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A Journal of Regional Studies

MARIST

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From the Editors

This marks the bicentennial year of Robert Fulton's maiden voyage aboard the steamboat that would eventually be called the *Clermont*. Fulton's "invention" revolutionized transportation and commerce, forever changing the Hudson River and its surrounding valley. In commemoration of this anniversary, we open this issue with a fascinating recounting of Fulton's achievements written by his foremost biographer. Next, we explore more recent efforts to expand transportation in the region, focusing on the struggles surrounding construction of a Westchester County parkway. Finally, we offer the first glimpse at a recently discovered Dutch account book documenting the eighteenth-century fur trade in Ulster County.

Continuing our nautical theme, our history forums encourage visits to the Albany Institute of History and Art, which has mounted a compelling exhibit about Fulton and steamboats, and the Hudson River Maritime Museum in Kingston. Another forum article proposes a hike along the shoreline below Storm King Mountain, the haunt of a famous nineteenth-century steamboat captain. As usual, we conclude with a book review and a listing of new and noteworthy titles.

Reed Sparling
Christopher Pryslopski

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Call for Essays

The Hudson River Valley Review is anxious to consider essays on all aspects of the Hudson Valley—its intellectual, political, economic, social, and cultural history, its prehistory, architecture, literature, art, and music—as well as essays on the ideas and ideologies of regionalism itself. All articles in *The Hudson River Valley Review* undergo peer analysis.

Submission of Essays and Other Materials

HRVR prefers that essays and other written materials be submitted as two double-spaced typescripts, generally no more than thirty pages long with endnotes, along with a computer disk with a clear indication of the operating system, the name and version of the word-processing program, and the names of documents on the disk. Illustrations or photographs that are germane to the writing should accompany the hard copy. Otherwise, the submission of visual materials should be cleared with the editors beforehand. Illustrations and photographs are the responsibility of the authors. No materials will be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided. No responsibility is assumed for their loss. An e-mail address should be included whenever possible.

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

Since HRVR is interdisciplinary in its approach to the region and to regionalism, it will honor the forms of citation appropriate to a particular discipline, provided these are applied consistently and supply full information. Endnotes rather than footnotes are preferred. In matters of style and form, HRVR follows *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Contributors

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Cynthia Owen Philip is an independent historian who has written extensively on the Hudson River Valley. She is the author of *Robert Fulton: A Biography* and the prize-winning *Wilderstein and the Suckleys: A Hudson River Legacy*. A wide array of her articles and essays have appeared in national and local magazines. Her illustrated history *Rhinecliff, N. Y., 1686-2007* will be published next spring.

J. Michael Smith is a native of Beacon, New York, and a resident of Vermont. As an independent historian he has focused on the cultural histories of Munsee and Mohican groups of the Hudson River Valley. He is the author of "The Highland King Nimhammaw and the Native Indian Proprietors of Land in Dutchess County, New York: 1712-1765," *The Continuance: An Algonquian Peoples Seminar*, (Albany, NY: 2004), and "The Seventeenth Century Sachems or Chiefs of the Wapping Country: Identity and Interaction in the Hudson Valley."

Kees-Jan Waterman lives in Leiden, the Netherlands. An independent historian, he has provided English translations of Dutch seventeenth- and eighteenth-century documents to the Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, New York. He is the translator and editor of *"To Do Justice to Him and Myself": Evert Wendell's Account Book of the Fur Trade with Indians* in *Albany, New York, 1695-1726*.

THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

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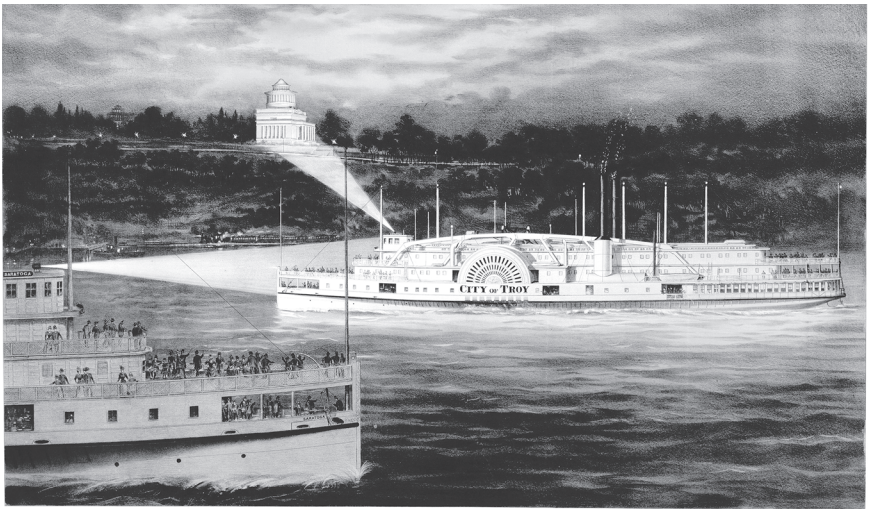
Regional History Forum

Book Reviews

On the cover:
Clermont: Three Part Study of a Ship, Richard Varick DeWitt (1800-1868), 1858, watercolor on paper, ht. 18 in., w. 25 in., framed: ht. 25 in., w. 32 in.; Albany Institute of History & Art, Bequest of Sarah Walsh DeWitt, 1924.1.2

Regional History Forum

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



***Troy Line*; Published by Charles Hart (1847-1918); 35 Vesey Street, New York; c. 1878; hand-colored lithograph; framed: ht. 32 in. w. 40 in.; Albany Institute of History & Art; A.J. Hull Collection of Prints and Drawings; 1944.17.7**

Full Steam Ahead: An Exhibition Honoring Robert Fulton and the Era of Steamboats on the Hudson

Amanda Hurlburt, Marist '08

With today's bustle of gas-powered transportation, one can gaze out across the Hudson River and see nary a passing boat. On occasion, a freighter or cabin cruiser will make their way up the Hudson, while the of oars from the shells of collegiate rowing teams often break the water's early-morning stillness. Today, we are more likely to travel about in motor vehicles, trains, and airplanes. Food and other goods are transported in similar fashion. But it was not so long ago that the

nation's waterways provided the means for the fastest and most efficient form of transportation. In the northeast, there was the Hudson River, the region's main highway since the reign of the Algonquin, Mahican, and Iroquois tribes. In 1609 Dutch explorer Henry Hudson sailed up the river looking for a passage to the Orient; it would mark the beginning of two centuries of heightened commerce. With the first Dutch settlements along the Hudson's banks in the seventeenth century, ferry service began. Throughout the eighteenth century, the river supported a fleet of sloops and whaling ships.[1] During the Revolutionary War, American forces used it to ferry troops and supplies.[2] By the mid-nineteenth century, its use had reached a new height. The vessel of that era was the steamboat. In 1850, over 150 vessels traveled up and down the Hudson, ferrying as many as a million passengers.[3] Freightliners transported coal, ice, lumber, stone, and cement, as well as agricultural goods such as grain, livestock, dairy products, fruit, and hay.[4] Horns blared. Flags snapped in the breeze. And a symphony of steam engines was audible up and down the river's banks.

