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From the Editors

You have to reach back fifteen years to find the last issue of *The Hudson River Valley Review* whose articles focused exclusively on our region's recent past, and it was not nearly this diverse. The forgoing articles provide compelling insights into an extraordinary array of people and movements that nevertheless share common threads — community, politics, social action, the struggle for human rights. They prove that over the last century the Hudson River Valley has continued to maintain its reputation as a bulwark of progressiveness and a bellwether for national trends. Devin Lander and Paige Rozanski examine significant aspects of the artistic, social, and spiritual explorations that took place in the region in the 1960s, predating San Francisco's vaunted "Summer of Love" and the Woodstock Festival and influencing many of the psychedelic aesthetics still prominent in fashion and advertising today. Looking across the 1970s into the 1990s in the City of Albany, Ashley Hopkins-Benton recounts the trials and victories of grassroots activists working for LGBTQ+ rights and the role their strategies played in state and national politics. While the 2017 controversy on the campus of SUNY New Paltz was neither the first nor the most famous instance of questioning the naming of school buildings, Reynolds Scott-Childress relates an innovative response on the part of the administration there to foster community engagement and dialogue around the issue.

Speaking of issues: the previous edition of *The Hudson River Valley Review* set exclusively in the twentieth century was dedicated entirely to Eleanor Roosevelt and her legacy. In this issue, the Regional History Forum celebrates her and the Val-Kill National Historic Site on the fortieth anniversary of its opening by tracing the evolution of "The First Lady of the World" in the place Eleanor Roosevelt felt most at home. Finally, the book reviews delve further back into the past, as far as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as do many of the titles in our New & Noteworthy section.

Read on, dig in, and enjoy!

From the Publisher:

Like any good journal, *The Hudson River Valley Review* relies on scholars with a rich variety of interests and expertise. That is why we are excited to welcome three new members this year to our Editorial Board: COL Seanegan Sculley, Kerry Dean Carso, and Joshua Groffman. COL Seanegan Sculley, the author of 'Contest for Liberty': *Military Leadership in the Continental Army, 1775–1783* (Westholme Publishing, 2019) among many other publications, currently serves as an Academy Professor in the Department of History at West Point. Kerry Dean Carso, author of *Follies in America: A History of Garden and Park Architecture* (Cornell University Press, 2021) is professor of art history at the State University of New York at New Paltz, where she teaches courses on American art and architecture. Joshua Groffman, a composer and researcher whose work includes research on music, sound, history, and environmental politics in the region, is associate professor of music at Southern Connecticut State University. We look forward to their support of the journal.

On the cover: (front, clockwise) USCO and friends at the Church, Garnerville, New York, April 1966, courtesy of USCO. Timothy Leary, family and band on a lecture tour; State University of New York at Buffalo (1969), Dr. Dennis Bogdan, Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0. *Shiva, 1965,* courtesy of National Gallery of Art, Washington. (back, clockwise from top) Flyer made by USCO, c. 1964–66, courtesy of USCO. Timothy Leary, photo by Dr. Dennis Bogdan. Images of both projections and slide carousel with USCO controller, National Gallery of Art Event Images — General Events. Photograph by Rebecca Clews. [26B5_135051_053.tif and 26B5_135051_015.tif]. Courtesy of National Gallery of Art Archives. *Spheres-Time (Tabernacle Painting), 1965,* National Gallery of Art, Washington, image courtesy of Carl Solway Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati

THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

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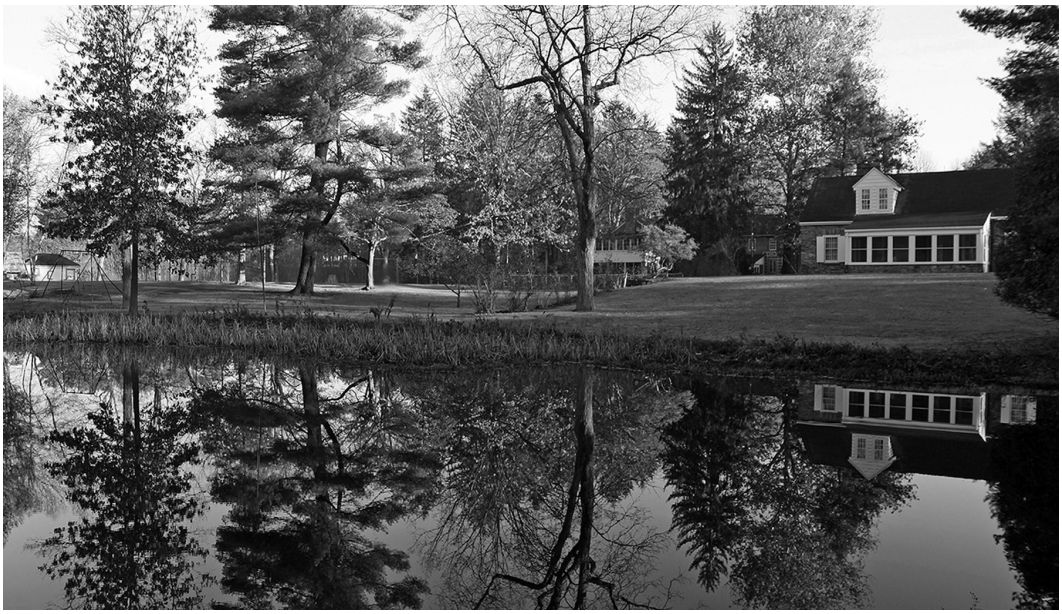
Personal Reflection

Regional History Forum

Book Reviews

Crafting a Legacy at Val-Kill: The Emergence of Eleanor Roosevelt

Grace Naccarato



Val-Kill, looking across the water at Stone Cottage, NPS/Bill Urbin, and an artist's rendering of a bird's-eye view of the site. All images courtesy of the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site and the National Park Service

Eleanor Roosevelt's life began at a time when young women rarely grew up to achieve extraordinary things. In childhood, she was surrounded by women who sought to control her life and stifle her personal development. Continuing into adulthood, she also was surrounded by important men who would have made it easy for her to remain in the shadows. However, Eleanor Roosevelt became a prolific author, an entrepreneur, a politician, and one of the world's most formidable activists. Despite all the traditional expectations, she broke precedent, redefining the standards set for women by becoming widely recognized as the "First Lady of the World" and one of the most influential voices of her time. Her story is one of evolution, an evolution deeply intertwined with the evolution of Val-Kill — her home and today the country's only National Historic Site dedicated to a First Lady.

> "*Remember no one can make you feel inferior without your consent.*"
> — Eleanor Roosevelt

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt was born on October 11, 1884, to Anna Hall Roosevelt and Elliot Roosevelt. She began her life as one of the "Oyster Bay Roosevelts" because of her relation to her uncle, future President Theodore Roosevelt. Although she was born into a life of great privilege, with many advantages due to her family's wealth and reputation, she still faced several adversities.

From a young age, Eleanor idolized her mother and sought her approval in everything. However, Eleanor was never able to live up to her mother's unattainable expectations. Anna repeatedly tore down Eleanor's self-confidence, nicknaming her "Granny" and "the ugly duckling" as a child and telling her that because she looked plain, she had no choice but to achieve extraordinary things. This instilled a supreme sense of unworthiness in Eleanor that led to her desperately seeking validation from others, especially from her father, a struggling alcoholic.

When Eleanor was eight years old, her mother and younger brother, Elliot, Jr., died of diphtheria. Shortly after, her father succumbed from complications of a suicide attempt. Eleanor lived with her maternal grandmother, Mary Livingston Hall, until age fifteen, when she was sent to England to attend the Allenswood School for Girls. There she met her first true mentor, headmistress Marie Souvestre. The daughter of a French philosopher, Souvestre held firm humanistic beliefs that she passed on to her students. In Eleanor's time at Allenswood from 1899 to 1902, she began to grow into herself and develop the self-confidence she sorely lacked. Therefore, the supportive environment at Allenswood was necessary to Eleanor's evolution. She once said, "Whatever I have become since had its seeds in those three years of contact with a liberal mind and a strong personality."

