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From the Editors

From 1609 through the 1960s, and right up to today, the history of the Hudson River Valley has included points of contention. To misquote Heraclitus, you cannot sail the same river twice. Ever since Europeans first explored the Mahicannituck, today called the Hudson, there have been discrepancies in their descriptions and maps. Patrick Landewe focuses on the number and location of the "racks," or reaches, that navigators recorded and cartographers fixed to better understand the river. Contrary to what many of us learned even a generation ago, slavery existed in New York, and enslavement could be as brutal here as in the South. Similarly, the lives of Black residents throughout the Hudson River Valley could be just as fraught with peril. This was proven when Port Jervis resident Robert Lewis was lynched by fellow townspeople in 1892. Philip Dray recounts the incident and its aftermath as part of his examination of racial relations and injustices in American history. Another aspect of Black life in the region was Pinkster, an annual celebration that provided enslaved people a brief reprieve from daily life. Few firsthand accounts of these festivities exist, but the late-life recollection of James Eights provides a glimpse of how Pinkster was celebrated by both the Black and white communities in Albany in the early 1800s. In his introduction to Eights' reminiscence, Michael Groth asks whether — and how — we can know the origins and purposes of certain cultural traditions. Sara Evenson asks the same question through her investigation of family recipes exchanged between Catherine Teresa Romeyn Beck and her granddaughter, Catherine Beck Van Cortlandt, in the mid-nineteenth century. Finally, in the Regional History Forum, Michaela Ellison-Davidson offers a tour of Hudson River School art exhibited across the region. She visits two museums and two historic sites that offer experiences of the landscape, art, architecture, and artists who defined and continue to redefine America's first art movement.

On the cover: Michael Seymour (1802–1887), Butter *Hill* (Storm King) *and the Highlands from Newburgh on the Hudson River, July 24, 1846,* Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Purchase: William Reese Company, DLC/PP-2000:086

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Finding the Sublime: Where to View Hudson River School Paintings In the Hudson River Valley

Michaela Ellison-Davidson

Thomas Cole (1801–1848) *Untitled Landscape (Sunrise in the Clove)*, n.d. Oil on canvas, Thomas Cole National Historic Site, Gift of Edith Cole Silberstein, TC.64.11.16

The Hudson River Valley offers incredible opportunities to see paintings of the Hudson River School of art surrounded by the landscape that inspired them. The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Albany Institute of History and Art, Olana State Historic Site, and Thomas Cole National Historic Site each present artworks within differing levels of context in terms of the surrounding architecture and landscape.

I developed my project as an Art History major at Marist College intent on producing a regional history article that would explain where readers could view Hudson River School paintings throughout the region. My goal was to analyze how different museums curate an immersive collection of art. I had not visited any of the four sites prior to undertaking this project.

To begin, I researched background information through virtual resources provided on each location's website. The online element of each site acts as a supplemental tool for at-home research prior to visiting or can be used as a stand-alone educational experience for those who cannot travel.

The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, located on the Vassar College campus in Poughkeepsie, provides a 3-D virtual exhibition on its website, making its three-room Hudson River School Gallery available from a phone or computer. Arrows are used to navigate each room and a zoom feature provides easy access for examining a painting's details. Analysis and historical context are available for each artwork as well.

The Albany Institute of History and Art provides online resources for understanding the history behind its extensive art collection. The 3-D virtual exhibition on its website depicts the museum's Hudson River School Collection, displayed in the Hearst Gallery. It can be viewed while simultaneously reading a PDF discussing the historical context of each painting. Another extensive online exhibition titled "The Making of the Hudson River School" provides background information on the development of this art movement.

The homepage for the Olana State Historic Site, located in Greenport, shows an aerial panorama of the landscape. The website provides a brief historical overview of Hudson River School artist Frederic Church and the construction of his home at Olana under the "Learn" tab. Information on "Church's World," "Church's Art," "The House," "The Collections," "The Landscape," and "The Viewshed" can be accessed as well.

The website of the Thomas Cole Historic Site, located in Catskill, holds an extensive amount of educational research and resources for anyone interested in Cole or the Hudson River School. The 1815 Main House and 1839 Old Studio can be explored virtually. The tour consists of a 3-D immersive experience. From the comfort of my dorm room, I could witness the landscape of the Hudson River Valley from Thomas Cole's front porch or examine the many objects and works of art within the house, each with an information bubble providing context and interesting facts about it. An interactive tour, "Explore Thomas Cole," is featured on its website as well. This tour gives background information on the artist and his well-known works.

I also had the opportunity to visit each location, beginning with the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center.

Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center

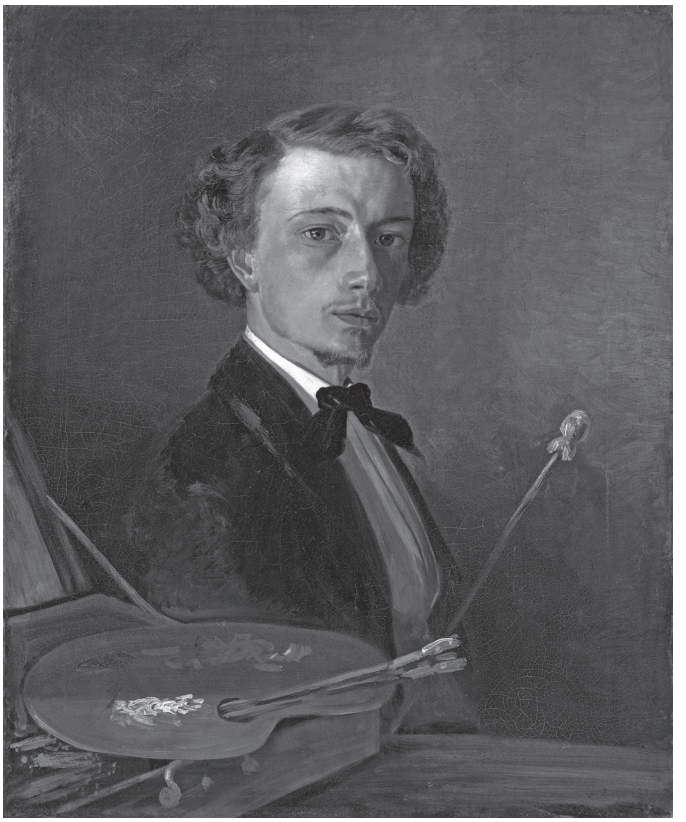
A woman stands at the entrance of the gallery. She asks me if I've ever been before and I nod, the two of us entering the space. This is my second visit to the Loeb.

**19th century, *Portrait of Matthew Vassar, "Man of Affairs",* oil on canvas,
The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center,
museum acquisition, X.162**

I stand in the first room of the Hudson River School Collection, where a portrait of Matthew Vassar greets me. His expression is soft and his mouth suggests he is forming a smile. His desk, also present in the portrait, sits in the far-right corner of the room.

Picture this: The year is 1864. Elias Lyman Magoon sells his Hudson River School collection to Matthew Vassar. Here, in the Loeb's Hudson River School gallery, are forty-two of those paintings.

Like the fundamental ideology of the Hudson River School, Magoon viewed landscapes as a direct representation of God's innovation, drawn to the profound compositions of idyllic scenes and romantic light. The Hudson River School collection at the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center demonstrates the beauty of the sublime in a three-room permanent exhibition that features well-known Hudson River School artists such as Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand, Frederic Church, Jasper Cropsey, and Sanford Robinson Gifford.



**Henry Van Ingen (1833–1898), *Self Portrait,* Oil on canvas,
The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center,
Gift of Ruth M. Keeney, class of 1905 1960.8**

The Hudson River School Collection: Room One

The first room provides an overview of the collection. A sign on the far right corner titled "Art of the Hudson River School and its Legacy" explains Matthew Vassar's purchase of the collection. On the other side of the room are a portrait and bust of Henry Van Ingen. With the purchase of Magoon's Hudson River School collection, Matthew Vassar named Van Ingen the first director of the college's gallery, and allowed him to craft a curriculum in art and art history based on the paintings.

Unlike Vassar, Van Ingen's self-portrait lacks all expression. His features beautifully rendered in earth tones and brooding shadows, Van Ingen poses with a palette and easel, a symbol of his artistic talents and love for art.

Within the first room, the most striking features are two paintings of Springside, Matthew Vassar's Po ughkeepsie estate, painted by artist Henry Gritten. The property depicted represents the overall theme of the picturesque landscape so well loved by Hudson River School artists.

Jasper Francis Cropsey (1823–1900),
***Artist Sketching on Greenwood Lake,* 1869, oil on canvas,**
The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center,
gift of Georgia Potter Gosnell, class of 1951,
and Elizabeth Gosnell Miller, class of 1984, 2005.28

Room Two

The second room is a soft white with wood paneling running across each wall. Despite its quietness, it offers a welcome atmosphere. The room displays works by well-known Hudson River School artists such as Frederic Edwin Church, Jasper Francis Cropsey, and Sanford Robinson Gifford. I am struck by scenes of Europe; these are paintings that allude to time spent studying the classical tradition.

A series of three paintings can be seen on the left wall: Sanford Robinson Gifford, *The Roman Campagna*, c. 1859; Samuel F.B. Morse, *Cervara in the Sabine Hills*, c. 1830; and Jasper Francis Cropsey, *Evening at Paestum*, c. 1856.

Works on the room's right side place an emphasis on water and light. In Thomas Cole's *Essay on American Scenery*, he states that a body of water defines a landscape. It acts like a mirror, reflecting the surrounding nature on its tranquil surface. The paintings featured here hold a sense of stillness and peace.

I am particularly drawn to Jasper Francis Cropsey's *Artist Sketching on Greenwood Lake*, c. 1869. Not only does Cropsey reinforce Cole's ideas of the importance of water, but he places a small figure in the foreground that invites me into the composition. I become the man sketching, the sun warm on my face, my legs dangling from the tree branch on which I sit, the soft sounds of a dog's feet padding through puddles in the distance.

George Inness, (1825–1894),
***The Valley of the Shadow of Death*, 1867, oil on canvas,**
The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, gift of Charles M. Pratt, 1917.1.6

Room Three

Beneath foreboding skies and the light of a floating cross, a man contemplates the human experience, his body framed by jagged rocks and towering mountains. This is what I see as I enter the third room: George Inness's *Valley of the Shadow of Death*, c. 1867.

Everything in the exhibit leads me here, an artistic pilgrimage mirroring the contemplation of the lone figure dressed in white. He stands with uncertainty, his isolation prevalent as a storm rages. From the second he is born, the rest of his life is a pilgrimage to reaching the end. He doesn't know where his life will lead. He doesn't know where he is going.

French poet Nicholas Boileau-Despréaux put into words what the third room depicts: "the sublime is not strictly speaking something which is proven or demonstrated, but a marvel, which seizes ones, strikes one, and makes one feel." The pastoral and wilderness scenes such as Asher B. Durand's *Through the Woods*, c.1856; Worthington Whittredge's *Rocks and Pines*, c.1863–64; and William Hart's *Landscape with Cattle*, c. 1873 represent the awe of the American landscape.