The Albany Institute of History and Art's new exhibit, *Full Steam Ahead: Robert Fulton and the Age of Steamboats* seeks to bring this colorful past back to life with numerous objects and artifacts from the steamboat era. The Institute is no stranger to promoting interest in the history and culture in the Upper Hudson Valley. Its ties stem to the founding of the Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Arts, and Manufactures in 1791.[5] The primary dedication of the society was the development of new agricultural techniques; for some time the organization's name was simply shortened to the Agricultural Society.[6] But under Robert Livingston, the future partner of Robert Fulton in the river's first successful steamboat enterprise, the society grew more specialized, renaming itself the Society for the Promotion of Useful Arts.[7] Agriculture was still the focus, but a dedication to the arts gained prominence. The society bounced around the state capitol in the early 1800s, acquiring books for a small library and a handful of glass cases to display the mineral collections of its members. With the formation of the State Board of Agriculture in 1815, the society's need for an agricultural basis dropped considerably. By 1824, the society had expanded to the nearby Albany Academy building, merging with the Albany Lyceum of Natural History. Thereafter, it was known as the Albany Institute.[8] Over the next hundred years, the institute gathered heirlooms, paintings, and other artifacts. In 1907 the organization moved into its current home on Washington Avenue, one block west of the capitol.[9] The two-story building by the architectural firm Fuller and Pitcher is constructed of brick and Indiana limestone. It sits 100 feet back from the street, nestled amongst trees and in close quarters to brownstones and similar

Beaux-Arts structures.[10] In 1926, the institute officially adopted the title "Albany Institute of History and Art."[11]

Now, the institute welcomes 20,000 children and adults annually.[12] Its galleries, auditorium, and nearby brick annex (the former Rice mansion and current home of the Laurence McKinney library and the Bryn Mawr Bookshop), set the stage for family programs, lectures, teachers' workshops, art and history education classes, films, and gallery talks.[13] For those out of reach of Albany, the museum offers access to its collections via video conferencing and virtual field trips.[14] And from the humble glass cases of mineral collections and a few sparse shelves of donated books that marked the institute's first steps toward becoming a museum, the AIHA's holdings are now nationally recognized as the best collection documenting the life and culture of the Upper Hudson Valley region from the late seventeenth century to the present.[15] The curatorial collections include more than 20,000 objects, including 1,600 paintings, 1,200 ceramic pieces, 4,000 prints, 1,100 drawings, and 500 pieces of furniture.[16] Additionally, the library holdings include over 85,000 photographs, 1,000 linear feet of manuscripts, 140,000 volumes, and 125 periodicals.[17] The Institute houses five permanent exhibitions: *19th Century American Sculpture, The Landscape That Defined America: The Hudson River School, Traders and Culture: Colonial Albany and the Formation of American Identity, Sense of Place: 18th and 19th Century Paintings and Sculpture*, and *Ancient Egypt*. Colonial Albany silver, limner portraits, furniture, ceramics, textiles, and manuscripts can

JOHN WHIPPLE PHOTOGRAPHY

Albany Institute of History and Art

be found throughout the museum.[18] But the highlight of any trip to the museum this year will likely begin with the new steamboat exhibit.

The exhibition commences in the third-floor Square Gallery. As visitors crest the marble staircase surrounded by salmon-colored walls and white marble statues, they will figuratively stand in the age before steam, a time when travel and freight transport were difficult and expensive. Though the Hudson had long been used as a means of trade and commerce, it had its limitations, and no vessel could yet keep up with the growing demand. Throughout the eighteenth century, residents of the Hudson River Valley relied on sloop and stagecoach, the fastest transportation available. Still, transit time for any great distance took at least several weeks, often several months. There would be no rail service until the 1830s. Dirt roads were seasonally impassable, and rivers and tributaries offered one-way travel.[19] Though by the turn of the nineteenth century a sloop could travel roughly five to six miles per hour with the tide, it still had to anchor when wind and tide conditions were unfavorable.[20] Women and children rarely traveled long distances.

As the Society for the Promotion of Arts, Agriculture and Manufactures gathered books and searched for a more permanent residence, a man named Robert Fulton studied abroad in Europe. For some years prior to the turn of the nineteenth century, he tinkered with art and mechanics, submitted proposals for submarines, and toyed with mines and torpedoes. Ultimately, he developed a relationship with Robert R. Livingston, then U.S. minister and plenipotentiary to France.[21] At that time, Livingston possessed a legal monopoly for a steam-powered boat that could run on the Hudson, but only if he could construct a boat that could run at least four miles an hour.[22] He tried the endeavor twice before but was stymied by the mechanics.[23] When Livingston and Fulton met in 1802, they discussed plans to build a steamboat that could run from New York City to Albany. Their goals and skills seemed a perfect match. Fulton had the firm grasp on mechanics, which Livingston lacked. He would assist Livingston in the construction of a boat that could meet the four-m.p.h. quota for his monopoly. Fulton also was familiar with a number of prominent French scientists. Livingston, on the other hand, had the financial means and the political clout to make Fulton's mechanics a reality. For Fulton, who had struggled monetarily, this was a welcome opportunity for paid employment.[24] They began working together immediately.[25] Through some finagling, they convinced the British government to grant them an export license for an engine from Boulton and Watt, a pivotal acquisition. From then on, Livingston handled the finance and patent, and dealt with customs, while Fulton completed theoretical work and experiments, supervising the construction of the engine and boat.[26] They planned for the enterprise

they hoped would change river travel forever.

As visitors to the exhibit stand at the glass doors marking the entrance to the Square Gallery, they will hear a soundtrack of whistles and calliopes. (Some of this period music is derived from recordings available at *steamboats.org*).[27] Even the most tentative visitor, standing uncertain in the threshold, cannot help but lean closer, pry open the door—and step into the age of steamboats. A quote from Robert Fulton creeps across the three facing walls: "As the component parts of all new machines may be said to be old…the mechanic should sit down among levers, screws, wedges, wheels, etc. like a poet among letters of the alphabet, considering them as the exhibition of his thoughts; in which a new arrangement transmits a new idea to the world." Below this quote, the workings of the basic steam engine are first introduced with the mechanical drawings and watercolors by Albany artist/draftsman Richard Varick DeWitt (1800-1868). These drawings illustrate the complexity of the engine, the mechanics of which Livingston could little comprehend. The delicate ink washes on rag paper feature handwritten notations and specifications.[28] In 1806, Fulton arrived back in the States to work on the hull of the burgeoning vessel, the *North River Steamboat of Clermont*. When construction was finally completed in the spring of 1807, the vessel's dimensions measured 140 feet long, sixteen feet beam, and seven feet depth of hold, with twenty-eight inches draft of water.[29] On August 17, 1807, the steamboat set sail from a dock in New York City near the State Prison in Greenwich Village (The prison would close twenty years later, with the opening of Sing Sing upriver).[30] A small crowd gathered to watch from shore, a jumble of faces splashed with surprise, fear, skepticism, relief, even jealously. Fulton watched from the deck as his craft completed the first successful steamboat voyage of any substantial distance, chugging along at a respectable five miles an hour. The thirty-two hour trip to Albany passed without serious incident, the boat only stopping briefly for a few minor repairs. Soon after, Fulton wrote to his friend and mentor Joel Barlow that:

> The morning I left New York there were not perhaps thirty persons in the city who believed that the boat would even move one mile per hour, or be of the least utility…and although the prospect of personal emolument has been some inducement to me, yet I feel infinitely more pleasure in reflecting on the immense advantage my country will derive from the invention.[31]

Within weeks, the *North River Steamboat* was set to ferry passengers up and down the Hudson. The fare for a trip from New York to Albany was seven dollars. (Current visitors to the Albany Institute of History and Art can enter the exhibit for only eight dollars.)[32] And though the *North River Steamboat* has long since

made its final trip up the Hudson, studies by DeWitt on display in the Square Gallery provide an accurate depiction of the vessel. In *Three Part Study of a Boat*, DeWitt shows the *North River of Clermont* as it first appeared in 1807, and after remodeling in 1808. A series of insets provide a privileged glimpse that most regular passengers would not have been privy to.[33] The primary oval inset depicts the original vessel, the middle provides the remodeled boat with covered paddle-wheel, and the bottom inset shows the engine and interior of the boat.[34]

Paintings across from DeWitt's works offer a new perspective on the *North River Steamboat*. In depictions by E.L. Henry and Robert Havell, Jr., the faces of onlookers along the banks are biased with time and nostalgia. In Havell's 1840 oil painting *The Steamer Clermont*, a crowd cheers during the boat's maiden voyage. In Henry's 1910 rendering of *The Clermont Making a Landing at Cornwall* (most likely inspired by the 1909 Hudson-Fulton Celebration), there is a similar level of Romanticism, though the reaction of the crowd is a little more diverse.