However, Eleanor's time in England ended abruptly after her grandmother heard that she had been sightseeing unchaperoned in Europe and quickly arranged the young woman's return to the United States. Soon after, Eleanor made her official

debut into society. Then in 1903, her grandmother arranged Eleanor's engagement to her fifth cousin, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR). That same year, Eleanor enrolled in the Junior League of New York, where she volunteered as a teacher of immigrants. Shortly after, she also joined the National Consumers League's investigation into working conditions in the garment districts, marking her first official civic involvement.

After Franklin was elected to the New York State Senate in 1910, he and Eleanor moved from his family's Springwood estate in Hyde Park, New York, to the capital in Albany. By this time, Eleanor had given birth to the couple's first four children. With a desire to prove her usefulness to her husband, Eleanor assumed the role of a picture-perfect political wife. She was a fundamental part of FDR's next position as assistant secretary of the Navy. She busied herself by forming relationships with influential figures who could serve as potential allies, running the Roosevelt household, and making herself vital in any way possible. This continued throughout the duration of Franklin's campaign for vice president in 1920. While she played behind-the-scene roles, she proved to be a great asset to Franklin in many ways.

Throughout the 1910s, Eleanor became interested in and knowledgeable about the inner workings of the political world. She offered insight to FDR, which he grew to appreciate greatly over time. She attended her very first Democratic Party convention. She also was present at Woodrow Wilson's speech in 1917 when he addressed Congress in an attempt to get the United States to declare war. Afterward, Eleanor said she had been overwhelmed by the sense of impending change. As a result, she started to shift her focus more to social reform instead of social responsibilities.

This shift in Eleanor's priorities was timely because in 1921 FDR became paralyzed by polio. In the face of his disability and the many challenges that came along with it, Eleanor joined the Women's Division of the New York State Democratic Committee to keep hope alive for Franklin's political career. She started delivering speeches in a successful attempt to receive more funding for his campaigns. Thanks to the help of Roosevelt political advisor Louis Howe, Eleanor's skills in speech-making greatly improved over the next several years, and she became recognized as one of the state's most prominent women speakers, along with her political companion Caroline O'Day.

Eleanor began working with several political organizations. In addition to the Women's Division of the New York State Democratic Committee, she joined the Women's Trade Union League, the Foreign Policy Association, and the New York League of Women Voters, all of which helped to solidify her role as a promising political presence. Soon, she was put in charge of the Women's Division budget by Democratic Party leaders and became highly esteemed among female activists. As Eleanor built her reputation, there was a growing disconnect between her roles in the public eye and the family home. There were two versions of Eleanor — the

strong political woman and the more traditional wife, mother, and daughter-in-law. This dual identity was especially difficult to manage within Springwood, as tensions were growing between Eleanor and her mother-in-law, Sara Roosevelt. Through her work, Eleanor made quite a few female political associates. The most notable were her relationships with Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman, which developed into remarkably close friendships. The three bonded over their shared passions; all

From left, FDR, Eleanor, Marion Dickerman, Nancy Cook, and an unidentified man aboard a train at a campaign stop

were extremely active in the Women's Division of the New York State Democratic Committee and had volunteered in hospitals during World War I. As they got closer, Eleanor learned of Nancy's woodworking skills, which she had previously used to make prosthetic limbs for veterans. This, combined with the nation's ongoing agricultural crisis, sparked the idea that would later become the Val-Kill Furniture Factory.

As Eleanor continued to evolve, she eventually outgrew Springwood. While living at the main house with FDR and Sara, Eleanor was constantly being monitored and distracted, which effectively stifled her growth. She needed her own place, where she would have the freedom and space necessary to collaborate with Nancy and Marion

on projects important to her. This led the three women to form a partnership by building a cottage at Val-Kill and embarking on a new journey.

Establishing Val-Kill Industries

> "*No one can tell you how to use your time. It is yours. Your life is your own. You mold it. You make it.*" — Eleanor Roosevelt

FDR originally purchased the land that later made up the Val-Kill property in 1911. At the time, it was farmland that spanned 181 acres of open fields for crops and livestock. Eleanor later spent a great deal of time there with Marion and Nancy, and they all grew especially fond of the area. On one of their frequent picnics, the idea of building a cottage for themselves was born, and FDR was more than happy to let the women use the land. Eleanor had always loved the property for its beauty and peacefulness and the nature surrounding it, and she was eager to make it her own. Val-Kill became an important physical marker of independence as she began her new journey of self-direction. The cottage's construction was the fundamental first step in her evolution.

Although the property was already separate from the rest of the Roosevelts at Springwood, about two miles away, Eleanor also continued evolving personally by developing her voice as an author. During her time at the cottage, she wrote articles for various journals and magazines, allowing her to earn an income that could fund her own interests and causes without relying on FDR and the Roosevelt family. This granted her a level of financial independence she never had before. Some of her newly earned money was put toward the expenses of building the Stone Cottage at Val-Kill — so it could truly belong to her. Eleanor and her companions, Nancy and Marion, all had a considerable amount of input in the cottage's construction, with Nancy coming up with design plans to make it uniquely theirs. Each of these steps added an additional degree of independence.

The first meal at Stone Cottage was served on January 1, 1926. The cottage was by no means finished, but Eleanor was impatient to move in and begin this next phase of her life. The three women furnished the house on their own, with furniture designed and built by Nancy and her assistants. The three women embroidered all the towels and table linens with the initials E.N.M. It was one of Eleanor's priorities to design the house so it was comfortable and welcoming, rather than impressive, like the mansion at Springwood. She always felt like a permanent guest at Springwood; at Val-Kill, it was her desire to make a true home for herself. It was made clear to Sara Roosevelt that this was Eleanor's own space, not an extension of Springwood. Once the three women were settled into the cottage, it became a refuge for them all. They grew even closer in friendship and served as each other's confidants and

The Stone Cottage at Val-Kill in spring

support systems. Shortly after moving in, Eleanor and her companions started to consider what more they could do with their newfound freedom.

Val-Kill quickly became the center of many projects. The three women were all heavily involved in the publication of a mimeographed bulletin released by the Women's Division of the New York State Democratic Committee. During their time at Val-Kill, they turned it into a highly successful monthly magazine titled the *Women's Democratic News*. Each of the women contributed by suggesting topics, authoring articles, and working as editors. Eleanor's financial independence allowed for more freedom to focus on new projects. This was the beginning of the women's partnership in Val-Kill Industries, but there was still much more to come.

The idea for the Val-Kill Furniture Factory was developed as an attempt to help local Hyde Park farmers who were struggling. At the time, agriculture — specifically dairy, apples, corn, and barley — made up most of the economic activity in Dutchess County. During World War 1, farmers had increased production to aid overseas allies. This resulted in overproduction, and prices plummeted at the war's end, leading to a nationwide agricultural depression. Countless farmers across the country, especially in Dutchess County, were abandoning their farms because they could no longer afford to keep the land. In an attempt to create a solution to this growing problem,

the factory was established to teach local farmers to build specialty furniture that they could sell as a supplemental income, particularly during the winter months. In 1926, construction of the factory began. Because of her expertise in woodworking, Nancy took a leading role in its particulars, while Eleanor assumed much of the financial responsibility using personal funds she had earned as an author.
At the time, Val-Kill Industries was revolutionary. It was customary for political

Val-Kill Furniture Factory building

wives to simply be at their husbands' sides, aiding in their careers, but Eleanor defied convention and did what no political wife had done before. The furniture produced in the factory was available for purchase in department stores. It could be found in many public and private venues — from Vassar College and the children's room in Buffalo's National History Museum to the James Roosevelt Memorial Library in Hyde Park — as well as in the homes and workplaces of prominent political figures. Eleanor also purchased and placed select pieces in other Roosevelt properties, including Stone Cottage, Warm Springs, and Campobello Island. She even opened the doors to her own house in Manhattan to display it. Her role in the public eye drew a lot of attention to the business and she proved to be a remarkably effective saleswoman.

