

THE LONG ISLAND HISTORICAL JOURNAL



Lionel, The Lion-Faced Boy

Fall 2001 / Spring 2002

Volume 14, Nos. 1-2



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

Walt Whitman

**STONY
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial Comment

FREAKS AND GEEKS:
CONEY ISLAND SIDESHOW PERFORMERS AND
LONG ISLAND EUGENICISTS, 1910-1935

By Tanfer Emin-Tunc -- 1

MOHAWK SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE LONG ISLAND INDIANS:
FACT OR FICTION? A RE-EXAMINATION OF PRIMARY
AND SECONDARY SOURCES

By John Strong -- 15

ROBERT MOSES, JONES BEACH, AND
THE LEGACY OF PROGRESSIVE-ERA CONSERVATIONISM

By Michelle Kleehammer -- 27

VILLAGE SCHOOL TO CITY SYSTEM:
THE SCHOOLS OF THE TOWN OF NEW UTRECHT

By John F. Roche -- 42

PRESERVING "THE GOOD OLD SPIRIT": LONG ISLAND
IN THE COLONIAL REVIVAL, 1880-1941

By Joshua Ruff -- 62

FROM POTATO PATCH TO WINE ORCHARD:
SOUTHOLD TOWN'S PATH OF RURAL PRESERVATION

By Michael Rokofsky -- 86

"THE DEVIL'S OWN IMPONDERABLES": TWO SMITHTOWN
MEN IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

By Elizabeth Shepherd -- 86

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

"LONG ISLAND HAS BEEN A SCHOOL TO ME":
THE 1825 LETTER OF AN INSTRUCTOR AT SCHOOLS AT
ROCKAWAY AND GREAT NECK

By James R. Greve -- 119

THE ORIGIN, RISE, AND DECLINE OF THE LONG ISLAND
BRANCH OF THE RANGER FAMILY: AN UPDATE
By Charles E. Squires, Robert J. Young, and Michael B. Ranger -- 125

SECONDARY SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST

BLACK MIGRANT WORKERS ON THE EAST END
OF LONG ISLAND DURING THE 1950s AND 1960s
By Caroline Axelrod -- 128

THE BIRTH OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN LAKE SUCCESS
By Erika Brown -- 138

JUPITER HAMMON: AMERICA'S FIRST BLACK POET
By Marshalette Gillings -- 147

BOOK REVIEWS

Frank Cavaoli, Ph. D. *State University of New York at Farmingdale.*
By Sean A. Fanelli -- 156

John A. Strong. *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island.*
By Gaynell Stone -- 157

Natalie A. Naylor, ed. "*The People Called Quakers*":
Records of Long Island Friends, 1671-1703.
By Christopher Densmore -- 160

Tom Montalbano. *Images of America: Syosset.*
By Karen Cooper -- 162

BOOK NOTES -- 163

FILM REVIEW

Parsing Pollock.
By Helen A. Harrison -- 164

COMMUNICATIONS -- 170

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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.

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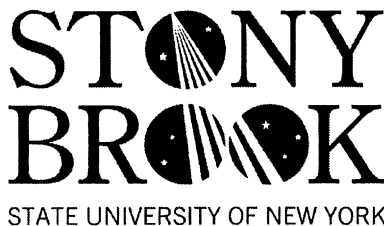
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EDITORIAL COMMENT

This has been a difficult transition year for the *Long Island Historical Journal*. The death of our founding editor Roger Wunderlich has resulted in several changes in the *Journal*. Most notably, we will publish an annual issue for the foreseeable future, until we once again have a full-time editor. We hope, however, to return to the semi-annual format as soon as possible.

Many friends of the *Journal* deserve special mention and thanks for their help this past year. First, we thank you, the readers of the *Journal*, for renewing your subscriptions so promptly and sending letters of support. This publication truly could not exist without you. Dr. Marilyn Weigold took on the task of soliciting and compiling the book reviews for this issue. Associate editor Dr. Richard Harmond read each of the articles and provided valuable advice throughout the process of putting this issue together. Dr. Natalie Naylor also gave invaluable assistance throughout this year. Drs. Wilbur Miller and Joel Rosenthal also provided advice and encouragement. We would also like to thank all of our authors for their patience in the longer-than-usual process of editing the articles.

We have assembled a interesting and informative group of articles for this year's issue. Tanfer Emin writes about the eugenics movement of the early twentieth century and the studies that the Cold Spring Harbor Labs did on sideshow performers at Coney Island. John Strong re-examines the relationship between Long Island Indians and the Mohawks and refutes the old story that Long Island peoples were tributaries of the Mohawks. Michelle Kleehammer analyzes Robert Moses' conservation ideals and how these influenced his work at Jones Beach. John Roche studies the transition of schools in New Utrecht from rural institutions into a large city system. Joshua Ruff writes about the colonial revival on Long Island based on research for an exhibit at the museum. Michael Rokofsky looks at the attempts by Southold residents to preserve the rural charm of their town in the face of population growth and suburban expansion. Elizabeth Shepard examines the roles of patriots and loyalists in the Smith family during the American Revolution.

We also have several shorter articles. James Greve has transcribed an 1825 letter written by a school teacher in Great Neck to his family in Connecticut. Charles Squires, Robert Young and Michael Ranger have updated their article on the Ranger family from the previous issue of the *Journal*. In addition, the *Journal* and the Center for Excellence and Innovation in Education at USB once again sponsored our annual Secondary School Contest. We had the difficult but ultimately pleasing task of selecting three essays to publish in this issue.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the *Long Island Historical Journal* and thank you for your continued support.

Marsha Hamilton, Guest Editor, *LIHJ*

FREAKS AND GEEKS: CONEY ISLAND SIDESHOW PERFORMERS AND LONG ISLAND EUGENICISTS, 1910-1935

By Tanfer Emin

This way for the Streets of Cairo! One hundred Oriental beauties! The warmest spectacle on earth! Presenting Little Egypt! See her prance, wriggle, and dance the Hoochy-Koochy! Anywhere else but in the ocean breezes of Coney Island she would be consumed by her own fire! Don't crowd! Plenty of seats for all!¹

Little Egypt was a sensation. Imitators sprang up all over Coney Island, hoping to attract the large crowds that surrounded the exotic belly dancer. They came in droves during the summer of 1915: pleasure-seekers from New York City, immigrants from the Bronx, and eugenicists from Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island.²

American Progressivism and Eugenics at Cold Spring Harbor ³

Beginning in 1910 and continuing through 1935, scientists from Cold Spring Harbor's Eugenics Record Office (ERO) visited Coney Island to photograph and document the sideshow performers who were on exhibit. Their visits, however, were not out of mere curiosity. The ERO, and its interest in unusual, exotic, and "abnormal" individuals, was a product of early twentieth century American progressivism and its desire to categorize, homogenize, and cleanse the nation. As Robert Wiebe illustrates in *The Search for Order*, American progressive reform was both a panacea to the nation's illnesses and a mixture of less positive initiatives.⁴ According to Wiebe, implicit in the progressive attempts of some middle-class intellectuals and activists was a rather racist agenda. Under the guise of science, a number of progressive reformers began to encourage eugenic programs with the aim of eliminating the immigrant, working, and "degenerate" classes in the United States. Because they lived and worked comfortably with blacks and immigrants, the working class, which included Coney Island sideshow performers such as Little Egypt, also became a target of eugenic programs. Even white sideshow performers were targeted for, as historian Matthew Jacobson delineates, skin color itself was not simply determinative of race; race became associated with class, or a set of social or cultural arbiters, which included mannerisms, employment, and

housing.⁵ Using these social definitions, scientists, specifically eugenicists, began to label these Americans as genetically inassimilable menaces to the homogeneity of the American landscape.

Charles Davenport, a committed eugenicist who maintained that plant and animal breeding theory could be applied to human beings to reduce the social threat of genetic “undesirables,” founded the first major eugenics institution in the United States in 1910: the Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor. With a \$34,250 grant from the Carnegie Institute of Washington, D.C., and the support of wealthy benefactors, such as the widow of E. H. Harriman whose ultimate contribution exceeded half a million dollars, the ERO served as the center for all major eugenics research until 1939.⁶ In its early years, the ERO served as a testing grounds for research and propaganda in eugenics, such as Davenport’s *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* (1911). Cited by one third of the high school and college biology textbooks used in the interwar years, *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* tied fears of social chaos with fears of race, class, disease and immigration. Using the newly acquired scientific legitimacy of eugenics, these theories were quickly extrapolated to include exotic figures such as Little Egypt, as well as mental and physical “degenerates,” many of whom could be found on display at Coney Island.

The academic fascination with eugenics entered popular culture during the 1920s when the ERO began their national eugenics campaign. Through the use of cultural institutions, such as state fairs, eugenicists were able to establish a form of cultural hegemony which defined normality, abnormality, and reinforced the goals of positive and negative eugenics. As the ERO-sponsored Fitter Family Contests illustrated, the ultimate goal of this eugenic campaign was to produce the “fittest” (i.e., “whitest”) families possible, who could then be promulgated as examples of Anglo-American genetic purity and racial superiority. Eugenic films, such as *The Black Stork* (1916), reinforced why degenerates should be eliminated by invoking in the American public a tangible fear of genetic monstrosities.⁷ This early film, as well as later ones, such as Tod Browning’s *Freaks* (1932), stressed the thin line that existed between normal and abnormal, between *us* and *them*. By portraying strange individuals who, like immigrants, formed their own cliques and lived by their own social and moral codes, these films constructed, in the collective mind of the nation, the potential result of unchecked breeding: genetic “freaks.”⁸ They also reinforced the power of science, and the newly-formed profession of eugenics, to eliminate these human monstrosities: “Never again will a story [such as *Freaks*] be filmed, as modern science and teratology [i.e., the study of birth defects] are rapidly eliminating such blunders of nature from the world.”⁹

Freaks and Geeks: Coney Island Sideshow Performers and Long Island Eugenicians, 1910-1935 3

Eugenicians, such as Davenport, believed that the study of human disabilities could provide them with evidence for their eugenic theories. As a result, in 1910, Davenport established a summer school at the ERO which, over a span of fourteen years, trained a total of 258 men and women to be eugenic field workers. The students were taught by Davenport himself, and became experts in recording family histories and constructing pedigrees. To supervise the activities of the genetic field workers, Davenport recruited a zealous eugenicist from Missouri, Harry H. Laughlin. Under Laughlin's direction, the ERO became the epicenter of the American eugenics movement, amassing thousands of family pedigrees, case studies, photographs, and medical records. Their activities ranged the spectrum from trips to mental asylums to visits to Coney Island.¹⁰

Though performers in freak shows were originally intended as curious spectacles, eugenicians interpreted their disabilities as examples of degenerate heredity, and raided freak shows for observations and specimens. Aware of the research possibilities inherent in an isolated community such as Coney Island, Davenport began a project which objectified and placed scientific value on sideshow bodies. However, the eugenicians who visited Coney Island were not merely searching for scientific proof for their theories. Their reports, photographs, and constant surveillance facilitated the medical identification, and elimination, of deviant, or "pathological" bodies - all with the hope of *normalizing*, or homogenizing, the population of the United States. Normalization thus became a strategy, or a mechanism, of social inclusion or exclusion which, on Coney Island, targeted race, class, gender, sexuality, and culture.

The Spectacle of the Exotic: Performing Race, Class, and Culture on Coney Island

Once commanding two miles of beach on the southwestern end of Long Island, New York, Coney Island represented the culmination of turn-of-the-century mass consumerism and low culture. Not only did its amusement parks and sideshows entertain the nouveau riche bourgeoisie, but they also promoted conspicuous consumption. At Coney Island, middle class Americans displayed their wealth and status through their clothing and jewels, while promoters profited from the presentation of human spectacles. Understandably, the glorification of abnormality, the rising number of immigrants at the parks, and the licentious, decadent, and unchaperoned atmosphere of Coney Island, troubled Long Island eugenicians.¹¹ Moreover, Coney Island's "Bowery," with its promenade of distorting mirrors, furnished the illusion that the curious spectators themselves had become freaks. Thus, Coney Island seemed charged with a magical, and eugenically dangerous, power to transmute customary appearances into

fluid new possibilities. It represented an alternative world, a dream world, perhaps even a *nightmare* world.

Coney Island's Manhattan and West Brighton beaches, with their replica minarets, exotic elephant-shaped hotels, "authentic" tribal warriors, and vaudeville-influenced Orientalism, served as the literal and figurative *stage* for performances of race, class, and culture. There, eugenicists found Lionel, the lion faced boy, who embodied the Tarzan-like primitive *l'enfant sauvage* (Figure 1). Marketed as a product of the uncivilized Russian forest, where he survived by picking berries, hunting like a wolf, and roaring like a lion, Lionel became the quintessential "missing link." In reality, he was raised on the fairgrounds of Europe, traveling from sideshow to sideshow with his equally-hairy father, "*L'homme Chien*."¹² As Lionel entered adolescence, however, he could no longer be cast as *l'enfant sauvage* for he could not play the part of the savage: his interest in reading had somehow been discovered by the media, transforming his barbaric image – and his class – virtually overnight. In later photographs, Lionel is often attired in upper-class, even aristocratic, clothing, and is captured in educated poses. In one studio photograph, for example, Lionel is wearing highly decorated leggings, and is reading a book as he reclines on an elaborate cushion.¹³ Lionel's sudden make-over undoubtedly fascinated eugenicists. His ability to transform himself from the missing link to an



Figure 1: Lionel, the Lion-Faced Boy. Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society.

almost-acceptable aristocrat challenged the limits of normality. Clearly, Lionel presented a eugenic threat: in their pedigrees, Cold Spring Harbor eugenicists noted that Lionel and his father both exhibited the same trait -- *hypertrichosis* (excess face and body hair) – and that such a trait could be passed on from generation to generation by hereditary means. Eugenicists believed that if such a pattern continued, the number of “Lionels” in American society could eventually outbreed the eugenically fit population, resulting in social, and genetic, chaos.

The conflation of genetic degeneracy with race and primitive *animal-like* qualities is prevalent throughout the Coney Island records compiled by the ERO. Defying categorization, these abnormal specimens existed between the animal and human realms. Toney, the “Alligator Skin Boy,” and Susi, the “Elephant Skin Girl,” in reality, suffered from the genetic disorder *ichthyosis*, or “elephant-like skin,” which covered their bodies with tough, dark quadrangular scales (Figure 2). Prince Randian, an armless and legless native of New Guinea, who at the climax of the film *Freaks* is shown inching his way through the mud with a knife between his teeth (in real life he was married with five normal children), was known

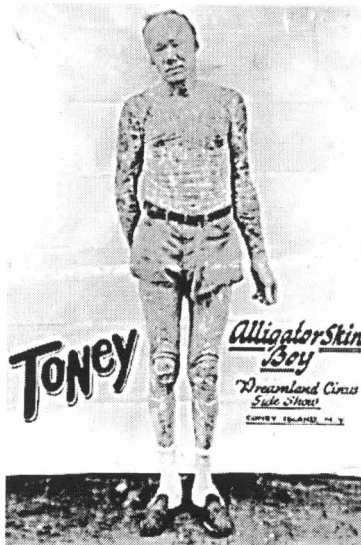


Figure 2: Toney, the Alligator-Skin Boy. Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society.



Figure 3: Alice Bounds (Bear Lady) and Mother. Courtesy American Philosophical Society.

not only as the “Living Torso,” but also as the “Snake Man” and the “Caterpillar Man.”¹⁴ *Phocomelics*, such as the Prince, whose hands and feet extended directly from their torsos, were often called “seal boys or girls” (the medical term itself meaning “seal limbs”). Coney Island performer Alice Bounds, known as the “Bear Lady,” was not only a phocomelic, but was also a woman of color (Figure 3). Born in Calcutta to a phocomelic mother, Alice could easily “pass” as an African-American, which the race-conscious eugenicists most likely noticed.

