

AUTUMN 2022

THE  
HUDSON  
RIVER  
VALLEY  
REVIEW

*A Journal of Regional Studies*

**MARIST**



The Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College is supported  
by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

## From the Publisher

Vernon Benjamin, noted Hudson River Valley historian and a good friend of the Hudson River Valley Institute, passed away in June. Vern published numerous articles and reviews in *The Hudson River Valley Review* and participated in many symposia and colloquiums sponsored by HRVI, including delivering the keynote at the New York State Quadricentennial Conference in 2009. In addition, he taught the history of the region for many years at both Marist and Bard colleges.

A native of Saugerties, where he resided most of his life, Vern served as a long-time aide to Congressman Maurice Hinchey, whom he advised on environmental and energy issues. He served as a county legislator in the 1980s and town supervisor of Saugerties in the 1990s and was a journalist and editor. When I first met Vern at the annual New York History Conference in 1996 (held that year at New Paltz), he was just starting his work on the project that would consume much of his time over the next decade and a half. In fact, his book on the Hudson grew so much in depth and span that he decided it must fill two volumes! The massive set — *A History of The Hudson River Valley: from Wilderness to the Civil War* and *A History of The Hudson River Valley: from the Civil War to Modern Times* — became the authoritative history of the region. The New York Times review stated that the first volume “is a model for how to enliven geography, anthropology and biography and weave them into a microcosmic account of America, from the ‘Paleo Prelude’ to ‘Custer’s First Stand.’”

Vern had a long personal history of political involvement, including his work in helping to develop the Hudson River Estuary Management Act (1987) and his support of the Hudson River Valley Greenway. In late 2016, he traveled in his pickup truck to the Standing Rock Reservation in the Dakotas, carrying supplies donated by Hudson Valley residents for the water protectors there. In his writings and personal life, Vern stood with the many against the powerful. His easy, friendly way of interacting with folks, as well as his immense knowledge and wry sense of humor, will be sorely missed throughout the Hudson Valley.

## From the Editors

It can be as important to ask questions about the things we don’t know as it is to reflect on what we know (or think we do). The topics covered in this issue allow readers ample opportunity for both. For all that has been written about Henry Hudson’s exploration of the river that bears his name, there are plenty of gaps in this one-sided narrative. Scott Kostiw sets out to fill them in by determining the precise locations of Hudson and his crew as they sailed up and back down the river. His account of the *Half Moon*’s itinerary also helps to identify the various groups of Native Americans encountered during the voyage. Thomas Cole and Washington Irving are often celebrated as the first true artists of our young nation. They were contemporaries, traveled in many of the same circles, and shared acquaintances, but the historic record bears little evidence of any meetings or correspondence between them. J. Woodrow McCree looks more closely for any influence they may have had on one another, and also posits why neither would have mentioned it.

Another notable stage of national development, the creation of parks and gardens, was initially led by Newburgh native Andrew Jackson Downing, whose protégé, Calvert Vaux, shared his recognition of the “genius of place” and would continue designing public and private landscapes after Downing’s untimely death. In May 2022, the Calvert Vaux Preservation Alliance presented a symposium on the often-overlooked legacy of its namesake. Much of it is adapted and published here. Thomas Wermuth shares a research note about the nineteenth-century holiday tradition of “Blue Monday” and Laurence Hauptman offers an introduction and context for a historic speech given by Congressman Hamilton Fish, Jr., which reflects on the circumstances of the Watergate Impeachment. Finally, Shannon Butler and Brian Berryann share some surprising stories from another offspring of the National Parks movement — the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery.

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# History Unearthed: The Land and Legacy of the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery

*Shannon Butler and Brian Berryann*

***Editors' Note: this article has been adapted from one of the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery's annual walking tours.***

As we all know, there are two things in life that will always be certain: death and taxes. When we die, something has to be done with our remains. Before the creation of rural cemeteries, you had a few options when you died. If you were in good standing with your church, you could be buried in your church's graveyard, or perhaps your family had established a burial ground on their own land. If you had no money to speak of, you would most likely end up in a "potter's field," among strangers and fellow paupers. On the 1834 map of Poughkeepsie, there were six burial grounds within the area that we now consider the city (at the time, it was a village). All of these are now used for other purposes — either playgrounds, parking lots, or housing. It wasn't until the New York State Legislature passed the Rural Cemetery Act in April 1847 that people really began discussing the possibility of establishing a major cemetery for everyone in Poughkeepsie.

True to its tagline "Neutral in Nothing," the *Poughkeepsie Journal* jumped right on this on July 10, 1847. It advocated that Poughkeepsie's "leading citizens" should "proceed immediately, incorporate themselves, purchase land, and lay out a cemetery that shall be an ornament to our village, and that will rob the grave of half its terrors" (which makes us wonder what half they were talking about).<sup>1</sup> The paper could get pretty flowery in its writings concerning the need for a cemetery. On June 14, 1851, it stressed:

Is it not desirable for all our citizens, of every creed to unite in one common place of sepulture, that thus by their union the locality itself might be beautified as a 'Rural Cemetery,' and the graveyard be regarded as a region where no sectional partitions are discovered. Such a spot would be an invaluable ornament to our village, attracting both the resident and the stranger, and inculcating by its silent eloquence salutary lessons of the fleeting character of life.<sup>2</sup>

Well-known local businessmen like James Bowne and Matthew Vassar formed a committee and decided to purchase about fifty acres of land on the south end of Academy Street to

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1 "A Rural Cemetery," *The Poughkeepsie Eagle*, July 10, 1847.

2 "To the Inhabitants of Poughkeepsie," *The Poughkeepsie Eagle*, June 14, 1851.

be used as a cemetery.<sup>3</sup> However, this land didn't interest many subscribers. In May 1853, properties belonging to William Davies and David Lent were being viewed as possible locations, but finally it was decided that the old estate of Judge Smith Thompson, just south of the city and alongside the railroad, would be the best location.<sup>4</sup> The estate consisted of fifty-four acres, the former residence of Judge Smith, and enjoyed fabulous views of the Hudson River. One of the features of this site was used in early land dealings between local Native Americans and European settlers in the late seventeenth century. The waterfall that can be seen on the eastern end of the cemetery and flows out into the river near Mine Point was mentioned in a deed between a Native American named Massany and Arnout Viele in 1683.<sup>5</sup>



Part of a stereoscope image showing the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery in its early days.  
Courtesy Local History Room, Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie N.Y.

Sixty prominent members of Poughkeepsie society came up with the money — just over \$16,000 — to purchase this property, and by August 1853 work was well underway on preparing the grounds for burials. The landscape architect behind the property's layout was Howard Daniels, who had become well-known for his work in cemetery landscaping.<sup>6</sup>

3 Platt, Edmund, *The Eagle's History of Poughkeepsie From the Earliest Settlements 1683–1905* (Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County Historical Society, 1987) 148.

4 "Weekly Log-Book," *The Poughkeepsie Eagle*, May 14, 1853.

5 Reynolds, Helen Wilkinson. *Poughkeepsie: The Origin and Meaning of the Word*, (Poughkeepsie, 1924) 16–17.

6 The Cultural Landscape Foundation, <https://www.tclf.org/pioneer/howard-daniels>.

The *Poughkeepsie Journal* reported that “a large gang of workmen are at work in grading the avenues and preparing the lots for occupancy.”<sup>7</sup> The cemetery was officially opened on November 2, 1853, with a dedication ceremony and groups in carriages, a brass band, and hundreds of spectators on foot.<sup>8</sup> Some of the first burials that took place in the following weeks were actually reburials from some of the old graveyards around the city. The first recently deceased (in other words, not previously buried) person to be interred in the cemetery was Carra Peters, the three-year-old daughter of Daniel and Ellen Peters, on December 4, 1853.<sup>9</sup>

The cemetery’s elaborate gatehouse was designed and built by local architect J.A. Wood in 1867.<sup>10</sup> He is responsible for several other prominent buildings in Poughkeepsie, including the Bardavon Opera House and Vassar Institute.

More than 100 acres have since been added to the cemetery, including the Livingston family burial ground, which was located just next door. Purchased by the cemetery Board of Trustees from the family in 1914, it has some of the oldest graves in the entire cemetery.<sup>11</sup> The Livingston family had established themselves on this land back in the early eighteenth century. Henry Livingston, Jr., who may have written “The Night before Christmas,” is buried in this private family section that is just in view of the community mausoleum added to the property in 1985. Over the years, several memorials have been added to the cemetery. Some pay tribute to groups like firefighters and police officers, while others



Young Charles Spross at his piano with a small oval image of him as a child. The Charles Gilbert Spross Collection, Local History Room, Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie N.Y.

commemorate those who served in combat, such as the Civil War and Spanish-American War monuments. There are more than 60,000 inhabitants interred throughout the property. Some left their marks on Poughkeepsie’s history; others managed to make their presence known across the world. Following are some of the most fascinating.

**Charles Gilbert Spross** was born to German immigrants Michael and Alouisa Spross on January 6, 1874, in the family’s home at 51 South Bridge Street in Poughkeepsie.<sup>12</sup> As a child, he no doubt enjoyed listening to his father and uncle sing, as they were members

7 “Weekly Log-Book,” *The Poughkeepsie Eagle*, August 27, 1853.

8 “Weekly Log-Book,” *The Poughkeepsie Eagle*, October 22, 1853.

9 “Weekly Log-Book,” *The Poughkeepsie Eagle*, December 10, 1853.

10 “The Gate Keeper’s Lodge at the Cemetery,” *The Poughkeepsie Eagle*, December 3, 1867.

