

THE  
HUDSON  
RIVER  
VALLEY  
REVIEW

*A Journal of Regional Studies*

MARIST

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## Publisher's Intro

It is with great pleasure that I introduce two new members to the Editorial Board of our *Hudson River Valley Review*, as well as two new members to the Hudson River Valley Institute's Advisory Board. On the Editorial Board, Michael Groth joins us from Wells College where he is an Associate Professor in History and Kim Bridgford, Professor of English at Fairfield University, will act as our poetry editor for Regional Writing. Shirley Handel and Robert E. Tompkins, Sr. bring their experience and commitment to our region to the vision of the Institute.

—Thomas S. Wermuth

## Editors' Intro

While the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area's "Corridor of Commerce" theme has not received the greatest amount of attention, it highlights an important aspect of the region's historic legacy. Time and again, commercial and industrial innovations developed in the Hudson Valley have placed the region firmly into the history books. Glenn Curtiss's 1910 flight from Albany to Manhattan established that air travel could be a practical means for moving people and goods, much as Robert Fulton's steamship proved the potential for that mode of transportation a century earlier. But the valley's commercial legacy really begins with Native Americans, such as Daniel Nimham, who traded goods and land with European settlers. While Nimham is most often remembered as a Patriot who fell at the battle of Kingsbridge, there is substantial evidence he also was one of the colonial era's great land barons. Over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the regional economy grew to include manufacturing—such as the bell foundries located in the upper valley—as well as substantial shipping and wholesale and retail operations. Finally, it was the valley's suitability for travel that made it a crucial point of defense by militia and regulars during the American Revolution, and later one of the ideal routes for establishing Post Roads enabling communication between the Northeast's major cities. The Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome, the Maybrook Historical Society, and the Danbury Rail Museum are each dedicated to preserving a different portion of this transportation legacy. We welcome you to another issue of the *Hudson River Valley Review*, which explores all of these fascinating topics.

—Christopher Pryslopski, Reed Sparling



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The mission of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area Program is to recognize, preserve, protect, and interpret the nationally significant cultural and natural resources of the Hudson River Valley for the benefit of the Nation.

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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. Scanned photos or digital art must be 300 pixels per inch (or greater) at 8 in. x 10 in. (between 7 and 20 mb). No responsibility is assumed for the loss of materials. 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*.

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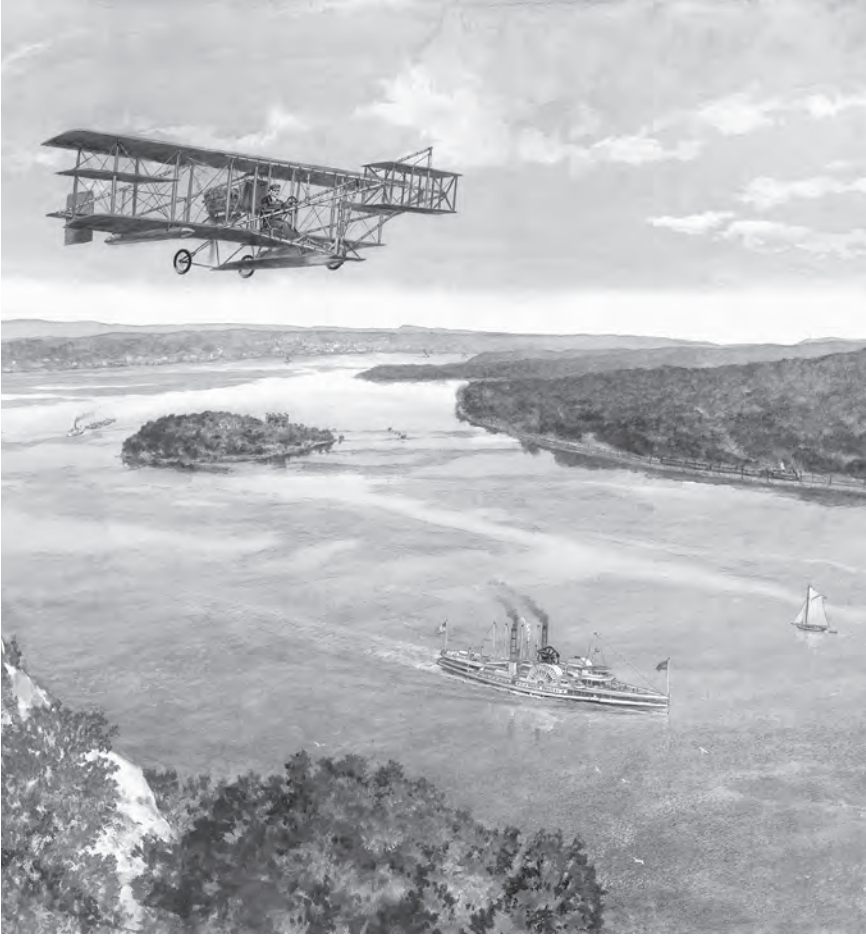
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On the Cover: *Albany Flyer*, by John Gould,  
Photo courtesy of Bethlehem Art Gallery



Artist John Gould's depiction of Glenn Curtiss' 1910 flight in the *Albany Flyer*  
from Albany to Manhattan

# More than the Wright stuff: Glenn Curtiss' 1910 Hudson Flight

*Reed Sparling*

Glenn Curtiss secured the Hudson River Valley's place in aviation history a century ago this May. Just seven years after Orville Wright's inaugural flight—which lasted 12 seconds and spanned half the length of a 747—Curtiss revved his plane's 50-horsepower engine and took off from an Albany field. When he landed on Governors Island off the tip of Manhattan five hours later, he had set an American distance record and become a hero. Along the way, he ushered in a slew of flying firsts.

Curtiss had already earned his stripes as a daredevil. In 1907 he'd been dubbed “the fastest man on earth” for setting a land speed record (at 136.3 m.p.h.) aboard a motorcycle. A year later, he became the first pilot in the U.S. to fly one kilometer before a crowd. But the trip down the valley would take far more fortitude than those exploits.

The impetus for the flight was supplied by the *New York World*, which offered \$10,000 to any pilot who could complete a Manhattan-to-Albany journey—replicating Robert Fulton's initial steamboat passage—before October 10, 1910. Two stops would be allowed, and the 152-mile flight could be made in either direction.

The thirty-two-year old Curtiss quickly took up the challenge. Over the winter, he and his mechanics built the plane in his hometown of Hammondsport, in the Finger Lakes. It was a flimsy looking assemblage of wire, bamboo, and steel that the pilot likened to a “monster violin.” The double set of wings were covered with rubberized silk. In case he had to make a crash landing in the river, Curtiss crafted a variety of flotation devices. Beneath each wing he placed a sealed metal drum, while five inflated bags sewn out of balloon cloth stretched the length of the craft. It was the world's first seaplane.

Because the winds seemed to favor a north-to-south flight, Curtiss opted to take off from Albany. In May, the plane was taken apart, crated up, and shipped to the capital, where a field on Rensselaer Island was rented from a German farmer for five dollars. It would become the city's first municipal airport.

While Curtiss's crew reassembled the plane, he took a boat trip downriver to scout out possible landing sites and get a feel for the valley's tricky air currents. He hoped to make just one stop; for it, he chose a field south of Poughkeepsie, which was the approximate midpoint of the trip.

Curtiss had tried to keep the flight a secret, to prevent other pilots from going after the prize. But it didn't take long for the public to catch on. Each day, hundreds of spectators thronged the makeshift airfield, hoping to catch a glimpse of the takeoff. A train chartered by the *New York Times* was kept in constant readiness across the river; it was given right of way on the tracks, so photographers and writers (as well as Curtiss's wife, Lena) could keep up with the plane.

For three straight days, the flight had to be scrubbed—first because the plane wasn't ready, and then due to bad weather. People were getting tired of watching the skies. "Curtiss gives us a pain in the neck," said one local newspaper.

Finally, on Sunday, May 29, the weather cooperated. Clad in a pair of fisherman's waders, a leather jacket, motorcycle goggles, and a cork life vest, Curtiss settled onto the plank that served as a seat. In his pocket was a letter of greeting from the mayor of Albany addressed to his counterpart in New York. It was the first piece of airmail.

The propeller was given a turn and the adventure began at 7:02 a.m. Ironically, fewer than 100 onlookers had turned up that morning. The next day, the *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle* waxed poetic over the takeoff: "Over the level runway the aeroplane bustled on wheels, like a partridge running to get its wings, and like the beating of wings of a partridge was the roar of exhaust from the pulsating engine. With a little left she had taken the air and, as the ribbed wings of her planes spread brown and dusty against the sky, the suggestion of a partridge receded in the mind and one saw that in tenuity of gossamer surfaces and reedy anatomy this was a locust springing from the sands."

Curtiss flew up to 700 feet and leveled off above the middle of the river. At 7:33 he passed Hudson; as he flew over Catskill, the telegraph operator cabled downriver: "Curtiss just went by here and he is gone, going like H- -!" He had no controls: he used the flutter of his sleeve to gauge his speed and the drift of smoke from chimneys to assess wind direction. As he approached Poughkeepsie at 8:20, he debated whether he should fly above or below the railroad bridge—today's Walkway Over the Hudson. He stayed above it and landed minutes later.

Curtiss had arranged to have fuel waiting for him, but the supplier was a no-show. (Perhaps he had been humbled by the local pastor who chided Curtiss for choosing "the Lord's day to make his spectacular flight, thus robbing God of his day.") Fortunately a couple of New Jersey motorists who were passing by gave

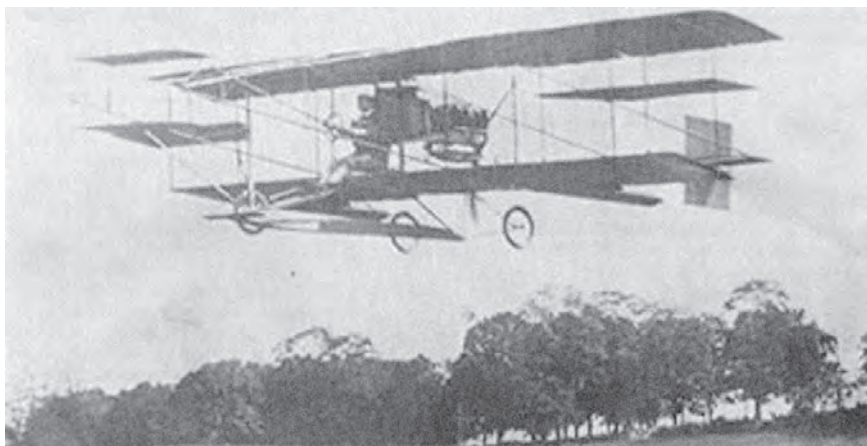


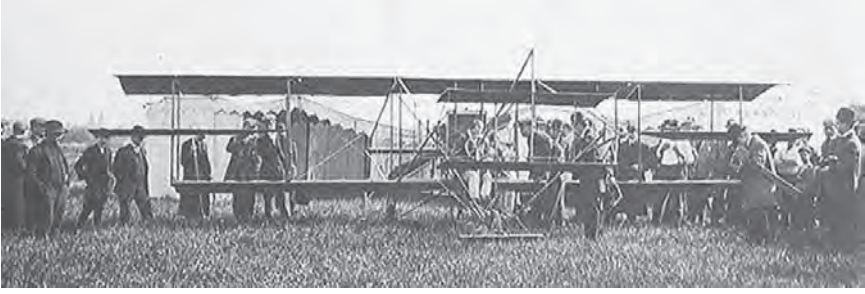
Photo of the *Albany Flyer*, circa 1910

him the eight gallons of gas needed to top off his ten-gallon tank. After laying over for an hour, just long enough for his mechanics to check out the plane (and for him to get a kiss from Lena), he took off once more, barely missing a couple of cows who were startled by the roar of the engine.

The most dangerous leg of the trip was at the northern entrance to the Hudson Highlands, where the mountains form a giant wind tunnel. Curtiss rose to 2,000 feet to try to avoid the worst of the gusts, but they jolted the plane mercilessly, at one point dropping it several hundred feet and nearly throwing the pilot out of his seat. "It was the worst plunge I ever got in an aeroplane," he later noted. "I thought it was all over." Curtiss decided to try a new tack: he reduced his altitude to forty feet. There, another blast of air nearly pitched the plane into the water. He managed to pull up just in time.

At West Point, cadets flocked on to the plain to salute Curtiss (and his thoughts turned to how easy it would be for a plane to drop bombs on them—the first suggestion of an aircraft's military capabilities). Then, as he soared above the Tappan Zee and Palisades, he discovered that he was running low on oil, the result of a leak. He would have to make an unscheduled stop.

Shortly after passing Spuyten Duyvil, Curtiss spotted a long, grassy lawn behind a house; he touched down on it at 10:25. The owner of the house was sitting on his front porch reading about the pending flight in the Sunday paper. When he heard the commotion, he rushed to his backyard, where he found the hero in the flesh. Oil and gas were procured and, as crowds turned the yard into what an author likened to a "fairgrounds," Curtiss took off on his final leg. (Since he'd already landed in Manhattan, he had technically won the prize).



COURTESY OF GLENN H. CURTISS MUSEUM,  
HAMMONDSPORT, NY

Photograph of the *Albany Flyer*, circa 1910

Over those last miles he was hailed by the toots of tugs on the river and the waving masses who thronged Manhattan's rooftops. Over New York Harbor, he looped around the Statue of Liberty and dropped onto Governors Island at noon. He had been airborne for two hours and 51 minutes, for a speed of 52 mph. After a celebratory dinner, Curtiss decided to give his anonymous craft a name—the “Hudson Flyer.” (Later, it also became known as the “Albany Flyer.”)

The next March, *Scientific American* magazine awarded Curtiss a trophy for his heroic deeds. In making the presentation, publisher Charles Munn noted that “Three names will always remain associated with the history of the river—that of Hudson, the explorer; that of Robert Fulton, the introducer of the river navigation; and that of Glenn H. Curtiss, the birdman.”

How important was Curtiss's exploit? “The Albany-to-New York flight was the event, more than any other, which marked the birth of practical aviation in America,” writes C.R. Roseberry in his biography, *Glenn Curtiss: Pioneer of Flight*. “Up to then, flying had been more an experiment and a sport than an activity to be taken seriously. By achieving the first sustained flight between two major cities, Curtiss had pried off the lid. He had proved that an airplane might dependably start from here and go to there.... The excitement kicked up by his deed triggered an outbreak of distance flights which stretched ever longer until they marked out the continental airways.”

*The Glenn H. Curtiss Museum, in Hammondsport, is dedicated to Curtiss's legacy as well as local history. Its collection of artifacts includes antique Curtiss bicycles, motorcycles, and airplanes, as well as reproductions that volunteers construct in the museum's working shop. They are constructing a replica of the Hudson Flyer that will reenact this historic flight this fall. [www.glennhcurtisismuseum.org](http://www.glennhcurtisismuseum.org)*

# The Changing Nature of Mid-Hudson Valley Business During The Dawn of the Industrial Era (1783-1835)

Evidence from Early American Newspaper Advertising

*Sally M. Schultz & Michael Guiry*

The period from the end of the Revolutionary War to the third decade of the nineteenth century was one of significant change in the young American nation, characterized by westward expansion of the population and the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution. Methods of manufacturing, transportation, agriculture, mining, and communications that had been relied upon for hundreds of years were updated. Farm production shifted from subsistence-based to market-based; agricultural tools were improved with the use of iron; and new farming methods were introduced. Improvements in transportation accelerated the pace of economic development. Craft technology—based on artisans using hand tools and simple machines in the home or shop—gave way to mechanized and industrialized production.<sup>1</sup>

In this essay, we gain perspective on how these changes impacted business, the economy, and everyday life in New York's mid-Hudson River Valley by reviewing business advertisements that appeared in the Early American Newspaper Collection (1783-1835) of the Huguenot Historical Society in New Paltz. Over this time period, general stores began stocking an increasing variety of goods. Manufacturing firms, educational institutions, and service professionals offered goods and services to mid-Hudson residents. Advertisements attest to the roads and canals that were being financed and built, and to the increasing use of the corporate form for businesses as well as public works. New York City was the source for many of the imported goods stocked by local merchants and was the recognized center of style and fashion.

The era was characterized by migration and the omnipresent need for construction; artisans in rural as well as urban areas developed multiple competencies.



High mobility, both geographic and social, weakened family ties; sons were often drawn away by new opportunities, and business partnerships continually changed. Many entrepreneurs did not specialize in one trade or industry, but were willing to take on any commercial enterprise that might return a profit.<sup>2</sup>

The Huguenot Historical Society's Early American Newspaper Collection (1783-1835) consists of single issues rather than runs of papers. Most of the newspapers in this collection were printed at Kingston. Additional issues were printed in Newburgh, New York City, Albany, Philadelphia, and Virginia. The contents of this collection are enumerated in Table 1.

<div>Table 1</div> <div>Early Newspaper Collection of the Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, NY</div>		
Title	Location	Date
<i>The New York Morning Post</i>	New York, NY	Friday, November 7, 1783
<i>The Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser</i>	Philadelphia, PA	Tuesday, September 21, 1784
<i>London's New York Packet</i>	New York, NY	Thursday, March 17, 1785
<i>The Newburgh Packet</i>	Newburgh, NY	Monday, June 19, 1797
<i>Ulster County Gazette</i>	Kingston, NY	Saturday, July 13, 1799
<i>Ulster County Gazette</i>	Kingston, NY	Saturday, July 20, 1799
<i>Ulster County Gazette</i>	Kingston, NY	Saturday, January 4, 1800
<i>Ulster County Gazette</i>	Kingston, NY	Saturday, October 31, 1801
<i>Ulster County Gazette</i>	Kingston, NY	Saturday, January 23, 1802
<i>The Rights of Men</i>	Newburgh, NY	Thursday, May 20, 1802
<i>The Plebian</i>	Kingston, NY	Wednesday, November 9, 1803
Unknown (Fragment)	Kingston, NY [?]	Winter or Spring 1805
Unknown (Fragment)	Kingston, NY [?]	March 9, 1805
Unknown (Fragment)	Kingston, NY [?]	June 1805
<i>Ulster County Gazette</i>	Kingston, NY	January 1806
<i>The Plebian</i>	Kingston, NY	October 1807
Unknown (Fragment)	Kingston, NY [?]	March 1808
<i>New-York Spectator</i>	New York, NY	Saturday, July 15, 1809
<i>The Plebian</i>	Kingston, NY	Tuesday, March 26, 1811
<i>The Plebian</i>	Kingston, NY	Tuesday, May 14, 1811
<i>Ulster County Gazette</i>	Kingston, NY	Tuesday, January 7, 1812
<i>Republican Farmer</i>	Staunton, VA	Thursday, February 18, 1813
Unknown	Albany, NY [?]	March 1815
<i>Ulster Plebian</i>	Kingston, NY	Tuesday, February 3, 1818
<i>New-York Spectator</i>	New York, NY	Friday, January 16, 1824
Unknown (Fragment)	Kingston, NY [?]	Fall 1829
Unknown (Fragment)	Kingston, NY [?]	Probably January, 1830
<i>The Ulster Palladium</i>	Kingston, NY	Tuesday, April 6, 1830
<i>The Ulster Palladium</i>	Kingston, NY	Tuesday, May 18, 1830
<i>The Ulster Palladium</i>	Kingston, NY	Wednesday, May 11, 1831
<i>The Ulster Sentinel</i>	Kingston, NY	Wednesday, December 19, 1832
<i>Ulster County Whig</i>	Rondout, NY	Wednesday, September 9, 1835
Unknown (Fragment)	Kingston, NY [?]	1834

ADAPTED FROM HUGUENOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY AMERICAN NEWSPAPER COLLECTION (1783-1835) FINDING AID, COMPLETED BY ERIC ROTH 3/2/2000 AND REVISED 7/5/2005.



Newspapers were the primary means of disseminating public information during this era, and their proliferation was an important cultural development during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Before the 1830s, most newspapers appeared weekly and typically served a local readership, with contents devoted to commercial and political subjects. During the 1830s, technological innovations in printing and improvements in transportation reduced the cost of newspapers. Circulation increased, and newspapers began to take on more modern characteristics.<sup>3</sup>

We chronologically examine the contents of the newspapers in this collection, and the related developments in business, technology, and culture. The periods used as a framework for the discussion are the New Republic (1783-1800), the early nineteenth century (1801-1823), and the Jacksonian era (1824-1835). However, some overlap in developments between these periods is inevitable.

## The New Republic, 1783-1800

### *Currency, Geography, and Trade*

In colonial America, the local economy had largely been based on barter, which developed in response to the shortage of coinage. The barter was often asynchronous, since farmers could not deliver commodities to the shopkeeper until after the harvest. Not only were delays in payment inevitable, but the use of commodity money made exact settlement difficult, and a balance was often left over. Merchants used barter accounting to tally the balances due from—or to—their customers. In the absence of a sufficient supply of reliable money, bookkeeping barter provided liquidity to the market.

Recording barter transactions required adoption of a monetary unit of account, and the English settlers used pounds, shillings, and pence (£, s, d.). These units continued to be used when the colonies issued paper notes to address the shortage of coinage. After the birth of the new American nation, the dollar became the principal unit of currency based on passage of the Mint Act of 1792. Nevertheless, pounds and shillings continued to be used as the primary units of account for many small businesses in the mid-Hudson valley well into the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> As the nineteenth century progressed, now that a stable currency was available, cash increasingly became the preferred medium of exchange and served to facilitate economic development.

The geography of the northeastern United States, with its fertile agricultural land penetrated by many rivers and bays, led to the development of an agricultural and commercial society with a relatively high standard of living by the end of

the eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> New York Harbor, served by three protected waterways (including the Hudson River) was superior to any of its rivals. The volume of business in the port increased, facilitated by merchants' strong ties to British exporters and importers and by good communications. Philadelphia, the great port of the late colonial and early national periods, lost its lead to New York in the value of exports by 1797 and in population by 1810.<sup>6</sup>

*The New York Morning Post* of November 7, 1783—the year Britain recognized the independence of the United States—included an advertisement announcing the arrival of goods from London that were “to be sold very low,” including books, tooth powders, Wedgwood inkstands, and rings, locketts, and pins. Comestibles for sale at wholesale or retail included tea, sugar, rum, coffee, cinnamon, brandy, mustard, pickles, porter, ale, vinegars, and spices. Imports during this period included desirable luxury goods, as well as a number of staples. Earthenware, fine shoes, fabrics, and hatter's trimmings also were available, as were tobacco, snuff, military shoes, and women's apparel. Merchants accepted cash or bills of exchange from customers. The newspaper also included notices posted by individuals; one advertised for work as a wet nurse, and another offered a reward for the capture and return of a runaway servant.

*The Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser* of September 21, 1784, included schedules of ships sailing from Philadelphia to destinations that included Liverpool, Dublin, Cork, London, and the Caribbean. Wines, including claret, Medoc, Burgundy, and sherry, were offered for sale, as were beer, sweet oil, dry goods, Carolina Rice, and Havana sugar. Isaac Franks advertised his services as a broker buying and selling commodities, while other advertisers informed the public about a dancing school and lots to let.

*London's New York Packet* of March 17, 1785, carried advertisements for a wide variety of domestic and imported goods whose origin was typically specified, including: Irish beef, Jamaica spirits, Lisbon salt, Connecticut beef, and New Jersey pork. A bookbinder and stationer announced an inventory of bibles, dictionaries, and histories. Other merchants advertised tools and building supplies such as files, nails, hinges, chisels, augers, hammers, anvils, hemp, and cordage. Household supplies were also for sale, including knives, combs, buckles, razors, and brushes.

Table 2 reproduces the list of current commodity prices that appeared in this issue of *London's New York Packet*. Items were priced in terms of shillings and pence. The comparative prices show that unrefined muscovado sugar was a luxury, selling at many times the price of either refined sugar or molasses. Beef seems to have been more costly than pork, and rock salt more costly than fine salt. When

Table 2  
Current Commodity Prices  
From London's New York Packet of March 17, 1785

	Shillings	Pence
Wheat, per bushel	8	6
India Corn	4	3
Flour	27	0
Brown Bread	18	0
West India Rum	4	6
Muscovado Sugar	40	
Single Refined Sugar	1	4
Molasses	2	4
Beef, per barrel	70	0
Pork	11	0
Fine Salt	5	0
Rock Salt	8	0

EARLY AMERICAN NEWSPAPER COLLECTION (1783-1835)  
HUDSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, NEW PALTZ, NY

no particular quantity was specified in the table, the items were probably priced in terms of barrels, the containers commonly used to contain foodstuffs during that era.

## *Agriculture and Business in the Mid-Hudson River Valley*

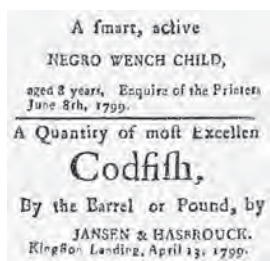
At the end of the eighteenth century, farm families in the mid-Hudson region were growing grains, cultivating gardens, raising farm animals, and manufacturing textiles. Most continued to use the same tools as their grandparents had: scythes and sickles for reaping wheat and cutting grass, and wooden plows and harrows. Iron tools appeared in less than twenty percent of probate inventories from the 1790s.<sup>7</sup> Storekeepers were the primary source of consumer goods produced outside the valley. These merchants served as intermediaries, transporting the farmers' produce to city markets, and in exchange obtaining the imported goods their local customers desired. Over time, an increasing number of domestically manufactured products would become available.

Agricultural products from the mid-Hudson region were transported to New York via Hudson River sloops, a distinctive type of watercraft that combined stability, large cargo capacity, and shallow water navigability. Developed around 1750, sloops gained in popularity, and about 1,000 were launched between 1796 and 1835. They were manufactured in various locations, including the Albany area and Rockland County. Sloops served as the mainstay of the Hudson River fleet until steam replaced wind as the primary source of energy for navigation.<sup>8</sup>

Sloops traveling between Newburgh and New York City announced their sailing dates in *The Newburgh Packet* of June 19, 1797. Other advertisements in the same newspaper offered for sale shad and herring caught in the Hudson River, in addition to dry goods, groceries, crockery, and glassware. Compared to the ads in the New York and Philadelphia newspapers, those in the Newburgh paper generally mentioned fewer goods, suggesting that merchants in the mid-Hudson region were smaller and more specialized than those in the major seaports. Also, price information now appeared in some of the ads, whereas the advertisements in the New York and Philadelphia papers from a decade earlier had made no mention of prices. A hosier advertising in the *Newburgh Packet* charged 6s. for weaving men's stockings, 5s. for women's, and priced children's according to size. The prevalence of multiple currency units is apparent from another advertisement, which announced that long shingles were selling for \$5 per thousand, while corn was priced at 7s. 6d. per bushel. It seems that the traditional shilling and pence units were used for locally produced goods, while dollars were used for goods purchased in New York City. Merchants in the cosmopolis would have adopted the new Federal dollar as their unit of measure more quickly than shopkeepers in the hinterlands.

The *Ulster County Gazette* was a weekly published on Saturdays. A number of issues of this newspaper are included in the collection. Advertisements that appeared in the paper in 1799 include several announcing the sale of slaves, noting their desirable attributes. One, for an active, smart, eight-year-old girl appears at the top of Figure 1. Once sold, the children of slaves would be separated from their families—one of the cruel realities of the institution. New York colonists had imported African slaves throughout most of the eighteenth century to address a labor shortage. By clearing the land and maintaining farm life, slaves were vital to the development of the Hudson River Valley. It was also in 1799 that a gradual

**Figure 1**  
**Wench Child & Codfish**



SOURCE: ULSTER COUNTY GAZETTE OF JULY 20, 1799. EARLY AMERICAN NEWSPAPER COLLECTION (1783-1835), HUGUENOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, NEW PALTZ, NY

emancipation act was finally passed in New York. It provided that children born to slaves after July 4 of that year would be freed when they reached the age of twenty-eight (for males) or twenty-five (for females). A subsequent gradual emancipation act, passed in 1817, resulted in most New York slaves being granted their freedom on July 4, 1827.<sup>9</sup>

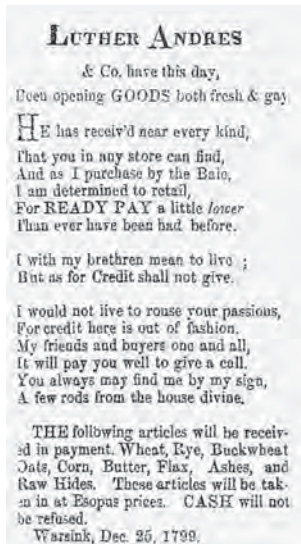
Figure 1 also includes an ad for the partnership of Jansen & Hasbrouck, announcing the availability of codfish for sale by the barrel or pound. Each advertisement included a note at the bottom specifying the

date when it had been initially placed, and often the location as well. The use of the old style “s” (which looks like an “f”) is apparent throughout these ads.

Specifics about the terms of payment also were increasingly included in advertisements, as Figure 2 shows. This ad for the opening of Joseph Dobson’s Kingston store appeared in the *Ulster County Gazette* in 1799. It specifies that only cash would be accepted in payment for the various beverages, chocolate, and barley that Dobson offered for sale at “the New-York price.”

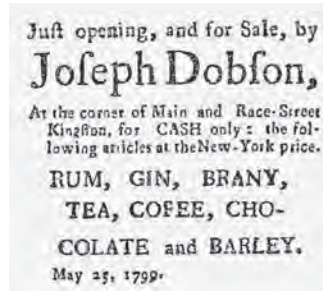
Although shopkeepers had commonly extended credit to their local customers during the colonial era, in the early republic immediate payment was increasingly demanded. This message was conveyed poetically by Luther Andres in the advertisement that he ran in the *Ulster County Gazette* in 1800, which appears in Figure 3. Payment could be made in cash or by delivering commodities such as wheat, rye, corn, flax, butter, ashes, or hides, for which Andres promised to pay “Esopus prices.” Like other merchants, Andres was probably an export agent,

Figure 3  
Luther Andres



SOURCE: ULSTER COUNTY GAZETTE OF JANUARY 4, 1800. EARLY AMERICAN NEWSPAPER COLLECTION (1783-1835), HUGUENOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, NEW PALTZ, NY

Figure 2  
Joseph Dobson



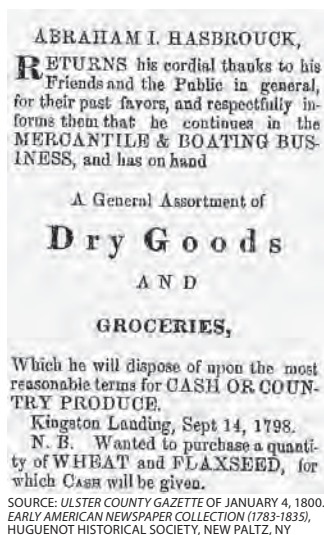
SOURCE: ULSTER COUNTY GAZETTE OF JULY 20, 1799. EARLY AMERICAN NEWSPAPER COLLECTION (1783-1835), HUGUENOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, NEW PALTZ, NY

transporting local goods to New York City and exchanging them for imported products. As the eighteenth century drew to a close, the advertisements suggest that cash was increasingly used to settle transactions.

An announcement appeared in the January 4, 1800, issue of the *Ulster County Gazette* concerning the dissolution, by mutual consent, of the partnership between Henry Jansen and Abraham I. Hasbrouck, the firm whose codfish had been advertised in Figure 1. In this mobile society, business partnerships frequently survived only in the short term. The announcement encouraged customers of the partnership to settle any open accounts without delay—all kinds of produce would be accepted in payment—so the firm’s property could be divided between the owners.<sup>10</sup>

Abraham Hasbrouck continued in business, announcing his new mercantile and boating enter-

Figure 4  
Abraham Hasbrouck



prise in the ad that appears in Figure 4. An assortment of dry goods and groceries were advertised for sale on reasonable terms in exchange for cash or country produce. Hasbrouck also offered to purchase wheat and flaxseed from local farmers. The seed of the flax plant provided linseed oil, used for painting and burning; it also had medicinal uses and provided a source of animal fodder. Linen was made from flax fiber and was widely used before cotton became available. Prior to and immediately after the Revolution, flax was prepared, spun, and woven in nearly every household.<sup>11</sup> (Although Hasbrouck's ad indicates that it was placed on September 14, 1798, it was likely placed on that date in 1799, as was the announcement of the partnership dissolution.)

Abraham Hasbrouck was a leading shopkeeper and exporter in the mid-Hudson region during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His surviving account books were analyzed by Wermuth, who found that only eighteen percent of the credits to customers' accounts during 1799 were in the form of cash, with the remainder based on delivery of agricultural goods, barrel staves or wood, textiles, clothing or services.<sup>12</sup> Similar results have been found for two general stores doing business in New Paltz, where cash accounted for twelve percent of the credits in one store, and twenty-five percent of the credits in the other during the month of October 1798.<sup>13</sup> This indicates that, despite the increasing demand for cash on the part of merchants, local trade in New York's mid-Hudson Valley was still largely based on the use of commodity money and bookkeeping barter as the eighteenth century drew to a close.

## The Early 19th Century, 1801-1823

### *Transportation*

Sailing schedules for a number of vessels, accompanied by illustrations of ships, appeared in *The Rights of Man*, published in Newburgh in 1802. The sloop *Two Sisters* was scheduled to sail from Cornwall Landing to New York every other Saturday from March through early December, and could accommodate the shipment of produce in its storehouse. Regularly scheduled Hudson River voyages thus predated regular transatlantic trips—which didn't begin until 1818—by a decade

or more.<sup>14</sup>

In 1803, a notice in *The Plebian*, published in Kingston, informed stockholders in the Ulster & Delaware Turnpike Road that payment was to be made to the treasurer, John Tremper. A merchant such as Tremper may have been a logical choice to serve as treasurer for this enterprise during an era when individuals served in a variety of roles. Merchants kept accounts for many in the community, and could track various types of payments in their ledgers.<sup>15</sup>

Before the American Revolution, roads were merely cleared tracks that were virtually impassable for heavy wagons during rainy periods. After 1790, new road-surfacing techniques were introduced and road building boomed. By the time construction peaked in the 1820s, New York State had chartered over 300 turnpike companies that built about 5,000 miles of hard-surfaced roads. Early U.S. corporations were chartered as a means of pooling money to finance projects, such as roads, that served the public interest. Although turnpike construction greatly benefited communities by improving transportation and communications, the companies were frequently unprofitable due to high maintenance costs and poor management. Nevertheless, profits accrued to those who provided services along the turnpike, such as tavern-keepers and stagecoach proprietors.<sup>16</sup>

One such provider was Benjamin Ostrander, the owner of the Kingston Stage House. Ostrander announced in *The Plebian* of March 26, 1811, that “he has opened a Tavern and provided every necessary to accommodate his guests, whether of the town or from the country. The weary traveler, the idle loungeer... the man of business and the man of pleasure, shall equally experience his prompt attention.”

Building roads was costly. In 1808, the Ulster and Delaware turnpike published an announcement of an additional appropriation of \$3 being levied on each of the 5,000 outstanding shares. (A call of \$2 per share made the previous October had apparently been insufficient to complete the road.) Stockholders were assured that no additional calls would be made. By 1819, after local residents had invested thousands of dollars, the project was abandoned. Ultimately, Kingston farmers lacked enthusiasm for this expensive undertaking and were reluctant to give farmers in Delaware County the means to compete with them.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, the road-building frenzy continued. Notices appeared for several turnpike roads during 1812. Stagecoach schedules appeared in a paper probably published in Albany in 1815. At the time, the stage from Albany to New York City took two or three days and included stops for breakfast and for the evening’s lodging. Transportation for goods and produce could be arranged in the fireproof stores of Hudson River sloops, as another ad announced.



The market revolution that occurred during the first several decades of the nineteenth century would have significant implications for mid-Hudson Valley farmers. As turnpikes and canals were constructed, towns and cities in the north-eastern U.S. were linked in a complex market system. Fertile farmland in the western part of New York State had access to New York City markets, which led to increased competition for Hudson Valley farmers. In response, valley farmers cultivated more land, invested in more sophisticated farming equipment, and diversified away from grain production. They increasingly focused their energies on raising farm animals, producing textiles, manufacturing barrel staves, and engaging in other profit-oriented activities.<sup>18</sup>

### *Farming and crafts*

Characteristic of the rural economy, newspaper advertisements in 1805 included notices about sheep, horses, and wool to be sold at public vendue (auction) and the availability of a horse for stud services. During this era, many people farmed as tenant farmers. One ad, seen in both 1807 and 1811, offered farms for lease on the following terms: the first three years were rent-free; rent for the fourth year would be 5 bushels of wheat per 100 acres; for the fifth year, 10 bushels per 100 acres; and for subsequent years, rent would be 15 bushels per 100 acres. A farmer who wanted to keep up with the latest methods might purchase the first volume of the *Transactions of the Society of Dutchess County for the Promotion of Agriculture*, which was advertised at a price of 3s.

