noted Greene.

The educational philosophy of *Clearwater*'s Classroom on the Waves Program is "learning by doing." Through inquiry-based activities, students help raise the sloop's sails, navigate the boat, set and haul in a fishing net, as well as interact with learning stations on board to examine and touch the day's catch, perform water-quality tests, and study plankton and other invertebrate life under field magnification. *Clearwater*'s Tideline Discovery Program is offered to school groups in grades K to 12. *Clearwater* caters to the general community with its Community Educator Programs, designed for adults and mixed ages. *Clearwater* also offers educational programs in classrooms throughout the Hudson Valley. Its educators bring slides, songs, and stories, as well interactive exhibits.

Moving beyond the traditional classroom, The organization also offers onboard experience through sloop apprenticeships, educational internships, and volunteer positions aboard the sloop. Apprentices are selected for two-month campaigns between April and July. They assist the crew in all aspects of sailing, including education and maintenance. Educational interns join *Clearwater* for two to three months between April and October. While serving as full-time crew

members, they focus primarily on assisting with educational programs. Volunteers working as crew hands are part of a two-crew rotation from April to October. They may occupy the positions of first mate, second mate, cook, engineer, bosun, and deckhands.

Aside from providing educational opportunities, Clearwater hosts a number of fun on-shore events. The most prominent of these is the Clearwater Festival, held each June at Croton Point Park in Westchester County. For three decades now, Clearwater has hosted approximately 15,000 attendees who come to enjoy top-quality performances of a diverse mix of contemporary, traditional, World, and American Roots music, dance, and storytelling.

Pete Seeger's dream has changed little since Clearwater was first created in 1966. The *Clearwater* still sails up and down the Hudson River, spreading its message of hope, its crew continuing to educate and fight for the river.

Learn more about the Clearwater*, its educational and sailing opportunities, and its work in environmental efforts, and with sloop clubs around the region by visiting the Web site www.clearwater.org or contact them at 112 Little Market St., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601. 800-67-SLOOP or 845-454-7673; office@clearwater.org.*

Trout Rising Into Sunlight

for Sparrow Stoneback

Matthew Nickel

I.

Blue skies and sun open above maple and cherry,
On a hill overlooking the curve in Black Creek
Where Ascension Cemetery rolls back in green grass,
Shaking fern and ivy cover ancient graves below
Edging up to the old nuns and crosses, we kneel
And I draw a solitary fish in the soil of a new grave;

Somehow in the distance, the light shifts over
The creek, and I remember fishing that curve and dam
Singing aloud, catching trout in black waters,
I remember walking into the woods along the ridge,
Deep into darkness where Burroughs brought Whitman
Under hemlock boughs up along the black waterfalls

The way Whitman described Black Creek,
savage, solitary, druidical and the sinking feeling
Of the hermit thrush singing low in the pine trees,
How a trout shimmered like a wafer of light
Holding steady in the light-crested dark-rippled
Rushes below Copperhead Hole;

Then I remembered dinner, in the still clean light
The skillet sizzled oil-browned trout and leeks,
Sparrow poured red wine for Stoney and my wife;
I held Sparrow's hand dancing for *herbes de Provence*,
Thinking how she caught her first trout in Black Creek
And we sang hymns about the last good country.

II.

At night sleeping, I feel the rush of water in my legs
Pulling always pulling broken knees bending,
Dreaming of lonesome Catskill streams, hunting
Hudson's slopes in long tree shadows slanting
Along Riverby to the Hudson, Mother-river
That flows-two-ways, cutting the distance

In crossed sunlight, to the Vanderbilt Mansion
Or the wind lifting over the garden, leeks
And garlic shooting skyward, bending leaves
Earthward, all things rising and falling, and
The way Stoney rose from his chair
To clip the rosebush the day of Sparrow's funeral,

It was a bright day, and I cannot forget the way
Our Lady of the Presentation held her hands outward
Before the coffin, pallbearers, family, friends,
Or how it reminded me of the *pietà* in Notre Dame
In Paris, the Blessed Virgin open-armed offering,
Stone-faced suffering, still trying to love the whole world

Or the way Mother Mary reminds me of Sparrow
Arms wide open, eyes bright, singing our favorite songs,
Humming "Lord, Let Me Live by the Hudson,"
In that divine harmony, loving to tell the story,
Teaching us how to be fishers of men in song
In this lonesome high hill country of the heart;

Some days it's harder now to walk back into the woods
By Black Creek, or to fish those dark waters
Where a trout might rise into sunlight, beyond those graves
Where we lowered Sparrow's body into the earth—
But we walk slowly, onward, with infinite care,
While her spirit still sings, still lifts up our hearts to Heaven.