Eleanor Roosevelt with Todhunter School staff in Washington, D.C.

The partnership between the three women that made up Val-Kill Industries expanded further in 1927 when Marion Dickerman approached Eleanor with an idea to buy the prominent Todhunter School for girls in New York City. The school was well known for its small class sizes, which ensured that each student received maximum attention. Marion had been a teacher at the school since 1922, and when the owner announced that he was going to sell it, she wanted to jump on the opportunity. Eleanor fell in love with the idea because of the fondness she felt for her time at Allenswood and decided to purchase the school. Marion became the principal and Eleanor associate principal. Eleanor held a great deal of affection for the students and decided to teach classes in the field of liberal arts, including literature and history.

Also in the summer of 1927, the furniture factory was flourishing and Otto Berge, a prominent craftsman, was hired to bring it to the next level. He introduced new methods of manufacturing and helped to perfect existing operations. To accommodate its growth, additions were made to the factory building in 1928 and 1929. These included a showroom, a pewter forge, woodworking shop, and finishing room. The women also created an additional program that taught local women how to weave homemade cloth, and they were able to sell additional items such as suits.

At the center of the Val-Kill partnership were three incredibly driven and innovative women whose partnership resulted in a remarkable number of successful enterprises in publishing, education, manufacturing, and social projects. But what is most notable is the headway each made in their individual processes of personal growth, and the progression of women as a whole in the United States.

Developing Her Own Political Identity

"*Do the things you think you cannot do.*" — Eleanor Roosevelt

While Val-Kill was growing rapidly, so was Eleanor, and although she thoroughly enjoyed her time at Val-Kill, her life was changing. In 1928, only a year after completion of the factory, FDR was elected governor of New York, and the family moved back to Albany. The couple became overwhelmed with everything that needed to be done, not just affairs concerning the state, but those related to the onset of the Great Depression. However, FDR was not the only one taking on additional work. That same year, Eleanor was appointed director of the Bureau of Women's Activities by the Democratic National Committee. Somehow, she balanced running the Roosevelt household in Albany, teaching at the Todhunter School in New York City, managing the Val-Kill Furniture Factory, and continuing to advance her own political work.

In 1932, still at the height of the Great Depression, FDR was elected President of the United States. Eleanor's move to Washington, D.C., opened up a plethora of doors that allowed for new opportunities. While she was still heavily involved in day-to-day operations at Val-Kill, Eleanor increasingly had more responsibilities outside of Hyde Park. She had not been a traditional political wife while FDR served in his various positions prior to the presidency, so naturally she would also break precedent by holding all-female press conferences, something no First Lady had done before. She assisted FDR in many of his duties when she was needed, but she also did not let go of her personal projects and remained present in her role with the Democratic National Committee and other organizations.

Due to FDR's paralysis, which he continued to hide from the public, Eleanor was much more involved than most previous First Ladies. She frequently made public appearances and delivered speeches on FDR's behalf. Additionally, FDR often asked Eleanor to travel around the country and report back to him on the success of New Deal policies he was implementing. Thus, Eleanor had a particularly good understanding of what the country needed at any given time. On one of her visits, she reported back to FDR on farming towns struggling out West and urged him to act to provide relief. She then played a significant role in the creation of the Homestead Settler's Act, and used the Val-Kill Furniture Factory as a successful template for implementing its programs.

The Homestead Settler's Act sought to help poverty-stricken towns by building communities designed by the federal government. Struggling families could rent a home and work on local farms or in local industries. The idea for these communities was essentially the same that led to creation of the Val-Kill Furniture Factory, just on a larger scale. Over time, approximately 100 communities were built across the United States. The first community built was in Arthurdale, West Virginia; it became

known as "Eleanor's Little Village" because of the fundamental role she played in its creation. The town's residents grew to love her because she visited thirty-three times to check on its progress. Eleanor was also involved in other New Deal programs, most notably the National Youth Administration, which focused on providing employment for those between sixteen and twenty-five, a priority relating back to her earliest passions when she was volunteering as a young woman.

In addition to supporting FDR and his work, Eleanor also had her own agenda, focusing on the advancement of women, especially in politics. In 1935, she set up meetings between FDR and the head of the Democratic National Committee and the head of its women's division to discuss the role of women in political elections and how it could be improved. Also in 1935, she started writing her syndicated "My Day" newspaper column, in which she discussed a variety of topics, including women's rights, civil rights, and current events.

Eleanor's role in the public eye as First Lady and a party politician became more prominent each day. She could no longer be present at Val-Kill as she wished, especially since she was now living so far away from Hyde Park, so she made the decision to withdraw from Val-Kill Industries in 1936. Eleanor first emerged as an individual alongside Nancy and Marion. Now she was ready to begin her next phase of independence.

Eleanor was gaining respect for herself as an entirely separate entity from FDR while making herself indispensable to his political career. When it came time for FDR to run for re-election in 1940 and he was unable to make an appearance at the Democratic national convention, Eleanor went in his place. She delivered a powerful and persuasive speech that secured FDR's unprecedented third term as president. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor shortly into the term, FDR addressed the nation in a speech still widely remembered and quoted. However, what most do not remember is that Eleanor was actually the first person to speak to the American people immediately following the attack — via her radio show, "Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Program," which aired every Sunday night.

In 1943, as the war raged on, Eleanor toured the South Pacific war zone in an effort to boost soldiers' morale. Her tour lasted five weeks and covered more than 25,000 miles. She made it a point to speak to service members, join them for meals in mess halls, and visit hospital wards to comfort the wounded. By the time Eleanor took this trip, she had been First Lady for more than ten years, and while she was known for pushing boundaries, this endeavor was truly unrivaled. For her safety, the trip was kept a secret, but when news of it broke ten days in, it sparked controversy. However, the publicity had the desired effect: It served as a medium for Eleanor's voice to reach even more people, giving her an even stronger wartime leadership role. These actions were more boundary-breaking than anything Eleanor had done previously, and further shattered the mold of the discreet First Lady.

Becoming First Lady of the World

> "*The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.*"
> — Eleanor Roosevelt

In 1945, while still serving as president, FDR died from a cerebral hemorrhage at the age of sixty-three. Before his death, he expressed a wish that Springwood, along with the adjacent Presidential Library, be donated to the National Park Service and become a National Historic Site. Thus, Eleanor prepared Springwood for this transition and moved into Val-Kill full time. In 1947, Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman moved away and sold their interest in Val-Kill to Eleanor. She had previously renovated the former furniture factory (which closed in 1936) into a cottage. Now, she chose that building to be her home. Eleanor had always felt like an outsider at Springwood because Sara had always made it clear she was. So Eleanor was happy to take up permanent residence at the one place she felt at home.

After assuming the presidency, Harry Truman appointed Eleanor — for whom he had always had a great deal of respect — as the first female delegate to the United Nations General Assembly. Shortly after, her work as a human rights activist was recognized and she was elected head of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Eleanor played an integral role in the drafting, writing, and passage of the Declaration of Human Rights, which was successfully adopted in 1948.

Eleanor remained actively involved in the fight for human rights around the world and visited several countries to meet with other important political figures. In each city she visited, she was met with cheers. By this point, Eleanor had proven that her reach was not limited; she had the respect of the American people as well as those around the world. Outside of her work with the United Nations, she also initiated creation of the Americans for Democratic Action Group in 1947. It focused on domestic social reform and resistance during the Cold War. Then in 1952, Eleanor resigned from her position in the United Nations to join the campaign trail as an endorser and advisor for Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson.

