
LONG ISLAND HISTORICAL JOURNAL



Portrait of Colonel Benjamin Tallmadge and
Son William Tallmadge painted by Ralph Earl in 1790.

Volume 20, Numbers 1-2

Fall 2007/Spring 2008



Starting from fish-shape Paumanok where I was born...

Walt Whitman



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MOVING IN, MOVING ON: LEE KRASNER'S WORK IN JACKSON POLLOCK'S STUDIOS

Helen A. Harrison

The painter Lee Krasner lived in the shadow of her more famous husband. But his early death coincided with an impressive -- and perplexing -- flowering of her own work. Helen A. Harrison discusses the tribulations of this famous East Hampton couple.

On August 15, 1956 the painter Lee Krasner watched stoically as her husband Jackson Pollock was buried in Green River Cemetery in Springs, a hamlet in the Town of East Hampton on eastern Long Island. Several of those who attended the funeral later remarked on how calm and controlled she was, but her outward composure masked the emotional turmoil that she allowed only a few close friends to see.¹ Pollock's death in a drunken car crash four days earlier was the tragic culmination of their turbulent relationship, which had been strained to the breaking point by his affair with Ruth Kligman, a 25-year old art student. With her friend Edith Metzger, who had come out to visit for the weekend, Kligman was a passenger in Pollock's Oldsmobile convertible when it careened off the road, plowed into a stand of trees and overturned. Kligman was injured, but Pollock and Metzger were killed.

When the accident happened Krasner was in Paris, on a trip that allowed her to distance herself from the situation at home, where Pollock's alcoholism was out of control and his infidelity was humiliating to her. Without her steadying influence, however, his downward spiral accelerated until it reached "escape velocity."² On his death, she became the sole heir to the work that remained in his studio, a converted storage barn on their property. Pollock had used the building since 1946, while Krasner worked in a small upstairs room, which had previously been his studio. She now had the responsibility of marketing his artistic legacy and of perpetuating his reputation as one of the foremost twentieth-century abstract painters. But Lee Krasner was much more than the Widow Pollock of legend. She was also a formidably talented artist who had willingly subjugated her own ambitions to promote her husband's career. Now that he was gone, she focused on her own career.

When she and Pollock began their relationship in late 1941, Krasner was far better known in the minuscule art world microcosm that was the New York City avant-garde. She lived and worked in an apartment at 51 East 9th Street, around the corner from Pollock's flat on

46 East 8th Street. After she moved in with him in 1942 she maintained a separate studio for a time, but later began to use the apartment's back bedroom as a workspace. There is only one known photograph of her in that small room, which faced south, not the ideal orientation for a studio. Pollock, by contrast, had the much larger front parlor, ideally lighted by north facing windows. So right from the early days of their relationship, Krasner deferred to Pollock's professional needs, often to the detriment of her own.



Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner in the barn studio, 1949. Photograph by Lawrence Larkin, courtesy of Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, East Hampton, New York.

This was not simply a matter of male dominance and female subjugation. By her own account, following her exposure to Pollock's work, Krasner not only recognized his potential but also underwent a profound reevaluation of her own artistic direction. As a student of the German émigré teacher and painter Hans Hofmann, she had been traveling the well worn path of European modernism for some five years and was among the leading New York neo-cubists. As such, however, she and her colleagues in the American Abstract Artists group

were considered by the cognoscenti to be followers at best and imitators at worst -- certainly not the innovators they aspired to be.

When she first saw Pollock's work, Krasner later said, she felt that he was "ahead of" her. In a 1967 typescript statement, now among the Lee Krasner Papers in the Archives of American Art, she described her response to the initial visit to his studio in December 1941: "What did I think? I was overwhelmed, bowled over that's all. I saw all those marvelous paintings, I felt as if the floor was sinking when I saw those paintings."³ In a 1981 interview with Grace Glueck of *The New York Times*, she discussed her response in relation to her own development, specifically her acceptance of Hofmann's neo-cubist dicta: "I was much more struck by what he [Jackson] was about," she told Glueck. "It opened a new channel, a new avenue for me. I started to break away from what I had learned and was involved with."⁴ She began, as she put it, to "lose cubism and absorb Pollock." But, she insisted, she "never became a Pollock. I didn't because I wasn't a student of his in that sense. I admired him, but also Mondrian and Matisse. One admires other artists, and I think I'd have admired him whether or not I was his wife. He'd have affected me."⁵

But of course she was his wife, at first in all but name, and legally as of October 25, 1945, two days shy of her thirty-seventh birthday. In the early days of their union, she was constantly confronted with, and challenged by, his powerfully expressive imagery, which seemed to arise spontaneously from some deep creative wellspring. She tried to tap a similar reservoir within herself, but kept missing the mark. She would work on a painting for months at a time, adding layer upon layer until the surface resembled mud. Then, so it would not be a total loss, the frugal Krasner would soak those failed canvases in the bathtub, scrape them down, and give them to Pollock to paint on. But she continued to struggle through what she dubbed her "grey slab" period. "I was putting masses of paint on canvas and nothing would happen," she later recalled. "Just tons of paint going nowhere . . . It was all very frustrating."⁶ Ironically, her only surviving canvas from that time bears the name of her former lover, Igor Pantuhoff, a painter with whom she lived in the 1930s and who reportedly encouraged her artistic ambitions.⁷

In June 1944, Krasner temporarily moved her studio to a spare room in the apartment of a friend and fellow artist, Reuben Kadish, who believed that she and Pollock were getting on each other's nerves. "They were so competitive that they couldn't even work in the same house together," Kadish told Pollock's biographers Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith. Whether or not having adjoining studios troubled Pollock, it evidently bothered Krasner. According to Kadish, "she was

being digested into oblivion by his presence.”⁸ Again, only one canvas from that period has survived, and it shows her returning to the cubist structure she learned from Hofmann, albeit overlaid with expressionistic brush work.



Krasner in her parlor studio, 1949. The painting on the easel is *Stop and Go*. Courtesy of Lee Krasner Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

However much conflict Krasner was having creatively, she continued to promote Pollock's nascent career. By this time he had been

taken up by Peggy Guggenheim (a niece of Solomon R. Guggenheim), who had returned to her native New York after many years as an expatriate in Europe, where she collected surrealist and abstract art and fraternized with the avant-garde. Guggenheim commissioned a mural from Pollock, and gave him his first solo exhibition at her 57th Street gallery, *Art of This Century*, in the winter of 1943.⁹ Whatever competitive pressure Krasner may have felt in the privacy of their adjacent studios, in public she was Pollock's ardent champion. Clement Greenberg recalled that, when she introduced him to Pollock -- a virtual unknown when the two men met in late 1942 or early 1943 -- Lee declared: "This guy is a great painter."¹⁰ The writer Lionel Abel, a friend from those years, summed up the opinion of many observers: "She [Krasner] carried the ball for the enterprise. She thought the whole thing out from the beginning: how to put him over and make him a big success."¹¹

It was Krasner's idea to move to the country in 1945, when Pollock's drinking and erratic behavior were threatening to derail the career she had cultivated with such determination for nearly four years. At first he resisted, but soon saw the wisdom of distancing himself from the city's plentiful temptations and distractions. They moved to a homestead in Springs in early November, renting at first while Krasner negotiated a loan from Guggenheim that would enable them to buy the property and settle down. By then they were married, and for the only time in their fifteen year relationship, Pollock's studio arrangements were less comfortable than Krasner's. Since she apparently was never asked about it, nor did she volunteer the information, we can only speculate that her new found domestic security prompted her to assert herself. She appropriated the back parlor, the biggest room in the house, with a bay window. In addition to abundant sunlight, the room was warmed by a Franklin stove which, together with a kitchen range, was the building's only heat source. Pollock set up shop in a chilly upstairs room, the smallest of the three on that floor, although it had the advantage of a north window. It also had privacy, which Krasner's workspace didn't, but compared to hers it was cramped and Spartan.

Both painters experienced a burst of creative energy. Krasner emerged from her "grey slab" period with lively abstractions rendered in energetic strokes of color, while Pollock began his *Accabonac Creek* series, infusing his cryptic imagery with a new brightness and openness. By the spring, when Guggenheim's loan enabled them to get a mortgage, they took title to the property and Pollock began clearing out the barn that would become his studio. It was ready by the fall, when he was already at work on his *Sounds in the Grass* series of "all over" abstractions. He showed sixteen works from both series at *Art of*

This Century the following January. Krasner completed only six paintings during the same period, but she was a slow worker who constantly revised. And she was juggling her studio time with the domestic chores, which were arduous in a house with no indoor plumbing or central heating. Years later, when asked what it was like at first, Krasner replied: "How can I describe it? It was hell, to put it mildly, for me."¹² Notwithstanding the hardships, she had found a new and fruitful direction in her work that would carry her through the rest of the decade.



Krasner in her studio at 51 East 59th Street, New York City, 1939. Photograph by Maurice Berezov. © AE Artworks Inc.



Lee Krasner in her upstairs studio, 1950. Photograph by Hans Namuth.
© Hans Namuth, Ltd.

Once the barn was cleaned out and converted to serve as Pollock's studio, Krasner moved into his former studio upstairs in the house, where she worked for about ten years. In that small room, roughly ten by fourteen feet, she developed and refined her Little Image series of grid based paintings, executed in a heavily layered impasto and sometimes embellished with calligraphic pourings of liquid paint. Meanwhile Pollock was rapidly progressing with the all over poured paintings that made him famous. Both artists were moving into uncharted territory, and often sought mutual reassurance, although according to Krasner they only visited each other's studios by invitation. Occasionally during this period, however much they valued their privacy, necessity caused their working and living spaces to overlap. In a 1976 interview with the art historian Barbara Rose, Krasner mentioned that when it was too cold to paint in the unheated

upstairs studio she would come down and work in the back parlor.¹³ The barn studio also was unheated, and although, according to Krasner, Pollock “would manage in winter if he wanted to; he would get dressed up in an outfit the like of which you’ve never seen,” he worked in the house when the barn got too cold.¹⁴ At least one of his large canvases, and probably other smaller ones, as well as works on paper, were done near the warmth of the parlor stove.¹⁵



Jackson Pollock’s barn studio, Spring, 1950. Photograph by Hans Namuth. ©Hans Namuth, Ltd.

If this overlap caused any professional tension between Pollock and Krasner, it is not recorded. The awkwardness of the situation may have been eased by Pollock’s brief period of sobriety, from late 1948 through 1950, during which time he was taking tranquilizers.¹⁶ After central heating was installed in the house in late 1949 she worked exclusively in the upstairs studio, which Pollock entered by invitation only. And she equally respected his privacy. Her statements often refer to the arrangement whereby each would ask the other for assessments of work in progress. She described the procedure to an interviewer, Emily Wasserman, in 1968: “Generally, I would preface it with a big bellyache about something, . . . and then I’d list what was bothering me. And when he’d come into the studio, he’d say something like, ‘Oh, forget all that and just keep painting, it’s a lot of rot.’” For his part, Pollock greatly valued his wife’s opinion. As she told Wasserman, “he did keep saying, ‘Come and look, what do you think?’ I mean, that was a constant. So I take it that some part of my response was essential, you know.”¹⁷



Lee Krasner in the barn studio, Springs, 1959, with an early version of *The Gate*. Photograph by Halley Erskine. Courtesy of Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, East Hampton, New York.

Whatever the other elements of their relationship may have been, their respect for each other's artistic integrity was surely an important, not to say crucial, component. This mutual sustenance, however, was nurtured and expressed in private. To the world at large, Krasner did not have a career, in the professional sense of that term: representation by a dealer who cultivated clients for the work and who mounted annual solo shows that were reviewed in the press. But she did exhibit her work regularly, both in New York City and locally on eastern Long Island. Two of her paintings and a mosaic table she had made were featured in "The Modern House Comes Alive" at the Bertha Schaefer Gallery in 1948, when she and Pollock were both included in the annual invitational exhibition at Guild Hall in East Hampton; her painting won second prize, while Pollock's came in third.¹⁸ In 1949 they showed together in "Man and Wife," a group exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery in Manhattan, and again at Guild Hall in 1950. The following year, they were both included in the Ninth Street Show, a group exhibition that helped establish the roster of the New York School. Also in 1951, after Pollock interceded on her behalf, she had the first solo exhibition of her career at the Betty Parsons Gallery in Manhattan,

where he had been represented since Peggy Guggenheim closed her gallery and moved to Venice in 1947.¹⁹

Indeed, ever since Guggenheim gave him his first solo exhibition in 1943, Pollock had had an annual show in New York City every year. Guggenheim had also exposed his work in Venice, and it was being included in important shows across the United States and in Europe. A profile in *Life* magazine's August 8, 1949 issue broadcast his name to more than five million readers. By comparison, Krasner was virtually unknown -- although, as the exhibition listing indicates, she was hardly invisible. Nothing was sold from her 1951 Betty Parsons show, and the critics ignored it. It was four years before she had another solo show in New York City.²⁰

By the early 1950s Krasner evidently decided that she had outgrown the bedroom studio. Notwithstanding professional setbacks, and whatever reticence she felt about competing with Pollock, she also wanted a detached work space. In 1953 they bought an acre of land adjacent to their property and moved a small nineteenth-century barn onto it, with the intention of turning it into Krasner's studio.²¹ Although this never became her primary work place, especially as it had a dirt floor, no heat and no electricity, her decision to establish a separate studio shows that she remained dedicated to her work in spite of her lack of professional validation.

From 1945 to 1955, when she exhibited her collage paintings at the Stable Gallery in Manhattan, Krasner's work underwent five distinct changes in direction, or "breaks," as she called them. First she abandoned the gestural exuberance inspired by her initial encounter with Pollock's work for the thick paint and grid-like structure of the Little Image series. Then she made a series of geometric abstractions, which quickly gave way to a few transitional expressionistic, figure-based canvases -- including her "personage paintings," almost all of which were later reworked -- that led to the abstract color field paintings she showed at the Betty Parsons Gallery. Most of those canvases later served as the basis for a series of abstract collage paintings, which she began in 1953. These abrupt directional shifts bespeak an aesthetic restlessness, dissatisfaction, or perhaps a lack of confidence that plagued her throughout her relationship with Pollock.

By the end of that relationship, Krasner had made yet another transition, abandoning the collage technique for a return to straight painting and the exuberant brush work and florid forms of her earlier expressionist phase. But the subject matter was figurative, and much more ominous, perhaps in response to her deteriorating marriage. Moreover, in spite of having produced and exhibited a solid body of

work in the collage paintings, she had yet to receive critical recognition, much less make a sale.²²

Following Pollock's death, Krasner faced her greatest challenge: managing his estate and her own career simultaneously. After spending the winter in a hotel in New York City, she returned to Long Island in the spring and began to make the transition from the upstairs studio in the house to Pollock's barn studio. Krasner never spoke on the record about that transition, except to say that it was a hard time for her.²³



Lee Krasner in New York City 1983, with her untitled collage painting, ca. 1982. Photograph by Bernard Gotfryd. Courtesy Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, East Hampton, New York.

Friends described Krasner as being devastated by Pollock's death, beset by guilt, anger and sorrow. But this anguish was manifested in her work. What came out of the emotional wellspring she had been trying to tap since her first encounter with Pollock's work was an explosion of voluptuous organic imagery rendered in lively brush work and bright color. Years later, when the poet Richard Howard questioned her about this seeming contradiction, she was at a loss to explain it. "I remember she said that when I was painting *Listen*, which is so highly keyed in color -- I've seen it many times since, and it looks like such a happy painting -- I can remember that while I was painting it I almost didn't see it, because tears were literally pouring down," Howard said.²⁴

If this was not exactly a joyous time for Krasner, it was a period of great achievement, when what came to be known as the Earth Green

series asserted her artistic independence. Her response to speculation about her motivations was often an evasive, noncommittal “I wouldn’t know” or “I couldn’t say.” In this case, however, it seems apparent that she was genuinely perplexed by the upbeat turn her work had taken in the face of her grief. Pollock’s first biographer, B.H. Friedman, a close friend during that time, considers it to have been a kind of antidote to her negative feelings, as well as an assertion of her determination to move forward with her life and career.²⁵ Whatever the cause, the effect was to liberate the creative energy that had been suppressed while she concentrated on managing Pollock. Moreover, instead of a tiny room, she now had a spacious studio with a high ceiling and twenty-one foot walls, and she made the most of it, enlarging both her format and her gesture.

Krasner lived for twenty-eight years after Pollock’s death, dividing her time between New York City and Springs, where she used his former barn studio until severe arthritis and other health problems ended her productivity. *Morning Glory*, the last painting she is known to have done there, was completed in the summer of 1982. The following year, in December, she was photographed in front of what is believed to be her final work, a collage painting that illustrates her lifelong penchant for revisiting and recycling earlier material. It is made of drawings done in Hofmann’s school in the late 1930s, collaged onto one of the few 1951 color field abstractions that she hadn’t already reworked, with new areas of paint added to unify the composition. This poignant final statement shows that for Lee Krasner, moving on often involved a paradoxical dialogue with the past.

NOTES

¹ Jeffrey Potter, *To a Violent Grave: An Oral Biography of Jackson Pollock* (New York: G.P. Putman’s Sons, 1984), 252-261.

² Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith, “Escape Velocity,” *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1989), Chapter 44, 774-793.

³ “Lee Krasner Pollock: Statement,” in Helen A. Harrison, ed., *Such Desperate Joy: Imagining Jackson Pollock* (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2000), 63.

⁴ “Scenes From a Marriage: Krasner and Pollock,” reprinted in Harrison, 79.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁶ Naifeh and Smith, 485.

⁷ Jeffrey D. Grove, "Chronology," in Ellen G. Landau, *Lee Krasner: A Catalogue Raisonné* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995), 302. Naifeh and Smith (379), claim that Krasner virtually stopped painting while she lived with Pantuhoff (1932-39), yet some 100 of her works from that period -- one-sixth of her entire known oeuvre -- have survived.

⁸ Naifeh and Smith, 484.

⁹ Siobhán M. Conaty, *Art of This Century: The Women*, exhibition catalogue (East Hampton: Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center / Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, 1997), 41.

¹⁰ Potter, 66.

¹¹ Naifeh and Smith, 404.

¹² Lee Krasner, interviewed in "Jackson Pollock: Portrait," from the Public Broadcasting System series, *Strokes of Genius*, 1982.

¹³ Barbara Rose, *Lee Krasner: A Retrospective*, exhibition catalogue (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1983), 61.

¹⁴ Harrison, 65.

¹⁵ Mercedes Matter, interviewed in "Jackson Pollock: Portrait," recalls watching Pollock at work in the living room on the large canvas now known as *Number 1A, 1948* (Museum of Modern Art, New York).

¹⁶ Potter, 102.

¹⁷ Harrison, 72.

¹⁸ Her prize-winning painting may have been an untitled oil on pressed wood (catalogue raisonné entry 224), which is inscribed on the stretcher, "Lee Krasner East Hampton \$350." The "Modern House" exhibition reviews were the only ones in which her work was mentioned. See Landau, 106.

¹⁹ Naifeh and Smith, 672.

²⁰ Krasner had a one-day solo exhibition of work at the House of Books and Music in East Hampton (15 August 1953).

²¹ The cancelled check for the purchase is preserved in the Pollock-Krasner Study Center archives.

²² Prior to 1953, Edward F. Dragon and his companion, artist Alfonso Ossorio, acquired two of her works, but whether they were purchases or gifts is not clear. See catalogue entries 231 and 223, in Landau. "A Selection from 12 East Hampton Collections" at Guild Hall in 1953.

²³ See, for example, a videotaped interview with Hermine Freed, ca. 1973, in the Pollock-Krasner Study Center oral history collection.

²⁴ *Lee Krasner Paintings 1959-1962*, exhibition catalogue (New York: Pace Gallery, 1979), n.p.

²⁵ See the Remarks for entry 311 in Landau, 163.

**A NEW DEAL FOR DISASTER:
THE “HURRICANE OF 1938” AND FEDERAL DISASTER
RELIEF OPERATIONS, SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK**

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This article is part of a larger Ph.D. dissertation entitled “The Shape of Disaster and the Universe of Relief: Individuals, Communities and Governments During the Relief Operations of the ‘Hurricane of ‘38’ on Suffolk County, Long Island, New York, 1938-1941,” State University of New York at Buffalo, due to be completed in the summer of 2008.

On September 21, 1938, just as Hitler was about to annex the Sudetenland, a hurricane of astonishing force and speed made landfall on Long Island, New York, sweeping north across Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont. The “Great New York-New England Hurricane of 1938,” “Long Island Express,” “September Surprise,” or “‘Unnamed’ Hurricane of 1938,” as it has been alternately called, eventually petered out over the northeast interior of the continent, a few hundred miles north of Lake Ontario in the Canadian outback.¹



The Hurricane of ‘38 was born on September 10, 1938 off the west coast of Africa just south of the Azores. Twelve days later, it passed over central eastern Long Island on the afternoon of September 21, 1938. (Note -- each dot represents six hours in the life of the storm with its mad dash up the eastern seaboard of the United States from Florida to New York taking just twenty-four hours. The track speed of the storm, in its final, deadliest form, still ranks as one of the fastest hurricane track speeds on record.) Courtesy of Jason Dorje.

Left in its wake, however, was untold destruction, both in terms of human life and property loss. The east end of Long Island was hit hard. Fishing shacks and tony estates alike fell victim to the hurricane with mountains of 'storm lumber' littering area beaches. East Hampton's tree lined Main Street, along with miles of sleepy roadways were reduced to matchsticks making travel impossible. Out at Montauk and Southampton, fishing boats and custom yachts were thrown in backyards, atop hedgerows depriving owners of their livelihoods and sources of recreation. Telephone and electrical lines were downed covering the island in darkness and severing its link with the outside world. Families were separated, and in some cases lost loved ones, due to raging gales and storm surge. As that long day finally turned to night, Long Islanders huddled together with neighbors and strangers, waiting for the morning to come to see what remained of their battered communities.²

At sunup on September 22 private, commercial, and religious groups, and local and state agencies descended upon Long Island to first assess the damage, and then commence the arduous process of relief and renewal. Macy's flagship Broadway store expanded the delivery zones and scheduling of their Red Star Fleet to transport needed supplies to Long Island. The Suffolk County Welfare Department provided food, clothing, and shelter to displaced area residents. The Village Board of Westhampton Beach passed a series of resolutions, closing streets, authorizing official appointments, and marshalling resources.³

The federal government's response to the Hurricane of '38, in particular, was critical to the overall relief scheme. Upon hearing of the destruction President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was suffering from a head cold, directed a broad mobilization of military and civilian agencies from his bedside. The next day, on September 22, 1938, the "Chief Executive's orders [were released] to half a dozen government establishments."⁴ The Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) waived "all rules and regulations governing the routing of traffic to the . . . area."⁵ The Disaster Loan Corporation (DLC) prepared to receive loan applications from storm victims. The Coast Guard cancelled the cutter Mendota's scheduled participation in the President's Cup Regatta the following weekend due to "the urgent need for vessels, equipment, and personnel."⁶ Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps were put on alert, and prepared to turn their activities towards emergency clean up and reconstruction. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) dispatched crews to assess the damage to federal, state, and local infrastructures. And the Works Progress/Projects Administration (WPA) mobilized its workforce, preparing to shift federal resources to the hurricane wracked region.⁷

The federal component of the disaster response regime in effect during the Hurricane of '38 was a diverse collection of civil servants, New Deal agencies, and the armed forces synchronized through a complex administration. To be sure, the federal government's role in disaster response during this period of time was transitional, signaling a major change in how national relief was conducted. Standing between the nineteenth-century disaster relief scheme of limited legislative grants of aid and the Federal Disaster Relief Act of 1950, the New Deal represented a revolution in national disaster relief. While federal disaster relief programs could be traced back to the founding of the republic, New Deal disaster aid and assistance was so extensive, bureaucratically managed and concurrently ad hoc and routine as to constitute a giant leap forward in federal disaster policy and practice.⁸

Traditionally, hazard response was a "local responsibility" and not a public one. As Roy S. Popkin, former director of the American Red Cross Emergency Relief Program, noted in "The History and Politics of Disaster Management in the United States," the first phase of disaster relief was epitomized by "frontier neighbors rallying to raise a barn or to help a burned out settler or farmer rebuild a home destroyed by fire."⁹ Beyond self help and ad hoc community and religious groups providing aid, greater colonial disaster relief schemes were nonexistent. Quite simply, the colonies had not matured to the point of instituting a home grown system of disaster relief. As Matthew Mulcahy noted disasters "exposed the fragility of the social order and the dependency of the colonies on outside supplies for their basic existence."¹⁰

Upon the founding of the republic the subject of disaster relief was not broached save for the creation of a process through which citizens could seek redress. In this phase, individuals would individually apply to Congress via a "private bill" of relief from a fire, flood, or other calamity that befell them through no fault of their own. This was the key determinant to receiving aid. Justifications for disaster relief were "uncontroversial and popular," but the extension of relief to circumstances other than "no fault" was not.¹¹ Congress denied applications based on personal responsibility, the individual assumption of risk or the danger of falling down the ubiquitous "slippery slope" -- the likelihood that extending aid to applicants who were less than blameless could lead to a sharp increase in disaster relief bills thus running counter to governmental policy and possibly wrecking havoc on federal coffers. While this process was time consuming, procedurally cumbersome and favored those with political clout, it represented a marked improvement in disaster relief.¹²

The third phase of disaster relief witnessed the federal government crafting generalized disaster relief legislation targeted at discrete groups

of persons without the need for individual application. One of the federal government's earliest forays in disaster relief was in 1803 when Congress extended "further time [for the] discharge . . . [of] customhouse bonds" to the inhabitants of Portsmouth, New Hampshire after a storm event laid waste to portions of the town.¹³ In what would mark the common trend in nineteenth-century federal disaster relief policy, Congress took the initiative and crafted disaster specific relief legislation. Rutherford Platt notes that between 1803 and 1947 Congress ratified 128 specific acts expressing "sympathy and . . . financial assistance" for victims of various calamities.¹⁴ Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth-century, this piecemeal response scheme would remain virtually unchanged with specific disasters giving rise to limited forms of federal assistance. When the federal government did intervene it functioned simply as a stopgap to augment the physical capabilities of the community, and to mute the overwhelming harm occasioned by a particular catastrophe. During this period, however, there was great experimentation, with grants of relief that were innovative, substantial and drew upon a wide array of the civilian and military components of the federal government. Some legislative grants continued the practice of extending time for the repayment of bonds; others went so far as offering substitute lands lost during the New Madrid, Missouri earthquake of 1815; fires in the cities of New York, Chicago and Portland, Maine prompted the government to rescind import duties on building supplies and the suspension of taxes; during the grasshopper ravages of 1875, food and clothing was distributed to stricken homesteaders; the hiring of private boats and use of surplus military equipment was tendered during the overflow of the Mississippi river in 1890; and, the San Francisco Earthquake and fire of 1906 prompted the executive to dispatch army troops, placing the city under martial law, distributing supplies, and federalizing fire fighting operations.¹⁵

But the 1930s signaled a new chapter in American history, and within the field of federal disaster relief. As America endured the Great Depression and an up tick in natural disasters, victims of economic and environmental calamity represented an additional challenge to the national government. The federal government actively assumed the welfare of the American people with its century and a half record of disaster legislation used as a basis for the passage of relief programs successfully fusing notions of economic and disaster relief. Since economic and natural disaster victims were deemed equally blameless, they were deemed to be equally deserving of aid.¹⁶

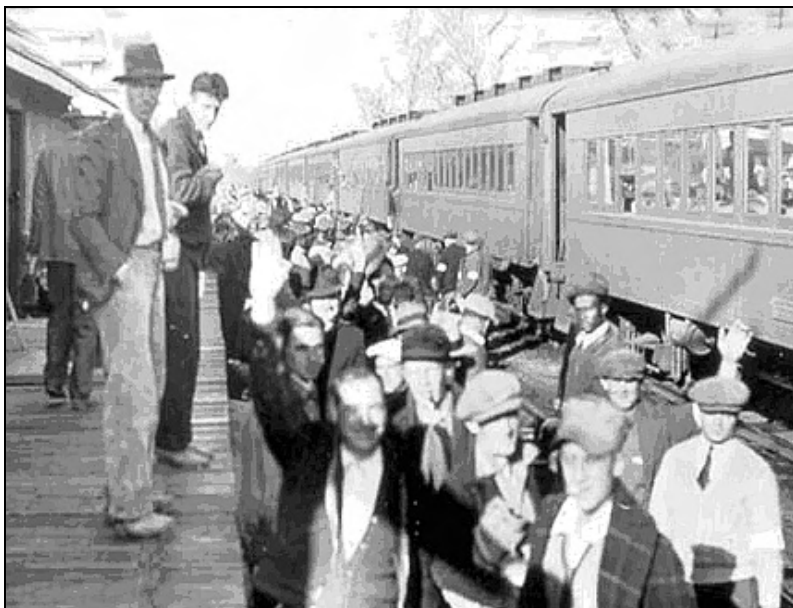
Occupying a unique place in the history of disaster relief in the United States, the federal operations during the Hurricane of '38 in Suffolk County, New York straddled the early days of piecemeal

legislation and modern omnibus disaster relief. The hurricane clean up was a means of putting Long Islanders to work and building up the infrastructure. It was an event which gave rise to a complex web of coordinating agencies and energies modernizing federal disaster relief. It was also a vehicle which demonstrated and encouraged existing social, economic and environmental relief programs at work during the 1930s. Some programs were designed specifically with disaster relief in mind, such as the DLC. Others ably filled the role of disaster relief despite their primary function in public works, the arts, education, and economic relief, such as the Works Projects Administration (WPA), CCC, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), the National Youth Administration (NYA) and Public Works Administration (PWA).

An enduring feature of federal disaster relief has included the activities of the armed forces. Even as disaster relief is primarily a function of civilian control, the organization, manpower, stores and mobility of the armed forces make them well suited to the curious demands of disaster aid and assistance. So it was no surprise then that the first federal disaster relief contingent to appear on the Long Island horizon was in the form of Coast Guard cutters, tenders and rescue craft. The immediate job of rescuing fishermen and those dragged out to sea was all but hopeless so efforts quickly turned to the recovery of bodies; and with many boats cast adrift by receding storm waters, the Coast Guard retrieved numerous trawlers, launches, yachts, sloops and skiffs in the Atlantic Ocean and the island's interior bays. Not only did these efforts remove floating hazards, but assured fishermen and sportsmen a prompt recovery of their property so they could quickly return to work.¹⁷

The efforts of the Coast Guard, however, were not limited to the recovery of bodies and water craft, proving instrumental to the emergency efforts in a variety of functions. With roads and bridges wiped out, Coast Guard ships proved instrumental in the transport of Red Cross and federal relief personnel and supplies to outlying areas. Fire Island, for instance, trapped many residents not able to escape to the mainland ahead of the storm. Coast Guard rescue boats landed along a thirty mile stretch of beach east of the Fire Island Inlet. Red Cross and federal relief personnel would be off loaded to commence recovery efforts with storm victims, in turn, brought aboard, wrapped in blankets, fed and transported to Red Cross and private aid centers on greater Long Island. The easternmost stretches of Easthampton were cut off from the outside world as train lines and major roadways were clogged with debris as well. The Coast Guard came ashore near the fishing village at Fort Pond Bay, Montauk to facilitate the Red Cross in the distribution of food and the provision of shelter and medical services to storm victims. The Coast Guard was also called on to restrain distraught residents from swimming

to their damaged homes putting themselves and others in danger.¹⁸ Not long after the Coast Guard arrived, the first trainload of WPA workers pulled into the Westhampton Beach station.



WPA workers arrive at the Westhampton Beach train station days after the storm. Courtesy of the Suffolk County Historical Society.

The local pool of able bodied men could not fill the emergency needs of Long Island's vast east end on such short notice, so New Deal workers from New York City and upstate New York were mobilized. Combined with the shortage of manpower was the problem of housing the relief workers making their daily transport into the disaster zone a necessity. Each day WPA employees streamed into the area by car, truck, or on a special work train of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) with scheduling coordinated by company representatives and the WPA.¹⁹

On October 7, 1938, Lester W. Herzog, New York State WPA administrator, authorized hiring an additional 380 men of Suffolk's unemployed to supplement the WPA's existing federal disaster relief workforce of 1,300 personnel. So long as the men proved to be physically fit, a wage of \$.50 per hour would be offered. The emergency duties of the almost 2,000 WPA men included the recovery of bodies, collection and disposal of debris, the retrieval of salvageable materials, and the clearing of roads and fire lanes. Federal resources outside the disaster zone were insulated from the destruction and had the advantage of

shifting men and materiel from areas where the capabilities of state and local governments were overwhelmed by the storm proving an effective means of disaster response.²⁰

The WPA played a significant part in the disaster relief efforts, and even though it was not originally designed with disaster relief in mind, it filled the role quite capably. Created in 1935, the mission of the WPA was the “execution of the work relief program, and . . . to move from the relief rolls . . . the maximum number of persons in the shortest time possible.”²¹ As noted by Historian William Bremer, programs such as the WPA were intended as an “antidote for joblessness.”²² The Red Cross noted that “[m]any men who would have been unemployed because of shut-downs of damaged factories, loss of occupational tools and so forth were temporarily employed on these WPA projects.”²³

Beyond the immediate work of recovering bodies and clearing debris, the WPA provided emergency clothing to displaced Long Island residents through local and greater New York State WPA sewing clubs. As the hardest hit county in New York State, Suffolk was singled out for “immediate assistance.”²⁴ In order to meet Long Island’s emergency needs, Anne McIntyre, director of Women’s Professional Projects of the WPA, requisitioned an additional 15,000 yards of flannel, 6,000 yards of percale, and 5,000 yards of pajama check for the Suffolk County Sewing Project. Within days, Suffolk County sewing clubs hurriedly turned the supplied fabric and materials into much needed clothing. Even as most of the garments were locally produced, the WPA sewing program drew on the collective strength of the greater New York WPA organization transferring additional garments from upstate sewing clubs, warehouses, and distribution centers. A request for 2,723 articles of children’s clothing was made from the South Schenectady Warehouse to the Welfare Department of Suffolk County. Additionally, WPA officials coordinated the transfer of over 200 comforters made by the Troy Comforter Project through the New York State Department of Social Welfare.²⁵

Established under the Federal Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935, the NYA was intended to provide relief and gainful employment for young men and women between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five years of age who no longer attended school and were unemployed. After receiving a telegram in the Washington office the day after the storm, New York state NYA officials assigned NYA recruits to aid Long Island’s District Number Four. Approximately 250 youths from Long Island and greater New York State were put on full time status. Project Supervisor of the NYA disaster operations on Long Island, Oskar Frowein, reported that “The full facilities of the [NYA] of Nassau and Suffolk county . . . [were being used] in the work of clearage and rehabilitation.”²⁶ Local NYA recruits came from across Long Island in

the towns and villages of Roslyn, Northport, Huntington, Greenport, Sag Harbor and East Hampton. In addition a special contingent of NYA workers from upstate New York in Albany and Poughkeepsie was shuttled in by a special convoy of trucks to the south shore of Long Island. At Quogue, approximately 80 NYA recruits, under the supervision of village officials, began a program of beautification of the summer resort community. In Montauk, another group of NYA boys cleared up the wreckage of homes and boats to facilitate Red Cross officials in the completion of their program of rehabilitation. On the streets of Sag Harbor, a local group of NYA employees removed 700 fallen trees blocking roadways and sidewalks; and at the Sag Harbor primary and secondary schools workers removed seventy-six fallen trees, stumps, and assorted debris clearing the playground and ball field for school children to once again enjoy. In the town of East Hampton they were assigned to the Town's Superintendent of Highways, William H. Greene, for the general clean up and rehabilitation of town streets and open spaces. Recognizing the success of the NYA program, and the benefit to jobless youths on Long Island, Commissioner Williams of the Suffolk department lobbied for additional federal and county funds to fund a special project. The program included splitting and cutting trees into fire logs to be distributed Long Island's needy for home heating in the coming winter months.²⁷

NYA girls had a hand in the relief efforts as well. They provided food and refreshment to storm victims and relief personnel at the Westhampton Beach Food Canteen. They supported the Red Cross doing statistical and clerical work in the application of grant and loan requests, helping state and local Departments of Welfare answering phones and typing, and sewing garments and bedding. The Mayor of Quogue, Principal of Pierson High School in Sag Harbor and the Principal of the Quogue Public School all praised the efforts of the young boys and girls who answered the call during Long Island's hour of need. Harvey Cooley of the Quogue Public School stated it plainly, "Without [your] help . . . it would take us a year to get back into shape. Your organization has certainly been fine in cooperating with the local authorities in their efforts to get things straightened out."²⁸

Some of the letters also raised an interesting facet of the disaster relief work in Suffolk County on the training of NYA recruits. The NYA was organized to teach young men and women a marketable skill. Be it a speech, typing, woodworking class or program on forestry, the types of activities that were needed during the hurricane were honed through repeated use under real world conditions. While recruits were supervised by elders from their own ranks, the WPA, Red Cross and local authorities, they would be tasked with a specific job and expected to carry

it out on their own. Additionally, the value of teamwork and problem solving skills were all exercised during the relief operations. Mr. Cooley explained “The boys themselves are good workers. They are learning how to handle tools and how to work together effectively . . . They were interested in learning to do all sorts of things from trimming trees to using a crosscut saw effectively.”²⁹

Together with WPA personnel, NYA recruits also distributed supplies provided by the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation (FSSC) in state and federal vehicles over roads that were cleared by the CCC. Formed in 1933 under the direction of the Secretary of Agriculture, the FSSC was empowered to purchase surplus agricultural products in the hopes of raising farm prices through government induced scarcity. In a subsidiary role, the FSSC functioned as a storehouse of necessary foodstuffs to be donated to families in times of need. This particular quality of the organization made them instrumental in the event of a disaster, and prior to the Hurricane of '38 the FSSC supplied agricultural products to victims of the Florida Labor Day Hurricane of 1935, the New England Floods of 1936, and the Mississippi Valley floods of 1937. So when the call came into the New York State office of the FSSC about the need for emergency agricultural goods on Long Island, the organization was ready to act. Commissioner Williams of the New York State Area office oversaw the operation of twelve agricultural distribution centers, one warehouse at Yaphank, Suffolk County, and a storage facility located in Nassau County. By Monday the 27th of September, the FSSC prepared to distribute 48,000 cans of dried milk and 14,400 cans of peas with an additional 10,000 pounds of rice, 12,500 pounds of prunes, 12,500 pounds of raisins, and 18,000 pounds of dried milk at the ready. Transport was coordinated with local Welfare departments, the WPA and federal personnel assigned to the FSSC agricultural distribution program. To insure an adequate supply of food in the Long Island area, a special freight train was shipped to Suffolk County from outside of New York State with one rail car each of dried peaches, prune plums, butter, carrots, beets, oranges, canned grapefruit juice, and wheat cereal. The FSSC also transported shoes and clothing from the State Department of Social Welfare Warehouse to Suffolk County residents. The fishing village at Fort Pond Bay, Montauk, in particular, benefited from the donated food and supplies of the FSSC well into October.³⁰

To aid local farmers due to market disruptions caused by the storm, the FSSC and Farm Security Administration (FSA) purchased several hundred box cars of Long Island cauliflower, potatoes and other assorted agricultural products. While the impact of the storm on local agricultural producers was mixed, large numbers of crops were bruised, rotten or felled. The affected vegetables were still edible, but in their condition not

marketable. In order to relieve the strain on the Long Island agricultural industry, bulk farm purchases were made.³¹

Beyond manpower and enhanced organizational capabilities, the New Deal made available loans, grants and rebuilding packages to Long Island residents hit by the storm. While economic support in the form of bond, duty and tax deferments had long been a feature of federal disaster relief, New Deal programs took it a step further. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), for example, extended loans to corporations for the repair of buildings damaged as a result of fire, earthquake, tornado, or flood throughout most of the 1930s. The DLC, established one year prior to the Hurricane of '38, was "empowered to make loans to individuals or corporations" due to the 1937 floods in the Ohio-Mississippi Valley.³² While it was never envisioned to be anything more than a temporary measure for the 1937 floods, with the Hurricane of '38, tornadoes in the southeast, and additional floods in the Midwest later that same year, the DLC turned into something more permanent. It suddenly found itself flush with funds from its parent corporation, the RFC, to be disbursed to individuals, municipalities, and a host of other organizations affected by the storm.³³

DLC aid was available to those who could demonstrate a substantial loss, possessed sufficient equity, and gave reasonable assurances of repayment. Those not capable of securing DLC loans were directed to the Red Cross for grants, FSA and Homeowner's Loan Corporation (HOLC) for loans or local charities. RFC and DLC offices for Long Island residents were opened up in East Hampton and Quogue. These disaster relief "annexes" in turn submitted reports, applications and loan recommendations to newly established regional offices. The regional DLC office was set up in the New York Loan Agency of the RFC in Manhattan effective September 24 1938. The recommendations of Disaster Loan committees, made up of leading businessmen, financial leaders and prominent citizens from Long Island's own communities, carried great weight in the loan process. Their loan recommendations were often the final say in a loan determination and monies were not doled out wholesale.³⁴

DLC loans to individuals generally preceded any application for FHA loans or Red Cross grants. But quite often the aid process began in the office where the applicant first arrived. Individuals could either set up an appointment or just show up at the East Hampton or Montauk office and have a consultation with a DLC agent. After answering a few preliminary questions about their loss, needs and financial status, the necessary paperwork would be filed. If approved the loan would be repayable at 3 percent over a period from one to ten years. Generally loans were granted for clothing, household goods, business equipment,

and the repair or construction of buildings. Farmers and fishermen could also apply for farming and fishing equipment, livestock, outbuildings, boats, tackle, and other materials necessary for an ongoing concern.³⁵

DLC loans are also noteworthy acting as a barometer of the social and economic habits of Long Island life. Who applied for and received loans was largely a measure of the importance of the particular endeavor to Long Island society. Given the stability of churches and their considerable real estate holdings, they were deemed to be a sound guarantor of DLC loans. While DLC ledgers contain only a few churches in their records, this might owe to ignorance of the DLC program, the thrift and independence of area churches, and the prosperity and fund raising abilities of individual parishes. The roof of St. Mary's Episcopal Church on Shelter Island was severely damaged by winds and fallen trees. They applied for and were granted a \$200 loan for the repair of the church roof on October 25, 1938. The Community Baptist Church on Plant St., Southampton was extensively damaged. On January 10, 1939 they applied for and were awarded a \$3,000 loan executed by the Board of Trustees with a security lien on the Church's land and out buildings.³⁶

Individual loans to fishermen and farmers reveal the importance of the agricultural and fishing industries on Long Island. While these programs tended to favor larger and more prosperous endeavors, this was mitigated by the presence of Red Cross grants and WPA aid and assistance providing a blanket of disaster relief coverage. The damage to the fishing village at Fort Pond Bay, Montauk drew many fishermen from the area to apply for DLC loans. Russell E. Terry of Montauk applied for and received a loan in the amount of \$3,500 on October 21, 1938 to repair and replace those portions of his fishing business damaged by the storm. Collateral was in the form of two homes, a fishing boat, tackle, household furnishings and work equipment. Joseph Hill Clark, another fisherman from Montauk Point, was granted a \$1,000 loan on November 12, 1938 with a lien placed on his fishing and marine equipment. Poultry farms were big business on Long Island as well with a number of duck farms on the south shore in need of financial assistance. Their substantial real estate holdings and positive cash flow made them perfect candidates for DLC loans. John A. Aiden of East Moriches, located in the zone of greatest damage next to Westhampton Beach, applied for and obtained a loan in the amount of \$3,000 for the repair of his land and out buildings. Security on the loan came in the form of a lien on the 4-1/2 acres of land on which the duck farm was located and attached structures. Lewis A. Hallock of Speonk, was granted a loan in the amount of \$30,000 for the repair of his duck ranch on September 30, 1938.³⁷

While individual applications account for a greater percentage of raw loans, a preliminary census of DLC loans indicates that businesses

accounted for a higher share of total outlays. With portions of the island reliant on the tourist trade many hotels, cottages and resorts applied for DLC assistance. Harold R. Lockwood and Louis V. Treacy, representing the partnership of Sunrise Fishing Cabins in Montauk, needed a loan to get their modest retreat in order for next year's fishing and vacation season. A loan for the venture was approved in the amount of \$4,000 with a lien on the office buildings and cabins, furniture, fixtures and equipment. Bridget T. Morris of the Seaview House in Sag Harbor applied for and received a loan in the amount of \$700 on October 13th, 1938. Collateral was in the form of the buildings and land on Brick Kiln Road in Sag Harbor Interest amounted to 3 percent of principal with payments commencing on July 15, 1939. The terms of the loan specify that the monies are to be used for the reconstruction, repair and rehabilitation of the named property. Richard F. Culver of Westhampton Beach applied for and received a loan in the amount of \$27,000 on November 9, 1938 for the repair of the Apaucuck Hotel. Emma T. Hallock of Quogue, located next to Westhampton Beach a receiving the brunt of the storm as well, was granted a loan in the amount of \$5,000 on March 9, 1939 for the repair of the Quogue House and its 679 feet of ocean frontage.³⁸

The shipbuilding, marine supply and shell fishing industries were also important to Long Island and well represented in DLC loan applications. The Greenport Shipyards received a loan in the amount of \$10,000 on October 20, 1938 with a lien placed on the company's outbuildings. The Montauk Fish and Supply Company was granted a \$4,000 loan on October 17, 1938 for the repair of company property and buildings with security coming from the same. The Long Island Fish Company of West Sayville received a \$10,000 loan on February 10, 1939 for the rehabilitation of the company's infrastructure with a lien placed on three fish traps, one lighter equipped with two motors, a one pound boat and motor, and two small boats and stationary engines. The DLC granted 1,559 loans to individuals and corporations in the New York-New England region amounting to \$2.8 million dollars.³⁹

Another option available to residential property owners was Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loans. The FHA was initially created under the National Housing Act of 1934 to improve housing standards and insure private mortgage loans on property thereby protecting owners from loss. Within days after the storm struck, New York. State FHA director Thomas G. Grace sent an emergency letter to authorized FHA lending banks urging the availability of funds to those affected by the disaster to cover "rehabilitations, rebuilding and replacement of improvements on such real property . . . damaged or destroyed" by the hurricane.⁴⁰

Although such loans were a sound alternative for the repair of private properties damaged by the storm, they proved an especially attractive selling point to be used for the beautification of Long Island's residential properties, and Suffolk County banks, building supply companies, and contractors highlighted this in advertisements. In the weeks and months after the storm, Suffolk newspapers ran booming headlines about the availability of loans and building materials, the necessity of renovating one's home and the positive impact on the community that would result. A sponsor of FHA loans, the Osborne Trust Company of East Hampton, arranged a display of a model village, touting the benefits to the rental and real estate markets and the generally enhanced appearance of the village that would result from FHA funded improvements. The paper editorialized their efforts intoning residents to "dress up their homes [and] have roofs repaired, garages repaired or rebuilt, painting done as well as new building."⁴¹ The Southampton Lumber Company promised to handle "all details" in obtaining FHA loans for applicants, supplying building materials, and repairing storm damage. They also promised "no red tape," offering liberal terms payable in convenient monthly installments.⁴² The Fleet Lumber Company of Greenport ran a similar ad informing home owners who could not afford to renovate their properties that "perhaps [they could] afford . . . an FHA Insured Loan."⁴³ Prospective customers were assured that the "FHA Plan" would "take care of the cost of labor and materials" with reasonable financing terms, costs and repayment schedules.⁴⁴ A full page add in the *County Review*, that read more like a public service announcement for the FHA, had advertisements for bank loans, roof repair, lumber supply and tree experts. Through the creative use of marketing, the Oysterman's Bank and Trust Company of Sayville urged homeowners to apply for FHA not only for the repair of damaged buildings but to patronize "local lumber yards and stores [and] also to employ local mechanics."⁴⁵ Repair and renovation efforts fueled by FHA loans had an impact on Long Island's tourism and real estate industry, increasing sales, rentals and construction permits in 1939 and 1940.⁴⁶

With the completion of emergency operations, the majority of federal agencies and the Red Cross departed in the winter of 1938-9, leaving state, local and individual interests to finish the majority of long term repair and rehabilitation projects on their own. Some tasks, however, were so extensive as to require a more sustained effort that only federal government supplied labor and funds could provide. The widespread damage to Long Island's trees and presence of storm wreckage presented a severe fire hazard, and by the start of 1939 only 30 percent of the fire abatement work had been completed in Suffolk County. Due to the expiration of a federal exemption allowing the employment of non-relief personnel on January 1, 1939, hundreds of Long Island WPA relief

workers lost their jobs and Long Island an able cadre of hurricane relief workers. The U.S. Forest Service, who sponsored the WPA program, hastily arranged for the CCC to continue the fire hazard reduction work in the spring of 1939 before the threat of fire became acute.⁴⁷

Like the NYA and WPA, the CCC was not created with disaster relief in mind but due to their existing programs of conservation, forest maintenance and resource management they were uniquely suited to perform duties involved in hurricane clean up, such as clearing roads, opening fire lanes, removing flammable material, and salvaging timber. The CCC was originally established by Congress under the Emergency Conservation Work Act of 1933, after President Roosevelt proposed a plan to both “check the heedless waste of our natural resources, and . . . idle manpower” caused by the depression.⁴⁸ The CCC provided gainful employment and vocational training to young men aged 17 to 23 years old spanning the United States, its territories and possessions throughout the 1930s.⁴⁹

The CCC first conducted conservation work in Suffolk County from 1934 to early 1938 at Camps P-99 in Huntington Station, 4 and S-89 in Yaphank, and S-75 in Bridgehampton. They performed a variety of activities related to conservation, maintenance and recreation such as project 274 which included the construction and safeguarding of truck trails and fire lanes, the development of a quail preserve, the preservation of a game farm, the planting and seeding of trees, and gypsy and pine shoot moth control. With the conclusion of project goals in the mid-1930s, CCC manpower and resources were shifted to other areas of the country. So when the hurricane struck, there were no active camps on Long Island; and had it not been for the expiration of the WPA non-relief worker program they probably would not have been needed.⁵⁰

Vast stretches of the Pine Barrens running through central Long Island, back roadways, and the shoreline needed to be clear of potential fire hazards. In the early spring of 1939, men and equipment from Camp P-109, Valley Gun Pond, Westchester County were transferred to Long Island to commence the fire reduction campaign that included clearing downed timber, repairing fire lanes, and replenishing forest stand loss. They were sent to a hastily arranged tent camp at Sag Harbor. Later that year, an additional 188 men attached to Company 3215 from Indian Lake in the Adirondacks was sent to a multi-purpose federal facility in Fort Upton, Yaphank. Early each morning, CCC road crews spread out across Long Island’s woods and thoroughfares clearing fire lanes, removing downed trees and thinning out the tangle of clogged ground cover. CCC fire abatement efforts developed parallel to local relief activities and eased the burden placed on state, village and individual resources. Moreover, they handled most of the stubborn jobs that local and state

resources could not or would not perform. Shelter Island, particularly, presented a logistics and fire hazard nightmare for Suffolk County and the CCC. Situated neatly between the island's interior forks, Shelter Island comprises over 8,000 acres of dense woodland and was home to some 200 year round families at the time of the storm. While they were a hardy lot of old salts, sea captains and farmers, the clean up of the island was too great a job to be handled locally. The problem was made more severe because Shelter Island was without a bridge connecting it to the mainland. Beginning in early summer of 1939, the CCC sent fifty men and two trucks from the Sag Harbor tent camp daily to Shelter Island via the Shelter Island-North Haven Ferry which was contracted to ferry CCC workers back and forth for the duration of the project. Their primary job was to clear state and town roadways of fifty foot high piles of brush and wreckage. Private property would be cleaned up as well providing owners filed the necessary paperwork with the CCC and Conservation Department permitting workers access to their lands. Before 1939 was out, the majority of fire abatement work was completed, the threat of fire minimized, and roads and fire lanes were cleared.⁵¹

The federal relief efforts are also noteworthy exhibiting synergy between locals and CCC recruits in varied social interactions. The plight of sick Jane Frankemolle, for instance, is instructive. While vacationing with her family, young Jane wandered off into the woods prompting an effort by local authorities to locate her. After failing to find her in the woods around Sag Harbor, village police contacted the CCC camp nearby appealing for help. A fifty member strong detail spread out across the area successfully finding Jane and returning the girl safely to her parents. The local press praised the CCC boys and the cooperation between local authorities. Doctors, ministers, and town officials were also frequent guests of the CCC camp, regularly stopping by to check on the progress of disaster relief work, and the physical and religious health of the young men. Incidents and activities such as these prompted locals to actively embrace the newcomers and include them in community activities. A Visitor's Day was held at the Sag Harbor Camp on May 21, 1939 with tours offered to citizens of nearby communities. In the summer and fall of 1939, local basketball and baseball leagues included WPA and CCC teams in their 1939 leagues with newspapers carrying the details of the events and the pluck and gamesmanship of the New Deal boys.⁵²

The WPA and Public Works Administration (PWA), under the direction of administrator Harold Ickes, were instructed soon after the storm "to act in the fullest extent by law to aid communities in filing applications for reconstruction."⁵³ Long Island towns and the County of Suffolk applied for no fewer than eighteen grants and loans for hurricane repair and renovation totaling over \$6 million dollars. Though some of

the monies were for projects unrelated to the storm, such as hospital, school and incinerator construction, others were motivated by a genuine interest in improving local infrastructures. Clearly, the after effects of the storm and availability of federal monies encouraged some local governments to reconsider their collective priorities in areas of vulnerability, applying for federal monies for mitigation projects in the construction and repair of storm drains, sewers and sidewalks. These projects, coupled with grants for the repair of areas plainly damaged by the storm, such as harbor improvement and bridge construction, made for a busy federal relief environment well into 1939. The construction of beach breakwaters around the newly created Shinnecock Inlet, for example, received much attention. Of all the inlets created after the hurricane, Long Islanders wanted Shinnecock to stay open. This required a coordinated effort to stabilize the inlet, but Suffolk County did not have the money or manpower necessary to accomplish the task on its own. In the weeks after the hurricane, the county and WPA workers were having a rough go of closing Quantuck and Potunk inlets. After months of dumping sand, storm debris, cars, parts of demolished homes, and timber into the breaches, the inlets were closed; but Shinnecock required a more sustained -- and expensive -- effort.⁵⁴



WPA project to replenish the banks of the Shinnecock Inlet. Note scale of thirty foot piles used in the project with ten foot lengths exposed 1939. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, MARYLAND

The immediate job of replenishing sand on the banks of the inlet was undertaken by the Suffolk County Highway Department and WPA with monies coming from a federal grant and county bond issue. County Highway Department Superintendent Harry T. Tuthill oversaw the

operation of county and WPA workers in the construction of barrier fences and pile cribs on the banks of the inlet.⁵⁵

A preliminary assessment of the work in May of 1939 declared the pilings were “holding” and the inlet was becoming deeper; but local interests were nonetheless worried about the possibility of the inlet closing up again as it did in the past. Early in May of 1939, the Suffolk Association sponsored a meeting at the Canoe Place Inn to discuss Shinnecock Inlet. Business leaders, property owners, and the Hampton Bays Boatmen’s Association were encouraged by the support of Rep. Leonard Hall and argued that federal monies were necessary to keep the inlet open. In making their case, they cited no less than thirteen reasons, including the prevention of erosion, providing a safe and navigable waterway, reviving the fishing industry in Shinnecock Bay, attracting fishing and sporting industries to Long Island, providing a harbor suitable for naval operations, and, perhaps most important, enhancing the recently started, federally funded Shinnecock canal waterway project. Federal monies were eventually contributed for the stabilization of the inlet, but its maintenance is an issue that Suffolk County continues to grapple with to this day.⁵⁶

With the conclusion of disaster aid and reconstruction goals, and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, New Deal relief efforts shifted towards the preparation for war. The efforts of the federal government during the Hurricane of ’38, however, stand as a vital link in the evolution of federal disaster aid and assistance. The disaster relief programs, policies and personnel of the New Deal, specifically, signaled a revolution in disaster aid and assistance heralding the Federal Disaster Relief Act of 1950 and the creation of FEMA in 1979.

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THE OPENING OF SUFFOLK'S FIRST FOUR YEAR COLLEGE: ADELPHI-SUFFOLK :1959-1960

Leroy E. Douglas

Leroy Douglas completes his historical trilogy on the birth of Adelphi-Suffolk College in Sayville in 1960.