11 Livingston Family Plot File, Archives of The Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery.

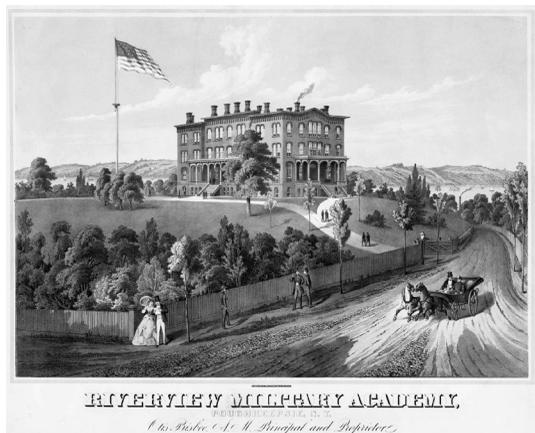
12 Charles G Spross, in the New York, U.S., State Census, 1875.

of the Germania Singing Society.<sup>13</sup> Spross took after his father and began singing in the choir of the Church of the Nativity as a boy. He began his training in piano and organ with Adolf Kuehn and Helen J. Andrus (author of “A Century of Music in Poughkeepsie”).<sup>14</sup> Later, Spross would serve as the accompanist for the Germania Singing Society while his teacher conducted and his father sang.

By the time he was twenty years old, Spross began playing organ and directing choirs at various churches, including St. Paul’s in Poughkeepsie and later the Rutgers Presbyterian church in New York City. His abilities as an accompanist earned him a reputation in the musical field and he was soon desired by all of the great singers of his day. He even played with the famous Enrico Caruso in front of 10,000 fans in Toronto.<sup>15</sup> It was his touring with singer Alma Gluck that made his own compositions famous. She sang his song “Will O’ the Wisp” all over the country and it became an instant hit.<sup>16</sup>

Spross’s compositions for both secular and sacred music earned him fame and his sheet music sold out in music stores across the nation. He was asked to perform at the White House by Presidents Taft, Wilson, Harding, and Coolidge. He received a Doctor of Music degree in 1936 from Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, while continuing to perform and write. After all of the traveling and performing like a rock star of the vaudeville era, he decided he wanted to return to his roots. In his later years, he found his way back to Poughkeepsie and served as organist and choir director of the First Congregational Church until he retired in 1956. He died in his home at 4 Allen Place on December 23, 1961.<sup>17</sup>

**Otis Bisbee** was born into a poor Massachusetts family in 1822. He managed to educate himself and save enough money to go to Union College when he was twenty-one years old. After graduating with honors, in 1850 he made his way to Poughkeepsie, where he became a teacher’s assistant under Charles Bartlett at College Hill.<sup>18</sup> He formed a partnership with fellow instructor Charles Warring and when Charles Bartlett died, they jointly took over the school for five years. Bisbee then ran the school alone for another five years until



Lithograph of the Riverview Academy, artist and date unknown. The United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division

13 “Dr. Spross marks his 87th birthday,” *The Poughkeepsie Journal*, January 11, 1961.

14 “Dr. Spross dies at 87, Held wide fame in music,” *The Poughkeepsie Journal*, December 24, 1961.

15 “Sudden Death of Caruso mourned by Poughkeepsie,” *The Poughkeepsie Eagle News*, August 3, 1921.

16 “He played for greats, yet he’s little known at home,” *The Poughkeepsie Journal*, April 13, 1983.

17 “Dr. Spross dies at 87, Held wide fame in music,” *The Poughkeepsie Journal*, December 24, 1961.

18 Beers, J.H. *Commemorative Biographical Record of the Counties of Dutchess and Putnam, New York: Containing Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens, and of Many of the Early Settled Families* (Chicago, 1897) 28–29.

he purchased property just west of Eastman Park and began constructing a new school. On a spring day in 1867, the entire school marched from the old College Hill campus to the brand-new Riverview Military Academy to begin classes at the new location. The property included about five acres of sporting fields, a gymnasium, school building, and living quarters. A grand total of \$70,000 was spent to improve the campus, which was no doubt risky. However, the venture paid off within a year when students from all over the nation began flowing in.<sup>19</sup>

The main school building, also designed by J.A. Wood, had classrooms on the first floor and apartments for students (called “cadets”) on the next two floors. A school catalog from 1888 proclaims that the building has “hot and cold water on every floor, is heated with steam, and lighted with gas. It is believed that the building is equaled by few in the State for elegance, spacious accommodation, and conveniences of school-boy life.”<sup>20</sup> This site is currently a soccer field just off of Lincoln Avenue.

In 1884, Bisbee suffered a slight stroke but got back to work as soon as he was able. He died a year later, on February 12, 1885, while working at his school. His obituary in the *Poughkeepsie Eagle News* noted that “He was not a brilliant or quick man, and was accustomed to say sometimes that he could appreciate the difficulties which boys experienced and adapt his explanations to their dull comprehension, because he had always been compelled to patiently study out every process and understand every step for himself.”<sup>21</sup>

**Dr. Sara Josephine Baker** was born in Poughkeepsie on November 15, 1873, to Orlando Daniel Mosher Baker and Jenny Hardwood Brown. Orlando Baker was one of Poughkeepsie’s most prominent and respected lawyers, and Jenny Brown one of the first students to enter Vassar College. They lived at 31 South Clinton Street, where they had three children, Mary, Sara Josephine (who everyone called Joe), and Robert. As Orlando Baker’s practice was successful, life seemed to be going well for the family. They were wealthy enough to have servants and the children all attended school. However, in March 1890, Robert, then a cadet at the Riverview Military Academy and just thirteen years old, suddenly fell ill and died.<sup>22</sup> Less than three months later, in May, Orlando Brown became ill and died.<sup>23</sup> Years later, in her book *Fighting for Life*, Sara Baker wrote about how typhoid had taken both of them. “In those days typhoid was the scourge of Poughkeepsie and no wonder, since the town water supply was drawn from the Hudson just below the outlet of the sewer from the large Asylum for the Insane above the town.”<sup>24</sup>

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19 “Riverview Academy. A Classical, English, and Military Boarding School, Riverview, Poughkeepsie, New York.” 1888. Riverview Academy, Catalogs and Pamphlets, Box 373–R, Local History Room, Adriaance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie, New York.

20 Ibid.

21 “Obituary. Otis Bisbee.” *The Poughkeepsie Eagle News*, February 13, 1885.

22 “Obituary. Robert N.B. Baker.” *The Poughkeepsie Eagle News*, March 8, 1890.

23 “Obituary. O.D.M. Baker.” *The Poughkeepsie Eagle News*, May 28, 1890.

24 Baker, S. Josephine. *Fighting for Life*. (United Kingdom: New York Review Books, 2013) 24–25.

It is believed that this was her reasoning for abandoning plans to attend Vassar College and instead go to a medical college. In 1898, after four years of intensive study, Baker graduated second in a class of eighteen at New York's Women's Medical College.<sup>25</sup> She interned, or gained practical experience in medicine, at the New England Hospital for Women and Children, an outpatient clinic serving residents in one of the worst slums in Boston, Massachusetts.<sup>26</sup> Later, she moved to New York City with her roommate and fellow intern, where they set up a practice near Central Park West. Unable to make ends meet, Baker took a job as a medical inspector for New York City's Department of Health. She examined sick children in schools and worked toward controlling the spread of contagious disease.

In 1902, Baker was given the job of searching for sick infants in Hell's Kitchen, a slum area where 1,500 children were dying of dysentery each week. Six years later, the city's Department of Health established a division of child hygiene, with Baker as its director — making her the first woman in the United States to hold an executive position in a health department. There she shaped policies for innovative health reform and made preventive medicine and health education the responsibility of the government.<sup>27</sup> As Baker's program saved the lives of countless infants, she revolutionized pediatric health care in the United States.

During her years as an inspector, she helped take down the infamous Irish cook Mary Mallon, known to the public as "Typhoid Mary." Baker had worked alongside other doctors to locate Mallon in a Park Avenue home, but the woman refused to cooperate. Since the young Dr. Baker was a woman, she was given the task of pinning down Mallon inside an ambulance. She wrote, "I literally sat on her all the way to the hospital; it was like being in a cage with an angry lion."<sup>28</sup> The first known healthy carrier of typhoid, Mallon instigated several separate outbreaks of the disease and is known to have infected more than fifty people through her job. At least three of those she infected died. Mallon was not the only repeat offender, or the only typhoid-contagious cook in New York City at



A photograph of Dr. Sara Josephine Baker dated 1922. The National Library of Medicine, <https://collections.nlm.nih.gov/catalog/nlm:nlmuid-101409664-img>

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25 Ibid. 29.

26 Ibid. 33.

27 Baker, S. Josephine. "Dr. Joe: Pioneer of Public Health Initiatives for Immigrant Mothers and Children." *AJPH*, October 10, 2011, <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.96.4.618>.

28 Baker, S. Josephine. *Fighting for Life*. (United Kingdom: New York Review Books, 2013) 75.

the time, but she was unique in that she did not suffer any ill effects from the disease. As a result, she was the only patient placed in isolation for the rest of her life.<sup>29</sup>

Dr. Baker wrote more than 250 articles and four books, and served on dozens of medical societies and committees. In her later years, she lived with her friend (and perhaps life partner) Ida Alexa Rose Wylie, a writer.<sup>30</sup> They lived together until Dr. Baker's death in 1945. She was the last to be buried in the Baker family plot at Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery.



Photograph of Harvey Eastman, taken at the Vail Brothers Photography Studios. Vail Brothers Collection, Local History Room, Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie N.Y.

**Harvey Eastman** could spread the word about where to get a good education better than anybody. Born in western New York on October 16, 1834, he was educated as a young man at a business school operated by his uncle in Rochester.<sup>31</sup> (He was first cousin of George Eastman, founder of the Eastman-Kodak Company.) This institution inspired Eastman to create a business school of his own, in Oswego in 1855. In the years just before the Civil War, he went west to Missouri to try to build a school there before coming back east and settling in Poughkeepsie. He opened up his next school in November 1859, beginning with a single student, Andrew Houston.<sup>32</sup> Within a few years, Eastman had several hundred students and a reputation for running the leading business institute in the nation. The school would continue after Eastman's death, eventually educating well over 50,000 people.

