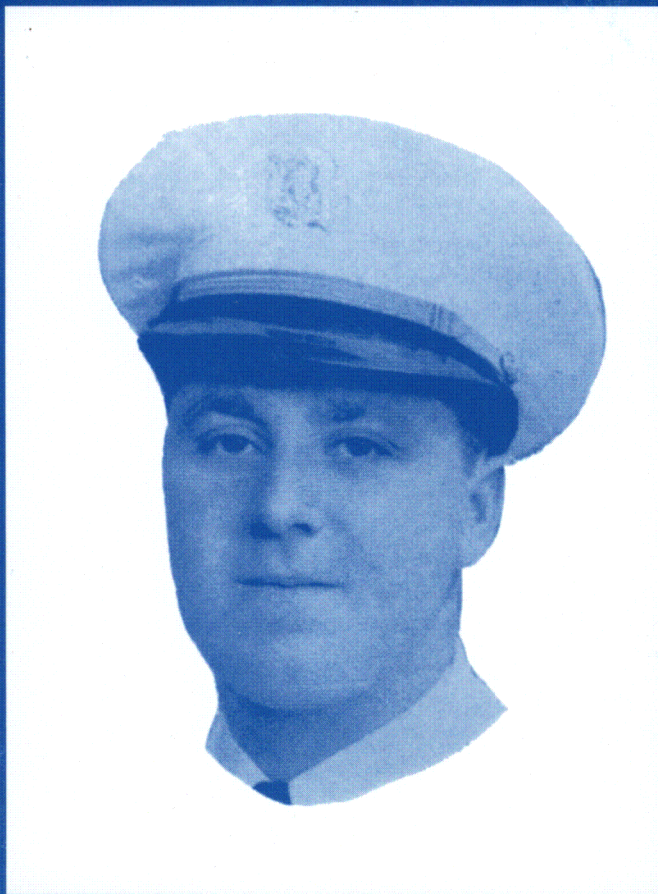
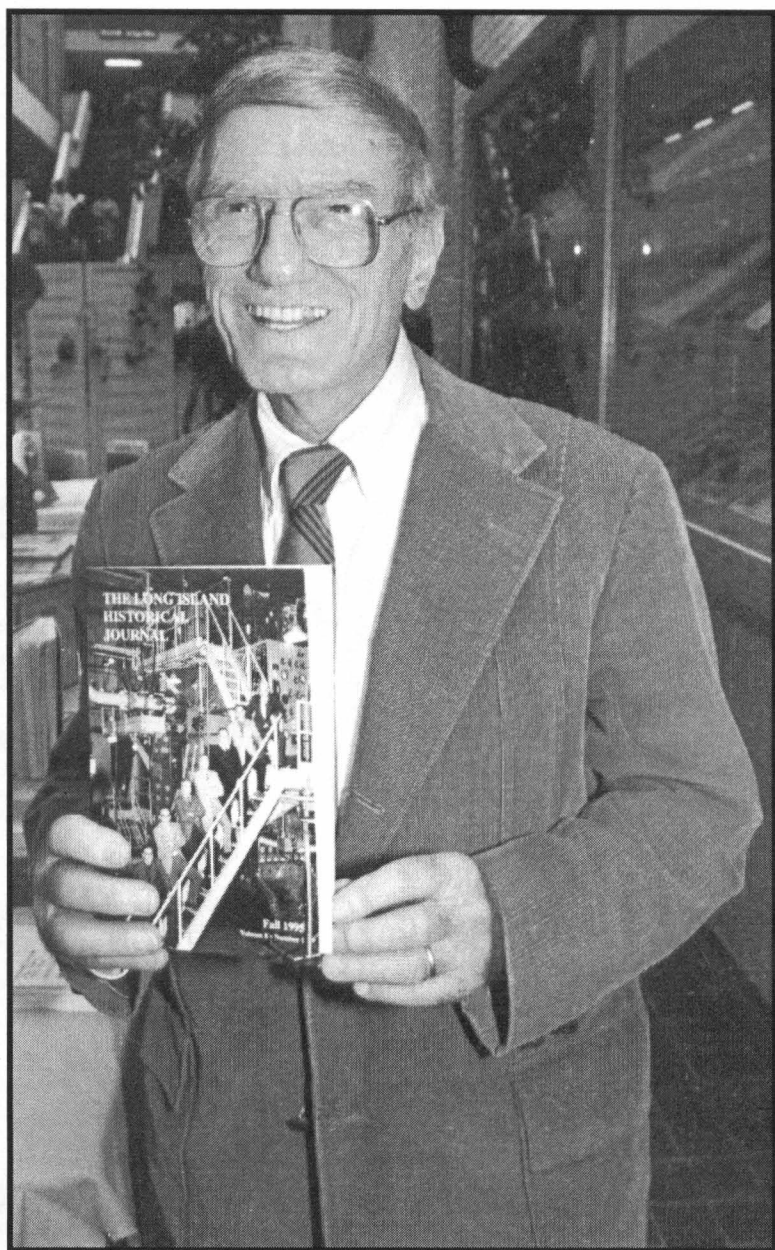


# THE LONG ISLAND HISTORICAL JOURNAL



**Arnold A. Bocksel**  
**A World War II Hero**

**Spring 2001**  
**Volume 13 • Number 2**



*Roger Wunderlich  
1914-2001*



Dear LIHJ Subscribers,

It is our sad duty to inform you of the passing of our founding Editor, Roger Wunderlich, who died on the morning of May 19, 2001.

Over the past year, Roger had slowed down. He stopped teaching the Long Island History course this past spring, one that he had inaugurated ten years ago and over which he had presided, before overflow crowds of undergraduates necessitated the hiring of another instructor. But he continued – at full speed – to work on his beloved *Journal*. Indeed, during the two weeks he was in the hospital in May, he called Liz Kelley (Assistant Editor, *LIHJ*) to his bedside every three days, up until the day before he died, to give her instructions about this issue of the *Journal*.

All of us who came to know Roger quickly learned his mantra, "Long Island history is American History." Both in the History department and in the *Journal*, he dedicated himself to the serious and scholarly elaboration of Long Island's long and colorful history. This devotion expressed itself in his editorial perfectionism, and his intrepid search for new and high-quality material and promising new contributors. His energy and enthusiasm are impossible to replace and he will be deeply missed. In his memory, his family and colleagues at Stony Brook have established a scholarship fund in his name to support one or more worthy undergraduate students of History at Stony Brook. If you would like more details or wish to contribute to the scholarship please contact Jane Mac Arthur, Assistant Director for Advancement, at (631) 632-8520 or [jmacarthur@notes.cc.sunysb.edu](mailto:jmacarthur@notes.cc.sunysb.edu).

As of this writing we have not yet worked out the editorial and organizational details, but be assured that the *Long Island Historical Journal* will continue. The Department of History at Stony Brook University will remain its sponsor, and all correspondence related to subscriptions as well as articles may continue to be sent there. Even before Roger passed away, discussions had taken place to ensure the continuing success of the *Journal*. These included plans to move to an annual issue, rather than the current semi-annual format. The Editorial Board will, of course, keep all of our readers and subscribers updated on any changes that may occur.

We thank you for all of the support that you have shown the *LIHJ* over the past 13 years. Roger was, as we all continue to be, proud to help bring greater understanding of and interest in Long Island history to our readers and subscribers. We look forward to continuing the *Journal* with your help.

Best regards,

Elizabeth Kelley  
Asst. Editor LIHJ

Gary Marker  
Chair, Department of History  
SUNY Stony Brook







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

*Walt Whitman*

*Spring 2001*

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*Cover:* Chief Warrant Officer-4 Arnold A. Bocksel, September 1941. Photograph in Bocksel, *Rice, Men, and Barbed Wire* (Hauppauge, 1989), 2.





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Ed.

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**Richard P. Harmond**, the associate editor of *LIHJ* and professor of history at St. John's University, is the author of many books and articles on the history of Long Island.

**Natalie A. Naylor**, director of the L.I. Studies Institute at Hofstra University, is a prolific historian and conference organizer; her most recently edited books are *Index of Articles in Journals and Conference Volumes on Long Island Studies*, and *The People Called Quakers: Records of Long Island Friends, 1671-1703* (see Book Notes).

**Hugh E. O'Rourke**, the curriculum chair of the criminal justice department at Westchester Community College, is a former US Navy commander who also served as captain of the New York City Police Department's Tenth Precinct in Manhattan.

**D. Reid Ross**, a retired city planner who resides in Durango, Col., has published eight articles on various members of his family and recently completed an account of his Civil War ancestors, "Four Brothers Fight for the Union."

**Charles E. Squires, Robert J. Young, and Michael B. Ranger** are Ranger descendants who have synthesized their separately conducted research on the history of the family's Long Island branch.

### Secondary School Essay Contest Winners

At the time of writing, **Jeremy Francis** was a junior at Paul D. Schreiber High School, Port Washington.

**Carmen Granda** was a junior at Kellenberg Mem. High School.

**Heather R. McIlvaine** was a junior at Amityville Mem. High School.

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

This is the city and I am one of the citizens,  
Whatever interests the rest interests me, politics, wars, markets,  
    newspapers, schools,  
The mayor and councils, banks, tariffs, steamships, factories, stocks,  
    stores, real estate and personal estate.  
Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself"

Convert "city" to "Long Island" to fit this journal's premise of Long Island as America. In our view, the history of Long Island reflects as well as contributes to most major phases of national life, from colonial times to the present. If anything, we cover the historical waterfront more extensively than does Walt Whitman's poem: we welcome articles and reviews on any and every aspect of the social, political, economic, ethnic, and cultural history of Suffolk, Nassau, Brooklyn, and Queens, a richly historic region that has not received the attention it merits.

For thirteen years, from our opening issue of Fall '88 and onward for twenty-six more, we have kept the price of subscriptions at \$15 per annum. We did this in spite of rising costs and diminished funding, and God willing and the creek don't rise, we shall continue to maintain this rate. However, there will be change of a different type. From now on, we will publish an expanded, more illustrated journal to be issued annually.

Forthcoming editions will feature in-depth studies by leading scholars, reviews of pertinent books and exhibits, and articles by Long Island's brightest high school students, which we receive as entries in the contest we sponsor jointly with the USB Center for Excellence and Innovation in Education. We take particular pride in these student essays and the guidance for them provided by creative teachers of social studies.

Please know that our transom is all the way open for unsolicited articles or reviews of books you come across which may not be familiar to us. In any case, please do your bit when you receive your renewal notice, and, if possible, sign up a friend.

We thank you for your loyal support: This reader-supported journal depends on you.

Roger Wunderlich, editor, *LIHJ*





# THE ORDEAL OF ARNOLD A. BOCKSEL, A LONG ISLAND SOLDIER TAKEN PRISONER IN WORLD WAR II

By *Richard Acritelli*

They have so many stories to tell, stories that in many cases they have never told before, because in a deep sense they didn't think that what they were doing was that special, because everyone else was doing it too.

— Tom Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation*  
(New York: Random House, 1998).

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the United States plunged into war against a despotic coalition bent on world domination. Fighting in Europe, Africa, and Asia, our armed forces helped to save the world from tyranny. They were willing to make any sacrifice to prevent the Rome/Berlin/Tokyo Axis from destroying the democratic way of life.

As did the rest of the nation, Long Island strongly supported the war effort. While the Island's new aircraft industry manufactured fighter planes, young Long Islanders went off to fight in distant places in some of history's bloodiest battles. Many of these intrepid but often modest veterans still live among us, their stories of courage and honor insufficiently told. This article explores the ordeal of one such hero, Arnold A. Bocksel, born and bred in Brooklyn and now a resident of Syosset, who, in 1942, was captured on Bataan and spent the next three and one-half years as a Japanese POW. The complete account of Bocksel's harrowing experience may be found in his absorbing book, *Rice, Men, and Barbed Wire*, on which this article is based. To avoid excessive use of "Ibid." endnotes, parenthetical page numbers in the text accompany references to this book.<sup>1</sup>

After graduating from the New York State Maritime Academy in 1936, Bocksel rose to the rank of Chief Engineer in the U.S. Merchant Marine. In 1941, months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, his sense of patriotism led him to leave the Merchant Marine and enlist in the U.S. Army. After training at the Submarine Mine Depot School, he was sent to the Philippines as Chief Engineer of the U.S. Army Mine Planter *Harrison*, with the rank of Chief Warrant Officer-4. Arriving in late September 1941, he took part in laying and maintaining the mines that protected the entrance to Subic and Manila Bays and the lower Bataan Peninsula (6). Now "twenty-seven years of age, happy and care-free" (1), Bocksel enjoyed the delights of Manila, a

beautiful city, called the Pearl of the Orient...on Luzon, one of  
over 7,000 islands in the Archipelago...I found the Filipina

women warm, friendly, and gracious...[and] fell in love practically every weekend during those early days in Manila, when a siren was a beautiful woman and not an air raid alarm, as we later learned (2).

Although not yet directly involved in the war, the United States kept a watchful eye on its interests abroad. As early as the 1930s, Japan waged brutal war in China and French Indo China, and had designs on the Dutch East Indies. The Philippines were a symbol of American power and prestige, an outpost to guard our interests in Asia. In its effort to contain Japanese aggression, the United States set about building an American-Filipino army, led by General Douglas MacArthur. However, fear of invasion was minimal in the Philippines. MacArthur held that, "it would take the Japanese a half-million men, three years, and 5 billion dollars to take the Philippines and that they would not be willing to pay that price."<sup>2</sup>

An article in the November issue of *Life Magazine* predicted that, should war break out, Japan "would be defeated in two weeks time, by the Navy alone... the Japanese could not bomb accurately due to genetically poor vision and inferior quality aircraft; that they were slovenly and ill-disciplined, and that their warships were poorly designed" (3).

MacArthur was determined to defend against any attack, his army augmented by thirty-five B-17 bombers and 107 P-40 fighter planes, representing more than half of the nation's heavy bombers and one-fifth of its fighter planes. Defeat by the Japanese was considered impossible. On 15 November, Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall contended that, if war broke out, MacArthur had "the greatest concentration of heavy bomber strength anywhere in the world...after defending the Philippines, MacArthur would conduct bombing raids on Japan and obliterate her paper cities."<sup>3</sup>

On 7 December 1941 the impossible happened; Japan devastated Pearl Harbor and soon after assaulted other crucial U.S. bases in the Pacific. The surprise attack stunned MacArthur, the Supreme Commander of American forces in the southwest Pacific theater, who felt that any strike would not come until spring. But, as Bocksel recalls, "when the Japanese came over to the Philippines on December 8, 1941, they gave us a licking almost like the one they inflicted at Pearl Harbor" (3).

The concept of Japan as a weak and inferior power was laid to rest. Bocksel characterizes the Japanese as "well-trained, fearless, rigidly disciplined, with splendid military hardware...they were tough bastards." The punishing Japanese attacks were possible because the enemy's "Zeros were probably the most advanced and superior military aircraft of the times" (4).

The early stages of the Pacific war were disastrous for the United States. Although America had considerable forces at Pearl Harbor, in the Philippines, and on Guam and Wake Islands, the ferocity of the Japanese onslaught inhibited resistance. American air power was destroyed on the ground

by the *Zeros*, while a superior Japanese navy blockaded the coastline. MacArthur hoped that the island nation could be defended, but with American and Filipino forces spread too thinly, the Japanese pushed them back to Bataan.

The Japanese attacked with such power that the mines in Manila and Subic Bays were rendered practically useless, most of them sunk in the water. Because enemy forces surrounded the Philippines, no reinforcements or supplies could be sent from the United States. The Japanese targeted U.S. fuel reserves in and around Manila Bay, sinking American and Filipino ships containing fuel. Bocksel concluded that the only way to continue laying mines would be to retrieve the crippled ships' fuel, under cover of darkness. For a time, the navy salvaged enough oil to refuel all the remaining vessels in the area (7-8).

The situation worsened daily, as the enemy's naval blockade and air superiority tightened the noose around the beleaguered American forces. In April 1942, Bocksel was ordered to the island fortress of Corregidor to defend against impending attack. Until they captured Corregidor, the "Gibraltar" of the Philippines, the Japanese could not completely control Manila Bay and Bataan.

For the Americans at Corregidor, the situation was hopeless. The island had only a limited amount of supplies and materiel to aid its ten thousand defenders. Bocksel vividly remembers the stress of constant bombardment:

I was caught in one very severe shelling one night that I can't ever forget. Shell after shell exploded around us in a world changed to lights, flames, explosions and screams. Between the shell bursts you can hear the cries of the wounded and dying. When the shelling eventually stopped, the area looked like an outdoor butcher shop (10).

MacArthur ordered continued resistance by General Jonathan Wainwright, who commanded the forces on Bataan. However, like the garrison on Corregidor, Wainwright's troops had too little ammunition and food to mount a significant counter attack. Although they outnumbered the Japanese, they were weak, hungry, and under-supplied, with no expectation of reinforcement. To Bocksel, it was obvious that, the forces fighting in the Philippines were expendable. News Correspondent Frank Hewlett wrote:

We're the Battling Bastards of Bataan,  
No Mama, no Papa, no Uncle Sam,  
No Aunts, no Cousins, no Uncles, no Nieces,  
No pills, no planes, no artillery pieces,  
And nobody gives a damn (6).

Some of the soldiers questioned MacArthur's leadership, referring to him as "'Dugout Doug,' the inference being that he would jump into a dugout or foxhole during bombings and shells" (13). Bocksel does not subscribe to what he calls "this scurrilous myth." He admires MacArthur "enormously," as a "warrior and a statesman," one of the nation's greatest generals, and backed up his opinion with this recollection:

One day on Corregidor I was caught in a very severe artillery barrage. Standing only a few feet away from me was General MacArthur. Everyone in the vicinity, including me, hit the dirt, fast and hard...that is except MacArthur. He never moved, flinched, ducked, or wavered during the intense shelling. He stood ramrod straight, no helmet on, smoking his corn cob pipe, and he never missed a puff. If he was selling morale that day, he did one hell of a job, but you know what I felt...that he wasn't one goddamned bit frightened. When it was over, he smiled and waved at us. I don't think he knew the meaning of fear" (13-14).

On 11 March, General Marshall ordered MacArthur to leave the Philippines and retreat to Australia, where he could raise an army for future retaliation. Although their position was untenable, the defenders of Bataan and Corregidor held out temporarily, faced not only by the enemy but also by rampant disease. In March 1942, the supply of quinine, a preventive for malaria, ran out. By the end of the month, admissions for malaria to the two American hospitals on the southern end of Bataan reached nearly one thousand a day. Desperately short of food, the troops began to eat mule, dog, horse, cat, lizard, monkey, and iguana meat, and many gnawed on tree roots, bark, and leaves.<sup>4</sup>

On 6 May 1941, General Wainwright surrendered the American-Filipino Army on Bataan and Corregidor. According to Bocksel, the action

was obviously dictated by the facts that we could no longer hold out against the Japanese because we were greatly outnumbered; incessant aerial bombardments and continual shelling, over which we had no defense; failing food and medical supplies; lack of ammunition; the remaining garrison consisting of a small group of sick, tired, gaunt men with no hope of reinforcements coming from the U.S. ....

The Japanese. swarmed all over Corregidor. We were herded together and made to sit on the ground with our hands over our heads. We were kept this way for about three days. No food or water. Rings, watches, jewelry and other items...that strike the fancy of the Japanese are stripped from us. Objections are met with a rifle butt to the face or body (16-17).

The Japanese High Command was incensed by the months of continued resistance by American and Filipino forces, which disrupted its schedule of conquest. Lt. General Masaharu Homma, the commander of Japanese forces, had been assigned fifty days from 7 December to conquer the Philippines. The timetable had come and gone. Imperial Headquarters in Tokyo held its field commanders responsible for not taking objectives on time. The American prisoners of war would feel the brunt of this anger.

After some time on Corregidor, the American POWs were sent to Manila. Bocksel remembers the anguish of the Philippine people, who, along with the Americans, bore the brunt of Japanese victory. As the defeated GIs departed for prison,

The Filipinos lining the streets were grim faced and sad looking. Many had tears in their eyes as they behold the mighty conquerors and their bedraggled captives. Some tossed us food, much to the chagrin of the guards, others whispered encouragements to us with tears in their eyes. Many of us were teary eyed, too (20).

Atrocities were committed from the earliest point of surrender. The Japan wrongly assumed that the captives had enough food and water to last until they arrived at the prison camps. In reality, if they were fortunate, they had barely a one-day supply of food and water. Moreover, while marching to the camps, they were given little sustenance. To make matters worse, the Japanese systematically beat and killed Americans as a form of revenge for not



surrendering sooner. This savage episode has gone down in history as the Bataan Death March.

After spending time at Bilibid Prison in Manila, Bocksel was taken by train to the Cabanatuan POW camp in Northern Luzon. The experience was one of misery and despair for the prisoners: "We were loaded aboard the box cars, about 100 men to a car. It was rough sitting on the floor, bodies pressed close together, unable to move at all, temperature hovering well above the 100 degree mark" (22). The crowded journey took an eternity to Bocksel:

You do not know how long you have been in the box car, but it feels like a lifetime. Blissfully, you return to some semblance of reality when you hear the train grinding to a stop. Japs are screaming and doors are opened. You feel air—beautiful, beautiful air, and you just lift your head and breath and breath. You hold it in your lungs and slowly exhale, and slowly breathe and exhale (23).

After the horror of the boxcars, the prisoners were forced to march all the way to the Cabanatuan prison camp. As in the boxcars, there was no food or water, and beatings by guards intensified:

They let us rest for a while that afternoon. No food and water getting low. The combination of dust and perspiration makes us a motley looking crew, even to each other. Sweat covered faces streaked where perspiration has cleared paths through the covering dust; eyes wild, reflecting misery; exhausted, aching bodies. Some men run to the side of the road where caribou are wallowing in the muddy water. Those men fill their canteens from the muddy waters. Even the caribou looked astonished. Thirst crazed men don't care (25).

The commander of the prison camp viewed the prisoners with contempt, telling them that:

American domination of the Orient was over. Japan was now ready to take over the entire area of East Asia. He could destroy them all but the code of Bushido forbade such action. The slightest violation of any order would result in instant execution. You are our enemies and we will fight you and fight you for a hundred years.

This code of Bushido represented the highest honor, respect, and dignity by which Japanese soldiers were trained to live. One of its rules was never to

surrender: the Japanese saw their prisoners of war as cowards because they were not prepared to fight to the death.<sup>5</sup>

The same treatment was inflicted at the Cabanatuan Prison Camp. Bocksel describes one harrowing incident:

Three men attempted escape one evening...[and] were quickly apprehended by the Japanese. who, after beating them severely, tied them to wooden stakes outside the prison compound, where they were in view of the other prisoners inside the compound. They were kept there for three days with no food or water, continually exposed to the scorching sun and regularly beaten by the Japanese....As I recall, one was beheaded and the other two shot ((31).

The gruesome amount goes on to summarize the Samurai technique of decapitation.

As Bocksel and his comrades endured the incessant cruelties of imprisonment, they found themselves in a dire struggle to survive such diseases as dysentery (the greatest killer), beriberi, and malaria. These illnesses spread like wildfire, finishing off those prisoners who were already close to dying. Granted that the war caused shortages of supplies for the Japanese, little was done to help sick and dying prisoners. To quote Bocksel,

In Cabanatuan, the grave detail gathered the bodies of those who had died the day before and on makeshift litters, made of tree limbs and blankets, carried them to the burial grounds — a large ditch dug in the ground. The litter bearers were nothing but walking cadavers themselves. The bodies were thrown into the large pits, one of top of the other. In the rainy season, legs, arms, and other parts would protrude from the ground and had to be recovered with dirt” (34).

Bocksel pays a touching tribute to the esprit de corps of the prisoners, who worked together to help survive their terrible ordeal:

We had many real heroes in prison camp. They did not get any medals for their heroic acts. These were the men who carried the sick with dysentery to the latrines, washed and cleansed them too; brushed away the ever present flies and held their hands when they were dying. They also answered when they called for God or Mama, and closed their eyes when they died —and cried a little, too. I once heard a man

cry in his delirium, "Mama, Mama, please take care of me, come and get me, Mama...Mama...Mama (38).

The rules of conduct that guided the camps originated with the planners of the Imperial Japanese war effort. Prime Minister Haddock Too, who thought that it was a privilege for prisoners of war to have food and shelter, issued standing orders for a "No work—no food" policy:

To this Division is attached a Prisoner of War Camp. Prisoners of war must be placed under strict discipline as far as it does not contravene the Law of Humanity. It is necessary to take care not to be obsessed with mistaken idea of humanitarianism or swayed by personal feelings towards those Prisoners of War which may grow in the long time of their imprisonment. The present situation of affairs in this country does not permit anyone to lie idle doing nothing but eating freely. With that in view, in dealing with the Prisoners of War, too, I hope you will see that they may be usefully employed.<sup>6</sup>

With so many able-bodied men in the armed forces, the Japanese planned to put the thousands of American, Dutch, English, New Zealand, and Australian prisoners to work to aid their war effort. In September 1942, the chief of staff of the Candying Army (responsible for Japanese-dominated Manchuria) wired the vice minister of war:

As the technicians shortage in Manchuria makes it essential to use 1,500 prisoners of war in the plan for utilizing the Manchurian Machine Tool Company for rapid increase in aircraft production dealt with in No. 3,129-Army Secret Asia, we intend to open an internment camp and ask you to inform us as soon as possible the time of their being transferred to Manchuria and the number, etc. Considering the necessity to establish a camp before winter, we wish to transfer the prisoners to Manchuria as soon as possible.<sup>7</sup>

As an engineer, Bocksel was exactly the type of skilled worker needed. On 8 October 1942, along with fifteen other officers and two thousand enlisted men, he embarked on the Japanese freighter *Tatori Maru*. Transferred to an unknown, distant place away from his many friends, Bocksel poignantly sketches his final moments in the Philippines: "I was among sixteen officers assigned to this group. I did not want to go, but I had no choice in the matter. The next day, after sad and tearful eyes of farewell to my buddies, we were marched to the docks of Manila for departure" (40).

As the Japanese refused to recognize the Geneva Convention, the ships that transported their prisoners of war did not have Red Cross or other markings. This put the prisoners at another risk, because of the large American submarine presence in the Pacific. Like the German U-boats in the Atlantic, American submarines attacked every kind of Japanese ship in the Pacific. The American Navy had no way of knowing which ships carried prisoners of war, because the Japanese would not mark their ships accordingly.

Confined to the hull of the *Tatori Maru* (the Americans called it the "Diarrhea" *Maru*), the prisoners were again subjected to boxcar-like conditions: "We were berthed in the lower holds of the vessel, on the steel deck plates. The scorching sun, fetid air, pungent odors, and the jammed overcrowding were a far cry from even a cattle boat. I learned what Dante's *Inferno* must have felt like" (42). The American commander, Major Stanley Hankins, persuaded his captors to allow his men to sleep on the deck of the *Tatori Maru*. Although the hull was a little warmer, the deck allowed the prisoners to breathe fresh air and have more space to move about. To Bocksel, the deck was like "heaven compared to...the hull." After a stop at Formosa (now Taiwan), the ship headed for Kobe, Japan, where some "five hundred of our men disembarked, and ...steamed on to Pusan, Korea," where the remainder were put onto a train for their journey to Mukden, Manchuria (46).

At Pusan, the fourteen officers, 1,188 enlisted men, and one hundred British soldiers were issued old Chinese cold weather clothing by the Japanese. Prisoners who had suffered the heat of the Philippines now shivered in the Siberian winds of Manchuria. On the train, they received "box lunches for food, and... hot tea. I thought and decided that I had died and gone to heaven. I wished I could have stayed on that train for the rest of the war" The prison camp in Mukden, Manchuria, was a few hundred miles south of Siberia, not far from the Mongolian border. As the prisoners made the transition from hot to cold weather, the daily rigors of survival were still the same. Bocksel recalls his first impression of the Mukden camp:

We were marched again, not too far, to an old, abandoned Chinese army barracks that must have been built when Confucius was still walking around. The old wooden barracks were halfway sunk into the earth, with only the tops of the barracks showing, probably as protection against the cold weather....We also found that there were other occupants of the barracks—huge, and I mean huge, ugly and hungry looking rats. "Looks like good eatin's," someone said (49).

Immediately, the prisoners were put to work at the Manchurian Machine Tool Company (M.K.K.). Ironically, this factory had been designed and built in 1940 by four American engineers, as part of Japan's massive

expansion of industrial facilities in Manchuria.<sup>8</sup> Major Hankins informed Colonel Matsuda, the Japanese camp commandant, that to make captured officers work was a violation of the Geneva Convention. Hankins and his fellow officers "would only assume duties that were related to the care and well being of their men" (57). Although Japan did not comply with the Geneva Convention, Matsuda granted this one request. Bocksel is sure that,

Hank did it, the Colonel relented and the officers in the camp were assigned the duties only related to the well-being of our men. This was just after the Battle of Midway, in which the Japanese Navy was severely beaten. Maybe the Colonel saw the "handwriting on the wall," or maybe he was not such a bad guy (57).

Bocksel was appointed mess officer for the prisoners, and directed to pick up food to cook for them. Surprised by the meager amount allotted, he asked if there were more food for the twelve hundred prisoners in the camp. The Japanese guard on duty flew into a rage, and shouted:

You Americans are starving Japanese prisoners and also the Japanese you have imprisoned in the United States; you are also mistreating and killing them, we have this information from our newspapers. Japanese do not starve or kill their prisoners but treat them in accordance with our benevolent code of Bushido. This food is for the next three meals (50).

"This is not true," responded Bocksel:

We also have a code of honor in our armies and in our government. Prisoners of war are fed the same rations issued to our troops and we further treat all prisoners strictly in accordance with the Geneva Convention, and our treatment of them is verified by the International Red Cross in Switzerland. If these prisoners are expected to work in your factories up here, they cannot subsist on these small rations" (50).

Bocksel risked his life by speaking so bluntly, but, as it turned out, this same officer became "almost friendly," giving Bocksel a few cigarettes on occasion, and even discussing the war (51).

In 1984, Bocksel received a letter from Vernon K. Stroschein, a fellow prisoner at Mukden, who had witnessed his plea for more food:

They could have killed you right then and there with one of the swords they all carried on their side. I was standing right beside you at that time and after all these years, I have never forgotten this act of courage. Many times I have told friends and relatives of A. A. Bocksel and his bravery" (51).

Conditions were a little better here than in the Philippines, but not for long. The Mukden camp had many anti-American guards who wanted to make their presence known to the prisoners. One day as Bocksel was preparing food, a Japanese guard, Corporal Eichi Noda, known to the prisoners as the "Rat," requested a "good stateside burger." Bocksel disputed the order. He told the Japanese corporal, "this was the first meat ration we had received in over two weeks time, and to do that would deprive about 20 men of their mean ration the next day" (41).

Although he had attended schools in America and spoke English well enough to act as camp interpreter, Noda hated the United States and took out his venom against the prisoners. The epitome of evil, he would slap and beat prisoners and make them run around the compound until they dropped from exhaustion. After the war, at the War Crimes Trial, Col. Matsuda was hanged and Corp. Noda was sentenced to twenty years in jail (60).

Bocksel also had an unfortunate incident with the prison's second-in-command, Captain Ishikawa, known as the "Bull" by the prisoners. One night, when the captain entered Bocksel's barracks and screamed "Attention," Bocksel was the last to stand. For this minor infraction, Ishikawa severely beat Bocksel and left him close to death:

The Bull kept pummeling me and I would stagger up after each blow, for how long, I don't know. He ended up with a long tirade after he finished with me — in Japanese, so I don't know what he said" Later, Ishikawa was transferred to the Chinese-Russian border, where it is presumed that Russian soldiers killed him. Something that " couldn't have happened to a 'nicer' guy" (61).

As Bocksel and his comrades continued to suffer abuse from their captors, they defiantly broke the rules of the camp. During the war, the Japanese would photograph prisoners to show they were properly fed, clothed, and sheltered. Although this was far from true, the Japanese did so for the duration. One day the Japanese brought baby chickens to the Mukden prison camp. Eggs and poultry would have provided a good source of nutrition for the prisoners, but the Japanese really wanted two imprisoned officers to take care of the chickens for them, a task for which Major Hankins named Bocksel and his good friend, Captain "Johnny" Johnson, of the English contingent.

The thought of taking care of these chickens was ludicrous to Bocksel: "What a selection!...Neither of us had ever seen a chicken, except on a plate" But Bocksel and Johnson built a chicken coop and after some time the hens were laying large quantities of eggs, which the two "farmers" gave to the allied doctor for distribution to needy prisoners in the hospital. But, as Bocksel had soon learned, all good things must come to an end ((75-76).

As the chickens laid eggs their noisy cackling attracted the attention of guards, who inquired about the number of eggs produced daily. When Bocksel and Johnson informed them that the hens laid only two eggs day, the guards took the two, put a lock on the coop, and announced that they would be back tomorrow for more. Bocksel and Johnson

were dumbfounded and scared, too. What in the hell was going to happen to us tomorrow when they came and found 20-30 eggs? Johnny, who was a devout Catholic joined me in the corner of the coop where we made a novena of sorts, promising to give up women and liquor forever if we ever got out of this place alive" (76).

Early the next day, the two men broke into the coop and removed all but three of the eggs. When the guards arrived on "E-Day (Egg Day)," they found four eggs ("some bitch of a chicken had laid another"), and promised to come tomorrow for more. Knowing that the guards could easily ascertain the actual number of eggs being laid, Johnson took action:

All of a sudden (recalls Bocksel), I see Johnny spring to attention and approach Colonel Matsuda. Saluting him in the smart manner that only the British can do, he says, 'Sir, I am a graduate of Sandhurst, and brought up in the same military traditions as you...and like you, I am an officer and a gentleman. I consider locking this door as an act impugning upon my integrity and honor. Further, how can we clean the hen house and feed the chickens if the door is locked? I ask you to reconsider this action. Thank you" (77-78).

After this eloquent plea, the commandant kept the coop unlocked. Johnson's bravery saved the two men from beatings or worse, because stealing and lying were prohibited by the Japanese code of "Bushido." Bocksel wryly remarked to Johnson, "I thought you were going to get us killed by beheading or getting shot at sunrise; and this crazy Limey I am mixed up with is really crazy—but I love you" (79).