In actuality, reactions to this new steamboat were mixed. Resistance came from a handful of Hudson River sloops. Jealous captains seeking reparations for lost profits rammed the steamboat, repeatedly putting it out of service.[35] Other captains emphasized the danger of steamboat boiler explosions. A sloop ticket from 1809 (featured in a case below the paintings) promises the traveler the most reliable passage with provisions.[36] Certainly, many people were fearful of the large and noisy steamboat and opted for transit by other means. It is said that when sailors of other crafts first found themselves alongside of the steamboat, "gaining upon them in spite of contrary wind and tide, [they] actually abandoned their vessels and took to the woods in fright."[37] As the boat moved along the river at night, some onlookers prayed, calling it a "monster moving on the waters defying the winds and tide, and breathing flames and smoke."[38] But a number of people praised the speed and efficiency of the "Steam-Boat," and its representation in art, news, and journals continued. By 1808, only a year into the *North River*'s service, a poem had already been written about it. The work is attributed to Fulton's friend Joel Barlow, an American poet who helped Thomas Paine publish the first part of *The Age of Reason* in 1795. The poem, *The Steam Boat*, is scrawled on a sheet of paper today taped together and yellowed with age. "It is the work of fiendish genius/ Nurtured in this western clime,/ Where free-born millions hence delighted/ Shall feel th'inventive power sublime."[39]

But despite mixed reactions and minor setbacks, Livingston and Fulton could finally rest easy by March of 1808. In the case beneath DeWitt's drawings sits a New York State document extending the monopoly first granted to Livingston in 1798. It gives both partners full reign on the Hudson: exclusive rights to all

steam navigation. This meant they now had authority to seize the steamboats of competitors and wield penalties for injury or destruction done to their own.[40] The river was cleared for their steamboat dominance.

The right-hand corner of the gallery features engravings of men pivotal to the steamboat enterprise. An engraving by Alonzo Chappel depicts Fulton; one by Asher B. Durand shows Barlow.[41] There are also similar miniatures of Richard Varick DeWitt, Daniel Drew (later owner of the *People's Line*), and Robert R. Livingston.[42] Visitors may pause in front of a May 6, 1814, letter to the *Albany Argus* in which Fulton advertises the freight service of not only the *North River Steamboat*, but also two newer vessels: the *Paragon* and the *Car of Neptune*.[43] Along with the earlier designed *Richmond* and future designs for the *Chancellor Livingston* (unveiled in 1816), the Fulton-Livingston steamboat enterprise was on its way to becoming a small fleet. But Fulton would never live to see the vast armada that was to come. A case in the Square Gallery contains an unassuming letter from Robert L. Livingston to his brother, John. Dated February 24, 1815, it reads:

> [I] have received the melancholy news of the Death of poor Fulton. He caught a severe cold about a fortnight since in New Jersey, John R. Livingston having prevailed upon him to accompany him to Trenton—he died yesterday morning his loss will be severely felt both by his friends and the public.[44]

The next decade passed with the unveiling of several new steamships: *Demologus* (later launched under the name *Fulton the First*), the *DeWitt Clinton*, and the final debut of the *Chancellor Livingston*.[45] As visitors move into the adjacent Round Gallery, they will be greeted by letters, photographs, and the works of "port painters," a group of New York marine artists who painted steamboats on canvas in the style of the Hudson River School painters. (Many of these paintings were later made into prints by Currier & Ives.) The gallery features steamboat portraits by James Bard, Fred Pansing, Joseph B. Smith, Antonio Jacobsen, and Charles Parsons and his son, Charles R. Parsons. They are commonly considered the leading marine artists of the era.[46]

Rates cheapened with the overturning of the Fulton-Livingston monopoly in 1824. The landmark court case, *Gibbons v. Ogden*, spurred an age when steamboats were made faster, more efficient, increasingly elegant, and in greater numbers. In 1824 the *James Kent* could make the journey to Albany in less than half the time of the *North River Steamboat*'s maiden voyage: fifteen hours and thirty minutes.[47] Two years later, the transit time was cut by another three hours. Passages were

made both day and night with the addition of sleeping cabins. As visitors to the exhibit move along the walls of the Round Gallery, they enter into a new area of steamboat travel. An earthenware plate honoring Chief Justice John Marshall, presiding judge in the *Gibbons v. Ogden* case, is one of the many artifacts celebrating the beginning of this whirlwind. This kind of earthenware, produced by English potters Enoch Wood & Sons, was commonly used in the dining rooms of the new independent and passenger-oriented steamships.[48] Dinner, dessert, and soup plates all featured the standard dark-blue transfer-printed shell border in the tradition of Staffordshire china.[49]

By 1863, the Hudson River Day Line offered new luxury in passenger transport on the Hudson. Amidst art displays and chamber music, commuters and tourists took in the majesty of the Hudson. Day Line promotions included the slogan "strictly first class—no freight."[50] As modern historian and author Donald C. Ringwald writes in *Hudson River Day Line: The Story of a Great American Steamboat Company*: "No one had seen America until he had seen the Hudson River, and no one had seen the Hudson River properly unless he had done so from the deck of a Day Line steamer."[51] The Round Gallery contains oil paintings of these magnificent vessels. Also on display are guidebooks such as Disturnell's *Railway and Ship Guide*, published by the American News Company in 1865. It features maps and information on fares, distances, and steamer departure times. The 1860s were the golden age of steamboat travel, the era of dinner parties, cotillions, and brass bands. All of this was offered with the elegance of first-class hotels for nominal fares. In the center of the Round Gallery is a mannequin wearing a ball gown restyled from a wedding dress. It was considered the height of high fashion in the grand saloons on board "palace steamers."[52] A mere century before, women and children seldom traveled alone. Now children ten to twelve years of age would meet friends on deck. Women attended social gatherings on board, and now possessed the means to visit friends and relatives up and down the river. As rail and steam services became widely publicized and accessible, travel became commonplace.

But just as the steamboat rose from obscurity, so too did it fade with the coming of the twentieth century. The gallery slowly comes to an end with a black and white photograph from an unknown photographer. The pictured steamboat, the *C.W. Morse*, seems almost weary. At 427 feet long and four stories tall, it once was one of the longest side-wheel steamers on the river.[53] Eventually, it was sold at auction and dismantled for scrap. The steamboat era disintegrated with the growing use of automobiles and railroads in the 1920s and '30s, and with the increasingly passenger-oriented air travel system that developed in the late

1940s and early '50s. Internal combustion engines and electric power came to dominate the travel industry.[54] Steamboats became something of a novelty in the 1920s, and the once grand and powerful Hudson River Day Line struggled to find passengers for day-trip excursions to Bear Mountain and Indian Point Park. By the Depression, the Day Line filed for bankruptcy. Despite a brief reprieve during World War II, it was forced to end service on December 31, 1948.[55]

Today, there are few remaining artifacts from the steamboat era. One can still board the 220-foot steamboat *Ticonderoga* in Shelburne, Vermont. It was salvaged from Lake Champlain after service ceased in 1953 and grounded as an addition to the Shelburne Museum. It has since become a National Historic Landmark.[56] The Arabia Steamboat Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, features cargo and other artifacts recovered from the steamboat *Arabia*, which once traveled the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and sank in 1856. Online, the curious steamboat enthusiast may explore several virtual exhibits; *steamboats.com* features hundreds of steamboat photos, links, and other historical data. But when it comes to the history of steamboats on the Hudson, a trip to this exhibit provides the best perspective. It ends with a quote from Mark Twain: "The steamboats were finer than anything on shore. Compared with superior dwelling-houses and first-class hotels in the valley, they were indubitably magnificent, they were palaces."[57]

Ruth Greene-McNally, the curator in charge of this exhibit, tends to agree. When asked what one thing she wanted visitors to come away with after viewing the displays, what sense she wanted them to retain about the era, she said that it was "a vivid sense of steamboat transportation in its 'heyday' and the social significance of commercial steamboat service. For the first time, everyday citizens could afford to see the country and own the view of the plentiful Hudson River Valley, and they were able to do so in style."[58]

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53. David Lear Buckman, *Old Steamboat Days on The Hudson River* (The Gafton Press, 1907), quoted by The Hudson River Maritime Museum, *http://www.ulster.net/~hrmm/diglib/oldsteam/chapter12.html.*
54. The Albany Institute of History and Art, "Gallery Labels"
55. Ibid.
56. The Shelburne Museum, "Steamboat *Ticonderoga*" *http://www.shelburnemuseum.org/collections/detail.php?id=8.*
57. Ibid.
58. Ruth Greene-McNally, museum curator.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KORNELA. KRECHOWIECKYJ

Most of old Bay View Avenue has deteriorated, leaving a path marked with stones, branches, and fallen trees

Hidden History at Storm King Mountain

By Kris A. Hansen

Along the Hudson River at Cornwall-on-Hudson, nature has been healing the wounds of an embattled past. There is history hidden by the shore, but to discover it necessitates a short journey back to a bygone era. An old, dirt-covered school bus turnaround stands along Bay View Avenue (Route 218) just before the Storm King Highway's southward ascent up the mountain. The turnaround provides entry onto—not a hiking trail, but the remains of an abandoned public street that once was an extension of Bay View Avenue leading down to the Hudson River's shore.