Eastman came to love Poughkeepsie as his home. He purchased a house and twenty-seven acres of land along the corner of Market and Montgomery streets, and spent an additional \$200,000 to improve the land and build a house for his family, which consisted of his wife Mary Minerva and daughters Cora and Carlotta.<sup>33</sup> They also had another daughter, Minnie, who was actually the first family member buried in Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery. She died at the age of nine months from congestion of the lungs in 1872.<sup>34</sup> Eastman's park, which he built alongside his mansion, was his own version of a Central Park; it had paths, gardens, and a zoo. He also built

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29 Filio Marineli, MD, "Mary Mallon (1869–1938) and the history of typhoid fever," National Library of Medicine, 2013, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3959940/>

30 Bert Hansen, PhD, "Public Careers and Private Sexuality: Some Gay and Lesbian Lives in the History of Medicine and Public Health," National Library of Medicine, January, 2002, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1447383/>

31 "In Memoriam, H.G. Eastman, LL.D." 1878. Material on H.G. Eastman and the Poughkeepsie Branch of E.N.B.C. – 378.1 E, Local History Room, Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie, New York.

32 Ibid.

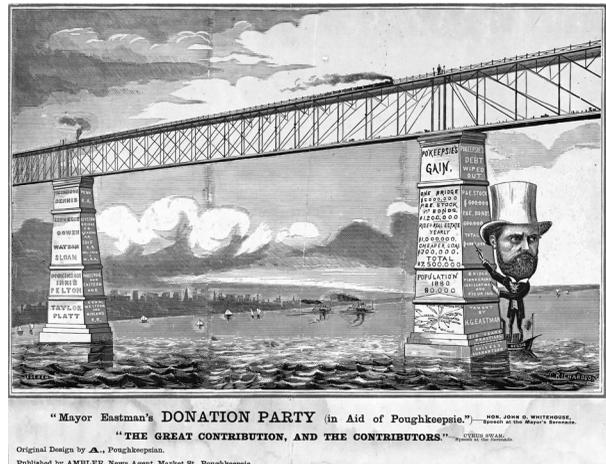
33 "The Absolute Public Sale of the Superior Residences of The Eastman Terrace, at Poughkeepsie, NY." Pamphlet, 1873, Eastman Collection Collection, Local History Room, Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie, New York.

34 Eastman Family Plot File, Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery Archives, Poughkeepsie, New York.

ten large townhouses on the south end of his park, along what is now known as Eastman Terrace. (He had planned to build twenty-four houses, but the first ten proved too difficult to sell.)<sup>35</sup>

Eastman was elected mayor of Poughkeepsie in 1871 and again in 1877. His contributions to the area include the Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge, which was mostly his idea; the Soldiers Memorial fountain on Market Street; and the creation of a proper sand filtration water plant, constructed with the hope of ending the epidemics that plagued the city.

Eastman died in Denver, Colorado, on July 13, 1878, while trying to take the cure for his consumption. A huge funeral preceded his burial in Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery.<sup>36</sup>



Political cartoon showing Harvey Eastman and his idea for the Hudson River Railroad Bridge, original design by “A. Poughkeepsiean.” Local History Room, Adriaance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie N.Y.

**Wesley and Delia Smead** reside in a mausoleum that was built with love and maybe a dash of madness. Born on December 23, 1800, in Westchester County, Wesley Smead worked as a newspaper boy before becoming a printer and heading off to Ohio Medical College to study medicine. When he discovered that being a doctor was not going to make him rich, he turned instead to the pharmacy business. He became so wealthy that he began lending his money with interest, and eventually moved into the world of finance with Citizens Bank in Cincinnati.<sup>37</sup> He was married at least twice prior to hiring a young Irish woman named Delia Smith to be his nurse. He ended up marrying her as well.<sup>38</sup>

Delia Bridget Smith was born in Ireland on April 23, 1836. There doesn't seem to be much information about her early life, and it appears she changed her birth date on different passport applications and census records in her later years.<sup>39</sup> It is difficult to say exactly when she was born and how she ended up in Poughkeepsie. Smith's 1887 passport application states that she was born in Dublin but married a “native US citizen” in 1862.

35 “The Absolute Public Sale of the Superior Residences of The Eastman Terrace, at Poughkeepsie, NY.” Pamphlet, 1873, Eastman Collection, Local History Room, Adriaance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie, New York.

36 “In Memoriam, H.G. Eastman, LL.D.” 1878. Material on H.G. Eastman and the Poughkeepsie Branch of E.N.B.C. – 378.1 E, Local History Room, Adriaance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie, New York.

37 Smead Family Plot File, Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery Archives, Poughkeepsie, New York.

38 U.S. Passport Application – 1887, 1895.

39 Ibid.



Photograph of Mrs. Smead taken in 1873 at the Vail Brothers Photography Studio. Vail Brothers Collection, Local History Room, Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie N.Y.

(That would have been her employer, Dr. Wesley Smead). However, her 1895 passport application claims she was born in New York.<sup>40</sup>

Based on the various newspaper articles about her life, Smith was working for Dr. Smead as his nurse when he moved to Poughkeepsie. The marriage produced no children but the doctor certainly cared for her, as evidenced by these words in his last will and testament: “finally for her devoted affection in cheering the path of my declining years for her ever anxious solicitude for my comfort for her watchful and tender loving care of me by night and by day during my many years of impaired health, I bequeath to her my never dying love.” (He also bequeathed her a good amount of money to live comfortably for the rest of her life.)<sup>41</sup>

The couple appears to have lived in the Morgan House Hotel, on Poughkeepsie’s Market Street, as opposed to owning a grand house of their own. When Dr. Smead died in 1871, his funeral was held at the hotel and his widow began making plans for an elaborate memorial.<sup>42</sup> With her newfound wealth, she decided to buy several plots of land atop a beautiful hill in Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery. She then began preparations for an Ionic-styled tomb made entirely of Quincy granite. The cost was said to be somewhere close to \$50,000.<sup>43</sup> It was reported that she watched its construction every day, even taking part in the work. According to the *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle*, she “would take an old pail and shovel and go down to the Smead mausoleum and work with the men, even climbing up to the top of the monument and working there.”<sup>44</sup>

When the tomb was completed in 1878, Delia Smead refused to accept the work that had been done, as she did not like the look of “one or more of the blocks of granite used.”<sup>45</sup> The building was leveled and rebuilt, and the remains of Dr. Smead were finally interred in July 1879, nine years after his passing.<sup>46</sup> Stories of her odd behavior would continue to appear in the papers, everything from telling indecent stories to random strangers in the Nelson House dining room to tipping trolley conductors five dollars for a ride (equivalent to several days salary). She was known for her liberal donations to various charities and Catholic organizations, including St. Mary’s Church and the Columbus Institute. However, some of her family seemed to feel that her costly donations to random workers were a sign

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40 Ibid.

41 Last Will and Testament of Dr. Wesley Smead, 24 Nov 1869.

42 “Obituary, Dr. Wesley Smead,” *The Poughkeepsie Eagle News*, January 7, 1871.

43 “A Costly Sepulcher,” *Poughkeepsie Daily Press*, April 6, 1874.

44 “Effort to break Smead Will,” *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle*, November 22, 1910.

45 “Smead Mausoleum,” *Poughkeepsie Daily Press*, October 21, 1878

46 “Removal of the body of Dr. Smead,” *Poughkeepsie Daily Press*, July 29, 1879.

that she needed a rest, which in those days meant being sent to a sanitarium.<sup>47</sup>

Delia Smead spent about a week at the Hudson River State Hospital before finally being released. She appears to have moved to New York City, where she lived in a boarding house on West 12th Street. This may give the impression that she had no money. In fact, her estate was said to be worth well over \$100,000 at the time of her death on December 26, 1909.<sup>48</sup> After a large funeral at St. Mary's Church, her remains were brought to the mausoleum.

**Matthew Vassar** was born in England on April 29, 1792, and immigrated with his family to America when he was about four years old.<sup>49</sup> His childhood was kind of bumpy, as far as he could remember: Lots of near-death experiences like almost drowning, being thrown from his father's horse, nearly being impaled by an English bull, and catching typhus three times.<sup>50</sup> He also never had a proper education. He tried schooling for a hot-second as they say but it never really panned out. His father decided to have him focus on physical labor instead.

For a time, Vassar worked for a merchant just north of Newburgh before making his way back to Poughkeepsie to join his family's brewing business.<sup>51</sup> In 1812, he opened an oyster restaurant in the basement of the Dutchess County courthouse to feed all those working in the legal system.<sup>52</sup> He invested in the Poughkeepsie Whaling company and had several sloops that delivered ales from his brewery up and down the river.<sup>53</sup> He was also involved in the Farmers and Manufacturers National Bank as well as directing the Poughkeepsie Lyceum of Literature, Science and the Mechanical Arts.<sup>54</sup>



Photograph of a painting of Matthew Vassar made by Charles Loring Elliott in 1861. Local History Room, Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie N.Y.

47 "Mrs. Smead Committed," *Poughkeepsie Eagle News*, July 11, 1908.

48 "Mrs. Delia Smead died on Sunday," *Poughkeepsie Eagle News*, December 27, 1909.

49 Haight, Elizabeth Hazelton. *The Autobiography and Letters of Matthew Vassar*. (New York, 1916) 1-2.

50 Haight, 20.

51 Haight, 27-28.

52 "More than a brewer," Vassar Encyclopedia, 2006, <https://www.vassar.edu/vcencyclopedia/matthew-vassar/more-than-a-brewer.html>.

53 "Poughkeepsie Whaling Company," *Poughkeepsie Journal*, June 6, 1832.

54 Ibid.

Vassar's wealth and vision would eventually lead to the founding of the college named after him. It was partially inspired by a niece of his, Lydia Booth, an early educator of girls in Poughkeepsie.<sup>55</sup> Vassar's two nephews, John and Matthew, Jr., who had essentially been raised as his sons, were very much against the idea of a female college. Instead, they wanted their uncle to build a hospital (eventually, they did that on their own).<sup>56</sup> But Vassar decided to go ahead with the project. Construction started in 1861, but the Civil War slowed its progress. In 1865, Vassar College finally opened. Its initial class contained more than 350 students.