The nineteenth century fascination with jungle-esque primitivism and stage personifications of the *dark* savage through exotic costumes and dance movements were common spectacles at Coney Island. These exhibits, which sought to romanticize native culture through displays of quotidian indigenous activities, resulted in a zoo-like public gaze which objectified and dehumanized the bodies of black subjects. Eugenicists, many of whom were still interested in craniometry, reaped tremendous benefits, as these exhibitions provided them with a laboratory in which to measure not only skull shape and volume - that is, the brain size and therefore the “intelligence” of their black subjects - but also various aspects of human anatomy. As Davenport noted, “There are structural differences that are innate and racial and need to be measured and studied. It is known that the baby of two full-blooded Negro parents will develop black skin, wooly hair, a large nose, and large eyes.”¹⁵ This could explain the ERO’s

Freaks and Geeks: Coney Island Sideshow Performers and Long Island Eugenecists, 1910-1935 7

fascination with Chief Pantagal, a savage jungle man, or *glomming geek*, who performed with live snakes and chickens, biting off, chewing, and swallowing their heads as part of his racialized “wild man” performance (Figure 4). Intrigued by the Chief, the ERO agents collected a sample of his hair, which they described as “frizzy, dark and curled.” In their notes, they also drew a short pedigree, which included the Chief’s sisters, his wife (a “full blooded Negro woman”), and his daughter, all of whom, not surprisingly, exhibited the same kind of hair.

Another so-called *wild man* whom the ERO photographed, Chief Amok, “A Bantos Head Hunter,” further illustrates the social binaries that existed between the sideshow performers and their audiences. Dressed in tribal regalia with an almost serene look on his face, the Chief was the quintessential “noble savage,” willing to tell his story to sympathetic onlookers while denouncing his fellow tribesmen. His anachronistic, pseudo-status title of “Chief,” like the titles of “King,” “Queen,” or “Prince,” blurred the boundaries between high and low culture, suggesting a sort of perverse aristocracy that would naturally be denigrated by *democratic* Americans. Clearly, freak shows acted out a relationship in which exoticized and disabled peoples functioned as physical opposites of the ideal “white” American. However, it is interesting to note that these



Figure 4: Chief Pantagal. Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society.

sideshow performers often became wild men only after donning burnt cork to their faces, frizzing their hair, and affixing gold rings to their noses - thus *performing* exotic culture and the black race. Their popularity, and therefore eugenic threat, stemmed from the fact that they fit the mental image of the "savage degenerate" that was imbedded in the collective mind of white turn-of-the-century Americans. Believed to be mentally inferior, "blackface" characters, such as these "wild and primitive" Africans, reinforced racism, thus guaranteeing racial domination even in the imaginary realm of the sideshow. This, undoubtedly, increased the cultural authority of eugenicists, as they sought to eliminate the abnormal and "uncivilized" individuals which American society shunned.¹⁶

Beauty and the Beast: The Freak as Erotic Threat

According to Franz Fanon, the black man in white society is not simply perceived as racially different. His darkness represents the savagery of the jungle; he becomes the *uncontrollable beast* and the embodiment of lustful hyper-sexuality: "One is no longer aware of the Negro, but only of a penis; the Negro is eclipsed. He is turned into a penis. He is a penis."¹⁷ As illustrated by images of the nude torsos of Chief Pantagal and Chief Amok, eugenicists associated this portrayal of race and sexuality with the human exhibits. Davenport even expressed these sentiments in a 1913 ERO Bulletin when he characterized individuals of African ancestry as having "a strong sex instinct without corresponding self-control."¹⁸ Clearly, in spite of its appeal to objective reason, eugenics, and its fascination with the unusual, contained elements of fantasy, longing and desire. Moreover, Davenport's attitude towards the sideshow performers illustrates that the fin-de-siècle preoccupation with the dark exotic body did not fail to invoke the phallic and colonialist gaze of these male scientists.

The search for scientific "truth" became an endorsement to display the black body in a variety of primitive and sexualized situations. Countless examples of bare-breasted or totally nude men and women of color exist. In 1815 Paris, the infamous sideshow performer, the "Hottentot Venus," displayed her buttocks to curious spectators.¹⁹ In Coney Island, scantily-clad and consumed by her own sexual fire, Little Egypt danced the "Hoochy-Koochy" in front of crowds of American men, who were, no doubt, enthralled by her exotic body and the cultural spectacle she presented. Because these racialized characters were reduced to sexual creatures who were no different than the wild animals of the African jungle, standards of decency, to a certain extent, were overlooked. Photography and documentation by organizations such as the ERO merely reinforced this characterization of the black body.

These explicitly sexual sideshows stood in stark contrast to displays which, by exhibiting aesthetically unappealing women, hoped to deter thoughts of exotic sexual encounters with “freaks.” Billed as the “Ugliest Woman in the World,” Mary Ann Bevan presented an inverted beauty pageant (Figure 5). Her masculine and distorted appearance, which, at the age of 32, was brought on by *acromegaly*, or a pituitary tumor which caused the abnormal bone growth of her face and limbs, implied what the most beautiful woman in the world should look like. Fat Ladies, who, because of their overabundance of flesh and maternal figures, were potentially the most erotically appealing freaks, were blatantly portrayed as eugenically unfit to produce their own children. Billed under cute names such as “Dolly Dimples,” “Jolly Holly,” or “Baby Doll,” these women, like Browning’s female dancing pinheads, Zip and Pip, were constructed as perpetual children, and therefore, sexually, and eugenically, undesirable.



Figure 5: Mary Ann Bevan. Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society.

Similar to the Fat Ladies were the “Midget Madames,” such as Duchess Leona, Lady Little, and Wee Jeanie. While, as noted by ERO eugenicians, these individuals suffered from inheritable hypopituitary disorders, they tended to be well proportioned and physically attractive. Spectators who visited *Lilliputia*, a Coney Island municipality of three hundred midgets, were permitted to touch these “cute” people. Consequently, in *Lilliputia*, the little person became a social, and potentially

sexual, object, which disturbed eugenicists. To de-emphasize the compelling nature of this midget world and accentuate the eugenic danger of such freaks, ERO field workers often photographed sideshow performers next to *normal* individuals. Such images clarify the extent to which the coercive tactics of *negative eugenics* - race separation and the elimination of the abnormal - co-existed with the *positive eugenics* of selective breeding during the first few decades of the twentieth century.

Closely related to the sexual threat of the sideshow performer was the ability of the freak to transcend social constructions of gender. Clearly, the full breasted, bearded lady challenged the bipolarity of the sexes. Bearded women with hair reaching to their ankles not only confronted gender distinctions, but also crossed the borders which distinguished customary and unc customary behavior. Bearded women, as well as masculine women such as Mary Ann Bevan, presented forms of deviant gender expression which defied concrete categorization. Through their bodies, these women revealed the fluid nature of gender and the fallacies of anatomical construction. Clearly, what was on the outside of their bodies - a masculine face - did not correspond to what was on the inside of their bodies - female sexual organs. Such a configuration was particularly problematic because these women represented *gender-reversals*. In other words, their "gender was at odds with their sex. Moreover, their apparent masculinity was at odds with their supposed femininity."²⁰

The full-breasted bearded lady's ability, and inability, to transcend gender-lines illustrated the extent to which these constructions were staged on, and derived meaning from, the female body. The spectacle of a masculine woman was problematic not only because it challenged the twentieth-century stress on female beauty, but because it also implied non-dominant, non-authoritative, and even impotent, masculinity in a heavily patriarchal society. Because of its resemblance to the masculine form, the bearded face became a gendered object which women, such as Grace Gilbert, used to negotiate power within the realm of the sideshow world (Figure 6). Not only did she, as a bearded woman, provide the abnormal state over which male eugenicists obsessed, but she also presented a social and political challenge: she was a non-conformative woman in an age that stressed female docility and domesticity.

Because of their gender-ambiguity, bearded ladies should have been socially, and eugenically, marked as unworthy of marriage and reproduction. What troubled eugenicists was most likely the fact that these bearded women, in spite of, or maybe because of, their deviant gender expression, had little trouble finding husbands. Rosine Muller, Annie Jones, Clementine Delait and Grace Gilbert, were all married at least once. Lady Olga, who was billed as originating from an aristocratic plantation of the Old South, and was featured in the film *Freaks* as the mother of a

Freaks and Geeks: Coney Island Sideshow Performers and Long Island Eugenicists, 1910-1935 11

gender-bending baby girl whose father was a living skeleton, was married four times.²¹ The ability of these freakish women to marry and procreate, however, was not simply limited to bearded ladies. The famous conjoined twins, the Hilton sisters, were happily married to two separate men in *Freaks*. Mary Ann Bevan married and produced four “normal” children. Midget men and women also found spouses, and in some cases, produced children who, ironically, if it were not for their unfit heritage, could have been poster children for the ERO’s Fitter Family Contests.



Figure 6: Grace Gilbert, the Bearded Woman. Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society.

By 1935, the year in which the last Coney Island photographs were taken, the heyday of eugenic research at Cold Spring Harbor had come and gone. As funding subsided and new benefactors refused to donate to an organization which, up to that point, had done little to improve the human condition, Davenport began to spend less and less time at the ERO, opting instead to explore the lecture circuit. Mounting evidence of serious methodological flaws in their research, and Laughlin’s misuse of “data” to illustrate the genetic threat of immigrants, did not help the ERO’s

reputation. Moreover, news of the horrific Nazi applications of eugenics sealed the fate of the American movement, and the ERO was closed in 1939. However, the legacy of eugenics at Cold Spring Harbor is one with which the institution still struggles. The institution's ambivalent attitude towards explaining its eugenic activities stemmed from the fact that the scientists involved with this movement genuinely believed they were fostering public good. While it is true that eugenicists such as Davenport and Laughlin were preaching that scientifically-influenced social change could solve many of the complex problems facing American society, they were simultaneously scrutinizing, classifying, and marginalizing the less-fortunate. In the end, however, they could not adequately perpetuate the power and cultural hegemony of the white middle and upper classes. All that remains of their efforts are their texts, notes, and the enduring images of the Coney Island sideshow performers whom they unsuccessfully tried to eliminate.²²

NOTES

I would like to thank Drs. Gene Lebovics and Ruth Cowan for their support and encouragement in the publication of this article.

1. Edo McCullough, *Good Old Coney Island* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), 255.
2. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory has a website documenting its involvement in the eugenics movement: vector.cshl.org/eugenics. Much of my research is derived from this website, specifically its images of the Coney Island sideshow performers, which can be found under the heading of "Circus Performers." I suggest pairing the reading of this article with a visit to the website, which also contains images of ERO fieldworkers, eugenicists, "fit" families, and other historical documents which will help illuminate and contextualize my research.
3. In 1883, British scientist, Sir Francis Galton invented the term eugenics to express the "science of improving stock, especially in the case of man, to give the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had." In this brief definition, Galton conveyed all the dimensions that came to characterize eugenics as an ideology and social/political movement during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries: a firm trust in the methods of selective breeding as an effective means of improving the overall quality of

Freaks and Geeks: Coney Island Sideshow Performers and Long Island Eugenicists, 1910-1935 13

the human species; a strong belief in the power of heredity to determine physical, physiological, and mental traits in adults; an inherent belief in the inferiority of some races and superiority of others (a view extended to ethnic groups and social classes); and a faith in the power of science to solve pressing social problems and eliminate physical deformity and mental illness. For more information on the definition of eugenics, see Mark Haller, *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1984), Chapter 1.

4. Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877- 1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

5. Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 56.

6. Haller, 65.

7. *Ibid.*, 80.

8. In turn-of-the-century America, terms like “freak” and “monstrosity” were part of the national lexicon. While they were not as “sensitive” as terms such as “feble-minded,” Americans used these words in everyday speech. Hence, my use of these terms is not in any way pejorative; rather, I am using these terms in the same way in which lay people and scientists used them in the context of early twentieth-century discourse. Ironically, terms such as “freak” and “monstrosity” are being reclaimed by some members of the disability movement, just as the word “queer” has been reclaimed by the gay and lesbian movement to denote difference and diversity. For more information on language, please consult Leslie Fiedler, *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978).

9. This quote comes from the introduction of the film *Freaks*.

10. Haller, 65 - 66.

11. John Kasson, *Amusing the Millions: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 29 - 54.

12. Fiedler, 166.

13. *Ibid.*, 167.

14. Ibid., 168.

15. Davenport, *Medical Genetics and Eugenics* (Philadelphia: Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, 1940), 14.

16. It is unclear whether or not eugenicists were aware of this racial role playing, or if they considered the possibility in their analyses. What is clear, however, is that the media's exposés on these impostors helped discredit the ERO's eugenic research, which ultimately contributed to the demise of the entire movement.

17. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1952), 170.

18. Charles Davenport, *ERO Bulletin No. 9: States Limiting Marriage Selection in Light of Eugenics* (Cold Spring Harbor, NY: Eugenics Record Office, 1913), 34.

19. Fiedler, 141.

20. Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), 24.

21. Fiedler, 147.

22. Sideshow performers can still be seen at Coney Island.

MOHAWK SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE LONG ISLAND INDIANS: FACT OR FICTION? A RE-EXAMINATION OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

By John A. Strong

Introduction

In 1995, Natalie Naylor, director of the Long Island Studies Institute at Hofstra University, wrote to Christine Malmgren, the education editor for the New York State Historical Association, calling her attention to the student edition of a leaflet entitled *How Gifts Change Lives: A Haudenosaunee Story of Wilderness Diplomacy*, written for the association by David Rickard and Jack McKinney.¹ Naylor was concerned about one of the student activities at the end of the leaflet. The students were reminded that “every community throughout New York State has a local history that includes Native Americans. . . . With your teacher’s help try to find out about the history of the Native Americans in your community in the past. What nation of the Iroquois Confederacy lived in your community’s area?”² Naylor noted that the question incorrectly implied that the Indians on Long Island were Iroquois. She urged the association to amend their materials to include some specific references to the Algonquian peoples of Long Island. Malmgren responded, acknowledging the error, and passed Naylor’s letter along to David Rickard who wrote to Naylor, agreeing that the activity in the leaflet did imply that the Iroquois lived on Long Island and noted that the Algonquian peoples of southern New York were often overlooked in the publications from both the association and the state department of education. He agreed that the student activity needed to be amended.

In defense of his “oversight,” Rickard raised an issue that has long been of interest to students of the Algonquian cultures on Long Island. Rickard said that his assertion of Iroquois supremacy over Long Island was based on Cadwallader Colden, Louis Henry Morgan, Francis Parkman, and two amateur historians from Long Island, Richard Bayles and Robert Coles. He also mentioned archaeological reports of Iroquois artifacts and pottery styles on eastern Long Island and the migration of Long Island Indians to Samson Occom’s Brotherton community in Central New York State in the eighteenth century as further evidence of an Iroquois connection with Long Island. These latter two sources in Rickard’s list, however, are not directly relevant to the issue in question. The presence of artifacts associated with Iroquois culture on eastern Long Island is evidence of trade, not

domination. As Rickard himself notes "How they got there is anybody's guess." The presence of Montaukett Indians at Brotherton after the American Revolution is not at all relevant to the question of Mohawk relations with tribes on Long Island in the seventeenth century. In fact, the Brotherton settlement was established on Oneida lands and had nothing at all to do with the Mohawks. The other sources listed by Rickard deserve more attention because they have had considerable impact on our understanding of Long Island's history.