August 15, 2008—Feast of the Assumption

Book Reviews

***Land So Fair,* Firth Haring Fabend.**
New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2008. (348 pp.)

With New Amsterdam now but a brief footnote in most history books, Dutch heritage may be lost to most New Yorkers, but it is palpable nonetheless. Dutch New York still lingers today in the names of many places in the Hudson Valley, from Brooklyn and the Bronx all the way up to Voorheesville and Rensselaer in the Capital Region. Take the Bowery, for example: *bowerij* in Dutch means "farm," in this case Peter Stuyvesant's farm, which was located near what is now trendy SoHo. It's sobering to think that the Bowery's original tenants were goats and horses. Ask anyone about the American Revolution and they will more than likely describe it as a struggle between the imperial British and their upstart colonists (and for those who paid attention in ninth-grade history, some Hessians for good measure); but of course, the struggle involved many other factions, not the least of which were the Dutch families who had settled in the Hudson Valley long before anyone dumped tea into Boston Harbor.

In her historical novel *Land So Fair*, Firth Haring Fabend explores three generations of Dutch American women and their families living in New York during the years before and during the American Revolution. Fabend employs a historian's eye for detail in creating an impressive backdrop of the Hudson Valley during the second half of the eighteenth century; historical icons such as the Sons of Liberty, George Washington, and General Sir Henry Clinton, British commander in chief of North America, make their presences known. The novel explores the violent conflicts not only between the armies, but between next-door neighbors, some loyal to the Crown, others loyal to the idea of independence. Here is a depiction of the American Revolution that shows the struggle on a smaller scale, with war going door-to-door in some cases. Readers will undoubtedly enjoy the fresh perspective Fabend employs here in bringing history to life.

However, the real strength of this novel, may lie in the development of its female characters, particularly the younger Margaret, who is exceedingly well-defined as a girl growing up to be a woman aware of her family's traditions but also looking toward what the future may bring. Margaret's story can be seen as the story of that time in American history itself, a transition that would require

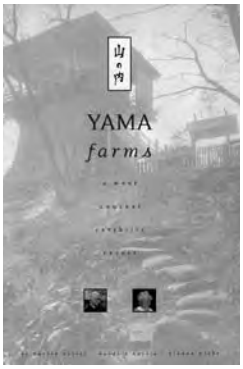
sacrifice, strength, and above all a strong sense of community. The names and basic biographical information of Fabend's main characters are real, but the characters are more than just historical stick figures. They are fleshed out by detail and character development.

For any historical novel set on such a grand scale, the greatest challenge for an author is to create characters with an engrossing narrative thread while depicting historical figures, places, and events accurately. Fabend does not shy away from this challenge. Instead of merely shifting back and forth between the story of the Blauvelt women and the larger context of the American Revolution, she chooses to meld the frames together at various points. Many times the characters are thrust headlong into their historical backdrop with exciting results: "Margaret… and the child clambered out of the cellar, hastily packed a few effects and fled to the Hudson River, along with scores of others with the same idea: to find a boat, any boat, to take them to security across the river. Margaret lost a shoe in the process, but she didn't stop for it. Half hopping, half running, she hustled her hugely pregnant daughter through the cobbled streets with one thought on her mind: get out of the city." (219) However, this conflation of fiction and fact might be used too often. By the end, it could prove tedious for some readers who are enveloped in the narrative of Margaret and her family, only to have the characters pushed into yet another scene with historical implications. Readers might want to concentrate more on the interesting lives of these heroic women who find themselves surrounded by war, rather than have them merely defined by that war.

For anyone interested in the largely forgotten Dutch heritage of New York, *Land So Fair* is an invaluable read, full of interesting and poignant details brought to life in a way that a purely historical text could never accomplish. Author of five previous novels, Fabend is a scholar of Dutch American culture and the eleventh generation of the family she depicts in *Land So Fair.* That background is clearly used in weaving an accurate and caring portrait that does much to remind all of us that the history of New York is much older and more complex than we may at first think.