Innovative agricultural techniques, including new seed drills, plow designs, crop rotation, and planned animal breeding, had been slow to catch on in America. Land was plentiful. Farmers focused on doing things quickly and crudely, rather than investing the effort in careful farming that would not deplete the soil. Only after the advent of agricultural fairs around 1811 did farmers respond to efforts to promote the mechanization of American agriculture. In the mid-Hudson Valley, adoption of new agricultural technology was spurred by increasing competition from farmers in the western part of New York State as a result of improvements in transportation, including the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825.<sup>19</sup>

Some agricultural crops would become raw materials for distillers and brewers. In 1811, a distillery in Hurley advertised that it would pay a generous price for the 1,200 to 1,500 bushels of rye and corn wanted for purchase. Another advertisement announced availability of a distillery for sale to produce rum, gin, cider, spirits, or cordials. Several ads offered breweries for sale or rent. An ad that appeared in *The Plebian* of November 9, 1803, noted: “as no malt liquor is at present made in this place, and the inhabitants in this Village and its Vicinity, have



a remarkable predilection for the use of it, there is reason to calculate in success and encouragement in an establishment of this kind.”

The craftspeople advertising their services in the Newburgh or Kingston papers during the first decade of the nineteenth century included a stonemason, tailor, gold and silversmith, shoemaker, and saddler and harness-maker. During this era, training in crafts, including housework and cooking, was typically obtained through apprenticeships.<sup>20</sup> Newspaper advertisements sought apprentices to work in the hatting business, teenaged apprentices for the shoemaker, and journeymen to work with the tailor.

Abraham Delamater, Jr., announced that he had commenced in the hatting business; he offered an assortment of the best made hats for sale, and was willing to pay the highest cash price for hatter's furs. A tailor, John Hogg, advertised that he had just returned from New York and was ready to provide customers with the latest spring fashions from the metropolis. Then—as now—New York City was the nation's fashion capital. Hogg charged just over £1 for a first-rate coat, 8s. for a vest, and between 10s. and 16s. for pantaloons or breeches, depending on whether they were plain or welted. Hogg accepted produce in payment and was seeking to hire two or three journeymen tailors.

A blacksmith advertised wares that included an assortment of well-made axes, hoes, bells, and traps. These could be purchased from his shop in Wawarsing or from retail stores in Kingston, Rochester, and Wawarsing. The American axe, developed before the Revolution, is an example of an early technological improvement made in the New World. With a cutting edge or bit the same weight as its flat edge or poll, this axe was remarkably well-balanced. With practice, it could be swung straight and clean. Its use led to increased productivity compared to the European axe, which had a longer and narrower bit and a small poll.<sup>21</sup>

Water-powered mills played an essential role in U.S. economic development. As mechanical outposts in a rural countryside, they laid the foundation for the Industrial Revolution. Before the advent of steam, water wheels powered gristmills for grain, sawmills for lumber, fulling and carding mills for textiles, and tanneries for hides. Many gristmills were run by farmers who operated them seasonally following a harvest. Waterpower (and later, steam power) was cheap and available, while labor was scarce, so machinery was used whenever possible. With an American ideology that favored mechanization, businesses large and small invested in machinery.<sup>22</sup>

In an 1806 advertisement, David A. Hasbrouck announced that a fulling mill had been erected at High Falls in the town of Marbletown. A fulling mill was a machine that pounded woolen cloth immersed in water to make it clean, strong,

and compact.<sup>23</sup> Hasbrouck instructed customers to leave their cloth, accompanied by written instructions, at the office of the *Ulster County Gazette* or at Isaac Bloom's store in Marbletown. An 1807 ad announced that a gristmill located on the Rondout Creek near Esopus would return 20 barrels of superfine flour for every 100 bushels of wheat delivered. Customers who supplied their own barrels would also receive 2 bushels of bran per barrel.

Other fulling and dying mills advertised as well: one announced that fabrics for common wear would be completed in fourteen days; another specified that work would be done in the neatest manner and with dispatch. David Hasbrouck, whose High Falls mill had opened two years earlier, advertised in 1808 that he had hired a dyer from Great Britain, who has been brought up in the clothing business. This illustrates how technology was frequently transferred from the British Isles to America. With their long experience within the British system, a shared language, and friends and relatives in England, Americans welcomed British craftspeople and mechanics, and the technological innovations they brought with them.<sup>24</sup>

## *Merchants and Trade*

An increasing number of firms placed ads during the early decades of the nineteenth century, offering customers a wider variety of goods and services. Among the merchants advertising in Kingston's *Ulster County Gazette* during 1801 and 1802 were John Tremper, John Hosford & Co., James Grier and Justus & David Burr. Various types of cloth were available at these stores, along with spices, hardware, crockery, and stoneware; cash and produce were accepted in payment. General stores of the era also sold spirits (rum, cognac, and gin); groceries (tea, sugar, raisins, cheese, and chocolate); tobacco and pipes; paper, ink, and almanacs; handkerchiefs; gun powder and shot; and bar lead.

An advertisement for John Brown's Universal Store appeared in the Newburgh paper, *The Rights of Man*, in 1802. Brown was willing to make sales to both retail and wholesale clients for cash or merchantable county produce. He also informed customers that no credit would be given in the future, and requested that those indebted to him settle their accounts immediately.

The Newburgh paper also included a list of commodity prices reprinted from the New York papers, which appears in Figure 5. Denominated in dollars and cents, the list includes price ranges for some items traded. No ranges had appeared in the 1785 price list reproduced in Table 2, which had been denominated in shillings and pence. Another change can be seen in the range of goods listed. The 1785 list had included only comestibles, but in 1802 prices also appeared for products such as lumber, barrel hoops and staves, tallow, and ashes (which were

priced by the ton). The production and trading of barrel staves had been going on since the mid-seventeenth century, but the first two decades of the nineteenth century saw a dramatic increase in this home industry as households responded to the challenges of increased market competition by engaging in such nonagricultural pursuits.<sup>25</sup>

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Illustrations first began to appear in advertisements in the Kingston newspapers. An 1803 issue of *The Plebian* included a picture of clock face in an ad for a clock and watchmaker; a mortar and pestle illustrated an ad for a purveyor of drugs and medicines. Advertisements for various medications became prevalent around this time. Eye-water was touted as a remedy for diseases of the eyes, and was purported to strengthen weak sight. Ointments for the itch and drops for ague and fever were warranted as infallible. One 1809 advertisement described mercury as a most valuable and salutary medicine, but warned that indiscriminate use could cause problems.

This period also saw the first mention of separate charges for storing and freighting goods and the first indication that notes would be accepted as a form of payment. William Buchanan, who advertised the best quality Jamaica spirits for sale by the hogshead or barrel, specified payment terms of cash or an approved 90-day note. A note or bill from one businessperson to another would become a negotiable instrument if it was accepted by a third party, who took responsibility for its collection.<sup>26</sup> Israel Ketcham offered a wholesale pricing arrangement in an ad he placed in the *Ulster County Gazette* in January 1806. It announced that “a very liberal deduction will be made to Tavern keepers, and those who purchase to sell again.”

Newspaper notices continued to announce efforts at debt collection. In 1812, the publisher of the *Ulster County Gazette* notified readers that he would be calling on those residing in New Paltz, Plattekill, and several other towns during the first week in January to collect balances due for papers or advertisements. Similarly, those having overdue accounts with the estate of Johannis Hornbeek were requested to visit the house of the deceased to settle their affairs.

Ads for slaves continued to appear. One 1811 advertisement was for a twenty year-old man described as healthy, honest, faithful, and well-acquainted with ordi-

Figure 5  
Current Price, May 12, 1802

NEW-YORK PRICE CURRENT.			
May 12.			
[Corrected week 7.]			
		From	To
		Dls. Cts.	Dls. Cts.
ASHES, Pot.	ton,	100	
	Pearl,	130	
Beans, white,	buftel,	1	25
Beef, cargo,	barrel,	10	
Prime,		11	
Med,		12	
Flaxseed, (rough)	7 buftels,	8	
Flour, Superfine,	barrel,	6	50
Common,		5	
Middling,		4	50
Rye,		3	
Grain, Wheat, N. R.	buftel,	1	18
Rye,		63	75
Corn, Northern,		56	
Flax,	lb.	9	11
Hoops, hhd. new,		27	50
Lumber, boards, oak, M. R.		17	50
North River, pine,		17	50
York, cargo,	bbl.	13	50
Prime,		14	50
Med,		16	50
Staves, white-oak, pipe, M.		55	
	hhd.	41	25
	bbl.	18	75
red oak,	hhd.	27	50
Tallow,	lb.	13	
Bees-wax,		39	

SOURCE: THE RIGHTS OF MAN OF MAY 20, 1802.  
EARLY AMERICAN NEWSPAPER COLLECTION (1783-1835),  
HUGUENOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, NEW PALTZ, NY

nary business; another offered a \$20 reward for a runaway slave.

The corporate form of organization had initially been used for public works. A general incorporation law was passed in New York in 1811. It allowed manufacturing firms and other enterprises not associated with the public good to be organized as corporations. Reflecting the new law, a May 1811 notice in *The Plebian* announced that Bristol Glass, Cotton & Clay Company stock was being sold at a price of \$100 per share, with a ten-percent down payment due when the shares were subscribed. The 1811 statute sought to aid domestic manufacturing during a period when the British trade embargo and the subsequent War of 1812 resulted in acute shortages of consumer goods, especially textiles. New York entrepreneurs quickly saw the advantages of the corporate form for pooling large sums of investment capital in an organization with limited liability for shareholders and an unlimited life. The number of New York State corporations grew from twenty-eight before 1800, to more than 1,300 by 1840.<sup>27</sup>

### *Growth of Manufacturing and Technological Innovation*

Ward & Powers announced in 1818 that they had established a partnership in the boot and shoe manufacturing business. Their product line included boots and leather and morocco shoes for men and children, while ladies could find fancy kid shoes in different colors. The shoe industry had started in the home with manufacturing done by the man of the house, or an itinerant cobbler. In the early part of the nineteenth century that started to change, as the newspaper ads in this collection suggest. Cobblers had initially fabricated a complete shoe, except for cutting the leather and the final binding. Later, apprentices were hired and a division of labor occurred. The resulting piecework culture affected the evolution of industrial mechanization.<sup>28</sup>

The growth of U.S. manufacturing is evident in several ads that appeared in the *Ulster County Gazette* of January 7, 1812. One ad proclaimed that “American Manufactured Goods”—including cotton stripes, checks, ginghams, chambrays, and cotton yarn—were superior to dry goods manufactured in Europe. During the eighteenth century, Americans had produced some textiles in the home, but also imported large quantities from Britain. By 1800, textile mills powered by water and steam were common throughout England, and textile manufacturing was relatively inexpensive. In the U.S., some argued for maintaining the manufacture of textiles as a home industry. Nevertheless, fourteen mills had opened in New England by 1807, and additional mills sprang up with Jefferson’s embargo of English goods in 1808. These small cotton and wool mills were run by water power and spun yarn that was then woven in the home. Larger mills, which included

power loom weaving as well as spinning, followed around 1814. The size, corporate structure, and urban setting of these large textile mills would set the style for much of America's subsequent industrialization and mechanization.<sup>29</sup>

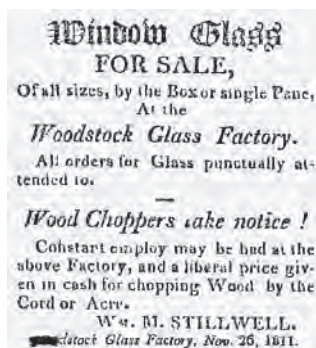
Glassmaking was a traditional industry that was distributed along the Northeastern coast. It remained a hand labor process, regardless of the size of the plant, requiring skills that were often supplied by British or German immigrants.<sup>30</sup> An advertisement for the Woodstock Glass Factory appeared in the *Ulster County Gazette* of January 7, 1812, announcing that all sizes of window glass were offered for sale by the box or single pane.

This ad, which appears in Figure 6, also announced the availability of constant employment for those willing to chop wood by the cord or acre. Further, it illustrates the increasing variety of fonts now available to printers.

Wood was abundant in America, as the ad suggests; it needed only to be cut. Wood was the primary building material during the colonial and early national periods, used for constructing a variety of items, including ships, wagons, tools, scientific instruments, and household devices. It served to fuel cooking, heat buildings, and smelt iron. Chemicals derived from wood included potash (an alkali used in manufacturing glass and soap), turpentine, tannin for tanning leather, and maple sugar. In contrast, Britain suffered from a shortage of wood; as a result, nearly all industries that required heat—including iron production, ceramics, and glass—were converted from wood to coal, and its derivative, coke. One result of this conversion process was that Britain gained some unexpected advantages in accelerating industrial development.<sup>31</sup>

British innovations in iron production were not introduced until around 1815, when industrialization created a demand for different types of iron, and bituminous coal became available near Pittsburgh. Iron mills would be established in the Hudson River Valley at Troy and Cold Spring. The West Point Foundry began operations at Cold Spring in 1817, and was one of America's most innovative and productive early ironworks. Over time, it supplied guns and munitions, produced steam engines, and manufactured cast-iron piping for New York City's water system. It also was among the first companies to develop the principle of vertical integration, controlling acquisition of natural resources, processing, manufacturing, sales, and distribution.<sup>32</sup>

Figure 6  
Woodstock Glass Factory



SOURCE: ULSTER COUNTY GAZETTE OF JANUARY 7, 1812.  
EARLY AMERICAN NEWSPAPER COLLECTION (1783-1835),  
HUGUENOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, NEW PALTZ, NY

## *Professions and Education*

An 1802 advertisement in the Newburgh paper announced that Cliosophic Hall offered instruction in various subjects. Tuition was \$1.50 a quarter for spelling and reading; \$2.00 a quarter for reading, writing and arithmetic; \$2.50 for English grammar and geography; and \$4.00 for classics and sciences. Middle-class parents could afford to send their children to such a private academy; the idea of free elementary schooling would not be advanced until nearly the middle of the nineteenth century. During this era, education tended to follow hereditary patterns, with well-educated parents teaching their children, even in the absence of schools, and poorly-educated parents not encouraging education, despite the availability of schools.<sup>33</sup> The Kingston Academy's 1811 advertisement in *The Plebian* announced that it had procured a "madam" to teach the fine arts in the female division. Another ad announced a lottery to help finance Schenectady's Union College, with whole tickets priced at \$9 and half-tickets at \$4.50. In an era when capital was scarce, such lotteries served as an informal means of raising money.<sup>34</sup> Founded in 1795, Union College was the first institution chartered in the State of New York.

Numerous advertisements for books and publications appeared in the *New-York Spectator* in 1809, illustrating one area of difference between the types of ads seen in the metropolis and those published in newspapers in the rural mid-Hudson region. In New York, one could obtain a dissertation on the mineral waters of Saratoga, a publication on canal navigation, or the memoirs of Thomas Jefferson—which cost \$4.50. Books on history, law, medicine, logic, and geometry were advertised, together with the scriptures. Office supplies available for sale included gilt and plain office paper, invoice or draft paper, wrapping papers and parchments, pocket books, inkstands, receipt books, slates and slate pencils, and law and mercantile blanks.

One attorney-at-law, Samuel Hawkins, announced his availability as a tutor in the *Ulster County Gazette* in January 1806, stating that: "young gentlemen who are pleased to commence a course of Judicial studies... will be carefully instructed, and have the benefit of a well chosen and pretty extensive library." Another attorney advertised in *The Rights of Man* in 1802 that, for "a little reasonable cash," he would be a friend who would stick closer than a brother.

## The Jacksonian Era, 1824-1835

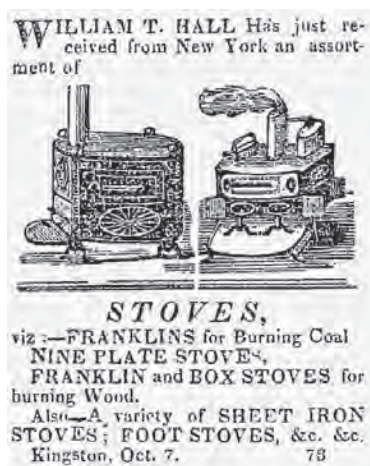
### *Farming, Manufacturing, and Technological Innovation*

The ongoing Industrial Revolution and the adoption of new agricultural tools were apparent in several ads that ran in *The Ulster Palladium* during 1830. One advertised the availability of 100 patent ploughs of different descriptions made from cast and wrought iron. They would be sold for cash or approved credit. Another ad announced the erection of the Ulster County Furnace, which manufactured everything from wagon boxes and sleigh shoes to fanning mill iron. The ad noted that work would be done—with quality as good as anywhere in the state—at New York prices. In another ad, an entrepreneur announced that he had purchased the rights for making, vending, and using Bull's Patent Washing Machine for the towns of Saugerties, Woodstock, and Shandaken—apparently an early franchise arrangement.

William T. Hall advertised his copper, tin, and sheet iron ware factory during January 1830 in a newspaper t likely published at Kingston. The factory sold both locally manufactured and imported products, including stoves, kettles, bowls, frying pans, and coffee mills. Customers could pay by delivering country produce or old copper, brass, pewter, or lead. Hall ran two additional ads in the same paper. In one, he advertised an inventory of stoves just received from New York, including plate stoves, Franklin stoves, and box stoves. This can be seen in Figure 7. The third ad described a stove of Hall's own invention that tailors and hatters could use to heat irons while simultaneously heating their shops.

With the cold winters in the Northeast, space heating was a necessity and attempts to improve it were ongoing. During the 1820s, coal joined wood as a source of fuel for stoves, as Figure 7 indicates. Before the nineteenth century, most of the bituminous coal used in America was imported from Britain. Coal supplies were reduced by the War of 1812 and the embargoes that preceded it. The resulting energy shortage spurred a search for alternative fuels. Some entrepreneurs thought that anthracite coal, which was mined in northeastern Pennsylvania, could be marketed in urban Philadelphia

Figure 7  
William T. Hall



SOURCE: PAPER FRAGMENT PROBABLY FROM JANUARY 1830. EARLY AMERICAN NEWSPAPER COLLECTION (1783-1835), HUGUENOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, NEW PALTZ, NY



and New York. Anthracite had been used locally in Pennsylvania since its introduction in 1770. Only after the 1808 introduction of an open grate, on which anthracite could be burned without a forced draft, did it become feasible to burn it in an ordinary fireplace. Anthracite produced an intense, slow-burning, clean flame with a greater energy output than either wood or bituminous coal. However, before the coal could be supplied to urban markets, a better transportation system was needed.<sup>35</sup>

## *Transportation and Industrial Development*

In 1823, the Wurts brothers conceived the Delaware & Hudson (D&H) Canal as a means of transporting anthracite coal from northeastern Pennsylvania to the metropolitan markets of New York. To finance this undertaking, they needed to raise capital. They began to sell stock in the D&H Canal Company after demonstrating the heating capabilities of anthracite at the Tontine Coffee House in New York. Subscription books also were opened in Goshen and Kingston. The sale was a success, and the D&H Canal Company is generally regarded as the first private enterprise in America capitalized for more than \$1 million.<sup>36</sup>

The canal started in Honesdale, Pennsylvania. After much discussion, it was decided that it would end at the Rondout Creek, which joined the Hudson River at Kingston. Once completed, mules would pull barges down a four-foot-deep, 32-foot-wide, 108-mile-long waterway. Navigation of the full-length of the canal began in 1828, and it operated until 1898. From the Rondout Creek, the coal was transported on the Hudson River to New York City and other river ports. From Albany, it was carried to the western part of the state and the Great Lakes via the state-financed Erie Canal.

The D&H Canal is associated with such technological innovations as the gravity railroad, developed to connect the coal fields with the canal terminal in Honesdale, and the *Stourbridge Lion*, whose 1829 test run is considered the first operation of a commercial steam locomotive on a track in the U.S. The D&H Canal Company, which also amassed a fleet of barges to transport the coal after it left the canal, provides another early example of a vertically integrated corporation. For Kingston and the mid-Hudson valley, the opening of the D&H Canal proved to be the beginning of a new era, which transformed the region in size, scope, and economic development.<sup>37</sup>

The D&H Canal encouraged economic growth, with industries developing along its route to exploit local resources such as lumber, agricultural products, and bluestone. One of the most notable was the Rosendale cement industry, which developed following the 1825 discovery of natural hydraulic cement in that area.



Because of its unique property to harden under water, Rosendale cement was used to hold together the locks of the D&H Canal, and later in the nineteenth century to build the Brooklyn Bridge, the Statue of Liberty, the Croton Reservoir, and many other structures. Millions of barrels of Rosendale cement made their way to market using transportation links provided by the D&H Canal, the Hudson River and the Wallkill Valley Railroad.<sup>38</sup>

An advertisement the D&H Canal Company placed in *The Ulster Palladium* of April 6, 1830, appears in Figure 8. In it, the canal company announced that it was looking for individuals who wanted to run boats carrying coal during the present season, or who wished to propose a line of packet boats to transport passengers in the future. In the fall of 1829, one advertisement announced packet boats that were running on the D&H Canal, while another sought delivery of hoop poles and staves for cement barrels near the canal at Greenkill. The demand for barrels in which to ship Rosendale cement gave rise to a local cooperage industry.

Development of the Hudson Valley brick industry also was spurred by completion of the D&H canal. An innovation patented in 1829 added pulverized anthracite coal—which had become available with the opening of the canal—to the clay or loam material used to fashion bricks. This allowed the bricks to fire themselves from internal heat, substantially reducing firing time and fuel usage while improving quality. Demand for bricks boomed after the Great Fire of 1835 destroyed hundreds of buildings in New York City, and would continue as the city grew.<sup>39</sup> Bricks were advertised for sale in two ads that appeared in the 1835 *Ulster County Whig*. One announced the availability of bricks for sale at the Napanoch brick yard on the canal; it advertised 1,000 bricks for sale at Rondout.

The advertisement in the lower part of Figure 8 announces that the sloop *Catherine* was for sale. We can only speculate about why the owner wanted to sell it, but the advent of steamships on the Hudson River may have made this vessel seem outdated. The first practical steamboat had been introduced in New York Harbor in 1804. Three years later, Robert Fulton piloted a steamboat up the Hudson from New York to Albany. Fulton and his financial underwriter, Robert R. Livingston, would have a monopoly on steam travel on the river until 1824.<sup>40</sup>

Figure 8  
The D&H Canal Company

SOURCE: THE ULSTER PALLADIUM OF APRIL 6, 1830, EARLY AMERICAN NEWSPAPER COLLECTION (1783-1835), HUGENOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, NEW PALTZ, NY

## Providers of Goods and Services

Sharp and Voorhees ran a general store that, judging from its advertisements, expanded its product line over time. An earlier ad mentioned dry goods, hats, boots and shoes, and combs and brushes. Later, groceries, teas, molasses, paints, oils and putty, drugs and medicine, hardware and holloware, bar iron and steel, and looking glasses also were advertised for sale. General stores continued to seek farm products during this era, offering to pay cash for products including wheat, rye, corn, oats, buckwheat, dried peaches and apples, clover and timothy seed, shingles and boards, beeswax, mustard seed, and butter. The growing diversity in the products marketed by local farmers is evident here, as is the continuing role of merchants as intermediaries who transported local goods to New York, where they were exchanged for the imported and domestic goods that their local customers desired.

Two stores in Saugerties, self-described “cheap stores,” advertised in the *Ulster Palladium* during April of 1830. Both carried dry goods and groceries, but the “Cheap Cash Store,” whose ad appears in Figure 9, also noted the availability of liquor and hardware. Although the stores appear to have been competitors, each may have had its own customer base during this era when trading patterns tended to be concentrated on ethnic, familial, or social relationships.<sup>41</sup> Compared to earlier decades, stores now were carrying an expanded range of goods, including meats, eggs, flour, and butter—as Figure 9 illustrates. As agricultural improvements led to increased food production, more people could move from farm labor to work in trades and factories. As a result, more families began to buy farm products from general stores.

Figure 9  
Cheap Cash Store

**CHEAP  
Cash Store.**

THE Subscribers respectfully inform their friends and the Public that they have on hand at their STORE in Perdition street, near Montgomery street Saugerties, a General Assortment of

Dry Goods,	Crockery
Groceries,	China, Stone
Liquors,	and Earthen
Hard Ware,	Ware.

—ALSO—

Fish,	Eggs,
Pork,	Smoked
Flour,	Tongues,
Dried Beef,	Butter,
Hams,	Lards, etc.

Which they offer, Wholesale and Retail, on the most accommodating terms for Cash.—Persons are respectfully invited to call and view for themselves.

CROSWELL & FIELD.  
N. B. All kinds of COUNTRY PRODUCE taken.

Saugerties, March 2, 1830. 654d

SOURCE: THE ULSTER PALLADIUM OF APRIL 6, 1830. EARLY AMERICAN NEWSPAPER COLLECTION (1783-1835), HUGUENOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, NEW PALTZ, NY

As the ad in Figure 9 indicates, general stores continued to advertise dry goods that were widely used for sewing clothing in the home. At the same time, a shift to the sale of ready-to-wear apparel was evident during this period. In 1830, J.A. & L. Vernold Merchant Tailors advertised made-to-order apparel from a selection of superior European and domestic cloth, as well as an assortment of ready-made clothing, including coats, cloaks, vests, pantaloons, shirts, drawers, Guernsey frocks, cravats, and handkerchiefs. The tailors' ad specified that they had learned their trade in New York City from an experienced workman and

were prepared to construct fashionable garments suited to the season. Other ads announced the availability of new spring and summer goods, including both the latest imports and American products, and were touted as having the same quality as those for sale in New York City.

Many ads that appeared in the mid-Hudson Valley newspapers cited New York City as the source for styles, products, and training. One 1830 ad for a “virtualing establishment” on Wall Street in Kingston announced the recent receipt of a supply of Brazil nuts, filberts, figs, peanuts, almonds, and raisins from New York. Other refreshments available at the restaurant included oysters, oyster soup, pies, cakes, and a bar stocked with choice liquors. The liquor may have been purchased from a merchant like Joseph Smith, whose January 1830 advertisement offered for sale 4 hogsheads of Portland rum, 5 pipes of American gin, and 10 hogsheads of New Orleans molasses, as well as brandy, sugar, coffee, bar soap, starch, indigo, wrapping paper, and spices. (A hogshead was a barrel used for liquids, that was equivalent to 63 gallons; a pipe was equivalent to two hogsheads, or 126 gallons.)

Those who wanted to distill their own alcoholic beverages—a traditional craft—could buy a still from Peter Gallagher, the county sealer. He advertised three for sale during 1830 (they held 300, 150, and 80 gallons, respectively) in addition to various quantities of worms, copper pipes, mash tubs, and cisterns. However, some would disapprove of such a venture: during the first half of the nineteenth century, the temperance movement gained momentum. In his 1834 ad, J.K. Trumpbour announced that he was discontinuing retailing liquors, and he invited tavern-keepers to call and see his stock, which he was prepared to sell very low. Similarly, another 1834 advertisement announced that James Woodruff was discontinuing the occupation of tavern-keeper to resume the sale of books and stationery, noting “whether his present business will be more or less honorable or beneficial to himself, useful or accommodating to his friends and the public, remains for the future to disclose.”

Nelson and Clay were merchants who sold the common medicinal remedies of the day, including alcohol, alum, arsenic, laudanum, opium, and rhubarb, as well as patent medicines and miscellaneous articles such as ink, soda, and corks. Other shops marketed toiletries, including cologne water, macassar oil, bears’ oil, vegetable oils, cold cream, fancy and shaving soaps, toilet powder, and smelling salts. A leather and bindings store advertised leather, skins, binding, shoe thread, and lamp black, and would pay cash for hides and skins. The jeweler advertised a new assortment of watches and jewelry, and paid cash for old gold and silver. Other merchants advertised pocket books, wallets and purses, clothes and hair brushes, pen knives, razors, violin strings, window sash and glass, wines, soaps and

candles, molasses, pork, botanic pills, salt, and hoes.

In 1834, Israel Bradley announced that he was starting a painting business and promised to keep on hand all colors of ready-mixed paints. He had taken over the store formerly occupied by Sharp and Voorhees, and in case it was closed when he was working elsewhere, Bradley advised customers to enquire at the cooper's shop opposite, or at his residence. Credit sales seem to have come back into favor during this period of economic growth. The proprietor of the boot and shoe manufactory offered to make sales for cash or approved credit at prices ranging from \$4.50 to \$5.50 for calf boots, \$3.00 for coarse boots, and \$1.75 to \$1.88 for calf skin shoes.

Thomas Harley was a barber and hairdresser on John Street in Kingston who also offered razors and surgical instruments for sale. He promoted his business poetically in a January 1830 advertisement:

May the Gentlemen of Kingston  
Who despise a long beard,  
Repair to T. Harley's  
Whose shop is repair'd  
With his brush and his razor,  
He'l [sic] polish your face,  
And six pence may save you  
From sneers and disgrace.  
Forget not T. Harley's  
Attention [sic] and care,  
In scraping your faces,  
And cutting your hair.

Other service providers included Kingston's Eagle Hotel, located on Main Street, which advertised its bar and stables, as did the Orange Hotel in Newburgh, which also identified itself as an agreeable home and desirable residence. Travelers lodging at these establishments might have consulted schedules, such as the one published for the steamboat *Baltimore*, which ran on the Newburgh and Albany line.

Educational services were provided by schools such as the Kingston Academy, which advertised itself as a classical school with a female division. Tuition was \$3 to \$5 per quarter, and the summer term commenced on May 3. Tuition was only \$2.50 in the elementary English division, which was open to lads only. Board cost \$1.50 per week; it could be had in the immediate vicinity of the academy, in the same family with the instructor.

## Currency and Finance

During this period, concurrent use of the newer Federal dollars and the older monetary units of pounds and shillings continued to appear. For example, copal varnish was advertised for \$3 a gallon in one ad published around 1829, while another offered to pay farmers for crops delivered at the following market prices: 9s. for flaxseed, 4s.6d. for rye, and 4s.3d. for corn. The same ad noted that dead pork—which could now be sent with safety—would bring a fair price. Again, it seems likely that mid-Hudson merchants measured goods purchased in New York City using dollars and shillings and pence for those acquired locally.

The first American bank was chartered in 1780. At that point, debts and contracts became increasingly impersonal. Early banks—such as the Bank of New York, founded in 1784—were organized by merchants in seaport cities. A new era of capital formation began that would ultimately transform the metropolis into a money market. When chartered banks spread into the hinterland, they were often started by potential borrowers to finance farms, buildings, machinery, and crops. As the primary mechanisms for pooling capital for investment in transportation, commerce, and manufacturing, banks played a key role in fostering economic growth. Banks issued notes that circulated as currency and were used to monetize economic relationships in the growing market economy. The number of banks grew rapidly during the early decades of the nineteenth century: New York State had four banks in 1800 and eighty-six by 1835. The Bank of Newburgh, which was founded in 1811, was the fifth corporation in New York State.<sup>42</sup>

Banknotes were not money in the current sense, but represented a bank's promise to pay specie (coin) to the bearer. Banks printed notes in excess of their specie reserves in an effort to expand the supply of currency. A banknote might be passed along indefinitely, but its value declined the longer it was held and the further it traveled from its point of origin. A market in banknotes developed, with newspapers publishing lists of the notes that could be redeemed at par and those that were trading at a discount.<sup>43</sup> A table of banknotes that appeared in the *Ulster Palladium* in both 1830 and 1831 specified that some notes were trading at par, others at less than par, while some were referred to as "brok" or "broken." The lottery and exchange office on Wall Street in Kingston announced in an 1829 advertisement that it would exchange specie and city paper for "uncurrent" country notes, and for Columbia, Middle District, Paterson, and Greene County bank notes. In another ad, \$1,000 in Greene County bank bills was sought to help a poor friend who owed money to the bank.

## Summary and Conclusions

In this paper, business advertisements that appeared in the Early American Newspaper Collection (1783-1835) of the Huguenot Historical Society in New Paltz were used to illustrate changes in business, the economy, and everyday life in New York's mid-Hudson River Valley as America's Industrial Revolution unfolded. Over the course of the period examined, advertisements for manufacturing industries began to appear, general stores stocked an increasing variety of goods, and educational institutions and professionals began to advertise. Roads and canals were financed and built. The corporate form was used first for public works and then for businesses. Dollars replaced pounds and shillings as the primary unit of measure, but the transition was a slow one; the different units of measure continued to be used concurrently in the mid-Hudson River Valley at the end of the era examined. Local advertisements frequently cited New York City as the immediate source of many goods, and as the center of desirable fashions and styles. Throughout the period, merchants served as intermediaries, transporting local produce to city markets and in exchange obtaining imported goods and an increasing number of domestically manufactured products. Farm production shifted from subsistence-based to market-based, agricultural tools were improved with the use of iron, and new farming methods were introduced. The building of the D&H Canal and the advent of steamboat travel on the Hudson River accelerated the pace of economic development. Significant changes occurred as craft technology began to be replaced with mechanized production. Advertisements published in the newspapers of the era serve to highlight these changes and help us better understand the genesis of our current business, economic, and technological environment.

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# Private Peter Reid and Colonel A. Hawkes Hay's Militia in the American Revolution

*Reid Ross*

The strategy for the initial British campaign in New York was to gain control of the Hudson River. To do so, General John Burgoyne's forces were to invade the Hudson Valley by marching south from Canada to Albany in the summer of 1777. General Sir Henry Clinton's army was to move simultaneously up the Hudson from New York City to connect with Burgoyne at Albany.

Albany was a major breadbasket and supply base that could well serve the British army. Additionally, by controlling the Hudson Valley, New England would be severed from the rest of the colonies. General George Washington was well aware that the Hudson Valley was as important to his army as it was to the British.

For these reasons, the Hudson Valley became one of the most hotly contested and highly crucial Revolutionary War battlegrounds, causing General Washington grave concern throughout the war. The experience of Colonel Ann Hawks Hay's Orange County Regiment and one of his militiamen, Private Peter Reid, illustrate how Washington conducted this campaign.

On July 4, 1774, residents of Orange County adopted the "Orangetown Resolutions," expressing their indignation at the injustice of the British Parliament. They stated that "...we are duty bound to use every just and lawful measure to obtain a repeal of [these] acts..." They further declared their "abhorrence of measures so unconstitutional and big with destruction." Some regard the Orangetown Resolutions, adopted at Mabie's Tavern in Tappan, as a precursor to the Declaration of Independence.

In February 1775, King George III declared the Massachusetts Bay Colony in a state of rebellion. In the early spring, about 1,550 Orange County residents signed a resolution in support of a defense association that pledged its members to execute necessary measures as determined by the Continental Congress to oppose arbitrary and oppressive acts of the British Parliament. In the Haverstraw precinct where Peter Reid lived, 180 residents signed the resolution.

A few days later, on Sunday evening, April 22, 1775, as hard-riding couriers arrived in Haverstraw, Peter Reid and his wife Maria, both forty-one years old, heard the chilling news that the Battle of Lexington had just been fought. Excitement and tension prevailed in their household as they contemplated the significance of the news to their lives. The couriers also announced a call to a Provincial Congress in New York City and a Continental Congress in Philadelphia. Haverstraw chose John Haring, John D. Coe, and David Pye—all Peter Reid's neighbors—to attend the Provincial Congress, whose meeting began on May 22. Two months later, George Washington was named Commander in Chief of the Continental Army; he assumed command on July 2.

Born in Scotland, Peter Reid was about three years old when he arrived in Haverstraw with his parents in 1739. A weaver by trade, he also served as constable, tax collector, and roadmaster in Haverstraw precinct. He was an “organizing” member of the New Hempstead Presbyterian (English) Church, also known as the English Meeting House, and was a trustee of the nearby Clarkstown School. On July 17, 1775, less than three months after hearing the news of the Battle of Lexington, Reid became one of the 373 Haverstraw signers of the Oath of Allegiance to the Cause of Liberty of the New York Provincial Convention. The 104 people who did not sign at that time were labeled “enemies of the people.”

Reid's wife, Maria Krom, was a fourth-generation Dutch woman whose ancestors had arrived from Pynacker, Holland, and initially settled in Flatbush, N.Y., around 1670. From there, her family moved to Haverstraw about 1682 to become one of its first Dutch families. Their 740-acre land patent fronted on the Hudson River, bordering Minisceongo Creek.