This road, long deserted by traffic and neglected of human care, is scarcely accessible except to the adventurous. Shaded by dense tree growth, it descends deep into the woods, following the edge of a drop-off, until the roadbed largely disappears into a dirt path strewn with leaves and pebbly rock. Along this path, unkempt from natural washout, holes, and many fallen trees, a natural wonder-

land almost fifty years in the making reveals itself. Autumn is a particularly picturesque time here, as golden leaves float gently down to earth and carpet the landscape with their bronze hue. Deer, wild turkeys, and an occasional coyote make a crackling sound as they scurry across this landscape.

As the steep slope levels off, the path begins to vanish underneath thick overgrowth. The old avenue almost disappears, but through the brush ahead a small, unnamed meadow comes into view. The sudden glare of sunshine stuns the eyes with brightness. The meadow is easily traversed as the terrain becomes flat and clear of rocks. The size of the meadow is apparent; its perimeter is lined with lofty trees probably planted by nature long ago. A wisp of breeze rustles the leaves to create the only audible sounds to be heard in such a beautiful yet isolated place. In the end, nature won, reclaiming for the present a mountainside of untouched beauty.

In 1873, writer-historian Lewis Beach described the beauty of Bay View Avenue:

> This is a most beautiful Drive. It appears to the best advantage at sun-set. Commanding a fine view of the water its whole length, it needs the quiet, subdued shadows of evening to bring out the beauties of the scene in their full force… The road is pleasantly winding and unpleasantly short. No one that ever tried it but complained of its limited extent. It leads to the point of Storm-king and is not over a mile in length…[1]

Today the thick tree growth along old Bay View Avenue obscures clear vistas of the river. However, beyond the meadow and through the trees the first glimpses of it come into view. The now undetectable Briggs Road once intersected with Bay View[2]; today there is no longer a clear path to finish the trip to the shoreline. The terrain offers space to roam among the tall trees and to explore near the rocks and see the river.

The "Hubbard 2" geodetic marker set in a rock at the Hudson River's edge

At the Hudson's shoreline can be found a clue that history dwells here. Hidden across the railroad tracks, imbedded into rock and washed by the river tides, is a metal geodetic marker inscribed "Hubbard 2."[3] The U.S. Geological Survey's Earth Science Information Center says it has no information concerning the inscription. However, maps, land records, and census records show that a man named Edward Hubbard lived

The old Hubbard's Point juts out into the Hudson River

in this area. The marker may indicate one of the points on his property.

Hubbard was a Hudson River steamboat pilot who moved from Newburgh to settle in Cornwall with his family sometime between 1848 and 1850.[4] An ordinary working man, his life was filled with pain and sorrow. He lost his first wife, Sarah, in 1848, most likely in childbirth; his infant daughter died three months later.[5] He was destined to lose another wife and several more of his young children during his lifetime.

In 1852, during his residence in Cornwall, Hubbard suffered still more grief. While piloting the new and very popular steamboat *Henry Clay* downriver on July 28, the craft suddenly burst into flames near Yonkers. Fires raged onboard as more than eighty people perished. Shortly after the disaster, Hubbard and the ship's other officers were charged with manslaughter.[6]

The criminal charge hung heavy over Hubbard's head. If convicted, he faced ten years in prison, leaving his second wife, several children, and many extended family members without his support. As a result of witness testimony at the trial, held in New York City in October 1853, Hubbard was completely exonerated of any wrongdoing. He returned to Cornwall a hero, the result of his life-saving actions at the time of the disaster.[7] However, Hubbard did not live the life of a hero. He maintained an unassuming existence, providing for his large family by continuing to pilot Hudson River steamboats.

With the cloud of the trial lifted and a future seemingly more certain, Hubbard and his second wife, Laneretta, purchased ten acres of land at the base of Storm King Mountain.[8] The seller was Christopher Miller, a partner of Hubbard's in a ferry service running between Cornwall and Cold Spring. Their relationship was so solid that Hubbard named one of his sons after Miller.[9]

Located an easy distance from Cornwall Landing, a frequent steamboat stop, Hubbard's property was one of several homesteads in the area. For recreation in the mid-nineteenth century, these neighbors watched the never-ending stream of steamboats filled with eager passengers bound for far-off places like New York City or Albany. Nearer to home, a regatta could fill a summer's day. Local young men from both the Hubbard and Ward families were known to enjoy scull races[10] on the river, while their families and friends watched from shore. The elder Hubbard enjoyed a row on the river himself, but at a more leisurely pace. Nathaniel P.

Willis, the noted writer who resided in Cornwall (and the man who renamed *Butter Hill* to the more ominous *Storm King*), reminisced:

> Our boatman was Hubbard, the renowned ferryman between Cornwall and Cold Spring and the indispensable guide to the Highlands and their histories and mysteries…Hubbard telling us something we wanted to know at every dip of his oar… pointed out a fine eagle, swooping around the shoulder of Storm King, as we glided slowly through the water at the monarch's feet…Hubbard, as you know, has been the pilot on the river through trying scenes…"[11]

Those trying scenes had been tempered for the pilot by his family and his home on land bordered by Storm King Mountain on one side and washed by the waters of the Hudson River on the other. Jutting out a bit into the river, the property was known for years as Hubbard's Point. An old map of Orange County clearly indicates the name "E. Hubbard" at a spot along the Hudson's Cornwall shore.[12]

The remains of a stone foundation near the end of old Bay View Avenue may possibly mark the location of Hubbard's house. Over the years the precise location of his property has been lost; poring through land records proved a formidable task. It must be noted that the method of surveying during that time did not aid in the search. Markers and landmarks were often living pieces of landscape or moveable objects. Such practices were evident in the land records of Hubbard's purchase, in which cedar trees and piles of rocks were employed as boundary markers:

> All that certain lot piece or parcel of land situated in the town of Cornwall county of Orange bounded as follows beginning at a cedar tree on the bank of the Hudson river…running thence up the river as the river runs ten chains to a stone heap near a rock at or by the river thence…to a small cedar marked then south…to a stake + stone heap…"[13]

Piles of stones are still clearly visible, but there is no way to confirm with certainty that these mark Hubbard's land, or if they were actually official markers. However, Hubbard did live on this land and became father to several more children here.

The simple joys in Hubbard's life turned to grief again in 1860 when he lost his second wife.[14] Shortly afterward, Christopher Miller, who held the mortgage on Hubbard's property, also died. Hubbard was forced to sell his home.[15] He purchased a house on Cornwall's Hudson Street and moved there with his third wife, Sarah Jane.[16] By this time, his older children were grown; some had

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"The Hudson river near Storm King," by the 1890s, the railroad had created a cove just south of Hubbard's Point, a portion of an old road is visible at the bottom of the image

married and set off to start their own lives. During the remainder of his life, Hubbard was known simply as "Captain." When he died in 1893, *The New York Times* published a simple obituary: "Capt. Edward Hubbard, one of the oldest of Hudson River pilots, died at his home, in Cornwall, Thursday."[17]

The land once known as Hubbard's Point experienced many changes in later years. It eventually made its way into the hands of a man named Dean; for a time, it became known as Dean's Point. (Local residents still refer to it as such.) The fact that it was previously known as Hubbard's Point had been lost to history.