Frances Lehman Loeb Collection

In addition to the Hudson River School collection, there are twelve other spaces in the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center displaying art from ancient times to the modern era. Every gallery is carefully curated to reflect the art within. The main galleries change in color and light, depending on what would flatter specific works displayed.

Albany Institute of History & Art

Douglas McCombs, curator of the institute's Hudson River School Collection, speaks about his vision behind the installation in the Hearst Gallery. We discuss the historical significance of these iconic paintings and take a private tour of the institute's archives.

The Albany Institute of History & Art houses an extensive collection of work associated with the Hudson River School. Founded in 1791, the museum seeks to bring "a global perspective to the art, history, and culture of the Upper Hudson Valley, creating physical and virtual experiences for the education, entertainment, and inspiration of people of all ages."

The Hearst Gallery represents well-known Hudson River School artists such as Thomas Cole, Asher Brown Durand, Jasper Cropsey, and Sanford Robinson Gifford. It evokes a sense of importance and awe through its large size, open floor plan, and installation of eighty-three paintings.

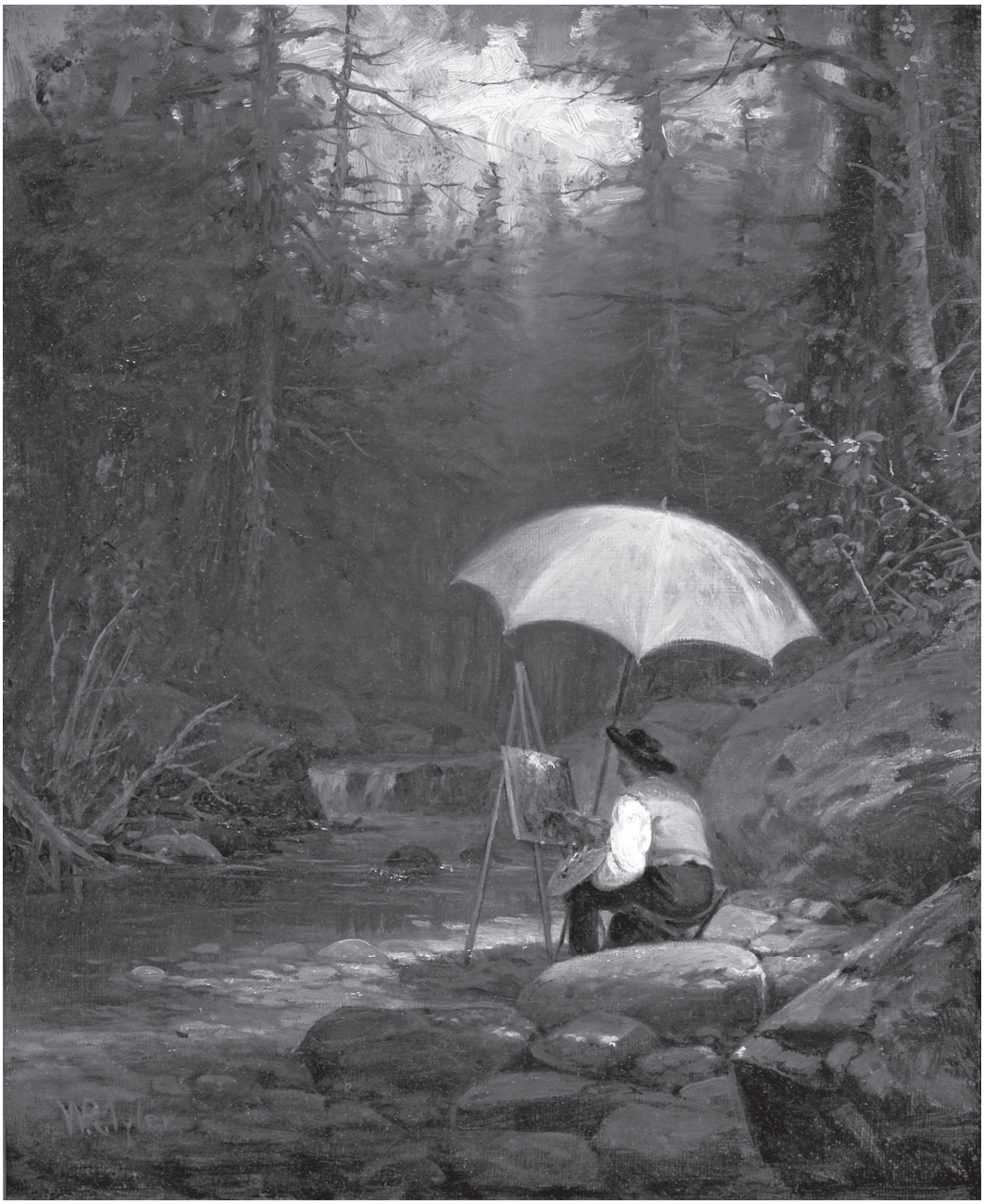
Upon entering, I am taken by the high ceilings and original skylight, an ornate feature that no longer illuminates the gallery but still draws the visitor's attention upward. The direct lighting on each artwork allows the viewer to experience them intimately. The lighting draws me toward a piece, immersing me within the landscape without becoming distracted by other paintings on the same wall.

McCombs refers to the Hudson River School collection as an "installation" rather than an "exhibition." I find this noteworthy: An exhibition can traditionally be defined as a space in which works of art "meet" an audience. McCombs' use of the term "installation," where viewers are intended to contemplate and walk around the entirety of a space, creates a timeless and immersive experience.

The paintings are placed either at eye level or at waist height and grouped closely together. The installation is suggestive of a nineteenth-century salon in which art covered the entirety of a wall. The dark purple of the gallery walls allows the artwork's gold frames to stand out. More than half of these frames are original or were built to match the materials and techniques of the time, making the color of the gallery walls an important choice in showcasing their beauty.

The placement of paintings within the Hearst Gallery evokes the natural progression of civilization, something reminiscent of the five works in Thomas Cole's *The Course of Empire* series: *The Savage State*, *The Arcadian or Pastoral State*,

The Consummation of Empire, *Destruction*, and *Desolation*. The installation is meant to be followed clockwise.



William Richardson Tyler (1825–1896) *The Artist*, c.1870, Oil on canvas, The Albany Institute of History & Art, u1977.389

Sarah Cole (1805–1857) *A View of the Catskill Mountain House, 1848*, Oil on canvas, The Albany Institute of History & Art Purchase 1964.40

The Savage State

The first series of paintings includes works such as: John Kensett, *The Mountain Stream*, ca. 1845 or 1856; Homer Dodge Martin, *Bash Bish Falls*, 1859; Asher B. Durand, *Cathedral Ledge*, 1855; and James M. Hart, *The Adirondacks*, 1861.

They represent the beauty of untouched nature, a reminder of a time before civilization or industrialization. These paintings celebrate the American landscape both by direct representation, but also by idealizing and romanticizing.

It is a world unchanged by humanity.

The Arcadian or Pastoral State

As the Gallery Guide explains, William Richardson Tyler's *The Artist*, painted in 1870, demonstrates the nineteenth-century movement of painting plein-air, or outdoors. Artists immersed themselves within nature, capturing it realistically while adding their own interpretations. Within Tyler's work "the artist, in the midst of nature, paints a small canvas supported on a portable easel, while a large, white umbrella shades the artist and canvas from the glare of the sun."

The Artist transitions the paintings into a more pastoral or arcadian subject matter. The following wall features scenes of cows, sheep, and horses. These paintings showcase humanity at peace with nature; the lighting emphasizes the vibrant skies

Thomas Cole (1801–1848), *Gardens of the Van Rensselaer Manor House,* 1840 Oil on canvas, The Albany Institute of History & Art Purchase, Bequest of Miss Katherine E. Turnbull, 1930.7.1

and sunsets depicted in each. The animals are shown resting or moving languidly through wild, sunny fields.

A bench is placed in front of this wall. I can take a seat and pause, looking up just as a cow lifts its head from a clear stream of water or the red and orange sky seems to melt into the background of a Frederic Church landscape.

The Consummation of Empire

The installation continues with the addition of infrastructure. Sarah Cole's *A View of the Catskill Mountain House* from 1848 focuses on the stark contrast between architecture and the natural landscape. A large white building protrudes from a mountain, the fall foliage contrasting with the classical architecture.

As the paintings progress from the pastoral to the development of infrastructure, I can't help but notice two paintings by Thomas Cole: *The Van Rensselaer Manor House* and *Gardens of the Van Rensselaer Manor House*, 1841 and 1840, respectively. In each, a small object appears in the foreground, standing out against the earth-toned color palette of the rest of the landscape. My eyes are drawn to a red lawn chair and picnic basket filled with vibrant flowers. These objects invite me into the painting,

Asher Brown Durand (1796–1886), *An Old Man's Reminiscences*, 1845, Oil on canvas, Albany Institute of History & Art, Gift of the Albany Gallery of Fine Arts, 1900.5.3

similar to how Caravaggio left an open space or pulled out a chair to invite the viewer to participate in the scene.

In *Gardens of the Van Rensselaer Manor House*, the pathway runs off the canvas. I am tempted to step into the painting and pick up the abandoned basket, looking around to see who else may be there. In *The Van Rensselaer Manor House*, the chair is placed perfectly to view and admire the house, tucked behind towering trees.

McCombs explains that both works were commissioned by William Patterson Van Rensselaer. He wanted Cole to paint scenes of both the gardens and the house for his mother and sister. The objects allow the viewer to ask who was here and where did they go.

Destruction and Desolation

The final wall of the installation completes the themes of destruction and desolation. Asher Brown Durand's *An Old Man's Reminiscences*, completed in 1845, is an allegorical painting. It represents the cycle of life. As we age, we look back on certain moments with happiness or regret. We reminisce on what was and what could have been.

The institute describes the work as picturing "a nostalgic reverie, a moment of reflective contemplation and assessment for the aged man seated in the shade at left."

**Aerial view of Olana State Historic Site, Peter Aaron/OTTO.
Courtesy of The Olana Partnership**

Thomas Cole's *Study for the Voyage of Life* also hangs on the final wall. These four canvases were preparatory oil paintings for the artist's final series. Viewing this smaller version, I get a chance to understand Cole's process. Placed beside Asher Brown Durand's *An Old Man's Reminiscences*, they create another contemplative experience.

Expanding the Collection

A new painting to be installed in the Hearst Gallery this summer will help to educate the public about the often-overlooked women artists of the Hudson River School. Julie Hart Beers was the younger sister of William Hart and James M. Hart, both of whom have works featured in the Hearst Gallery. *Cows in Landscape,* dating to the 1860s, will join two works currently on view by Sarah Cole, sister of Thomas: *A View of the Catskill Mountain House*, and *Mount Etna*, 1848 and 1846–52, respectively.