Maria's family took the Oath of Allegiance to the English Crown in 1687, almost a century before the Revolution. Her grandfather and grandmother were married at the Dutch Reformed Church in Tappan, the first recorded marriage in what is now Rockland County. Several of her relatives also enlisted in her husband's regiment.

Peter Reid and Maria Krom were married in 1763, moved to Haverstraw, and by the outbreak of the Revolution had three daughters and a son. (Another son, Daniel, born during the Revolution, died in the War of 1812.)

Two days before the courier had arrived in Haverstraw on April 22, Ann Hawkes Hay also was selected as a delegate to the Provincial Congress. Then thirty-one years old, he was the son of a wealthy plantation owner in Jamaica (and named after the aunt who left him her inheritance). Hay moved his family to Haverstraw in 1773, after purchasing 200 acres of meadowland that fronted on the Hudson River and building a house there. He was appointed chairman of the

committee to apportion quotas of men to be raised in Orange County to serve in the four militia regiments organized there.

At its May 22 meeting, the Provincial Congress resolved to help control the Hudson River by placing fortifications and batteries on both of its banks to control the stretch through the Highlands. By doing so, they could prevent British ships from sailing 170 miles upriver to join Burgoyne's forces. In addition to dividing the colonies, these moves, if successful, would cut off the Continental Army's river supply route and communication line to troops in New York City and New England. Orange County became vital to securing the river throughout the entire war.

By August 1775, Orange County was divided into districts by its Committee of Safety. One militia company, consisting of eighty-three able-bodied men between the ages of sixteen and fifty, was recruited from each district. On August 10, Colonel Hay, a confidant of General Washington, was appointed commissary (supply officer) for all of the militia north of Kingsbridge when they were in service on the west side of the Hudson. Hay was described by Brigadier General John Morin Scott, a member of the Continental Congress, as "a gentleman and uncommonly spirited in the public cause."

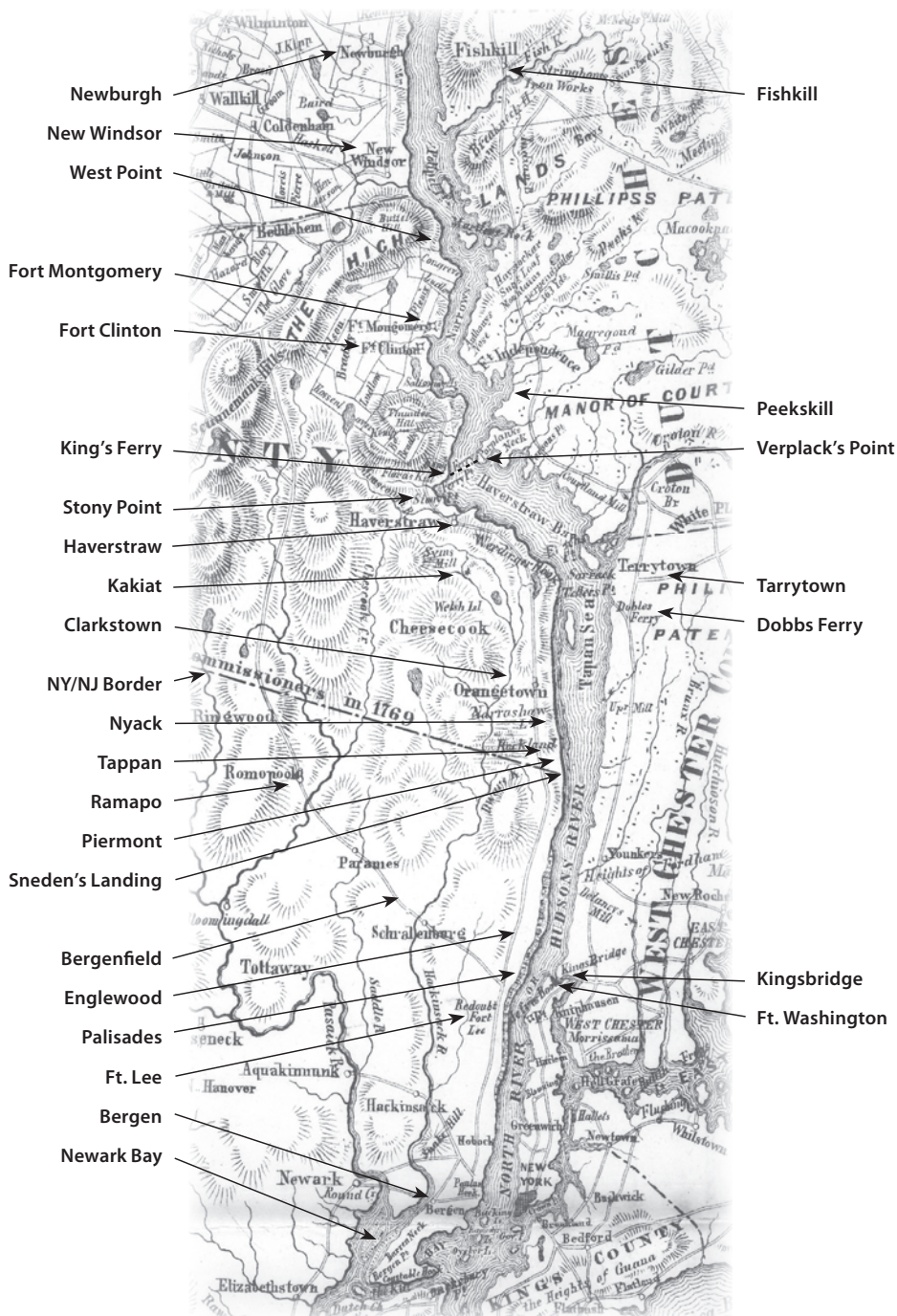
Safe routes for delivering materials and supplies from Kingsbridge were laid out. In October, the first batteries were put in place in the Highlands and colors raised over them. Signal posts and beacons were placed on mountaintops and ridges at sixteen-mile intervals to spread the alarm in case of attack.

On January 30, 1776, Peter Reid enlisted for six months as a private in the Kakiat Company of Colonel Hay's 2nd Orange County Regiment, comprised of militia from north of Kingsbridge in the Haverstraw precinct. Many of his friends and neighbors also enlisted about the same time, as did two of his brothers in a Charlotte (now Washington) County regiment, about seventy-five miles north of Albany. Reid enlisted despite the fact that weavers were exempted from militia service.

Likewise, Hay had two brothers in the service of their country. Udney Hay served as the Quartermaster General of General Horatio Gates' northern army and was headquartered in Albany. Later he became Deputy Quartermaster General for General Washington. Charles Hay was a Quebec merchant who refused to help defend that city and was arrested for spying on the British in Canada.

Copies of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* pamphlet must have stimulated the rush to shoulder muskets in Orange County at the beginning of the war. Knowledge also was widespread that Parliament had banished all trade with the thirteen colonies and all colonial vessels were declared lawful prizes of war. By

## Scene of Operations around New York



then, the first official American flag with thirteen stars and stripes was beginning to displace the Union Jack. Then in May 1776, word arrived that King George III was sending 12,000 German mercenaries (Hessians) to put down the revolt. Virginia delegates to the Continental Congress were instructed to “declare the United Colonies free and independent states.”

In February, the Kakiat Company was mustered in under Captain Reynard Quackenboss and First Lieutenant Garrett Eckerson. (Peter Reid’s home was in Kakiat, now known as New Hempstead, a small settlement in the Haverstraw precinct.) By then, Hay was serving as chairman of a committee appointed by the Continental Congress to decide how many men should be raised from each of the New York counties. That March he was made commander of the Haverstraw Precinct (2nd Orange County) regiment of militia consisting of ten companies.

Each private in the regiment, including Reid, furnished his own musket or long fowling-piece, bayonet, sword or tomahawk, shot bag or cartridge box, gunpowder and powder horn, plus a flint, knapsack, and blanket. Since the variety of guns was significant, issuing standardized ammunition was impossible.

Every six men had to equip themselves with a camp kettle. Their rations consisted of beef, flour, rice, milk, peas, and spruce beer. Their meals were prepared over a campfire in the kettle they had furnished. The militiamen received a \$20 bounty for enlisting. A private’s pay was \$6  $\frac{2}{3}$  monthly; a colonel received \$75. Most did not collect their salaries until 1784 or later.

Each man was required to drill for four hours a month and to have one pound of powder and three pounds of bullets available at all times. They wore civilian clothing—there were no uniforms—and they could not be called to serve outside the colony for more than three months. Each company was divided into groups of four men. One man in each group did a week of guard duty, making it possible to keep a continuous guard while allowing the rest of the men to operate their farms. However, some alarms could keep them on duty for as many as ten days.

The 400-man 2nd Regiment helped to man three unfinished forts and guard the Orange County shore along the Hudson River against British attack from the river. In 1776, Washington had ordered the construction of these forts—Montgomery, Clinton, and Constitution—but by 1777 they were still unfinished and lightly garrisoned. (See Map, Scene of Operations around New York) The 2nd Regiment was one of nine Highland militia regiments in Brigadier General George Clinton’s 4th Brigade, five from Orange County and four from Ulster. Clinton’s brigade was relatively free to respond to reports of ship sightings and landings between Peekskill and Haverstraw.

Beginning in June, Quackenboss’s company was stationed at different places

and times along the Hudson, guarding and scouting in what is now Rockland and Bergen (N.J.) counties. His brigade responded to reports of ship sightings at Tarrytown and landings near Peekskill and Haverstraw, among others.

On July 9, 1776, when news of the signing of the Declaration of Independence reached Haverstraw, bonfires were lit, toasts were drunk, and prayers said. On July 15, the popular and patriotic George Clinton was appointed commander of the Highlands with headquarters at Fort Montgomery. Militia were the only protecting forces in this area, since regulars were seldom stationed along the New Jersey-New York border in the Tappan-Haverstraw-Nyack vicinity.

As a result, foraging raids by British regulars as well as pillaging, harassing, and spying by British irregulars (in and out of uniform) were commonplace in these villages. Consequently, the shore guard stationed there protected them to the extent possible. Likewise, those who lived along the Hudson were subject to raids from the river.<sup>2</sup> To defend the passes and the Highland forts from these raids, the militia marched when two cannon were fired at Fort Montgomery and two more at Fort Lee (initially known as Fort Constitution). These were answered quickly by two additional reports from a twenty-four-pounder at New Windsor, six miles north of Fort Montgomery. This action was coordinated with flags by day and signal fires by night atop hills and mountains sixteen miles apart. When these signals were seen or heard, militia detachments were dispatched to the river forts as quickly as they could be mobilized.

On April 20 and again on July 14, 1776, General Washington ordered that these alarms also be conveyed to his headquarters. He also acknowledged his pleasure that “on all occasions...people...fly to the protection of any part of the country where there is any danger from the enemy.” No records exist as to whether Peter Reid responded to these signals beyond his original term of enlistment, which ended in August 1776. However, a review of the regiment’s record indicates the nature of the action in which he participated. It is also clear that many of his fellow militiamen reenlisted two and often more times for periods up to six months in Hay’s and other regiments. Reid enlisted three times. Some also enlisted in regiments in the Continental Army.

The regiment remained under Colonel Hay until his resignation in January 1783. The earliest regimental record was made in March 1776, when sixty-five privates in two companies from the 2nd Regiment were drafted to serve in the Continental line to invade Canada in the successful effort to take Montreal. That month another 100 men were sent to aid the defense of New York City.

By November, the remainder of the troops in Colonel Hay’s regiment had grown mutinous, refusing to do their duty. General Nathanael Greene wrote



General Washington on November 5, 1776, threatening to place the troops under guard and send them to Fort Lee for duty. Greene told Washington that their morale had been adversely affected by the fact that “many of them had left their families without wood, without meal, and without fodder at home for their cattle; many of their families without shoes and some of them little better here.” Morale in the entire Continental Army also was at a low point in late 1776, but it was revived somewhat by Washington’s rout of the Hessians at year’s end in Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey.

The chief duty of the 2nd Regiment throughout 1776 was to guard the western shoreline of the Hudson River from the vicinity of present day Piermont north to Stony Point, where the mountains meet the river. This stretch was fully exposed to enemy foraging from ships, and noncombatants were prohibited from walking along the shore after dark. By patrolling it, the militia protected the residents from marauding parties that would land anywhere. These parties were often guided by local Tories in their efforts to plunder, burn, or otherwise destroy property, steal cattle and provisions, and murder farmers.

At about 3 p.m. on July 12, two British frigates and three tenders set sail from New York Harbor, under orders from Admiral Richard Howe, who had arrived two weeks earlier with a fleet of 150 ships. Aided by a flowing tide and favorable breezes—ideal sailing conditions—the ships passed upriver virtually unscathed. American batteries positioned on both banks of the river (one of which was manned by Captain Alexander Hamilton) fired nearly 200 cannon shots with little effect. The men onboard the ships, protected by sandbags placed on the decks, returned fire.

The ships’ destination was the Tappan Zee, one of the widest parts of the Hudson River, offshore Nyack. By sailing close to the New Jersey shore, the frigates *Phoenix* (856 tons, forty-four guns) and *Rose* (448 tons, twenty-four guns) were charged with disrupting the river supply line to General Washington’s troops in Manhattan. As a secondary mission, they were to provide protection to British Loyalists behind rebel lines who were being disarmed by the local Committee of Safety. The ships arrived off Nyack, thirty miles above New York City, by evening.

That night, on orders from Colonel Hay, couriers rode from Haverstraw, and his 400 troops were mobilized to line the Nyack shore at daybreak to guard public and private stores along the river by preventing an enemy landing. Women and children were sent inland. Cartridges and gunpowder were distributed to the troops upon their arrival. From their concealed locations, the militia repulsed two attempted landings on July 13.

Colonel Hay described this action in a letter he wrote to General Clinton

that night. John Coe, deputy chairman of the Committee for Orange County, also wrote Washington on July 13, asking for instructions. Washington replied the next day "...Every precaution ought to be taken to prevent the men-of-war from getting any supplies of fresh provisions or keeping up any intercourse or correspondence with the disaffected [Tory] inhabitants." Private Reid and the other exhausted militiamen remained on duty night and day despite their worry about their inability to harvest their ripening grain.

On Sunday, July 14, Hay again wrote Clinton: "My regiment ... of 400 men, has now been upon duty, night and day, since Friday evening, and we are greatly fatigued with the service. The men express great uneasiness that they lose their harvest ... if they are obliged to guard the shore..." To relieve his men, he asked Clinton for "... a detachment of one hundred and fifty or two hundred men from your brigade." He also asked for two or three armed boats to move men and provisions and help prevent an enemy landing.

On July 16, another British attempt to raid American army stores, including herds of sheep and cattle, was made further upstream in the lower reaches of Haverstraw Bay, but the livestock and other supplies had been moved inland for protection. By then, Hay had received about eighty reinforcements from Clinton instead of the 150 to 200 men requested.

The raid was repulsed by well-directed shots from the muskets and long fowling pieces of the militia, which had followed the ships northward, marching up roads on both sides of the Hudson. The men were then posted in Highlands forts and defiles. One of the British cutters was grounded for six hours in the middle of the river off Stony Point; it could have been destroyed had the regiment been equipped with artillery. An attempted troop landing was repulsed by musketry fire from Hay's militia. Another landing craft, a barge, also approached the west shore of the river, but militiamen kept it from landing. During these episodes, the British ships would occasionally respond to the roving militiamen with cannon fire, to little effect.

For nine days, the British ships remained at anchor off Haverstraw, landing only once to burn the house, plunder the garden, and steal a calf and the pigs of a farmer named Jacob Halstead. (A sister of Peter Reid's wife married a David Halstead, and Peter's son, Daniel, named a daughter Margaret Halstead Reid. Several other Halsteads were members of Peter's church.) As the ships headed downstream, militiamen fired muskets at them but did no damage.

On July 19, 1776, the British ships anchored in Haverstraw Bay, nearly abreast both Colonel Hay's 102-acre home, which had a river landing, and the farm on which Peter Reid's wife was born, which also had river frontage. In Minisceongo



Creek, which separated the Krom and Hay farms, Hay kept all small boats concealed to prevent them from being used to make contact with the enemy. Here he learned from his first trustworthy source that the British were “highly mortified” as to the results of their expedition.

By this time the regiment was so short of powder and shot that Colonel Hay appealed for replenishment from General Clinton when he arrived on July 17. The regiment was given twenty pounds of powder and instructed to move additional government goods, sheep, and cattle back from the river to a place of safety. The undisciplined men were firing their muskets indiscriminately at the ships, even though they were more than a mile away. Clinton took command of the situation and deployed the militia.

General Washington was concerned that the British men-of-war would succeed in capturing provisions or in making contact with “disaffected inhabitants.” He wrote to the Committee of Orange County urging it to keep the militia ready “at a moment’s warning, to assemble at any place they may be called to.” He also feared a naval attack on Albany and Poughkeepsie, where two frigates were under construction for the American fleet. There also was a possibility that the British would attempt to destroy Kingsbridge, a critical river crossing for the supply line into New York City. Colonel Hay wrote back to General Washington on July 19, indicating that General Clinton had sent him the eighty-man detachment from Fort Montgomery but that the militia was again short of “powder and ball.” At this time and probably later, ammunition was in such short supply that the lead weights from fishing nets were melted and molded into bullets. Hay also stated that he was keeping “the greatest part of my regiment on duty” to prevent the enemy from attempting another landing should they return. The reinforcement allowed Hay to permit some of his men to return home.

On July 25, the British ships sailed down the Hudson from Haverstraw to raid Westchester, on the river’s eastern shore, and obtain supplies at Croton Point. The militiamen fired musket balls through their sails, doing little harm. That same day, Hay wrote General Washington suggesting that if he were furnished with cannon and light whaleboats he could take the offensive more quickly. Thus equipped, he could pursue the enemy and cut off its efforts to obtain supplies, thereby reducing the number of militia needed to guard the shore. He also could prevent the “disaffected” from joining the enemy.

On August 2, Hay again wrote Washington that, while the enemy had received some supplies at Westchester, the Haverstraw militia had successfully prevented foraging on the river’s west bank by driving back a barge attempting to make a landing. He volunteered to serve as deputy commissary on the west

bank, noting that he had “extensive acquaintance...for facilitating the necessary supplies.”

Hay also suggested that since river traffic had been so hindered by obstructions, a rider should be hired to carry intelligence from the Highlands forts to Washington’s headquarters once or twice a week. On August 10, Hay was appointed commissary for the west bank by Washington. Commissary officers were established throughout the Hudson Valley to provision troops. In the meantime, General Clinton was still concerned that enemy ships attempting to land would be successful. Therefore he issued orders to hide all small boats that the enemy might capture in the creek beside Colonel Hay’s property and place a guard over them. However, five small boats under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Tupper were used to attack the British ships still in the Tappan Zee.

Washington was concerned that the enemy could launch an amphibious operation and turn his right flank. In mid-August, on his orders, a large number of chevaux-de-frise (sunken hulls and stakes pointed with iron) were sunk in the Hudson between Forts Washington and Lee. Washington wrote his brother John, “...that a vessel with a brisk wind and strong tide, cannot, unless by chance shot, be stop’t by a battery, unless you can place some obstruction in the water to impede her motion within reach of your guns.”

Aided by favorable winds, the *Phoenix* and *Rose* sailed briskly downstream on August 18, nearly unscathed from these obstructions (whose iron-tipped stakes pointed the wrong way) and also avoiding significant damage from fire rafts. The rafts, however, sank one of the three British tenders. Fortunately, Colonel Hay captured a large drove of cattle from the Tories, who had put them ashore for pasture. Back in New York, the two warships provided covering fire for the British landing that began the Battle of Brooklyn, the first major engagement of the Revolution and a disaster for Washington’s Army.

On October 10, 1776, Hay wrote Peter Livingston, president of the Provincial Congress, that three enemy warships (including the *Phoenix*) with tenders had again sailed the day before past the guns at Forts Lee and Washington. The ships successfully smashed through a reconstructed barricade of hulks, a chain, and timber cribs in the river and reached the Tappan Zee. Fortunately, Fort Washington and Fort Lee were so high above the water that the ships’ guns could not be elevated sufficiently to fire at them. The Fort Lee batteries were able to substantially damage all of the ships as they sailed closest to the eastern shore, where the river was deepest.

By this time, Hay had to write Washington that his regiment at Haverstraw “consists of only three hundred men (down from 400), and very near one half of

them (were) without arms... (and) I must apply for [reinforcements] in case [the enemy] should attempt a landing on the west side of [the river]. We are destitute for provisions." He also asked for money to purchase food. It was feared that British troops were aboard the warships. His men were without arms because they had been given to the Continentals. On October 12, 100 levies (draftees) were assigned to Hay; they were to be raised in the northern part of Orange County.

General Clinton was warned to man the forts, move his supplies inland, and guard against those cooperating with the enemy. He was then ordered by the New York Committee of Safety to guard the shore. A landing was attempted at Nyack but was repulsed by Hay's militia. (A shot from one of the British tenders tore off part of Colonel Hay's hat.) Two days later, Hay received \$500 to purchase food and notification that 100 reinforcements would be sent as soon as they could be conscripted.

By October 15, Hay reported that after repeated alarms he could only muster thirty-eight of his regiment at one time, and he was short of weapons as well as money to pay the militiamen. He had only eleven men to guard the shore between Verdudigo Hook and Stony Point; the rest refused to do duty. By this time, militiamen had been called from their farms to their military posts innumerable times, leaving them no time to harvest their corn and buckwheat, or to sow winter grain. They responded to the alarms despite an almost total lack of military training and much less experience, but they were angry. Washington recognized that the men were not entirely to blame. He wrote, "Men who have been free and subject to no control, cannot be reduced to order in an instant." Nevertheless, Washington was asked by the Committee of Safety to send "a Body of Men to the Highlands...to secure the passes, prevent insurrection and oversaw the disaffected."

On October 16, Colonel Hay issued orders for his guards to mount daily in the late afternoon, but not to fire unless a sentry had hailed a vessel in the Hudson three times, or an alarm had been sounded. The British made an attempt to land at Upper Nyack later in October for water and forage. Hay reported that they "were prevented by a party of my command. Some damage was done to the house and barn of Phillip Sarvent as several cutters fired shots through them, but none of my men were hurt."

Meanwhile, Hay was busy supplying Clinton's brigade with provisions and needed help in protecting the military stores at Haverstraw and Nyack, which had to be moved by boat past a British man-of-war. These were the only two places in the vicinity where British troops could land. To prevent the enemy from capturing provisions there, under General Greene's order the cattle, carriages, hay, grain, and flour were moved to Clarkstown and Tappan. Greene also instructed Hay to

“alter” the Kings Ferry Road. Kings Ferry was guarded by two forts at Stony Point. It was the key crossing of the Hudson from New England to the middle colonies. Whoever held Stony Point controlled this essential communications link.

Shortly after, Washington ordered most of his Continental troops to cross the river from Haverstraw and defend Fort Washington, which was perched atop a 230-foot hill on Manhattan overlooking the Hudson. This left a small force of Continentals plus the militia to guard the Highlands passes. On November 16, despite all efforts, Fort Washington, under Greene’s command, was captured by the British. Washington and Greene stood on the Palisades along the river’s western shore and watched the white flag go up as 2,000 troops surrendered. Washington and the remnants of his army fled across the Hackensack River toward Newark. In August, he had commanded an army of 20,000; now he had only 3,500.

Two days after the capture of Fort Washington, 6,000 redcoats led by General Charles Cornwallis crossed the Hudson at Dobbs Ferry. Without opposition, they posted their seventeen pieces of artillery on the Palisades near Englewood, New Jersey, a few miles from Fort Lee. By 1 p.m. that afternoon, they captured the fort without a fight. A few months previously, Private Reid and the Orange County militia had been patrolling that stretch of the Palisades riverbank.

On November 24, more redcoats also landed at Nyack. The next day, General Cornwallis, with an army of 10,000, started his pursuit of Washington. As a result, the morale of the militia was so low that it unnerved General Greene. On November 15, he had written to Washington that Colonel Hay’s entire regiment had mutinied.

Hay reported to Greene that his men told him that British “General [William] Howe had promised them peace, liberty and safety and that is all they want.” Greene sent Hay about fifty men and threatened to order his regiment to the trenches at Fort Lee. Later, Greene observed, “The enemy will never relinquish their plan, nor the people be firm in our favor, until they behold a better barrier in the field than a voluntary militia who are one day out, and the next at home.” The men were dispirited, intractable, and impatient to be home. Many deserted. Hay wrote on November 26 that “many of the disaffected had gone to the enemy, some of whom had hinted they would [guide] the enemy [so as] to cut off our troops.” Triggered by this letter, a Council of War held at Peekskill agreed immediately to assign General Scott’s entire brigade to Haverstraw to stop the enemy advance and guard the stores there.

In December, the enemy made a raid, looted a house, and stole some cattle from a neighbor of Peter Reid’s. General Clinton issued an order to the militia of

both Orange and Ulster counties to hold themselves in readiness to march at a moment's notice to repel an enemy invasion. Clinton asked Colonel Hay to transmit those orders to the other regiments.

In response to a message from Hay that there were twenty British ships in Tappan Bay, General Scott's brigade (whose terms of enlistment were about to expire) was sent across the Hudson to Haverstraw to support Hay's effort to guard against further landings, protect the military stores, and prevent any enemy advance into the Highlands passes; 500 Pennsylvanians at Peekskill also were sent to assist. As far upstream as Dobbs Ferry, the Hudson was now a British river. As commissary officer, Hay was having extreme difficulty supplying meat, flour, and salt, and finding wagons and teams to deliver these provisions to the militiamen who were quartered in the huts, barns, and homes of inhabitants from Tappan to Paramus. He also was using his personal funds without any reimbursement. On November 28, he sent General William Heath an itemized list of expenses totaling £618 that he had incurred to feed his men.

Later in December, Hay's militia was ordered into New Jersey to cooperate with the forces under Generals Charles Lee and Horatio Gates. The British and their Hessians were plundering households and farms, but the New Jersey Loyalists were the most villainous, according to General Greene. By then Daniel Coe, chairman of the local Committee of Safety, estimated the regimental strength at "280 men, most unarmed, one third of whom were disloyal." Washington's victory at Trenton and Princeton at year's end made it possible for them to return to their families, who by this time were destitute. By then, the British had clearly demonstrated to Washington that they could send any portions of their fleet of 150 ships up the Hudson almost all the way to Albany if they chose. (Albany had a population of 42,000, nearly twice as large as New York City and significantly more important.) The redcoats could also cut off the escape routes of Washington's New York troops into New Jersey if that became necessary.

Another British attempt to land two boats was made at Piermont in early 1777. By that time, another chain had been successfully strung across the Hudson and no British warships challenged it. Then stationed at Fort Montgomery, Hay had less than 100 men to protect the shore and supplies from being plundered by the British. He was being denied reinforcements by Clinton. On March 23, Hay wrote Washington from Haverstraw that the enemy was burning Peekskill. Clinton had the stores removed, but the British destroyed the ammunition magazines, storehouses, and barracks. However, because their contents had been removed or set afire beforehand by General Alexander McDougall, the British came away empty-handed.

On March 26, 1777, General Washington wrote the President of the Continental Congress that he could not provide Colonel Hay with reinforcements. Washington noted that "...The Militia [of New Jersey] are not to be depended upon... they come, you can scarce tell how, they go, you hardly know when. In the same predicament are those of Pennsylvania." He also stated that many of the Continental regiments were seriously shorthanded, often fewer than 100 men in the ranks.

In July, a British galley made an unsuccessful attempt to land at Upper Nyack to destroy a sloop moored there. The next morning, the bodies of nine British sailors killed in the attempt washed ashore.<sup>4</sup> Hay was still having difficulty keeping his men on duty because they wanted to take care of their homes and farms. Some—perhaps as many as a third—even "disaffected" to the Loyalist cause. Nevertheless, he continued to guard the west shore along Kakiat (Nyack) and Clarkstown as best he could. Captain Garret Anderson's company, in which Private Reid served, was kept busy from May to September performing guard duty from Bergen on the south to Fort Montgomery to the north. One of his majors declared publicly that if the militia were harassed as much as last year, "he would give up the cause." On August 21, Hay reported that he had taken a large drove of cattle from Tories who had fled.

On October 3, British Admiral Richard Howe dispatched 4,700 troops upriver under General Henry Clinton. Three days later, they landed on the western shore near Stony Point, marched over the mountains, and captured Forts Clinton and Montgomery, which were poorly defended by Generals George Clinton and Israel Putnam, whose troops were on the east side of the river. In addition, the British burned two American frigates guarding the chain across the Hudson below Fort Montgomery. (The chain also was dismantled.)

On October 5, Colonel Hay wrote to General Washington that a British flotilla including four ships of war, a number of other armed vessels, eight transports, and forty flat-bottomed boats had appeared in Haverstraw Bay. An estimated 1,500 to 2,000 British troops were landed a few miles below West Point and Fort Montgomery, at Verplank's Point in Westchester County.

General Washington, who wrote General Putnam on October 7 that the enemy's strength "cannot possibly be [as] great..." as Hay indicated (in fact it was greater), ordered 3,000 New Jersey Militia to the defense of the forts. But it was harvest time and only 300 reached the fort. In any event, they arrived too late to help. General Clinton wrote Washington that he had the cattle and sheep herded to places of safety, but he criticized Hay for not being able to control the shore guard of militiamen. Meanwhile, the British spent several days laying waste to the

countryside near the river, burning Newtown as well as burning and or capturing American vessels while apparently awaiting orders to move north.

This British effort to establish a foothold on the Hudson's west bank was made to prevent Washington from sending troops north to Albany to help oppose General Burgoyne. Few American troops were available because most had been shifted to Philadelphia to prevent its capture. Burgoyne, however, was defeated decisively on October 7 at the Battle of Saratoga, before Henry Clinton could have arrived. Albany and the Hudson River remained in colonial hands, thanks in part to militiamen like Peter Reid and his two brothers, Alexander and Daniel, Albany County militiamen who fought at Saratoga.

Fearing the worst, on September 22, 1777, Hay had written the Albany Committee of Correspondence suggesting that it order the Albany militia to help oppose Burgoyne. They immediately did so by ordering the militia north to harass the British and destroy their supplies. Concluding that he could neither "buy nor conquer these Dutchmen," General Henry Clinton withdrew all his troops to New York City by October 17, after destroying Forts Clinton and Montgomery. That same day, Burgoyne's surrender was accepted and his army began its 200-mile march to Boston, where it would be paroled and sent back to England. In January 1778, Hay was offered British cannon from Fort Ticonderoga after its abandonment following Burgoyne's defeat. He provided an estimate of the sleighs and horses needed to haul the cannon where he needed them, as well as to provide flour for his troops. The Albany Committee of Correspondence agreed to pay the sleigh men and to provide other assistance.

Altogether, as militiamen guarding the Hudson shore between December 1776 and April 1778, Hay's regiment was called out twelve times and spent 292 days in the field. During this time, they also were almost constantly engaged in building forts in the Highlands or navigational obstructions in the Hudson, and were under arms as Minute Men patrolling the river or guarding animals, forage, and other stores at Haverstraw.

Having difficulty calling out his militiamen, Hay wrote Washington on February 28, 1778, that the large amount of forage at Haverstraw had to be protected immediately from the enemy by "very speedily moving it or [having] a proper guard sent over from Peekskill" by General Putnam. "He reported that all the young men (in the area) have either enlisted in the [Continental] Army or are ferry men; therefore there are now families with but one male in the household to harvest their grain, feed the cattle and [to] provide firewood for their home." He added "the [Militiamen] think it rather cruel to be asked to turn out, as both their Families and Farms must suffer..."

Peter Reid (now forty-four), had a wife, four young daughters, and two sons at home. His youngest son was only a year old. Hay must have had Reid and a number of other militiamen in mind when he wrote this letter. The regiment was subsequently mustered out and new recruits enlisted to respond to "Different alarms from the 4th of April 1778 to the 9th of August 1780," when Captain Garrett Ackerson was mustered in as company commander. Recruiting efforts, however, were not very successful. Undoubtedly because of this, on May 28, 1778, the regiment was consolidated with the Orange Town Regiment under Colonel Abraham Lent, with Colonel Hay commanding the consolidated regiment.<sup>5</sup>

The year 1778 was the most disheartening one of the war for Orange County, as well as for Hay. His house, barn, stables, and animals were destroyed and he was destitute. New York City and Brooklyn were occupied by the British, and their warships sailed unopposed into the lower Hudson. Orange and adjacent Bergen County were brutally raided by the British. On April 5, Hay wrote Clinton that an enemy ship had gone up the river as far as Teller's Point, and although he had ordered out part of his militia, he had no provisions for them and needed money to feed them. Ackerson's Kakiat Company, in which Peter Reid was serving, was part of this contingent.

Hay's request for money and or provisions was denied by Clinton. The militia was starving and nearly naked. Washington, who visited Haverstraw on July 15 with General Greene, feared "a general mutiny and dispersion." Washington stayed at Hay's home, making it the headquarters of the Continental Army for five days while they crossed the Hudson at King's Ferry.<sup>6</sup> Before leaving, Washington authorized additional powder for Hay's cannons, some of which were enemy cannon hauled down from Ticonderoga.

From August 12 to 14, twenty-seven privates and two lieutenants under Captain Ackerson were paid a total of £21 to pursue Claudius Smith and his party of Tories and robbers through the mountains at Smith's Clove. They were unsuccessful in capturing them.

In the fall of 1778, Colonel Hay marched his regiment, now reduced to 250 men, to a position two miles below Tappan on the road leading to Schralenburgh Church at Bergenfeld, New Jersey. They guarded and scouted Paramus and Hackensack from their camp to New Bridge. Hay immediately sought reinforcements from Washington's headquarters. (At that time, the Continental Army was occupying the Highlands around West Point.) On September 28, Colonel Gilbert Cooper wrote Hay, who was at Fishkill, that "a large body of men from about 100 flatboats" had just landed about two miles from Tappan. Captain Ackerson was ordered to form a scouting party and skirmish with them.



In October 1778, the citizens of Orange County petitioned Governor Clinton to send assistance to Colonel Hay's militia, then stationed at Clarkstown. The petition stated that his troops "were worn out by the hard duty... and many of them had not put any winter grain in the ground... the enemy [was] within a quarter of a mile of Clarkstown [and] no aid will be afforded from the Continental Army." The governor dispatched temporary reinforcements.<sup>7</sup>

In early June 1779, Colonel Hay wrote the governor that the enemy had just crossed the river at Stony Point without opposition and advanced to Haverstraw village (two miles north of Hay's home), and that he was being overwhelmed. By then, the British had seized Stony Point, which had been defended by a small force that had withdrawn, and the villagers had fled. Clinton dispatched at least one militia regiment to assist Hay, but the British would hold Stony Point until November.

The next morning, Hay's militia opened fire from the fort at Verplank's Point under Lieutenant Colonel Cooper. The British then began to skirmish with Hay's troops for the rest of that day and all the next. They penetrated six miles inland to the mountains, capturing some of his men, plundering houses, and driving off the cattle. Efforts by Hay to save his own property were unsuccessful. His house, barn, and stables had previously been plundered and burned in October 1777. He wrote General Clinton that in this second British raid, the British "stripped my wife, my children and myself of everything we possessed but the apparel that covered us in our flight." They also carried off two horses, while his slave ran off. He pleaded with Governor Clinton to send him troops from West Point.

The raid had been carried out on the vindictive order of British Governor William Tryon in New York City. Afterward, Hay moved his family to Fishkill, before returning to Haverstraw in 1780. He also petitioned the New York Legislature for compensation, reporting that "My farm is now almost a wilderness, having no hands to work it." Likewise, he wrote Washington, who replied from West Point on August 2, that "... it gives me real pain that I have it not in my power to comply with your request respecting an order for clothing."<sup>8</sup>

In late November, troops from Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, North Carolina, and New York moved from the vicinity of West Point to winter camp at Morristown, New Jersey. Some of these Continentals slept on the lawn of Peter Reid's church the night they passed through. Hay begged the Governor for immediate assistance.

Without reinforcements for his small regiment guarding twenty miles of shoreline, on June 4 Hay wrote Governor Clinton that he might be forced to surrender to the enemy's superior force. Several of his regiment were missing, pre-

sumably captured. In the meantime, the Haverstraw militia harassed the British rear, keeping them within narrow limits. Nevertheless, a British battery opened up against the fort at Verplank's Point and silenced it. Washington, who must have received a copy of Hay's letter to Clinton, wrote Hay on June 4, "Your exertions and those of the Militia in opposing the Enemy claim my thanks..."