A world away in Brooklyn, the war took its toll on Bocksel's parents, Angela and Conrad Bocksel, who for twenty months were not

notified that their son was a prisoner in a Japanese camp. In a newspaper interview, Angela Bocksel explained how she coped with the unknown status of Arnold, the oldest of her three sons (the other two, Raymond and Lawrence, also served with distinction in World War II). Rather than worry, she said, "I think it is better to stand behind them on the home front. Work in the Red Cross and at church keeps my mind off worries" (21)

In an imaginary letter to his deceased mother, Bocksel reminds her of an occasion when she could not control her stress.

I heard you lost your "cool" one day during the war when you went to the butcher shop and asked for some meat. I heard, the butcher shouted, 'Lady, don't you know there is a war going on?' ... and with your voice rising to hysterical heights you continued, "one of my sons is a Japanese prisoner of war, another is in Germany with Patton, and a third is on the high seas planting mines, and you ask me if I know there is a war going on? (111).

The continued suffering of Bocksel and his parents would not last forever. Although they had no prospect of victory, the Japanese were prepared to fight to the bitter end until the dropping of the atomic bombs in August 1945. To Bocksel, the bombs saved his and countless other lives.

[T]hose who steadfastly maintain that it was a wrong decision are implying that it would have been better to have allowed millions of Americans and Japanese servicemen to die in the planned invasion of Japan plus the many more millions of Japanese civilians who would have perished in the warfare. (142).

As the camp hummed with rumors that the prisoners would be moved again, Bocksel and his comrades contemplated escape: they doubted that they could survive another forced march, much less more trips on cattle cars and prison ships. However, on 16 August, an Office of Strategic Service (OSS) team came to Mukden to arrange the release of allied prisoners. After being detained for hours, the negotiators met with Colonel Matsuda, the camp commandant, who agreed to place the camp's administration in the hands of the prisoners. Although free, the prisoners were told to stay in camp until a large allied force arrived. This force turned out to be a Russian tank division, which had traveled more than one thousand miles to liberate Mukden Prison Camp. "Everyone



broke out in cheers and shouts of joy," reported Bocksel. "I never thought I would be cheering the Russians, let alone loving them." (120).

Bocksel rejoiced at the thought of returning home to his beloved family.

[T]he nightmare was over...though it will be forever tattooed in our minds...August 17, however, will always be one of the happiest days of my life. Incidentally, August 17 is also the birthday of my mother. Happy birthday, Mom—and I have a very special present for you on this birthday—me!" (121-22).

More good news awaited Bocksel. The United States was preparing to prosecute those Japanese responsible for the inhumane treatment of prisoners. Aware of this by the end of the war, the Japanese High Command recommended desertion by the conductors of these vicious crimes. The Japanese Prisoner of War Bureau sent a message to all prison camps, reading:

Personnel who mistreated prisoners of war and internees or who are held in extremely bad sentiment by them are permitted to take care of it by immediately transferring or by fleeing with a trace. Moreover, documents which would be unfavorable for us in the hands of the enemy are to be treated in the same way as secret documents and destroyed when finished with.<sup>9</sup>

Despite efforts to cover their crimes, the perpetrators were brought before the allied tribunal and prosecuted as criminals. For Bocksel, justice was specially served when the sadistic Corporal Noda was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment. Although Bocksel did not think that he was as evil as Noda or the "Bull," Colonel Matsuda was hanged because he was held responsible for atrocities under his command at Mukden.

Arnold A. Bocksel harbors "no personal bitterness for the experience fate dealt me" (153), firmly believing that, as a soldier, it was his duty to fight for his country no matter what the consequence. Although not sure if he can ever trust the Japanese nation, he is "trying hard, even though my memory will be forever stained by the blood of your innocent victims who died in your prison camps." He praises American patriots of Japanese descent who fought gallantly in Europe in spite of the war-time internment of Japanese in the western United States, which he believes was unfair but "reasonable and proper *at the time*" (149).

As an executive of a large U.S. ship builder, Bocksel visited Japan several years after the war ended. When Japanese people expressed surprise at how well he spoke the language, he would comment that he "had been 'a guest of the Emperor' for 3-½ half years...In fairness to them, they didn't know what

was going on in their prison camps, and I am sure that the majority of their population didn't know, either" (94).

Now in his mid-eighties, Bocksel enjoys golf, early American folk art, and a summer home in Mattituck. Much as he misses his late wife Peggy, he cherishes his four children, nine grandchildren, and large number of relatives. He was recently honored by his alma mater, the State Maritime Academy, at which time this charter member of the "Greatest Generation" was given congratulatory letters from Tom Brokaw and Bob Dole, another genuine war hero.

Long Island can take pride in residents such as Arnold A. Bocksel, who served willingly and endured extreme hardship during the great crusade of World War II. Considering the high rate of fatalities for U. S. soldiers in Japanese prison camps, the odds far from favored his safe return. Although exact figures of Japanese war prisoner casualties "are impossible to establish," Bocksel offers the following estimate:

Approximately 25,000 thousand Americans captured;  
of these, approximately 9,700 survived.

Of the initial number, over 5,000 prisoners died while on  
Japanese "Hell Ships" and over 1,000 perished on the Bataan  
Death March alone.

These figures do not include the Filipinos and prisoners of other  
nationalities who died while in Japanese captivity (146-47)

After a moving admonition not to forsake or forget those fallen comrades "who gave up your tomorrows so we could have our todays," Bocksel ends his book with these typically positive words:

It is always nice to tell a story with a happy ending. This one has one too: some of us survived, we learned a lot we are proud to be American, proud to have served, proud to be called patriots; and proud to have the Stars and Stripes flying over us again. We learned the value of freedom and that our Democracy and way of life are the best in the world (154-55).

## NOTES

1. Arnold A. Bocksel, *Rice, Men and Barbed Wire* (Hauppauge: Michael B. Glass & Associates, 1989, 2d printing 1991). Available for \$18 from Arnold A. Bocksel, 78 Miller Blvd., Syosset, NY 11791.

2. Lawrence Taylor, *A Trial of Generals: Homma, Yanashita, MacArthur* (South Bend, Ind.: Icarus Press, 1981), 25.

3. *Ibid.*, 36, 37.

4. E. Bartlett Kerr, *Surrender and Survival: The Experience of American POWs in the Pacific, 1942-1945* (New York: William Morrow, 1985), 50; William B. Breuer, *MacArthur's Undercover War* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1995), 27.

5. Kerr, 61.

6. *Ibid.*, 83.

7. *Ibid.*, 112.

8. *Ibid.*, 166.

9. *Ibid.*, 281.

# NATIVIST AND IRISH RIOTS IN BROOKLYN, 1854

By Hugh E. O'Rourke

Brooklyn in 1854 was the scene of a series of riots between newly arrived Irish immigrants, who were fleeing the Famine in Ireland, and American-born New Yorkers. The riots were the result of Irish resentment of Protestant open-air preaching which was openly hostile to Catholicism, and attempts to control local elections in Williamsburg.

Prior to the massive immigration of the Irish fleeing the Famine and the German migration of 1848, New York was a generally Protestant society, reflecting the culture and biases of the descendants of the Dutch and English settlers. Although New Amsterdam had been a multicultural community since its founding in 1624, pre-Famine Irish immigrants tended to remain a minority group within a Protestant city. Threats or challenges to the dominant Anglo-Protestant society were few and intergroup violence was uncommon. With the huge influx of Irish Catholic and German immigrants in the late 1840s and 1850s, New York City soon experienced a great deal of intergroup conflict, with the Irish community pitted against American-born New Yorkers who were hostile to Catholicism and immigrants.

## Nativism

The arrival of the poverty-stricken Irish stimulated an anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic movement known as nativism. Anti-Catholicism, with roots in religious and national rivalries, xenophobia, and fear of unfamiliar traditions, increased with the flow of Catholic immigrants. A feeling that America had lost its ability to control its national destiny due to the influx of immigrants triggered hostility to foreigners in general and Catholics in particular. Nativism spread and created political programs to reduce the influence of immigrants in politics during the middle-nineteenth century. A wide variety of organizations was formed to restrict immigrant power. Members of the American Party were generally referred to as "Know-Nothings," a term reflecting their answer to questions concerning their organization. Nativism was also a continuation of Anglo-American fear and hatred of Roman Catholicism. Nativists feared that Catholics, whom they believed would undermine American democracy, were conditioned to living under European despots and monarchies.<sup>1</sup>

The *Daily Budget*, a nativist newspaper, commented in its 23 May 1854 edition:

Of all the people that flock to this land of liberty, the Irish Catholics are well known to be the least desirable citizens.

They are ignorant, quarrelsome and every way disagreeable. Besides it is not at all unlikely that the people of Europe, glad to rid themselves of these worthless creatures, drive them to America.<sup>2</sup>

Other issues exacerbated the division in society between the native-born and immigrant population. The problem of the public schools and the use of the Protestant Bible caused Archbishop John Hughes to create a separate Catholic school system. The American Republican Party, created in 1843, called for a twenty-one year probationary period before naturalization, the election of only native-born candidates for public office, and the reading of the King James Bible in public schools. Support by the Protestant community for temperance and the restriction of the spread of slavery were also issues that divided the Irish immigrant community and the nativist New Yorkers.<sup>3</sup>

### **Immigration patterns**

During the nineteenth century immigration accelerated, as people from many countries arrived in New York. Their reasons varied, but economic considerations usually were primary. The most numerous mid-nineteenth-century immigrants were German and Irish, both of which groups suffered from the economic and social upheavals of the 1840s. Others immigrated to escape anti-Semitic policies or avoid political oppression in various European states. Adventurers were drawn by the novelty of travel or the possibilities of Californian gold.<sup>4</sup>

The Irish were the largest immigrant group during the 1845 to 1875 period. The Census of 1850 listed 26 percent of the city's population, or 133,730 people, as born in Ireland. By 1860, more than 200,000 Irish-born people were residents of New York, a city with a population of 800,000. By the end of the era of the great migration, 1844 to 1877, New York became, in the words of a current historian, "the most Irish city in the Union."<sup>5</sup>

### **Catholic and nativist conflict**

The anti-Catholic rhetoric used in open-air preaching by Protestant evangelicals was a dangerous source of intergroup violence. Irish immigrants were all-too familiar with attempts to convert them to Protestantism. A vigorous evangelical campaign in Ireland to convert Catholics lasted from 1829 to 1860. Led by the Anglican archbishop of Dublin, William McGee, the established church unsuccessfully attempted to bring about a Second Reformation to Irish Catholics.<sup>6</sup>

Collections were solicited from New York City Protestants to convert Catholics in Ireland. The Reverend Doctor Heather, the secretary of the Irish Home Missionary Society, visited New York and spoke at local churches

seeking support for the efforts of the one hundred one Protestant missionaries in Ireland.<sup>7</sup>

### Religious violence

Efforts of Protestants to evangelize and the prevailing nativist attitude led to violent clashes between native-born Americans and the Irish Catholic immigrant community in Brooklyn and New York. The preaching of the Englishman, John S. Orr, who called himself "Angel Gabriel," produced confrontations on several occasions, with the most serious riots in South Brooklyn. Orr, who appeared in white robes and was accompanied by brass trumpets, originally preached against Catholicism in Boston where his activities led to violence. On Sunday, 7 May 1854, his sermon caused a riot between his followers and the Irish, when his supporters attacked and damaged a Catholic church in Chelsea. After the local police prevented him from addressing open-air meetings again, he moved to New York City.<sup>8</sup>

Orr was particularly incensed at the visit in 1853 of Gaetano Bedini, apostolic papal nuncio to the court of Brazil, to the United States. The papal nuncio came to deal with the issue of trusteeism in parish churches, and to convey the pope's interest in the growing Roman Catholic Church in America. However, to Protestant evangelicals, the visit was part of a Roman plot to destroy republican liberty. "Forty-eighters" from Germany, Austria, and France also denounced the involvement of Rome in American affairs.<sup>9</sup> The Catholic Church had attacked Italian liberals in 1848, leading Protestants to believe that what they perceived as a reactionary organization would also attack American democracy. Archbishop Bedini was accused of involvement in the death of anti-papal revolutionaries in Italy and the suppression of Italian reformers. Protestant evangelicals, protesting his presence in America, followed him from city to city. In most cities where these evangelicals appeared, there were increased attacks on Catholic church property and battles between Protestant and Catholic mobs. On 30 October 1853, Bedini stayed with Archbishop Hughes in New York and attended the consecration of Bishop John Loughlin of Brooklyn and Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley of Newark. Bedini abandoned his tour of America after an assassination attempt in Cincinnati in December 1853, and sailed in secret from New York on 3 February 1854.

Alessandro Gavazzi, a former Roman Catholic priest now a rabid anti-Catholic, arrived in America in March 1853. The *North American Protestant* and the American Protestant Association sponsored his lecture tour of the country during which he preached against the pope, Catholicism, and the opposition to the use of the Protestant Bible in public schools. At the height of the anti-Catholic fervor, a mob in the nation's capital seized a block of marble the pope had donated for building the Washington Monument and threw it into the Potomac.<sup>10</sup>

Gavazzi earned the hatred of the New York City Irish by his attacks on

them as puppets of Rome. As such, he contended, the Irish could not be trusted to be loyal to republican principles or the United States. Gavazzi urged Protestant employers not to hire Irish domestic servants as they were "spies of Rome and Jesuits in disguise." Phelim Lynch, the editor of the *Irish American*, accused him of being in the pay of British abolitionists.<sup>11</sup>

In New York, an individual calling himself "Moses" and presenting himself as "Secretary of the Angel Gabriel," took to preaching in City Hall Park. During one of his sermons, members of the crowd took offense to his anti-Catholic rhetoric and fights began between Irish and Protestant bystanders. The police reserve was called to quiet the disturbance, during which Roger McLaughlin, a Catholic, was arrested for stabbing a person in the arm with a dirk. In the following week a few fights broke out, but there were no riots in City Hall Park. The Protestants, who assaulted several Irish bystanders, were the more aggressive party that Sunday. Two arrests were made, of James W. Hyatt and James T. Taylor, both described as "native Americans" and carpenters by trade.<sup>12</sup>

The growing antagonisms led to assaultive behavior between Irishmen and those whom they believed were Protestants. Violence spread throughout New York. "Four stout Irishmen" accosted a man walking through the Washington Parade Ground, near Waverley Place, and asked if he were Catholic or Protestant. When he refused to reply he was accused of being a "d--d Know-Nothing Protestant." When one assailant attempted to stab him with a long knife, the victim ward off the blow with his hand and received a serious wound.<sup>13</sup>

The practice of wearing white felt hats by Know-Nothings and militant Protestants, associated with the "Wide Awake" movement, led to Irish collective violence on numerous instances. Daniel J. Domyne was assaulted while wearing a white hat by a party of twelve to fifteen Irishmen in Highbridge, in the Bronx, on the assumption that he was a Protestant. On another occasion a party of Irishmen assaulted everyone wearing a white hat near the Battery, as well as a *New York Times* reporter wearing the offending symbol. Five Irishmen were arrested for an attack on a Grand Street ferry, in which the victim was asked whether he was a Know-Nothing before he was beaten.<sup>14</sup>

### Religious rioting in Brooklyn

More serious Sunday disturbances were to occur in Brooklyn. The bishop of Brooklyn, John McLaughlin, advised Catholics to avoid attending or harassing street preachers at Smith Street and Atlantic Avenue, in the midst of an Irish neighborhood.

Moses, "Secretary to the Angel Gabriel," soon joined the Brooklyn street preachers. On 28 May 1854, he brought a crowd from Manhattan to listen to the preaching of the Reverend John Beach of the Primitive Methodist Church, on Bridge Street, who spoke to six thousand people on the corner of Smith

Street and Atlantic Avenue. The *New York Times* reported that the Irish Catholics interfered with the Sunday preaching and attacked Protestants as they returned to the ferry for Manhattan.<sup>15</sup>

The *New York Herald*, however, reported that the three hundred Protestants from Manhattan were the more aggressive group. The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* also concluded that "had it not been for the procession from New York, headed by the secretary of the Angel Gabriel, there would have been no excitement whatever." Protestants assaulted an Irishman who was arguing with the preacher, and other Irish bystanders were also beaten. As the New York contingent marched to the ferry for Manhattan at the end of the day, they continued to attack Irishmen in the street. A crowd of Irishmen responded to the reports of fighting and attacked the Protestants as they awaited the ferry at the Catherine Street terminal. The fighting finally ended when the ferry removed the Protestants to Manhattan. The Brooklyn police arrested six but did not specify their religious affiliation.<sup>16</sup>

Street preaching disorders worsened. On the next weekend, 4 June 1854, the Irish were ready and attacked the Protestants. The militia was required to calm the situation. In a battle between the Irish and the Protestants and their Know-Nothing supporters, forty to fifty persons were seriously injured.

The Protestants and their allies brought three hundred people from Manhattan on the ferry. Rumors circulated among the Irish that the group would make an attempt to burn down Saint James Church, on Jay Street, the seat of the new Diocese of Brooklyn. To meet the challenge, the mayor of Brooklyn, Edward A. Lambert, called up the 14th Regiment to suppress fighting between the two groups. The preaching went on without disturbance at the usual location, the corner of Smith Street and Atlantic Avenue. The topic of the sermon was uncertain: some reported that it contained nothing offensive while others recalled it was anti-Catholic in tone. One drunken man was arrested at the scene for interrupting the service.<sup>17</sup>

However, as the New York Protestants and their Brooklyn supporters—a group of some fifteen hundred persons—walked down Fulton Street to Main Street and onto the Catherine Street Ferry, they were followed by an estimated five thousand Irish. As the procession reached Front Street, stones were thrown at the marchers and a general melee broke out in the street. The marchers were prepared and drew revolvers, which they fired at their Catholic opponents. Police Officer James McGrath and three boys in the crowd were shot, and a bystander was injured severely by a paving stone.

Fighting occurred throughout the area, with an estimated twenty thousand people in the vicinity of the riot. The disorders continued for longer than necessary when the ferry captains refused to pull into the dock in Brooklyn, leaving the Manhattan Protestants trapped against their Irish antagonists. Forty-eight arrests were made; most of those arrested were Irish.<sup>18</sup>

Mayor Lambert warned that continued violence would not be accepted. He issued a proclamation on 6 June 1854, cautioning



all persons from any attempt to interfere with the rights guarantied to all our citizens to meet together for public worship, [and] all persons from making any demonstration which would tend to excite ill feeling among our citizens by organizing and moving in procession in the public streets to such places of worship. Those violating the proclamation could expect to be arrested.<sup>19</sup>

Phelim Lynch, of the *Irish American*, also appealed to the Irish community to avoid attending the open-air services. "With pain I am forced to say you act most criminally by attending these gatherings. And when you, unfortunately, happen to be present, you act more criminally still by interruptions and indulging bouts of passion."<sup>20</sup>

Street preaching continued on the following Sunday, 11 June, both on the steps of City Hall in Manhattan and in Brooklyn. John S. Orr published an announcement in several New York papers calling for support by the Protestant community:

America for the Americans—Purgatory for Popery and the Pope, and scorn for those who rob us of our rights. Mr. J. S. Orr, the open-air orator, intends to exercise the right of speech next Saturday, in Atlantic street, near Hoyt Street, South Brooklyn at 5 o'clock P.M. To speak to Romanists, Orr has no hope. This invitation is to Protestants.<sup>21</sup>

After preaching at 3:00 P.M. on the steps of City Hall, Orr rushed to Brooklyn and at 6:00 P.M. addressed a crowd of two thousand at Smith Street and Atlantic Avenue. The Reverend Booth, of the Primitive Methodist Church of Brooklyn, assisted him. Orr's sermon followed his previous theme: "my hatred against Lordship, Devilship and the Pope, which if we do not put down there can be no liberty." Mayor Lambert was quick to raise a strong force to prevent bloodshed. He again called out the 14th Regiment of the militia, the police, and a group of one hundred fifty special police officers hired for the day. The sheriff also recruited one hundred special deputy sheriffs for the anticipated disturbance. While only brief scuffling was reported, dangerous rioting again occurred as the Protestants marched down Atlantic Avenue to the ferry. Stones thrown by Irish residents, who waited for the marchers, injured several persons. After the marchers departed for Manhattan, the special police were attacked by the Irish and "severely used" until another detachment of special police and the militia came to their rescue. Several shots were fired at the Irish, and two were superficially injured. Twenty-six arrests were made.<sup>22</sup>

The 7 June 1854 issue of the *Freeman's Journal*, a newspaper supporting the Roman Catholic Church and the Irish community, viewed the

disorders as a result of ancient Irish problems with England and Protestantism. The riots and “their promoters are mostly Englishmen and Irish Protestants. This is an ascertained fact. We have, moreover, good grounds for our assertion that these foreign servants of England are in the pay of the British government.” Michael Doheny, an Irish nationalist leader, wrote to the editor of the *New York Times* and noted that English and Protestant troublemakers never attacked Jewish, Italian, or German immigrants. He declared that agents of England directed the continual abuse of Irish Catholic immigrants. With this view popular among the Irish in Brooklyn, the factional fight response was predictable.<sup>23</sup>

The belief that Great Britain continued to harass the Irish in American had strong support in the Irish community. After the Orange riot of 1870, the *Irish American* charged that:

agents were sent out of Great Britain to establish “Orange Lodges” here and the officers of these “Orange Lodges” hold their commissions under a charter granted by the “Grand Orange Lodge” on the other side, the officers of which swear to support the Hanoverian succession, which includes the sovereignty of the American colonies. Every “Orange Lodge” is therefore a “Tory” camp, maintained by men who repudiate American citizenship and are always ready to swear allegiances to monarch and claim British protection.<sup>24</sup>

Archbishop Hughes issued a pastoral letter to the New York Diocese on 15 December 1853, concerning the rioting between his flock and the street preachers. Hughes requested New York Catholics to “avoid all such preachings and to leave the parties who approve of them to the entire and perfect enjoyment of their choice.” However, he concluded his pastoral with a statement that could be interpreted as supporting riotous conduct in certain instances.

You, dearly beloved brethren, will be careful to avoid even the appearance of offence in regard to measures that might lead to such a result [a riot]. But if, *in spite of your forbearance, it should come, then it will be lawful for you to prove yourselves worthy of the rights of citizenship with which you are invested, by a noble defense of your own property, as the same is declared by the laws of the country* (italics added).<sup>25</sup>

This was similar in spirit to his statement to Mayor James Harper in 1844, in which he suggested that New York would be burned by the Irish if one Catholic church should be destroyed by nativist rioters. He threatened that New York would be a “second Moscow,” a reference to the burning of the Russian capital by its residents during the Napoleonic wars. Hughes blamed the

Catholics of Philadelphia for allowing some of their churches to be burned in nativist-Irish rioting: "They should have defended their churches, since the authorities could not or would not do it for them. We might forbear from harming the intruder into our house until the last, but his first violence to our church should be promptly and decisively repelled."<sup>26</sup>

However, the 11 June 1854 disorders were the last of the "Angel Gabriel" disorders in Brooklyn, although open-air meetings continued with other preachers. John S. Orr, arrested for rioting later that summer in Boston, departed from New York City to Europe on the steamship *Glasgow* on 20 January 1855. He died in prison in British Guiana in 1857, where he was serving a sentence for rioting and sedition.<sup>27</sup>

Minor skirmishes occurred in the city of Williamsburg on 9 July 1854 between the open-air preachers and the Irish community. At North Second and Fourth Streets, a preacher, Daniel Parsons, was addressing an audience of one thousand, with a large contingent of police and sheriffs' special deputies present.<sup>1</sup> Someone called in a false report of a fire, to which Engine Company 5 responded. The company was described as composed entirely of Irishmen. As the engine passed the scene of the preaching, the driver ran it so close to the sidewalk that the handles of the pumps struck some of those attending the open-air service. After the police arrested seventeen of those running with the engine, firemen resisted arrest and injuries were inflicted on police officers.<sup>28</sup>

Violence subsided in August, but flared up again in September. Several preachers continued to speak in the area around City Hall and City Hall Park, Manhattan. On 9 September 1854, near the Hall of Records, "Paul [gave] a long and tedious discourse," while a man named Mills spoke on City Hall steps on the incomparability of Roman Catholicism and republicanism. He also declared that Roman Catholics could not be true Americans. No disturbance occurred during these talks. However, a report of a riot at the Battery sent the crowd into a panic and a riot broke out between Irish and Protestants.

An associate of the "Angel Gabriel" was preaching to a crowd of longshoremens, boatmen, and others, when another battle began over the wearing of white Wide Awake hats. The Wide Awakes fled up Broadway, where they met friends who helped them battle their Irish attackers. However, as they were outnumbered, they were seriously beaten. A second attack occurred at the Battery when an "American by birth," James Wood, was stabbed by an Irishman, and several pistol shots were fired. The police arrested three at City Hall, Ebenezer Esquel for assault, and Samuel Lemon and William Marsh for inciting the mob to riot.<sup>29</sup>

The city governments of Brooklyn, Williamsburg, and New York tired of the violence and attempted to restrict the right to open-air preaching. A *New York Times* editorial also called for restricting the issuance of preaching licenses.

“Privileges of this sort [the right to preach] ought not to be granted to persons who have distinguished themselves by violence and inflammatory character of their polemical harangues and whose track is always marked by rioting and public.” Mayor William Wall, of Williamsburg, convinced Daniel Parsons not to preach the next Sunday in Williamsburg, but when future persuasion was unsuccessful, arrests were made. William Yeager, a German street preacher arrested for violating the Sabbath ordinance forbidding the sale of religious books, was found guilty and fined \$10. Not able to pay the fine, he was sent to the county jail for ten days.<sup>30</sup>

Open-air preaching declined in popularity during the following years, until the New York Evangelical Alliance instituted a series of such meetings throughout the New York area. Beginning on 2 July 1861, preachers of various Protestant denominations commenced a program of religious worship. By this point the authorities, fearing renewed conflict, required a permit from the mayor for preaching, which he would deny if violence were anticipated. The well-known evangelist, “Moses,” was arrested the next Sunday, 17 September 1861, for preaching without a permit and for selling religious tracts. Mayor Fernando Wood, who courted the Irish vote, banned anti-Catholic religious meetings that might result in violence. In an era less sensitive to first amendment rights, he issued a restrictive permit to preach. “The New York Evangelical Alliances are permitted to hold open-air meetings on the Sabbath, for the purpose of promulgation of religion provided *no religious sect or its opinions be denounced or public disturbances occur in consequence* (italics added).” This order, issued 26 June 1861, was used to prevent religious speech which might result in violence.<sup>31</sup>

Although a large percentage of the German immigrant community was Catholic, Germans were seldom involved in violent conflicts over the open-air preaching. This is not to say that they were not, at times, offended by anti-Catholic preaching, but they, unlike the Irish immigrants, could protest in nonviolent ways. On 24 September 1854, William Yeager, the Protestant German street preacher, spoke to a large crowd at the corner of Ewen Street and Montrose Avenue in Williamsburg. After he finished, John Baker, a German Catholic, took the stand and spoke in opposition to Yeager. The crowd loudly supported Baker’s remarks, greatly concerning police at the scene. Expecting violence, the police told the crowd not to cheer the speaker. When the crowd continued cheering, six persons were arrested and taken to the Third Ward station house. A crowd of more than one thousand persons marched to the station house in support of those arrested, but no attempt was made to rescue the prisoners. Friends of Adam Plattey, who was also arrested, offered \$20,000 bail but were refused. There was no violence at this mainly German immigrant affair.<sup>32</sup>

### The Williamsburg election riots of 1854.

Serious riots frequently accompanied local elections. An election in the city of Williamsburg, which was upgraded from a village on 1 January 1852, suffered typical political disorders with Irish and nativist combatants.<sup>33</sup>

Nativist and Irish antagonism existed in Williamsburg since 1840, with the establishment of the nativist Log Cabin Party. As in New York City, the volunteer fire companies often supplied the muscle for election day disorders. The 8 November 1854 election riot was more violent than usual for the period, and resulted in two deaths, numerous injuries, and an attempt to burn down the local Roman Catholic Church. Disorders occurred at the first district poll of the Fourteenth Ward, at the corner of North Sixth and Second Streets, Williamsburg, caused by attempts of Know-Nothing poll watchers to challenge Irish voters. Charles Silkworth, a poll watcher, testified for the prosecution in the trial of the Irish rioters arrested during the disorders. He testified that the polling place was crowded with Irish voters who interfered with his attempts to challenge ineligible voters. Before the riot began, an Irishman attempted to vote illegally and was arrested by the police officer on duty. However, the crowd at the poll attacked the officer and rescued the prisoner. The officer called on a group of special deputy sheriffs, who did little to hide their Know-Nothing sympathies, to come to his aid. When they responded, the Irish united and attacked the group. In the melee two of the nativists, William H. Harrison and John H. Smith, were beaten to death.<sup>34</sup>

The coroner's jury investigated Harrison's death. A witness to the riot, William H. Clinch, testified that between one and two o'clock he

saw several men, apparently Americans enter the voting place, but the crowd would not let them; they appeared to be Irishmen; someone of this crowd, an Irishman, demanded to see the inside of one man's ticket and would not let him go in to vote in consequence of his refusal.

Ten or twelve deputy sheriffs armed with clubs attempted to enter the polling place, but were attacked by the crowd, now numbering around three to four hundred, armed with spades, hoes, clubs, and barrel staves. Clinch identified a redheaded Irishman wearing a red shirt as beating a man in the gutter.<sup>35</sup>

The unconscious man in the gutter was William H. Harrison, a deputy sheriff, who died of injuries to his head. He was forty-two years old and a spar maker by trade. Engine Company 3, of which he was a member, attended his funeral, as did delegations from nearly all the fire companies in the city, and two hundred fifty special deputy sheriffs. The fire companies and the special deputy sheriffs were undoubtedly linked to nativist organizations. John H. Smith was also a member of Engine Company 3 and a special deputy sheriff. Based on testimony at the coroner's inquest, Oliver Lee was arrested on 19 November in Manhattan. He admitted to hitting Harrison but claimed that he acted in self defense. Lee, twenty-nine years old and a butcher by trade, was born in Ireland

and lived in Williamsburg with his father. He was convicted of manslaughter in the first degree.<sup>36</sup>

The deaths of Harrison and Smith at the hands of the Irish infuriated nativist elements in Brooklyn. The area had been racked by the open-air preaching riots earlier in the year, and anti-Irish feelings were strong. Mayor William Wall, who by this time was experienced in handling Irish-nativist disorders, called up the 13th Regiment under Colonel Abel Smith and two hundred fifty special deputy sheriffs. The mayor also issued a proclamation to prevent further violence.

On Thursday, 9 November, a procession of five hundred nativists marched through Williamsburg in protest. At Grand Avenue and Fifth Street they were urged to disperse by Mayor Wall and George H. Andrews, editor of the Protestant-nativist newspaper, the *Courier and Enquirer*. However, a large number of men reassembled and marched through the Irish neighborhood, where the election riot had taken place. They assaulted several Irishmen and fired twenty shots in the air in front of Alderman John Linsky's house. As few people were on the street, the group began seeking other targets. A cry of "Down with the Church" began, and the crowd marched at 12:00 A.M. to Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church on Second Street, tore down the iron cross over the gate entrance, and broke the front windows and door. They attempted to burn the church by lighting straw up against the door, but the attempt was unsuccessful. Before more damage could be done, Colonel Smith and the militia arrived about 1:00 A.M. and dispersed the rioters.<sup>37</sup>

In the church at that time was a small party of armed Irishmen. Colonel Smith found several coming out of the damaged front door. When called upon to surrender their weapons, one drew a sword and challenged the colonel. The group was arrested and taken to the station house, but released by the mayor with a reprimand.<sup>38</sup>

Rumors circulated that the Irish would retaliate by burning down the Methodist Church on North Fifth Street. To prevent further attacks on churches, Colonel Smith had militia members guard Saint Peter and Paul's, Most Holy Trinity, and Immaculate Conception Catholic Churches, as well as the Methodist Church. Father Johann S. Raffener, pastor of the mostly German parish of Most Holy Trinity parish, also rallied his congregation to guard the church from any nativist attack.<sup>39</sup>

At the trial of the eighteen persons arrested for rioting at the poll, the defense attorneys stressed the immigrant-nativist aspects of the disturbance. In an attempt to discredit their testimony, the defense attorneys asked prosecution witnesses whether they were members of nativist organizations. When the key witness, Charles Silkworth, was asked by Philip Crooke, defense counsel, "Do you belong to a secret society?" he answered, "I decline to answer the question." After objections from the district attorney, questioning continued and the defense got Silkworth to admit that he was a member of the nativist Order of United Americans. Defense Counsel H. B. Lapaugh also examined a witness,

Charles H. Henry, as to his nativist connections, asking a series of questions:

- Do you belong to any society formed to oppose Foreigners?
- Do you belong to a society prejudiced against these defendants, they being Irishmen?
- Do you belong to any organization or formed to oppose all Irishmen?
- Do you belong to the Order of United Americans?
- Do you belong to the American Protestant Association?<sup>40</sup>

In the best Know-Nothing tradition, the witnesses were reluctant to answer or acknowledge membership in nativist organizations. However, the defense lawyers were able to establish that several witnesses were connected to or in sympathy with such organizations, and four persons eventually were found guilty of riot.<sup>41</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Irish immigrant rioting declined dramatically by 1875. The Irish were no longer without friends in government to assist them with their problems. With political success came strong allies who courted the Irish vote. By 1871 Tammany Hall was firmly in the hands of "Honest John" Kelly, and Irish influence in city government would remain powerful. With a strong city government came a better police department, which was more successful in establishing social control in the various neighborhoods.

By 1875, the Irish immigrants had made great social and economic strides. Economic advancement moved many into the middle class and civil service positions became viewed as Irish occupations. The 1890 census showed increased Irish presence in the small professional group, in trade and transportation, and in manufacturing. Civil engineers, chemists, architects, artists, author, designers, and journalists increased in number. A large increase occurred in the number of Irish-born officials and bank employees. Rough Irish behavior of the Famine-era immigrants soon gave way to a more middle-class attitude, and the riotous behavior of the earlier immigrants was abandoned.<sup>42</sup>

The community was no longer looked on with suspicion by American-born New Yorkers. The bravery exhibited by Irish regiments in the Civil War won the Irish community respect as loyal citizens. While Irish immigration was a serial phenomenon with new arrivals every year, New Yorkers gradually found the Irish less strange and threatening. By the last quarter of the century, immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were viewed as a threat to American ways. The Irish, as the earliest immigrant group, were accepted, and discrimination was directed at the new Russian, Polish, and Italian newcomers.