Undated photo of Eleanor Roosevelt with Martin Luther King, Jr. Courtesy of the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, 2016

Even though Eleanor held no public office, she was still very prominent in the political community, thus making Val-Kill important as her center of operations. Its proximity to Springwood allowed her to stay connected to FDR's legacy, while also

creating one of her own. She hosted several foreign and national political figures at the cottage, including Nikita Khrushchev, leader of the Soviet Union, and John F. Kennedy. Kennedy visited the cottage in 1960 in hopes of gaining Eleanor's support for his presidential campaign. Following his election, he appointed Eleanor once again to the U.S. delegation to the United Nations. She also was appointed to the National Advisory Committee of the Peace Corps and chair of the president's Commission on the Status of Women. However, she passed away prior to assuming these positions.

Eleanor Roosevelt and friends at Val-Kill

Leaving a Legacy at Val-Kill

"*To leave the world richer — that is the ultimate success.*" — Eleanor Roosevelt

From a young age, Eleanor Roosevelt was consistently made to feel inadequate and unwelcome, whether it was at her childhood homes or at Springwood. She began her adult life in the background of her husband's political career, carrying out the duties of a traditional wife, but quickly grew restless in that role. She became much more active and eventually moved out of Springwood and into her own home at Val-Kill, where she could make her goals a priority. There, she finally felt as though she belonged and was important, a feeling she had been yearning for her whole life. From this point on, her standing grew as a political figure and a successful author. She added another dimension to her initiatives when she purchased the Todhunter School, where she acted as associate principal and teacher. And most importantly, she opened the Val-Kill Furniture Factory, which laid the grounds for important future political and economic programs in the United States.

As the wife of a U.S. President, Eleanor was revolutionary and created entirely new standards for what a First Lady could do. Even after FDR's passing, she continued her work and made her most significant global contributions as an officer with the United Nations. She remained an important political figure while living at Val-Kill and used the property both as her home and headquarters until her death in 1962 at the age of seventy-eight. She was one of the most transformative and influential political figures of her time and was successful in redefining the role of the First Lady before becoming one of the first women to hold significant global standing. It was through Eleanor's tenacity and perseverance that she earned the moniker First Lady of the World.

"*Val-Kill is where I used to find myself and grow. At Val-Kill I emerged as an individual.*" — Eleanor Roosevelt

Like its most famous resident, the property of Val-Kill has undergone a lengthy process of evolution that continues to this day. Historians with the National Park Service and the National Archives are still receiving artifacts and firsthand accounts that allow for an incredibly accurate and immersive walk-through of Eleanor's life. There is so much history throughout Val-Kill's buildings and grounds, and understanding all the information found there is essential to understanding her trajectory and the mark she left on the world.

One of the main factors that led Eleanor to choose this land as her home was its location in the middle of a beautiful, wooded area and its proximity to the Fall-Kill Creek. When arriving at Val-Kill today, visitors travel along a lengthy scenic drive at the end of which they come to a pond and an unintrusive parking area. From the moment visitors exit their vehicles and cross the bridge, they are transported

back to the environment that Eleanor fell so in love with. The first building that visitors enter is Stone Cottage, the first building constructed on the property. It was initially built to fit the needs of Eleanor and her companions, Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman. The three women lived there on and off for years, and Nancy and Marion remained there full-time from 1936 to 1947, when they moved to Connecticut. Afterward, Eleanor's son, John Roosevelt, lived there with his wife and children.

Presently, Stone Cottage serves as a visitor center that also exhibits many original artifacts from the property. On display are Nancy Cook's tools, the Val-Kill stamps used to mark furniture manufactured in the factory, and reproductions of catalogs advertising the factory's products and their respective prices. Visitors also can see several pieces made in the factory, including furniture, cutlery, and a cloth suit. And there are several personal items, such as Eleanor Roosevelt's business card and linens embroidered with the ENM initials of Eleanor, Nancy, and Marion.

Val-Kill Cottage is a combination of the original furniture factory and additions

Val-Kill Cottage, NPS/Bill Urbin

made through the years. Visitors first enter the original factory building, walking into the room where furniture was built before being brought upstairs for finishing. It contains several original pieces produced there, including a butterfly table, hutch, daybed, TV table, and Eleanor's desk. After the factory's closure, this space was converted into a suite for Eleanor's secretary, Malvina "Tommy" Thompson. It consisted of her office, two bedrooms, and a kitchen area.

When visitors venture upstairs, there are two small bedrooms along a narrow hallway, at the end of which is Eleanor's bedroom and her sleeping porch. In the

summer, the bedroom was too hot for Eleanor, so she enjoyed spending time on the porch with a view of the garden below. Most of the furniture visitors see in the bedrooms are also Val-Kill originals. Even some of the pewter pieces from the factory are found there.

Back downstairs in the dining room, the dinnerware is most notable, not for its great monetary value, but because it is Franciscan Ware, a very average set of tableware from the time. What really sets Val-Kill apart from other historic sites, such as Springwood or the nearby Vanderbilt Mansion, is that it was not meant to be grand. At Val-Kill, Eleanor wanted all her guests, whether they were John F. Kennedy or her neighbors, to feel welcome. She did not feel the need to impress.

Visitors next enter the living room, which is cluttered with furniture and decor. The seating is mismatched because, as Eleanor said, her friends came in all shapes and sizes. There are also countless photos of family members and close friends scattered throughout the room and lining the walls. Eleanor used this room to entertain friends and family, but also as a place for meetings. She famously had a lengthy conversation with Kennedy in this room when he came to Val-Kill in hopes of receiving her endorsement as the Democratic Party nominee for president in 1960. She agreed on the condition that he make civil rights a priority, paving the way for one of the country's most prominent pieces of legislation.

The living room at Val-Kill Cottage

Eleanor's health began to decline rapidly in 1962 while she was in New York City. She wished to make the journey back to Val-Kill to live out her last days but was unable to do so. Upon her death that November at age seventy-eight, the National Park Service declined the family's offer of the property because of a lack of funds. Fortunately, the National Archives photographed everything — from the layout of the rooms to the books on the shelves. All the furniture was auctioned off, which is why many of Val-Kill's original furnishings are missing. The buildings were used as apartments until a developer bought the property with the intention of turning it into condominiums. However, local activists opposed development, which caused then-President Jimmy Carter to intervene and establish the land as a National Historic Site. Today, the National Park Service is slowly finding and collecting more original pieces and bringing them back to be displayed at Val-Kill in their original manner, using the 1962 photos for reference.

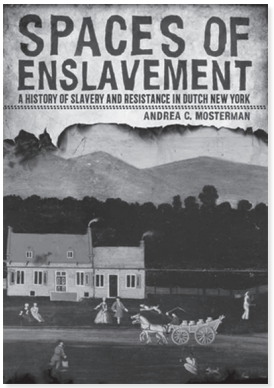
Similar to Eleanor in many ways, Val-Kill has a complex legacy. Upon first glance, it seems to be nothing more than a welcoming home, which it was, but it is also the location of extremely significant historical events. Beginning with empty farmland, each addition Eleanor made over the years represents a period of her own evolution. The property is truly a mosaic of everything Eleanor accomplished, both in her personal and professional life.

The Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site at Val-Kill officially opened in 1984, the centennial year of Eleanor's birth. Through the combined efforts of the Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Partnership, the National Park Service, and the Muriel F. Siebert Foundation, the property is continuously being restored to its original condition. Visiting the site and seeing everything on display provides visitors with a whole new outlook on the legacy of one of the most impressive women in American history. It was during Eleanor's time at Val-Kill that she became widely recognized as the First Lady of the World. Val-Kill's history is just as important as Eleanor's. One could not have existed without the other.