Cadwallader Colden, in his classic two volume *History of the Five Nations*, written over a twenty year period beginning in 1727, made rather extravagant claims for the spread of Iroquois power and authority. Rickard cited Colden's claim that the Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy had dominion over tribes from Maine to Mississippi. He acknowledged that it was unlikely that Iroquois sovereignty extended to Mississippi and Maine, but said that "he didn't doubt for a minute that they held small tribes like the Canarsie hostage by way of tribute payments." Rickard also referred to Louis Henry Morgan, whose *League of the Iroquois*, published in 1851, was a pioneer effort in the development of modern anthropology. Morgan, however, focused his attention on the internal aspects of Iroquois society and was not primarily interested in the relations between the Iroquois and the neighboring tribes.

Francis Parkman, the eminent nineteenth century historian whose seven volume study of the French and Indian War included *Montcalm and Wolfe*, a study of the campaigns in the Iroquois lands. Parkman, however, paid little attention to Iroquois relations with southern tribes in the seventeenth century. These authors, said Rickard, suggest that "the Iroquois extended their conquests and depredations from Quebec to the Carolinas." Based on this information, Rickard concluded that, "Through years of conquest and terrorism the Iroquois subdued tribes as far south as the Carolinas and westward to the Ohio valley." It might be important, he continued, "for the school children of Long Island to understand the role the Iroquois played in their area, and what changes were brought about by their influence."³

Rickard's suggestion presumes that the Iroquois exercised a form of colonial control over the Algonquian peoples of western Long Island. Colden, Morgan and Parkman, however, did not make any specific references to Long Island. Among those cited by Rickard, only the two local amateur historians, Bayles and Coles, claimed that the Mohawk or Iroquois had control over the Indians of Long Island. One of the references to Iroquois dominance Rickard cited was Bayles' account of a raid by the Mohawks on the Canarsie Indians who lived on western Long Island. The raid, said Bayles, was launched by the Mohawks to punish the Canarsie for withholding an annual tribute of wampum and dried clams.⁴ According to

Bayles, the “whites,” a general reference that could mean the Dutch, the Swedes, the English or some combination of the three, had encouraged the Canarsie to stop paying tribute to the Mohawk. Rickard said that, according to Robert Coles, this attack came “sometime around 1609.” Rickard, expanding on Bayles’ report, asserted that the Mohawks had established a tributary relationship over numerous other Long Island tribes. That alone, he concluded, “would have had a profound influence on the lives of these Long Island Indians.”

From “Dutch tradition” to “historical fact”

This assertion of Mohawk hegemony over the Algonquians of Long Island appears frequently in scholarly and popular accounts. Rickard’s response prompted me to revisit the primary and secondary sources with two goals in mind. First, of course, was to determine the nature of the relationship, if any, between the Mohawks and the Delaware-Munsee speaking Algonquians of western Long Island. The second goal was to examine the treatment of the issue in the historical literature from 1824 to the present. The first historian to report a specific interaction between the Mohawks and the Algonquian people of Long Island was Silas Wood, Long Island’s pioneer historian. In 1824 Wood wrote, “the confederacy of the five nations extended their conquests as far south as Manhattan, and passed over to the west end of Long Island, and subdued the Canarsie.”⁵ Wood probably read Cadwallader Colden, who claimed that the Iroquois had dominion over all of the Indians of eastern North America. Wood, however, added a dramatic anecdote that has captured the imaginations of lay readers and amateur historians right up to the present. There is a tradition among the Dutch, he told his readers, that “at the time of first settlement of the Island, the Canarsie tribe paid the Mohawks an annual tribute of wampum and dried clams, and that they discontinued the payment of it on the persuasion of the whites, in consequence of which a party of the conquerors came and destroyed the whole tribe except for a few who happened to be away from home.”⁶ This is the first mention of the Canarsie extermination in an historical account. Wood, to his credit, does acknowledge that the story is “Dutch tradition” and not an established historical fact. Some historians were not so careful.

Wood’s history influenced many of the historians who followed him. One of these was Gabriel Furman, who wrote a series of historical sketches between 1824 and 1838 which were published as a book in 1875. Furman turned Wood’s “Dutch tradition” into an historical fact. Furman, however, departed somewhat from Wood’s account. According to Furman, the Canarsie decided on their own, without prompting from the “whites,” to withhold tribute payment to the Mohawk. Furman also departed from

Wood's account by asserting that the massacre of the Canarsie *undoubtedly* took place in 1655 during the Peach War.⁷ He added that following this attack, the Dutch intervened to make sure that the Long Island Indians paid their tribute to the Mohawks on schedule.

The Peach War in 1655 was a more plausible setting for the alleged raid on the Canarsie. This brief conflict was actually a series of raids rather than a war. At the time rival European powers threatened New Netherland.⁸ The English pressed them from the east and the Swedes established themselves on New Netherland's southern border. Early in 1655 the English in Connecticut challenged Dutch control over lands on Long Island and in what is now Westchester County. Rumor had spread that English warships were at sea heading for New Netherland to drive out the Dutch. Some of the English settlers in Gravesend issued a proclamation declaring their allegiance to England in open defiance of Dutch authority.⁹ The Dutch promptly arrested the leaders of the English revolt in Gravesend and sent Governor Stuyvesant on an expedition to drive out the Swedes.

Governor Stuyvesant sailed south on 5 September 1655 with over seven hundred men to attack the Swedish settlements. Within days the Algonquian communities north of New Amsterdam organized a war party of over five hundred armed men and landed on Manhattan. The intentions of the Indians were not clear. In a letter from the government in Holland, the directors noted that they had heard some reports from private parties that the Indians were seeking revenge for the murder of a squaw accused of stealing peaches from Henry Van Dyke's orchard. The directors noted, however, that this had never been verified.¹⁰ The invaders did wound Van Dyke with an arrow, but they did not kill him. Another account suggested that the Swedes had encouraged the attack to draw the Dutch troops away from their settlements.¹¹

After a brief encounter, which took the lives of three or four men on both sides, the Indians left Manhattan and waged a series of bloody raids on the Dutch settlements of Hoboken, Pavonia, and Staten Island, but there is no evidence that any of the war party attacked Long Island towns. Nor is there any indication in Dutch documents that the warriors attacked the Canarsie or any of the Long Island Algonquian communities, who all remained friendly to the Dutch. The four contemporary reports of the attacks provide slightly differing accounts, but none of them mention an attack on the Canarsie by the Mohawks or any of the other tribes who participated in the raids. The Council of New Netherland's letter to Stuyvesant is the only one that identifies the Mohawks (Maquasas) as members of the war party.¹² The other three accounts do not identify the Indians by tribe.¹³ Related documents name the Mohicans, Pachamis, Esophus, Hackinsacks, Tappans, Tankitekes, Wecquaesgeeks, and Wappingers.¹⁴

Furman was at a disadvantage because the fifteen-volume edition of the New York colonial documents was not completed until 1887. He relied on some interesting contemporary oral testimony which two elderly white women gave him. The first was an unnamed "very aged lady," who was a small girl at the time of the American Revolution. She recalled that "five or six Indians of the Iroquois Nation were for some offense brought to New York and sent to Jamaica, upon Long Island: and [that], although they were prisoners, not one of the Long Island Indians could be induced to look, with his person exposed, upon one of these terrible Mohawks . . . expressing the utmost fear and dread of them."¹⁵ The second account came from a Mrs. Anthony Remsen, who recalled that around 1800, she had spoken to the last surviving member of the Canarsie tribe. The ancient Canarsie repeated the story of the Mohawk massacre to her. She added a few details to the account. "Three or four families," she said, "having become alarmed by shrieks and groans of their murdered friends, fled for the shore of the bay, got into their canoes and paddled off to Barren Island, . . . where the Mohawks could not, or did not follow them."¹⁶

Furman expanded the reach of the "dreaded Mohawk" to the east end of Long Island. He reported that the Reverend Dr. John Basset, minister of a Dutch Reformed Church in Brooklyn, told him that when he lived in Albany, he learned that the Montauk Indians "for a long time paid tribute to the Six Nations of Indians and that the consistory of the Dutch Reformed Church in Albany was the designated agency to receive the wampum payments."¹⁷ Furman said that he "recollected to have heard, about ten years ago, that fifteen or twenty years previous to that time [c.1790], it was usual for the farmers coming to the city of New York from the east end of Long Island, in the fall of the year, to bring with them to the city a quantity of wampum which was sent to Albany."¹⁸ We have little doubt, he continued, that it was a tribute payment to the Iroquois. Furman and Wood, however, had one critic. A local historian named Samuel Jones from Oyster Bay stated, in a paper delivered to the New York Historical Society, that he found no convincing evidence that the Mohawk ever collected tribute from any Indians on Long Island.¹⁹ Furman denounced Jones, accusing him of giving "his own thoughts without having examined the original documents."²⁰ Jones, however, is certainly correct about his challenge to the claim that the Mohawk were receiving tribute as late as 1790 because the Iroquois military power had been destroyed during the Revolutionary War. The Mohawk were in no position to demand tribute from anyone.

Even if the Canarsie had, at one time or another, sent tribute to the Mohawks as Furman asserts, the nature of the relationship would have been quite different from the "colonial" model suggested by Furman and many of the other nineteenth century historians. Understandably, these authors were

unaware of the complexity involved in the Native American tributary relationships. In the latter half of the twentieth century anthropologists revisited the primary sources and developed new insights into Native American cultures. Tributary payments are a ceremonial recognition of a reciprocal, albeit subordinate, relationship between two communities.²¹ The superior party in the alliance accepted some obligations, usually in the form of military protection.

Tribute might also be given in the form of sporadic gifts for specific occasions. If the Long Island Algonquians gave any tribute to the Iroquois it was most likely in this form. There is no evidence, for example, that the Mohawk had a relationship with the Long Island Indians similar to the one they established with the Mohicans of the Upper Hudson. After a period of warfare, the Mohicans bought peace with the Mohawk in 1628 with a promise of yearly tribute in wampum. They also promised to join Mohawk war parties when drafted. Even in this case, however, there was very little Mohawk interference in the daily affairs of the Mohicans.²² In fact, when the Mohicans ceased paying the promised yearly tribute payments after two years, the Mohawks did not attack or harass them.²³ Once again, however, it is important to note that there is no mention in any of the existing colonial documents of a Mohawk raid on any part of Long Island.

Benjamin Thompson, in his classic *History of Long Island*, published in 1839, was much more cautious than Furman, but he did state that the Mohawks were "a most feared and dreaded tribe," who *probably* held all of the Long Island Indians in a tributary status.²⁴ In his account of the Peach War, however, Thompson made no mention of the Mohawks or of a Mohawk raid on the Canarsie for failure to pay an annual tribute.

The first historian to work carefully with the primary Dutch documents was Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan who published his *History of New Netherland* in 1848 (reprinted 1966). If he was aware of the "Dutch Tradition" reported by Wood, he dismissed it. O'Callaghan makes no mention of Mohawk hegemony over Long Island, and he does not include them in his list of the Indian communities who took part in the Peach War. Two other prominent historians, Edward M. Ruttenber and John Romeyn Brodhead, also make no mention of a Mohawk involvement in the Peach War. According to Brodhead, the party of nineteen hundred Indians who attacked the Long Island homesteads included "the Mahicans, Pachsmis, Esophus, Hackinsacks, and Tappans, with some others from Stamford and Onkeway." These Indians, said Brodhead, were looking for Indians from the North, not the Canarsie. Ruttenber, however, reported that the Montauketts "at the time of discovery, were a part of or under tribute to the Mohicans."²⁵ He does not offer any documentation to support this speculation.

Wood's account of the Mohawk attack on the Canarsie for withholding the annual tribute in wampum and dried clams re-appears in Richard Bayles' *Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Suffolk County*.²⁶ Bayles rejected, or simply ignored, Furman's claim that the Mohawk attack took place in the context of the Peach War. He argued that the event took place around 1609 when Henry Hudson first encountered the Indians after he had entered the mouth of the Hudson River on his voyage of discovery. According to Rickard, Robert Coles also placed the event at this time.

The story is repeated in Martha Flint's *Long Island Before the Revolution*, written some twenty years after Bayles' publication. She made some interesting changes in the account. She does not mention the 1609 date and tells her readers that there was more than one brutal attack on the poor Canarsies. "After the settlement of Nieuw Netherland," says Flint, "the Dutch persuaded the Canarsies to forgo this payment, an omission which brought upon the doomed race many a murderous raid from the Mohawk."²⁷ Flint has added a new element. Now we have an assertion that there were many raids by the Mohawks in spite of the fact that the earlier accounts by Wood, Furman, Thompson and Bayles all describe a single devastating attack. Wood's "Dutch tradition" has been significantly embellished.

Contemporary Views

Scholars in this century have come to conclusions similar to those of Brodhead and O'Callaghan. Allen Trelease, Michael Kammen, and Shirley Dunn, for example, conclude that it was highly unlikely that either the Mohawks or the Mohicans took part in the Peach War. The Council of New Netherland's letter to Stuyvesant added the names to the lists, suggests Trelease, only because the swiftness and effectiveness of the attacks reminded them of typical Mohawk and Mohican warfare.²⁸ "Although some Mohicans were reported to be among the war party," wrote Dunn, "this report was probably not true."²⁹

There are other reasons to question the participation of the Mohawks in the attacks. The prisoners taken in the raids were in the hands of the Hackinsacks, the Wecquaesgeeks and the other Algonquian tribes in Westchester. There is no mention of the Mohawks or the Mohicans in the negotiations for the release of the prisoners.³⁰ If the Mohawks had played a major role in the war, they most certainly would have taken control of the captives. The Canarsie were certainly not exterminated in 1655 because they took part in the formation of an alliance with the Dutch in 1656. Tackapousha led the sachems from Canarsie, Massapequa, Rockaway, and several other Munsee-speaking communities in the negotiations with the Dutch. Another document which indicates that the Mohawk had not

participated in the 1655 raids was the renewal of the 1643 treaty between the Dutch and the Mohawk. When the Dutch met with the Mohawk ambassadors in 1659 to reconfirm the provisions of the treaty at Caughnawaga, the Mohawk ambassador said that the iron chain which bound the two had not been broken by either side.³¹ The document makes no mention of any troubles in 1655.

The question of occasional tribute payments to the Mohawk by the Canarsies and other western Long Island Indians is not so easily settled. Robert Grumet, who has studied the historic contact sites in the Northeast for the National Park Service, suggests that there is some “negative evidence” that tribute in wampum and trade goods may have flowed from western Long Island to the Mohawks.³² Grumet’s research for his comprehensive review of post-contact archaeological sites revealed a marked absence of wampum and trade goods in the western Long Island excavations. Grumet also noted that there was a wealth of such trade goods in the post-contact Mohawk sites. He suggests that one possible explanation is that some of these goods went north as tribute to the Mohawks. It is possible, he believes, that the Mohawks may have competed with the Mohicans, the Munsees and the Europeans for control of the wampum trade from Long Island.³³

Conclusion

Unfortunately the inflated accounts of Mohawk dominance continue to find their way into high school libraries. William Golder’s *Long Island’s First Inhabitants*, published in 1981 and reprinted in 1989, compares the Iroquois to the mafia, “You might call the Iroquois the original mafia. In colonial times,” continues Golder, “they killed Long Island Indians who refused to pay tribute, because the Long Island Indians had the promise of the Dutch that they would protect them from the savage Iroquois. The Iroquois hit men, in the form of a war party, showed them the error of their thinking.”³⁴ This is another reference, although not cited by Golder, to the “Dutch tradition” first mentioned by Wood in 1824.