## NOTES

1. John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 165-66.
2. Quoted in the *Irish American*, 3 June 1854.
3. Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: the Northern Know-Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), 11-19.
4. Robert Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City 1825-1863* (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1994), 1-11.
5. Hasia R. Diner, "The Most Irish city in the Union: the Era of the Great Migration, 1844-1877," in *The New York Irish*, edited by Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1999), 87-106.
6. Desmond Bowen, *The Protestant Crusade in Ireland 1800-1870* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1978), ix-x.
7. "The Irish Mission," *New York Times*, 20 Nov. 1854.
8. "Bloody Riot in Chelsea," *ibid.*, 9 May 1854.
9. Allen Nevins, ed., *The Diary of George Templeton Strong: Ordeal of the Union* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), 2: 324.
10. John Kean Sharp, *History of the Diocese of Brooklyn, 1853-1953: the Catholic Church on Long Island* (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 1954), 1:271-72; Rowland Berthoff, *An Unsettled People: Social Order and Disorder in American History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 281.
11. "Gavazzi the Destroyer," *Irish American*, 18 June 1853, 4.
12. "Preaching in the Park—Disgraceful Row, and Stabbing," *New York Times*, 23 May 1854, 3; "Preaching in Brooklyn, and Disgraceful Proceedings," *New York Herald*, 29 May 1854, 1.
13. "A Cowardly Attack," *New York Times*, 4 July 1854, 8.
14. "Wide Awakes" were known for accompanying Protestant preachers to Catholic neighborhoods and protecting them from attack; the rallying cry of the group was Wide Awake; "Another Victim of a White Hat," *New York Times*, 19 June 1854, 8; "Street Preaching Excitement," *ibid.*, 12 June 1854, 4; "Riot and Assault," *ibid.*, 24 July 1854, 3.



15. "Street Preaching Disturbances," *ibid.*, 29 May 1854, 1.
16. R. J. Purcell and J. F. Poole, "Political Nativism in Brooklyn." *Journal of the American Irish Historical Society* 32 (1941): 43; "Preaching in Brooklyn, and Disgraceful Proceedings," *New York Herald*, 29 May 1854, 1.
17. Purcell and Poole, 44.
18. "Street Preaching in Brooklyn—Serious Riot," *New York Times*, 5 June 1854, 8; "The Sunday Rioters Sentenced," *ibid.*, 22 Sept. 1854, 5.
19. "Street Preaching in Brooklyn—Serious Riot," *ibid.*, 5 June 1854, 8; "Still Another Account," *New York Herald*, 5 June 1854, 1.
20. "Street-Preaching Riots," *Irish American*, 10 June 1854, 2.
21. "Street Preaching Excitement," *New York Times*, 12 June 1854, 4.
22. *Ibid.*; "Brooklyn Rioters Sentenced," *ibid.*, 13 June 1854; "Sunday Rioter Sentenced," *ibid.*, 17 June 1854.
23. Sharp, 274; "The Brooklyn Riot," *New York Times*, 8 June 1854, 2; "The Brooklyn Riot—the Saxon and the Celt—Letter from Michael Doheney," *ibid.*
24. "The Twelfth of July 1870," *ibid.*, 23 July 1870, 4.
25. Lawrence Kehoe, *Complete Works of the Most Rev. John Hughes, D.D., Archbishop of New York. Comprising His Sermons, Letters, Lectures, Speeches, etc.* (New York: The Catholic Publication House, 1864), 1: 721.
26. John R. G. Hassard, *Life of the Most Reverend John Hughes, D.D., First Archbishop of New York with Extracts from His Private Correspondence* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1866), 276.
27. "Departure of the Angel Gabriel," *New York Times*, 22 Jan. 1855; Sharp, 275.
28. Parsons, a well known preacher who attacked immigrants and Catholicism, was arrested 11 December 1853 for inciting riot, and thus was a martyr to the nativists who flocked to his sermons. "Street-Preaching in Williamsburg," *New York Times*, 10 July 1854; on 23 July 1854, the Brooklyn Common Council disbanded Engine Company 5 and expelled James Fitzgerald, Bernard Swift, John Law, and John Curlow from the Brooklyn Fire Department ("Engine Company No. 5 Disbanded," *ibid.*, 26 July 1854, 5).
29. "Street Preaching—Serious Affrays in the Park and at the Battery," *ibid.*, 4

Sept. 1854, 8.

30. "Suspension of Street Preaching in Williamsburg," *ibid.*, 11 July 1854, 1; "Street Preacher Jailed," *ibid.*, 28 Sept. 1854, 8; "Open-air Preaching," *ibid.*, 3 July 1861, 5.

31. "Open-Air Meetings," *ibid.*, 3 July 1861, 5; "Open-Air Meetings," *ibid.*, 14 July 1861, 5.

32. "Open-Air Meetings," *ibid.*, 14 July 1861, 5.

33. The city of Williamsburg, which amalgamated with Brooklyn in 1855, experienced explosive growth as immigrants sought work in its new factories.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>
1835	3,300
1840	5,094
1845	11,338
1850	30,786

Source: Purcell and Poole, 13.

34. Henry Reed Stiles, *A History of the City of Brooklyn* (Brooklyn, New York: published by subscription, 1869), 2: 403-5; "Open-Air Preaching," *New York Times*, 3 July 1861, 5; "Trial of Rioters," *ibid.*, 22 Nov. 1854, 2.

35. "Trial of Rioters," *New York Times*, 22 Nov. 1854, 2; "Election Riots," *ibid.*, 18 Nov. 1854, 5; "The Riot in Williamsburg—One Man Dead," *ibid.*, 9 Nov. 1854, 8.

36. "Murderer of Harrison Arrested," *ibid.*, 20 Nov. 1854, 1; "The Williamsburg Election Riot," *ibid.*, 7 Dec. 1854, 3.

37. Alderman John Linsky, an active participant with his Irish constituents in rioting, had also been arrested on 9 July at an open-air preaching riot on North Second and Sixth Streets ("The Ninth of July Riot at Williamsburg," *ibid.*, 10 Jan. 1855, 3); "Great Riot in Williamsburg," *ibid.*, 10 Nov. 1854, 8; John Gilmary Shea, *The History of the Catholic Church of the United States, 1844-1866* (New York: McBride Publishers, 1892), 4: 493.

38. "The Plain History of Events," *ibid.*, 18 Nov. 1854, 2; Denis R. O'Brien, "The Centenary of Rev. Sylvester Malone, Great Catholic and Great Citizen," *Journal of the American Irish Historical Society* 19 (1921): 179-92.

39. "Quiet Restored—the Military Present in Force," *New York Times*, 11 Nov. 1854, 4; *The Most Holy Trinity Parish in the Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y., 1841-*

1916. *Three quarters of a Century of Progress, Spiritual and Temporal* (Brooklyn, 1916), 10.

40. "Trial of Rioters," *New York Times*, 22 Nov. 1854, 2.

41. "The Williamsburg Riot Case," *ibid.*, 22 May 1855, 1.

42. Edward Prince Hutchinson, *Immigrants and Their Children, 1850-1950* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1956), 147-48.

Editor's note.

Unlike most of our articles, which deal with the making of Long Island history, the following three examine the writing of Long Island history. In his analysis of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century historians, which first appeared in the *Long Island Journal of History* 15 (Fall 1978), Richard P. Harmond (our distinguished associate editor) modestly omitted *Long Island as America: A Documentary History to 1896* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1977) the valuable survey edited by him and his St. John's University colleague, James E. Bunce. The *Long Island Historical Journal* is grateful to Bunce and Harmond for the use of their cogent phrase, "Long Island as America," as the rationale for our existence.

The second article, by Professor Emerita Natalie A. Naylor, director of the Long Island Studies Institute at Hofstra University, evaluates several recently reissued histories of Long Island. The final piece, by David Yehling Allen, the historically well-versed map librarian of SUNY at Stony Brook's Melville Library, provides a comprehensive overview of Long Island history sources on the Internet.

## **DOING AND NOT DOING LONG ISLAND HISTORY: THE LONG ISLAND HISTORIANS FROM WOOD TO WEEKS**

*By Richard P. Harmond*

Despite the occasional contributions of professional historians, the content and parameters of Long Island's history have been defined for us by a group of nonacademic, locally oriented writers.<sup>1</sup> Some of the localists have been more capable and conscientious than others. But whatever their abilities and scruples, the work of these writers has suffered from several deficiencies, the most notable being the failure to organize data into some sort of an interpretative pattern.<sup>2</sup> The localists, it should be said at the outset, have given us many facts, and a considerable amount of pleasure. On the other hand, they have not shed much light on the meaning of Long Island's historical experience.

From our vantage point, any survey of the localists must begin with Benjamin F. Thompson. His *History of Long Island From Its Discovery and Settlement to the Present Time*, the first edition of which appeared in New York in 1839, clearly establishes Thompson's position as the father of traditional Long Island history.<sup>3</sup> In his own time there were two other possible claimants: Silas

Wood and Nathaniel. S. Prime. As we can now appreciate, however, neither was to have anything like Thompson's impact on the subsequent study and writing of Long Island history.

In each case it is not difficult to see why this was so. Wood's, *A Sketch of the First Settlements of the Several Towns on Long Island, With Their Political Condition, To the End of the American Revolution*, was a pioneering effort in the field of Long Island history; the first edition predated Thompson's *History* by some fifteen years.<sup>4</sup> But his *Sketch* was too erratically organized and, confined as it was to certain aspects of the colonial and Revolutionary eras, too limited in scope to have served as a model for later localists.

Prime's *A History of Long Island, From Its First Settlement by Europeans to the Year 1845, With Special Reference to Its Ecclesiastical Concerns* (New York, 1845), was, in its own way, also quite restricted in scope. Prime, who not incidentally was a Presbyterian minister, possessed a vigorous writing style. His *History* was also peppered with shrewd judgments, and was not without humor. (His description of the coming of the Long Island Railroad is a minor classic.) In spite of its attractions, though, the book was basically an account of each Long Island town's churches and preachers. Nor did the minister-author neglect the subject of community morals. Of East Hampton, for example, he wrote that the "steady habits and rigid morals of primitive Puritanism are retained here in greater purity than in any other part of the world." But he had a rather different opinion of Williamsburgh's moral situation. "Placed in the immediate vicinity, and under the very shadow of a great metropolis [New York City] whose overflowing wickedness is constantly pouring forth a torrent of moral desolation at every avenue," declared Prime, Williamsburgh "cannot but feel its demoralizing influences."<sup>5</sup>

Such an "ecclesiastical, or moral and religious history," as Prime described his narrative, may have appealed to the minister's contemporaries. Benjamin F. Thompson, for instance, was quite impressed with Prime's handiwork, calling it a "splendid and most elaborate" history, and a "bang-up publication that has scattered its rays abroad." But future localists were to be more interested in what Prime referred to as "secular history."<sup>6</sup> And here many took as their model Thompson's *History of Long Island*.

What accounted for Thompson's influence on his successors? According to his biographer, Charles J. Werner,

Thompson was a methodical man and arranged his material in such a way that his book became a model for local histories. The reader will find that the Island as a whole is first dealt with - the counties are then touched upon and finally a detailed treatment of the several towns is offered.<sup>7</sup>

If Thompson's volumes were skillfully organized, they were also solidly researched. Furthermore, his *History* was well received at the time.

Thompson got flattering letters from Henry Clay, William H. Seward, and the historian, George Bancroft. Washington Irving praised his *History* as "quite a mine of local history." And an aspiring localist, Henry Onderdonk Jr., publicly expressed his "good opinion" of the book.<sup>8</sup>

While such praise enhanced his reputation, we should recall, too, Thompson's strategic advantage. His *History* constituted the first extensive account of the Island's past. No future writer could very well come to the subject of Long Island history without first consulting his volumes. For several reasons, then, Thompson's *History* served as a model, as well of course as a source of information for generations of localists.

After Thompson's volumes no general, comprehensive work on Long Island history appeared for decades. Rather, his nineteenth-century successors produced a mixed bag. First of all, there was published a group of county studies, organized much like Thompson's *History*, though suitably updated and amplified. Among these were: Richard Mather Bayles, *Historical And Descriptive Sketches of Suffolk County...With A Historical Outline of Long Island, from Its First Settlement by Europeans* (Port Jefferson, 1874; reprint, Port Washington: Ira J. Friedman, 1962); *History of Queens County, New York, With Illustrations, Portraits and Sketches of Prominent Families and Individuals*, and the companion *History of Suffolk County* (New York: W. W. Munsell, 1882); and, Henry R. Stiles, *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History, and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings... New York, From 1683 to 1884*, 2 vols. (New York: W. W. Munsell, 1884). Secondly, Henry Onderdonk Jr. brought out several volumes that were less histories than medieval-like chronicles.<sup>9</sup> lastly, Gabriel Furman wrote an episodic, though engaging book of social history entitled, *Antiquities of Long Island* (New York, 1875).

In this (the twentieth) century, localists have produced two kinds of Long Island histories: the personalized essay, and the multi-volume, comprehensive study. The former category included: Rufus R. Wilson, *Historic Long Island* (New York, 1902); Jacqueline Overton and Bernice Marshall, *Long Island's Story*, and its sequel, *The Rest of the Story, 1929-1961* (Port Washington, 1961); and George L. Weeks, *Isle of Shells* (Islip, 1965). These volumes, and others of the genre, were lively, competently written, and enjoyable. They also tended to be chatty, thinly documented, and rambling. The chapters in the typical personalized essay rolled by, only tenuously connected with each other. The books rambled in this fashion because their authors lacked a consistently applied principle of selection —other, that is, than their own personal predilections. And this is only another way of saying that the authors did not relate Long Island developments to a meaningful theme, or an important historical issue.

The same was true of the Thompson-type, comprehensive studies, a category enlarged in this century by: Peter Ross, *A History of Long Island From*

*Its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time* (3 vols., New York and Chicago, 1903); Henry 1. Hazelton, *The Boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens, Counties of Nassau and Suffolk, Long Island, New York, 1609-1924*, 7 vols. (New York and Chicago, 1925); and Paul Bailey, ed., *Long Island: A History of Two Great Counties, Nassau and Suffolk*, 3 vols. (New York, 1949).

These works, like their nineteenth century predecessors, were—and continue to be—useful to anyone doing research in Long Island history. Thus, Stiles's study, an awesome collection of data, remains to the present time the most inclusive history of Kings County. Among its other strengths, Ross's history had a good section on slavery, while Bailey's work contained interesting material on the Long Island economy in the twentieth century. Moreover, these three histories, along with Thompson, Hazelton, and various county studies, had a great deal of hard-to-come-by biographical information.

Whatever their merits, though, these stodgily written comprehensive histories were basically historical encyclopedias. They were there to check out some fact, or series of facts, and perhaps to examine now and then. But it was a rarer reader who would have chosen to curl up cozily on a winter's eve to read one of them through from cover to cover.

The comprehensive histories were not merely dull. None of them sustained a theme, or for the most part came to any significant conclusions about the Island's past. Facts are not history, though the authors of these tomes seemed to believe otherwise. In short, the comprehensive histories were valuable compilations of data, but that was about all.

Well, that was not quite all. One cannot go through the histories of Thompson and his successors without being struck by two commonly expressed sentiments: patriotism and boosterism.

According to the localists the people of Long Island were—except during the American Revolution—staunch patriots who fervently supported their country in its wars. For instance, Ross averred that:

The Island has fully met every claim made upon her; in the Revolution she suffered much and deeply, and the name of Woodhull and many another gallant hero ranks high on the honored roll of those who sacrificed home and property and life that political and religious freedom might live—in the war of 1812 she was ready to meet any invading force, and her ships helped to win the victory and to wrest from Britain, for a time, at least, that country's old claim to invincibility on the sea—in the Civil War she liberally contributed men and treasure to preserve intact what the founders of the Republic had fought for, and in the war with Spain she freely responded to the call of the General Government.<sup>10</sup>

In one way or another, most of the localists made the same point.<sup>11</sup>

Apparently there were no cowards or dissenters on Long island; only a brave and committed citizenry. This seems a doubtful proposition, however. To take but one instance. If one were to check the published town meeting records for the Civil War years, he would discover that the towns on Long Island were forced to offer bounties to encourage men to volunteer for military service. Like communities throughout the North, Long Island towns at times had difficulty meeting the quotas assigned to them by the War Department. The diligent researcher would also discover that men on the Island, as elsewhere, hired substitutes.<sup>12</sup> In other words, Long Islanders were behaving little differently from people elsewhere in the North. Many rushed bravely off to war, but some held back.<sup>13</sup>

The other sentiment was boosterism. The localists often stressed the attractiveness of the Island. As Thompson once put the case:

To those whose means enable them to travel either for health or amusement, Long Island presents many solid attractions... inland plains, woods and forests, abounding in game for the hunter—the numerous streams, ponds, and bays, teeming with scale and shellfish of every kind—its fine air, with an illimitable water prospect in every direction, all hold out strong inducements to tempt and gratify the stranger....Our villages are among the pleasantest, the scenery luxurious and varied, and the great south bay insures employment and a competent support to many thousands. Besides the ocean views on the south, the shores of the Sound and its promontories and beautiful indentations afford sites for building of surpassing beauty, with an atmosphere of great salubrity.<sup>14</sup>

Long Island was more than a beautiful place, though. The localists also boasted of its agriculture, businesses and industries, praised its leading local families, and boosted its government and people.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, according to Ross:

Long Island since the echoes of the Revolutionary War have died away has always been found ranged on the side of liberty and toleration, her representatives in Congress and in the assembly have been men who by their talents commanded respect and by their efforts added largely to the progress the nation has made in all the arts that render men happy and ensure the prosperity of the country... [Long Island] presents, in fact, in her own career an epitome of all that makes the country really great, thrift, honesty and religion leavening the whole, while progressivism, energy and a watchfulness for opportunities add year by year to the general wealth.<sup>16</sup>



Was this so? Perhaps, but there is no sure way of proving or disproving such claims. And this was the problem with "boosting" statements in a work of history. They may have made the reader feel good, but they were not really susceptible of historical proof. Further, the booster spirit inhibited, if it did not actually preclude, dealing with the unpleasant side of the story. As a result, the localists generally avoided such topics as crime, labor upheavals, tenement housing, poverty, public health, ethnic strife, pollution, and environmental spoilage.<sup>17</sup>

When we turn from the volumes of Thompson and the other localists, and look for an interpretative, nonboosting history of Long Island, we find that there has been only one: *The Evolution of Long Island* (Port Washington, 1968), by Ralph Henry Gabriel, a professional historian.<sup>18</sup> Gabriel's essay, which was documented and which connected Long Island's story to American developments—both rare occurrences in local history—also has a persuasive thesis. Gabriel argued that the overriding influences in the evolution of Long Island were New York City and the sea. This thesis—the pull of Gotham and the lure of the Atlantic—wound its way throughout the book. As Gabriel summarized his theme,

So they have played the game from the beginning, the land and the sea. The people of the Island have believed that they were working out their own destinies. They have been mistaken. They could not resist the call of the ocean to work and later to play. Nor could they prevent the creation, by the broad hinterland, of the great city at their very doors...As their development has gone on, the sea has, in the main, been the factor stimulating the variations which are an inevitable part of any evolution. One after another new vocations have appeared, whaling, fishing, oystering, caring for the summer visitors, and the rest, almost all of them the result of the pull of the ocean. On the other hand, the hinterland, acting through the city of New York, has been the selective factor, choosing from among variations those which should continue and those which should disappear. It has been the hinterland, moreover, that has stimulated the conquest of the old, primitive environment and the creation of the new, man-made environment of the railroad, the ... highway, and the city. It is easy to look back at the simple days of old and see those two great forces playing with the men and women who struggled almost bare-handed to wrest a living from their primeval surroundings. It is not so easy to realize, in the complexity and artificiality of modern days, when man is raised on a scaffolding of civilization far above the primitive struggle for existence, that the same natural forces are still

playing Me same game. Yet, can anyone doubt that the sea, which brought the first sturdy adventurers to Long Island shores, has lost any of its power in these latter days of the ... hundreds of summer cottages that line the beach? Can anyone look at the skyline of New York City and believe that the great hinterland has lost its potency?<sup>19</sup>

*The Evolution of Long Island* is now over fifty years old and no longer wholly satisfactory. Gabriel slighted such topics as religion and social reform, and more importantly he failed to take account of the suburbanization process. Yet, even today his book helps us to understand the Long Island experience. The pull of New York City can be seen, for instance, in the 30 percent of Nassau County's work force, plus the 15 percent of Suffolk's, which commute daily to the Empire City.<sup>20</sup> The lure of the sea is also still evident; increasingly, though, it is the lure under the sea—oil—that beckons.

Why this perceptive and well written book has not been more influential is difficult to say. Only Charles McDermott, in his fine essay *Suffolk County, New York* (New York, 1965) has critically applied Gabriel's thesis to one of the Island's counties.

Gabriel's is not the only way to do thematic local history, of course. Thus one might take a particular proposition, and test it out in a local context. This is what Merle Curti did in *The Making of An American Community* (Stanford, California, 1959). Using manuscript census returns, Curti tested Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis (that the frontier promoted economic and political equality) in Trempealeau County, Wisconsin. And there are other kinds of approaches to a history which is at once local in *focus and interpretative in approach*.

To conclude, there is unquestionably a place for the traditional sort of Long Island history—that of Thompson and Stiles, Wilson and Weeks. Some of its practitioners, like local historians elsewhere in the country, have uncovered, preserved, and recorded a great deal of information.<sup>21</sup> Other localists have given much enjoyment to their readers. Doubtless, too, traditional local history will continue to be written and read by Long Islanders. But for all the facts and the fun, this kind of history has its faults, as we have seen. All too frequently it has been served up with a heavy dose of local chauvinism. More seriously, it has not been presented within an interpretative framework. And here is surely the reason why traditional local history has done little to resolve the biggest riddle of all: why Long Island developed the way it did. One hopes, therefore, that at least a few of the future historians of Long Island and its counties will set about to do another kind of local history—that of Gabriel and Curti.

## NOTES

1. This essay focuses on the Island-wide and county histories published from the early nineteenth century to the mid-1960s. These books have basically shaped our view of the Island's past. It remains to be seen whether more recent histories and those forthcoming, particularly studies inspired by the Bicentennial, will alter our conception of Long Island history.

2. Dixon Ryan Fox has some brief but cogent comments on this problem in Ralph Foster Weld, *Brooklyn Village* (New York, 1938), viii-ix. His comments serve to remind us that this is not a problem peculiar to Long Island historiography.

3. A second, revised, enlarged two volume-edition appeared in 1843. A manuscript Thompson for a third edition, which remained unpublished after his death in 1849, was finally published in 1918, with critical notes by Charles J. Werner. References in this article are to the last edition, cited as Benjamin F. Thompson and Charles J. Werner, *History of Long Island From Its Discovery and Settlement to the Present Time*, revised and greatly enlarged with additions and a biography of the author by Charles Werner, 3d rev. ed., 3 vols. (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1918; reprint, Port Washington: Ira. J. Freidman, 1962).

4. The first edition of Wood appeared in 1824, with revised editions in 1826 and 1828. The 1828 edition, reissued in Brooklyn in 1865, contained a biographical memoir by Alden J. Spooner: Silas Wood, *A Sketch of the First Settlement of the Several Towns of Long Island, with Their Political Condition, to the End of the American Revolution* (1824, 1826, 1828; reprint, in *Historical Chronicles of New Amsterdam, Colonial New York and Early Long Island*, Cornell Jaray, ed. (1865; reprint, Port Washington: Ira J. Friedman, 1968). A recent appreciation of Wood and Thompson, by Robert Coles, will be found in the *Long Island Forum*, 33 (1970), 68-71.

5. Nathaniel S. Prime, *A History of Long Island from Its First Settlement by Europeans to the Year 1845, with Special Reference to Its Ecclesiastical Concerns* (New York: Robert Carter, 1845), 172, 356; (editorial note: see also Richard P. Harmond, "Recollections of the Reverend Nathaniel S. Prime," *LIHJ* 13 [Fall 2000]: 23-43).

6. Benjamin F. Thompson to Henry Onderdonk Jr., 17 February 1846. (*Historical Letters Addressed to Henry Onderdonk Jr.*, 2d Series, Long Island Historical Society); Prime, 1: xlv..

7. Thompson and Werner, 1: xiv. Werner neglected to mention that Thompson (as would his successors) also included biographies of prominent Long

Islanders, and essays on certain specialized topics, such as ship disasters, and the Quakers.

8. *Ibid.*,1: xliv, xlv; Thompson to Onderdonk, 2 October 1843. *Historical Letters*).

9. Henry Onderdonk Jr. *Documents Intended to Demonstrate the Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County* (New York, 1846); *Queens County in Olden Times* (Jamaica, 1866).

10. Ross,1:1; see also 215, 255, 442, 463-480.

11. See, for example: Thompson and Werner, 1: 302, 399, 402; Bayles, 114, 399, 402; Stiles,1: 61,487-500; Hazelton, 1: 278-290, 423-512; Bailey, 1: 223, 337, 398, 510.

12. *Oyster Bay Town Records*, 8 vols. (New York, 1940),8: 202-11; *Records of the Town of Southampton. With Other Ancient Documents of Historic Value* , 6 vols. (Sag Harbor, 1874-1915), 4: 284; *Records of the Town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County, New York, 1856-1885* (New York, 1893),223-27, 232-33; *Records of the Town of East Hampton* 9 vols.(Sag Harbor, 1887-1943), 5: 93-95, 97, 117-121.

13. Some localists recognized that the towns paid out bounties, and that men hired substitutes, but failed to draw the above conclusion. For one who did, though, see Bailey, 1:298-99.

14. Thompson and Werner, 3: 276-77.

15. See *History of Queens County*, 1:73-247, 417; Stiles, 1: 338, 463, 526, 668; Hazelton, 1:1029; Bailey, 1: 347, 349, and 2: 164, 207, 510-11, 11, 31, 370, 381, 431.

16. Ross, 1:2

17. For some pointed and well-informed remarks on man's impact on the Long Island environment consult Robert Cushman Murphy, *Fish-Shape Paumanok* (Philadelphia, 1964).

18. *The Evolution of Long Island*, first published in 1921 by Yale University Press, was based on Gabriel's doctoral dissertation.

19. Gabriel, 184-85.

20. *New York Times*, 6 Oct. 1974, BQLI,1, 4.

21. David D. Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past: An Interpretation of the Development of Historical Studies in America. 1607-1884* (Chicago and London, 1960), is enlightening on this and other aspects of nineteenth-century American local history and historians.

# REVIVING LONG ISLAND HISTORY: A COMPARISON OF TWO UPDATED EDITIONS:

Robert B. MacKay and Richard F. Welch, eds. *Long Island: An Illustrated History*. Sun Valley, Calif.: American Historical Press, 2000. Illustrations, bibliography, index. Pp. 296. \$32.95.

Bernie Bookbinder. *Long Island: People and Places, Past and Present*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998. Illustrations, bibliography, index. Pp. 278. \$39.95.

*By Natalie A. Naylor*

Long Island history has undergone a revival in recent years, popular interest doubtless having been spurred by *Newsday's* feature articles and books on our past in the last few years including *Long Island: Our Story* (1998) and *Hometown, Long Island* (1999). Now we also have two narrative histories of Long Island back in print.

The original 1985 edition of *Long Island: An Illustrated History* was entitled *Between Ocean and Empire: An Illustrated History of Long Island*. Edited by Robert B. MacKay, Geoffrey L. Rossano, and Carol A. Traynor, it was published by Windsor Publications in California. Gaynell Stone wrote the first chapter, "Long Island Before the Europeans"; Roger W. Lotchin the two chapters on Brooklyn in the nineteenth century; and MacKay, the director of the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities (SPLIA), wrote the chapter "Of Grand Hotels, Great Estates, Polo, and Princes." Rossano wrote five chapters, covering from the colonial period through the antebellum years and the twentieth century. Other historians contributed sidebars focusing on important Long Islanders. The American Historical Press purchased the rights to the book and has issued a new edition. This article focuses on the new material, comparing the new edition with the original 1985 book, with some comparisons to the second edition of Bernie Bookbinder's *Long Island*.

Richard F. Welch, the new editor, wrote a new final chapter, "Into the Millennium" (220-37), and took most of the black and white photographs for it. It is not easy for historians to chronicle the recent past, but Welch has provided a reasonable summary of some key developments. He begins his chapter with population growth and changes during the last few decades. He notes the increase in Hispanics and Asians, but limits his figures to percentage growth—54 percent for Asians and 90-100 percent for Hispanics. However, he does not indicate that these groups constitute less than 3 percent and about 10 percent, respectively, of the total population of Nassau and Suffolk. The treatment of Hispanics is rather negative, mentioning illegal immigrants and the problems caused by day laborers congregating for work in Glen Cove and Farmingville.

Welch appropriately deals with changes in the economy caused by the demise of Fairchild-Republic, the decline of Grumman, and the growth of Computer Associates and other high tech industries. He discusses some of the political changes in county government, particularly Nassau's adoption of a county legislature and fiscal crisis in the late 1990s, but does not mention the first African Americans elected to political office. Theaters, museums, sports, parks, and shopping malls are noted, and several pages are devoted to the East End, both in terms of the trendy Hamptons and of agriculture and commercial fishing. Environmental concerns and the forces of development remain in tension. While indicating that "much of Long Island's natural uniqueness and historic character has been lost," in recent decades, Welch cautions that we must "weigh the gains and losses of preservation and development." He aptly concludes, "The future is open, but it begins now" (237).

Not only did the publishers change the title and cover illustration in this new edition, but they also dropped the names of two of the original editors, Traynor and Rossano. However, biographical information on them, as well as MacKay and Welch, is on the back flap of the new dust jacket; Welch receives twice the space as any of the others. SPLIA had primary responsibility for securing authors, contributors, text and photographs for the first edition, but its involvement in this new edition apparently was limited to providing some new illustrations.

Given the economics of reprinting books, it is understandable that very few changes have been made in the original text. Minor changes were made in the introduction, and Welch added sources for his chapter at the end of the bibliography, which is otherwise unchanged from the original edition. Most readers will not be aware of the change of type font on pages where changes were made (as on 218-19, where the final concluding paragraphs and lines from Walt Whitman were dropped). A few of the photographs have been changed. However, readers should have been alerted to the fact that most of the book was written in the early 1980s. For those not familiar with the original publication, the only reference to the earlier incarnation of the book is that the acknowledgments refers to an "earlier version of this book" (9).

The quality of reproduction of photographs is comparable to the first edition. For economy of reproduction, the full color illustrations are grouped in sections throughout the book in both editions. However, the colors in some of the paintings, most notably, William Sidney Mount's *Farmers Nooning* (78), are not true to the original. Indeed, there is even significant difference in the colors in Edward Lange's 1880 watercolor of the Northport Thimble Factory on the attractive dust jacket and on the title page of the new edition.

The so-called "mug book" county histories at the turn of the last century were financed in part by individuals who paid to have their biographies and pictures included. Today some publications are underwritten by corporations. Cooperation with the Long Island Association in 1985 enabled Windsor to include seventy-three pages of corporate sponsors in their "Partners

in Progress” section. In the 2000 edition, “Chronicles in Leadership” covers forty-two pages, with only a few companies represented in both editions. Grumman, Republic, and Sperry, of course, are now part of history rather than the important companies they were in the 1980s. Although purchasers may object to paying for advertising pages, the better of the corporate entries do provide some useful information on the history of the companies. Historians may find information in these corporate profiles not easily found elsewhere.

Errors slip through in any publication, but it is unfortunate that the most glaring errors in the first edition were not corrected. The title of chapter 2, “New World, New Amsterdam, New York” (30) should more accurately refer to “New Netherland,” since the reference is to the colony rather than the city. Photographs of a row of houses in Garden City in the sidebar on A. T. Stewart are misidentified as “Disciple” houses (175). There are errors in the new material, as well. The Timeline (no author is credited) refers to the *Monitor*’s being launched at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, but it was built at Greenpoint (284). Frances Hodgson Burnett (not Francis Hodgson) is the author of *Secret Garden* (285), and it is the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (not Laboratories). Unfortunately, proofreading was lax, and there are a considerable number of typos in the new material, particularly in the pages of the Timeline.

An interesting contrast is provided by the 1998 edition of *Long Island: People and Places, Past and Present*, originally published in 1983 under the auspices of Newsday. The author, the late Bernie Bookbinder, was a reporter, feature writer, and editor at Newsday for nearly forty years. The title was retained, but the illustration on the dust jacket was changed, and the front of the dust jacket clearly states, “Updated edition.” The copyright page lists both the 1983 and 1998 dates, and there are explicit references to the updated edition also in the preface, introduction, and acknowledgments. Changes in the text are in the final chapter, which Bookbinder revised. He incorporated references to important developments in the intervening fifteen years such as: the infamous Islip garbage barge, Senator Al D’Amato’s career, the election of Carolyn McCarthy, emergence of the gay community, Newsday’s five Pulitzer Prizes, and allusions to Amy Fisher, Sol Wachtler, Katie Beers, and Adelphi’s (former) president, Peter Diamandopoulos. Some new photographs were added. Newsday dropped the eleven-page section in the original edition devoted to museums and historical societies, while increasing the number of pages from the original 264 to 278.

*Long Island: An Illustrated History* has two chapters devoted to Brooklyn, whereas attention to Brooklyn is sparse in Bookbinder’s book (and also in Newsday’s *Long Island: Our Story*). Queens gets relatively little attention in any of these books. The American Historical Press book includes many more archival illustrations, but fewer color pictures than the Newsday book. The authors of the chapters in *Long Island: An Illustrated History* hold Ph.D.s, and most of the authors of sidebars are historians and museum professionals. They



are experts in their fields, and the text goes into greater depth on many of the topics. As a journalist, Bookbinder produced a very readable book which is remarkably free of errors (Gaynell Stone was his researcher). None of these books includes the footnotes scholars would like, although there are bibliographies and some internal references to sources in the text. The index in each book was revised to incorporate references to the new material, though the new Timeline in the American Historical Press's book is not indexed.