In 1850, Vassar found himself serving on a committee to create a cemetery for Poughkeepsie. He purchased the Allen Farm for \$8,000 and in the fall of 1850 he began to make improvements on the property with the help of landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing. However, the cemetery idea fell through and the committee decided on land across the street and closer to the river, its current location. Vassar instead made his property into a gentleman's farm, known as Springside.<sup>57</sup> He died on June 23, 1868, while delivering a speech and is buried in the cemetery he helped create.<sup>58</sup>

**Jane Matilda Bolin** was born in Poughkeepsie on April 11, 1908.<sup>59</sup> Her father, Gaius Charles Bolin, was the first Black graduate of Williams College, in 1889. In addition to having a successful legal career in Poughkeepsie, his accomplishments included being a founding member of the local branch of the NAACP and the first African-American president of the Dutchess County Bar Association.<sup>60</sup> His daughter Jane was undoubtedly inspired by her father to build her own law career and succeed in a world that made things harder for both African-Americans and women. She attended Wellesley College, where she was one of two Black freshmen. At her graduation in 1928, she was named a Wellesley Scholar, a distinction given to the top twenty students of the class.

Bolin was the first Black woman to attend Yale Law School, the only Black person in her class, and one of only three women. After passing the bar in 1932, she went to work in her father's law office in Poughkeepsie before being hired in 1937 by the New York City Corporation Counsel. In 1939, she was appointed to a ten-year term as a Family Court Judge by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia.<sup>61</sup>

In February 1944, Bolin gave a speech while visiting her home city that spoke very clearly of the feelings concerning racial equality (or the lack thereof) at the time. "When I am asked why I ever left such a beautiful town as Poughkeepsie I am forced

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55 Haight, 33.

56 "Top Hat Scandal," Vassar Encyclopedia, <https://www.vassar.edu/vcencyclopedia/early-vassar/top-hat-scandal.html>.

57 "Springside: A Partnership with the Environment" (Dutchess County Department of Planning, 1968).

58 "Matthew Vassar," Vassar Encyclopedia, <https://www.vassar.edu/vcencyclopedia/matthew-vassar/matthew-vassar.html>.

59 "Judge Bolin: A Lady of Firsts," *Poughkeepsie Journal*, February 2, 1979.

60 "One of the People: 51 Years a Lawyer," *Poughkeepsie Journal*, November 21, 1943.

61 Martin, Douglas. "Jane Bolin, the Country's First Black Woman to Become a Judge, Is Dead at 98," *The New York Times*, January 10, 2007.



Photograph of Jane Bolin from 1942.  
The United States Library of Congress's Prints  
and Photographs division

to answer: "Yes, it is physically beautiful, but I hate fascism whether it is practiced by Germans, Japanese, or by Americans and Poughkeepsie is fascist to the extent of deluding itself that there is superiority among human beings by reason solely of color or race or religion." She went on to say that she had hoped that she could tell the world that in Poughkeepsie "there are Negroes on the staff of the district attorney, in the fire and police departments, in the city council – I should like to say that Negro physicians are welcomed on the staff of the Poughkeepsie hospitals, that Negro nurses are employed there." However, none of that was the case.<sup>62</sup>

Bolin was reappointed to ten-year terms by Mayors Paul O'Dwyer, Robert Wagner, and John Lindsay. She served until 1978, when she reached the mandatory retirement age of 70. ("I don't want to go, they're kicking me out," she said.<sup>63</sup>) After her retirement, she was a volunteer reading instructor in New York City public schools for two years, and was appointed to the Regents Review Committee of the New York State Board of Regents. She was married twice and had one son with her first husband. She had outlived both of her husbands and died in Queens at the age of ninety-eight in 2007.

**Arnout Cannon, Jr.**, born on August 3, 1839, was one of five sons of the prominent Poughkeepsie builder Arnout Cannon, Sr. The son learned carpentry at a young age and went on to study architecture in New York City under Frederick Draper.<sup>64</sup> But before he began a serious career in architecture, he served in the Civil War in the 128<sup>th</sup> New York State Volunteers, which he joined in 1862 as a sergeant. At least two of his brothers served alongside him in the 150<sup>th</sup>, also known as the Dutchess County Regiment.<sup>65</sup> When he returned from service, he jumped right into building projects, including the Vassar Brothers Institute and Vassar Brothers Old Men's Home (now occupied by the Cunneen-Hackett

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62 "Judge Bolin Declares 'Brotherhood' Pointless unless Poughkeepsie Ends Its Intolerance," *Poughkeepsie New Yorker*, February 23, 1944.

63 Martin, Douglas. "Jane Bolin, the Country's First Black Woman to Become a Judge, Is Dead at 98," *The New York Times*, January 10, 2007.

64 Fitch, Charles E. *Encyclopedia of Biography of New York, a life of men and women whose sterling character and energy and industry have made them preeminent in their own and many other states*, (Boston, New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1916) vol. 1, 72.

65 Hanaburgh, David Henry. *History of the One Hundred and Twenty-eighth Regiment*, (Press of Enterprise Publishing Company, 1894) 238.



Photograph of Arnout Cannon Jr.  
From the Local History Room,  
Adriance Memorial Library,  
Poughkeepsie N.Y.

Arts Center). His ability as an inventor gained him substantial wealth when he created the Cannon Patented Dumbwaiter.<sup>66</sup>

By 1884, Cannon focused his attention exclusively on architecture. Three years later, he designed and built his personal residence and office at 204 Church Street in Poughkeepsie. A brick row of townhouses that Cannon also designed still stands just east of his home along Church Street.<sup>67</sup> In 1888, Cannon redesigned Wilderstein, the Suckley estate in Rhinecliff, from its original Italianate villa style into the fashionable Queen Anne mansion that exists today.<sup>68</sup> He designed the William T. Reynolds house (now the Italian Center on Mill Street in Poughkeepsie), as well as several modest homes on Carroll and Montgomery streets and Hooker Avenue while creating more elaborate

residences for well-to-do families on Garfield Place and Balding Avenue. He also designed one of the Adriance homes on Academy Street and a mausoleum in the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery for the Tower family.

When it came to family life, Cannon and his wife Ann Eliza had their first child, Ida, in 1862, just as he was enlisting to join the war. Ida had the chance to live a good long life, which cannot be said for most of her siblings or her mother. Of the nine children Ann Eliza gave birth to over a span of fifteen years, six died young and she succumbed during childbirth in 1877 at the age of thirty-eight.

Cannon remarried and had another son, but neither wife nor child are buried in Poughkeepsie. In 1895, seemingly at the height of his success, he developed serious issues with his eyes; at the age of fifty-six, he was forced to retire from the field he loved. On March 31, 1898, Cannon had breakfast in his home on Church Street and walked to the nearby Masonic Temple, purported to be his favorite among the buildings he designed. He took a seat in the empty hall, pointed a revolver to his heart, and fired. Arnout Cannon died at the scene and was laid to rest in Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery.<sup>69</sup>

**The Smith Brothers**, who perhaps created the most well-known brand to come out of Poughkeepsie, are buried in different plots — William is in Section 13, Andrew in Section F.<sup>70</sup> The sons of James Smith and Ann Anderson, William was born in 1830 and Andrew

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66 Musso, Anthony. "Cannon designed prominent Poughkeepsie Buildings." *Poughkeepsie Journal*, June 23, 2015.

67 Wahlberg, Holly. "Statement of Significance: 204 Church Street" (Residence of architect Arnout Cannon) 2014, Sep 26.

68 Letters between A. and G. Cannon and R. Suckley, Wilderstein Historic Site Archives, 1888–1889.

69 "Very Sad Suicide, Arnout Cannon Takes His Own Life," *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle*, April 1, 1898.

70 Smith Family Plot File, Archives of the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery.

six years later. In 1847, the family moved to Poughkeepsie from Canada, where they opened a confectionary shop on Market Street. In 1852, their father purchased a recipe from a man named Sly Hawkins for the famous cough drops that quickly became a necessity for alleviating cold and allergy symptoms. Brothers William and Andrew took over the business when their father died in 1866.<sup>71</sup> Their main factory at the time was located on Church Street, just behind the Armory, though the company moved to a bigger location on North Hamilton Street in 1915.<sup>72</sup>



A package of Smith Brothers cough drops.  
From the Local History Room,  
Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie N.Y.

In 1872, the brothers began marketing their now famous cough drops in little white boxes, with a newly issued government trademark and pictures of themselves on the cover. Their pictures sat right above the words “trade” (William) and “mark” (Andrew), which caused a bit of confusion for some of their loyal customers. Andrew, who died in 1894, was quiet, hardworking, and a very kind man who gave to the poor regularly and donated to various local charities. He never married, nor did he ever hold any public office.<sup>73</sup>

After Andrew’s death, William bought his brother’s share of the company and continued to use the name Smith Brothers. He was much more active in public affairs and his name appeared in the newspapers more frequently. He donated \$5,000 to the Old Ladies’ Home and more than twice that amount to the Y.M.C.A.<sup>74</sup> When he died in 1913, his son Arthur took over the reins until his death in 1936. At that point, two Smith brothers again controlled the company — Arthur’s sons William and Robert.<sup>75</sup> The brand that the original brothers created still remains one of the most recognizable cough drops to this day.

**George Edwin Bissell** was born on February 16, 1839, in New Preston, Connecticut. As he was preparing to enter into higher education, the Civil War broke out and he enlisted with the 23<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Volunteers in Waterbury, Connecticut.<sup>76</sup> He served as a private until 1863, when he landed the role of assistant paymaster with the U.S. Navy until the end of the war.<sup>77</sup> He returned home, married Mary Elizabeth Welton, and together they started a family. They traveled along with George’s father Hiram and his brother Henry

71 “Smiths’ Story One in True American Tradition Family of Scots Went to Canada,” *Poughkeepsie Journal*, April 20, 1947.

72 “Smith Bros. Plan Improvement to cost \$175,000,” *Poughkeepsie Eagle News*, May 4, 1915.

73 “Andrew Smith Dead,” *Poughkeepsie Eagle News*, October 22, 1894.

74 “Services in Memory of William W. Smith,” *Poughkeepsie Eagle News*, November 24, 1913.

75 Almost the entire issue of the *Poughkeepsie Journal* for April 20, 1947, was dedicated to the Smith Brothers on their 100th anniversary. Several stories about the company’s history can be found throughout.