Tommy Zurhellen

Yama Farms: A Most Unusual Catskills Resort.
Harold Harris, Wendy E. Harris, and Dianne Wiebe. Highland NY: Cragsmoor Historical Society 2006. (86 pp. plus illustrations, bibliography, and index)



The growth of tourism in the Catskills resulted in at least forty hotels and boarding houses tucked into the Rondout Valley hills between Napanoch and Cragsmoor by the early twentieth-century. None of them were quite like Yama-no-uchi ("Home in the Mountains," also called Yama Farms Inn), a 1,300-acre idyllic thumb overlooking the Rondout gorge created from 1902 to 1913 by Frank Seaman (1858-1939) and his companion Olive Sarre (1873?-1954). Seaman was attracted to the once-thriving little canal town (laid low by the abandonment of the Delaware & Hudson in 1902) by a stocks and bonds wizard of ostentatious demeanor named William Woodend. Woodend used to travel through the village of Napanoch in a white coach-in-four carriage (complete with driver and coachman in matching livery), showering children with handfuls of pennies. Seaman matched a fifteen-acre acquisition from Woodend with a 60-room Swiss cottage that he purchased in 1912, retaining the former owner's family at the gate house. Anita Foraste (1906-2004), the daughter of the family, hunted butterflies with John Burroughs in the fields.

Yama Farms was similar to the hotels at Cragsmoor (1904), Minnewaska (1887), Sam's Point (1871), and Mohonk (1870) in the beauty of its surroundings, unique architectural styling, and atmosphere of traditional charm. Cragsmoor's development since the 1880s as a haven for artists and illustrators was of special interest to Seaman and Sarre, who were friends with George Inness, Jr., and Frederick Dellenbaugh, the more famous residents of that southeastern ridge. Yet there was nothing quite like George Seaman's digs. You did not make reservations at Yama Farms: you were invited. Some came by yacht or their own personal train cars; many were picked up in New York City by Seaman and his staff. No one paid; tipping was not allowed; anything desired was available day or night. The guests usually worked out their bills beforehand or paid months later.

Seaman was a wealthy advertising executive who undertook this ambitious project as a resort for his wealthy clients. Among his accounts was Eastman Kodak, the company of his boyhood friend, George Eastman. He also had Palmolive, Studebaker, and his most meteoric account, American Tobacco. He and Sarre's immersion in the "niceties of hospitality" of Japanese culture and architecture following a visit there in 1906 (fifteen years before Frank Lloyd Wright), coupled

with their interest in the Arts and Crafts Movement (which had attracted Ralph Whitehead to Byrdcliffe a decade earlier) resulted in this stunning retreat for America's elite.

John D. Rockefeller stayed here. Sidney Colgate, Poultney Bigelow, Douglas MacArthur, Rabindranath Tagore, Edgar Lee Masters, Alexander C. Flick, H.H. Westinghouse, Hamlin Garland, U.S. Vice President Alton Parker (he came over from Esopus), U.S. Treasury Secretary Ogden Mills, Jacob Raskob, Edward Everett Hale, the Earl of Sandwich, Leopold Stowkowski, Frank N. Doubleday, Frederic Remington, Rudolph Wurlitzer, Count Felix Von Luckner, Prince Louis Ferdinand, and the Vincent Astors all had their own "keys" to Yama Farms—and their own wooden peg with brass name plates on which to hang their hats and coats. The most well-known guests were the Famous Four—John Burroughs and his friends Henry Ford, Thomas Alva Edison, and Harvey Firestone—also known as the Four Cronies.

Buffalo Bill Cody came one season and drove an old stagecoach through a village of "Indian" teepees in the annual Farms pageant. One of the employees remarked in later life that he overheard a group of bankers, politicians, and industrialists planning America's entry into World War I in 1913 in a Yama Farms conference room. A convention of American Telephone and Telegraph Company executives was preceded by sixteen engineers who came and built an experimental plant designed to allow them to send photographs by wire. The Vitaphone or "talking moving picture machine" was first shown to Bell Telephone Company nabobs at Yama Farms.