We are fortunate to have both of these titles back in print and available in bookstores. Libraries and specialists in Long Island history will want copies of the second editions of each. The casual reader who owns the earlier edition of these books should realize that there are only twenty-four pages of new text, plus the forty-two new pages of corporate profiles in the American Historical Press book, and thirty-eight revised pages in Bookbinder's book. It is unfortunate that the publishers of *Long Island: An Illustrated History* seem to be disguising the fact that the book is a re-issue of a 1985 publication with some added material.

# LONG ISLAND HISTORY on THE WORLDWIDE WEB

By David Yehling Allen

This article is part review essay, part prophecy, and part advocacy. By now most Long Island historians have used the Worldwide Web for research or teaching. Still, many are uncertain about exactly what is available on “the Web,” and few have pondered how the Web may affect their work in the future.

Even in the case of a narrowly focused area, such as Long Island history, a surprising amount of primary and secondary material is already available on the Web. Much of it is “hidden” in the sense that it cannot be found by using a search engine to locate material under an obvious subject like “Long Island history”: rather, it has to be ferreted out by looking for sites on specific subjects, such as Walt Whitman or the Vanderbilt Motor Parkway, or else by sifting through huge collections, such as the American Memory Project at the Library of Congress.

The article discusses a number of Web sites with information about Long Island history. They will be described and evaluated, and hints will be provided on how to use them. To facilitate its use as a resource guide for the Internet, a version of this article with active links to the sites described has been made available on the Web (<http://www.sunysb.edu/libmap/liweb.htm>).

The article concludes with a discussion of the possible future of Long Island history on the Internet. A program is set forth for digitizing large quantities of historical materials relating to Long Island, and prospects for realizing such a program are considered.

## Sites Devoted Primarily to Long Island History

There are few sites devoted solely to Long Island history. The best known and most important is Newsday’s *Long Island: Our Story*, and we will begin by reviewing that site (<http://www.lihistory.com>). Not only is the Newsday site the most comprehensive one dealing solely with Long Island history, but it also illustrates many of the possibilities and problems of historical publication on the Web. The Newsday site is an outgrowth of its “Long Island History Project,” which led to a series of articles in the newspaper, and a handsomely illustrated book, also bearing the title *Long Island: Our Story*. Most of the content of the Web site also appeared in the articles and in the book.<sup>1</sup>

The Newsday project has been warmly received by Long Island historians, as well it should have been, for it has made available in readily digestible form a wealth of information about Long Island’s past. In many respects Newsday’s beautifully illustrated book and its counterpart on the Web provide the best existing overview of Long Island history. The journalists who wrote the individual stories generally did a good job of familiarizing themselves

with the contemporary historical literature on their subjects, and of summarizing it for a wide audience. Reflecting the interests of contemporary historians, Newsday's book includes a good deal of information on such subjects as women, Native Americans, blacks, and everyday life on Long Island. These subjects have been given short shrift in most earlier works that attempt to give an overview of Long Island history.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of its considerable merits, Newsday's production, in all of its formats, has serious limitations as a work of history. Many of these are probably inescapable in a work written by a team of journalists. The quality of the articles is uneven. The articles written by the lead reporters on the project, Steve Wick and George DeWan, reflect wide knowledge of Long Island history. They are based on interviews, extensive reading of the modern historical literature, and some reading of primary sources and older works. At the lower end of the scale, a few of the articles are downright inaccurate, and reflect little research of any kind. Inevitably, even at its best, the Newsday series does not measure up to the standards of professional historians. It does not have the authority and depth one expects in works by historians who have spent years immersed in their subjects. In common with many of the older comprehensive works on Long Island history, there is also a certain lack of coherence to *Long Island: Our Story*. The work as a whole does not constitute a narrative grounded on careful analysis of broad developmental themes. The book is a collection of articles and vignettes, which few would want to read from cover to cover. Finally, the articles lack footnotes and bibliographies. Thus, there is often no way to check the veracity of the sources of information used in the stories, and they cannot be used as launching pads for further research.<sup>3</sup>

One of the purposes of the Newsday series is to provide material for use in primary and secondary education. But, especially on the secondary level, one has to wonder how useful such information really is. Although Newsday accompanies its stories with contemporary illustrations and selected original source materials, there are not enough of them to use for original research. A student paper written using only what Newsday provides would read very much as if it were based on an article in an encyclopedia. One would hope that even at the high school level students would be encouraged to go beyond this approach, and arrive at their own conclusions based on reading a variety of conflicting sources.

It would be unfair to take Newsday to task for not producing an academic work of history, which was not its purpose and would probably not appeal to most of its readership. However, this does not mean that we should ignore its limitations—many of which could have been avoided or corrected. The translation of *Long Island: Our Story* into Web format provided an opportunity to remedy many of the weaknesses of the book, and the Newsday staff has taken some advantage of this opportunity.

It is easy to revise documents on the Web, to add materials, and to provide links to related resources. The Newsday staff has done this to some

extent, and added a large amount of supplementary material to the original book. This new material includes a section called "The Vault," which includes selected source documents, as well as photographs, sound bites, and video clips. Another section, "Our Towns," includes brief town histories, which are often embellished with old photographs. The town histories usually include a final paragraph entitled "Where to Find More," which mentions local libraries, historical societies, and sometimes books. The lack of such a feature is a serious weakness in the book version of *Long Island: Our Story*.

Newsday has so far been shy about adding to or revising the articles that originally appeared in the book. The core of the Web site is basically an exact replication of materials that were previously published. It is understandable that the editors would want to retain the integrity of the original articles, but it is a pity that they do not correct even obvious errors. It would also be a fairly simple matter to add bibliographies to the individual sections on the Web. They might be placed in a separate section in "The Vault," and linked to the original stories. And, of course, hyperlinks could be added to related materials on the Internet. These additions would help serious students and researchers to move beyond the circumscribed presentation of Newsday's series, and to explore the much wider world of Long Island history. Being unobtrusive, there is no reason to think these additions would detract from the readability or popularity of the original. By making the site more useful to educators and researchers, they would probably make it more popular.

In spite of its limitations, *Long Island: Our Story* excels in breadth and depth all of the sites devoted solely to Long Island history. The other sites relating directly to Long Island history are narrower in focus and content than the Newsday site, although most have similar limitations. With some exceptions, they are designed to present basic information about an institution or a subject, rather than to provide in-depth resources for further research. This is fine in so far as it goes, but it is possible to go much further.

A number of sites provide useful leads for researchers looking for source materials. A useful listing of "Archives and Manuscript Repositories in Nassau and Suffolk Counties" has been put up by the Suffolk County Clerk's office (<http://www.co.suffolk.ny.us/clerk/LIArchmanDirectory.html>). Many Long Island museums and historical societies have Web sites. A comprehensive list of them can be found on "Long Island's Page of Pages" ([http://www.fordyce.org/long\\_island/](http://www.fordyce.org/long_island/)).

Most of the sites of historical societies and other institutions just contain basic information about the sponsoring institution, but others also provide substantial information about local history. One of the information-rich sites belongs to the Oyster Bay Historical Society (<http://members.aol.com/Obhistory>). This growing site includes a brief history of Oyster Bay, along with a selection of historical documents, a gallery of historical photographs, and a collection of links to related resources. This is also a good place to begin looking for information on Oyster Bay's most famous

resident, Theodore Roosevelt, though you can turn directly to such sources as the National Park Service's Sagamore Hill Website (<http://www.nps.gov/sahi/>), or the huge site maintained by the Theodore Roosevelt Association (<http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org>). Another site worth special mention is that of the Cow Neck Peninsula Historical Society (<http://www.cowneck.org>). In addition to information about the Port Washington area, this site includes an outstanding collection of links to a wide range of sites dealing with all aspects of Long Island history.

Westernmost Long Island is also relatively well served by Web sites. Brooklyn On Line has a page devoted to Brooklyn's history with a variety of interesting things on it (<http://www.brooklynonline.com/history/>). My favorite part of this site is devoted to the Battle of Brooklyn (also known as the Battle of Long Island). Those interested in Brooklyn history will also want to look at Michael Cassidy's genealogy-oriented site (<http://www.panix.com/~cassidy>). A highlight of this site is the complete text of Henry Stile's *History of the City of Brooklyn* (1867-1870).<sup>4</sup>

Another useful site is hosted by the Friends for Long Island's Heritage (<http://www.ffliih.org>). This site contains information about that organization's projects and about the museums and preserves it supports in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. The Friends site includes a link to the Cradle of Aviation Museum (<http://www.cradleofaviation.org>). The Cradle of Aviation Museum boasts one of the most content rich sites on Long Island, and provides fairly detailed articles about various aspects of the history of aviation on Long Island, including photographs, sound recordings, and other resources. Those interested in aviation history or the general area around Mitchel Field will also want to take a look at the Hempstead Plains site (<http://www.HempsteadPlains.com>).

Other forms of transportation are also relatively well served on the Internet. The Oyster Bay Historical Society includes among its resources a Long Island Railroad History Project, which has links to several related sites, including the Railroad Museum of Long Island (<http://www.bitnik.com/RMLI/>). For those interested in automotive transportation, the New York Roads site (<http://www.nycroads.com>) is a good starting point. It has a wealth of historical information about Long Island roads, including maps and important planning proposals, such as the Long Island Sound Bridge Study. It also has links to a number of related sites, including one for S. Berliner III's page on the Long Island (Vanderbilt) Motor Parkway (<http://www.motorparkway.com>). And, finally, those who prefer to navigate by water can find a wealth of information at the Long Island Lighthouses page (<http://www.longislandlighthouses.com>).

An interesting and well-done community-based site is "Longwood's Journey" (<http://www.longwood.k12.ny.us/history/>), which provides a wealth of information about the little-known Longwood area (Coram, Middle Island, Yaphank, and Ridge). The Longwood site, which was put together in part by social studies students at Longwood Middle School, provides a good historical

summary of the development of the area, along with historical census information, maps, selections from newspapers and diaries, and even obituaries. I was particularly impressed by the use of details from property maps to show the development of the Longwood community through time. This site might serve as a model for other school and community based organizations.

Sites created by genealogists are often rich sources of information about local history. Perhaps here more than anywhere else is revealed the extent to which the Internet has contributed to a grass-roots resurgence of interest in local history. It has already been noted that the complete text of an important history of Brooklyn can be found on a genealogical web site. The most important single site for New York State genealogy is NYgenweb (<http://www.rootsweb.com/~nygenweb/>), which hosts pages for most counties in the state. Many of the upstate county pages on Nygenweb include historical maps and digital versions of important books on local history. The NYGEN sites for Kings, Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk counties are not yet so richly endowed, but all are worth visiting. Look for lists of cemeteries (and their residents), census records, brief town histories, lists of churches, and related links of interest to both genealogists and local historians. Also worth investigating is "The Long Island Genealogy Page," hosted by the previously noted "Long Island Page of Pages." This page has a number of interesting links, including one to a site that includes the full text of several old Long Island business directories

([http://www.rootsweb.com/~nygglishp/Long\\_Island\\_Directories.html](http://www.rootsweb.com/~nygglishp/Long_Island_Directories.html)).

There are also sites devoted to individual Long Islanders. Long Island's poetic icon, Walt Whitman, predictably has the most extensive coverage. Access to the several sites with Whitman material can be obtained through a Long-Island based "Walt Whitman" page (<http://www.liglobal.com/walt/>). This site has links to extensive collections of material by and about Whitman at the Library of Congress and at the University of Virginia. The Walt Whitman Hypertext Archive at the University of Virginia (<http://Jefferson.Village.Virginia.EDU/whitman>) is especially impressive. It includes a comprehensive bibliography on Whitman, reviews of Whitman's works, the complete text of his published writings, and a variety of manuscript works, notebooks, and letters. It is the only site discussed in this section of this article with enough information to allow for extensive original research.

Other literary lights also have Web pages devoted to them, although none receive such extensive treatment as Whitman. A number of sites are devoted to F. Scott Fitzgerald, including the F. Scott Fitzgerald Centenary page at the University of South Carolina (<http://www.sc.edu/Fitzgerald/>). There are several sites with information on Jupiter Hammon, Long Island's first black poet. One of the best is Paul Reuben's page, which includes a bibliography and timeline, as well as the text of several of Hammon's works (<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap2/hammon.html>). Another site is even devoted to Jack Kerouac at Northport

(<http://www.liglobal.com/nbeat/kerouac/>). There are many other sites with information about people associated in some way with Long Island. Generally speaking, it is relatively easy to locate sites dealing with specific people, places, or events by using well-known commercial search engines, such as AltaVista or Google.

Searching for materials on the Web can sometimes turn up strange and unexpected things. One such surprise occurred when I was looking for information about Camp Hero (the military base near Montauk point). I discovered that there is practically a whole subculture concerned with experiments allegedly conducted at Camp Hero during and after World War II involving time travel, flying saucers, extraterrestrials, and massive atrocities by the federal government. While most of this is doubtless fantasy, this cult would make an interesting subject for the student of popular culture. To find out more, look for links at the aptly named "Surfing the Apocalypse" site (<http://www.surfingtheapocalypse.com>). Who would have thought that Long Island has a location to rival Roswell, New Mexico?

I hope it is not presumptuous to include in this discussion my own site for the Map Collection at the University at Stony Brook (<http://www.sunysb.edu/library/ldmaps.htm>). This site includes a set of pages entitled "Long Island Maps and Their Makers," which provides a brief overview of the history of Long Island cartography, and serves as an introduction to the book with the same title. However, this is not the place to go for high quality digital images of Long Island maps. Better images of entire maps can be found at this site on the page "New York State Historical Maps," and many of these maps include Long Island. The best images of Long Island maps can now be found elsewhere. Technical developments in the past few years have made it possible for institutions with sufficient resources to produce and distribute over the Internet very high quality images of large maps. Links to such maps depicting Long Island can be found on the last page of "Long Island Maps and Their Makers," and through the "New York State Maps Pathfinder," which is part of "New York State Historical Maps." Particular attention should be given to the Library of Congress site (panoramic maps, railroad maps, some early maps); the David Rumsey Collection (many nineteenth-century maps); the University of Connecticut (early maps showing Connecticut and Long Island, Long Island Sound); and the National Ocean Service (published Coast Survey maps).<sup>5</sup>

Some Long Island property maps and atlases have also been digitized. These were mostly made between 1850 and 1920, and show individual homeowners and sometimes property lines. These qualities make property maps favorites of genealogists, archaeologists, and town historians. The only Long Island property map that has so far been digitized in its entirety is a 1906 map of Long Island by E. Belcher Hyde, which has been done by Newsday (<http://www.lihistory.com/spectown/townmain.htm>), but which lacks sufficient resolution to read all the names on the map. High-quality black

and white images of the important *Atlas of Long Island* by F. W. Beers (1873) can be found on the useful "Long Island Information Page" hosted by Roots Web (<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~blkyn/LI/L.I.index.html>).<sup>6</sup>

Somewhat strangely, although maps are among the most difficult materials to digitize, Long Island historians are better provided with cartographic materials than with any other type of information in digital form. Nonetheless, much work remains to be done. Many property atlases remain to be digitized, and other types of maps have yet to make an appearance on the Web. Fire insurance maps are among the many types of maps that are not yet available on the Internet. Fire insurance maps resemble property maps, but are still more detailed, and even include information about the construction of individual buildings. Also not yet available in digital form are the manuscript Coast Survey maps, which provide the earliest detailed cartographic picture of all of Long Island.<sup>7</sup>

The situation of Long Island maps is representative in one respect of all types of Long Island historical resources on the Internet. The material at a site labeled "Long Island" constitutes only a small fraction of what is available elsewhere on the Web. In the case of maps, links have been made to similar materials at other locations. In the case of most other materials, such a comprehensive collection of links does not exist, and it is up to individual researchers to somehow find the numerous resources that exist somewhere in cyberspace.

### **Finding Information about Long Island History at Comprehensive Web Sites**

Most of the material on the Web useful for original research on Long Island history is on sites with a broader focus than just Long Island. This should not be surprising, since digitizing historical materials is expensive, and funding has been easier to find for projects that are national in scope.

A good place to begin a consideration of these sites is JSTOR (<http://www.jstor.org>). Unlike most of the sites presented here, JSTOR, which stands for Journal Storage project, is not freely available on the Internet, but only through subscribing institutions. Many research libraries belong to JSTOR, including the University at Stony Brook, and unaffiliated researchers can get access to it at the university's libraries. Nonsubscribers can obtain basic information about JSTOR at the Internet address (URL) given above.

JSTOR consists of the back runs of over 120 heavily used academic journals. These include twenty historical journals, among them the *American Historical Review*, the *Journal of Negro History*, and the *William and Mary Quarterly*. The back runs of these journals are preserved as scanned digital images, which are indexed to make them searchable by key word. Long runs of some of these journals are available—in the case of *American Historical Review*, everything from its inception in 1895 to within a few years of the



present. Because JSTOR specializes in preserving and making available back files of journals, publishers can continue to profit by selling current issues to their subscribers. A "moving wall" is used to update the collection: as journal volumes reach a certain age they are continually added to the collection (for example, the most recent volume of a particular journal in JSTOR might always be the one that is three years old).

For researchers, JSTOR has two major advantages. First, it enables them to access back runs of journals from computers at home or office, and to print high quality copies of articles that look much like good photocopies. In addition, the key-word indexing enables users to search through whole runs of journals, or even through the entire JSTOR collection, using keywords, or combinations of keywords. The sophisticated search software used by JSTOR incorporates such features as searching by phrase and key words, use of Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT), truncation of search terms, and limitation by date of publication. In terms of the ways it can be searched, JSTOR is typical of many of the large academic sites specializing in scholarly materials.

The best way to understand the implications of searching massive amounts of full text by key word is to look up some articles on a specific subject, such as Long Island history. Because of the huge size of the JSTOR database, searches on broadly conceived topics are likely to be unproductive. Thus, a search for the phrase "Long Island" in the twenty historical journals yields more than 200 "hits" (the maximum allowed by the database). It is possible to restrict searches on broad topics like this to article titles, but "Long Island" appears in the titles of only two articles—both dealing with the Battle of Long Island. This may be an indication of the relative neglect of Long Island as a subject of historical research, although it should be kept in mind that none of the historical journals included in JSTOR include any of those dealing with Long Island or even New York State history.

JSTOR really comes into its own when you start to search for more circumscribed subjects. A researcher interested in slavery on Long Island could retrieve 187 articles with the key words *slave+* and "Long Island." (The plus sign in JSTOR is a truncation symbol, which allows you to retrieve such variants as "slave," "slavery," and "slaveholder.") A search for Jupiter Hammon yields sixteen articles in the collection of historical journals; journals dealing with African American studies are in a separate collection, and you can get an additional fifteen articles by including them in your search. Those interested in the American Revolution will find 196 articles containing "battle" and "Long Island" on the same page; more than 200 articles can be retrieved by searching for "battle" and "Brooklyn." To narrow down searches with too many results, try including specific names or places. The name of Washington's spymaster, Benjamin Tallmadge, appears in only seven articles. The moral is that researchers using this type of database need to be flexible and try a variety of combinations of terms to get the results they want.

Keep in mind that current issues of historical journals are often also

available in electronic format. With few exceptions they, too, are not free, and must be accessed through institutions that subscribe to them. A list of the electronic journals in history available at the University at Stony Brook can be seen at (<http://www.sunysb.edu/libmap/ejrnl.htm>).<sup>8</sup>

JSTOR's use of image files in combination with full-text indexing reoccurs in many of the large collections of scholarly materials available on the Internet. The same combination can be found in the Making of America (MOA) project, which is being carried out by Cornell University (<http://moa.cit.cornell.edu>) and the University of Michigan (<http://www.umdl.umich.edu/moa/>). While JSTOR specializes in academic journals, MOA concentrates on books and periodicals published between 1815 and 1925. This time coverage is typical of many digital projects, since materials more than seventy-five years old are generally no longer protected by copyright.

Already the Making of America project constitutes a valuable resource for students and researchers interested in Long Island history. Numerous references to events on Long Island can be found in both the book and the periodical collections. The collection at Cornell is particularly important for its Long Island holdings, since it contains a relatively high percentage of materials relating to New York State. These include six works dealing specifically with the history of Long Island, *The Records of the Town of Brookhaven* (vols. 2 and 3); Gabriel Furman's *Antiquities of Long Island* (1874); T.G. Bergen, *Register in Alphabetical Order of Early Settlers of Kings County, Long Island, N.Y.* (1881); S.M. Ostrander, *A History of the City of Brooklyn and Kings County* (1894); M. P. Bunker, *Long Island Genealogies* (1895); and H. P. Hedges, *A History of the Town of East-Hampton, N.Y.* (1897).

The collection at the University of Michigan, which at present has to be searched separately, should not be ignored. Many journals in that collection contain materials on Long Island, and the book collection includes a notable treasure: the four-volume *Documentary History of the State of New York* edited by E. B. O'Callaghan. Such massive compilations of miscellaneous source materials seem to cry out full text indexing and presentation over the Internet.<sup>9</sup>

Since every single word in these collections has been indexed, they are ideal for investigating "needle in the haystack" type questions. An example is the often asked, but never definitively answered, question of when New York was first called "the Empire State." Since it is possible to search for this phrase in the full-text of the entire collection, and to restrict searches by specific time periods, it is easy to establish usage patterns. As it turns out, the phrase occurs frequently in all periods after 1840; there are a few uses of it in the 1830s; and none in the period between 1815-1830. The phrase first appeared in 1833, and the casual way it was used in publications from the 1830s shows it was already well-known at that time. That it does not turn up in the MOA collections prior to 1834 does not prove much about the origins of the phrase: if more materials from the early nineteenth century were included in MOA, earlier uses would doubtless be found. Nonetheless, our search does at least show us that the phrase

was well-established by the middle 1830s.<sup>10</sup>

The richness of the two MOA collections is revealed by the results of several sample searches. What has been said about searching in JSTOR applies generally to MOA. Because such a massive amount of text is indexed, searches work best on very specific subjects (such as names of towns or people). Broader subjects, such as slavery or agriculture, should be searched using Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT)—e.g. “slavery” *and* “Long Island”, or “farms” *and* “Suffolk County.” Keep in mind that while the same types of searches can be conducted in JSTOR and MOA, the operators used in searching are sometimes different. Thus, the “+” sign is used as a truncation symbol in JSTOR, while MOA uses an asterisk for the same purpose.

Even larger than the Making of America project is the American Memory Project (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amhome.html>). This project includes collections from a number of libraries, but its focus is the Library of Congress, which is making many of its important holdings in American history available in digital form through this project. Taken as a whole, the American Memory Project constitutes the richest group of collections of digital materials on the history of the United States, and works dealing with Long Island are scattered unevenly through it. Most collections at this site are thematic, and references to blacks and women on Long Island can be retrieved from one of several corresponding collections. As previously noted, the American Memory Project includes many Long Island maps. It also includes a collection of environmental photographs from the first part of the twentieth century, many of which show Long Island landscapes, such as a photograph of the Hempstead Plains around 1900. Many old Long Island buildings can be seen in a collection of early twentieth-century architectural photographs.

The American Memory Project provides good examples of the use of digital imaging to make rare manuscript materials widely accessible. Both the George Washington papers and the Thomas Jefferson papers are available at this site. It is possible to search these collections in their entirety by key word, to read transcripts of many of the documents in which the key words appear, and to call up digital images of the original documents. As one might expect, the Washington Papers are a valuable source of information about American operations on Long Island during the Revolutionary War

New additions are made frequently to the American Memory Project, and it pays to review its holdings from time to time. One of the most important collections currently under construction is entitled: “A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation, U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774-1873.” Already this collection includes all or parts of such important congressional publications as the *Statutes at Large*, the *House Journal*, the *Congressional Globe*, and the *Congressional Serial Set*. The entire collection is indexed or searchable in some fashion. A large amount of material concerned with Long Island can be turned up in this collection, although the coverage is uneven and the full text of most of the materials is not indexed (the key word searches

usually cover only the indexes). As more materials are added to this collection, especially additional volumes of the *Serial Set*, the *Century of Lawmaking* will become an extremely valuable resource.

Users of the American Memory Project should be aware that searching this collection is not as simple as it may seem. The various collections that make up the project are indexed in a variety of different ways and to different degrees. A person logging on to the home page of the American Memory Project may notice an option to search the entire collection at once (including even such related collections as the Making of America Project). While this comprehensive search is possible, the results retrieved may be incomplete and misleading. The collections as a whole are not indexed for this preliminary search in as much detail as are some of the individual collections. Thus, the only way to search through every single word in the Washington Papers or Cornell's Making of America collection is to log on to these collections individually, and search them one at a time.

While the above collections are the most important for the history of Long Island, a number of other Web sites have enough material to repay a visit. The digital collections at the New York Public Library are among the most notable. The geographical proximity of New York City to Long Island increases the likelihood of relevant materials being found at this site. So far the New York Public Library has made a relatively small amount of its holdings available in digital form, but its online collections are well worth investigating. One, which is entitled, "Small-Town America: Stereoscopic Views from the Robert Dennis Collection"

(<http://digital.nypl.org/stereoviews/>), includes many photographs of Long Island towns. The New York Public Library was also involved with other libraries in a cooperative project entitled "Women, Marriage and the Law, 1815-1914" (<http://www.rlg.org/scarlet/index.htm>), which includes a good deal of information about women on Long Island. The New York Public Library site is another that is worth revisiting periodically to see what new collections have been added.

Although very different in purpose and scope, two commercial sites, netLibrary (<http://www.netlibrary.com>) and Xlibris (<http://www.xlibris.com>), are of potential interest to Long Island historians. All sites discussed so far (except JSTOR) have concentrated in making available materials that are no longer copyrighted, and even JSTOR is a not-for-profit corporation. Netlibrary and Xlibris, on the other hand, focus primarily on distributing copyrighted materials. They are commercial publishers of the digital word, and, like conventional publishers, they charge for their services, both to make a profit and to pay royalties to authors.

NetLibrary focuses on working with established publishers to distribute their books in digital form. A new and rapidly growing company, they make available as of this writing about 40,000 volumes, including many recent titles from the SUNY University Press and the Syracuse University Press (the leading

publisher of works on New York State history). NetLibrary specializes in selling rights of access to individual works to institutions, such as libraries, which can then "check out" the volumes to their users for limited periods of time. Borrowers can search the full text of the volumes by keyword, print out individual pages, annotate pages, and cut and paste into their own manuscripts. A side benefit of having the books in digital form is that they can be kept in print indefinitely. It costs very little to store an e-book, and it is more economical to print individual copies of little-used books on demand than it is to print and store a whole run of them in inventory.<sup>11</sup>

As with JSTOR, it is possible for anyone to sign onto netLibrary and get some basic information about the service, including a complete list of titles available on any subject. However, to read and download individual works, you have to obtain access through an institution that has purchased the right to make the titles you want available to its clientele. All SUNY libraries subscribe to at least a small core group of electronic books through netLibrary, and some public libraries may be able to provide access to selected titles through a consortium called NYLINK. At present, there are no books dealing exclusively with Long Island history available through this service, but it does include quite a few works dealing with other areas of New York State, including some with information on Long Island. NetLibrary titles potentially worth exploring for references to Long Island are: *Fort Orange Records, 1656-1678* and Mark V. Wasny, *Washington's Partisan War, 1775-1783*. The contents of netLibrary are expanding rapidly, and more books relevant to Long Island history are certain to appear in the future.<sup>12</sup>

It will be interesting to see how popular netLibrary becomes. Most academics, myself included, would much rather read a book in paper than in digital form. Nonetheless, researchers should appreciate being able to do keyword searches through the complete text of books, as well as the ability to copy blocks of text into their notes without typing them in them by hand. For libraries there are great advantages in not having to catalog, shelve, preserve, store, and check out books (although this raises some interesting questions about how librarians would spend their time in a completely digital library). Having books readily available forever (or at least until our computers melt down) will certainly be a boon to both libraries and their users, who will not have to worry about locating scarce out of print books. It is unlikely that libraries will stop buying books in paper anytime soon, but I expect we will be seeing much more of electronic books in the near future.

Xlibris is of particular interest to local historians in search of a publisher. Xlibris, which calls itself as "a strategic partner of Random House Ventures," is one of several enterprises that might be described as digital versions of vanity presses. Because of their small potential market, specialized works of local history are notoriously difficult to publish. However, the low cost of electronic publishing and the possibility of printing on demand from digital files makes electronic publishing an economical way to produce books with

little potential for large sales. Xlibris publishes electronic books at minimal cost to the author (although it charges extra for such services as illustrations and marketing), and it pays higher royalties than standard publishers.

Works may be purchased directly from Xlibris in either digital or in paper form, and for a fee they can be advertised through services like Amazon.com. A number of specialized works of local history have been published by Xlibris, although so far none of them deal with Long Island. It is nonetheless an option for writers of Long Island history to keep in mind, and may eventually develop into a site with enough resources to make it of interest to researchers.

There are other places where the diligent researcher may find materials relating to Long Island. Since we lack a comprehensive collection of links for Long Island history, a good place to begin further investigations is the collection of links to Worldwide Web resources put together for the Making of New York Project (<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/nycrl/sitelink.htm>). This is the most complete collection of links relating to New York State history, and includes a page of links for each region of the state. The "history" page of this site has links to sites that have digitized materials concerned with many aspects of New York State history, and includes a list of most of the digitized books dealing with New York that can be found at the Making of America site and elsewhere.

### **The Future of Long Island's Past on the Internet**

Although the amount of information on Long Island history on the Internet is impressive, it is only a tiny fraction of what should be made available. A compelling case can be made for digitizing a much larger selection of primary sources and secondary materials. With a much more extensive collection available on the Web, students and researchers could do much of their work without having to spend large amounts of time in archives and special collections with their restrictions on access and use. In addition, having the full text of these materials searchable by keyword would make it possible to track down with relative ease bits of information that would otherwise be lost in volumes of unread text.

It does not require a great deal of imagination to think of things to digitize. On the analogy of JSTOR, back issues of Long Island historical journals, including the (discontinued) *Journal of Long Island History*, the *Nassau County Historical Journal*, the *Long Island Forum*, and the *Long Island Historical Journal (LIHJ)* could be made available on the Web (the lead article in each issue of *LIHJ* is reproduced on Newsday's *Lihistory.com*). The full text of every issue should be made searchable by key word.

The published records of the Long Island towns are prime candidates for publication in digital form. So are the classic works on Long Island history, such as Benjamin F. Thompson's *History of Long Island* (1849). They could easily be distributed in digital form, since they are no longer under copyright. A project to render Long Island's past in virtual form might also include early

Long Island newspapers. Digitizing newspapers would be somewhat more difficult to carry out, since most they would probably have to be digitized from microfilm. But this, too, is feasible, and may soon become commonplace.

Historic photographs would be easy candidates for digitization. So would drawings and much art. Large paintings, like large maps, require special equipment and unusual software to distribute the resulting images, but there are many examples of such materials being successfully made available on the Web. Although a good sampling of cartographic material is already available, much remains to be done. There is a particular need for digitizing property maps and county atlases, which show individual homeowners, and are favorites for both genealogical and historical research.

There are, of course, numerous manuscript materials that could be digitized, but I would not give them highest priority, simply because of the amount of work involved. Although it is not difficult to scan manuscript materials as images, the texts have to be transcribed by hand if they are to be searched by keyword, and hand transcription of manuscript materials requires much labor and expertise. Scanned images of printed materials, on the other hand, can be read by optical character recognition (OCR) software, which greatly facilitates the task of transcription and indexing.

All the elements of the project I am describing have been done elsewhere using similar types of materials. Although there is nothing revolutionary about this proposal, there are many reasons why it has not yet been carried out on Long Island. Much money and specialized expertise are required to carry out large-scale digitization projects, and so far almost all of the work that has been done is by large and prestigious institutions, such as the Library of Congress and Cornell. But this situation is gradually changing. Standards for digitization are being established; smaller institutions are gaining more experience in working with scanners and servers; and the cost of storing information in digital form is decreasing. On the state level, plans are already being developed for the digitization of New York State Materials. Some planning has already been done for the previously mentioned "Making of New York Project," a plan being developed by the eleven largest research libraries in the state for digitizing materials relating to New York State history. A related project for developing digital library resources in New York State called NOVEL includes in its legislative proposal for this year one million dollars for the creation of a New York State digital library.<sup>12</sup>

Many things need to be considered before undertaking a digitization project. These include: making certain that the digitized products have sufficient resolution to be useful, assuring that they are adequately indexed or searchable by key word, and making certain they are adequately cataloged to ensure that people can find them. Some sort of arrangement also has to be made to preserve the digital files and make them available indefinitely. It is fairly easy to scan volumes of historical materials and put them up on the Web. Already a number of local historical societies and genealogical groups throughout the country have

undertaken small projects of this kind. Although such efforts are commendable, there are questions about their long-term viability. Many digitized books lack key word indexing, which is technically more difficult than simple scanning, and this limits their usefulness. These works are often not cataloged and are difficult to track down using Internet search engines. Finally, one wonders how long small institutions and even private individuals will be able to preserve the digital files and make them available. Larger organizations are in a better position to address these issues, and before undertaking digital projects, smaller institutions would do well to consider whether they are not taking on more than they can handle. Probably cooperative arrangements of some kind are the answer to many of these problems—either between smaller and larger institutions, or through smaller institutions grouping together.

As a result of ongoing national and statewide projects, we can expect to see more Long Island historical materials digitized over time. Needless to say, much more could be done if Long Island libraries, museums, and historical societies were to band together to digitize parts of their collections. The time is ripe for Long Island institutions to work together to develop a plan for creating a Long Island digital library and to start looking for funding to accomplish it.