Olana State Historic Site

Allegra Davis, associate curator of The Olana Partnership, shakes my hand with a smile. We stand in front of the visitor center/gift shop, the house visible from behind a group of people readying themselves for a tour of the grounds in an electric vehicle.

The 250-acre landscape at Olana serves as the canvas for Frederic Church's largest artistic project. For Church, the sublime views and expansive forests represent the ideology of the Hudson River School: Through nature, the viewer can experience a spiritual understanding and inherent appreciation for the landscape.

View of the house from Lake Road,
Beth Schneck Photography. Courtesy of The Olana Partnership

The Landscape

Davis takes us on a private electric vehicle tour, providing a brief history of the house and land.

Church first moved onto the property in 1861, having recently married Isabel Mortimer Carnes. The first home on the estate, located among orchards and farmland, was referred to as Cosy Cottage. Church later expanded his property holdings, hoping to accomplish his long-term vision of building a house on top of a hill. He oversaw the creation of five miles of carriage roads and the cultivation of the landscape, allowing him full craftsmanship of his surroundings.

I view the barn and what would have been farmland. Church not only painted on his property, but maintained a working as well as ornamental farm. From the lookout, I can see the top of the house. I'm taken by how it and nature collaborate to create a picturesque scene.

My next stop allows me to overlook the lake. It sits in the middle of the grounds, mirroring the Hudson River to the west. Church created the lake out of a swampy area, workers digging it by hand.

This view is one of the most beautiful on the property, reflecting the iconic elements of American landscape painting: the vast woodlands, the tranquil lake,

The sitting room in the Main House at Olana State Historic Site, Peter Aaron/OTTO. Courtesy of The Olana Partnership

the reflection of light on the water's surface, the brilliant blue of the sky, and the hazy mountains in the distance.

The Road to the House

The approach to the house was carefully designed by Church to emphasize the beauty of its façade. We drive along a steep road that switchbacks up the hill's wooded north face before cresting and looping down the south face. Following a dramatic bend, the house finally comes into full view.

The house was inspired by Persian architecture and the many buildings Frederic Church saw while traveling in the Middle East. There is a romantic quality to it — the soft browns and reds of the exterior walls, the delicate arches over the studio, the slender railings on the front porch. It evokes within me an overwhelming urge to explore, but also to pause and admire the intricate architecture.

Davis parks. She leaves me for a moment before entering the house. I look around the corner and catch a glimpse of the Hudson River and the autumn foliage at full color. The pull toward the landscape is magnetic. If I had questioned why Frederic Church chose this location for his home prior to my visit, I no longer have any doubts. I stand at the edge, the sky a clear blue, the river below, and the Catskills in the distance. I'm that little figure standing in a work of art.

View through the house toward the studio in the Main House, Olana State Historic Site, Peter Aaron/OTTO. Courtesy The Olana Partnership

The House

The house sits at the highest point on the property, designed by Church and architect Calvert Vaux (co-creator of New York's Central Park), who brought Church's vision to life in 1872. The artistic style of the home is tough to categorize. On the exterior, Middle Eastern motifs mix with Victorian architecture.

We step through the front door and my eyes adjust to the light. I can see straight through the house. Down the hallway, my gaze catches on the studio window that opens to another view of the river and Catskills.

The stencils around the front door were designed by Church, another reminder that the house was his passion. Each small detail was crafted through his imagination. It's why we go to sites like this—to be immersed in an artist's environment, to witness art and nature work hand in hand in inspiring an American artistic movement.

Currently, there are forty-eight Frederic Church paintings on view in the house. Davis explains that this number fluctuates based on the rotation of collections or items on loan, and that the permanent collection holds more than 700 works by Church, including "15 bound notebooks and printed books, 439 graphite drawings on unbound papers, 50 drawings done principally or entirely in ink, 114 unframed oil studies painted outdoors, 23 framed oil studies painted outdoors, 27 unframed

The 1815 Main House. Photo by Escape Brooklyn, courtesy of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site

oils painted indoors, and 32 framed studio oils." The works span Church's career. This makes the house a prime spot for viewing and learning about his artistic process over the course of his life.

The Olana State Historic Site follows a rigorous process in furnishing the interior of the house, intent on creating a space that reflects the nineteenth-century furnishings and environment Frederic Church would have curated. Each room draws from nineteenth- or early twentieth-century photographs, letters, diary entries, or bills and receipts that document the purchase of furniture.

The House and the Landscape

In the first few years Church lived in Cosy Cottage, he spent time painting in his New York City studio as well as a less formal workspace on the farm. Between 1888 and 1891, he added a studio to the finished house atop the hill, installing large, arched windows that frame the views, turning Olana's grounds into a canvas. In fact, throughout the building, windows connect the visitor within to the landscape outside. The house and nature are always in correspondence.

Thomas Cole National Historic Site

Jennifer Greim, director of Advancement and External Affairs, and Heather Paroubek, director of Visitor Engagement, greet me on Thomas Cole's front porch.

Main House, west parlor. Photo by Peter Aaron / OTTO, courtesy of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site

The Federal-style main house sits in what now can be considered suburbia, a street with a stoplight visible from a bedroom window. Yet the essence of the great landscape painter remains, thanks to the Thomas Cole National Historic Site's intention to create an immersive environment showcasing the impact of Cole's art and ideas. As they explain on their website, "this nationally recognized historic site is an affiliate of the National Park Service and operates as a forward-thinking nonprofit organization embracing change and continually pursuing authenticity and resonance."

I am provided with a private tour of the historic home, originally built in 1815 and named Cedar Grove by the Thomson family. Griem begins with a brief overview on Thomas Cole. He first came to the village of Catskill on a sketching trip in 1825 and boarded with the Thomsons at Cedar Grove. Cole made the house his home in 1836 when he married Maria Bartow, Mr. Thomson's niece. It's clear that Thomas Cole came for the landscape, but his letters show he stayed for love.

In the late 1980s, the National Park Service recognized the significance of Thomas Cole and his life at Catskill, and Cedar Grove was declared a National Historic Site in 1999, opening to the public in 2001. The Thomas Cole National Historic Site takes great consideration in preserving Cole's legacy and maintaining the home's historical accuracy.

Thomas Cole (1801–1848), *Hunters in a Landscape,* 1824–1825, Oil on canvas, Thomas Cole National Historic Site, Gift of Dr. Susan Gates Austin Warner, TC.2019.1

The First Floor

After his marriage to Maria Bartow, Cole set upon redesigning the first floor into an impressive space to welcome guests and patrons. The house's decor represents Cole's personal love for art and design, as well as his experience in the decorative arts.

My tour of the first floor includes the foyer, East and West parlors, and a back room now used as an exhibition space. In the foyer, the vibrant floor pattern and powder blue walls stand out immediately. Nineteenth-century-style hats hang on a wall. They represent the many people who lived and worked in the home during Cole's lifetime. Cole never owned the house, but he shared the space with his wife's sisters and the household staff.

On the first floor, a section of Thomas Cole's handed-painted borders have been restored to their original appearance after being uncovered beneath modern paint.

1839 Old Studio. Photo by Peter Aaron / OTTO, courtesy of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site

East Parlor

Technology within the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, particularly in the East and West parlors, brings the essence of Thomas Cole back into the house.

In the East Parlor, reproductions of Cole's *The Oxbow, Kaaterskill Falls,* and *The Hunter's Return* (1836, 1826, and 1845, respectively) hang on the back wall. Paroubek explains that the reproductions were chosen based on the works' popularity and historic significance. The fact that they are reproductions allows the visitor to stand up close and examine them.

Several large frames are placed on the front wall, with a portrait of Cole placed in the middle. The frames are actually screens. The technology in this installation brings Cole's paintings to life and gives voice to his original essays, letters, and private journals through an interactive video. As the video plays, a voice quotes Cole's vision on art and the landscape. Hearing Cole's own words while in his house and looking at his art deepens my understanding of why he loved the Hudson River Valley. (A transcription of the East Parlor narrative can be found on the primary sources tab on the website.)

The West Parlor

Across the hall, I step into the West Parlor. It features a large, centrally placed table and additional reproductions of Cole's dramatic landscape paintings. More of his decorative borders, found during restoration, also can be seen across the top of the walls.

Papers cover different surfaces within the space. Paroubek explains that anything with a green dot can be touched and examined further. I pick up a stack of letters written by Thomas Cole; turning the pages, I find a copy of his handwriting. By reading Cole's private correspondence, visitors get to know him and his patrons.

The Second Floor

Cedar Grove's second floor includes a gallery space once used as a bedroom by Maria Cole's sisters, Maria and Thomas Cole's bedroom, and another sitting room that includes an interactive studio space.

The gallery exhibits original works by Cole such as *Hunters in a Landscape*, ca. 1824–1825. Paintings such as this help educate visitors on ideas Cole presented in his *Essay on American Scenery*, where he writes about the importance of landscape elements such as trees, sky, water, and light. The gallery also includes a paintbrush used by Cole.

From the gallery, I am led into Maria and Thomas Cole's bedroom. A trunk with Cole's initials sits beside the neatly made bed. Also on display are works by Thomas Cole's daughter, Emily, the only child of his who went on to pursue an artistic career. (She was well known for her botanical scenes and hand-painted china.) One of Emily Cole's painted tea sets sits on a dresser.

After the tour of the bedroom, Greim and Paroubek lead me back down the hall and into a sitting room where work by Sarah Cole is displayed. On one of the tables, letters between Thomas and Sarah Cole are also available for visitors to read.

Through the sitting room is an interactive studio space with an easel. The lights are turned down and the walls become a screen for an informative video explaining the creation of one of Cole's landscape paintings. As his letters and journal entries are read, the easel shows the progression of the painting, beginning with a preparatory sketch and developing as layers of paint are laid down.

The Old Studio

We leave the house and enter the Old Studio, a converted storehouse where Thomas Cole worked for seven years. Maria's uncle allowed him to repurpose the space so he could paint larger canvases.

Towering over the room is Cole's easel, built to hold the large-scale paintings he worked on here. A reproduction of his *The Voyage of Life: Childhood*, 1839–40, can be seen as well.

Expanding the Site

Since its opening, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site has looked for new ways to engage visitors with the artist's history. This includes construction of the Cole Center, on which ground was broken last fall. It was designed by New York City-based architectural designer Stephen Shadley, who is also a member of the Thomas Cole National Historic Site Board of Trustees.

The Cole Center draws inspiration from Cole's architectural designs. This helps to integrate it with the property's existing buildings, such as the reconstructed New Studio (now an exhibition space) built to Cole's design in 1846. According to the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, "The Cole Center will serve as a multi-purpose open-concept space to not only host visitor orientation, a gift shop, a café, and a public terrace, but also events, talks, students, and creative activities."

Conclusion

These four locations in the Hudson River Valley offer incredible ways to engage with the history of the Hudson River School and sublime opportunities to experience art and architecture.