Park hours and Val-Kill Cottage tours vary by season at the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site. Learn more online at https://www.nps.gov/elro/index.htm or call 845-229-9422.

— Grace Naccarato, Marist '26

Book Reviews



***Spaces of Enslavement: A History of Slavery and Resistance in Dutch New York*, Andrea C. Mosterman (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021), 246 pp. $42.95 (hardcover)**

Scholars of slavery, Andrea C. Mosterman contends, need to consider spaces of enslavement. Currently associate professor of Atlantic history and Joseph Tregle Professor in early American history at the University of New Orleans, she illustrates this point by discussing the Maison des Esclaves at Gorée Island in Senegal, where the sights, sounds, and smells of the place can "tell a story of enslavement and human trafficking that is rarely captured in written sources" (1). *Spaces of Enslavement* uses spatial analysis to examine the spaces that enslaved people in Dutch New York inhabited and joins other studies that analyze slavery in New Netherland and New York. Mosterman emphasizes how enslavers worked to limit enslaved people's movements and activities as well as how enslaved people resisted bondage by, among other tactics, escaping or expanding their mobility within spaces.

Mosterman begins by outlining efforts by the Dutch West India Company to settle New Netherland and the significant role enslaved people played in the Dutch colonial project. Enslaved people "were instrumental in company efforts to claim this space for the Dutch" (14). They were frequently armed to protect the colony. They performed backbreaking labor to help construct public works and other infrastructure. Finally, they also cultivated the land. The Dutch knew the important role that enslaved people played in New Netherland. The West India Company made frequent strategic use of half freedom or conditional freedom. This type of manumission allowed the West India Company to maintain access to the labor of formerly enslaved people, because enslaved people who received conditional freedom were required to help the company when necessary. Furthermore, conditionally freed people continued to cultivate land and helped the Dutch maintain control of the region. Also, conditional manumissions created hierarchies of enslavement. In other words, enslaved Africans and conditionally free Africans proved integral to the survival of New Netherland.

In the Dutch colony, physical and social spaces shaped lives and opportunities. Although enslavers did their best to control spaces, enslaved people frequently resisted Dutch efforts. Mosterman examines the ways enslaved people navigated systems and colonial spaces. Free and enslaved Africans often rubbed elbows with Europeans

in drinking establishments. Enslaved families became active participants in New Netherland's Dutch Reformed Church. Church participation "helped strengthen the African community and their bonds with white residents" (41). Baptismal records illustrate how people forged connections with each other. Enslaved people, in sum, built a strong Black community. Furthermore, enslaved people helped shape the colony's legal system; through their participation in it, they "forced the courts to consider issues concerning slavery" (48). Like many other European colonial societies in the Americas, enslaved people constantly contested the limits of their bondage.

After discussing New Netherland, Mosterman then turns to New York during the eighteenth century. She begins with public spaces. As slavery expanded in New York, authorities did their level best to restrict the activities and movements of enslaved people in these spaces. White New Yorkers, she asserts, "turned the area's public spaces into 'white space' through, among others, architecture, legislation, and surveillance" (53). Slavery expanded and flourished in New York and so did systems of surveillance. White people employed legislation and slave codes to limit enslaved people's mobility and create geographies of control. However, despite the time and effort many white people invested in creating these geographies of control, they were never foolproof. Enslaved people countered with geographies of resistance. They understood how to navigate public space, participated in activities prohibited by white people, took advantage of political turmoil, and used travel passes to subvert enslavers' attempts to control their movements. Mosterman also analyzes the dual nature of Pinkster, the Dutch version of Pentecost or Whitsuntide celebrations. On the one hand, Pinkster celebrations helped sustain slavery in New York. On the other, it "proved critical to enslaved people's emotional, social, and physical well-being" (77).

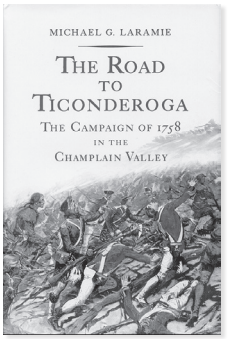
Geographies of resistance competed with geographies of control as different groups of people put forth different understandings of public space. What about homes? Throughout the eighteenth century, Dutch American architecture began to change, reflecting different ideas about space in homes. Enslavers "increasingly considered where to house the people they held in bondage as they began to spatially segregate the work and living spaces of these enslaved people from the main living quarters" (80). Increasingly, enslavers relegated enslaved people to cellars and garrets. Unsurprisingly, enslavers sought to create systems of control and surveillance within their homes, due in large part to their concerns about acts of violence by enslaved people. Just as they did in public spaces, however, enslaved people contested these systems of control and created spaces of resistance within homes. Mosterman portrays homes as physical, social, and emotional spaces and illuminates them as competing spaces of control and resistance.

The final chapter considers Dutch Reformed churches in New York. In a world where church seating reinforced hierarchies, status, and surveillance, it is telling that

enslaved men and women usually did not have designated seats. Free and enslaved Black people were treated as "permanent guests." Mosterman writes that church space "transmitted a powerful message to all: even when Black men and women had access to the privileges of the gospel, they were never considered equal to their white counterparts" (125). Enslaved people were rarely buried in church cemeteries; they had to bury their dead in separate areas. Despite this exclusionary treatment, Black religious life flourished and some enslaved people continued to practice African burial rites. In sum, "keeping Black New Yorkers from worshipping in these churches did not keep them from practicing their religious beliefs" (132).

Spaces of Enslavement illustrates the importance of space, place, and race in New Netherland and colonial New York. White enslavers attempted to create geographies and spaces of control, while enslaved New Yorkers "created alternative ways of knowing and navigating the spaces they inhabited and frequented" (134). Interactions between enslavers and enslaved people form the heart of this book. Readers will appreciate Mosterman's analysis of how both groups sought to enact their understandings of space and place in New Netherland and, later, New York.

Evan Rothera is assistant professor of history, social sciences, and philosophy at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith.



***The Road to Ticonderoga: The Campaign of 1758 in the Champlain Valley,* Michael G. Laramie (Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2024), 238 pp. $34.95 (hardcover)**

In his classic work *Vom Kriege (On War),* Carl von Clausewitz points to the dangers of "friction" to campaigning armies. The accumulation of small mistakes and unanticipated accidents and incidents — unexpected foul weather, a lost map, a misunderstood order, and any number of other unplanned mishaps — could send even the most ambitious and initially successful battle or campaign plan sideways. Less theoretical, but often just as germane, is Murphy's Law: "If anything can go wrong, it will." According to Michael G. Laramie's *The Road to Ticonderoga: The Campaign of 1758 in the Champlain Valley*, we will find no better example of the impact of friction or of Murphy's infamous dictum than the 1758 British effort to break through to French Cananda via the traditional Lake Champlain Valley-Richelieu River corridor. The campaign, meticulously planned and arraying some 15,000 British and colonial troops — the largest army ever deployed in the North American colonial wars — had real promise, but it ended disastrously after a series of poor command decisions, misinterpreted intelligence,

and just plain bad luck. For all of that, as Laramie relates, the campaign was the stuff of high drama on both the British and French sides, culminating in the bloody Battle of Fort Carillon at Ticonderoga on 8 July.

Laramie's narrative of the campaign unfolds in ten succinct chapters. (The author does not waste words.) The approach is chronological, but with deep dives into the background of the war, the personalities involved (British, French, colonial, and American Indian), political and strategic considerations, the events that led to the engagement at Carillon, the battle's aftermath, and the implications of the campaign. The author includes perspectives from virtually all ranks of those who moved north with the British or confronted them in defense of French Canada. The primary narrative, however, follows the strategic and operational concerns of the senior British and French political and military leaders.