The buildings, whose designs were credited to Olive Sarre, were considered "the best adaptation of Japanese architectural principles in America," according to Carlyle Ellis in the July 1910 issue of *American Homes and Gardens*. Yet Yamano-uchi excelled in more than architecture, scenery, and style. Seaman's black minorcas, which produced "the largest hens' eggs known," were considered "the aristocrats of the poultry world." The Jenny Brook Trout Hatchery, there in rough form when Seaman purchased the property, became "the best private hatchery in this country." The Yama Farms pure-bred Jersey herd, which included a $10,000 bull, won blue ribbons across the state. Their collection of Japanese irises was the best in America. The library consisted of more than 4,000 volumes. Olive Sarre also maintained a world-class English ceramics collection.

"I lost my heart to Jenny Brook," John Burroughs remarked about its trout fishing. "I think she took it with a hook." A John Burroughs Night was a standard feature in which stories were told by the rich and famous around a campfire. Burroughs and his wealthy friends, who often traveled together, were frequently

the subject of local anecdote and story. One day they were motoring in the country near Grahamsville when their Ford suffered a flat tire. A blacksmith grudgingly agreed to change it after negotiating a price. He complained about how shoddy things were these days, the tire and tube in particular.

"It's all his fault," Ford said, pointing to Firestone. "He made that tire and inner tube."

"Hmmph," said the blacksmith.

Edison piped up by informing the worker that the man who had just spoken had made that automobile.

"Hmmph," he said again.

"And this fellow here," Firestone chimed in, pointing to Edison, "built the battery and the lights on that machine."

That was enough for the blacksmith. He rose and pointed to the white-bearded man with them and shouted, "And I suppose he is Jesus Christ!"

Another tale of a Yama Farms car involved a wealthy perfume manufacturer who always had his chauffeur stop at the office when arriving. The driver came around to the front of the car, unscrewed the radiator ornament, took it into the office, and waited for it to be stored in the vault for safekeeping. The ornament, made of diamond-incrusted gold, was worth $35,000.

Poultney Bigelow's eccentricities—walking barefoot on the trails and hooting like an owl, not to mention his two-inch-long toenails, of which he was uncommonly proud—appeared in their best light at Yama Farms. Yet the gregarious (and often obnoxious) world correspondent also was outclassed by his companions. At one point, showing off his pedigree, Bigelow announced that he was "one of the few men still alive" who saw John Wilkes Booth perform.

"Sir," said a man with him, "I was his manager." The speaker was John Burnham, president of the American Protective Association, who managed Sarah Bernhardt and John Drew as well.

Burroughs was not the only distinguished naturalist to frequent Yama Farms. Others included Roy Chapman Andrews, Raymond Ditmars, Carl Akeley, and Carl Lumholtz. Akeley and Andrews, an expert on China's Gobi Desert, helped create the American Museum of Natural History. Ditmars, a reptile and snake expert, was with the Bronx Zoo. Lumholtz was a Norwegian naturalist and ethnographer who studied indigenous societies in Australia and Borneo.

The setting was not only stunning, but convenient. Yama Farms spread from the top of the gorge that carries the Rondout Creek down from the Catskills to its slow, long drawl across the Rondout Valley to Esopus Creek. Route 209 south to New York lay just below. Honk Lake was a mile into the mountain plateau,

where Route 55 followed the upper creek to the new Rondout Reservoir. Today, the hatchery lies in ruins below the plateau, where some of the old buildings, now crowded in by man and forest, are still used. On one side of the Hut, a beautiful stone and wood grouping up a cobblestone drive from the highway, a modern mobile home park, (surprisingly well-kept) sits today. On the other side, the woods have grown to shield almost entirely the view of the valley below.

No matter. Across Route 55 a sanding operation is gouging out a mountainside. The gorge itself was fenced off by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation after it ran out of money in a half-hearted cleanup of a Superfund site created in the dumping of polychlorinated biphenyls by a defunct paper company decades ago. This beautiful natural area is not open to the public anymore.

Yama-no-uchi also is gone. Its short, elaborate life expired with Frank Seaman in 1939, although Olive lived on amid the splendid setting for another 15 years. Its memory is sustained in an Ellenville Public Library display, and its elegance evoked in this touching, intelligent, well-illustrated, and altogether charming record by Harold Harris, based on his own memories and fifty years of notes and memorabilia. Harris, who died in 2003, was a Channel Master executive with a special interest in Japanese culture that drew him to Yama-no-uchi. Dianne Wiebe worked with him throughout the project and after his death. His daughter, Wendy E. Harris, undertook the final editing and rewriting.

Vernon Benjamin

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