The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center provides educational resources for visitors, both online and in the first room of its Hudson River School Collection. The second room in this gallery exhibits sketchbooks by artist Sanford Robinson Gifford. Viewing these deepened my understanding of his artistic process and my own appreciation for his art.

In the archives of the Albany Institute of History and Art, I also was able to view one of many sketchbooks by Hudson River School artists. Its Hudson River School collection in the Hearst Gallery focuses on completed works. This installation provides a diverse collection of artists and a variety of artistic styles. I was able to come face to face with artwork I had studied in school.

The Olana State Historic Site and Thomas Cole National Historic Site capture the essence of the Hudson River School by preserving the spaces in which the two artists lived and worked. Whether you are a lover of landscapes, art, or architecture, there is something for everyone at Olana. Understanding the landscape in which Church lived and worked allows for a deeper appreciation for his art. Similarly, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site crafts this experience through the use of technology, utilizing personal journals and correspondence from Cole.

By researching each location online, as well as visiting in person, I came to the realization that the way in which a site presents its art affects how people perceive it. Experiencing each museum both ways proved beneficial in my overall understanding of the Hudson River School. The online element allowed me time to pause and reflect. After each visit, I was able to further examine the context of a place or a work of art.

Studying the Hudson River School collections at each location strengthened my admiration of art and nature. I look outside my window and notice elements of a landscape I hadn't paid attention to before: autumn leaves, the reflection of light on water, the color of the sky as the sun sets. After the death of his good friend and painter Thomas Cole, William Cullen Bryant described his art as nothing short of a religion. "The contemplation of Cole's work," he wrote, "made men better."

Like religion, art has no verbal explanation for the emotions it may evoke, but we believe in it despite this uncertainty. We look at it and we see something within ourselves.

Michaela Ellison-Davidson, Marist '23

Links to online features:

The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center
The Hudson River School Collection: http://emuseum.vassar.edu/collections/92/hudson-river-school/objects
The Hudson River School Collection 3-D Tour: https://www.vassar.edu/theloeb/exhibitions/hudson-river-school-collection

The Albany Institute of History and Art
The Hudson River School: Landscape Paintings (Contains the gallery guide, 3-D Tour): https://www.albanyinstitute.org/exhibition/the-hudson-river-school-landscape-paintings-from-the-albany-institute
The Making of the Hudson River School: https://www.albanyinstitute.org/exhibition/the-hudson-river-school-landscape-paintings-from-the-albany-institute

The Olana State Historic Site
History: https://www.olana.org/history/churchs-world/
360 Landscape Overview: https://www.olana.org/gigapan/

The Thomas Cole National Historic Site
Thomas Cole 360 Virtual Explore: https://thomascole.org/360explore/
Thomas Cole Virtual Tour: https://www.tours.vividmediany.com/3d-model/thomas-cole-historic-site/fullscreen/
Explore Thomas Cole: http://www.explorethomascole.org/
Thomas Cole Primary Sources: https://thomascole.org/primary-sources/
Thomas Cole Collection Highlights: http://thomascole.org/collection/

Review Essay

On Their Own Terms: New York Women Shaping their Lives

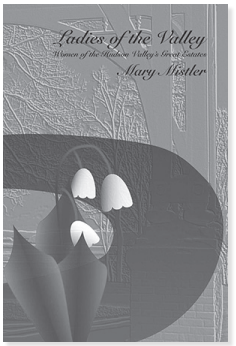
Robyn Rosen

How have women been able to carve out spaces for themselves in places and times that sought to keep their lives contained and constrained? How has a combination of determination and forbearance enabled women to imagine and then forge paths that were not there, and shape the space around them to suit their purposes? These questions are all considered in very different ways in three books about New York women.

Examining wealthy white elites, social movement leaders, and a brilliant lawyer and jurist, these books illuminate the various ways women have sought avenues for growth, control, purpose, and ambition. Mary Mistler's *Ladies of the Valley* provides engaging portraits of Hudson River Valley women from the seventeenth through twentieth centuries. Focusing on generations of elites, Mistler aims to animate the lives of these women whose money and status came through inherited wealth or fortuitous marriage. L.C. Santangelo's *Suffrage and the City* takes on the dynamic suffrage campaign in New York City, exploring the ways women staked out a claim to the city in their quest for civil rights. Here, we see women's political activism simultaneously being shaped by and shaping the urban environment. Finally, in Tomiko Brown-Nagin's *Civil Rights Queen*, we have an in-depth exploration of one woman whose life and work broke down barriers and changed the nation. This compelling and comprehensive biography offers new ways to consider not just Constance Baker Motley, but the impact she had on the Black Freedom Struggle, New York City and state politics, and the law. In all three books, readers encounter New York history in new ways.

While each book presents information and interpretations that consider women's influence — on their families, communities, and the political sphere — the authors' methodologies are distinct. Brown-Nagin's work is a scholarly and deeply contextualized biography, while Mistler offers a more popular collection of biographical sketches. Santangelo provides an astute analysis of both New York City and the suffrage movement in the Gilded Age and Progressive era. What they have in common is the insights they offer into the roles, responsibilities, and obstacles faced by New York women. All three books expose the gendered expectations that have constrained women's lives for centuries and offer a glimpse of how, through

their own machinations, determination, and talents, these constraints have both been accommodated and challenged.

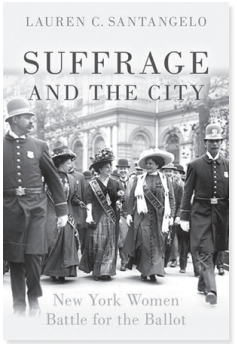


Ladies of the Valley:
Women of the Great Estates
of the Hudson Valley
By Mary Mistler
(Independently Published, 2020) 349 pp.

Ladies of the Valley draws on interest in the great estates of the Hudson Valley to amplify the experiences of the women who lived in them, ran them, owned them, and sold them. Mistler writes: "The families who inhabited these homes were some of the wealthiest and most prominent in the country. But, many of the women who lived in these homes are not widely known, and hardly celebrated." (9) She examines nine women, beginning with Alida Schuyler Livingston and ending with Margaret Lynch Suckley. Most chapters begin with a genealogy, then move on to describe the woman herself, including personal attributes; familial, social, and romantic entanglements; travels; and social impact. Mistler, a docent at the Vanderbilt Mansion and Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Sites, as well as Wilderstein, has written an engaging collection of biographical sketches, grounded in both research and her experience as a seasoned interpreter. In many ways, her book functions the way an effective public history site should, in that it both entertains and inspires curiosity about the past. Like the best docents at house museums, Mistler's book is full of colorful stories and interesting connections. She brings alive these historical figures, often neglected or relegated to their ornamental role in high society. In her goal to offer insight into the changing roles of women in New York from early Dutch settlement through the twentieth century, Mistler is less successful. The nature of the material itself and Mistler's background lend themselves to specificity and detail, rather than overarching or thematic coverage.

Mistler brings to light the personalities of her subjects and offers a sense of the complex familial dynamics that provided the framework for their lives. With both the more obscure and well-known figures, her narratives are fascinating mixes of the factual and speculative. Grounded in primary documents when available, she is also careful to acknowledge gaps in the historical record. Especially in earlier chapters, she often uses phrases like "it seems most likely" and "it is possible that." This tactic serves both to remind readers of these gaps and to highlight Mistler's

goal to find ways to place these women back into the story of the great Hudson Valley estates. When it comes to more well-known and studied figures, Mistler sometimes uses her "insider status" to push against conventional interpretations. For example, centering Sara Delano, rather than seeing her as Eleanor Roosevelt's mother-in-law, changes the way Mistler describes Delano's infamous move to Boston while her son attended Harvard: "This move to Boston has often been attributed to her being an overbearing mother, but it seems it was more likely the loneliness of a newly widowed young woman, unused to living alone." (270) Furthermore, on Sara's reticence about Eleanor, Mistler writes: "The family's history of alcoholism alone would have frightened off most mothers-in-law-to-be." (272) Challenges like these to the more accepted version of Sara show how easily complex human beings can be flattened into caricatures. Mistler's decision to center the lives and perspectives of her subjects so that readers can consider them and their choices in new ways provides a richer understanding of the people who inhabited the Hudson Valley estates.



Suffrage and the City:
New York Women Battle for the Ballot
By L.C. Santangelo
(New York, Oxford University Press, 2019) 272 pp.

Likewise, Santangelo takes a well-known topic in new directions by examining not just how women in New York City fought for suffrage, but the role the evolving city played in their struggle. Both women's and urban history are enriched by highlighting this intersection. Providing an overview of New York City suffrage activism from 1870 through the referendum victory in 1917, *Suffrage and the City* focuses on how both urban, tactical, and generational change in these years shaped the strategies and fortunes of the movement over time. We meet well-known New York suffrage leaders, but Santangelo interrogates and contextualizes their work in new, fruitful ways.

Santagelo's fundamental argument is that changes in the political strategies, tactics, leadership, and rhetoric of suffragists must be considered in relation to the particular environment in which they operated. They begin with Gilded Age suffrage leaders like Lillie Devereaux Blake, who saw the city landscape as an obstacle to be overcome, a "maelstrom of diversity, anonymity, and congestion…" (11) Steeped in

deeply gendered notions of space and place, this generation of suffrage leaders was constrained in their thinking and cautious about how to operate respectably and effectively in what they deemed a hostile environment. Manhattan's reputation, diversity, size, and mores initially hampered the New York City suffrage movement. Santangelo writes: "Leaders sheltered meetings in private homes…worried about immigrants and corporations…and assumed metropolitan life endangered white, middle-class women." (149) This book tells the story of suffragists overcoming this initial discomfort and learning how to celebrate and use the city's dynamism and diversity to their advantage.

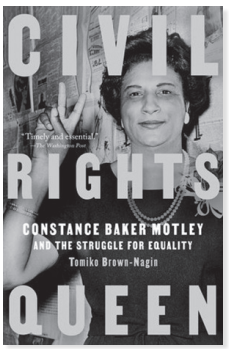
By the 1890s, a new generation of politically savvy suffragists, including wealthy and well-connected allies, breathed new life into the movement. The progressive era leaders, including Harriot Stanton Blatch, Maud Malone, and Carrie Chapman Catt, picked up the mantle from Blake and began to embrace the city to create a mass suffrage movement. This second generation of suffrage leaders was "willing to capitalize on Manhattan's resources [and] push the city's movement beyond anything that their predecessors could have imagined." (49) They transformed the movement through their attention to "political geography" over "a geography of affinity and sociability." (58) These are the women Santangelo credits with claiming a right to the city, "strategically reading its landscape to publicize their demands, recruit new supporters, and enhance their prestige." (79) The city went from being an obstacle to a resource as suffragists began to take advantage of what it had to offer, including streets for open air meetings and parades, the stage and screen, and a growing population of professional women who were recruited to the cause.