The French and Indian War, the American component of the global Seven Years' War (1756–1763) was the fourth and concluding conflict between Britain and France as they grappled for dominance in North America. Laramie has written on all of these colonial wars, with a particular interest in developments in the Champlain Valley. In *The Road to Ticonderoga*, readers will find he is venturing into familiar territory; Lawrence Henry Gipson, Howard H. Peckham, and others have shared his interest in the events of 1758. But Laramie's is a fresh look, although he agrees with previous authors that the campaign of 1758 was part of a war profoundly different from the previous contests. King William's, Queen Ann's, and King George's wars were relatively minor extensions of conflicts begun in Europe, all of which ended generally inconclusively with modest territorial adjustments (although Britain did add Nova Scotia to the empire). The French and Indian War, however, began in America — with young George Washington's ill-starred foray toward Fort Duquesne in 1754 — and full-scale war began in 1755 as Britian and France committed major forces to their North American colonies. The British did so even as they prepared to fight in (or finance) theaters as far-flung as continental Europe, Africa, India, and even the Philippines. However, their largest military commitment would aim at driving the French from America once and for all.

First Minister William Pitt, far from the action in North America, is central to Laramie's account. It was Pitt who decided on a "fight to the finish" in America, and he conceived the strategy of the campaign and selected its operational commanders. There would be three major operations. One would be a thrust down Lake Champlain toward Canada. A new commander-in-chief, Major General James Abercromby, would lead this assault. In some respects, Abercromby's title of commander-in-chief was hollow, as two other major forces would operate independently and far from the Lake Champlain region. Major General Jeffery Amherst would move against the French citadel of Louisbourg near the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, while Brigadier General John Forbes would lead a third force west against Fort Duquesne.

It was an ambitious plan, but Pitt did his best to assure that British armies would have the men, money, and matériel necessary to success. Laramie deftly explains all of this — the point being that without proper financial and logistical support wars can be lost before anyone fires a shot. But not Pitt's armies: As they campaigned in 1758, British commanders would enjoy resources the French simply could not match.

General Abercromby's reputation never recovered from the fiasco at Ticonderoga (more on that shortly), but it made perfect sense when Pitt tasked him as commander-in-chief. As Laramie explains — and I think that in some respects he has a more balanced view of Abercromby than a number of other writers — the general had compiled a distinguished record in the European wars, and as a member of the Scottish aristocracy and member of Parliament he had the political connections and social prestige associated with senior command. Besides, he was a proven army administrator. He ably organized the advance against Carillon, capably dealing with the myriad details inherent in moving thousands of men, animals, and equipment up Lake George. This was no mean feat. But if Abercromby was an excellent manager, he was a lackluster personality and his army had to look elsewhere for inspirational leadership.

The troops found it in Abercromby's second in command, Brigadier General George Augustus Howe, 3rd Viscount Howe. Howe was an animated leader, widely respected in the officer corps and magic with the rank and file. He was also the commander-in-chief's principal tactical officer, in charge of planning the actual operations that would challenge Fort Carillon's defenders. Howe envisioned moving the army in front of the fort's works immediately after the voyage down Lake George, forcing the badly outnumbered French either to abandon the post or endure an ultimately doomed entrapment. But he never got the chance to implement his plan; far out front of the British advance, Howe died in a chance encounter with a French patrol on 6 July. Historians have generally considered his death a critical blow to Abercromby's operation, and Laramie agrees. "It is not difficult to express the impact the brigadier had made on Abercromby's army," he writes. "Almost every journal of the expedition, provincial and regular alike, lamented his loss" (121). Here was "friction" indeed. And if unstated, the author has amply demonstrated that the fate and conduct of individuals — personalities — matters in framing the trajectory of historical events.

Personalities mattered in Canada as well. If British officers were generally pleased with Pitt, the same cannot be said of relations between French military and political leaders. The French commander was Louis-Joseph de Montcalm-Gozon, Marquis de Montcalm de Saint-Veran. Montcalm was talented, widely admired in Canada, and able to unite impressive Indian forces with his French regulars and Canadian colonials. Earlier in the war he had won a string of impressive victories. By 1758, however, he had concluded that limited French numbers and resources, far inferior

to British and British-colonial manpower and logistical support, argued against holding posts beyond the core of French Canada — chiefly the regions around Niagara, Montreal, and Quebec. That meant pulling back from positions such as Fort Carillon and Crown Point on Lake Champlain. In this opinion he clashed with Canadian-born Governor Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil de Cavagnial, marquis de Vaudreuil, who insisted on holding French Canada's frontiers. Thus in July Montcalm found himself at Fort Carillon, preparing for a battle he did not want to fight and in whose outcome he placed little hope.

In effect, the British saved Montcalm. With the death of Howe, Abercromby delayed any immediate deployment against the fort — he would not attack until 8 July — and the French took advantage of this gift of time. Over 7 July, they feverishly constructed a line of redoubts some three-quarters of a mile northwest of the fort, fronted with a tangled abattis of fallen trees and brush. The works (they would be called the "French Lines" when insurgent Americans held them against the British in 1777) were not perfect, as they were vulnerable to a flanking attack from the north — and British troops were numerous enough to do so. Montcalm could only hope Abercromby would launch an assault directly against his new fortifications.

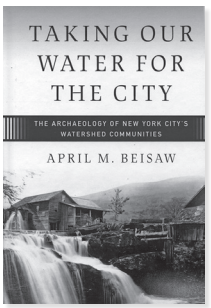
In a terrible blunder, the British general did precisely that. Laramie is at his best in explaining Abercomby's decision and in recounting the grueling combat on 8 July. Fearing the French would receive reinforcements and trusting to his numerical superiority, he chose not to besiege the fort, attempt a flanking movement, or even to wait for his artillery to come up. Abercromby also trusted flawed engineering reports on the supposed vulnerability of Montcalm's defenses. He attacked into the teeth of Montcalm's lines. It was a disaster, and after some four hours of fighting the British broke off, having suffered 1,956 casualties (including those incurred in the skirmish on 6 July in which Howe died), including 562 dead. In comparison, the French lost only 104 men killed of 572 total casualties (182–83). It was the biggest bloodletting the British army endured until Bunker Hill. Still, British morale remained intact. They still vastly outnumbered the French, artillery support was on the way, and Abercromby's officers wanted to renew the battle. But the general had had enough and he ordered a retreat back to Lake George. The offensive was dead. Rarely has a military campaign had so much go so wrong so quickly. As Murphy's Law predicted, between 6 and 8 July, virtually everything that could go wrong for the British did so.

Yet Laramie correctly presents Montcalm's victory as bittersweet. It was the last real victory for French Canada, something of a last hurrah. It was a tactical triumph, to be sure, but it was virtually meaningless in strategic context. While Abercromby was stymied at Carillon, the British were successful everywhere else. After the disaster on 8 July, Abercromby dispatched colonial-born Lieutenant Colonel John Bradstreet on a successful expedition against Fort Frontenac on Lake Ontario, while Forbes, after a successful march, forced a French evacuation of Fort Duquesne. In the east,

Amherst reduced Louisbourg, and the Royal Navy virtually assured Canada could expect no meaningful support from Europe. New France was on borrowed time, and a year later time ran out. Pitt replaced Abercromby with Amherst, and in July 1759, when the new commander-in-chief moved north, the French abandoned Carillon after enduring only a brief siege. There was no repeat of Abercromby's fiasco. The British renamed the post Fort Ticonderoga, and the conquest of the rest of Canada followed over the course of the year. In retrospect, the Battle of Fort Carillon, no matter how dramatic, seemed but a bump on the road to victory. William Pitt had won his war in North America.