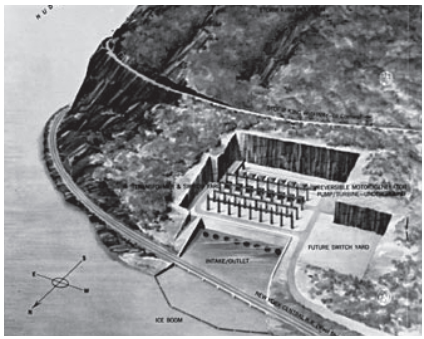
Sometime after the mid-nineteenth century the community at the fringe of Storm King Mountain became home to a vibrant summer-resort industry. Hudson River School paintings and the writings of N.P. Willis enticed vacationers from New York City to flock to Cornwall for a sojourn far from the steaming metropolis. Grand Victorian homes that graced the Hudson River along the length of Bay View Avenue were converted to boarding houses or hotels.[18] In time, properties such as Hubbard's were sold, divided into smaller parcels, and resold several times over.

In the 1880s, the railroad cut around Storm King Mountain along the river's edge and across the former Hubbard's Point.[19] Miles of track were laid, making it possible for freight trains to make their way through the Hudson Highlands. Chugging engines sliced through the mountain silence, bringing soot and smoke. Opportunities were lost and found. A new boat landing by Hubbard's Point never came to pass,[20] perhaps a sign of times to come. However, a new railroad depot was constructed at Cornwall-on-Hudson (which had separated from Cornwall). It was so popular that it eventually was expanded.[21] Soon, Cornwall Landing became a railroad hub for the shipment of Pennsylvania coal.[22]

In the early twentieth century, the land at the base of Storm King Mountain, especially around Hubbard's Point, experienced another change. Plans were drawn to bring the New York City Aqueduct through Cornwall by way of Bay View Avenue, passing directly down to the old Hubbard's Point property and then across the Hudson River by tunnel. Excavation and drilling, shafts and tunnels, and tracks for a narrow-gauge rail line peppered the landscape with the debris of

demolition. Curious onlookers came to check on the progress.[23]

During the 1920s the new Storm King Highway was completed, offering improved transportation in the Hudson Highlands.[24] However, this modern venture could not stop what was perhaps inevitable—the area around old Bay View Avenue ultimately fell into ruin. Any remaining homes, vacation hotels, and boarding houses were demolished in what became the final insult to this mountainside community.



MARIST COLLEGE ARCHIVES, THE MARIST ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY PROJECT

Proposal for a 800-foot-long powerhouse at Storm King Mountain (detail)

In the 1960s, Consolidated Edison planned to install an 800-foot-long powerhouse at Storm King Mountain, with a huge reservoir atop it.[25] The company brought in roaring bulldozers whose hungry blades tore into the once pastoral mountainside, altering the landscape forever. Old survey markers were consumed by massive earth-moving machinery as cedar trees fell to the earth and piles of rocks were turned over into the dirt. The sounds of destruction rang through the Highlands as more of Bay View Avenue history was erased.

Following seventeen years of litigation this land was returned to the people. Con Edison was forced to stop its project. Unfortunately, what remained at the base of Storm King was a desecrated and severely altered landscape. Some of this land fell under the stewardship of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC)[26], which designated it as Storm King State Park. The rest of the land along the old section of Bay View Avenue remained a part of Cornwall-on-Hudson.

During subsequent decades, nature worked to reclaim its place on the mountain. New growth and trees sprung up on the awkward piles of earth that were left to rest where they had been moved by machinery. Animals returned to make their homes or to win back their migration paths. Slowly a living forest emerged.

The meadow that was crossed to arrive at the old Hubbard property is unnamed. However, its location could invoke such a name as "Hubbard's Point Meadow." North of this meadow, in plain sight, is a huge rock. Driven into its top is an old iron property stake. At some point, this evidently marked the boundary of one of the land parcels along Bay View Avenue. This rock sits just below another quiet meadow, which could fittingly be called "Bay View Meadow" because of its proximity to old Bay View Avenue.

Between the meadows, there is no easy path to follow, since much of what

The "Shore Road Meadow" is the largest of the three meadows

was easily traversed long ago is now overgrown with brush and trees. A few prickly bushes seem ready to inflict pain upon those who dare to enter; patches of poison ivy in some spots add to a trekker's challenge. The meadows do not appear to be naturally created but manmade, most likely due to the bulldozing that had been done in the area.

On the north side of "Bay View Meadow" there is an entrance to another abandoned thoroughfare, Shore Road. Through the thick brush, it becomes evident that this road nearly paralleled the railroad tracks. Old stone and brick foundations, a rusted fire hydrant, a fallen telephone pole, and vestiges of what may have been an icehouse sit by the road, serving as reminders that this land once was populated. Beyond the steep ridge along the roadside, sunlight glints off a small pond near the railroad tracks.

For a brief section, Shore Road comes clearly into view, its edges lined with tall shade trees forming a canopy that allows just enough daylight to flicker through to illuminate the way. The gloom makes it easier to envision the time when families like the Hubbards, Wards, and Clarks walked down the road into Cornwall Landing, itself a mere memory.

There is one more meadow to cross, conceivably called "Shore Road Meadow." Wild grass, some shrubs, and a handful of young cedar trees dot its landscape. Shortly after exiting this meadow to the north, caution must be exercised. Shore

Road ends abruptly right at the railroad tracks, where long freight trains often can be seen. A white stone marker next to the tracks reads "N.Y. 52," indicating that this spot is exactly fifty-two miles north of New York City. Located south of this marker is the tract once known as Hubbard's Point.

Today, the land at the base of Storm King Mountain holds little resemblance to a time gone by and a life long past. Although it is impossible to know where the old property lines had been drawn, it is probable that some of Hubbard's Point and neighboring parcels near the old abandoned Bay View Avenue now sit safely for posterity in the north end of Storm King State Park. Although these lands have been extensively altered by man, history remains there.

The marker "N.Y. 52" along the railroad tracks marks the distance from New York City at exactly fifty-two miles

To learn about Storm King State Park, visit www.nynjtc.org/index.html *or contact the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, Bear Mountain, NY at 845-786-2701.*

Kris A. Hansen is a native of the Hudson Highlands and the author of the book *Death Passage on the Hudson: The Wreck of the Henry Clay*, (Fleischmanns, N.Y.: Purple Mountain Press, Ltd, 2004).

Endnotes

1. Lewis Beach, "Town of Cornwall: Bay-View Avenue," in *Cornwall* (Newburgh: Ruttenbur & Sons Printers, 1873), 98-99. (Courtesy of Janet Dempsey, Cornwall Town Historian)
2. The locations of Bay View Avenue, Shore Road, and Briggs Road are found in land records for the Village of Cornwall-on-Hudson, section 109-1-1, dated 9-11-67.
3. Geodetic marker at Designation: Hubbard 2 Reset, LX 1302, *www.ngs.noaa.gov*.
4. Federal Census records for 1840 Newburgh, Orange County, New York, and for 1850 Cornwall, Orange County, New York.
5. "Vital Records Taken from the *Newburgh Gazette*," Orange County Genealogical Society.
6. Kris A. Hansen, *Death Passage on the Hudson: The Wreck of the Henry Clay* (Fleischmanns: Purple Mountain Press, Ltd, 2004), 39-40, 112, 167.
7. Ibid., 135-136, 138, 163.
8. Land records for Orange County, New York, Year 1853, Liber 126, p. 29.
9. "Vital Records Taken from the *Newburgh Gazette*," Orange County Genealogical Society.
10. Erene Ward Norsen, *Ward Brothers: Champion of the World* (Vantage, 1958), 17. (Courtesy of Janet Dempsey, Cornwall Town Historian)
11. Nathaniel P. Willis, "The Convalescent," in *Out-Doors at Idlewild* (New York:Charles Scribner,

1855), letter 11 written July 1855 to Morris, printed *Home Journal.* (Courtesy of Janet Dempsey, Cornwall Town Historian)