Wealthy patrons used their status and influence to help the movement gain access to Gotham's exclusive places, helping the movement literally and figuratively shift from the margins to the center. As suffrage activities moved from private homes to New York landmarks like the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, the city itself became an ally whose receptivity signaled a profound shift. Whereas earlier suffragists expressed a sense of being overwhelmed by the urban environment, elite suffragists used their privilege and access to pique the interest of the press and reframe the movement in the public eye. Santangelo discerns and describes a simultaneous expansion in terms of height and breadth in the Progressive Era — rising upward to exclusive spaces and broadening out into neighborhoods with a resolute determination.

Santangelo's claim that this generation succeeded in building a mass movement and developing a strategic, systematic, targeted campaign, while well supported and intriguing, does not fully account for the defeat of the 1915 suffrage referendum. Twenty-five years of strategic and innovative activities did not translate into victory. That would have to wait two more years and involved another round of alignment with the city's needs and its powerbrokers. After the defeat, suffragists "put municipal housekeeping rhetoric into action" during a polio epidemic and in preparation

for war. (130) They worked to aid the city Board of Health, lent themselves to the census, and aligned with the better baby movement. The urban expertise suffragists had cultivated could now be put to use to contribute to public education and relief work. Tying their cause to the city's welfare and playing up maternalistic rhetoric ultimately bore fruit. In 1916, both political parties endorsed women's suffrage and the next year the state referendum enfranchised New York women. By supporting the agenda of men, the suffragists bolstered their own credentials. But this was only the latest iteration in their strategic and tactical evolution, borne out of decades of work to claim their rights to and in the city.

Santangelo convincingly shows that New York City suffragists did more than win the vote, concluding that what they accomplished was as much a cultural as a political victory. Along with enfranchisement, suffragists "carved out a greater role for themselves in the nation's largest metropolis, dining where they pleased, proselytizing on street corners, co-opting baseball games." (151) Ultimately, *Suffrage in the City* effectively integrates cultural, urban, and political history to underscore the unique and important role that New York City played in the struggle for the vote, deepening our understanding of women's goals and achievement. Santangelo writes, "Suffragists needed to reimagine women's place within the metropolis to achieve the ballot." (153) By reconsidering the work of these women activists, readers can now see the key role the city played in this achievement.



Civil Rights Queen: Constance Baker Motley and the Struggle for Equality
By Tomiko Brown-Nagin
(New York, Pantheon Books, 2022) 512 pp.

Brown-Nagin's biography of Constance Baker Motley shows how one woman found her place within the metropolis by reimagining and then toppling barriers for both women and people of color. Motley boasts a plethora of firsts — the first Black woman to argue a case before the U.S. Supreme Court, be elected to the New York State Senate, serve as Manhattan Borough President, and sit on the federal bench. Perhaps she is best known as one of the lawyers who worked on the *Brown v. Board of Education* case under the mentorship of Thurgood Marshall. Brown-Nagin brings Motley out from under Marshall's shadow to examine her remarkable career and

achievements, in the process offering an important perspective on the Black Freedom Struggle, New York politics, and the capacity of liberalism to grapple with diversity.

Foremost among the questions that animate Brown-Nagin's portrait of Motley is how people from marginalized groups gain access to power and how their outsider status affects what they can accomplish. Zeroing in on one exceptional Black woman, she uses James Baldwin's concept of "the price of the ticket" to interrogate Motley's career trajectory and efficacy. Counter to conventional wisdom, she argues, "The closer Motley came to the pinnacle of American power, the less unconstrained was her ability to advance the imperatives of the disadvantaged." (352) This overarching framework shapes Brown-Nagin's interpretation of Motley's long and impressive career and foregrounds her assertion that individual advancement occurs within a system or power structure that "does not fundamentally transform; at best it accommodates difference." (361) A less astute biographer might have blithely construed Brown's rise as a quintessentially American success story: poor, Black woman from an immigrant family makes good in the land of opportunity. Brown-Nagin is careful to avoid these kinds of oversimplified tropes; this is not a Black woman Horatio Alger finding her way in the American meritocracy as sexism and racism recede to allow for diverse talents. Instead, we have a clear-eyed biographer who keenly weaves Motley into the historical context, not letting her or the larger culture off the hook in the process. This is the best kind of biography, one that seeks to make visible and make sense of a remarkable historical figure while deeply contextualizing her life and work.

Born in 1921, Constance Baker grew up in New Haven, Connecticut, in an Afro-Caribbean family of strivers who "geographically distant from the Jim Crow South enabled a young Constance to believe in the power of personal agency." (23) Determined from an early age to rise above her working-class origins, Constance's abilities attracted financial support to attend college. She began her studies at Fiske University in Nashville but left the South within months and opted instead for New York University, where she matriculated in 1942. Two years later, she entered Columbia Law School. Before she graduated, she met two men who would shape the trajectory of her life — Thurgood Marshall, who offered her an internship at the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund, and Joel Wilson Motley, Jr., who she married in 1946. Marshall's mentorship would become the foundation of her legal career, but it would be her husband who defied gender conventions to publicly support that career and with whom she established "an egalitarian marriage decades before the idea captured the American imagination and became the ambition of many working couples." (60)

Brown-Nagin is particularly interested in examining how the intersection of her gender influenced not just Motley's life and career but her historical legacy as well. Motley had to contend with the casual and ubiquitous sexism that pervaded

the culture. Brown-Nagin writes: "Her persona — reserved, honorable, imperial, and feminine — facilitated her professional breakthroughs in a world premised on masculine norms, steeped in gender stereotypes, and dominated by men habituated to both. But those same traits likely worked against her being widely perceived as a transformational leader in the mold of Marshall and King — talkative, limelight-seeking, charismatic, and masculine." (8) This essential dualism shaped Motley's career. For example, despite the important role she played in "establish[ing] the burgeoning fields of civil rights law" and having seniority over her colleague Jack Greenberg, Marshall chose Greenberg as his successor. (67) Brown-Nagin devotes a chapter to this "setback of 1961" and continues her exploration of gender through Motley's tenure as a U.S. District Court judge. Ultimately, she shows that Motley steered clear of any association with feminism or the women's movement, but ruled in favor of women plaintiffs when she determined they had been discriminated against because of their gender.

After the Brown decision, Motley spent the next ten years litigating in the South and championing the causes of desegregation and the right of peaceful protesters. She contributed to some of the most well-known cases in the history of the movement, including the Children's Crusade in Birmingham, Alabama, and James Meredith's integration of the University of Mississippi. Motley identified her work on the Children's Crusade among the most satisfying in her career. Brown-Nagin makes clear the toll these cases took on Motley, both emotionally and physically, as she left the safety and security of her home and family in New York City to travel South, where her mere presence in the courtroom was considered a provocation. We get insight into the exhaustion and despair she experienced when traveling back and forth between New York and Mississippi twenty-two times in eighteen months, dealing with tragedies like the murder of Medgar Evers and the condescension and outright hostility of white Southern lawyers and judges. These insights remind us that in addition to the martyrs, foot soldiers, and heroic public figures, the movement also was fueled by dedicated professionals who fought battles outside of the limelight.

Motley's work in the courtroom brought her to the attention of New York Democrats, who convinced her to run for the New York State Senate in 1964. In shifting from the courtroom to the capitol, Motley continued to find ways to work for social justice. She introduced dozens of bills to advance rights and access to jobs, housing, and education, casting herself as a "liberal lioness." (211) But this next phase of her career coincided with significant changes in the politics of the freedom struggle. Motley began to face skepticism among Black leaders just as her star was rising among white politicians. "By the mid-1960s, Motley — a civil rights lawyer once considered a transformational figure — looked weak and accommodationist." (221) As the cultural and political context shifted around her, including riots in Harlem and the ascendance of Black power, Motley's association with "incremental, court-

based racial change" seemed passé among many black activists. (205) Thus, although Motley had lived in Harlem for nearly twenty years, by the time she ran for state Senate to represent the people of Harlem, "Dorothy Height & Kenneth Clark and other well-known figures suggested she take 'walking tours' of the district," where they could essentially "vouch for her authenticity." (210)

As a Senator and then Manhattan Borough President, Motley found a way to make herself acceptable to the power brokers in the Democratic Party, while also working to extend rights and opportunities for all New Yorkers. Dismissing Black nationalism as tired, emotional, and inflammatory, she considered herself on the side of reason and reform. During the Harlem riots, for example, she "condemned police brutality, urged calm, and insisted on the rule of law." (225) Essentially, Motley aligned herself with and maintained faith in the political system to solve social problems and intervene positively in people's lives, even as that position became less popular as the liberal consensus began to splinter. Brown-Nagin presents an ironic tale chronicling years of dedication to a cause that was changing around Motley. "The more Malcolm X berated the 'traditional Black leadership,' the more the white establishment was drawn to those traditional Black leaders…" (229) So even as (or because) Black politicians like Adam Clayton Powell called Motley a pawn of the white establishment, she came to the attention of President Johnson, who wanted to appoint her to the federal bench. In 1966, Motley was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to be a judge on the District Court, a symbol to white liberals that "opportunity abounded and social mobility was available to those with luck and pluck." (262)

Brown-Nagin's examination of Motley's career as a judge highlights the complexity of her decisions and how her identity informed them. She writes: "Outcomes in Motley's courtroom belied the cartoonish assumption that identity determines how judges decide cases." (328) However, when it comes to Motley's proximity to the beginning of the era of mass incarceration with the advent of the Rockefeller Drug Laws, Brown-Nagin asserts that she was instrumental in the prisoners' rights movement because "she understood more about the causes of Black and brown communities' tortured relationship with the police, their skepticism of the court system, and the distrust of local government than most people who donned judicial robes." (285) Although appeals courts later overturned her rulings, Motley stood firmly to defend the rights of prisoners and to limit police power, taking a stand "against the machinery of mass incarceration." (298) Among the many decisions she handed down were a ruling against solitary confinement, awarding a financial settlement to prisoners, and opposing the harsh penalties of the new drug laws. While recognizing ways that Motley's point of view aligned with power structure enough to make her "acceptable," Brown-Nagin also laments that "[i]f only Motley's words had

been heeded, the nation might have escaped the devastation caused by draconian criminal laws and sentences during the four-decade-long War on Drugs." (301)

These three books pose fascinating questions and offer insights about how people with various levels of outsider status have struggled to have control over their lives, make them meaningful, and contribute to social change. What Brown-Nagin writes about Motley is true for all of the women portrayed in them: "The invisibility of this fascinating woman in our public histories and popular culture distorts our sense of who rebuilt America." (11) We can similarly and more specifically say that New York history is enriched by the inclusion of these women, the work they did, and the things they accomplished.

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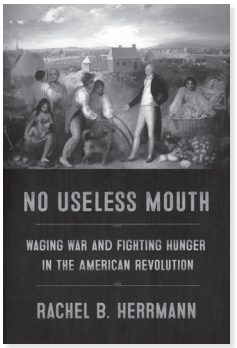
Book Reviews



No Useless Mouth: Waging War and Fighting Hunger in the American Revolution
By Rachel B. Herrmann
(Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019) 308 pp.