Although the Mohawks did send raiding parties great distances from their homeland and may have attacked the Canarsies on occasion, they did not wipe them out. The Mohawk extinction of the Canarsie is apocryphal, and it is unlikely that the Mohawk intervened in Canarsie affairs to any significant degree. The Long Island historians, such as Bayles, Coles, Furman, and Flint, all relied on Silas Wood’s account without noting his qualification that the attack was not verified in the primary sources. Even if they had carefully examined Edmund Bailey O’Callaghan’s classic history of New Netherland they would have found that he made no mention of the “Dutch tradition,” cited by Silas Wood. The

popularity of the account may reflect the tendency to impose European style political models on the Iroquois, who have sometimes been called the "Romans of the New World" by amateur historians.

Rickard is correct in his concern that the school children on Long Island should learn about the Iroquois and their role in the history of New York State, and he did agree to make the proper amendments to the educational materials provided to the New York state schools. Now that the New York state social studies curriculum has placed an emphasis on the use of primary documents, perhaps the teachers should be encouraged to have their students use the colonial documents to determine for themselves what the relationship was between the Algonquian-speaking peoples of Long Island and their Iroquois neighbors.

NOTES

1. Letter, Naylor to Malmgren, 31 May 1995.
2. David Rickard and Jack McKinney, "How Gifts Change Lives: A Haudenosaunee Story of Wilderness Diplomacy, *Local History Leaflet* (Cooperstown: New York State Historical Association, 1994).
3. Letter, Rickard to Naylor, 26 June 1995. The works mentioned (but not cited) by Rickard include Cadwallader Colden, *The History of the Five Nations of Canada Which are Dependent on the Province of New York* (Reprint New York: Great Seal Books, Reprint 1958); Louis Henry Morgan, *League of the Iroquois* (Reprint Secaucus, N.J. 1996); Francis Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe* (Reprint, New York: The Modern Library, 1999).
4. Richard Bayles, *Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Suffolk County With a Historical Outline of Long Island From its First Settlement by Europeans* (Port Jefferson, NY: William Overton, 1874), 62-63. Robert Coles, *The Long Island Indians* (Glen Cove, N.Y.: Little Museum Press, 1954). The account of the Mohawk raid on the Canarsie is repeated by Seon Manley in *Long Island Discovery* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1966), 32. Both of these men probably took this account from Nathaniel Prime's *A History of Long Island, From its First Settlement by Europeans to the year 1845* (New York: Robert Carter, 1845), 94.
5. Silas Wood, *A Sketch of the First Settlement of the Several Towns on Long Island*, (Brooklyn, NY: Alden Spooner, 1824), 52.

6. Ibid.

7. Gabriel Furman, *Antiquities of Long Island* (New York: J. W. Boulton, 1875), 20-21. Wood's account of the 1655 Peach War makes no mention of a "Mohawk raid" on western Long Island. The war party of Indians from Jersey and the Hudson Valley, said Wood, "passed over to Long Island and threatened Gravesend, but retired without doing much injury" (Wood 1824, 61).

8. Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, *The History of New Netherland*. 2 vols. (Spartenburg, S.C.:1848; The Reprint Company,1966), 2:280-99; Allen Trelease, *Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 138-48; Michael Kammen, *Colonial New York: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press,1975), 67-8.

9. O'Callaghan 1848, 2:280

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31. O'Callaghan 1848, 2:391. In the seventeenth-century Dutch records there is a letter from Brant van Slichtenhorst, the first director of Rensselaerwyck, in which he reports that Mohawk war parties raided their neighbors in a radius of seventy miles from their home territory. It is

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ROBERT MOSES, JONES BEACH, AND THE LEGACY OF PROGRESSIVE-ERA CONSERVATIONISM

By Michelle Kleehammer

He looked at Jones Beach with eyes that had looked at crowded New York City and had seen a hundred ways of improving it - and he realized that the emptiness of the strand, its endless, untouched vistas, was a clean canvas on which he could draw whatever he chose.

-- Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker*

On 4 August 1929, Jones Beach State Park on Long Island's South Shore opened to the public, inciting a rash of news reporters, city planners, and scholars to hail it as "the most unusual and spectacular public recreational facility constructed in America up to that time." Crowds who drove from New York City on the scenic new Southern State Parkway found the beach pristine, the buildings ornate and tastefully decorated, and the recreational facilities unrivaled. What had been a relatively unknown, wild strip of barrier beach with limited access even for baymen had become the pre-eminent beachfront on the continent. The individual responsible for everything from the initial idea of developing Jones Beach to the design of the bathhouses, trash receptacles, and employees' uniforms was Robert Moses, one of the most successful and controversial urban planners of the twentieth century.¹

As president of the Long Island State Park Commission since its inception in 1924, Robert Moses had worked tirelessly to make Jones Beach a reality. In fact, from the 1920s into the 1960s, Moses strove to create in New York State the most extensive network of public parks the nation had yet experienced, a network in which Jones Beach would become the "crowning achievement."² Yet despite a Pulitzer-Prize winning biography and a bibliography of studies, Moses's environmental ideology remains relatively uncontextualized and misunderstood. As evidenced in his park designs and strategies, Robert Moses was a conservationist who viewed recreational land as a resource to be conserved for the public.

Moses the politician and urban park planner remains a controversial public figure even beyond his death in 1981, and has been written about extensively, most notably by journalist Robert A. Caro. In his book *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (1974), Caro argues primarily that Moses's accession to and eventual lust for power within New York State's bureaucratic structure was a negative, or at least ambiguous, event for New York. Joel Schwartz supplements Caro's thesis

with *The New York Approach: Robert Moses, Urban Liberals, and Redevelopment of the Inner City* (1993). In this work, Schwartz poses important questions about the role of New York City's liberal establishment

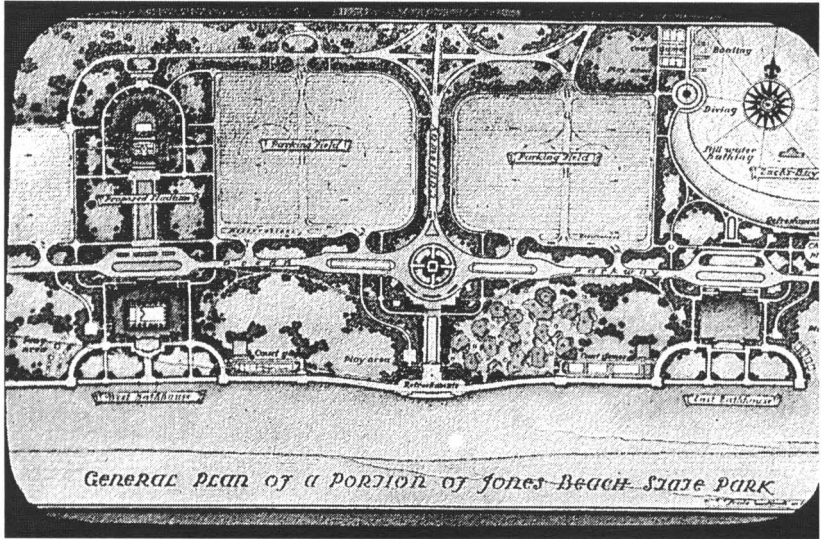


Figure 1: Plan of Jones Beach State Park, c. 1920s. Courtesy Frances Loeb Library Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

in Moses's sometimes controversial highway and neighborhood plans. Others, such as Eugene Lewis in his 1980 study of public entrepreneurship, look at Moses's strategies and successes as one of the city's most powerful non-elected bureaucrats of the twentieth century.

However, less attention has been paid to where Moses's career, particularly his attention to public parks, lies on the spectrums of environmental history and conservationism. These issues have only been touched on peripherally in the works cited above. It is ironic, given the obvious interaction between Moses and the ecology of Long Island, that attention to his goals, methods, and intentions vis-à-vis the natural environment remains insufficient. With the 1988 Long Island Studies Conference devoted to Robert Moses, issues of environmental history were granted a relatively greater weight by local authors, followed by a series of

more recently published papers in the *Long Island Historical Journal* (1994-1995), and a few other sources. Yet a comprehensive analysis of Moses and his environmental ideology remains absent.

Each biographer of Moses has called attention to his commitment to Progressive-style activism. Caro and Lewis are in agreement that Moses learned from his privileged upbringing the importance of public service, including a belief in some degree of paternalistic social control.³ Robert Moses's mother, Bella Moses, was a settlement worker at Madison House in New York's Lower East Side, where she created a summer camp program for immigrant and poor youth. Lewis argues that Moses upheld the Progressive reform impulse he inherited from his mother, including her belief that "it was the responsibility of the more fortunate to help the less fortunate to enjoy the fruits of pastoral recreation." In addition, the aspect of Progressivism most embraced by Moses was undoubtedly his commitment to efficient, rational planning, which Caro dubs an "engineering mentality."⁴ Like the Progressives who influenced him and the New Dealers contemporary to his early career, Moses embraced an "allegiance to 'good government' and faith in the rule of experts."⁵ What these authors inadequately address, and seldom agree upon, is that Moses's environmental ideology also falls closely in line with his Progressivist tradition, and in fact was born out of Progressive-era debates over conservation, wilderness preservation, and the optimal use of the nation's resources. Robert Moses, urban planner and park builder, was a conservationist in the manner defined by Progressive historians and in the same tradition as such pioneering self-identified conservationists as Gifford Pinchot and Theodore Roosevelt. For Moses, public recreational space was a commodity to be used and conserved much like timber, water, and other resources recognized by the Progressives.

In his 1959 landmark study, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*, Samuel P. Hays describes Progressivist conservationism as "above all . . . a scientific movement . . . [whose] essence was rational planning to promote efficient development and use of all natural resources." Moses, with his entourage of engineers, architects, and designers, embraced efficiency, optimal use, and refinement as the paramount traits which he hoped would characterize his parks. As Hays argues, early conservationists "emphasized expansion, not retrenchment; possibilities, not limitations."⁶ Moses fits this description as well. One aspect agreed upon by Caro and his critics alike is that Moses sought to create a park empire. He saw in the large expanses of untouched land of 1920s Long Island the potential for endless recreational and park building opportunities, and he wanted to be the one to implement them.

In these ways Moses worked in the tradition of some of the early twentieth-century's most prominent conservationists. Moses's commitment

to resource management mirrored that of Theodore Roosevelt during his presidency. Roosevelt's enthusiasm for outdoor recreation and his emphasis on "planning, foresight, and conscious purpose" complemented his intensely Progressivist search for a 'scientific' solution to social and economic problems.⁷ Roosevelt's conservationist policies were developed primarily by Chief of Forestry Gifford Pinchot. It was Pinchot who articulated the philosophy of "the use of the earth for the good of man." This ideology led him to advocate the regulation of the lumbering industry to ensure an efficient and future-oriented use of timber. Pinchot believed one of the most important aspects of federal conservationism should be the streamlining of separate land offices, agricultural bureaus, and park commissions into more centralized and thus efficient operation.⁸ This aspect of conservation policy is also apparent in Moses's creation and control of the Long Island State Parks Commission in 1924. The Parks Commission, much like earlier Progressive-style agencies, was created as nonpartisan and apolitical, yet "with an extraordinary set of powers . . . to control the allocation of scarce public resources."⁹ Moses would use those powers to further his conservationist goals.

Conservation, not preservation, would become the dominant ideology of the Progressive Era. Pinchot's beliefs were shared by water reclamationists such as John Wesley Powell and Francis G. Newlands, particularly in the developing American West. These tactics brought serious criticism and ideological battles with the emerging preservationists, such as Sierra Club founder John Muir, who desired a hands-off approach to the nation's wildernesses. Preservationists advocated leaving wilderness untouched, and valued the intrinsic beauty of nature rather than its potential for resource extraction and subsequent profiteering. In contrast, Pinchot and others focused on utilizing land and resources as efficiently as possible. In *Breaking New Ground*, published in 1947, Pinchot recalls how he adhered to geologist W. J. McGee's doctrine of "the use of the natural resources for the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time."¹⁰ This philosophy defined for Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, for the majority of Progressive reformers, and for New Dealers of the 1930s, the direction government land policy would take in early twentieth-century America.

Robert Moses, though he did not outwardly self-identify as a conservationist, was already planning Long Island's park network in the 1920s according to the conservationist tradition. Progressive-era conservationism held that resources had to be regulated so they would not be depleted but rather be useful to humans for as long as possible. Moses expanded the Progressive meaning of conservation to include not only commodities popularly understood as natural resources, such as timber, minerals, and water, but also land for recreational opportunity. Consistent

with their early twentieth-century context, conservationists did not like to see land or any other potentially profitable resource go unutilized because that was viewed as wasteful and inefficient. Pinchot, for example, concerned himself with “maintaining and even increasing the permanent production of forest and forest range.” As Caro describes, when Moses looked at Jones Beach for the first time in its barren, natural state, “he realized that the emptiness of the strand, its endless, untouched vistas, was a clean canvas on which he could draw whatever he chose.”¹¹ The authors who discuss Moses’s development of Jones Beach almost universally echo Caro’s words, yet they have also almost entirely ignored or misconstrued Moses’s conformity with conservationism in the Progressive tradition.

One of the ways the scholarship on Moses has been lacking an environmental historical framework is in the careless use and misuse of the terms ‘conservation,’ ‘preservation,’ and even the anachronistic ‘environmentalism’ by those who address the environmental ideology and impact of Moses’s park planning. For the authors who attempt to include such a discussion, there remains an inconsistent set of suppositions and definitions that are at odds from one author to the next. For example, in *Public Entrepreneurship*, Eugene Lewis describes the tensions between Moses and the older generation of New York park advocates, to whom Lewis attributes “a deep feeling for the virgin forest, for conservation and for the preservation of the natural beauties of nature.” Lewis claims Moses shared their “tastes for the unsullied outdoors,” and yet Moses’s park designs rarely demonstrated any commitment to preserving wilderness in its “unsullied” form.¹² Instead, it appears that consistent with his Progressivist belief in “the gospel of efficiency,” Moses viewed any undeveloped park land as wasted recreational space. Lewis’s analysis of the transition of this environmental policy is complicated by a series of false distinctions. One is between the older generation, whom he claims favored ‘conservation’ over ‘capitalism’ (which Lewis characterizes as the greedy, rapacious profiteering off the land). If the older park interests, as described above, favored the ‘virgin forest,’ their goal was most likely preservationist (more than conservationist), and unrealistic, given the urban growth around New York City. Pitting them at odds with capitalism would seem to reveal more about their distaste for new-moneyed “capitalist entrepreneurs,” who unlike the older philanthropists demonstrated a “concern for profit and power alone.”¹³

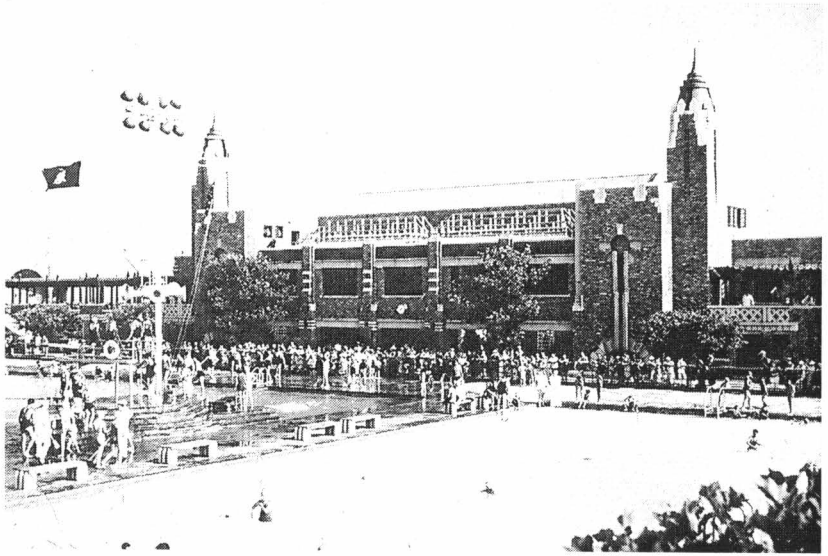


Figure 2: West Bathhouse and Swimming Pool, Jones Beach State Park, 1934. Courtesy Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

An even more problematic depiction here is Lewis's separation between the older crowd and the newer generation of park planners embodied by Moses. Lewis describes this as a tension between those who favored 'conservation' over 'recreation.'¹⁴ The author never defines his terms beyond this, but by making them mutually exclusive, he is forced to place Moses on one side at the expense of the other. Because Moses wanted to build "bathhouses, playgrounds, hiking trails, bridle paths, campsites, and similar facilities by the thousands," Lewis defines him as a recreationist. This seems like an obvious descriptor for Moses, yet the author gives no reason that this should come at the expense of calling him a conservationist as well. In fact, Moses's Progressivist style of designing beaches and parks for the optimal use by the largest public (i.e., as recreational park land) reveals a commitment to conservation that encompasses recreation, not excludes it.