Adelphi College-Garden City tried, but failed, to establish a full-time, four-year liberal arts college in Suffolk County in Stony Brook-Setauket, and in Southampton between 1956 and 1958, but did successfully offer popular extension courses in the state hospitals in Brentwood, Central Islip and Kings Park in 1953 and 1954, and in public schools in Port Jefferson, Riverhead, Patchogue and Sayville from 1955 until 1959.¹

Adelphi's prospects for establishing a full-time, four year liberal arts college in Sayville received a tremendous boost on April 1, 1959. In that year it's Board of Trustees "junked plans" to establish a liberal arts college in Southampton because a local citizens committee failed to raise the nearly one million dollars necessary to purchase Mrs. Hugh Chisholm's "Montrose" estate on Bullhead Bay in Southampton and develop it into a suitable college campus. Dr. Paul Dawson Eddy, Adelphi's President, complained that Adelphi "had not heard from the Southampton group for months and could not finance the project itself," as the college "was now engaged in a two-million dollar development program in Nassau." Dr. Eddy revealed that Adelphi was concentrating on a new plan to establish a permanent, two year branch college somewhere in Sayville by 1965 and announced that "the Sayville branch would open in September 1960 to admit a freshman class at temporary quarters at the Sayville school district's Old '88 school." One or two science laboratories were to be installed in Old'88. Dr. Eddy predicted that Adelphi would hold classes in Old '88 "for five years" while the college found a suitable permanent campus "with the necessary physical plant in western Suffolk County."²

Adelphi's proposed new Suffolk branch was designed to "offer a basic general education program," which would allow students to transfer to senior colleges, with no plans for vocational or professional programs. Thus, from the very beginning, Adelphi-Suffolk's mission (and that of Dowling College after 1968), was to be a humane, sensitive "personal college." Adelphi-Suffolk students were not to be rushed, or unduly pressured, but were to receive caring, individual attention from teachers, administrators and staff at the college. This mission was perfectly suited for the needs of most potential students who were,

typically, the first in their families to attend college. The seminal Adelphi memo "*A Proposal for an Adelphi Branch College at Sayville,*" written by Dr. Agnes Snyder, who came out of retirement at the behest of President Eddy in 1957 to serve as Director of Curriculum Development and Coordinator of Adelphi's Suffolk County extension center, compassionately articulated the pioneering school's mission:

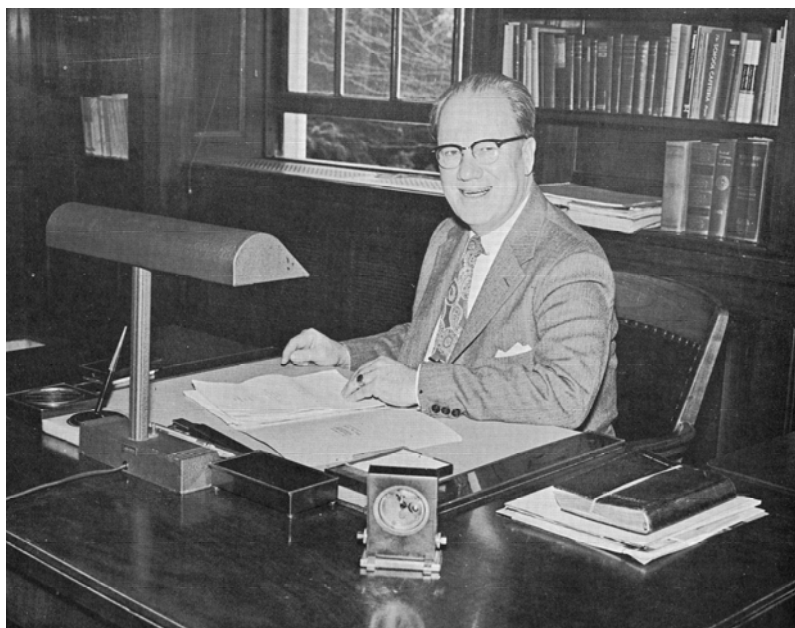
While, in general, completion of the work will take two calendar years, this time limit is not definitely set. Human development proceeds at too variable a rate for one to be definitive as to the exact time any individual will need to accomplish a goal. Some may take more, some less than two years . . . There is, however, one common denominator which invariably exists in all human learning. All people learn best when confronted by problems of vital concern to themselves. Whether the problems are solved intelligently or not is largely a matter of the quality of education one has had . . . It is the supreme function of education to help people solve the problems which they inevitably meet in the process of living.³

Adelphi was realistic and cautious in selecting the original Adelphi-Suffolk branch students. Prior experience had shown college administrators that two dangers could be anticipated. On one hand, the novelty of new college programs tend to attract "rebels" and dissatisfied young persons. On the other hand, they have an appeal for students whose academic standing does not qualify them ordinarily for college admission. In contrast to these two groups, one can expect to find a group of intelligent young people from backgrounds which permit them to see the real worth of the program and consequently to desire admission primarily for that reason." Dr. Snyder believed "skilled interviewers will be needed in order to make the selection a wise one." Adelphi Suffolk, she said, had "no ambition to secure the unusually brilliant student. Certainly, some are desirable, but in the conviction that good average students can profit by a college education, we expect to secure the bulk of the students from this group. Other qualities are to be sought. These are qualities of character and intellectual curiosity."⁴

Adelphi Suffolk's founders realized that if their mission was to be accomplished, "the faculty will need to be chosen with great care. They must, of course, represent a high degree of scholarship, but in addition,

they need to be devoted to teaching and to the interest of young people and possess an experimental approach to education . . . The faculty must be free to be with students and be free to be with each other as well as have time for the preparation of the kind of teaching that does not simply follow a text book or subject matter outline.”⁵⁵

Adelphi Suffolk College, therefore, would be “a new branch of a firmly rooted existing institution, nourished by the same principles,” which had been evolving at Adelphi-Garden City in general education and in Adelphi’s innovative New Teacher Education Program for ten years. In sum, The Adelphi Suffolk branch college would “put forth new growth in new directions.”⁵⁶



Adelphi College President Paul Dawson Eddy -- in his office on the Garden City campus during the 1956 school year. Courtesy of Adelphi University Archives.

Adelphi Plans for a Liberal Arts Day College in Sayville

In May 1959 when college officials announced that twenty-five prospective students were being selected to take a full program of college subjects in the late afternoons and evenings in the Sayville Junior High School during the 1959-60 school year. Dr. Eddy agreed to spend \$20,000 renovating Old ‘88 to enable 500 full-time Adelphi-Suffolk College students to begin day classes in the building in

September 1960. Dr. Eddy declared that he was accelerating plans for a junior college in Sayville because of procrastination by the Suffolk County Board of Supervisors in establishing a community college for Suffolk. Eddy acknowledged that unfortunate delays by Adelphi and Suffolk's supervisors meant that "only a handful of 1959 graduates of Suffolk can be expected to enroll as freshmen this fall, but by September 1960 Adelphi-Sayville expects a large first year class." Dr. Snyder, now Adelphi-Suffolk's Director, began interviewing interested students in her office in the Sayville Junior High School in June 1959.⁷

Leon (Jake) Swirbul, the legendary president of the prestigious Grumman Aircraft Company in Bethpage, organized a dinner for the thirty member Adelphi Suffolk Citizens Advisory Committee at the Riverside Inn in Smithtown to discuss the long term future of Adelphi in the Sayville-Oakdale area. Dr. Eddy was negotiating with the Sayville School District for a five-year lease on Old '88, and was still investigating sites for a permanent campus in or near Sayville. Swirbul's committee was "expected to explore ways and means of obtaining financial support for the long term program." It was anticipated that most of the charter members of Adelphi Suffolk College Board of Trustees would be selected from the Citizens Advisory Committee.⁸ Artemus L. Ward, the Chairman of the Adelphi College Finance Committee told the diners "It is understood that Adelphi-Suffolk College will become self-supporting through income from student tuition, gifts from individuals and corporations and scholarships provided by local organizations." Dr. Eddy said he believed "Suffolk County has the need, interest and resources to establish the Adelphi-Suffolk College." Eddy predicted Adelphi-Suffolk would enroll a "freshman class of 100 students in the regular day session in September 1960," and would enroll at least 100 students "each fall thereafter." He was convinced that Adelphi-Suffolk could "expand into a four-year undergraduate liberal arts college offering programs in a regular day session if the need and support for such an institution was demonstrated."⁹

Adelphi Suffolk College's Original Administrators

In June 1959 Adelphi filled three administrative posts at Adelphi-Suffolk. Dr. William R. Palmer, professor of English, and Director of the Division of General Studies at Springfield College in Springfield, Mass., who had graduated from Muhlenberg College and Columbia University, was appointed dean of Adelphi-Suffolk College as of September 1st. Irl Flanagan, a graduate of Hofstra College and Columbia University, who had done recruitment and public relations work for Adelphi for many years, was named college field

representative for Adelphi-Suffolk. The Rev. Robert K. Thomas, who had served in the ministry for twelve years, and who had graduated from Dartmouth and New York University, was appointed Director of Student Personnel.¹⁰

More details were revealed about the twenty-five students who were being selected to participate in the 1959 freshman pilot class starting the evening of September 28, 1959. The new freshmen were to comprise a class in American Studies for “qualified high school graduates who wish to continue their higher education while employed in the area.” Adelphi provided \$12,000 for twenty-five half tuition scholarships (\$480 each) for the students. The twenty-five 1959 freshmen would have the opportunity to earn associate degrees in the arts, or the Bachelor of Arts degree.¹¹

As in the Port Jefferson area, Adelphi had strong local newspaper support in the Sayville area. Joseph C. Jahn, the editor of the *Suffolk County News*, wrote that Sayville “welcomes Suffolk’s first institution of higher learning with open arms.” Jahn sounded a cautionary note, however, when he wrote “It behooves local residents to keep aware of the fact that we may lose the college to some other community by 1964 unless permanent quarters are found in this immediate vicinity.” Jahn concluded, “Sayville cannot help but be a better community with the educational and cultural activities that center about a collegiate campus. We intend to keep Adelphi here, come heaven or low tide.”¹²

Sayville area residents acted quickly to support Adelphi Suffolk College by organizing an Adelphi Library Founders Fund. Samuel K. Munson lead the drive to provide at least 1,000 reference books for the Adelphi-Suffolk library by September 1960. Munson, a former Sayville Schools superintendent, called upon the community “to help stack the shelves to give concrete proof of our civic pride and concern for our youth.” The Founders Fund vowed that each five dollar gift would provide one reference work for the library and promised that each volume would be “suitably inscribed with the name of the donor.”¹³

Tragedy struck Adelphi Suffolk College in mid-August 1959, when Dr. William R. Palmer, the 39-year-old professor of Literature and History, who was to have embarked on his duties as the dean of the college on September 1, 1959, died unexpectedly after surgery in the Springfield (Mass.) Hospital. Dr. Eddy expressed the sense of loss felt by the entire Adelphi College community when he wrote the staff “We have been deeply shocked by the sudden and untimely death of Dr. William Palmer. We had high hopes and great expectations for the branch college in Suffolk County under his leadership.”¹⁴

President Eddy took over the day-to-day development of Adelphi Suffolk College after Dr Palmer’s untimely passing. He said “pending

the selection and appointment of a new Dean of the Sayville Branch College” he would, as Acting Dean of Adelphi-Suffolk College, “perform the general coordinating functions (which had been) assigned to the Dean of the Branch College.” While Dr. Eddy was directing the September 28th opening of evening classes at Adelphi-Suffolk, he was also organizing Adelphi-Suffolk’s “formal opening and Convocation” in Sayville in late October 1959. Eddy maintained that the “Opening Convocation” of the first liberal arts college in Suffolk County must “have the most influential leader-speaker available.” Adelphi anticipated approximately 500 graduate and undergraduate evening students studying in Sayville in the fall of 1959. “The proposed new freshman group,” Dr. Eddy disclosed, (the twenty-five half-scholarship students in the American Studies program) “will be a separate or special section, as far as numbers permit and qualified faculty personnel may be available. The future of Adelphi College in Suffolk County is promising and challenging. I am confident that a significant educational institution will emerge through the cooperative effort of the administrative officers and interested faculty members.”¹⁵

In mid-August 1959 Adelphi hired a Director of Development, a Registrar and a Librarian for the new Adelphi-Suffolk College. Martin Auerbach, a real estate attorney, and a graduate of the City College of New York and the Brooklyn Law School, was selected as Adelphi Suffolk’s first Director of Development. As Development Director, Auerbach served as business manager and coordinator of public relations. Mrs. Margaret Polsten was hired as the initial Registrar, and Ms. Martha Schmidt was employed as Librarian. Ms Schmidt was a graduate of the University of Michigan and had been Chief Librarian for Radio Free Europe in Germany for seven years where she was “responsible for the development and day-to-day administration of a multi-lingual library of 25,000 volumes and 1,200 periodical titles.” Ms. Schmidt was assisted in the library by Mrs. William McMullen.¹⁶

Old '88 Renovated for College Classes

Skilled craftsmen worked feverishly over the summer as Adelphi spent over \$50,000 preparing Old '88 for afternoon and evening classes in September 1959. All the furniture and furnishings were removed from the building. The school’s wiring, plumbing and heating system were updated to meet modern safety standards. The entire building was repainted, giving it a “complete interior face lifting.” In sum, Old '88 was converted into a “safe and practical college.” All new furnishing was provided, and the former ground floor gymnasium was refitted as the college library. Adelphi Suffolk’s administrative offices were located on the first floor across from the library. A faculty-student

lounge was constructed in the rear first floor room in what had previously been a home economics room. A cafeteria and bookstore also occupied the rear of the first floor. The second floor had fourteen classrooms and two science labs. College officials considered the renovated classrooms “large, comfortable and well-lighted” and judged Old ‘88’s “location near the village, the bus line and the railroad station ideal.”¹⁷

Just before Adelphi Suffolk’s freshman American Studies program started in the afternoon and evenings on September 29, 1959, the names of the first three winners of the \$480 half-tuition scholarships were announced by Richard F. Clemo, the Director of the Division of General Studies. Kathryn Kelleher of Centereach planned to major “in either psychology or drama.” Bruce Van Duynes of Bayport was employed as a teller at the People’s Bank in Patchogue, and aspired “to become a high school history instructor.” Alfred La Porte of Oakdale desired “to work toward a degree in business administration.” College officials hoped that the 1959 scholarship winners would serve as sophomore leaders in the fall of 1960 when Adelphi Suffolk College would become a full-time day college with at least 100 freshmen studying in Old ‘88.¹⁸

Five-hundred part-time graduate and undergraduate students registered for evening classes at Adelphi-Suffolk College in Sayville on September 28, 1959. Robert Thomas told the *Suffolk County News* that prospective students stood in line for ninety minutes waiting to register. Upwards of 300 part-time evening students were taking undergraduate work, and 184 post-graduates signed up for courses. Tuition at Adelphi-Suffolk was \$32 per credit.¹⁹

Adelphi failed to attract the twenty-five full-time evening American Studies students, but 17 students did participate in Adelphi-Suffolk’s late afternoon and evening program in Sayville in the fall of 1959. Adelphi also offered teacher education courses in Riverhead High School that fall.²⁰ The first classroom lecture Adelphi Suffolk’s original full-time students attended was given by speech instructor, Arnold Rood. Mr. Rood, an authority in theatre history, held degrees from Queens College and Teachers College, Columbia University. Academic Program Director Dr. Snyder created a set of classes for the seventeen freshmen designed to provide “a new pattern of higher education.” The curriculum included: English, Speech, Psychology, Sociology and Mathematics. The full-time students were required to meet in a seminar with Dr. Snyder once a week “to coordinate the ideas of all their courses and thus gain a more meaningful picture of their total education.”²¹

About two weeks into the fall semester, classes at Adelphi-Suffolk were disrupted briefly when an arsonist tried to burn down Old '88. Fire inspectors from the Sayville Fire Department determined that the arsonist had broken into the school through a rear door, ignited the school's five oil burners by raising the thermostats to 85 degrees, cut the copper overflow pipes, piled wood scraps, rags and scrap paper on the pool of oil which had collected on the basement floor, hoping that sparks from the thermostats would ignite the oil. Two basement doors had been opened to create a draft to spread the fire. Only small flames erupted in the basement, but huge clouds of thick smoke filled the building. Assistant librarian, Mrs. William McMullen, reported the fire to authorities when she arrived for work at 9:15 a.m. Sayville fire fighters quickly extinguished the small fire using dry chemicals and vented the building. College administrators acted swiftly to have Old '88 cleaned so Adelphi-Suffolk's twenty-nine afternoon and evening classes were able to resume the next day. Fire officials estimated the smoke damage at between \$10,000 and \$25,000 and Islip Town police "stationed a round-the-clock guard to insure against a possible return by the firebug."²²

The development of an adequate college library was one of Adelphi-Suffolk's highest priorities as the branch college evolved from an extension center to a full-service college. The small library in Old '88 in 1959 could only seat forty students due to a shortage of furniture. Martha Schmidt, the librarian, was hopeful that the seating capacity could facilitate up to seventy-five students as additional furniture was purchased. The inadequate space in Old '88 for a really suitable college library was one of the main reasons college officials were searching for a larger campus in the Sayville-Oakdale area. By October 1959, the Adelphi-Suffolk library had accumulated about 2,000 volumes. Ms. Schmidt estimated that the library would need at least 20,000 volumes by 1964 to meet the college requirements of the State Education Department. The library had a reference section, a reserve section and an open shelf area from which books could be taken home. The library subscribed to sixty-four newspapers and periodicals and featured a collection of recordings for the use of instructors and students who deal with languages, literature, drama and music. Adelphi-Suffolk students could also use the Sayville Public Library, which held over 30,000 volumes, and the Adelphi-Garden City Library, which held over 100,000 volumes. The Adelphi-Suffolk Library Founders Fund had raised \$2,500 for 500 books by November 1959.²³



Arnold Rood, Instructor in Speech, one of Adelphi Suffolk College's original teachers (far left), Dr. Robert K. Thomas, Dean of Students at Adelphi Suffolk College, advising the school's initial Student Council members in 1960. Courtesy of Adelphi University Archives.

Adelphi Suffolk Tries to Share Old '88

Adelphi College-Garden City did not decide to make Adelphi Suffolk College a four-year liberal arts institution until December of 1959. Adelphi-Suffolk's future was confused, however, since its development became intertwined in the press with the simultaneous creation of the Suffolk County Community College. The Republican-dominated 10-member Suffolk County Board of Supervisors was under heavy pressure from H. Lee Dennison, a Democrat, in October 1959 to press forward rapidly with the development of Suffolk County Community College, as the number of high school graduates was sky-rocketing in Suffolk. Dennison was campaigning in Suffolk's first County Executive race and was vocally advocating the immediate creation of a Suffolk County Community College. Adelphi College proposed that the Suffolk County supervisors approve a plan whereby Suffolk Community College would temporarily share Old '88 with Adelphi-Suffolk until a permanent Suffolk County Community College campus could be located and developed. Adelphi leaders thought that Suffolk could use Old '88 for classes for incoming freshmen and sophomores while Adelphi would provide instruction for juniors and seniors who had graduated from Suffolk Community College. The idea was for the Suffolk students to take classes in the mornings and early afternoon while the Adelphi students would study in the late afternoon and evenings. Huntington supervisor, Joseph W. Cermak (R) and Islip supervisor Thomas J. Harwood (R) supported the concept of Suffolk Community and Adelphi-Suffolk sharing Old '88.²⁴ *Suffolk County News* editor Joseph C. Jahn applauded the proposal that Suffolk Community and Adelphi-Suffolk share Old '88. He commented that the Suffolk County Board of Supervisors would be "making a serious

mistake if it fails to accept Adelphi College's suggestion that the proposed Suffolk County Community College open in Sayville next September." Cooperation between Suffolk and Adelphi, Jahn advised, would save the county money and give Suffolk's officials time to properly plan the badly needed community college. A joint venture by Adelphi and Suffolk, Jahn insisted, would "provide Suffolk's young people with an opportunity to attend four years of college within easy driving distance from their homes at a total tuition of less than \$2,500."²⁵ The idea for Adelphi Suffolk to share Old '88 with the proposed Suffolk County Community College was announced by Adelphi's president, Dr. Paul Dawson Eddy, at Adelphi Suffolk's Convocation in the auditorium of the Sayville Junior High School on October 28, 1959 before 300 to 400 guests. Adelphi Suffolk College granted its first degree when Dr. Eddy bestowed an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree on Anthony Drexel Duke, the founder of Boys Harbor, a summer camp in East Hampton for underprivileged boys. James A. Linen, the chairman of Adelphi's Board of Trustees, and publisher of *Time* magazine, was the featured speaker at the Convocation. Linen predicted that by 1969 half the college aged population in the U.S. would be attending college.²⁶

Suffolk County Community College never shared quarters with Adelphi-Suffolk College. Dennison's dramatic election as Suffolk County's first County Executive in November 1959 and the Democrats' stunning capture of the Suffolk County Board of Supervisor's (six seats to four for the GOP) doomed the ill conceived idea. County Executive-elect Dennison vigorously pressed the Supervisors to "move rapidly" to establish the Suffolk County Community College in time for a September 1960 opening. Dennison wisely rejected a proposed county referendum on the community college idea as an unacceptable delaying tactic, complaining that: "too often public officials pass the electorate decisions which are rightfully their own responsibility."²⁷ The lame duck Republican majority on the Board of Supervisors voted 7-3 on November 18, 1959 to establish Suffolk County Community College without selecting either a temporary or permanent site or providing financing for the community college.²⁸

Adelphi's plan to share quarters in Sayville with Suffolk Community College was aborted by devastating criticisms of the concept delivered by Walter M. Ormsby, Superintendent of Suffolk's Second (school) Supervisory District, and by County Executive-elect H. Lee Dennison. Ormsby complained that Old '88 in Sayville was totally inadequate for even temporary use by Suffolk Community College because of the lack of parking, and because the outdated building had no "laboratories, auditorium or gymnasium." Ormsby suggested that

Suffolk Community College use an existing centrally-located high school in Suffolk (such as the Sachem Junior-Senior High School in Lake Ronkonkoma) as its temporary campus. The combative, H. Lee Dennison, not known for pulling his punches, bluntly dismissed Old '88 as being a "fire trap." Furthermore, Dennison informed Adelphi-Suffolk field representative, Irl R. Flanagan, Jr., on November 9, 1959 that he was "appalled" at the idea of locating the new Suffolk Community College in the "old Patchogue Hotel." Dennison thought that the new Suffolk Community College "should not be established in something old or in an old situation." Flanagan's memo of his meeting with Dennison to Paul Dawson Eddy indicated that while the county executive-elect "is extremely interested in a community college of some kind . . . he seemed not too warmly disposed toward a liberal arts college. He favored educating people to enable them to earn a living. He mentioned Farmingdale (the two-year New York State Institute of Agriculture and Technology in East Farmingdale) citing it as example." Flanagan concluded his candid, but pessimistic, memo to Dr. Eddy by remarking that "Mr. Dennison is an engineer whose approach to life and education is very 'practical.'"²⁹

Adelphi Announces Full Time Day College in Sayville

Just after Christmas 1959 Adelphi announced that Adelphi-Suffolk College, Suffolk's first four-year liberal arts college, would open in Sayville in September 1960. A freshman class was to be admitted and a "junior-senior college curriculum will be offered with majors in the liberal arts, teacher education and business administration leading to the bachelor's degree." The seventeen full-time evening students from 1959-60 would be sophomore mentors to the incoming freshmen. Adelphi-Suffolk College would also offer a graduate program in teacher education leading to the Master of Arts degree in Education. Scholarships, ranging from \$200 to full tuition grants would be offered to qualifying applicants and the college would continue its evening classes for part-time students. President Eddy declared: "Adelphi's Suffolk branch will offer qualified high school graduates an opportunity to earn a "bachelor's degree within the borders of Suffolk County."³⁰

The *Suffolk County News* celebrated Adelphi's decision calling the establishment of "a full fledged four-year college . . . the first of its kind . . . a significant milestone in our educational history." Editor, Joseph Jahn felt that allowing "our young people . . . to complete an entire four-year college program . . . within the borders of Suffolk County . . . represents real progress for the thousands of Suffolk families who up to now have been unable to send young people to college" because of the prohibitive costs of residential colleges. Looking back Jahn recalled that

“Adelphi’s program has moved forward steadily since that day two years ago when several men interested in bringing a college here took a long nostalgic look at Old ’88 and wondered if the school board could be persuaded to keep the old building standing for a few more years.”³¹

Registration Adelphi-Suffolk’s afternoon and evening courses in February 1960 “exceeded expectations.” Richard Clemo, director of Adelphi’s General Studies Division, announced that 475 graduate and undergraduate students had enrolled for the spring 1960 semester in Sayville. Clemo reported that spring enrollment was greater than the fall registration and while most students took two courses “there are increasing numbers who have decided to take as many as three and four per semester.”³²

The college was making good progress recruiting its first full freshman class and Dean Robert K. Thomas was “confident” that Adelphi-Suffolk would enroll 100 day students in September 1960 since he had answered over 200 requests for enrollment applications. Thomas told reporters “When the high school students realize what is being offered to them this close to their homes, we’ll need every inch of space to fit them all in. We know that there are plenty of good students in Suffolk who can’t afford to go away to college so we have brought them to a course of study and a teaching staff which will provide them with a first rate education.”³³

As Adelphi officials were engaged in opening Old ’88 as temporary quarters for Adelphi Suffolk, they created a Site Selection committee to aggressively seek a larger permanent campus. Joseph C. Jahn, of the *Suffolk County News*, and a member of the site committee, cautioned area residents that it was far from certain that Sayville or Oakdale would be chosen as Adelphi-Suffolk’s lasting home. The idea that Adelphi-Suffolk’s future campus might be located outside the Sayville-Oakdale area was given life by statements by Jack Retalliata, vice-president of Grumman Aircraft and chairman of Adelphi-Suffolk’s advisory board. Retalliata disclosed that “the community of Shirley is being considered as one of the possible sites for the establishment of a permanent Suffolk campus of Adelphi College.” Retalliata had just completed a tour of Shirley with Emil Keen, chair of Adelphi-Suffolk’s site selection committee, and with Walter T. Shirley, Jr. of Shirley, L.I., Inc. Retalliata acknowledged that the site committee was also considering sites in Sayville and West Islip.³⁴

In April 1960, Adelphi-Suffolk announced it would offer its first summer session in eastern Suffolk County at Westhampton Beach High School. Dean Ralph Mc Neil said, “Our program and our willingness to give the people of eastern Suffolk and western Suffolk what they need, has made the county aware that we are here to stay.”³⁵

A milestone was reached in the history of Adelphi College in Suffolk County on June 15, 1960 when Mrs. Betsy Widirstky of Southold was awarded a Master of Arts degree in Secondary Education by Adelphi College in Garden City during its sixty-fourth commencement exercises. Mrs. Widirstky was “the first graduate student to receive her degree from the Suffolk Branch of Adelphi College.”³⁶ Ironically, the featured guest speaker at Adelphi’s 1960 commencement was Robert W. Dowling, chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Arts of the National Cultural Center in Washington, D.C, president of the City Investing Co., a future benefactor of Dowling College (nee Adelphi-Suffolk College) in Oakdale, who spoke about “Time and the Arts.” Adelphi gave other honorary degrees to: Brooks Atkinson, drama critic of the *New York Times*; Edna Ferber, author of the novel *Giant*, and Norman Cousins, editor of *The Saturday Review*.³⁷

Adelphi College worked hard to recruit students for September 1960. Dr. Eddy hosted an “open house” on April 21, 1960 for 150 Suffolk County seniors in Old ’88 “College Hall,” and vigorously encouraged them to apply for admission. Dr. Ralph Mc Neil and Robert K. Thomas “welcomed the college bound students to Adelphi’s Suffolk campus and explained the curriculum. Dr. Eddy said that even with the upcoming opening of Suffolk County Community College, the State University at Stony Brook and Adelphi Suffolk-College “there will not be enough room for every student who wishes to attend college locally.” Eddy saw “no competition” between the state and county colleges and Adelphi Suffolk because of the tremendous demand for college facilities in Suffolk and Nassau Counties, and because of the “diversified programs offered by the three colleges.” College officials announced that more than seventy students had already been accepted for the 1960-1961 freshman class at Adelphi-Suffolk, and that more than forty other applications were under review. More than 600 students were expected to be studying at Adelphi Suffolk in the day and evening programs in the fall.³⁸

Dr. Snyder had crafted idealistic educational goals and a humanistic mission for Adelphi-Suffolk College. The courses were “geared to the major problems of today, drawing upon the worldwide cultural heritages of man,” and were designed to help students “utilize and appreciate the wisdom of the past in order to build a better present and future world.” Courses at Adelphi-Suffolk were to feature a variety of “pedagogical techniques such as recitations, discussions, lectures, field trips, library work and supervised and directed study.”³⁹

Adelphi Suffolk offered spirited cultural programs for the enrichment of students and the community from its inception. Adelphi Suffolk’s first cultural presentation occurred when *The Gold Mask*, a

dramatic group at Adelphi-Garden City, performed the play *The Boy Friend* in the Sayville Junior High School auditorium. Proceeds of the performance were donated to the Adelphi Library Founders Fund.⁴⁰

Adelphi Suffolk's First Full-Time Faculty

Adelphi Suffolk's first six full-time faculty members were appointed just before daytime undergraduate classes began in late September 1960. Dr. Ying-wan Cheng, Assistant Professor of History, had a Bachelor's degree from Smith College and Masters and Ph.D degrees from Radcliffe College. Dr. Cheng had taught history at Vassar, Hunter and Brooklyn Colleges and had worked at the prestigious Center for Asian Studies at Harvard University with Professor John King Fairbank. Charles Grippi, Instructor in English, was a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis and had received two Fulbright grants for study in Italy. Arnold Rood, Instructor in Speech and Dramatic Art, had taught at the Adelphi-Suffolk Extension Center in Sayville in 1959. Mr. Rood was a graduate of Queens College and Columbia University and had been Director of Programs and Advertising for the Metropolitan Opera Company. Mrs. Matilda C. Salmone, Instructor of Romance Languages, had Bachelor's and Masters degrees from Middlebury College, had taught at Hunter and Hofstra Colleges, and also had been a Fulbright Scholar in Italy. James Skellenger, Instructor in Sociology, had a Masters from Western Reserve University, was a doctoral candidate at New York University, and had served as an administrator at Adelphi-Garden City. Peter J. Sqicciarini, Instructor in Biology, had a Bachelors from Adelphi and a Masters from Hofstra and had participated in research programs in Biology at the University of Florida and at the Brookhaven National Laboratory.⁴¹

Adelphi-Suffolk hired three additional teachers when it became apparent that 150, not 100, students would be studying full-time in the Old' 88 College Hall in September 1960. They were: Mrs. Dorothy Willis, Instructor in English, who had a B.A. from Hunter College and an M.A. from Yale University, where she was completing a Ph.D. W. Keith Kavenagh, Instructor of Economics and Political Science, had a B.A. from Oberlin College and an M.A. from Columbia University and completing doctoral studies at New York University in American history. Mrs. Florence Silver, Instructor in Philosophy. In addition, Donald L. Smith, an Assistant Professor of Education at Adelphi-Garden City, who had taught an American history class in the evenings in Sayville in 1958 and 1959, was appointed as a Consultant on Teacher Education at Adelphi Suffolk.⁴²

Late September and early October 1960 were historic times for higher education in Suffolk County. Adelphi College: Suffolk Division conducted its first full-time day liberal arts classes in Old '88 College Hall in Sayville on September 20, 1960 and Suffolk County Community College inaugurated its first late afternoon and evening junior college classes in temporary quarters in a wing of the Sachem Junior-Senior High School on October 3, 1960.⁴³ Dean Mc Neil reported that the school's opening was accomplished without "major problems." "Sayville's Main Street welcomed the Adelphi students attired in (yellow) freshman "beanies." Local restaurants and shops noted an increase in business and there was a general feeling of satisfaction that the county's first college had come here."⁴⁴

The opening of Adelphi College: Suffolk Division and the Suffolk County Community College did not come a moment too soon. There were 6,093 high school graduates from Suffolk's forty-two public high schools and eleven private high schools in June 1960. This was an increase of 1,229 (or 25.2 percent) over the 4,864 students who had graduated in 1959. Of these graduates, 88 percent came from Suffolk's public high schools. Of the 1960 graduates 4,851 came from schools in western Suffolk, five of which graduated seniors for the first time. Almost 50 percent (or 3,023) of the 1960 high school graduates in Suffolk wanted to continue their educations.⁴⁵ These impressive numbers demonstrated a very strong demand for higher education in Suffolk County, but did not include the numerous adults in Suffolk who wished to attend college, or continue their educations with Masters or professional certificates-particularly among educators. Paul Dawson Eddy had been correct; there was more than sufficient demand for public and private two and four year colleges on Long Island in 1960-but particularly in Suffolk County. With the creation of Adelphi College: Suffolk Division, Suffolk County Community College, and the soon-to-be-opened State University at Stony Brook, high school graduates from working class families in Suffolk County now had realistic opportunities to attend college and achieve significant upward social mobility.

The evening program at Adelphi College: Suffolk Division in Sayville continued to attract large numbers of students. 509 students (mostly older adults who worked during the day) were enrolled in 38 graduate and undergraduate classes when the evening program began on September 26, 1960.⁴⁶ Ironically, the National Dairy Research Laboratories at "Idle Hour," the fabulous former William K. Vanderbilt mansion and twenty-three acre estate in Oakdale, closed in September 1960 after making "many significant advances in food processing technology" there since 1948.⁴⁷ "Idle Hour," on the eastern bank of the

lovely, broad Connetquot River, would become the campus of Adelphi-Suffolk College from January 1962 until 1968, when it became Dowling College.

Conclusion

The development of Adelphi-Suffolk College between 1953 until its opening as Suffolk's first full time, four-year liberal arts college in September 1960 was difficult, complex, and often frustrating. The badly needed college was the result of the tireless and persistent efforts of a dedicated group of determined, optimistic visionaries such as: Dr. Paul Dawson Eddy, Stuart Gracey, Dr. Earl L. Vandermeulen, Cecil Hall, George Crouse, Samuel K. Munson, Joseph C. Jahn, Dr. Agnes Snyder, Richard C. Clemo, Irl R. Flanagan, Ralph Mc Neil, William J Condon, Jr., Leon (Jake) Swirbul, John B. Rettaliata, Robert K. Thomas who were committed to providing Long Islanders with greater opportunities for higher education. Dowling College (originally Adelphi-Suffolk College) has made numerous contributions since its humble origin with a few nursing courses at Long Island State hospitals in 1953. Rooted in the humanistic philosophy of its creators at Adelphi College, Dowling College continues to maintain the belief in the ability of the individual to grow intellectually, and the determination to assist students in appreciating the wisdom of the past in solving the problems of the present and the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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JOHN E. GEE AND THE EARLY TRUCKING INDUSTRY ON LONG ISLAND

Bradley L. Harris

John Gee started a trucking business in 1920, using one U.S. Army surplus vehicle. By 1938 he had built his trucking business into a major enterprise that kept thirty trucks on the road and employed sixty men. Initially known as the G & D Motor Express Company, Gee was a pioneer in the trucking industry. The growth and development of the company that became G & D Associates is a remarkable chapter in the commercial history of Long Island.

John Eccleston Gee was born in 1891 in New York City. His father, William Gee, lived in the city where he was employed as a printer for the *New York Sun*. William Gee contracted “black lung” from the fumes of the printer’s ink. Acting upon his doctor’s advice, Gee moved out of the city and into the country in search of a healthier living and working environment, bringing his family to live in Cutchogue. In Cutchogue, the Gees purchased a house on the corner of Depot Road and Main Street where they operated a small hotel. Grandma Lena Gee was a milliner and she opened a small hat shop in the house. The hotel drew a limited clientele, mostly wealthy New Yorkers who came out to Cutchogue by the LIRR. These folks had summer homes and cottages in New Suffolk, would stay overnight in Cutchogue, and then travel by horse and carriage to their summer homes the next day. John Gee attended the little one-room schoolhouse in Cutchogue that he managed to survive until the eighth grade. Then he attended the Academy in Southold, but “didn’t like school, and they didn’t like him, so they threw him out.” John Gee went to work, finding employment in 1907 in a machine shop and began a career that involved automobiles, taxicabs and motor trucks. He soon became proficient in the manufacture, operation, and maintenance of all types of engines – gasoline, diesel, and steam engines.¹

When World War I began John Gee enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Service, then in its infancy and considered a part of the Army Signal Corps. Because of his prior experience in working with mechanics and engines, the U.S. government sent him to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to become a ninety day wonder. He became an officer and was assigned to an Aviation Repair Depot in Dallas, Texas. He was placed in charge of the depot where all of the engines for early aircraft were built or repaired. The engines in those early flying machines were fragile and temperamental. They were usually good for one mission

and then had to be pulled from the aircraft and rebuilt. The engines required constant maintenance and attention from skilled mechanics. Gee found that his experience and knowledge of all types of engines made him an ideal supervisor of the repair depot. He kept the aircraft flying.²

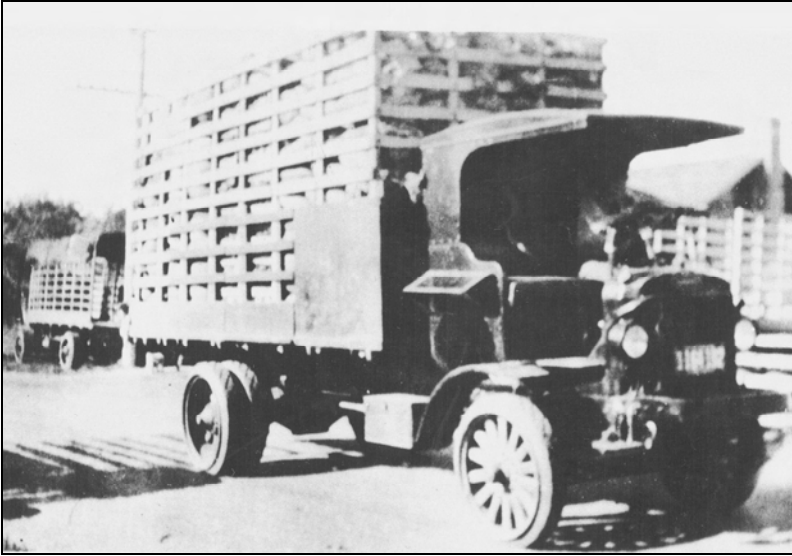


An accident involving one of G & D's trucks and an automobile. The hard rubber tires on the truck and the presence of a windshield suggest that the truck dates from the early 1920s.

Gee was sent to France where he was given the assignment of overseeing the fourteen Allied airfields in operation with the mission of keeping the aircraft flying. When he arrived in Issouden, France, he discovered that no consideration had been given as to how fires might be extinguished at these airfields. Since his work experience just before entering the service had been as a national service representative for Pyrene Fire Extinguishers working with fire suppression, Gee was given the task of creating and implementing fire suppression systems for the Allied airfields. He remained in France until the end of the war.³

When Gee returned to the States, he was prepared to pursue a career in fire suppression systems. But his mother Agnes had another career path for him to pursue. She got him involved in the trucking business. In 1919, his mother put up the house/hotel she owned in Cutchogue as collateral for a loan that Al Denzler, John Gee's brother-in-law, needed to buy a surplus U.S. Army truck. Al intended to use the

truck for hauling produce and goods between New York City and Cutchogue, but he discovered that he lacked expertise in marketing. The truck sat idle. Agnes Gee, who was concerned about paying back the loan and getting out of hock, convinced John E. Gee who was then in New Haven, Connecticut, to return to Cutchogue and help his brother-in-law get a trucking business started.



One of G & D's earliest trucks, had no windshield, hard rubber tires, and a wooden framed body.

Gee went into partnership with his brother-in-law Al Denzler, and they founded the G & D. Motor Express Company. The company owned one truck that had been converted from an Army truck into a freight truck. Gee built a customer base by first talking to farmers in the Cutchogue area to find out how they transported their crops to market. At the time, all produce came into New York City by rail, and this was true when Gee began his trucking business in 1920. Gee discovered that the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) was the only way farmers had to get their produce to market. To get their crops to market in New York City, farmers had to have their produce at the local railroad station at 4:00 p.m. so that they could be loaded on the daily freight train from Greenport. The farmers had to notify the station agents ahead of time that they intended to ship produce so that the train engineer could be notified that he had to make a stop. The LIRR would transport the crops to Sunnyside Boulevard in Queens where the crops

were loaded onto trucks, taken to markets throughout Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan, and sold. The railroad handled everything on consignment, and when the crops were sold, the transportation costs were deducted and the farmer received a check from the railroad. If the crops got to market, but didn't sell, the farmer received nothing for his crops and he still had to pay for the cost of shipping.⁴

John E. Gee came up with a better way for farmers to get their crops to market and sell them. He guaranteed that if the farmers had crops ready to transport at 4:00 p.m., he would have them at the produce markets by midnight, sell them at the market, and return with cash in hand the next morning. His scheme required two drivers to handle the eight hours of driving time into the city, and eight hours to drive back out. Trucks at the time had a top speed of fourteen miles an hour. It was a grueling trip along North Country Road (State Route 25A), a narrow two lane highway that was still dirt in many locations. The drivers "carried tools, jacks, blocks, boards and shovels, because the solid rubber tires sometimes sunk in the sand or mud."⁵

John E. Gee and Al Denzler did the driving, loading and unloading of the crops, negotiating for the best prices, and settling up with the farmers before they ever received a dime. It was a tough way to make a living, yet G & D Motor Express Co. prospered as farmers found the truckers delivered the goods as promised, and they were paid more for their crops. Slowly but surely more farmers came to rely on trucking for transport of their crops. In 1925, Middle Country Road was paved and this reduced the travel time into New York City to four hours. John E. Gee steadily expanded his fleet and gave over the driving to others. But it remained a brutal, demanding business. John E. Gee purchased smaller trucks that he dispatched to individual farmers to pick up produce and bring it to warehouses in Cutchogue or Riverhead where loads would be consolidated. Then huge ten wheelers would haul the crops into New York City. John shifted the operational headquarters of G & D Motor Express Co. to Riverhead. This was a more convenient location, since he now did business with farmers in Jamesport, Riverhead, Aquebogue and all the towns to the west along Long Island's north shore as far west as Port Jefferson.⁶

In the 1920's there were only a few trucking outfits on Long Island. John E. Gee's G & D Motor Express Co. was hauling farmer's produce along the north shore. The Reach Brothers in Patchogue handled light freight and packaged goods, as United Parcel Service does today. L. I. Motor Haulage, run by Joe Gerard out of Patchogue, dealt with rigging and heavy trucking. South Shore Transportation in Bayshore and H. E. Sweezy in Eastport handle transportation for duck farmers. These trucking companies began to handle most of the freight business on

Long Island and the LIRR lost more and more of its market share of the shipping business.⁷

The trucking business in its infancy was a tough business. Many of the drivers who worked for John Gee were farmers who worked their farms during daylight hours and drove into New York City at night. They grabbed sleep when they weren't driving and napped in their trucks. They followed this routine six days a week. Although they occasionally had accidents, John Gee was proud of his drivers and maintained that his company "had the finest and safest equipment" and was "operated by one of the best groups of drivers ever to travel our highways." He attributed their expertise to the fact that "drivers were selected and schooled in defensive driving -- the old drivers having much to do in the guiding and schooling of new drivers." It also helped that John Gee had a "generous bonus system" and gave his drivers a "share of earnings," keeping "everyone on the ball."⁸



A typical ten wheeler in the G & D Motor Express fleet. The trucks were purchased from an Autocar dealership in Long Island City.

When John Gee started in the trucking business, there were no requirements that truckers have special licenses or insurance. John was self-insured, and any time one of his drivers got into an accident, he required that they notify him immediately. John Gee would respond by driving to the scene of the accident to take photographs. If he couldn't respond, he would find a photographer who could be there, like "Feather" of Smithtown, who took many photographs for him. Gee would gather evidence of what caused an accident, take photographs of

the resulting damage, and then take his evidence into court to defend his drivers. In the early days, everyone believed it was the trucker's fault whenever an accident occurred, but Gee did such an excellent job of defending his drivers and his company, that he only had to pay one claim for an accident. That accident happened on Jericho Turnpike, on the hill coming into Smithtown. Unfortunately this one accident and the claim that followed drove John Gee into bankruptcy.⁹

The accident happened in the early 1930s. A truck travelling east on Jericho Turnpike, going up the hill into Smithtown, was doing its top speed of 10 miles an hour when a car traveling in the same direction slammed into the back of the truck. Both the driver and the passenger in the car were seriously injured. John E. Gee, Jr., John Eccleston Gee's son, recalled that a woman riding in the car lost her arm and the man driving the car was cut by glass. The driver of the car sued claiming that the truck had come to a dead stop in the road, and was actually rolling backward, when he ran into it. The driver of the truck and eye witnesses said that the truck never stopped and the car ran into the back of the truck. The ensuing lawsuit dragged on in the courts until 1934, when a trial was held, a jury convened, and a \$35,000 judgment was made against G & D Associates. On November 24, 1934, John Gee's trucks were seized and impounded as collateral for the debt. By this time, the Depression had taken its toll on the trucking business and Gee had already been forced to cut back on the number of trucks and drivers he kept on the road.¹⁰

The Depression hit Gee's trucking business hard. Farmers everywhere were facing financial difficulties and even when they managed to produce a marketable crop, they couldn't sell it. By 1932, the LIRR was really in trouble. Gee figured that he alone had taken away 75 percent of the railroad's freight business with the farmers on Long Island's north shore. The railroad claimed that truckers had an unfair advantage since they weren't regulated. Because all the farmers were using trucks to transport their crops, the LIRR was down to three freight trains a day and their freight business had been reduced to hauling coal, lumber and heavy equipment. In an attempt to help the nation's railroads, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) enacted new regulations that required truckers to be insured and licensed haulers. This regulation only applied to companies that had fleets of trucks and not to independent truckers. In addition, the ICC required that the haulers had to publish their rates and charges and this made it even harder for truckers to compete for business.¹¹



G & D's depot in Riverhead with a dozen vehicles lined up. The smaller trucks were used to pick up produce from farms on the north fork of L.I. and haul it to the depot where the loads were consolidated and packed on ten wheelers for transport into New York City.

To remain in business, John Gee was forced to sell off some of his trucks, many to his own drivers, who went into business on their own as independent truckers. In some cases, John Gee had to vouch to bankers and truck manufacturers that the men to whom he sold the trucks had the ability to make payments on their truck. These new independent truckers immediately became competitors in the hauling business and made things even more difficult for G & D Motor Express Co.¹²

In an effort to stabilize the industry on Long Island, John Gee helped organize the Consolidated L. I. Freight Lines in 1932. This trucking association, made by the four major trucking companies on Long Island, with over 150 trucks, worked to give truckers a voice in discussions and negotiations with the ICC, and an opportunity to make their problems publicly known.¹³

In spite of all his business acumen and prominence in the trucking industry, John Gee couldn't stop the courts from impounding his trucks following the judgment against his company. Nor could he stop his brother-in-law from leaving the company. In 1936, following the accident and resulting lawsuit, G & D Motor Express Co. was reorganized as a corporation and G & D Associates came into existence. After fifteen years in the business, Al Denzler wanted to go his own way, and the partnership was dissolved and replaced by a corporation. The principals of G & D Motor Express Co. became the stockholders of

the corporation -- John E. Gee, his mother, and Al Denzler all received shares. John E. Gee retained the controlling interest in G & D Associates and continued to run the business that he had built into the largest produce hauler on Long Island's north shore.¹⁴

While his trucks sat idle Gee tried to keep his company afloat by leasing additional trucks. During the ensuing year, Gee appealed the court's decision and on June 25, 1936 he won a reversal of the settlement and got his trucks back. But the court case and the impoundment of his trucks from 1934 through 1936 cost him dearly and he never did financially recover from the accident case. In 1938, John Gee was forced to declare bankruptcy and G & D Associates was placed in receivership.¹⁵

John E. Gee lost his business, did what he could to pay off his creditors, but at age 47, he was out of the trucking business. Even so, he found a way to keep his hand in trucking. During the war, it was virtually impossible to buy a truck, and the government confiscated trucks that were serviceable for the military. So John E. Gee built his own truck. He took the chassis of a 1932 Reo Speedwagon, a ten wheel truck, and installed a 1941 General Motors Corporation six cylinder engine that he scavenged from a truck that had been in an accident. He used an Autocar auxiliary transmission to link the engine and drive shaft that powered a two-speed rear axle. The truck he came up with had tremendous power and thirty gearspeeds that made it possible for John Gee to literally "pull a house."¹⁶

With this truck Gee did contract hauling for the U. S. Government and transported produce (food, fruit, and vegetables) to Virginia. Always on the lookout for a return load, he met a bag manufacturer in New York City who was recycling burlap feed bags, and this got him involved in the salvage feed business. The man was buying up used burlap sacks, removing the "screenings" (leftover food grains caught in the burlap sacking), and selling the burlap to the government. But he didn't know what to do with the screenings. Gee got the idea of trucking the screenings out to Riverhead, where the screenings could be cleaned further, then sold to duck farmers. The duck farmers could mix the screenings into their duck feed and reduce the cost of feeding the ducks. Gee started up a salvage feed business.¹⁷

In the summer of 1948, Gee left Riverhead and brought his family to live in Smithtown. The Gees moved into a house on the Dahl Estate, in Head of the River. The estate, that originally contained hundreds of acres, was located on both sides of 25A to the west of the Nissequogue River. In 1946, the estate was broken up into four sections and auctioned off. Two men named Eckernkamp and Brenner purchased one-hundred acres north of 25A. They intended to subdivide the

property and sell off parcels for development. Somehow, Gee obtained a three year option to buy eleven acres of property on the former estate and the Gees moved into a five room house that was on this property. There were also two big barns, along with a newly built greenhouse that had an eight-acre irrigated garden surrounding it. John E. Gee wanted to continue his salvage feed business using this property as his base of operations, and he felt he could sell salvaged feed to chicken farmers in the area. Perhaps as a way of demonstrating that the salvaged feed could be used to feed chickens, Gee became a chicken farmer. He raised layers, used screenings to feed his chickens, and sold eggs. He was just getting established as a chicken farmer when an accident occurred that dashed John Gee's dreams of raising chickens.

The accident happened Thanksgiving Day of 1948. John Gee, Jr., eighteen years old at the time, vividly remembers that day. The family "had just finished eating dinner" and his father went out "to pull a stump with his tractor." The tractor was a Fordson with a rebuilt engine and cleats on the wheels that gave the tractor additional pulling power. "I don't know how he did it, but somehow he must have slipped the clutch, and the tractor reared up and toppled over on him. I don't know how my two brothers and I ever got that tractor off him, but we did. An ambulance took him off to Mather Hospital and he was in the hospital for over a year." Gee's most serious injury was a badly broken leg that took over a year to heal properly. The year in the hospital ended Gee's plans of becoming a chicken farmer and his involvement in the salvage feed business. He also lost the wherewithal to buy the eleven acres of property, and instead rented a house on the north side of Main Street, just to the west of the LIRR underpass.¹⁸

When he got out of the hospital Gee started up a mobile locksmith business instead. At the time he was fifty-seven. He was a big, strong man, and he liked the locksmith business and the fact that he had all the tools he needed in his truck. He never maintained a locksmith shop. With all the new homes that were going up in Smithtown, it was a good time to be a locksmith. Gee worked as a mobile locksmith for the next twenty-five years and he worked "right to the day he died." He lived alone after his wife died in 1958, but following a heart attack in 1963, he moved in with his son, John Gee, Jr., as he continued to work at his locksmith trade until 1973. Then one morning, the family found him in the kitchen with "an egg in the frying pan, toast in the toaster," but dead on the floor from a second heart attack. He was 82.¹⁹

John Gee, Jr. fondly remembers his Dad as "quite a guy." He was an excellent salesman and had an uncanny business sense. He could see an opportunity to develop a business and he had the drive and perseverance to make that business become a viable and paying

concern. He did that with the G and D Motor Express Company and pioneered the trucking industry on Long Island. He did that with the salvage feed business during the war, and he was just beginning to see his business pay dividends when the tractor accident dashed his hopes of continuing in the salvage feed business. But when he got out of the hospital in 1949, he developed a whole new field of expertise as a locksmith and started another business that would sustain him for the rest of life. Gee was a truly remarkable entrepreneur whose motto easily could have been: "If at first you don't succeed, then try, try, again."

NOTES

¹ Interview with John E. Gee, Jr., March 28, 2007. A digital recording of this interview can be heard in the Long Island Room of the Smithtown Library, Smithtown, New York.

² John E. Gee's "Autobiography," untitled and unpublished manuscript of four handwritten pages discussing his life and career in the trucking industry, on file in the Long Island Room of the Smithtown Library, Smithtown, New York.

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WILLIAMSBURG, BROOKLYN: THE HOME OF THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL COMMERCIAL SUBMARINE

Henry Silka

Known for its central role in the development of Brooklyn's famed shipyards, among other things, few would associate Williamsburg with pioneering submarine technology. With Brooklyn native Henry Silka's deciphering of fascinating new research, that might soon change.

Seven years ago, a unique product of Brooklyn's unknown history of nineteenth-century commercial shipbuilding was discovered by maritime historians in Panama. While serving as a lecturer on a cruise through Panama's Pearl Islands in February 2001, noted nautical archaeologist and historian James P. Delgado was informed of the existence of an abandoned submarine on the beach of one of the islands. Local legend said that the derelict had been a Japanese midget submarine, abandoned after a failed attempt to attack the Panama Canal during World War II. When Delgado saw the vessel, it was apparent to his trained eye that it dated from a much earlier period. On returning home to his British Columbia, Canada, he began an intensive investigation into the origin of the strange craft and uncovered a trail of documentation that led back to the Civil War and the waterfront community of Williamsburg, a neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York.

In March 2002, Delgado returned to the Pearl Islands and, with the assistance of colleagues, conducted an archaeological reconnaissance of the derelict submarine. The hull was measured, key construction details and external features were drawn and photographed, and a video record of the vessel and site was made. As Delgado describes it in a paper for *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, "The submarine lies in the inter-tidal zone of a small, un-named cove on the eastern shore of Isla San Telmo (St Elmo's Island) . . . in the Archipiélago de las Perlas (Archipelago of the Pearls) . . . in the Gulf of Panama." Today a nature preserve, the uninhabited island is home to a variety of bird life "and is generally off-limits to visitors."¹

Back home again, Delgado began the task of identifying the submarine. He contacted colleagues around the world and distributed images and data of the abandoned vessel. In 2003, archaeologist Richard Wills, who had previously documented a Civil War-era submersible at the Louisiana State Museum, directed Delgado to a scholarly 1902 article about an American built submarine named *Explorer*, constructed for the pearl fishery in Panama. "Wills emailed a cross-sectional drawing of



Starboard profile of the *Submarine Explorer* at low tide, Pearl Islands, off the coast of Panama, February 2006. Courtesy of James P. Delgado.

Explorer . . . which matched the Isla San Telmo vessel," Delgado writes. The drawing was based on an 1860s plan of the craft.²

Delgado's subsequent research revealed the identity of the inventor and led him to the shore of Williamsburg, where the submarine was built. The inventor was Julius Kroehl, a German immigrant living in New York City. Born in 1820, Kroehl immigrated to the United States, becoming a citizen in 1840. Identified in city directories as an engineer, Kroehl worked in iron casting.³

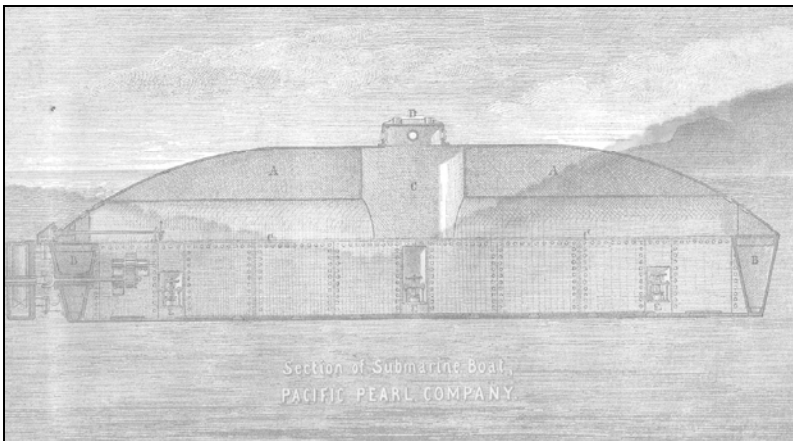
Kroehl was also a principal of the firm of "Husted & Kroehl, Submarine Engineers" and became experienced in underwater work during the late 1850s, when his firm won a contract to remove Diamond Reef off Governor's Island by blasting. To assist in the work, a third partner was brought into the firm, Van Buren Ryerson, who brought to the project a diving bell he had invented.⁴

In 1862, with the Civil War raging, Kroehl was hired by the U.S. Navy as an underwater explosives expert and was later appointed a volunteer lieutenant. After contracting malaria during the siege of Vicksburg, he returned to New York and was discharged out of the Navy in August 1863.