The next day, Washington also ordered the colonel in command of a New Jersey militia regiment to collect at least 500 head of cattle and other supplies and deliver them to Orange County. He was concerned that the British were going to attack other Highland posts in "a vigorous operation." Therefore, his army would need subsistence for the duration of the crisis if it were to be depended upon. Washington also wrote Hay and two other militia colonels of the anticipated enemy attack upon Highland posts in Orange County and its vicinity. Washington wanted to know how many of their militia would join his Continental troops.<sup>9</sup>

In 1780, the New York Legislature passed legislation to provide levies to reinforce the Continental Army's 1st, 3rd, and 5th Regiments. This law required the militia to furnish soldiers for three months of service in the Army of the United States. Colonel Hay's regiment raised twenty-eight men on the first call; 100 men were called out on August 1, and twenty-two more in December 1780. During his third enlistment, Peter Reid was one of these Levies.<sup>10</sup> All served under Lieutenant Colonel Gilbert Cooper to strengthen the New York levies guarding Tappan. In August, Colonel Hay supplied some of his own oxen to these troops. When the Continental Army arrived on August 8, the militia was dismissed. In September, the British landed at Upper Nyack and burned the home and barn of Major John L. Smith of Hay's regiment before being driven off.

On February 25, 1781, Colonel Hay was ordered by Washington to assemble his regiment and send detachments to guard the passes through the mountains near Suffern and elsewhere that provided the route for a surprise attack on West Point. They were to wait there in good positions until further orders. Others in the regiment were assigned to guard the blockhouse at Sneden's Landing against attack by 200 British troops from Jersey City. One of Hay's men was wounded in that encounter.<sup>12</sup>

After Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga, the war was fought mostly in the South, although the British still held New York City and Long Island when Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown in October 1783. To supply the troops garrisoned there, they continue making devastating raids to steal food, forage, and animals in the Hudson River Valley. Hay remained the Continental Army's Deputy Commissary General, to which he was appointed in June 1779. In April 1782, Hay

asked Washington for a cannon and artillerymen to be positioned at Haverstraw that could fire on British ships that occasionally sailed upriver. Shore guards, probably from Hay's regiment, were placed from Haverstraw south to Nyack. In May, the reinforcements arrived and were positioned at Stony Point.

Hay resigned his commission on January 1, 1783.<sup>13</sup> The following year, he served as justice of the peace. Once wealthy, Colonel Hay spent his entire fortune on the revolutionary cause. He had been offered a commission twice in the British army but refused it because of his avid patriotism. In his seven years of service between 1776 and 1783, he guaranteed large payments—for which he was never reimbursed—to farmers for animals and crops. He lost his home and all of his possessions. A father of twelve, he died penniless in 1785 at age forty in New York City, just a month after the last of his children was born. During the course of the war, Generals Washington, Lafayette, Greene, and Anthony Wayne visited Hay's house, evidence of the esteem in which he was held.<sup>14</sup>

Describing the behavior of Revolutionary War soldiers, including militiamen, historian Charles Royster wrote: "But the many derelictions of wartime behavior seemed to pale beside the one essential achievement—the ideals would survive." In 1781, the *Annual Register*, published in London, characterized these soldiers as having "an unconquerable resolution and perseverance, inspired and supported by the enthusiasm of liberty." Four faiths motivated these soldiers—God, country, family, and liberty.<sup>15</sup> The intensity of these feelings were an outgrowth of their determination to leave behind the class system of the Old World.

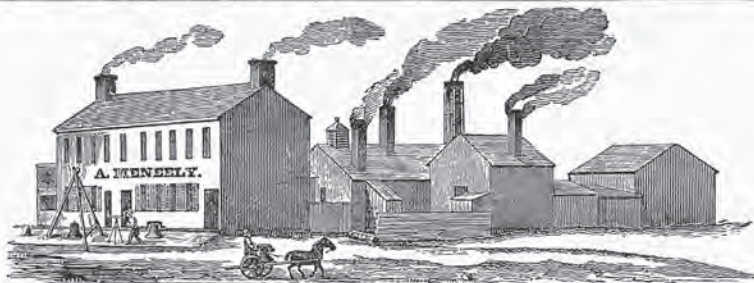
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Broadside advertisement, circa 1841



# Bell Founding in the Upper Hudson River Valley

*Edward T. Howe*

On June 24, 2007, the church bell at the Jonesville United Methodist Church in Clifton Park (Saratoga County) rang out again following an extensive restoration of the building's wooden tower.<sup>1</sup> The reinstalled bell, made in 1841 by the West Troy Meneely Bell Foundry of Albany County, served as a reminder that the Hudson-Mohawk region of Albany and Rensselaer counties once had several firms that cast bronze bells. Tower bells, produced either singly or in combination (i.e., peals, chimes, or carillons), constituted the mainstay of the business. Cast primarily for churches, they were also made for schools, colleges, municipal buildings, and other private and public facilities. The tower bells generally weighed from 400 pounds with a diameter at the opening (mouth) of twenty-seven inches up to 7,500 pounds with a diameter of seventy-two inches. For nearly a century and a half, the Hudson-Mohawk bell founders cast a combined output roughly estimated at 100,000 bells.

More notably, the bell foundries provide an interesting historical example of how firms in a niche craft rose from local beginnings in the Hudson-Mohawk region to national prominence during the nineteenth century. Accordingly, after exploring the colonial and early American origins of tower bell founding, this essay will trace the development of this skilled trade in the Hudson-Mohawk region from its early nineteenth-century roots, through its heyday of innovation and national expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century, to its demise by the mid-twentieth century.

## Background

Since there were no bell founders in the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth centuries in colonial America, tower bells had to be imported. Most came from England, which already had a long tradition of casting quality bronze bells. This tradition started around the eighth century, when bell founders lived in monasteries, abbeys, and other religious communities. Gradually they replaced iron with various alloys, including copper and tin (bronze), as they experimented in

making small bells. By the thirteenth century, bell founders began to work independently and to produce larger bronze bells. The first known bell founders toiling for themselves were Master John and Master Thomas, who cast bells in Norfolk as early as 1229 and 1333, respectively. Bell foundries subsequently emerged over the next several centuries in larger cities—such as London—and smaller towns and villages. The British colonists imported most of their bells from the Whitechapel foundry, which traces its roots to 1570 in Croydon.<sup>2</sup> As immigrants from Holland, Sweden, and Germany came to America in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, they also imported bells from their native lands. Colonial tower bells—as in past and subsequent generations—were mainly used to call people to worship, a funeral, a celebration, or a meeting; for sounding a fire or other alarm; and for indicating the time of day or start of a curfew.

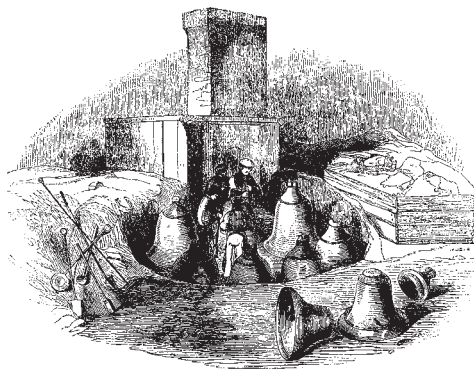


Illustration of bell casting process,  
from Penny Magazine, 1842

A few British colonists—already experienced in using metals to make clocks, surveying instruments, and brassware—first turned to bell casting around 1740. Although an abundant amount of many metals was available in the colonies, there was a noticeable lack of copper and tin needed to make bronze bells. Since domestic supplies were insufficient, especially of tin, the colonists relied on British imports.<sup>3</sup>

Colonial tower bell production began in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. One of the earliest known bell founders was John Whitear of Fairfield, Connecticut, a well-known clockmaker. He publicly announced in 1738 that he would cast bells “from the lowest size to two thousand weight.”<sup>4</sup> One of his first known bells was made a year later for Christ Church in Stratford, Connecticut.<sup>5</sup> By the late eighteenth century, some members of the Doolittle family had become well-known bell makers. In 1773, Isaac Doolittle of New Haven, Connecticut, another clockmaker, acquired the bell-making assets of John Whitear, Jr., who had succeeded his father in business in 1762. Doolittle sold his equipment to James Cochran in 1800. Enos Doolittle of Hartford (a cousin of Isaac) and his son James later cast bells from 1782 to 1811.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a bell was ordered in 1751 from the Whitechapel foundry for the State House. Unfortunately, the bell cracked after being initially struck upon its installation. Subsequently, two local brass found-



ers—John Pass and John Stow—successfully recast a 2,080-pound bell, which became the famous “Liberty Bell,” in 1753.<sup>7</sup> The only other known Pennsylvania bell founder was Matthias Tommerop of Allentown, who cast at least one of his bells for Zion Reformed Church in 1769.<sup>8</sup>

About 1770, Colonel Aaron Hobart of Abington, Massachusetts, established a bell foundry that produced meetinghouse and church bells for nearby towns. Hobart, also known for sending both his son and a blacksmith to teach Paul Revere how to cast a bell, sold his business to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts around 1800.<sup>9</sup>

Some people advertised in local newspapers that they were prepared to cast tower bells, but no evidence of actual production has been found. For example, Aaron Miller of Elizabethtown, New Jersey, informed the public in 1747 that he would make church bells.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Robert Barker of Hanover, Massachusetts, said in 1765 that he was willing to cast meetinghouse bells.<sup>11</sup>

By the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783, a foundation for future growth in tower bell founding had thus been established. However, colonial demand for tower bells was necessarily limited to local areas as land transportation costs were relatively high. Since income from the sale of bells was often sporadic, bell founders were frequently engaged in producing and selling clocks, watches, surveying instruments, and other artifacts.

After approval of the U.S. Constitution in 1789, market activity expanded geographically as western settlements spread beyond the Appalachian Mountains. Markets also became more integrated as new transportation developments (i.e., canals, steamboats, and railroads) linked formerly separated areas. One of the earliest bell founders who benefited from these developments was Paul Revere. Armed with his knowledge of the operations of the Hobart foundry, he cast his first tower bell in 1792 for the Second Church in Boston. He produced his masterpiece, a bell for King’s Chapel in Boston, in 1816. The prolific output of the firm during its thirty-six year history testified to the quality of its products. Revere and his descendants cast 467 church bells between 1792 and 1828, as well as innumerable ship, courthouse, school, factory, and town crier bells.<sup>12</sup> They were sold mainly in New England, but also in several states across the country and as far away as Singapore. Operating as the Revere Copper Company after 1828, the firm occasionally made undated tower bells. Given its output, the Revere firm was arguably the first large bell foundry in America. Two apprentices of Paul Revere—Major George Holbrook and William Blake—eventually left his employ to establish other well-known Massachusetts bell foundries in Brookfield (1797) and Boston (1823), respectively.

## Hudson-Mohawk Bell Foundries Emerge 1800-1860

Bell Founding in the Hudson-Mohawk region began shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century. Between 1808 and 1860, three large bell foundries commenced operations in the region. By 1860, only two firms remained in business—the Meneely firm in West Troy and the Jones foundry in Troy.

In 1808, Colonel Benjamin Hanks, who began casting bells in 1786, left Mansfield, Connecticut, with his son Julius to start a bell foundry in Gibbonsville (which became West Troy in 1836), near Albany. Julius stayed in Gibbonsville until 1825, when he moved across the Hudson River to Troy. He and his son Oscar concentrated on bells initially, but increasingly turned to clocks and surveying instruments, which constituted most of the business when the firm closed in 1845.<sup>13</sup>

Andrew Meneely—a former apprentice of Julius Hanks—began making bells and surveying instruments in 1826, the year he both married Philena Hanks (a niece of Col. Benjamin) and bought the Gibbonsville foundry.<sup>14</sup> The Gibbonsville and Troy foundries were poised for growth, given their strategic locations near the beginnings of the Champlain and Erie canals (completed in 1823 and 1825, respectively) at the junction of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers. The canals, relative to land conveyance, allowed both raw materials and heavy manufactured goods—such as bells—to be transported more cheaply over greater distances. Several short-haul railroads, constructed over the next three decades, further enhanced the transportation advantages of the region.

After Andrew Meneely died in 1851, his sons Edwin and George took over the business. James Hitchcock, a cousin of the Meneely brothers and the foundry foreman, left the firm a year later and opened the Troy Bell Foundry with Eber Jones. This operation became Jones & Co. in 1857, when Hitchcock retired.

Some lesser-known bell foundries also operated in or near the region. Lewis Aspinwall ran a small foundry in Albany from 1823 to 1848. He was known to have cast bells for churches in Albany, Rochester, and the hamlet of Oak Hill in Greene County.<sup>15</sup> Just outside the Hudson-Mohawk region in Greene County, Beelzebub Barton cast church and sleigh bells in South Cairo for an unknown time in the early nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup>

Although tower bells comprised most of their business, the Meneely firm and the Jones foundry also cast innumerable academy, factory, fire alarm, depot, locomotive, plantation, school, ship, and steamboat bells.

Several bell foundries also emerged outside the Hudson-Mohawk region in the first half of the nineteenth century, especially in various cities that had excellent transportation facilities. William Greene of Cincinnati, Ohio, opened one of

the earliest foundries in 1817, the Cincinnati Bell, Brass, and Iron Foundry. Other well-known Cincinnati firms included the Buckeye Bell Foundry, established by George W. Coffin in 1837 (operating as the E.W. Vanduzen firm after 1865). This firm made the heaviest tower bell in America in 1896, at 17.5 tons, which hangs in the belfry of St. Francis de Sales Church in that city.<sup>17</sup> George L. Hanks—a nephew of Benjamin Hanks—continued a family tradition when he opened the Cincinnati Bell Foundry in 1842.

Baltimore, Maryland, had two known foundries. Joshua Regester began his foundry operation in 1844; he made both tower bells and plumbing supplies. Henry McShane, an apprentice of Regester, opened his firm in 1856.<sup>18</sup> St. Louis, Missouri, had at least five bell foundries before 1860. Among the owners were David Caughlan, in business from 1853 to 1866, and Johann Stuckstede, who began operating in 1855.<sup>19</sup> Other regional bell foundries of this era included H.W. Rincker, who opened for business in 1849 in Chicago, Illinois; Joseph Bernhard, who began casting bells in 1845 in Philadelphia; the Fulton Brass and Bell Foundry, which started in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1832; and W.T. Garratt, who commenced operations in 1851 in San Francisco, California.<sup>20</sup>

Although most tower bells were made of bronze, cast steel bells began to appear shortly before 1860. The foundry of Charles S. Bell, in operation from 1858 to 1974, was the most notable producer. The Meneely West Troy firm, along with other bronze bell casters, criticized cast steel bells as having a harsh and discordant sound and being more liable to break because of the metal's hardness.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, small rural churches often purchased these bells since they were less expensive than bronze bells.

Neither the Hudson-Mohawk bell firms, nor any other bronze bell founders across the country, made handbells. The major firms specializing in these included Rowland Mayland of Brooklyn, Edward Street of Hartford, and Joseph Deagan of Chicago.<sup>22</sup> Currently, handbells are made by Schulmerich Carillons of Sellersville, Pennsylvania, and Malmark of Plumsteadville, Pennsylvania.

East Hampton, Connecticut, known as "Belltown U.S.A." by the early twentieth century, had numerous nineteenth-century bell makers. These firms specialized in sleigh, cow, fog, dinner, bicycle, and other small decorative and functional bells.

The bell founders that operated across the nation up to 1860 generally had few or no competitors. As mentioned, in the Hudson-Mohawk region the Andrew Meneely firm of West Troy competed only with the Hanks foundry in Troy during the 1830s and 1840s.<sup>23</sup> Between 1845 and 1857, the Meneely firm had a local monopoly until the arrival of the Jones facility.

Unfortunately, no business data regarding the Hudson-Mohawk firms could be obtained either from federal census data or the firms themselves for the period 1810-1860. Nevertheless, it seems, (according to *The Plough, The Loom and The Anvil*), that the West Troy Meneely facility had become a notable producer. During its first quarter century of operation from 1826 to 1851, the firm produced 8,274 bells, mostly tower bells. Most of these were sold in the United States, but the firm's international reputation was evident in its sales to Canada, the West Indies, Mexico, and China.<sup>24</sup>

Despite its famed reputation for quality, the West Troy firm went bankrupt in 1857 due to competitive pressures from the Jones Company and mismanagement by the sons of Andrew Meneely. The firm's closing was avoided when their mother, Philena, provided both management advice and financial support. It was finally solvent by 1863.<sup>25</sup>

## Innovation and National Expansion 1850-1900

Between 1850 and 1900, the tower bell industry in America experienced significant changes in product development, technological improvements, and competitive conditions—with the Hudson-Mohawk firms playing leading roles. The end result was that the Hudson-Mohawk firms had achieved national prominence by the end of the nineteenth century.

After 1850, many American tower bell makers extended their offerings to include peals and chimes. A peal is a set of two to seven (commonly three or four) swinging bells using a major chord of the first, third, and fifth notes. Before 1850, peals of bells in America were generally imported from English firms, such as Whitechapel. Meneely of West Troy cast one of the first peals made in America, which was sold to a Kingston, Ontario, church in 1848.<sup>26</sup> A chime, a set of eight to twenty-two stationary bells in a major scale, was produced in greater quantities. The Jones foundry was among the first to cast chimes, producing a nine-bell set for St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Philadelphia in 1853. The West Troy Meneely foundry also claimed it had produced one of the earliest chimes, a nine-bell chime cast in 1850. It was exhibited at a fair of the American Institute in New York, but apparently was never hung anywhere.<sup>27</sup>

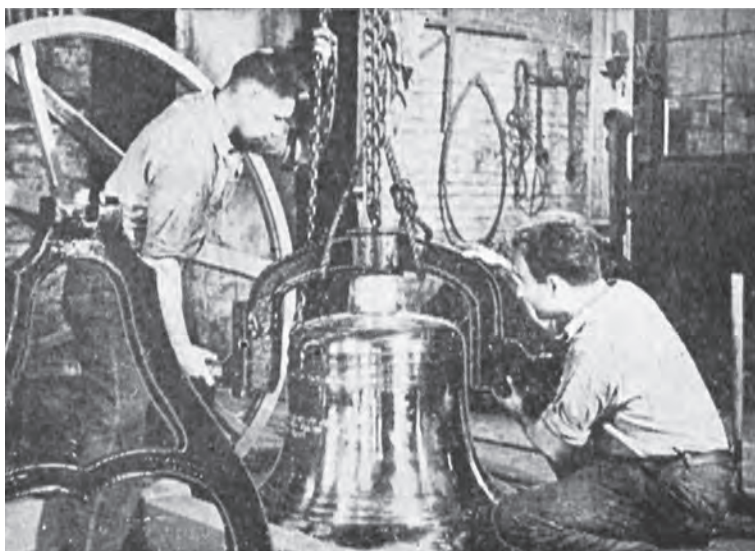
An important breakthrough in bell hanging occurred in 1855 when George W. Hildreth of Lockport obtained a patent, later held by the Jones foundry, for an "improved mode of hanging bells" using a rotary yoke. Under the old method, the clapper, located inside the bell, would hit the same opposing sides when the bell swung. The rotary yoke, emanating from the frame from which the bell hung, now allowed the clapper to hit other parts of the circumference to help prevent



Pouring a cast at the Meneely Foundry, c. 1937

breakage.<sup>28</sup> George W. Meneely of the West Troy foundry also received a patent for rotary yoke improvements in 1868.<sup>29</sup>

The Jones foundry also secured patents for improvements in the tuning of bells, an operation especially needed in the casting of chimes. Eber Jones believed that the proper tone of a bell could best be achieved through an improvement in the casting of the inner and outer molds (i.e., the core and the cope) by providing more uniformity in the thickness of the bell metal so there was more accuracy in how the perforated molds were centered and placed. He received a patent for this advance in mold preparation in 1855.<sup>30</sup> Octavous Jones, the son of Eber, was awarded a patent in 1870 for improvements in the machinery used for turning the inside surface of a bell to enhance its final tuning.<sup>31</sup>



WWW.BELLS.DAMMENEELY.COM

Checking the fit of the yoke, Meneely Foundry

Federal census data shows that the number of tower bell firms remained relatively constant at ten to fifteen producers between 1860 and 1890, with most regional areas having anywhere from one to four firms competing at any one time. However, the value of all types of large bells produced rose from \$334,520 to \$540,506.<sup>32</sup> The major reason for the increase in the value of these bell products was that most new churches constructed between 1850 and 1890 wanted a tower bell. U.S. census data shows that in 1850 there were 38,061 church buildings in the nation. By 1890, the number had risen to 142,521, with most of these churches built by Protestants—particularly Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians.<sup>33</sup> Although no specific data is available, additional tower bells were ordered for various public and private buildings, such as government offices and educational facilities, as urbanization intensified across the nation in the late nineteenth century.

In the Hudson-Mohawk region, competition increased with the opening in 1869 of the Clinton H. Meneely foundry in Troy. Denied a partnership with his brothers in the West Troy foundry, Clinton Meneely began casting bells of all sizes and shapes with his brother-in-law, George Kimberly. The ensuing bitter rivalry between the two Meneely foundries culminated in a lawsuit initiated by the West Troy firm charging that Clinton Meneely had illegally used the family surname for commercial reasons. The New York Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, ruled in 1875 that Clinton Meneely had the right to use his last name for commercial purposes. The court said that the family surname was not an exclusive



trademark that could be used to prevent another firm with the same name from conducting lawful business practices in the same industry.<sup>34</sup> This ruling became a landmark decision in trademark litigation.

The Clinton Meneely foundry was known for its many replicas of the Liberty Bell. It cast its first reproduction in 1876 (the Centennial Bell) for the Independence Hall belfry in Philadelphia. A second Liberty Bell reproduction was made in 1893 for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Another well-known replica was the Women's Liberty Bell, cast in 1915 for the Suffragist movement.<sup>35</sup>

After relying on imports of copper and tin from Britain since the eighteenth century, the Hudson-Mohawk bell founders—along with many of their competitors—turned to various U.S. sources of supply in the nineteenth century. Starting in 1840, copper mines opened in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and dominated production until the 1880s, when deposits in Montana and Arizona became available.<sup>36</sup> As for tin, nineteenth-century imports were obtained from the Straits Settlements in Malaysia. The Hudson-Mohawk bell founders purchased both metals through various brokers. For example, the West Troy Meneely foundry worked with the New York City firms of Phelps Dodge, D. Houston, J. H. Ackerman, and Bunting Brothers.

The development of an intercontinental railroad network and the telephone system in the late nineteenth century further facilitated the growth and integration of national markets across the country. Many small firms in highly competitive consumer goods markets sought to meet the increased demand for their products by expanding their plant sizes to take advantage of economies of scale (i.e., the building of larger facilities that could utilize mass-production techniques to reduce various costs). Mergers with competitors also were undertaken to acquire more efficient facilities and consolidate the market position of the combined entity.

Precluded from achieving economies of scale because of their centuries-old processes and wishing to remain independent, the Hudson-Mohawk bell founders—and some of their competitors—turned to various marketing strategies to increase national sales and gain a larger market share. One of these efforts involved wider distribution of catalogs. These publications generally included a description of any improvements made in bell casting; a listing of various types of bells made by weight and diameter; the price of the hangings; the conditions of the warranty; and testimonials from satisfied customers. Another marketing ploy was to place small advertisements in local or regional publications, especially of a religious nature, scattered across the country. To reach prospective buyers, Meneely of West Troy, for instance, employed various advertising agents such as

*Right*  
METROPOLITAN  
TOWER  
NEW YORK  
*Bells 650 feet  
above ground*



*Below*  
CONSOLIDATED  
GAS BUILDING  
NEW YORK  
*Bells 400 feet  
above ground*



*Above*  
ROANOKE  
BUILDING  
CHICAGO  
*Bells 450 feet  
above ground*



*Left*  
STRAUS  
BUILDING  
CHICAGO  
*Bells 425 feet  
above ground*

The Four Highest Sets of Bells in the World  
*Were made by* MENEELY BELL CO., Troy, N. Y.

Page from Meneely Bell 1937 Catalog



N.W. Ayer and Son of Philadelphia and Charles A. Clegg of New York City. In addition, the two Meneely firms periodically presented their tower bells at international exhibitions and fairs. Any prizes or awards received at these venues were immediately publicized.

The severe competition for regional and national sales dramatically altered the competitive landscape. Among the foundries that closed were the Holbrook firm in 1880 and the Jones Company of Troy in 1887. By 1900, six producers dominated the national market for tower bells: the two Meneely firms, McShane, Vanduzen, and two Stuckstede firms (Stuckstede and Bro. opened for business in 1890).<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, federal census data limitations prevented market share calculations for these firms for the period 1860 to 1900.

## End of an Era 1900-1952

The favorable economic conditions that the tower bell industry enjoyed during the last half of the nineteenth century was undermined by several adverse forces in the first half of the twentieth century. These negative factors included a slowdown in demand for tower bells, the introduction of electronic substitutes, increased foreign competition, and governmental restrictions on the use of metals. The result of these changes was that most of the major, and many minor, bell founders had disappeared by 1961.

Before conditions threatened their existence, however, both Meneely firms had some notable early twentieth-century successes. The Troy firm installed “the largest school bell in all the world,” weighing 7,000 pounds, at the City College of New York in 1906.<sup>38</sup> Two years later, the firm mounted a peal of four bells outside the forty-sixth floor of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. in New York City. At 650 feet above ground, they are the highest bells ever hung in the world.<sup>39</sup>

The West Troy (City of Watervliet as of 1896) Meneely foundry further enhanced its reputation by casting the first American carillons. They were installed in churches in Danbury, Connecticut, in 1928; Holland, Pennsylvania, in 1930; and in 1931 in Storrs, Connecticut, and Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. A carillon is a musical instrument consisting of twenty-three or more bronze bells that are hung stationary in a tower. Before Meneely began casting them, carillons had initially arrived in America in the nineteenth century from France, Belgium, and England. The Meneely firm credited its tuning discoveries made in the late nineteenth century for their success in building these instruments.<sup>40</sup> Before electrification, carillons were played using a keyboard with wooden levers and pedals wired to the clappers. Two other firms are also known to have made them. The Troy Meneely foundry cast a carillon for a tower in Dayton, Ohio, in 1942 and

the Vanduzen foundry cast a carillon in 1933 for a tower in Glendale, Ohio. Many of the major bell founders, including the Meneely firms, also cast one or more bells as part of carillons that were made by foreign firms for installation in the U.S.

After experiencing advantageous growth in the late nineteenth century, the entire (i.e., tower and other bells) U.S. bell industry entered a period of rapid decline after 1900. Federal census data shows that the value of all bells produced rose from \$1,023,010 to a peak of \$1,247,730 between 1870 and 1900. After 1900, the aggregate value of total bell output dramatically declined, reaching \$145,160 in 1939—the last year of federal data for traditional bells cast.<sup>41</sup>

One major reason for the eventual failure of the Meneely firms and other bell founders was the slowdown in demand for traditional tower bells. The number of new churches constructed between 1906 and 1916 increased from 210,418 to 226,718, a gain of 7.7 percent; but ten years later, the number had risen only to 232,154, a 2.4-percent gain. By 1936, church construction had fallen to 199,302, a decline of 14.2 percent.<sup>42</sup> In addition, the need for tower bells in governmental and private facilities had subsided. For example, demand for fire alarm bells had declined with the growing use of sirens after World War I.

The technological development of electronic sound further weakened the demand for tower bells. As early as 1899, a keyboard that had an electrical connection with magnets for controlling valves of air cylinders was used in playing chimes in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. In 1926, the Verdin Company of Cincinnati, Ohio—known primarily for its tower clocks—developed an electric bell-ringing device that gave a tower bell a push before letting gravity take over the swinging. In the 1930s, the Troy Meneely foundry developed both an electrical vibration meter to detect flaws in tonal quality and an electrical ringing system that allowed sets of tuned bells to be played from a console that activated electromagnets causing specially designed clappers to swing inside the stationary bells.<sup>43</sup>

At least since the onset of the Great Depression, American bell founders had complained that foreign labor costs put them at a competitive disadvantage. After seeking tariff protection, they were rebuffed in a 1931 report issued by the U.S. Tariff Commission. The commission did not recommend any changes to the duties on tower bells and chimes, contending that bell founders had not been harmed by imports. The commission further contended that imported carillons did not pose a threat since there was no American industry.<sup>44</sup> Despite this setback, all of the major bell founders survived the Great Depression, except for the Henry Stuckstede firm, which closed in 1931.

World War II and the Korean Conflict created more formidable difficulties. All types of U.S. bell production, except for ships, ceased during World War II as copper and tin use was diverted to the military. After World War II, American bell founders again had to deal with foreign competitors. They now had both lower labor costs and new offerings of more advanced electronic substitutions.<sup>45</sup> Foreign imports—primarily from England, France, and Holland—gained a further advantage at the start of the Korean Conflict in 1950, when the U.S. government once more imposed metal restrictions on domestic bell founders.

The combination of metal restrictions and foreign competition proved to be insurmountable for the Meneely firms. Both ceased operation in 1952.<sup>46</sup> The Vanduzen foundry, experiencing similar conditions, had closed two years earlier. Stuckstede & Bro. continued to produce tower bells intermittently after 1940, but finally closed in 1961.

The McShane foundry, the last of the major casters of traditional bronze tower bells, currently remains in business. It does not cast any large tower bells, but relies on its service business of refurbishing, repairing, and electrifying old bells. Some other firms such as Maas-Rowe Carillons, Inc. of Escondido, California, (established in 1922), and Meeks, Watson and Co., of Georgetown, Ohio (established in 1990), are still willing to cast bronze tower bells, though these specialize in electronic bell-sounding devices. Verdin, the tower clock maker, has been casting tower bells up to 700 pounds since 1994.

## Conclusion

The Hudson-Mohawk bell founders were part of an important niche industry. Beginning in the early nineteenth century and continuing for almost 150 years, they produced thousands of tower and other bells that were sold both domestically and in many foreign markets. The two Meneely firms, in particular, rose to national prominence because of the supreme quality of their products, their technological inventiveness, and their marketing skills. Their demise marked the end not only of a notable period of industrial creativity in the Hudson-Mohawk region, but as part of the passing of a uniquely traditional craft that could trace its immediate roots to Western Europe.

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Artist Michael Keropian's depiction of Sachem Daniel Nimham is based on historic scholarship and correspondence with Nimham's descendents

# Wappinger Kinship Associations: Daniel Nimham's Family Tree

*J. Michael Smith*

*Legal papers compiled during the Wappinger Indians' land claim case in Dutchess County contain testimony listing the names of both the maternal and paternal relatives of the then-sachem Daniel Nimham. The documents also contain evidence of kin relations between Wappinger and Mohican families. An examination of these papers provides information about Indian kinship in the eighteenth century.*

## Introduction

The Wappinger sachem Daniel Nimham, a “native Indian” of the Hudson River Valley, is perhaps best known for his active participation in the American Revolution and his subsequent death alongside his son, Abraham, during a battle with British forces north of New York City (Walling, 2004: 103-112; Calloway, 1996: 85-107). Yet, accounts of Nimham's military exploits comprise only a portion of the over 100 colonial documents chronicling his activities from 1745 to 1778 (author's files). Sixty-one of the documents mentioning Nimham deal specifically with Wappinger land claims in southern Dutchess County and describe him as an assertive defender of his tribe's native rights. Eight documents additionally reveal his involvement in Mohican land claims and land sales in both New York and neighboring Massachusetts. Eleven documents further record his personal proprietary affairs and land affairs of his immediate family at the Mohican township of Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

This article examines Nimham's land claim made before the New York Colonial Council in 1762, the first of three unsuccessful attempts to retain Wappinger rights to lands reserved decades earlier. Similar efforts resulting in formal trials were made in 1765 and 1767 (Nammack, 1969: 70-85; Frazier, 1992: 156-169). The 1762 claim provides direct testimony from Nimham himself describing the boundaries of two distinct tracts of land and includes listings of individuals and their familial claims to these areas. The individuals identified in this initial claim are his maternal and paternal relatives, and represent families spanning four



generations. Some of these relationships reveal kin ties to Mohican Indians that help explain Nimham's associations with this cultural group. This data combined with later court case records and other documents referencing Wappinger kin relations provides information about Indian kinship and patterns of descent and inheritance during the late colonial period.

## Daniel Nimham's Predecessors

Primary sources depicting Daniel Nimham's activities identify him as a principal spokesman of the Wappingers or Highland Indians living in the mid-Hudson Valley. The Wappingers, one of some twenty Indian bands collectively known as Munsee-Delawares or Munsees, occupied the Highlands and adjoining areas of colonial Dutchess County. Ethnic references pertaining to this group show that they maintained close political ties with neighboring Mohican bands of the upper Hudson and Housatonic river valleys throughout the colonial period (Smith, 2009: 43). Nimham does not appear to have been chosen sachem of the Wappingers until 1765. There are no documents prior to this year that recognize him in such a leadership role. During the 1762 land claim, he identified himself solely as a "River Indian" of the "Wappingoe" tribe, and reported that he was "a Christian and has resided some years with the Mayhiccondas at Stockbridge" (Misc. Mss., Columbia County-NYHS, August 2). Listed as thirty-six years old at the time, he also stated, "that these two Tribes [now] constituted on[e] Nation." His age recorded here indicates he was born around 1726.

Nimham is first mentioned as the leader of his people on October 30, 1765, in a testimonial supportive of his land claims where he is noted as the "acknowledged Sachem or King of a Certain Tribe of Indians known and called by the name of the Wappinger Tribe." (NYCM-LP, 18: 128) The testimonial further states that "This Tribe Formerly more numerous, at present consists of about Two hundred and Twenty seven Persons: they have always had a sachem or Indian King, whom they acknowledge to be the head of the said Tribe, and to whose Government they have submitted; and by a line of succession the said Government descended to the said present Sachem."

Confirmation that Daniel Nimham inherited tribal leadership through a line of succession is contained in a 1764 letter of attorney granting guardianship over Wappinger land rights to Samuel Monroe, a Connecticut emigrant who maintained a farm on the disputed lands. Monroe and other emigrant farmers had joined forces that year with Nimham, acquiring Indian leases challenging New York landowners' claims to the territory. In the letter, Nimham and other tribesmen are identified as the sons and heirs of previous Wappinger leaders:

“Stephen Kounhum Son and Heir of Kounhum of the High Lands in Dutchess County and Province of New York Deceased, and Daniel Nimham Son and Heir of Nimham the Son of Sackoenemack of Dutchess County aforesaid—also deceased, and one Pound Pocktone of the County aforesaid Son and Heir of Ahtaupeanhond Deceased ... and Jacob Aaron Son of Aaron [Nimham?] and Jacobus Nimham Son of Nimham” (John Tabor Kempe Papers-NYHS: Box 10, Folder 9, November 17).

Two of the individuals listed above, Stephen Kounhum (or Cowenham) and One Pound Pocktone (noted elsewhere as John Packto or Backto) might not be related to Nimham. In a separate letter of attorney endorsed by these men earlier the same year, they granted legal powers to him as their “faithfull and trusty friend”; no kinship relation is implied (John Tabor Kempe Papers-NYHS: Box 10, Folder 9, July 21). These men, both noted as heirs, were likely leaders of other Wappinger families with associated land claims in the region. Daniel and Jacobus Nimham are clearly identified as sons of the individual named Nimham, who, in

## Bill of sale for Hyde Park

Anno 1696 the 25th of June.

The rightful owners went there  
with Jan Oostroom and Tijs Gerretse and  
conveyed the land with the Viskil [Fishkill]  
and also all the other kils up to Meyndert Harmense's  
property. The land is called  
Aquasing. In acknowledgement of the truth  
these two witnesses have signed:

This is the mark of Jan Oostroom

This is the mark of Tys Gerretsz  
This has been signed in the presence of the rightful  
owners and also of me,  
Meyndert Harmensz.

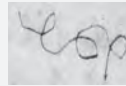
1696 the 24th of June.