Laramie's book rests on a foundation of solid research. He has worked from an extensive range of manuscript collections in the French Archives Nationales (Paris), the Canadian National Archives (Ottawa), the British Public Records Office (London), and collections in the United States. He has mined an impressive array of printed primary sources in English and French, including some excellent contemporary accounts of the 1758 campaign, and his command of the relevant secondary literature is sure. These sources have allowed Laramie to produce some quite informative appendices on French and British (including colonial) orders of battle, casualties, and some selected (and gripping) firsthand campaign narratives. While this is a concise volume, and nicely written, it does not lack scholarly weight. *The Road to Ticonderoga* should appeal to any audience interested in the colonial wars of North America.

Mark Edward Lender is a professor emeritus at Kean University and author of Cabal! The Plot Against General Washington: The Conway Cabal Reconsidered.



***Taking Our Water for the City: The Archaeology of New York City's Watershed,* April M. Beisaw (New York: Berghahn Books, 2023), 124 pp. $120 (hardcover)**

The New York City water system is complex — it includes aqueducts, tunnels, controlled lakes, and reservoirs. All of its nineteen reservoirs were built by displacing towns and villages through the process of eminent domain. *Taking Our Water for the City* by April M. Beisaw is a comprehensive exploration of "the takings" of land for the Boyd's Corners Reservoir in Putnam County and the Ashokan Reservoir in Ulster County. An archaeologist and professor of anthropology at Vassar College, Beisaw conducted a series of surface archeological studies with her students to determine what the artifacts left behind after "the takings" can tell us about the people who occupied these lands. The book explains in easy-to-understand

terms what modern public, surface archaeology is and how it is used to survey sites. It also gives a concise history of the entire New York City reservoir system, making it a valuable resource for those with little knowledge of these fields. The first two chapters, "Archeology and the Contemporary Past" and "New York City's Water System," lay a clear foundation for understanding the book's premise. While these introductory chapters serve as a background for placing Beisaw's work, they are little gems in themselves. The book is short — just 123 pages — but covers a lot of ground in its five well-organized chapters.

Beisaw's work aims to give "a long-term perspective on the human costs of urban water systems." To accomplish this, she has done three things. First, she shows the endless need for urban water sources, in this case, in New York City. Second, she validates modern surface archaeological techniques and surveys to study the pattern and history of human habitation in places categorized as mostly virgin forests. She writes, "the careful examination of places intentionally destroyed and the things there that have decayed from disuse allow us to remember what was." Third, she uses two case studies, Kent and Olive, New York, to show how archaeology can understand the recent past and how the reservoir system displaced and disrupted communities and continues to do so.

The history of the New York City water system is not just a tale of infrastructure and engineering. It is a story of people, their homes, their communities, and their lives. This extensive system, which provides water to nearly ten million people, has a history spanning more than 180 years. The system outside of New York City covers over 2,000 square miles (roughly the size of Delaware) and there are two perspectives on its history: one told by the New York City Department of Water Supply and the other by the people who were displaced from their homes and communities in upstate New York. Beisaw focuses on the latter. She contends that surface archaeology can help tell a more complete story of how the system was created and how it did not just displace people and their communities — it destroyed them. Beisaw busts the myth that communities can be moved to a new location. She reiterates that it was not just people who were relocated, but homes (some with generational histories), businesses, churches, schools, and even cemeteries. Many of these could not establish themselves elsewhere and were lost forever. "Ignored, however," writes Beisaw, "are the histories of these same lands, the communities that struggle to remain there, and the archaeological sites that tell the stories of those who came before." She is not a dispassionate scientist who has been removed from the sacrifices the local communities made. Instead, she clarifies that "city water destroys rural communities."

The two places Beisaw surveys, Kent and Olive, each have a unique history that helps readers understand the intricate nature of creating the water system. Beisaw shows how the land in Kent was taken over a long period. Thus, the history of its lands and people was lost slowly. Eventually, Kent's residents welcomed the city's

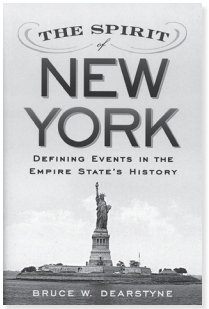
intervention on their lands and saw benefits in being a reservoir community. Current residents have little connection to those displaced by the reservoir. In Olive, on the other hand, residents were forced off their lands, their communities broken. The animosity in Olive remains strong in residents to this day. The contrast between these two communities allows readers to delve into the deep complexities of creating the reservoir system. Beisaw makes it clear it is not a simple process. Neither, she contends, is it a harmless one.

Beisaw takes the reader into the field as she explores the lands that are accessible to her and her Vassar students. Through her vivid descriptions, the reader can witness the current state of the land and understand evidence of its past use. This firsthand experience adds a layer of authenticity to the book, making it a compelling case study.

While the book includes black-and-white photographs and maps, it could benefit from more visuals. The photographs make it challenging to see the subject, and the pictures are small. While the maps are clear, they are too small and sometimes difficult to read. There are sections that just beg for a picture, particularly for those who are unfamiliar with the areas. While adequately described, color photography and larger maps would significantly enhance understanding of large bodies of water, artifacts, and specific geographical features.

This is not a balanced report of the development of the New York City water system. There is no way to report the forced removal of people from their lands and communities destroyed for urban water other than to point the finger at the harsh method the city used, which caused the destruction of numerous towns and displaced thousands of lives. The communities of Kent and Olive (more so Olive) are portrayed as victims of downstate water needs and the developers of the New York City water system as perpetually duplicitous. In full disclosure, I currently live near Olive and grew up between the Rondout and Neversink reservoirs, hearing stories about the evils of "the city." I often nodded and agreed with Beisaw's conclusion that "urban water is an extractive industry in need of more socially just practices." Watershed residents may even contend that there is no "other side." If that is considered, this book is excellent, exceptionally well-written, and highly recommended.

Marianna Boncek teaches creative writing at Southern New Hampshire University.



***The Spirit of New York: Defining Moments in the Empire State's History (2nd Edition),* Bruce W. Dearstyne (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2022), 456 pp. $29.95 (softcover)**

On first impression, a book boldly titled *The Spirit of New York* might seem unserious, a case of special pleading. After all, something as ineffable as "spirit" represents a hard thing to capture, especially given the scale and diversity of a place as vast as New York State, whose set of histories are so varied that it seems perilous to generalize anything at all about its people. In the hands of an unskilled historian, the result might verge on a trite and selective exceptionalism.

Yet the author, the talented and earnest Bruce W. Dearstyne, while insistent in the methodological conceit, uses this book's nineteen eclectic chapters to paint broadly and inclusively. Each episode contains a detailed look at an interesting event in New York State. Through this series of critical case studies, he offers a big story in readable and informative bites. Dearstyne explains that the selected episodes he has chosen "illustrate the spirit of New York — the elusive traits that make New York State unique, or at least distinct, among the fifty states — and the complexity of its history."

In some sense, the book succeeds in spite of its quixotic aims. The journey itself is fascinating, and part of the fun includes pondering the implicit argument that each chapter must make to the knowledgeable reader: Why include this story but not that? Does it add up? In fact, the resulting patchwork holds together pleasingly — though no doubt New York history buffs will have many inclusions to suggest. Those teaching a basic course on New York history, or seeking a lively introduction to the subject, should consider using this book as a take-off point. College students would likely prefer it to a more ponderous comprehensive text and might be challenged to add a chapter of their own as a final assignment.

To understand the book's approach, the introduction is essential reading — not to be skimmed over — for it also presents the book's conclusions. The basic criteria Dearstyne uses in choosing an event seems noteworthy: 1) The event included "took place on a particular day"; 2) it has "received limited attention in standard historical accounts"; 3) "It is an interesting story with lively, engaging New York characters; and 4) It has features of drama, excitement, adventure, or courage." (XVII) While this might not be the rigorous methodology of the *Annales* school, it serves its mission — to engage the public in an original way with the history of the state.