## NOTES

1. Newsday, Inc., *Long Island: Our Story: The Celebrated Series* (Melville: Newsday, 1998).
2. For Edwin G. Burrows's review of *Long Island: Our Story*, see *LIHJ* 11 (Spring, 1999):233-34; the Newsday project received an Award of Merit from the American Association of State and Local History in 1999.
3. Admittedly, Newsday does not have much competition when it comes to producing a "modern" history of Long Island. Most comprehensive histories of Long Island date back to the nineteenth century: see Richard P. Harmond, "Doing and Not Doing Long Island History: The Long Island Historians from Wood to Weeks," *Journal of Long Island History* 15 (Fall 1978):16-22, reprinted above. Two more recent surveys are the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities-sponsored, Robert B. MacKay, Geoffrey L. Rossano, and Carol A. Traynor, eds., *Between Ocean and Empire: An Illustrated History of Long Island* (Northridge, Calif: Windsor Publications, 1985), reissued as *Long Island: An Illustrated History*, Robert MacKay and Richard Welch, eds. (Sun Valley, Cal.: American Historical Press, 2000; and the Newsday-sponsored Bernie Bookbinder, *Long Island: People and Places, Past and Present* (New York: Abrams, 1983, updated ed., 1998); for evaluation of these two books, see see Natalie A. Naylor, "Reviving Long Island History: a Comparison of Two Updated Editions," above.



4. Henry Reed Stiles, *The History of the City of Brooklyn: Including the Old Town and Village of Brooklyn, the Town of Bushwick, and the Village and City of Williamsburg* (3 vols.; Brooklyn: published by subscription, 1867-1870).
5. David Yehling Allen, *Long Island Maps and Their Makers: Five Centuries of Cartographic History* (New York: Amereon House, 1997); the National Ocean Survey site includes high-resolution images of all *printed* maps of Long Island and surrounding waters published by the Coast Survey in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but not the important *manuscript* maps of Long Island done by the Coast Survey in the 1830s (see note 7 below);
6. Property maps of Long Island are described in Allen, 85-111, 116-18; E. Belcher Hyde Map Co., *Map of Long Island: Based upon Recent U.S. Coast Surveys, Together with Local Maps on File* (Brooklyn: E. Belcher Hyde Map Company, 1906).
7. The manuscript maps of Long Island produced by the Coast Survey in the 1830s are the first detailed maps of many parts of the island, and contain important information about such matters as vegetation, buildings, and roads not contained in the printed maps mentioned in note 5 (see David Yehling Allen, "Long Island Triangulated: Nineteenth-Century Maps and Charts of the U.S. Coast Survey," *LIHJ* 6 (Spring 1994):191-207).
8. The University at Stony Brook Library's history collection home page (<http://www.sunysb.edu/libmap/hhome.htm>) is also as good a place as any to begin exploring those aspects of historical research on the Internet not discussed in this article, such as research databases and comprehensive Web sites with links to historical subjects other than Long Island history.
9. *Documentary History of the State of New York*, ed. E. B. O'Callaghan (Albany: Weed, Parsons, 1849): 51.
10. The earliest reference to the phrase "the Empire State" in the Making of America collection is in an anonymous article at the University of Michigan site, "Colonization and Abolition," *Princeton Review* 5 (July 1833):302; the origin of the phrase is discussed by Milton M. Klein in "A Communication" in *LIHJ* 13 (Fall 2000):139-40.
11. NetLibrary has an agreement with OCLC, a large not-for-profit provider of services for libraries, for OCLC to maintain archival copies of eBooks from netLibrary(see OCLC News Release, 26 Oct.1999 (<http://www.oclc.org/oclc/press/19991026.htm>); for NYLINK, see (<http://nylink.suny.edu/>); Charles T. Gehring, ed., *Fort Orange Records, 1656-1678* (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 2000); Mark V. Kwasny, *Washington's*

*Partisan War, 1775-1783* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State Univ. Press, 1996).

12. For more on this proposal, see the Making of New York homepage <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/nycrl/mainpage.htm>); for NOVEL see NOVEL home page (<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/library/novel/>).

# **JORIS AND CATALINA RAPALJE, THE FIRST COLONISTS IN NEW NETHERLAND**

*By D. Reid Ross*

The Catholic-Calvinist religious conflict in Europe that began in the sixteenth century raged well into the seventeenth. Known as the Reformation, it began in the Lowlands in 1518 when Martin Luther's doctrines were first preached in Antwerp. In the Spanish Netherlands it resulted in a division between the seven northern Calvinist United Provinces on one side of the Rhine that became independent of Spain in 1581, and the ten Catholic provinces, half Dutch-speaking (Flemish) and half French(Walloon) on the south side of the Rhine, dominated by the Spanish Catholic kings. These were the "obedient provinces."<sup>1</sup>

Spanish kings were devoutly Catholic, suspicious of other beliefs, fearful of Luther's heresy, and unwaveringly loyal to Rome. Nevertheless, this religious orthodoxy did not prevent these kings from asserting their authority over the powerful and wealthy church, or taxing it heavily. Anyone in Spain who differed in the slightest particular with Catholic orthodoxy was branded a Lutheran and subjected to secret trial and torture, and probably execution, if found guilty.

Protestantism in the majority of Western Europe at the same time was becoming the religion of the principalities and the provinces, the feudal and urban interests, as the Reformation gained momentum. They were resisting the strengthening of authority and power of kings over their own economic and social domains. They wanted to preserve the cherished autonomy of their provinces. These opposing interests squared off to fight both civil and religious wars for more than a century. In this struggle, both sides attracted nobility and other powerful, articulate, and prosperous people with crusading zeal. In the case of the Dutch, who held strongly to their medieval heritage of constitutional representative government, new concepts of civil liberty and personal responsibility grew out of the conflict. This was true despite an ever-widening gap that developed between the aristocrats, merchants, and landlords who comprised the upper-class and the poverty stricken serfs and wage laborers who could barely eke out a subsistence living and were excluded from property ownership. By 1561 the Catholic Church and kings also had to counter Calvinist doctrine which was even more radical than Lutheranism. Calvin rejected mass, the invocation of saints, and all ecclesiastical hierarchy. By 1566, the country had been flooded with Calvinist pamphlets. Four hundred churches, monasteries, and convents were ransacked in provinces such as Hainault.

This was the setting for the Dutch Calvinist rebellion against the Spanish Catholic encroachment, as well as that of the French Calvinists (Huguenots) against the French Catholic monarchy. Each side used brute force to convert the other. By the 1560s they were launching civil wars in the name of God. Philip II of Spain (1556-1598) provoked a Calvinist rebellion in the 1580s

in the Netherlands, which he could not suppress. Calvinists refused to tolerate ungodly kings. They were sworn to obey and enforce God's law. They were hard to silence, much less subdued. Philip II, the mightiest European prince of his day who was extremely unpopular and did not like Netherlanders, could not put down this small band of aristocratic and prosperous Covenanters with God. Not only did they occupy the wealthiest region in Europe, but they were accustomed to considerable local autonomy.

Philip II regarded the Low Countries as vital to his Spanish empire. In his attempt to introduce his Spanish political and religious practices, he encountered massive resistance. He turned shopkeepers into soldiers, others into patriots and Calvinistic fanatics who established Calvinist cells and fortified villages. They destroyed Catholic churches and nunneries. The seven northern provinces became independent and Protestant; the southern (half Walloon) became Catholic and loyal to Spain. By 1600 the modern nations of Belgium (the southern provinces) and Holland (the northern provinces) were born. Calvinist preachers whipped their followers into a rage. Philip II countered this "Calvinist fury" with brutal reprisals. His Duke of Alva led ten thousand Spanish troops garrisoned in the southern provinces who had been unpaid for two years. They retaliated with "Spanish fury," and sacked Antwerp, one of the best fortified towns in Europe, after a year's siege. Its population was predominantly Protestant, some eight thousand of whom were murdered as heretics, reducing the opposition to a forlorn band of exiles under the Prince of Orange. He kept the revolt alive despite Alva's belief that negotiations with the enemy should not begin "until everything has been flattened." Nevertheless, with the arrival in 1578 of another 20,000-man army under the Duke of Parma, William of Orange was able by 1581 to unite the Calvinist northern provinces into the Dutch Republic. They were Holland, Zedland, Utrecht, Overjssel, Gelderland, Groningen, and Friesland. Parma held the ten remaining provinces south of the Rhine, including Hainault, but a wave of 100,000 religious and political refugees fled north to the new Dutch Republic. William would not compromise with the Spanish on two points. He demanded that the "practice of the reformed [Protestant] religion according to the word of God be permitted, and that [his] whole country and state return to its ancient [constitutional] privileges and liberty."<sup>2</sup>

When William was assassinated by a Catholic fanatic in 1584, the Dutch Republic appealed to Germany and France for help but received little. They then appealed to Elizabeth of England, who sent a small army in 1585 to hold the line at the Rhine River against Parma. The Spanish - Dutch war lasted until 1609 with neither side penetrating very far beyond the Rhine. The Dutch managed to fortify the principal towns, building block houses along this line from the Zuider Zee to Tiel. It remained the dividing line between the prosperous seven Calvinist United Provinces and the ten Spanish Catholic ones (the Spanish Netherlands). A twelve-year truce lasted until 1621, when Philip IV

refused to review it. The war then re-opened and the Dutch gained the advantage, finally pushing the Spanish well south of the Rhine. Holland became politically independent and predominately Calvinist. The southern provinces remained Catholic and Spanish. The moral purpose and community spirit of the Dutch were strengthened. Nevertheless, a decline in Calvinistic religious zeal took place which was supplanted by a secular zeal for making money. Great days lay ahead of the Dutch as they began to build the world-wide commercial empire that included New Netherland. They also contributed immensely to developing new concepts of individual liberty, responsibility, and prosperity, as well as public order and power.<sup>3</sup>

By 1621 when the Dutch West India Company was founded, an articulate urban capitalist class of merchant oligarches had evolved which grew rich by enlarging old avenues of trade and opening new ones. Amsterdam became Europe's greatest shipping, commercial, and financial center and grew in population from 30,000 in 1566 to 200,000 a century later. It also engaged in colonization. Yet wage laborers in that city led a starvation existence and worked twelve to fourteen hours daily if they could find jobs. Hainault, the southernmost province of what today is Belgium was eventually lost to the French but not until after wartime occupation, depopulation, and destruction during the Thirty Years' War, which ended in 1648, had reduced the residents to abject poverty. The Protestants in the provinces except those in Valenciennes, had become an insignificant minority and had to worship covertly.<sup>4</sup>

However, Valenciennes, a Walloon village in the province of Hainault, had a large and restless Protestant population since the 1560s because they were forced to discontinue baptisms, communions, and collections. The first Calvinist preachers in the Netherlands planted deep roots, beginning in the 1540s. It became the bastion of Calvinism in the Walloon area. When they were required to cease holding any service where a Sacrament was performed, the Calvinists organized a small army to resist a Spanish royalist siege of the village. When the French Huguenots could not be prevailed upon to send troops to their relief, the townsfolk were forced to surrender in 1567 to the Spanish authorities. After the Duke of Alva condemned 425 of its prominent citizens and confiscated their property, Calvinist worship ended.<sup>5</sup>

In 1572, Valenciennes, with French Huguenot help, was retaken from the Spaniards and Calvinist worship restored. However, with the massive immigration of both capital and people from Hainault and the other southern provinces, Valenciennes as well as countless other villages were in ruins. Commerce, agriculture, industry, merchants, and craftsmen had moved north, enriching the Dutch. Calvinist churches and records were destroyed and the ministers mobbed. Some French-speaking Walloons who wanted to preserve their religious identity moved to Amsterdam and affiliated with Dutch Calvinist churches. Others, like Joris and Michele Rapalje moved on to New Netherland, having been recruited by the Dutch West India Company. The company had made little profit from the fur trade on which it had a monopoly which it

controlled from its bases in New Netherland and Albany. Its directors began to recognize the necessity for a colony of farmers to feed the traders and soldiers protecting them, along with the need for artisans to repair ships upon their arrival.<sup>6</sup>

By this time, both England and France were challenging the Dutch claim to New Netherland. To strengthen its claim the Dutch decided they had to colonize, not just build trading posts to exploit fur trade opportunities with the Indians. By written agreement known as the Provisional Orders, the colonists were to be left alone to worship as they pleased. The West India Company retained the right to choose settlement sites, allocate land, and select crops. The company also was to be the sole purchaser of furs. In return the colonists received free passage and free land. Livestock at reasonable prices could be purchased from the company with interest-free loans.

Thirty Walloon families who had fled Belgium to Amsterdam were shortly thereafter settled initially at Fort Nassau at the mouth of the Delaware, near Camden, New Jersey, Fort Good Hope at the mouth of the Connecticut Rivers, near Hartford, Connecticut, and at the mouth of the East River at Wallabout Bay on Long Island, as well as Fort Orange, now Albany. Presumably they were to repair ships and provide harbors as well as to raise food for the fur trappers and soldiers at these forts which also served as trading posts. The Dutch thus laid claim to the territory they called New Netherland and acquired control of the water-dependent fur trade of the area.<sup>7</sup>

Joris (George) Janszan Rapalje, was a Walloon from Valenciennes in Hainault, a southern province in the Spanish Netherlands but now in Belgium. He was baptized there on April 28, 1604, as the son of Jean Rapareillet in the Catholic Church of St. Nicholas. Another record indicates his father was Abraham, renowned painter. Other records indicate that his father was Gaspard Colet de Rapalje, born at Chatillon Sur Loire, France in 1505. However, I believe that Gaspard was more likely Joris's great grandfather since he was born at least 100 years before Joris. Gaspard was made a Colonel in the French Army 22 December, 1545 and became a Protestant in 1548. However, after Philip II of Spain defeated Henry II of France in 1557, he began to enforce an edict against all Protestants. Gaspard was deprived of his command and fled to Holland as a persecuted Huguenot. His grandson or great grandson Joris was born there. Presumably Joris as a Protestant was baptized in a Catholic church to avoid persecution.<sup>8</sup>

Joris became a textile worker, probably in the Flemish linen industry. Joris's wife, Catalina Jeronimus Trico (Tricot), also a French-speaking Walloon was probably born about 1605 in Prisches, a farming village also in Hainault, near Valenciennes. After being married in a Walloon church in Amsterdam on 21 January, 1624, they sailed for New Netherland from Amsterdam four days later aboard the *Unity*, along with thirty Walloon families. William Rapalje, brother of Joris, also was a passenger. Undoubtedly these thirty Walloon

families from the southern provinces of the Spanish Netherlands were Protestants escaping religious persecution from the Catholic Spanish monarch, Philip IV. An earlier effort undertaken in 1621 by Walloons from Hainault to colonize in Virginia had been rejected by the Virginia Company of London.

These thirty Walloon families comprised the first party of colonists recruited to settle on lands granted by the States General of the United Provinces of the Netherlands (the original seven northern Calvinist United Provinces) in 1621 to the West India Company when it also was granted a twenty-four year monopoly on navigation and trade on the eastern coast of North America. Only four of these families left descendants who have been identified, one of which was that of Joris and Catalina Rapalje, who settled initially at Fort Orange in a hut built of bark. A log fort offered minimal protection from Indians and the weather. Eighteen families settled here, planting grain and corn. On 9 June 1625, a little over a year after they arrived, their daughter Sarah was born in the dirt-floored hut. Two shiploads of livestock also arrived from Holland that year for the colonists, including cattle, horses, sheep, and hogs. They lived at Fort Orange for two years.<sup>9</sup>

After the harvest in 1626, Peter Minuit of the West India Company resettled eight families from Fort Orange, including the Rapaljes, to the southern tip of Manhattan at Fort New Amsterdam. Fort Orange then ceased to be a settlement and reverted to its original function as a fortified trading post. The other twenty-two families that initially had settled at Governor's Island at the mouth of the Hudson, Fort Nassau on the Delaware, and Fort Good Hope on the Connecticut River, also were relocated. The thirty families comprised about two hundred people. The West India Company was developing a New Netherland headquarters named New Amsterdam, by building a fort, mills, church, road system, and laying out building lots for thirty houses and farms. The thirty company-obligated colonists were required to settle there, but the community grew slowly, even after 1629, when free settlers were offered land.

Most likely the Rapaljes initially lived in a primitive one-and-one-half story log house near the East River. It is not known how Joris earned a livelihood. However, these early colonists were needed to construct the fort and roads and control the Indians, especially during the bloody Kieft War (1643-1645) when Willem Kieft, the Dutch Governor, attacked nearby Indian villages. Eventually, Joris acquired a lot on which he built two houses near the fort on Pearl Street, at the intersection of what is now Whitehall Street. Their daughter Sarah lived next door to them. In 1637 Joris traded goods with the Indians for 335 acres of land known as Reggnegaconck on Wallabout Bay in present Brooklyn, near present-day Brooklyn Navy Yard. During the American Revolution this bay was harbor for infamous British prison ships. This was the first land to be acquired adjacent to the East River in that part of Long Island. They did not move there until sometime after 1650, when Joris became prominent in public affairs as a magistrate, plantation owner, trader, part owner of a privateer, and tavern keeper.<sup>10</sup>

Joris died on 21 February 1662 in Brooklyn. Catalina, who helped him with many of his business affairs, outlived him until her death 11 September 1685, also in Wallabout, Brooklyn.

Sarah (b. 1625 d. 1685), the first of fourteen children of Joris and Catalina Rapalje, married first, Hans Hansen Bergen (b. Norway 1600, d. ca. 1653) and second, Teunis Gysbertszen Bogaert of Brooklyn. Sarah, the first European girl born in New Netherland, has often been called the "Mother of New Amsterdam." Teunis Bogaert (b. 1625, d. 1687) Sarah's second husband, was from Schoenderwoert, a small village near Leerdam in the south of Holland. Teunis and Sarah Bogaert's daughter, Aeltje (Allie) Tunis Bogaert, baptized in Brooklyn 8 September 1661, married Cornelius Claese Cooper on 11 December 1681, in Bergen, Norway, the year in which Sarah joined by certificate the Brooklyn Dutch Reformed Church. Her husband was a deacon of that church and her mother was a member.<sup>11</sup>

Many well-to-do Dutch merchants and others became Loyalists during the American Revolution because they were committed to the status quo and saw no need for change. As far as he was concerned, John Rapalje, Esq. (1728-1802), a great-grandson of Sarah Rapalje, the political and economic system had been tested for a century and a half and proven tried and true. Both loyalty to the Crown and devotion to the Revolution varied significantly from colony to colony. Loyalism was strong in New York but varied with the day-to-day fortunes of war, as well as with the socio-economic class of the citizen. Tories saw the rebels as conspirators against the Crown. In spite of the Stamp Act, Tea Tax, closing of western lands, and restrictions on American manufacturing and trade, these collaborators with British policy and beneficiaries of colonial status wanted to maintain the status quo that, in the case of the Rapaljes, had functioned to their advantage for so long. The foundation of their wealth and position was the empire: as monarchists content with colonial status, they rejected American independence, much less the formation of a republic. To them, the possibility that the thirteen colonies could be welded permanently into a nation was, at best, remote. Under these circumstances, risking the blessings of their property was a foolish risk to the Rapalje family.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, despite the religious persecution his ancestors had suffered from European kings, John, the great grandson of Joris, and fifteen other Rapaljes who, together, were large landholders, identified themselves as Loyalists by signing a petition in October 1776 acknowledging allegiance to the Crown. Four of the fifteen served in the British Army, several went to Canada. John, the wealthiest and most prominent, was an outspoken Loyalist. He had inherited two hundred cultivated acres, on which there was a brick mansion and a large store, near the Brooklyn Ferry which undoubtedly was where Joris and his daughter Sarah had settled about 1650. The Brooklyn Ferry was where trade was concentrated. He also owned an eighty-six acre farm in Brooklyn, five other tracts, and, altogether, almost all of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> wards of Brooklyn, the



largest estate in Brooklyn. John and his family were living there at the opening of the Revolution, when Brooklyn's lush farmland was still sparsely settled. The principal market for its produce was the village of New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island across the East River.

Brooklyn, surrounded by marshlands, rugged hills, and impenetrable forests was almost an island paradise. Its Dutch settlers were prosperous, happy farmers who could afford fine, well-furnished houses. Their wives were well-dressed in the latest European fashions. Large numbers of black slaves cultivated the fertile soil, tended the cattle, and performed virtually all other farm chores. The few larger land-holding merchant families, including conservative Dutch and Huguenot merchants such as John Rapalje, had extensive trading ties with the British. Some had joined the Anglican Church and were part and parcel of the aristocratic social structure. The Anglican Church was a potent force in nurturing Loyalism, its members receiving the cream of the royal governor's patronage. Further, since 1664, while under British rule, compliant merchants had been left largely alone in the conduct of their prosperous businesses on which most of the town depended. Their Dutch Reformed Church had been allowed to thrive and they were allowed to speak and conduct business in their native tongue—Dutch. Business was unregulated. Brooklyn also was familiar to the British soldiers stationed in the Royal garrison in Manhattan, who frequently crossed the river to court Dutch girls and participate in or watch horse races. John's daughter Jane eloped at the age of seventeen and married a British colonel at Trinity Church, in New York. For wealthy merchants and landowners, Toryism had become almost fashionable.

This contentment with their lot in life led some to dread the possibility of war with Britain, the world's greatest military power. In Kings County, the usual proportions of one-third patriot, one-third Loyalist, and one-third neutral did not apply. The majority of the county's conservative Dutch and Huguenot residents supported colonial status within the empire, and opposed American independence. Some opted to submit to whichever side won and chose, at the war's beginning, to remain politically neutral, while a small number sided with the patriots. Within that context, some family circles were shattered and friendships destroyed as patriots, Loyalists, and neutrals identified their positions.<sup>13</sup>

The Battle of Brooklyn, often referred to as the Battle of Long Island, was won on 27 August 1776 by the British. In so doing, they captured the granary they sorely needed to feed their 20,000-man army and its animals. They were to occupy the city and all of Long Island until the war ended seven years later. The fighting then shifted across the river to Manhattan, and many Dutch Brooklynites breathed a guarded sigh of relief. Those who had been neutral while Washington's army occupied Brooklyn suddenly became ardent Loyalists. Many must have thought the British would put down the rebellion and wanted to get back to enjoying their lifestyle. Women wore red ribbons to signify their loyalty to the crown. Men wore red patches on their hats and some slaves wore

scarlet patches made of rags.

John Rapalje had not waited until after the Battle of Brooklyn to display his loyalty to the king. Since 1775, he and other merchants had been members of the pro-British General Assembly of the Province of New York. Rapalje represented King's County. The merchants did not want politics to interfere with trade anymore than they wanted to be governed by what Tory propaganda represented as a "riotous revolutionary mob." That year he and twelve others voted against adopting a Continental Congress resolution that amounted almost to a declaration of war against Great Britain. Congress had resolved that it derived "its power... not from the Scrolls of ...Kings, but from the people." Of the thirteen members of the General Assembly voting against adoption, eight, including Rapalje, were eventually attainted for high treason. He and other prominent Loyalists opened their homes to British officers and provided supplies to their fleet. At the outbreak of the Battle of Brooklyn there were 500 British ships in Wallabout Bay. Rapalje's house became the residence of British General Gray when the British army occupied his estate. Exceeding his power as deputy town clerk, Rapalje removed the Brooklyn public records and took them to England in October 1776. That year he was one of fourteen assemblymen who addressed British General Thomas Gage in Boston, requesting aid. He sold cattle, sheep, provisions, and wood to the British army and rendered financial assistance to imprisoned Loyalist friends. Rapalje also was charged with enlisting as a soldier in the service of the King, which he denied, but confessed that he was a member of the party that wounded one Lt. Terwilliger, an officer in the Revolutionary army. He also confessed that he had been drafted to serve in the Highland Forts but could not do so because of illness and hid in the mountains with others to escape prosecution for the wounding of Lt. Terwilliger. He and thirteen others were found guilty of levying war against the State of New York and sentenced to hang, but, instead, was banished from the colony because of his influence and the respect in which he was held by fellow Loyalists. He was taken to the Norwich, Connecticut, jail on 11 August 1776 but paroled about seventeen weeks later and allowed to return to New York.<sup>14</sup>

Two days after the Battle of Brooklyn, on the night of 29 August 1776, George Washington commenced a retreat across the East River from near the Brooklyn Ferry, where John Rapalje's family lived, to Manhattan Island. Washington's army had suffered over 1,600 casualties. By 10 P.M., the troops began crossing the river, one regiment at a time. Washington personally took his station at the ferry to superintend the withdrawal. His army was surrounded by a vastly superior force and his intrenchment were hopelessly inadequate for defense against an attack. British frigates in the East River were sufficient to cut off the retreat. It had been raining for two days and nights and the men had had little, if any, sleep. The river was a mile wide with a rapid current. At dawn a dense fog covering the harbor arose so thick a man could not be seen twenty feet

away. All night long and into the morning, with the wind in their favor, 9,500 exhausted and dispirited men were ferried across the river by Col. John Glover's brigade of fishermen from Salem and Marblehead known as Marbleheaders, in small boats and canoes from the Brooklyn Ferry landing. Glover's Marbleheaders would later ferry Washington's men across the Delaware and General Horatio Gate's command across the Hudson prior to the Battle of Saratoga. Washington's masterful retreat was as risky and significant as that of the British at Dunkirk in World War II. Washington left with the last company of his soldiers, leaving behind only a few rusted buckets.

During the night Annatie Rapalje, John's wife, surmised that from the number of boats on the beach near the landing and other movements she could hear or observe, that a retreat was imminent. She dispatched a slave to report this information to the British commander, General William Howe. A Hessian headquarters guard unfamiliar with the English language detained the slave overnight, believing he might be a thief. While a British officer was making his inspection rounds at daylight, the Hessian guard handed over the slave to the officer who took him to Gen. Howe. Astonished at the report, a company was dispatched to the ferry and found it deserted, the last boats disappearing into the fog between 8 and 9 a.m.. Had the Hessian guard not detained the slave, Washington and his entire army could have been captured.<sup>15</sup>

Despite this attempted treachery by his wife while John was jailed in Connecticut, on 16 November he was granted a six-week parole to visit his family on Long Island, "provided he would not do or say anything against the United States...or give intelligence or advice to the enemy." He also agreed to get two named prisoners released by the Americans and was authorized to bring back family members and servants who were under a solemn promise to move to Nova Scotia. Despite these generous terms, while on parole "he rendered every service in his power to the King's cause." This included delivering a flock of sheep to General Howe's army. In October, 1779, Rapalje was attainted of high treason, his 200-acre estate at the Brooklyn Ferry on which were his large store and brick mansion, four other houses, two blacksmith shops, and three barns, as well as his personal property, were confiscated and he was banished from the state. The estate had a half-mile frontage on both the East River and the road, and had been in a high state of cultivation, but had suffered considerable damage at the hands of the British, as well as Americans. As forfeited property, it was vested with the Commissioners of Sequestration. He was detained for at least part of the time in Connecticut with his family and his brother Garrett, until November 1783 after the British troops evacuated Long Island. The two brothers also spent time attempting to collect money owed them. In New Jersey, where Garrett had served as a commissary of fuel for the British Army. John's wife and son, however, remained on Long Island until August 1784 in "quiet possession" of their property. Having occupied Long Island continuously from 1776, the British troops and their Hessian and Loyalist allies had exercised a strangle hold on virtually all activity for the entire war<sup>16</sup>

In August 1784 his wife and son Isaac “were turned out by the Commissioner of Sequestration.” By 4 October 1786, the property was sold for £12,430. Four other of his Long Island properties were also sold for a total of £1,930. Part of the proceeds of these sales was used to settle claims of twenty-six of his creditors, and another part compensated the overseers of the poor in King’s County for the support of Rapalje’s old and helpless black servants. By June 1784, Rapalje was in England and had filed a claim for compensation for his confiscated estate, which was approved because of his service to the Crown as an American Loyalist. By terms of the Treaty of Paris, debts to Loyalists were to be paid by the British government. Rapalje was one of 2,291 Loyalists who filed claims in London that were approved. Claims filed by New York Loyalists were settled for about one-third of the total requested. On 30 June 1784, in recommending that he be compensated by the Crown, William Tryon, the former British governor of New York, wrote that Rapalje’s behavior “both in commencement and progress of the Rebellion...afforded the clearest evidence of his fidelity and loyalty to the Crown, and his attachment to the interests of the British Empire... he was very useful to us within the British lines.” The next day, 1 July, the late governor of North Carolina wrote the Commissioners of Forfeiture on behalf of John Rapalje. He stated that during “the whole course of the Rebellion, [Rapalje] and his family maintained the most steady loyalty, his house being an asylum and sanctuary, open to the occupancy of the friends of the King’s Government, among whom my family was particularly indebted to Mr. Rapalje for protection.” Both of these men were in London when they wrote these letters. On 6 March 1784, having filed one of the larger claims, the commissioners authorized payment in installments of half of the £20,611 he estimated his loss amounted to for the value of his seven farms. He also received £140 annually as a pensioner of the British government. This was twice as large as the average pension granted to merchants. He was one of fifty-nine merchants attainted in New York state. All of their property was forfeited.<sup>17</sup>

By 1785, the New York Common Council was discussing whether the fence should be taken down which separated the Rapalje property from the ferry, so that the ferry yard could be enlarged for the benefit of the public. By 1778 this improvement had not been made. Rapalje died in England in 1802 at the age of seventy-four. His son Isaac resettled in New Orleans, his brother Garrett in West Florida. In June 1778, Garrett offered for sale 17,800 acres of land, two iron forges, and two grist mills in or near Hunterdon County, New Jersey. The newspaper advertisement making this offer was published only days before the British evacuated Philadelphia and retreated into New Jersey, pursued by Washington’s Continental troops. John and Garrett, who also was imprisoned, were partners in these New Jersey ventures, including a salt works. Garrett, also a merchant, had been made a freeman of New York City in 1753. John recovered some of his other debts while in New Jersey, presumably while

in partnership with his brother. His claim for compensation as a Loyalist was also based on uncollected rent for property that the army occupied; crops, cattle, provisions, and wood he supplied the army; and the use of his roads, a barn, and two stables. It did not, however, include compensation for Long Island land he had purchased in 1780, after the Act of Attainder had been passed in October 1779 by the New York General Assembly. He also had spent considerable sums of money for new buildings on this Long Island property, which was seized and sold as confiscated property by the Commissioners for the Sale of Forfeited Property. One scholar, Mary Beth Norton, has noted that with respect to compensation, merchants suffered most while landowners suffered least. The majority of merchants received less than 30 percent of their claims, whereas Rapalje received half of his request.<sup>18</sup>

Records have not been found to explain all the reasons why his claim was so relatively well rewarded. However, when John Rapalje arrived in England in June 1784, he told Loyalist William Smith, former Chief Justice of New York who also was in London to apply for compensation as a Loyalist, that Americans "hate those who have led them to the separation from Great Britain and long for a restoration." He insisted that the most of the rebellious were former Whigs who were "free and impetuous against their leaders beyond description." As these statements indicate, his staunch position as an unreconstructed Loyalist was probably one reason he was treated more favorably than other claimants. Nevertheless, his granddaughter was not satisfied with the settlements. In 1810, eight years after John's death, she arrived in New York with her English husband from her home in Norwich, England. They were attempting to recover John's property and hired Aaron Burr and his law partner to assist them. After being advised that the Act of Attainder barred their claim, they then attempted unsuccessfully to sell for \$10,000 the Brooklyn Public records that John had stolen in 1776 and sent to England.<sup>19</sup>

It is indeed ironic that descendants of victims of Old World oppression by kings would lend heartfelt support to the king of England who bitterly opposed the independence of his New World subjects.

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# THE ORIGIN, RISE, AND DECLINE OF THE LONG ISLAND BRANCH OF THE RANGER FAMILY

*By Charles E. Squires, Robert J. Young, and Michael B. Ranger*

As tenth-generation descendants, we report the Ranger story not because it is unique but because of the light it sheds on the history of Long Island. Our article proceeds from the family's English roots to Edmund Ranger's 1671 migration to Boston to Samuel Ranger II's decision to relocate in the East Hampton hamlet of Northwest a century later. It examines the flowering of the Long Island Rangers and ends with the disappearance of the family name in the last third of the twentieth century. More thorough analysis must await publication of the two manuscripts on which the article is based.<sup>1</sup>

Greater Northwest comprises the westernmost of East Hampton's two large northern necks. The hamlet was concentrated near the shore, a collection of no more than a dozen and a half family farms with some distance between neighbors. For two and a half centuries this remote area was the town's primary source of wood and salt hay. Its shallow shoreline on Northwest Harbor served as the local port until the burgeoning whaling interests built the long wharf at Sag Harbor in 1770. The Sag Harbor area of Northwest Harbor, only two or three water miles away, has deeper water close in.

There were few permanent residents prior to 1757, when Isaac Van Scoy of Amagansett brought his new bride to the Northwest wilderness to carve out its first farm and found the hamlet. It was an idea whose time had come, others followed almost immediately. The story of the rise and decline of Northwest over the next hundred fifty years is entwined with the Rangers, paralleling the fortunes of neighboring Sag Harbor as a major port. By 1900 it was passing into history.

Although the Ranger surname is widely distributed across the northern tier states, there are only two survivors born to that name in Suffolk County, New York, and these two women will be the last. However, for more than a hundred years Ranger was a common East Hampton name. A century and a half ago Northwest had a half-dozen Ranger households, and its one-room school teemed with Ranger children. Their East End descendants today bear surnames too numerous to list. Because a hundred individuals come readily to mind, the total is probably two or three times that.

**Roots.** The mileposts of history tend to be the wars and succession of rulers. Edmund Ranger (1636-1705), a son of Edward Ranger and Joyce Eaton of Dover, Kent, England, grew up in the bloody days of the English Civil War. In 1649, when Edmund was a teenager, Charles I was beheaded by the forces of Oliver Cromwell. Then, in 1660, Cromwell's son Richard fell from grace and Parliament recalled Charles II from exile to take the throne. The Stuart monarchy thus was restored, but the premise of the divine right of kings in England was now on its last legs.

In 1664 the twenty-eight year old Edmund Ranger, now a resident of Canterbury, married Mary Simmons. He was now an established bookbinder and is thought to have learned his trade as a London apprentice before returning to Kent. It would seem that a good and prosperous life lay ahead of him, and indeed it did, but not in a way he could have guessed. Mary and their three young children were all dead by 1670. An epidemic would be a reasonable guess.