Henderick ten Eijck has come to an agreement with some Indians, rightful owners of the land and the kil called Aquasing, called by us the Viskil [Fishkill]. This land begins on the north side of the Viskil at the boundary of trees. These sell to Henderick ten Eyck all of this [ ] land with the Viskil to the other kils until Meyndert Harmensz's property. This aforesaid land runs eastward until the Valkill of Meyndert Harmensz and westward to Hutsons River. As acknowledgment of the truth they have signed this,

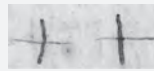
This is the mark of Minsam [LS]



This is the mark of Willem [LS]



This is the mark of Matasiwanck [LS]



This is the mark of Quagan [LS]



This is the mark of Rapaweas [LS]



This has been signed and sealed in the presence of Meyndert Harmense and his wife and conveyed by the Indians to Henderick ten Eyck, as witnesses,  
Meyndert Harmensz  
Lenne Meynders

This is the amount that has to be paid:  
 5 kettles  
 Coverlets 4 and 8 shirts  
 Blankets 4 and 8 pair of stockings  
 Duffel cloth 4  
 Gunpowder 12 lb.  
 Lead 25 staves  
 Guns 4  
 Sewant [wampum] 300 guilders of black and white  
 Axes 12  
 Knives 20  
 Tobacco 2 rolls  
 Adzes 12  
 1 barrel of cider  
 1 half barrel of good beer  
 2 hats  
 1 ancker of rum [10.128 gallons]  
 2 nice jackets  
 2 shirts, nice  
 2 pair of stockings [ ]

[In English:]

New Y[ ]  
 they appeared before me [ ] Cortland one off the  
 justices of the Supream Court off this Province Mijndert Harmensz  
 and Helena Harmensz and being swarne upon the holy Evangelist  
 said, Thatt they ware witnesses to the within deed, and saw the Indians  
 therein named, seigne seal and deliver the same as their act & deed  
 N York 1696 Sworne before me  
 Entered upon re[ ] in the book of hyper S v: Cortlandt  
 wart surveys deeds pr pag 62 Exmed pr David Jamison secry.

turn, is listed as a son of the deceased Sackoenemack of Dutchess County. The individual identified as “Aaron,” the father of Jacob Aaron, may be a reference to Aaron Nimham, a man reported along with Daniel Nimham in land records at Stockbridge and believed to be a younger sibling (Frazier, 1992: 112).

Information from the 1764 letter to Samuel Monroe implies that Daniel Nimham and his brothers are grandsons of Sackoenemack. Daniel is the only grandchild mentioned as heir, which by inference indicates his place in the line of succession. Other references pertaining to Sackoenemack occur in correspondence between interested parties in the land controversy and British Indian Superintendent Sir William Johnson. In these exchanges, including an appeal by visiting Wappinger tribesmen, he is identified in more personal terms as “Old Nimham,” “Old Capt. Nimham,” and in one instance specifically as “Nimham the Grandfather” (PWJ, 10: 493-495, 853-854; Colden Letter Books, 1: 247-248). In Dutchess County records compiled during this man’s life, he is identified only as “Nimham,” or under several slightly differing spellings of that name (Ninham, Nemham, and Minham). Reconstructing Daniel Nimham’s family tree begins with a consideration of this leader and his successor.

## Nimham the Grandfather

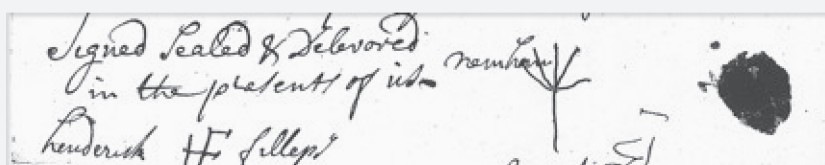
Daniel Nimham’s grandfather, Old Nimham, made his first known appearance in Dutchess County in 1696 as one of the “rightful owners of the land and the kil called Aquasing,” endorsing a deed to several thousand acres extending from the Hudson River to the Valkill or Fallkill Creek in the present Town of Hyde Park (FDR Presidential Library and Museum). The sale provided the foundation for an extensive land grant made the following year by the New York Council; known as the Great Nine Partners Patent, it encompassed almost 145,000 acres stretching from the Hudson River to the Connecticut border. Patent applicants of the “Nine Partners Company” with the consent of the council had deliberately enlarged the boundaries of the 1696 deed, spanning “from the [Hudson] river to the fall kill [Creek] at 2 mils,” into a land tract almost 20 miles wide (McDermott and Buck, 1979: Introduction, 5 ; NYCM-LP, 2: 234). Knowledge about the dimensions of this grant would be kept from the Indians for over thirty years.

He was next identified in 1712 signing a controversial deed to land sold previously along the Wappinger and Casper creeks at “a place [called] Matapan,” near the colonial township and county seat of Poughkeepsie (NYCM-LP, 5: 124). In this and the above-mentioned deed, he is listed as the principal signer and noted by a unique mark connecting both of these events to the same individual (Figure 1). Comparisons of Old Nimham’s signatures with one made by his successor

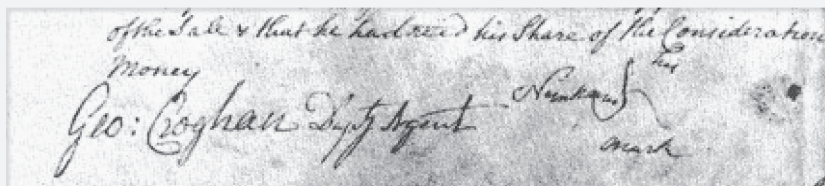
Figure 1 (A/B)  
Signatures made by Old Nimham on Indian land deeds in Dutchess County.



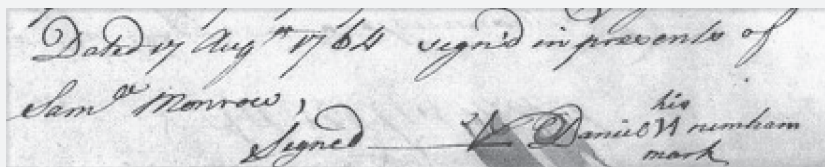
1696 deed to the Aquasing (or Crum Elbow) tract in the present Town of Hyde Park (courtesy FDR American Heritage Center Museum, author's photo).



1712 deed to the Matapan tract in the present Towns of Poughkeepsie and Wappinger (NYCM-LP, 5: 124). The depiction of the stick-figure arm and splayed hand shown in both documents (next to his names written in Dutch and English script respectively) is similar to those found in pictographic rock art that have been interpreted as images associated with shamanism (Shirley Dunn, 2005, "Echoes of Rock Art in Native American Objects and Pictographic Signatures." Paper presented at the sixth annual Algonquian seminar, Native American Institute of the Hudson River Valley).



Signature of "Nimham the Eldest & Principal Chief of the Wappingers or Opings" on a 1758 Munsee Indian deed to lands in northern New Jersey (Brawer, et al., 1983: 65).



Signature of Daniel Nimham on a 1764 "Advertismen" of the Wappinger land claims in Dutchess County (Kempe Papers, Court Case Records, Box 10, Folder 9, courtesy New York Historical Society).





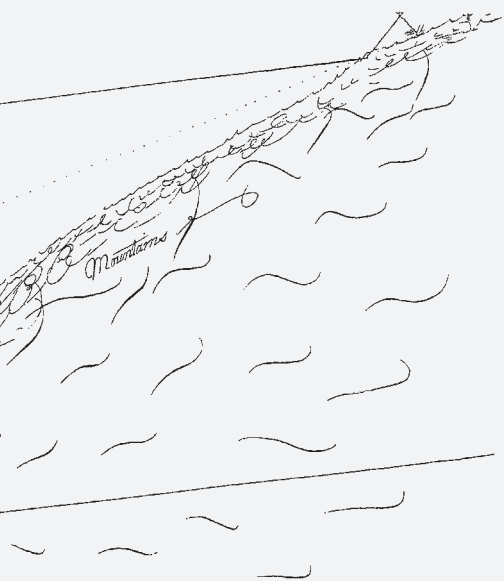


Figure 2

Undated survey map, north line of the Hudson Highlands in Dutchess County made by John Alsop (Sr.). “Minham’s” wigwams and the houses of early settlers (Jacobus Swartout, Johannes Terboss and Johannes Buys) at “Weikopieh” (present-day Wiccopee) are depicted at center. The dotted line running from the lower-left to the upper-right corner of the map measures sixteen miles from the Hudson River to the top of the highland mountains, determined in 1721 by New York officials to equal the distance of “four Houers going into the woods” as described in the 1683 Rombout/Verplank purchase from the Wappinger Indians. The tribe had disputed the extent of land conveyed in the purchase and received compensation and assurances of protection to their remaining rights. The East Line at the bottom of the map marks the southern boundary of the Rombout Patent. Philipse Upper or Highland Patent lay below this boundary line (Philipse-Governor Family Papers, P18: #99, courtesy Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York. Scan from photocopy of map, digitally enhanced by author).

Creek, where he and his sons One Shake and a younger sibling lived (Colden Letter Books, 1: 247-248; NYCM-CP, 63: 143; PGP, P18: #99; PWJ, 10: 493-495).

In the decades following the Rombout land controversy, records produced by Dutchess County officials make several references listing the expenditure of presents (both goods and currency) made “to Nimham a Sachem & other Indians” (BSDC, 1911: 52, 211, 257). These repeated disbursements to the tribe, part of the process of “Renewing articquils [sic] of Peace with them as Yearly,” (BSDC, 1911: 122) were probably an outgrowth of the provincial conferences conducted during the earlier land dispute. Such mandated treaty renewals provided a forum for natives and settlers to air grievances. County administrative records noting the distribution of gifts to the Indians, including periodic payments of wolf bounties to named individual tribesmen, document a continual Wappinger presence in the region during the first half of the century.

Old Nimham made a final appearance in the deed record in 1730. Identified as one of the “Principal Sachemache and Proprietors” of the tribe, he was listed among the signers conveying lands incorporated decades earlier as part of the Great Nine Partners Patent, but not yet purchased from the Indians. Learning

about the dimensions of the provincial grant after landowners' attempts to divide and settle the un-purchased lands, the tribe demanded compensation. Native leaders, represented by Old Nimham and another principal sachem named Acgans (both signers to the original 1696 Indian conveyance), "insisted to be paid for the bulck of the land according to the [1697] Patten" and received trade goods and currency totaling 150 English pounds for endorsing a "new deed" to their remaining rights (McDermott and Buck, 1979: 4-5, 109-112).

Old Nimham was last mentioned during his lifetime in 1744 by newly arrived Moravian missionaries to Dutchess County, who identified him as "King Nimham" of the Highland Indians and as a sorcerer (i.e., shaman) forbidding his people to attend Christian meetings (MOA, Box 112, Folder 2: # 3, May 21). Old Nimham and Acgans are last identified in records together during the 1767 trial, where they are mentioned in the New York Council's verdict on the Wappinger claim noting that prior to Daniel Nimham's leadership, the disputed lands near "Wickapee ... were owned by some other principal Sachems, Two of whom died on them many years ago, and a third, with some others, removed to [beyond] Delaware [River]" (NYECM, 26: 85-89). The third sachem mentioned by the council appears to be a reference to Daniel Nimham's father. The verdict points to the tribes' removal to the frontier in the mid-eighteenth century.

## Nimham the Father

Far less is known about the activities of Daniel Nimham's father in Dutchess County. Most references pertaining to this man mention him in the context of events relating to the Seven Years War between England and France, where he is noted as the expatriate leader of the "Wapings or Wapinger Indians" living on the upper Susquehanna River, far from their ancestral homeland (MPCP, 8: 176, 217; Grumet, 1992: 86-87). Like his predecessor, he is most often identified in records simply as "Nimham" or under several variations of that name (Nimhaon, Nimeham, and Nemeham). Documents mentioning this man also include a known alias, "Nuntian" or "Nunetiam," which help distinguish him from references associated with Old Nimham or Sackoenemack (MPCP, 8: 667-669).

In treaty conferences with New Jersey and Pennsylvania officials in 1758 and 1761, he was recognized as "Nimham the Eldest & Principal Chief of the Wappengers or Opings" (Brawer, et al., 1983: 65). The ethnic term Opings, including Fishkill Indians and occasional references to generic "Mohickanders or River Indians," are all names synonymous with the Wappingers in records describing this group in the eighteenth century (NYCD, 7: 159). His identification as the chief elder of the tribe suggests he may in fact be the eldest of Old Nimham's "two

Sons,” the individual nicknamed One Shake during the earlier mentioned land dispute with Rombout Patent proprietors.

References to individuals named Henry Nimham and Coleus Nimham, the only such family members reported as living on the Susquehanna during the Seven Years War, could also pertain to the two sons of Old Nimham. Henry Nimham, “a Fishkill Indian,” was identified in 1756 at the Munsee town of Tioga on the Susquehanna River, in the company of “Stephen [Cowenham?] of the Fishkill” and another man called Cornelius (Colden Papers, 5: 95-96). All were noted as having spoken both English and Dutch.

Coleus (possibly a misspelling of Cornelius) is perhaps the more likely of the two men to have been Daniel’s father. A Stockbridge Indian delegation sent to Sir William Johnson in 1763 reported that: “As Many of the Mohicander Indians are gone from these parts Some years ago to live along the Susquehana & its Branches, wh<sup>h</sup>, gives their friends here much concern ... We therefore Father earnestly request You will call them all from thence, [and] to call Coleus Nimham in particular & whoever likes to come [back] with him” (PWJ, 10: 930-932). Earlier references by Moravian missionaries in Connecticut in 1751 to a family leader named “Nuntian” and the “Nimham brothers” may also refer to this man and events associated with his generation before the tribes’ removal from Dutchess County (Grumet, 1992: 96, n.29; Frazier, 1992: 89, 258, n.22).

During the above treaty conferences held at Easton and Bushkill, Pennsylvania, Nimham’s authority as chief of the “Wapinger Indians Called the River Indians” was acknowledged by the presentation of “a Short broad Belt of White Wampum, having in the Center two Hearts of a reddish Colour, and in Figures, 1745, wrote after the following Manner, 17 © © 45.” New Jersey and Pennsylvania officials noted “the [Peace] belt was given [to] them by the Government of New York, and represented their Union” (MPCP, 8: 217-218; 667-670). The wampum belt displayed, and an accompanying certificate of assurance from New York Governor George Clinton, which Nimham described as his “Commission,” likely refer to events recorded by the Colonial Council in the winter of 1745 to 1746 and approximate the time of his selection as sachem.

New York agents visiting with Munsee Indians during King George’s War in December 1745 reported to the Council that an unnamed group among them said “They had lost their Sachim, and as they Consist of two Tribes [or clans] Vizt the Wolves and Turkeys, they were then debating of which Tribe a Sachim should be chosen to govern the Whole.” The newly chosen sachem and other chief men of the group met again with the agents in January, when they exchanged wampum belts “to renew their Covenant Chain” alliance with the English (NYECM, 21:

71-72; NYCD, 6: 649). Regrettably, the Indian agents never identified the new leader's band affiliation or his associations with either the wolf or turkey clans. Later information provided by Daniel Nimham in an "Advertisement" of his claims in Dutchess County notes that his ancestors had only sold "about Six thousand Acres of their land in the County exclusive of what was own'd by the Turkey Indians" (Kempe Papers: Box 10, Folder 9, August 17, 1764, NYHS). Such a statement implies that the man believed to be Daniel Nimham's father was possibly a member of the wolf clan.

The Wapping or Oping chief Nimham might also be one of the unnamed Indians mentioned in a letter from Sir William Johnson on May 28, 1756, to "the Magistrates of the Precinct of Fish Kilns" in Dutchess County. Johnson informed these officials that:

"The River Indians whose families are at Fish Kilns, have had a Meeting with the Mohawk Indians, and it is agreed that they Shall remove and live with the Mohawks; Two of those Indians are going down to fetch up their Women Children &c<sup>a</sup>: and I send an Interpreter with them; as the Removal of these Indians and their incorporation with the Mohawks is an Affair that will be I hope of happy Consequence towards the public Tranquility and [at] this juncture I must desire you will give all Assistance in your Power to the Indians who are going down, and take Care that no just Cause of Dissatisfaction be given to them." (PWJ, 2: 477-478)

Johnson mentioned this group again during a conference at Fort Johnson on July 9, when he noted the presence of "the Mohikander or River Indians who arrived during his absence, and were sent for the 28 may last ... with their wives and children they amounted to 196 Souls." The spokesman of the group thanked Johnson for providing them safe conduct to his home and stated "we found no obstructions in our way but the road was smooth and pleasant" (NYCD, 7:152-153, 159). Sadly, this speaker and his companion were not named. Years after this event, during the already mentioned treaty conferences, provincial officials reported that the Wapping chief Nimham had received a second certificate of assurance sometime in 1756 from then-Governor Charles Hardy, which was displayed as an additional token of his authority. The certificate, "written in parchment," was likely given to him on July 19 at a meeting in Albany with "Some Sachems and Warriors of the Six Nations [Iroquois], and of the River Indians who attended Sir William Johnson to this City, having desired to see Major General Abercrombie and Sir Charles Hardy" (MPCP, 8: 217, 669; NYCD, 7: 160).

The contingent of "Indians & their Familys from the Fish Kills" (PWJ, 2: 615,

624) and other Hudson valley groups, including Mohicans proper from Albany County and Esopus tribesmen from the Kingston area who had arrived earlier that spring, were settled by Sir William Johnson on the Susquehanna River, where he gave them supplies and provisions to establish new homes. Johnson's efforts among River Indian peoples in 1756 were an attempt to supplement British Indian allies for upcoming campaigns against the French in New York (Dunn, 2005: 62-65). Later, Iroquois sachems and allied Conoy and Nanticoke Indians living on the Susquehanna informed colonial officials "that the chiefs of the Mohickons & Opies [or "Wapings"] have settled with the Six Nations, at a place called Chenango [or Otsiningo], where you may always find them, if you should have occasion to speak to them" (MPCP, 8: 655-656).

During the 1761 treaty conference, "Nimeham [or Nuntian/Nunetiam] Chief of the Opies" and "Good Tomach [Guttamaack] one of the Chiefs of the Mohickons" told Pennsylvanian officials of plans to settle with the Delaware leader Teedyuscung in the Wyoming Valley (MPCP, 8: 667-669). (Teedyuscung had earlier served as a spokesman for Wappinger Indians at the 1758 Easton conference and had once again befriended the tribe.) The planned move by Wappinger and Mohican families as part of a gradual exodus of some previously settled groups from the Six Nations' territory near the end of the French and Indian Wars. He was last mentioned in person at Easton, on June 22, 1762, as Nemeham, one of the sachems of the "Mohiccons and Opings" signing a petition by Teedyuscung demanding a written account of discussions over past Pennsylvania land policies towards the Delawares and Munsees (PWJ, 3: 762-771).

Before Daniel Nimham's land claim in 1762, there is little evidence linking his father with Indian land affairs in Dutchess County. A 1765 deposition by Fishkill resident Jacobus Terboss, judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the county and a legal consultant to Daniel and other tribesmen, states:

"that he has always from his youth, been well acquainted with the bigger part of said tribe, and conversant in most of their affairs, as he has always lived near them, (even as it were among them) and that, about thirty-eight years ago, Mr. Adolph Philipse [proprietor of the Upper or Highland Patent], came up into that country, and that he then heard the then Sachem, viz. The father of the present Sachem, tell the said Mr. Philipse, that he understood he had got a patent of that tract of land, (meaning the land now in controversy) but that he never had bought the Same." (Anonymous, Geographic-Historical Narrative, 1768: 31-32; see also NYECM, 26: 83, deposition dated 20 August)

In sworn testimony, Daniel Nimham, reported that his father was a recipient of lands granted by the tribe in the Rombout (or Fishkill) Precinct. Further information about these tracts and the claims of Wappinger families before their removal in 1756 is clarified in Daniel Nimham's initial attempt to restore native rights in the county.

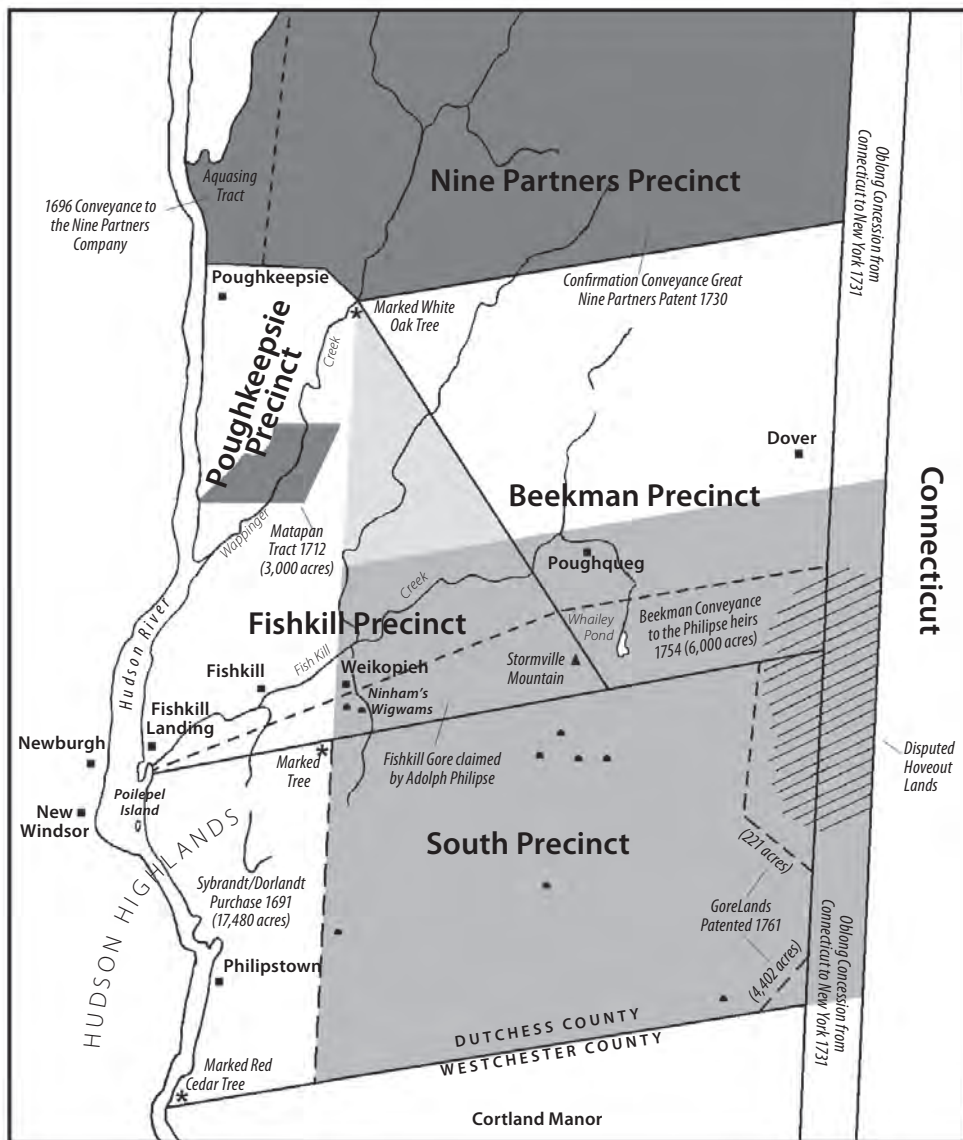
## The 1762 Land Claim

Daniel Nimham made his first official claims to Wappinger lands on July 28, 1762, when he appeared before acting Governor Robert Monckton at Fort George in New York City. Arriving without legal counsel, he was "laying Claim to Lands near the Fish Kill [Creek] in Dutchess County, formerly granted by Patent to Adolph Philipse ...and to other Lands formerly granted [by Patent] to [Francis] Rumbout [sic] and Company" (NYECM, 25: 454). The Rombout Patent and Philipse Upper Patent (incorporated in 1685 and 1697, respectively) were, at the time, organized under the jurisdictional divisions of the Fishkill and South precincts (Figure 3). Created in 1737, these precincts largely followed the boundaries of the original patent grants. However, a parallel tract of land lying along the west bank of Wappinger Creek, a partition of the Rombout Patent, fell under the jurisdiction of the Poughkeepsie Precinct after the re-division of the county from an earlier system of wards (McDermott, 1986: 3).

Historians investigating the Wappinger land controversy note that prior to 1762 the tribe "had remained silent" concerning their rights and were only spurred to action by a proclamation from the King of England enacted to protect Indians from excessive land grants; or, moreover, unduly credit settlers like Samuel Monroe "for inducing" them to pursue the claims (Nammack, 1969: 72-73; Kim, 1978: 376-377). While the Wappingers were almost certainly encouraged by the King's proclamation, records indicate that this was not the first time they had raised concerns over their lands in recent memory. References to letters of attorney to Daniel Nimham from members of the tribe entered as evidence during the 1767 trial and dated July 3, 1758, confirm they had actually begun efforts several years earlier. The two letters signed by Hendrick Wamash (or Waumaue), Mehloous, and other named family leaders (Arie Sauck, Out Quamos, and John Backto) granted Nimham legal powers "respecting their Lands at Wickapee &c.," and other "Lands in the Province of New York" (NYECM, 26: 82-83).

A month after Daniel Nimham's appearance before Governor Monckton, Catharyna Brett, daughter and heir of Francis Rombout, wrote to Sir William Johnson. She reported that she had already met with Nimham, who claimed he was being "Kept Out of his Right" to lands reserved for "Old Nimham and two of

Figure 3  
Wappinger Land Controversy in Colonial Dutchess County



- Land in the Fishkill Precinct Claimed by Daniel Nimham in 1762
- Lands in Controversy Claimed by Daniel Nimham in 1767
- Land Transfers Involving Nimham the Grandfather
- Indian Wigwam Occupied to 1756
- Colonial Town or Hamlet
- Boundary Markers Noted in Wappinger Deeds



his Sons" (PWJ, 10: 493-495). Brett further revealed that the meeting had taken place "About a Year Ago... And I told him if the Whites Owed him Any thing by Promise he might Get it if he Could, I have Nothing to do with it, but from that time forward he Should make no Demands there."

The above references show that the tribe was not complacent prior to the 1762 land claim. Daniel Nimham's appearance before the governor without legal counsel also shows that he was following an Indian agenda reminiscent of Old Nimham's actions during earlier land disputes with the Rombout and Great Nine Partner proprietors. In this regard, he was following native protocol where Indian leaders preferred to settle disputes directly with provincial officials as opposed to litigation in open court (Trelease, 1960: 186). It was only after the Colonial Council's inaction on the claim that Nimham began actively seeking support from nearby settlers, efforts that would lead to a trial and ultimately a personal appeal to the King of England.

As a result of Nimham's action before the New York Council, Governor Monckton ordered the colony's attorney general, John Tabor Kempe, to examine his claims and what papers he could produce to support them. The governor promised that after receiving Nimham's claims in writing he would take the matter into consideration. The ensuing report is a unique document relating to the study of Indian history. Testimony provided by Nimham includes detailed descriptions of the lands claimed by the tribe and the rights inherited by specific family members. The rarely cited document, unsigned and undated, is a draft of Kempe's report. Kempe presented the council with an official report on August 2, 1762 (Chalmers Papers-NYPL, II: 26).

Historians citing the official report wrongly interpret the joint land dispute described, inferring that it concentrates solely on either of the Indians' claims against the Rombout Patent or Philipse Patent proprietors separately (Kim, 1978: 377, n.88; Mark, 1940: 131-132, n.5). Furthermore, these authors overlook significant kinship data found in both the official report and the draft copy. While the documents essentially contain the same information, they also include some slightly differing content in a few passages. The amount of geographic and kinship information elicited by Kempe's examination was not duplicated in the records compiled during later trials. Nimham's testimony therefore is probably the closest representation approaching his voice on these matters.

## Claims in the South Precinct

Nimham's testimony in the first section of the draft report details Wappinger claims against the proprietary heirs of the Philipse family in the South Precinct.

The individuals identified in this section are his maternal relatives. In his description of tribal claims here, Nimham also provides the Indian place names for several boundary areas on the Hudson River mentioned in the letters patent to Adolph Philipse (PGP, P14: #61). These names are not included in the letters patent or in either of the two Indian deeds associated with this grant made in 1691 and 1702 (PGP, P14: #59, #56), where only the English equivalents are given. Other Indian place names listed and located along the upper Peekskill (or Annsville) Creek, “cropped” or transected by the patent’s southern boundary line, are not mentioned at all in the above land records (note: text in brackets crossed out in original document).

“In pursuance of your Excellencys Order in Council of 28th of July last: I have examined Daniel Nimham, and his Papers relating to [the Complaint made by him] his Claim to certain Lands near the Fish kill, [and of certain other lands] in Dutchess County formerly granted by Patent to Adolph Philipse now in the Possession of the Heirs of Col. Fredrick Philipse deceased, and to other Lands formerly granted to Rumbout & Company, now in the possession of Mrs. Brett. His Claim to the first of these Tracts he thus states—Awansous a Wappingoe Indian Grandfather to the Complainant on the mother’s side, was possessed of a certain Tract of Land lying on the East side of Hudson’s River, beginning at the mouth of the Fish kills called in the Indian language Mataowawmungh thence running down Hudsons River southerly to Anthony’s Nose called in the [Indian] same language Wacoghquaneek, and Eastward into the woods as far as the Oblong cropping the Peeks kill. Awansous sold to Adolph Philipse the Low Lands on that Part of the Peeks kill contained within this Tract, and also a pine swamp containing [about six] a few Acres called Kichtondacongh and a piece of low Land lying Southeasterly from Kichtondacongh called Paukeminshingh, [and no more] but no up Lands, [they as A. Philipse not buying them] they [not] being looked on that Time as of no worth. That Adolph Philipse Heirs claim & have possessed themselves of the whole of Awansous Rights under the Kings Grant, that no more than what is abovementioned was purchased from Awansous. Awansous died leaving behind him two Sons Tawanout otherwise called John Van Gilder and Sancoolakheekhing, to whom the Body of the Nation solemnly confirmed their Fathers Land according to the Custom of their Nation at a publick Toast & sacrifice [sealing their Grant]. Sancoolakheekhing Died without any Children and on his Death the Nation confirmed the whole of the Lands to [Tawanout] John Van Gilder who was Uncle to the Complainant, being his Mothers Brother. & he [John

Van Gilder in the year of the Defeat at Ticonderoga] hath since given the whole of these Lands to the complainant..." (John Tabor Kempe Papers-NYHS: Box 10, Folder 9, "State of Nimham's Case").

## Claims in the Fishkill Precinct

Nimham's testimony continues with tribal claims against Catharyna Brett of the Fishkill Precinct. The individuals identified in this section of the draft report are his paternal relatives. Although not stated in the testimony, Wappinger claims in the Fishkill Precinct included other complaints against the heirs of Francis Rombout's two partners, Gulian Verplanck and Stephanus van Cortlandt. These men's heirs, along with Catharyna Brett, were implicated in later appeals made by Hendrick Wamash to Sir William Johnson and New York Lieutenant Governor Cadwallader Colden in 1763 (PWJ, 10: 853-854; Colden Letter Books, 1: 247-248). Wamash, who reported that the settlers of Fishkill and Poughkeepsie owed the tribe for land in several places, included another claim not cited in the attorney general's report against Henry Beekman Jr., owner of the neighboring back-lots patent along the Connecticut border.

Descriptions of tribal claims in this section of the draft report also include additional native place names not mentioned in the provincial land grant or 1683 Indian deed associated with the Rombout Patent (NYBP, 5: 206-210, 72-75). One of these Pasakesung, is a likely spelling variant of Pakakcincq (or Pooghkepesingh), a name originally associated with other seventeenth-century Wappinger land sales in the present City and Town of Poughkeepsie (ERA, 2: 84-85; NYCD, 13: 571). Nimham's description locating Pasakesung in relation to a large white oak tree—a place noted as a boundary marker in the 1730 Indian deed to the Nine Partners Company that bordered both the Rombout Patent and Poughkeepsie lands—defines the northern limits of Wappinger claims in the Fishkill Precinct. A depiction confirming the location of the white oak tree at a point where the above land tracts meet appears on the 1779 Sauthier Map illustrating the boundaries of patent grants in New York (DHSNY, 1). The top of the high mountains mentioned by Nimham as the eastern bounds of the claim refers to an imprecise point of land near present-day Stormville Mountain, located in the Town of East Fishkill.

The dimensions of the tract delineated by Nimham shows that the tribal claim here included nearly half of the lands in the Fishkill Precinct. However, his account that the tract contained about 1,200 acres is not consistent with the larger area he describes, a land area encompassing many times that acreage. Nimham might have misspoken in his testimony and may have been unaware of

the total acreage involved with the claim. Or perhaps he was referring only to the acres of improved lands in and around Weikopieh reserved during the 1721 land dispute. His statement that 200 out of the 1,200 acres was sold to Theodorus van Wyck, one of two brothers settling in the Town of Fishkill in the 1730s near the reserved lands at “Weakepey” (BSDC, 1911: 155), lends support to the latter interpretation. Unfortunately, Nimham provides no date in his testimony for when his father received land in the Fishkill Precinct, but the events he describes probably took place following the elder Nimham’s selection as sachem in 1745/46:

...Danl. Nimham states his claim to the Lands in Rumbout Precinct as follows. The Indian Nation the Wapingoes, gave to the Father of the Complainant, whose name was Nimham, and who was their speaker a Tract of Land in Rumbout Precinct, containing about Twelve hundred acres [bounded to the] extending North [by] as far as a large white Oak Tree marked near a place called Coghhapaens, and Pasakesung, and bounded to the South by a small [creek] stream of water running into Weekapee Brook, to the west by Weekapee Brook, and to the East by the Top of the high Mountains. Nimham the Father of the Complainant gave half of the Lands to Sack one of his sons & Qua Wamaus his Cousin—The other half to Wapenaus another of his Cousins. Sack and Wapenaus have leased out the whole for Ninety Nine years, all but two hundred acres which Mrs. Brett has sold to Theodorus Van Wyck, [and] that Mrs. Brett claims the whole of the Twelve hundred acres, notwithstanding when Mr. Rumbout bought Rumbout Precinct from the Wapingoes, this Tract was reserved for the Indians and not sold, which the Complainant says Mrs. Brett well knows having confirmed that Reservation, and procured from the Father of the Complainant a promise that whenever it was sold she should have the first offer, but now has warned the Tenants of the Indians from paying them the rent, on which account they refuse [payment] to pay them their rent. Wapenaus is dead, having given his Right to these Lands to John Packto, Old Sack gave his Right to these lands to Arie Sack his Son and old Quamaus gave [part of] his Right to part of these Lands to Hendrick Quamaus his Son—and this the Complainant says have given all his Right to him which is confirmed by Mehloss the son of Wapenaus, as a proof of which he handed me some Writings, which on perusal appear to be only Powers of Attorney to gather the Rents of this Land let by Sack—On my observing this to him he says it was the Intent by those writings to pass the Land to him, & it is a mistake in the Drawer of the writings ...

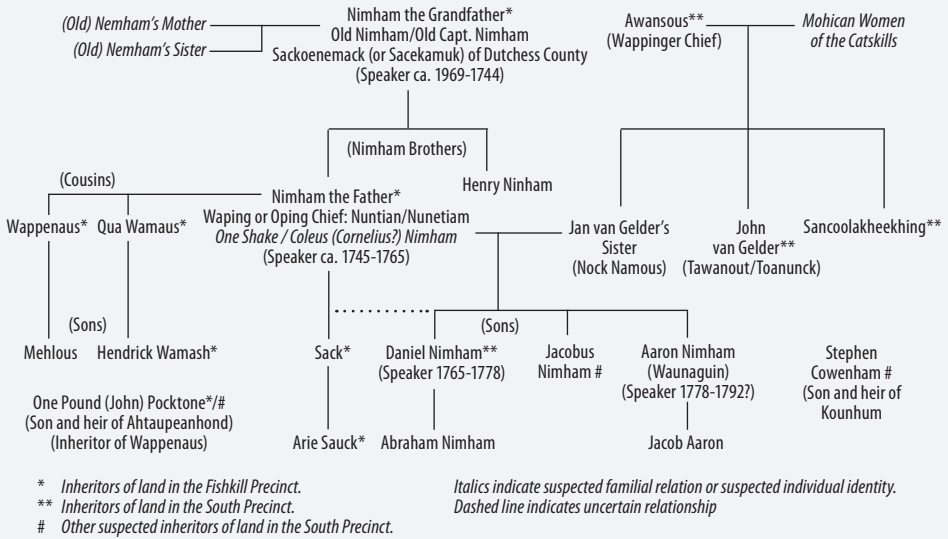
John Kempe's examination of the Wappinger claims concludes with observations he intended to present to the governor. Kempe took issue with the boundary descriptions provided by Nimham and those boundaries mentioned in 1718 document granting land rights to members of the tribe. In his official report to the council, Kempe offered no other legal opinions regarding the claims, but did note Nimham's sentiments that the granting of lands in the Rombout and Philipse Patents "not purchased" from the tribe was "contrary to the public Faith and the Treaties subsisting between this Government & his Nation, and to the most solemn assurances repeatedly given them of Protection in their just Rights" (Chalmers Papers-NYPL, II: 26). One of the recipients listed in the 1718 land grant, an Indian named Sasckamuk (or Sacekamuk), is likely a reference to Daniel Nimham's grandfather, Sackoenemack or Old Nimham, and places this event during his tenure as spokesman of the tribe. The tribal grant suggests that lands later acquired by Nimham the father in the Fishkill Precinct had originally belonged to Sackoenemack and his generation's kin-group.