In the historiography of the American Revolution, one can be forgiven for thinking every possible topic has been covered. But Rachel B. Herrmann's new book *No Useless Mouth: Waging War and Fighting Hunger in the American Revolution* brings new nuance to the period. In it, Herrmann argues that food played a decisive role in the shifting power dynamics between White Europeans, Indigenous Americans, and enslaved and free Africans and people of African descent. She looks at the American Revolution through an international lens, covering from 1775 in the various colonies through to the dawning of the nineteenth century in Sierra Leone.

The book is divided into eight chapters and three parts. Part I, "Power Rising," introduces us to the ideas of "food diplomacy," "victual warfare," and "victual imperialism" within the context of the American Revolution. Contrasting the roles of the Iroquois Confederacy in the north and the Creeks and Cherokees in the south, Herrmann brings additional support to the idea that U.S. treaties with Indigenous groups should join the pantheon of diplomacy history, while centering food and food diplomacy within the context of those treaties. She also addresses how Indian Affairs agents communicated with various Indigenous groups — with varying success.

Part II, "Power in Flux," addresses the roles of people of African descent in the American Revolution, focusing primarily on Black Loyalists as they gained freedom through Dunmore's Proclamation and the Philipsburg Proclamation. Black Loyalists fought on behalf of the British as soldiers, spies, and foraging groups, and escaped post-war to Nova Scotia with white Loyalists.

Part III, "Power Waning," summarizes what happened to Indigenous and Black groups post-war, focusing on the nascent U.S. imperialism of Indian policy and assimilation and the role food and agriculture played in attempts to control Native populations. It also argues that Black Loyalists adopted the imperialism of their British compatriots in attempts to control food in Sierra Leone, ultimately losing their power to white colonists. Part III also includes Herrmann's conclusion chapter.

No Useless Mouth is most useful to scholars of the American Revolution, providing good references to food diplomacy while also highlighting under-studied groups like Native Americans and Black Loyalists. However, lay readers may find the text difficult to process. Herrmann often makes references to groups and events with little to no context, assuming her readers are as knowledgeable as she is.

In addition, the author appears to conflate Indigenous groups with one another, making generalizations about food consumption patterns and agricultural practices without the context of cultural differences. In focusing on the Iroquois Confederacy and the Creeks/Cherokee, Hermmann also ignores other Native groups, despite sometimes using evidence from other Indigenous nations to support her arguments. For instance, when discussing postwar assimilation practices with the Iroquois in the north and the Creeks and Cherokee in the south (often jumping from one to another in quick succession), she cites Hendrick Aupaumut's advice to Europeans for dealing successfully with Indigenous groups. But she fails to note that Aupaumut was neither Iroquois, Creek, nor Cherokee, but was in fact Stockbridge Mohican. The Stockbridge Mohicans were a group from Stockbridge, Massachusetts, that was already Christianized prior to the outbreak of the American Revolution. They fought on the Patriot side of the war, with disastrous consequences to the Stockbridge Munsee population, and ultimately lost their lands to the people they fought to defend. Without knowledge of this nuance, readers would accept the author's evidence at face value.

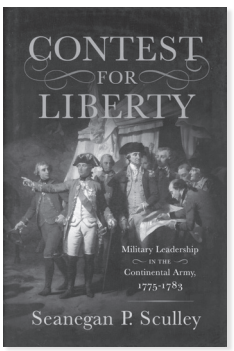
Herrmann's strongest chapters are on the Black Loyalists, and her research into the role of food control in both Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone is groundbreaking. But even those chapters have a few curious omissions. She discusses Lord Dunmore's Proclamation, which was issued in 1775 in Virginia and targeted enslaved people held in bondage by rebels, freeing those who were willing to join the British Army. The chapter then focuses primarily on the roles of enslaved people from the American South. But Herrmann also mentions briefly the Philipsburg Proclamation, issued in 1779 in Westchester County, New York, which freed all people held in bondage by rebel enslavers who could make it to British lines. That proclamation arguably had a much larger impact on the Black Loyalist population, as it also included women, children, and those above military age, thousands of whom streamed into New York City, the primary point of evacuation to Nova Scotia. And yet, Herrmann does not mention at all enslaved people in New York and New Jersey, where slavery was still very active throughout the American Revolution and well into the nineteenth century. In the chapter on Nova Scotia, Herrmann also mentions that white Loyalists brought enslaved people with them, still held in bondage. Neither Dunmore's nor the Philipsburg proclamations freed people held in bondage by Loyalists, and yet they get only a brief mention.

Herrmann's chapters on Indigenous-European relations are extremely useful for other historians researching the period, but would have been improved with additional context on land use in relation to food. Herrmann often references famine, food diplomacy, and victual warfare in these chapters, without addressing the impact of land grabs and disease on the ability of Indigenous groups to feed themselves. She references, but does not fully address the need of European settlers to expand settlement into Indian Country as a motivating factor in war and postwar diplomacy.

Finally, while the focus of the book is specifically on the roles of Indigenous and Black groups in the context of food and warfare, the omission of victual warfare by British and American troops and militias, especially in "foraging" and destroying foodstuffs of white civilian populations throughout the colonies seems like a missed opportunity to compare and contrast with policies and long-term impacts of victual warfare toward Indigenous groups.

In all, this book is a worthy addition to the bookshelves of serious scholars of the American Revolution, especially those interested in Indigenous and Black history of this time period, but it also leaves room for future scholars to examine more closely the issues raised by Herrmann.

Sarah Wassberg Johnson is an independent food historian and museum professional.



The Contest for Liberty: Military Leadership in the Continental Army, 1775–1783
By Seanegan P. Sculley
(Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2019) 206 pp.

Popular discussions of military leadership during the American Revolution often begin and end with the stately, stoic figure of George Washington, usually presiding over a freezing army at Valley Forge. Recent works like *Hamilton: An American Musical* have expanded the public's perception to include a few other officers in the Continental Army: aides-de-camp like the striving social climber Alexander Hamilton and the buffoonish Major General Charles Lee serve as foils to the sincere, ever-respectful Washington. That musical treats military leadership as a political stepping stone for Hamilton (and an equal number of missteps for his rival Aaron Burr), a venue for social reform (and martyrdom) for his fellow aide John Laurens, and as proof of a lack of character and competence for Lee. It all makes for great drama, but how does it compare to the real work of leading regular troops in and, arguably more important, out of combat during the American Revolution? And what did the enlisted men of the Continental Army, being in reality somewhat more opinionated than a Broadway chorus line, make of their officers? Seanegan Sculley,

head of the American History Division of the United States Military Academy's History Department, provides a fresh look at the people who led this army, their effectiveness, and how they were able to respond to the demands of their soldiers.

Examinations of military leadership outside the rarified air of Washington's tent have been a staple of the New Military History, the now half-century-old turn in historical scholarship that grafts the ideology and methodology of social and cultural history onto the study of armed conflict. Charles Royster's seminal *A Revolutionary People at War* (1979) remains an excellent and far-reaching look at the contentious process by which people fighting for liberty instituted and subordinated themselves to military discipline. James Kirby Martin and Mark Edward Lender's *A Respectable Army* (1982), a staple in military history classes, looks at the growth of ideas of military professionalism among the American Revolutionaries, officer and soldier alike. David Hackett Fischer used these approaches to synthesize a history of the New York-New Jersey campaign of 1775 in the pleasingly accessible *Washington's Crossing* (2003), which has also become a go-to for college courses. And in *A Proper Sense of Honor* (2014), the late, great Caroline Cox studied how insecurities about their rapidly achieved status as gentlemen shaped the behavior of American officers. *Contest for Liberty* builds upon and converses with all of these books. By focusing on the concept of leadership, Sculley delves into how these various cultural trends came together to create, sustain, and direct the fighting force that secured American independence.

In his introduction, Sculley defines leadership as "the cultural construct within which decisions for an organization are made and actions are taken to effect that decision." The construction of leadership is ultimately an act of negotiation between members of that organization; in a microcosm of the social construct, officers of the newly-formed Continental Army only wielded as much power as the people enlisted in that army were willing to cede to them. Under this framework, Sculley views successful officers in the Continental Army as those who were able to walk a tightrope between the demands of the Army — for stricter discipline and longer terms of service — with the demands of their men for fair pay, just treatment, and respect. Thus, one of the keys of George Washington's leadership was setting aside the persona of an aloof Virginia planter-aristocrat and becoming the ideal republican soldier: enduring the environmental hardships his men faced in the field, never taking leave, and (at least early in the war) selecting officers the soldiers of the Army would accept based on reputation and local affiliation. Sculley does a persuasive job of showing how Washington found and promoted talent across the army within this republican framework. Happily, this study of officership stretches from the generals down to the lives and interpersonal conflicts of the oft-neglected junior officers. The result is a rare view of leadership across the ranks of the Continental Army.

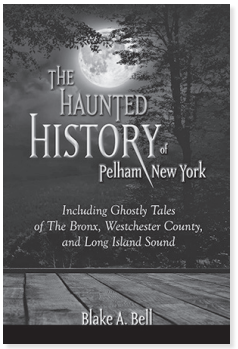
With definitions and framework in place for explaining and evaluating leadership, Sculley divides the rest of his book between the social substances of army life:

recruitment, discipline, training, and morale. These chapters chart how, through often-bitter negotiation, the Continental Army transformed from a popular army in the *rage militaire* years at the start of the war to a small, committed, and more capable force that secured victory at Yorktown. By negotiating new norms for the standards of military service — particularly how long soldiers would serve and how they would be treated during that service — the Continental Army was able to endure repeated military defeats and periods of extreme privation. Sculley persuasively claims that states with a cultural tradition of negotiation (namely, Massachusetts and Connecticut) were most successful in fielding and maintaining Continental troops. States with more chaotic (Pennsylvania) or rigidly stratified (Virginia, South Carolina) social structures could not navigate these dynamics and failed to maintain a regular military presence throughout the war.

"Soldiers in the Continental Army," Sculley writes, "had to be convinced they were being led, not driven." (93) That American soldiers needed to know the *why* of their orders and not just the *what* is one of the oldest tropes in writing about the War of American Independence. Sculley takes this truism and expands it wonderfully into a broad understanding not just of the Continental Army's soldiers and officers, but of the society they inhabited. In his conclusion, Sculley points out that the tradition of leading by education, inspiration, and respect is the real enduring legacy of the Continental Army, manifesting both in the republic the Revolutionaries created and the traditions of the military that defends it.

This book is a worthy addition to the library of any scholar of the American Revolution. Concise and accessibly written, it pulls together a wide array of social, cultural, and academic threads and weaves them into a convincing picture of how the Continental Army functioned. This kind of big-picture understanding of the context an army operates in is a model of current approaches to military history.

Michael Diaz is Curator of History and Uniforms at the West Point Museum, United States Military Academy.