In his two-part article "Robert Moses and the Making of Jones Beach State Park," R. Marc Fasanella makes several interesting points regarding Moses's political and logistical obstacles in developing Jones Beach.¹⁵ However Fasanella also misapplies some terminology that a contextual framework of environmental history could help provide. Fasanella argues that Moses was not a 'conservationist,' but his examples

do not seem to support this assertion. Rather, the author's illustrations imply instead a recognition that Moses was not in favor of preserving wilderness untouched by human development. Fasanella cites specifically Moses's preference for turning what is now the Kennedy Wildlife Sanctuary, adjacent to Jones Beach, into an eighteen-hole golf course. Regarding Jones Beach specifically, the author argues that Moses did not make provisions for wilderness trails or nature preserves, which would have indicated a more preservationist tendency while maintaining some recreational goals.¹⁶

Fasanella also argues that "although [Moses] showed little interest to practice conservation during [Jones Beach's] creation, he was not completely indifferent to environmental concerns." Yet, in each of the examples provided by Fasanella, Moses's stance is overtly conservationist. According to Fasanella's research, Moses expressed apprehension about dumping New York City's refuse and waste into the ocean. The author thus attributes to Moses a dissatisfaction with "unwise development that threatened the health of Long Island's waters."¹⁷ In each of these examples provided by Fasanella, Moses's stance is overtly conservationist. The designer of Jones Beach obviously did not want to see the public's waterfront recreational facilities tarnished by unnecessary pollutants. Yet neither did Moses wish to leave the barrier island in its natural state -- undeveloped and relatively inaccessible to the average New Yorker. Wilderness exploration would have been possible for only a small minority of local outdoors enthusiasts, unlike the fastidiously designed beachfront Moses favored. Thus given an environmental historian's theoretical framework of Progressive-era philosophies, Fasanella has inadvertently painted a picture of Moses the conservationist.

A false distinction also occurs in Caro's work. He argues that conservation had been the nineteenth-century philosophy behind public park planning, but that Moses opted instead for 'recreation,' an ideology which Caro views separately. Caro argues that Progressive-era park planning

had meant "conservation" rather than "recreation." Even during the 1920's, of course, parks still meant "conservation" to most park experts; there wasn't one in the country who would lean as heavily as Moses to thinking of parks as baseball fields and tennis courts rather than as glades and forests and hiking trails.¹⁸

The earlier parks, even the "glades and forests and hiking trails," were designed by urban planners devoted to more rustic, less defined uses for the park land than Moses. Rather than distinguishing between the two terms,

Moses's plans for Jones Beach and other New York parks reflected a devotion to conservation as well as recreation. Moses took the Progressive notion of efficient and rational resource management to include public leisure space as a valuable commodity along with extractive natural resources. As Caro himself argues, Moses wanted to alter government policy to include recreational use of land -- as well as transportation to the park land -- for maximum enjoyment by the public constituency.¹⁹

Interestingly, one author who asserts that Moses was in part a preservationist is John A. Black. In his paper "Robert Moses: Long Island's First Environmentalist," Black challenges Caro's negative assessment of Moses, which "blames him for Long Island's suburbanization and all of its subsequent environmental ills." Instead, Black argues that Moses exhibited foresight in his park planning that accounted for the island's impending population growth and resource restrictions as best he could. He asserts that Moses "knew the crucial difference between refuges and recreational areas and realized that it was unrealistic, if not impossible, to expect to limit access to all of the state's natural areas with a huge city on its doorstep." According to Black, when designing Jones Beach and other Long Island parks, Moses "opted for a balance between recreation and open space," as well as turning a few limited-access preserves into protected state parks. He also asserts that Moses was solely responsible for the establishment of the Jones Beach [Kennedy] Wildlife Refuge and the preservation of Jamaica Bay, the latter of which was otherwise destined to become a waste dump.²⁰

While these refuges remain important to Long Island's ecosystem preservation, defining Moses as an environmentalist seems both anachronistic and overstated.²¹ Moses's public works projects, including the island's barrier beaches, depended upon large-scale modification of the existing, fragile ecosystem. Considering the relative enormity of his recreational projects, compared with his smaller commitment to wildlife preserves, Moses's goals do not appear congruous with preservationism overall. Whenever possible, his careful planning and building consisted of clearly defined recreational facilities and controlled 'natural' areas. In this way as well, despite conflicting opinions by his biographers and researchers, Moses's concept of efficient and rational land use remains closely correlated with Progressive notions of conservation.

One interesting analysis of Moses's environmental ideology has come from Frank B. Burggraf and Karen Rollet's article, "The Rustic and Sophisticated in Park Design: The Moses Style vs. the CCC." In it, the authors argue that the New Deal program's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) promoted rustic park designs and minimal facilities. "The goal was to conserve the site in its natural state; facilities for recreational use were provided, but were subordinated to the protection and preservation of natural resources." In contrast, Moses's "vision of public recreation, while

embracing natural beauty, was a broader and more inclusive one than [the vision] being assembled by the CCC.” Burggraf and Rollet demonstrate Moses’s commitment to the conservation model of optimal and efficient use of the land. Further, the authors advance a fresh framework in which to interpret Moses’s design style and his motivation. They argue that Moses adhered to a more active recreational design strategy than the passive CCC, since his facilities were built for specific uses rather than simply leaving open fields and forest land for the visitor to use at his or her whim. Moses’s park designs thus advocated a “full range of active recreational pursuits,” also consistent with Progressive-style conservation and social control.²²

A distinction Moses did make in park planning, which Caro and others identify, was between wasted and wisely-used land. Studies of the creation of Jones Beach most clearly identify this aspect of Moses’s ideology. According to Caro and others, Moses made frequent boat trips to Jones Beach when he was creating plans for its beachfront in his mind. A *Newsday* article reflecting on “The Master Builder” reports that “Moses would often take his old motorboat out through the reeds in the bay and pull up at Jones Beach, where he would sit and think and marvel at the possibilities for this almost virgin spit of land.” In order to complete his project, Moses faced a remarkable array of physical and ecological difficulties. The enormous extent of planning, construction, and disruption of the natural ecology is well documented by Caro, Lewis, and others. And, as Caro points out, “Moses refused to let nature stand in his way.” He directed the dredging of 40 million cubic yards of sand from the bottom of the Great South Bay onto the beachfront to increase the land level by twelve feet for a distance of seventeen miles in order to safely build Ocean Parkway and park buildings outside of the potentially destructive path of storm waves or erosion. When the fine-grained sand proved to erode too quickly in the wind, Moses discovered with the aid of landscape engineers that planting a special beach grass with a horizontal rooting system would secure the sand in place. Moses then ordered the planting, by hand, of millions of clumps of the beach grass throughout the artificial dunes.²³

The planner believed that a public beach, with bathhouses, swimming pools, a scenic beachfront, and games areas would be the best use of this fragile barrier island. On the Jones Beach shoreline, Moses saw far more than the opportunity for swimming. He sought optimal use of the space for recreational means. “Moses wanted people to feel that they were really on a vacation -- an ocean cruise -- when they came to Jones Beach,” describe Burggraf and Rollet. Caro similarly emphasizes Moses’s belief in the potential for recreational opportunities at Jones Beach and other parks. Moses was not content to think of parks as unspoiled nature. Rather, he focused on ‘improving’ the land by filling the space with human influences. As Caro asserts, Moses “referred to the portions of the Long Island parks

without active play facilities as ‘undeveloped for park use.’” Using Burggraf and Rollet’s model, Moses emphasized an active and more intensive development scheme.²⁴

Moses’s optimal use strategies have been called into question in several ways. Long Island’s current traffic problems, excessive commercialization, and disproportionate access of white middle-class residents to public beachfront have all been attributed in part to Moses. His development of Jones Beach included not only the park property itself but the parkway system which transports New Yorkers and Long Islanders east from the city and off the main island onto the barrier island. The building of the Southern State Parkway and three major causeways onto the park have been heavily documented by Caro, Lewis, the Long Island Studies Conference participants, and others. Moses wanted to make the experience of driving on his highways, in addition to the destinations themselves, pleasurable and park-like. Thus he created a system of what Caro terms ‘ribbon parks’ throughout Long Island.²⁵

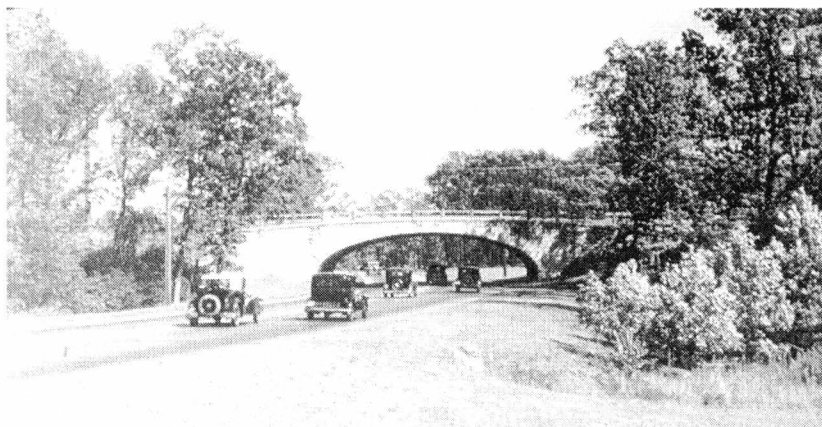


Figure 3: Southern Parkway, Approach to Jones Beach State Park, 1934. Courtesy Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

Some scholars have argued that such projects have negatively affected Long Island’s balance of ecological and commercial development. In her essay, Martha J. Bianco has asserted that

Moses never understood the environmental and political ramifications that his projects would have in the future. Unfettered freeway building displaced thousands, upset political balances, and facilitated suburbanization and sprawl, with attendant automobile . . . dependency and environmental degradation.²⁶

The island, with its proximity to New York City, has grown in population far exceeding its comfortable capacity, making both beach facilities and highways inadequate. However, it is just as plausible to believe that Moses has done a service for the rapidly developing suburbs, which would have grown regardless of his intervention. He strongly believed that land should be in the hands of the public through government regulation as much as possible, and disrupted the wealthy estates of the famed Gold Coast inhabitants to build many of his projects.²⁷ Moses's philosophy of democratizing public access to the coast inherently promoted the enjoyment of Jones Beach by the greatest number.

Yet regulating the population which had access to his parks is an important aspect of Moses's planning which has received ambivalent attention by several authors. As a privileged, Progressivist builder, Moses left a legacy of parks that reflects a conflicted position on race and class. Caro, on one hand, claims that Moses advocated a democratization of land use by appropriating estates from Long Island millionaires to give to the larger public in the form of state-run parks. The author writes that "by the end of 1926, the beaches of Long Island, once reserved for the rich, were dotted with wooden bathhouses open to all." On the other hand, Caro emphasizes what he considered to be Moses's racism and classism by arguing that Moses discouraged the poor and people of color from using his public beaches. He cites especially the contested opinion that Moses purposely built the freeway overpasses for Jones Beach too low for the clearance of public buses, poorer people's primary source of transportation. By discouraging public transit to Jones Beach, both by bus and the Long Island Rail Road, Caro argues that Moses not only contributed to the detrimental automobilization of Long Island, but advanced his own racist, exclusionary agenda onto the public park system.²⁸

Other scholars, especially Lewis and Schwartz, have upheld Caro's analysis on this issue. Schwartz, in studying Moses's role in inner city planning, argues that Moses's power "rested on broad consensus about the lengths the city had to go to rebuild itself," which meant expanding slums and constructing highways that sliced through the neighborhoods of racial minorities. Lewis also agrees that Moses's parks were designed for the mainly white middle class, who could afford automobiles. In his *Newsday*

article, George DeWan also emphasizes Moses's elitism. He asserts that Moses was never "keen on the 'rabble' from the city using his Long Island parks, which he designed for the middle class, auto-owning people." These writers argue that Moses, led in part by a paternalistic Progressivism, used public parks to impose his own privileged ideas of proper behavior and attempted to exclude 'undesirable' elements from his refined park facilities.²⁹

Yet Moses' methods, goals and legacy are more recently being reassessed. Some scholars, most notably Kenneth T. Jackson, have challenged Caro's analysis, claiming he has overstated Moses's exclusionary tactics. Jackson gave the keynote address at the 1988 Long Island Studies Conference that prompted the collection *Robert Moses: Single-Minded Genius*. "Robert Moses and the Planned Environment: A Re-Evaluation," along with many of the other included papers, question various assertions in Caro's work. Regarding social control of land use, Jackson relieves Moses of the responsibility for ensuring public transit access to Jones Beach. Jackson also argues that Caro's critiques of racism imply that Moses acted outside of the American mainstream, when in fact the 1920s was probably the nadir in the twentieth-century African-American experience in regard to segregation and racism, as well as an oppressive period for other people of color. Jackson goes on to emphasize the economic and logistical reasons Moses designed the access to Jones Beach the way he did, de-emphasizing the racist components of such decisions.³⁰ These viewpoints continue to be contested, and the debate over race, class, and optimal land use remains an important one in the larger question of early twentieth-century conservationism and indeed Progressivism. Consistent with the limited racial consciousness of the era, Progressivist notions of social control at times superseded the desire to democratize aid and social policy for under-represented Americans.

The question of Moses's conception of optimal use has as much to do with the cultural geography of Long Island as with its population boom. While some blame Moses for creating destructive commercialization or for perpetuating racism and classism, others have argued that Moses foresaw the intensive development of Long Island and its potentially devastating effects on the environment and population, and for these reasons set aside as much land as possible for recreational use. In this way as well, Moses's public planning served a conservationist, as well as a Progressivist, social-control purpose. In their study of Moses's role in the maintenance of Central Park, Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar emphasize this point. They argue that "Moses was a progressive who believed that a healthful environment could influence social behavior. . . . [He] viewed all parks as places for active, wholesome play. . . ." Lewis concurs, asserting that, like his reformist mother, Moses held a "thoroughly upper crust notion

of what was clean, well designed, and absolutely free of commercialism." Social control of public land was tied directly to its optimal use and was a question of design as much as of access and cost.³¹

There has been a considerable amount of scholarship and reflection about Robert Moses's enormous legacy of public works, his unique park designs, his strong-arm political tactics, and his personal code of ethics. Given the incredible scale and far-reaching impact of his designs, these are important questions that command attention. However, few of these works attempt to consider Moses's influence upon the natural or the physical environment within a proper historical context. Particularly since the publication of Samuel P. Hays's *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*, Progressive-era environmental policy has received much-needed attention in the historical field. Understanding conservation as the practice of wise use of the land for the greatest good in a rational and efficient manner makes a reinterpretation of some of Moses's projects possible. It seems that this ideological framework is a necessary component in interpreting Moses's strategies and impact upon Long Island's beachfront.