...I must observe to your Excellency that the above Description of the Lands now claimed by Daniel Nimham [do] seems not to agree with the [bounds] Description of the Lands [admitted] granted by the Indians to John Van Gilder & an Indian named Sasckamuk [the Complainant had a Right in contained in] by an Instrument [under the hands of several Indians] bearing Date 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept. 1718, [the land Description in that Instrument] the Indian Names Widely differing, [I observed this to] the Complainant, [who alledges] accounts for it by alleging it to have happened by the Ignorance of the Drawer of the Deed or the Transcriber of the Copy shown me, and the Difficulty of spelling [the] Indian [Names] words correctly. He complains greatly of the Injury sustained by him in being deprived of his Lands by Mr. Philipse, and of his Rents & Lands by Mrs. Brett, that he is poor & destitute of subsistence, and unable to obtain Redress for himself on that account and because he imagines the whole of both the Tracts he complains of is contained in the respective Patents of Adolph Philips, & of the Rumbout Precinct, which will effectively cut off his claim in an English Court of Justice by the policy of the Constitution.

## Kinship, Descent and Inheritance

The kinship data from Daniel Nimham's testimony and other eighteenth-century documents referencing Wappinger kin relations are catalogued in the attached appendix. Kinship associations identifying Nimham's relatives and their inheritance rights to lands in Dutchess County are depicted in Figure 4. Most of the kin

Figure 4  
Daniel Nimham's Family Tree



relations noted identify the sons of particular men—individuals who represent the generational leaders of family kin-groups and their heirs. Eleven such incidents are recorded. Other kin relations noted include references to sisters, brothers, and cousins, many of whom are the immediate relatives of Nimham the father. Kinship references by Daniel Nimham to his grandfather on his mother's side and his uncle (mother's brother) are terms considered important to Indian people's reckoning descent along maternal lines (Grumet, 1990: 21-22).

While the numbers of Wappinger leaders and their sons identified in records is historically significant, the documents themselves give no indication whether these associations reflect European or native concepts of kinship. In most cases reporting such associations, it is not known if the relationship between fathers and sons is biological or if the fathers of these men are maternal uncles, or social fathers—individuals from whom inheritance rights are passed in matriarchal societies to a sister's children.

However, Daniel Nimham's identification of Awansous as his maternal grandfather implies that his relations with his father and Old Nimham were physiological. This tends to support the statement in the 1765 testimonial cited earlier that Nimham had inherited tribal leadership through a direct (i.e., paternal) line of succession. The observation suggests that many of the father and son relationships identified by Nimham could be biological and that some of these men therefore inherited land rights along paternal lines. In contrast, references to

the land rights of his grandfather and uncle “on the mother’s side” reveals aspects of matrilineal descent and bilateral inheritance among Wappingers and their Mohican neighbors.

Daniel Nimham’s maternal grandfather Awansous seems to be the same man identified in the 1765 testimonial as Awanganwrgk, one of the “then Indian Chiefs of the said tribe of Wappingers” who were reported as having sold land in Dutchess County near the end of the seventeenth century. The same name appears on the first of the two Indian deeds associated with the Philipse Patent listing grantors selling territory in the Highlands. He first appeared in records in 1680, as the “Indian named Awannis,” an individual noted by Albany officials as “having authority” among Highland Indian signers conveying land in Poughkeepsie, the first native land transfer made there (ERA, 2: 84-85).

The Wappinger chief Awansous is also likely the same man identified in 1697 and 1698, under the names Awannighqaet or Awaannaghqat, appearing on lists of Mohican individuals found in the account books of Albany fur trader Evert Wendell (Waterman, 2009: 2, 8). He is last mentioned in these accounts in 1707, when Wendell recorded transactions with an Indian man named Heerij who “hout bij [lives by or with] Awanwaghquat’s people” (Waterman, 2009: 15). The notation indicates that Awansous, although listed among Mohicans visiting Wendell’s trading post, was not native to the Albany region and was not ethnically Mohican.

The most remarkable kinship association noted by Nimham is his relation to his uncle (mother’s brother) Tawanout, or John Van Gelder, a man reported in all other primary accounts as a Mohican Indian. Late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century histories mentioning John van Gelder describe him as a man of mixed white and Indian ancestry living in Sheffield, Massachusetts, who was raised by Dutch foster parents in nearby Dutchess County. One source notes that as a youth he was known by the name Konkapot, suggesting that John had familial ties with a well-known Mohican sachem originally from the Hudson Valley. However, many of these earlier traditions based on town and county folklore are largely conjectural and their validity is questioned by present authors (Dunn, 2000: 169; Winchell, 2009: 128).

More definitive references qualifying Van Gelder’s Indian and Mohican ethnicity are found in depositions filed ten years after his death in 1768, during provincial litigation disputing the lower boundaries of Rensselaerswyck manor in colonial Albany County. The deponents (including one of Van Gelder’s sons) reported he was an Indian man named Toanunck who was married to a white woman and lived on lands in the Taconic Mountains at present Egremont, west of Sheffield. One deponent further reported he believed John “belonged to the Catt’s



Kills" (Misc. Mss., Van Rensselaer-NYHS). The last statement strongly suggests that at some point Van Gelder's father, Awansous, had married a Mohican woman from the Catskill region. In the eyes of matrilineal peoples, this association would have made their son John entirely Mohican. Such an association was plainly expressed in a letter from Benjamin Kaukewenauhnaunt, the principal sachem at Stockbridge, who informed William Johnson in 1756 that the old man John Van Gelder was "one of our tribe" and "belongs to us" (PWJ, 9: 581-582)

Other references showing that John Van Gelder reckoned descent along maternal lines and followed matrilineal residence are contained in deeds recording his rights to land in Mohican territory. Van Gelder lived on reserved lands set aside in 1724 for the "Housatonack" or Stockbridge Indians in a sale establishing the colonial townships of Sheffield and Great Barrington, Massachusetts (Wright, 1905: 116-119). This Indian reserve ran west of Sheffield to the New York border. Van Gelder's participation as a signer among the twenty-one grantors listed in the deed entitled him to rights reserved for the native sellers living there.

John Van Gelder's rights to these lands were confirmed later in tribal grants made in 1737 and 1756. Indian grantors listed in the deeds gifted the lands "for the love and affection" they bore toward Van Gelder; no purchase price was recorded (Wright, 1905: 141-142, 155-157). The language used in both grants implies close interpersonal relations. The first grant endorsed by the three principal signers noted in the 1724 sale confirmed Van Gelder's rights to "One half of all the [reserved Indian] land from Sheffield West bounds To the foot of the ... Tauconnock Mountain[s]."

It is within the realm of possibility that John Van Gelder's mother could have been the sister of one of the three men listed in this document. Such an association would provide Van Gelder with a definite maternal connection to these lands. The principal signer to the grant, John Pophnehaunauwack (better known in other records by the Dutch nickname Konkapot) (Dunn, 2000: 170, 354), is a probable candidate and could have been his maternal uncle or social father. This interpretation lends some credence to the nineteenth-century source reporting that John Van Gelder was called Konkapot as a boy (Winchell, 2009: 128). Although no direct evidence has been located to verify such a relationship, the possibility of familial ties between the two men should not be entirely discounted.

The second tribal grant was signed by a women named Noch Namos, who described herself as a native "now of the Fishkills in Dutchess County ... [but] formerly of Housatunnnock." Noch Namos granted all of the reserved Indian lands in Sheffield to Van Gelder—lands that she claimed to be the "Sole and lawfull [sic] owner" of and which she held by an "Estate of Inheritance In fee Simple."

While it has been suggested that this women was possibly John Van Gelder's mother, this appears to be unlikely, as he was identified in other records from 1756 as an elderly man (Dunn, 2000: 187). It seems more plausible that this could be a reference to Van Gelder's sister (the daughter of Awansous), and therefore Daniel Nimham's mother. By inference from Nimham's testimony before the New York attorney general, John Van Gelder's sister would be the wife of Nimham the father, although Daniel Nimham never specifically qualifies a marital relationship in his account.

References to an Indian woman in 1721 and 1723 as a patron of an anonymous Dutch trader in Ulster County noted as "Jan Van Gelder's sister" also likely pertain to Daniel Nimham's mother and events occurring several years before his birth (Waterman and Smith, nd). The same trader also mentioned two other women in September of 1721 whom he simply describes as "Nemham[']s sister" and "His mother." The trader's entry coincides in time with the dated certificate given to Old Nimham by Governor Burnet on September 7, 1721. This implies that these women were associated with his generation—in other words, women who would have been prominent in Old Nimham's matrilineal kin-group.

In his testimony before the attorney general, Daniel Nimham clearly identifies himself as the recipient of land inherited from his mother's brother, John Van Gelder, in the South Precinct of Dutchess County. Nimham probably was not the only recipient of lands from his uncle here, given the number of individuals he identifies as inheritors of land in the Fishkill Precinct. Unfortunately, he names no one else as heirs. Later court records list Jacobus Nimham, Stephen Cowenham and, One Pound (or John) Pocktone, as the only other claimants to lands in the South Precinct (NYECM, 26: 5-6).

It also is apparent from Daniel Nimham's testimony that he was not a direct recipient of land from his father in the Fishkill Precinct. Another son named Sack and two other men, Qua Wamaus and Wappenaus, identified as cousins of Nimham the father, inherited these lands. Nimham's rights in the Fishkill Precinct as cited in John Kempe's report were based on letters of attorney granted to him by members of the tribe as their legal representative. The letters mentioned refer to those given to him in 1758 by Hendrick Wamash and Mehloos, the same men listed in the attorney general's report as the sons of his father's two cousins. Arie Sauck, a man noted in testimony as the son and heir of Sack, was also a participant to the earlier events.

This evidence shows that Daniel Nimham's rights in the South Precinct were inherited along maternal lines and that he more than likely viewed John Van Gelder as his social father. The maternal association explains Nimham's close

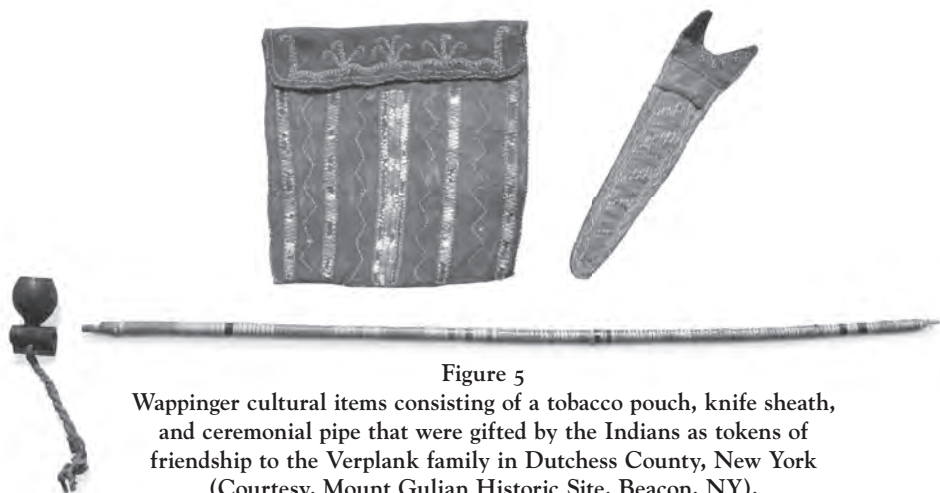


Figure 5  
Wappinger cultural items consisting of a tobacco pouch, knife sheath,  
and ceremonial pipe that were gifted by the Indians as tokens of  
friendship to the Verplank family in Dutchess County, New York  
(Courtesy, Mount Gulian Historic Site, Beacon, NY).

ties to Mohican Indians and his participation with leading tribal spokesmen in land sales and land claims in and around Stockbridge. Moreover, land records confirm the close relations between Nimham and his uncle's immediate family. In 1758, he and two women from Stockbridge, Rhoda Ponoant and Mary Fast Case, gifted additional Indian land west of Sheffield to one of John Van Gelder's sons (BC-MDD, Bk. 12: 134-135). Later in 1766, Nimham's brother Jacobus and several of John Van Gelder's children signed a letter of attorney "investing" him "with the Powers of a Sachem of the Wappinger tribe, and to act for them as to their claims to Lands whereon Encroachments had been made" (NYECM, 26: 83).

However, Nimham's testimony also reveals that John van Gelder had inherited land in the South Precinct directly from Awansous, based on the present evidence. This implies that Van Gelder was an inheritor of lands from both his father and mother's families in Wappinger and Mohican territories. The inference to bilateral inheritance bears marked similarities to a statement made by Nutimus, an eighteenth-century sachem of the Delawares who told Pennsylvania land agents that "His mother came from this side of the [Delaware] River & by her he had a Right here as he likewise had to some Land in the Jerseys which his father left him" (Grumet, 1992: 19).

Land rights in Dutchess County belonging to Wappenaus—one of the two cousins of Nimham the father—reveal other possible evidence of bilateral inheritance. Wappenaus (or Wappenas), a signer to the earlier 1730 Nine Partners deed, may have inherited lands in the Fishkill Precinct near the area noted in testimony as Pasakesung and Coghhapaens. In his account, Daniel Nimham states that Wappenaus granted his rights to John Pocktone, a man identified elsewhere as the son and heir of Ahtaupeanhond. Mehlous, the biological son of Wappenaus

mentioned in the attorney general's report, was not a direct recipient of land from his father in the Fishkill Precinct. The testimony suggests that John Pocktone, also reported as a claimant to lands in the South Precinct, was likely an inheritor of maternal and paternal rights in Wappinger territory.

Bilateral inheritance of land rights indicated in Daniel Nimham's testimony may reflect the process of acculturation resulting from over 100 years of contact and interaction with Europeans. Significant cultural changes among Indian peoples were evident at the time to colonial officials like Cadwallader Colden and William Johnson, men with considerable knowledge of native socio-political systems. Writing in 1750 about the Iroquois and the Mohawks particularly, Colden reported "This Nation indeed has laid aside many of its ancient Customs, and so likewise have the other Nations ... and have adopted many of ours; so that it is not easy now to distinguish their original and genuine Manners, from those which they have lately acquired" (Fenton, 1988: 147, 153-154). Johnson later reported similar observations, adding that the degrees of acculturation among "Indian Nations" differed appreciably between "the more remote Tribes & those Indns ... having been next to our settlements for sevl years" (DHSNY, 4: 431).

Determining degrees of culture change based on Daniel Nimham's testimony alone is no easier today. Although the kinship data he recites is extensive, it is not ethnographically complete. Information pertaining to the women and their relations who would have been prominent in the kin groups of the fathers and sons identified is not known. Nimham only includes such information for himself. The absence of such data makes more definitive conclusions about social change among the Wappingers and Mohicans difficult. Current documentation enables only a limited reconstruction of Daniel Nimham's family tree. Nonetheless, his testimony identifying his maternal and paternal relatives and the land rights of these individuals presents possible evidence of change and continuity in native social systems during the colonial period.

## Conclusion

Daniel Nimham's account before the New York Attorney General in 1762 provides a unique indigenous perspective on the Wappinger land claims in Dutchess County. The testimony provided highlights the Wappingers' many grievances over their land rights during the eighteenth century, despite repeated assurances to those rights made by colonial governors. Information in this and other documents substantiate tribal claims as an accurate record of past transgressions by various land patent holders in the county. Testimony by Daniel Nimham also provides important kinship data revealing the close interpersonal relations between

Wappinger and Mohican families, kinship associations with a longer time depth in the region than once thought. Other legal papers listed as evidence in the 1767 trial—as yet unlocated—hold the potential for discovering further information about Daniel Nimham and his extended family relations.

## Appendix: Documents Referencing Wappinger Kin Relations

August 1721 / 7 March 1723 (Indian Trade in Ulster County, New York, 1712-1729, Waterman and Smith, nd., unpublished manuscript: 22, 29)

-Jan van Gelder's sister: Identified by a Dutch trader as an Indian client with ongoing accounts  
September 1721 (Indian Trade in Ulster County, New York, 1712-1729, Waterman and Smith: 39)

-[Old?] Nemhams sister [and] His mother: Identified by a Dutch trader as Indian clients with ongoing accounts

9 March 1751 (Frazier, 1992: 89, 258, n.22)

-Nimham brothers: Native informants reporting to Moravian missionaries in Connecticut about recent events at Stockbridge, Massachusetts

28 July 1762? : Examination of Daniel Nimham by Attorney General John Tabor Kempe (John Tabor Kempe Papers-NYHS: Box 10, Folder 9, "State of Nimham's Case;" see also, Chalmers Papers-NYPL, II: 26, "Attorney General Kempe's Report Concerning Nimham the Indian," 2 August 1762)

-Awansous a Wappingoe Indian Grandfather to the Complainant [Daniel Nimham] on the mother's side, was possessed of a certain Tract of Land [in the South Precinct] lying on the East side of Hudson's River

-Awansous died leaving behind him two Sons Tawanout otherwise called John Van Gilder and Sancoolakheekhing, to whom the Body of the Nation solemnly confirmed their Fathers Land

-Sancoolakheekhing Died without any Children and on his Death the Nation confirmed the whole of the Lands to John Van Gilder who was Uncle to the Complainant, being his Mothers Brother. & he [John Van Gilder in the year of the (English) Defeat at Ticonderoga (1758)] hath since given the whole of these Lands to the complainant

-The Indian Nation the Wapingoes, gave to the Father of the Complainant, whose name was Nimham, and who was their speaker a Tract of Land in Rumbout [Fishkill] Precinct

-Nimham the Father of the Complainant gave half of the Lands to Sack one of his sons & Quamaus his Cousin—The other half to Wapenaus another of his Cousins

-Wapenaus is dead, having given his Right to these Lands to John Packto

-Old Sack gave his Right to these lands to Arie Sack his Son

-old Quamaus gave his Right to part of these Lands to Hendrick Quamaus his Son

-the Complainant says [they] have given all [their] Right to him [by letter of attorney, 1758] which is confirmed by Mehloss [or Mehlooss] the son of Wapenaus

26 August 1762: Letter from Catharyna (Rombout) Brett to Indian Superintendent Sir William Johnson (Papers of Sir William Johnson, 10: 493-495)

-Old Nimham and two of his Sons / Old Nimham has been Dead about Twelve Years but his Children might have Stayed on till this Day but his Oldest Son One Shake Came to me and Asked me Liberty to Sell the Improvement [at Wickapee &c.] to One Cap<sup>t</sup> Swartwout. I Opposed it at First and a Little after he Came Down Again with Seven or Eight more Indians for Liberty to Sell the Improvement, I Give him Leave to Sell y<sup>e</sup> Improvement, and he Sold it for Twenty Pound

20 September 1763 (Papers of Sir William Johnson, 10: 853-854)

-Hendrick Wamash with abt. A Dozen of his people came to Sir W<sup>m</sup> [Johnson] with a Complaint against M<sup>rs</sup>. Brett of the Fish Kills, Co<sup>ll</sup>. Beekman, Verplank, Cortland, & Phillips for that they had not paid his Ancestors viz<sup>t</sup>. old Cap<sup>t</sup>. Nimham &<sup>ca</sup>. for a Tract of Land near to y<sup>e</sup>. Fish Kills

8 October 1763: Letter from Lt. Governor Cadwallader Colden to Sir William Johnson (Colden Letter Books, 1: 247-248)

-the Indian Hendrick Wamash ... says that several people at Fishkill and Poughkepsy owe him for some pieces of Land in several places. I told him that near 40 years [1721] since the Indians of Fishkill and Wappingers were heard by Governor Burnet on a like complaint at the House of Mr. Haskol near the place since called New Windsor [in colonial Ulster County New York], that then everything was settled to the content of Nimham the Grandfather of this Man & of the other Indians

17 August 1764: Daniel Nimham's advertisement of Wappinger claims (John Tabor Kempe Papers-NYHS: Box 10, Folder 9)

-Whereas the Wappingers otherwise called River Indians, Natives of Dutchess County & province of New York since there submission, to the Crown of England [1664] have from the severall Governors to whom Application, has been made [1711?, 1721, 1745/46, 1756], Obtained assurances of protection while they behaved as loyall and dutifull subjects, And whereas they as a people or body have never forfeited there rights to such protection in the enjoyment of their native right & priveledges ... south of Brits and Bickmans Patent[s], nor made conveyance lo any, except about Six thousand Acres of their land in the County exclusive of what was own'd by the Turkey Indians

17 November 1764: Letter of attorney granting Samuel Monroe guardianship over Wappinger lands (John Tabor Kempe Papers-NYHS: Box 10, Folder 9)

-Stephen Kounhum Son and Heir of Kounhum of the High Lands in Dutchess County and Province of New York Deceased

-Daniel Nimham Son and Heir of Nimham the Son of Sackoenemack of Dutchess County aforesaid—also deceased

-one Pound [John] Pocktone of the County aforesaid Son and Heir of Ahtapeanhond Deceased

-Jacob Aaron Son of Aaron [Nimham?] and Jacobus Nimham Son of Nimham

October 1768: Deposition of Joseph van Gelder and others filed during provincial litigation disputing the lower boundaries of Rensselaerswyck Manor (Misc. Mss., Van Rensselaer-NYHS)

-his fathers name was John Van Gelder in Indian Toanunck

October 1768: Deposition of Timothy Woodbridge, Stockbridge Missionary (Misc. Mss., Van Rensselaer-NYHS)

-Joseph Van Gelder's family his Father an Indian his Mother a White Women

October 1768: Deposition of Richard Moore (Misc. Mss., Van Rensselaer-NYHS)

-Joseph Van Gelder lives at Egremont on this side of Howsitenack River to the Eastward of Tackannick Mountains ... He believes His father [John van Gelder] belonged to the Catt's Kills

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(MPCP): Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, from the Organization to the Termination of the Proprietary Government, 10 March 1683 to 27 September 1775. Microfilm Series, New York State Library.

(NYBP): New York Book of Patents and Deeds, Secretary of State. New York State Archives, Albany, New York.

(NYCM-CP): New York Colonial Manuscripts-Governor's Council Papers, Secretary of State. New York State Archives.

(NYCM-LP): New York Colonial Manuscripts-Indorsed Land Papers, Secretary of State. New York State Archives.

(NYECM): New York Executive Council Minutes 1668-1783, Secretary of State. New York State Archives.

(PGP): Philipse-Governor Family Papers. Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York City.

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Hudson River State Hospital Administration building

# An Asylum for Poughkeepsie

*James Regan*

*Science, aided by humanity, has dispelled ignorance, overcome prejudice, conquered superstition, and investigated the causes, character and curability of mental disease, and has gloriously demonstrated that insanity can be made to yield to the power of medicine and medical treatment, and to moral discipline. The mystery that once enveloped it has vanished. The condition of the insane is now calling forth the warmest and most powerful exercise of the compassion and philanthropy of the age.*

—New York State Senate, March 1856

The quote above, now over 150 years old, unfortunately reflects a goal that has not been realized even to this day. The sanguine nature of the senators manifests a period in the history of New York State when institutions for the mentally ill were seen as a positive and necessary development despite certain societal concerns. Poughkeepsie has been part of this history through the establishment and evolu-

tion of its institution for the mentally ill—the Hudson River Psychiatric Center (previously the Hudson River Asylum for the Insane).

Public institutions for the mentally ill first appeared here in the early nineteenth century. Four states—South Carolina, Kentucky, Maryland, and Virginia—had asylums before 1830, although only Virginia (whose Virginia Eastern Asylum is considered the oldest public facility in the U.S.) reported specifically on the number and condition of the mentally ill (lunatics). These facilities and those that followed developed out of a concern and a desire to care for those afflicted in this way. This concern was exacerbated by the growing number of mentally ill who were, similarly to other dependent groups, cared for by placement in almshouses.

The almshouse or poorhouse came about as the result of a relatively new initiative for dealing with the nation's poor (paupers). Previously, the country had accepted and implemented the Poor Laws as defined by the English. Established as early as 1601, these laws gave local officials responsibility to provide for all dependent persons. The English believed that, as a government, they should take care of all members of their society. Although they were provided for, the “dependents” were expected to contribute to society, mostly through work. Failure to participate or assist could lead to incarceration.

Providing shelter and sustenance to the poor reflects a value that has, to some degree, persisted until this day. Unfortunately, this worthy concept has seen abuses both past and present. Those most vulnerable, such as the mentally ill, also were the most disadvantaged. Communities could lessen their burden of caring for dependents by several means, including auctioning them to the lowest bidder (the disgrace associated with “lowest” should be noted). Reports of such actions persisted over a wide area of the nation and most likely originated in the Northeast (Deutsch, 1949).

Pauper Poor Laws came under scrutiny in the 1820s, both in Massachusetts and New York. New York Secretary of State John Yates provided a report of abuses and made recommendations that would eventually shape institutions throughout New York and other states (Grob, 1994). Yates reported abuse in towns such as Franklin, Ancram, Austerlitz, Ghent, and Chazy, among many others. Those towns practiced “passing on,” where a pauper (most likely mentally ill) was passed on from one town to the next. He also reported that paupers were “dumped” from one town to the next. These abuses, callous enough in themselves, are echoed even today as some communities resist the development of homes and residences for the mentally ill. Yates's answer to this problem was the development of poorhouses or almshouses. As a result, the Legislature ordered sixteen counties to establish a “poor house.”



Dancing Pavillion



Dayroom at the hospital

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By 1856, all of New York's fifty-eight counties except Franklin and Hamilton had established poorhouses. A statewide survey conducted at the time by superintendents of forty-nine of these counties indicated that the facilities housed 5,339 individuals of whom 757 were identified as lunatics. In Dutchess County, the report provided the following data: 230 individuals were housed, of whom thirty-four (twelve males and twenty-two females) were identified as lunatics. Of these, eight were of native birth and twenty-six foreign-born. The thirty-four identified were additionally, and not exclusively, characterized as: twenty-five of mild state, one of excitable state, four as dangerous, ten as filthy, fifteen as destructive, ten as constantly confused, three as requiring medical restraint, six as having been treated in an asylum, and thirty-two previously employed before the invasions of insanity (County Superintendents, January 1856). The identification of individuals as lunatics and detailing their subsequent needs (such as dangerous, requiring physical restraint, etc.) was instrumental in supporting the idea of separating these individuals from others (simple paupers) who did not have special needs. Indeed, there was a trend developing from the Yates report that the insane should be removed from poorhouses and managed in separate institutions. In 1866, New York City Hospital, later called Bloomingdale Asylum, opened a separate building for the insane with financial support from the state. In addition, this separatist trend was supported by reports from Europe and other countries indicating that treatment of the mentally ill could not only reduce symptoms but also produce a cure.

In Europe, William Tuke, among others (such as Philippe Pinel of France, Vincenzo Chiargui of Italy, and eventually Benjamin Rush of the United States), presented a treatment regime that provided for humane and respectful care. The approach was termed "moral treatment." Tuke often referred to his approach as similar to that of working with children. He was able to use an asylum (places



**Patients working on the farm at the institution**

for the mentally ill were not routinely identified as hospitals until the latter nineteenth century) to create an environment where this novel treatment could be applied. This approach was adapted at some of the earliest institutions, including Bloomingdale's and the Virginia Eastern Asylum.

A developing groundswell of support for the separation of the mentally ill was buttressed by the publication of cure rates of forty to 100 percent (Quen, 1975). Such claims were no doubt exaggerated and over time may have led to public disillusionment with the psychiatric field in general. S. Woodard—a well-known and respected professional who was then director of the asylum in Worcester, Massachusetts, and who would later be the first superintendent of New York's first asylum in Utica—made claims in 1834 of a cure rate of eighty-two percent. Additionally, Galt (at the Virginia Eastern Asylum) in 1842 to 1843 was reporting an astonishing 100-percent recovery rate (Quen, 1975).

Given the momentum that was now developing to separate the mentally ill from poorhouses, coupled with the encouraging reports from Europe on hospital treatment approaches, it is not surprising that in his annual message in 1830 New York Governor Enos Throop called for establishing an asylum “...for the gratuitous care and recovery of the most destitute class of the human family who are suffering from a darkened understanding and the evils of poverty at the same time” (Charles Lincoln, ed., *Messages from the Governor* 3:293-294 as cited in Dwyer, 1987). However, support was not immediately forthcoming. Further legislative study, review of other states' institutions, and ongoing advocacy all were necessary. It was not until March 30, 1836, that the Legislature authorized the establishment of the New York State Lunatic Asylum.

Armed with a small amount of money to initiate the project, it took until the summer of 1837 to purchase a site in Utica. (An offer on property in Watervliet, near Albany, had been turned down previously.) The fact that the site had been

suggested by C.B. Coventry, who was active in the asylum movement, and that it was centrally located in the state made it an acceptable choice. By this time, a new governor, William Seward, had taken office. He was fully supportive of the ever-increasing costs of the project. Upon completion in 1850 (patients had been admitted as early as 1843, but some buildings were not completed at that time), the asylum had cost more than eight times the initial allocation.

Seward's largess would be a harbinger for the building of similar institutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Coupled with the notion of moral treatment, positive cure rates, and the impression that "lunatics" could be seen as people needing child-like care, the actual expenditures for buildings would be secondary and often overlooked. To be clear, there were legislators and others who were appalled by the rising cost of land and buildings, and who threatened to slow the momentum of the Utica Asylum. However, their voices could not drown out those of supporters. At this time, Dorothea Dix, one of New York's most remarkable advocates for the mentally ill, began to visit almshouses. She witnessed multiple abuses, including keeping lunatics in "cages" or "cells" (Dwyer, 1987). Her calls for an increase in the provision of humane care, following the treatment as advocated by Tuke (whom she had visited), was tireless but not immediately effective. Beginning in 1844, she lobbied the Legislature for another state asylum, but with little effect. Appropriations for the next asylum were not approved until 1866.

The rapidly crowded Utica Asylum created a curious dilemma that ultimately influenced the development of future facilities. Rather than create another hospital similar to the one in Utica, the Legislature decided to modify the functions of the asylum. Utica Asylum would admit new patients, identified as acute patients; those who required longer stays—chronic patients—would be transferred to another facility. When it was completed in 1869, the Willard Asylum in Seneca County accepted the transfer of chronic patients. It is relevant to note that New York State in 1857 was facing a financial crisis. Additionally, the Civil War turned interest and finances in a different direction. It wasn't until 1866 that the Legislature returned to an interest in constructing another "acute" care asylum.

The question of location for this new facility was again paramount. To some degree, the geographical area of the Hudson Valley was advanced through the strong advocacy of Dr. Samuel White of Hudson. A nationally known surgeon who advocated strongly for the insane poor, Dr. White was an original member of the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions, organized in 1844. The "original thirteen," as they were called, also included Samuel Woodard, Thomas Kirkville, and John Galt. This esteemed association would later develop into today's American Psychiatric Association. Dr. White petitioned the



Legislature as early as 1830 to establish an asylum in the Hudson River Valley. Rebuffed, he opened a private asylum in Hudson at his own expense.

In addition to Dr. White's ongoing advocacy, two other reports were presented to the Legislature that eventually provided the tipping point for further asylum development. The first was the 1856 report of the County Superintendents of the Poor on Lunacy and its Relation to Pauperism and for Relief of Insane Poor (January 23, 1856). This sixteen-page report concluded:

In view of the urgent demand that has been presented, your memorialists, in conclusion, do not hesitate to recommend that your honorable body will at once cause the immediate erection of two State lunatic hospitals...and so relinquish the undersigned the pain of longer continuing a system fraught with injustice and inhumanity (p. 16).

The second report was written by Sylvester Willard, then secretary of the State Medical Society. The society was eager to expand services to the mentally ill and had hoped that further review would reinforce this need. In the 1865 report to the Legislature, Willard concluded that another state asylum was essential (Grob, 1994). It appears that the synergy created by White, Willard, and the County Superintendents report convinced then-Governor Reuben Fenton to take action. (Not to be lost were the tireless efforts of Dorothea Dix, who had been making calls in support of additional asylum sites from 1844 until this time.)

Chapter 666 of the Laws of 1866 provided for Governor Fenton to appoint a Board of Commissioners (A.W. Palmer, Dutchess County; W.S. Kenyon, Ulster; J.M. Cleaveland, Oneida; D.M. Madden, Orange; and J. Falconer, New York City) charged with finding a location "...on or near the Hudson River, below the city of Albany, upon which to erect the Hudson River Asylum for the Insane" (Edmonds, 1868). Apparently, discussions had occurred (no doubt influenced by White) that the new site needed good access and proximity to New York City. Both rail and water transportation were available along the Hudson River's north-south route; as such, the Hudson Valley was an ideal location.

Towns throughout the region were notified that, should they have an interest in providing a site for an asylum for the mentally ill, they should prepare a prospectus for review by the Board of Commissioners. The hope was that all proposals or bids would be presented by December 1867. In Poughkeepsie, a number of planners had a strong interest in securing land for the asylum development, but they had been unable to garner more broad-based political support for the proposal. The *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle* (forerunner of today's *Poughkeepsie Journal*) issued a cautionary note in its November 17, 1866, edition: "The citizens of Hudson are





Cutting ice on Fishkill Creek



Ice Harvesting at the Main Building

moving energetically in the matter of the new Lunatic Asylum, and if we don't look out [they] will get ahead of us" ("The New Lunatic Asylum," November 17, 1866). The Hudson community had for years been listening to the voice of Dr. White as an asylum advocate; no doubt it was ready to make his desires for a public asylum a reality.

Two days later, however, the *Daily Eagle* reported; "We understand that the commissioners appointed by the Governor to locate a new State Lunatic Asylum on the Hudson River have found a site that is satisfactory to them near this city" ("The New Lunatic Asylum," November 19, 1866). The *Daily Eagle* was clearly supportive of a Poughkeepsie site and went on to state in the same report: "now for our part we propose that we go through no long or tedious operation to see what individuals will do for the purpose of securing the required property..."

The *Daily Eagle* kept its readership appraised of developments by reporting on November 20, 1866, that the commissioners had selected a site. Two days later, the paper further revealed the commission had met with Poughkeepsie's mayor and Common Council. By this time, it was becoming clearer that the process had both detractors and supporters, with the *Daily Eagle* clearly aligning itself with the latter. On November 23, the paper reported that the local Board of Supervisors, the Common Council, and citizens appear "...at (a) loss what they should do with regard to the proposed location of the new State Lunatic Asylum in this neighborhood" ("State Lunatic Asylum," November 23, 1866). The *Daily Eagle* again demonstrated its obvious support by indicating in the same article that "...we would respectfully call their attention to a few facts showing what other places are disposed to do for the purpose of securing the location of public institutions within their limits or neighborhood." Although not directly stated, no doubt those at the *Daily Eagle* were convinced that the asylum would bring an economic windfall to the city and county. Indeed, estimates from the only functioning State Lunatic

Asylum at Utica indicated positive economic profit for the surrounding area. On November 26, the *Daily Eagle* was forced to print a retraction of its November 20 report that a site had already been secured. However, in the same article, it indicated that the commissioners set a December 1, 1866, deadline to make a formal proposition, "...at which time they intend to have a meeting to review the propositions from other places and to finally decide the whole operation" ("The New Lunatic Asylum," November 26, 1866).

There certainly was interest and support on the part of a number of local elected officials, who had worked quietly with the state commissioners to review a site 1.5 miles north of the city. The property was owned by James Roosevelt. According to the *Daily Eagle*:

...the mansion on the Roosevelt homestead...had recently been burned and the family offered to dispose of the property, 206 acres for \$85,000. Those were times of inflation, after the war, when gold was at a premium, and this price, thought more than twice as great as such a farm would be worth now (1895) was not regarded as exorbitant and nobody had any objection to paying it, provided the money could be raised ("The Institutions of Poughkeepsie," 1895).

It appears there was sufficient progress in securing this site that the Poughkeepsie group was able to move the date of the commissioners' review of proposals from December 1 to 27. The extra time was needed to secure the necessary funding to purchase the Roosevelt estate.