During his convalescence, Kroehl redesigned Ryerson's diving bell into a submarine vessel, in effect a submersible that could be propelled and maneuvered while submerged. A typical submersible of the time was essentially a diving bell, a strong metal shell with a compartment in which air was trapped, allowing a person to remain underwater and function for an extended period of time. It was lowered by a cable from a

mother ship to the sea floor, where it remained stationary until lifted and moved to another location. Kroehl designed a submersible with a pressurized compartment that allowed divers to exit and re-enter the craft at depth and a hand-operated propeller to enable the crew to move the vessel from place to place without the aid of the mother ship.

Ryerson's diving bell, which he had named *Submarine Explorer*, was unique in its own right. It had a double shell and was large enough to hold as many as six persons. The space between the shells was filled with compressed air, which was used to regulate descent and provided oxygen for the crew. The bell also had a primitive air replenishment system. In his redesign, Kroehl included an array of mechanisms to control the descent, ascent, and maneuverability of the vessel. Perhaps in recognition of Ryerson's earlier invention, Kroehl named the redesigned vessel *Explorer*.⁵

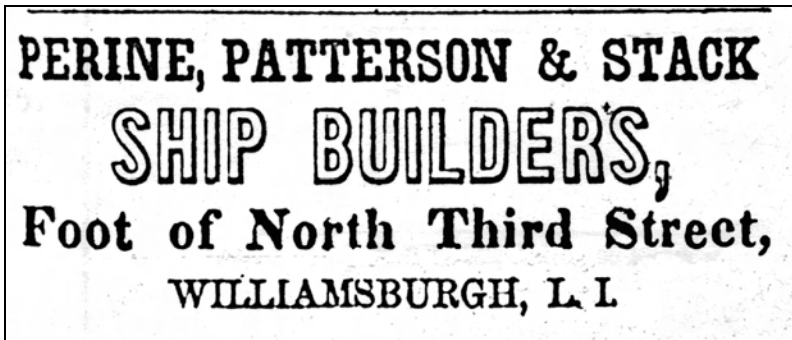


Submarine Explorer as illustrated in pamphlet *The Pacific Pearl Company* (1865). Courtesy of The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Kroehl's revolutionary underwater vehicle gained the interest of a group of investors. Together they formed the Pacific Pearl Company, incorporated in New York, for the purpose of harvesting mother-of-pearl shell from deep sea oyster beds in Panama and Mexico. Oyster beds within the free diving limit of about forty feet were largely fished out. Yet, there remained an increasing demand for mother-of-pearl shell for a wide variety of uses, including buttons and costume jewelry. Kroehl's submersible offered the promise of large-scale harvesting of the shells from deeper beds. With regular steamship lines operating between American East Coast ports and Panama and the Panama Railroad crossing

the Isthmus to connect to the Pacific side, the infrastructure was in place for an efficient harvesting operation and direct transportation from the Archipelago of the Pearls to the North American market.⁶

Backed by the financial resources of the newly formed company, Kroehl began construction of his submarine at the shipyard of Ariel Patterson, located at 273 First Street (Kent Avenue today), near North Third Street. (Contemporary street addresses greatly differ from those of 1865.) Just how Kroehl became acquainted with Patterson and why he chose this particular shipbuilder may never be known. Kroehl's submarine was an iron vessel, but Patterson was a builder of wooden ships.



Perine, Patterson & Stack ad in 1850-51 Williamsburgh directory. Private collection.

Between 1845 and 1853 Patterson had been a principal in the shipbuilding firm of Perrine, Patterson & Stack. Originally located on the East River shore of Manhattan, in 1846 the firm moved its operation to the independent village of Williamsburgh (the community's correct name was spelled with an "h" at the end). In 1847, they had the fourth largest shipyard in the port of New York.⁸

The firm operated on various sites along the East River shore between North Second Street (Metropolitan Avenue today) and North Fifth Street (the main directory listing for the Stack shipyard places him at the foot to North Second Street). They built a number of notable vessels, including trans-Atlantic sailing packets, steamships for the California trade, and a number of clipper ships -- all made of wood, though the hulls of their later vessels were reinforced with iron braces.

In 1851, they established their main yard at the foot of North Sixth Street, on the site of the Jabez Williams and Son shipyard, which had relocated to Greenpoint. The firm operated here until 1853, when the partnership dissolved. Patterson and Thomas Stack continued building

independently at the main yard, Patterson occupying the northern portion. William Perrine opened his own yard in Greenpoint.⁹

Shipbuilding boomed through most of 1854 only to collapse before the year ended. Perrine, who in July was lauded as one of the country's largest shipbuilders, declared bankruptcy in August. Patterson launched his last major vessel in July and a 209 ton schooner in August. Only Stack's yard remained profitable, launching vessels annually into the 1880s, by then under the ownership of James D. Leary, his nephew.¹⁰

Little information about Patterson's activities after 1854 has been found. He continues to be listed as a shipbuilder in the Brooklyn city directories, except in the 1861-62 edition where he is identified as a "shipjoiner."¹¹ His business address is given as First Street (Kent Avenue) near North Sixth, the northern portion of the old Perrine, Patterson and Stack yard. In the 1864-65 directory, 273 First Street is given as his business address. Though he is again listed simply as a shipbuilder, a full page advertisement identifies him as a "ship builder and ship smith" and describes the services he was providing: "planing [*sic*], sawing, re-sawing, and scroll sawing" -- services more frequently associated with a lumber yard than a shipyard. In a December 13, 1865 report on shipbuilding, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* states: "Mr. Patterson has not been engaged in the business for some time, but now carries on *an extensive saw mill*" (italics in the original).

The ad in the 1864-65 Brooklyn city directory reveals that Patterson was also working with iron, and listed the services he was providing: "heavy iron planing [*sic*], turning, punching, and cutting." While not exactly indicating a complete iron works, this apparently was enough for Kroehl to contract with Patterson for the construction of his unique vessel, the *Sub Marine Explorer*. Kroehl probably intended to rely on his own experience and expertise in working with iron during the actual construction phase. However, in the initial planning phase there were important questions to be considered: hull shape, flotation, stability, trim and other features associated with naval architecture. Patterson would address these.

The preliminary phases of construction also required Patterson's shipbuilding expertise: modeling, developing preliminary offsets, mould lofting, and making patterns. Exactly when construction began has not been discovered, but by June 1864, work had progressed to the point where Kroehl could offer his vessel to the U.S. Navy. The Civil War was still going on, and in a letter to the Chief of the Bureau of Yard and Docks, Kroehl wrote:

I am now building a submarine boat, constructed on the same principle as the diving bell, which I have used for

six years in the harbor of New York . . . In the operations against some of the rebel forts and harbors I have no doubt the Navy Department will require submarine boats . . . As I have the patterns for one boat all finished and nearly all the castings made, it will not take much time to finish this one boat and build another of the same or even a larger size. Should I get the order for another boat, I can finish both boats at nearly the same time.¹²

ARIEL PATTERSON,
SHIP BUILDER
AND
SHIP SMITH,
273 First Street,
(NEAR NORTH THIRD.)
WILLIAMSBURGH.

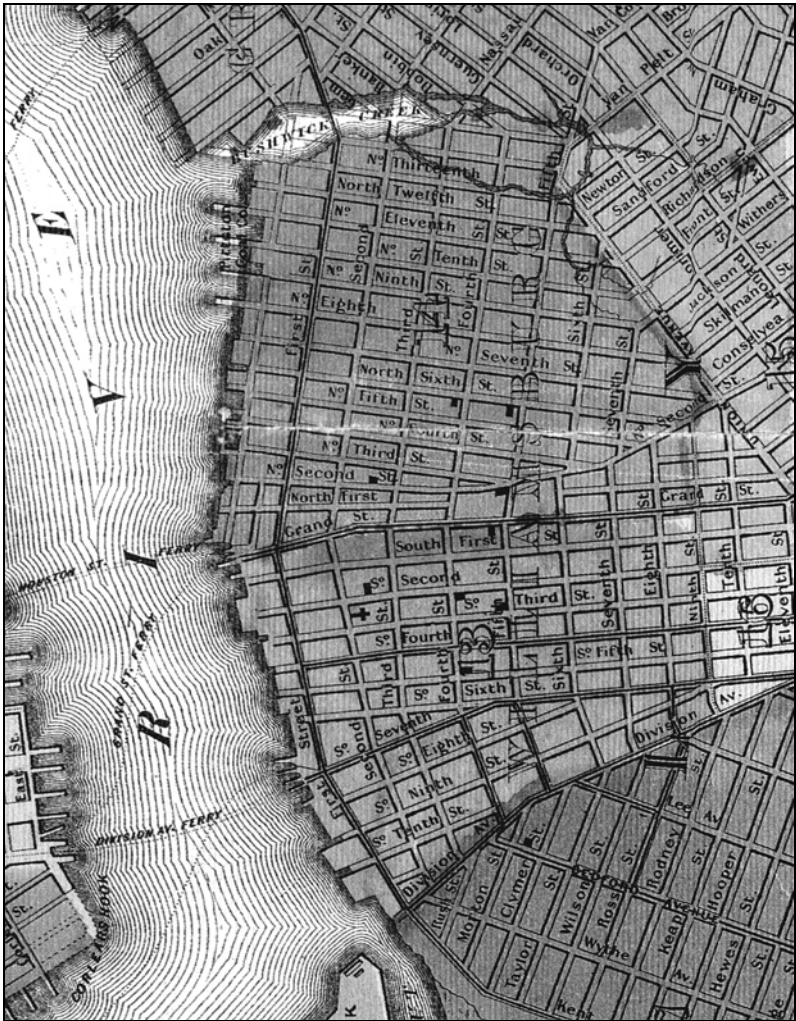
←→

PLANING, SAWING, RE-SAWING,
AND
SCROLL SAWING.
ALSO,
Heavy Iron Planing, Turning, Punching,
and Cutting.

PATENT COMPRESSED
LOGUST TRENAILS,
OF DIFFERENT LENGTHS.
ALSO, A LARGE ASSORTMENT
OF

ALL KINDS OF TIMBER
SAWED, TO ORDER, ALWAYS ON HAND.

Ariel Patterson ad in the 1864-65 Brooklyn City directory. Courtesy of private collection.



Portion of an unidentified street map of New York City and environs (probably dating from the late 1850s), showing the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn. The streets are depicted largely as they are today, with exceptions due to some never having been dedicated and others having been condemned. Starting with First Street, the modern names of the numbered north-south streets are Kent Avenue, Wythe Avenue, Berry Street, Bedford Avenue. Courtesy of a private collection.

Construction progressed slowly because of the lack of materials, especially boiler iron, for non-war purposes. Consequently, there was no

completed vessel that the Navy's inspector could test. He did, however, report favorably on the plans and concept, concluding with the recommendation "that practical tests of the *Submarine Explorer* be made on its final completion." It was not until after the war had ended that the *Explorer* was finally completed. The *New York Times* of November 12, 1865 reported her completion, but no report of her actual launching has been found. Six months later, the *Times* of May 31, 1866 reported the fourth and probably last New York test of the *Explorer*:

Yesterday afternoon there was a private trial of the Pacific Pearl Company's *Submarine Explorer*, in the dock foot of North Third Street, Eastern District. At 1:30 o'clock [a crew of four] entered the *Explorer* through her man-hole, which being finally closed and the signal given the boat was submerged, and for an hour and a half she traversed the bed of the dock. During the submersion the friends of those onboard the boat exhibited considerable anxiety for their safety, but then at last . . . she rose to the surface and Engineer Kroehl and his companions emerged from her chambers, (the former leisurely smoking his meerschaum) . . . [Kroehl] held up a pail of mud which he had gathered from the bottom of the dock, showing conclusively the success of the experiment . . . The experiment yesterday . . . was the fourth made . . .¹³

As completed, the *Explorer* cost an estimated \$75,000 and measured 36 feet long by 10 feet wide. The chamber where the crew worked was 32 feet 10 inches long, by five feet and six feet at the widest and highest points, respectively, excluding the conning tower. The enclosed space for a crew of four was 660 cubic feet. She could lift to the surface a cargo of ten or twelve tons in addition to her own weight of sixty tons.¹⁴

Soon after the fourth test, the *Explorer* was partially disassembled and shipped by steamship to Panama and by rail across the Isthmus. Reassembled, she was launched on May 29, 1867 and underwent a series of further trials in the Bay of Panama. Julius Kroehl, however, did not live to realize the fruits of his invention. He died on September 21. His crew carried on the trials and eventually began harvesting oysters.

Operating procedures for the *Explorer* were as follows: As the *Explorer* floats on the surface, her compressed-air chamber is filled to a pressure of 60 pounds per square inch. The crew lets water into the ballast chambers, and the vessel gradually descends. On the sea floor, compressed air is let into the working chamber until the pressure equals that of the water pressure at that depth. Then the crew opens hatches in the deck of the working chamber, which is also the flat bottom of the hull.

The internal air pressure prevents water from entering the working chamber, and the crew is able to harvest oysters directly from the sea floor.¹⁵

The air replenishment system was essentially a pump that sprayed seawater in a fine mist throughout the working chamber. The accumulated carbonic acid created by the crew's exhalations would be absorbed by the sprayed seawater, which would then release oxygen. While not the most ideal system, it permitted men to work underwater for hours at a stretch and allowed spermaceti candles to be burned to provide light in the otherwise dark chamber.¹⁶

When the oysters in the immediate vicinity were collected, the vessel would be moved to a new location by means of a propeller turned by hand by the crew. When a sufficient supply of oysters had been collected, the bottom hatches would be closed, compressed air let into the ballast chambers to force the water out, and the submarine would rise to the surface.

Trials were conducted during the almost two years following Kroehl's death, until the summer of 1869. During this time about 10-1/2 tons of pearl shells were collected and shipped to New York. This was far less than the ten to twelve tons of shells the *Explorer* was capable of lifting. Nevertheless, after diving for twelve straight days in August of 1869, the *Explorer* was considered a success. However, because the crewmen repeatedly suffered from fever, it was determined that the same men could not continue doing the work, and the *Explorer* was laid up in a cove. Apparently, the vessel never sailed again.¹⁷

The men's repeated illnesses were blamed on the fact that they were North Americans and not acclimated to the tropical conditions of the region. It was considered that natives might be better suited. What was not known at the time was that men subjected to the ambient pressure of the submarine's working depth and quickly ascending to lower surface pressure are doomed to suffer decompression sickness. It was not until "caisson disease" was diagnosed in men working in the pressurized underwater caissons during construction of the Brooklyn Bridge that physicians discovered the link between working under pressure and the symptoms of caisson disease.¹⁸

Because many of the symptoms of decompression sickness -- among them pain in joints, paralysis, dizziness, convulsions, rashes, itching -- are similar to those of yellow fever and malaria, the sick men of the *Explorer* had been diagnosed as suffering from those tropical diseases. Subjected again and again to affects of decompression sickness during twelve straight days of diving and working four hours during each dive in an atmospheric pressure of 46 pounds per square inch (three times surface pressure), the men became too debilitated to continue harvesting oysters.

They could not avoid decompression sickness. “[T]he cure was not realized until Haldane's 1908 experiments, which resulted in the first tables for staged decompression.” Kroehl's death, attributed to fever, actually may have been caused by decompression sickness. “If so, he would be the first known victim.”¹⁹

Delgado compares the *Explorer* with two other submersibles of the 1860s -- the *Hunley* and the *Intelligent Whale*. The *Hunley* was a Confederate submarine that made a single foray against a Union warship in 1863, destroying the vessel but sinking herself. The *Intelligent Whale* was built in 1866 and was, along with the *Explorer*, “the most sophisticated of all known pre-1870 submersibles.” She survives as a museum exhibit in New Jersey. Delgado concludes his article with this observation:

In comparison to *Hunley* and *Intelligent Whale* . . . *Explorer* is the largest, heaviest, and most sophisticated submarine of her era, particularly in regard to her buoyancy and ballast systems and her lack of reliance on a snorkel for air replenishment. Closest in design to *Intelligent Whale*, *Explorer* is a “successful” craft, whereas the *Intelligent Whale* never progressed beyond the experimental, or trial, stage and was ultimately decreed an expensive failure . . . *Explorer* remained in use after her initial trials in 1865, and was only abandoned after 1869 when problems with the crew's health . . . became apparent. Had decompression been understood in 1869, *Explorer* could have been successfully operated.²⁰

The remains of the *Explorer* lie in the inter-tidal zone, “exposed to wet and dry cycling, and to the full effects of tidal surge and waves.” Those parts of her that have not been removed over the years are slowly corroding and, without conservation, this “unique piece of technology” will eventually disappear. And with it will disappear a unique example of the untold history of commercial shipbuilding in nineteenth-century Brooklyn.

NOTES

¹ James P. Delgado, “Archaeological Reconnaissance of the 1865 American-Built *Sub Marine Explorer* at Isla San Telmo, Archipiélago de las Perlas, Panama,” *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 35, no. 2 (2006): 231.

² Delgado, 232.

³ Delgado, 244-45. Except where noted, the career and technical information of the *Explorer* and the biographical information about her inventor, Julius Kroehl, are from Delgado's "Archaeological Reconnaissance."

⁴ Delgado, 245.

⁵ "Mechanics and Engineering," *New York Times*, April 4, 1860, 11.

⁶ "A Marine Novelty -- The Submarine Explorer," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, November 11, 1865, 3/1; Delgado, 245; John Haskell Kemble, *The Panama Route 1848-1869* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1943).

⁷ *Reynolds' Williamsburgh Directory, Village Register and Business Advertiser For 1850-1* (Williamsburgh, NY: Samuel & T. F Reynolds, n.d.), 44.

⁸ "Ship-Building at the Port of New York in 1847," *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine* 18, no. 3 (March 1848): 310.

⁹ Henry Silka, "Shipbuilding and the Nascent Community of Greenpoint, New York, 1850-1855," *The Northern Mariner* 16, no. 2 (April 2006): 15-52.

¹⁰ "Ship-Building at Green Point," *New York Journal of Commerce*, July 28, 1854, 2; "Shipbuilding for 1854," *New York Herald*, Dec. 26, 1854, 3-5; Henry R. Stiles, ed., *History of Kings County from 1683 to 1884* (New York: W. W. Munsell & Co., 1884), vol. 2, 798.

¹¹ *The Brooklyn City Directory* (Brooklyn, NY: J. Lain and Company), published annually from 1859. Patterson's ad appears in Lain's 1864-65 directory, facing page 368. The ad is repeated in the 1865-66 directory. After the Williamsburgh and Bushwick townships were consolidated with the city of Brooklyn in 1855, separate directories for Williamsburgh were no longer published.

¹² Delgado, 246.

¹³ "Successful Trial of a Submarine Novelty," *New York Times*, May 31, 1866, 8.

¹⁴ Delgado, 235, 241, and 248, referencing the *New York Times* of August 29, 1869.

¹⁵ Delgado, 241-42, referencing the *New York Times* of August 29, 1869, 8.

16. "Mechanics and Engineering"; "Submarine Explorations," *New York Times*, July 31, 1868, 8.

¹⁷ Delgado, 248.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Delgado, 248-49.

²⁰ Delgado, 250.

BRIDGING THE EAST RIVER: THE HISTORY OF AN IDEA, 1800-1867

Richard Haw

Richard Haw explores the history of what preceded the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge.

New York is a fantastic incongruity: at once a centralized metropolis through which the wealth of a nation flows and an isolated island community cut off from its neighbors and the rest of the country. For much of its long and storied past, the entire region has been dominated by what the Commissioner's Plan of 1811 described as "those large arms of the seas which embrace New-York Island": the Hudson and the East rivers.¹

Geologically, the East River is not a river at all but a tidal strait. But for all intents and purposes the East River has served as a river, or a barrier, much like a mountain range. One doubts whether George Washington ruminated on the difference between rivers and tidal straits on the evening of August 30, 1776 when he led his band of 9,000 war-weary troops across the East River after the disastrous Battle of Brooklyn. Instead, Washington discovered what Walt Whitman came to know instinctively: that Long Island was defined by the East River, and that the relationship between "fish-shaped Paumanok" and its powerhouse neighbor-island to the west would forever revolve around this small stretch of water. Unlike London or Paris—single, united cities employing the common use of a river—and more like Budapest, Brooklyn and Manhattan were (at least until consolidation in 1898) independent municipalities who—despite (or even because of) their dependent economic relationship—fought long and hard over who should control, regulate and have access to their shared waterway.²

The need for sure and steady passage across the East River is as old as the Lenape tribes that populated the region in the years before European settlement. With the establishment of New Netherlands, the issue took on more urgency. From the beginning, Long Island's main commercial enterprise was agriculture while New York's was trading and shipping, and as any good farmer knows, no amount of expert husbandry will pay the bills if you can't get your wares to market. Unfortunately, for those on Long Island their only sizable market lay over the East River. Even more unfortunately, what passed for a ferry service was neither sure nor steady.

There were already dozens of shady, fly-by-night outfits offering passage between the islands when innkeeper Cornelius Dirksen

established the first official East River ferry service in 1642. Dircksen's ferry ran from Peck Slip to Fulton Street in Brooklyn, the shortest point between the two shores. Distance, of course, was of paramount importance. With strong winds and erratic currents, the journey across the East River was arduous and wildly unpredictable. Rowboats were forced to endure strong shifting tides; often, sailboats would catch a stiff breeze and, within the blink of an eye, fetch up on either Governor's or Blackwell's Island.³



Fulton Ferry in 1750, from the Brooklyn Shore, 1750, *Harper's Weekly*, November 2, 1872.

By 1650, river traffic was a total mess. Not only were skiffs and scows yo-yoing frantically up and down the water, they were neither shipshape nor Bristol fashion. Often overloaded and understaffed, they could be downright lethal, especially when shipping livestock. Regulation was clearly needed, and in July 1654 an ordinance was passed that required all ferry-men to acquire a license, be liable for passenger safety, provide adequate staff and shelter, and maintain their craft to a "proper" standard. Strict limits were placed on cargo, times of travel and conditions.⁴

Regulation calmed the ferry industry, but new battles swiftly replaced old. In 1685, the Duke of York ascended to the English throne and the following year, New York received a new royal charter, one that set the stage for a hundred years of conflict. The charter fixed New York's boundaries not at the shore but at the shores of Long Island, giving them total control over all aspects of the ferry system. Brooklynites countered that the East River was a public highway open to all -- that they had every right to transport themselves, under their own sails or by the strength of their own oars, across the water to any destination -- but to no avail.

What followed was a game of colonial politics as familiar as it was absurd. While Brooklynites were dedicating themselves to acts of “injury” against the New York ferries, successive governors and legislatures defined the rights to the East River vaguely back and forth between the two communities. All this changed with the “Montgomerie Charter” of 1731, which created, through royal decree, the corporation of New York, gifting it all land surrounding Manhattan Island and the Long Island waterfront from “Wallabout [where the Brooklyn Navy Yard now stands] to the west side of Red Hook.” In no uncertain terms, the charter affirmed New York’s possession of the East River.⁵

Brooklynites were infuriated with the decision and from 1731 to 1745 “the corporation of New York lived in a perpetual state of warfare with the inhabitants of Brooklyn.”⁶ As civil disobedience flourished on the East River, Brooklyn took to the courts and in 1745 sued for the right to ship its own goods to market in New York. Bizarrely, the case took over thirty years to decide. But in October 1775 Brooklyn was awarded the victory they had long hoped for. Predictably, the decision was appealed directly to George III, but within six short months Washington was frantically trying to ship his soldiers across the East River and the King of England had more pressing matters to deal with.

From 1776 to 1800, New York rose from an important harbor to the nation’s preeminent commercial hub. An expanded ferry system eased congestion, but the journey was still treacherous. Spooked livestock could upset even the stoutest vessel and United States independence had made neither the winds nor the tides more charitable. No longer could oars and sails be trusted with the city’s commercial future. Clearly, New Yorkers needed to get busy. And get busy they did. A bridge was a financial imperative, and in New York calls for economic improvement are always answered by a thousand different voices, many of which emanate from the shaded region between crank, crackpot and creative genius.

The nineteenth-century is littered with a thousand schemes to bridge the East River. Some are intriguing, most are harebrained, and it all began in 1800 when Jeremiah Johnson set down the following in his private notebook:

It has been suggested that a bridge should be constructed from this village across the East River to New York. This idea has been treated as chimerical, from the magnitude of the design; but whosoever takes it into their serious consideration, will find more weight in the practicability of the scheme than at first view is imagined. This would be the means of

raising the value of the lands on the east side of the river. It has been observed that every objection to the building of this bridge could be refuted and that it only wanted a combination of opinion to favor the attempt. A plan has already been laid down on paper, and a gentleman of acknowledged abilities and good sense has observed that he would engage to erect it in two years' time.⁷

This short paragraph contains almost the entire history of attempts to bridge the East River in the nineteenth century. A proposal is issued and greeted with great skepticism. This doubt is well founded -- no one can yet build to such "magnitude" -- but the technical issue is rapidly ignored. Instead, the conversation turns to commercial interests and the "combination of opinion" needed to "favor the attempt." For the landowner and the local trader, the proposal was "practicable" not because it was technically feasible but because it was commercially desirable. Yet money was already being made in the harbor by the region's maritime interests. They clearly "disfavored the attempt," and they spent much of the nineteenth-century fighting tooth and nail to block any changes. As a result, the requisite political will took a long time to emerge. Still, a flood of proposals came pouring in over the next seventy years.

In early 1802 a mysterious organization calling themselves the "Subscribers, Inhabitants of the City of New-York and Long Island" issued the first formal bridge proposal in an open letter to the "Honorable [...] Representatives of the People of the State of New-York." "Actuated only by motives which embrace public utility," the group felt that with "intercourse between" the two "insular" regions "at all times uncertain, and sometimes impracticable," a bridge was "indispensable" if the "great and increasing population of the city of New-York" were to enjoy "a daily supply" of the "necessaries of life."⁸ The lobbyists and their intentions must have been known locally, for the day after the petition appeared two opposing letters were published in the New York press. Both were lengthy and detailed, and, one suspects, prepared in advance; their effect was to touch off a month long debate over the merits, not so much of a bridge, but of river versus land traffic. On one side stood "Hydraulicus," on the other a variety of *noms de plume*, all representing the city's harbor trade.

Hydraulicus also worried about the "deprivations" likely to affect the growing yet "insular" city. More important, however, were military concerns and, oddly, noxious gases. Should a foreign fleet land below the city's fortifications on Long Island, what would prevent them from

marching straight up to Brooklyn, where “they may command the city, and lay it under contribution, or burn it”? A bridge, apparently, though one need hardly mention that if a foreign army could lay waste to New York from Brooklyn Heights, they could probably lay waste to a bridge as well. The East River’s “tempestuous” currents also worried Hydraulicus. Not only did the tides carry boats precariously up and down the East River, they also carried “a species of air or gas, which is extremely detrimental to animal life.” Produced by the “decomposition [of] animal or vegetable matter” (dumped daily into the East River) this miasma was carried over the whole region by the rapacious tides. The solution to this problem went beyond mere bridging. To calm the tides and cure disease, New York would have to dam the entire river.⁹

As Hydraulicus appealed to readers of the *Daily Advertiser* a gentleman styling himself “Common Sense” argued against him in the *Mercantile Advertiser*. A dam, he countered, would have the opposite effect to that envisioned by Hydraulicus. Tides were beneficial, not detrimental. They carried the “the street-water and filth” away from the city, not around it. Tides also supplied “a pleasant and refreshing breeze” in summer, a subject which seems to have fascinated the writer more than bridges. Yet after spending several paragraphs on “salutary and cooling gales,” Common Sense finally got to the crux of his opposition: “The ‘port and harbor,’ have made the city of New-York what it is,” he remarked, and “the latter can never be benefited by an injury done to the former.” New York’s rising prosperity was enabled and sustained by shipping. To compromise this was madness, especially as a bridge would only join “two islands” and neither to the “*main land*.”¹⁰

Opposition to the bridge proposal mounted in the following days. An unnamed correspondent allowed that while a bridge was worthy of the “most serious consideration,” common sense must prevail. A bridge would impede river traffic and was therefore unthinkable. Another allowed that if “we could reasonably expect such great benefits from the purposed bridge, no time ought to be lost in carrying the proposal of Hydraulicus into effect,” before going on in great detail to rubbish each and every aspect of the scheme. The debate drifted towards parody with the entry of “Caligula.” Would it not be a greater convenience,” he wondered, “to erect a bridge from the Battery to Elizabethtown” where New Yorkers could do a little strawberry picking? The matter would soon be laid to rest in the most direct and succinct manner by the ironically named “Philo-Hydraulicus”: “the events of the last year have afforded convincing testimony, that the most sublime theory, and the most absurd practice, when united, form the perfection of human virtue and talents.”¹¹

The 1802 debate was fixed on whether a bridge *should* be built, not whether it *could*. Piers in the river were taboo, and with sailboats still ascendant, insufficient height would doom any project. Clearly, the situation called for a single arch bridge of mammoth proportions. Unfortunately, no one had yet got close to the requisite length. Louis Wernwag achieved world renown in 1812 for his 340-foot clear span wooden arch bridge over the Schuylkill River at Fairmount, PA, universally known as the “Colossus,” and by the mid-1820s Claude-Louis Navier in France and Thomas Telford in Britain had erected remarkable suspension bridges with central spans of between 550 and 600 feet. At its narrowest point, however, the East River was over 1500 feet wide, and, even allowing for lengthy stone arch abutments, would require a central span of over 1000 feet. No amount of commercial desirability could make up for a lack of technological knowledge.

The poor state of American bridge building was brought to the public’s attention in 1807 by an obscure inventor, architect and landscape gardener named Thomas Pope. In an open letter to the *Evening Post*, Pope attacked the “*inconsistent, expensive, delusive, destructive, deformed, weak and unmeaning structure[s]*” that passed for modern bridges. Conceived in “lamentable circumstance” by “speculative theorists” employing “ludicrous and puerile ideas,” these “silly-formed” spans showed the “truly defective nature of the whole system of bridges heretofore adopted.” For Pope, “can-do” was an attitude, not a guarantee. Bridges were going up all over the United States, but few actually lasted. Floods, fires and ice floes ensured that the life span of bridges was short and their reliability ruled by chance. Yet Pope’s rant was no innocent warning. It was a sales pitch. Pope, it seems, had a bridge to sell.¹²

Pope’s bridge -- grandiloquently named the “Flying Lever Pendent Bridge” -- consumed five years of his professional life, and the effort would ensure his lasting fame, if not an actual bridge contract. Unfortunately for Pope, 1807 saw other developments that would play a large part in postponing the entire East River bridge project altogether. On August 17 1807, Robert Fulton launched a bizarre contraption into the Hudson River, and proceeded to motor up to Albany. All blenching smoke, flying sparks and whirring cogs and levers, Fulton’s “queer-looking craft” (as one eyewitness described it) made the round trip in record time, ushering in the era of the steamboat.¹³ Much tinkering still remained, but by the time Pope had refined his pitch, Fulton had refined his product.

Needless to say, this didn’t stop others from joining the bridge debate. Where Pope’s plans were generic, others were more specific. John Stevens -- engineer, inventor and railroad pioneer -- entered the

debate two months before Pope and spent much of the next few months refining his ideas and lobbying the State Senate. Somewhat obviously, he then spent several weeks reading assorted attacks on his proposal in the newspapers before abandoning the bridge idea and moving on. To tunnels, as it turns out.¹⁴



View of Pope's Flying Lever Bridge, 1811.

Stevens brought a more comprehensive approach to the bridge question. If piers in the river were a major objection, then he would build no piers. Instead, he would construct a floating bridge complete with draw bridges for river traffic. And if bridging the East River merely joined two islands, and neither to the mainland, then clearly both the Hudson and the East River needed bridging simultaneously. Stevens' proposal was read in front of the New York State Senate on February 28, 1807, where the issue was referred to committee. Stevens met with the members who, on March 6, reported back that the "proposed bridges . . . may be applied to purposes highly beneficial to the public," yet no full endorsement was forthcoming. Instead, the issue was thrown back on the city: "as this project involves considerations of the highest importance, and as objections may be made against the same, by persons concerned in navigation," the committee instructed Stevens to repetition at the next legislative session after he'd circulated his petition among three newspapers in New York and two in Albany.¹⁵ Effectively, the Senate requested that Stevens test his ideas in the public forum of the newspapers.

Stevens' petition finally appeared in December, and shortly afterwards all hell broke loose in the press.¹⁶ The response was entirely predictable, but Stevens didn't help his own cause either. Between his first and second petitions, Stevens ditched his floating draw bridge and opted for the *bête noire* of the shipping industry: a permanent arch bridge. The assault was begun by "A Citizen" -- "among the number of plans proposed to obstruct the navigation, and ruin the harbor of New

York, none were more ruinous in its consequences to this city than” Stevens -- who signed off “hoping that the same . . . patriotism which [was] exerted some years since on this all-important subject, will not be permitted to lie dormant.”¹⁷ Clearly, to some this was no mere technical matter, but an issue of national importance. To love free navigation was to love one’s country.

Writing in the *American Citizen*, “A Merchant” went further, wondering whether “it is not a plan of foreign projection, to aid in injuring the welfare of the city?” After all, “an inimical government could not by any intrigue adopt a more secure plan to interrupt the commercial importance of New York, than by forwarding this plan.” Suspicious on all fronts, the Merchant also worried about real estate speculation. Why “the necessity of a junction between Long Island and New York,” he asked, “unless to gratify the avarice of a few opulent landholders at the expense of public prosperity?” Many concurred with the merchant’s assessment, including “A Citizen,” who rejoined the debate the following day to report that “the most respectable inhabitants of Brooklyn, and its vicinity” were against this “threatening evil.”¹⁸ The senate continued to discuss the issue, but the debate had been defined: the commercial lifeblood of the city was about to be sacrificed to the whims of real estate speculation. By the middle of February the issue was effectively dead, and Stevens’ petition was never again mentioned in Albany.¹⁹

Stevens’ failures meant nothing to Pope, who on June 26, 1809 invited the Common Council of New York “to visit a Model of a Bridge which has been constructed consisting of one Arch only and which might be thrown over the widest rivers.” History has failed to record whether this visit took place, but Pope was determined and in 1811 he reentered the bridge debate with his now-famous *A Treatise on Bridge Architecture*. Pope’s book is an odd combination: it begins with a rant; continues voluminously though the history of bridge building; pauses to explicate the theory, design and construction of his own bridge; and concludes with a 210-line poem of heroic couplets. Its renown rests on a number of foundations each unfortunately as shaky as Pope’s engineering skills.²⁰

Although the first comprehensive history of bridge architecture to be published in the United States, it contained almost nothing new: 170 of its 288 pages were copied directly from *The Universal American Geography* (1805), *The Wonders of Nature and Art* (1807) and *Rees’ Cyclopaedia* (1810), among other sources. Pope’s absence from the literature of nineteenth-century bridge building might be the most accurate assessment of its influence and impact on the profession. In an

era where all calls to bridge the East River were met with howls of derision, Pope's met with silence.²¹

The lack of hue and cry helps debunk the greatest popular myth surrounding Pope's bridge: that he designed his structure to span the East River. If he had, he might have got some attention, but he didn't. Instead, Pope's bridge was meant to be generic: it was designed for general application, not a specific location. "It is a notorious fact," he wrote, "that there is no country in the world which is more in need of good and permanent Bridges than the United States of America." Likewise, "our forests teem with the choicest timber; and our floods can bear it on their capacious bosoms to the requisite points." America had both the need and the resources. All it now required was a national plan, and Pope was more than happy to supply one.²²

Ever content to hedge his commercial bets, however, Pope was unwilling to leave the question of location entirely unstated. The first page of his treatise featured a wonderfully rendered engraving of his bridge in profile, the flat wooden arch bridge stretching with grace and ease from one shore to another. Yet these are not generic shores, but the banks of the Hudson River: to the left, the rural hills of New Jersey, to the right the commercial bustle of the New York harbor. The presence of a steamboat -- just beginning to ply their trade on the Hudson -- is further evidence. And if this wasn't enough, Pope gave the game away in the first two lines of his epic poem: "Let the broad arc the spacious HUDSON stride, / And span COLUMBIA'S rivers far more wide."²³

Pope's book was not the announcement of a proposal but the last act of a four-year project. His last hurrah came in Philadelphia a year later with the showing of "A Grand Model, of T. Pope's Flying, Pendent, Lever, Bridge" at the Mansion House Hotel, only now and for the first time explicitly stated "suitable . . . for the East River at New York."²⁴ The Quaker City was a strange place to exhibit but having gained no traction in New York, Pope might well have hoped that some enterprising local citizen would put two and two together and come up with a commission. After all, Philadelphia was itself a city of rivers with a pressing need for bridges. New York was the goal, of course, but so was vindication. Pope sought to publicize his Philadelphia debut with a letter to the editor of the *Aurora and General Advertiser*. Describing himself as "an artist engaged in the science of Architecture," Pope humbly begged leave to raise the question of bridge building, and went on to hope that his views on this "important subject" would be picked up and reprinted throughout the city. Pope's hopes in this matter went the way of all his wishes. His letter appears to have had no impact whatsoever.²⁵

Pope's dream died that month in Philadelphia. Subsequently, we hear very little from him directly and nothing as far as bridges are concerned. He stayed in Philadelphia through the end of the year exhibiting some designs for "alterations and additions to State-House" at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and advertising his "Architectural Academy" in the *General Advertiser*. By 1814, he had fallen on hard times and under the wing of the great architect and engineer Benjamin Latrobe, who was in Pittsburgh working on a new arsenal. On Pope's behalf, Latrobe wrote to Captain Wooley of the United States Army on June 9, 1814: "Mr. Pope, who is well known for his knowledge of the subject of bridges, has with a large and extensive family shared the fate of others in our seaport towns and is now out of business. He is now in Pittsburgh in hopes of finding employment here and the means of supporting himself." Latrobe's recommendation did the trick, but not for long. Pope worked as a draughtsman for a year, but left the project when his mentor did in 1815. In his final communication to Wooley, Latrobe noted that Pope "is besides crazy about his patent lever bridge."²⁶

Pope was back in New York in 1816 "to remind the public, that the fit season for the laying out . . . Ornamental Gardens and Pleasure Grounds, is fast approaching," and of course to offer his services. By the end of the year, he was advertising "patent sun shades" of his own revolutionary design and by the following August "an improvement in building, worthy of the attention of the public:" a self-cleaning chimney.²⁷

Latrobe's endorsement lends credibility to Pope's claims as an architect and engineer. Latrobe was the country's foremost authority on the art and practice of building and in 1807 had himself studied the possibility of throwing a bridge over the East River.²⁸ Yet it is more likely that Latrobe thought more highly of Pope's draughtsmanship than his engineering acumen. Certainly, for all the importance Pope placed on scientific study, he was a poor scientist. Consisting of two thin wooden arms cantilevered on either shore by massive stone abutments, and designed to meet halfway to form a long, flat arch, Pope's bridge was a disaster waiting to happen. Wood has neither the rigidity nor the tensile strength to support a span of any appreciable length. If attempted, Pope's bridge wouldn't have got much further into the river than the boats at anchor in the harbor before snapping under its own weight.

With little talent as an architect and no civic influence, Pope was an inconspicuous individual roundly ignored during his lifetime. Yet in a marvelous twist of history, he has managed to survive, thanks in large part to that which most likely attracted Latrobe. The continued

fascination with his treatise stems from his beautiful drawings, and the bold vision they contain, not from any innate engineering ideas. Had Pope's treatise appeared without illustrations, one imagines, his name would be lost to all but the most specialized antiquarians. Instead, his exquisitely rendered etchings have managed to captivate generation after generation. Given the beauty of his designs and the daring of his plans, we seem to want to hear stories of him. And mythmakers have obliged. From the farfetched reminiscences of an unnamed New Yorker published in *St. Nicholas* magazine in 1883 to Emily Barton's 2006 novel *Brookland*, Pope's legend has grown to include more fancy than fact.²⁹ Yet this is hardly the point. Despite living with frustration and disappointment as constant companions, Pope's name has managed to live on as a testament to how Americans can dream, although not to how they can build.

On May 10, 1814, the East River was finally conquered, not by bridges but by machines. Fulton's new steamboat -- the *Nassau* -- made the journey between Beekman Slip and Ferry Street in an astonishing six minutes, and in its wake and all talk of conquering the East River dissipated.³⁰ The silence lasted eleven years and was broken by events in Europe, not by some essential need or defect in New York. On March 2, 1825, work began on Marc Isambard Brunel's stupendous 1,300 foot tunnel beneath the Thames in London and by August 22 questions were being raised in New York. Having read an account of Brunel's project, the editors of the *New-York American* were "at a loss which most to admire, the magnitude of the undertaking, or the folly of the projectors," before going on to wonder: "what would be thought here of a scheme to carry a *turnpike under the East River?*" Neither engineering skill nor will, they concluded, but sheer cost. "John Bull... is whimsical, and he has a right to his whims, as he can afford to indulge in them." Americans, they feared, could not.³¹

A gentleman calling himself "Aquarius" took issue with this observation two days later. A "culvert or tunnel" from New York to Brooklyn was entirely feasible, he thought, especially if constructed "on the plan of that is now forming at London under the Thames." Americans possessed no less ingenuity than their British cousins, especially for a project guaranteed to "benefit the public, and at the same time promote their own interests." Unmoved, the *Gazette's* editors thought "Aquarius" just as whimsical as John Bull, but refused to "laugh at him, or sneer at his lucubrations." After all, steamboats were once thought "visionary" and thousands had "ridiculed the idea of forming a canal from the Hudson to Erie," so they threw the issue to the consideration of their readers and invited response. None arrived.³²

The issue of an East River tunnel followed the fortunes of the Thames Tunnel. From the late 1820s to the mid-1840s silence reigned in New York as Brunel's project floundered. His tunnel flooded twice during the first three years, killing at least six workers. Yet the Thames brought much more than the fear of drowning into the underpass, it brought the toxic filth of London. By the early nineteenth century, the Thames was effectively an open sewer, and as water began to seep through the protective shield "tunnel sickness" began to spread among the workers. Many fell ill -- including Brunel and his extraordinary twenty-year-old son Isambard -- while others died or were struck blind. Eventually the project was shut down for seven years, before reopening in 1835. Perceptions changed, however, once the Thames Tunnel was opened to the public in 1843. Shortly after, the *Brooklyn Daily Advertiser* reported that some of Brooklyn's "wealthiest citizens" were "agitating the subject of a tunnel under the East River." If London could do it, they reasoned, why couldn't New York? They could, of course, but the question was would they want to? Although jubilation and relief accompanied the tunnel's opening, it was a forbidding place and a financial failure. Even Nathaniel Hawthorne, no stranger to dark visions, was repulsed by its "tomb-like" appearance -- "the damp plaster of the ceiling and walls, and the massive stone pavement, the crevices of which are oozy with moisture" -- and the poor wretches "who spend their lives here, and who probably blink like owls, when, once or twice a year, perhaps, they happen to climb into the sunshine." Standing before the tunnel was like gazing into "everlasting midnight," thought Hawthorne, before concluding that this "mighty piece of work has been wrought in vain [and] has proved an absolute failure."³³

Although Hawthorne visited the tunnel in 1862, its shortcomings were known in New York much earlier. When the *Tribune* began to lobby for a bridge in 1849, the *Long-Island Star* shot back: from "a pecuniary point of view ... the bridge would be a gigantic failure, like the Thames Tunnel ... Its aerial galleries would be deserted, while the comfortable and well-warmed seats of the fine steam ferry boats would be filled to overflowing."³⁴ In the face of such criticism, the *Tribune* then went on, somewhat bizarrely, to switch courses and advocate a tunnel. Unsurprisingly, the *Star* again vilified the proposal, and the tunnel issue promptly fell out of vogue.

The idea of subaqueous travel resurfaced in 1857 when *Scientific American* showcased two similar plans: Joseph de Sendzimir's "Submarine Thoroughfare" and H.P. Holcomb's "Submarine Carriage Way." Both plans sought to lay vast iron tubes on the river bed to form a continuous roadway from New York to Brooklyn. Sendzimir's thoroughfare consisted of three tubes -- one flat central section flanked

by two inclined -- covered by masonry; Holcomb's carriage way comprised thirty fifty-foot tubes bolted together with flanges. Such plans had the advantage of cost (they would be cheaper than a bridge), uninterrupted navigation (the tubes would be laid at the deepest portion of the river) and access (neither would affect the commercial life of either waterfront).³⁵

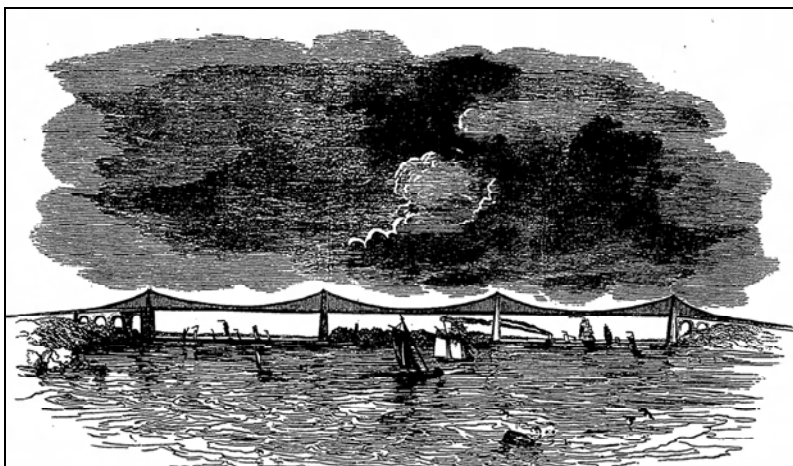
A year later, Gustavus Becker published the first serious plan to tunnel under the East River, and it came with diagrams, sound engineering sense and a fully itemized cost appraisal. For Becker, New York and Brooklyn were growing at such a rapid pace that a permanent connection was not only desirable but inevitable. And, as a bridge would necessarily interfere with navigation, a tunnel was the only realistic option. Becker's plan called for not one but two tunnels positioned side by side: one for trade; the other for passenger cars. "Partitioned off by strong walls and buttresses," a passageway for "those who preferred walking through" would be constructed next to the trade route.³⁶

While tunnel advocates were straining to gain attention, bridge proposals buzzed around the cities at an increasing pace. In late 1829, the *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser* announced that "a magnificent project, we hear, is now in agitation in this city . . . that of erecting a bridge from the foot of Maiden Lane to Brooklyn, high enough to allow the largest ships to pass under it."³⁷ Despite receiving the customary scorn of most of the press, the project -- "yet in its crudest state" -- was unique: it was the first to propose a *suspension* structure across the East River, albeit on the chain model, not the wire plan. With towers of Maine granite and a central walkway flanked by two separate carriageways, the 1829 plan prefigured that eventually adopted in 1867. In other respects, it mirrored Telford's Menai Straits Bridge in Wales, opened just four years earlier. Stone arch abutments would project 300 feet into the East River, while a center span of 500 feet would rise 160 feet above high water.³⁸

Telford's bridge was a remarkable success. It established the suspension principle as a viable way to span great distances while preserving navigation. It did not, of course, convince everybody, and neither did the 1829 proposal. The *New-York Mirror* railed against "the incalculable mischief" of such a "stupid project." "How distressing it would be to witness the shocking deformity, nay, the almost wanton destruction of so fine a haven" as the New York harbor, noted the *Mirror*, before concluding that all talk of a bridge must be silenced forthwith.³⁹ Nevertheless, further discussion came thick and fast.

Jeremiah Johnson reentered the bridge debate in 1834, and this time his views were negative. Running for mayor in the newly

incorporated City of Brooklyn, Johnson stood for disassociation. The river that separated New York from Brooklyn was a fine thing, he declared: after all, the two cities held no common “object, interest, or feeling.” If New York would just stay in New York, and Brooklyn in Brooklyn, he predicted, all would be well. Unfortunately, the Old General lost the election and shortly afterwards Brooklyn’s Common Council commissioned a study “relative to the expediency and probable expense of erecting one or more bridges between the cities of Brooklyn and New York.”⁴⁰

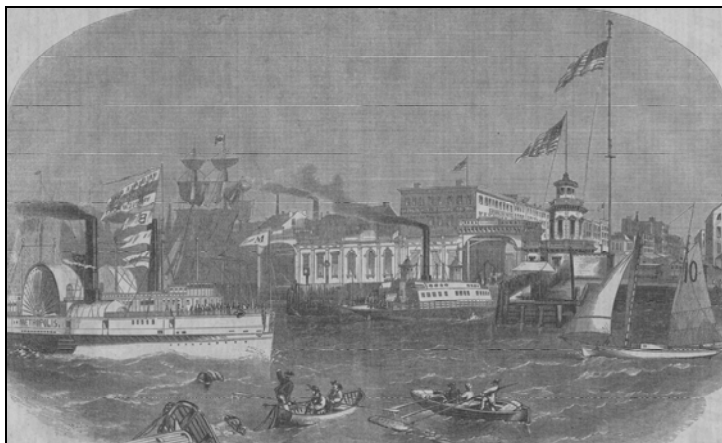


Plan for a Suspension Bridge, *The Family Magazine*, May 1, 1838.

The impetus for the Common Council’s study may have emanated, in part, from the pages of the *American Railroad Journal*, which in January 1835 published a proposal by William Lake, a civil engineer with a home in Brooklyn and offices in New York. Having to commute daily across the East River, Lake had become “forcibly struck” by “the many inconveniences attending” the ferry service; equally, by the fact that an East River bridge was “not only practicable, but would be a profitable speculation for any company to be engaged in.”⁴¹

Lake proposed a five span bridge “on the suspension principle” with a central span of 545 feet adjoined to two spans of 315 feet on either side. River clearance would be seventy feet to allow for the passage of sail ships, and a central walkway of ten feet would be flanked by roadways of twelve feet. As to the practicality of the undertaking, Lake referred readers to Wernwag’s “Colossus,” which had required much deeper river foundations, and to Telford’s 579 foot span over the Menai Strait. Lake’s proposal was “practicable,” he

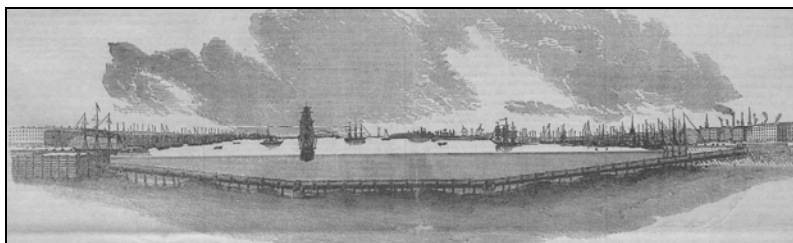
concluded, because the essential features were already in use.⁴² As with so many previous and future projects, however, the proposal and subsequent dialogue came to naught. Engineers were clearly convinced of the practicality of bridging the East River by means of the suspension principle, yet politicians and urban bosses were not. Technical know-how is, after all, only the junior partner of construction; without sufficient money and political will, no project makes it off the drawing-board.



View of the Fulton Ferry's Buildings, Brooklyn, *Ballou's Pictorial*, January 3, 1857

But the mid-nineteenth-century was a time of drawing boards, of new plans, new technologies, new methods of transport and communication. The following year, General Joseph G. Smith proposed that a dike be built across the river and was roundly ignored.⁴³ A year after that, a Mr. Graves shifted the focus a little up river when he published plans to erect an “iron hanging-bridge” over the east and west channels of the East River at Blackwell’s Island. Rooted on solid ground, Graves’ bridge was a three span affair of 700 feet per span requiring neither caissons nor coffer dams. Stone arch abutments would anchor the bridge to either shore and enable an elevation of 120 feet above high water. Four main suspension cables carried a 2,108-foot-long and forty-five foot wide roadway that ran through four large tower arches. The roadway comprised two carriageways running in opposite directions and a central footpath for pedestrian traffic. Graves’ bridge had the look and feel of a modern suspension structure, and the effect was enhanced by a somewhat rudimentary sketch that accompanied the proposal. Vaulting clear over the East River, the bridge appeared both

elegant and unobtrusive.⁴⁴ But the purpose of a bridge was for sure and swift transportation from point of manufacture to point of consumption -- from bustling Brooklyn to lower New York -- not from one relatively unpopulated rural area to another. As others could come to realize, Blackwell's Island was an engineering tease and a geographical red herring: a great asset to bridge builders placed right where no one yet needed a bridge.



Holcomb's Submarine Carriageway, *Scientific American*, June 6, 1857.

The 1830s proposals supply a prologue to the first great age of American suspension bridges. In 1839, Charles Ellet published *A Popular Notice of Wire Suspension Bridges* and three years later built the country's first modern suspension structure over the Shuylkill River at Fairmont. Shortly afterward, an obscure young engineer by the name of John Roebling was getting his start in Western Pennsylvania with a suspension aqueduct over the Allegheny River (1845) in Pittsburgh and, in the same city, a suspension bridge over the Monongahela River (1846). The engineering community held their breath while these bridges were built, opened and tested by use. Needless to say, doubters still remained, but their number grew smaller and their opposition less vocal.⁴⁵ With the completion of Ellet's 1,010 foot long suspension bridge over the Ohio River at Wheeling, and with work underway on a mighty *railway* suspension span -- the first of its kind -- across Niagara Gorge, the wire suspension bridge came of age.

The Wheeling Bridge was opened on November 15, 1849, by which time word of its success had already spread throughout the Eastern United States. Ellet's magnificent achievement spurred renewed discussion in New York and elsewhere. The *Tribune* led the charge with numerous editorials advocating a suspension bridge over the East River. Short on detail and long on the rhetoric of commercial improvement, the *Tribune* declared that this "was not the age" and "New-York and Brooklyn are not the cities" to balk at difficult problems, especially "in the present advanced stage of the art of engineering." The *Tribune's* support followed a simple rationale: "The interests of New-York and Brooklyn are identical. They are to all

intents and purposes one city in everything.” In consequence, “such a bridge would become instantly an immense and important thoroughfare, second scarcely to Broadway itself.” *Scientific American* concurred noting only that “if such a work is to be done, Charles Ellett [sic], Jr., C.E., is the man for it.”⁴⁶ Such talk raised the ire of an obscure young Brooklyn journalist by the name of Walt Whitman who fired back at the *Tribune* from the pages of the *Sunday Dispatch*: “We notice there is much talk, just at present, of a Bridge to Brooklyn. Nonsense. There is no need of a bridge, while there are incessantly plying such boats as the New-York, the Wyandance, and the Montauk.”⁴⁷ Shortly afterwards in January 1850, Charles W. Burton held a public lecture at Clinton Hall in New York to advance the idea of a bridge linking New York and Brooklyn, and was ridiculed by the always curmudgeonly *Long-Island Star*: “New Yorkers are extremely anxious to take us into their embrace. We are old and strong enough to look out for ourselves, and so long as we can keep well regulated and expeditious ferries we are satisfied.”⁴⁸



Ice Bridge Across the East River, *Harper's Weekly*, February 9, 1867.

On March 16, 1855, a large crowd gathered at Niagara Falls to watch a train pull twenty double loaded freight cars from Canada to the United States over a stupendous new suspension bridge. Most feared the worst: that the bridge -- strung 230 feet high over the Niagara Gorge -- would collapse and take with it five years of labor and nearly half a million dollars in capital. The span's supremely confident designer and engineer, however, took the hubbub in stride. John Roebling watched the trials "sitting upon a saddle on top of one of the towers" and reported feeling "less vibration than I do in my brick dwelling at Trenton during the passage of an Express Train."⁴⁹ His Niagara

suspension bridge -- the world's longest at the time and the first to carry railroad traffic -- was a huge success and Roebling was an overnight sensation, the foremost bridge engineer in a country desperate for bridges.



Proposed Suspension Bridge, *Scientific American*, August 5, 1868.