In 1671, the widower Edmund Ranger migrated to the town of Boston in the Massachusetts Bay colony to start a new life. However, if he expected any respite from the war and violence of his youth he would be terribly disappointed. In the area surrounding the boom town of Boston, and especially along the coast, new industries, new businesses, and whole new towns were springing up one after another. Opportunity abounded on all sides for those prepared to seize it. Meanwhile, on Long Island, the far more rural towns of the East End also prospered, but at a much more sedate pace.

Southold, Southampton, and East Hampton had been settled some twenty to thirty years earlier by other Englishmen. Many of the pioneer families in these towns of the eastern forks had roots in the coastal towns stretching from Kent to Dorset, and many had sojourned briefly in and around the Boston-area town of Lynn before coming to Long Island. The timing of those settlement enterprises was in part calculated to preclude the establishment of a Dutch presence on the East End. New Netherland had soon expanded from its 1626 settlement of New Amsterdam to the creation of five Dutch towns on the fertile western end of Long Island.<sup>2</sup>

Edmund Ranger married Sarah Fuller of Dedham in 1671, the year of his arrival in Boston. From the beginning he prospered in the New World, as a bookbinder, bookseller, publisher, farmer, and innkeeper. In 1672 he was a witness to the will of Governor Richard Bellingham, indicating that he was a man of substance. Edmund and Sarah's son John, born in 1674, was the first American-born progenitor of the Long Island Rangers. The coincidence of his birth date and his mother's death date suggest that Sarah died in childbirth. Edmund, who married twice more, was the father of eleven children.

John Ranger (1674-1718) was a Boston house-wright. It is difficult to imagine a trade more in demand. Probably because he was the eldest son, he also inherited his father's inn. A year after John's birth New England was devastated by King Philip's War, the Indian uprising in which the Narragansetts, Wampanoags, and others, led by Metacomet, the sachem the English called King Philip, took up arms against the white settlers. Over the course of three years more than fifty settlements were attacked, and hundreds were killed on both sides before the Indians finally were put down. Ironically, Metacomet was the son of Massasoit, the Wampanoag sachem who, along with Squanto and Samoset, had befriended the starving Pilgrims in 1621, and thereafter as long as he lived.

In the period of relative calm following King Philip's War, the English busied themselves fighting off the devil. In 1692, as young John was beginning his building business in Boston, twenty people were put to death for witchcraft in nearby Salem. The bright side was that widespread revulsion to this grim miscarriage of Christianity greatly hastened the end of New England's witch-hunts.

In 1695 John married Elizabeth Wyllys, or Willis, of Dorchester. By now that series of four conflicts called the Old French Wars was underway. These were extensions of the seemingly endless French-English conflicts in Europe. In the New World the struggle centered on control of the fur trade—Albany versus Montreal. Both sides enlisted Indian allies to whatever extent they could. Historically the French treated the Native Americans more fairly than the English, and, come warfare, that policy was rewarded.

In 1697 King William's War, remembered for the burning of Schenectady and Saratoga, ended by negotiation. But nothing had really been settled; in 1702 Queen Anne's War broke out. That conflict resulted in the Deerfield massacre. Clearly there was militia duty to be done, but whether John was a participant in the fighting is not known. There were two types of militia forces: the home guard and the provincial forces, the latter composed of militiamen who were temporarily made a part of the colony's army. Although most of the violence was well removed from Boston, the town had its own problems. From the beginning it suffered a succession of devastating plagues, the last great smallpox epidemic coming in 1722. In the midst of the tumult, John and Elizabeth raised six children. The fifth, born in 1706, was the first Samuel Ranger in the direct line leading to Long Island.

The suffixes I-IV are used herein to sort out the Samuels of the Long Island branch; neither they nor the early records used any distinguishing notation. Samuel Ranger I (1706-1753) married Esther Dering of Wrentham, southwest of Boston, in 1740. Their second of four children was Samuel II (1743-1838) who eventually settled in East Hampton. The next year saw the start of King George's War, the third of the Old French Wars (the expedition to Cape Breton Island).

**Samuel Ranger II, Adventurer: The French and Indian War.** At the age of ten Samuel II became an orphan. His mother had died two years earlier and his father had remarried just in time to sire two more children before passing on. The next seven years of Samuel's life are a blank to us. It is clear that he remained in the Wrentham area, but he may have lived in the neighboring town of Norton. It is not known who raised him. This was typical of the conditions under which children were "bound out."

Letters written during the French and Indian War by Jonathan Caswell at Ticonderoga to his father at Norton, Massachusetts, place seventeen-year-old Samuel Ranger II and several other home town boys with the Massachusetts troops of Captain Job Williams's Company, Colonel Thomas's Regiment, at Crown Point, in July 1760. That fortification overlooks the narrows near the

lower end of Lake Champlain, the time-tested invasion route to and from Canada.<sup>3</sup>

Samuel's older brother Stephen was in the same company most of 1760, until his term of enlistment expired. However, Samuel had "enlisted for the total reduction of Canada," and therefore stayed on after Stephen's departure. Another Caswell letter indicates that in 1762 Samuel II was in garrison at Fort Massachusetts in the far northwestern corner of the colony, where Massachusetts meets Vermont and New York, close to the town of West Hoosac, today's Williamstown.<sup>4</sup>

**The Long Island Connection.** In 1763, the year the war ended, twenty-year-old Samuel Ranger II married Elizabeth Parsons of Fireplace, East Hampton, the fourth child of John Parsons and Martha Edwards. Almost certainly the marriage took place on Long Island. It seems likely that young Samuel was on his way home via the Hudson River and Long Island Sound when he got a better idea. Being young, single, and an orphan, he probably felt little pressure to rush back to the Boston area. Perhaps there was reason to stop at Sag Harbor, a change of vessels, say, or perhaps he traveled with an East Hampton war buddy. Many East Enders were involved in the war. In 1756 the Rev. Samuel Buell, the third of East Hampton's consecutive fifty-year ministers, preached to thirty-eight men about to start for Lake George. Among that company were Isaac Barnes, Abraham Dayton, John Field, Jonathan and William Miller, Stephen Osborn, Abraham Schellinger, and John Squire(s). Others who went, perhaps later, include Samuel Bennett, Simon Conklin, Samuel Davis, Samuel and Thomas Filer, Elias Hand (who raised a company), and Timothy Miller, a Fireplace resident well-acquainted with the Parsons family. Whatever the mechanism of Samuel II's first visit to Long Island, he did not transplant immediately. It would require yet another war for that.<sup>5</sup>

The first two children of Samuel Ranger II and Elizabeth Parsons, both daughters, were born in Williamstown. The next three children, all boys, were probably born in East Hampton between 1769 and 1772. While no mention of the family has been found in the sparse East Hampton records of that period, that is not uncommon; In Massachusetts vital statistics were recorded and preserved far more diligently. A fourth son was born back in Williamstown in 1773. Subsequent events demonstrate that the family retained strong ties to both towns. The trip from one to the other was largely a voyage between Sag Harbor and (probably) Albany. The overland journey between the upper Hudson and Williamstown, some twenty-five miles on good military roads, took about a week.

**The Revolution.** When "the shot heard round the world" was fired in April 1775, Samuel Ranger II and family were living in Williamstown. By the end of April, Benedict Arnold, with a commission from Massachusetts, and Ethan Allen, with a commission from Connecticut, were recruiting for a quick expedition against nearby Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point. These caretaker-

manned facilities were the central repositories for British cannon stored after the French and Indian War. For Samuel II this was familiar ground, and close to Williamstown. Perhaps too close. If he were inclined to go to war again, why did he not sign on with Arnold and Allen? A reasonable guess is that his first consideration was to get his family out of the war zone. Thus they made the move to East Hampton, to Elizabeth's people.

During the years of the New England Indian uprisings and the Old French Wars, East Hampton never saw a shot fired in anger. It is said that, except for those who went away to fight, local aggressions were vented by endless intramural bickering. As everywhere, there were far too many childhood deaths, and far too many mothers lost in childbirth, but death trod lightly here compared to Boston-area epidemics. To Samuel II, the fourth generation of Rangers to see too much violence and too much disease, East Hampton must have seemed a sanctuary.

East Hampton, 29 April 1775: *The Articles of General Association*, a document which deplored "recent arbitrary and oppressive acts of the British Parliament" and pledged support for "whatever measures may be recommended by the Continental Congress" was signed by "every male in the town (emphasis added) that are capable of carrying arms." The document bears no Ranger signature. If the "every male" statement is literally true, as it is held to be, Samuel II was not yet in residence. However, he clearly was there a few weeks later.<sup>6</sup>

Samuel Ranger II served with the Third Regiment of the New York Line, commanded by Colonel James Clinton. He was a private in Captain John Hulbert's Company of East Hampton and Southampton volunteers from its inception on 28 June 1775 until its discharge on 31 December that year. Hulbert's was one of three Suffolk County companies formed for a six-month tour of duty in the Continental Service. Their initial assignment, in cooperation with Captain Griffing's North Fork company, Captain Grennell's Huntington company, and a contingent of Continental troops, was to protect the livestock of the East End against the depredations of the British fleet. Among the Continentals was Lieutenant (later Major) John Davis, the husband of Elizabeth Parsons Ranger's younger sister, Puah.<sup>7</sup>

In an abrupt change of priorities, all the Long Island forces were ordered to Ticonderoga. In mid-September Hulbert's Company, eighty-seven strong, took ship at Sag Harbor. In October Samuel Ranger II appeared on the company's Lake George muster roll. He was right back where he started from, a stone's throw from Williamstown. Their duties seem mainly to have involved handling British prisoners of war. At year's end Hulbert's company returned to Long Island and was discharged.

In late August, following the loss of the Battle of Long Island, General Washington was forced to withdraw, first to Manhattan, then to White Plains, and eventually to New Jersey. The regiments of the Suffolk County Militia disbanded. Despite desperate entreaties from the East End, the Continental

command decided wisely not to entangle its meager forces in an attempt to defend the ocean end of this long, narrow island. The difficulty of putting an army into place would have been exceeded only by the difficulty of getting it out should things go badly. In the end, the plea for help was answered by the Provincial Congress with (to paraphrase): "Destroy what you can't carry and run for it." Many did just that. More than a hundred East Hampton families headed north across the Sound, and in other towns it was the same.<sup>8</sup>

**The British Occupation.** The 1776 Census of Suffolk County, conducted in the early days of the British occupation, shows Samuel Ranger II and family resident in East Hampton. In 1778 "Samuel Ranger, farmer, age 40," along with everyone else in town, took an oath of allegiance to George III. That places his birth date in 1738, five years earlier than the 1743 shown in both the Wrentham and Continental Army records. Whether this was entered in error or by design to mislead the British, we cannot say. He had little choice about the oath of allegiance; one does what one must to get by.<sup>9</sup>

The occupation years were difficult in the extreme for those who stayed on the East End. Farms were raided again and again by Patriots and British alike, and the farmers were punished by each side for supplying the other. The final irony was that after the war these same Long Islanders would be required to pay a special tax because they had not contributed their fair share to the war effort. However, Yankee stoicism saw them through and life slowly returned to normal.

The end of the war ushered in the beginnings of Sag Harbor's boom-town era. It became an official port of entry, with a shipping volume of major importance. The prosperity of the port boosted the economy for miles around, including the hamlet of Northwest, a supplier of timber, fire-wood, and farm products.

**The First Census.** The national census of 1790 recorded that Samuel Ranger II lived at Northwest with his wife, four sons, and two daughters. Then, three years later: "Samuel Ranger enters for his earmark an ell on the upper side of the left ear, and a half penny on each side of the right ear. Recorded the 23rd day of August, 1793 by Abraham Miller, Town Clerk."<sup>10</sup>

He had finally settled in and acquired enough cattle and sheep to participate in the common pasturage. The Ranger farmstead comprised about 150 hilly acres on the western shore of Three Mile Harbor, immediately south of Hand's Creek. The site, still substantially intact, is the home of Boy's Harbor, a children's summer camp.

**The Progeny of Samuel Ranger II and Elizabeth Parsons.** Olive Ranger (1764-1859), the firstborn of Samuel II, never married. The 1820 census listed fifty-five-year-old Olive as head of a household, living alone and then, in 1850 she as a pauper lodged in a poorhouse kept by Frederick and Hannah King, probably at Northwest. She had far outlived her siblings, and her nephews evidently declined to take her in. To keep a poorhouse generally meant to

provide bed and board for public charges in one's own home. Resident in that same 1850 poorhouse was the child pauper Charles Mayes, of whom more later. Olive died in East Hampton at the age of ninety-five.

An apparent second daughter, born ca. 1775, is known only as a census statistic of 1776, 1790, 1800, and 1810. Indications are that both she and Olive lived with their parents until the parents died some time between 1810 and 1820. Then she disappears from the record. Where did she go? Why is she not with Olive in the 1820 census? She remains a near-total mystery. It is frustrating to be unable at least to dignify her with a name.

It will be noted that this is a male-oriented account. Census records before 1850 listed only the head of a household by name, with everyone else merely counted. Most males showed up eventually as they established households of their own, but females often faded into the statistical data. As a result, one relies heavily on vital statistics—birth, death, and marriage records—to trace the early women. In East Hampton, such record keeping fell to the town minister, were he so inclined. Often he was not, so we must fall back on family Bibles and other devices as best we can.

The Ranger sons Parsons (1769-1840) and Abraham (ca. 1774-bef. 1820) eventually returned to Williamstown, where they married the sisters Martha and Naomi Torrey (the Torrey family still thrives there). Both couples eventually settled in upstate New York. Sons Dering (1771-1830) and Samuel III (1773-1837) stayed on at Northwest, and all subsequent Long Island Ranger progeny are descended from these two.<sup>11</sup>

**The War of 1812.** Once again the Champlain valley and Niagara frontier became war zones, and British warships controlled the Sound and Gardiner's Bay for the duration. The impressment issue, advanced as the immediate cause of the conflict, was neither remote nor theoretical to the sea-going East Enders. East Hampton men who suffered impressment included Lewis Osborn, John Strong, Reuben Hedges; and from the Northwest-Three Mile Harbor area, the Ranger neighbors John Gann, Ben Miller, Ben Leek, and Joshua Penny. Penny, who was held in servitude for many years, recounted his "Life and Adventures" in a pamphlet published in 1815. Commodore Hardy's June 1813 naval raid on the Sag Harbor wharf was beaten off by well-placed cannon on the burying ground hill. A brief landing was made and a sloop set afire, but the enterprise was hastily abandoned. One of the sentinels on the wharf that night was the aforementioned John Gann.<sup>12</sup>

Family tradition has it that Samuel III, who was nearly forty when war was declared, was active in the local militia at the time of the 1813 Sag Harbor raid. The muster rolls show a Samuel Ranger who was a sergeant in Shubael Dunham's Company, Churchill's Regiment, New York Militia, but that was almost surely our Samuel's nephew, the son of his brother Parsons who left Northwest to return to Massachusetts, and eventually settled in up-state Warren County, New York. Samuel was a very popular name in the Ranger family, as were John and Stephen, so one must be careful in interpreting the data. Our

South Fork militia force was Miller's Detachment of Case's Regiment, commanded by Major (later General) Jeremiah Miller who rests in East Hampton's South End Burying Ground.<sup>13</sup>

Between the British blockade and American-imposed trading restrictions, shipping ground to a halt and economic depression became rampant in New England and New York. Merchantmen rotted at their docks and dissatisfaction with the central government ran high. At the Hartford Convention of 1814, angry Federalists came close to advocating secession. Happily, their militant delegation to Washington arrived just as the war ended.

**The Samuel Line.** Shortly before the War of 1812, Samuel Ranger III (1773-1837) married Jerusha Miller, the daughter of Nathan Miller and Mary Mulford. Samuel III and Jerusha had three daughters and a son. The daughters were Fanny (1813-1845); Eliza (1818-?), who married a Mr. Hatch and moved to Brooklyn; and one (1811-ca. 1890), first name unknown, who married Charles Marsh and moved to St. Joseph, Michigan, at a young age. She signed letters to her brother "Mrs. Charles Marsh" in the formal style of the time. The son was Samuel IV. He married Sarah (Sally) Ann Lester of Round Swamp, the daughter of farmer Talmage Lester and Maria Miller (the farm still operates, staffed by the extended Lester family).

**The Dering Line.** Sometime earlier Samuel III's older brother Dering married Mary (Polly) Van Scoy, the youngest daughter of Isaac Van Scoy and Mercy Edwards. Isaac and Mercy had come from Amagansett as newlyweds and were the first to try farming in what was then called the Great Northwest Woods. They were the de facto founders of the hamlet of Northwest, probably its largest landholders, and arguably its leading family. Dering and Polly had three sons. The eldest, Stephen (1798-1885) married first Eliza Conklin, who was the mother of his five children, only two of whom, Alfred D. and William, survived and married. Mary died unmarried at twenty-nine, George died unmarried at twenty-five, and Stephen Jr. died in his teens. In late middle age Stephen married Eliza Leek, and finally, at the age of seventy, he married Phebe Bennett. It took a minimum of two to keep house.

Sylvester (1801-1892) married Mary Conklin. David, their only child who survived infancy, died unmarried at age 30. Alfred (1807-1882) married Matsey Edwards. Their only child to survive to adulthood was Julius. Harriet A. died in childhood. Of Dering's eleven grandchildren, only three, all grandsons, survived to adulthood and married. The progeny of the three sons of Dering were unusually decimated by infant mortality, small pox, typhoid fever, and various other troubles. Perhaps the port, now flourishing as a major deep sea whaling center, with its comings and goings of sailors of many races and nations, contributed to the problem.

Sylvester, one of six original trustees at the official incorporation of the First Presbyterian Church of East Hampton, was also involved in government though to a lesser extent than Stephen. In addition to serving as viewers of



fences, path masters, and pound masters, which most men of good reputation did from time to time, these two served many terms as town trustee. All Ranger men were also Northwest school trustees at one time or another, until it closed its doors in 1885. The sons of Dering were worthy successors to grandfather Van Scoy.<sup>14</sup>

**The Samuel Line Continued: The Civil War.** Samuel IV and his sister Fanny (1813-1845) stayed on in East Hampton after their sisters emigrated, one to Brooklyn, the other to Michigan. In July 1862, when President Lincoln issued a call for 300,000 new three-year enlistments, the 127th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment was one of those raised in response. They called themselves the Monitors but were commonly known as the "Clamdiggers."

Samuel Ranger IV was forty-five years old, the maximum permissible age to enter military service. He had a small farm as well as a wife, a two-year old toddler, a twelve-year old son, and a fourteen-year old daughter. Having worked hard all his life, he seems to have been at the edge of a reasonably comfortable middle age, and not a strong warrior candidate. However, he said he had to go because all Samuel Rangers had been soldiers. In August 1862 Samuel IV and his friends and neighbors, perhaps as many as three dozen of them, left East Hampton for the start of a long and difficult adventure. As in most East Hampton things, the Millers, Kings, and Bennetts were heavily represented. Old folks used to say that the Sunday morning church bell sang: "Come Bennett! Come Miller! Come King!"

The roll of volunteers also included Bailey, Baker, Beebe, Brown, Clark, Collum, Dayton, Edwards, Gould, Lester, Loper, Morgan, Payne, Pidgeon, Sherrill, Squires, and Strong. The list is heavy with farmers and baymen and light on men of business and the well-to-do. Unlike more modern military units, these men all knew one another, knew each others' wives and families, and recognized each others' horses. They were to some considerable degree cousins descended from their common, small-town gene pool. In their first year, the regiment participated in the defense of Washington in the days following the Battle of Antietam; General Dix's campaign on the Virginia Peninsula; the successful defense of Suffolk, Virginia against General Longstreet's siege; and the harassment of General Lee's retreat after Gettysburg (at the time of which they were still at Suffolk).

The next two years were spent in the Siege of Charleston, posted on the barrier islands (Folly, Cole's, and Morris), south of the entrance to Charleston Harbor, within a stone's throw of Confederate-occupied Fort Sumter. Here they developed the innovative "boat infantry," patrolling the maze of tidal streams and marshes in eight and ten-oared surf boats, duty uniquely suited to the Long Islanders. The Regiment's two formal battles came late in 1864, in a campaign to cut the Charleston and Savannah Railroad as General Sherman neared Savannah on his march to the sea. The Battle of Honey Hill and the Battle of Deveaux's Neck, little known outside South Carolina, involved fewer than ten

thousand troops (both sides), but were as hotly contested and costly on their own scale as any battle of the war. The Clamdiggers led their division in both engagements. In its own corner of the war, the 127th New York was a crack regiment.<sup>15</sup>

Samuel IV managed to stay with his regiment for the full three years of its duty in Virginia and South Carolina, while many younger men fell by the wayside. He returned home at war's end in broken health and, although he lived another fifteen years, never recovered. They were fifteen years of chronic dysentery, sporadic bouts of malaria, and a leg wound that never healed.<sup>16</sup>

Three years after his father returned from the war, Samuel's only son, Ezra (1850-1869), shipped out of Sag Harbor on the whaling brig *Myra*, owned by W. & G. H. Cooper and commanded by Captain Henry Babcock. Among the family papers is a letter from Ezra to his father from "Fayal, Azore Islands, North Atlantic [with] Rio Janiero (*sic*), Brazil" indicated as the next mail ("Care of American Counsel") port of call. It has the appropriately jaunty tone of a youngster on an adventure.

Shortly after returning home from that first voyage, Ezra Ranger married Nancy Miller, the daughter of Lewis B. Miller and Matilda Bennett. A few weeks later, Ezra fell to his death from the mast of a ship at Greenport, thus putting an end to the Ranger surname in the Samuel line.

The majority of today's Ranger progeny in East Hampton descend from Samuel IV's daughters Annie (1846-1922, who married Oliver Goodale) and Eunice (1860-1928, who married Abram O. Miller, the younger brother of the above Nancy), or from their cousin Frances (1840-1910), the only child of Fanny. Frances married Charles Mayes, an orphan boy of Northwest. One of their numerous offspring, Howard Mayes, helped to establish the East Hampton Methodist Church at the beginning of the twentieth century, a departure from the Rangers' long adherence to the Presbyterian faith.

**A Milestone in Education.** Ezra's letter from the *Myra* reminds us of something it never intended. Its firm hand, good grammar, and excellent spelling are evidence of something new taking place in East Hampton. In his father's generation functional literacy was not uncommon but far from universal. Now, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the common folk, the farmers and fishermen and laborers, were becoming significantly more educated. School attendance, once a luxury to be indulged only as the business of making a living permitted, was rapidly becoming the rule.

Samuel IV's Civil War letters, twenty-three of which exist, were written by younger friends who by modern standards were only marginally competent. His usual scribes were his old neighbors Jonathan Allen Bennett, who died on Folly Island at the age of eighteen, and William B. Miller, who went on to a long career as a Lifesaving Service station keeper. Although these old writings are almost entirely phonetic, and completely devoid of punctuation, they communicate admirably well.<sup>17</sup>

**The Dering Line Continued.** In the West new opportunities abounded. Even as the nation plunged into civil war the transcontinental railroad neared completion. That marvel of its time ended all doubt that the nation stretched from ocean to ocean, and the Civil War ensured that it would continue to stretch from Canada to Mexico. William (1840-?), a son of Stephen, married Harriet Leek, the daughter of Erastus Leek and Eliza Smith. Taking advantage of the Homestead Act of 1862, they left for Illinois just after the Civil War. Efforts to trace them through census records have been unsuccessful.

Alfred D. (1835-1906), Stephen's son who remained at Northwest, married Charlotte Parsons and fathered three daughters: Mary E., Fanny D., and Charlotte. Julius (1848-1911), Alfred's son, carried on the family name in the Dering line. He married Henrietta Luce and sired George, Matsey and Harriet. George (1887-1959) and Harriet M. (1884-1954), a.k.a. Hattie, married Jessie and Frank Tuttle, brother and sister of Eastport, Long Island. Both couples subsequently made their homes there but remained in close touch with East Hampton, Sag Harbor, and Northwest.

George and Jessie had daughters: Irma (1914-1996, who married a Norwood; Eva (1918-1988), who married first a Coffey, second a Butler, and third a Thompson; Gladys, born 1924, who married William Rizzuto; and Leone, born 1926, who married a Davison. Gladys and Leone survive. There were also two sons, George and Edwin. The elder, George Jr. (1925-1997), removed to Salt Lake City and died without progeny. Alfred D.'s eldest daughter, Mary Elizabeth (1862-1911), was a live-in teacher at Gardiner's Island when it still operated as a near-feudal fiefdom. She later taught at Northwest in the one-room school at the edge of the Van Scoy farm (she was probably the last to teach there). Mary E. married Henry Talmage, but their only child never survived infancy. Alfred D.'s younger daughter, Charlotte (1875-1896), married Francis M. Conklin. Their line is alive and well, and still in East Hampton. The third daughter, Fanny D. died in infancy.

**World War II.** George's second son, Edwin (1921-1969), was a corporal in Battery B, 271st Field Artillery, in World War II. Edwin, who died unmarried, was the last male to bear the Ranger name on Long Island. He was a ninth-generation American as well as a sixth-generation member of the family's Long Island branch. Although he was survived by two sisters, Gladys and Leone, Edwin's passing marked the end of the Ranger surname in the Dering branch.

**Decline of the Ranger name.** The 1850s saw the high point of the Ranger name on Long Island. Over the next three generations it died out in East Hampton but lingered in Eastport. Improbable as it may be, after 1850 the young Ranger men were taken one by one by disease or accident. Only four ever left the Island: The brothers Parsons and Abraham left some time after the Revolution; William went homesteading after the Civil War; and George Jr. of Eastport left after World War II. The young Ranger women, on the other hand, generally fared well, and intermarried with older East Hampton and Eastport

families. Although the Ranger name disappeared, the gene stock was thoroughly and widely absorbed into the fabric of the East End.

Aside from being genealogical statistics, who were these Rangers of Northwest? We know a lot about a few, but very little about most. Nevertheless, some general observations can be made to satisfy our need to tag and pigeon-hole. Only Edmund the book-binder, our immigrant forefather, achieved a level of fame that preserved his name. He was at the top of his craft, involved with the first books completely published in the colonies and such authors as the Reverend Increase Mather, the minister whose Puritan faith he and future Rangers shared. The model of the urban entrepreneur, exemplified by Edmund and, to a lesser extent, by his son John the house-wright, stayed in Boston.<sup>18</sup>

On Long Island the Rangers were primarily subsistence farmers and laborers. Most of the earlier men filed earmarks with the town clerk, suggesting that they kept considerable numbers of sheep and participated in the common pasturage. Secondly, the Rangers were baymen and woodcutters for as long as Sag Harbor's shipping activities provided a ready market. Later they pursued those activities primarily to meet their own needs. None, again with the possible exception of Edmund, were movers and shakers outside their immediate neighborhoods. However, the Rangers were vigorous participants in, not merely passive observers of, the events that shaped their days.

The Long Island Rangers were not town people. Although the hamlet of Northwest was partially defined by its remoteness, few people left. Before 1900, only Sylvester D. is known to have sold out and opted for village life, and that was in his old age. That all of the Samuel Rangers were soldiers is nearly true, but perhaps misleading. They readily, even eagerly, responded to their country's call when it was appropriate to do so, but they were not military men. Oral tradition indicates that they took pride in their military service, but when it was over they put it behind them and moved on. The Rangers of Northwest were rural people of modest means, typical of their time and place; and therein lies their historical interest.

**Northwest Revisited.** Because Northwest sits astride the Ronkonkoma glacial moraine, its terrain is highly variable. While most areas exhibit the choppy hilliness and thin, uneven soil typical of that situation, there are still isolated fertile pockets. Local lore has it that the general utility of the land for crop farming lasted only a few generations before it wore out and reverted to pasture land and wood lot. The farms of Northwest could not long compete with those of the hamlet of Wainscott, situated on the rich loam of the outwash plain just to its south. Sheep farming became common at Northwest for a time during the nineteenth century, and then that died out too.

By 1900, Northwest was largely a wilderness marked by old wells and cellar holes, its pastures rapidly giving way to field cedar and oak scrub. Thus it stayed until after World War II when it slowly came back to life as an area of parkland and second homes. Happily, the old dirt roads and footpaths still exist,

the beneficiaries of benign neglect, and the area has become increasingly popular with hikers.<sup>19</sup>

## NOTES

1. The article draws on two overlapping works in progress. All Old World and New England genealogical information is from Michael B. Ranger and Robert J. Young, "350 Years of the Rangers in America," (both authors are New England based, tenth-generation Ranger descendants from Edmund's fourth wife, Mary Gatcliffe). The other source, Charles E. Squires, *The Rangers of Northwest*, 2d. ed.. (E. Northport: the author, 1966), deals with the history and genealogy of the Long Island branch, of which he too is a tenth-generation descendant (the first edition, distributed as a work in progress to Ranger family progeny and researchers, triggered the research sharing which made this article possible).

2. Jeannette Edwards Rattray, *East Hampton History and Genealogies* (Country Life Press, 1953), 7, 13; *Newsletter of the Springs Historical Society* 3 (March 2000): this newsletter reprints articles of interest to the Springs area which previously appeared in the *East Hampton Star*; the edition noted focuses on Isabel Norton's analysis of the correlation of older colloquial Springs area speech with that of Elizabethan Dorset and neighboring shires.

3. "Old French War Letters," *New England Historical Journal* 4 (January 1850): 24-27.

4. D. Hamilton Hurd, *History of Bristol County, Massachusetts* (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis and Son, 1883), 499-563; Ranger and Young.

5. Rattray, 515; Sherrill Foster, "The Five John Parsons Untangled," *Suffolk County Historical Society Register* 23 (Spring 1998): 128; Nancy Hyden Woodward, *East Hampton, A Town and Its People, 1648-1992* (East Hampton, 1995), 88; for French and Indian War participants see Rattray, 223, 228, 229, 250, 263, 328, 354, 451.

6. "Articles of General Association," L. I. Collection, East Hampton Library.

7. "Compiled Military Record of Samuel Ranger of the 3d New York Regiment, Revolutionary War," cards 35495787, 35494703, 35494863, 35494939, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.; Rattray, 515.

8. Frederic G. Mather, *The Refugees of 1776 from Long Island to Connecticut* (1913; reprint, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1972, 1995).

9. Thomas B. Wilson, *Inhabitants of New York 1774-1776* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1993): 253; "Oath of Allegiance," L. I. Collection, East Hampton Library.
10. *East Hampton Town Records*, 4: 279.
11. Ranger and Young.
12. Averill Dayton Geus, *From Sea to Sea, 350 Years of East Hampton* (W. Kennebunk, Me.: Phoenix Publishing, 1998), 44-48; Joshua Penny, "The Life and Adventures of Joshua Penny" (East Hampton: the author, 1815, printed by Alden Spooner, Brooklyn), L.I. Collection, East Hampton Library; Henry P. Hedges, "Early Sag- Harbor," an address delivered before the Sag Harbor Historical Society, 4 Feb. 1896, L.I. Collection, East Hampton Library.
13. "Compiled Military Record of Samuel Ranger of the New York Militia, War of 1812," cards 37671012, 37671068, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.
14. Charles E. Squires, "Uncle Stephen Ranger, A Piece of Work," *East Hampton Star*, 26 Feb. 1998.
15. Franklin McGrath, "127th New York Volunteers: Monitors" (pub. date unknown; reprint, Mattituck: Amereon House, 1992).
16. Charles E. Squires, *Sam's War* (East Northport: the author, 1998, 1999, 2000), an account of Samuel Ranger IV's Civil War experiences in the 127th New York Volunteer Infantry, available at the Suffolk County Historical Society, Riverhead; the L.I. Studies Institute, Hofstra University; Northport and East Northport Public Libraries; Northport Historical Society; L.I. Collection, East Hampton Library.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Thomas J. Holmes, *The Bookbindings of John Ratcliff and Edmund Ranger, Seventeenth Century Boston Bookbinders*, in *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society for April 1928* (Worcester, Mass., 1929).
19. John Hanc, "Retro Trekking," *Newsday*, 11 Oct. 2000.

# SECONDARY SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST

We are pleased to present the following three winning entries in our “Long Island as America” essay contest, an ongoing event we cosponsor with the USB Center for Excellence and Innovation in Education, Dr. Eli Seifman, director. We cordially invite social studies teachers to submit papers by their students on any aspect of Long Island history.

## **RELIGIOUS FREEDOM COLLIDES WITH AIDS EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF *WARE V. THE VALLEY STREAM SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK***

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In 1989, the recently developed mandatory New York State Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) curriculum sparked a First Amendment conflict between the state and the Plymouth Brethren, a separatist religious group residing in Valley Stream. In the wake of the rapid spread of AIDS, New York State Commissioner of Education Thomas SNOBOL introduced this curriculum to alert children to the danger. The Plymouth Brethren sought exemption for their children in Valley Stream public schools, contending that it infringed on their religious rights. Stressing AIDS education as integral to the state's goal of protecting its residents, SNOBOL denied their request. The judicial controversy that followed pitted religious rights against the state's concern for the good of its people.