As early as November 16, 1866, the site had been identified and payment arrangements had started. Initially, the Common Council passed a resolution for the city to contribute \$32,000 on condition that the county furnished the remaining \$48,000. The county refused. Next, a number of resolutions offering various ratios of payment between city and county were offered; all suffered defeat. The final due date was swiftly approaching and no agreement had been reached. On December 27, 1866 (the date proposals were due), the supervisors met in an effort to reach an agreement. As before, the initial discussions were unfruitful. As the meeting continued, some members left the room for a break, but a small quorum of positively inclined politicians remained. E.W. Simmons of Northeast took advantage of the fortuitous odds for passage and offered a new financial solution: the county would pay two-fifths of the final cost up to \$34,000, with the city furnishing the rest. As an additional ploy, Simmons suggested three possible locations for the asylum: the Roosevelt site in Poughkeepsie, Fishkill, and property in the interior of the county. He used the two sites outside of the city as a sham



A view of the entire Administration Building and South Wing, taken by WR Wright in 1892

to ensure that some of the costs would be paid by the city. The remaining county supervisors, not wanting to lose the city's contribution, used the smaller quorum and approved the resolution for the Roosevelt site. According to the *Daily Eagle*, the other legislators returned to the room surprised, dumbfounded, and eager to "...explain to their constituents that the resolution had been rushed through when they were not there" ("The Institutions of Poughkeepsie," 1895).

Having approved the financing, the proposal could now be presented, but time was an issue. A message was sent by telegram to the commissioners' review committee, which was meeting downriver in Newburgh, indicating their bid would arrive by 9 p.m. It was to be delivered by George Morgan, Esq.; John P.H. Tallman, Esq.; Alderman Robert Slee; and *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle* reporter George W. Davids. The trip to Newburgh tested the group's mettle and determination. The weather was stormy and the last southbound train had departed. The delegation had to travel from Poughkeepsie to Fishkill Landing (now Beacon) and then cross the river by ferry to Newburgh. Mr. H.G. Eastman, a supporter of the project, provided transportation as he "...had his team of high steppers hitched to a sleigh" ("The Institutions of Poughkeepsie," 1896). On December 29, 1866, the *Daily Eagle* (most likely George Davids) reported on the trip:

The night was a terrible one, the wind blowing a perfect hurricane and the snow drifting heavily. Twice we got off the road, the snow building up in such a manner and the track blown so full that it was utterly impossible in some places to find the way. There was no lack of exercise on the passage, as it became necessary, at times, to get out of the sleigh to keep it from upsetting. After several trials and much vexation, Fishkill Landing was reached, our horses put out and the ferry boat brought into requisition. On getting on board of that vessel, the captain stated he did not intend to start in less

than an hour. There was a “fix”. After an executive session the captain was prevailed on to start his boat immediately, much to the gratification of the Poughkeepsie delegation. At 9 o'clock in the evening the destination was reached where good cheer and hearty welcome was given by the attaches of the Orange Hotel and where we were soon discussing the Lunatic Asylum matter with Messrs. DuBois and Willard, the Hudson delegates, Mr. Adams of New burgh and the Commissioners. The various interviews, state rents, proposals, etc. lasted until one o'clock in the morning, at which hour all retired to rest, no official conclusion having been reached. (“The New Lunatic Asylum, A Stormy Night's Ride,” 1866)

The delegation returned to Poughkeepsie and reconvened there to meet with the commissioners and other delegates. The group met at the Morgan House, having been invited there by George Morgan. At 4 p.m. on December 28, the state commissioners accepted the property north of Poughkeepsie and the Hudson River Asylum for the Insane was born.

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## Regional History Forum

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

# Milestones of Dutchess County

*James Spratt*

*The following article was adapted from a transcript of the lecture “Milestones of Dutchess County,” presented by Mr. James Spratt in 1995. Mr. Spratt was a civil engineer with the New York State Department of Transportation for nineteen years, the Dutchess County Commissioner of Public Works for nineteen years, and a Past President of the New York State County Highway Superintendents Association (1986). He and his wife, Marguerite, were instrumental in preserving those milestone markers remaining in Dutchess County in the 1970s. After James’ death, Marguerite Spratt generously allowed the Marist College Archives and Special Collections to digitize much of their research material and make it available online at: [http://library.marist.edu/archives/online\\_exhibits.html](http://library.marist.edu/archives/online_exhibits.html). The recorded lecture was originally transcribed by Erin Kelly, Marist ’09.*

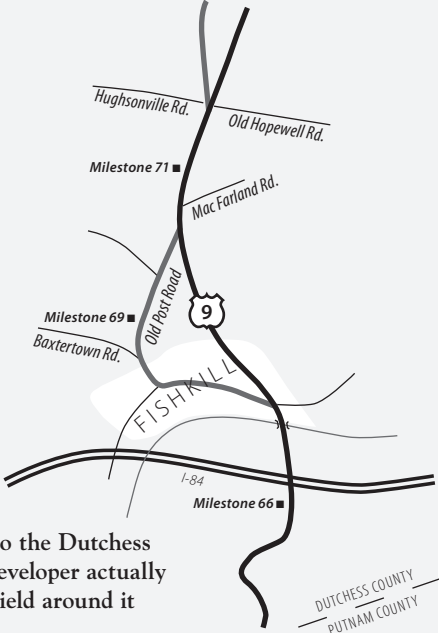
I find milestones a roadside treasure, both historical and functional.

Today, when we go on a trip, we have readily available roadmaps, and shortly we will have video readouts in our car to show where we are and how we get to our destinations. Supporting all of this is our very elaborate and costly highway signage system. Milestones were the beginning of this system, stone markers that now stand silently along our highways. Along New York State Route 9 and the various Old Post Roads throughout Dutchess County, they resemble gravestones, made from sandstone quarried as far west as Indiana that was chosen for its smoothness and softness. The carving or tooling of text on the stone face required the use of a soft stone. Today, erosion has left many milestones faceless.

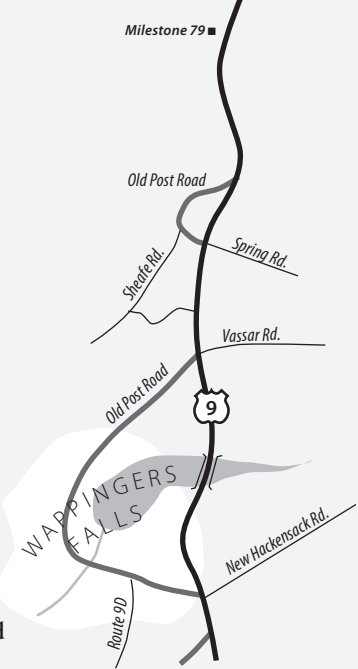
My interest in milestones began with my wife’s question about the markers. She noticed a broken milestone along the road and inquired as to who restores them. It was just prior to our country’s bicentennial celebration, and I am a highway engineer, so a project was suggested—to find as many milestones as possible



Milestone sixty-six is at the entrance to the Dutchess Mall, south of Route I-84. The mall developer actually saved it by putting a new protective shield around it



Milestone seventy-nine, recovered by Constance Smith, the former Supervisor and Historian of the Town of Wappinger







Milestone eighty-two is located on the edge of Pulaski Park in Poughkeepsie, on Washington Street

between Poughkeepsie and Columbia County to the north. In Dutchess County, we are blessed with a concentration of milestones still in existence. This was not by chance: when governor, Franklin Roosevelt had a law passed that gave responsibility for the maintenance and preservation of these milestones to the State Highway Department, now called the Department of Transportation.

Roosevelt's interest in preserving the milestones extended into his presidency, when he had the Dutchess County Historical Society provide a protective stone masonry enclosure for each of the original sandstone markers. These efforts are obvious today. The milestones are of red sandstone and stand about three feet high by eighteen inches wide. The distance along the Old Post Road or Route 9 is oriented to New York City, giving the number of miles you are from City Hall. Milestone number one is on exhibit in the Museum of the City of New York.

Benjamin Franklin was the originator of the milestone system. When he was serving as Postmaster General and needed a basis for revenue to pay for the Post Office Department, he devised a rate system based on miles traveled and the number of sheets of paper a letter contained. Typical rates were six cents per sheet for less than thirty miles and twenty-five cents per sheet for over 400 miles. It is





Located near the west wall of the FDR estate, milestone eighty-six was hit by a car in 1965 and was reported as having been taken by a man in a station wagon. In spite of having a witness report the theft and license plate, the marker was never recovered from the alleged thief due to “lack of evidence.” This replica was installed by the Youth Corps in 1980 under the direction of Joe Ryan

reputed that Franklin placed some milestones himself. These were said to be on the Boston Post Road and in the Philadelphia area. In order to lay out these markers, a clacker system was used. A dowel was placed inside a wagon wheel of known circumference or tread length. Each time it made one revolution, it hit a clacker, making a sound that could be counted. If the wheel circumference was, say, thirteen feet, it would take 390 revolutions—or clacks—to measure a mile. We have no evidence that Franklin himself did the actual placement, but this is how it was accomplished. Having been established as postal route guides, these markers soon became transportation guides as well. Today, the average driver going fifty miles an hour might not notice them, but colonial travelers riding in uncomfortable stages over bumpy roads looked anxiously for each milestone to gauge the time



**Milestone eighty-seven, built into the wall of Archibald Rogers' estate, indicates eighty-seven miles to New York and five miles to Poughkeepsie**

before reaching the next coach stop. As our road system developed, the milestone has been replaced by signs and by our kids using McDonald's as a measuring guide.

The establishment of postal roads brought about the term "Post Road" in our transportation system. In 1703, then-Governor Viscount Cornbury established five "Great Roads" whose maintenance would be the responsibility of the colony. These routes, which included the Albany Post Road and Boston Post Road, radiated from New York City, with its hub on Lower Broadway at Wall Street. Funding to construct the new roads was to come from a lottery. When this was not well-received, private investors were asked to provide capital, bringing about the introduction of turnpikes in our transportation system. Originally, a turnpike was a toll road with markers placed at each mile and toll gates every ten miles; users



**Milestone eighty-nine is located between the village of Hyde Park and the hamlet of Staatsburg on Route 9**

paid a maximum of twenty-five cents, the highest fee charged to those riding in a fancy conveyance, such as a coach. In 1772, the Provincial Assembly established a weekly mail route between New York and Albany. It was to go up one side of the river and down the other. Hence, in the town of New Paltz, just west of the village, there is a road called Albany Post Road.

In Dutchess County, the milestones' preservation was undertaken jointly through the efforts of the Dutchess County Historical Society, the State Highway Department, and President Roosevelt. Of the 159 milestones placed between New York and Albany, forty were in Dutchess County. Of those, we have recorded twenty-eight as still existing.



The 1917 DR-1 Tri-plane is a replica. There are no flying originals

# The Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome

*Elizabeth Vielkind, Marist '10*

Want to experience the thrill of historic flight in the Historic Hudson River Valley? Look no further than Red Hook. This is where the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome is located. This museum of World War I aircraft and antique automobiles celebrated its golden anniversary in 2009.

The aerodrome is the inspiration of Cole Palen, who was partially inspired by the existence of the Shuttleworth Collection in England. In 1959 Palen found a farm for sale near the quaint village of Rhinebeck, which included a small farmhouse. He was able to purchase the property by paying the back taxes that were owed on it. He cleared a runway and built makeshift hangars from scrapped materials with his bare hands—and the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome was born. Palen collected aircrafts spanning from 1900 up to the start of World War II. He restored and flew them regularly as his alter-ego “The Black Baron”. These air shows continue to this day from mid-June through mid-October. Biplane rides are available before and after the shows for visitors.

If early original aircrafts did not exist, accurate replicas powered by authentic engines were built at the aerodrome. A sizable collection of veteran and vintage

vehicles—nearly all in working order—also was collected, nearly all in working order. In 1960, the first air show took place to an assembled audience of approximately twenty-five people. Palen died on December 8, 1993. With his passing the aviation world and the early aircraft preservation movement in particular lost not only a unique pilot and collector, but also a great character and showman.

The simple early shows led to a philosophy of not only showing the aircraft in their natural environment, but also providing a fun and entertaining day out for the whole family. The aerodrome allows families to take self-guided tours and get up close to airplanes and artifacts in the collection. It does not look like a typical airport nor a typical museum. It is nestled in a grassy, wooded knoll with barns and makeshift buildings serving as hangars much as they did for the barnstormers in the 1920s.

The aerodrome starts the air show with an audience-participation fashion show with children getting dressed up to model period costumes and ride in the antique car parade. The ground show melodrama is built around a “Perils of Pauline” spoof that kids enjoy. The characters: Trudy Truelove, Sir Percy Goodfellow, Pierre Loop de Loop, and the evil Black Baron of Rhinebeck pose for pictures with youngsters (and adults). After the air show, the pilots, also in period costume, stand by the airplanes on the flight line to explain their plane and their relationship to the history of aviation.



The aerodrome is a family-friendly museum featuring a melodrama with the characters Trudy Truelove, Sir Percy Goodfellow, Pierre Loop de Loop, and the evil Black Baron of Rhinebeck. After the air show the pilots, also in period costume, stand by the airplanes and explain their relationship to the history of aviation. Shows start with an audience-participation fashion show; children get dressed up to model period costumes and ride in the antique car parade





The 1918 Curtiss Jenny is one of three originals in the world still flying

Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome features many remarkable World War I and pre-World War I aircraft that can be seen nowhere else in the world today. For example, Palen built a Fokker Triplane that flew for many years. Carrying the American registration number N3221, it was one of his first reproduction aircraft projects to fly when the aerodrome opened. This aircraft and another replica were flown for nearly two decades.

The air shows simply provide the justification to get the antique airplanes into the sky. The aerodrome comes to life with the roar of rotary engines and the smell of burning castor oil used for lubrication. The dedicated aviation enthusiasts



Bill Gordon, flying the New Standard D-25, which could carry four passengers in addition to the pilot, such as this family

who carry on the legacy created by Cole Palen are proud of the fact that all of the airplanes are restored originals or built as accurate reproductions and powered by original rotary engines.

For the 2010 season, the Rhinebeck Aerodrome will launch new wonders. The Fokker D-VII that has been under restoration for two years should be flying. It has had a complete structural rebuild and will be recovered with a period paint scheme. The D-VII was considered by many to be the finest flying airplane in its era. Old Rhinebeck's Fokker D-VII wings were in need of recovering and some restoration. The lower wing leading edge plywood was repaired where there was some minor damage and the area was reinforced. The lower wings have been recovered and the meticulous work of recreating the original Lozenge camouflage paint scheme has been completed. The upper wing is now receiving the same attention and will be finished soon.

Another addition will be the Stampe, which has been out of service for a number of years. Finding parts for its original engine has proved a difficult task, but they now have been located and are being inspected by an engine rebuilder. The aerodrome plans on having the engine back together by season's opening and to have the biplane back in the air.

*The Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome is located at 9 Norton Road, Red Hook, NY 12571. They are open mid-June to mid-October. You can learn more about the museum's collections, air shows, biplane rides, and events by calling 845-752-3200 or visiting them online at [www.ldrhonebeck.org](http://www.ldrhonebeck.org).*



**Bill Gordon working on an ORA flying antique. Gordon is both chief pilot and director of maintenance**



# The Industrial History of the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge and the Central New England Railway's Maybrook Line

Gail Goldsmith '12

## Introduction to the Development of Industry and Transportation in the Hudson River Valley

The history of the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge spans a large part of the economic development of the Hudson River Valley, as it served as a focal point for economic development and strengthened railway-centered commerce by providing an east-west route across the Hudson River. The rallying of local entrepreneurs for the advancement of this structure solidified industrial energy. Lauded in the press as an engineering achievement, the bridge was a vital conduit for the transportation of people, products, and supplies as lopsided population growth and uneven resource distribution necessitated such exchanges. Prominent industrial cities developed along the East Coast (New York, Boston, Philadelphia) and the borders and outlying areas of the Great Lakes (Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Detroit, Buffalo, St. Louis, Cincinnati), while regional centers across the rest of the country relied more on agriculture, lumber, and mining.<sup>1</sup>

In his *Hudson: A History*, Tom Lewis links industrial advancements and transportation to the nineteenth-century zeitgeist of the Hudson River Valley:

Steamboats and sloops ply the water, while across the river, at the foot of mountain peaks, a small town nestles on the shore. Smoke rises from its red brick buildings, telling us of industry and prosperity within...

...the cities great and small that were strung along the east and west riverbanks between New York and Albany, all helped make the Hudson River into an icon of America's nineteenth century sensibilities.<sup>2</sup>

The "rising tide of population" in the Hudson Valley helped to spur the need for systems to transport people, goods, and supplies between urban centers and

rural areas, resulting in a gradual spread of opportunities. The Erie Canal served as the spine of a network of canals, including the Champlain and Delaware & Hudson canals, linking Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware. Nationwide railroad expansion, an effect of the Industrial Revolution, and fascination with symbols of “progress” served to increase the speed, reach, and efficiency of the flow of information, people, materials, goods, and culture.

The rise of railroads also was fueled by the national fascination with this evidently efficient and imposing transportation option and helped by the ease of immigrant labor. Railroads facilitated the spread of communication by transporting daily newspapers and mail order catalogs as well as the materials and personnel to build and maintain telegraph and (later) telephone systems. In *Hopewell Junction: A Railroaders’ Town*, Central New England Railway historian Bernie Rudberg notes that rail systems facilitated a bi-directional flow between rural and urban spheres by bringing farm products to the cities and city culture to outlying farms. Rudberg also credits railroads with the rise of the vacation as a viable recreational opportunity by decreasing travel time, cost, and discomfort.<sup>3</sup> He further writes that economic opportunity enticed businessmen: “When the idea of taking advantage of this economic potential took hold there were plenty of people with high hopes to join in and get rich. As in any new undertaking there were lessons to be learned and a dose of reality to cope with. Some actually did get rich. Most did not.”<sup>4</sup>

Many small-scale local railroads sprang up, coalesced, and spiraled down into bankruptcy. Dutchess County hosted several of these ventures as the Hudson River Valley emerged as a high-profile center of commerce due to its natural resources, available workforce, successful port and manufacturing industries, and banking establishments. The increase of transportation facilities and methods rose largely in tandem with the increase of industry, as industry manufactured useful components of construction. The valley was not only a supply route for grain and goods, but also a natural resource for building materials including stone, bricks, and cement.

A geographically strategic location, Dutchess County was a high-priority area for businessmen and developers interested in railroad planning. On a north-south axis, it is between New York City and the state capital in Albany. Most early railroads were arranged on this axis, and could serve a New York City, Albany, and Montreal route. East to west, however, Dutchess County links the western states and Pennsylvania coal fields to southern New England. Other modes of transport across the Hudson were more weather-dependent; steamboats could not travel when the river was frozen, and rail cars had to cross via the ferry at Newburgh.

Goods had to be unloaded and transferred to ferries or steamboats and then reloaded if headed farther than the port of call.

The inconveniences of these other transportation systems compared unfavorably with a more direct route across the Hudson. In combination with several other factors, this made Poughkeepsie a focal point for dynamic area entrepreneurs promoting the idea of building a bridge. The city's economic profile rose along with that of the region as industries in and near the city developed and expanded. Local businessmen Matthew Vassar and Harvey Eastman were energetic advocates of the bridge idea, realizing the economic and strategic advantage of such a structure.

Vassar—a brewer, owner of a whaling ship, and later founder of Vassar College—envied the success of Albany and New York. Steamboats chose Kingston and Newburgh as destinations instead of Poughkeepsie, which in winter often was isolated by ice. In 1842, Vassar hired engineers to report on the viability of a bridge; they found that building a span five feet above the water would be cheapest. These findings galvanized steamboat owners, whose influence on the state Legislature dissuaded it from granting bridge proponents a charter.

By 1871 the timing, economic conditions, and commercial climate of New York State favored Harvey Eastman's new bridge proposal. In February, Eastman—the head of Poughkeepsie's Eastman Business College—advocated for building the span in a public letter, writing: "If the reader will draw a line on the map from Boston to Pittsburg [sic] he will be surprised that Poughkeepsie is not only directly in the line...nearly so...are Springfield, Hartford and the Pennsylvania coal fields."

A month later, Eastman was in a better position to advocate for the bridge as the newly-elected mayor of Poughkeepsie. Together with Jonathan I. Platt, the editor of the *Poughkeepsie Eagle*, and Pomeroy P. Dickinson, he drafted a charter for the Poughkeepsie Bridge Company. They included concessions to gather local support, providing crossing space on the bridge for "foot passengers, teams, vehicles, cattle, horses, sheep, and swine."<sup>5</sup>

## The Poughkeepsie Bridge Company

Building the bridge at Poughkeepsie appealed to many; the railroad tracks could easily connect to the Hudson River Railroad, the Poughkeepsie & Eastern Railroad (which was planned to expand to the Connecticut border), and other lines. The geographic features of the area also were opportune. The height of the surrounding bluffs would allow the construction of the bridge to facilitate river shipping. A visiting committee from Boston found reason to support this entre-

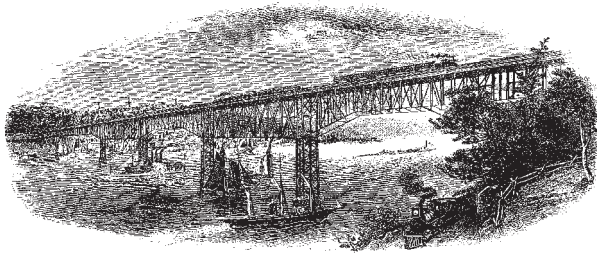


Illustration from a bond document for the Poughkeepsie Bridge Company

preneurial enthusiasm: “We have no hesitation in saying that it is in the interest of Boston and... and all of the southern Northeast to have this bridge built as speedily as possible.”<sup>6</sup> In addition, the project was endorsed by an editorial in the *Boston American Union* stating that the span would bring “trade and profit, and honor and glory.”<sup>7</sup>

Vocal opposition came from Cornelius Vanderbilt’s New York Central Railroad, which did not relish the prospect of competition or diminished traffic for its bridge at Albany. Other towns, of which Newburgh was the most vocal, feared their economic clout would wane. Other entrepreneurs were worried that the bridge would interfere with river navigation and reduce the need for shipping across or along the river.<sup>8</sup>

The first crib for the rectangular truss bridge was built in 1876 by the American Bridge Company. The crib’s ensuing collapse from construction difficulties exacerbated the financial weaknesses of a company still recovering from the Panic of 1873. The Poughkeepsie Bridge Company soon liquidated. Meanwhile, Eastman died of tuberculosis, and bridge-building efforts stalled without his energy and vision.

Interest in the proposed Poughkeepsie bridge was reinvigorated in 1886 by the increase in rail-car ferry crossings at Newburgh, proposals for a bridge to be built instead at Storm King, and an influx of funds from William W. Gibbs, a utilities executive from Philadelphia who bought stock in the Poughkeepsie Bridge Company. By August 1886, it had contracted with the Union Bridge Company. Union’s president, Thomas Curtis Clarke, and partner Charles MacDonald were most involved with the design and construction of the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge.

From the 1840s to the 1870s, most railroad work was done by Irish immigrants, but by the 1880s construction laborers were more likely to be Italian, as most working on the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge were. In a debate paralleling the contemporary controversy, *The Poughkeepsie News-Telegraph* defended this hiring practice as not taking jobs away from Americans, but hiring out the “mean”

and “hard work” no one else “could or would do.”<sup>9</sup>

In a lecture at Cornell University, Thomas Curtis Clarke called the bridge a “considerable piece of engineering,” though he qualified his remarks on the bridge’s appearance, saying that in American engineering “aesthetic considerations are little regarded. Utility alone governs design.”<sup>10</sup> The Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge was completed in December 1888 at a height of 212 feet so ships could easily pass under.<sup>11</sup> Promoters had been calling it the longest bridge of its kind in the world, but in 1890 they conceded that title to the cantilever bridge across the Firth of Forth in Scotland.<sup>12</sup>

The Smith Street Yard in Poughkeepsie connected bridge traffic to the Poughkeepsie & Eastern Railroad and the Poughkeepsie & Connecticut Railroad.<sup>13</sup> The bridge line was also connected to Hopewell Junction. The bridge also provided a valuable short-distance connection by enabling people to commute from Orange and Ulster counties to Poughkeepsie.<sup>14</sup> Soon after the bridge’s completion, construction began on the Hudson Connecting Railroad from Highland to Orange Junction. This later became the Maybrook Switching Yard.<sup>15</sup>

## Evolution of Routes, Infrastructure, and Commerce Along the Maybrook-Danbury Line

The Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge had been planned when the Hudson Valley’s railroad system was mostly composed of small companies serving the local area. However, the bridge was at the height of its efficacy and prominence during the Central Northeastern Railway years, as the line on top of the bridge—commonly known as the Maybrook-Danbury Line—served as the crucial link across the valley to Northeastern states.

In 1889, a group of investors from Philadelphia consolidated several of the small railroads in Dutchess County into the Central Northeastern and Western Railroad. Under newly-chosen president Archibald MacLeod, the system was reorganized as the Philadelphia, Reading & New England Railroad. MacLeod now controlled both of the railroads connecting at Hopewell Junction to the Northern Dutchess & Columbia Railroad, the New York & New England Railroad, and the Philadelphia, Reading & New England Railroad. Feeling the threat of competition, J.P. Morgan used the New Haven Railroad to cut off access to the New York & New England Railroad. The Philadelphia, Reading, & New England Railroad system also had inherent faults that would limit its success. Often only single-tracked, it wound through a sparsely populated, mountainous area that necessitated steep grades and curves.<sup>16</sup>

The ensuing complications from Morgan’s move as well as financial strain



This map shows the maximum extent of the CNE between 1905 and 1916

and a stock market crash forced the Philadelphia, Reading & New England Railroad into receivership from August 1893 until 1899, when Arthur Brock and Henry O. Seixas purchased the company at a judicial sale and reorganized it into the Central New England Railroad.<sup>17</sup> Brock and Seixas' company retained all Philadelphia, Reading & New England Railroad personnel and adopted all their orders, circulars, rules, and regulations to ensure a smooth transition.<sup>18</sup>

To control the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge and the Maybrook-Danbury Line route, Morgan's New Haven Railroad bought the Central New England Railway in 1904, continuing operations under that name. New Haven's personnel also closed the Newburgh rail-car ferry, eliminating what was by this time paltry competition. In 1905, the New Haven Railroad also purchased the Newburgh, Dutchess & Connecticut Railroad and the Poughkeepsie & Eastern Railroad, merging both into the Central New England Railway, which operated under that name until it was formally merged with the New Haven Railroad in 1927. The Central New England Railway was able to improve its current holdings and expand as a result of its success. In 1907, the tracks on top of the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge were rearranged into a gauntlet configuration, which meant that only one train could cross at a time.<sup>19</sup>

The Central New England Railway absorbed the Dutchess County Railroad and the Newburgh, Dutchess & Connecticut Railroad in 1910, also adding the Springfield branch in Massachusetts to solidify its presence in the Northeast beyond New York. By leasing track rights from Hopewell Junction to Danbury, Connecticut, in 1915, the Central New England Railway solidified its main east-



west route. The rails on top of the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge would come to be known as the Maybrook line in recognition of the high traffic between the Maybrook Switching Yard and Danbury Station.<sup>20</sup>

As a conduit for commerce, the stretch of railway between Maybrook and Danbury originated little of the line's high volume of tonnage traffic; it served primarily as a strategic connector. Especially in the early twentieth century, most of the freight rolling into New England was raw materials, predominantly coal. Significant amounts of oil, grain, lumber, beef, and farm produce also were shipped there. Shipments from the Northeast to western and mid-Atlantic states were comparatively lighter and consisted mostly of manufactured goods and (during the season) Atlantic fish, Maine potatoes, and Cape Cod cranberries.<sup>21</sup>

## The Rise and Decline of Maybrook

Facilities at the Maybrook Switching Yard and Danbury Station were instrumental in easing the transfer of goods. The former hosted a workshop for repairing cars, a roundhouse with twenty-seven repair stalls, a turntable, expansive stockyard, coaling and watering facilities, an icing platform, and freight transfer mechanisms. The icing plant, built in 1910, allowed meat from Chicago, California fruit, and vegetables from the South to be shipped across the Northeast by replenishing ice in refrigerator cars.<sup>22</sup>

The small village of Maybrook was home to many of the Switching Yard's employees; during the railway years, the population was about 1,400:

"The residents of Maybrook became accustomed to living with the snorting of engines, the hissing of air brakes, the crash of cars coupling, and smoke. They also got used to living with crusty railroad men, men who worked at all hours of the day and night, men who could be both fiercely protective of one another and fiercely competitive. They were also men who, living constantly on the edge of danger, were sometimes called to be heroic. Railroading, said President Theodore Roosevelt, demands heroic virtues."<sup>23</sup>

Railroading was apparently not a job for the faint of heart. Workers risked getting snared by the many large, heavy machines. A Maybrook-based conductor was fond of telling his crew, "Eat your pie first, boys. You are liable to get killed any minute."<sup>24</sup> Small fires were common on the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge. Men would walk behind trains as they crossed, tracking the conditions by punching into three clocks along the span if there were no problems. Failure to punch in after the passage of a certain amount of time signaled that emergency service was necessary.<sup>25</sup>





Workers near the eastern approach to the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge

As employees in high-risk jobs were often the first to unionize, these dangers inspired workers to engage in collective bargaining. The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen formed at Maybrook in 1904, early in the American labor movement. The union aimed to improve workers' wages and hours and increase vacation time. This gave workers a feeling of engagement in this enterprise, which boosted morale.<sup>26</sup>

Employees who did not live in Maybrook could commute on "Scoot" or free Ontario & Western Railroad shuttle cars from Poughkeepsie and Middletown, respectively. Railroad crews based elsewhere were housed in Maybrook's YMCA or a boarding house. The men often amused themselves by boxing or playing pinochle. Saloons were a popular place to congregate and relax for residents and non-residents alike.<sup>27</sup>

In the 1940s, the Central New England Railway and its key sites at Maybrook, Danbury, and Poughkeepsie contributed to the war effort, as did most American industries. The Maybrook-Danbury line was well-placed for shipping military rations, gasoline, and other supplies to ports at New London, Providence, and Boston.

In Carlton Mabee's *Bridging the Hudson: The Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge and Its Connecting Rail Lines*, one employee remembers the striking image of cars coming through the Maybrook Switching Yard carrying naval fighter planes on

December 8, 1941—the day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.<sup>28</sup> Both troop trains and trains carrying prisoners of war traveled the line. The former met with cheers from Switching Yard employees, the latter with more diverse—and predominantly negative—responses.

Mabee singles out this one incident:

“However, Frank Doolittle, Jr., then a yard clerk, remembers German soldiers giving him letters to mail—he mailed letters for some of them, watching that he didn’t get caught doing it.’<sup>29</sup>

The Central New England Railway modernized after the war, replacing its paper waybill cargo tracking system with IBM punch-card devices that transmitted car numbers, destinations, and each car’s assigned cargo by Teletype to teleprinters, providing tracking information and delivery confirmation.<sup>30</sup>

Despite this and other modifications, the Central New England Railway began to decline in the latter half of the twentieth century with the ascendancy of trucking and air freight industries.

## Looking Back and Toward the Future

The Penn Central Railroad Company was formed in 1968 to combat the decline of the formerly prominent railroad companies of the Northeast: the New York Central Railroad, Pennsylvania Railroad, and the New Haven Railroad.

When the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge caught fire and burned in 1974, its tracks were deemed irreparable and fell into neglect. Sparks from the trains were a common cause for such fires, but the *Hudson Valley Hornet* alleged that Penn Central may have sponsored arson to wash their hands of the declining route.<sup>31</sup> As trains could no longer cross the bridge, this rendered the Maybrook Switching Yard irrelevant. Traffic was instead redirected to the Livingston Avenue bridge in Albany, built in 1856.

“After the fire, Maybrook had to shut down as traffic slowed. You couldn’t get across the bridge. The route they found to solve the problem bypassed Maybrook. When you look at industrial history, so many places lived and died by one industry,” explained Susan Isaksen, historian for the Town of Montgomery and a volunteer with the Maybrook Historical Society.<sup>32</sup>

The Penn Central Railroad proved to be an unsuccessful operation; in 1976, the federal government created the Consolidated Rail Corporation (known as Conrail) to save it from a sudden collapse. The Newburgh, Dutchess & Columbia Railroad was now owned by Conrail; the Maybrook line and the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge, in their industrial incarnations, were eliminated by Conrail after

the last run in 1982.

However, the three major components of the Maybrook-Danbury line still survive, albeit in different capacities. The Maybrook Switching Yard facilities are commemorated in a small museum and library that is moving from the village's public library to its municipal center.

"The move will not affect current resource holdings, but rather the larger space will hold expanded displays," said Susan Isaksen.

The library's resources include pictures of the switching terminal, employees, and trains; artifacts include badges, equipment, the lamp that lit the Switching Yard at night, and a model railroad mapping routes and facilities; documents, papers, and timetables.<sup>33</sup> Some documents have been digitized for the online archive on the Hudson River Valley Heritage Web site; volunteers are in the process of digitizing more.

In its current incarnation as Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park, the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge stands as a monument to the Industrial Revolution in the microcosm of the Hudson River Valley and northeastern United States.

*The Danbury Station is commemorated at the Danbury Railroad Museum, located at 120 White Street in Danbury, Connecticut. It provides educational exhibits and guided tours as well as train rides from April to December. Call 203-778-8337 or visit [www.danbury.org/drm](http://www.danbury.org/drm) for more information.*

*Maybrook Village Hall, which will house the museum dedicated to the Maybrook Switching Yard, is located at 109 Main Street. It can be contacted at 845-427-2717. The Maybrook Historical Society's collection may be seen online at [www.hrvh.org/browse](http://www.hrvh.org/browse).*

*Bernard L. Rudberg, author of Twenty-Five Years on the ND&C: A History of the Newburgh, Dutchess & Connecticut Railroad, and historian of Central New England Railway, can be contacted at [brudberg@optonline.net](mailto:brudberg@optonline.net). Mr. Rudberg also conducts annual rail tours of the CN&E.*

*Access to Walkway over the Hudson is from Parker Avenue in Poughkeepsie and Haviland Road in Highland. For more information, call 845-454-9649 or visit [www.walkway.org](http://www.walkway.org).*

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**Poughkeepsie  
in May, 7:00 p.m.**

Catching an early evening tide,  
the Hudson ripples southward,  
its slate-blue crested waters  
a skein of liquid silk, a ruffling  
of perfect, sheer-edged peaks  
pouring through day's last light.  
*Nothing here worth staying for*  
the hurrying river admonishes,  
except to watch  
this spectacle of sleek departure.

—*Judith Saunders*

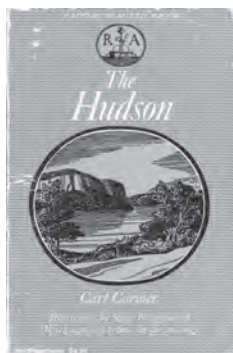
## Writing the Hudson River Valley

Historical writing about America's rivers has followed as many different directions as do the waterways themselves. In what is arguably the greatest of books written by an American author about a river, Mark Twain begins *Life on the Mississippi* (1866) with an account of the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto, the first European who saw the river, in 1542. From there he briefly sketches its antiquity and history, which he establishes by comparison with events that occurred in Europe at the time of de Soto's "discovery." Twain devotes most of his prose to contemporary life along the Mississippi and describes it in a richness and vernacular that account for the book's enduring value as a literary document. Perhaps no other writer can match Twain's insight—his keen eye for detail, his ear for the nuances of an evolving language, his evocation of a sense of place—but that hasn't stopped a host of other writers from tackling the subject of an American river, perhaps none more so than the Hudson.