Environmental historians often frame their research within an analysis of conservationism, preservationism, and the modern ecological movement when studying the American West. The history of the East Coast, with its large-scale urbanization and suburbanization, is no less a circumstance of cultural ideology dictating interaction with the environment. Just as Progressives and New Dealers understood 'nature' and 'human' as mutually exclusive categories, current scholars of urban planning and park building continue to miscategorize the human/nature interface as separate entities. Scholars of Robert Moses's public works might find new insights by contextualizing and analyzing the historical framework that informed Moses and his contemporaries regarding the urban, suburban and wilderness environments.

NOTES

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2. Lewis, 182.
3. Caro, 30-33, 37; Lewis, 156-158.

4. Lewis, 172; Caro, 705.
5. Roy Rosenzweig, and Elizabeth Blackmar, "Robert Moses and a New Deal," in *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992), 449.
6. Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 2.
7. Hays, *Conservation*, 265, quote 266-267.
8. Gifford Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1947), quote 322, 319-321.
9. Lewis, 171, quote 175-176.
10. Pinchot, 326.
11. Hays, *Conservation*, 2; Pinchot, 306; Caro, 161.
12. Lewis, 184.
13. Caro, 482; Lewis, 184.
14. Lewis, 184.
15. R. Marc Fasanella, "Robert Moses and the Making of Jones Beach State Park, Part One: Persistence," *Long Island Historical Journal* 7:1 (Fall 1994): 99-110; and R. Marc Fasanella, "Robert Moses and the Making of Jones Beach State Park, Part Two: The Grand Design," *Long Island Historical Journal* 7:2 (Spring 1995): 207-219.
16. Fasanella, "Persistence," 217.
17. Fasanella, "Persistence," 217.
18. Caro, 243.
19. Caro, 166.

Robert Moses, Jones Beach, and the Legacy of Progressive-Era Conservationism 41

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VILLAGE SCHOOL TO CITY SYSTEM: THE SCHOOLS OF THE TOWN OF NEW UTRECHT

By John F. Roche

In his 1961 study, *The Transformation of the School . . . 1876-1957*, the distinguished historian of American education, Lawrence Cremin, cited the decade of the 1890s as an era which "brought forth a nationwide torrent of criticism, innovation, and reform" directed at the nation's schools. A new "progressivism" hit its stride then, he shows, as urbanization, industrialization and heavy immigration altered American society.¹ To the reform-minded, coping with these fast-moving changes necessitated new structures and a new spirit in America's school system.

A case study of Professor Cremin's stress on the crucial importance of the 1890s for American education presents itself in the history of the public schools of an historic community at the extreme southwestern tip of Long Island, the town of New Utrecht in Kings County. This article examines the founding and slow evolution of New Utrecht's schools through the nineteenth century and explores the effects of the new status that came in the century's final years.

By the 1890s the town had survived for over two centuries as the distinct, primary unit of political -- and educational -- administration for its inhabitants. The early Dutch farmers and fishermen who settled along the shores of the Narrows and Gravesend Bay secured New Utrecht's charter from the authorities of New Netherland in 1661. Scores of years passed with little change in the community's small and close-knit society. Well into the nineteenth century the town retained a rural, agrarian character despite its proximity to the expanding cities of New York and Brooklyn. As late as the Civil War era the value of its farm produce exceeded that of any other town in Kings County.² By then, however, clear signs of change in New Utrecht were evident.

The building of Fort Hamilton at the Narrows between 1825 and 1831 had been the major catalyst of change. Not only was that project the most important boon the town had ever experienced, but the influx of soldiers, construction workers and their families began to undermine the stable domination enjoyed over the community by the long-established farm families. Then the 1840s saw the arrival of steam railroads and ferries which cut travel time between New Utrecht, the city of Brooklyn and New York City. Easier commutation brought business and professional men from these cities to turn farm tracts into residential estates. Good transportation also led to the building

of hotels and boarding houses which lured Brooklynites and New Yorkers to bathing beaches, picnic groves and athletic fields along the Narrows and at Bath Beach on Gravesend Bay. As the town's population grew more varied, its size also grew apace, increasing from the 569 inhabitants recorded in the first United States census of 1790 to a total of 8,854 in 1890.³

But it was in the pivotal decade of the 1890s that the modernizing trends affecting old New Utrecht reached a climax. First the entire town, from Bay Ridge to Bath Beach and from Fort Hamilton to Borough Park, was annexed by the city of Brooklyn on 1 July 1894. Brooklyn was then the fourth most populous city in the nation, surpassed only by New York, Philadelphia and Chicago. Yet only three and a half years later, on 1 January 1898, Brooklyn in turn was annexed by the city of New York.

This swallowing of the old town by urban consolidation was bitterly opposed by a vocal minority of New Utrecht's inhabitants among whom descendants of the original Dutch settlers were prominent. One of the latter, Van Brunt Bergen, termed the change "a matter of sentiment to us," one requiring "a submission to progress, not one of liking. . . ."⁴ Another long-time resident told a newspaper reporter that while he appreciated the modern conveniences "that contribute to the comforts of the body," he was convinced that "electric lights and trolley cars and newfangled notions and inventions" did not make his neighbors more content. "No, indeed! Everybody around here seems to be restless and uneasy. They grate upon my nerves."⁵

The majority of New Utrecht's citizens, however, supported the transformation from town to city. They looked forward with anticipation to improvements such as paved and well-lighted streets, additional parks and playgrounds and reduced utility rates. Above all else, the forthcoming change that seems to have excited the highest degree of fervid expectation among many townspeople and yet severe melancholy among others was the modernization expected from the absorption of New Utrecht's public schools into the vastly larger educational systems of Brooklyn and New York City. Many of the town's residents had great affection for Public School #1 in New Utrecht Village (the town's center) or the "little red schoolhouse" in the Bay Ridge section. A trustee of the former, James Dean, was reported in the press as having been "visibly affected in addressing the scholars" when his school held its last graduation ceremony before Brooklyn's Board of Education assumed control.⁶

Consolidation did, of course, dilute the local individuality of New Utrecht's five town schools of 1894. But the nostalgia of Dean and others notwithstanding, the town's school system had already been significantly

transformed from the educational patterns of the early or even mid-nineteenth century. Modernization had come gradually, in discrete steps, and mainly after 1850, but its effects were unmistakable by the 1890s. Public funding for education had increased meaningfully. The student bodies of the schools had become not only larger but more diverse in ethnicity, race, religious affiliation and socio-economic background. In New Utrecht the use of the Dutch language in the classroom gave way to English. As the nineteenth century progressed, pupils attended school for longer periods of time -- even before compulsory attendance laws were enacted. Curricula became broader. An educational bureaucracy developed on state, county and local levels, standardizing, among other things, the licensing of teachers. The appointment of women teachers in mid-century significantly modified the strongly paternalistic tone of the town's first schools.

From the single rural school of 1794 with some fifty pupils, the New Utrecht system had grown by 1894 to five suburban schools enrolling 1,623 students. New Utrecht's first school was established during the town's colonial era, sometime after the British seized New Netherland from the Dutch in 1664. Joost DeBaane is mentioned as "schoolmaster and reader" about 1690; J. M. Sperling is listed as master in 1724; a 1768 subscription list reveals that twenty-eight townsmen donated some £39 so that "the Scholl [sic] House Should be Repaired"; and in 1777 Peter Muerenbeldt was named schoolmaster.⁷

No doubt this first town school was closely linked to the Dutch Reformed Church. Under the practices of the colonial communities joined together by the British as Kings County in 1683, the "consistory of the church. . . was conjointly with the civil authorities charged with the care of the school and the selection of master," and the schoolmaster led prayers and taught the catechism.⁸ New Utrecht's Reformed Church was located at the town's hub, New Utrecht village, and the school adjoined the church. Instruction was given solely in the Dutch language until about 1785, just after the American Revolution, when the Reverend Martin Schoemaker introduced the English language in both the church and the school.⁹

The Revolution gave emphasis to the modern concept of widespread education as a civic necessity. In 1787 a committee of New York State's Board of Regents reported that "the erecting of Public Schools for teaching reading, writing and arithmetic is an object of very great importance which ought not to be left to the discretion of private men but be promoted by public authority." The Regents pressed such a policy upon the state legislature with growing fervor over the next half-dozen years.¹⁰ The lawmakers finally responded in 1795 by authorizing grants of £20,000 (\$50,000) annually for five years to support elementary schools.

The state funds were to be divided among the counties in proportion to the number of their Senators and Assemblymen in the legislature; each county was to subdivide its grant among its towns according to the number of their tax-paying residents; and each town was to apportion this money among school districts on the basis of days of attendance by pupils. The new law mandated that localities also contribute to school support. New Utrecht was required to raise in taxes a sum equal to one-half its share of state funds.¹¹

New Utrecht's portion of the state's largesse was very modest, only £21.18s.7d (approximately \$54) in the 1797-1798 school year. Yet that sum roused the townspeople to make more regular provision for the school at the village center and to finance a second school, located approximately a mile and a half northeast of the village center, on New Utrecht Lane.¹² Enrollment at the first school hovered close to fifty students for the five years of the state aid program. At the "Lane School" which had thirty scholars at the outset in 1795, a slight decline over the following years (possibly due to a turnover of eight different schoolmasters between 1795 and 1800) brought enrollment down to twenty-four in 1800.¹³ For children living in New Utrecht's western area, two to three miles from these schools, an arrangement was made with the adjoining town of Brooklyn. New Utrecht's pupils were admitted to the Brooklyn school on Gowanus Road at a fee of twelve shillings per quarter per pupil. During the 1796-1797 school year, eight boys and five girls of the Bennet, Bogert, Cropsey, Van Brunt and Van Pelt families were so provided for. Similarly, and presumably also for reasons of proximity, three students from the town of Flatbush and three from the town of Gravesend attended New Utrecht's Lane School.¹⁴

State aid notwithstanding, New Utrecht experienced great difficulty in hiring and retaining teachers. Peter Stiles was master when the village school opened for the 1795-1796 year, but he quickly gave way to James Groenendyke who held the post until 1800. That tenure was exceptional. The Lane School had three different masters in 1796-1797 and three again in 1798-1799. A pay scale that was anything but progressive was the major part of the problem. In 1796 the Lane School trustees paid the teacher "Forty Six Pounds [\$115] in Cash and Bed, Board, Washing and Mending, which we judge to be worth Forty six Pounds more, in all Ninety Two Pounds." At the village school, Groenendyke was first paid ten shillings per quarter per pupil, then fourteen shillings, six pence, and finally a flat £100 (\$250) for the academic year.¹⁵

The state's five-year appropriation plan expired in 1800. The Assembly voted an extension but Senate approval did not follow despite recommendations from Governor John Jay. Deprived of the outside subsidy,

New Utrecht's Lane School apparently closed down. For fifteen years the town records are also devoid of references to the school at the village center. It is probable that the latter remained in existence, however, reverting to its earlier character as an affiliate of the community's Reformed Church. The Town Meeting minutes of 1799 do reveal passage of a resolution that the church elders should "for the time being" be the Commissioners of Schools and the church deacons be the school trustees for the town.¹⁶

In 1805 the New York legislature reached agreement on a new plan to support education. Half a million acres of unappropriated land were sold to create a "permanent fund for the support of common [i.e., elementary] schools." After a \$50,000 fund had accumulated, disbursement of interest would begin. Further legislation in 1812 stipulated that such payments be divided among the state's counties and towns on the basis of population. Each town was to raise by taxes a sum matching that received from the state. These monies were to be used exclusively for teachers' wages. On the basis of a census of children between the ages of five and fifteen inclusive, each town was to be divided into districts by elected commissioners. School management in each district would be the responsibility of elected trustees.¹⁷

A special town meeting held in New Utrecht on 12 August 1813 selected the town's commissioners and mapped out three school districts. District One was the southeastern section of the town along Gravesend Bay, including the New Utrecht village school. District Two was the western third of the town along the Narrows, the area then known as Yellow Hook. There, after many delays, a "little yellow schoolhouse" was built in 1823 (near present day Ridge Boulevard and 87th Street). In District Three, the inland northeastern sector, the Lane School was restored to use.¹⁸

With state money now flowing uninterruptedly (although in modest amounts for so lightly populated an area as New Utrecht), the town's school system at last achieved permanence despite enrollment fluctuations:

Table 1: New Utrecht Town Schools, 1827-1850¹⁹

For calendar year	Number of children taught in District			Total number of children ages 5-15 Inclusive in District			State funds received by District		
	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3
1827	47	96	45	91	104	60	\$40	\$49	n.r.
1834	46	40	24	122	101	54	57	46	24
1842	78	58	25	137	135	44	103	99	34
1850	118	105	33	132	216	82	107	157	62

It will be noted from Table 1 that the proportion of New Utrecht's school age children who were actually sent to school is quite low. This phenomenon is probably a reflection of the farm-centered character of the community throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, the fact that tuition was charged in the town schools and the absence of compulsory attendance laws. Seventy-five percent of New York State's school age children were said to have been registered in public schools in 1849-50,²⁰ but New Utrecht's schools enrolled only 60 percent in 1850. Indeed, as the data above indicates, without District One's excellent record the town's percentage would have been lower, for Districts Two and Three recorded only 49 percent and 40 percent that year.