12. The name "E. Hubbard" can be found noted on a map presently on display at the Newburgh Free Library Local History Room, Newburgh, NY: *Map of Orange County, New York*, 1850/1851, from actual surveys by J.C. Sidney C.E. author of *Twelve Miles Around New York* (Newburgh, NY: Newell S. Brown, Publisher), map submitted 1851, entered according to an Act of Congress in the year 1850/1851 by Robert P. Smith in the clerk's office in the District Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Also Hubbard's Point is mentioned in a news item of the *The Cornwall Times*, 13 March 1880.
13. Land records, Orange County, New York, Year 1853, Liber 126, p. 29.
14. Old Town Cemetery records, North Section, No. 1, Newburgh, NY.
15. Land records Orange County, New York, Year 1866, Liber 193, p. 470-473.
16. Land records Orange County, New York, Year 1867, Liber 198, p. 368-369 and Federal Census records for 1870 and 1880 Cornwall, New York.
17. "Obituary Notes," *The New-York Times*, 14 January 1893.
18. Janet Dempsey, with Colette C. Fulton and James I. O'Neill, "Bay View Villa," *Cornwall, New York: Images From The Past 1788-1920* (Cornwall: Friends of the Cornwall Library, 1994), 84.
19. Janet Dempsey, with Colette C. Fulton and James I. O'Neill, "West Shore Depot," *Cornwall, New York: Images From The Past 1788-1920* (Cornwall: Friends of the Cornwall Library, 1994), 70.
20. *The Cornwall Times*, 13 March 1880.
21. Janet Dempsey, with Colette C. Fulton and James I. O'Neill, "West Shore Depot," *Cornwall, New York: Images From The Past 1788-1920* (Cornwall: Friends of the Cornwall Library, 1994), 70.
22. Janet Dempsey, with Colette C. Fulton and James I. O'Neill, "The Coal Docks," *Cornwall, New York: Images From The Past 1788-1920* (Cornwall: Friends of the Cornwall Library, 1994), 71.
23. Janet Dempsey, with Colette C. Fulton and James I. O'Neill, "The New York City Aqueduct," *Cornwall, New York: Images From The Past 1788-1920* (Cornwall: Friends of the Cornwall Library, 1994), 131.
24. Janet Dempsey, with Colette C. Fulton and James I. O'Neill, "The Storm King Highway" *Cornwall, New York: Images From The Past 1788-1920* (Cornwall: Friends of the Cornwall Library, 1994), 138-140.
25. "The Scenic Hudson Decision: Timeline," Marist Environmental History Project *http://library.marist.edu/archives/mehp/scenicdecision.html.*
26. Land records Orange County New York, Year 1981, Liber 2218, p. 132-137.

The writer extends sincere thanks to:

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PHOTO: SEYMOUR WEINSTEIN/ALL PHOTOS FROM HUDSON RIVER MARITIME MUSEUM

Cornell Steamboat Co. tugboats at Kingston, 1947

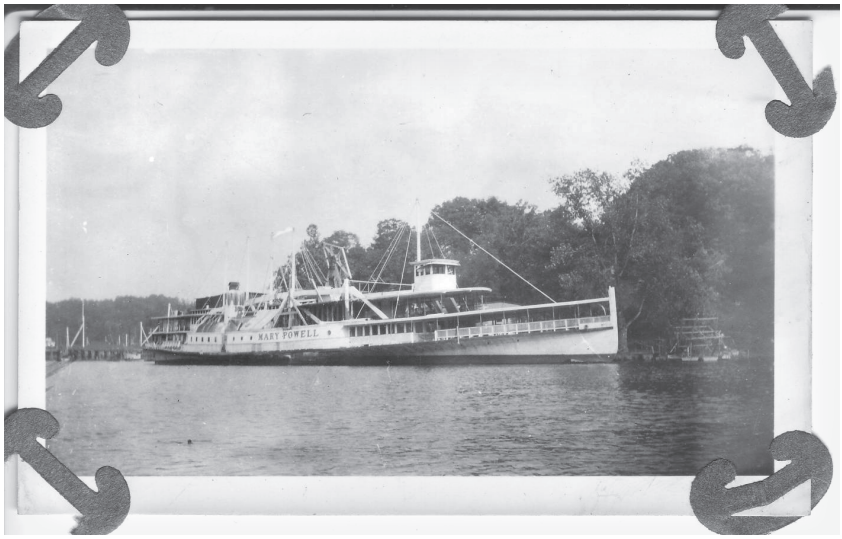
Hudson River Maritime Museum

Kate Giglio '07

On this weekend afternoon in October, two brothers visiting the Hudson River Maritime Museum zip back and forth, under and around several boat hulls, old steamboat bells, and rows of vibrant storyboards. As they ruthlessly spin a captain's wheel that looks at least 100 years old, I cringe a little, then almost jump to pull one boy back from incessantly ringing another bell. But their enthusiasm stops me—and I realize these artifacts are as durable as their legacy.

The weathered brick museum building, featuring vibrant scenes painted on its windows, huddles near Kingston's East Strand. It houses the most comprehensive assemblage of Hudson River maritime artifacts and information anywhere. Indeed, the museum is really the only place dedicated to the Hudson's maritime past—and it shows. Antique tools, aging photographs, yards of spliced line…all of it is labeled as meticulously as a display in the Smithsonian.

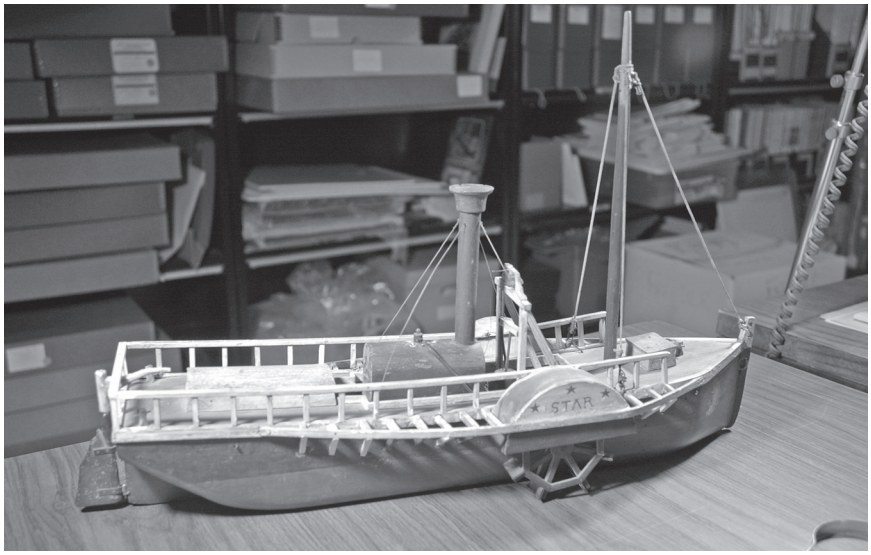
A small lobby gives way to cozy rooms focusing on nearly every aspect of sailing or boating on the Hudson. There are paintings, prints, photographs, vessel blueprints, and ship models, as well as a research library.

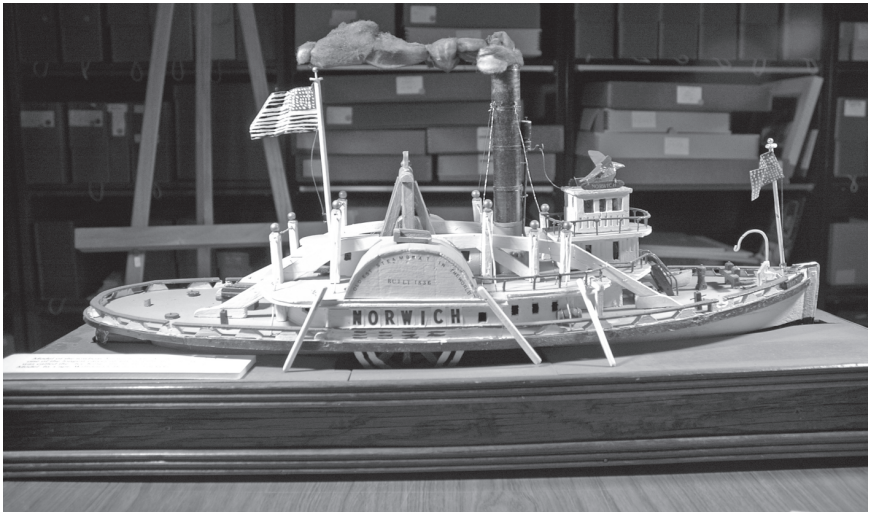


***The Mary Powell* in the Roundout, c. 1900**

The 1909 replica of *The Half Moon* trails behind *The North River* during the Hudson-Fulton Tercentennial Commemoration

Through a set of double doors, one finds a warehouse-like display of small boats and various relics. A waiting-room bench from the old ferry building in Newburgh looks larger than life, positioned across from a tiny replica of the steamboat *Hendrick Hudson*. Antique bells, wheels, and rudders are scattered across the space. Also on display are a lifeboat from the famed steamboat *Mary Powell*, a lighthouse tender, and several ice yachts. Outside, the 1898 steam tugboat *Mathilda* looms above the many Sunday visitors milling around the docks





Steamboat models from the Hudson River Maritime Museum's collection

on Rondout Creek. Next to it sits a 100-year-old shad boat.