76 “George E. Bissell, Sculptor, Dies at 81,” *The New York Times*, August 31, 1920.

77 Record of service of Connecticut men in the army and navy of the United States during the War of the Rebellion. 1889 – <https://cslib.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p128501coll2/id/176120>.



George E Bissell — A photograph of George E. Bissell. From the collections of The United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division

to Poughkeepsie, where they began a marble business on Main Street and lived in two separate houses on High Street.<sup>78</sup>

When his father died in 1871, Bissell decided to begin the practice of sculpting, and the following year he was awarded his first commission — the powerful and mournful Firemen's monument in Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery.<sup>79</sup> After this, he and his brother began advertising their business on Main Street as "H.F. & G.E. Bissell, Monumental Sculptors."<sup>80</sup> George Bissell and his wife were met with heartache in January 1877 when two of their sons, Harry and Joseph, died from diphtheria only a few days apart (this terrible yet common illness killed many in the nineteenth century).<sup>81</sup> In 1887, he designed the monument for the 150<sup>th</sup> (Dutchess County) Regiment that stands on the battlefield at Gettysburg.<sup>82</sup> He also designed

several soldiers' monuments in his home state of Connecticut. By 1890, his brother left the business to become a postal worker while George carried on with his own work in a studio in his new home on Mansion Street (site of today's post office).

During the 1870s and '80s, it was popular for American artists to travel to Europe to sharpen their skills, and in 1875 Bissell made his way overseas to study and work in places like Rome, Florence, and Paris.<sup>83</sup> He would continue making a transatlantic journey between a new home and studio at 25 Balding Avenue in Poughkeepsie and a studio in Florence.<sup>84</sup> In 1895, he designed a thirty-five foot statue to commemorate New York State's ratification of the U.S. Constitution in Poughkeepsie in 1788. The statue was supposed to stand at the intersection of Main and Market streets, but it appears that it was never executed.<sup>85</sup>

Bissell was commissioned to create several statues in New York City, including one of Chester A. Arthur in Madison Square Park and several of members of the prominent De Peyster family.<sup>86</sup> As a result of his work, in 1901 he was made the director of the

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78 "George E. Bissell, Sculptor, Dies at 81," *The New York Times*, August 31, 1920.

79 "Sculptor 'on Way' After Monument in Rural Cemetery," *Poughkeepsie Journal*, May 28, 1961.

80 Bissell Advertisement, *Poughkeepsie Eagle News*, April 24, 1875.

81 Bissell Family Plot File, Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery Archives, Poughkeepsie, New York.

82 The "Dutchess County Regiment": (150th Regiment of New York State Volunteer Infantry) in the Civil War. 1907 – <https://books.google.com/books?id=lzj2CAOmH-kC>.

83 "Personal Mention," *Poughkeepsie Eagle News*, March 11, 1895.

84 *Sanborn Insurance Map, City of Poughkeepsie, 1895*. Local History Collection, Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie NY.

85 "The Proposed Monument," *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle*, February 8, 1895.

86 "Statue of Chester A. Arthur," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, June 11, 1899.

Municipal Art Society of New York City. In his later years, he and his wife moved to Mount Vernon in Westchester County, where he lived until his death in 1920.<sup>87</sup>

**Anandabai Joshee, M.D.**, rests beneath one of the most visited graves in Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery. This young female physician from India traveled across the world to receive a proper education. Born in 1865 and raised in a Marathi Chitpavan Brahmin family,<sup>88</sup> she was named Yamuna at birth, but her husband, Gopal Vinayak Joshee (to whom she was married at the age of nine) renamed her Anandi, the “happy one.”<sup>89</sup> Although Gopal was a widower and twenty years her senior, he wanted to make sure that Anandi was properly educated, considered very progressive for the time.<sup>90</sup>

A prominent member of the Carpenter family, Mrs. Theodosia Eighmie Carpenter, read of Joshee’s desire to become a doctor, which was impossible for her in India. Carpenter managed to convince her family of the importance of sponsoring this young woman.<sup>91</sup> Joshee sailed from Calcutta for America on April 7, 1883, being the first high-caste Brahman woman to come to the United States.<sup>92</sup> In 1883, she was enrolled in the Pennsylvania Medical College with the help of the Carpenter family and graduated on March 11, 1886, with a medical degree. She was the first Hindu woman to receive a degree of Doctor of Medicine in any country in the world at a time when very few American women had accomplished this.<sup>93</sup>

Joshee received word that she had been appointed as a physician and would be in charge of the female ward at the Albert Edward Hospital back in Kolhapur, India. She thanked the family that had supported her dreams and set sail for home in October 1886.<sup>94</sup> Sadly, she remained in this position for less than a year before succumbing to tuberculosis on February 26, 1887, not yet twenty-two years old. Her husband decided to have her ashes sent back to America to be buried with the family that had made her feel like she was



Photograph from *The Life of Dr. Anandabai Joshee* by Mrs. Caroline Healey Dall. The United States Library of Congress’s collection on the Internet Archive

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87 “George E. Bissell, Sculptor, Dies at 81,” *The New York Times*, August 31, 1920.

88 Kosambi, M., Ramaswamy, R., Kolhatkar, M. and Mukherji, A., 2019. *A Fragmented Feminism: The Life and Letters of Anandibai Joshee*. (Routledge India, 2020).

89 Shakti, Street” Anandabai Joshee (1865–1887) <http://www.streeshakti.com/booka.aspx?author=16> .

90 Ibid.

91 Carpenter Family Plot File, Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery Archives, Poughkeepsie, New York.

92 Sarasvati, Pundita Ramabai, “The High Caste Hindu Woman,” (Philadelphia, 1888). <https://archive.org/details/highcastehinduwo025195mbp/page/n5/mode/2up>

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

one of them.<sup>95</sup> Today, Joshee is celebrated as a feminist and serves as an inspiration to young women throughout India.

The Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery was designed for, and remains, a place of peace and tranquility. The very purpose behind the Rural Cemetery Movement was to give the living a continued sense of comfort.<sup>96</sup> Its founders had a vision of gently rolling hills, tranquil waters, and stately trees that would create a park-like sanctuary of abiding dignity and natural splendor. That vision is meticulously maintained to this day by its devoted staff. As you walk the grounds, one can't help but feel the history and see the beauty as each section tells its own story. Every monument pays homage to the accomplishments of loved ones and is a place to gather, honor, and celebrate that life.

The staff at Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery is committed to being leaders in both the preservation of history and the continued operations of a full-service cemetery. They provide families with every option available, ensuring that final arrangements and wishes are met with dignity and respect. They have also created walking tours that shine a light on the lives of those buried within.

The Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery and the Poughkeepsie Public Library District are partnering to create more walking tour experiences. For more information on upcoming tour dates, visit <https://poughkeepsieruralcemetery.com/tours-and-events/> and <https://poklib.org/>.

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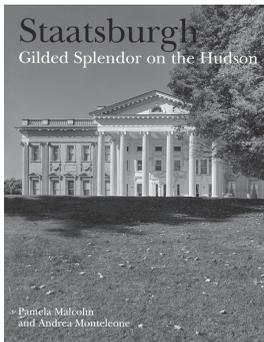
95 Carpenter Family Plot File, Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery Archives, Poughkeepsie, New York.

96 Douglas, Ann. *The Feminization of American Culture*, (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1977) 208–213.

Following the Yellow Brick Road  
in the Late-Nineteenth Century  
Mid-Hudson Valley:  
A Review of *Staatsburgh:  
Gilded Splendor on the Hudson*  
and *Hyde Park in the Gilded Age*

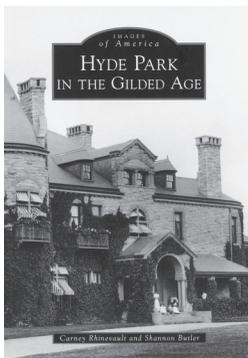
Charles F. Howlett

*Without wealth there can be no Maecenas*  
Andrew Carnegie, “Gospel of Wealth” (1889)



**Staatsburgh: Gilded Splendor on the Hudson**

By Pamela Malcolm and Andrea Monteleone  
(Staatsburg, NY: Friends of Mills at Staatsburgh, 2021)  
96 pp. \$28.95 (softcover)  
[www.blackdomepress.com](http://www.blackdomepress.com)



**Hyde Park in the Gilded Age (Images of America)**

By Carney Rhinevault and Shannon Butler  
(Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2019)  
127 pp. \$21.99 (softcover)  
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## Introduction

These two co-authored works shed light on a “golden” age in the mid-Hudson Valley. They address a period in our nation’s history known as the Gilded Age. The term Gilded Age comes from an 1873 novel by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner that satirized the materialistic excesses from the end of the Reconstruction Era to the final years of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> It was a time when the United States emerged as the world’s leading industrial nation, marked by a powerful navy that helped win the Spanish-American War of 1898; the end of the continental frontier as the settlement of the American West was completed; the rise of industrial capitalism in which cities and factories now dominated over the once-powerful agricultural countryside; and the large influx of European immigrants populating these urban areas and working in massive steel and manufacturing plants.

For contemporaries such as E.L. Godkin, editor of *The Nation*; British commentator Lord James Bryce, whose *The American Commonwealth* replaced Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* as the definitive study of the American way of life at that time; and Harvard historian Henry Adams, a direct descendant of Presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams, the Gilded Age was a period marked by corruption and little cultural depth. As they depicted it, business leaders (later labeled as “robber barons” by journalist Matthew Josephson) cared little for the public welfare while amassing huge fortunes due to influence peddling and government corruption. In their view, such materialistic acquisition and political corruption — Credit Mobilier, Whiskey Ring, Tammany Hall — stifled intellectual imagination and cultural pursuits.<sup>2</sup>

Twentieth-century historians sought to present a more balanced picture. Carl Degler’s *The Age of Economic Revolution*, Vincent P. De Santis’ *The Shaping of Modern America*, John Garraty’s *The New Commonwealth*, *The Gilded Age: A Reappraisal* (edited by H. Wayne Morgan), and Robert H. Wiebe’s *The Search for Order* have examined (both positive and critical) the entrepreneurial skills of the “Captains of Industry” in promoting the free enterprise system, as well as the importance of the general public’s political involvement in matters governing the nation — this despite the overwhelming influence of Social Darwinism and the prevailing theory of *laissez faire*.<sup>3</sup> Harvard historian and former journalist Howard Mumford Jones in his *The Age of Energy* went so far as to argue that the Gilded Age may have been one of the most remarkable generations in the nation’s history.<sup>4</sup> It represented a time of important scientific and technological inventions (e.g., the electric light and telephone), as well as intellectual development. The formation of professional organizations such as the American Bar Association and the American Historical Association complemented the rise of universities with graduate degree programs

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1 Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner. *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today* (Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing Co., 1873).