Roebling returned home in the wake of his triumph to find his mailbag overflowing with requests. Among them was a short query by two New Yorkers -- Archibald H. Lowry, a real estate speculator, and Henry Kneeland, a merchant who caused a small scandal five years later when he shot himself in the head -- asking Roebling to examine "the East River at Blackwell's Island with a view of bridging it." Sensing the big stage, Roebling rushed off to New York to survey the site, and on June 13, 1856 reported back to Lowry and Kneeland. Roebling planned a three span structure, with a central span over Blackwell's Island of 500 feet and two flanking spans of 800 feet each. For "a first class structure, in point of convenience, strength, permanence & beauty," the cost would run to \$1,216,740.⁵⁰

Lowry and Kneeland balked at Roebling's price tag, and on August 18 1856 the bridge builder signed a contract to erect a bridge over the Ohio River between Covington and Cincinnati, an opportunity he'd been lobbying for since 1846. The Ohio deal put Roebling's New York ambitions on hold. But not for long. Roebling continued to set his mind to the problem while in Cincinnati. He began to sketch, to plot, to calculate. The project, he decided, would be his crowning

glory. But he would not work up in the lonely reaches of Blackwell's Island, but at the commercial and political heart of lower New York where the need was the greatest and the challenge more demanding.

By March 1857, Roebling was ready to go public. With an itemized proposal and numerous sketches in hand, he sought out influential industrialists and politicians, before announcing his intentions in a letter to Horace Greeley at the *Tribune*. Greeley was an obvious correspondent and natural associate. An influential and respected voice throughout the United States, Greeley shared Roebling's attachment to the emerging Republican Party and had long supported a permanent link between the two independent cities: "New York and Brooklyn," he proclaimed in 1849, "must be united."⁵¹

Roebling's letter was a model of practical promotion. He began not with current conditions, but with the future prospect. Irrefutably, New York and Brooklyn faced a coming crisis. The populations of both cities were growing and could, within "say fifty years," reach well into the "millions" on "both shores." This massive growth spurt would, of course, necessitate more and more ferries, eventually turning river traffic into a floating circus. "Delays and collisions" would rule the journey between New York and Brooklyn, creating gridlock and serious harm to commercial shipping. In essence, Roebling subtly turned all previous arguments on their head: far from ruining navigation, a bridge was actually the only practical way to maintain it. Without a single-span wire suspension bridge, the East River would become nothing more than a parking lot.

Roebling's initial designs for an East River Bridge replicated his work at Niagara. Running from City Hall Park to Brooklyn Heights, a lower floor would carry "all kinds of vehicles and passengers" while the upper floor would house two railroad tracks. In addition, Roebling was careful to stress the broader commercial implications of a bridge. The span would function not only as a great urban thoroughfare but as a destination in and of itself: "strangers in the city will be induced to make a trip for the sole purpose of enjoying the grand sight." In equal measure, observatories placed at the top of the towers would further enhance the bridge's role as a tourist beacon.⁵²

Roebling's letter generated a wealth of local chatter but no contract. Under his influence, a bill to incorporate the "New York and Brooklyn Suspension Bridge Company" was introduced into the New York State legislature, but it failed to pass.⁵³ This, of course, did not stop the tenacious Roebling. It had taken him ten years to secure his Ohio contract, and if it took a further ten years to secure an East River commission, then so be it. And as things shook out, it did.

Roebing kept the idea of an East River bridge before the engineering community while working in Cincinnati. In response to a favorable editorial in the *Architects' and Mechanics' Journal* in March 1860, Roebing composed a lengthy article about his plans to bridge the East River. He still planned a structure along the lines of his Niagara span, this time with "sidewalks on both floors" to attract sightseers, and again warned of the commercial implications of a crowded and congested East River. Roebing was leery of stating a fixed location, at least until he could survey the area personally, but had decided that any bridge must "bring the City Hall of New York within a five minute ride of the City Hall of Brooklyn." As far as local government was concerned, Roebing had also decided that for "the enterprise to be successful [it] must be conducted by individuals." "As to the corporations of Brooklyn and New York undertaking the job, no such hope need be entertained in our time," he noted, before getting to the elephant in the room: "nor is it desirable to add to the complication and corruption of the governmental machinery of these cities." Few heeded Roebing's warning, but a year later the Tweed Courthouse -- the living embodiment of Tammany graft and civic embezzlement -- was begun and looting became the principal business of local government.⁵⁴

As Tweed was figuring out ways to fund his new political machine, Lincoln was winning the general election and South Carolina was preparing to secede. With the outbreak of hostilities in April 1861, destruction not construction became the national activity, and all building plans were put on hold, including Roebing's half-finished Covington and Cincinnati Bridge, poised precariously between slave-state (although non-Confederate) Kentucky and free-state Ohio. As the war raged, the towers of Roebing's Ohio Bridge stood as lonely symbols of a stalled nation. But as the war turned in the summer of 1863, Roebing was able to resume work, finally completing his mammoth bridge in December 1866.

With the end of his Ohio project in sight -- and likewise the war itself -- Roebing again pushed for his East River plan with a letter to *The Engineer*.⁵⁵ Once more, the project received favorable reviews, but it would take the intervention of a man who had designed the nation's first modern sewerage system (in Brooklyn, coincidentally), coupled with the Southern surrender, to give the project its first real burst of energy. In 1865 Colonel Julius W. Adams returned from the war and began to lobby around Brooklyn for a tubular suspension bridge of his own design. Through his work on the city's waterworks, Adams possessed the one thing Roebing lacked: direct access to Brooklyn's political and financial muscle. Composed of "elliptic tubes, placed side by side and supported by ribbons of steel," Adams' bridge was never a

serious contender, but the idea roused the attention of local contractor and Democratic heavyweight William C. Kingsley. Sensing a contracting goldmine, or at the very least the commercial expansion of his adopted city, Kingsley became convinced about the bridge and set out to make it happen. His first move was to enlist the old Brooklyn patriarch and state senator Henry C. Murphy. Once a great figure in the nation -- he came within a single vote of the Democratic presidential nomination in 1852 -- Murphy was an odd but astute choice. In the twilight of his career, and holed up in his mansion in far-flung Bay Ridge, his voice was no longer the city's most influential, but his newspaper was. As proprietor of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* Murphy was able to direct and influence the bridge discussion in ways that Roebling and Kingsley could only dream of.⁵⁶

While Adams, Kingsley and Roebling all plotted and planned, other proposals circulated. In December 1856, Samuel Nowlan exhibited designs for a stone arch bridge of five successive 300 foot spans, described by *Scientific American* as "the most ingenious plan yet proposed for such a structure over the East River." Another five span arch bridge -- this time of cast-iron design -- was exhibited at the offices of J.P. Stryker in lower New York eleven years later. "The Empire Bridge," as it was known, featured a center span of 1,020 feet with adjoining arches of diminishing length. The single deck roadway was wide enough to carry "double car tracks, sidewalk and carriage ways." The winter of 1867 was a particularly fertile time for bridge proposals. On January 23, the East River froze solid, and in a matter of days, hundred of bridge proposals had flooded into the local papers, "most all of which will tumble with their own weight," commented Alfred Boller (while proposing his own "suspension trussed girder bridge" at a meeting of the American Institute), "and fall still born to the ground." The most bizarre called for a giant X-shaped bridge -- called "The Brooklyn Combination Bridge" -- with two terminals in each city. In 1869, U.S. Navy engineer Edwin L. Brady began to lobby for what the *Brooklyn Daily Union* described as the "virtual destruction of the vexatious East River." Brady wished to "run a dike, several hundred feet wide, with streets, houses and docks upon it, from the New York side of South Ferry clear across to Brooklyn."⁵⁷

No one, of course, stood a chance against the country's foremost bridge builder and the confluence of events that rolled towards the incorporation of the New York Bridge Company in April 1867. For Roebling, the great freeze of 1867 arrived like a blessing. Three weeks earlier his Covington and Cincinnati Bridge had opened to rave reviews and national fanfare. With a center span of over 1,000 feet it effortlessly took its place as the world's longest suspension bridge.

Exactly at that moment New York and Brooklyn were clamoring for someone to bridge the East River. It didn't take Kingsley and Murphy too long to realize that no one in their right minds would trust such a massive project to anyone but Roebling.

Everyone associated with the project agreed, and on May 23, 1867, Roebling signed a contract that went far beyond anything he had hoped for. Not only was he contracted to act as chief engineer, but also free to design and construct any type of bridge he desired. As David McCullough explains, "a man had been selected, rather than a particular plan."⁵⁸ In fact, Roebling's plans had barely advanced since his initial proposal ten years earlier. But they would, and over the next three months, with his *carte blanche* in hand, he closeted himself in his office in Trenton and worked feverishly at his drawing board. By September 1, 1867, he was ready to issue a full report:

The contemplated work, when constructed in accordance with my designs, will not only be the greatest Bridge in existence, but it will be the greatest engineering work of this continent, and of the age. Its most conspicuous features, the great towers, will serve as landmarks to the adjoining cities, and they will be entitled to be ranked as national monuments. As a great work of art, and as a successful specimen of advanced Bridge engineering, this structure will forever testify to the energy, enterprise and wealth of the community, which shall secure its erection.⁵⁹

His bridge would be bold, daring and audacious; it would confer glory upon its sponsors and lead Brooklyn, New York and the nation into a bright new future. Now, of course, all he had to do was build it.

NOTES

¹ Quoted in Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 419-422.

² See Henry R. Stiles, "Brooklyn Ferries and Ferry Rights," in *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History, and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, New York from 1683 to 1884*, ed. Henry R. Stiles (New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1884), 2 vols, I: 425-446.

³ My understanding of the history of the East River ferry system is taken from Stiles, “Brooklyn Ferries and Ferry Rights,” I: 425-446; Henry E. Pierrepont, *Historical Sketch of the Fulton Ferry and its Associated Ferries* (Brooklyn: Union Ferry Company, 1879); Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 353, 432, 580-1.

⁴ Stiles, “Brooklyn Ferries and Ferry Rights,” 426-7.

⁵ See Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, 138-9.

⁶ Stiles, “Brooklyn Ferries and Ferry Rights,” 429.

⁷ Henry Stiles, *A History of the City of Brooklyn, Including the Old Town and Village of Brooklyn, the Town of Bushwick, and the Village and City of Williamsburgh* (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1993 (1867-70)), 3 vols, II: 383-4.

⁸ *New-York Evening Post*, February 18, 1802, 2.

⁹ *Daily Advertiser*, February 19, 1802, 3.

¹⁰ *Mercantile Advertiser*, February 19, 1802, 2.

¹¹ See *Daily Advertiser*, February 20, 1802, 2; February 22, 1802, 3; February 23, 1802, 2; March 15, 1802, 2. Also see *Daily Advertiser*, March 10, 1802, 2 and March 12, 1802, 2.

¹² See *New York Evening Post*, April 29, 1807, 2. Shortly after his open letter, Pope took out space in numerous newspapers to advertise his bridge. See *Mercantile Advertiser*, June 16, 1807, 1, for example.

¹³ John Q. Wilson quoted in Alice Crary Sutcliffe, *Robert Fulton and the “Clermont”* (New York: Century, 1909), 247.

¹⁴ For information on Stevens’ plans to lay a two-way vehicular tunnel on (not under) the Hudson river bed, and for further details about his bridge proposals see Archibald Douglas Turnbull, *John Stevens: An American Record* (New York: Century, 1928), 216-225.

¹⁵ See *Journal of the Senate of the State of New York*, 30th Session, 1807, 62 and 75.

¹⁶ The petition was published in the *American Citizen*, the *Public Advertiser*, the *New York Evening Post*, the *Albany Register* and the *Albany Gazette* and ran, at the behest of the State Senate, for two months. For a general summary of the opposition see Turnbull, *John Stevens*, 219-222.

¹⁷ *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser*, January 16, 1808, 2.

¹⁸ See *American Citizen*, January 27, 1808, 3; *Public Advertiser*, January 28, 1808, 2.

¹⁹ A Citizen expounded on the “ruinous consequences” of “land speculation” at great length in a further letter: “Does not this present proposition of erecting bridges over the north [Hudson] and east rivers smell strong of land speculation? Are not the few men, who are most assiduous, and who have left no stone unturned, to effect the purpose, the sole proprietors of the land upon which the abutments are to be raised?” Unfortunately, the answer was yes: Stevens owned most of Hoboken. See the *Public Advertiser*, February 6, 1808, 2. Also see *Journal of the Senate of the State of New York*, 31st Session, 1808, 26, 33-34 and 49.

²⁰ See I.N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of New-York Island, 1498-1909* (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1915), 6 vols, V: 1506. The most interesting assessment of Pope’s book, and in many respects its most generous, remains Alan Trachtenberg, *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol*, second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979 (1965), 24-29.

²¹ Pope’s book appears to have generated only a single review, a thoroughly hostile rebuke printed in *The General Repository and Review*. After rubbishing the entire treatise, the reviewer concluded with a stinging reference to Pope’s poetry: “for ourselves we set about as high a value on his inventive powers in poetry as in bridge building.” One need hardly add that Pope’s poetry is truly awful. See *The General Repository and Review*, 2:1 (July 1812), 141-163.

²² Thomas Pope, *A Treatise on Bridge Architecture* (New York: Alexander Niven, 1811), 127.

²³ See *ibid.*, frontispiece and 281.

²⁴ *Aurora and General Advertiser*, February 10, 1812, 1.

²⁵ *Aurora and General Advertiser*, February 14, 1812, 2.

²⁶ See Pavel Petrovich Svin'in, *Picturesque United States of America, 1811, 1812, 1813*, ed. Avrahm Yarmolinsky (New York: W. E. Rudge, 1930), 40-41; *Aurora and General Advertiser*, December 1, 1812, 1; Talbot Hamlin, *Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 419-2.

²⁷ See *Commercial Advertiser*, February 16, 1816, 3; *Columbian*, December 20, 1816, 4; *New York Evening Post*, August 2, 1817, 2.

²⁸ See Benjamin Latrobe, "Report and Estimate on the New York-Long Island Bridge," in Hamlin, *Benjamin Henry Latrobe*, 578-582. Latrobe's report reached the following conclusions: first, that such a bridge was entirely feasible; second, that no municipal government or private organization would be able to afford it.

²⁹ See Charles Barnard, "The Brooklyn Bridge," *St. Nicolas Magazine*, 10:9 (July 1883), 699-700 and http://www.smallspiralnotebook.com/interviews/2006/09/aaron_hamburg_er_interviews_emi.shtml.

³⁰ Brian J. Cudahy, *Over and Back: The History of Ferryboats in New York Harbor* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1990), 34-37. As late as 1829, the *New-York Mirror* could write: in a "former period, the scheme [to bridge the East River] seemed connected with some semblance of propriety, inasmuch as there was very frequent delay and difficulty, and sometimes serious danger, in crossing the river. Since the establishment of steamboats, this objection has been completely removed. A passage is now effected in much less time than it could be on foot over a bridge." See *New-York Mirror*, November 14, 1829, 7.

³¹ *New-York American*, August 22, 1825, 2.

³² *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser*, August 24, 1825, 3.

³³ See L.T.C. Rolt, *Isambard Kingdom Brunel: A Biography* (London: Book Club Associates, 1972(1957)), 20-37; *Brooklyn Daily Advertiser*, January 22, 1846, 3; Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Up the Thames," *The Atlantic Monthly*, 11:7 (May 1863), 599-602. Visiting London during the

American Civil War, Hawthorne himself raised the issue of a tunnel beneath the Hudson River as a somewhat lighthearted yet surprisingly vicious solution to ongoing conflict: "Could I have looked forward a few years, I might have regretted that American enterprise had not provided a similar tunnel, under the Hudson [...] It would be delightful to clap up all the enemies of our peace and Union in the dark together, and [...] when the turmoil shall be all over, the Wrong washed away in blood (since that must needs be the cleansing fluid), and the Right firmly rooted in the soil which that blood will have enriched, they might crawl forth again and catch a single glimpse at their redeemed country, and feel it to be a better land than they deserve, and die!" See *ibid.*, 602.

³⁴ *Long-Island Star*, October 27, 1849, quoted in Jacob Judd, "The History of Brooklyn, 1834-1855: Political and Administrative Aspects" (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1959), 188.

³⁵ See "Sendzimir's Submarine Thoroughfare" *Scientific American*, April 4, 1857, 233 and "Holcomb's Submarine Carriage Way," *Scientific American*, June 6, 1857, 305. Both Sendzimir's and Holcomb's plans were revived and reprinted a decade later by *Scientific American* magazine in response to both the Brooklyn Bridge and the construction of the Whitehall Pneumatic Tube Railway across the Thames in London. For the magazine's editors, Roebling's bridge was too expensive and too injurious to the surrounding area (the approaches would stretch deep into both cities obliterating many houses and businesses), whereas a tunnel, built on the "submerged" principle, would prove both cheap and convenient. Unfortunately, *Scientific American* had too much faith in the British. London's pneumatic tube was abandoned a year later. See "Crossing the East River," *Scientific American*, June 22, 1867, 396.

³⁶ See "Becker's Plan for Connecting New York and Brooklyn," *Scientific American*, June 26, 1858, 336. For a similar proposal one year later see *American Railroad Times*, February 19, 1859, 2.

³⁷ *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser*, November 5, 1829, 2.

³⁸ See *Ibid.* and Roland A. Paxton, "Menai Bridge, 1818-26: Evolution of Design," in *Thomas Telford: Engineer*, ed. Alastair Penfold (London: Thomas Telford, Ltd., 1980), 84-116.

³⁹ *New-York Mirror*, November 14, 1829, 7. The *Saturday Evening Post* was also virulently against the scheme. See *Saturday Evening Post*, November 14, 1829, 1.

⁴⁰ *Long-Island Star*, February 13, 1834 quoted in David McCullough, *The Great Bridge: The Epic Story of the Building of the Brooklyn Bridge* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), 113 and *Long-Island Star*, November 5, 1835 quoted in Judd, "The History of Brooklyn, 1834-1855," 188.

⁴¹ See *American Railroad Journal*, January 10, 1835, 4-5. Lake followed up his proposal with a short history of the suspension bridge. See *American Railroad Journal*, January 17, 1835, 19-20. Lake's proposal was also published in the *Mechanics' Magazine*, January 10, 1835, 17-18.

⁴² See *American Railroad Journal*, January 10, 1835, 4-5.

⁴³ See Hamilton Schuyler, *The Roeblings: A Century of Engineers, Bridge-Builders and Industrialists* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1931), 131 and Harold Coffin Syrett, *The City of Brooklyn, 1865-1898: A Political History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 146.

⁴⁴ See *The Family Magazine*, May 1, 1838, 41-3.

⁴⁵ In 1845, the amateur historian Reverend Samuel Prime reported that the "erection of a bridge between New York and Brooklyn of a single arch, so lofty as to form no obstruction to navigation and so strong as to bid defiance to the winds of heaven, has become the great topic of conversation." His reaction was simple: "who could think of crossing on a bridge [when] you can pass from one city to the other with equal safety and greater rapidity" on a ferry? See "Bridges Proclaim Might of New York," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, December 26, 1926, 7.

⁴⁶ See *New York Tribune*, November 3, 1849, 2; *New York Tribune*, November 10, 1849, 2; *Scientific American*, November 3, 1849, 53. Unfortunately, Ellet's stock as a bridge-builder would fall over the next five years: he lost his contract to construct the Niagara Gorge Bridge in December 1848 and on May 16 1854 his beloved Wheeling Bridge was swept away by a massive storm.

⁴⁷ Walt Whitman, "Letters From a Travelling Bachelor, Number X," *New York Sunday Dispatch*, December 23, 1849 reprinted in Joseph Jay

Rubin, *The Historic Whitman*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1973), 347-352.

⁴⁸ See Judd, "The History of Brooklyn, 1834-1855," 189.

⁴⁹ John A. Roebling, "Memoir of the Niagara Falls Suspension and Niagara Falls International Bridge," in *Papers and Practical Illustrations of Public Works of Recent Construction, Both British and American* (London: John Weale, 1856), 3.

⁵⁰ See Roebling Collection, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Box 6, Blackwell's Island Bridge (1856-57) Folder.

⁵¹ Quoted in McCullough, *The Great Bridge*, 24.

⁵² See John A. Roebling, "Bridge Over the East River Between New-York and Brooklyn," *New York Tribune*, March 27, 1857, 5.

⁵³ *Circular*, March 5, 1857, 27.

⁵⁴ See *Architects' and Mechanics' Journal*, March 31, 1860, 5 and April 14, 1860, 13-14. The Tweed Courthouse took twenty years to build and cost the city over thirteen million dollars, a majority of which disappeared into the pockets of Tweed and his political friends. See Alexander B. Callow, Jr., *The Tweed Ring* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 197-206.

⁵⁵ See "Proposed American Suspension Bridge," *The Engineer*, February 19, 1864, 107.

⁵⁶ The fullest account of the machinations behind the creation of the bridge is McCullough, *The Great Bridge*, 122-143.

⁵⁷ See *Scientific America*, December 20, 1856, 120; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, January 28, 1867, 2; *Annual Report of the American Institute of the City of New York, for the Year 1866-67* (Albany, NY: Van Benthuysen, 1867), 893-907; Barbara Head Millstein, "Crossing the River: The Alternatives," in *The Great East River Bridge, 1883-1983* (New York: Harry H. Abrams, 1983), 146; *Brooklyn Daily Union*, January 7, 1868, 2.

⁵⁸ McCullough, *The Great Bridge*, 120.

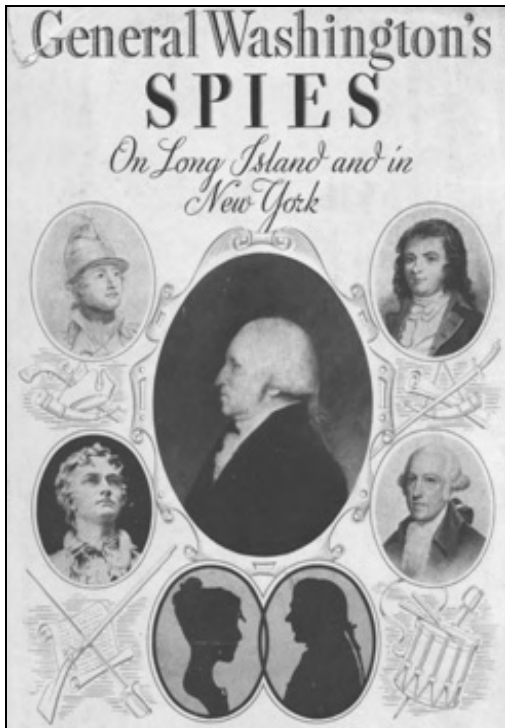
⁵⁹ John A. Roebling, *Report of John A. Roebling, C.E., to the President and Directors of the New York Bridge Company on the Proposed East River Bridge* (Brooklyn: Daily Eagle Print, 1867), 3-4.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

FROM CAPTIVITY TO FREEDOM: LONG ISLAND DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

On October 5, 2007 the Long Island Historical Journal and the Stony Brook University Libraries hosted a conference entitled From Captivity to Freedom: Long Island During the American Revolution. The conference was held in the Charles B. Wang Center at Stony Brook University and was inspired by Stony Brook's acquisition in May of 2006 of a letter signed by George Washington to General Benjamin Tallmadge, Washington's chief intelligence officer from Long Island, dated September 24, 1779. The next three articles originated from papers given at this conference. They follow the abstracts of an additional paper and a documentary film presented at the conference.



General Washington's Spies on Long Island and in New York by Morton Pennypacker. In 1939, Pennypacker identified Robert Townsend as the spy known to Washington only as “Culper Jr.”

Edwin Burrows

The Prisoners of New York

During his talk, Dr. Burrows, the co-author of the 1999 Pulitzer Prize-winning *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* and Distinguished Professor of History at Brooklyn College, described how over 20,000-plus Americans were held by the British in New York during the Revolution, under conditions so atrocious that the mortality rate often reached seventy percent or more. Dr. Burrows raised questions about how this aspect of the war has been treated historically.

Gerard Sztabnik

The Spies of the Revolution (Docudrama)

Gerard Sztabnik graduated from the School of Visual Arts in 2007. He is the writer, director, and producer of a documentary on *The Spies of the Revolution*, which focuses attention on the Culper Spy Ring of Setauket, Long Island. The film detailed how eighteen-century operatives from Long Island fought in a secret war filled with encrypted messages, double agents and secret aliases. In this investigative docudrama, based on historical research and expert testimonials, the manners and methods in which George Washington's covert spy ring conducted espionage and helped the patriots to win the war is told through a series reenactments and interviews.

**SURVIVING THE ORDEAL:
LONG ISLAND WOMEN DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY
WAR**

Natalie A. Naylor

Long Island's role in the Revolutionary War is widely known. But few historians have explored the role that women on Long Island played in that war. Natalie Naylor ploughs this rich but mostly untrameled terrain.

During the Revolutionary era, women were nearly half the adult population on Long Island and should not be ignored and forgotten, as they have been in most of the histories.¹ The only women usually mentioned are Sally Townsend of Raynham Hall and Anna (Nancy) Strong in the Culper Spy Ring, whose experiences have been romanticized and embellished.² The mysterious "Lady 355," allegedly in the spy ring, is another woman sometimes mentioned, but historians in the 1990s demolished much of that legend.³ Lydia Minturn Post's *Personal Recollections of the American Revolution*, which was reprinted in 1970, is sometimes quoted by women's historians (though not by Long Island historians), but its authenticity has been conclusively challenged.⁴

In Continental Village (just northeast of upstate Peekskill) where patriot troops were stationed during the Revolution, a memorial erected in 1921 claimed to be the first (and perhaps it is still the only one) to the women of the Revolutionary War. The plaque on the stone states, "In memory of the Mothers of the Revolution who watched and prayed while our fathers fought, that we might be free."⁵ But "mothers" and, more specifically, Long Island women, did more than simply "watch and pray" during the war. Although Long Island women certainly did not win the war nor play a major role, their activities are largely invisible in the historical accounts.

In the colonial period, womens' sphere was the home, not the public arena. Official records, newspapers, and historical accounts overwhelmingly report on the activities of men. Only occasionally are there women's names. But the soldiers and other patriots and loyalists whose names are in the history books had wives, mothers, and daughters who were affected by the Revolution. Some became widows or orphans when men were killed in battle. When the British took control of Long Island in late August 1776, many women went with their families to Connecticut as refugees. They, as well as those who remained on the island, had their lives disrupted; many had their homes

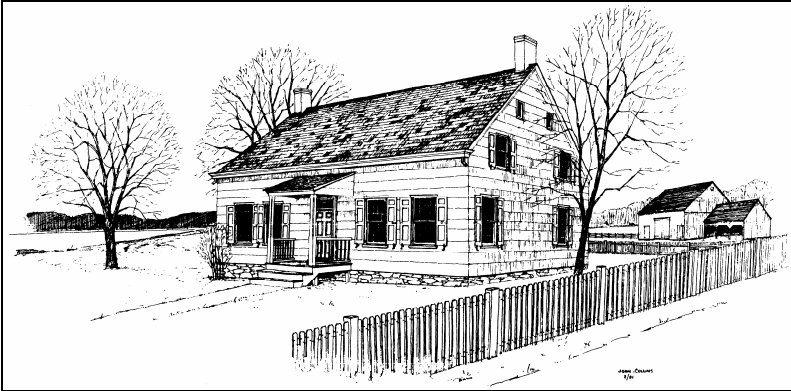
and farms destroyed as a result of the British occupation of the island. At the end of the war some loyalist women left with the British evacuation, going to Canada or England. Few escaped the war's effect.

The economic boycotts instituted by the colonists in response to the Stamp Act and the Townshend Acts in the 1760s could not have been effective without the women who refused to purchase tea, cloth, and other goods imported from Britain. Women found substitutes for tea and "daughters of liberty" took out spinning wheels and wove homespun. A group of Long Island women, in fact, came to the attention of a Boston newspaper in 1769 which reported: "Three young Ladies at Huntington on Long Island, namely Ermina, Leticia and Sabrina, having met together, agreed to try their Dexterity at the Spinning-wheel; accordingly the next morning they sit themselves down, and like the Virtuous Woman, put their Hands to the spindle and held the Distaff; at Evening they had 26 Skeins of good Linen Yarn each Skin [sic], containing 4 ounces, all [of] which were the effects of that Day's Work only."⁶

The published diary of Mary Cooper, an Oyster Bay farm woman on Cove Neck, covers the years before the Revolution. Cooper writes primarily of domestic affairs, the weather, and going to meeting (church). Although the Coopers had at least one household slave (who is almost invisible in the diary), Mary is often exhausted from preparing and preserving food, cleaning the house, washing dishes and clothes, producing thread, soap, and candles, providing for many visitors -- relatives, tradesmen and others -- and performing other household tasks.⁷

Many women entered marriage and endured the drudgery of housework in anticipation of happiness with children and family, but their expectations were not always fulfilled. Mary Cooper married at fourteen and bore six children; two died in infancy, two in childhood, and the two daughters who survived to adulthood each died before their parents. Child mortality was a fact of life in those days, but Cooper endured more than her share. She wrote her diary when she was in her fifties and her two adult daughters were still alive. One had separated from her husband and lived with Cooper and her husband, Joseph Cooper. Mary's relationship with her husband apparently did not bring her joy. On her wedding anniversary in 1769, she wrote: "This day is forty years sinc[e] I left my father's house and come here, and here have I seene littel els[e] but harde labour and sorrow, crosses of every kind. I think in every re[s]pect the state of my affairs is more then [sic] forty times worse then when I came here first, except that I am nearer the desierered haven. A fine clear cool day. I am un well."⁸ It was not a happy marriage.

Mary Cooper wrote nothing about political events. The surviving pages of her diary end in October 1773, before the outbreak of hostilities. In her final years (she died in 1778), she might have written about the British soldiers based in Oyster Bay and Huntington taking wood, food, or hay from their farm, but if so, these pages have been lost.



Mary Cooper's home (c. 1770) was typical of many Long Island houses of the era. (Drawing by John Collins, 1981. Courtesy of the Oyster Bay Historical Society.)

Long Island's population just prior to the war in 1771 was nearly 28,000 -- larger than New York City's population of just under 22,000. Long Island, of course, included much more territory than New York, which encompassed only lower Manhattan island, considerably south of today's Houston Street.⁹ On Long Island, Suffolk County was overwhelmingly patriot, while the majority of the population in Kings County were Tories or loyalists; and Queens (which included present day Nassau County) was divided. In fact, patriots in the northern part of Hempstead seceded in September 1775, a split confirmed by the state after the war with the division of the town into North Hempstead and South Hempstead, now the Town of Hempstead. But the divisions in the Queens population were not equal. Recent estimates are that a majority of those in Queens, 60 percent, were neutral or apolitical, with 27 percent loyalist, and only 12 percent patriot.¹⁰

Outbreak of Fighting

In mid-August 1776, when forty-six men in the patriot militia were protecting the cattle grazing in Far Rockaway, it was a woman who first alerted the men that the British were coming. After "looking out of an upper window," Nelly Cornell told an American officer, that she saw

“trees rising from the ocean.” After another officer also looked, he said, “that’s the British fleet; down with the tents, and let’s be off to the ferry.” They impressed wagons to convey the baggage and drove the cattle off the peninsula.¹¹ What Nelly Cornell saw was a fleet from Europe bringing 10,000 British and Hessian soldiers to Staten Island. Ten days later more than 15,000 men begin landing at New Utrecht on western Long Island. At the end of August, the Battle of Long Island was fought in Brooklyn.

There is no record of women involved in the actual fighting on Long Island, although women were involved elsewhere in other battles of the Revolution. In Brooklyn the patriots were greatly outnumbered and soundly defeated. It could have been the end of the war, but thanks to a heavy fog, muffled oars, and the failure of the British to immediately follow up on their victory, General Washington was able to evacuate his surviving troops to Manhattan. The evacuation, however, was almost foiled by a woman. Mrs. John Rapalye was upset because her husband had been sent to Connecticut by the patriots “being suspected of disaffection to the American cause.” From her house on Brooklyn Heights she observed Washington transporting his soldiers across the East River after the defeat. Mrs. Rapalye sent a slave to report this to the British, but he was taken by Hessian soldiers who could not understand English. The next morning when he could give the message to an officer who understood English, it was too late; Washington had evacuated all his troops.¹²

Just prior to the Battle of Long Island in August 1776, Suffolk militia commander General Nathaniel Woodhull had orders to round up cattle and sheep in Queens and drive them east to prevent them from falling into British hands. He was captured by the British near Jamaica. Reportedly, when ordered to say “God Save the King,” he responded instead, “God save all honest men,” and his incensed British captors struck him with their swords. Afterwards, Mrs. Howard, the wife of a local tavern keeper, gave him food. He was moved a couple of times, and when the general realized he was dying, he sent for his wife and asked her to bring food from their Mastic farm. Ruth Woodhull arrived just before he died and he asked her to distribute the provisions among the prisoners, which she did. A friend sarcastically wrote, “They were so generous to his lady as to indulge her with liberty to carry home the general’s corpse and bury it with decency.”¹³

Most officers, when captured, received better treatment than General Woodhull, and many were paroled in Brooklyn and housed with private families. Women had responsibility for feeding and sheltering the prisoners. American authorities paid for their care, but

many women whose names we do not know provided food to prisoners and nursed wounded soldiers without compensation.

Three of New York's signers of the Declaration of Independence had ties to Long Island, and the wives of two are worth mentioning. Francis Lewis had a country home in Whitestone, Queens. When British troops swept over the island in September 1776, one of their first targets was Lewis's retirement home. They did not find him in Whitestone, but they took his wife Elizabeth prisoner and wrecked the house. Accounts indicate she was kept several months "in a room without a bed or a change of clothing," and given little food. Eventually General Washington had two prominent Tory women in Philadelphia kidnapped and "threatened them with the same treatment as Mrs. Lewis unless she was released." Elizabeth Lewis was able to return to her husband, but not to Long Island. She "was broken in health, both mentally and physically" and died "within two years," a casualty of the war.¹⁴

A second signer, William Floyd, lived in Suffolk County. His wife, Hannah, managed to bury the family silver before leaving for Connecticut in September 1776. Hannah wrote her husband, "We have disagreeable news from the East End of Long Island . . . our friends houses [are] filled with soldiers." The Floyds' Mastic estate was occupied by the British, part of the house used as a stable, and slaves impressed. Hannah died at the age of 41 in 1781, her early death attributed to anxiety about her husband's safety. After the war William Floyd was able to retrieve the silver his wife had buried.¹⁵

After the defeat at the Battle of Long Island, the New York Convention recommended that Long Islanders send as many as possible of their women, children, and slaves, together with grain and livestock, to Connecticut. (They assumed patriot men would be serving in the militia or army.) These "refugees of Long Island" are estimated to number nearly 5,000, more than 15 percent of the pre-war population of the island. Most of the refugees were from Suffolk County, whose men were most outspoken about their opposition to the British. Perhaps 30 percent of Suffolk's population became refugees in Connecticut.¹⁶ It wasn't easy for these refugees who had only what they could carry and owned no land or homes there. Other women stayed on Long Island.

Many able bodied men were in the patriot militia and left Long Island after the defeat in Brooklyn in late August 1776. The British recruited loyalist men to serve in the provincial corps. Though they were promised land, the number of Long Islanders who served in DeLancey's and other loyalist regiments disappointed the British. Since many men served in the military, their wives were left to run the farm as well as the household, whether on Long Island or as refugees in

Connecticut or upstate New York, where some relocated. Loyalist soldiers also left their wives in charge of home and farms.

Women took over more responsibilities for the outdoor work on farms during the war. They had always been in charge inside the house and had responsibility for the kitchen garden with its herbs and vegetables. When the war disrupted regular routines, women had to cope. This experience of independence and greater responsibility during the war may have had some long lasting effects within the domestic sphere of the family. Historians using records from other areas have traced how the language used during this time changed. Men's references to "my family" became "our family"; women and some men referred to "our farm" as women took on more responsibility. Such recognition of women's more equal partnership may have been a step toward greater independence for women, though not achieved politically for many years. Significantly, the Declaration that Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote at Seneca Falls in 1848 echoed the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident. That all men *and women* are created equal" (emphasis added).¹⁷

Some women who left Long Island followed their husbands in the army. Not all the "camp followers" were prostitutes, as the term may imply. Probably most prostitutes were with the British, who had more money; certainly some British officers kept mistresses.¹⁸ A Bicentennial exhibition, *Remember the Ladies*, opened with a portrait of Martha Washington whom the exhibit referred to as "the most prominent camp follower of the American Revolution."¹⁹ The camp followers performed essential support service for the soldiers -- nursing, cooking, mending uniforms, laundering, and foraging for food, primarily for the injured and sick. Though these activities were traditional "women's work," the importance of these "women of the army" was recognized since both sides allocated rations to them.²⁰ The presence of women was so common that they became known by the generic name "Molly Pitcher," similar to "GI Joe" in World War II.²¹ Some Long Island women probably became camp followers, joining their husbands serving in the military. The Associated Loyalists at Lloyd's Neck allocated half rations for women and one-quarter for children.²²

With the occupation of the island, the British required men to sign an oath of allegiance; often the alternative was to leave the island. Some signed as the expedient thing to do when faced with armed British soldiers, though it may not have been an honest expression of their beliefs. Early in the occupation, the British identified Loyalists by a piece of red cloth in their hats. Faced with military occupation, almost all the men wore red in their hats, even those who might not have taken the oath of allegiance. Women tore up their red petticoats for these hat-

bands. The British derisively referred to the “petticoat gentry” or “Petticoat Brigade of 1776,” but many women sacrificed their petticoats for these badges promising protection.²³

Many of the families who stayed on Long Island during the war lost their physicians who were serving with the military. In their absence, women provided nursing and medical care. One example is Huntington’s Elizabeth Williams Potter, whose husband, Gilbert Potter, was a doctor. She had often assisted him and while he was serving in the patriot army, she attended to the sick in Huntington, both British soldiers and civilians.²⁴

Much has been written about various episodes of the whaleboat warfare, with guerrilla raids from Connecticut. Less familiar are those from New Jersey to western Long Island. And the British retaliated with raids on Connecticut, and women were sometimes victims. In 1779 loyalist Judge Thomas Jones was kidnapped from his home at Fort Neck in today’s Massapequa, to exchange for patriot militia General Gold Selleck Silliman. The patriots “robbed Mrs. Jones of her wearing apparel and took that of two young ladies in the house,” excepting only “the clothes upon their backs.” The men sold the clothes and divided the proceeds.²⁵ As this example indicates, whaleboat warfare sometimes degenerated into plundering and stealing by patriots coming from Connecticut or New Jersey. Moreover, some local residents and occupying soldiers, pretending to be patriot raiders, also looted. Sometimes the thievery involved stealing chickens. Many residents buried their silver and valuables, even if they remained in their homes, fearful of being robbed because the British did not maintain law and order during the occupation.

Some women and civilian men, as well as soldiers, were killed or injured in the raids. In Major Benjamin Tallmadge’s successful raid on Fort St. George in Mastic in 1780, the newspaper reported “a poor woman was also fired on at another house and barbarously wounded through both breasts.”²⁶ In 1783 in today’s Port Washington, the whaleboat raiders beat John Mitchell and his elderly father, who escaped and ran to a neighbor’s house. Mitchell’s young son Benjamin came down and when one of the thieves realized the boy recognized them, he shot him. His mother, hearing the fatal gun shot, was “seized, and beaten till she fainted.”²⁷

The Culper Spy Ring is another favorite topic of historians, as a recent book by Alexander Rose as well as numerous other books on the spies, attest to.²⁸ At least one woman Anna (Nancy) Strong was probably involved, although there does not seem to be any documented evidence for the celebrated clothesline code. Kate Strong wrote several articles on Nancy Strong; such family oral traditions are virtually our

only evidence on her involvement. One documented record does refer to a woman aiding the spy ring in Setauket; that and the location of the Strong house during the war, provide evidence for Nancy Strong's participation. Her story has probably been embellished and romanticized over the years, and is part of Long Island's popular folklore.²⁹

During this period, a significant number of Quakers lived on Long Island, most of them in Queens County. The majority of Quakers tried to remain neutral because of their pacifist views. Consequently, both sides often accused them of aiding the other. Quakers were fined or had property confiscated by the British for their refusal to pay taxes to support the war (documented in what they termed their "sufferings").³⁰

By 1776, Long Island Quakers could not be in good standing if they had not freed their slaves. Quakers pioneered anti-slavery activities, and later, when public education was not yet available, they started a charity school for former slaves. In 1771, one in six Long Islanders was African American -- 17 percent of the population -- and most were enslaved. Queens County had the largest number (2,236), but Kings the highest percentage (32 percent) and Suffolk the lowest (11 percent). Slightly fewer than half were female. Slavery on Long Island, with a few notable exceptions, was usually on a smaller scale than in the South. Many, but not all, "middling" families had one or two or perhaps five or six enslaved blacks who worked side by side with the master and mistress. A few wealthy large landowners had more than ten slaves.³¹

Both sides offered freedom to enslaved blacks who enlisted, and some doubtless used the disruptions of wartime to gain their personal liberty by running away. Although there is little information in the records of this period of Long Island's African American women (and none for Native American women), there was an advertisement for a woman runaway at the time of the evacuation of loyalists in late 1783. Moreover, fifty-six black women were among the evacuees from New York to Nova Scotia at the end of the war, including seventeen from Queens County. Some may have been accompanying white loyalist families.³²

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) have preserved stories of Long Island women. Several of their local chapters, in fact, are named for local women associated with the Revolutionary War, including the Anna Smith Strong chapter in Setauket. Edna Yeager has provided the most extensive account of these women in her writings. Some of her vignettes may be romanticized and exaggerated, but probably have an element of truth.³³ Many describe what can be called "domestic resistance." Perhaps the most famous occurred in East

Hampton. Mrs. Joseph Osborn (too often the women's first names are not known) was cooking a berry pudding (in other accounts, it is Indian pudding made from corn meal and molasses). Some nearby soldiers smelling it, came and demanded it. Fannie Elkins told the story in verse in the nineteenth century. Her poem concludes:

Oh, no you're not she made reply
 Then seized the boiling pot
 Ran with it through the open door,
 And threw it, blazing hot.
 Pudding and all, adown the hill,
 And left it in the sand.
 Amid the curses, loud and deep
 Of all the hungry band.

The account may be legend and embellished, but there *is* a Pudding Hill Street in East Hampton.³⁴

Southold historian Augustus Griffin in his mid-nineteenth-century *Journal* also recorded activities of several women during the war, mainly on the North Fork, as in the following. In retaliation for whaleboat raids on Long Island, British soldiers were returning from a raid to Connecticut in 1781. The troops landed at Orient Point where Elizabeth (Betsey) Vail's husband, Jeremiah, operated a tavern. The Vails saw the soldiers approaching the house. The only liquor they had was two large barrels of applejack (hard cider). Betsey did not want drunken soldiers wrecking her home, so she went down and knocked out the stoppers and turned the barrels to empty them. Griffin wrote, "She then ascended the stairs in time to meet the unwelcome countenances and forbidding expressions of this ruthless gang, who entered the house more like demons than civilized beings. Their looks she described as awful -- having not slept probably within the last forty-eight hours, and besmeared visibly with the blood of her murdered countrymen at Groton. They flourished their swords, and uttered oaths of vengeance on American rebels; seized and bound Mr. Vail, and confined him in the garret." After they searched every room and closet for "something to drink," without success, they went to the cellar. Griffin continues: "They there soon discovered they had been successfully foiled in their wicked purpose. The ground had drank the liquor, and was still sober. Like mad men, they ascended to the room of Mrs. Vail, and demanded her reasons for depriving them of refreshments. She very deliberately replied: 'You are the enemies of my country; I have nothing for you; you have no business here; threats nor oaths don't alarm me. If I have done wrong, I am responsible to my

husband, not to you. You will not eat or drink in this house, if I can prevent it.' She expected violence; but they left the house very soon after, muttering curses for her devotion and fortitude."³⁵ Such stories initially preserved in family oral accounts and recorded by later historians are part of Long Island's folklore and history.

As mentioned earlier, some American prisoners, usually officers, were paroled in Brooklyn and lodged in private homes. British and Hessian soldiers were everywhere on the island, especially during the winter months when there was usually no fighting. One estimate is that at the peak of occupation, one in six residents on Long Island was a British or Hessian soldier. Some were quartered in private homes, including Raynham Hall, now an historic house museum in Oyster Bay. Sarah (Sally) Townsend was eighteen years old when Colonel John Simcoe selected the Townsend house for his headquarters in 1778. Young officers in the Townsend home flirted with Sally and her sisters, who enjoyed the masculine company. One soldier scratched on a still-extant window pane, "Miss A [Audrey] T. The Most Accomplished Young Lady in Oyster Bay" Audrey was Sally's older sister. Another soldier wrote on a different pane, "the adorable Miss Sally Townsend." Colonel Simcoe sent Sally a valentine in 1779 which reads in part, "To you my heart I must resign; / O choose me for your Valentine!" Her involvement in the spy ring and in the capture of Major John Andre, however, are more difficult to document.³⁶

Whether quartered in a house, barns, or elsewhere on private property throughout Long Island, soldiers could and sometimes did bring smallpox or some other disease. Women often had to provide food for them, and the soldiers certainly disrupted household routines. Homeowners were supposed to be compensated by American officials for patriot prisoners and by the British for their troops. In practice, often women received only depreciating Continental currency, receipts of dubious worth, or IOUs from the British. These often went uncollected, even at the end of hostilities, when the British were supposed to settle accounts.

The presence of the soldiers in an area also brought the fear and reality of rape and venereal disease. Although it is impossible to estimate numbers because many rapes were never reported, investigations by the Continental Congress indicated that they occurred "on a large scale." John Staudt reports, "British soldiers attacked pregnant women, the elderly, and girls as young as thirteen years old, and sometimes gang raped their victims over the course of several days." As Linda Grant De Pauw has observed, "rape was one of the grievances that made patriots out of neutrals, for American women took it more seriously than the British officers."³⁷

Some Long Island women married British soldiers; a number of such weddings are documented. But some young ladies were foiled, like "Miss H.," whose family opposed her marriage to a soldier in a Highland regiment. Just before the British were to leave, hoping to leave with their troops, she dressed as a soldier, but her father came, found her, and took her home.³⁸

Silas Wood, writing in 1824 summarized the impact of the occupation. "The army was a sanctuary for crimes, and robbery, and the grossest offences [by civilians] were atoned by enlistment" which "shielded them from punishment." Wood wrote that the officers "compelled the inhabitants to do all kinds of personal services, to work at their forts, to go with their teams, on foraging parties, and to transport their cannon, ammunition, provisions, and baggage. . . . The officers seized and occupied the best rooms in the houses of the inhabitants. They compelled them to furnish blankets and fuel for the soldiers, and hay and grain for their horses. They pressed [impressed] their horses and wagons for the use of the army. They took away their cattle, sheep, hogs, and poultry, and seized without ceremony, and without any compensation, or for such only as they chose to make, for their own use, whatever they desired to gratify their wants or wishes."³⁹

The British occupation of Long Island meant martial law, but not protection for most Long Islanders. The British forces often commandeered wood, livestock, hay, and food, sometimes giving receipts, but sometimes not. That meant less food and fewer resources for the families -- and it was the women who had to cope with the shortages. Women and children suffered together with the men living on the island when the British soldiers "plundered, pillaged, and terrorized the civilian population."⁴⁰ They seized cattle, grain, and wagons, denuded the woods and fences for firewood, and desecrated Presbyterian churches and even Quaker meeting houses. Anglican (Church of England, later Episcopal) churches were usually spared, but even loyalists were not immune. Many Long Islanders endured abuse from the occupying troops. British martial law did not maintain law and order, whether among soldiers, marauding patriots, or robbers who pretended to be whaleboat raiders.

The accounts in Henry Onderdonk's various compilations, and even the history written by loyalist Thomas Jones, provide extensive detail of specific incidents during the occupation. Many women endured having their homes violated or confiscated, and some women were injured and lost their property. As Joseph Tiedemann concludes, the British lost the political struggle and Long Islanders who had been neutral, apolitical, or even loyalists at the beginning became patriots as a result of British misconduct against civilians, which was exacerbated

by officers profiteering at the expense of Long Islanders.⁴¹ Even many of those who had receipts for property seized by the army were not compensated when accounts were settled in 1783. Claims in the Town of Huntington totalled more than £7,000 for those with receipts, but none were paid. This represented less than one-fourth of the actual total of property losses. Wood estimates the actual financial “losses by the war” was more than \$500,000.⁴²

In 1780, as the war shifted to the southern colonies, the British withdrew most of their troops from the East End. Consequently more petitions came from refugees seeking permission to return to Long Island. Others returned after the defeat of Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781, or when peace was finally achieved in 1783. Almost all the refugees found their property in shambles, “wasted and often destroyed altogether.” Fields were overgrown and orchards trampled. It is arguable that Long Island suffered more than anywhere -- certainly longer, with the occupation lasting seven years and three months.⁴³

Long Island women bore more than their share of that suffering, whether on the island during the fighting and occupation, as refugees in Connecticut, or camp followers with the troops. Many became widows and some themselves were victims of the war. Many women had their household goods stolen and homes and property destroyed; a number resisted British demands. Some loyalist women left Long Island at the end of the war and became exiles in England or Canada. Before the war, patriotic “daughters of liberty” contributed to the effort, making homespun and finding substitutes for tea and other boycotted goods. The experiences of all these women, whether patriots or loyalists, may not be as romantic as Sally Townsend’s valentine from Col. Simcoe at Raynham Hall, but Long Island women did more than “watch and pray.” They endured the battles, skirmishes, and most of all, the calculated humiliations of the seemingly interminable occupation, but they survived the ordeal. Let us then remember Long Island’s women during the Revolutionary War.

Though John Adams and other leaders did not take Abigail Adams’ plea in 1776 to “Remember the Ladies” in the new code of laws, women coped with the devastations of the war and occupation. After the Revolution they resumed their lives and again embraced domestic concerns. They rebuilt families, homes, churches and communities, thereby enabling the island to do its share in creating the new nation.

NOTES

¹ This article is revised and expanded from a presentation at the Stony Brook University conference, “From Captivity to Freedom: Long Island

During the American Revolution” on October 5, 2007. I appreciate and acknowledge suggestions on a draft of the article from Mark Rothenberg, Carolyn Sobel, and John Staudt.

² The most extensive treatment of Sally Townsend is by Morton J. Pennypacker, *George Washington's Spies on Long Island and in New York*, 2 vols. (Brooklyn: Long Island Historical Society, 1939 and East Hampton: East Hampton Free Library, 1948), 1:112-16; and Dorothy Horton McGee's *Sally Townsend, Patriot* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1952; reprinted in 1994 by the Townsend Society). Some libraries catalogue McGee's book as fiction, others as a Young Adult biography. Miss McGee referred to her book as “dramatized biography,” in “Adventure in Historical Writing,” *Nassau County Historical Society Journal* 18 (Winter 1957): 18-29. On Sally Townsend, see also Abigail Halsey, “Sallie Townsend,” in Pennypacker, 2: 16-19 (poem); Myron H. Luke and Robert B. Venables, *Long Island in the American Revolution* (Albany: New York State American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 1976), 52-53; www.oysterbayhistory.org; Candace Floyd, “Legend vs. History: Raynham Hall Redirects Interpretation [of Sally Townsend] from Romance to Documentary,” *History News* 36 (September 1981): 14-15; and Peter Luyster Van Santvoord, “Did Sally Townsend Save West Point?” *Long Island Forum* 26 (March 1963): 53-54, 69-70, 273-74, 290. Van Santvoord finds no solid evidence to support the claim regarding Sally Townsend and John Andre. Nancy Strong is discussed briefly later in this article.

³ Morton J. Pennypacker claimed that an unknown woman assisted Robert Townsend (Culper Jr.) in the spy ring, had his baby, c. 1781, and died on a British prison ship. She became known as “Lady 355” after the number in the spy code for woman. However, Robert Townsend, Jr. was born after the end of the war in 1784, to a servant in the Townsend household, Mary Banvard (later Van Buskirk). The father was Robert Townsend who paid for his education. Lady 355 is in Pennypacker, *George Washington's Spies*, 2:34-35. See Estelle D. Lockwood, “The Lady Known as ‘355.’” *Long Island Forum* 55 (Winter 1993): 10-15; and Harry Macy, Jr., “Robert Townsend, Jr., of New York City,” Part 1 (of 3), *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 126 (January 1995): 25-34.

It is possible there was a different Lady 355 during the war, variously identified with Robert Townsend or a mistress of Col. John Simcoe. See John A. Burke, “New Evidence in the Benedict Arnold / John Andre / Robert Townsend Debate,” Oyster Bay Historical Society, *Freeholder* 4

(Fall 1999): 3-5+; and Corey Ford, *A Peculiar Service: A Narrative of Espionage in and Around New York During the American Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965), 234-35.

⁴ On the authenticity of Lydia Minturn's *Personal Recollections of the American Revolution*, ed. Sidney Barclay, 1859 (Reprint; Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1970), see Ellen M. MacRorie, "Personal Recollections of the American Revolution, by Lydia Minturn Post: An Authentic Long Island Revolutionary Relic?" B.A. diss., St. Joseph's College for Women, Brooklyn, 1969 (a copy is in the Nassau County Museum Collection in the Long Island Studies Institute at Hofstra University); and Sarah Buck, "An Inspired Hoax: The Antebellum Reconstruction of an Eighteenth-Century Long Island Diary," *Long Island Historical Journal* (hereafter, LIHJ), 7 (Spring 1995): 191-204. Minturn may have used now lost family papers as the basis for her historical novel.

Despite being forewarned about the lack of authenticity, Judith E. Greenberg and Helen Cary McKeever used Post's *Personal Reminiscences* for a young adult book as part of their "In Their Own Words" series." On this book and for additional information on Post's book, see Natalie A. Naylor, "A New Incarnation of Lydia Minturn Post's 'Personal Recollections' of the American Revolution: A Review Essay," *LIHJ* 9 (Fall 1996): 109-19; and Sarah Buck, "Response to an Uninspired Hoax: Judith E. Greenberg and Helen Care McKeever, Journal of a Revolutionary War Woman," *LIHJ* 9 (1996): 120-21.

⁵ Stuyvesant Fish erected the memorial, which also identifies the site: "Continental Village, 1776-1783, A military post and depot of supplies burned by the British, October 9, 1777." The monument is at the junction of Routes 13 and 15, the Old Albany Post Road and Canopus Hollow Road. See "Unveiling of the Memorial to the Mothers of the Revolution," October 9, 1921, pamphlet reprinted for rededication, October 9, 1976 (author's collection).

⁶ On the boycotts, see Carol Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 12-25. The Boston newspaper is quoted by Mary Beth Norton in her *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston: Little Brown, 1980), 169; and by Linda Grant De Pauw in *Four Traditions: Women of New York During the American Revolution* (Albany: New York State Bicentennial Commission, 1974), 5.

⁷ Mary Cooper, *The Diary of Mary Cooper: Life on a Long Island Farm, 1768-1773*, ed. Field Horne (Oyster Bay: Oyster Bay Historical Society, 1983), ix.

⁸ Cooper, *Diary of Mary Cooper*, 15.

⁹ Population figures for counties are conveniently available in *The Other New York: The American Revolution Beyond New York City, 1763-1787*, ed. Joseph S. Tiedemann and Eugene R. Fingerhut (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 2. A 1776 map of New York City is in Judith L. Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies: Patriots and Loyalists in Revolutionary New York* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), following the Contents (unpaginated).

¹⁰ Joseph S. Tiedemann, "Queens County," in *The Other New York*, 44-45.

¹¹ Henry Onderdonk, Jr., *Documents and Letters Intended to Illustrate the Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County*, 1846, hereafter cited as *Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County*, 1846 (Reprint; Port Washington: Ira J. Friedman, 1970), 85-86 (no. 97).

¹² Benjamin Thompson, *History of Long Island From Its Discovery and Settlement to the Present Time*, ed. Charles J. Werner, 3rd ed., 3 vols., 1918 (Reprint; Port Washington: Ira. J. Friedman, 1962), 361 (Thompson died in 1849, but his third edition was not published until 1918); and Henry Onderdonk, *Revolutionary Incidents of Suffolk and Kings Counties*, 1849 (Reprint; Port Washington: Ira. J. Friedman, 1970), 1:361.