In the 1830s, in Dublin, Ireland, John N. Darby founded the Christian group now known as the Plymouth Brethren. Darby left the Anglican priesthood because he felt that the Church of Ireland—a Protestant establishment in a predominantly Catholic country—no longer met his spiritual needs. He began to organize small congregations of worshipers, called assemblies, in which Christians could freely worship according to their own interpretation of Scripture. With more than twelve hundred members, the assembly in Plymouth, England, was the most important of these groups. Early leaders included aristocrats, scholars, and army and navy officers. In an event leading up to an 1845 schism known as the Bethesda division, Darby accused B. W. Newton, the leader of the Plymouth Elerington Street Assembly, of “attempting to establish the large and influential group as an independent church with himself as pastor.” George Muller, the leader of the Bristol assembly, accepted the fellowship of members excommunicated from Plymouth. Arguments between Darby and Muller caused a split in the movement; followers of Darby were called the Closed or Exclusive Brethren, while those who followed Muller became known

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as the Open or Independent Brethren.<sup>1</sup>

Open Brethren permit any Christian to attend meetings, and make decisions applying only to their assemblies. Closed Brethren follow a more rigid policy, barring outsiders from their meetings and demanding that one assembly's disciplinary decisions be honored by all assemblies. Separatism, an important aspect of Closed Brethren ideology, stems from a desire to keep the community free of the outside world's evil influence. Brethren infected by this influence must repent or face exclusion. Both groups agree that Brethren throughout the world should follow the same doctrines, observing the Eucharist weekly, expecting the Second Coming, and following the example set by Jesus and his disciples. Bible study is crucial, because it is their sole authority on religious matters. Brethren assemblies are priesthoods of believers, with no hierarchy, status for leaders, or distinction between clergy and laity. They take no collection at meetings, believing that God will provide needed funding.<sup>2</sup>

Donald Ross, a Scottish evangelist, and his followers began the Brethren movement in North America, preaching and forming small assemblies in the early 1870s in Ontario, Canada. During the late 1870s and early 1880s, the movement spread westward. Assemblies acted independently but were united by frequent conferences and shared practices and beliefs. By the mid-1900s there were Brethren communities all over North America. The Closed Brethren group in Valley Stream, which in 1989 consisted of about 120 members, moved there in 1978 from disparate communities in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island. According to John Ware, some two hundred members presently live in Valley Stream. Except for the lower grades, the children are home-schooled, taught by their parents.<sup>3</sup>

The Brethren in Valley Stream contended that their principles of separatism and purity were violated by the mandatory AIDS curriculum. Early in the lawsuit held in State Supreme Court, Mineola, the state sought summary judgment from the trial judge, Alfred S. Robbins. In such a challenge, plaintiffs must show that their First Amendment free exercise rights have been impermissibly burdened. Conversely, if this be proven, the state must demonstrate that its compelling interest outweighs this violation, and that it has no less restrictive way to achieve its goal. This was the framework for the arguments in *Ware v. The Valley Stream School District and the Commissioner of Education of the State of New York*.<sup>4</sup>

Judge Robbins ruled in favor of the state on 14 June 1989, finding that the rights of the Brethren had not been impermissibly infringed upon. He also ruled that the state's compelling interest justified the compulsory AIDS curriculum, a decision affirmed by the Appellate Division. However, the Court of Appeals, New York State's highest court, reversed the lower courts' rulings, holding that more information would be required to settle the dispute. At that point, the parties agreed to a "standstill agreement," exempting the Brethren



from the AIDS curriculum until litigation concluded. During the discovery process, both parties presented supporting evidence. One issue explored was the relevance to *Ware of Wisconsin v. Yoder*, a 1972 U.S. Supreme Court case holding that Wisconsin's compulsory high school education law violated the First Amendment rights of the Old Amish order.<sup>5</sup>

In their depositions, the plaintiffs explained their objections to the curriculum from which they wanted exemption. Brethren parents John Ware and Robert Scott specifically objected to the exposure of their children to the medical implications of homosexual activity, and the characteristics and effects of certain drugs. They pointed out that the possibility of moral corruption was enhanced because the children were susceptible to outside influences, and this, in turn, would damage the moral bonds of the assembly and, as in *Yoder*, threaten the existence of the Brethren as a church community.<sup>6</sup>

The plaintiffs also argued that the regulation violated the privacy right of parents to raise their children free of government interference, and also contradicted the Brethrens' belief that only parents and other adult members of the community could teach ethical standards. The Brethren did not object to the clinical teaching of AIDS, but feared that classroom education would directly or indirectly imply moral teachings. John Ware argued that "[T]he conversation couldn't be controlled so that moral issues would be discussed strictly from an educational point of view rather than a moral point of view." Two Brethren parents described this manner of instruction as "[t]he consistent effort to broaden a child's education, to give him all the options and possibilities, both positive and then negative and then let him select his own course and standard [that ran] directly contrary to scriptural principles."<sup>7</sup>

The state contended that the commissioner's requirements did not target religious beliefs, and that Brethren children were not compelled to act contrarily to their practices, but would simply be exposed to the facts for the sake of education. The state responded to the privacy argument by maintaining that the commissioner's regulation did not proscribe the education the Brethren children received at home. Through the discovery process it became apparent that Brethren children attempted to maintain a degree of separation while attending public schools. They did not take the bus but were driven by members of the Brethren, were instructed by their parents not to engage in social discussions or otherwise mingle with non-Brethren classmates except when required by academic assignments. The Valley Stream Brethren children were forbidden even to have lunch in the cafeteria, because "[e]ating involves fellowship, if I eat with you I'm in fellowship with you." Brethren children were picked up each day and driven home for lunch.<sup>8</sup>

Teachers and administrators reported that the Brethren made few requests for exemptions before filing the lawsuit. After its filing, they requested exemption from several areas of education that they found blasphemous or evil. According to Robert Scott: "[W]e felt that we had received fresh light from the Lord as to the explosion of the use of videos and computers tied together...these

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are anti-Christian instruments that would eventually be used by a man who will be the personal anti-Christ and he will use them to deceive the entire world.” They were exempted from computer courses except for word processing, and from all video education (when educational videos were shown, Brethren children asked to leave the room or averted their eyes from the screen). They received exemption from such works read in literature courses as *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and took an elective biology course in horticulture instead of human psychology and evolution. Brethren were discouraged from education beyond high school, and most did not attend universities.<sup>9</sup>

Members maintained a certain degree of separation in the workplace. Most of them owned their own business or worked in a Brethren-owned enterprise. Before owning Safetywise, a safety equipment distributor, Scott operated a floor waxing and carpet cleaning concern. During the course of his work, he sometimes had to enter the workplaces or residences of non-Brethren. Scott testified that during the years preceding the litigation, many Brethren worked for firms owned by non-Brethren or that hired many non-Brethren employees. John Ware owned a construction company in which all employees except his two daughters were non-Brethren.<sup>10</sup>

Some Brethren’s jobs required travel. While working for his father’s linen importing business in the early 1960s, James Taylor III made occasional buying trips by automobile within five or six hundred miles of New York, during which he stayed in hotels, motels or, when convenient, with Brethren relatives. Brethren left the community two or three times a year to attend religious meetings in other communities throughout the United States and Canada, usually traveling by automobile and avoiding public transportation.<sup>11</sup>

One of the Brethren’s principal precepts is to avoid what they perceive as evil. To this end, the Valley Stream assembly did not allow televisions, radios, or magazines in their homes. They did, however, subscribe to certain newspapers, such as the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*. Robert Scott testified that he allowed his eighteen- and fourteen-year-old sons to read the *New York Times* on a daily basis.<sup>12</sup>

Because the Brethren assembly in Valley Stream was not geographically isolated, most members had non-Brethren neighbors. Brethren parents interacted with the mainstream community in order to provide for the family’s basic needs. They bought groceries at supermarkets but did most other shopping from catalogues, with an occasional visit to a department store for clothes. Most owned at least one automobile, serviced by Brethren when possible, but at repair shops owned by non-Brethren when necessary. They did not encourage allowing non-Brethren into their homes, save for medical emergencies and service calls.

The second point of controversy was whether the state’s interests outweighed the religious interests of the Brethren. The plaintiffs did not address

this issue in detail, simply stating that the state's goals were not compelling enough to allow violation of the Brethren's free exercise rights. The state argued that the AIDS epidemic was a health crisis in the United States, and that New York accounted for 25 percent of reported cases. There was no known vaccine or cure and almost all victims died within two years of being diagnosed. The transmission of AIDS, however, was avoidable through certain preventive measures. The state contended that the most powerful weapon was education, which must be explicit to avoid confusion over the causes of the disease and preventive measures that could be taken. The plaintiffs did not contest the severity of the AIDS epidemic, but maintained that there was a less restrictive alternative to the commissioner's regulation. They claimed that the Brethren's teaching of rigorous moral and ethical standards provided an adequate substitute for the AIDS curriculum. John Taylor described the moral values the Brethren instilled in their children: "We try to provide them with moral guidance....we've taught them that their bodies are holy, the temple of the Holy Spirit." Smoking and drug use were considered affronts to God, sexual relationships outside of marriage were strictly forbidden, and marriage to non-Brethren was almost unheard of. From early childhood through adolescence and adulthood, Brethren were exposed to these values constantly, through daily meetings and scripture reading.<sup>13</sup>

While Brethren parents objected to exposing their children to the details in the classroom, they were willing to teach the essential facts of AIDS if they could provide their own moral insights. The state responded that strict moral teaching was not an adequate alternative to imparting knowledge of the AIDS epidemic; that Brethren children should be informed of the health consequences of actions that cause its spread; and that frequent movement in and out of the community was increasing the Brethrens' contact with the outside world. The state was particularly concerned with members "cast out" of the community for moral or religious violations, who presented a danger to society and themselves through their ignorance of the AIDS epidemic.<sup>14</sup>

Evidence offered during discovery demonstrated that any member who violated Brethren principles was "withdrawn from" the community and denied contact with other members. Sexual misconduct, lying, and drug use were among the offenses leading to this possibly temporary excommunication. Withdrawn from members were prohibited from working in Brethren-owned businesses, and if the miscreant owned a business which employed other Brethren, they gave notice and left as soon as practical. In December 1989, John Ware was withdrawn from for "violating the high standard of trust" of the Brethren, but readmitted in May 1990. During his exile he lived at his place of business in Mineola, and his daughters found employment elsewhere. Ware spent his time working, reading the Bible and newspaper, and cooking his meals. He did not go to movies, read magazines, visit anyone's home, or have any contact with his family.<sup>15</sup>

When a withdrawn from member sought readmission, he or she was

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visited by a group of Brethren and asked to account for activities during the period outside the fellowship. If it were ascertained that the member had lived by Brethren principles and repented for the violation, he or she was allowed to rejoin the community. There was no limit to the time that Brethren could spend outside the community before being allowed to reenter. In the past, eleven members of the Valley Stream Brethren had been withdrawn from, including one for fornication. Five were readmitted, five were still "under discipline," and one had died. The procedure for withdrawing from was relatively simple.

[I]f it comes to be known that [a member of the community] is doing something we regard as a sin, the matter is put in the hands of two or three persons that are respected and valued in the community who will look into it and report back to the assembly. On the witness of two or three persons as to what the facts are, it will be decided what should be done.

In most cases, the family of a withdrawn-from member elected to remain in the community. When a member was withdrawn from, the information was not communicated to other Brethren communities, so that other assemblies might not become aware of it for a long period.<sup>16</sup>

Non-Brethren rarely expressed interest in joining a Brethren community, and such a situation never occurred in Valley Stream. Robert Scott, however, described a process by which non-Brethren could enter the community:

If someone expresses an interest they would normally be invited to be at our preaching in the, as we call it, in the open or on the street corner. If they express further interest, they would be invited to a brother's home and be spoken to. Once again, two or three persons who are respected would bring the facts before the Assembly, and they would be accepted.<sup>17</sup>

The state pointed out that, in the past, religious divisions among the Brethren resulted in the assimilation of great numbers of them into mainstream society. In 1970, Brethren in Valley Stream and other parts of the world began to express discontent with some long-held religious practices of separation. Among them were the prohibitions against eating with non-Brethren or being incorporated into professional associations. This dissatisfaction was manifested in a rejection of the leadership of James Taylor, an important member of what would later become the Valley Stream community. During the separation that resulted, about 150 members of that community and 15 percent of Brethren worldwide dispersed into the secular community.

After conducting the discovery process, the state decided not to pursue the case. It determined to allow the "standstill agreement" to remain in place, and did not enforce the mandatory AIDS education regulation against the plaintiffs. Robert Calica, the attorney for the Brethren, believes that this decision was based on the state's conclusion that the Brethren would win the case because of their willingness to teach their children the important facts of AIDS. Calica also believes that the state feared that a Brethren victory would set a precedent and spark further litigation against the AIDS curriculum by other religious groups.<sup>18</sup>

If this were the state's reasoning, its conclusions were accurate. The testimony of the Brethren showed that they were not truly isolated, but rather were integrated in mainstream society in many ways. Discovery, however, revealed the strength of their convictions and demonstrated that the mere exposure to facts concerning the AIDS disease was a violation of their religious beliefs. The plaintiffs did not provide evidence to refute the many facts presented by the state to establish the epidemic proportions of AIDS, but the Brethren had the advantage on the case's most critical issue: whether there was a less restrictive means of achieving the state's goal. The state argued that the strict moral instruction of the Brethren was not an adequate substitute for factual teaching about AIDS. In their testimony, however, Brethren parents demonstrated a remarkable willingness to inform their children of basic facts concerning AIDS, excluding only minor details they found particularly offensive. For this reason, it appears that, if litigation had continued, the case would have been decided in favor of the Brethren, who would have received a complete exemption from the AIDS curriculum.

According to Calica, shortly after the conclusion of the case, many Brethren removed their children from public schools in Valley Stream and began taking the necessary steps to provide them with state-approved home schooling. Perhaps, as a result of *Ware*, the Brethren Valley Stream assembly decided that for their children to receive a public education while still maintaining their moral purity would be impossible.<sup>19</sup>

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# THE SECRET SUCCESS OF ROBERT TOWNSEND AND THE SETAUKET SPY RING

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After American defeats in the Battle of Long Island and at Kip's Bay, some patriots, including John Jay, suggested burning New York City rather than abandon it to the British. General Washington and most other strategists declined such drastic action, which would have hurt the city's residents too severely. However, it was necessary to keep all other options open, among them some way to obtain information regarding the size, movements, and disposition of British forces in New York City and on occupied Long Island.

Nathan Hale, a young Continental officer, was sent to Long Island to gather intelligence on the British. Unfortunately, he was soon discovered and hung as a spy. When captured on 21 September 1776, Hale carried concealed papers with sketches of fortifications and other important information. Subsequently, he acknowledged that he was on a secret mission for General Washington. This failed mission was Washington's first attempt to collect secret intelligence from within British lines.<sup>1</sup>

After the patriots were defeated in the Battle of Long Island (27 August 1776), Long Island became a British base for the duration of the Revolution. Aware of the need to establish a well-organized secret service, Washington realized that there was no better place for a spy ring than here among the enemy's forces. Learning some serious lessons from the Hale venture, Washington knew this service had to be carefully planned so that the spies could operate without being captured.

By 1778, the British securely held lower New York and Washington was struggling to keep the Revolution alive. Many of the soldiers became discouraged and tired of fighting. They were losing the war and many wanted to quit the army and go home. It was at this time that Washington began to command a top-secret spy operation in New York City and on Long Island,

He appointed Major Benjamin Tallmadge as his chief intelligence officer. Tallmadge, a Long Islander born in Brookhaven on 25 February 1754, graduated from Yale in 1773 and became an officer in Connecticut's Second Regiment. He served as a junior officer of dragoons from 1776 until 1778, fighting in most of the major battles in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

Tallmadge's chief spy was Robert Townsend, an Oyster Bay merchant and a key member of the network that became known as both the Setauket and the Culper Spy Ring (most of the members were from Setauket and the network revolved around Townsend, whose alias was Culper Jr.) Three Setauket men—Abraham Woodhull, a farmer known as Culper Sr; Austin Roe, a tavern keeper;



and Caleb Brewster, a whaler, rounded out the ring.<sup>2</sup>

Robert Townsend, born 25 November 1753, became a well-established merchant of New York City and Oyster Bay. As the proprietor of his father's business, he traded in flax, sugar, rum, iron, and dry goods during the war. This proved a good cover for mixing with the city's British occupiers, as well as communicating with Long Island patriots. No one suspected him of spying because of his business connections and pretended Loyalist sympathies. In the course of conducting transactions, he would talk with various shippers encountered at their offices or in coffeehouses and taverns. He made a practice of buying rum for his British and Loyalist friends, asking questions, and gaining bits of important information. Robert also worked part-time, without pay, as a journalist for James Rivington's Loyalist newspaper, the *Gazette*, in New York City. He also became a silent partner in the coffeehouse Rivington established on Wall Street, near the printing shop, to provide British officers with a place to meet and talk. British officers visited frequently, conversing freely with Townsend because they wanted their names in the paper. They never suspected that he was a spy, and his identity as Culper Jr. remained unknown. Although he was a respected businessman, his family, unaware of his wartime exploits, saw him as a lonely, sad, drinking man who did nothing worth noting. Townsend could not tell anyone about his role as a key secret agent during the war. Part of his cover included pretending to have Loyalist sympathies and writing for a Tory newspaper; because of this, most of his family was dismayed by his overt support of the British.<sup>3</sup>

One of the ring's most valuable achievements came in August and September 1780, with the capture of the British officer, Major John André. One of the many stories and controversies concerning this incident, even though there is no substantive evidence, is that Tallmadge received a report from his agents that a British spy might be using the alias "John Anderson." General Benedict Arnold, then commander of West Point, provided safe passage for a man using this name. On 23 September 1780, after a secret meeting with Arnold behind American lines in Westchester County, André was captured by three militiamen and taken to North Castle, where Lt. Col. John Jameson was in command of American troops. After André produced papers signed by Arnold he was sent under guard to West Point. Tallmadge was alerted and identified André when he was captured with papers in the name of Anderson, at which point André revealed his identity. Tallmadge was unable to prevent Arnold's escape, but made sure that André did not get away. After a trial, André was hung as a spy at Tappan, New York, on 2 October 1780.<sup>4</sup>

One of the most important achievements of the Long Island spy connection was in summer 1780, when the British were threatening the patriots' French allies. A French fleet of seven ships, four frigates, and more than thirty transports carrying five thousand troops was about to sail into Newport, Rhode Island, to assist the Americans. Washington did not know what the British knew about this, so he wrote an urgent message on 11 July, which was passed along

the spy ring. The reply got back to Washington by 4 P.M. on 21 July, the fastest delivery of a dispatch the Culper Ring had ever made. Washington learned that the British, under General Sir Henry Clinton, had eight thousand troops about to embark at Whitestone and sail up Long Island Sound to Newport to destroy the French fleet. Clinton, the longest-serving British commander-in-chief in the Revolution, was involved in many important battles, such as Bunker Hill, Long Island, and Monmouth.<sup>5</sup>

In response, Washington and his staff concocted a fictitious plan for a twelve thousand-man attack on New York City. They gave the plan to a man who, posed as a Tory farmer, passed it on to the British. Clinton was taken in by the ruse, called the British fleet back to New York, and the French fleet at Newport was saved.<sup>6</sup>

The men and women of the Culper Spy Ring took elaborate and highly effective precautions to preserve their identities. They communicated by means of complex codes they devised as a means of keeping in touch without revealing who they were. Throughout the Revolution, Washington and Townsend never met. Major Tallmadge, Washington's spy chief, prepared code books for four people: Washington, Woodhull, Townsend, and himself. The code consisted of hundreds of words from Entick's *Spelling Dictionary*, each of which was assigned a number. All the spies and other key people were also given numbers: Washington was 711; Townsend 723; Roe 724; and Tallmadge 721. In addition to numeric codes, aliases included John Bolton (Tallmadge) and Samuel Culper/Culper Sr. (Woodhull). Many important places were given numbers: New York was 727; Long Island 728; Setauket 729. Months of the year were also given numbers, and each of the twenty-six letters of the alphabet was given a different letter. Tallmadge kept the original code and forwarded copies to Long Island and General Washington. Most important to the spy ring was the use of invisible ink, which had been invented by James Jay, a physician living in England who was a brother of John Jay (who later became the first Chief Justice of the United States and then governor of New York).<sup>7</sup>

Washington called this creation a sympathetic stain or white ink. He ordered that the invisible messages be written between the lines or under a regular written message, so as not to arouse suspicion. The messages were deciphered by using a special liquid containing a chemical that made the white ink visible by wetting the paper with it. Sometimes a letter would be folded in a special manner so that whoever received it would know that there was invisible ink. Townsend preferred invisible ink to the code sheet prepared by Tallmadge. At one point, Washington had to tell his agents to economize with the special ink because of its limited supply.<sup>8</sup>

One unsubstantiated story has it that a woman known as Agent 355 was involved in the Culper Spy Ring. The story gives her no name or other personal information. She was supposedly the lover of Robert Townsend and mother of their child, Robert Townsend Jr. After many years it seems that this myth can

be laid to rest. The mother of Robert Townsend Jr. was Mary Banvard, an immigrant from Nova Scotia, who at the time was Townsend's housekeeper in his New York apartment. Robert Townsend Jr. was born on 1 February 1784, after the war was over and the spy ring disbanded. Robert Jr.'s cousin, Solomon Townsend, settled this myth by proving that Robert Jr.'s mother was not the mystery spy. Solomon wrote in the family scrapbook that Robert Jr. was accepted as Robert Townsend's son, and that the mother was the housekeeper in the New York apartment where Robert lived with his brother, William, and another, unidentified, relative. Solomon suggested it was possible that William was father of the boy, yet Robert accepted the child as his responsibility. This information seems to put an end to this mystery. The only hint of a woman's involvement was a comment in a coded letter to Washington dated 15 August 1779, by Culper Sr., Abraham Woodhull of Setauket: "I intend to visit 724 (New York) before long and think by the assistance of a 355 (woman) of my acquaintance, shall be able to out with them all." There was no Agent 355 involved. The number simply meant woman, as the code number 371 meant man. There may have been a woman who assisted Woodhull during the early part of the spy ring, but there is no documentation of her.<sup>9</sup>

Townsend's family unknowingly helped keep Robert out of suspicion during the war. Hannah, Robert's first cousin and neighbor, married Major Joseph Green of the British army. Although it is unlikely that this arrangement had any ulterior purpose, it helped to conceal Robert's secret identity. Robert's sister Sarah, known as Sally, received a love note from a British officer in 1779. During the seven-year occupation of Long Island from 1776 to 1783, the British used Raynham Hall, the Townsend homestead in Oyster Bay as their headquarters: John André and the British commander, Col. Simcoe, lived there amongst the Townsend family. A British officer scratched out some memorable words for Sarah on one of the window panes. All these acts could only have helped to make Robert less suspected by the British.

Robert passed information on to General Washington about British activities at their major base in New York City. He transmitted the news either on paper using invisible ink or verbally to Austin Roe, who made the fifty-five mile ride on horseback to the city at least once a week. Roe's cover story was that he needed to purchase supplies for his business. He would meet Townsend and, when the papers were ready, return to Setauket and deposit the information in a box in a corner of Abraham Woodhull's farm. Woodhull, whom Tallmadge recruited for the spy ring in 1778, traveled whenever possible to town to meet Townsend, but to avoid suspicion, many messages were passed by unknown intermediaries. Another member of the group, Anna (Nancy) Smith Strong (a descendant of William "Tangier" Smith, the patentee of St. George's Manor) arrayed garments in certain ways on her clothesline to signify across Little Bay that a message was waiting. She would hang her black petticoat only when she knew that Agent 725, Caleb Brewster, had arrived from Connecticut in his whaleboat. To indicate in which of six coves Brewster was hiding, she would

add to the line one through six white handkerchiefs. Under cover of night, Brewster would sneak through the British boats guarding the nearby waters and cross Long Island Sound to Fairfield, Connecticut, which was under patriot control. A courier would take the papers to Benjamin Tallmadge or Enoch Hale, Nathan Hale's brother, who would forward them to George Washington.<sup>10</sup>

After helping win the Revolution, Townsend returned to his Oyster Bay home but was soon turned out by his family. He was seen as a disgrace for remaining loyal to the British. The code of silence for spies was strictly enforced, to the extent of complete deception of his friends and family. He moved to a house down the street and continued to manage his father's mercantile business. He died at Oyster Bay on 7 March 1838, at the age of eighty-four, and was buried unceremoniously in Tarrytown.<sup>11</sup>

Benjamin Tallmadge settled in Litchfield, Connecticut, where he became a merchant, represented his district as a Federalist in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1801 to 1817, and died in 1835 at the age of eighty-one. Abraham Woodhull continued to farm and served as a judge of the court of common pleas for six years and a Suffolk County judge from 1799 until 1810. Austin Roe continued to operate Roe's Tavern in Setauket, and then moved to Patchogue where he founded Roe's hotel in 1798. Caleb Brewster settled in Fairfield, Connecticut, and was pensioned by Congress for gallantry in action in a whaleboat raid. He was the captain of a revenue-cutter, an armed government vessel used to prevent smuggling in the New York area for many years. Anna Strong remained unmolested on Strong's Neck, but her husband, Judge Selah Strong, was confined on the infamous British prison ship *Jersey* in 1778 for "Surreptitious correspondence with the enemy." She gained permission to bring him food, which probably saved his life, and eventually obtained his release by appealing to her Tory relatives. Because he was still in danger he spent the rest of the war in Connecticut, taking their six children with him. At the end of the war, the family reunited in Setauket, its property restored to its former status as the initial portion of St. George's Manor.<sup>12</sup>

Nothing shows that Washington knew that Robert Townsend was Culper Jr., his chief spy. At Washington's own suggestion, he was never introduced or called anything other than Culper Jr. Townsend's role was uncovered only in the twentieth century after painstaking analysis of handwriting of secret papers. The principal unraveler of the mystery was Morton Pennypacker, a historian from East Hampton, whose voluminous collection of books, articles, pamphlets, and historic manuscripts pertaining to Long Island, amassed in the 1920s, became the foundation for the Pennypacker Long Island Collection of the East Hampton Free Library. He died at the age of eighty-four in 1956.<sup>13</sup>

Although the names of Robert Townsend and the other members of the Setauket Spy Ring may not be well known, they were genuine heroes of the Revolution. They worked hard and sacrificed parts of their own lives and

reputations to influence the outcome of the Revolution. They provided Washington with critical information concerning British forces stationed in New York. In 1780, they helped to save the French forces, who thus were able to assist their American allies gain final victory at Yorktown. Their cunning, as shown by their ingenious codes and techniques for passing on information, can still be marveled at, even by our high-tech society. Time and again, Tallmadge, Townsend, and the others put themselves in harm's way in conducting the often-inglorious work of intelligence gathering. The Setauket Spy Ring's courage for operating in enemy-occupied territory helped pave the way for American victory in the Revolution. The secrets of their success became the blessings of our liberties.

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4. DeWan, "Leading the Charge," *ibid.*, 141.
5. Purcell, 466.
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8. *Masked Dispatches: Cryptograms and Cryptology in American History, 1775-1900* (National Security Agency Central Security Service), 58-59.
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# DAVID FROTHINGHAM'S *LONG ISLAND HERALD*, 1791-1798

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The years following the American Revolution invoked both hope and disillusionment. George Washington took the first oath of office as president, and chose Alexander Hamilton as his secretary of the Treasury. Hamilton's "system," which included a protective tariff, funding of debt incurred during the Revolution, and establishment of a national bank appealed to the entrepreneurial interests but aroused the strenuous opposition of adherents of the agrarian Jeffersonian "system." The Jeffersonians, who came to power in 1800, especially objected to the rewards conferred to speculators by Hamilton's assumption, at face value, of the greatly depreciated debt. During the 1790s, the period of Federalist party control, the Hamiltonian system inspired vigorous opposition. Pamphlets were abundant, such as one that jeered that, "The rights of the poor but meritorious citizens are sacrificed to wealthy gamblers and speculators." Although Hamilton's action was necessary to establish the credit of the fledgling nation, there was feeling in the country that the voice of the common people was not sufficiently heard in the upper ranks of government.<sup>1</sup>

One such dissenter was David Frothingham, who grew up during the tumultuous years of the American Revolution in Charlestown, Massachusetts, and learned the printer's trade in Boston. After the adoption of the Constitution, he began taking sides, forming opinions, and developing the significance of the press, which "taught the political organizers and the manipulators of public opinion how useful newspapers could be to them."<sup>2</sup> He met Nancy Pell, of Pelham Manor, New York, a young woman from a prominent family, and married her when she was sixteen, he nineteen. In 1791, Frothingham made the decision to establish a newspaper. He became a conscientious editor, who cultivated respect for his profession. A reader of dissenting pamphlets issued in this turbulent period, he grappled with basic questions concerning freedom and the Enlightenment.

Henry Packer Dering, the influential scion of an East End mercantile family, had been appointed collector of the port of entry at Sag Harbor in 1788 by President George Washington. Dering "believed in a strong federal government, responsive to the needs of Long Island's farmers...and other working people."<sup>3</sup> Consequently, as did many prominent men of his time, he sponsored a local newspaper, in "which he could promulgate the benefits of the new constitutional government." His search for a printer-editor led him to Boston, where he tried to convince Frothingham, then a journeyman printer, to establish a printing business on Long Island.

David wrote to Dering in 1791, urgently sounding out the possibility of going to Sag Harbor to establish a newspaper. His letter combined blind hope

and the utmost confidence:

Sagg Harbour [as it was spelled in 1791] is the place of trade, we may suppose, that like the Centre of Gravity it draws most of the inhabitants around it...Sagg Harbour must be my station. It is a custom as ancient as the noble art of printing that when a young beginner sets up his business in a country place, to have some small premeum [*sic*].<sup>5</sup>

This was the period into which the first newspaper on Long Island was born, and its editor was eager to promise to "expose vice though clothed in the garb of authority" and "shoot folly as it flies," the latter phrase a quotation from Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*. In 1791, when David Frothingham set up his small printing shop on Main Street in Sag Harbor, he hoped for the best. It was an exciting decade for the sleepy enclave of Sag Harbor. The whaling industry had begun to dawn on the small village, providing expectations and optimism. David Frothingham's *Long Island Herald* was anxious to bring the town an awareness of important information.<sup>6</sup>

With the aim of expanding the minds and embellishing the enlightenment of his readers, Frothingham printed the first issue on 10 May 1791. The sole sheet of hardy rag paper, folded into four eight by seventeen inch pages, was a triumph signifying long, hard work and endurance. "To the Public: With the greatest deference, the first number of the Herald is laid before the public on whose smiles the Editor found his hope of patronage and expects so laudable an undertaking that will meet with encouragement tantamount to its merits."<sup>7</sup> Frothingham expected his newspaper to be a beneficial source of knowledge and entertainment, but the first number also carried advertisements from nine townspeople. Later, he printed ads for the return and reward of runaway slaves.

Most importantly, Frothingham presented subscribers with news that would most directly benefit them, nearly all of which was devoted to pertinent events in America, Long Island, Europe, Sag Harbor, and the Hamptons. With Sag Harbor's dependence on trade as the mainstay of its economy, all such news was compelling. Perhaps Frothingham's most prominent show of devotion was his long-running, front page spread entitled "The History of the War," an account of the American Revolution.

What piqued his interest most was the federal government's attitude towards France and Great Britain, which was watched carefully by Frothingham, Dering, and readers of the *Herald*. "Because Frothingham was dependent upon his patron, the editorials reveal Dering's political ideology."<sup>8</sup> The *Herald* also harbored suspicions of Federalists, most notably Alexander Hamilton, "who resisted the sharing of political power with citizens."<sup>8</sup>

Frothingham often inserted quotations from the Bible, biblical essays,



and religious statements and poems. Among such literary items were essays on philosophy, philanthropy, happiness, how to prevent unhappy marriage, European intelligence, American news from Elizabethtown, Boston, New London, Worcester, and Newburyport, and columns of poetry. Beneath the italicized title came the line from Pope, "Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies, and catch the manners living as they rise," his motto in every issue.<sup>9</sup>

As the village of Sag Harbor prospered, so did Frothingham's business. Since the *Herald* was the only newspaper on it, it circulated throughout Long Island and was carried by boat to be regularly distributed in New York City. Frothingham soon had to hire post riders to apportion papers around the Island. Through such enterprising allotment came an abundance of advertisers, whose ads the *Herald* boasted proudly.

The newspaper gained momentum across Long Island and in New York City, but, somehow, financial prosperity eluded Frothingham. He charged one dollar for a year's subscription, but also accepted payment in produce, hog bristle brushes, goose quills, and sail cloth. His printing shop ran on little or no money at times, and he and his apprentice, John Elliot, albeit respected community members, resorted to placing ads in the paper to ask subscribers to pay their debts. In the 8 June 1795 edition, he wrote, "The Printer earnestly requests all those indebted to him to make immediate payment, as he is much in want of Money at this time."<sup>10</sup> Near the end of the decade, Frothingham and his wife Nancy were parents of six children, and money was a necessity. As if pecuniary troubles were not enough to discourage him, he also had to grapple with the difficulty of obtaining rag paper on which to print his newspaper. Ads asking subscribers and townspeople to donate old rags and raw materials were common. During times of exceptional shortages, Frothingham either reduced the size of the *Herald* or suspended publication until he was able to procure printing necessities.

For seven and one-half years, he dutifully printed Frothingham's *Long Island Herald*. However, it may have been his interest in the federal government that led to his ultimate downfall. "The new administration sought to stifle the voice of the opposition."<sup>11</sup> By the late 1790s, his economic situation had worsened, and, coupled with John Adams's passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts, "his anti-administration slant soon made the publication of the *Herald* an unacceptable risk for his patron, Dering."<sup>12</sup> He made the decision to close his shop in December 1798. The last issue was printed 17 December, without fanfare or commotion. It was an abrupt and unassuming close, leaving those who benefitted from the newspaper without such a medium for news until 1802. Twenty years later, until his death in 1822, Henry P. Dering continuously sponsored the *Suffolk County Herald*, *Suffolk Gazette*, and *Suffolk County Recorder*.

On 19 December 1798, Frothingham attended an anti-Federalist rally in Bridgehampton, which marked Thomas Jefferson's presidential campaign. While in attendance, he accepted an offer from Aaron Burr to run the presses of

the *New York Argus*. Seeking to retain ownership of the *Argus*, the late owner's wife, Mrs. Thomas Greenleaf, needed someone to carry on its printing. At the age of thirty-four, he left his wife and children in Sag Harbor and went to New York City, taking the job of foreman-printer at a salary of \$8 per week.

The *Argus* "was one of Greenleaf's anti-Federalist papers, and Frothingham carried on established policies."<sup>13</sup> The *Argus* "earned the enmity of the former Secretary of Treasury"<sup>14</sup> by "promoting state legislation permitting Burr to charter a bank in competition with Hamilton's Bank of New York."<sup>15</sup> Frothingham was targeted for libel when a letter was reprinted in the *Argus* on 6 November, accusing Hamilton of secretly using money to suppress the Philadelphia newspaper *Aurora*, which publicly criticized him. On 9 November, Hamilton had him arrested for libel under the Alien and Sedition Acts. The reason is unclear why Hamilton had him arrested, when the letter had already appeared in other newspapers, and when Frothingham had no hand in the decision to reprint it. Within weeks a trial began, in which Frothingham was convicted to four months in jail and a fine of \$100. After that, David Frothingham's whereabouts remain shrouded in mystery.