The ages of pupils attending New Utrecht's schools before the 1850s suggests further that few of the town's parents sent their children to school at five or six years of age but tended to wait until their boys and girls were seven or eight years old. Of 105 children at the District One school in 1848, only three were five years old, five were six and eight were seven. Those aged eight, nine and ten numbered twelve, fifteen and thirteen in turn, with the age twelve group the most numerous with eighteen. There were four sixteen-year-olds in attendance, all boys. District Three's students displayed a similar age distribution in 1848: of thirty-two only three were under the age of seven, with nine nine-year-olds constituting the largest single group.²¹

Furthermore, students varied widely in the regularity of their school attendance. Juvenile truancy was surely one factor but the New Utrecht farmer's need for assistance from his children in the fields and orchards was probably the major cause of fragmented schooling. For the 1796-1797 year at the village school, attendance ranged from seventy-two to 277 days per individual pupil, and at the Lane School in 1799-1800 from thirty to 248 days.²² The following data (see Table 2) indicates that irregular attendance was still evident fifty years later but had begun to give way somewhat at mid-century:²³

Table 2: Duration of Attendance: 1842, 1849

	<u>District One</u>		<u>District Two</u>		<u>District Three</u>	
	1842	1849	1842	1849	1842	1849
Total # of Pupils:	78	112	58	92	46	59
Attend Under 2 Months	30	28	10	19	8	3
2-4 mo.	12	29	6	19	7	8
4-6 “	10	18	11	18	6	13
6-8 “	10	9	8	14	9	10
8-10 “	9	15	10	14	6	15
10-12 “	7	13	5	8	10	7
12 “	-	-	8	-	-	3

In the 1830s and 1840s the town schools generally remained open twelve months of the year; there was no summer shut-down. District One's school was “kept” a full twelve months during thirteen of the twenty years from 1831 through 1850. This pattern was duplicated in District Two except that its school operated only seven months in 1833. But in sharp contrast, the trustees of District Three experienced grave difficulties in maintaining instruction. In 1835 their school was open less than three months and for only three months in 1838. That sorry record led the Commissioners for Common Schools to find the district ineligible to receive state monies “on account of the school not being a lawful time kept.”²⁴ The trustees redeemed themselves with a full twelve month operation in 1837 and regained state funds. But then deterioration set in again: only three and a half months instruction in 1838 (“the teacher left in April” was noted in the annual report) and none at all in 1839 and 1840. The school was finally reopened in 1841 with thirty-six pupils and was “kept” for eight months.²⁵

During the first thirty to forty years of the nineteenth century there were few changes in the composition of the student bodies and the curricula of the New Utrecht schools. Even after 1840 the old Dutch names still resonated -- Van Brunt, Couwenhoven, Van Pelt, Densye, Voorhees, Van Sicklen. As late as 1848 there were eleven pupils of the Van Pelt family alone among 105 children attending the District One school. By the 1840s, however, Irish family names appear in significant numbers -- Coghlan, McGinley, Murphy, O'Sullivan, Riley -- first of all in District Two where additional construction work at Fort Hamilton

was booming. There were African-American children now in the town's schools, too. Many -- probably most -- of them were descendants of the 106 slaves recorded in New Utrecht in the 1790 census. In 1848 District Three enrolled eleven "colored children" ranging in age from six to fourteen.²⁶

As the town's population grew larger and more heterogeneous during the 1840s and as transportation improvements chipped away at New Utrecht's rural parochialism, the school curriculum began to expand beyond the lessons in "English, arithmetic, spelling and the Bible" that Colonel William Cropsey, a schoolboy in the 1830s, recalled as "important to the parents of the Dutch communities."²⁷ A Yellow Hook (District Two) pupil, Charles Church, recalled that about 1845 his teacher, D.C. Winslow, assisted by his wife, presented the pupils with "a little book of songs, and that the introduction of music in a school was something new at that time."²⁸ A few years later geography became a new subject at the New Utrecht village school: a special meeting of parents had to be called to approve spending \$33.46 for "the purchase of Maps."²⁹ On the other hand, the study of the Dutch language, even as a second one, had now disappeared entirely.

At the middle of the nineteenth century, the funds to operate the town schools of New Utrecht were still a mixture of public monies (the state grants and local district taxes) and tuition fees charged to the pupils' parents or guardians. In 1849 the state government reiterated its commitment to provide funds for teachers' wages, confirmed that a "rate bill" (tuition charge) for the balance of wages could be assessed on parents in proportion to the number of days' attendance of their children and restated the district's responsibility to impose a general tax to maintain a schoolhouse and provide instruction for children whose indigent parents were unable to pay the rate bill.³⁰

The proportional share of these various funding sources may be illustrated by data from 1849. Operating the District One school that year cost \$435, \$400 for teachers' wages, \$20 for fuel and \$15 for repairs. Of that sum the state granted the district \$109.56, tuition brought in \$224.55 and the district school tax raised \$100.89, of which \$35 covered the fuel and repairs and \$65.89 the "exemption of indigent persons from teachers wages." Costs in District Three, with a much smaller student body, nevertheless followed a similar pattern: total expenses were \$220 (\$200 for the teacher and \$20 for repairs) paid with \$61.94 from the state, \$103.06 in tuition revenue and \$55 in district tax receipts, \$35 of which went to cover "deficiencies" in tuition collections.³¹

The 1850 census revealed that New Utrecht's population had risen to 2,129, a gain of over 800 since 1840. Prominent as a growth area at this time was the town's western section along the Narrows, School District Two. A

village had already bloomed close by Fort Hamilton. Now a second settlement was taking shape a mile and a half north of the fort at Yellow Hook.

District Two's schoolhouse, built in 1823, had been expanded in 1835. By 1849, however, the district trustees decided that the building would have to be replaced. The owner of the site, Albert Van Brunt, had notified them that he wished to terminate the lease, the number of school age children in the district had more than doubled since 1840 and the structure had become "somewhat dilapidated." The forward-looking trustees informed the Superintendent of Common Schools, John Carpenter, that it would be unwise to build a new schoolhouse near the present one "when our rapidly increasing population warns us that if we do not divide [the district] now, the day is near at hand when necessity will compel us to do it, and then we shall be left with a good building on a site which will suit neither of the [proposed] new districts."³²

The trustees proposed to split District Two roughly in half. The northern part would retain that designation while the southern half would become the new District Four. The trustees had to convince Carpenter that the value of taxable real estate and personal property within the areas proposed for Districts Two and Four provided an adequate tax basis for partition. Aiding them in this regard was the incorporation in 1850 of a new real estate venture, the Ovington Village Association. It gave promise that more of the district's fields and orchards would soon be transformed into sites for modern "villas." Accordingly, on 12 May 1851, the Town Supervisor and Town Clerk joined Superintendent Carpenter in granting approval for the new Fourth District.³³

A new schoolhouse was promptly provided for in District Two. The voters approved a special tax to raise \$500 to purchase land and \$900 to construct the building. The site acquired was on the east side of Third Avenue at today's 73rd Street. Construction of the frame building, twenty-two feet wide and thirty-five feet deep with a porch along the front, began in November 1851 and was completed four months later. There was but a single classroom inside, housing eighty pupils in 1852.³⁴ The school was variously known as the "little red schoolhouse" and the "Bay Ridge School." The latter term had come into use for the neighborhood after an 1853 meeting of the Ovington Village and nearby property owners chose that name for their expanding community to replace "Yellow Hook," the Dutch-era designation.

To the south, in the new District Four, provision also had to be made for a schoolhouse. An off-street site was selected in the village adjoining the western flank of Fort Hamilton. The lot and building cost \$1,250 there. In 1852 the school boasted an enrollment of 123, but only twenty-nine pupils attended for more than six months.³⁵

By the eve of the Civil War, New Utrecht's school system had not only grown in number of schools and pupils but it was coming under closer supervision by state and county education professionals. Until the 1840s the town's own school officials (three commissioners, three inspectors and two trustees elected in each district) examined, licensed and appointed the teachers. In 1843 the state reduced the local role to nominating faculty to the Superintendent of Common Schools. The next year, in another effort to tighten responsibility on the town level, a single Town Superintendent replaced the three commissioners. That post was held from 1844 until 1856 in New Utrecht by John Carpenter, a physician. He was noted not only for his work with the town schools but also as founder of the Sunday schools in the villages of New Utrecht and Fort Hamilton.³⁶

There was additional bureaucratic "modernization" in 1856 as Kings County's control was increased over the schools of New Utrecht, Flatbush, Flatlands and Gravesend, the rural towns of the county not yet absorbed by the city of Brooklyn. The office held by John Carpenter and his counterparts in the other towns was eliminated. Henceforth, a single County School Commissioner would be elected by the four town supervisors (mayors). That this official was endowed with important power was made evident over the next few years when he issued orders for the alteration of New Utrecht's school district boundaries, even to the extent of transferring part of the town's District Three to a Flatbush school district.³⁷

During the 1850s and 1860s two other significant developments moved New Utrecht's schools still further from their rural past. In District Two at first and then in the other districts as well, the trustees began to employ a second teacher in each school to share the burden of instruction. True, there had been an instance back in the 1830s of a husband and wife team sharing the teaching at the New Utrecht village school.³⁸ But the first regular appointment of a second teacher did not come until 1858 when, at the Bay Ridge school, Maria E. Jenks joined Charles W. Bates. The Fort Hamilton school followed suit in 1868, pairing Alonzo Lake and Adalaide Robinson.³⁹

That women were among the new teachers was the second modernizing development. A Mrs. Puckman had indeed been hired back in 1832 to teach at the Yellow Hook school, but only as an emergency measure after the regular teacher, Jonathan Horton, was dismissed.⁴⁰ Twenty-five years passed before the appointments of Elizabeth Wright as the sole teacher in District Three and Maria Jenks, mentioned above, could be said to establish a definite pattern for the employment of women teachers. After 1866 both teachers at the Bay Ridge school, without exception, were women, and within another five years a majority

of the combined facilities of the four town schools were women. Furthermore, state law was amended by 1880 to give women the vote in school district elections and make them eligible for school offices.⁴¹

Other legislation coming out of Albany brought additional changes of importance. First, in 1867 New York State finally abolished the traditional rate system of tuition charges; New Utrecht's town schools were transformed into free public institutions. The state compensated the localities for the resultant revenue loss by increasing its grants for education. From today's vantage point the extra aid seems minuscule, but at a time when a teacher was paid approximately \$250 a year, an increase as in District One's case from \$57 in state funds in 1866 to \$203 in 1868 was meaningful.⁴²

Secondly, New York State enacted a compulsory education law in 1874. Mild as its provisions were (teenagers who were regularly employed were not obliged to attend school, for example), the new law and the town's rising population pushed New Utrecht school attendance significantly higher (see Table 3).⁴³

Table 3

	Number of children ages 5 - 21				Average daily attendance			
	<u>District</u>				<u>Public School</u>			
	1	2	3	4	#1	#2	#3	#4
1866	173	245	165	339	44.1	38.3	17.9	33.1
1873	200	306	179	373	38.7	51.0	31.0	52.8
1880	226	361	222	429	63.3	73.7	40.0	46.4
1888	397	460	257	603	83.7	109.9	35.7	103.0

With more pupils came the need for expanded facilities. District One's trustees took early action. In 1872 they purchased a lot adjoining the old Reformed cemetery on the south side of 84th Street between 16th and 17th Avenues, a wide street that was once part of the colonial King's Highway from the ferry at the Narrows to New Utrecht village. The new property was acquired for an addition to old Public School #1 as well as an enlargement of the school yard. Only eleven years later, however, the town selected a new site on 86th Street near 18th Avenue, erected a brand new schoolhouse there and sold off the historic 84th Street lot.⁴⁴ Tradition was giving away to the need for modernization.

The town's other districts were also active in upgrading their buildings during the 1880s. District Four, the Fort Hamilton section, sold its original school site in 1883 and erected a new building with four classrooms at a location

four blocks to the north, 92nd Street and 5th Avenue.⁴⁵ The following year the Bay Ridge district, Number Two, sold its half acre site on 3rd Avenue for \$1,500 and put up a new “model building” on 2nd Avenue (Ridge Boulevard) and 71st Street. This schoolhouse cost \$10,000; it had two stories with five rooms and a faculty of four teachers by 1888.⁴⁶

District Three had a smaller school population than any other New Utrecht district yet it was also the largest one in area. Consequently it became the town’s only district to support two schools. The main building containing four classrooms in the 1890s was on 14th Avenue between 53rd and 54th Street, west of the former location on New Utrecht Lane. Just before the town was annexed by Brooklyn in 1894, a larger schoolhouse of eight rooms, technically an annex to Public School #3, was opened two-thirds of a mile away on Fort Hamilton Avenue at 59th Street. This was designated Public School #5.⁴⁷

It was not long, however, before title to these new schools passed from New Utrecht to the City of Brooklyn. On 3 May 1894 Governor Roswell P. Flower approved “An Act to Provide for the Annexation to the City of Brooklyn of the Town of New Utrecht” effective 1 July. That same day he also signed the legislation for Brooklyn’s absorption of the towns of Flatbush and Gravesend. “This is the most important event here since Brooklyn was herself made a city,” commented the *Brooklyn Eagle’s* editor.⁴⁸

New Utrecht was to become Ward 30 of Brooklyn. Section 3 of the annexation law stated that:

All public property in said town used for public educational purposes and vested in said town . . . shall become the property of, and is hereby vested in the Board of Education of the City of Brooklyn. All moneys collected from taxes levied . . . for educational purposes . . . or to become due in said town or any school district thereof . . . shall be paid over to the treasurer of the said city for the use of the said Board of Education . . .⁴⁹

Even before the consolidation occurred, the tempo of modernization increased as New Utrecht’s officials made an obvious effort to turn over their schools to Brooklyn’s Board of Education in a flourishing condition. The 1894-1895 school budget authorized an additional teacher at P.S. #2; in District Three four lots were purchased for a playground behind the annex schoolhouse; and P.S. #4’s trustees arranged extensive repairs “to the school and grounds before handing the property over to the Brooklyn city authorities.”⁵⁰

Brooklyn’s Superintendent of Public Instruction, William H. Maxwell,

became responsible for integrating the schools of New Utrecht and the other annexed towns into his city's system. At the end of 1893 Brooklyn had eighty-seven schools, 2,134 teachers and 102,213 pupils. The system gained 10,305 students in 1894, of whom 1,623 were "credited to" New Utrecht's schools.⁵¹

Maxwell visited the four New Utrecht districts at the outset of the 1894 school year in September and expressed pleasure that the disparities between the schools of the city and the old town were not as serious as had been feared. The five former New Utrecht schoolhouses were now designated Public Schools #101 through #105 in the Brooklyn system. The central Board of Education authorized the local school committees to continue the principals and teachers then under contract at their current salaries, except those whose licenses had expired. The annexation law provided that faculty who held "certificates of qualification, granted in accordance with the laws of the State of New York, shall not be subject to further examination while said certificates are in full force . . ." ⁵² But all those who had taught in the town's schools were not guaranteed permanent appointment by Brooklyn. The 1894 Board of Education report noted that the names of New Utrecht's thirty-six teachers at Public Schools 101 through 105 were omitted "until status of teachers and grades is more clearly defined by the Board." In May 1895 the Board authorized Maxwell to grant "conditional certificates good for one year from July 1, 1895 to principals and teachers . . . whose work in their classes will warrant such action."⁵³

The nostalgia of some senior residents of New Utrecht for their little red or yellow school-houses notwithstanding, the town's schools undoubtedly profited by their merger into Brooklyn's urban system. The curriculum was expanded further, improved instructional equipment became more readily available, teaching staffs were enlarged and additions to the schoolhouses were made to provide much needed classroom space. The 1890s progressivism was having an impact.

During the first year of the transition, members of Superintendent Maxwell's staff surveyed curricular aspects in the annexed districts. In April 1895, for example, the Supervisor of Drawing, Walter Goodnough, reported that:

The class teachers of these schools deserve commendation for the manner in which they have applied themselves to what is new to most of them. Their zeal speaks well for the future. In most cases, one or two terms will be needed to bring these schools up to grade with the city schools.⁵⁴

The same month Jessie H. Bancroft, Director of Physical Culture,

informed Maxwell:

Special mention is due the schools of the annexed districts. Since mastering the first difficulties, they have quickly brought their classes up to the standard of the older schools, and are doing excellent work . . . No.'s 101 and 102 have basement gymnasias in which all of the classes exercise . . . No. 101 has on hand some light apparatus with which the classes will begin work this spring.⁵⁵

Clearly, the new, structured regime of class exercises with gymnasium "apparatus" marked a departure from the mode remembered by a pupil at pre-annexation P.S. #2: "There was a fine lawn sloping to Second Avenue . . . where we played . . . Of course we were completely unsupervised. No teacher would have dreamed of organizing our games."⁵⁶

Maxwell moved promptly to provide more teachers for the former New Utrecht schools. Each one of them gained faculty during the four years they were administered by Brooklyn's Board of Education, 1894-1898. The increases ranged from only one at P.S. #105 to nine at P.S. #102. Overall, the teaching staffs of the five schools grew by 67 percent in that period while student enrollment rose 53 percent. New principals were appointed at P.S. #103 and P.S. #104.⁵⁷

In addition, plans for the upgrading of the five school buildings were formulated in 1894-1895. Implementation followed promptly in three cases in 1896: P.S. #101 was enlarged by four classrooms with a capacity of 197 "sittings," P.S. #103 by eight classrooms with places for 388 students and P.S. #104 by four classrooms. P.S. #102 and #105 had to wait until 1901 for the opening of their wings of eleven and eight rooms respectively.⁵⁸

The latter alterations of 1901 were authorized by the City of New York, not the City of Brooklyn. For on 1 January 1898 the Consolidation Act of 1897 became effective, uniting Brooklyn, including the former town of New Utrecht of course, with the city of New York. With that development the five former town schools became part of a still larger urban system. Their numerical designations, P.S. #101 through #105, were retained and were supplemented in 1916 by descriptive titles. In numerical order these were: the New Utrecht School, the Bay View School, the Borough Park School, the Fort Hamilton School and the Blythbourne School.