¹³ Ezra L'Hommedieu's letter is quoted by Henry Onderdonk in *Documents and Letters Intended to Illustrate the Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County*, 2nd series (Hempstead: Lott Van de Water, 1884), 8 (hereafter cited as *Incidents of Queens County*, 2nd series). Onderdonk also includes accounts of Woodhull's capture in *Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County*, 89, 104-5. See also George DeWan, "A Hero's Last Words," in *Newsday's Long Island: Our Story* (Melville: Newsday, 1998), 125. W. H. Sabine has a quite different perspective of Woodhull and argues that the general defected to the British while a prisoner. See Sabine's *Murder, 1776 & Washington's Policy of Silence* (New York: Theo. Gaus' Sons, 1972); and his *Suppressed History of General Nathaniel Woodhull* (Hollis, NY: Colburn & Tegg, 1954).

¹⁴ Edna Howell Yeager, *Around the Forks*, ed. Eileen Yeager Carmer (Privately printed, 1984), 30-31, 46; and De Pauw, *Four Traditions*, 21-22.

¹⁵ Hannah Floyd quoted by Susan Page, "He Dared to Sign," in *Long Island: The Way it Was* (Special Section of *Newsday*, June 13, 1976), 7; and Yeager *Around the Forks*, 29.

Philip Livingston, the third signer, had a country home in Brooklyn. The Americans used his house as council chambers during the Battle of Long Island; later the British used it as a hospital. Livingston's family left the island and lived with relatives during the war. (Yeager, *Around the Forks*, 31.)

¹⁶ Percentages calculated from population figures and estimate of number of refugees in Frederic Gregory Mather, *The Refugees of 1776 from Long Island to Connecticut*, 1913 (Reprint; Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1972), 187.

¹⁷ Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 3, 214-22. One of the resolutions adopted at the convention was the vote for women. The Seneca Falls meeting is usually regarded as the beginning of the woman's rights movement in the United States.

¹⁸ The most famous was Elizabeth Loring, mistress of General William Howe, who had ties to Long Island. The wife of British officer Joshua Loring. Elizabeth grew up in Boston, the only daughter of Nathaniel and Elizabeth (Davenport) Lloyd. Known as Betsey in the family, she was the granddaughter of Henry Lloyd I and niece of both Henry Lloyd II and Joseph Lloyd, who all lived on Lloyd Neck on Long Island. Betsey was born in 1752 in Dorchester; her father drowned in Boston Harbor the next year. (Her widowed mother married Nathaniel Hatch in 1755.) Betsey married Loring in 1769 and they visited the Lloyds on Long Island in 1771. The Lorings had two children before the war and three in England after the war. New-York Historical Society (NYHS), Papers of the Lloyd Family of the Manor of Queens Village, Lloyd's Neck, Long Island, New York, 1654-1826, Collections, NYHS, 1926 and 1927, 2 vols. (New York: NYHS, 1927), 2:552, 721n, 888-89, 894-95. Contemporary gossip and legend surround Elizabeth Loring's relationship with General Howe. See, for example, Philip Young, *Revolutionary Ladies* (New York: Knopf, 1977), 57-86.

¹⁹ Linda Grant De Pauw and Conover Hunt, *Remember the Ladies: Women in America, 1750-1815* (New York: Viking Press, 1976), 145 (exhibition catalog). See also page from the Huntington Minute Men (1978), "Camp Followers," in the vertical files of the Suffolk County Historical Society, attesting to the respectability of the camp followers.

²⁰ Linda Grant De Pauw, estimates that the army women may have been 20 percent the size of the regular male Continental force in Service. See her "Women in Combat: The Revolutionary War Experience," *Armed Forces and Society* 7 (Winter 1981): 210; this article discusses the women of the army. See also Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers*, 51-53.

²¹ The wives of artillery soldiers often filled in for the men as needed. Although women in the Battle of Long Island have not been documented, the "Molly Pitchers" were not bringing water for the men to drink, but water to swab out the cannons, and thus were performing essential military tasks, as well as freeing men for other duties. At the battle of Monmouth one (unnamed) woman's experience with the artillery was recorded by a witness: "While in the act of reaching a cartridge and having one of her feet as far before the other as she could step, a cannon shot from the enemy passed directly between her legs without doing any other damage than carrying away all the lower part of her petticoat. Looking at it with apparent unconcern, she observed that it was lucky it did not pass a little higher, for in that case it might have carried away something else, and continued her occupation." Joseph Plumb Martin, *Private Yankee Doodle: Being a Narrative of Some of the Adventures, Dangers, and Sufferings of a Revolutionary War Solider*, ed. George E. Scheer (Boston: Little Brown, 1961), 132-33; Martin's memoir was originally published in 1830.

The most extensive account of women in the army is in articles in *The Brigade Dispatch*, the journal of the Brigade of the American Revolution (re-enactors): John Rees, three articles in vols. 23-24 (1992-1993) and two in vol. 28 (1998); Don N. Hagist, four in vols. 24-25, (1995-1996). David Clemens brought these articles to my attention. Though I could not identify any Long Island women, the various articles provide extensive information on women with the army. See also Holly A. Mayer, *Belonging to the Army: Camp Followers and Community During the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996).

²² Onderdonk, *Revolutionary Incidents of Suffolk and Kings Counties*, 1849 (Reprint; Port Washington: Ira. J. Friedman, 1970), 261. The Institute for Advanced Loyalist Studies web site, <http://www.royalprovincial.com>, has additional information, including numbers of women with various regiments and numbers evacuated at the end of the war (search for: women and “Long Island”).

²³ Onderdonk lists the names of those who signed the oath in Queens and Suffolk in his *Revolutionary Incidents of Queens*, 118-28 and *Revolutionary Incidents of Suffolk and Kings Counties*, 167-71. On red identifying loyalists, see Thompson, *History of Long Island*, 1:285-86; and Yeager, *Around the Forks*, 19. Mark Rothenberg pointed out a more recent parallel in Denmark in the 1930s, when the Danes followed King Christian’s example and wore the yellow star of David.

²⁴ Yeager, *Around the Forks*, 43.

²⁵ Thomas Jones, *History of New York During the Revolutionary War*, ed. Edward Floyd deLancey, 1879, 2 vols. (Reprint; New York: New York Times and Arno Press, 1968), 2:277-78, 300. Henry Onderdonk also cites this in his *Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County*, 218 and in his *Incidents of Queens County*, 2nd series, 13. Joy Day Buel and Richard Buel in *The Way of Duty: A Woman and Her Family in Revolutionary America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984) focus on the experiences of Mary Silliman in Connecticut, whose husband was exchanged for Jones; see particularly, p. 145 ff.

²⁶ Onderdonk, *Revolutionary Incidents of Suffolk and Kings Counties*, 99.

²⁷ Onderdonk, *Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County*, 179-80; this incident (and others) is also included in Joan Gay Kent, *Discovering Sands Point: Its History, Its People, Its Places* (Incorporated Village of Sands Point, 2000), 26.

²⁸ Alexander Rose, *Washington’s Spies: The Story of America’s First Spy Ring* (New York: Bantam Books, 2006). The classic account is Morton J. Pennypacker’s, *George Washington’s Spies*; see also his earlier, *The Two Spies: Nathan Hale and Robert Townsend* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1930). There have several books of historical fiction on the Culper Spy Ring, including a number for children. The conference at Stony Brook included Gerard Sztabnik’s twenty minute film, *The Spies of the*

Revolution, which he wrote, directed, and produced in 2007 as a student at the School of Visual Arts in New York City.

²⁹ Kate W. Strong's articles include: "Nancy's Magic Clothesline," *Long Island Forum (LIF)* 2 (November 1939): 13, reprinted in *LIF* 15 (March 1952): 49; "In Defense of Nancy's Clothesline," *LIF* 32 (July 1969): 138-40; and "Nancy's Clothesline Code," *LIF* 38 (April 1975): 79-80, reprinted in *LIF* 39 (July 1976): 142-43.

³⁰ Onderdonk *Incidents of Queens County*, 2nd series, 59-60.

³¹ Statistics on the number of African Americans are available in Edgar J. McManus, *A History of Negro Slavery in New York*, 1966 (Reprint; Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001); and Tiedemann and Fingerhut, *The Other New York*, 2. Both books have figures by gender and the latter includes information on age ranges (but inexplicably omits Suffolk County). Their source is Evarts B. Greene and Virginia D. Harrington, *American Population before the Census of 1790* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 102-4 (reprinted in 1996 by P. Smith, Gloucester, MA).

³² Graham Russell Hodges and Alan Edward Brown, eds. *Pretends to Be Free": Runaway Slave Advertisements from Colonial and Revolutionary New York and New Jersey* (New York: Garland, 1994), 300 (no. 656); and Graham Russell Hodges, *Root and Branch: African Americans in New York and East Jersey, 1613-1863* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 160.

³³ Yeager, *Around the Forks*, 38-46.

³⁴ William Donaldson Halsey, *Sketches from Local History* (Bridgehampton: Privately printed, 1935), 179-81. Yeager in *Around the Forks*, quotes a portion of the poem about Mrs. Osborn (41).

³⁵ Oysterponds Historical Society, 1983), 193-94.. *Griffin's Journal* was doubtless the source for some of the women Yeager and Halsey mention (see notes no. 33 and 34 above). *Journeys on Old Long Island*, also reprints incidents observed by Femmetie Hegeman Lefferts in Flatbush during the war, as recorded a century later by her granddaughter, Gertrude Lefferts Vanderbilt (19-33).

Similar accounts of other women are in Noel Gish, *Smithtown, New York, 1669-1929: Looking Back Through the Lens* (Virginia Beach, VA: Donning Corporation/Smithtown Historical Society, 1996), 47, 51-52. See also Peter Luyster Van Santvoord, "Revolutionary Incidents of Oyster Bay Town," *Long Island Courant* 3 (March 1967): 24-25.

³⁶ Yeager, *Around the Forks*, 44-45; see also McGee, *Sally Townsend*, 208 and, for the complete valentine verse, 220-22 or Onderdonk, *Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County*, 214-15. Sarah Townsend never married; the original valentine was found among her possessions when she died in 1842, and remained in the Townsend family until it disappeared in the twentieth-century (see Morton Pennypacker, "Col. Simcoe's Valentine to Oyster Bay Maiden Memento of Revolution," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, February 13, 1928). The inscriptions to the Townsend sisters on the window panes survive and images are reproduced in Lockwood, "The Lady Known as '355.'" *Long Island Forum* 55 (Winter 1993):15. On Sally Townsend, see also references cited in note 2 above.

³⁷ John Gerard Staudt, "'A State of Wretchedness': A Social History of Suffolk County, New York in the American Revolution" (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 2005), 122-23 (available in the Stony Brook University Melville Library); and De Pauw, *Four Traditions*, 30. See also, Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers*, 41; and Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, 202-3.

Regarding rapes on Staten Island, a British officer wrote in a letter, "The fair nymphs of the isle [Staten Island] are in wonderful tribulation, as the fresh meat our men have got here has made them riotous as satyrs. A girl cannot step into the bushes to pluck a rose without running the most imminent risk of being ravished, and they are so little accustomed to these rigorous methods that they don't bear them with the proper resignation, and of consequence we have the most entertaining court-martial every day." Berkin, *First Generations*, 184.

³⁸ Miss B. at Foster's Meadow was also foiled when the soldier who tried to carry her off was shot. Onderdonk, *Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County*, 203. Other British soldiers were more successful marrying local women. Onderdonk mentions three weddings in *Incidents of Queens County*, 2nd series, 16.

³⁹ Silas Wood, *A Sketch of the First Settlement of the Several Towns on Long Island* . . . new edition (Brooklyn: Alden Spooner, 1828), 118-19; Thompson, *History of Long Island*, 2:416-18. On Wood, see also Gertrude Halloran Gerhard, "Silas Wood: Legislator and Historian," *Long Island Courant* 3 [October 1967]: 7-32.

⁴⁰ John G. Staudt, "Suffolk County," in *The Other New York*, ed. Tiedemann and Fingerhut, 63.

⁴¹ Tiedemann, "Queens County," in *The Other New York*, 50-55. Tiedemann and Staudt, as well as Edwin G. Burrows in his chapter, "Kings County," in *The Other New York*, document the devastating effects of the occupation. Henry Onderdonk collected numerous incidents from newspapers, official records, and other sources in his *Revolutionary Incidents* books and articles. In addition to those cited above, see Onderdonk's "Suffolk County in Olden Times," *Journal of Long Island History (JLIH)*, 6 (Winter 1966): 15-36; and "Notes on the History of Queens County," *JLIH* 7, no. 1 (1967): 53-76. On Jones and his *History of New York*, see note no. 25 above. Staudt has more extensive discussion of the occupation in his dissertation, "A State of Wretchedness." See also Joseph Tiedemann, "Response to Revolution: Queens County, New York, During the Era of the American Revolution," (Ph.D. diss.; City University of New York, 1977) and his articles cited in *The Other New York*, 57n.1. (A copy of Tiedemann's dissertation is in the Long Island Studies Institute at Hofstra University's Axinn Library.)

⁴² Wood, *Sketch of the First Settlement*, 119.

⁴³ Mather, *Refugees of Long Island*, 193.

FROM WRETCHEDNESS TO INDEPENDENCE: SUFFOLK COUNTY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

John G. Staudt

Suffolk County had a formative influence on the events of the American Revolution, and the Revolution brought dramatic changes to the county.

Just days before the American Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence in July 1776, the British Army landed on Staten Island in New York Harbor. When George Washington heard the grim news he wrote from his headquarters at the tip of New York City in view of Staten Island:

The Time is now near at hand which must probably determine, whether Americans are to be, Freemen, or Slaves; whether they are to have any property they can call their own; whether their Houses, Farms, are to be pillaged and destroyed, and they consigned to a State of Wretchedness.¹

Within two months the people of Suffolk County, New York, began enduring the "State of Wretchedness." British forces occupied Long Island in late August 1776, and for seven years soldiers plundered, pillaged, and terrorized the civilian population. American partisans, who behaved more like pirates than Patriots, conducted raids across the Long Island Sound from Connecticut and compounded the war's viciousness by looting and killing Loyalists, Whigs and neutrals alike. Meanwhile, civilians who fled to the mainland for safety suffered the hardships of wartime refugees.²

By the time the British evacuated Long Island in November 1783, the Revolutionary War had destroyed hundreds of farms, ruined the countryside and left what remained of local communities in disarray. The tragedies accompanying the Revolutionary War -- military occupation and imposition of martial law, loss and destruction of property, separation of families, imprisonment, and death -- diminished the drive for social cohesion, confidence in authority and the traditional emphasis on public virtue. Simultaneously, many "modern" perspectives such as increased political plurality, rotation in public office, greater religious toleration and the gradual abolition of slavery emerged. As postwar transformations in Suffolk County reveal, while military occupation and revolutionary warfare sapped local political, social and religious customs, it simultaneously ushered in a new era of republican ideology.

Revolutionary Suffolk County encompassed the eastern two-thirds of Long Island covering approximately twelve hundred square miles. It was approximately ninety miles in length, thirty-four miles at its widest point, and it

contained over six hundred miles of coastline. It consisted of eight townships, including from west to east, Huntington, Smithtown, Islip, Brookhaven, Southold, Southampton, Easthampton and Shelter Island. Queens County bordered it on the west, the Long Island Sound on the north, and the Atlantic Ocean on the south. In 1776, the majority of Suffolk's thirteen thousand plus inhabitants were white yeomen farmers who could trace their family roots back to New England, especially Connecticut.³



“Triumph of Patriotism.” Washington entering New York City after the evacuation of the British Army, Nov. 25, 1783. Engraving by A.H. Ritchie. 148-GW-334. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

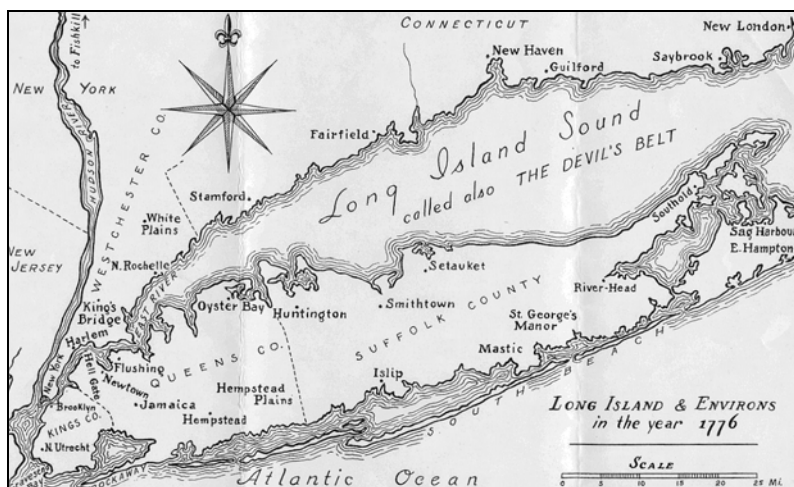
The only exception to Suffolk's ethnic uniformity was the presence of a few hundred Indian servants and laborers, over a thousand enslaved Africans and a small number of free blacks. By the eve of the Revolutionary War, enslaved African-Americans in Suffolk County exceeded 1,400 or approximately 11 percent of the total population.⁴

Tax and census data indicate that two out of every five households in Suffolk owned slaves. Although a few prominent

families owned over a dozen slaves, there was no slaveocracy in eastern Long Island. Even though the majority of yeomen were not slaveholders, manumissions were rare and white opposition towards slavery was non-existent.⁵

A few prominent families dominated local leadership in colonial Suffolk County. For example, in Huntington a mere six families controlled the position of town supervisor between 1694 and 1776. In Smithtown, the Smith family dominated local government serving in over half of the town's twenty-three offices each year from 1761 until the Revolution. Several officers in East Hampton, Southampton, Huntington and Brookhaven served simultaneously as their town's supervisor, clerk and as a member on the town's board of trustees. Furthermore, it was not uncommon for many officials to serve in the same office for over thirty years. In Brookhaven, Richard Woodhull, a son of a town patentee was supervisor and president of the board of trustees between 1723 and 1741, and Daniel Smith was town clerk from 1738 to 1775. In Southampton, Christopher Foster served as town supervisor and town clerk for thirty two years

(1711-1742). Another Daniel Smith, this one of Smithtown, was town clerk for thirty-eight years (1750-1788) and supervisor for twenty-five years (1759-1784). In Huntington trustee Eliphalet Wickes held seven different positions and was elected to leadership posts eighty times in twenty-two years. Epenetus Platt Jr., a son and nephew of one of the town's founders, and "the patriarch of the town's second wealthiest clan" was elected as town trustee for thirty-three years (1699-1732) and also served as assessor, treasurer and surveyor; all together he filled 139 posts for over forty-three years. Solomon Ketcham also of Huntington held over one hundred forty posts in a thirty year period. Between 1747 and 1776 Burnet Miller of East Hampton was town supervisor, town clerk and a town trustee. On Shelter Island, Nicoll Havens served as both the town clerk (1759-1777) and town supervisor (1770-1777). In East Hampton Cornelius Conklin was town clerk for thirty-eight years (1709-1747) and Burnet Miller, son of Assemblyman Eleazer Miller, held the post for twenty-nine years (1747-1776). In Southampton Stephen Rodgers held the post of town clerk for thirty-one years (1753-1783). In Southold Robert Hempstead served as town clerk for thirty three years (1745-1778).⁶



Map of Long Island and Environs in the Year 1776. Drawing by Ellen Sabine.

At the same time, the Presbyterian Church dominated local religious affairs. Ministers of the Suffolk Presbytery retained their positions for extended periods and maintained a significant influence over public opinion. Sylvanus White was pastor of the Southampton Church for fifty five years (1727-1782); East Hampton's pastor Nathaniel Hunting (1696-1746) served for fifty years and his successor Samuel Buell (1746-1799) for fifty three years. In Huntington, Rev. Eliphalet Jones was minister from 1671 until his death in 1731 and Ebenezer

Prime who was hired as Jones's assistant served from 1719 until his death during the Revolutionary War in 1779.⁷ The only non-Presbyterian parishes to appear in Suffolk's "puritan domain" before the Revolution were the Anglican churches established in Brookhaven and Huntington. These two congregations languished, however, as they went without regular ministers after 1773.⁸



American forces retreating from the British near the Gowanus Creek, Brooklyn, during the Battle of Long Island, August 27, 1776. Painting by Alonzo Chappel, 1858. Courtesy of the Brooklyn Historical Society.

For most of the eighteenth-century, the burdens of government and taxes in Suffolk County were light, and residents conformed to local social, political and religious conventions. Even as colonial protests occurred elsewhere in the colonies between 1763 and 1774, Suffolk inhabitants remained aloof and more concerned with farming and the weather than with political strife. Following Parliament's passage of the Coercive or Intolerable Acts in 1774, however, residents grew apprehensive that the British government was plotting to seize their property and extinguish their cherished self-government. Whig leaders saw opposition to arbitrary rule by Parliament as an act of self-defense. The county's geographic isolation and socio-economic aversion towards its more Loyalist neighbor's in western Long Island and New York City, as well as its affinity to Independence-minded Connecticut had fostered a long-standing tradition of autonomy. Consequently, one of the most forceful early statements

of resistance to Parliament's heavy handed policies was Huntington's "Declaration of Rights," which stated that "every freeman's property is absolutely his own, and no man has the right to take it from him without his consent."⁹ As colonial protest grew more and more antagonistic, revolutionary organizations such as committees of correspondence, observation and safety appeared throughout eastern Long Island. By the summer of 1776, local leaders adopted the rhetoric of republican liberty, mobilized a large majority of citizens into the Patriot militia and incorporated the populace into the political process to a greater degree than ever before.¹⁰

In harmony with the county's political leaders, local Presbyterian ministers led public opinion in favor of colonial resistance. From their pulpits they extolled the actions of the Continental and Provincial congresses and the righteousness of the American cause. In 1776, Charles Inglis, the Anglican rector of Trinity Church in New York City, wrote that he knew of no Presbyterian minister on Long Island "who did not, by preaching and every effort in their power, promote all the measures of Congress, however extravagant." Prior to the British occupation, ministers such as Ebenezer Prime of Huntington, Joshua Hart of Smithtown, and Samuel Buell of East Hampton promoted support for American resistance in their sermons. Several Long Island ministers had family who joined the American forces including Brookhaven's pastor Benjamin Tallmadge whose son, Maj. Benjamin Tallmadge, served as Washington's chief intelligence officer from 1778 to 1783. Family members of different ministers supported the Revolution in other ways. Rev. Ebenezer Prime's son, Benjamin Young Prime, wrote popular patriotic songs before the war that according to one historian "spread like wildfire" through the colonies.¹¹ Presbyterian support of the Revolution was fostered by the fear that the British government was plotting to increase the authority of the Church of England by creating an Anglican Episcopate, the jurisdiction of an Anglican Bishop, in America. Presbyterians saw the supposed establishment of an American episcopate as being part of an effort to create an exclusive and monopolistic Anglican establishment. Even though no such course had been planned by the Church of England at that time, the fear of such a possibility was enough to compel Suffolk's Presbyterian ministers to believe that their religious liberties were at stake and that their only defense was to make a clean break from England. Anglican Loyalism gave the rebel cause an additional religious sanction. In the minds of most residents, Whig triumph ensured religious freedom while a Loyalist victory would lead to the establishment of the Church of England throughout the colonies. By 1776 the drift toward Revolution in Suffolk County was charged with religious passions on both sides.¹²

Notwithstanding the county's overwhelming adherence to American resistance, a small, steadfast faction of inhabitants remained loyal to the crown. In Suffolk, as in other New York counties, Anglicanism was the "bedrock of Loyalism." Foremost among the Loyalists were Col. Richard Floyd and Dr.

George Muirson of Brookhaven and Parker Wickham of Southold. All of these men came from privileged families, owned huge tracts of land, had been appointed to royal political positions, and were members of the Anglican Church. In Huntington, most of the town's Loyalists were members of St. John's Episcopal Church including, among others, Zophar Rogers, Shubal Smith and Stephen Abbet.¹³ On the whole, Suffolk's Whigs checked royalist efforts and proceeded against Loyalists with what General Washington described as "commendable zeal and activity." At the same time, however, local records do not indicate the use of extreme methods such as tarring and feathering and other forms of physical violence. It is possible that the absence of wide-spread Loyalism in the county excluded the necessity for violent measures.¹⁴

Despite the success of Suffolk Whigs and the county's considerable efforts in preparing local defenses neither the militia, nor the entire American army for that matter, were able to withstand the assault of the British offensive. On August 27, five days after the initial invasion of Long Island, the British won a decisive victory and routed the American forces at the Battle of Brooklyn. Over five-hundred Suffolk County troops, under the command of Col. Josiah Smith of Brookhaven, took part in the battle and then went home to remove their families and as much property as possible to safety in Connecticut. On August 29, other elements of the Suffolk militia attempted to rally in Smithtown; however, fearing their forces insufficient to oppose the British, the officers told their men to go home. Before the end of September, the enemy had occupied all of Long Island and by November, the British compelled local Whig committees to revoke "all their proceedings under the Congress," dissolve "their unlawful associations," and submit "to the King, His laws and Gov't."¹⁵

The British army's occupation of Long Island provided access to badly needed provisions, protected the flank of the main British army in New York City, and secured a base of operations along the Atlantic seaboard. Although numbers varied at times, thousands of British, German and Loyalist troops occupied Long Island and a fleet of British ships patrolled the south shore and the Long Island Sound. All told the army established at least six fixed fortifications in Suffolk not including the countless smaller redoubts and armed camps that were strewn across the county. Most forts included breastworks, enlarged and strengthened by palisades. They were all close enough to the shore to be protected by several armed ships from the British Navy. All of the forts doubled as supply depots and most were manned by Loyalist soldiers with occasional regular troops stationed among them. The fact that Suffolk County remained the easternmost foothold of the British Army from 1779 until the end of the war probably only intensified the sense of abandonment and desperation felt by the inhabitants.¹⁶ As a result, Suffolk and all of Long Island was under martial law longer than any other part of any colony during the Revolutionary War.¹⁷

Although those who remained in eastern Long Island initially tried to appease the British, rebellious behavior resurfaced as British officers and soldiers committed countless atrocities including looting, beating and sometimes outright murder of civilians. One particular officer, Maj. James Cochran, was extremely abusive of inhabitants. According to eyewitnesses in Southampton, he would fire his pistol at anyone he thought needed it and personally whipped residents like David Russell in 1779 for violations of his instructions. During one fit of rage, Cochran killed a Southampton resident with an oar and then disposed of the body in a ditch. According to Philip Heartt, a young resident of wartime South Huntington, Cochran's reputation as the ruthless leader of the British Legion was notorious as he and his men were "constantly committing depredations on the inhabitants." Such "hard-line" attitudes of British officers and soldiers and sympathy to the rebel cause led to a resurgence in local resistance. As a result, the army failed to pacify the region and Long Island plummeted into a state of violence, lawlessness and wartime wretchedness.¹⁸

One of the greatest burdens the British placed on residents was the seizure of their property. As early as September 1776, orders were issued to residents that they must support the army by driving "all the fat cattle and sheep in Suffolk Co . . . down to Jamaica [Queens County] . . . for the refreshment of the King's Troops." The British also demanded that all farmers turn over grain, straw, and all of their hay to the army. If residents refused to assist the army, Gen. William Erskine, the commander of the British troops in Suffolk County, threatened to "lay waste the property of the disobedient as persons unworthy of His Majesty's clemency."¹⁹ In addition to supplying the army with fresh provisions, residents were compelled to support the army's transportation needs, including horses, drivers, saddles, wagons and stables. The British also commandeered pastures and farm fields for the grazing of their livestock. The army's appetite for wood was insatiable. Timber was needed not only for the construction of barracks but also as fuel for cooking and heating. Thousands of Loyalists seeking refuge in British occupied New York served as woodcutters who readily denuded Suffolk's public and private woodlands. Wherever the supply of trees ran low, soldiers tore down churches and fences. In one season alone, Loyalist troops stationed in Huntington, under the command of Col. Benjamin Thompson, burnt over 5,830 wooden rails, fourteen loads of timber and 390 feet of boards.²⁰ Housing was also in great demand. If there was insufficient space indoors, the soldiers set up tents and built huts or barracks on local pastures and meadows. Most often, however, officers and soldiers lodged either in local taverns and inns or in private homes. According to historian, Silas Wood, who lived in Huntington during the British occupation, the officers generally seized the best rooms and "compelled [owners] to furnish blankets and fuel for the soldiers, and hay and grain for their horses . . . and seized without ceremony, and without any compensation . . . whatever they desired to gratify their wants or wishes." The type of property the army confiscated included

everything from crops, wood, victuals, rum, household items and even women's clothing.²¹

As farmers turned over their property to the army, British officials were supposed to provide receipts for the goods. More often than not though officers and attendants failed to provide these. In some instances, officers, such as Col. John Simcoe, did not issue receipts to a great number of citizens "on Account of their Rebellious Principles, or absolute disobedience."²² Even when receipts were issued certificate holders were rarely compensated. When they came to exchange their receipts for payment officials made up excuses why they could not be paid at the time or threatened to throw them in prison as rebels. Towns wrote petitions and memorials and even sent representatives to British commanders but they were ignored. By the end of the war the amount of recorded damages in the town of Huntington alone totaled £21,383. In Smithtown, receipts for property taken totaled over £3,400.²³ Prior to the Revolutionary War, harkening to petitions was viewed as a major role of any government in the British Empire. The breakdown in the functions of *de facto* and *de jure* government during the war was yet another factor, along with unreliability of oaths, in the depoliticizing and rising cynicism of the people of Suffolk County.

Although military oppression touched every aspect of life in wartime Suffolk, few institutions suffered as severe a fate as the Presbyterian Church. The patriotic reputation of Suffolk's Presbyterian ministers and congregations made them particular targets for British retaliation. As a result, the British Army abused Presbyterian ministers, suspended religious services and scattered local congregations. A number of ministers were driven away, imprisoned or died. The pastor of the Southold Church, John Storrs, and the pastor at the South Haven Church, David Rose, became refugees to Connecticut. Rev. Joshua Hart of Smithtown was arrested several times and almost died of disease while confined in a New York City prison in 1777. He recovered from his sickness and was released but remained "closely watched" for the rest of the war. In Huntington, Rev. Ebenezer Prime sought refuge in a remote part of town where he died in 1779 as "an exile in a solitary neighborhood of his congregation." His demise was likely hastened by British officers who possessed his home, destroyed his library, broke up his furniture and vandalized the rest of his property. The army also erected a barracks on his home lot, cut down his orchards, burnt his fences and commandeered the use of his stables.²⁴ Simultaneously, Anglicans gained strength in Suffolk County as exemplified by the increasing number of baptisms performed at St. John's Church between 1776 and the end of the war; while only six baptisms were performed in 1777, the number increased to eleven in 1780 and twelve in 1782. Many of these ceremonies were conducted by Rev. Leonard Cutting, the Rector of St. George's Anglican Church in Hempstead while other services were held by John Sayre

and the Reverend T. L. Moore who officiated to “small but attentive” Anglican congregations in Huntington, Setauket and Islip in 1782.²⁵

The attitude of most officers that only Anglican property was sacred and that the buildings of dissenters were simply “rebel meetinghouses” led to the desecration and destruction of a number of Suffolk’s Presbyterian Churches. Soldiers tore out the pulpit and pews at the South Haven Church and converted the building into a stable and storehouse for hay. British troops tore down the Presbyterian Church in Islip and used the timber to build barracks. The British Legion ripped 6,396 feet “of the best pine” boards valued at over £129 from the church at Smithtown. Sometime before August 1777, Col. Richard Hewlett and two hundred-sixty Queens County Loyalists of De Lancey’s Brigade fortified the Presbyterian Church in Setauket. First Hewlett had his men tear out the church’s interior and convert the building into a barracks; he then mounted four swivel guns on parapets built behind a trench dug on church property. In the course of the construction of the fort the loyalist troops destroyed dozens of tombstones and “cast up the bones of many of the dead” in the church’s graveyard.²⁶

The British, however, dealt with no church as harshly as Huntington’s “Old First” Presbyterian Church. Shortly after General De Lancey garrisoned his troops in the town, the church fell into a “ruinous state.” Soldiers tore out all the pews and the building was used as a storehouse. Meanwhile, the church bell was carried off by Capt Ascough of the British warship *Swan* stationed in Huntington Bay. Later on the British mounted the bell on the brig *Rhinoceros* until the end of the war. In 1783 the Royal Navy returned the bell to the church so severely damaged that it had to be sent to Connecticut to be recast.²⁷ In the closing years of the war, Col. Benjamin Thompson, a Loyalist officer from New Hampshire who commanded six hundred or so Loyalist troops occupied Huntington in the winter of 1782-1783.²⁸ Thompson’s men committed one of the more unnecessarily callous acts of the war. Despite the fact that the preliminary peace treaty had already been signed, Thompson compelled residents to level the graves of their ancestors and ordered them to construct a six-foot high earthen fort, named Fort Golgotha, “with a ditch and abatis of brush,” on top of the church’s burial grounds. To obtain the wood he needed for the project, Thompson ordered residents to tear down the church, several barns and other buildings in the vicinity. The stones of the church were used to build the fort’s blockhouse which was placed in the middle of the cemetery. The troops not manning the fort were quartered among the local inhabitants or placed in huts around the village green. According to Nathaniel Prime, an early Long Island historian and the grandson of Rev. Ebenezer Prime, the old men of the town told him that they recalled seeing loaves of bread taken out of these ovens, with “the reversed inscriptions of the tombstones of their friends on the lower crust.” Thompson then placed his tent in the graveyard, and made Reverend Prime’s tombstone his doorstep, in order, as he reportedly said, “to have the

pleasure of treading on the old rebel as often as [I] went in and out.”²⁹ Whatever Thompson’s motives were for committing such an odious act we may never know for he left no record explaining his actions. What is certain, however, is that the desecration of Suffolk’s Presbyterian Churches and burial grounds, along with the constant anxiety, dread and terror that engulfed eastern Long Island further demoralized the population and intensified the war’s secularizing effect on the county’s Puritan majority.

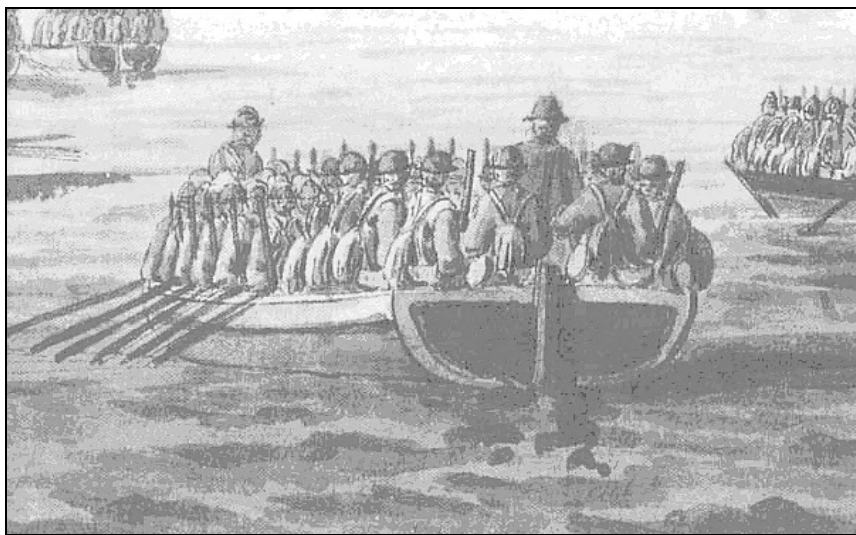
Immediately following the British invasion of eastern Long Island, many residents made the torturous decision to become wartime refugees on the mainland. Approximately five-thousand Long Islanders, the majority from Suffolk County, fled to Connecticut and upstate New York. The overall experience of Long Island’s refugees during the Revolution was tragic. Families were reduced to destitution and want. The refugees suffered from the lack of money, clothes, food, sufficient housing, employment and many other necessities, as well as all the comforts of life. Official and private attempts to alleviate their problems were ineffective. As a result, despite using “the best economy” and “exercising the greatest industry” some of the wealthiest families were reduced from “Affluence to Indigence” during their protracted time as refugees.³⁰

When the British finally evacuated Long Island at the end of the war, Whig refugees returned home to find their churches destroyed, their houses broken into, their fields ruined, their woodlands denuded, their tools missing and their livestock taken and butchered by the British. According to one New York Loyalist, British soldiers so badly damaged homes, barns and other buildings that “no one could make proper use of them.”³¹ As a result, destitute families had to salvage their lands and rebuild their lives the best they could. Many refugee families had consumed most of their property and spent whatever money they had while on the mainland. Among the most tragic refugee stories is that of John Foster. Foster was a prosperous ship owner in Sag Harbor before the war. He was also a zealous Whig who served as a delegate to the Provincial Congress. After the invasion of Long Island he became a refugee to East Haddam, Connecticut. During the war he served as an auditor for the American army’s commissariat department, often paying for supplies for the troops out of his own pocket. His son served as an officer in 4th New York Line. During the war the British had burnt his ships, badly damaged his home and farm buildings and destroyed his books and papers. Foster estimated that the damages to his property amounted to over £2,500. In the end, despite his sacrifices, Foster died in debt and was interned in an unmarked grave in the old burial ground in Southampton.³²

The suffering inflicted on refugees and inhabitants at the hands of the British often reignited local Whig dedication to the Revolution. From the time the American army retreated in August 1776 until the British evacuated New York in the fall of 1783, Long Island saw a flurry of activity as swarms of

partisan revolutionaries, local insurgents, and American privateers adopted unconventional tactics to disrupt the enemy's actions. The objective of partisans and subversives in Suffolk County was to attack the structures that made the British occupation possible -- the enemy's ships, depots, storehouses and lines of communications. Some elements of the fighting were unique; but most reflected what happens when ordinary people fight back against a powerful army of occupation.

Many of the partisans participating in American whaleboat raids conducted across the Long Island Sound from Connecticut were Suffolk refugees. While rebel sympathizers who remained in Suffolk often assisted and sometimes even participated in the raids. In March 1779, *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer* printed a "Caution to Travellers," warning that American bandits were ambushing Loyalists and robbing homes in Smithtown. The marauders also "harbored and supplied with provisions and intelligence" other American insurgents who frequently made incursions into Suffolk from Connecticut. *Rivington's* added that the "unfortunate Loyalists" in Smithtown "are greatly exposed to the savage cruelty of these assassins" because British sympathizers were so "few in number."³³



Artist rendering of the whaleboat warfare taking place across the Long Island Sound during the American Revolution. Water color from Robert Gardiner, *Navies and the American Revolution 1775-1783* (London, Chatham Publishing, 1996).

Their extensive knowledge of local geography, as well as their skills as whaleboat men, allowed Suffolk's partisan raiders to make lightning-quick raids

and swift retreats across the Sound. By maximizing the element of surprise the rebels made a virtue of necessity and used their inexperience in the European art of war to justify relying on their imagination and initiative. These methods proved more appropriate to the nature of revolutionary warfare rather than the strictures of eighteenth-century military doctrine. The fundamentals of partisan warfare conducted against the British on Long Island revolved around small unit operations involving loose formations of irregular fighters. Unconventional troops moved swiftly and quietly eluding capture and evading decisive engagements while sapping British strength by killing or capturing enemy soldiers in continuous raids. Partisans kept the British on constant alert by conducting surprise attacks against isolated outposts and by destroying lines of communications and supply. The effective execution of these elements allowed Washington's relatively untrained army to fight and survive against a highly disciplined, well-equipped force.³⁴

One of the most innovative partisan officers on Long Island was Benjamin Tallmadge. Tallmadge grew up in Brookhaven and was the son of Benjamin Tallmadge Sr., the pastor of Setauket's First Presbyterian Church. Tallmadge was an officer in the 2nd Continental Dragoons and served at the Battles of Long Island, White Plains, Brandywine, Germantown and Monmouth. He was also a brilliant partisan commander who led several successful raids against the British on Long Island. In effect, he was the region's equivalent to South Carolina's Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox." Tallmadge utilized his combat experience, extensive knowledge of local topography and his personal connections to recruit volunteers and foster insurgency on Long Island.³⁵

A good example of one of Tallmadge's raids was his assault against the British held Fort St. George in Mastic along the Great South Bay. On November 23, 1780, acting under the authority of George Washington, Major Tallmadge and eighty men, Continental soldiers and partisan-refugees, attacked the fort's garrison of approximately 200 troops, mostly Loyalist refugees from Rhode Island. The enemy had seized the mansion of John Smith in Mastic and converted it into a fortified supply base comprised of a triangular stockade and six mounted guns. As the fort was located on the Great South Bay, British warships stationed near the stronghold provided additional protection. Tallmadge first heard about the fort through letters sent by Smith and local insurgents who were looted by the troops. In order to avoid detection by the naval force outside the fort, Tallmadge decided to make an indirect approach. The men landed on Long Island's north shore at Old Man's (Mount Sinai) on November 21st. Because of rainy weather, which might have caused their flintlock's to misfire, the partisans hid their boats and took cover in the nearby woods. The following night the party marched to the Island's south shore. Arriving at the fort before sunup, Tallmadge divided his force into three assault columns, to confuse the enemy. The attack order was the shout "Washington and glory!" After the fort was captured Tallmadge had his men turn the fort's guns

on one of the enemy ships, burning it to the water line. By eight in the morning the fort was destroyed and the assault was over. Years later, Tallmadge recorded in his memoirs that he never saw “the sun rise more pleasantly.” The partisans had only one man wounded while the enemy suffered seven casualties and fifty three taken as prisoners. Among the partisans were Caleb Brewster, Heathcote Muirson, Benajah Strong and Thomas Jackson, all friends of Tallmadge from his boyhood days in Setauket.³⁶

One of the most useful duties of local insurgents was providing a steady flow of information to George Washington about British logistics, fortifications, troop embarkations and the plans and designs of enemy commanders. In 1778, Washington tasked Maj. Benjamin Tallmadge to open up a “private correspondence with some persons in New York.”³⁷ Although Washington remained his own spymaster, he asked Tallmadge to handle the day-to-day activities of the Continental secret service. Tallmadge recruited a number of his contacts who remained in British-occupied New York as spies. From 1778 to the end of the war, these men comprised what was known as the Setauket or Culper Spy Ring. Some of the most important work of this group revolved around the correspondence of two members whose aliases were Culper Sr. and Culper Jr. (the individuals behind these two aliases were Abraham Woodhull of Setauket and Robert Townsend of Oyster Bay and New York City). Although the most important information flowed from New York City, the village of Setauket was the geographical linchpin of operations.

The importance of Long Island’s unique geography during the Revolutionary War comes out more clearly in light of the espionage that was carried on in the region of the Long Island Sound. With the open ocean on one side, and bays and inlets on the other, Long Island was very convenient for carrying on clandestine operations. In order to pass information from British-occupied New York to General Washington’s headquarters on the mainland, the spy ring created an elaborate scheme to evade British detection. The spies operated along an approximate one-hundred mile route that looped through Manhattan to Setauket and the coves along the north shore. The secret messages were carried across the Long Island Sound to Connecticut and on to Washington’s headquarters in upstate New York. Consequently, Washington often commented to commanders and other officials that the intelligence he received from his spies in British occupied New York was more accurate than information he received from any other place. Moreover, spying was another way of rejecting neutrality and breaking rules which further encouraged the secularization of Suffolk County. In the end, the espionage that occurred on Long Island further drained political and social norms, and broke down the county’s previous emphasis on civic unity and traditional values.³⁸

Tragically as the war dragged on, American whaleboat raids ultimately deteriorated into indiscriminate attacks against civilians. While the principles and rhetoric of the Revolution motivated some to become freedom fighters, the

tragic force of war exhausted public virtue and enthusiasm in others for any cause except self-interest. The war so devastated the communities in the region of the Long Island Sound that the necessities of survival sapped many citizens of their ideals and virtue and led them to commit atrocities against their former friends and neighbors. As a result, by the end of the war Long Island was a chaotic no man's land of lawlessness, mayhem and violence as the brutality of the British army was often outdone by the viciousness of American plunderers from New England.

One case in point is the attacks on the home of Nehemiah Heartt, Jr., a Whig sympathizer living in Huntington. Late one night in October 1778 a band of fifteen armed men broke into Heartt's home, which also served as a store and tavern. The intruders were part of the gangs from New England which indiscriminately looted, beat, kidnapped and killed Loyalists and Patriots on Long Island. A carpenter named Philip Platt who was working on enlarging the store was upstairs sound asleep. Awakened by the commotion of the prowlers ransacking the home, Platt went downstairs where he recognized several of the men as refugees from Huntington who had fled to Connecticut early in the war. Enraged, he began cursing at the looters for stealing the property of their neighbor whom they had known and presumably befriended for years before the Revolution. Realizing they were caught, the shamefaced bandits put the stolen items back and departed after telling Platt that if they should "ever be on such an errand again and he should expose them they would take his life." A few weeks later the same gang, with some additional men, came again in the night and broke into Heartt's home and store. Heartt was away on business but this time his wife Mary, his four children, and a local boy who was the shop's clerk, were home. The thieves, who had blackened their faces with powder so they could not be recognized (a tactic similar to wearing a ski mask today), pounded on the door and demanded Mary let them in, but she refused. Taking an ax from a woodpile they broke through the door and into the house. While holding Mary and her children at gunpoint the thieves ransacked the home and scooped up everything that was not nailed down. Despite their blacken faces, Heartt's son, Phillip, recognized one of the men as Ezekiel Wickes, a refugee from Huntington who had fled to Norwalk, Connecticut. Phillip later wrote in his memoirs that he had seen Wickes on an earlier occasion shoot a Loyalist officer and rob him of his watch and money and left his victim to die "weltering in his blood." After returning home and finding out what had happened, Nehemiah Heartt went to Norwalk where he had the looters arrested. One of the men, Jim Crossman, a resident of Connecticut, turned State's evidence and said that if Heartt had been at home at the time of the break-in and recognized any of the men he was to have been killed. Crossman gave the names of the whole company and Heartt received notes promising they would pay him for the stolen articles, but they never did.³⁹

Denied English goods since the beginning of the Revolutionary War, many Americans yearned for British imports. Neither trade with the French nor privateering could do enough to supply their demands. As a result, smugglers of every kind sold illegal goods in what was known during the war as “the illicit trade.” The illicit trade was an illegal or “black” market where British merchandise was exchanged for Connecticut provisions. The chief agents of the illicit trade were the whaleboat men and smugglers operating on the Long Island Sound, and Loyalists and British officials who wanted to procure fresh provisions from the mainland. The scope of the trade extended from New England to New Jersey with the center of the traffic being the Long Island Sound. The illicit trade prompted thieves to loot Long Islanders and sell the stolen goods on the mainland. These items included among other things: furniture, silverware, tableware, all kinds of cloths, buttons, clothing, shoes, spices, and chests of tea. Since the merchandise was stolen, the profits made by black marketers were astronomical.⁴⁰

Although the desire for material goods fueled the illicit trade, the lawlessness that pervaded the region allowed the looting of inhabitants to occur. As a result of the occupying authority’s suspension of civil courts and imposition of martial law, local citizens had no way to maintain public order and stability. In fact there was very little law and order; rather there was only the semblance of law in the guise of army commands and military directives -- hardly acceptable as legitimate authority by people who cherished civic law and self-government. Consequently, it was in this empty shell of a state that plunderers not only functioned but thrived. The suspension of civil law acted as a magnet for looting, murder and anarchy on Long Island. The plundering of civilians continued until the end of the war. As late as September 1783, Capt. Johann Ewald of the German Jäger Corps, fighting in the service of the British, wrote in his diary “many atrocities are perpetrated on the inhabitants . . . robberies and murders are committed so frequently that one is compelled to ride on the open highway with bare saber or drawn pistols as soon as night falls . . . quarters at all places are robbed and looted -- this is another kind of war to wage!”⁴¹ As the war dragged on it became something more than an affair one voluntarily participated in, rather it plowed over most Long Islanders on a tragic scale. Despite the depravity of the plunderers, ultimate blame rested with state authorities (both British and American) that were too stubborn, corrupt or weak to take the steps necessary to secure the territory. In the end, however, the people on eastern Long Island were paying the price for a war that they themselves had originally embraced; like the leaders on both sides little did they know that they were igniting a tragic force of violence never before, nor ever since, experienced in Suffolk County.

In the end, the British ruling class realized that success in the American war would cost more money, time and effort than they were willing to spend. The situation was best summed up by Major General von Lossberg of the German

auxiliary forces who declared in November 1777 that the countryside was “too large and there are too many people.” “The more land we win,” he complained, “the weaker our army gets in the field.” Finally Lossberg arrived at the conclusion that “it would be best” for the British “to come to any agreement” with the rebels rather than continue to try to occupy the country.⁴² The British, however, failed to see the big picture. Instead of reconciling the political problems at the root of the rebellion, the occupying authority relied on what they believed to be superior military power. By so doing they tragically misinterpreted the realities of the Revolution and excluded any practical, just and lasting political solution. The Revolution was a struggle for the allegiance of the American people and the occupiers needed to win the support of inhabitants to end the rebellion. The army’s abuses went against one of the basic precepts in pacifying an occupied country, the practice of rectitude -- correct conduct toward civilians and prisoners. British occupation in this sense provided the impetus for greater resistance and created insurgents, as well as criminals, out of ordinary citizens. As a result, the British rarely controlled more than the ground they stood on and the war in the region of the Long Island Sound was the kind of war that neither side wanted to fight—a partisan war of attrition. Fortunately, for the rebels in occupied New York, as with those in the Carolina backwoods, the Americans proved more adept at implementing the strategies and tactics of partisan fighting (the use of irregular forces in unconventional fighting) and insurgency (civilians living under enemy control who covertly supported the revolutionaries) that eventually won the war.

When the British evacuated in November 1783, Suffolk inhabitants reconstructed their shattered communities, keeping the pain and suffering of military occupation in mind. The traumatic experiences of the war coupled with the Revolution’s republican ideology altered traditional patterns of power and authority. Local emphasis on hierarchy, authority, and patronage diminished as republican ideals of equality, liberty and independence gradually took hold. The business conducted at town meetings still had the greatest impact on the lives of residents. At the same time, the county’s rural existence remained relatively unchanged so most of the decisions at the local level were limited to land transactions, regulating livestock, overseeing the poor, and managing common property. In general, government remained personal, informal, and unsophisticated.⁴³

Although the form and procedures of local affairs changed little after the war, the traumatic experience and the liberalizing spirit of the Revolution profoundly altered traditional notions of power and authority. During the Revolution, thousands of people who had never shown interest in politics had become active participants in public affairs. Hundreds more who had acted previously only on the local level became important players on the state and national stage. One of the biggest political transformations wrought by the Revolution was the discovery that despite the humbleness of their origins or lack

of great wealth, common people have worth. In the end, despite the agony which accompanied the war, the success of the Revolution brought a new sense of self-confidence to the common man. Although members of wealthy and well-established families continued to dominate the highest elected offices, men from less prominent and more humble families occupied a greater number of political positions than ever before.⁴⁴ One world traveler, Gen. Francisco de Miranda, a Spanish Officer who fought against the British in Florida during the Revolution, noted while visiting the Hamptons in 1784 that despite “the simplicity and narrowness” of the people’s lives, they held surprising “high ideas” about the role of government and society.⁴⁵

The most striking changes in local political patterns was a decline in plural office holding and, too a lesser degree, greater rotation in office. Prior to the Revolution, it was common for town supervisors to simultaneously serve as town clerk and as a member of the board of trustees. After the war, however, only two men, Abraham Miller of East Hampton, and Jared Landon of Southold, served in their respective towns as town supervisor and town clerk; Miller held both offices from 1789-1796 and Landon only for one year in 1789. In Brookhaven five men were elected town supervisors from 1783 to 1799 none of who served as town clerk. By the end of the eighteenth-century the principle of rotation in office in Huntington was well established and many politicians held only one job with the overall index being 1.45 posts per officeholder in the 1780s and 1790s. In the first decade following the war the popularly elected Huntington town supervisor changed hands eight times, two times more than during the entire colonial era. In Smithtown, Daniel Smith had been town supervisor and clerk for twenty five years (1759-1784). In the two decades following the war, four individuals were elected town supervisor. On Shelter Island, in the two decades leading up to the Revolution, only three men had held the supervisor position. From 1783 to 1799 the office changed hands nine times between seven different men and only one individual, Gen. Sylvester Dering held both the supervisor and clerk positions (1793-1794, 1796). In East Hampton the office of town clerk was turned over four times in the first seventeen years following the war, more than the entire period from 1688 to 1776.⁴⁶

As with politics, the Revolution democratized local religious institutions and aligned the county’s spiritual life with Suffolk’s new republican ideals. As a result, there was greater religious tolerance as new sects attracted members and a variety of denominations took root during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries. Although the enemy demolished Presbyterian churches on Long Island during the war, many were rebuilt after the British evacuation. Nonetheless, Presbyterianism suffered the loss of its privileged status. In the new order, colonial customs of collecting compulsory town rates for the support of town sanctioned Presbyterian churches and ministers were abolished. Funds for congregations were raised through the voluntary subscriptions of

parishioners. In addition, a state law passed in 1784 formally separated church and state in New York and allowed religious societies to incorporate and elect trustees for the administration of their “temporalities.” As a result, members of new faiths enjoyed greater freedom to support those denominations they found most attractive. Between 1787 and 1793 there were at least six Strict Congregational Churches organized in Suffolk County which established “for their mutual benefit and assistance” the Strict Congregational Convention of Long Island in 1791. Afterwards, the Convention was able to claim churches in Patchogue, Baiting Hollow, Old Man’s, Moriches, New Village, Wading River, and three churches in Riverhead. The sect was particularly successful in attracting Long Island’s indigenous population and the Shinnecock and Poosepatuck Indians formed churches in Canoe Place, Wading River and Poosepatuck in the 1790s. Other denominations that were marginalized during the colonial era gained new strength and respectability. For example, the congregation of the Baptist Church in Coram, which suspended meetings after the death of its minister in 1774, revived its parish and incorporated in 1790. Baptist churches were also established at Baiting Hollow, Cold Spring, Huntington and Greenport. In 1789 the county’s first Methodist church building was erected in Commack.⁴⁷ At the same time, religious meeting halls appeared in hamlets throughout the county where members of different sects, such as Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, and Baptists could worship according to prearranged schedules. Although ecumenicalism was probably in part a reflection of secularization in Suffolk County, considering that all Presbyterian Churches were shunned before the war, negotiations between different sects and the use of shared church buildings was an impressive achievement.⁴⁸ In effect, the Revolution made Suffolk County a more egalitarian, pluralistic and tolerant society and led many people to question traditional ideas including those surrounding their religious beliefs. As a result, citizens threw off long-established views and began seeing the world around them in new, more democratic ways.⁴⁹

In addition to changes in politics and religion, the Revolution altered attitudes towards slavery on Long Island. During the colonial era, most whites accepted slavery as just another form of debasement in a hierarchical society that had many degrees of freedom and subjection. After having suffered dearly in a struggle to secure political independence, however, a number of enlightened citizens questioned the justice of denying enslaved Africans their freedom. As a result, some slaveholders began to liberate their slaves. The first ideologically-based steps towards gradual abolition in New York began when the legislature enacted a law authorizing the voluntary manumission of slaves in 1785.⁵⁰ One of the first slaveholders in the county to liberate slaves under this law was Judge William Smith of St. George’s Manor. Smith, who was a delegate to the Provincial Congress and a member of the New York State Senate during the war, released his slaves Doll and Amy in January 1786. In August 1786 in

accordance with his will, Dr. Gilbert Potter, a former militia officer, committeeman and Continental Army surgeon, released his slave Mark. In April 1789, Silas Powel of Huntington, also an active member of the American resistance during the war, bought a slave named James for eight pounds with the intention to “keep him for five Months in service and then let him go free.” Isaac Buffet of Smithtown, whose father Joseph was killed during the war, released his slave Tamer in 1792. Sylvester Dering, a refugee who served in the Commissary Department of the Continental Army, released his slave Matilda in 1795. Joshua Smith of Smithtown, who was a refugee during the war, set his slave Oliver free in 1796.⁵¹ It is possible that some slave owners released their bondsmen in reaction to changes in the economy or because of alterations in agricultural production. In order to ensure that masters were not just relieving themselves of aged or decrepit slaves, town boards examined and certified that they were under fifty years of age, in good health and able to support themselves before approving their release. If a freed person was deemed a public charge, masters were compelled to pay the town which would then see to their upkeep.⁵²

According to a colony wide census taken in 1771, there were 1,452 blacks in Suffolk, which comprised 11.1 percent of the county’s total population. In 1776, there were approximately fifteen hundred slaves living in the county. After the war, manumissions combined with natural increase in the black population caused the proportion of slaves to free blacks to drop dramatically. By the time of the first federal census in 1790 the number of black inhabitants on eastern Long Island had risen to 2,224 while the number of slaves dropped to 1,098. Less than a decade after the end of the war, Suffolk County contained the highest number of free African-Americans living on Long Island, with 1,126 free blacks. The number of slaves steadily declined as the county entered the nineteenth-century, and by 1810 the total number of slaves in Suffolk had fallen to 413.⁵³

Manumissions in Suffolk County were spurred on by the outspokenness of local emancipationists who helped to create an intellectual and moral climate which fostered antislavery sentiments. For example, in 1788 New York Anti-federalist Thomas Tredwell voted against ratification of the United States Constitution in part because the document failed to immediately end the slave trade. Tredwell wrote that the slave trade “was a stain to the commerce of any civilized nation,” and had “blackened half the plains of America with a race of wretches made so by our cruel policy and avarice, and which appears to me to be already repugnant to every principle of humanity, morality, religion and good policy.” Sag Harbor resident David Frothingham, editor of the *Long Island Herald*, Long Island’s first newspaper, condemned public slave sales and labeled one auction in Whitestone, Queens in January 1796 “a disgrace to humanity.” Frothingham remained steadfast against slaveholding and urged readers to protest the slave trade by sending petitions to the legislature.⁵⁴ Despite the pressure of emancipationists, many of Suffolk’s leading citizens remained

slaveholders. Although slaveholders could delay the eventual end of slavery in New York, the tide of the Revolution's liberalizing ideology and the psychological impact of the British occupation was too powerful to hold back forever. The ideals of the Revolution combined with the tragic force of the war compelled local citizens to rethink all forms of personal dependency and question the social, moral and intellectual basis upon which slavery had existed during the entire colonial era.