In her 1941 pamphlet on Frothingham, Nancy Boyd Willey stated that a Frothingham descendent, Mrs. Louis T. Vail, asked the attorney, Thomas Dewey, to investigate the mystery (unfortunately, Willey did not say when this happened or whether the Dewey involved was the famous Thomas E. Dewey). Dewey searched court records back to 1799 and brought forth the minutes of the trial, *People vs. David Frothingham*, and the original indictment read by the court. Whether liability for the reprint belonged to Frothingham or Mrs. Greenleaf, the record shows that Frothingham assumed the fault: "If the owner had not been a woman, such an attitude on the part of a mere journeyman printer, would have been out of the question."<sup>16</sup>

The Greenleaf newspapers screamed that Hamilton was wreaking vengeance on them for their candor regarding his personal life, and did not stop until the rendering of the judgment, "That the defendant be committed to the Bridewell for Four Calendar Months, that he pay a fine of One Hundred Dollars, that he stand committed until the said fine is paid."<sup>17</sup> Once released from jail, Frothingham would benefit from money and sureties from the government for good behavior.

David Frothingham never again saw his family after he was released from jail, if ever he was released. Dark rumors circulated that Frothingham and other political prisoners were taken out West and killed toward the end of the Adams administration. An 1814 report from Boston claimed that one David Frothingham was on a ship that sank at sea. In 1822, another Boston paper purported that Frothingham died on the Congo River in Africa. A gravestone in Sag Harbor bears his name and the year 1814, but it stands without a body.

## NOTES

1. Nancy Boyd Willey, *David Frothingham: Pioneer Editor* (twelve-page pamphlet, Bay Shore: Long Island Forum, 1941), 4.
2. Milton Hamilton, *The Country Printer, New York State, 1785-1830* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1936), 54.
3. Steven R. Coleman, "Political Journalism in the 1790s: Frothingham's Long Island Herald," *LIHJ* 4 (Fall 1991): 93.
4. Ibid.
5. Andrew Smith, "A Publisher's Ambitious Start," in *Long Island: Our Story* (Melville: Newsday, 1998), 164.
6. Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man* (1733-1734), Epistle 1; Frothingham's *Long Island Herald*, 10 May 1791 (Morton Pennypacker Long Island Collection, East Hampton Library).
7. Coleman, 95.
8. Ibid.
9. *Long Island Herald*, 8 June 1795; Pope.
10. Coleman, 100.
11. Ibid., 95.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., 101.
14. Willey, 9.
15. Ibid., 14.
16. Ibid, 11.

## REVIEWS

Tom Twomey, ed. *Exploring the Past: Writings from 1798 to 1896 Relating to the History of the Town of East Hampton*. New York: Newmarket Press, 2000. Illustrations, bibliography, notes, index. Pp. xvii, 492. \$39.95. Available from Book Hampton, 631-324-4939; entire proceeds donated to the Long Island Collection of the East Hampton Library.

*Exploring the Past* is the third in a series of books detailing the history of the town of East Hampton and edited by Tom Twomey, the president of the East Hampton Library and leading organizer of the town's 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in 1998. Seventeen writings published between 1798 and 1896 include historical narratives, magazine articles, a diary, a sermon, and a travelogue by one of East Hampton's most famous part-time residents, John Howard Payne. Each piece is preceded by a succinct biography of its author. While the focus is on East Hampton, the contributions of such distinguished historians as Silas Wood (1828), John W. Barber (1842), Benjamin F. Thompson (1843), Nathaniel S. Prime (1845), J. H. French (1860), William Pelletreau (1882), and Martha Bockée Flint (1896) illuminate the history of Long Island.

Twomey's introduction warns that some of book's selections may not be completely accurate as to facts and interpretation. Written by authors with nineteenth-century mind-sets, the articles exhibit a patronizing bias toward the Native American people of East Hampton, the Montauketts. Moreover, there is little if any mention of women or African Americans, large groups that were nearly invisible in the community histories written during the period. This in no way detracts from the book's importance, but rather serves to enhance understanding of how society has matured in its interpretation of Native American and Long Island's cultural and social history. Lest we get too smug in our twenty-first-century politically correct world, we should remember that women could not vote in until 1920; schools were not desegregated before 1954; and, despite proliferation of their gambling casinos, the American Indian people are still scarcely visible to our consciousness. As Lyman Beecher, East Hampton's fourth minister, commented in his 1806 "Sermon Containing a General History of the Town of East Hampton From Its Settlement to the Present Time":

The folly and accumulated wisdom of former ages are made to pass before us. They admonish us what to shun; they instruct us what to embrace without the hazard of personal experiment (52).

Articles by members of the Gardiner family, John Lyon (unlike most Gardiners named Lion, John spelled his name with a "y") Gardiner (1798) and David Gardiner (1840), include tributes to the East End's first English settler, the

redoubtable Lion Gardiner, who arrived in 1639. John Lyon Gardiner covers a wide range of subjects from agriculture, fishing, Captain Kidd, and Gardiners Island to the Montauketts and the early colonists' belief in witchcraft. David Gardiner's thirteen-chapter "Chronicles of East Hampton" summarizes family history, praises the townfolk, and describes East Hampton in 1840 with the help of deeds, patents, and other excerpts from town records. (For State Senator David Gardiner and his daughter Julia, who married President John Tyler in 1844, see Natalie A. Naylor, "Mrs. Tippecanoe and Mrs. Tyler Two," in *LIHJ* 6 (Fall 1993): 2-16.)

Wood, Thompson, Prime, Pelletreau, Flint and other leading historians examine East Hampton's history, with more excerpts from town records, impressions of the Montauketts, and biographies of people who played important parts in the past. While some of the information is repetitive, the overall effect provides a fairly complete account through the end of the nineteenth century. Balancing these are well-composed magazine pieces by Walt Whitman and William Cullen Bryant describing the land, waters, animals, and beauty of the East End; William Mackay Laffan and Charles Parsons each explains how the area became a favored site for artists; and George Parsons Lathrop's study of "The American Lordship" offers further information on the history of Gardiner's Island.

Other engrossing articles are by Lyman Beecher, John Howard Payne, and Timothy Dwight, all of whom made names for themselves beyond East Hampton. Beecher was considered to be the father of more brains than any man in America: all his sons were ministers, and one of them, Henry Ward Beecher became the most influential preacher of the mid-nineteenth century; two of his daughters were involved in promoting higher education for women and spearheading the women's rights movement, and Harriet Beecher Stowe was the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Lyman Beecher's sermon proceeds from the history of East Hampton, from its 1648 inception to 1806, to a thunderous exhortation to his congregation to cherish the "glorious inheritance" transmitted by their Puritan forbears and "make the Bible and conscience your only guide...cease to do evil and learn to do well...and ye shall find rest to your souls" (70,71,72).

Another Calvinist minister, the Reverend Timothy Dwight, the president of Yale College, wrote a four-volume travelogue (published posthumously in 1822) that included his vivid recollections of East Hampton and other Long Island towns. John Howard Payne—who was probably not born in East Hampton but spent part of his childhood there—wrote one of the first descriptions of an American community for other than informational purposes while he resided in Washington, D.C., published in 1838 in the *Democratic Review*. (Most renowned for writing the words of "Home Sweet Home," Payne was also an accomplished actor, a playwright and poet of sorts, an editor, a writer for magazines, a champion of the rights of American Indians, a supporter of stronger copyright laws, and a US consular official in Tunisia, where he died

in 1852.) The purpose of his article was to strengthen Anglo-American relations, informing British readers of the rural life of America that closely resembled Old England's. As were many of his deeds and actions, this one was misconstrued; the residents thought that his impressionistic, tongue-in-cheek account of East Hampton and its manners and customs was intended to make fun of them.

Payne's article evokes a feeling that prevailed then and is still relevant—a distaste for intruders. He remarked that the steamboats that ran from New York to Sag Harbor “made the seclusion of East Hampton readily accessible to city rovers in pursuit of sea, air, and rurality—those barbarians of aristocracy and fashion.” This gave “the old settlers evident concern. When an accident abruptly stopped the newfangled-facility's approach it was a source of exhalation among some of the town's residents.” Finally, Payne predicted, ever so correctly, that the sweet solitude of East Hampton was inevitably destined to be interrupted by city dwellers (Robert Rushmore's account of Payne's article appeared in *LIHJ* 10 [Fall 1997]:25-38).

Readers may be disappointed by the lack of more illustrations highlighting the sites and geographical features which frequent the writings, as well as the absence of women's voices. One of those female voices was that of Miss Fanny Hunting, whose diary observations between 1855 to 1887 illuminate every-day life on Main Street in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. These judgements aside, I recommend *Exploring the Past* as a valuable addition to the literature of East Hampton which, as one of the nation's most beautiful and historic towns, well deserves the attention it has received from so many outstanding writers.

HUGH R. KING

*East Hampton's Official Town Crier, and Historic Site Constant at Home Sweet Home Museum*

*Takeoff! How Long Island Inspired America to Fly: Stories and phonographs of the men and women who took us from the farm fields to the moon.* Harvey Aronson, ed. Illustrations, bibliography, addenda, index. Melville: Newsday, 2000. Pp. ix, 214. \$44.95.

This tribute to aviation's pioneers is a very handsome addition to Newsday's two previous books, *Long Island: Our Story* (1998) and *Hometown Long Island* (1999). As explained in editor Harvey Aronson's introduction, Newsday's intent is not to provide a step-by-step account but rather “to convey the spirit and the history of aviation on Long Island by telling the stories of some of its most colorful figures—men and women who flew larger-than-life across a new frontier” (vii). A foreword by the novelist and flying enthusiast, Nelson DeMille, and Aronson's introduction are followed by eleven informative articles, four by Laura Muha, a free-lance writer, and seven by Newsday staff writers. Not only is each chapter replete with color and black-and-white photographs, but five separate “gallery” collections totaling more than two

hundred photos, some published for the first time, are inserted between every two chapters. Two useful addenda round out the book: a one-page "Long Island's Space Travelers" offers capsule biographies of the nine NASA astronauts from the Island, and a nine-page "Higher, Faster, Farther: Moments That Shaped Long Island Aviation" provides an almanac of aerial progress, from an 1833 balloon ascent to developments in the year 2000.

James Kindall's opening chapter tells of Glenn Curtiss, "The World's First Great Birdman," whose 1909 twenty-five-mile flight in his *Golden Flyer* won the \$10,000-prize donated by the *Scientific American*. The Curtiss Engineering Corp. started in 1917 with a factory in Garden City which developed prototypes for production by the Curtiss plant in Buffalo (a merger formed the Curtiss Wright Corp. in 1929). Four ensuing chapters by Laura Muha describe Harriet Quimby, "America's Flying Sweetheart"; Henry Walden, "The Dentist Who Loved to Fly"; Bert Acosta, "Bad Boy of the Air"; and Elinor Smith, "Freeport's Famous Young Flyer."

Drew Fetherston's chapter 7, although inappropriately titled "Red Mile and the Bullfrog," is an otherwise comprehensive, well-illustrated prewar, war-time, and postwar history of the Grumman Aircraft Engineering Co. and its founders, Leroy Grumman and Leon (Jake) Swirbul. Regarding the nicknames, "while everyone in the plant felt comfortable in calling Swirbul Jake, no one ever called Grumman anything but Mr. Grumman" (114). The account of Grumman's World War II role as producer of fighter planes for the Navy, including the single-month record production of 664 aircraft in March 1945 (115), contains the statement that its F6F *Hellcat* was "the only fighter aircraft developed in the United States during the war" (117). This contention is debatable, considering the existence of US fighters such as the F4U *Corsair*, P-51 *Mustang*, P-47 *Thunderbolt*, P-38 *Lightning*, and others during that period. Aside from this, the chapter ably reports the dramatic history of a company that "played a crucial role in winning World War II in the Pacific, put men on the moon, and helped shape the face and economy of Long Island for more than 50 years" (110).

The next three chapters continue the Grumman story. With so many men away during war-time, it became the first American firm to hire women as test pilots. Lauren Terrazzano focuses on one of them, Cecil "Teddy" Kenyon, with attention to her two colleagues, Barbara Jayne and Elizabeth Hooker. James Kindall recounts the exploits of the daring test pilot, Charles A "Chuck" Sewell, killed in an air crash in 1986, and Michael Dorman honors the accomplishments of Thomas "Tom" Kelly, "The Father of the Lunar Module."

The final chapter, by Newsday's leading historian, George DeWan, celebrates the distinguished George Dade,

who mingled with the great ones: Charles Lindbergh, Jimmy Doolittle, Amelia Earhart, Elinor Smith, Igor Sikorsky, Glenn Curtiss, Bert Acosta, to just name a few... Dade made his own

mark, but not as a daredevil flyer or an airplane builder. He developed a system that revolutionized the system of crating aircraft for shipping, and in World War II his company packaged more than 33,000 newly built American fighter planes for overseas delivery (188).

The five photo "galleries" are headed Pilots, Planes, Failures, Triumphs, and Memories. Some of the notable pilots are Lincoln Beachey, a pioneer stunt flyer; Clarence Chamberlin, an early transatlantic flyer; Giuseppe Bellanca, who was also a leading aircraft designer; Jimmy H. Doolittle, the famous air race competitor who became an Air Force general in World War II; Bessie Coleman, "the first licensed black pilot in the world, [who] died in a Florida plane crash in 1926" (36); and Roscoe Turner, whose eighteen-hour-and-forty-three-minute flight set an East-West record in 1930 (but in a Lockheed *Air Express*, not in the *Vega* ascribed to him in the book [36]).

The gallery of "Airplanes: Weird, Wild, and Silly" depicts the strange-looking machines which often resembled "flying erector sets, and toys and centipedes [but]...Amazingly enough, most of them got off the ground—and the sea, too" (66). "The Failures: Tragic Consequences" gallery shows a dozen photos of crashes, among them that of a C-123 *Transport* on the Southern State Parkway in 1958.

In contrast, the section on "Triumphs: Celebrating the Firsts of Flight" ("In the beginning, almost every other flight was a first" [130]) proceeds from lighter-than-air to airplane flight, the first transcontinental flight, the first flight by a woman, the first airmail flight, and "the most glorious first of all—the epic journey of the lone eagle, a 25-year-old flyer named Charles Lindbergh, who took off from Roosevelt Field in May, 1927, and flew the *Spirit of St. Louis* across the Atlantic nonstop to Paris" (130).

The lengthiest gallery is the collection of photos labeled "Memories of Long Island's Golden Age of Aviation," which begins with a 1909 shot of Glenn Curtiss and his *Golden Flyer* and goes on to the international speed and altitude tournament held in 1910 at Belmont Park, vintage World War I scenes, pictures at Roosevelt Field of such luminaries as William P. Lear, Howard Hughes, the South Pole explorer Richard F. Byrd, and Lindbergh, to early photos of LaGuardia and Idlewild (later Kennedy) Airports.

Although it thoroughly covers the Grumman story, *Takeoff!*'s only reference to Republic Aviation Corp., Long Island's other major aircraft manufacturer, consists of one 1943 photo of the company's airport and factory in Farmingdale, along Route 110. The caption acknowledges the key role Republic played in World War II: it produced more than 15,000 P-47 *Thunderbolts*, "which entered combat over Europe in May, 1943...combining for 546,000 sorties" (185). Also omitted, except for a photo and caption (124) is Lawrence Sperry, the inventor and aeronautical engineer, and the Sperry Gyroscope Co. that, together with Grumman and Republic, played a key role in



World War II.

Perhaps Newsday may be excused for these omissions on grounds that it makes no claim to cover every aspect of the subject. In any case, *Takeoff! How Long Island Inspired America to Fly* is a valuable and beautifully made contribution to the growing body of literature on the Island as Cradle of Aviation. As Nelson DeMille remarks in his foreword, "As memories fade, and as the participants and pioneers of Long Island aviation move away or pass away, it becomes more important to preserve this rich and unique heritage, and to pass it on to our children and grandchildren" (iii).

ROGER SEYBEL

*Northrop Grumman History Center*

Joshua Stoff. *Transatlantic Flight: A Picture History 1873-1939*.

Mineola: Dover Publications, 2000. Illustrations, index. Pp. vii, 120.

\$12.95 (paper).

Joshua Stoff is a prolific writer on aviation as well as curator of the Cradle of Aviation Museum at Mitchel Field. *Transatlantic Flight*, his fourth book on aviation history, offers a comprehensive survey of early efforts to conquer the Atlantic by air.

The book begins with lighter-than-air attempts in the period from 1859 to 1910, none of which succeeded. Final achievement of the crossing is described in Stoff's account of the U.S. Navy's NC flying boats, one of which, the NC 4, made it to Lisbon, Portugal, on 27 May 1919 after a nineteen-hour flight. In June 1919, R.A.F. Captain John Alcock and his navigator, Arthur Brown, flew from Newfoundland to Ireland in sixteen hours, thereby becoming the first to fly non-stop across the Atlantic. An error, perhaps a typo, states that the NC boats were 14 rather than 44 feet in length.

Stoff covers numerous other transatlantic attempts, including the flight around the world by Douglas world cruisers in 1924. Detailed coverage then is accorded to Charles A. Lindbergh's famous non-stop solo flight from Roosevelt Field to Paris in 1927.

The remainder of the book describes many other attempts, such as the Ortieg competition and the involvement of Commander Richard E. Byrd and Clarence Chamberlin. East-to-West record attempts are also documented, culminating in Amelia Earhart's ill-fated around-the-world flight in 1935.

Among commercial events of the late 1930s, Stoff recalls the dirigible crossings, the Hindenburg disaster, and the last round-the-world flight by Howard Hughes, the multimillionaire flight enthusiast, in 1938. Extensive, fact-filled captions accompany more than 250 photographs, nicely rounding out this excellent picture history of early aviation.

ROGER SEYBEL

*Northrop Grumman History Center*

Salvatore J. LaGumina. *Images of America: Long Island Italians*. Arcadia Publishers: Charleston, S.C. (now Portsmouth, N.H.) Illustrations, index. Pp. 128. \$18.99 (paper).

Salvatore J. LaGumina, Professor Emeritus of History and Political Science at Nassau Community College, has presented a comprehensive photographic history of the Italians on Long Island. Covering a period from the late nineteenth century to the present, he has captured a vivid picture of the largest ethnic group in Nassau and Suffolk counties. Census figures reveal Italian Americans comprise 25 percent of the total population. They have influenced the early development of Long Island roads, agriculture, railroads, industry, and the culinary arts. In the later period, they have made their mark in education, politics, and organizational and religious life. Their advance from marginalized immigrant to assimilated citizen represents the great American saga as they achieved social, economic, and political success. Simultaneously, they gained the respect of the dominant society through hard work, family life, and patriotism.

*Long Island Italians* is part of the Images of America Ethnic Series of the Arcadia Publishing Company, which has recognized the importance of ethnicity and local history in American life. It also has recognized the role of photographs in recording events and personalities of the past. LaGumina has collected more than 200 original images, most never before published, in faithfully depicting this large ethnic group. The book is organized into six chapters:

1. Magnet Long Island: The South Shore
2. Nassau: The North Shore
3. Central Nassau County
4. Suffolk County
5. Italian Signs and Marks
6. Contemporary Italian American Life

More than four million Italians arrived in the United States from 1880 to 1920 as part of one of the greatest human migration in history. Most came from the Italy's *Mezzogiorno*, or the south, where poverty, illiteracy, and discrimination prevailed. They were drawn to an expanding industrial America that offered work and opportunity, conditions not found in Italy. They settled in the eastern industrial cities; others went west; many worked on the railroads and in the mines. Others started small businesses. Working long hours at low pay, often facing discrimination and prejudice, they gathered together in their ethnic communities and relied upon their family institution to sustain themselves in a hostile society.

LaGumina relates how many Italians opted to migrate as early as the 1880s to the suburbs, to places like Long Island, which he classified as the "prototypical suburban model," to own a piece of land and a home, to grow

vegetables and fruits in their gardens, and to escape the congestion and alienation of an urban society. They congregated in communities such as Inwood, Lawrence, Valley Stream, Port Washington, Glen Cove, Franklin Square, Elmont, Massapequa, Deer Park, Patchogue, Copiague, San Remo, and Huntington, where "Italian mutual aid societies, social organizations, food stores, and feast celebrations flourished."

The author has focused on the role of "ordinary," "inarticulate," people in Long Island life. Photographs depict Italian immigrants building roads in Roslyn, working on the Long Island Railroad and the Vanderbilt Motor Parkway, forming the Italian American Mutual Aid Society of Oyster Bay, engaged in landscaping with Hicks Nursery, marching in the Westbury *Dell'Assunta* Feast celebration, gathering at the Orchard House which was a settlement house vital to Glen Cove's Italians, and playing bocce. Leading personalities are also included: Inwood's Ray Barbuti who won two Olympic gold medals; Speaker of the Assembly Joseph Carlino; Nassau County Republican leader Joseph Margiotta; Nassau County District Attorney Frank Gulotta; Robert Curcio, who was the first Italian American Republican leader in Suffolk County.

This historic photo book relates the story of Long Island Italians through black and white images. Brief chapter introductions provide the theme and structure of the material that follows. The captions are linked to the photographs to form the thread of the story. Since some of the photographs are nearly one hundred years old the clarity is poor. This becomes evident when they are compared with the sharper images in the book. Moreover, some of the images could have been more fully defined through lengthening of the captions. While most of the captions are thorough in their presentations, some require greater explanation to the general reader.

LaGumina is author of twelve books, hundreds of scholarly articles on ethnicity, founder of the American Italian Historical Association and its local Long Island chapter, and serves as director of the Italian American Center at Nassau Community College. The publication of *Long Island Italians* represents the completion of a trilogy on ethnic-suburbia, his earlier two works being *From Steerage to Suburb: Long Island Italians* (1988) and *Ethnicity in Suburbia: The Long Island Experience* (1980).

FRANK J. CAVAIOLI

*Professor Emeritus, SUNY at Farmingdale*

Joan Gay Kent. *Discovering Sands Point: Its History, Its People, Its Places*. Sands Point: Incorporated Village of Sands Point, 2000. Illustrations, bibliography, index. Pp. vi, 234. \$35. Available at the Cow Neck Peninsula Historical Society, 336 Port Washington Blvd., Port Washington, NY 11050, phone (516) 365-9074, add \$6 s.& h. and \$2.98 tax; also at the Dolphin Bookshop, 941 Port Washington Blvd., Port

Washington, NY 11050.

In commemoration of the ninetieth anniversary of its incorporation, the village of Sands Point sponsored this history and distributed a copy to every household on the tax rolls. The author, Joan Gay Kent, lived in Sands Point for thirty years and is president of the Cow Neck Peninsula Historical Society, historian of the town of North Hempstead, and a member of the Town Landmarks Commission. Her professional background is in journalism and advertising. She conducted a number of interviews with residents, as well as more conventional historical research.

The book is aptly titled since the history devotes considerable attention to Sands Point people and sites. A "Who Was Who" section lists the mayors, village clerks, police chiefs, and presidents of several civic organizations. The 8-1/2" x 11" book has an attractive hardcover with a full-color 1869 painting of the Old Mott House and Hempstead Harbor on the front cover, and four photographs on the back cover. The text is illustrated with ten maps (dating from 1675 to 1999) and more than three hundred black and white photographs. Most are one-column in width (3-1/2 inches), but some are larger, and all are sharp and well placed. Frequent subheads alert readers to topics.

Appropriately, two-thirds of the book is devoted to the twentieth century, but the history begins with the glacial origins and American Indians. It proceeds chronologically, with a brief discussion of national events in each time period to give context to the local history. Hempstead initially used the peninsula as common land for grazing cattle, and hence it was known as the Cow Neck peninsula. The first European settlers were the Cornwalls (c. 1675), who soon were joined by the Sands, Motts, and Dodges whose descendants and homes are noted. Three of their early houses survive and are on the National Register of Historic Places. (Sands Point's eight historic landmarks also include the Sands Point Lighthouse and three early twentieth-century houses.)

Ship building, sand mining, and shell fishing, as well as farming were occupational activities through the years. Proximity to New York City and improvements in transportation (steamboats and the railroad) led to summer visitors and country homes. The Sands Point Hotel (c. 1850-1892) was the largest of the hotels. The twentieth century brought the great estates which earned Sands Point the designation of the "Newport of Long Island." Daniel, William, and Isaac Guggenheim, Alva Smith Vanderbilt Belmont, William Randolph Hearst, Vincent Astor, John Philip Sousa, and Averill Harriman were among the famous landowners in the 1920s. Golf, polo, yachting, and croquet were popular. In later years, celebrities such as Perry Como, Frank Costello, and Bernard Baruch resided in Sands Point.

When Sands Point decided to become a village, the estate owners found a means to circumvent New York State law, which at that time set a maximum area of one square mile for new villages. Initially in 1910, three villages were incorporated and two years later, Sands Point annexed the other two (Harbor

Acres was added in 1932, after the Astor estate was developed). Thus the entire northern part of the Cow Neck peninsula became the village of Sands Point which, even today, has no businesses. Population was small, with only 284 residents in 1920, 438 in 1930, and 628 in 1940. Most of the growth in numbers came in the 1950s and 1960s, and Sands Point population reached its peak in 1970 at 2,916.

Sands Point was home to a number of leaders in the women's suffrage movement, including Alva Belmont and Harriet and James Lees Laidlaw. Kent also describes the role of other Sands Point women in local civic activities. They led in establishing and expanding the library, serving on the Port Washington library and school boards, and securing a preservation law. Sands Point elected its first woman village trustee in 1981.

Kent is careful to use such terms as "possibly" and "reputedly" or identify some accounts as folklore or legend. She quotes frequently from official town and village records, newspapers, history books and articles, and interviews with individuals. Although there are no footnotes, internal references in the text and the extensive bibliography enable researchers to locate sources. There are some minor errors: Robert Fordham (not Forman) landed in Hempstead Harbor in 1643; Nancy Strong lived in the Setauket area, not Oyster Bay; and it was Rosalie Jones (of Cold Spring Harbor) rather than Alva Belmont who was known as the "General" in the women's suffrage movement.

This book will be of greatest interest, of course, to residents of Sands Point, who will particularly enjoy reading about their neighbors and the years they have lived in the community. Of necessity, the history extends to Port Washington, Manhasset, and at times to North Hempstead (particularly in earlier centuries when the population in Sands Point was sparse). Historians will find useful details and some information not in standard accounts: for example, Sands Point residents loaned money to the Continental government during the Revolution, raised bounties for enlistments during the Civil War before tax-financed bounties, and privately financed some work projects in the early years of the Great Depression. Kent has carefully researched the local newspapers and incorporated much information from them. She describes the havoc wreaked by the 1938 hurricane and later storms. There is good detail on World War II home front activities, when the tower of Hempstead House was an Aircraft Warning Observation Post and the Chimneys estate was a rest center for merchant seamen.

In recent decades, subdivision of land continues with some old houses torn down and replaced by larger houses, leading the village to tighten its building and zoning codes. The village purchased the IBM Country Club in 1994, which is now the Sands Point Village Club and open to all residents for an annual membership fee. Mayor Leonard Wurzel feels "fewer people respect the history of the Village and its rural atmosphere" (213), which may be why the village commissioned this history. Joan Gay Kent has succeeded admirably in her goal of providing a readable history of Sands Point, set in the context of

national events. The village of Sands Point is to be congratulated for this investment in its history.

NATALIE A. NAYLOR

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Candace Ward, ed., *New York City Museum Guide*, 2d Rev. Ed. Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc., 2000. Illustrations, index. Pp. 122. \$4.95 (paper).

These days, there are plenty of suitors for our dwindling leisure time. Making good choices requires planning. This useful little guide provides information on 132 New York metropolitan area cultural institutions, including zoos, historical societies, and museums. The source strives to be equitable, giving the same amount of written description to the Metropolitan Museum of Art as to the less-known Staten Island Institute of Arts & Sciences. In addition to short narrative summations, each entry provides vital basic information, including hours, admission fees, directions by subway or bus, and handicapped accessibility.

Some may ask how a guide like this retains prevalence in an age when one easily can obtain more extensive information about most places on the internet. Portability is not the only answer; this guide also provides maps which can help the user effectively plan a day's worth of adventure. Take a Saturday stroll through Prospect Park to visit the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and the Lefferts Homestead, one of the last remaining Dutch Colonial farmhouses in the region (built 1777-1783). On Sunday, drive down Northern Boulevard and stop at the 1694 Friends Meeting House and the Bowne House before eventually arriving at the American Museum of the Moving Image. For a unique perspective on the city, proceed directly to the Queens Museum of Art in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park and take a look at the "Panorama of New York City," an exact and updated replica of all five boroughs featuring 865,000 buildings housed in a gallery that simulates daytime and nighttime. Sounds like at least part of the recipe for a nice weekend to me.

The book is arranged alphabetically within each borough, with the majority of material dedicated to Manhattan. There may be few surprises here for seasoned museum-goers but the guide is not written esoterically; it is meant to provide something for everyone, especially families. There are many child-friendly venues listed, such as the Children's Museum of Manhattan, the Brooklyn Children's Museum, and the New York Hall of Science in Queens. Those looking for less publicized gems will be pleased to learn about the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum & Gardens in the Bronx, a splendid Greek Revival mansion furnished with decorative arts masterpieces by Charles Honoré Lannuier, Duncan Phyfe, and Joseph Meeks and Sons. For a spectacular view of the Hudson River and a house with rich historical connections to publisher William Henry Appleton and venerable visitors such as Charles Darwin, Mark Twain, and Theodore Roosevelt, go to Wave Hill, also located in the Bronx.

And the next time you visit the United Nations, keep in mind that you can observe not only the workings of world government but a fine collection of paintings by artists such as Marc Chagall, Henry Moore, Pablo Picasso, and Norman Rockwell.

Of special interest to readers of this journal, twenty-seven different places to visit are listed in Brooklyn and Queens, including the New York Transit Museum in Brooklyn, housed in an authentic 1930s subway station, and the Queens County Farm Museum, a forty-seven-acre working farm which is "the only remaining vestige of New York City's once-thriving agrarian past" (103). The guide updates readers on the Brooklyn Historical Society, in the midst of renovations and set to reopen its main galleries in 2002. As an aside, the reviewer naturally hopes that Long Island enthusiasts will not hesitate to look even closer to home for a great variety of museum experiences not listed in this guide, including the Nassau County Museum of Art in Roslyn, the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum, the Long Island Museum of American Art, History & Carriages in Stony Brook, and many others. For a full listing of the many opportunities available in Nassau and Suffolk, look for *Where to Go and What to Do on Long Island* (SCOPE, 1999).

Though your \$4.95 will be well spent on the *New York City Museum Guide*, you should be aware of several lapses. Perhaps not listing any of the multitudes of fine art galleries in Manhattan and Brooklyn which often feature important and interesting exhibits was done out of deference to not-for-profits; but one wonders at the logic of such a choice with the inclusion of such places as the Forbes Magazine Galleries and Rockefeller Center. While generally evenhanded, the written descriptions of each venue seem to have been derived from the respective institution's own publicity which sometimes leads to exaggerated claims. Thus, the Merchant's House Museum in Manhattan is presented as completely "intact and unaltered from the nineteenth century"—a dubious boast for any historic site to make. The guide also mistakenly asserts that the Wyckoff House (est. 1652) of Brooklyn is the oldest extant building in New York State—a statement which ignores two other Long Island structures, the Halsey House of Southampton (1648) and the "Old House" of Cutchogue (built in Southold, 1649). Finally, while not the fault of the organizers of this book, no museum guide can keep up with the transient nature of the field. In addition to using this guide, readers should call or visit the web site of each institution when planning a visit, as many museums periodically change their galleries.

Though it is an oft-mentioned suggestion, it bears repeating that New Yorkers should take full advantage of the historical and cultural opportunities that surround them. The *New York City Museum Guide* is a tool that will help people do just that.

JOSHUA RUFF

*The Long Island Museum of American Art, History & Carriages*

**BOOK NOTES**

Natalie A. Naylor, comp. *Index of Articles on Long Island Studies in Journals and Conference Volumes*. Hempstead: Hofstra University, Long Island Studies Institute, 2001. 8½- x- 11 inches, spirally bound. Pp. 102. \$10 (paper).

Index of more than one thousand articles (1939-2000) in journals and conference volumes, supplemented by a bibliography of book reviews. Available from the Long Island Studies Institute, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY 11549 (516-463-6411).

John Batchelor. *100 Historic Airplanes in Full Color*. Mineola: Dover Publications, 2000. Pp. 48. \$9.95 (paper). A collection of brilliantly colored pictures, by a renowned aviation artist, of historic civilian and military aircraft from the Wright Brothers' 1903 biplane to the B-2 "stealth" bomber.

Sharon Reier. *The Bridges of New York*. 1977; reprint, Mineola: Dover Publications, 2000. Illustrations. Pp. 160. \$12.95 (paper). A handsome new version of this author's classic survey, describing seventy-five historic bridges ranging from Peter Stuyvesant's time to that of Robert Moses, and including all of Long Island's major connections.

**Correction:** Our review of *Nassau County: From Rural Hinterland to Suburban Metropolis*, Joann P. Krieg and Natalie A. Naylor, eds. (Empire State Books, 2000) in *LIHJ* 13 (Fall 2000, 122-24) stated the paperback price of \$19.99 but failed to mention that the book is also available in cloth, for \$35.

**To be reviewed in our next issue:**

*The People Called Quakers: Records of Long Island Friends, 1671-1703*. Edited by Natalie A. Naylor, foreword by Elizabeth H. Moger and introduction by Mildred Murphy DeRiggi. Empire State Books and Hofstra University, 2001. Maps, photos, index. Pp. 174. \$28 cloth, \$18 paperback. Records include the earliest surviving Quaker Minute in America—23 May 1671; appendixes include entries from George Fox's diary on his 1672 visit to Long Island and selections from Henry Onderdonk's 1878 history of Quakers.

Frank J. Cavaoli. *State University of New York at Farmingdale*. Arcadia Publishers: Charleston, S.C. (now Portsmouth, N.H.) Illustrations, index. Pp. 128. \$18.99 (paper). The history of this institution by a distinguished professor emeritus.





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