2 Matthew Josephson. *The Robber Barons: The Great American Capitalists, 1861–1901* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1934) and *The Politicos, 1865–1896* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1938).

3 Leonard Schrup and James G. Ryan, eds. *Historical Dictionary of the Gilded Age* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), ix–xv.

4 Howard Mumford Jones. *The Age of Energy: Varieties of American Experience, 1865–1915* (New York: Viking Press, 1970).

and new social sciences like sociology. It was far from being an era of jobbery, boorishness, and self-indulgence.

The hamlet of Staatsburg and Town of Hyde Park were part of that history and no strangers to the wealthy during the Gilded Age. Both are located at a convenient halfway point between the nation's largest metropolis, New York City, and the state's capital, Albany, and were aided by the Hudson River, a developing and improved roadway system, and the advancement of the railroad from the nearby city of Poughkeepsie. A rural and agricultural area, the Hyde Park region had a population of about 2,800 people during this period. Its major neighbor was Poughkeepsie, which prospered during the nineteenth century due to its shipping, millineries, paper mills, and breweries (the most notable of the latter owned by Matthew Vassar, who founded the famous women's college named after him).

During the Gilded Age, and even before that, the area claimed some notable occupants: the Stoutenburgs, Bards (the college is named after its original inhabitant, Dr. John Bard, who named the town after Edward Hyde, a colonial governor in the very early eighteenth century), Hosacks, Langdons, Dinsmores, Millesees, Morgans, Rogerses, Vanderbilts, and the Roosevelts. (Interestingly, James Roosevelt's estate, Springwood, is more modest by comparison since he did not spend his money on a large mansion and the family is not associated with the "new money" that defined the Gilded Age.) These aristocratic landowners were patrons of the arts whose vast collections of paintings and sculptures were on display for their visitors to admire when welcomed into their homes. Looming over the right bank of the Hudson River when heading upriver, these country estates — some considered as second homes or weekend getaways, a pleasant retreat from the hustle and breakneck pace of urban expansion — became a reminder of the growing wealth and power of a young nation about to emerge on the world stage.

## Staatsburgh: Gilded Splendor on the Hudson

Pamela Malcom and Andrea Monteleone's *Staatsburgh: Gilded Splendor on the Hudson* is an informative history of this estate from its origins in the late 1700s to its present designation as a state historic site. The authors present all the details and have a firm grasp of its history. Their book is the print version of the widely-popular British television series *Downton Abbey*, though lacking the social dynamic of the servants who made that show popular. Replete with color illustrations compiled by the noted photographer Pieter Estersohn, along with black-and-white images derived from archival sources (for example, comparing the present rooms' appearance to that in the Gilded Age — pages 45 and 53), it would fit well on a coffee table.

The authors carefully craft their historical overview of the estate for a popular audience. They provide appropriate background to the richly-adorned country home of Ogden Mills and his wife, Ruth Livingston Mills. Mills' wife was a descendant of the Livingston family, prominent landowners in the Hudson Valley since the 1700s. Mills was an example of the myth propounded by historian Irvin G. Wyllie in *The Self-Made*

*Man in America*, which argues that most of the rich and famous were not self-made millionaires but inherited their wealth. Mills came into his fortune as a result of his noted financier father, Darius Ogden Mills, invested in banks, railroads, and mines.<sup>5</sup> The Horatio Alger “rags to riches” novels of the previous generation certainly did not apply to this class of people. Ten years prior to the turn of the new century, Ruth Mills had inherited her childhood home in Staatsburg that had belonged to her great-grandfather (and New York State’s third governor), Morgan Lewis.

Malcom and Monteleone describe how Ogden and Ruth Livingston Mills retained McKim, Mead, and White, one of the more noted New York City architectural firms, to remodel and expand their home. When completed in 1896, the lavish mansion was transformed into sixty-five rooms, including fourteen bathrooms — of course, not even close to George Washington Vanderbilt’s Biltmore Estate in Ashville, North Carolina, which, alone, had forty-two bathrooms and covered 87,000 acres! From a conceptual and decorative perspective, the authors note how the architects preserved elements of the original home’s Greek Revival style while adding the contemporary, “gilded” look of Beaux-Arts style.

The narrative accompanying the six chapters offers historical background on the families who lived on the estate, descriptions of the grounds surrounding it, and the rooms in the mansion that were fit for entertainment (including descriptions of paintings, sculptures, ceilings, staircases, and other furnishings). Organized chronologically, it is easy to follow. Two things stood out to this reviewer: (1) The images selected for each chapter nicely complement the analysis provided, which includes explanations of the architectural makeovers, the inhabitants themselves, the guests who were greeted by the butler and footmen and welcomed into the mansion’s spacious first floor (“An expansive central room, the main hall greeted visitors with rich cut-velvet draperies and upholstery, comfortable club chairs and plush sofas, potted trees and ferns, and a wall lined with portraits of seven of Mrs. Mills’ illustrious forebears” (44)), and the daily maintenance and upkeep of the grounds, including agricultural production on the estate’s Endekill Farms; and, (2) Unlike many other highly-illustrated works, the authors have provided appropriate documentation for their story in the form of endnotes and collection notes, which adds a scholarly tone to the narrative. Beginning with the estate’s origins in the 1790s and continuing through its Gilded Age transformation, its gifting to the State of New York in 1938, and subsequent modifications enhancing access for present-day visitors, readers are able to appreciate one of the crown jewels of the Hudson Valley.

The heart of the book lies in chapters two through four. While Chapter Two covers the first, second, and third Staatsburgh history, it is the period during the Gilded Age and the early twentieth century where readers learn about architect Stanford White’s remodeling of the home with its grand, colonnaded portico resembling that of the nation’s Executive

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5 Irvin G. Wyllie. *The Self-Made Man in America: The Myth of Rags to Riches* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1954).

Building (the name was changed to the White House by President Theodore Roosevelt). What readers may want to know, though, is a more comprehensive discussion of Mills' descendants and their own impressions of the estate, including its economic burden during the Great Depression until deeded to New York's Taconic State Park Commission. Chapter Three is particularly interesting as the authors describe the inner workings of the estate, from tending the spacious gardens to raising livestock and maintaining a creamery producing butter and cream.

For social historians, however, one may feel wanting when it comes to a failure to incorporate more detailed discussions of the daily lives of the estate's workers. Save for one image (27) of a worker on a horse-drawn lawn mower and another of William Jago (33), who worked on the estate's cultivation, we know little about their lives and their impressions of the Millses and those who visited. The same applies to the highest-ranking staff such as the electrician, estate superintendent, farm manager (and college graduate) L.O. Stevenson, and butler Frederick Thompson. (Thompson, like the other ranking staff, had a house built on the estate.) Although there is one image of a room in Thompson's house and another of the servants' dining hall, their stories and views about their work are nonexistent (71). According to the authors, "Mrs. Mills' reputation as a preeminent hostess rode on the excellence of her staff and the modern amenities the mansion boasted" (71). It would have been nice to highlight the lives of these peoples as part of the social fabric, including the head chef, Jacques Negre. Are any written records, stories, or worker impressions available to incorporate into a future edition? The only notable mention found is a sentence stating that the estate's "employees enjoyed skating in the Mills Cove at the base of the lawn" (38).

Chapter Four, the most extensive, effectively brings to light the structure's role in the Gilded Age. The photos and illustrations do capture time and place. The authors are absolutely on point noting that "Stanford White was known for eclectic collecting of objects he found beautiful or appealing, rather than the methodical collecting informed by connoisseurship. . . . [R]ooms contain an assortment of furniture styles, art, and objects from different cultures and centuries" (43). Like most mansions of the Gilded Age, there is no consistency for cultural taste; what we see is an exorbitant display of wealth with items from various parts of the world taking up space in the same rooms, called "conspicuous consumption" by the noted contemporary economist Thorstein Veblen.<sup>6</sup> Staatsburgh's ornate and large library (60–61), typical of these mansions, was meant to convey erudition, importance, and a fulfillment of Carnegie's quote above. One reason Carnegie, one of the world's richest men, donated millions of dollars to reading rooms (libraries), endowments like the one for international peace, and higher education was to serve as a respectable substitute for his own lack of a formal education.<sup>7</sup>

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6 Thorstein Veblen. *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1899).

7 Joseph F. Wall. *Andrew Carnegie* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

The authors also include floor plans for each of the remodeled mansion's three stories, as well as one for the basement. The book concludes by addressing Staatsburgh's role as a state historical site open to visitors, the continuing improvements taking place, guided tours and interactive programs for visitors and schoolchildren, as well as the role of the Friends of Mills at Staatsburgh, which continue to preserve the estate's rich historical contributions to the Hudson Valley. A family tree and colorized map of the Enderkill Farms is an added bonus.

## Hyde Park in the Gilded Age

Like *Staatsburgh*, though without the detailed historical commentary, Carney Rhinevault and Shannon Butler's *Hyde Park in the Gilded Age* ably captures the imagery of the town from four distinct angles: architecture, lifestyle, religion, and workers. Part of Arcadia Publishing's Images of America Series, the book includes more than 180 photographs depicting the community during the Gilded Age. The black-and-white images come from the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library, Town of Hyde Park Historical Society, Hyde Park Free Library, the National Park Service, and private collections (including those of the authors.) This particular series is not for serious, academic scholars, as there are no footnotes nor list of references; it is designed to present a photographic mosaic of the subject. There is a concise introduction establishing the historical background to the period, while each thematic chapter has a very brief synopsis followed by annotated images. General audiences familiar with Hyde Park's history will like this book, given the quality of the images reproduced, including old postcards and a Rogers family album not previously published. A number of images were taken by Charles Piersaull, a local photographer and occasional bicycle repairer.