Suffolk County provides an excellent case study of how the Revolutionary War converted colonial America into a modern republic. Most importantly it exposes the "tragic force" of military occupation -- the incredible pain and suffering people endured during the agonizing birth of our nation. Ultimately, the Revolution was both destructive and liberating. It disrupted lives but created a more equitable society. It demolished churches but eventually produced greater religious freedom. It devastated property but eventually liberated chattel slaves. Finally, the anguish endured during the Revolution was not forgotten as residents worked to propel their communities out of the "state of wretchedness" warned of by George Washington in 1776 and into the age of modern republicanism.

NOTES

¹ George Washington, General Orders, July 2, 1776: *The Writings of George Washington: From the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799* (hereafter cited as *Writings of George Washington*), ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, 39 vols. (Washington, DC: Published by authority of Congress, Government Printing Office, 1931-1944), 5:211, hereafter cited as *GW*.

² Frederic Mather, *The Refugees of 1776 from Long Island to Connecticut* (Albany: J.B. Lyon, 1913).

³ Myron H. Luke and Robert W. Venables, *Long Island in the American Revolution* (Albany, 1976), 2; for the early New England settlers of Suffolk, see Dixon Ryan Fox, *Yankees and Yorkers* (New York, 1940).

⁴ Helen Wortis, "Blacks on Long Island: Population Growth in the Colonial Period," *Journal of Long Island History* 11 (Autumn 1974): 40; Richard S. Moss, *Slavery on Long Island: A Study in Local Institutional and Early African-American Communal Life* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 1993); and *Census of Suffolk County, 1776, Excerpted from Calendar of Historical Manuscripts Relating to the War of the Revolution* (Lambertville, NJ: Hunterdon House, 1984).

⁵ David Korbin, *The Black Minority in Early New York* (Albany: State Education Department, 1971), 8-10; *Census of Suffolk County, 1776*, Helen

Wortis, "Blacks on Long Island," 40-41, 44; Moss, *Slavery on Long Island*, 14, 18-19, 47; "Negroes Belonging to Huntington, April 12, 1755; A List of Slaves...In the townships of Smithtown and Islip," *DCHNY*, O'Callaghan, ed., 3:519.

⁶ Geoffrey Rossano, "Oligarchs and Democrats: The Revolution in Huntington Town Government, 1765-1800," *The Quarterly of the Huntington Historical Society* 21 (Fall/Winter 1981): 4-23; "Class and Clan: The Origins of a Colonial Oligarchy in Huntington, Long Island 1650-1775," *Long Island Forum* 46 (June/July 1983): 105-135; "A Tale of Two Towns," *Long Island Forum*, 48, (July 1985), 136-165.

⁷ Robert Nichols, *Presbyterianism in New York State: A History of the Synod and Its Predecessors* (Philadelphia, 1963); *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1706-1788* (New York, Arno Press, 1969). For religious affairs in Huntington, see Charles Street, ed., *Huntington Town Records, 1658-1873* (Huntington, NY, 1887-89) 2:521-523, hereafter cited as *HTR*.

⁸ For the Anglican Church in Suffolk, see Robert Cray, "Anglicans in the Puritan Domain: Clergy and Laity in Eastern Long Island, 1693-1776," *Long Island Historical Journal* 2 (Spring 1990): 189-200.

⁹ Henry Onderdonk, *Revolutionary Incidents of Suffolk and Kings Counties, with an Account of the Battle of Long Island, and the British Prison-ships at New York* (New York, 1849; reprint, Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1967), 13-18.

¹⁰ By February 1776, Whig leaders had mobilized over 2,000 men, or approximately three-quarters of the county's eligible population into the militia. For copies of Suffolk's militia and minutemen rosters in 1776, see Mather, 989-1013.

¹¹ "Rev. Joshua Hartt's Liberty Sermon," transcription The Long Island Room, Smithtown Library, Smithtown, New York; Arthur Tuthill and John C. Huden, "John Storr's Patriot Pastor," *Long Island Forum* 15 (December, 1952): 233-234; Leonard Trinterud, *The Forming of an American Tradition: A Re-examination of Colonial Presbyterianism*, Reprint (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 254-255; Frederick K. Smith, *The Family of Richard Smith of Smithtown, Long Island: Ten Generations* (Smithtown, NY: Smithtown Historical Society, 1967), 116; William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit: or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished Clergymen of Various*

Denominations...to the Close of the Year Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-five (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1868), 31-33.

¹² Robert Cray, "Anglicans in the Puritan Domain: Clergy and Laity in Eastern Long Island, 1693-1776," *Long Island Historical Journal* 2 (Spring 1990): 189, 194, 197; Nichols, 46, 62, 64; Ebenezer Prime, *Records of the First Church in Huntington, Long Island, 1723- 1779: Being the Record kept by the Reverend Ebenezer Prime, the Pastor during those Years*, edited by Moses Scudder (Huntington, NY: Moses Scudder, 1899), 114; Leonard J. Trinterud, 23-238; Derek H. Davis, "Religion and the American Revolution," *Journal of Church & State*, 36 (Autumn 94): 717, 721; Jane Des Grange, comp., *Long Island's Religious History* (Stony Brook, NY, 1963), 35.

¹³ Although there were some common characteristics among Suffolk's Loyalists such as association with the Anglican Church, for the most part Loyalists, like Whigs, had diverse backgrounds and came from all levels of society. For New York Loyalists, see Philip Ranlet, *The New York Loyalists* (Knoxville, TN.: University of Tennessee Press, 1986); Esmond Wright, "The New York Loyalists: A Cross-section of Colonial Society," in *The Loyalist Americans: A Focus on Greater New York*, eds. Robert East and Jacob Judd (Tarrytown, NY: Sleepy Hollow Restorations, 1975), 74-94.

¹⁴ George Washington to the Committee of Suffolk County, Long Island, New York, May 16, 1776, *WGW*, 5:48-49.

¹⁵ Orders of Gen. Oliver DeLancey to Col. Phineas Fanning, September 2, 1776; and Orders of Gov. William Tryon, undated, reprinted in Onderdonk, 45-46, 60.

¹⁶ The number of British and Loyalist troops in Suffolk varied for the rest of the war. At times only a company or so of men and a handful of officers patrolled each town. At other times, such as in 1779, in response to a perceived Franco-American assault, twenty-five hundred British and Loyalist soldiers were stationed throughout the county. For British forts on Long Island, see Robert Roberts, *New York's Forts in the Revolution* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1986), 243-255.

¹⁷ For martial law on Long Island, see Joseph Tiedemann, "Patriots by Default: Queens County, New York and the British Army, 1776-1783" *William and Mary Quarterly* 43 (January 1986), 49-62.

¹⁸For abuse of civilians, see Stephen Conway, "The Great Mischief Complain'd of": Reflections on the Misconduct of British Soldiers in the Revolutionary War, *William and Mary Quarterly* 47 (July 1990): 370-390; and "To Subdue

America: British Army Officers and the Conduct of the Revolutionary War,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 43 (July 1986): 381-407; David Gardiner, *Chronicles of the Town of East Hampton, County of Suffolk, New York* (New York: Bowne & Co., 1871), 69; Martha Bockee Flint, *Long Island before the Revolution: A Colonial Study* (New York, 1899; reprint, Port Washington, NY: IJ Friedman, 1967), 433; Thomas Jones, *History of New York during the Revolutionary War*, edited by E.F. Delancey. 2 vol. (New York, 1879; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1968), 1:90; Suffolk County Historical Society, “Memoirs of Philip Heartt: Excerpts of a Huntington Boyhood 1768-1783,” *Suffolk County Historical Society Register* 24 (Summer 1998).

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²⁵ Charles W. Turner, *Annals of St. John's Church, Huntington* (Huntington, NY, 1895), 24-25.

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³⁷ Immediately following the Battle of Long Island, Washington realized that he needed to have spies operating in British headquarters in New York. His first attempt led to the capture and execution of Nathan Hale in September 1776. For more on Hale, see Morton Pennypacker, *General Washington's Spies on Long Island and in New York* (Brooklyn, NY: Long Island Historical Society, 1939).

³⁸ Tallmadge, 29; Charles S. Hall, *Benjamin Tallmadge, Revolutionary Soldier and American Businessman* (New York: AMS Press, 1966), 46-47; Pennypacker, 36.

³⁹ Heartt signed the Association in 1775 and was imprisoned briefly by the British for having traveled to Connecticut. At least two of the bandits had lived near-by and worked for Heartt's family as tailors and shoemakers before they became refugees to Connecticut. Mather, 1062; *SCHR* (24), 4-5.

⁴⁰ Mather, 209-10.

⁴¹ Johann Ewald, *Diary of the American War: A Hessian Journal, Translated by Joseph P. Tustin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), 347.

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⁴³ All white men who possessed freeholds worth £20 or rented tenement farms valued at £40 and their adult sons could vote. Even those who did not meet property requirements, which were relatively few, were usually permitted to vote in local elections, *HTR*, 3:147-158; Grania Bolton Marcus, "Patterns of Power in a Mid-Nineteenth Century Town: Huntington, Long Island, New York, 1848-1862" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1983), 188, 190, 221-222.188, 190, 221-222.

⁴⁴ Robert Middlekauf, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 547.

⁴⁵ Ettie Hedges Pennypacker, *Francisco de Miranda's Visit to Long Island in 1784: A Paper Translated from his Diary* (Garden City, NY: Nassau County Historical and Genealogical Society, 1937), 57.

⁴⁶ Marcus, "Patterns of Power," 191, 213; Rossano, "Oligarchs and Democrats," 1-15.

⁴⁷ des Grange, 13-14; C. C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1962), 173; Thomas Bayles, *During the Revolution in Brookhaven Town* (Brookhaven, NY: Town of Brookhaven, 1976), 3; Benjamin Thompson, *History of Long Island from its Discovery and Settlement to the Present Time*, 3 vol. (New York, 1849; reprint, New York: Robert Dodd, 1962), 2:496; Nathaniel S. Prime, *A History of Long Island*, 167; St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, *The Story of Methodism at Northport, New York* (Northport, NY: St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, n.d); "Record of Incorporation, Methodist Church in the East Bounds of Huntington, Judge Caleb Smith, March 29, 1792," Suffolk County Historical Society; Paul Bailey, ed., *Long Island: A History of Two Great Counties, Nassau and Suffolk*, 2 vol. (New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1949), 154; Oysterponds Historical Society, *Historic Orient Village* (Oyster Ponds Historical Society, 1976), 36; The Patchogue Methodist Church, *The Methodist Church of Patchogue, Long Island: 1791* (Patchogue, NY: The Patchogue Church, 1956); The Sag Harbor Methodist Episcopal Church, *Centennial Anniversary of The Sag Harbor Methodist Episcopal Church, Long Island, New York* (Sag Harbor, NY: Sag Harbor Methodist Episcopal Church, 1910); Lucille Rosen, *Commack: A Look into the Past* (Commack, NY: Commack Public Schools, 1970), 15; Halford Luccock and Paul Hutchinson, *The Story of Methodism* (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1926), 218.

⁴⁸ Robert E. Cray, Jr., "Forging a Majority: The Methodist Experience on Eastern Long Island, 1789-1845," *New York History* (July 1986): 295; 288, 296-298, 300-301; Nathaniel S. Prime, 415.

⁴⁹ Robert Mackay and Richard Welch, eds., *Long Island: An Illustrated History* (Sun Valley, Calif.: American Historical Press, 2000), 67.

⁵⁰ Three years later in 1788, the legislature outlawed the importation of new slaves into the state. Finally, in 1817, the state government enacted legislation that completely abolished slavery by 1827. *New York State, Laws of the State of New York* (Albany, NY: Printed by C. R. and G. Webster, 1802), 2:120-121, 3: 151.

⁵¹ Mather, 285, 328, 512, 576; Town of Smithtown, *Records of the Town of Smithtown, Long Island, N.Y. With Other Ancient Documents of Historic Value, Transcribed from the Originals in the Town Clerk's Office: with Notes and Introduction by William S. Pelletreau, A. M., and Published by Authority of the Town* (Huntington, NY: Long-Islander Print, 1898), 180, 183; Manor of St. George, Acct. Bk, Smith Mss. 4.1.1, Rhodes Collection; For a list of manumissions in Huntington see, Stanley Klein, *Manumission Book of the Towns of Huntington and Babylon, Long Island, New York: With Some Earlier Manumissions and Index, 1800-1824* (Huntington, NY: Town of Huntington, 1997). For manumissions in Smithtown, see Bradley Harris, *Black Roots in Smithtown: A History of the Black Community* (Smithtown, NY: Office of Town Historian, 1986). For the manumission in other towns refer to their town records.

⁵² *HTR*, 3:142; Ralph Ireland, "Slavery on Long Island: A Study of Economic Motivation." *Journal of Long Island History* 6 (Spring 1966), 9; Arthur J. Alexander, "Federal Officeholders in New York State as Slaveholders, 1789-1805," *Journal of Negro History* 28 (July 1943): 329.

⁵³ Moss, 155; Keith Kavenagh, "An Economic History of Suffolk County, New York, 1783-1812," Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1966, 88; Gilbert S. Bahn, ed., *Slaves and Nonwhite Free Persons in the 1790 Census of New York* (Baltimore, Md: Clearfield, 2000), 131-152; Wortis, 44; Marcus, *African-American Experience*, 88; Ralph Ireland, 9; Edgar J. McManus, *A History of Negro Slavery in New York* (Syracuse University Press, 1966), Appendix, 199.

⁵⁴ In 1794 Tredwell relocated his family to Clinton County, New York on Lake Champlain where he owned vast tracts of land. He was accompanied by as many as forty enslaved Africans who, shortly after their arrival, he emancipated

and settled at Richland, New York. For more on Tredwell, see Catherine Ball, "Thomas Tredwell of Smithtown (Long Island), Princeton (New Jersey) and the North Country," *Social Science Docket*, 7 (Summer-Fall, 2007): 48; James Bunce and Richard Harmond, eds, *Long Island as America: A Documentary History to 1896* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1977), 95; Bahn, ed., *Slaves and Nonwhite Free Persons in the 1790 Census*, 143; Ralph Ireland, 12.

SLAVERY IN COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY NEW YORK: COMPLICITY AND RESISTANCE

Alan Singer

Though small in number, slaves were a disproportionately high percentage of the population on Long Island, a region surprisingly entangled in that “peculiar institution.”

In 2007, Great Britain celebrated the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic Slave trade. As part of the bicentennial, the movie *Amazing Grace* told the story of William Wilberforce, a member of parliament and a close friend of Prime Minister William Pitt, who was portrayed as the hero of this struggle. The 2005 book version of the campaign to end the slave trade, *Bury the Chains* by Adam Hochschild, not surprisingly tells the story a little differently. In Hochschild's version Wilberforce is at best a supporting actor. The key players are a small group of religious dissenters led by Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp and including John Newton, who wrote the lyrics to *Amazing Grace*, and Olaudah Equiano, a formerly enslaved African.¹

Both the book and the movie, however, share the same premise, best expressed as a statement attributed to the American anthropologist Margaret Mead that Hochschild cites in his introduction: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does.”²

I am a big fan of this idea, but in this case I believe it is misleading. While individuals must play a role in social change, this view ignores too many other factors that make change possible. Great Britain decided to end the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and was able to convince the United States to nominally accept the ban, an historical moment for a series of reasons that were more related to economic development, political alignments, and the costs of empire and war, than they were to human agency.³

The slave rebellion in Haiti led by Toussaint L'Ouverture set the stage for the abolition of slavery. Great Britain tried and failed to suppress the rebellion at great expense and with heavy casualties. There was widespread fear that the continued importation of young African men, many of whom would have been warriors, would lead to further rebellions.

Another reason was that the cost of maintaining slave colonies and of empire was getting higher because of periodic warfare between the colonial powers, generally including in some combination Great

Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Spain. These wars were usually global contests with New World battlefronts. Among them were the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), which included a battle between Portugal and the Netherlands for control over Brazil and Portuguese African bases), the Anglo-Dutch Wars (1652-1654, 1664-1667, 1672-1674, and 1780-1784), the War of the Grand Alliance (1688-1697, known in the American colonies as King William's War), the War of Spanish Succession (1702-1713, known in the American colonies as Queen Anne's War), the War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748, known in the American colonies as King George's War), Seven Year' War (1754-1763, known in the American colonies as the French and Indian War), the American Revolution (1775-1783, which France and Spain entered on the side of the colonies in 1778), the Haitian Revolution (1793-1804, and later the Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815, the United States fought Britain in the War of 1812).

The dynamic of economic and political development during this period also played a crucial role. In Great Britain, and in the United States to a lesser extent, commercial capitalists involved in trade in slave produced commodities were losing political and economic influence to industrial capitalists who were not as interested in bearing the costs of slavery. British colonies already had established slave populations and the slave trade would be supplying labor to its competitors and sugar cane was of declining importance as a source of raw sugar. And last, the planters in the slave colonies were aligned politically with the landlords in Great Britain, an alliance that was seen as obstructing capitalist industrial development.

What I am suggesting is that if we want to understand why slavery in New York and on Long Island ended in the decades immediately following the American Revolution, we must look at the material conditions that led to the development of slavery on Long Island and how they changed, as well as what the slave system was like for both masters and the enslaved.

There were four types of New World colonies -- Planter, Settler, Trade, and Missionary --- although their structures certainly overlapped and metamorphosed over time. Planter colonies had huge populations of enslaved workers, generally Africans with a small European elite. The middle ground between the two was often held by a free, mixed race Creole group. The classic example of the plantation colony was Haiti. In settler colonies, free labor and European settlers predominated, although there were small groups of enslaved Africans and white indentured servants, especially when the colony was initially being developed. The British northern colonies fit in this category. Trading colonies were essentially fortified bases where Europeans exchanged

goods with native people. French Canada is an example. In what is now the U.S. southwest, Spanish influence was spread by Roman Catholic missionaries who established churches in areas where the population was overwhelmingly Native American.

New Amsterdam was established as a trade base but quickly changed into a settler colony. In the area settled by the Dutch on the western end of Long Island, enslaved Africans were used to build the infrastructure -- forts, roads, buildings, and docks, needed for trade, and later to clear land for farms. This region never developed a major commercial crop so large scale gang agriculture was never implemented. Most land holdings and slave holdings remained small.⁴

The east end of Long Island was settled by families from the New England colonies who were hungry for land, lived on small farms, and generally did not employ slave labor. Some parts of the East End, especially on the south fork and Shelter Island, were settled by planters from the British Caribbean who wanted food and materials to feed their Caribbean plantations and did use slave labor. But in this area as well, slave labor was needed for the initial creation of an agricultural infrastructure, not for ongoing gang labor on large productive plantations.

An examination of census material and other official records for Long Island from 1698 to 1820 gives us some important clues about the slave system. First, in general, when discussing colonial Long Island we are talking about a sparsely settled region with a small, but proportionally significant enslaved African population. In 1698, the total population of the three counties of Long Island -- Kings, Queens, and Suffolk -- was 8,261. Of that total, 1,053, or twelve percent, were enslaved Africans. By 1786, the population of Long Island was 30,863, 15 percent of who were enslaved Africans. In both years, approximately half of the enslaved population lived in the east. Starting in 1790, the percentage of the African population that is enslaved began to decline, until slavery in New York officially ended in 1827.⁵

Unlike on the plantations of the South and the Caribbean, most enslaved Africans on Long Island lived on small land holdings with only a few people held in bondage. In 1698, 75 percent of the enslaved Africans in Suffolk County lived with owners who had fewer than four slaves. In Kings and Queens, an even larger percentage of enslaved Africans lived under similar conditions. In 1755, 88 percent of all enslaved Africans on Long Island lived with owners who had fewer than four slaves.⁶

The best primary source document for understanding life under slavery for Africans on Long Island is probably the *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture Smith*.⁷ Smith wrote about his capture and

transport to the New World and conditions as a young boy on Fisher's Island and in the Hamptons. As a nine year old child he had to pound corn and card wool. Once he was suspended from a gallows as a punishment for disobedience by the son of his owner. Years later, as a young man, Smith attempted to escape and run away west of the Mississippi, but was forced to give himself up. Ultimately Smith was able to purchase his freedom and the freedom of his wife and children. As a teacher and an historian, one of the things I find most useful about the Venture Smith narrative is the way its credibility as an historical source is confirmed by a run away slave ad posted by George Mumford, Smith's owner, in 1754.⁸

With later increases in European population, unless enslaved Africans were surprisingly compliant, they would become economically unnecessary and even counterproductive once the initial phase of infrastructure development had passed. And the Africans were not compliant. Rebellion and resistance by enslaved Africans generated fear among the white population of the area. This fear escalated during the revolutionary era, when Colonel Tye fought for the British and led a regiment of Black troops against rebel forces in New Jersey and on Staten island, and when a large number of formerly enslaved Africans fled to the British lines where they hoped to secure their freedom.

Actual resistance and the fear of slave uprisings, whether justified or not, played important roles in transforming attitudes toward slavery. On July 22, 1706, Edward Lord Viscount Cornbury, the provincial governor, armed justices of the peace in Kings County on Long Island with the death penalty in order to deal with African maroons who, after freeing themselves, were inducing fear among the local colonists.⁹ On the evening of January 24, 1708, an enslaved Black woman and an enslaved Native American sought revenge on their owner, William Hallet Jr., of New Town, Queens County. They killed Hallet, his pregnant wife, and their five children. Authorities suspected a broader rebellion and arrested the two conspirators and several other Africans. On February 2, 1708, the woman was burned to death and the man was suspended in chains beside a blade that cut his flesh as he moved. Two other Africans were also executed.¹⁰

There was also a slave rebellion in 1712, and a suspected rebellion in 1741, in nearby New York City that definitely would have had repercussions for the Long Island Black and White populations. The 1712 uprising involved about two dozen African men and women. They are believed to have set fire to a building in the middle of town. When White colonists tried to extinguish the blaze, the Africans killed at least nine of them and wounded six others. Militia units joined regular soldiers to defeat and capture the rebels. Twenty-one of the slaves were

executed and others are believed to have chosen suicide rather than allow their captors to torture them to death. Governor Robert Hunter described the rebellion, the execution of the prisoners, and the aftermath in letters to the Board of Trade in London. According to one letter, one of the rebels was a pregnant woman whose execution was suspended. For the others, "Some were burnt, others hanged, one broke on the wheel, and one hung alive in chains in the town, so that there has been the most exemplary punishment inflicted that could be possibly thought of."¹¹

In 1741, the New York region was rife with talk of a slave conspiracy -- a conspiracy the existence of which historians still debate. Fear of an uprising by enslaved Africans in the city led to the arrest of 152 Blacks and twenty white co-conspirators. Eighty-one of the Blacks confessed to participation in the conspiracy in order to save their own lives or the lives of loved ones. Thirty-four Blacks and four Whites were executed. Thirteen of the Blacks were burned alive. Seventy accused rebels had their lives spared and were transported to the sugar islands of the Caribbean.¹²

I suspect these fears only grew during the American Revolution when Lord Dunmore, the governor of the Virginia colony and a former governor of New York, offered freedom to any slave or indentured servant who joined British forces trying to suppress the American rebellion. On Long Island, where most prominent local revolutionaries owned at least a few enslaved Africans, angry farmers burned Dunmore in effigy. According to records compiled in 1775 by the local militia, Hempstead township slaveholders included Georg Rierson, Cornelius Rierson, Benjamin Dusenbere, William Cornell, Hendrick Hendrickson, Thomas Hendrickson, John Hoster, John Montague, Jacob Vollentine, Benjamin Downing, William Lines, Thomas Seamons, Jonathan Valentine, Samuel Searing, Daniel Searing, Jacob Searing, Jeams Smith, Timothy Smith, Ellixander Davorson, John Cornell, David Allgoe, Sarah Seamons, Robbard Marvil, John Smith, Peter Titus, John Combs, Benjamin Smith, Jeams Smith, Richard Smith, Richard Titus, Uriah Plat, John Townsend, Phebe Not, John Petors, Epenetos Plat, Ambros Fish, Samuel Willis, Richard Williams, John Williams, William Titus, Mary Titus, Stephen Titus, Josiah Martin, George Holit, John Smith, John Searing, Samuel Rowland, John Hicks, Jacob Smith, Ephraim Vollingtine, Elizabeth Titus, and Charles Petors.¹³

In response to the British offer of manumission, thousands of enslaved Africans fled to the British lines.¹⁴ After the war, seventy-nine Africans from Long Island, including men, women, and children, were evacuated with the British forces.¹⁵ For enslaved Africans on Long Island and in the New York metropolitan area, the War for

Independence was not a war for freedom, unless they fought for the British.

One of the things that is so striking in the primary source documents is how quickly, at least in historical time, slavery went from being an established institution that was essentially taken for granted as needed and legitimate by the local white population, to an institution that was no longer acceptable, at least locally. Slaveholders were among the most prominent Long Islanders during the colonial period. They included the Willets and Lewis families of Flushing, the Lloyd Family of Queens, and the Smith and Tredwell families of Suffolk. The history of these families gives some insight into the general acceptance of institution of slavery on Long Island and the shift in beliefs and values that eventually made it unacceptable.

John Willet of Flushing was commissioned in the colonial militia by Lt. Governor Leisler in 1690. From 1711 through 1722, the family name appears a number of times in the register of the Anglican parish of Jamaica celebrating marriages and births. The family name also appeared in local newspapers -- as part of advertisements for the recapture of runaway slaves. Eighty-one enslaved Africans ran away from Queens county slaveholders between 1702 and 1825, at least three from the Willets.¹⁶

According to the *New-York Weekly Journal*, May 19, 1746:

Run away from John Willet, junior of Flushing, the 24th of April, a Negro fellow of about 21 years of age, his name is Primus but alters his Name frequently, he is about 6 feet high, and well-proportioned, he is of Malagasco complexion and it is observed that he will lye to that he is not to be believed or depended upon in that respect. Whoever takes him up the said Negro and brings him to his Master or secures him so his Master may have him again, shall be very well rewarded and all reasonable charges paid by me.

In April 1775, Francis Lewis was elected to the continental congress as a representative of New York State and he was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Lewis, according to a biography written by his great granddaughter, Julia Delafield (1877), not only owned enslaved Africans, but was probably a slave trader.¹⁷

The will of Richard Smith of Smithtown divided up his property, including his human property between his sons Richard and Nathaniel, his daughter Hannah, and his wife. As an important sign of the changes

taking place on Long Island with the eclipse of the slave system, one of his descendants, Epenetus Smith, later helped hide Henry Highland Garnet, a runaway slave on the family's farm.¹⁸

The Tredwell family of Smithtown underwent a similar transformation. Mary Platt Tredwell was a wealthy woman who lived in Smithtown at the time of the American Revolution. In 1773, an inventory was done of all her property, which included twenty-six enslaved Africans ranging in age from "new born" to sixty years old. Their total value was £853, or approximately \$128,615 in today's money. A few years later, Thomas Tredwell of Smithtown, her son, spoke as a leading opponent of slavery at the New York State Constitutional Ratification Convention. He called slavery "repugnant to every principle of humanity, morality, religion, and good society."¹⁹

As in Great Britain, Enlightenment ideas and religious fervor contributed to the campaigns to end the slave trade and slavery, but they were not the reasons for their success. The end of slavery in New York and Long Island depended on people of good will, but the people of good will could not have succeeded without the historical conditions present at the time. Significantly, the end of slavery locally did not result in either the end of slavery nationally or in the end of local complicity with that system through trade, financial ties, and the construction and outfitting of ships that continued to participate in the illegal trans-Atlantic slave trade up to the Civil War. As late as 1857, a slave catcher ship the "Wanderer" was built in Setauket. A year later it was outfitted for the trans-Atlantic voyage in Port Jefferson.²⁰

I was originally a high school teacher and I am now a teacher educator at Hofstra University. This has certainly shaped the way I present history when I speak. One of the things I have done is to develop a character that I call Reeces Pieces, because he "raps" about history and is better than Eminem.

This is Reeces Pieces summary of the history of slavery on Long Island.

Slavery on Long Island Rap

Time to learn the truth
Our local his-tor-y
That Lon'islan was land of sla-ver-y.

At Old Beth-page
Read the names
Schenk and Hewlett

Long Island Historical Journal

Play'd slavery games
 Se- tauk Cit-y
 Slave ships sell
 Port Jeff
 Glen Cove
 Travel to hell
 Thou-sands die on board
 In sad ad-ver-sity
 Cause Lon'islan was land of sla-ver-y.

Fran-cis Lew-is
 Declares us free
 He signs his name
 For liberty.
 But in his home
 He has slaves
 He made his money
 Slave trader ways.

Jup'ter Hammon
 Lloyd's Neck Queens
 Black man say that
 Lib'rty's a-great thing
 But we wait for heaven
 Till God sets us free
 Cause Lon'islan was land of sla-ver-y.

Afri-can capture
 Cross the Sea
 Brings Venture Smith
 To Sla-ver-y

Pur-chas-es free-dom
 Wife, Children three
 Cause Lon'islan was land of sla-ver-y.

Seven-teen Fifty
 August thirteen.
 Run-away Negress
 Phobe's not seen
 Forty shilling reward
 Great Neck by-the sea
 Cause Lon'islan was land of sla-ver-y.

Mar-y Tred-well
Seventeen Seventy three
Twn-y-six Afri-cans
They are not free.
Work her Smith-town farm
Until she's wealth-y
Cause Lon'islan was land of sla-ver-y.

Smithtown founders
They owned slaves
But their descendants
Broke with their ways.
They offered safe haven
To Henry Garnet
Escape slave catchers
It was their bet.
Sometimes the truth
Is hard to see
Cause Slavery days
Erased from history.
So its time to learn the truth
Our local his-tor-y
That Lon'islan was land of sla-ver-y.

NOTES

¹ Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005).

² *Ibid.*, 7.

³ Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery 1776-1848* (New York: Verson, 1989).

⁴ C. Moore, "A World of Possibilities: Slavery and Freedom in Dutch New Amsterdam," in Berlin, I. and L. Harris, eds., *Slavery in New York* (New York: The New Press, 2005).

⁵ R. Moss, *Slavery on Long Island: A Study in Local Institutional and Early African-American Communal Life* (New York: Garland, 1993).

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⁷ *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture Smith* (1796, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/venture2/menu.html>). Reprinted (Middletown, Conn.: J. S. Stewart, 1897).

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¹⁰ G. Hodges, *Root & Branch, African Americans in New York & East Jersey, 1613-1863* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 139-140.

¹¹ E. B., O' Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York; Procured in Holland, England and France 5* (Albany, New York: Weeds, Parsons. 1856), 341-342.

¹² L. Lepore, "The Tightening Vise: Slavery and Freedom in British New York," in Berlin, I., & L. Harris, eds. *Slavery in New York* (New York: The New Press, 2001), 85.

¹³ W. Funnell, "Many Nassau Families Owned Slaves Late in 18th Century: Record Compiled in 1775 Contains Names of Numerous Leading Residents," *Nassau Democrat Review-Star*, February 17, 1937.

¹⁴ Hodges, 139-140.

¹⁵ Moss, 166.

¹⁶ Moss, 108.

¹⁷ J. Delafield, *Biographies of Francis Lewis and Morgan Lewis by Their Granddaughter* (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph & Company, 1877).

¹⁸ G. Marcus, *Discovering The African-American Experience In Suffolk County, 1620-1860* (Setauket, New York: Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, 1988/1995).

¹⁹ *Social Science Docket* (2007, Summer-Fall). Thomas Tredwell of Smithtown (Long Island), Princeton (New Jersey), and the North Country.

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REVIEWS

John Hanc with a foreword by Ed Lowe. *Jones Beach: An Illustrated History*. Guilford, CT: The Globe Pequot Press, 2007. xxi + pp.190. \$18.96.

Jones Beach occupies a prominent position in our collective memory as Long Islanders and New Yorkers. So many of us have compelling, individual memories of this unique place. John Hanc's book is a vivid reminder of the park's importance to both the metropolitan region and countless individuals. In keeping with this dual emphasis, the book combines narrative history with memoir. The glow of a sunny summer day permeates much of the book, and anyone familiar with Jones Beach over the years will smile and remember.

We must keep in mind, however, that the Utopia-by-the-Sea was and remains a real and symbolic battleground. Hanc recounts Robert Moses' quest to construct Jones Beach State Park in the face of daunting legal, political, and geographic obstacles. The story of how the improbable facility was nonetheless created is a primer on New York State and Long Island politics in the 1920s. And while Hanc points out Moses' political deals and high handedness (construction contracts for the Hempstead Town Supervisor's brother-in-law is one example, p. 8) the Robert Moses of this book is not the villain of Robert Caro's *The Power Broker*. This is to be expected, for Jones Beach is arguably Moses' most popular creation and Hanc echoes Moses' characterization of the beach as a "miracle playground for the public" (p. 13).

Indeed, the question of the 'public good' looms large in this story of Jones Beach. Hanc, for example, explores the fate of High Hill Beach, a private community which occupied a site near present day Zach's Bay. Of course, these private properties stood in the way of Moses' public vision. While most historians are aware of the existence of the High Hill community, Hanc points out that sixty private residences remained as late as 1939-1940, when they were finally moved to West Gilgo Beach.

Much of Hanc's book deals with the growth and evolution of Jones Beach in the thirties, forties and fifties. We cannot fail to be impressed by the sheer size of Jones Beach -- one phrase Hanc uses is "the beach is apparently endless" -- and there are ample statistics: attendance figures, number of passenger cars crossing the causeway, construction costs. Jones was a powerful combination of recreation and democracy on a scale only twentieth-century America could concoct. Hanc includes well over one-hundred high quality vintage photographs, some sweeping over two full pages, which allows us to take it all in. The circa 1933 automobiles in front of the Jones Beach Water Tower (p. 1) is iconic, and

the informal shots of a happy citizenry enjoying the facilities in 1935 document the park's extraordinary success (p. 16). Even the most jaded among us cannot fail to be impressed and perhaps even inspired by the breadth of vision chronicled in the book. Jones Beach emerges, and rightly so, as a social experiment of major proportions.

While the larger history of Jones Beach makes for worthwhile and instructive reading, a key contribution of the book is the documentation of individual experience. Throughout the work Hanc cites personal letters, interviews and memories of ordinary New Yorkers for whom, after all, the beach was conceived. These memories humanize the saga of Jones Beach and serve as counterpoint to the institutional scale of the parking lots, swimming pools, and boardwalks.

Reaching the end of this book, it is difficult not to remember that the beach is still a battleground. Low levels of state funding have allowed architectural landmarks to deteriorate, and many small but important decorative details lovingly documented by Hanc have vanished from view. And then there are the looming threats of coastal erosion, not to mention the potential for a debacle with the proposed oceanfront restaurant. John Hanc chooses to deemphasize the physical decline of Jones Beach in the 1970s and 1980s along with the pressing threats to its future. To do so would spoil the cloudless skies and endless summer which is the essence of this engaging book. The threats to Jones Beach's historic grandeur and natural beauty are nevertheless serious, and if nothing else Hanc's work should inspire us to greater activism on behalf of one of the greatest public parks in the world.

PAUL D. VAN WIE
Hofstra University

Adrienne Onofri. *Walking Brooklyn*. Berkeley, California: Wilderness Press, 2007. Pp. 245, maps and photographs, \$17.95.

Adrienne Onofri's *Walking Brooklyn* is different. This is a manual for those interested in discovering the essence of Brooklyn through self-guided tours of its neighborhoods. This is not just an architectural digest of Brooklyn's best and most distinctive structures. It is not merely a series of historical abstracts describing the events and people that gave rise to the Brooklyn mystique. And it is not only an inquiry into the star attractions that too many visitors believe represent all there is to see in Brooklyn. It is all these and much more.

It is said that motorists disdain roadmaps and tourists despise guide books because they are impossible to follow or assume the visitor has prior experience with the locale. *Walking Brooklyn* is refreshingly

different because it invites visitors to experience Brooklyn in small, easily digested doses. It provides thirty different tours covering most of the borough. Tours are generally from two to four miles in length -- something that allows walkers to enjoy a leisurely pace and the chance to linger with no sense of hurry.

The author knows her subject and provides clear directions that avoid confusion. There are also a host of little known facts that embellish the story that emerges. Readers and tourists will appreciate the clear and easy-to-follow maps that accompany each tour. They show where to start, where you will be going, and where the trip concludes -- including public transportation that is available. Specific instructions (e.g. turn left on Henry Street) give comfort and confidence to first time visitors and veterans alike. The tours end with a listing of points of interest that were passed along the way. Many listed buildings include a telephone number so visitors can obtain additional information and arrange their trips at times the interiors of notable structures are open to the public. Finally, there is a route summary that traces the route in numbered steps. A few photographs of significant scenes supplement the text and complete the package.

Aside from the obvious features that are included in each tour, it is the authors' ability to link history, culture, arts, architecture, with the way people on these streets live that makes the volume so much fun. There are descriptions of what to do, what to eat, and what to see that make the book a pleasure to read in anticipation of an actual journey along Brooklyn's streets. For example, the Coney Island tour notes that Nathan's is a dispenser "of top dogs (their fries are awesome too)." The Williamsburg trip notes that on a smokestack remaining from a plant operated by Pfizer Pharmaceuticals there is a reference to the company mixing molasses -- with the explanation that molasses was used in the production of penicillin.

This is a marvelous volume that will seduce many readers into joining the ranks of walkers enjoying the wonders and joys of Brooklyn. It also will satisfy those who never plan to tour Brooklyn's streets, but just want to experience the essence of the borough. The author combines the arcane with the popular, the historic with what is current, and does so in a manner that is a lively and a pleasure to read. Happy reading and walking!

DONALD E. SIMON
Monroe College

John R. Stevens. *Dutch Vernacular Architecture in North America, 1630-1800*. West Hurley, New York: The Society for the Preservation of

Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture, 2005. Pp. 449, 132 plates, 157 photographs and prints. Paper \$50.00; Hardcover \$65.00.

This hefty, horizontally oriented book does for Dutch architecture in the former New Netherland what Abbott Lowell Cumming's *The Timber Framed Houses of Massachusetts Bay, 1625-1725* does for New England -- present meticulous plans, illustrations, and analysis of this early ethnic architecture -- a first in each region. As Stevens notes, the English style of framing and construction has been covered in numerous volumes over the years, but the early Dutch architecture has been studied much less. Also, most of these books do not include detailed structural drawings, a highlight of this book.

The editorial choice to include discussion and analysis (house types, frame and masonry construction, roofs, exterior features, interior construction, ironwork) in one section and drawings and illustrations in others makes for continual turning back and forth to produce a gestalt of the topic being studied, a wearying from the size of the book. The detail on every aspect of building construction is mind-boggling. There are also enlightening chapters on barns, mills, and outbuildings, but the few remaining such structures in Suffolk are not covered. Illustrations of similar Dutch structures in Canada, Belgium, the Netherlands, and other U.S. states show the breadth of the efficient Dutch 'bent' and other construction techniques; this is augmented by five appendices of building contracts, observations of early travelers, and views of Dutch Albany and New York, enhancing the context of the book's extensive details.

The volume is enriched with many illustrations (157) of the early Dutch cultural landscape and buildings, reminding us that this was a Dutch world for many years after the English arrival in 1664. However, there are also a number of pictures on the topic in regional collections which do not appear in the book and would further enrich it. In the section on maps, Suffolk County is shown as almost barren of Dutch houses; in reality, there are a sizable number of H-frame houses (story and a half), sometimes stone-end chimney, sometimes Dutch (divided) door, sometimes other, from Amagansett to the west on the South Fork, the length of the North Fork, many North Shore villages, and spotted along Rt. 25 to the Suffolk-Nassau border. Apparently, pressure of time to produce the wealth of detail presented here precluded covering Suffolk County Dutch influenced structures, a subject perhaps for another study.

This volume focuses mostly on the rich remaining Dutch architectural heritage of the Hudson Valley, although New Jersey, Staten Island, and Manhattan are included. However, a few Dutch structures are illustrated for Long Island (10 of 157 plates, 29 sites on the Island map), but a number, besides those in Suffolk, have been missed in Queens and

one in upper Manhattan. Old Bethpage Village Restoration has preserved much Dutch architecture -- the Schenck house, Dutch barn, and Peter Cooper house -- but the Lawrence house Dutch enlargement configuration is not mentioned.

A frequent comment in the volume is the purported early date of certain houses. The author rightly states that dendrochronology could provide the answer. One can hope that all of these unique structures with questioned dates can be cored and their true date of construction determined, as has occurred recently with seven of the oldest structures on the east end of Long Island. For the architecture buff, this is an engrossing volume; for the historically minded, an eye opener; for the casual reader, the illustrations alone provide a pleasant sojourn into a largely unknown part of our past. John Stevens' "labor of love" over many years of work and the editing of Natalie Naylor provide a treasure for all to enjoy.

GAYNELL STONE

Suffolk County Archaeological Association

Brookhaven Voices, 1655-2005. Presented by the Town of Brookhaven's 350th Anniversary Committee. Farmingville, New York, 2005. Text editor, Susan Bridson. Design editor, Ann Fossan. Pp. 278. \$15.00 (available through the Brookhaven Town Historian's Office).

Brookhaven Voices, published to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the founding of the Town of Brookhaven, is an extremely successful effort. Written by a panel of experts on local history, it provides the reader with a lot of meat for its content. The page layout is such that it can be either perused or read in detail. Either way, one gets a specific sense of the events that make up Brookhaven's past. Around the perimeter of the pages are illustrations (sometimes photographic though not always) with explanation and commentary or quotes that relate to the text of the same page, the style of which is sometimes narrative in nature, sometimes analytical. What results is an inviting, easily digestible, multi-faceted compendium of the history of Brookhaven through its long and eventful existence.

A related video/DVD entitled *Brookhaven Visions* was issued last year by the town. Each rests on its own merits. But taken together, they present a comprehensive tool with which to look at this town throughout time.

The book is an exceptional production. It is a paperback, but is printed on heavy stock paper, in an extremely sound binding that will stand the test of numerous reads. What results is essentially a hardcover

production in soft cover. It is a bargain for its price. It includes a bibliography, with selected footnotes in the quotations. Each article is signed, but without footnotes, although the illustrations and quotes are footnoted. I think that this style works well. One can consult the bibliography for further information.

The book's planners were remarkably insightful in devising the book's format, which is both a "picture book" and a read. They have produced a work that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy. And what a fine thing, to make history enjoyable!

CATHERINE BALL
Long Island Room Librarian,
The Smithtown Library

John M. Burns. *Thunder At Sunrise: A History of the Vanderbilt Cup, the Grand Prize and the Indianapolis 500, 1904-1916*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2006. Illustrations. Pp. 273. \$55.00.

Try this trivia question out on unsuspecting friends and relatives: What major international sports event had its American debut on the dirt roads of Nassau County in the early years of the twentieth-century? The answer is documented in John M. Burns' entertaining history of motor sports in America.

Burns details the early era of automobile racing in the United States, starting with Long Island's very own Vanderbilt Cup. Using contemporary newspaper accounts, secondary sources, and photos, the author provides an engaging commentary of the action paced races that thrilled hundreds of thousands between 1904 and 1916. Besides the Vanderbilt Cup, the Grand Prix and subsequent Indianapolis 500 races are also described in exciting "you are there" fashion. For those interested in the early years of the sport's history, the stories of the courageous drivers, the technology and evolution of the automobile race car and its effects on the entire industry, *Thunder at Sunrise* is a wonderful read throughout. However, as a Long Island history enthusiast, I found especially engrossing the first half, which chronicles the dawn of the century's Vanderbilt Cup competitions, run on the local dirt roads of Long Island. This was the primitive era prior to the advent of self contained oval speedways for motor sports.

William K. Vanderbilt Jr., the "poster boy for America's Gilded Age," was the great grandson of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt. The wealthy Vanderbilt Jr. built a Deepdale estate in Lake Success and proceeded to terrorize local residents with his reckless automobile

driving. He had hoped to buy the Lake and all public access roads to the shore but was prevented from doing so by North Hempstead voters not enamored of young Vanderbilt's vehicular antics. In fact, the first speed limit enacted in the village, at 6 miles per hour (mph), was a direct response to his dangerous 65 mph speeding.

Vanderbilt's interest and participation in automobile racing set in motion events that resulted in his sponsoring the first international automobile sports competition in America, the Vanderbilt Cup race. An approximate thirty mile circuit of mostly sandy, rutted local roads encompassing parts of Jericho Turnpike, Massapequa Road, Queens Village, Lakeville, Garden City, New Hyde Park, Mineola, Hempstead and Jericho, were designated as the track. Never enjoying a "permanent home," changes were made in the route over the years, yet it always remained a race that was run in a loop, primarily on the local roads of western Nassau County.

Plans for the inaugural race in 1904 met with opposition from the Nassau Board of Supervisors and the county's residents. Approval was delayed due to fears citizens had of being run down by the excessive number of speeding roadsters expected to participate. Taxpayers resented rich men getting special privileges, taking over local roads for sport. The local populace was concerned over the prospect of being forced to stay indoors during the pre race practice runs and actual race to avoid the kicked up dust and possible bodily injury. In the early years, when automobiles were usually the toy of the wealthy, it didn't take much for the common man and woman to take offense at those whizzing by in their fast machines. "Auto-fat" became an expression used to insult those drivers who were perceived as getting fat and lazy, eschewing walking or bicycling to get where they were going. Ultimately though, the Board agreed to allow the race once an understanding was reached that responsibility for any damage would be handled by the American Automobile Association. The economic possibilities of the event could not be ignored. The prospect of money pouring in from wealthy patrons of the sport, and the expected large crowds was hard to pass up. With an impressive trophy designed and made by Tiffany, Long Island's first competitive automobile race was ready to get underway.

In the chapter entitled "The Invasion of Nassau County" Burns paints a picture of what race day was like for the residents who lived along the route and the tourists who came in droves to witness the event. As Burns states, "1904 marked the beginning of spectator sports" in which "large crowds were a new and poorly understood phenomenon." Images of rural Long Island emerge from the author's descriptions of the races held from 1904 to 1910. Tremendous crowds would converge from Manhattan by ferry, drive in by auto, or travel in the pre dawn hours on the Long Island

Rail Road, which scheduled special trains for the occasion. Spectators would pay to be lodged in sold out hotels, private homes, or just ended up staying in their cars or in open fields. The wealthy would be accommodated by estate living acquaintances on the Island. Yet chaos and confusion was not uncommon as late arrivers stormed Rail Road ticket booths and created massive traffic jams of both motorized and horse driven vehicles. Cars would be abandoned wherever, as spectators would line up at points along the road for a good view. With money flowing in, the initial opposition from the locals dissipated. Although there were still those few who vandalized sections of the road to such an extent that people were hired to patrol the course, they were in the minority. Farmers helped ferry spectators, and provided refreshments. Grandstand seats were reserved for the rich, many of whom having brought their servants to prepare meals. Unofficial stands were hastily erected by landowners along the route. Others stood through the entire race, lined up in some places many rows deep. In 1906, the largest single day attendance record was set; over a quarter million people watched the Vanderbilt Cup race. Due to huge crowds along the public roads, accidents were not unusual. Neither unfortunately were fatalities. Drivers and spectators got in each other's way much too often. Mob control became a serious issue. The inherent dangers of racing on public roads eventually led to its demise. When four were killed and twenty injured during the Cup race of 1910, the authorities had had enough. That race would be the last of its unique kind on Long Island.

The longest modern concrete highway in the United States, the Long Island Motor Parkway, was built as a direct result of the Vanderbilt Cup race. Originally intended as a way to solve the Cup's crowd control problems, Vanderbilt and others came up with the idea of an automobile only toll road to extend from Queens to Riverhead. Not only would this road create income, it would serve as part of the track for the annual race. The project elicited controversy from the outset and foreshadowed in many ways the difficulties Robert Moses faced designing the construction of the Northern State Parkway years later. Some critics argued that the Island would henceforth be cut into two separate parts. There was also discontent over the prospect of a toll road for the wealthy cutting through private property and farmland. At first, individual landowners were approached to "donate" strips of land, having been told their property values would rise as a result. Some actually did donate parcels of land, but many who were angered over the "millionaire's" request didn't. Those farmers preferred to be paid for their land, and many farmlands were sold. Still, when the Parkway was completed in time for the 1908 race, after skipping a year for construction, there were many twists and turns along the route where right of ways could not be procured. Sporting

a newly erected grandstand, the race itself took up most of the new Parkway which was surrounded by a wire fence, plus fourteen additional miles of public roads.

The Long Island Motor Parkway was isolated from other roads and featured bridges and overpasses. In the late 1920s, Vanderbilt wanted to extend the parkway but Moses beat him to the punch with his plans for the Northern State. Even after tolls were reduced, fewer cars traveled on the now older highway, with its narrow roads. Moses was actually interested in one segment of the road but Vanderbilt refused him. Eventually the highway was turned over to the counties of Queens, Nassau and Suffolk in lieu of payment of back taxes. The road closed soon after. Today there is little evidence outside of a twelve mile stretch in Suffolk County to indicate where the road used to be. As the author summarizes, where once the road stood now can be found bicycle trails, shopping malls, power line right of ways, apartment complexes, and even backyards.

John M. Burns has done us all a favor by telling the whole exciting story of the famed Long Island race within the context of a comprehensive history of early automobile racing in America.

GARRY WILBUR
New Hyde Park, NY

Raymond E. and Judith A. Spinzia. *Long Island's Prominent South Shore Families: Their Estates and Their Country Homes in the Towns of Babylon and Islip*. College Station, TX: VirtualBookworm, 2007. Illus., maps. Pp. 390. \$24.95.

As a native born resident of the Town of Babylon, it is most refreshing to comment on this valuable reference work. The authors/compilers, former Long Island residents, are suited to the task and have earned their reputations as authorities on the history of the Island. This work is a sequel to their previously published two volume sourcebook on the prominent families of the North Shore. The present work delivers what has been promised and is every bit as worthy as their well received story about the North Shore.

There are a number of reasons why readers would want to consult this work. First, it is a thoroughly researched work which is based on the premise of determining the prominent families residing in the Towns of Babylon and Islip were, and then locating where they lived. Second, it is both a genealogical history that traces the prominent family histories, descendents, and occupations and an architectural description of the homes and estates where they lived. What the authors have done is

combined genealogical history with an architectural outlook in a nice concise package. For each prominent family readers are provided with occupation, civic activism, marriage(s), address, name of estate, year of construction, style of architecture, architect(s), landscape architect(s), whether or not the house is extant, and then, most importantly, historical notes regarding the family. In many instances, a historic or current photograph is provided. As an example, the Annie Stuart Cameron Arnold Estate in West Islip contains suitable illustrations which current and past residents of the area can easily identify. Third, an important contribution is describing how the estates evolved and what some of them have become today. For instance, the John Dunbar Adams Estate is now the Awixa Pond Restaurant, the William Bayard Cutting Estate is now the popular arboretum named after him, the Julien Tappan Davies Estate is now the Timber Point Country Club, the Robert David Lion Gardiner Estate is now the historic Sagtikos Manor, and the mansion of William K. Vanderbilt is now part of Dowling College. Fourth, maps of the Long Island Estate areas are provided. Lastly, there is an excellent bibliography along with a valuable appendix listing the various occupations of the prominent family members for easy reference. The real strength of this work is the appendices covering a number of areas including village locations and a selected bibliographic reference to South Shore Estate Owners, among others.

It is also interesting to note that scholars of Long Island history will find it worthwhile to know that Babylon and Islip had its share of prominent figures and statesmen. I was impressed to know that editorial figure Walter Hines Page lived in Bay Shore, Robert Allen Pinkerton, founder of the Pinkerton Detective Agency, resided in Bay Shore, atomic scientists Robert and Frank Oppenheimer hailed from Bay Shore, and Charles Tenney, Deputy Mayor of New York City during the Wagner administration, also called Bay Shore his home. There were others, such as “Godfather” author Mario Puzo, also of Bay Shore, Robert Moses, the urban planner from Babylon who later lived at Gilgo Beach, Benjamin Summer Wells, Assistant Secretary of State in FDR’s administration and homeowner in Islip, and the popular judge who later fell from grace in 1939, Martin T. Manton -- “preying manton” after his conviction on bribery charges -- who called Bayport his living quarters. Surely, the early twentieth-century on Long Island’s south shore could boast of shipping magnates, noted attorneys, bankers, aeroplane manufacturers, a world famous bakery (Entenmann), a Singer Sewing machine entrepreneur, the Gulden’s mustard founder, the founder of Abraham and Strauss retailer, the Adams and Chicle chewing gum manufacturer, a Republic Moving Pictures producer, and the Bon Ami cleanser developer, to name just a few.

Certainly, this area of approximately sixteen square miles extending eastward from the Nassau-Suffolk border to the Bayport-Blue Point boundary and one mile perpendicularly from South Country Road (Montauk Highway) to the Great South Bay represents what the authors like to call the "Hidden Gold Coast." It represents a time, before postwar suburbanization, when seasonal activity and social engagement determined the lifestyles of the rich and famous. In the late 1800s and early 1900s many ultimately chose this region to be their permanent home.

What did surprise me, however, was the lack of prominent families residing in the popular village of Amityville. Given the village's history and popularity as a summer resort during the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century, one would think more notable families would have resided there. Why did Babylon Village have almost seven times the number of prominent families than did Amityville? For researchers that would make for an interesting study.

While the authors/compilers have done a commendable job, the work would have profited from a small historical introduction to the region. A passageway, or overview, would be in order so that readers can catch the flavor of the period during the transition from summer retreat to permanent residence. What was happening in America at this time and what was taking place on Long Island when these prominent families were building their estates? Certainly, we have enough local newspapers of the period (now *Amityville Record* and *Babylon Beacon* for example) to provide clues. There are also a number of works now available to provide ample background as noted in the excellent bibliography. More importantly, a historical introduction to the time period enables readers to see how the landscape changed over time from landed gentry to the middle class suburbia of today. Naturally, today's social historians may take exception to this kind of work devoted to the privileged class given the emphasis over the past forty years on studying the "people." Lastly, while the reviewer cannot authenticate the accuracy of all the dates of the illustrations and images in this fine work there is one noticeable error. On page 75 the dates of some of the images of the Jay Stanley Foster II estate cannot be correct. There are three photos -- front facade, rear facade, and south facade -- dated 1976. That cannot be since the structure was no longer there at that time. Are these reprints that were made in 1976 of earlier photos? Clarification on this score is needed.