The Haunted History of Pelham, New York: Including Ghostly Tales of the Bronx, Westchester County, and Long Island Sound
By Blake A. Bell
(Excelsior Editions of SUNY Press, 2022) 221 pp.

For many, the sight of costumed guides garbed in eighteenth- or nineteenth-century period attire leading crowds of spectators with flashlights or LED candles clutched in front of them is a familiar one come October. Haunted history walks and tours led by museums, historical societies, private organizations, and

cultural sites are all the rage as of late, and for good reason. They allow these organizations to take the legends of their area, which can be difficult to include in regular tours or interpretations, and present them to an audience excited to learn about the ghosts and specters that are said to haunt their communities, all while staying on mission. Family-friendly, engaging, based in place, and educational (if perhaps with some liberties taken for the sake of good storytelling), these tours fill a much-needed niche, and their continued popularity with folks of all ages proves they have found an audience. At the end of the day, who doesn't like a good ghost story?

Like the best of these haunted tours, Blake A. Bell's *The Haunted History of Pelham, New York: Including Ghostly Tales of The Bronx, Westchester County, and Long Island Sound* places tales of hauntings and supposed paranormal happenings within their broader historical context, offering a glimpse into the society and events that produced them. And though Bell joins a longstanding tradition of authors and historians publishing local ghost stories, his contribution is both fresh and well-crafted.

Now, onto those ghost stories.

Bell writes these tales in a short and punchy manner that captures the allure and intrigue that has kept them alive (even if their subjects are not) and within the public's imagination. He avoids the pitfall of over-explanation or scrubbing away the charm; Bell knows the reader is there for both history and hauntings, not a detailed analytic breakdown or criticism about the plausibility of the supernatural. As such, he dutifully presents each haunting by first unpacking its historical context, then delivering the story itself, and lastly furnishing sources and further readings. This format provides a number of possibilities in which this text could be used in the classroom or as inspiration for a "haunted tour" of your community, while also maintaining the intrigue of the tales. Bell is not there to spoil the stories by burying the lede within long narrative arcs; rather, he's there to give you some facts, tell the story, and then let the audience do with both what they will. Again, it's a very effective way to convey this particular history.

For the geographic ranges of his book, Bell focuses on the lands encompassed in the original manor of Pelham, including "today's town of Pelham, much of the northeast Bronx, including Pelham Bay Park, City Island, and Throggs Neck; the city of Mount Vernon; the town of Eastchester (including its village of Bronxville); the city of New Rochelle; all the offshore islands in Long Island Sound; and more." (xiii) In each instance, these are spaces with which he is intimately familiar. Both the natural and built environments of this region are key to the stories featured in *The Haunted History*. Thankfully, Bell describes the locations of supposed hauntings effortlessly, allowing the reader to develop a very real sense of the physical spaces that influenced them, even if they've never been to them. Though the stories might have familiar elements (whose hometown doesn't have a wailing ghost or two?), Bell places these stories within the human and physical landscape of the former Pelham Manor,

and never loses sight of the geographic boundaries established in the introduction nor the communities contained within. A number of relevant maps and images are laced throughout as well, further connecting the reader to the areas described. So while this is a book very defined by place, even those unfamiliar to the area will find themselves able to enjoy reading it without feeling like an outsider peering in.

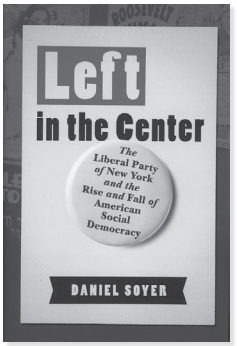
One of the strengths of this book is the overall structure of the narrative, which can be read as a whole or broken into smaller, quickly-accessed portions, thanks to the fact that Bell has separated the book into nine thematic sections. These include such enticing titles as "Ghostly Treasure Guards," "Haunted Houses and Ghosts of Pelham Mansions," and "Quirky Apparitions and Shadow Ghosts of Pelham." In most ways, each section is self-contained. Outside of a three-page preface that provides a general introduction, these sections emerge as vignettes against the overarching backdrop of folklore in the region. Each starts with a brief introduction conveying relevant historical information pertaining to the theme, followed by the corresponding stories separated as chapters. For example, one of the particularly strong sections, "Part II: Revolutionary War Specters," includes in its introduction a quick overview featuring write-ups on "The British Landing at Throggs Neck," "The Landing at Pell's Point," and "The Battle of Pelham." This sets the scene for five chapters of ghost stories, including such tales as the "Shrieking Ghost of Execution Rock" and "Specter of the British Spy." On their own, the chapters are interesting ghost stories, but when placed within the broader thematic sections, Bell weaves a narrative that connects history, folklore, and superstition for something both educational and engaging.

The sources Bell uses for each chapter are included at the tale's conclusion under a "Read More" heading, allowing immediate access for the curious reader who wants to examine a particular story further. In interrogating the sources provided it is evident that Bell performed his due diligence in searching for the origins of each ghost story, as a number of those included are from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with close proximity to the events described. Even for those with fewer or more recent sources, Bell includes any relevant information in succinct notes that might help the reader conduct further research. In many cases, these sources also highlight the fact that these stories have legs; they've been around for some time and are, in fact, a product of the past, and not recent creations.

A quick note for prospective readers: In keeping with the language at the time these stories were first recorded, certain dated terms relating to mental health illnesses are featured in a few. If using this text in the classroom, a discussion about changing language and societal understanding of mental health may help students understand the use of these terms. Additionally, a few stories feature individuals taking their own lives; however, Bell has mostly contained these to a single section, making it easier for readers to avoid this potentially triggering topic if they wish.

What is most striking about *Haunted History* is the versatility in which this book might benefit public historians, educators, or just those interested in a good ghost story. There seems to be something in it for everyone: For public historians and museum workers, a template and guide to mimic when developing or restructuring a haunted history tour for their own organization based on their community's folklore. For educators, a way to get their students to engage with content-related history through interesting tales. And lastly, for those who just like a good ghost story…well, there are plenty of those. *The Haunted History of Pelham, New York*, would serve as a welcome addition to the libraries of those who enjoy well-researched and well-told accounts of local and regional histories featuring superstitions, hauntings, and folklore.

Zachary Finn is Research Historian and Grants Reviewer at the William G. Pomeroy Foundation, and author of The Lady in White: A Tale set in Rochester, New York.



Left in the Center: The Liberal Party of New York and the Rise and Fall of American Social Democracy.
By Daniel Soyer
(Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022) 432 pp.

Daniel Soyer's book on the Liberal Party of New York is a gift to students of New York State politics, whether at the academy or in the political arena. The author furnishes readers with an arc of the party's existence, from its pre-history as far back as the 1880s to several years following the loss of ballot status at the 2002 gubernatorial election.

Soyer endeavors to study the activities of social democrats, the denizens of the Liberal Party. In accomplishing this task, he shows readers the complex nuances of those who find themselves on the left of the political spectrum. In particular, he highlights the tensions between Socialists and Communists and how that strain led to the genesis of the Liberal Party in 1944. These ideological pressures furnish readers with an important contribution, highlighting that the left is not a monolith, but filled with various shades of activists along a broad spectrum. Soyer highlights how these tensions that led to the demise of the New York American Labor Party and the birth of the Liberal Party did not entirely disappear when the ALP disbanded, but continued to haunt the party well into the Vietnam Era.

Soyer takes us through the decades of the Liberal Party's existence, beginning with its founding and its quest to help Franklin Roosevelt win New York State in the 1944 Presidential election. Part and parcel to this history is an overview of the party's electoral successes and failures. The former included its role in delivering the

margin of victory to Senator Herbert Lehman and Governor Averill Harriman, as well as providing John F. Kennedy with the votes needed to win New York's mass of electoral votes. Beyond this, Soyer highlights the importance of the Liberal line to Democratic candidates for statewide office over the years and Republican candidates for New York City offices, including John Lindsay and Rudolph Giuliani.

The features of these rich electoral stories also shed light on another contribution of the work: displaying the convoluted institutional rules of New York's election system. The author does this in a number of ways, but most directly with a clear and important discussion of electoral fusion. Fusion allows candidates to appear on multiple ballot lines in a general election. After all ballots are cast, the number of votes that candidates receive on each line are added together to produce a final total. As Soyer illustrates, Jacob Javits was an enrolled Republican, but won his first election to public office due to votes he received on the Liberal line being added to those received on the Republican ticket. When all the votes were counted, Javits won due to his margin from the Liberal Party. Fusion voting was the key to the Liberal Party's electoral success. While several candidates for office won solely or primarily running on the Liberal line, most candidates were victorious due to the cross-endorsement of the Liberals. Fusion politics still plays an extremely important role in New York politics today.

Other institutional features highlighted in this work include the Wilson-Pakula law, which prevents individuals not enrolled in a party from appearing on that party's primary ballot without the given party's consent. In addition, the book highlights internal party activities established by New York State party law, including those concerning the constitution of a party county committee and primary elections for party offices, such as district leader and state committee posts. Those interested in the environment in which New York politicos practice their craft will do well to read this book.

Beyond these important structural features chronicled by Soyer, which still matter in today's political environment, his work stresses the importance of demographic factors. The chief two of these are racial and ethnic voting blocs and labor union membership.

Racial and ethnic voting blocs have been and still are a major factor in New York elections. As Soyer chronicles, the core of the Liberal Party was largely composed of Jewish garment workers. Early on, Italian-American laborers also supported it. Soyer demonstrates how the shrinking of the garment industry and the cutting of ties with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) deteriorated the party's base of support. Further, white voters, including Jewish and Italian-Americans, left the Liberal Party due to numerous issues surrounding racial integration and politics. The combination of these two factors meant that the Liberal Party lost a base of party enrollees, volunteers, and voters. With this loss also went Liberal Party clubs,

filled with activists, who also played an important role in creating social capital and recreation – more glue that held the original base of the party together. Soyer chronicles these facets eloquently.

With the loss of union support, Soyer tells us that patronage became the new means for the Liberal Party to raise funds and entice activists to work on behalf of party nominees. Soyer accounts the degree to which Liberal Party activists enjoyed patronage, from being named administrative assistants and judges to deputy mayor of New York City. While Soyer spends a great deal of time highlighting this feature of the party, he also illustrates that the Liberal Party supported a wide range of left-of-center policy positions throughout its existence. And Liberal Party leaders thought that patronage was a vehicle for advancing their policy positions.

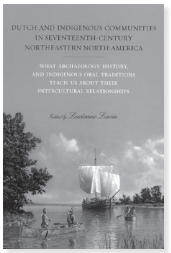
Soyer's work is based on a number of sources, including but not limited to data from over ten archives and interviews with political activists. Having combed through the Liberal Party archives at the New York Public Library I cannot stress enough how impressive it is for Soyer to be able to organize and weave together the party history based on the volume of information in those papers, not all of which are arranged chronologically. And without his interviews, many with luminaries in the party who possess first-hand knowledge of the events of Liberals throughout the years, this work might not have been complete.