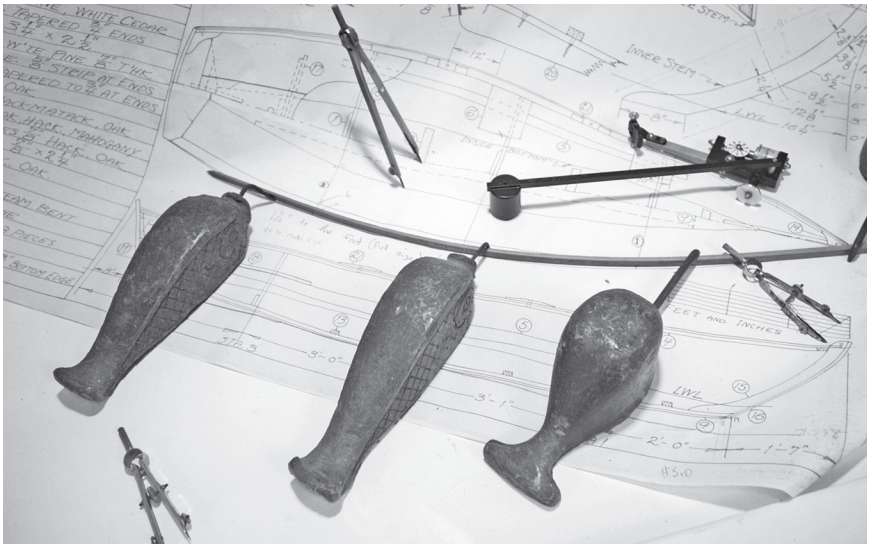
The museum was founded in 1980 by members of the Steamship Alexander Hamilton Society, the National Maritime Historical Society, and local historians. But its history dates nearly four centuries earlier—to 1609, when Henry Hudson declared Rondout a prime spot for a trading port. From that point on, the Hudson River would be an artery of commerce, teeming with all kinds of vessels, and Rondout (later to become part of the City of Kingston) would be the major port

Shad boat

Model schooner

between New York City and Albany.

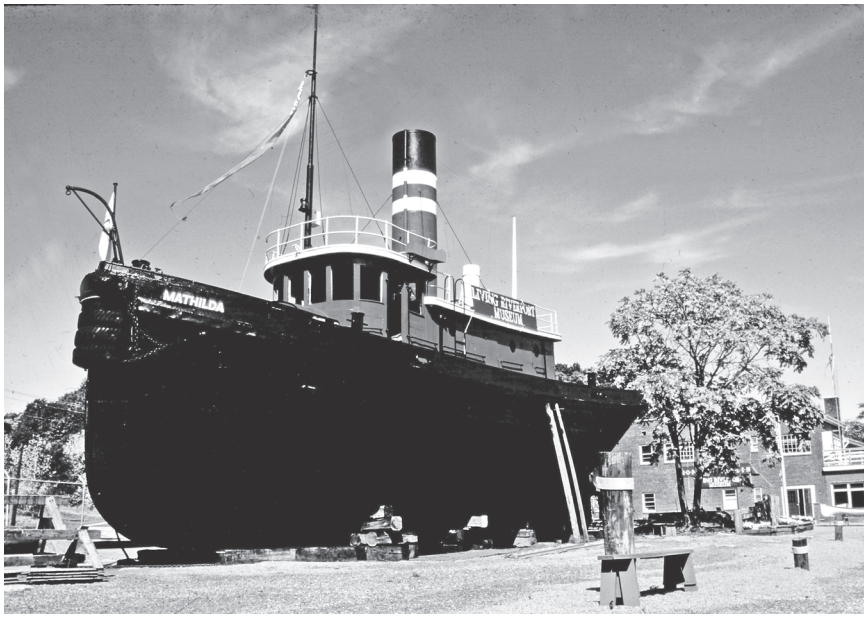
Some days, replicas of historic ships dock near the museum. The slave ship *Amistad* visits periodically from its home base in Mystic, Connecticut, reminding visitors of the West African people who were captured and brought across the Atlantic. At other times, the *Clearwater* can be found bobbing beside the museum, its staff eager to discuss the Hudson's environmental welfare.



Drafting tools and ship's plans

Replica ship *Amistad* at Kingston, 2006

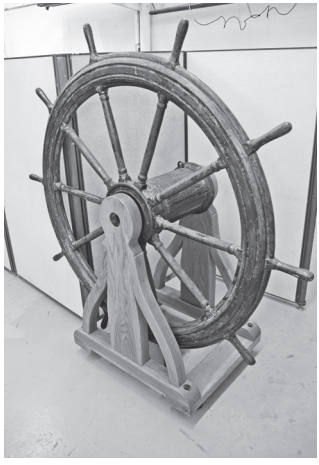
Each year, the museum hosts a special exhibit focused on a specific river-related theme. This year's is "Racing the Wind: Two Centuries of Iceboating on the Hudson River." Throughout the year, the museum also features many activities and events to enrich the public's understanding of both the history of the river and the Rondout area. These include a series of lectures. Recent featured topics were the building of the sloop *Woody Guthrie*, Hudson Valley Indian history, and



1898 steam tug Mathilda at the Hudson River Maritime Museum

a behind-the-scenes look at the museum's ship- and boat-building exhibit.

Besides such temporary exhibitions, the museum houses several permanent collections. The Donald C. Ringwald Hudson River Steamboat collection, The Cornell Steamboat Company collection, Feeney Reliance Marine Boatbuilding collection, the Ray Ruge Iceboating collection, and the Staples Brick Company collection are just a few examples, many of which include photographs, prints, paintings, ephemera, and artifacts such as gauges, bells, and tools. Plans are in the works to open the 1898 steam tug *Mathilda*, which has graced the museum's grounds since the autumn of 1983.



The Hudson River Maritime Museum is open May through October from noon to 6 p.m., Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. More information can be obtained by logging onto www.hrmm.org or calling 845-338-0071.

Book Review

Donna Merwick. *The Shame and the Sorrow: Dutch-Amerindian Encounters in New Netherland*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press (2006). 332pp.

Paul Otto. *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter in America: The Struggle for Sovereignty in the Hudson Valley*. New York: Berghahn Books (2006). 225pp.

Donna Merwick, senior fellow at the University of Melbourne and author of *Possessing Albany: The Dutch and English Experiences, 1630-1710* (1990), and Paul Otto, associate professor of history at George Fox University, present two distinct sides to Indian-white relations in New Netherland between 1609 and 1664. Merwick's work focuses on Dutch West India Company policies and is significantly European centered; except for his final chapter, Otto stresses events that transpired in the Hudson Valley. The two books complement each other, offering information and insights not found in the other. Otto's last chapter makes comparisons with the Dutch-controlled Cape Colony, while Merwick, employing many more Dutch-language sources, brings out comparisons with the extensive Dutch empire in Asia, including Goa and Batavia.