Despite such minor criticisms, the effort by the Spinzias is admirable. What is really valuable is that this is much more than a picture book. It reflects hours of painstaking research and meticulous attention to detail. The book describes the estates and provides readers with valuable historical information about each family. The occupations and

genealogical background is most useful as a tool for research. For me it is also a walk down memory lane. In the 1950s I would walk from George St. in Babylon Village through the back of the old Edwin Hawley Estate in West Islip. Hopping over the old broken bridge I would navigate my way to the other side of the small river. In the distance I could see the old waterfalls of the estate facing South Country Road. Before West Islip took on an identity of its own the Hawley Estate was located in the Effingham Park section of Babylon. The waterfalls are gone along with the home, replaced today with a roadway, Route 231. But alas! All is not lost. In the evenings my wife and I will walk along Lake Drive South and cross over two narrow, small bridges emblazoned with the Hawley Family Crest, "H." Thankfully, some remnants remain of what life was like before the onrush of automobiles, modern highways, and numerous housing developments.

CHARLES F. HOWLETT
Molloy College

Sara S. Gronim. *Everyday Nature: Knowledge of the Natural World in Colonial New York*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007. Pp. 261. \$49.95.

Sara Gronim is the author of prize winning articles focusing on colonial cartography and eighteenth-century medicine and a professor of early American history at C.W. Post College, Long Island University. In this, Gronim examines how over the course of the late seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries, a variety of new innovations in science, technology, and medicine were disseminated, rejected and often only reluctantly accepted by contentious colonial New Yorkers living along the rim of the Atlantic world.

Gronim's research makes admirable use of a multitude of records of natural observations and experiences, personal letters, government reports, almanacs, and travel accounts of colonial officials, ship captains, shopkeepers, craftsmen, local farmers and their wives -- virtually all of for whom the natural world made up the "fabric of their everyday lives."

Divided into two parts, the book discusses how the early colonists shaped and envisioned the land through farming, land surveying and cartography. It also explores how ordinary colonists perceived everyday physical conditions such as their bodies, the stars and changes in the weather, as well as more mysterious natural phenomena like "witches, epidemics, comets and malformations of everything from kittens to radishes." The book's main objective, however, is to examine how new

innovations in understanding the natural world were “embedded in larger cultural shifts.”

Early settlers brought over from Europe common assumptions about the natural world and their place in it. One of the most salient of these beliefs was that the natural world operated everywhere the same according to classical teachings and the bible. Therefore, most colonists in the seventeenth and early eighteenth-centuries were skeptical, at best about accepting new innovations in the knowledge of nature. Consequently, distinctions between superstition and science were not received on the word of scholars alone. Advocates of change in the knowledge of the natural world depended chiefly on the experiences of ordinary people who read newspapers and almanacs and experimented with new methods in farming. Gronim’s greatest contribution is to the body of literature, appearing in the last generation or so, which insists that the scientific revolution was not so much a product of “a few brilliant men” but rather the work of “many more ordinary people -- instrument makers, navigators, gardeners, doctors and hundreds of collectors and experimenters who never became famous.” *Everyday Nature* celebrates these unsung innovators as those ultimately responsible for reworking our modern understanding of the natural world.

One of the things most clearly expressed throughout the book is that novel ideas about the natural world had an exceptionally hard time being accepted in fractious colonial New York. As most historians of early New York would agree, the colony’s diversity made it a “chronically contentious [and] particularly disputatious place . . . [where] no single person or group claimed center stage.” It is logical that disparate beliefs about the natural world would become further cause for social tensions and turmoil. One of the biggest points of contention about new ways of knowing the natural world was that innovations threatened what ordinary people did in their everyday lives by elevating some people’s social authority (such as the erudite) while at the same time demeaning that of others.

While much is revealed about how the knowledge of the natural world advanced in colonial New York in general, there is only cursory information about how these innovations affected those living on Long Island. Curiously enough, however, the book begins with excerpts taken from Daniel Denton’s pamphlet *A Brief Description of New York* written in 1670. Denton, a New England migrant who took up residence in Hempstead, Long Island as a child in 1644 described the region as being “of very good soyle;” perfect for growing a wide variety of crops, fruits and other produce. According to Denton, Long Island was a virtual Garden of Eden, filled with songbirds, flowers and flowing “Christal Streams.” Denton’s description, however, does not describe Long Island

as an unsettled wilderness: the reason being is that by the time the first European colonists arrived the region had long been cultivated and improved upon by Algonquian-speaking Indians. Gronim points out that Europeans “more often than not erected their farms on old Indian sites, taking advantage of cleared lands, and . . . Indian trails.” Early white settlers also adopted some of the Indians ways of managing the land such as the technique of burning woodlands. Nonetheless, before long, colonists ascribed a natural savagery to all Indians that “erased their rights” to the land and rebuilt their settlements with “pastoral landscapes” and forms of agriculture similar to rural Europe.

One the few other passages relating particularly to Long Island is a section on how anomalies such as epidemics, comets and other unexplained natural phenomena were perceived by early settlers. Among examples provided are the stories of Goody Garlick who was tried (but not convicted) of practicing witchcraft in East Hampton in 1657 and Mary Wright of Oyster Bay who although put on trial for witchcraft was found guilty of Quakerism and banished in 1660. Gronim mentions these incidents for two reasons. To reveal how religious intolerance was a chronic source of contention in colonial New York and more importantly, to explain how the beliefs and practices of the “middling sort” saw the hand of God in all occurrences.

By the eve of the American Revolution, however, many New Yorkers felt they were living in a time of progress. Common experiences with such improvements as “hemp cultivation, more precise navigational instruments [and better cartography], and smallpox inoculation” led to readier acceptance of new ideas. By the late eighteenth-century, a major shift occurred in how people understood the natural world as logic and reason bred new optimism about the future.

What Gronim does best is explain how advances in the knowledge of natural science transformed and was affected by eighteenth-century social, religious and political affairs. Although details may vary, the “social relations of knowledge” and the spirit of early struggles to establish new ideas are still very much with us today. By focusing on how those experiences played out in colonial New York, Gronim provides us with important lessons on why some people in the past accepted new ideas and why others did not. In light of contemporary controversies such as the energy crisis, global warming and other concerns here on Long Island and throughout the world, these lessons must be understood if we hope to have a natural world we can continue to prosper with into the future.

JOHN G. STAUDT
Hofstra University

Dorothy Ingersoll Zaykowski and the Members of the Committee for the Old Burying Ground. *The Old Burying Ground at Sag Harbor New York*. Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, 2006. \$17.50.

In recent decades the value of early American burial grounds and the gravestones they contain has been increasingly recognized for both historical and esthetic reasons. Though much has been lost, Long Island is rich in colonial and early national burial grounds, and studies of these remarkable sites have proliferated over the past thirty years. Dorothy Ingersoll Zaykowski's *The Old Burying Ground at Sag Harbor* is a recent addition to the genre.

The Old Burying Ground includes a historical overview, brief description of marker types, and an extensive listing of the memorials. A separate insert maps the burying grounds, giving each stone a number which is keyed to a numbered list in the text. The text provides the biographical information on those interred beneath the numbered markers. This list is complimented an alphabetical index of all the gravestones in the grounds. This thorough inventory is augmented by another part recording the epitaphs found on the markers, which is also keyed to the numbers in the map survey.

Zaykowski provides separate sections devoted to the graves of Revolutionary War veterans for whom she provides brief biographical entries. Space is also devoted to the black and Portuguese sections of the burial grounds. The former were apparently segregated in death as they were often in life, while the Portuguese were mostly whalers who came to Sag Harbor during the Antebellum whaling boom. Another chapter highlights the career of Ithuel Hill, Long Island's only known resident gravestone cutter from the eighteenth century.

The production values of the 112 page, soft cover book are satisfactory, though not all one might hope for. In addition to the map insert, seventeen black and white photos are included which provide images of the burial ground as well as selected gravestones. Altogether, *The Old Burying Ground at Sag Harbor* is a useful addition to the literature of early American gravestone/burial ground studies.

RICHARD F. WELCH

LIHJ Ed. Brd.

John J. Head. *With Brush and Bridle, Richard Newton, Jr. -- Artist and Equestrian*. Washington, VA: Ellerslie Press, 2006. Pp. 110. \$55.00.

In this visually rich volume on the life and work of Richard Newton, Jr. (1874-1951), professor and former museum director John J. Head presents three full page color photographs of Newton's paintings of equestrians and their horses, as well as dozens of smaller black and white, and color, illustrations of those subjects. These striking pictures invite the reader into the closed world created by a Manhattan and Hamptons ("Town and Country") social elite that left its mark on Long Island from the 1890s through the 1930s. Head has largely achieved the three goals he defined for his book: to document Newton's paintings, some of which he has discovered; to present evidence that elucidates Newton as a painter and master of the fox hounds (a technical phrase abbreviated as MFH); and to make Newton's contributions to foxhunting and art known to a wider audience.

The author follows his introductory chapter on the beginnings of foxhunting in the Hamptons and its attendant social activities around 1900 with a narrative history of Newton's family and artistic milieu. Born in New York City, Newton's father was a prominent Episcopalian minister. Guests at his parent's country house, purchased in 1879, and located on Georgica Pond near the ocean in East Hampton included artists. By the early 1890s, Richard had exhibited his landscapes in New York, Chicago, and Boston. He was seventeen. Soon he was pursuing the red fox through fields and woods, leading local hunts, and in 1902 he founded Suffolk Hounds, one of the many private clubs mentioned in the text. This particular pack hunted the area from Southampton to Montauk Point. Newton remained its MFH from the club's inception until 1942 when the organization was disbanded. In 1924, the Newton family helped found the Riding Club of East Hampton. This chapter stresses themes of family heritage and marriage, social contact, sports, and local celebrity, and shows how Newton documented American foxhunting through his hunting landscape paintings.

Continuing a reliance on the *East Hampton Star*, the *New York Times*, memoirs, memorial writings, and documents related to the paintings, Head's third and longest chapter describes the commissions, exhibitions, and scenes depicted in Newton's work, although most hunt locations remain unknown. Yet, early in the book Head does note that the pond at Old Westbury, Long Island, was a "locale featured in Newton's equestrian portraits" (p. 4) but he doesn't identify the painting(s) where it is found. For the most part, these works were executed between 1906 and 1940. Early in this period the author notes that a kennel was built for the foxhounds of the Suffolk Hunt near Water Mill, a hamlet east of Southampton Village. At about the same time, in 1910, a clubhouse was set up nearby in an early nineteenth-century farmhouse (pp. 34-37). This may have been Box Farm. Head states that

the farm became Newton's country residence but the timing is unclear. Another source indicates that Newton, a young man of some private means, purchased the house in 1895. The equestrian-artist would have shared it with his first wife after their marriage in 1905. In the concluding chapter to the book, Head notes that Newton's third wife's family willed the farm to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which acquired it in 1994. It was soon sold. The landmark still stands on Montauk Highway.

In a final chapter, Richard Newton, coping with a series of family deaths and the disbanding of the Suffolk Hounds, appears to have deeply felt the melancholy of loss. In 1945, he and his younger brother printed a "memorial volume" as a tribute to their recently deceased older brother and Richard painted his last portrait.

Besides the four main chapters, the book includes a bibliography, lists of Newton's art works in their respective categories, biographical sketches of the people portrayed, an appendix that replicates Richard Newton, Jr.'s article, "Riding to Hounds," published in *Munsey's Magazine*, and a name index. A Foreword, by George Weymouth and Nicholas Prychodko, offers an assessment of the artist's portrait painting. It concludes that "Newton's is an apt formalism perfectly designed for describing the social ritual of foxhunting, with its panoply of customs, etiquette and costume imported from England. In his adherence to the established norms of sporting art, Newton placed himself squarely in the tradition set by his predecessors, but he brought to it his own unique attributes, notably a level of technical accomplishment and a sensitivity to the natural environment equaled by few of his peers" (p. 8). Head has performed a valuable service in bringing his subject to the general public through this work.

ANN SANDFORD
Sagaponack, NY

Kerriann Flanagan Brosky. *Ghosts of Long Island: Stories of the Paranormal*. Huntington, NY: Maple Hill Press, 2006. Pp. 159. \$24.95.

Even if it's not Halloween, Kerriann Flanagan Brosky's book is every bit as delightful as an artfully carved jack o'lantern. It contains fascinating tales about things that go bump in the night, and sections of the book are truly thought provoking. The author possesses a real knack for opening the window on a mysterious world that more and more people find fascinating. If you have any doubts about that, just remember that Long Island psychic medium John Edward is an international celebrity who packs in audiences as far away as Australia. Closer to

home, Edward, who was the subject of a cover story in the *New York Times Magazine* a few years ago, thrilled fans during several days of performances in Westbury in December 2007. Earlier in the decade, Long Islanders stood on long lines waiting to get into the Huntington Town House to see psychic medium James Von Praagh. The events of 9-11 were fresh in everyone's mind at the time and perhaps that explains, at least partially, what seems to be a growing fascination with the paranormal.

Yet, even before that dreadful September day, there was considerable interest in the sort of things Kerriann Flanagan Brosky delves into in her book. The thirty compact chapters of this fascinating volume recount tales of apparitions reported by witnesses. These ghostly appearances are said to have occurred in historic homes, the Fire Island Lighthouse, and old buildings that serve as fine examples of the adaptive reuse of historical structures. The Country House in Stony Brook, built around 1710 as a private residence and creatively adapted for use as a restaurant in the 1960s, has more to offer than good food and colonial architecture according to Brosky, who describes encounters with a ghostly Annette Williamson as reported by staff and patrons. The young woman was supposedly murdered in the house during the American Revolution because she and her parents were suspected of being Loyalists. A woman from a more recent historical period is thought to be the resident ghost at Cedarmere, the home of her great-grandfather, poet and newspaper editor William Cullen Bryant. Known as "Lovely" because of her middle name, Elizabeth Love Godwin died in 1975 but she didn't depart without raising a ruckus. Shortly after her passing, Ms. Godwin's attorney and the caretaker of the estate were startled when the annunciator or call box used to summon servants went off in the deceased's bedroom. To silence the thing, the men had to disconnect it. Skeptics might say that faulty wiring, rather than the ghost of Elizabeth Godwin, was responsible for the incessant noise but doubters notwithstanding, there are places on Long Island where the paranormal may offer the most plausible explanation for strange happenings. Montauk is one of these hot spots.

In a chapter on Montauk Manor, the resort condominium hotel which looms over Fort Hill Cemetery, an Indian burial ground, Brosky describes encounters unsuspecting visitors have had with an Indian wearing an elaborate headdress. Montauk Manor staff members have also reported seeing apparitions of a child and hearing loud noises emanating from empty units. In the past decade things have been quiet at the Manor leading some to believe that the spirit of the Indian Chief is finally at peace. Rumors that the Manor is haunted continue to abound, however, but with no apparent effect upon the resort's occupancy rate. In fact, the paranormal adds a bit of cachet to places frequented by tourists. Witness

the popularity of the “Ghost Stories and Legends of Fire Island” program at the Fire Island Lighthouse, an annual event held in October. Brosky asserts that the “volunteers at the lighthouse laugh when you mention the word ghost,” but she hastens to add that they refer to an imaginative ghost as George. A popular children’s book intimated that the Lighthouse “talked” to a young boy and this fueled speculation that the venerable beacon was haunted, possibly by a former keeper who repeatedly climbed to the top trying to catch sight of a doctor summoned to care for the keeper’s ill child. The physician failed to arrive; the little girl died and her father, some say, is still climbing to the top of the Lighthouse in search of the doctor.

Ghosts in public places are one thing. At the end of the day, except for resident caretakers or other staff, people can go home, presumably leaving behind those who have departed from this world. Ghosts in private homes occupied by twenty-first century families are quite another thing. Most people searching for their Long Island dream house would run the other way if the real estate disclosure form even hinted at the possibility of otherworldly residents in the place they were considering buying, but there are exceptions. Brosky devotes a chapter to a family whose members don’t mind sharing the stunning Patchogue Victorian they bought in 2003 with spirits, including, they say, that of their beloved golden retriever who passed on a few years after they moved in. Excessive tale wagging and rapt attention by two current family dogs, seemingly for no reason, may indicate that the pets are reacting to the spirit of another figure, that of a little girl. The homeowner claims that he heard the voice of a young girl soon after moving into the house. Except for the dogs, he was alone in the house at the time.

Another private home featured in this fascinating book is the Cutchogue residence of the Wickham family whose members have been farming on the North Fork for hundreds of years. Despite the fact that James Wickham and his wife were bludgeoned to death in a bedroom of the old house in 1854 by a revenge seeking farmhand who had been dismissed, the current occupant, former Southold Town Supervisor Tom Wickham, told the author that he and his wife were happy in the house and lived there undisturbed. Brosky concedes that the murder victims may finally be at peace and that perhaps the house isn’t haunted. But an expert on EVP (electronic voice phenomena) who accompanied her to the Wickham farm picked up a male voice in the background while recording an interview with Tom Wickham. EVP and other terms used by ghost hunters are defined in a helpful glossary which appears at the beginning of the book. There is also a separate glossary containing definitions of the ten types of ghosts. Uninitiated skeptics might react to this by asking: “Who knew?” but open minded readers unfamiliar with the paranormal

will find this material helpful for understanding some of the phenomena encountered throughout the book.

In a number of chapters the reader is introduced to people who were initially skeptical about the paranormal but became more open minded as a result of personal experience. The former science teacher whose Cold Spring Harbor gourmet shop resonated with strange sounds, including the opening of an oven once used by the store's former owner, began to wonder whether her deceased predecessor who "loved her store" and "loved her stove" had returned. A disembodied woman's voice and unusual shadows in the store were also cause for wonder. Of course, one can argue that susceptible types, including those newly converted to belief in the paranormal, simply read too much into otherwise ordinary things such as shadows. The author herself might be accused of this because her book, while extremely interesting, is filled with conjecture. In one of the shortest chapters, which discusses the J.P. Morgan estate on East Island, Glen Cove, Brosky recounts a conversation with nuns who ran a school in the mansion in the mid-twentieth-century. According to Brosky, a young female figure appeared to the nuns and told them that she was the spirit of Alice Morgan who had died there, of typhoid fever. Brosky then proceeds to ask what became of the spirit "when the wonderful home she lived and died in was destroyed." Perhaps predictably her response is: "Does she haunt the homes that were later built on her father's massive estate? Or does she spend her time at the guardhouse, the last remaining relic of an age long gone?" By the time they get to this chapter, which appears halfway through the book, skeptics may be tempted to toss the volume aside but that would be a mistake because like the chapters that precede this one, those that follow contain good historical data about Long Island landmarks and lesser known places. As expected, old gravestones and the Amityville Horror house are included but there is so much more, including a chapter on haunted dolls and one on a Southampton windmill which is supposedly haunted.

Of special interest is the chapter on Raynham Hall, an Oyster Bay museum which was formerly the home of the prominent Townsend family, some of whose members are suspected, by museum staff, volunteers, and visitors, of still being there. After providing a brief history of the venerable structure, Brosky cites examples of spirits making their presence felt, e.g. noises, apparitions, EVPs, smells and cold spots. A few years ago while accompanying a group to Raynham Hall, this reviewer did experience a rush of cold air in one part of the ground floor but merely attributed it to the climate control system installed to preserve the gracious old house. Perhaps influenced by the guide who indicated that the house might indeed be haunted, some of my students were inclined to attribute the cold spot to the presence of a Townsend

who had lived in the house long ago. Interestingly, Brosky concludes the chapter on Raynham Hall with some advice for her readers. "You decide whether or not you think Raynham Hall is haunted," she says, adding: "Go and visit this fascinating museum; you never know what ghostly encounters you may experience." No matter what one's position on the paranormal is, visiting for the first time, or revisiting the public sites discussed in this volume will surely be more exciting after having read Brosky's book. And for those who can't get enough of this sort of thing, the author's bibliography of print and Internet sources will serve as a guide to additional material.

MARILYN E. WEIGOLD
Pace University

Daniel M. Hendrick. *Jamaica Bay (Images of America)*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006. Illustrations. Pp. 128. \$19.99.

This welcome entry in Arcadia Publishing's "Images of America" series, examines the history of New York's Jamaica Bay. Through narrative, historical photos, maps and illustrations, the absorbing story of the area is told.

South of Flatlands, Jamaica and Hempstead, and east of Canarsie, sits the marshy region of islands and peninsula known as Jamaica Bay. Inhabited originally by the Canarsie and Rockaway Indians, the natives hunted elk, bear and beaver and fished for clams, oysters and weakfish that populated the Bay. It wasn't long after the Europeans settled in the area in the seventeenth-century that the land was sold by the natives for a pittance, causing the indigenous culture's subsequent decline. A telling epitaph occurred centuries later during excavations for the Belt Parkway highway, when some Native American burial sites were uncovered but then unceremoniously paved over.

Located in a remote location for those times, the change from Dutch to British rule had little effect on the inhabitants of the Bay. Yet early American history soon made its mark in the area. The land bordering the Bay became the site where British soldiers marched in the first land battle of the American Revolution and during the War of 1812, cannon was placed in Rockaway to keep the British ships out.

Using the natural tides to turn wheat into flour, mills were established and operated along the streams. Fishing and crop farming became trades. As landowners such as Wyckoff, Schenck, Vanderveer, Lott and King settled in neighboring Kings and Queens County towns, cattle were brought to feed on the marshland's salt hay. Before the consolidation of New York City in 1898, the town of Jamaica was given

jurisdiction of Rockaway's western swamps while Hempstead was given jurisdiction of the rest of the Rockaway peninsula. By the mid 1800s, industrialization had begun in earnest. Among the first established was fertilizing on Barren Island, the "place for disposing of the unwanted." Garbage scows would dump dead horses and other animals for glue and paint production. Harvesting of shellfish entered its most prosperous period from the mid-nineteenth-century to WWI. Around the same time, Rockaway, Canarsie and Bergen Beach all evolved into summertime resorts. Ferries connected Rockaway to the mainland, meeting the increased demand of vacationers. Major hotels, fishing clubs and cottages sprang up. The Long Island Rail Road and steamships from Manhattan helped to increase the number of visitors and inhabitants. Although thick marshes precluded conventional housing, homes on stilts were built, as were piers and docks. Later on, during Prohibition, Jamaica Bay was the place to go for those who wished to partake in the imbibing of illegal intoxicants. The Bay's relative isolation allowed for the proliferation of saloons, conducting their illegal business knowing the chances of sudden police raids were slim.

One of the more fascinating accounts involved the aborted plan to transform Jamaica Bay into the largest deep water port in the world. The author, using maps and photos, illustrates the massive changes that were proposed for the area. With New York City outgrowing its ports and Jamaica Bay proving in the aftermath of WWI that it could handle ocean going ship traffic, plans were set to transform the area into a huge, man made industrial island. Proposed were the following: removal of some marshes and meadows; the deepening of shallow water areas for shipping piers and basins; construction of dikes, bulkheads and Rail Road lines; and a canal and tunnel to help transport goods from sea to land. Vast dredging, re-sculpting of the Bay's island's, and reclamation of many of the remaining marshes would be done for both manufacturing and residential purposes. Although some significant work was completed, especially in Mill Basin and Gerritsen Creek, it soon became apparent that the grandiose plans were too broad in scope and expensive to complete. Among the formidable problems was the abundance of silt that needed to be removed for railway construction. Another significant factor that impeded the project was the continuing success of nearby competing Jersey ports. In the final analysis, the venture proved too daunting and unattainable.

The chapter entitled "Robert Moses and Transformation" highlights the controversial role played by New York City's authoritarian Parks Commissioner in the evolution of Jamaica Bay. Although the author presents both the good and bad decisions that were implemented on Moses' watch, the reader can glean that clearly the negatives outweighed

the positives. On the plus side, Moses set out to establish parks and marinas for recreation, designating the waterfront and islands of the Bay for that purpose. Riis Park in Rockaway was remodeled, its boardwalk renovated. Highways, bridges and rail lines, later sold by the Long Island Rail Road to the city for subway use, were constructed or expanded to help connect the Rockaways to Brooklyn and Queens. A wild life refuge was planned and ultimately came into existence. On the minus side, the remaking of the beachfront impacted unfavorably on those who lost jobs or homes working or living in the hotels, rooming houses and bungalows that were dismantled. Many who worked amidst, as Moses sarcastically put it, “the mechanical noise making” of the newly defunct amusement areas, were left jobless. In control of New York City’s Housing Authority, Moses continued his proclivity of erecting public housing projects that concentrated the poor in drab, cramped, large apartment buildings, isolated on remote sites along the Rockaway peninsula. Many inhabitants on the islands of the Bay were ordered out, their dwellings in some instances burned to the ground. Although Barren Island’s sewage and fertilizer factories closed in the 1930s, sewage treatment plants were newly built. Landfills, upon which parks were to be built, mainly consisted of garbage. Marine Park residents had to take legal action to force the city to change the fill to sand. Sewage, sludge and garbage continued to be dumped, marring Jamaica Bay’s landscape, especially along Pennsylvania Avenue near the Belt Parkway. Moses’ stated goal had been to reverse the pollution, sewage and slums that had been so much a part of Jamaica Bay’s history. His policies actually continued and in some cases worsened these conditions.

The largely unheralded story of aviation and national defense in Jamaica Bay is described from its beginnings at Rockaway’s naval air station during WWI. Established to protect New York Harbor from submarines and other enemy vessels, the station had at its disposal dirigibles and sea planes. The first sea plane to traverse the Atlantic took off from there. Bordering the naval station on the west was Fort Tilden which helped watch over the Bay and New York Harbor during both World Wars. The Fort had the distinction of having the most advanced weaponry of the period. Floyd Bennett Field on Barren Island opened a year after the Rockaway air base closed in 1930. It became New York City’s first and only municipal airport until LaGuardia airport effectively replaced it in 1939. Floyd Bennett subsequently was recast into a major naval air station in WWII. It was also the site of the first solo flight around the world. Over the years, Floyd Bennett Field received several visiting Presidents arriving for New York City events. Known as a top training center for pilots, the Field was eventually deactivated in 1971.

And lastly, Idlewild, later to be renamed JFK, became one of the busiest airports in the country after its opening in 1948.

The last part of the book is devoted to the evolution of residential life on the Bay. In pre-twentieth-century times, Jamaica Bay was home to aristocrats who eventually settled east on Long Island with the advent of the Rail Roads. In the early twentieth-century, the Bay area and environs became a vacation spot for the less affluent. Many were attracted to the recreation provided by the spacious land, and the opportunities for fishing and boating that the Bay offered. There were even major competitive boat races held in the post WWII period. The area lured so many that it was briefly considered to host the New York City World's Fair of 1939-1940. Subway islands were created in the 1950s to make the area even more accessible. More recently, Jamaica Bay has become home to many different ethnic groups. The author concludes by discussing the ecological damage that environmental missteps in the past have caused and its consequences for present and future generations. Pollution, sewage, and reckless dredging have all contributed to rising sea waters and diminishment of the wetlands.

As always with Arcadia regional histories, a plethora of wonderful photos are included, along with a variety of maps of all types, from Native American times to the present. *Images of America: Jamaica Bay* by Daniel M. Hendrick is an important entry in the saga of Long Island. By examining the "rich and storied past" of Jamaica Bay, this volume has earned a place on the book shelves of all Long Island history buffs.

GARRY WILBUR
New Hyde Park, NY

Ruth Crocker. *Mrs. Russell Sage: Women's Activism and Philanthropy in Gilded Age and Progressive Era America*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006. Illustrations, index. Xx + Pp. 526. \$49.95.

Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage (1828-1918) has now received the full biography she deserves. After the death of her millionaire husband in 1906 made Sage one of the wealthiest women in America, she embarked on a remarkable career of philanthropy, becoming America's preeminent woman philanthropist.

Crocker divides her narrative into three life stages. The shortest section deals with Olivia Slocum's first forty-one years (she was known as "Olivia" rather than "Margaret"). She grew up in Syracuse, attended Emma Willard's Troy Female Seminary for a year, and then held various teaching and governess positions. "Becoming Mrs. Russell Sage" (1869-1906) covers her years of marriage. The widower financier Russell Sage

was rich, but miserly. Olivia's benevolence during these years was small scale gifts and "performative philanthropy," giving of her time rather than major gifts of money.

Appropriately, the longest section of the book covers Olivia's twelve years of widowhood and focuses on her philanthropy. She was nearly eighty years old when her husband died, but said she felt she was "just beginning to live" (p. 226). She created the Russell Sage Foundation and Russell Sage College, and made large gifts to other educational, charitable, religious, and benevolent organizations, totaling (with her bequests) more than \$80 million. Many contributions were directed to women's organizations and causes, including suffrage and women's colleges. With these philanthropic gifts, she doubtless sought to redeem her husband's reputation as a robber baron and ruthless Wall Street speculator. Olivia also wanted to honor her ancestors, but she had a genuine commitment to benevolence and women's education (after 1911, she resolved to give no more money to men's colleges).

Olivia's life was spent primarily upstate and in New York City, but she prized her ancestral roots in Sag Harbor. Although Crocker refers to her "imagined historical relationship to Long Island" (p. 273), Olivia's mother in fact was born in Sag Harbor and her maternal grandmother lived in Bridgehampton. She purchased and restored the house of her Pierson grandmother in Bridgehampton and the home of her Jermain grandfather in Sag Harbor. The Sages purchased "Cedar Croft" in Lawrence in 1888 and spent several months there every year, except for a few years when Olivia summered in Sag Harbor.

Sage was the "Lady Bountiful" of Sag Harbor and her large contributions left her imprint on the community. She donated to the fire department, helped finance repair of the steeple of the Presbyterian (Whalers') Church, gave a parsonage to the Eastville A.M.E. Zion church, provided funds to build Pierson High School, and built and endowed both Mashashimuet Park and the John Jermain Memorial Library. From 1908 to 1912, Olivia spent summers at "Harbor Home" in Sag Harbor, which today houses the Whaling Museum. Although Crocker maintains that the town "revolted," resenting her reform efforts, and she no longer summered there, she later did anonymously aid striking watch workers in Sag Harbor. Long Island historians are indebted to Sage for financing publication of William Wallace Tooker's *Long Island Indian Place-Names* in 1911. (Tooker was a pharmacist in Sag Harbor, and an amateur, but knowledgeable, student of local Indians.) His book still remains the basic source on the subject.

During the years when Olivia was president of the Russell Sage Foundation (1907-1918), some meetings of the Executive Committee were held at her country home in Lawrence. Elizabeth Cady Stanton

visited Olivia Sage in Lawrence where Stanton converted her to the suffragist cause. Although the Sage's Cedar Croft home has not survived, nearby Sage Avenue is a reminder of her years in Lawrence. Moreover, she donated the Margaret Sage Industrial School in the adjoining Inwood area (better known later as the Trade School and now, in a new building, the Five Towns Community House).

Nearby, just over the Queens line, Olivia donated the magnificent First Presbyterian Church of Far Rockaway, Russell Sage Memorial designed by Ralph Adams Cram (at Central Avenue and Sage Street). The church has a very large (25' x 21') Louis Comfort Tiffany "Tree of Life" stained glass window and other ornamental windows by Tiffany Studios. Also in Queens, the Russell Sage Foundation financed Forest Hills Gardens. The planned community of model housing was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted with homes by the architect Grosvenor Atterbury. Although it did not prove to be a profitable investment for the foundation, Forest Hills remains a desirable suburb today.

One of the interesting and previously unknown aspects of Sage's Long Island connections is that she financed the first airplane designed by a woman. The eighty-two year old Olivia watched the first flight of Lillian Todd's airplane at the Mineola Airfield in 1910. Todd became Sage's secretary (or more accurately, administrative assistant) in 1912, serving as a gatekeeper for Sage and facilitated founding of Russell Sage College.

While this review focuses on Sage's important contributions to Long Island institutions, they constitute only a small portion of her philanthropy. This biography places her contributions to Long Island communities in the context of both her life and the history of philanthropy. Not all of Sage's papers have survived, but Crocker has thoroughly investigated those at repositories such as the Rockefeller Foundation and the Emma Willard School, as well as papers preserved by her brother's descendants. Her wonderful substantive notes comprise nearly 40 percent of the book. Crocker's previous study of social work and the settlement movement enables her to successfully provide the context explicit in the subtitle of her book. Ruth Crocker has crafted a masterly account of Olivia Sage's life and philanthropy.

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Geoffrey K. Fleming. *St. James (Images of America)*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006. Photographs. Pp. 128. \$19.99.

In April 1790, George Washington noted in his diary that he and his party left Setauket and traveled to Smithtown. They likely traversed what is now the hamlet of St. James, but as Geoffrey Fleming explains, the name of St. James arrived with the building of the St. James Episcopal Church in 1852. Situated in the Town of Smithtown, which was settled in 1665, the area was known as Nissequogue, Sherrawog, or Head of the Harbor, and included various homesteads, until it was renamed after construction of the church. Five years later, St. James received a post office, and by 1873, an official station on the new Long Island Rail Road line that extended from Northport east to Port Jefferson. The author chose to include not only the hamlet of St. James, but the two now incorporated Villages of Nissequogue and Head of the Harbor, referring to the general area as "Greater St. James." It is important to thoroughly read Mr. Fleming's Introduction to understand that these two areas were integral to the development of St. James, long before they were incorporated and also to learn about the history and development of St. James. The reader will have the background to appreciate the book's images much better. As a native of St. James, and presently Historian for the Village of Head of the Harbor, Mr. Fleming has a personal association, and interest in his subject. An author's zest for his subject always shows and *St. James* is no exception.

Mr. Fleming has chosen to concentrate on the time period 1860 to 1960, which takes us from St. James, being officially referred to by that name, through the next 100 years. He does, occasionally, update the reader as to the later development of an area or building. In one photo of the Gade Museum (p. 21), the author states that its history after 1955 is unknown. I hope some reader is able to provide the author with the fate of the museum. As the area got its name from the building of a church, the author's first chapter is aptly "Public Institutions" and the very first photo is the St. James Episcopal Church. This is the sensible place to begin and the chapter includes, among other churches, those public institutions that contribute to the wholeness of the community; schools, fire department, and the post office. Noticeably absent is a photo of the familiar St. James General Store.

Arcadia's formula fits generally for the author and subject. Unfortunately there are about a dozen pages that have one photo with a description, leaving a half-page of empty space, a design flaw in a photograph book. To show the history of this area, one must see the mix: small farmhouses and large estates, public buildings and recreational areas, the workforce and the leisure class, the full time residents and the summer people. The photographs are described well and there appears to be an effort to place photos, at least by groups, in a chronological sequence. An example is the schoolhouses, starting on page sixteen.

There is also a chapter on "People and Places." St. James had its share of interesting persons who contributed to the cultural makeup of the community, as well as those who influence reached far outside the area. Since St. James became a haven for actors, a separate chapter is devoted to "Vaudevillians", including the actors, their homes, and two of their performance locations. According to the author, many followed Willie Collier out to St. James, resulting in a summer colony of actors, who took part in social activities as well as continuing their acting performances.

In contrast to the photographs of people, estates, public buildings and smaller homes is a chapter on "Farming." Lest we forget the agricultural heritage of the area that existed for generations, St. James continued to require the products grown and harvested nearby, farms being plentiful into the 1970s. Interestingly, many of the photos are early twentieth-century, a short time ago. Mr. Fleming stated, "A hundred years ago, one could not have traveled far without running into multiple barns and farm buildings" (p. 94).

There are twenty-eight pages devoted to outdoor activities, of which the opportunities were many, and obviously taken advantage of frequently. Scenes of boating, beaches, picnics, and baseball are plentiful, as well as the organized sports of hunting, polo, and horse showing.

If one drives through the St. James area, you will notice the variety of lovely homes, all sizes and architectural styles. They vary, even today, from small cottages to large estates. Mr. Fleming did an outstanding job of including photographs of homes in this publication. There are numerous photos of the large estates, with captions that include such interesting facts as their architects and genealogies of the families who resided there. His separate chapter, "Homes, 1890-1930" presents the varieties of homes built in the area by craftsmen in many styles.

The reader will enjoy taking a trip through St. James, via *St. James*, a historic and beautiful community that retains much of its charm, despite the vast development over the last several decades.

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Dean F. Failey. *Long Island Is My Nation: The Decorative Arts & Craftsmen 1640-1830*. 2nd edition. Cold Spring Harbor, NY: Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, 1998. Pp.304. \$50.00.

For readers enamored of the first edition of Dean F. Failey's *Long Island Is My Nation*, the second edition will provide hours of pleasurable reading -- but that's not all. Like the first edition, published in 1976, the

updated version of this superb book is a must have reference work containing a substantive chapter on woodworking craftsmen and silversmiths. In addition to providing an historical overview of these mostly part time occupations, Failey includes an appendix listing the Island's woodworking craftsmen indicating their specific occupations, (e.g. cooper, carpenter, wheelwright, joiner), their locations, dates, and the sources of information about each craft. In a separate appendix Failey provides meticulously researched biographical data on each craftsman. Although most of the entries are concise, some are exceptionally detailed. For John Paine of Southold, who made a variety of items, including chairs, beds, brick moulds, and coffins, Failey provides an inventory of his estate. The agricultural, fishing, carpentry, and household items listed in the inventory afford a glimpse of the lifestyle of an East End craftsmen/entrepreneur of the early nineteenth-century.

The inventories of William Satterly of Setauket and Daniel Sandford of Southampton also shed light on how Long Island craftsmen turned the fruits of their labor into tangible symbols of success. At the time of his death, in 1811, at age 77, Sandford, who in his long career had built boats, mills, and furniture, in addition to maintaining his farm, left candlesticks, a necklace of "gold beads," books, textiles, and livestock. Biographical profiles of silversmiths, clockmakers, watchmakers, and pewterers listed in another of Failey's detailed appendices contain only one inventory, that of Southampton silversmith Elias Pelletreau, Sr., but it is revealing. The inclusion of valuable silversmith's tools and various gold and silver items indicates that Pelletreau's practice of using agents, who worked on commission to sell the items he fashioned, had paid off handsomely.

Elsewhere in the book the reader learns more about prominent Long Islanders whose possessions revealed their wealth. In a chapter dealing with fashion and tradition during a period of approximately fifty years beginning in 1730, Failey includes striking portraits of such notables as William Floyd, Benjamin Tallmadge and his wife, and Mary Sylvester, the daughter of Brinley Sylvester of Shelter Island, and the wife of Thomas Dering. Portraits of Thomas Dering and other well known Long Islanders are also included and furniture and silver owned by some of these people are depicted as well. A marvelous array of chairs, including corner chairs is featured, along with tables, mirrors, and chests. In addition to illustrations, the section on cupboards contains an excellent historical overview of *kasten*, or storage cupboards for linens. Failey discusses the Dutch origins of this very useful piece of furniture and its growing popularity as a result of intermarriage between Dutch and English residents of Long Island.

A different type of furniture, the high chest, is featured in a chapter covering the period from 1782 to 1830. Several magnificent examples of this elegant yet functional storage piece are depicted, along with information about their owners, the Gardiner family. Reading about David Gardiner's purchase of furniture prior to beginning construction of an "impressive mansion house" in 1774, one can almost envision him directing the placement of his new tables made by East Hampton craftsmen. Sadly, Gardiner passed away before the house was completed. Elsewhere in this chapter, the reader learns about leisure time pursuits on the Island by viewing William Sidney Mount's painting "Rustic Dance after a Sleigh Ride, 1830." The chapter also includes wonderful tall case clocks, silver and a fine example of Huntington earthenware. An earlier chapter, which includes an insightful analysis of Dutch and English architecture and lifestyles, depicts a beautifully patterned oxide glazed earthenware plate from Holland. The caption indicates that English, as well as Dutch, settlers used delftware. Perhaps the most unique item featured in this chapter, however, is something far sturdier than plates. One of only two known units of its type, this stand-up desk, which may have been made in Smithtown, has two drawers and seven open compartments.

Several desks are included in the "New Discoveries" section of *Long Island Is My Nation*. This unnumbered chapter featuring items that, with few exceptions, were not depicted in the first edition of the book appears at the beginning of the second edition, following a new preface. Among the treasures found here is a desk fashioned of cedar, walnut, tulip and poplar. This inlaid beauty may have been the work of Flushing Quakers who were influenced by Pennsylvania Quakers proficient in the production of inlaid furniture. The Southampton craftsman responsible for creating a maple, pine and poplar desk included in this section may have derived inspiration from Boston furniture makers. With its original vermilion paint still visible, this early eighteenth-century piece is a fine example of the work done on Long Island. The mid-eighteenth century Timothy Mulford desk appeared in the first edition of the book but Failey includes a larger and crisper picture of it in the "New Discoveries" section of the second edition, along with additional information about the East Hampton craftsman who made it.

One of the more unusual items included in the updated *Long Island Is My Nation* was also produced in East Hampton. It is a needlework picture done by a student at the school run by the wife of the famous clergyman, the Reverend Lyman Beecher. It depicts several female figures and a baby set against a pastoral background. Women also appear in three other pictorial embroideries, two of which are mourning pictures for members of the Hewlett family. In both of these examples of a type of

artwork popular in the nineteenth-century the background, complete with church and weeping willow tree, is identical but the posture of the inconsolable female figures is slightly different. Like so many other fascinating items in this book, these pictures are meant to be scrutinized. Readers who take the time to savor the illustrations and the authoritative commentary accompanying them will be rewarded with an enhanced understanding of life on Long Island in a bygone period. For those who wish to learn more, Dean Failey has included a comprehensive bibliographic essay broken down into sections on account books, probate records, land records, town records, newspapers and directories. Like the text preceding it and the appendices following it, the essay is a vital component of a masterful book that has become a classic.

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Clement M. Healy. *North Fork Cemeteries (Images of America)*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2005. Bibliography, maps, photographs. Pp. 128. \$19.99.

Clement M. Healy. *South Fork Cemeteries (Images of America)*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006. Bibliography, maps, photographs. Pp. 128. \$19.99.

These two small volumes provide an accessible popular introduction to the history of the North and South Forks through the medium of selected gravestones in each town's cemeteries. Healy also provides an introductory map of each town/village; this is useful for orientation, but no map is named or dated, except for his introductory use of Janzoon's 1635 "New Belgium and New England" for the North Fork and Visscher's 1656 "New Belgium and New England" for the South Fork. Further, the maps are too small to be useful generally or to locate the cemeteries discussed. Also used liberally are a number of historic photographs related to a particular gravestone. While the source of the maps is credited, most of the historic photos are not; this provides a problem for anyone wanting to pursue this information. Often, it is difficult to connect a picture to a gravestone, the cemetery it's in, and the story being told.

The organization of both books is the same -- cemeteries are listed by town or village, moving from west to the end of the forks. Each book begins with a contextual quote, James Joyce for the North Fork and Cornelia Huntington for the South Fork. A number of the illustrated cemeteries were photographed while it was snowing, or had snow

covering the stones, making them illegible -- probably done in the push of the publishing deadline. There is a preponderance of illustrations of seamen and shipwrecks, and soldiers of the various wars shown, perhaps because there is more information about them. These, plus all the gravestones of doctors, judges, colonels, and others results in a rather elitist record.

A useful feature of the books is the origins of most of the cemeteries, including information about when they began, who gave the land and other items. For example, in a section on seamen's gravestones, "in the 1800s the fishing industry ranked second only to hard coal mining in its mortality rate" (*North Fork Cemeteries*, p. 89).

Sometimes the photographs go very far a field. For example, in *South Fork Cemeteries*, two drawings (p. 42) of the *Circassian* show the ship sailing and foundering off Bridgehampton. Another picture (p. 43) shows the monument in the Shinnecock Reservation cemetery to the ten Shinnecock salvagers who died in the disaster. The picture below it shows two enslaved women from *Circassia* on display by P.T. Barnum at the American Museum in 1865. The photograph of the Inn of Lt. Constant Booth is in error (*North Fork Cemeteries*, p. 92); it shows a one story three bay cottage, not the two story five bay structure now part of the Oysterponds Historical Society.

Other errata – Nathaniel Sylvester, founder of the Manor on Shelter Island, is called Nathan (*North Fork Cemeteries*, p. 117) but labeled correctly on later pages. Healy's statement that "early settlers were initially free of any religious establishments" is incorrect, as Southold and Southampton settlers came with their ministers, and other early towns secured ministers as soon as possible (*South Fork Cemeteries*, p. 10, p. 101). These Puritan churches split into Congregational and Presbyterian in 1717. Meigs' Revolutionary War Raid on the British in Sag Harbor crossed the Mattituck Inlet, not Southold (p. 109). The Eastville community in Sag Harbor was a Montaukett and other Native American, not only an African American, community and cemetery (p. 111). "Few, if any, Montauketts are left today" Healy states (p. 122). Untrue: as may be seen in the 750 pages of *The History & Archaeology of the Montauk* (2003).

There is a lot of intriguing information in the photograph captions, but it is seldom attributed. One of these engaging stories is about the small African American community in Jamesport formed around a house built in 1884 by Cummy Boston on the farm where he worked and called Cum City. A local farmer/philanthropist built an African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church for them in 1895. This information is preserved in the map of Jamesport and the *Brooklyn Eagle* of September 25, 1901, but otherwise would not be known. Another is that of Col. Matthew

Howell, who was a representative of Suffolk County in the Colonial legislature, who was “honored with an expulsion” for presenting a paper considered “disloyal to His Majesty.” He was returned by his constituents to the legislature, where he continued to fight for the rights of colonists (*South Fork Cemeteries*, p. 57).

Although Healy’s bibliographies note Richard Welch’s *Memento Mori: The Gravestones of Early Long Island, 1680-1810*, he very sparingly uses the information on gravestone art styles and their carvers from this book -- noting only a few times the soul effigy which replaced the death’s head (*North Fork Cemeteries*, p. 73), or the ornate style of the late eighteenth-century Connecticut Valley carvers (p. 44), or the James Stancliff style of carving (p. 72). He states that the earliest types of markers were either wooden crosses or crudely carved boulders (p. 59). The boulders yes, wooden crosses no. These Puritan descended settlers did not use “Papist” crosses.

As gravestones are documents, albeit written in stone, they often provide information available in no other way, and these books certainly provide that. Many of the stories attached to the stones and historic photographs are not part of regional histories. This gives a charming, folktale feel to the books -- giving the “outsider” reader a look into the local “insider’s” past world.

GAYNELL STONE

Suffolk County Archaeological Association

Gaynell Stone, ed. *Native Forts of the Long Island Sound Area*. Stony Brook, NY: Suffolk County Archaeological Association, 2006. Illustrations, bibliography and index. Pp. 341. \$40.00.

Gaynell Stone, the indefatigable grand dame of Long Island archaeology, has produced yet another valuable resource for scholars interested in this field. The collection, volume eight of the *Readings in Long Island Archaeology and Ethnohistory* series, published by the Suffolk County Archaeology Association, focuses on the Native American forts constructed during the early contact period on both sides of the Long Island Sound. Dr. Stone has brought together essays and archaeological site reports by the scholars who have studied these structures in depth. The collection, notes Stone in her introduction, also provides insights into “the progression of archaeological practice, from early mechanical techniques to today’s high tech science based procedures, as well as the variations in terms and interpretations over the seventy years of study.”

The idea for the focus on these sites came, in part, from National Parks Service historian, Robert Grumet, who saw them as important

sources of information about the interaction between Native Americans and Europeans during the first few decades following the initial contacts between the two cultures. The seven sites selected for this collection range from the best known and most thoroughly studied Fort Corchaug site near Southold on the east end of Long Island's north fork to the poorly documented and little understood Fort Montauk on the eastern end of the south fork. Some of the reports were published in venues which are out of print or obscure and some are published here for the first time. Three of the sites; Fort Corchaug, Fort Massapequa, and Fort Montauk, are on Long Island. Fort Ninigret, Fort Shantok, and Fort Monhantic, are in Southern New England, and the Fort Island site on Block Island.

Ralph Solecki's involvement with the Fort Corchaug site began in 1950 with an excavation for his master's thesis at Columbia University. He contributed most of the artifacts to the Smithsonian in 1955, and was instrumental in having the site entered into the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. Lorraine Williams also studied the site in 1968 and again in 1972 when she compared the site with Fort Shantok for her Ph.D. dissertation (1973, New York University). Most of the first half of the volume discusses these two sites and their relationship to each other. Williams notes in her conclusion (p. 120) that although very little insight was gained about the political, social or religious life of the Native Americans, there was important information about the material culture, particularly wampum manufacture, and trade.

The section in the volume on Fort Massapequa is particularly welcome because there has been very little information in print about the site. The small, palisaded enclosure about one-hundred feet square is located in a small neck of land south of Massapequa Park. Solecki, with the help of Robert Grumet, had the site designated as a National Historic Landmark on April 19, 1993. Solecki's "The Archaeology of Fort Neck and Vicinity," draws together an interdisciplinary analysis of the site with appendices on wampum (James Burggraf), burials (Anagnostis Agrelarakis and William W. Claude), Indians of Massapeag (Robert S. Grumet) and archaeology (Carlyle Smith). Although Solecki could find no mention of the structure in the Dutch records, he speculated that it was built under Dutch supervision around 1656 (pp. 216-217). There was no indication that there had been any structures inside the enclosure. The materials from the site included a mix of Native American ceramics and shell with European trade goods materials. Adjacent to the fort was a small village with a burial site, which covered nearly two acres. The artifacts from these sites included materials which dated back four thousand years.

Robert Grumet's article, "The Indians of Fort Massapeag," was also published in the fall, 1995 issue of the *Long Island Historical Journal*.

Grumet focuses on an ethno historical analysis of the Indians who are named in the deeds related to the area around the site. He constructed a very useful genealogy of the western Long Island Indians. Grumet concluded that the Indians who signed these deeds were members of two extended families. These kinship groups were related to the Massapequa Indians who had lived there in 1636.

Following these lengthy sections on Massapeag and Corchaug are two brief articles on Fort Montauk. The Montauk site is located on the crest of Fort Hill overlooking the village of Montauk. The first, an article by William Wallace Tooker, which appeared in the Sag Harbor Express in 1888 is an important eye witness account of the remains of the fort, which were still visible in 1888. Tooker measured the outlines and reported that the walls enclosed an area 180 feet square with an opening in the southeast corner. Inside the enclosure Tooker located forty Indian graves, all marked with small piles of cobblestones, except one which had a granite slab with "1817-B.R." carved on it. He counted eighty-six more on the hillside outside the fort. He believed that all of these graves were placed here long after the fort had been abandoned. The second article by archaeologists Edward Johannemann and Laurie Schroeder Biladello from the State University at Stony Brook reports the limited excavation of a small portion of the site in 1979. They did not excavate any of the burials, but they did discover prehistoric ceramics, copper projectile points and lithic flakes and post contact European trade goods. Surprisingly they found no wampum or evidence of wampum manufacture.

Kevin McBride, the Director of Research for the Mashantucket-Pequot Museum, excavated the fourth site, located on Block Island. This fortified site was constructed sometime in the mid-seventeenth-century. McBride estimated that the enclosure was about sixty feet square, much too small to serve as a fort in the traditional sense. The archaeological data is examined in more detail by Christine N. Reiser, a doctoral student in anthropology at Brown University. Reiser drew her own interpretations about the site in her master's thesis "Safeguarding the Mint: Wampum Production and the Social Uses of Space at Fort Island." Reiser noted that although there were no domestic structures inside the enclosure, there were clear indications of food preparation and cooking (p. 268). This evidence included Native American ceramics, knives, scrapers, hammer stones and celts and hearths. She also noted the presence of such European goods as Kaolin pipes, delft pottery fragments, and glass beads. She concludes that the site was used as a protected area for the production and storage of wampum.

The fifth site is Fort Ninigret near Charleston, Rhode Island. The site today is protected and preserved as a public park. Charlotte Taylor,

an archaeologist for the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, believes that the structure was built by Ninigret, the Nianitc Sachem, in the latter half of the seventeenth century (p. 278). The site is located on a hill top overlooking a large salt pond. The enclosure was about the same size as Fort Corchaug and had no structures inside the walls. The presence of wampum and trade goods led Taylor to conclude that the site was a fortified trading post rather than a purely defensive fortification (p. 282). The enclosure is too small, has no interior source of water, and no evidence of storage pits. Her conclusion about the function of the site is similar to Reiser's view of the site on Block Island.

The sixth site, Fort Shantok, is located on a high triangular terrace overlooking the Thames River about three miles south of Norwich, Connecticut. This site was excavated by Bert Salwen, who ran a Columbia University field school at the site from 1962 to 1968 and returned for a final season in 1970. Lorraine Williams worked there in 1968 and 1970. She used the experience as a basis for her comparative study of the Corchaug and Shantok sites. There were many similarities in the artifacts and in most of the features. Both sites revealed evidence of extensive trade in wampum and in European goods. The major difference was in the design on the wooden structures. The Shantok site was protected by a palisade across the neck of the terrace. There was no clearly defined enclosure similar to the one at Corchaug. Salwen suggested that this wall would have protected the terrace.

The last site was the Monhantic fort erected by the Pequots during King Philip's War. This fortified village, located on the Mashantucket Pequot Reservation, was excavated by Kevin McBride in three field seasons from 1991 to 1993. McBride believes that the wooden stockade may have been constructed with the help of the English (p. 325). The fort was an enclosure 190 feet long on the north and south sides and one hundred and seventy feet long on the east and west sides. The structure enclosed several wigwams and features indicating domestic and military activity. There were evidences of wampum and European trade items, such as gun parts and metal knives.

Ralph Solecki, in his introductory overview of these site reports, reviews the literature on Native American forts and discusses the problems involved with the term fort. A colonial fort usually consisted of a wooden palisade around two or more blockhouses enclosing a heavily fortified dwelling place also made of logs (p. 10). This, of course, is not a useful methodological model for Native American fortifications. Solecki suggests that the terms palisaded forts and palisaded villages are more appropriate. Kevin McBride, in his analysis of the Block Island site, introduces similar models, calling them fortified villages and fortified places. The former is a permanent village surrounded by a

palisade wall, and the latter is “characterized by an intermittent or seasonal duration of occupation and a more limited range of activities” (p. 261). He concluded that the Block Island fort was a fortified place, and that Monhantic was an example of a fortified village.

Lynn Ceci, however, argued that term “trading stations,” was a better description for these sites. She believed that most of these alleged “forts” were purposely located on rivers and bays for access to the colonial trade in wampum. All of the sites except Fort Shantok and Fort Montauk were located on low ground near navigable water. Although Shantok and Montauk were on hilltops, they were both very close to navigable water. Ceci’s conclusions are further supported by the discovery of significant amounts of wampum at Fort Massapequa, Fort Corchaug, Fort Ninigret, Fort Island (Block Island), and smaller amounts at Fort Shantok.

This brings us back to the question of function. Only the Monhantic structure fits the commonly used definition of an aboriginal fort. Although this enclosure did have associated military materials, there is no evidence of warfare at the site. The forts which provide the criteria in the ethnographic literature for aboriginal forts include those built by the Iroquois in upstate New York and by the Pequots at Mystic. Most of these are palisaded villages where well documented military action occurred.

A more accurate description for these sites may be somewhere between Solecki’s “fort” and Ceci’s “trading station.” Charlotte Taylor’s interpretation of Fort Ninigret as a “fortified trading place” might be a better methodological model. Although the term “fort” is not appropriate for these structures, the archaeological and ethnographic data provided by Dr. Stone in this volume is a welcome resource for scholars and for the general public as well.

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Gary Lawrance and Anne Surchin. *Houses of the Hamptons, 1880-1930*. New York: Acanthus Press, 2007. Index, bibliography. Pp. 354. \$85.

Paul J. Mateyunas. *North Shore Long Island: Country Houses, 1890-1950*. New York: Acanthus Press, 2007. Index, bibliography. Pp. 368. \$80.

Long Island country homes and estates are a subject of continuing fascination, and these two books contribute significantly to the literature on the subject. Published by Acanthus Press, the *North Shore* book is part

of its "Suburban Domestic Architecture Series," while the *Hamptons* book is in "The Architecture of Leisure Series." (The publisher also has a series on "American Architects," with books on men who designed houses on Long Island.)

For each book, the authors provide a brief (twelve-page) introduction; the *Hamptons* book also features a perceptive foreword by East Hampton architect Jacquelin T. Robertson. The format for these two books is similar, presenting the houses generally in chronological order of construction, with large, well reproduced photographs of exterior and interior views. The *North Shore* book has more than 400 illustrations (mostly archival photographs), and the *Hamptons'* book has more than 375, including some thirty full color photographs (either current views or vintage color post cards). Both include floor plans for many of the houses, photographs of gardens for some, and elevation drawings for a few. The *Hamptons* volume features thirty-two houses and the *North Shore* book, forty. For each house, the authors describe the architecture and provide information on the original and subsequent owners, architects, changes over the years to the house and property, and current status. Each book has a "Portfolio" at the end, with small individual exterior photographs (usually six per page) of an additional forty or forty-eight houses, identifying the original owner, architect, and current status. In another appendix, each has biographies of the architects and architectural firms who designed the houses. Interestingly, only a handful of the architects are represented in both volumes (most notably, McKim, Mead & White, John Russell Pope, Frederick Law Olmsted, and the Olmsted Brothers).