This book is for everyone. For those in the political arena, you can learn a great deal about institutional factors fashioning the behavior of activists, internal party structure, personalities of many individuals involved in party politics, and electoral issues. For the New York Working Families Party in particular, which filled much of the void left by the demise of the Liberal Party, this work is a cautionary tale. It illustrates how perceptions, in addition to the realities of abandoning one's roots, can hasten a party's demise. For those in academia, this work is appropriate and accessible to both undergraduates and graduates. It can easily be assigned in classes on state politics, political parties, campaigns and elections, civic engagement, and political ideology. For the general audience, conversations around racial politics continue to evolve on a national scale, particularly with policy efforts in many states to censor academic materials, curriculum, and speech. This work is a reference point for current struggles about inclusion.

Simply put, this historical work is useful today on many fronts. It shows struggles and successes, aspirations and realities, power and influence, greed and generosity. I highly recommend it.

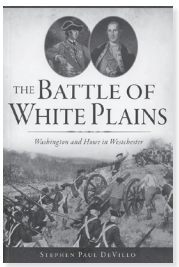
Michael A. Armato is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Albright College and secretary of the New York State Political Science Association.

New & Noteworthy Books



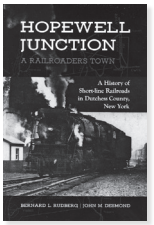
Dutch and Indigenous Communities in Seventeenth-Century Northeastern North America: What Archaeology, History, and Indigenous Oral Traditions Teach Us About Their Intercultural Relationships
Edited by Lucianne Lavin
(Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2021) 332 pp. $34.95 (softcover)
www.sunypress.edu

While more than the proceeds of the eleventh-annual Native American-Archaeology Round Table, this book shares that event's goal of emphasizing the often forgotten eastern and western extents of New Netherland, which ranged from southern New England to the Delaware River Valley. The ten chapters (by eleven authors) offer insight into the Dutch explorers and settlers and the many ways in which they interacted with their Native American neighbors. Readers will recognize many of the contributors as authorities on New Netherland, and will appreciate this wider view of colonial-Indigenous relations across the whole of New Netherland and throughout its history.



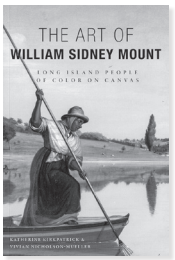
The Battle of White Plains: Washington and Howe in Westchester
By Stephen Paul DeVillo
(Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2022) 126 pp. $21.99 (softcover)
www.historypress.com

A local historian possessing great familiarity with Westchester County's geography and those who took part in this conflict, DeVillo describes the events that took place from March through November of 1776. In ten short chapters written with the authority and engagement of a public historian and tour guide, he traces the steps leading up to the battle, the daylong fight, and its aftermath, providing details about all of the actions, actors, and places involved. Amply illustrated with historic maps and images as well as photographs of living history reenactors (to whom the book is dedicated), this small book is big on content.



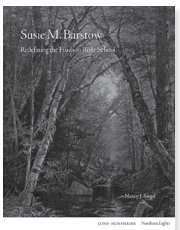
Hopewell Junction, A Railroader's Town: A History of Short-Line Railroads in Dutchess County, New York
By Bernard L. Rudberg & John M. Desmond
(Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2022) 160 pp. $29.95 (softcover)
www.sunypress.edu

Rudberg, who passed away in 2016, was a legend in railroad and local history circles for his research, annual bus tours of historic rail lines, and instrumental role in the restoration of the Hopewell Depot building. Unfortunately, accolades alone do not always guarantee that an individual's work will gain posterity. Fortunately, John Desmond has ably stepped in to compile and expand Rudberg's written legacy in this new volume. Gathering material from Rudberg's three out-of-print books, Desmond also includes primary documents and interviews that succinctly cover the town's (railroad) prehistory, its rise and fall, and the depot's rebirth as a museum adjacent to the Dutchess Rail Trail.



The Art of William Sidney Mount: Long Island People of Color on Canvas
By Katherine Kirkpatrick & Vivian Nicholson-Mueller
(Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2022) 192 pp. $23.99 (softcover)
www.historypress.com

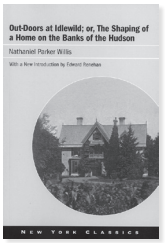
Mount (1807–1868) was no stranger to New York City or the National Academy of Design, where he enjoyed lifetime membership, but he spent most of his time living and painting on Long Island's North Shore. He achieved fame as a genre painter, notably depicting Black models in his compositions with the same dignity that the Old Masters portrayed white subjects. Kirkpatrick and Nicholson-Mueller provide a fine biography of the artist, but their greatest contribution is revealing the identities of Mount's previously unnamed models. The authors examine eleven paintings, reviewing them both aesthetically and historically before revealing the name of each subject and providing biographical information. The addition of ample illustrations (some in color) and discussions of important places within Long Island's Black community, combined with its focus on the intersection of art and social history, make this book valuable not only for its content but for the precedent it sets.



Susie M. Barstow: Redefining the Hudson River School
By Nancy Siegel
(London: Lund Humphries, 2023) 208 pp. $44.99 (hardcover)
www.lundhumphries.com

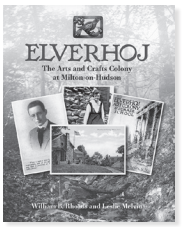
Barstow (1836–1923) was born into a Brooklyn merchant family, graduated from the (still new) Rutgers Female Institute, hiked and exhibited paintings with Jervis McEntee, later traveled the world with

a woman twenty years her junior, and enjoyed steady regard and sales of her art throughout her life. She would return from her travels to show paintings and regale full houses with her stories, yet today she is nearly unknown. Siegel's compelling biography traces Barstow's life through its many connections and influences, returning this most intriguing artist, as well as her compatriots, to the public's attention. Barstow created an individual and successful life that bridged the Victorian and Modern eras. She traveled freely and widely through a rapidly changing world, leaving a vital legacy that Siegel has uncovered and beautifully illustrated.



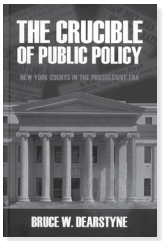
Out-Doors at Idlewild: or, The Shaping of a Home on the Banks of the Hudson, with a new introduction by Edward Renehan
By Nathaniel Parker Willis
(Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2021) 266 pp. $27.95 (softcover)
www.sunypress.edu

First published in 1855, *Out-Doors at Idlewild* is a collection of "Letters to the *Home Journal*" written by Willis about his estate (located in Cornwall-on-Hudson, near Storm King Mountain) and its environs. A celebrated author and editor, Willis enjoyed his celebrity as much as his "neighborhood" and seemed to relish using the former to brag about the latter. Whether sharing moments of inspiration or irritation, the book emanates with his deep interest in and affection for the Hudson Highlands, as well as Newburgh to their north, in a way that still engages readers. This republication is one of a series in Excelsior Editions' New York Classics, which are introducing such important and regionally-rich works to a new audience.



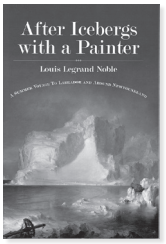
Elverhoj: The Arts and Crafts Colony at Milton-on-Hudson
By William B. Rhoads & Leslie Melvin
(Catskill, NY: Black Dome Press, 2022) 218 pp. $35.00 (softcover)
www.shop.blackdomepress.com

With the relatively reserved Danish immigrant artisan Anders Andersen as its principal founder and director, Elverhoj operated from 1912 to 1936 and offered drawing, painting, printmaking, metalwork and jewelry, weaving, pottery, and leatherwork, and later become renowned for its theater. Rhoads and Melvin present the colony's prehistory, growth, and eventual demise, with details about its founders, patrons, instructors, and students, as well as its lasting contributions to the region and the arts. The story is further enhanced by color illustrations and supplemental material, including a timeline, biographical sketches, and archival information. Of special note to many will be the chapter titled "The Women of Elverhoj: Craft as Cottage Industry, Craft as Cure," which primarily follows the lives of sisters Bessie and Henrietta Scott from artists to instructors to political activists and occupational therapy professionals.



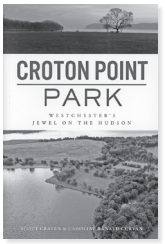
The Crucible of Public Policy: New York's Courts in the Progressive Era
By Bruce W. Dearstyne
(Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2022) 306 pp. $31.95 (softcover)
www.sunypress.edu

The New York State government spent the Progressive Era, from the 1900s through the 1920s, "catching up" with private industry by enacting legislation aimed to improve workers' lives and public health. This legislation would be challenged in the courts, often resulting in a repeated and improved second attempt to succeed. At a time when legislators were deliberately pushing social, economic, and political change, the courts often had to find a balance in order to remain above the political fray. Dearstyne discusses cases of individual privacy, public health, state commissions, regulatory agencies, and worker protections, all of which were key issues of their day and remain relevant in ours. His description of the courts' processes and the precedents they set have never previously been discussed in such depth.



After Icebergs with a Painter: A Summer Voyage to Labrador and Around Newfoundland
By Louis Legrand Noble
(Catskill, NY: Black Dome Press, 2022) 236 pp. $19.95 (softcover)
www.shop.blackdomepress.com

Following *The Heart of the Andes* (1859), *The Icebergs* (1861) helped to establish Frederic Church's reputation as an expeditionary painter. He voyaged to the polar waters off the coast of Canada's northeastern-most province to create the latter, capturing those subtle and sublime landscapes in a series of drawings, gouache, and oil sketches before memorializing them on canvas. The 1859 expedition also was documented by Church's friend and fellow traveler Louis LeGrand Noble. Unavailable for many years, this lively narrative has been republished and greatly enhanced by The Olana Partnership and Black Dome Press. The new edition includes thirty-eight additional color illustrations, all of which complement the wit, wonder, and terror of Noble's narrative as he relates visits with the locals and adventures rowing about the "Alpine" floating mountains that regularly endangered the boat and crew with cascades of ice.



Croton Point Park: Westchester's Jewel on the Hudson
By Scott Craven & Caroline Ranald Curvan
(Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2022) 158 pp. $23.99 (softcover)
www.historypress.com

Croton Point juts out from the east shore of the wide Tappan Zee stretch of the Hudson, making it one of the most dramatic features on a map of the river. Walking its shoreline, with the highlands looming across the waters and long views both north and south, is equally dramatic. But to use the term "jewel" in the title of a book about a park built on a landfill seems potentially excessive. Fortunately, Craven and Curvan prove that is not the case with their history of the peninsula. Beginning with geology, the authors then trace its history through Indigenous occupation, colonization, industrialization ("Grapes and Bricks"), its purchase by Westchester County for recreation and refuse (with a racially motivated subplot), its role in the rise of modern environmentalism, and finally to the passive and active recreational opportunities offered today. Amply illustrated with photos and maps, *Croton Point Park* also includes an extensive bibliography and a chapter on "Other Things to Do," making it a well-informed guidebook for those looking to get outside and a gateway for those who want to delve more deeply into the history of the site.

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