The book's first pictorial focus concentrates on the outside architectural designs of Hyde Park's mansions, including those of the Dinsmores, Langdons, Vanderbilts, Howards, and Rogerses (the latter called Crumwold). The descriptive annotations are appropriate as the authors demonstrate both a working knowledge of the images selected as well as a firsthand familiarity from living in the vicinity. There are curious inclusions that do not necessarily coincide with the intended focus of the chapter, such as images of the Vanderbilt greenhouses, the White Bridge on the estate, the Sexton boathouse, the greenhouses at Crumwold, and Hyde Park's first firehouse. The one exception is the Dinsmore greenhouse, which stands apart for its distinctive architectural design. An image of the James Roosevelt Memorial Library, constructed in 1927, following the end of the Gilded Age, brings into question its inclusion. The authors seek to justify it as an example of how wealthy individuals during that period "would have a structure built as a legacy for a departed family member" (34). This chapter may have worked better if the title was "Architecture and the Landscape."

Far more gratifying is the chapter about lifestyle. There are engaging family and individual portraits, especially that of Sarah Coolidge Newbold and her two children, as

well as the richly-adorned dress of Anne Caroline Coleman Rogers. Organizationally, they would fit better later in the chapter, to go along with excellent images of the Roosevelt, Rogers, Newbold, Vanderbilt, and Morgan families. Other images include those of leisurely sports for the wealthy such as golf, tennis, snowshoeing, horseback riding, ice yachting, and sailing on the Hudson. The heart of the chapter is the captivating images of the interior of Vanderbilt mansion. They clearly reinforce the Gilded Age's conspicuous consumption (check out Frederick Vanderbilt's shower, 77). So, too, do the images of the Sexton and Vanderbilt yachts (82). The authors' selection of an image of Fresh-Air Children (71) is an important addition to this chapter; it highlights the philanthropic duty that prominent families believed was part of their civic calling.

The remainder of this visual walk down Gilded Age Hyde Park addresses religious life and the workers who gave their sweat and toil to maintain these aristocratic estates. The religious side of Hyde Park takes center stage with images such as the Gothic Revival St. James Church (Episcopal), the Gothic-style Regina Coeli Church (Roman Catholic), and the imposing Jesuit seminary at St. Andrews, built in the early 1900s and now part of the Culinary Institute of America. Noticeably missing are images of the pastors who presided over their flocks during this period. How much influence did Roman Catholic priests exert over the community given the more established Anglo-Saxon and Protestant religions that had been firmly entrenched and supported by the area's well-to-do? Are there any images of church-sponsored picnics, which played a major social role in that era?

A strong suit of this book is depicting laborers at work. The authors have made a real contribution by including Charles Piersaull's contemporary photographs, which capture the activities of a railroad crew, construction workers pouring concrete at one of the main gates to Vanderbilt Mansion, the Vanderbilt farm gang, driving a well pipe at Crumwold, and a great image of the construction crew at Staatsburgh. There is even a historic photo of the still-extant Harrington House on Main Street, the home of Ed Harrington, who served as superintendent at both the Rogers and Vanderbilt estates. The point the authors make is that the "other side" of the story needs telling, that if not for the workers (the largest estates had from thirty to 100 servants, cooks, groundskeepers, gardeners, and coachmen), gilded existences would not have been possible. For those working for the "river families of Hyde Park," it was considered "an excellent career" (95). More importantly, it sustained the economic life of the community.

*Hyde Park in the Gilded Age* concludes with a brief contemporary look at a couple of extant mansions; a servant's cottage near the Roosevelt estate; stables, including those on the Hoyt, Howard, and Rogers estates (the latter has been converted into a multipurpose building with offices and apartments); Shepherd's cottage; and the front portico of Vanderbilt Mansion. Although change is constant, consistency persists and that is why Hyde Park retains its unique place in regional history. The authors deserve praise for fleshing out and putting together a wonderful panoramic overview of the gentrified estates, their workers, and the genteel families of Hyde Park. This is a book that local

residents and those curious about the Hudson River Valley during the Gilded Age will appreciate. The images and captions effectively tell the story.

## Conclusion

*Staatsburgh: Gilded Splendor on the Hudson* and *Hyde Park in the Gilded Age* are both important illustrative histories. Although not matching the breadth of Pieter Estersohn's *Life Along the Hudson: The Historic Country Estates of the Livingston Family*, they do provide a picture of the region during the Gilded Age. They also add to other pictorial histories of the area, including Richard Cain's *Eleanor Roosevelt's Val-Kill* and Joyce Ghee and Joan Spence's *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Hudson Valley Remembrance*. Visually, these books bring to life what it was like to live with the rich and famous, while offering a glimpse of those responsible for maintaining the daily upkeep and lifestyles of these impressive estates.

Indeed, it was a time when the estates' landowners espoused the "Gospel of Wealth" — far removed from the beginnings of overcrowded urban tenements and squalor that prompted social progressive critics to call attention to "how the other half lives." As the nation entered a new millennium, it would be the cities and not the countryside shaping its future destiny. And while the privileged lived comfortably in their country estates, there emerged a group of writers who took their cue from Jacob Riis' 1890 book, *How the Other Half Lives*, and challenged the notion that only these custodians of prosperity are fit to rule. In the very early twentieth century, Ida M. Tarbell's *History of the Standard Oil Company*, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, and magazine articles by David Graham Phillips ("The Treason in the Senate") and Lincoln Steffens ("The Shame of the Cities") changed the narrative and led to a series of progressive reforms regulating corporate practices and social conditions in urban America.<sup>8</sup> The Gilded Age was now eclipsed by tenement rows, elevated trains, soon-to-be skyscrapers, concrete sidewalks, paved gravel roads, and the automobile. By the 1920s, more people would live in cities than in rural America.

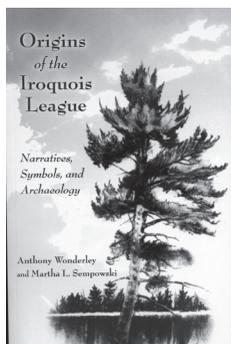
That historical observation aside, readers should enjoy the historical background and accompanying illustrations these authors have presented in their works. Their research is commendable. They provide a pleasurable walk from the past down one of the country's most famous yellow brick roads. They succeed in furthering our understanding of the Gilded Age in the mid-Hudson River Valley. It is a job well done.

*Charles F. Howlett is Professor Emeritus at Molloy University.*

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8 Stephanie Gorton. *Citizen Reporters: S.S. McClure, Ida Tarbell, and the Magazine that Rewrote America* (New York: Harper Collins, 2020); Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1967 edition); Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1906); George Mowery, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Movement* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1946).

# Book Reviews



## **Origins of the Iroquois League:**

### **Narratives, Symbols, and Archaeology**

By Anthony Wonderley and Martha L. Sempowski

(Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2019)

288 pp. \$29.95 (softcover) [press.syr.edu](http://press.syr.edu)

This important book summarizes and synthesizes a large body of archeological, anthropological, and historical research on the long-debated question of when and how the League of the Five Nations originated. The book's introduction, conclusion, chapter summaries, and fine illustrations (including exquisite drawings of Seneca artifacts by Gene Mackay) provide non-technical information for general readers. Specialists will value the detailed discussions of artifact types and archeological sites. The authors accept and strengthen the emerging consensus that formation of the league was a process, not a single event, that occurred over a century and a half, from about 1450 to 1600. Despite the prominence of the Five Nations in trade, diplomacy, and warfare in the colonial Hudson Valley, historical records, mostly of meetings and treaties, provide very few clues about the origins of the league and its ceremonial and political functions. Wonderley analyzes the semi-legendary accounts of the league's founding, first briefly recorded in 1743, summarized in a few nineteenth-century accounts, and expanded in multiple, lengthy renditions by Iroquois traditionalists in Ontario, John Arthur Gibson, Seth Newhouse, and others in the years around 1900. Those accounts derived from evolving Mohawk and Onondaga oral traditions that recall those nations' leading roles in formation of the league. Wonderley concludes that the textual sources are irreconcilable in their details and even story lines, with only broad similarities and hints of chronology.

The authors rely largely on their knowledge of Iroquoian artifacts, settlement patterns, and cultural practices, values, and myths (as well as the work of many other anthropologists and archeologists) to interpret archeological evidence of diplomatic contacts and community amalgamation that culminated in the league's formation. They emphasize the rapid merger of dispersed settlements into compact towns of what were now the Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk "tribes" (the authors' preferred term) during the fifteenth century. Seneca towns appeared in the early sixteenth century. The succeeding multi-community confederations of Iroquoian peoples in modern New York and southern Ontario (the Huron and "Neutral" confederacies) were contemporaneous. The propelling motives were internal harmony, mutual defense, and joint offense in an honor-bound culture whose impulse to violence was manifested in familial blood feuds and reciprocal

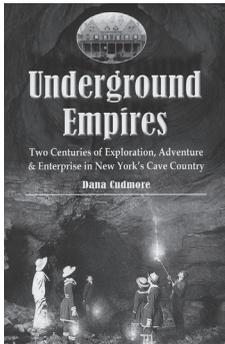
conflict between communities, then tribes, and later confederacies. A “proto-league” of the later fifteenth century seems to have consisted of the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, and Iroquoian communities in the upper St. Lawrence Valley (in Jefferson County, New York). The latter were destroyed in the early sixteenth century by enemies who probably included an initial league of the Mohawks, Oneidas, and Onondagas. A mature League of Five Nations finally emerged around 1600 with the addition of the Senecas and Cayugas.