Spanning from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first, the nineteen "defining moments" recounted by Dearstyne begin with the drafting of the first state Constitution in 1777 and end with the opening of the Broadway musical *Hamilton* in 2015. In between, he offers lively accounts of key moments in the fights for equal rights for women and Blacks, efforts to restore the state's polluted lands and waters,

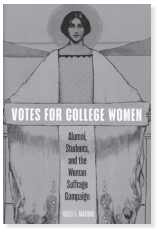
responses to disasters (including the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and Superstorm Sandy), heroic actions (the Miracle on the Hudson), and groundbreaking innovations (construction of the New York State Thruway, the creation of IBM).

Overall, *The Spirit of New York* tells the stories of "determined individuals" who "organize to bring change." (XX) Dearstyne criticizes the government's sometimes slow response to crisis, but also sees New York politics as "blurred," not crystallizing into "ready distinctions" of "rural versus urban, upstate versus New York City," or even of "liberal versus conservative." (XXI) He emphasizes the challenging dynamics of making positive change, focusing on things like energy, sacrifice, innovation, and creativity. Dearstyne's claim that New York has a "special kind of resilience" (XXIV) is a lovely sentiment, but other states could make similar claims.

Most of us interested in New York State history will enjoy chapters of this work. The book is fundamentally optimistic and progressive in the older meaning of the word. The writing flows well and seems even-keeled. Having this book around might tempt more casual readers, because each chapter is self-contained, like a collection of short stories, and does not require a big commitment. Dearstyne concludes that the stories selected "show a state characteristic of forging ahead, going around or over obstacles, and using state pride and the history of its great accomplishments to help sustain the momentum." (XXIV) Indeed, the book offers an inspiring collection of narratives for readers immersed in a trying time in our nation's history.

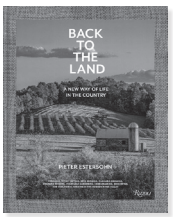
P. Matthew DeLaMater teaches history at SUNY New Paltz and SUNY Ulster.

New & Noteworthy Books



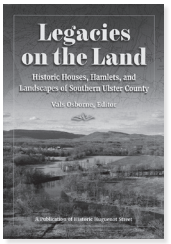
Votes for College Women: Alumni, Students, and the Woman Suffrage Campaign
By Kelly L. Marino
(New York University Press, 2024) 278 pp. $39.00 (hardcover)
www.nyupress.org

This book expands the timeline and geography of the woman suffrage movement and effectively challenges common misconceptions about the ways in which age, class, and race influenced and fueled it over time. Looking at the often-neglected years between the late 1890s and 1917, Marino investigates national and local organizations at colleges nationwide to reveal activism across gender and racial lines. Founded in 1910, the College Equal Suffrage League grew within the decade to include branches at women's colleges and co-ed institutions throughout the U.S. With more than 5,000 members, including alumni and current students, it laid the intellectual groundwork for expanding and popularizing women suffrage while effectively building coalitions with working-class organizations by stressing their shared independence and joint struggles to secure jobs.



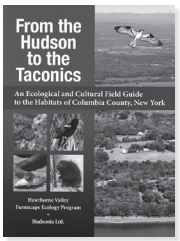
Back to the Land: A New Way of Life in the Country
By Pieter Estersohn
(Rizzoli, 2024) 256 pp. $55.00 (hardcover) www.rizzoliusa.com

Following up on his methodical exploration of the Livingston legacy along the Hudson River, photographer and author Estersohn sets out across the same territory with a new quest: Who is farming these lands now, and how are they doing it? The resulting book is a trove of sumptuous photos and first-person reporting that feels as fresh as a harvest dinner served in a field. More than thirty short chapters explore foraging, sapping, beekeeping, cheese making, raising livestock, and growing fruits and vegetables. The book also is an exploration of community, with the farmers themselves proving to be a cross section of generations, of newcomers and old timers, and of artists and entrepreneurs who honor agricultural traditions while experimenting with sustainability, inclusivity, and social equity.



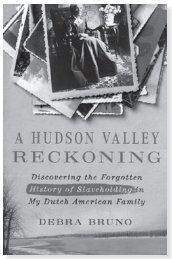
Legacies on the Land: Historic Houses, Hamlets, and Landscapes of Southern Ulster County
Edited by Vals Osborne
(Black Dome Press, 2024) 446 pp. $35.00 (paperback)
www.blackdomepress.com

With its all-star cast of authors, great diversity of places, and many exclusive color images, this is an essential book for enthusiasts and scholars of the Hudson Valley's rich culture. Originally researched and written as guidebooks for historical house tours offering access to four centuries of architecture in ten communities spanning southern Ulster County, the material has been thoroughly revised and expanded with an all-new introduction on the region's natural and social history. It sets the scene for detailed discussions of well over 200 remarkable examples of buildings, their builders, and their legacies.



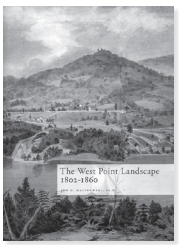
From the Hudson to the Taconics: An Ecological and Cultural Field Guide to the Habitats of Columbia County
By Anna Duhon, Gretchen Stevens,
Claudia Knab-Vispo & Conrad Vispo
(Black Dome Press, 2024) 432 pp. $35.00 (paperback)
www.blackdomepress.com

This unique guide combines maps, color photos and illustrations, and concise text to help residents and visitors alike better engage with the diversity and complexity of Columbia County's landscape. The county is presented in successional layers of narrative, beginning with geological, hydrological, soil, flora, and finally the "human overlay" to create a multilayered map and a multidimensional story. Habitats are organized into chapters that readers may use to identify and look more deeply at individual aspects and how they interrelate. The chapters themselves are organized by subtopic: first glimpse, location, what to look for (plants, birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, insects), variations, stewardship, history, perspective, and interactive exercises. Working with a host of organizations, including the Hawthorne Valley Farmscape Ecology Program and Hudsonia Ltd. as well as hundreds of volunteers, the authors have provided a compelling guide to lure readers with every variety of interest into the fields, forests, and waters of Columbia County.



A Hudson Valley Reckoning: Discovering the Forgotten History of Slaveholding in My Dutch American Family
By Debra Bruno
(Cornell University Press, 2024) 276 pp. $32.95 (hardcover)
www.cornellpress.cornell.edu

A growing number of history books challenge the notion that slavery in New York was somehow less brutal than its counterpart in the South. Written by scholars, these books are most persuasive when the research presents historic figures whose lives were directly impacted by the institution. Journalist Debra Bruno's book is an exciting anomaly. It begins with people, her own family, then researches their history. Writing with immediacy — how she discovered that her poor, pious Dutch ancestors were also enslavers — Bruno's frank tone and diligent research is irresistible. Readers confront and accept historic revelations as they follow the author's investigation of her family and accompany her on visits to historic sites, towns, and cities across the region to see who else is reckoning with this past and how they are going about it.



The West Point Landscape: 1801-1860
By Jon C. Malinowski
(West Point Press, 2024) 188 pp. (paperback and PDF)
www.westpointpress.com

Today's United States Military Academy at West Point was initially developed throughout the nineteenth century. Malinowski begins with the particulars of the Hudson Highlands' geology before quickly reviewing known eighteenth-century developments in the area. What was farm, field, and forest prior to 1776 became Fortress West Point during the American Revolution. It was then manned as a military post, and by 1801 began its evolution into the academy we know today. Readers unfamiliar with West Point may be surprised to see in rich color maps, paintings, and illustrations that its development parallels that of a town or small city. Over time, it required homes, schools, a chapel, hospital, river dock, water system and other infrastructure, and — of course — specialized military constructions, including fortifications, powder magazines, ranges, and a riding hall. The author presents the site's history, geography, and architecture in a handsome book that will appeal to far more than West Point alumni and military buffs.