Paul J. Mateyunas, author of *North Shore Long Island*, is a real estate agent in Locust Valley specializing in estates. He is also a restoration consultant and architectural writer. Old Westbury and the Brookvilles are the location of many of the houses featured in his *North Shore* book, but the range is from Sands Point to Centerport. Many of the photographs in his book come from his personal collection, others are from families, homeowners, and archival sources. He omits some well-known houses such as Clarence Mackay's *Harbor Hill* and the Pratt family's compound in Glen Cove, though they are mentioned in the introduction. Among the featured homes are Marshall Field's *Caumsett*, William K. Vanderbilt's *Eagle's Nest*, Otto Kahn's *Oheka*, and John Phipps' *Westbury House*, but most of the houses are less familiar. Particularly interesting, though never fully realized, was Pleasant Pennington and Dorothy Draper's proposed development in the late 1920s near the Piping Rock Club in Locust Valley.

Some of Mateyunas' generalizations are arguable. He claims there were 1,200 estates on the North Shore and that two-thirds were gone by

the early twenty-first century. Although the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities (SPLIA) documented close to 900 estates in its *Long Island Country Houses* (1997), fewer than 600 were in the North Shore area covered by Mateyunas. SPLIA estimated in the late 1980s that 58 percent of the country houses survived and “the rate of loss” had slowed (23). Of the total of ninety-eight houses in the *North Shore* book, more than two-thirds survive, most as private residences; some are now owned by institutions under adaptive reuse and a few are house museums. Mateyunas states that most of the “monumental” houses were built prior to World War I, but two of the largest he includes, *Inisfada* (built 1916-1920 for Nicholas and Genevieve Brady) and *Oheka* (1914-1917), straddle the war years, and *Caumsett* was built later (1921-1925).

Mateyunas considers the development of the North Shore estates to be a “product of the automobile” (p. 14), also citing the Queensborough Bridge (1909) and the Long Island (Vanderbilt) Motor Parkway (begun in 1908). The majority of the homes he includes, however, were built before cars became widely used, even by the wealthy. The Rail Road was the mode of transportation that initially facilitated country homes, as the authors of the *Hamptons* book point out. In 1910, the Long Island Rail Road began direct train service to Manhattan via the East River tunnels, eliminating the ferry connection. This facilitated commutation, but is a development not mentioned in either book. Not surprisingly, the 1910s were the peak decade for construction of houses in both locations documented in these books.

Although the Hamptons have been well known for celebrities for decades, the estates there are not as well known as those on the North Shore. In their introduction, Gary Lawrance and Anne Surchin sketch the history of the Hamptons and its development as a resort beginning with boarding houses. Artists discovered the “painterly light” on the east end and popularized the area in the late nineteenth-century. Architects used the vernacular architecture of early homes to create a rural regional architecture -- the shingle style. English ancestry and the “mythology of place” also influenced the architecture (p. 24). As practicing architects, Lawrance and Surchin’s descriptions have more architectural detail than Mateyunas and occasionally some technical terms.

Half of the featured houses in the *Hamptons* book are in Southampton, which the authors characterize as “the historical resort epicenter of the Hamptons” (p. 15). Seven are in East Hampton (dubbed a “suburb” of Southampton) and the remaining houses are in communities from Westhampton Beach to Montauk, including two complexes: the Montauk Association houses (1882-1884) and the Art Village in Shinnecock (1891).

The ending date of 1930 in the *Hamptons* book excludes the modern-style houses which have been built there in recent decades. However, Lawrance and Surchin stretched the date to include Lucien and Ethel Tyng's *The Shallows* in Southampton (1931), whose exterior is in "International Style Modernism," while the interior plan is traditional Beaux-Arts style. Thus, as the authors indicate, it "embodies the transition" to the modern style and "marks the end of the Hamptons' Golden Age" (p. 313). Although Mateyunas's period extends to 1950, only two of the North Shore houses he includes were built after 1937 -- Devereau Milburn's house in Old Westbury (1947) and Evelyn Marshall Field Suarez's home in Brookville (1952).

The size of the estates in both areas diminished over the years as less land was available and families divided their land for the next generation. Few of the homes discussed in these books remain in the family that built them, though some family connections, as Raymond and Judith Spinzia suggested in their *Long Island's Prominent North Shore Families*, are masked by women's married names. How do the women fare in these volumes? In his introduction, Mateyunas notes several women who were active in polo, golf, and aviation, but identifies most of the homes only by the male owner, except for a few built by women, e.g. Alva Vanderbilt Belmont's *Beacon Towers* in Sands Point. In the *Hamptons* book, both husband and wife are prominently identified. Moreover, the authors acknowledge the role of the "grandes dames" (or "Dreadnaughts") who managed the houses, and describe their civic activities on the South Fork.

For those not familiar with the geography of the area, a map of community locations would be helpful. The only map in either book is one of the Jericho Club, which is the frontispiece in the *North Shore* volume, but it does not include many of the communities in which featured houses are located. Neither book indicates the author's criteria for selection of the homes featured, nor are dates provided for most of the photographs. Internal source references substitute somewhat for notes in both books. The *Hamptons* book reflects greater research and more new information (its bibliography is eleven pages vs. three in the *North Shore* book). The credits for illustrations are easier to locate in the *Hamptons'* volume, since they are listed separately for each house.

Readers are sure to discover houses and people that they had not been aware of in both of these books. Neither of these volumes is merely a large coffee table book. Each has substantial text and both constitute important additions to Long Island and architectural history, documenting the golden age of mansions and estates in their respective locales.

NATALIE A. NAYLOR
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REVIEW ESSAY

THE INDIANS AND THE DUTCH: ENCOUNTERS ON THE FORGOTTEN FRONTIER

John A. Strong

Donna Merwick, *The Shame and The Sorrow: Dutch-Amerindian Encounters in New Netherland*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2006. Notes, maps, illustrations, and index. Pp. 332. \$49.95 (hardcover)

Paul Otto, *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter in America: The Struggle for Sovereignty in the Hudson Valley*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2006. Notes, index, figures and illustrations, and maps. 225. \$75.00 (hardcover)

The standard histories of colonial New York emphasize the English encounters with the Iroquois and, to a lesser extent, with the Algonquian peoples of Long Island. Prior to 2006 there were few sources which discussed the Dutch relations with the Munsees (aka Lenape, Delaware) in any depth. The Munsees, who lived in New Jersey, southern New York, and western Long Island, although celebrated by James Fenimore Cooper in *The Last of the Mohicans*, have also been pretty much overlooked. The earliest study which addressed the Dutch relations with the Munsees was Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan's classic, *History of New Netherland*, (1846-1848). It was not until over a century later that scholars focused specifically on the Dutch relations with the Indians.

Allen Trelease examined Dutch and English Indian policies in the seventeenth-century in his widely acclaimed, *Indian Affairs in Colonial New York* (1960). Trelease applied a conventional historical approach centered in the European worldview. Nearly two decades later Robert S. Grumet's Ph. D. dissertation "We Are Not Such Great Fools:" Changes in Upper Delawaran Socio-Political life, 1630-1758 (Rutgers University, 1979) was the first to examine the cultural interaction from the Munsee perspective. Another two decades passed before the subject was again examined: this time with a narrow focus on Governor Kieft's War (1641-45). Evan Haefeli's essay, "Kieft's War and the Culture of Violence in Colonial America," in *Lethal Imagination: Violence and Brutality in American History* edited by Michael A. Bellesiles (1999), is part of a larger more ambitious study of violence in American history. A year later Herbert Kraft's, *The Lenape Delaware Indian Heritage, 10,000 BC to AD 2000* (2001) provided scholars with a comprehensive study of the Munsee, which included an account of their relations with the Dutch.

Paul Otto covers much of the same material that Trelease examines in the first six chapters of his book. They both begin with a brief description of Munsee prehistoric culture: a necessary background for an effective analysis of their later relations with the Dutch, and one that is missing from Merwick's study. Otto then departs from Trelease's rather straight forward historical approach which is centered within the Dutch settlement. Otto continues with his initial focus on the Munsees as they struggle to understand what they perceive to be the rather strange ways of these new arrivals. Otto defines the frontier as a "zone and a process of cross cultural interaction," rather than as a geographic area between the two cultures.

One of the important contributions of Otto's book is his extensive notes which follow each chapter. You get the feeling that his publisher made him squeeze some of his text down into footnotes to reduce the costs of a longer manuscript. Eighty-four footnotes, for example, follow the second chapter, which is only twenty pages long.

Otto says that he wants to move beyond simplistic judgments and examine the strategies for cultural change employed by the Munsee, "both as individuals and as groups." His method here is to look at patterns of *acculturation*: ways the Munsees changed their culture; of *accommodation*: ways they retained their traditional culture, and of *resistance*: ways they resisted the imposition of European values and norms. He places these patterns of reaction in a historical framework which traces the gradually increasing stages of Dutch intrusion. The first was the early contact period, followed by a period of equal status trade and ended with military conquest.

The contact period began with Giovanni da Verrazzano in 1524 and ended with Henry Hudson's voyage along the river that bears his name in 1609. These first encounters introduced the Indians to the advantages of European manufactured goods and to the disastrous consequences of alcohol abuse and European diseases. There were also unpleasant incidents, which created a pattern of distrust that never completely abated. Verrazzano kidnapped a young boy and tried to capture a young woman who was with him, but she resisted and managed to escape. The boy was taken back to France as to display as a "token of discovery." Hudson's visit was marked by the introduction of alcohol and a violent encounter, which led to the deaths of several Indians and one Dutch sailor.

The second period, characterized by equal status trade relations between the two cultures, begins in 1610, following Hudson's return to Holland with the news about his discovery, and ends in 1623, following the establishment of the Dutch West India Company's monopoly over trade relations with the Indians. During this period the Munsees became

more and more dependent on such European goods as guns, copper kettles, metal tools, and clothing. The Dutch accommodated the Munsees by following their tribal rituals, which governed the protocols of exchange. The more profound cultural change, however, was the disastrous pattern of dependency on material goods that the Munsee could not replicate in their own villages.

The Dutch trade was soon driven by the demand in Europe for beaver furs. They had been purchasing furs from Russia at a high price, which reduced their profit margin. The furs could be supplied from the Indian sources at a fraction of the Russian prices. Within a relatively short time, however, the beaver along the Atlantic coastal areas was hunted to near extinction, forcing the fur traders to establish trade networks with the Iroquois and other inland tribes. The Dutch soon learned that these tribes wanted wampum made from the coastal shellfish as much as the European merchants wanted the furs. Demand for Wampum, which had long been an integral part of the aboriginal trade networks, now became a central focus of the Dutch fur trade. The Dutch began to purchase all the wampum they could lay their hands on to finance the purchase of beaver pelts from the Iroquois and other inland tribes. The Dutch soon referred to wampum as “the source and mother of the fur trade.” The trade during this period, says Otto, “took place within the framework of traditional Native American culture” (p. 72).

Otto’s third stage began in 1624 with the arrival of Peter Minuit and a small party of Walloons, who established permanent farmsteads on Staten Island, and ended in 1638 as the Dutch purchases of Indian land began to increase rapidly. New Netherland was being transformed from a string of coastal trading posts into a colony with regulations governing relations with the Munsee. The West India Company gave orders to the settlers that they must treat the Indians fairly and, “not give them any offense without cause as regards their persons, wives or property” (p. 82). During this period the Dutch became increasingly concerned about the growth of the English colonies in New England, which were now threatening their monopoly over the fur trade in the Connecticut Valley. The Dutch soon realized that the English were gaining an important advantage as the number of permanent settlers from England swelled, beginning with the “Great Migration” in the early 1630s. This concern led the Dutch to rapidly acquire more Munsee land. As the number of Dutch farmsteads increased, so did the potential for tensions, which occasionally led to individual acts of violence. Dutch cattle often invaded Indian corn fields and Indian dogs killed Dutch livestock. Gradually the Dutch began to assert their sovereignty over the Munsee in the process of resolving these conflicts.

The fourth stage began in 1638 with the arrival of the new Dutch governor, Willem Kieft, and ended after a series of bloody conflicts between the Dutch and the Munsee. As the Dutch population grew, the demand for farmland with expansive grazing areas began to reduce the Indian hunting territories. The Munsee dependency on European goods increased and alcohol abuse began to take a toll on Munsee community life. The origins of Governor Kieft's War (1640-1645), which Otto renames "The First Munsee War," can be traced from the fall of 1639 when Kieft proposed an ill-fated tax on the Munsee to help defray the costs of maintaining the fortification around New Amsterdam. His rationale was that the Munsee benefited from having a safe place in which to carry on trade. The Munsee, not surprisingly, objected vigorously and flat out refused to pay. The important significance of the tax, taken for granted by the Dutch, was that the Munsee were no longer sovereign in their own land. Otto quotes an Indian who said that Kieft, "must be a pretty mean fellow to come and live in this country without being invited by them and now wish[es] to compel them to give him their corn for nothing."

The following spring the growing tensions, related, in part, to the depletion of the beaver in the Munsee hunting territory by 1639, erupted in a conflict over pigs which the Indians on Staten Island killed. The Dutch responded by sending a troop of seventy men who proceeded to kill several Indians and torture their sachem. A number of minor conflicts followed, culminating in 1643 with a Dutch attack on two Munsee villages: one on Manhattan and one across the river in what is now New Jersey. The Munsee villages were caught by surprise and offered little resistance as the Dutch slaughtered several hundred men, women, and children, mutilating their bodies in a most grisly manner.

The massacre brought an immediate response from the Munsee and their allies. They launched a campaign of attacks on the scattered Dutch farmsteads which nearly wiped out the colony. As the sporadic episodes of violence continued, the Dutch, in desperation, recruited John Underhill, one of the three English officers who had led the colonial troops in the massacre of a Pequot village which ended the Pequot War in 1637. Employing the same strategy, Underhill launched a surprise attack on a Munsee village in what is now Westchester and wiped out an entire village, killing over five hundred men, women and children, and ending what Otto calls, The First Munsee War. The two years of fighting had taken the lives of an estimated sixteen hundred Indians and destroyed most of the farmsteads on western Long Island. The war left a deep legacy of suspicion and hatred, which erupted a decade later in the Peach War, renamed "The Second Munsee War" by Otto.

The conflict in 1655 began over an incident in which a settler killed an Indian who was stealing peaches. Munsee men retaliated by wounding the man with a bow and arrow. The Dutch quickly responded with an attack on the Munsee, killing sixty of their men. The Munsee responded with a three day wave of attacks, destroying forty-eight farmsteads, killing forty settlers, and taking another one-hundred into captivity. The Dutch, reluctant to attack the Munsees and risk the lives of the captives, negotiated a settlement which brought most captives home safely.

The last conflict between the Dutch and the Munsees, the Esopus War, involved the Esopus, a band of Munsees living near present day Kingston, New York. Otto renamed the Esopus War "The Third Munsee War." As the Dutch settlers moved northwards along the Hudson, the inevitable tensions emerged and erupted into violence in 1659. The small Dutch fort was besieged for nearly a month by 500 Munsee warriors before Stuyvesant was able to send troops to break the siege. The following March the Dutch launched a campaign, which forced the Esopus to abandon the land and to leave the area. Three years later the Esopus reorganized and renewed the fighting. The Dutch sent several expeditions against Esopus, destroying their crops. The Esopus ended their resistance in 1664, shortly before the Dutch themselves were driven out of New Netherland by the English. A century and a half later the Munsee, depleted by disease and squeezed off their land, also left; some went west across the Mississippi to Oklahoma and others settled finally in Canada.

Although Otto's account of the Dutch-Munsee relations follows the historical approach used earlier by Trelease, Otto provides important insights into the cultural developments within the Munsee during this time. He also broadens his analysis in an *Afterward* by comparing the three phases of the Dutch experience in New Netherland with their colonization of The Cape Colony in South Africa. He finds many parallels, but the most striking was that after periods of peaceful trade and episodes of violent conflict, both aboriginal groups eventually lost their land and became marginalized.

Donna Merwick's original and interesting account is limited by its narrow focus on the Dutch and what she describes as the shameful abandonment of their moral values. She carefully deconstructs the primary Dutch documents relating to Kieft's War as she builds her case against the Dutch. She contends that they not only "botched" their ambitious colonial maritime expansion, they also betrayed their own ideals and values and "reaped the shame and the sorrow." "The record of the Dutch encounter with the native population," she says, "is a tragedy" (p. 238, 266-267).

In contrast to Merwick's indictment of the Dutch, Evan Haefeli, whose lengthy essay focuses on the military conflicts, places the Dutch policies in a larger framework of American, rather than Dutch, cultural history. In Haefeli's view, there is nothing uniquely "Dutch" about the resort to violence and torture during Kieft's War. He notes that the Dutch shared a history of violence with the English, French, and Spanish occupiers of the New World. This common European heritage of violence, in Haefeli's analysis, contributed to the historical pattern of violence in America. Haefeli, therefore, does not single out the Dutch for condemnation, nor does he view the Munsee as passive victims. They also had a "culture of violence" that was expressed in their resistance to the Dutch. "The real clash," says Haefeli, "was between the European and Native American cultures of violence, between their ways of interpreting and coming to terms with violent acts" (p. 35). The Dutch folly was in not being flexible enough to recognize and act upon Munsee overtures at crucial times, which could have resolved conflicts without escalating the violence. Kieft, for example, rejected Munsee offers of compensation to victims as a resolution for conflict and relied on a policy which demanded total submission.

Merwick's choice of a title is most puzzling. She took the title, she says, from a 1971 documentary "*The Sorrow and the Pity*," which described the reaction of the French to the Nazi occupation of their country during WW II. Some French people resisted heroically and some willingly collaborated with the Nazi occupation. Merwick saw a parallel between the collaborators who betrayed "France's cultural past and humane values," and the Dutch in New Netherland. This is a strikingly flawed historic analogy, which distracts rather than informs her analysis. Although it is true that the collaborators and some of the Dutch occupiers did act contrary to their own moral values, the historical situations have little else in common.

Merwick's approach pretty much ignores the Indians, treating them, for the most part, as passive recipients of Dutch policies. Her account suffers from the absence of the Munsees. Merwick, an Australian scholar, takes an approach, often characterized as the "Australian school" of cultural history, which applies methods used by literary and art critics to primary documents and paintings from the same historical period (see James Homer Williams review in the June 2006 issue of *The Journal of American History* p. 249-250). The first half of her book deals with the somewhat unique culture of the Dutch, who she describes as a coastal people, comfortable to live on the shore facing the sea with their backs to the inland. Their colonial expansion consisted primarily of trading stations on the shores of Africa, Asia, and North America and on small islands. Unlike the other European colonial powers with large, restless

populations, the Dutch had little interest in penetrating into the interior to establish permanent settlements. "We are not here," said a Dutch trader, as Spanish conquistadors, "we only mean to trade" (p. 47). It was not until the English settlers threatened to overwhelm New Netherland that they began, too late as it turned out, to encourage their people to come to the new world. The Dutch people, content at home, were not eager to re-settle in a new and uncertain environment. Her account here, however, adds little to Russell Shorto's more straight forward, *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony that Shaped Manhattan* (Doubleday 2004).

The most glaring shortcoming of Merwick's approach is the absence of an informed understanding of the Munsee. She does not cite the standard works on the Munsee by Herbert Kraft and Robert Steven Grumet. Her unfamiliarity with the research on the Munsee is illustrated by her choice of a photograph depicting a birch bark canoe on page 191 as an example of "lost" Algonquian material culture. The Munsee and other coastal Algonquian used dugout canoes which were much more seaworthy than the light bark canoes used by Indians on the inland waters of New England. In another instance she confuses the references to an incident involving Wyandanch, the Montaukett sachem, who, she says, acted in a state of terror when he ceded land to the English to pay off a fine imposed for the burning of several buildings in Southampton (p. 191; 138). Wyandanch, hardly in terror, actually agreed to give land owned by his tributaries, the Shinnecock, to the English. This tributary status was an artificial imposition by the English, but the complex historical event was inadequately grasped by Merwick (see Strong, "How the Shinnecock Lost Their Land," in Gaynell Stone, ed., *The Shinnecock Indians: A Cultural History* 1983).

Merwick's account of Kieft's War and the subsequent conflicts, however, introduces a perspective which does increase our understanding of colonial wars with the Indians. She refers to the conflicts that Otto renames the First, Second, and Third Munsee War as a series of "*Kleine Kriegen*," disconnected little wars rather than as warfare in the conventional sense. She describes them as "low intensity conflicts in which formal battles were the exception" (p. 135).

Overall, however, Merwick's presentation of the military conflicts is rather pretentious and somewhat confusing. In the midst of her discussion of Kieft's War, for example, she introduces seventeenth-century Dutch paintings depicting violent events in Holland. One depicts a Dutch soldier kicking in the door of a peasant's house (p. 155); another shows Dutch peasants attacking a Dutch soldier with the "animalistic violence of savages," (p. 208) and a third is Pieter Brueghel's *Massacre of Innocents*, which portrays the merciless slaughter of ordinary civilians. Her purpose

is somewhat obscure, but she apparently wants to show that the attacks on the Indians are a part of a Dutch heritage of violence. This sort of artistic scaffolding detracts from her analysis.

On occasion, her writing becomes a bit obscure. In her discussion of the events leading up to Kieft's War, for example, she writes that the "omens" predicting the war were "there to read," like Edgar Allen Poe's *Raven*, "tapping on the chamber door whispering, "only this and nothing more." These omens, she continues, go beyond the hard edge of logic. They are "real but indeterminate, and mysterious, filling the crevices unreached by the rational" (p. 110). I am not sure what all that means, but perhaps a more sophisticated reader will understand. The rest of us will be better served by looking to Otto's book to help us understand the complexities of the relationship between the Dutch and the Munsees in the seventeenth-century.

OBSERVATIONS

WHO ARE WE? A DEMOGRAPHIC UPDATE FOR NASSAU AND SUFFOLK COUNTIES

Seth Forman

Our Editor takes a look at some hard data and concludes residents, and their representatives, have some important decisions to make.

The demographer William Frey believes America is divided into three distinct regions, and that these regions tell us quite a bit more about America than the simplistic “Red states” vs. “Blue states” paradigm that became popular after the historic 2000 presidential election. The three demographic regions in America, as Frey sees it, are: The New Sunbelt, The Melting Pot, and The Heartland. The New Sunbelt consists of roughly thirteen states located primarily in the Southeast and West whose population grew by 24 percent during the 1990s due mostly to domestic migration by whites and, to a lesser extent, Blacks. The New Sunbelt, which contains what are euphemistically referred to as “exurbs” or “sprinkler cities,” are where we find today’s suburbanites - 25-40 year-olds, especially those forming families, and new retirees settling in outer-ring suburbs substantially further from central cities than old line, “inner ring” suburbs. Although white married couples with children are declining nationally as a percentage of the total population, 9 of 10 of the states that gained such families in the 1990s are located in the New Sunbelt, led by Nevada where their number grew by 25 percent. The trend has continued into the 2000s.¹

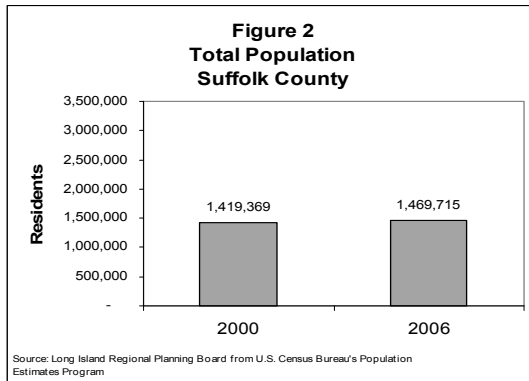
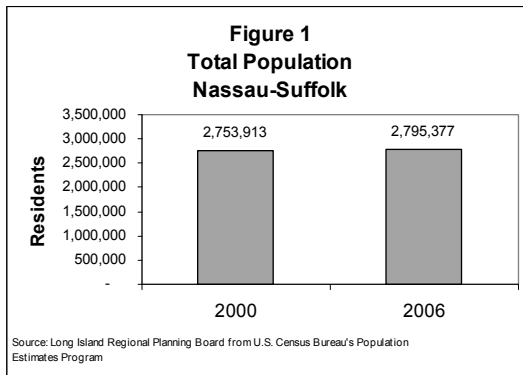
The Melting Pot consists of nine states, including New York, which experienced 13 percent growth in the 1990s mostly due to large amounts of overseas immigration. As a group these states have lost white population since the 1990s. Collectively, Asians and Hispanics accounted for 76 percent of the gains in Melting Pot states. The attraction and retention of immigrant minorities in the Melting Pot region is a result of job availability and a national immigration policy that emphasizes family reunification. It is also the result of established ethnic communities replete with their own institutions, small businesses, clubs, churches, and social networks that are not easily replicated in other parts of the country.

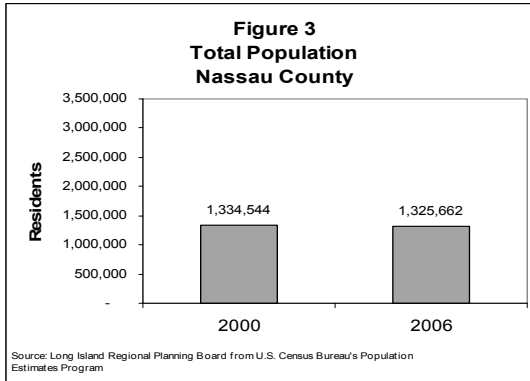
Finally, there is The Heartland, which consists of the remaining twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia, that have relatively modest growth rates and populations that are very largely white or both white and Black.

Long Island’s demographic changes can be seen as very much a part of the larger picture that Frey describes. Analyzing data for the years since 2000 shows that some of these patterns - suffering net losses to internal migration, losing white residents and gaining overseas immigrants - has persisted.

Overall Size and Composition

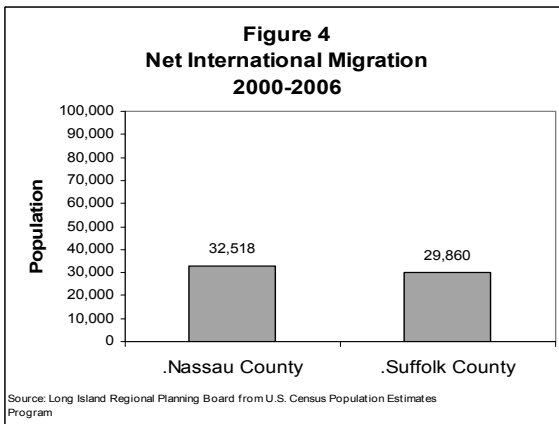
The total population of Nassau and Suffolk counties grew by 41,464 between 2000 and 2006, increasing from 2,753,913 to 2,795,377, a 1.5 percent increase (Figure 1). Most of this growth took place in Suffolk County, which experienced a total population increase of 50,346, or 3.5 percent, going from 1,419,369 to 1,469,715 (Figure 2). Nassau County experienced a population decline of around 9,000, or a half a percentage point, going from 1,334,544 to 1,325,662 (Figure 3).

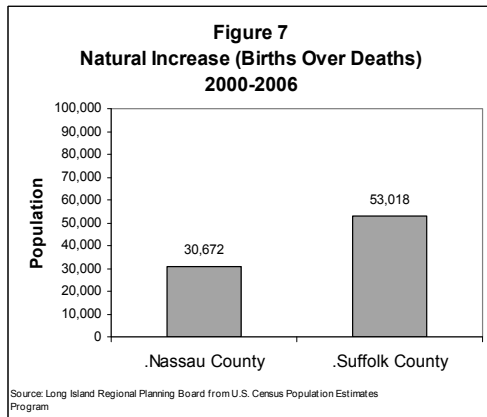
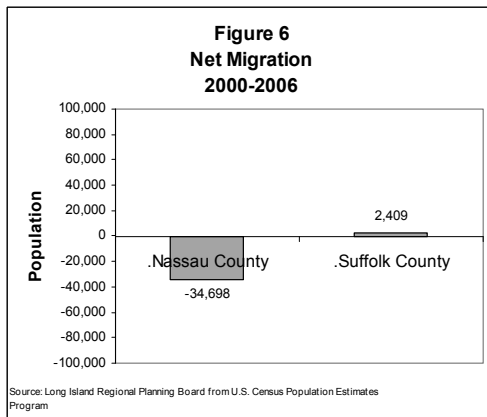
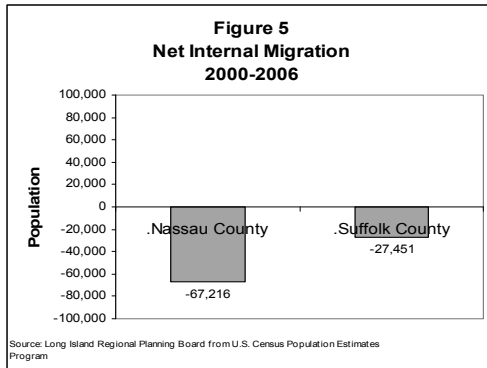




Gains and Losses

Nassau county lost population between 2000 and 2006 primarily due to migration patterns. While the county had a net gain of 32,518 persons from abroad -- that is, from foreigners or U.S. military personnel stationed overseas returning to the United States -- it suffered a loss of roughly 67,000 internal migrants, or those moving across state lines, over the same period. This resulted in a net migration loss for Nassau county of approximately 35,000 people, more than enough to offset the natural increase of births over deaths of roughly 30,600 (Figures 4, 5, and 6). Suffolk County attracted 29,860 more people from international migration, but it too suffered a net loss from internal migration of 27,451, 2,409 less than that gained from international migration, for a small net migration increase. The bulk of Suffolk's population increase, of course, was a natural increase of births over deaths of roughly 53,018 (Figure 7).



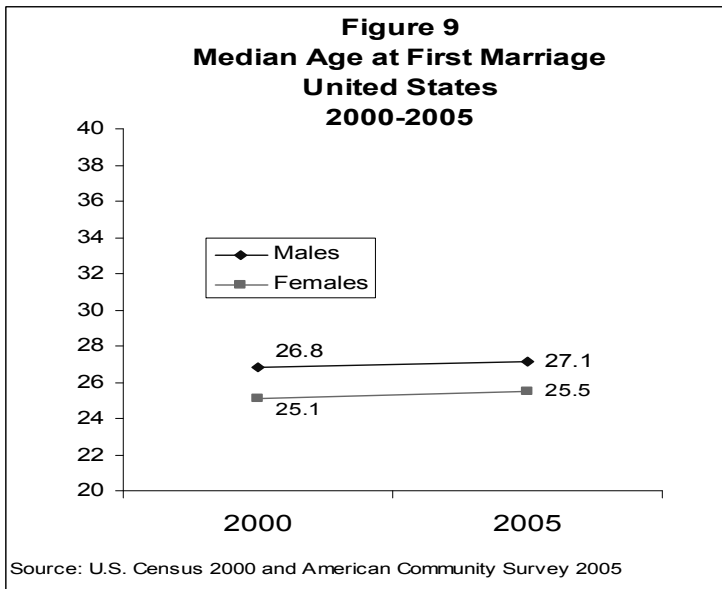
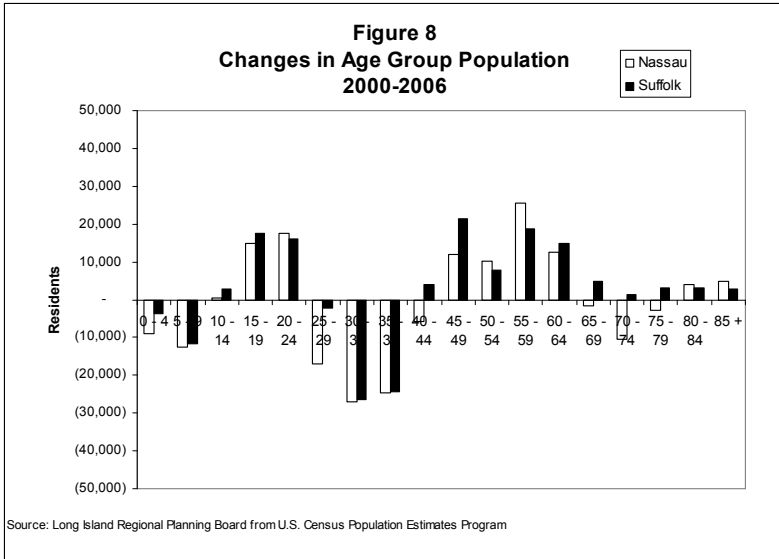


Ages

The population age groups that saw declines in Nassau included the population under ten years of age, those between the ages of 25 and 44, and those between the ages of 65 and 79. In Suffolk county the declining age groups were the same, except for those aged 65 to 79. Suffolk realized an increase of around 9,000 people between those ages (Figure 8). These figures add some support for the planning axiom that Suffolk county sends its retirees to Florida, and Nassau county sends its retirees to Suffolk.

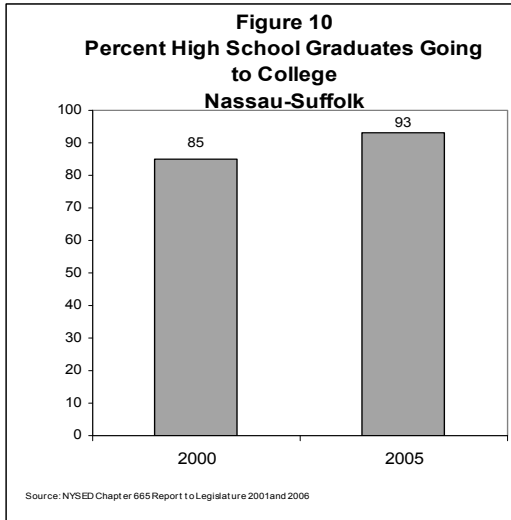
Numerous critics and advocacy groups have pointed to the drop in young workers between the ages of 18 and 34 since 1990, calling it a “brain drain,” or the movement of human capital outside of the region due to external factors like costly housing. The 2004 Long Island Index pointed out the decline of almost 130,000 residents between the ages of 20 and 34 in Nassau and Suffolk counties since 1990. It also cited a poll revealing that 53 percent of Long Island’s 18-34 year olds have considered leaving Long Island, and that the reasons for their considering leaving relate directly to the high cost of living, taxes and lack of affordable housing.² Matthew Crosson of the Long Island Association pointed out in a *Newsday* editorial that Long Island’s “economy cannot grow unless employers can find the skilled work force they need; and the younger portion of that work force is disappearing.”³

We don’t know for sure whether we are really losing tens of thousands of young workers to other regions, though we have certainly long been a “sending” region of young people. The pattern of development on Long Island has long centered around married families and the raising of children. A primary consideration among young parents is the quality of school districts. The historical failure of urban public schools and how that has ignited a bidding war among young couples for houses in good school districts is by now an old story.⁴ Added to this is the rising age at which people get married for the first time. Simply put, more women are in college in their early twenties, many are establishing careers, and consequently many couples are marrying later and having children later. In 1970 the median age for first marriages for women was 21 years old. By 2000 the median age was 25.3 (Figure 9, which shows data for 2000-2005). For men the median age went from 23 to 27, a four year delay. In 1970, 42 percent of first married single brides were teenagers. By 1990 that had dropped to 17 percent.⁵ This means that more young adults are finishing college and living as singles in New York and other high-end cities, then marrying and settling down to have families. When they decide to have families they are doing so often well into their thirties.



The decline in young adults is compounded by another development. The number of high school graduates moving on to college has increased over the past decade, by roughly 15 to 20 percent. Long

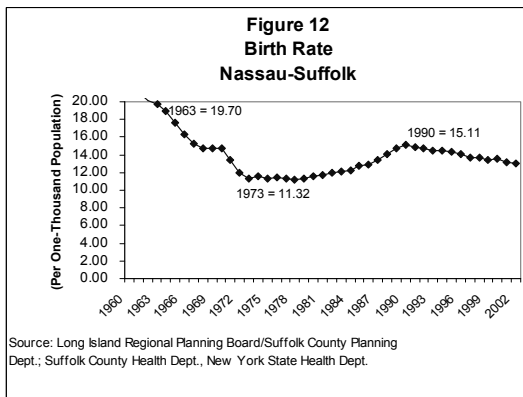
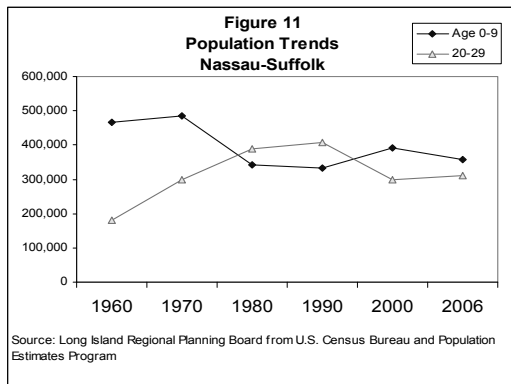
Island schools now have a median college-going rate of around 93 percent, up from 85 percent in 2000 (Figure 10, which shows data for 2000-2005). That represents an additional 35,000 17-24 year-olds, many of whom go off Long Island to attend college. This increases the chances that many of these young people will not return to Long Island, at least not immediately.



Ultimately, though, it may simply be the case that birth rates are the primary determinant of age group size. In other words, Long Island may not have lost 128,000 young adults in the 1990s; we failed to “create” them because of low birth rates in the 1970s. There were roughly 144,000 fewer newborns in the 1970s than in the previous decade, which translated into 128,000 fewer 10-19 year olds in the 1980s, which translated into 128,000 fewer 20-34 year-olds in the 1990s. Figure 11 illustrates clearly almost identical negative slopes between the decades as the 1970s birth cohort wends its way through the decades. Figure 12 illustrates the drop in the birth rate during the 1970s and 1980s. To put it another way, the primary reason employers are having trouble finding 20-34 year-olds to hire is the same reason so many high school buildings were mothballed in the 1980s; these people never existed.

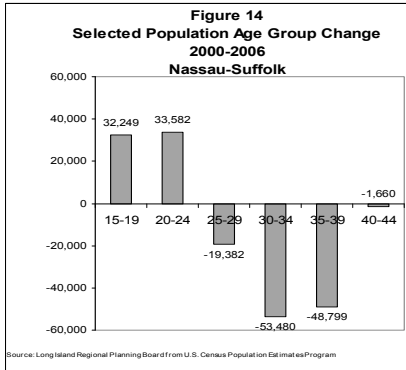
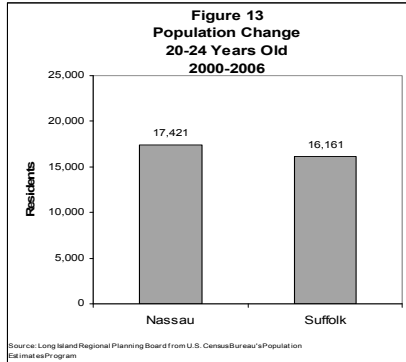
Fortunately, it looks like Long Island is starting to work its way out of this cycle. Because birth rates rose in the late 1980s and 1990s, we are now seeing substantial increases in the number of people aged 20-24, people who would have been born between 1982 and 1986. Figure

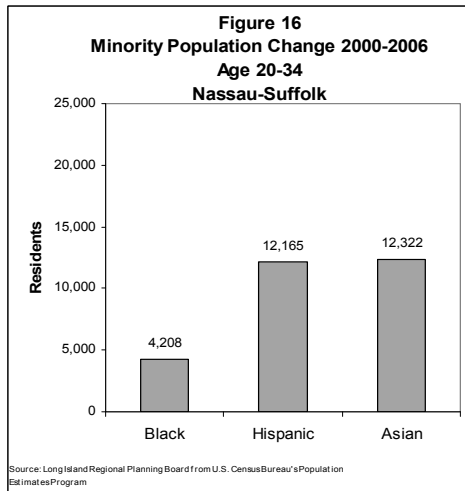
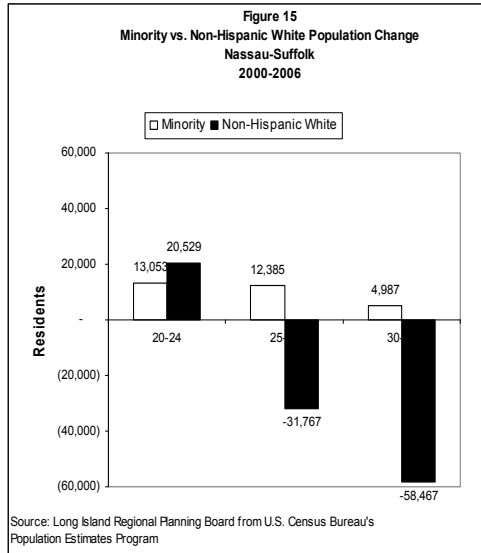
13 shows that Nassau county realized a gain of 17,421 for this age group over the last six years, while Suffolk has realized a gain of 16,161, for a total regional gain of 33,582 in the 20-24 year-old category. It is worth noting that the 15-19 year-old age cohort is also a large cohort, with an increase regionally of around 32,249 (Figure 14). This reflects the “mini baby boom” in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is for this reason that Sachem school district split into two different high schools for the first time two years ago (Sachem North and East), and why Smithtown High School reconverted its middle-school back into a Smithtown East High School after 12 years, and why there is again a Commack North and a Commack South High School.

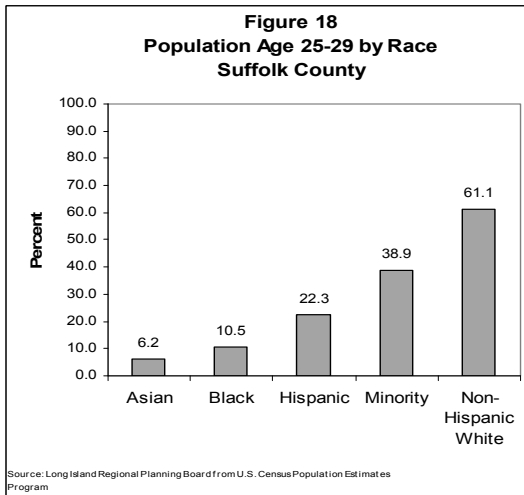
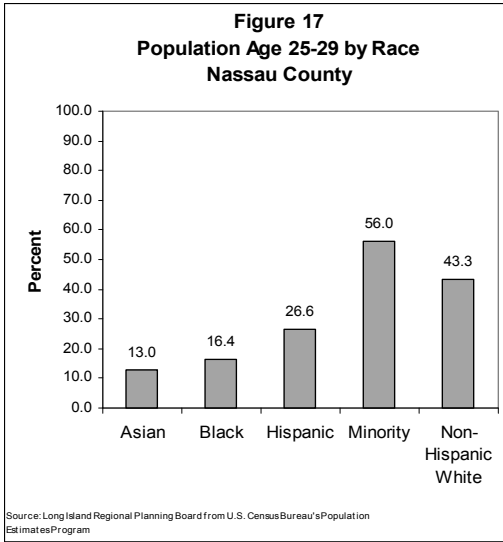


Even if there is some movement of young working aged adults off Long Island, it is important to distinguish which ones may be leaving and which ones may not be, so policymakers can fine tune economic

development policy. The data from the Census Bureau indicates there are some young adults who are seeking Long Island out. For example, minorities in the 20-34 year-old age group have realized a population increase in the region. Nassau and Suffolk have seen an increase of roughly 30,425 nonwhites in the 20-34 year old age group (Figures 15 and 16). There is a very strong likelihood that these people make less money than their white counterparts and their numbers are increasing, not declining. Indeed, in Nassau county, for the first time since records have been kept, members of minority groups make up a majority, or roughly 56 percent, of residents in the 25-29 year old age group (Figure 17). In other words, at least in Nassau county and to a lesser degree in Suffolk (Figure 18), young minority workers who are presumably somewhat less skilled and lower income are staying or moving in, while young white workers, presumably slightly more educated with slightly higher incomes, are not.

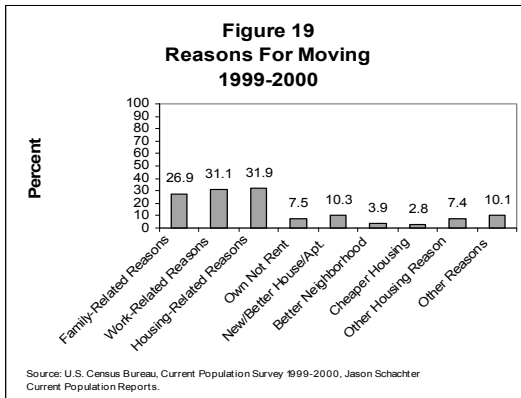






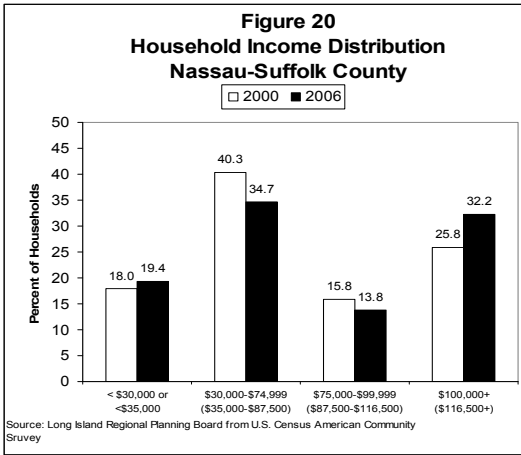
This data is consistent with most of the academic research that has been conducted on reasons why people move. This research indicates that increases in age reduce the likelihood of moving (until one reaches retirement age) and that long distance moves are most common among the highly educated. Generally, the distance of the move is related to whether the move is motivated by employment or housing reasons. Interregional moves are more likely to be job related, while intraregional moves are more likely to be housing related.⁶ Indeed, of

all out-of-county movers surveyed by the Census Bureau in 2000, 31.9 percent reported that it was for a “Housing-related reason,” but only 2.8 percent reported that it was for “cheaper housing.” Other housing-related reasons given were “Wanted to own home/not rent” (7.5 percent); “New/better house/apartment” (10.3); “Better neighborhood/less crime” (3.9 percent) (see Figure 19).



What the data show is something different than what would be expected looking only at the cost of housing as a factor in the decision to relocate. We are seeing young, poorer people of color coming to Long Island (though the increase in the Asian population is somewhat more complex) at the same time that we are seeing whites moving away, or at least not coming to the region in overwhelming numbers that would counterbalance the low birth rates of thirty-five years ago. This probably has influenced the decline in the number of middle class households on Long Island as well as the increase in the number of lower income households illustrated in Figure 20, a graphic on household income distribution. In effect, Long Island, once the great escape of the New York metropolitan area’s middle classes, has come to reflect the rich/poor stratification that has come to characterize large cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, and New York City.

These numbers allow us to evaluate economic development policy for Long Island by first asking the most fundamental question: does Long Island want to become a region characterized by large numbers of poor people, large numbers of wealthy people, and very few people in the middle class? There are at least two answers to this question competing for ascendancy among urban policymakers and theorists.



One answer is postulated by proponents of the “Be Hip and They Will Come” approach to economic development. Essentially, economists like Edward Glaeser, Joseph Gyourko, and, most famously, George Mason University Professor (currently teaching in Canada) and urbanist Richard Florida maintain that in older metropolitan areas where real estate prices are high and there is little chance that the cost of living can be significantly reduced, it is important to attract and retain the most talented, educated and high wage populations. The concern should not be overall population growth, or slight population declines, but an increase in relatively small, elite groups of workers that specialize in high end “producer services” like finance, design, project coordination, advertising and others which are crucial to making regions wealthy and competitive. Large concentrations of highly educated singles and artists contribute greatly to the development of technology and “creative industries,” and are more important than the middle class to older regions like New York City and its suburbs. Critics like Florida maintain that attracting this “creative class” is critical to attracting industries with high wages, and to becoming an affluent “consumer city.”⁷

Another viewpoint, postulated by planning specialists and demographers like Joel Kotkin, William Frey and others, concentrates on middle class families. This approach is expressed by John Lui, CEO of Houston-based IT Quest: “Good strong families will be the success of this city. They are less transient, able to think in the long term as opposed to short term gain, and are not as nomadic . . . My generation comes to block parties hoping that our kids will inherit what we have

and build a new infrastructure that is ten times greater in the next thirty years.”⁸

Joel Kotkin argues in his book *The City: A Global History*, that a successful region “must be more than a construct of diversions for essentially nomadic populations; it requires an engaged and committed citizenry with a long term financial and familial stake in the metropolis. A successful city must be home . . . to specialized industries, small businesses, schools, and neighborhoods capable of regenerating themselves for the next generation.” It is Kotkin’s belief that the decline of the urban, middle class family “deprives urban areas of a critical source for economic and social vitality” and that an economy focused on “‘creative’ functions is ill suited to provide upward mobility for more than a small slice of its population.”⁹

The kinds of economic development solutions that are favored depends a great deal on which is deemed more important to a region’s well being: the small (but growing) educated “creative class,” or the large (but shrinking) middle class. Those who believe in creating a “superstar” region, either because they see the trends as irreversible or because they see the trends as desirable, the following kinds of policy options are said to be most desirable.

- expanding “urban glamour zones” by concentrating on “grand achievements” like high-rise office buildings (e.g. World Trade Center), and arts facilities.
- promoting tourism based on natural surroundings that give the region its edge, such as bodies of water, mountains, lakes, ports (e.g. Southstreet Seaport), or historic traditions.
- promoting the growth – through subsidy or tax expenditure - of arts districts and entertainment centers.
- promoting the growth of condominium housing, which is said to be more attractive than detached housing for more “nomadic,” low-birth rate, upper-income singles, couples, and upper-income empty-nesters, who may have housing elsewhere.

The emphasis on “superstar” cities and the “super-affluents” who live there make these cities and regions among the wealthiest, but also the most stratified in terms of income. In general, these regions have lots of work for the affluent and well educated, as well as jobs for maids, waiters, store clerks, and other service industry workers. The stark contrast between elite classes and their servants is particularly notable in New York City and Los Angeles, which have among the highest rates of income disparity.

Those who believe that it is still possible and more important to build regional economies around middle class households may favor strengthening basic infrastructure, including:

- focus on efficient and mobile transportation, including efficient public transit and highways
- quality public schools, especially important for young families
- quality higher education, vocational as well as high skilled, for training both blue collar (welders, electricians, contractors, mechanics) and white collar workers
- affordable housing, with an emphasis on an ownership ladder which permits young families to gain equity in condos, coops, and small houses before moving up to larger houses. The possibility of ownership within a reasonable amount of time is seen as the key to attracting aspiring middle-class families
- Keep regulation of businesses and taxes low, particularly for new startup businesses

In support of these kinds of policies, the great urbanist Jane Jacobs wrote “A metropolitan economy, if it is working well, is constantly transforming many poor people into middle class people, many illiterates into skilled people, many green horns into competent citizens . . . Cities don’t lure the middle class. They create it.”

Nothing, of course, precludes implementing a strategic mixture of these policy tools, other than the limited availability of public resources. At the very least, though, policymakers should be aware that economic development decisions will have consequences for what Long Island will become, who will live here, and how they will live.

NOTES

¹ William Frey, “Three Americas: The Rising Significance of Regions,” *APA Journal* (Autumn 2002): 349-350.

² *Long Island Index 2004*, Garden City, New York, 2004, 15.

³ Matthew Crosson, “LI needs to keep younger workers,” *Newsday*, January 27, 2005, A. 37.

⁴ Elizabeth Warren and Amelia Warren Tyagi, *The Two Income Trap: Why Middle-Class Mothers & Fathers are Going Broke* (New York: Basic, 2003).

⁵ Data from U.S. Census Bureau; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/National Center for Health Statistics.

⁶ *Why People Move: Exploring the March 2000 Current Population Survey*, March 1999 to March 2000, May 2001, U.S. Census Bureau, Economics and Statistics Division, P23-204, Washington, D.C.: Steve H. Murdock, "The Relative Effects of Economic and Economic Factors on Age-Specific Migration: 1960-1980," *Rural Sociology*, 49 (1984) :309-18; Peter H. Rossi and Anne B. Shlay, "Residential Mobility and Public Policy Issues: Why Families Move Revisited," *Journal of Social Issues*, 38 (1982): 21-34; Anne S. Williams and Patrick C. Jobes, "Economic Quality of Life Considerations in Urban-Rural Migratin," *Journal of Rural Studies*," 6 (1990): 187-194.

⁷ Haye el Nasser, "Mid-sized Cities Get Hip to Attract Professionals," *USA Today*, October 10, 2003; Edward L. Glaeser and Albert Saiz, "The Rise of the Skilled City," Harvard Institute of Economic Research, December 2003; Kate Swan, "Where are You on the Talent Map?," *Fast Company*, January 2001; Joel Kotkin, "Opportunity Urbanism,: An Emerging Paradigm for the 21st Century," Greater Housing Partnership, 2007.

⁸ Young entrepreneur focus groups notes by Arthur Monroe, Texas Southern University, with Joel Kotkin and Tory Gattis in Kotkin, 32.

⁹ Joel Kotkin, *The City: A Global History* (New York: Modern Library, 2005), 153, 154.

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PLACE NAMES

BABYLON

Richard Harmond

Our Editor-at-Large wonders amusingly what Babylon residents were thinking when naming the town.

The relevant histories agree about the origin of the name Babylon. What none discuss, however, is why, considering the decidedly negative biblical allusions to Babylon, the name was retained by several generations of Babylonians who were, assumedly, conversant with the Old and New Testaments.¹

For the early part of its history Babylon was part of the town of Huntington, and was known, at first, as Sumpwams, and subsequently as Huntington South. With few residents, the main business of eighteenth-century Huntington South residents was the harvesting of salt hay used as cattle feed, and for bedding. Even at the end of the century, the area was lightly settled.

In 1803 Nathaniel Conklin constructed a house at the corner of Main Street and Deer Park Avenue. An unruly tavern, the American Hotel, was Conklin's next door neighbor. Conklin's mother, Phoebe Conklin, was displeased by the home's proximity to a raucous public house, and warned her son that the community would become another Babylon, as described in the Old Testament's 137th Psalm. "By the waters of Babylon where we sat down; yea we wept when we remembered Zion." Her son insisted that the hamlet would become a "New Babylon," and inscribed that name, and a date, on a stone tablet over the fireplace. The Huntington South citizenry soon shortened New Babylon to Babylon, and by 1830 the name was officially accepted by the United States Postal Service.

In the years that followed the people of Huntington South became convinced that their interests were being neglected by the Town of Huntington. So the residents of Amityville, Babylon Village, and Breslau (later Lindenhurst) petitioned the State Legislature to divide Huntington into two townships. After a favorable vote by Huntington South's citizenry, Babylon became a town in January 1872.

Nathaniel Conklin -- the largest landowner in the vicinity -- constructed a tannery early in the nineteenth-century that pioneered Babylon's emergence as a commercial center. Other ambitious businessmen invested in saw and flour mills. Some also took advantage of the bluefish and eels found in the bay, and shipped their catches to

Brooklyn markets. And by the 1880's Babylon was described as a "thriving country town" that rested "on the shore of a great, blue-bossomed, green-edged tranquil bay."

Nearer to the village the 350 room Argyle Hotel (built by Austin Corbin, president of the Long Island Rail Road) lured rich New Yorkers to spend their summer vacations by Babylon's bay. Of course, Fire Island offered its attractions to summer visitors.

We can assume that these summer sojourners were unconcerned that the town they visited was named Babylon. But what of the natives? Probably at no place in the Bible is Babylon so starkly depicted as in the New Testament's Revelations, Chapter 17-18 to quote in part:

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication , and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her.

How, one wonders, did nineteenth-century Babylonians react to this verbal assault? Or were they even aware of the Biblical pummeling?

¹ Stephen Prothero deals with this issue, and the broader question of how school text books exposed school children to the Bible, in *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs To Know -- And Doesn't* (Harper Collins: New York, 2007): 62-79; Carl Frederick Baker, "The Devil Take The Hindmost," *Long Island Forum* (October, 1964), 222; *History of Suffolk County, New York, with Illustrations, Portraits and Sketches of Prominent Families and Individuals* (W.W. Munsell & Co.: New York, 1882), 9-10, 12-13; *Huntington - Babylon Town History* (Huntington Historical Society, 1937), 244-45; Sr. Anne Frances Pulling, *Images of America: Babylon By the Sea* (Arcadia Publishing: Charleston, SC, 1999), 7-11, 24, 29.

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