The authors summarize and elaborate their own previous studies of archeological markers of peacemaking in consolidated communities and in an early confederation. The primary evidence is fired clay smoking pipes, an essential element of Iroquoian diplomacy. Pipes bearing images of a human face or figure in an arch or crescent appear in archeological sites in northern New York and in Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk territories dating from the mid-fifteenth century to the early sixteenth. Such images may depict the Iroquois myth of tribal emergence from the underworld. An associated pipe type (Dougherty) shows three or four faces arising from what may be the head (with eyes) of a serpent, depicting a similar myth of human death and rebirth. Wonderley believes the pipes are evidence of a cultural “interaction zone,” that they were used in peaceable communications among male diplomats of several nations, a precursor of the league. Pipes provide similar evidence of community integration among the Senecas. Sempowski describes human effigy pipes that seem to show a stylized serpent encircling the head, which recalls the Seneca origin myth of the giant snake at the head of Canandaigua Lake that disgorged human beings. Appearing throughout the Genesee Valley and western Finger Lakes region during the mid-sixteenth century, these pipes probably signal the relocation and reconciliation of peoples in the first Seneca villages.

The authors summarize archeological studies that indicate a critical period of confederacy formation in the early sixteenth century. Effigy pipes fall out of use. Marine shell objects (pendants and large beads) and a few European items (brass, iron) suddenly appear in Iroquoian sites throughout the Great Lakes region. Beaver bones become numerous in Mohawk sites. Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk towns are relocated to more defensible locations and surrounded by massive palisades. Some human remains buried there have marks of violent deaths. The populous Iroquoian communities in the St. Lawrence Valley disappear. Distinctive Laurentian pottery, presumably made by captive or refugee women, appears in Huron and eastern Iroquois archeological sites. The evidence suggests an all-out war by nascent Huron and Iroquois confederacies against the St. Lawrence Valley Iroquoians that involved a desire for access to a valuable new trade channel. The key indicator of a new political order is shell wampum. Iroquois tradition says it was essential for proper rituals because of its rarity and numinous quality. Marine shell and European goods appeared in many Seneca graves after the later sixteenth century, probably evidence of mortuary rituals promoting social cohesion in a diverse population that included many female war captives. Mohawk and Seneca artifact assemblages became

similar soon after 1600, both now including large quantities of Dutch goods. Social and material similarities strongly imply a contemporaneous political integration of the Five Nations, who proudly called themselves the people of the “extended house” or “longhouse” (anglicized Seneca, “Haudenosaunee”; older Mohawk, *kanuhsuꞑ:ni*).

James D. Folts, *New York State Archives*



**Underground Empires: Two Centuries of Exploration, Adventure, & Enterprise in New York’s Cave Country**

By Dana Cudmore

(Catskill, NY: Black Dome Press, 2021) 344 pp. \$21.95

(softcover) [blackdomepress.com](http://blackdomepress.com)

Nestled in New York’s Mohawk Valley region, halfway between Albany and Cooperstown, the Schoharie Valley boasts rural bucolic views, natural wonders, and many historic sites. In *Underground Empires: Two Centuries of Exploration, Adventure, & Enterprise in New York’s Cave Country*, Dana Cudmore delves into the history of Schoharie County, adventure and tourism at Howe Caverns and Secret Caverns, and the cement industry. He chose the title for this work as an homage to Clay Perry, author of *Underground Empire: Wonders and Tales of New York Caves* (1948). Through every section of his work, Cudmore brings to light the wonder of exploration, insight into the region’s historic people, and justification for preserving historic resources.

Cudmore divides *Underground Empires* into four sections. In the first, he provides an expansive look at the history of Howe Caverns and other caves in Schoharie County through 1990. In the second, he provides historical context on the cement industry in this area. In the third section, Cudmore covers more recent developments at Howe Caverns, new ownership of the quarry, and the rehabilitation of the Howe Family Cave House as a museum. In the fourth and final section, he provides bonus chapters on a variety of topics, including a flashlight company with ties to caving and the “Blenheim Monster Serpent Mystery.”

Though Cudmore doesn’t delve heavily into historiography, his work touches upon three major branches of history — tourism, industrial, and environmental. His writing on the rush to discover more caves and the personal rivalries and vendettas between different attraction owners is enlightening and thought-provoking. For example, he writes that the Cave Hotel at Howe Caverns boasted air conditioning before its time (along with gorgeous views of the countryside, spacious rooms, and good food). He includes descriptions of historic tours, a discussion on the importance of radio and road signs to market

attractions, and the over-commercialization of Howe Caverns when compared with the more natural look of Secret Caverns.

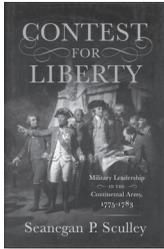
Similarly, while providing an examination of the rise and fall of the quarry and cement industry at Howe Caverns, Cudmore reveals the economic engine of this area. His work makes clear the intrinsic connections between tourism and the cement industry. Cudmore's great attention to detail about the environment of the caves and surrounding area is also of note. One of the book's most interesting chapters revolves around white nose syndrome in bats. An important link in pollinating plants, dispersing seeds, and controlling pests, bats in Howe Caverns began dying in large numbers from this fungus as early as the fall of 2005. By February of the following year, the caves' bat population had been reduced by ninety percent (241).

To construct his narrative, Cudmore pulled from primary documents, including published recollections, books, newspapers and magazines, brochures, and personal correspondence. He also utilized the records of the Cave House Museum of Mining and Geology, oral histories with Robert Holt (former general manager of Howe Caverns), geologists/karst hydrologists, and family histories.

Dana Cudmore is uniquely positioned to offer perspective on Schoharie County's "underground empires." In 1970, he took a job at Howe Caverns. At different points in his life, he has been a newspaper reporter, public relations director in New York's SUNY system, and a member of the original board of directors of Cave House Museum of Mining and Geology. In his own words, Cudmore wrote this work to offer "a look at the people and communities that developed around the caves, as well as the rugged industry that was built on that unique natural footing" (xxi). He has succeeded in delivering a readable, engaging narrative of Schoharie County's natural wonders, a work of interest both to caving enthusiasts and the general public.

*Erin Becker-Boris*

# New & Noteworthy Books



## **Contest for Liberty: Military Leadership in the Continental Army, 1775–1783**

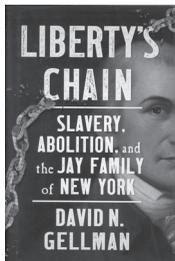
By Seanegan P. Sculley

(Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2019)

206 pp. \$30.00 (hardcover) [www.westholmepublishing.com](http://www.westholmepublishing.com)

Examining the development of a distinctly “American military,” *Contest for Liberty* is a social history full of contemporary accounts that also embraces sociology and philosophy. In comparing the British and Provincial armies,

Sculley includes a discussion of the differences and similarities in the societies from which each were created. In studying General Washington’s observations of New England regiments, he examines the dissimilarities between the colonies of Virginia and Massachusetts as reflected in their officers and soldiers. In examining “leadership as a negotiation of authority between the leaders and the led,” the author provides ample anecdotes that illustrate his thesis and make the book a compelling read.



## **Liberty’s Chain: Slavery, Abolition, and the Jay Family of New York**

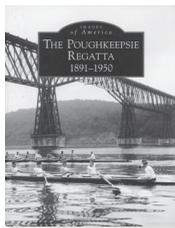
By David N. Gellman

(Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022)

519 pp. \$36.95 (hardcover) <https://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/>

It can be easy to forget that history is complicated, too often yielding to the temptation “to assemble a series of discrete lives into neatly sequenced narratives.” With *Liberty’s Chain*, Gellman resists that urge and further explains *why* and *how* history is truly experienced by those living it. No

matter how privileged, enlightened, or conflicted the Jay family may have been, its members negotiated between options and adversaries throughout their lives, each in their own way. Gellman’s timely history does this as well — by including multiple narrative threads without trying to tie them into a single bow.



## **The Poughkeepsie Regatta 1891–1950 (Images of America Series)**

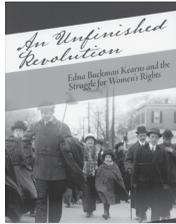
By Elizabeth Clarke and Ann Sandri

(Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2022) 128 pp. \$23.99 (softcover)

[www.arcadiapublishing.com](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com)

In the interest of full disclosure: *The Poughkeepsie Regatta, 1891–1950* was authored by our colleagues at Marist College, where the race and all its associated glories have long been celebrated. But one need not be

a regatta devotee to appreciate this Images of America book with its many images and detailed captions. For much of the time covered in this book, the mid-Hudson enjoyed national fame in connection with the regatta and sponsored lavish events coinciding with it. Organized chronologically, the images illustrate the athletes and their coaches, awards and ephemera, as well as some of the ancillary festivities.



### **An Unfinished Revolution: Edna Buckman Kearns and the Struggle for Women's Rights**

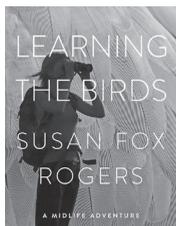
By Marguerite Kearns

(Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2021) 354 pp. \$34.95 (softcover)

[www.sunypress.edu](http://www.sunypress.edu)

An homage to an icon of the suffrage movement as seen through the eyes of her husband and daughter, and written by her granddaughter.

*An Unfinished Revolution* is a family memoir set within the historic particulars of the suffrage movement as just one era of the ongoing struggle for equality. Marguerite Kearns balances personal and universal threads throughout this amply-illustrated book, and readers will enjoy learning more about the women, and men, who participated in the struggle. Hudson River Valley readers will also recognize Alf Evers and other regional personalities, as the author (a resident of Woodstock for many years) recounts her multi-generational tale.



### **Learning the Birds: A Midlife Adventure**

By Susan Fox Rogers

(Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022)

306 pp. \$28.95 (hardcover)

[www.cornellpress.cornell.edu](http://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu)

It opens on the Amazon River and ranges from Alaska to Florida, but most of *Learning the Birds* takes place in the mid-Hudson Valley. Rogers' adventures, and misadventures, encompass far more than the birds at the center of this collection of essays. She deftly unites geography, history, and her own story while walking through marsh, field, and forest. Readers will recognize some of the "company" who guide her outings, such as John Burroughs, and they will revel in meeting lesser-known authorities like Florence Merriam Bailey. Beyond birding, this book thrills in the journeys and quests that Rogers, and we ourselves, take throughout life.