Rivers have long fascinated Americans and the European commentators who have traveled to the United States to study its physical characteristics as well as its social, cultural, and political institutions. To Native Americans, rivers were a source of rich food, while to early European settlers navigable waterways were the most efficient transportation arteries for getting crops to market or, at times, obstacles that impeded their journey to town or to distant places. But much as great rivers could separate communities and even states, so could they bring them together: the great conservationist Benton MacKaye considered rivers the lifeblood of geographical regions, bodies of waters that united far-flung places into an interdependent economic, social, and ecological whole. Over time, rivers have been considered utilitarian means of transport or places of great natural beauty and history, places to exploit or to cherish, and of course places to capture on canvas or film and in verse or prose.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most remarkable publishing ventures of the twentieth century was the *Rivers of America* project, a series of 67 books edited by the novelist and poet Constance Lindsay Skinner (and by Carl Carmer after her death in 1939) and published by Rinehart and Farrar and its successor firms between 1937 and 1974. Skinner believed that rivers had a "powerful influence on the temperament and imagination of mankind," and the *Rivers of America* series as she envisioned it would combine landscape and history to evoke a sense of place in a nation

riven by the Great Depression and a process of modernization that, to Skinner, threatened to subvert the distinctive regional cultures that had evolved through the interactions of humans with their environment. Skinner considered local and regional cultures as bedrocks of Americans' sense of identity in place and time. Her ideas clearly resonated with authors, as she and Carmer attracted some of the best known regionalist writers of the day to the series, including James Branch Cabell, Paul Horgan, Edgar Lee Masters, Henry Beston, and Donald Davidson. Talented illustrators added to the appeal of each volume.<sup>2</sup>



Carl Carmer's *The Hudson* (1939), the last of the series published under Skinner's editorial aegis, was a *Publisher's Weekly* bestseller and remains one of the most enduring books about the river he celebrated. In *My Kind of Country* (1966) Carmer explained the approach that he used in much of his writing, most notably in *The Hudson*, which he described as a "deep commitment to literary creativity in the writing of history." As has been true of most books written about the river, he begins with geography and geology, describing the thrusts and collisions of land masses that shaped the eastern United States. Carmer then traces the Hudson from its origin in Lake Tear of the Clouds, on Mount Marcy (discovered by Verplanck Colvin in 1872), passing majestic scenery on its meandering journey south toward Manhattan and beyond, to the submerged channel of the prehistoric river that extends more than a hundred miles through the continental shelf until it reaches the depths of the ocean. Following this evocation of the forces that shaped the valley, Carmer turns to its native inhabitants, whom he describes as the "friendly, simple people of the river" who fished, raised crops, and "swam as well as the river otters." Save for cameo appearances during the Seven Years and Revolutionary wars, the native peoples then largely disappear from his narrative.<sup>3</sup>

Carmer's Hudson Valley is a special place defined by the interplay of residents and the natural environment over centuries. An experienced folklorist who had long collected stories of life in New York State, he sought out and interviewed people as diverse as witches, fishermen, folk musicians, even the sitting president of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, whose family had lived in Hyde Park, on the east bank, for generations. Carmer devotes chapters to the influential career of the mid-nineteenth-century landscape gardener and architectural tastemaker Andrew Jackson Downing and the paintings of Thomas Cole and other artists associated with the Hudson River School of landscape art, as well as to the design of sloops and steamboats that plied the river and the octagonal



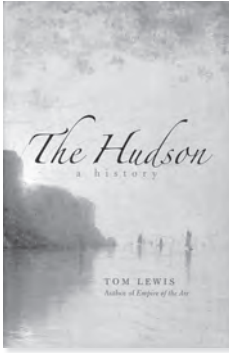
houses and barns inspired by phrenologist Orson Squire Fowler's *A Home for All* (1848). Carmer's interests were as catholic as the history of the people who have resided along the river. His conclusions, a number of which have been modified by subsequent scholars, brought the river to life for readers as defining a special place.

What gives Carmer's book power and thematic unity is his unflinching commitment to the common women and men who lived along the river. As he promised in the preface, his chapters include "more about tenants than landlords, more about privates than generals, more about workers than employers." In the following pages he describes the "country-boy soldiers from the Hudson valley," farmers and artisans who defeated Burgoyne's British regulars and Hessian mercenaries at the Battle of Saratoga and who rushed to the defense of the Highlands under the leadership of George Clinton and thereby kept the British from controlling the valley and separating New England from the rest of the colonies. He denounces the Van Rensselaers and Livingstons as greedy plunderers and writes evocatively of the farmers and tradesmen whose efforts to live independent lives were circumscribed by the manorial or patroon system, in which wealthy families accumulated immense political and legal power through a quasi-feudal landholding system that Carmer describes as the "greatest single instrument of injustice in the whole history of the Hudson valley."<sup>4</sup>

Carmer was much more interested in writing about the lives of people who tilled the soil or fished the waters than he was about wealthy landlords or powerful politicians or the plutocrats who built mansions along the river in the late nineteenth century. Throughout *The Hudson* he celebrated the workers who quarried granite or made cement and bricks, who harvested the ice or crewed on whalers or merchant vessels—people, in short, who made the Hudson Valley their home and whose efforts, he believed, built America. He also described the plight of residents who lived in "sociological islands," including the Jackson Whites, a mixed-race people who lived in the hills of western Rockland County, and the Eagles Nesters who lived west of Kingston and who, like the Jackson Whites, were the product of European, African American, and Native American intermarriage. This deeply personal concern for everyday people and their lives reflected the author's democratic proclivities as well as Skinner's belief that "folk," though neglected by academic historians, were the shapers of and the enduring strength of the nation.<sup>5</sup>

Carmer ends *The Hudson* on an optimistic note worthy of the residents who have struggled for economic justice over centuries. He observes that "in a strange way" the people have begun to win back the shoreline in the early twentieth century, as many of the great estates along the river were sold or given to schools, religious orders, or medical institutions. The very people he celebrated throughout

the book—ordinary working women and men who “have loved the big stream” over centuries—were cheered by the (slow) process of cleaning up the waterway, the end of quarrying that had scarred mountains, and by proposals for parks and parkways along its banks. “After three centuries of struggle and waiting,” he concludes, residents “will rejoice at last in a valley of happy reality served by a free and mighty river.”<sup>6</sup>



Tom Lewis's *The Hudson* (2005) covers much of the same terrain as Carmer's book, though with different emphasis and the advantage of generations of scholarship published since 1939. Like Carmer, save for discussions of the river's origins and the Revolutionary War Battle of Saratoga he devotes most of the text to the lower Hudson, the 150-mile stretch extending south toward the ocean from the Mohawk River and Albany. But whereas Carmer's text really concludes at the dawn of the twentieth century, Lewis's carries the story forward for another

century, though he attempts to convey the significance of the last hundred years in a single chapter.

Lewis, best known as author of *Divided Highways* (1997), an admirable account of the construction of the interstate highway system and its impact on American life, follows a roughly chronological format in presenting the history of the Hudson. He believes that the river is a key to the nation's past, “a thread that runs through the fabric of four centuries of American history, through the development of American civilization—its culture, its community, and its consciousness.” Throughout the book he examines four themes: utility, individuality, community, and symbol.<sup>7</sup>

Over nine gracefully written chapters, Lewis traces the history of the valley, beginning with a much more extended treatment of the river's geology and native inhabitants than Carmer provided. The same is true of the two chapters devoted to the colonial era and another to the Revolutionary War, though Lewis's explanation of the military struggle celebrates the generals rather than the farmers and artisans who were the heroes of Carmer's account. Three chapters examine the Hudson Valley in the nineteenth century. The first, devoted to the democratic river, discusses the development of steam travel, the successful struggle against the Livingston monopoly on the river, and the anti-rent wars that pitted farmers against the manorial system. A second analyzes the significance of “definers of the landscape”—Washington Irving, Thomas Cole and the artists of the Hudson River School, the influence of Andrew Jackson Downing, and tourist destina-

tions such as the Catskill Mountain House—but also the economic activities (especially tanning) that were despoiling the very scenery the artists celebrated and tourists traveled to visit. The third of the chapters devoted to the nineteenth century examines the emergence of extractive industries such as quarrying, brick-making, and ice-harvesting, but although entitled “river of fortunes” these pages pay remarkably little attention to the estates developed by wealthy New Yorkers along the river toward the end of the century.<sup>8</sup>

Like Carmer, Lewis neglects important figures, especially John Burroughs, the great naturalist and popular writer who after the Civil War built a stone house in West Park, above Highland on the west bank, and a cabin, Slabsides, as a retreat from the travails of his domestic life. Though largely forgotten today, Burroughs, known as John O’Birds, was considered an equal of his contemporary John Muir in teaching Americans to cherish their environmental heritage. Lewis is more favorably inclined toward Washington Irving than Carmer, who dismissed the *Knickerbocker History* (1809) for the “widespread misconception” that resulted from its caricature of the Dutch settlers (Irving eliminated or greatly softened the satire in subsequent editions of the book). Both authors could have paid greater attention to John Vanderlyn, the Kingston-born artist whose paintings were among the most ambitious and admired during the early republic, and the life of the painter and inventor Samuel F. B. Morse, whose Italianate house and gardens, Locust Grove, in Poughkeepsie, is a National Historic Landmark, as well as to popular nineteenth-century writers such as N.P. Willis and James Kirke Paulding. They might also have analyzed the continuing creativity of residents of the valley following the decline in popularity of the Hudson River School, particularly through arts and crafts havens such as Byrdcliffe, in Woodstock, and the colonies of painters that have flourished at various places and points in time.<sup>9</sup>

As Carmer had done, Lewis devotes the final chapter to the importance of environmentalism along the river. But whereas Carmer could only point optimistically to a future defined by clean water, parks, parkways, and other recreational amenities, and a people reconnected to their river, the reality was that for decades the river remained an open sewer, polluted by municipalities, individual residents, and corporations such as Ford and General Electric. But in the last four decades of the century, the Hudson entered a new phase in its history, and from the vantage of the early twenty-first century Lewis could look back at the enormous environmental progress made along the Hudson since the 1960s. One key to its emergence as the environmental river was the Storm King controversy, citizen opposition to Consolidated Edison’s proposal to build a pumped storage power plant at Storm King Mountain, one of the mountains at the northern gateway to

the Hudson Highlands. The Storm King case was litigated for almost a generation, and ultimately contributed to the adoption of the National Environmental Policy Act (1969), which for the first time established the requirement that such projects be evaluated for their impact on the environment, and the Clean Water Act (1970), which provided federal funding to municipalities to construct water treatment plants. Equally important, the publicity generated by opponents of the power plant at Storm King contributed to the emergence of a new “attitude toward the environment and aesthetics.” Lewis also points to the significance of the *Clearwater*, a replica of a nineteenth-century sloop that plies the waters of the Hudson teaching the gospel of environmentalism, and to the riverkeeper (which merits all of two sentences), a citizen activist who identifies polluters and serves as a protector of the public interest in the Hudson. Pointing to successful efforts to preserve Boscobel, a federal-era mansion (though removed to a different site) and Olana, the landscape painter Frederic E. Church’s spectacular, Moorish-inspired house atop Mount Merino, south of the east bank city of Hudson, the author argues that the future of the valley rests in its historic past.<sup>10</sup>

As the valley’s designation as one of the first National Heritage areas in 1996 affirms, a sense of the past is important, but this has long been an attribute of the Hudson and its environs. Yet the present is a fleeting moment between past and future, and time has not stood still. This is as true in the realm of culture as it is in the pattern of economic development. The arts continue to thrive in the cerebral abstractions of Alan Gussow and the poetic landscapes of Stephen Hannock, in the novels of William Kennedy and T. Coraghessan Boyle, among others, in Leila Philip’s *A Family Place* (2001), an elegantly crafted memoir of the upper Hudson Valley, in music festivals and live theater and craft shows that exhibit the work of skilled artists and artisans. In short, the river today inspires many artists and informs their work, much as it did the generations of Irving, Cole, and Church. Cultural institutions such as the Storm King Art Center, near Cornwall, one of the greatest outdoor collections of modern sculpture in the United States, and Dia:Beacon, another major collection devoted to modern art, attest to the continuing interplay of the arts and the Hudson Valley.

Yet for all the progress that has occurred over the last forty years, the Hudson and its residents face enduring challenges. The presence of polychlorinated biphenols (PCBs) in the river bottom and in the tissue of fish has destroyed the livelihood of fishermen on the river for decades to come. Suburban sprawl has resulted in the development of thousands of acres along the river, effectively creating a new barrier that limits the public’s access to its collective heritage, while traffic has increased to such proportions that the Tappan Zee Bridge at times seems like

an immense linear parking lot. Moreover, gentrification has begun to transform old industrial cities like Hudson and river towns like Catskill, as residents of metropolitan New York buy second homes and Albany's workers seek dwellings in quaint old places. How the Hudson Valley will endure such changes without rendering historic sites mere islands within an ocean of twentieth and twenty-first century development is one of the most difficult challenges residents have to confront. And, Carl Carmer would surely add, to honor the Hudson's rich history this must be accomplished in a way that protects the people whose families have lived along the river and loved it over generations.

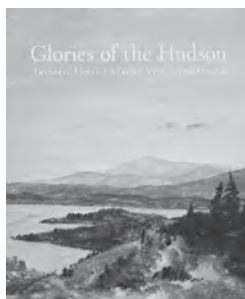
These important books provide windows on a special place, a beautiful river flowing through mountains and alongside gently rolling landscapes long devoted to farming. The scenery is spectacular, the landscape "sanctified," as Thomas Cole noted in 1836, because of its associations with critical events of the Revolutionary War. Prosperity resulted from the efforts of farmers who worked an exceptionally rich agricultural landscape as well as from the exploitation of natural resources. But the prosperity has been uneven: perhaps as a result of the manorial system, east bank towns and cities have long been richer than those across the river, and surely passenger service on the east bank railroad, which makes commuting to Manhattan much more convenient, has contributed to the uneven diffusion of wealth in recent decades. Moreover, deindustrialization, while it has contributed to environmental improvements along the river, has changed the nature of work and robbed many residents of traditional livelihoods.

Other challenges remain. Many of the older river cities experienced a significant increase in the population of racial and ethnic minorities in the second half of the twentieth century, and the disparities between cities and suburbs in wealth, educational attainment, and other quantifiable measures are reflections of a modern apartheid that is the most troubling reality facing the nation in the twenty-first century. In so many ways the Hudson River is an exceptional landscape, a place where natural beauty and history coexist as perhaps nowhere else. But only if communities in the valley act decisively to protect public access to the river and preserve open space, only if the towns and cities that line its banks provide an economic and social environment that welcomes African American and Hispanic residents into the mainstream of American life, as they did for immigrants from settlement through the early twentieth century, will the Hudson Valley fulfill Carl Carmer's democratic vision.<sup>11</sup>

—David Schuyler, *Franklin & Marshall College*

## Notes

1. Benton MacKaye, *The New Exploration: A Philosophy of Regional Planning* (New York, 1928). Constance Lindsay Skinner believed that river valleys were the crucible that transformed settlers from different parts of Europe into Americans: "We began to be Americans on the rivers," she wrote in announcing the publication of the *Rivers of America* series. See Skinner, "Rivers and American Folk," in Carl Carmer, *The Hudson* (New York, 1939), unpaginated appendix.
2. Nicolaas Mink, "A Narrative for Nature's Nation: Constance Lindsay Skinner and the Making of *Rivers of America*," *Environmental History* 11 (Oct. 2006): 751-74 (quotation p. 751).
3. *Ibid.*, p. 766; Carmer, *My Kind of Country* (New York, 1977), p. 00; Carmer, *The Hudson*, pp. 3-15.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-19, 31. Carmer's discussion of the climax of the anti-rent wars, the chapter "Tin-Horn Rebellion," is surprisingly lacking in analytical (or even anecdotal) power, given the tenor of his account of resistance to the manorial system that precedes it. In recent years historians have presented richer, more nuanced assessments of society, politics, and cultural conflict in the upper Hudson Valley in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. See, for example, Thomas Wermuth's *Rip Van Winkle's Neighbors* (2001), Reeve Huston's *Land and Freedom and Freedom: Rural Society, Popular Protest, and Party Politics in Antebellum New York* (2000), and Charles W. McCurdy's *The Anti-Rent War in New York Law and Politics, 1839-1865* (2001).
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 378-97; Skinner, "Rivers and American Folk," in Carmer, *The Hudson*, n. p.
6. Carmer, *The Hudson*, pp. 402-6.
7. Tom Lewis, *The Hudson: A History* (New Haven and London, 2005), pp. 3-9.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 186-253.
9. Carmer, *The Hudson*, p. 33; Nancy E. Green, ed., *Byrdcliffe: An American Arts and Crafts Colony* (Ithaca, NY, 2004); Vassar College Art Gallery, *Woodstock: An American Art Colony* (Poughkeepsie, NY, 1977).
10. Lewis, *The Hudson*, pp. 254-82 (quotation p. 265).
11. Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery," in John W. McCoubrey, ed., *American Art 1700-1960: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1965), p. 108. See also David Schuyler, "The Sanctified Landscape: The Hudson River Valley, 1820 to 1850," in George F. Thompson, ed., *Landscape in America* (Austin, TX, 1995), pp. 93-109.



***Glories of the Hudson: Frederic Church's Views From Olana*, Evelyn D. Trebilcock and Valerie Balint.**

**Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009.**

**Foreword by John K. Howat. (95 pp.)**

Over the past twenty years, major books have been written about the Hudson River School that attempt to explore the social, cultural, political, and economic forces that fostered its creative energies. This past year, 2009, witnessed the 400th anniversary of the European settlement of the Hudson, and with it, several new books on the Hudson River School painters. Included on this list is Evelyn Trebilcock and Valerie Balint's *Glories of the Hudson*, a study of Frederic Church and the inspiration he found at home.

In the nineteenth century, the Hudson River Valley emerged as a leader in American artistic and cultural life. The first recognized schools of American literature and art, the Hudson River writers and the Hudson River School of landscape painting defined the valley as a symbol of America's promise. Painters such as Thomas Cole, Asher Durand, and Sanford Robinson Gifford painted rich landscapes and imbued them with spiritual and mythical meanings, much like the Hudson Valley authors James Fenimore Cooper and Washington Irving did in their writings. As one literary scholar of the period has described, the nineteenth century landscape painters and authors highlighted the "manifold cultural meanings attached to the Hudson River Valley in the first half of the nineteenth century and exemplifie[d] the process of national self definition."

No one epitomized this more than Frederic Edwin Church. Arguably the most famous of the Hudson River School painters (vying with his own mentor, Thomas Cole, for that spot), he was certainly one of the most prolific and successful of the nineteenth-century landscape artists. The years that Church painted were particularly dynamic ones in American, and Hudson River, history. The United States was emerging as a major commercial power with the initial stirrings of industrialization and burgeoning population resulting from large-scale immigration. An important part of the economic growth of the nation was the result of the Hudson's farms, industries, and transportation networks. In turn, the Hudson served as a powerful symbol of emerging America.

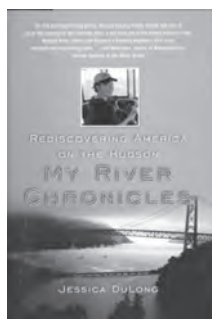
Frederic Church was a student of Cole but soon stood beside his teacher and Asher Durand as among the most successful landscape painters of the yet-to-be named Hudson River School. Useful introductions to the life of Church and the School are made in opening chapters by John Howatt and Ken Myers. Myers pro-



vides a thoughtful analysis of Church's work along with that of Cole and Gifford. Myers notes that even though Church occasionally strayed from the region for his inspiration (some South American and Middle Eastern locales served as occasional subjects), his primary interest was the Hudson River Valley, which he continued to concentrate on even after virtually disabling arthritis made painting difficult. In these later years, Church focused on what has become his most famous project, his Moorish-style home high atop the hills overlooking the Hudson, Olana.

Evelyn Trebilcock and Valerie Balint provide the core of the book, a narrative of Church's work put into the context of his life and, of course, his home. The authors do a very good job in providing the background to Church's work and contextualizing it in the framework of his stylized home. Indeed, Trebilcock and Balint are able to provide the familial milieu that structured Church's life and work; the tragic death of his young children, the triumph of his spirit to overcome the limitations of his disease, and his life-long devotion to interpreting and rendering a spiritual Hudson River. This very handsome volume is enhanced by many of Church's paintings that are beautifully reproduced, most in color. The book serves well as either an introduction to Church's work, or as enlightening view of an under-studied subject of this painter's vision.

—Thomas S. Wermuth



***My River Chronicles: Rediscovering America on the Hudson*, Jessica DuLong. New York: Free Press 2009. (308pp; with b&w photographs)**

Sailors in the Navy who work the engine room have a saying that brims with swagger: *There are two types of people onboard ship—engineers and passengers.* But anyone who has ever worked below decks knows it's a humbling job, and certainly not one that many would enjoy, let alone dream of: there's the noise, the smell, the cramped spaces, and in summertime the stifling heat. For a select few, however, the engine room of a ship is where life makes sense; it's a gloriously loud laboratory where things can definitely go wrong. An engineer has to solve problems quickly or else an expensive piece of machinery might break, or even worse, a shipmate might get hurt. For some, a tiny porthole offers the best view of the water.

In her delightful book *My River Chronicles: Rediscovering America on the Hudson*, journalist and bona fide engineer Jessica DuLong delivers two coming-of-age stories: one is her own and the other is of the Hudson itself, a waterway that

has seen so many changes in the 400 years since its namesake Henry Hudson explored as far as what is now the bluffs of Kinderhook. Both are stories of redemption; DuLong is a young woman who ditches a safe desk job and plunges head-first into a male-dominated world of diesels and generators, while the Hudson is a river that is finally experiencing a cultural and environmental rebirth after years of dumping and neglect.

DuLong, the daughter of an auto mechanic, hints that her interest in becoming one of only a handful of the world's female fireboat engineers might have been part of an even larger quest; as the author writes, this interest "escalated to obsession, then swelled to encompass the history of the Hudson River, whose industries helped forge the nation. I've since fallen in love with workboats, with engineering, with the Hudson" (7).

The book is more than a simple memoir, however; it's structured more like a collection of linked essays than a singular narrative, and that flexibility allows DuLong to weave in exciting threads of nautical history, nature writing, mechanical engineering, and New York lore without distracting the reader from the heart of the book, which is the compelling story of a girl who gains the confidence to follow her blue-collar dream and is in turn humbled by that experience. She meets a lot of interesting people along the way—some helpful in her quest, some not—and the result is a rare look at an American subculture not at all used to outsiders.

DuLong's voice is endearing throughout, and her journalism background clearly helps pace the story with colorful details and good-natured humor. Along the way, the reader picks up enough knowledge on the commercial and nautical histories of the Hudson River to fill a college course, without feeling overburdened with an endless array of facts and statistics. It's a unique balance that makes the book a pleasure to read from beginning to end.

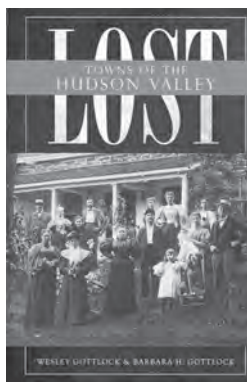
DuLong's journey may have started as a personal quest, but by the end of the book this grows into a wider admiration for both the history of the river and its future. The author comes to see herself not as an outsider but as an integral part of a long tradition of residents, workers, and river-keepers who have made the Hudson River what it is today. As she writes:

While I wait in the moonlight, my eyes adjusting to the dark, a convergence of Hudson River activity unfurls before me. I can make out the shape of a tugboat pushing a loaded barge north, the boat's deckhouse outlined in blue lights. Then the headlights of a passenger train appear, the engine speeding up the Hudson's eastern shore, pulling its cars full of people. A second tug materializes, heading south, its yellow deck lights lined up in a row. This second tug is towing an empty barge, and it passes the other tug port to port, on the one-whistle side. At

that moment, a clatter signals the approach of another train, this one on our side of the river, at the base of this mountain. A string of freight cars, the multiple colors of their shipping containers barely discernible in this light, shoots south down the Hudson's western shore. The scene before me embodies the mixed-use river of today—the tugs and barges, the trains hauling freight and people, the village of Cold Spring twinkling across the river, with its pleasure boats bobbing on moorings, and artists and spectators like us, who have come to watch the ever-busy river by the light of the moon (267-68).

Anyone interested in learning more about the complex commercial history of the Hudson River and its communities will undoubtedly treasure *My River Chronicles: Rediscovering America on the Hudson*. But more than that, Ms. DuLong's inspirational story should also be required reading for anyone who has ever pondered their own blue collar dreams. After reading her account of struggles and triumph, even the least mechanically inclined soul will be curious to see what the water looks like from inside the porthole.

—Tommy Zurhellen, *Marist College*



***Lost Towns of the Hudson Valley*,  
Wesley Gottlock and Barbara H. Gottlock.  
Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009. (159 pp.)**

*Lost Towns of the Hudson Valley*, offers a rare glimpse into this New York region's history. The authors introduce the commonality among Hudson Valley's lost towns in their introduction, namely that each served some vital role, which many times included providing for New York City. Unlike other towns of the time that evolved with the passing years, many of the lost towns had a very specific purpose and once this purpose was served the towns disappeared with little, if anything, remaining of them today.

Roseton, is one example of this. In the late 1800s, John C. Rose expanded his Rose Brick Company from Haverstraw to include land on the Hudson River north of Newburgh in Orange County. In the same area, the Juan Jacinto Jova family also used Hudson Valley clay to make bricks. As Rose and Jova brickyard workers populated the area with over 1,300 people, Roseton emerged. Two generations later, as the brick industry began to decline, Roseton lost much of its citizens and today little remains. Sand and clay from Roseton brickyards can be found in Central Park and Yankee Stadium; bricks from Rose and Jova companies make

up many of the buildings dotting the New York City skyline. Amazing photos of the brickyard are included as well as scenes of the Roseton school, church, and homes. Maps, census documents, and even Juan Jacinto Jova's passport make up the chapter.

Another lost town, Rockland Lake, formed from the Knickerbocker Ice Company ice business on Rockland Lake and the crushed stone business at the nearby Hook Mountain quarry in the mid-1800s. In its heyday, numerous ice-houses dotted Rockland Lake, and the city thrived with locals and tourists drawn to its shores. Townsfolk worked the ice business in the winter and the quarry in the summer. In the early 1920s, the town was lost as refrigeration ended the need for ice and the quarry closed for environmental concerns. The authors show pictures of the town, including the icehouses in action, the post office, lighthouse, hotel, school, and windmill, among others. Some buildings including the hotel and post office, remained after the land was bought in the 1950s by the Palisades Interstate Park Commission through the efforts of John D. Rockefeller. Although Rockland Lake may be a lost town, Rockland Lake State Park continues to be a popular tourist attraction.

Unlike Rockland Lake, Camp Shanks may only be remembered through the efforts of those running the Camp Shanks Museum and other historians and by any remaining World War II veterans who departed from or came back to the United States through this port. As World War II began, the U.S. Army constructed the camp from land bought and leased from families in Orangeburg and surrounding area of Rockland County. The camp deployed and received over three million troops. Additionally, it served as a temporary holding camp for over 290,000 German and Italian prisoners of war as they arrived in the U.S. and were repatriated at the war's end. Camp Shanks, the thriving military base, quickly converted into Shanks Village following World War II. Shanks Village housed soldiers who attended Columbia University on the GI Bill and their families. This ended in the 1950s and also signaled the end of Camp Shanks and Shanks Village. Like so many lost towns, few reminders remain.

Roseton, Rockland Lake, Camp Shanks, and Shanks Village all served a community of people who worked for a common industry or effort. Each of these communities became lost once the industry or population that it served was no longer in place. Other lost towns, however, became lost to serve another purpose. For example, flooding of the Ashokan Reservoir towns in the early 1900s allowed water to be supplied to New York City. The Ashokan Reservoir, the largest in the Catskill system, took eleven villages in its construction. Additionally, 2,600 graves and eleven miles of railroad were relocated in the building process. This chapter

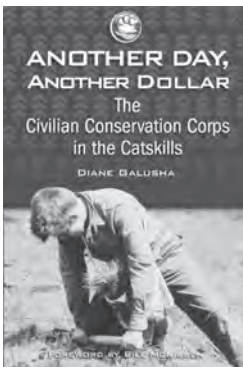
includes numerous pictures from the Ashokan Reservoir towns as well as a map of the reservoir and an auction flyer/brochure for a boarding house lost to the reservoir. Similar stories to this would continue to surface in the following years as towns throughout the U.S., including those in the jurisdiction of the Tennessee Valley Authority, were lost to reservoir/dam building.

Stories such as these presented in *Lost Towns of the Hudson Valley* are a reminder that with change often comes loss—even the loss of entire communities. The authors do a good job of presenting each lost town’s story through a short narrative, lots of pictures, and great photo captions. The reader gets a sense of the town’s infrastructure through maps and corresponding photographs.

This light work sparks the interest of the reader, but does not include a large amount of detailed information and lacks a bibliography or footnotes. Photograph contributors are cited in the photo caption and many individuals providing information for this book are mentioned by name. If a reader is looking for more in-depth information about the lost towns of the Hudson Valley, he or she might want to use this book as a resource to locate individuals, historical societies, and museums that could provide greater detail. Additionally, numerous books have been written on individual subjects mentioned in the book, including the brick and ice industries, creation of reservoirs in the early to mid 1900s, and homeland World War II studies such as the examination of the housing of prisoners of war in the United States.

I enjoyed reading and reviewing *Lost Towns of the Hudson Valley* and found it to provide the right amount of information for someone interested in the subject, but not wanting to get bogged down with heavy scholarly details. For those from the Hudson Valley, enough geography is provided so that you can imagine and possibly even visit the site where the lost towns once existed.

—Amy L. Thompson, Ph.D.



***Another Day, Another Dollar: The Civilian Conservation Corps in the Catskills*, Diane Galusha. Hensonville, NY: Black Dome Press, 2008. (224 pp., 100 illustrations)**

In 1933, in the depths of the Great Depression, President Franklin Roosevelt took office and began to fulfill his promise of a New Deal for America. As part of his program, Congress soon approved the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC put young

unemployed men to work in the nation's parks and forests, paying them thirty dollars a month. By the time the program ended in January 1942, with the outbreak of World War II, three and a half million men had served at 4,500 CCC camps in every state as well as in Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and on several Indian nations. The CCC played an important role in providing jobs and (indirectly) relief to millions of family members during a period of hard times. The men received five dollars of their pay each month, with the remainder being sent home to their families. In addition to providing jobs, the CCC resulted in major improvements to the nation's parks and forests.

The CCC in New York enrolled 210,000 men who lived at 161 camps scattered throughout the state, usually in remote areas. Run by the U.S. Army, the camps provided shelter, food, and basic services to upwards of 200 men each. The workers built public campgrounds; created hiking, skiing, and horseback riding trails; established game refuges; constructed dams to create swimming holes and waterfowl breeding sites; erected five Conservation Department Ranger Headquarters; conducted stream restoration and erosion-control work; and helped farmers implement soil conservation measures. They planted over 221 million trees and protected the seedlings by eradicating insects and disease-hosting plants. The men built nineteen fire lookout towers, 392 miles of access roads, and 1,207 ponds for fighting forest fires. The program led to the reforestation of vast areas of upstate New York and provided infrastructure to protect the new forests from pests, disease, and fire, while simultaneously enabling the public to enjoy the great outdoors through hiking, fishing, hunting, and other outdoor activities.

Diane Galusha, author of several books on New York history—including *Liquid Assets: The Story of the New York City's Water System* (1999), *Through A Woman's Eye: Pioneering Photographers of Rural Upstate* (1991), and *As the River Runs: A History of Halcottsville, NY* (1990)—is the founding president of the Historical Society of the Town of Middletown and a longtime resident of the Catskills. In *Another Day, Another Dollar: The Civilian Conservation Corps in the Catskills*, she provides an overview of the CCC in the 1930s that enables the reader to put the accounts of local CCC men in their proper context. The heart of the book is the seven chapters, each focusing on a particular CCC camp, which highlights the history of each camp through the eyes of fourteen camp veterans. Using oral history interviews and archival materials from regional libraries, historical societies, and special collections, the author provides a snapshot of what it was like in the camps, what the camps meant to the young men at the time, what work was accomplished, and how the camps contributed to the development of the region. The seven camps discussed are the Boiceville

Camp (Ulster County), Davenport Camp (Delaware County), Tannersville Camp (Greene County), Deposit/McClure Camp (Broome County), Breakabeen Camp (Schoharie County), Margaretville Camp (Delaware County), and the Masonville Camp (Delaware County). The stars of the book aren't the camps, but rather the fourteen CCC veterans. The author successfully presents their stories, capturing what these men lived through, how they felt, and what they got out of their experiences. One can't help but want to meet these men and hear more.

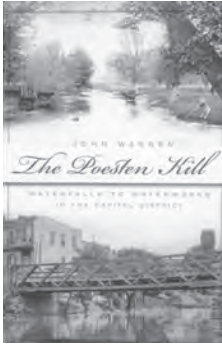
The book provides a wealth of information and photographs on the CCC veterans, the seven camps and the contribution of the CCC to the development of the Catskill parks and forests. What the book is not is a comprehensive history of the CCC at the national or state level. It is a solid addition to the regional literature on the CCC and the history of the Catskills region.

Considered a jobs program by many, others appreciated the long-term benefits of reforesting thousands of acres of upstate land abandoned by lumber companies that had clear cut the timber and stopped paying property taxes or farmers forced off the land by the collapse of agricultural markets during the Great Depression. From those millions of seedlings planted in the 1930s, the great forests of upstate New York were reborn. This book is a reminder of how different the Catskills might be had the young men of the CCC not been tasked with restoring the forests. This book will be of interest to historians looking for regional studies of CCC camps, those interested in the history of the state's parks and forests, and most importantly, to those interested in the history of the Catskills/Hudson Valley region.

—Dr. Steve R. Waddell, *United States Military Academy at West Point*



# New & Noteworthy Books Received



## **The Poesten Kill: Waterfalls to Waterworks in the Capital District**

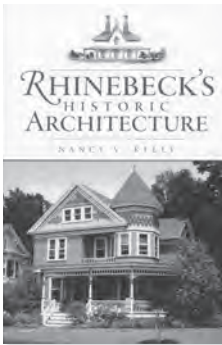
By John Warren

(Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009).

128 pp. \$19.99 (paperback). [www.historypress.net](http://www.historypress.net)

The Poesten Kill in Rensselaer County has been central to the area since before the arrival of Europeans. Since that time, the waterway has been key to the development of transportation, agriculture, and industry in the region.

John Warren captures the many ways that the Poesten Kill has been the lifeblood of the towns and communities that sprung up around it over the course of four centuries.



## **Rhinebeck's Historic Architecture**

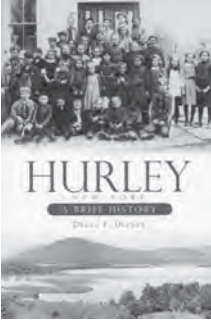
By Nancy V. Kelly

(Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009).

192 pp. \$19.99 (paperback). [www.historypress.net](http://www.historypress.net)

Divided into nine stylistic categories beginning in 1700, *Rhinebeck's Historic Architecture* displays the architectural diversity of the town's structures. Complete with dozens of accompanying photographs, the categories of architecture range from Colonial to Greek and Gothic Revival to Victorian. Many of the buildings and homes included

in this book are intact today, creating a truly unique combination of styles from some of the most influential architects throughout the history of the Hudson River Valley. In addition, it tells the complex story of Rhinebeck's history.



### **Hurley, New York: A Brief History**

By Deana F. Decker  
(Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009)  
144 pp. \$19.99 (paperback). [www.historypress.net](http://www.historypress.net)

The Ulster County town of Hurley has a storied history dating back to the seventeenth century. This book, Hurley Town Historian Decker's second on the town, spans its history from European settlement by the Dutch and British and the impact of 19th-century industry to the present day.

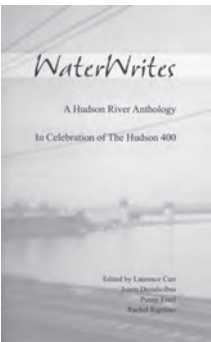
Particular attention is paid to the town's historic homes and residents. Decker also includes a large number of photographs and maps..



### **Love Songs in Minor Keys**

By Joseph Cavano  
(Charlotte, NC: Central Piedmont College Press, 2009)  
166 pp. \$13.99 (paperback).  
<http://www.cpcc.edu/servicescorp/products/cpcc-press-store>

A new collection of nine short stories from Hudson River Valley native Joseph Cavano. *Love Songs in Minor Keys* presents a variety of characters dealing with love and the complicated dimensions of human relationships. Cavano's stories leave the reader thinking about the situations and characters long after they have finished reading about them.



### **Water Writes: A Hudson River Anthology In Celebration of The Hudson 400**

Edited by Laurence Carr, Joann Deiudicibus, Penny Freel,  
and Rachel Rigolino (New Paltz, NY: Codhill Press, 2009)  
124 pp. \$15.00 (paperback). [www.codhill.com/](http://www.codhill.com/)

This collection of works from over sixty Hudson River Valley poets and authors, focuses on the significance of the Hudson River and its surrounding lands over the course of 400 years of history. *Water Writes* explores the diversity of perspectives and experiences that can be found across the

distance of the river through the varying seasons and periods of history. Divided into one section for poetry and another for essay and memoir, each contribution provides a unique glimpse into the different roles the Hudson River has played to all those who have experienced its wonder.

—Andrew Villani

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The Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College is the academic arm of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. Its mission is to study and to promote the Hudson River Valley and to provide educational resources for heritage tourists, scholars, elementary school educators, environmental organizations, the business community, and the general public. Its many projects include publication of the *Hudson River Valley Review* and the management of a dynamic digital library and leading regional portal site.

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