To Merwick, the Dutch West India Company initially recognized the sovereignty of the Indians, a point that she claims separated the Dutch from other European colonizers. She insists that the company's dealings at first were not as conquistadors; its operations were carefully managed and were specifically intended to prevent violence. Merwick contends that the company's officials did not intend or desire to "reorder the native's construction of realities. They felt no metaphysical obligation to bring them to a Netherlandish worldview." Things were to change, and not simply as a result of increased population and the advance of frontiersmen in New Netherland. To Merwick, the brutality of Kieft's War (1640-1645) and later conflagrations such as the Peach War (1655) and the two Esopus Wars (1659-1664) occurred not just because of local factors such as the personal limitations of Governor Kieft and his administration of the colony. She maintains that Dutch society in the Netherlands became overly materialistic, seeking greater and greater profits from its overseas empire, leading Hollanders to look the other way when colonial officials acted corruptly, lied to the Indians, and/or intentionally provoked racial tensions and wars. By the late 1630s onward, these colonial officials demanded tribute from the Indians, failed to regulate the actions of European settlers, and hired mercenaries (including John Underhill, "hero" of the Pequot War) to fight and massacre Indians in New Netherland.

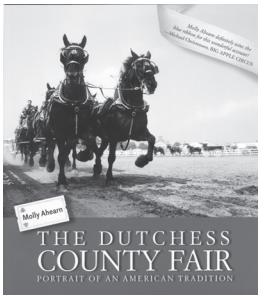
This is the meaning of Merwick's book title, namely a policy that tragically succumbed to greed and resulted in wars and dispossession of native peoples. Instead of an idealized portrait of Holland's golden age in the first half of the seventeenth century, Merwick sees a society that has fallen to temptation in its overseas adventures, resulting in militarism, intolerance, and anti-pluralism. Strangely, in presenting the tragedy, she never provides information or insights about the victims, namely the Munsees and Mahicans. Moreover, she never discusses the multiethnic (not just Dutch) reality of the colony that was a factor in shaping New Netherland's destiny, including its relations with the Indians.

In contrast, Otto recognizes the cultural diversity of the colony and, despite a paucity of documents, he reconstructs the Munsees' rapidly changing world of the seventeenth century. Otto describes the Munsees as diverse native peoples who varied in their relations with and accommodation to the colonists. Instead of writing in vague terms about the four Indian wars in New Netherland, Otto documents the body count. At least 1,600 Munsee men, women, and children perished in Kieft's War. Unlike Merwick, he states that Dutch Indian policies were not unique, but were "typical of European-Indian relations elsewhere." In contrast, he adds that governors from Verhulst to Stuyvesant never recognized Munsee sovereignty over the Indians' natural resources; however, he also shows that the Dutch had few qualms about miscegenation and did not focus their efforts on Christianizing. Otto recognizes the multiethnic reality of European existence in New Netherland. Unlike Merwick, he mentions Thomas Chambers, the prominent Englishman and founder of Wiltwijck (Kingston), and his role in precipitating the First Esopus War.

Much of what Otto presents is already familiar to scholars of Native American history since he draws much from the extensive writings of anthropologist Robert Grumet. However, his book could be useful to a general audience since it is better written and updates Allen Trelease's *Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century (1960)*. His treatments of Hudson's interaction with the Indians and the Dutch purchase of Manhattan, his up–to-date portraits of the Dutch governors and their Indian policies, and his accurate ethnographic descriptions of the Munsees could be especially useful to teachers at different levels. Yet, the definitive work on the native peoples of the Hudson Valley and environs still needs to be written. One can only hope that the long-awaited book by Robert Grumet—based on his thirty-five years of research—will fill this gap in Native American history.—*Laurence M. Hauptman, SUNY New Paltz*

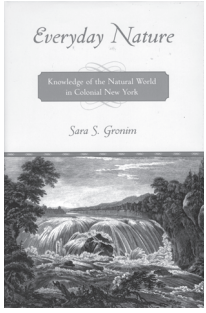
New & Noteworthy Books Received

Ann Panagulias



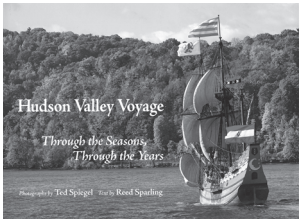
The Dutchess County Fair: Portrait of an American Tradition
Text and photographs by Molly Ahearn (Hensonville, NY: Black Dome Press, 2007). 128 pp. $15.95 (paperback). *www.blackdomepress.com*

Photography is truly one of the greatest pragmatic and aesthetic inventions of the nineteenth century. Here, it aids in the unique spinning of the tale of Dutchess County's annual celebration of the beauty of agriculture and community, from its modest beginnings with a $157 matching grant from the New York State Legislature to today's 142-acre extravaganza. The fortunes and hard knocks of the event, if not the county, were as intricate as the finest patchwork quilts displayed at the fair. The bottom line thwarted the ideals of "The Farm" as venues shuffled between bucolic Washington Hollow and bustling Poughkeepsie until reaching its permanent home in Rhinebeck. The fair is what "buy local" is all about: reaping the very best of agrarian life, in product and deed.



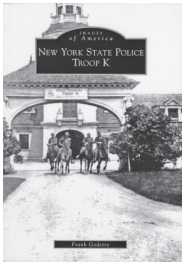
Everyday Nature: Knowledge of the Natural World in Colonial New York
By Sara S. Gronim (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press). 272 pp. $44.95 (cloth). *www.rutgerspress.rutgers.edu*

This enlightening account of colonists' conundrums is as much about human nature as it is a history of the gradual integration of innovations according to one's own interests in the mastery of Nature itself. Although the concept of "hand of God" acceptance regarding contagion and catastrophe slowly waned, most colonists were content with what they knew for themselves, their own experiences trumping trust in science or expertise of indigenous dwellers. Providentially, the citizenry bred the odd maverick to ensure the supremacy of our species; data was disseminated via encyclopedias and almanacs, as well as through organizations such as King's College (now Columbia University) and the Society for the Promotion of Arts, Agriculture and Oeconomy [sic], founded in 1754 and 1764, respectively.



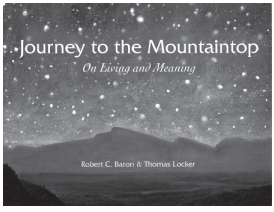
Hudson Valley Voyage: Through the Seasons, Through the Years
By Reed Sparling with photographs by Ted Spiegel (Fishkill, NY: Involvement Media, 2007) 159 pp. $36.95 (hardcover). *www.hudsonvalleyvoyage.com*

In this veritable Dutch Treat, the book's creators split their contributions right down the middle. Mr. Spiegel provides a photograph for each sense (and, obviously, season), while Mr. Sparling—coeditor of *The Hudson River Valley Review*—crafts a tutorial for every sensibility, the former beguiling, the latter in turns thought- or giggle-provoking. For good measure, the tome is liberally spiced with actual accounts and historical documents. If calling it a "coffee-table book" you must, accompany your prejudice with a cup of Java and a dozen *olykoeks* for dunking while daydreaming of your next ramble.



New York State Police Troop K
By Frank Goderre (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007). 127 pp. $19.99 (paperback). *www.arcadiapublishing.com*

Upon occasion, corruption comes on the heels of progress; bigger and better highways with faster and fancier automobiles drove crime from the Big City to the small town. The unflagging, five-year effort of two women, Katherine Mayo and Moyca Newell, led to the establishment of the New York State Constabulary—todays State Police. The evolution of this soldier-policeman, paying homage to Lafayette's Guard Nationale and Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders, is easily grasped in this pictorial album illustrating Troop K's tireless service to Major George Fletcher Chandler's "forgotten man." Alas, while preserving the peace, Troop K was an accessory to a regrettable act of vandalism. The splendid Washington Hollow Exhibition Hall, constructed in 1867 for the Dutchess County Fair, was razed in order to erect the troops Barracks upon the site in 1970.



Journey to the Mountaintop: On Living and Meaning
By Robert C. Baron and Thomas Locker (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2007). 48 pp. $25.00 (hardcover). *www.fulcrumbooks.com*

Reading between the lines, above all the virtue of companionship is exalted in this labor of love. By all means, take the time to scale literal and figurative heights. Then get out your pen, set up your easel, sing about it, dance about it, but for Heaven's sake, please share your sublimely creative musings with a friend!

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