Consolidation with New York City further quickened the modernization of education in the New Utrecht area. One particularly notable advance was the

introduction of public secondary schooling for its youngsters. In 1909 P.S. #101 was upgraded to a high school, first as an annex of Erasmus Hall in Flatbush, then as Bay Ridge High School, and finally, twelve years later, as New Utrecht High School. Much later, in 1945, New York City's Board of Education relinquished the old building and the site; today a branch of the Brooklyn Public Library is located there in a new building.

P.S. #102's model building of the 1880s stood until razed in 1929 to permit a major extension of an earlier addition. Old P.S. #103 had suffered the same fate much earlier: it was torn down in 1904 to permit construction of a new school with twenty-four rooms. As for the original P.S. #104, it was swallowed up by new classroom extensions on the same site in 1896, 1904, 1907 and 1928. P.S. #105 gave way to a new structure in 1926.⁵⁹

The passage of old New Utrecht's five historic schools into the massive New York City system was not without elements of conflict. But special circumstances tempered the impact. First, it was William Maxwell, Brooklyn's Superintendent of Education, who was elected by New York City's central Board of Education to become the first Superintendent of Schools for the consolidated city. Secondly, as Diane Ravitch points out in her trenchant study of New York City's schools as "Battlefields of Social Change," Brooklyn's representatives on the Charter Commission which drew up the plan for Greater New York's consolidation secured retention of their borough's "peculiar local-committee system" and "its provincial prerogatives" for school management. The Brooklyn Board of Education even went to court to assert its right to pay higher teachers' salaries than the city's other boroughs.⁶⁰

While such special circumstances modified the impact of new directions, the forces of modernization and reform through centralization soon achieved dominance. The result, Dr. Ravitch found, was "a remarkable burst of energy and innovation unparalleled before or since in the New York schools. The reformers had a program, a social-work approach to children's lives, and the new concentration of authority made it possible to introduce massive changes in the schools."⁶¹

Village School to City System: The Schools of the Town of New Utrecht 57

The schools of old New Utrecht shared in this positive if unsettling evolution. By the time the United States entered World War I in 1917, the number of public schools in the area had grown from five to fourteen, two of which were high schools. There were 525 teachers in those schools compared to the thirty-six of 1894, and the student body had grown from 1,623 to 20,000.⁶² Clearly, old New Utrecht -- from Bay Ridge to Bath Beach and from Borough Park to Bensonhurst -- had become urbanized, and its schools reflected that change. The progressive modernization of the town schools in the nineteenth century was capped, extended and solidified by the historic town's consolidation into the cities of Brooklyn and New York.

NOTES

1. Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 22.
2. Henry M. Stiles, *The History of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, 1683-1884* (New York: W.W. Munsell, 1884), 1:263.
3. The population of Flatbush, a neighboring rural town of the county, grew from 941 to 12,338 by comparison, and that of Gravesend from 426 to 6,937 over the same period; the city of Brooklyn had 806,343 inhabitants in 1890. Ira Rosenwaik, *The Population History of New York City* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1972), 31, 59.
4. Charlotte R. Bangs, *Reminiscences of Old New Utrecht and Gowanus* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Eagle Press, 1912), 147; New Utrecht Town Records, 1659-1831, transcripts, James A. Kelly Institute for Local Historical Studies, St. Francis College, Brooklyn (hereafter SFC), 192-93, 206.
5. *New York Recorder*, 21 Jan. 1894.
6. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1 July 1894.
7. William H. Kilpatrick, *The Dutch Schools of New Netherland and Colonial New York*. U.S. Bureau of Education, *Bulletin*, 1912, No. 12 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1912), 210.
8. *Ibid.*, 200.

9. Bangs, 103. The village was centered on today's 84th Street between 16th and 18th Avenues.
10. Harlan H. Horner, *Education in New York State, 1784-1954* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1954), 13-14.
11. James Sullivan, ed., *History of New York State, 1523-1927* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1927), V:2145; memo, 6 June 1797, Supervisor of Kings County, New Utrecht Miscellaneous Papers, 1:School Papers, (1796-1890),SFC, 252.
12. Perhaps anticipating such aid, the town had advertised in 1794 for "an English School-Master...capable of teaching reading, writing & Arithmetic...recommended for good morals and sober deportment." *New York Diary or Evening Register*, 28 Aug. 1794, quoted in Bangs, 189.
13. New Utrecht Misc. Papers, SFC, 1:248-59. The Lane was near today's 18th Avenue. The school's site is inferred from the documented site of a successor school of the 1820s. See Henry I. Hazleton, *The Boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing, 1925), 3:1091.
14. Reports of Trustees of the School taught at Gowanus, Township of Brooklyn, 15 March 1797 and the New Utrecht Lane School, 15 March 1796, SFC; Bangs, 95.
15. New Utrecht Misc. Papers, SFC, 1:249, 255-58.
16. New Utrecht Town Records, 1659-1831, SFC, 233. The catechism was taught in the public schools into the 1830s; Bangs, 155.
17. Horner, 14; Sullivan, 5:2147.
18. New Utrecht Misc. Papers, 1:266-67; Bangs, 190, 192; School District 2 Annual Meeting Minutes, 1822-50, notebook, Folder 32, Teunis G. Bergen New Utrecht Papers Collection, Brooklyn Historical Society (hereafter Bergen Collection, BHS).
19. New Utrecht School Papers 1827-1894, SFC, transcripts, 2, 16-18, 38-41, 82-87, 138-39, 153-54, 180-83, 217, 296-97, 307-08, 320-23, 357-57.

20. Horner, 141.
21. New Utrecht School Papers 1827-1894, SFC, 70-72, 347-48.
22. New Utrecht Misc. Papers, SFC, 1:250-259.
23. New Utrecht School Papers 1827-1894, SFC, 38-41, 77-82, 180-83, 200-210, 316-19, 351-54.
24. Ibid., 310-11.
25. Ibid., 314.
26. Ibid., 70-72, 349-50, 416-17.
27. Bangs, 155.
28. Ibid., 170.
29. New Utrecht School Papers 1827-1894, SFC, 62.
30. Sullivan, 5:2148-49.
31. New Utrecht School Papers 1827-1894, SFC, 77-82, 357-60.
32. Trustees of District 2 to Town Superintendent of Common Schools, 1839, Folder 33, Bergen Collection, BHS
33. Trustees of District 2 to Town Superintendent of Common Schools, 29 Jan.1851; Minutes of 12 May 1851, New Utrecht Misc. Papers, SFC, 1:330-34. The major dividing line ran along today's 82nd Street.
34. Minutes of 2 Sept. 1851, building contract and specifications, Folder 35, Bergen Collection, BHS.
35. H. F. Walling, *Topographical Map of the Counties of Kings and Queens* (New York: W.E. and A. A. Baker, 1859); F. W. Beers, *Atlas of Long Island....*(New York, 1873); New Utrecht School Papers 1827-1894, SFC, 424-

25, 431, 435-36. The school was south of Lafayette Street (today's 95th Street) between Fort Hamilton Avenue (Parkway) and today's 4th Avenue.

36. Horner, 131, 137; Stiles, 1:264.

37. Memo from V. M. Rice, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 12 May 1856 in Accounts of Supervisor of Town of New Utrecht, 1856-1872, SFC.

38. Reminiscences of W. J. Cropsey in Bangs, 155.

39. Accounts of the Town Supervisor, 1856-1872, SFC.

40. Minutes, School District 2, 20 Nov. 1831, 1 Nov. 1832, Folder 32, Bergen Collection, BHS. Horton's ire over his firing increased when he found four counterfeit dollar bills among his final pay; the school commissioners made restitution.

41. Accounts of the Town Supervisor 1856-1872, SFC; Horner, 18.

42. *Ibid.*, 15.

43. New Utrecht Misc. Papers, SFC, 1:289-90, 297-98.

44. Kings County Register, Conveyances, Liber 1047: 431; Liber 1563: 230.

45. Building History, Brooklyn Schools, 1856-1965, N.Y. City Board of Education, Bureau of Reference, Research and Statistics, card file, Library, Teachers College, Columbia University. (hereafter Brooklyn Schools card file, TC).

46. Kings County Register, Conveyances, Liber 503: 23; Stiles, 1: 226; L. Brown letters, *Brooklyn Eagle*, 23 Apr., 3 May 1942.

47. Brooklyn Schools card file, TC.

48. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 4 May 1894.

49. City of Brooklyn, Dept. of Public Instruction, 39th *Annual Report of the*

Superintendent

...*For the Year Ending December 31st, 1893* (Brooklyn: Citizen Job Print, 1894), 211.

50. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1 July, 13 Aug. 1894.

51. *39th Annual Report of Superintendent...1893*, 12, 17; *40th Annual Report...1894* (Brooklyn: T. B. Sidebotham, Jr., 1895), 100-104; *41st Annual Report...1895* (Brooklyn: T. B. Sidebotham, Jr., 1896), 17, 102-06.

52. *39th Annual Report...1893*, 203.

53. *40th Annual Report...1894*, 397.

54. *Ibid.*, 51.

55. *Ibid.*, 47.

56. Grace A. Glen, "Old Bay Ridge," *Journal of Long Island History* 6:1 (Winter, 1996):6.

57. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac 1896* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Eagle Press, 1896), 144; *Almanac 1899*, 225.

58. Brooklyn Schools card file, TC.

59. *Ibid.*

60. Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars, New York City, 1805-1973: A History of the Public Schools as Battlefields of Social Change* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 163, 165.

61. *Ibid.*, 167.

62. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac 1918* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Eagle Press, 1918), 228, 232.

PRESERVING “THE GOOD OLD SPIRIT”: LONG ISLAND IN THE COLONIAL REVIVAL, 1880-1941

By Joshua Ruff

It is not the good old customs that need to be preserved
but the good old spirit...

Reverend Samuel Herrick, Southampton, 1890¹

Visitors to the annual Women’s Fair at the Setauket Methodist Church were treated to something different in 1880—a chance to step back in time by enjoying a “supper in ye old style in ye New England Kitchen.” (Fig. 1) They could ponder and touch “many ancient articles, which were used in the olden times,” after enjoying a candle-lit dinner and old-fashioned organ music. If any of the 350 attendees saw a contradiction between this festive historical celebration and the thoroughly modern, smoke-belching Setauket Rubber Company down the street—which the event’s broadside advertisement politely identified as “ye Rubber Factory”—their voices are lost to the historical record.²

To what extent is tradition manufactured as a response to modern change? How does a manufactured sense of tradition help to balance and mediate our responses to the present? Even as Long Island was rapidly changing in the decades after the Civil War, a new form of traditionalism that privileged early Americana was beginning to take hold within the region, making an important impact. The colonial revival had profound effects upon Long Island architecture, decorative and fine arts, antique collecting, suburban planning, and even ordinary notions of local history and preservation. It is no coincidence that people found deep resonance in the comforts of this kind of “revivalism” at the very moment that the region was changing so markedly through the influx of newcomers, wanted and unwanted.

Context: the Colonial Revival in America

“Colonial revival” is a term coined by scholars to describe an essentially conservative movement in American culture that uses and adapts themes and motifs from the nation’s colonial past. Although this term was not in scholarly use until the 1960s, it is an appropriate appellation to describe a phenomenon especially noticeable to researchers of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century American culture. Visible in an extraordinary range of manifestations, from domestic architecture to

magazine advertisements for socks, the colonial revival at its peak often reduced the early history of the United States to unified and halcyon pageantry. "Colonial" came to represent a large range of disparate styles, from Queen Anne to Chippendale, at times lumping the seventeenth to early nineteenth century together without careful delineation. Despite the

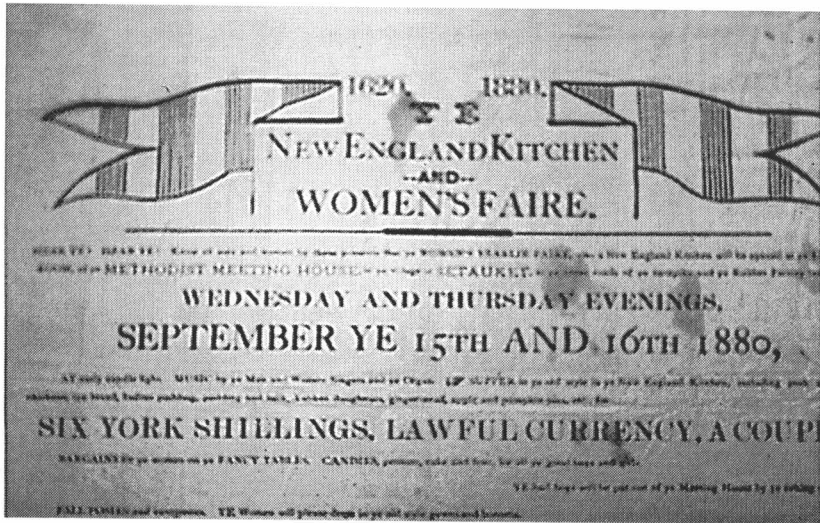


Figure 1: *Ye Old New England Kitchen Fair, 1880.* Broadside, ink on paper. Courtesy of the Queens Borough Public Library.

basic inaccuracies that the movement often propagated, which included uncritical and oversimplified views of early American class, gender, race, and ethnicity, it also ironically made history vividly accessible and inspired generations of historic preservationists to save relics of the past.³

The colonial revival arrived concomitant with exploding urban and industrial growth and increasing immigration of the nineteenth century. While these transitions were often viewed as a threatening challenge to the nation, it would be wrong to simply view the colonial revival as an effort to return to better times. Indeed, many of the most articulate proponents of glorifying the early American past, such as Henry Ford and John D. Rockefeller, had profited enormously from the present. The colonial revival went beyond mere nostalgia; it helped to shape community and national identity while offering a unifying design vocabulary, answering modern concerns that an increasingly heterogeneous nation needed to be stitched together.

And there is no doubt that heterogeneity was an obsession that helped drive the colonial revival. Unprecedented increases in immigration led to a mixture of anxiety and defensive pride in the nation's roots and helped spur preservation efforts. In an age of Social Darwinism, the colonial revival also helped to measure ethnic superiority. "One of the strongest characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon race is its respect for, and its adherence to tradition," wrote one member of the Walpole Society, a group of wealthy American male decorative arts enthusiasts formed in 1909. Other groups founded around the turn of the twentieth century, including the Daughters of the American Republic and the Colonial Dames of America supported the view that owning American family heirlooms that went back to colonial times was not only special—it also helped to prove that one's family had been American long enough to own such treasures. Joining these groups provided members with the psychological benefits of being able to separate themselves from new immigrants. The colonial revival also facilitated the Americanization of immigrants and the prevention of cultural "pollution." R.T.H. Halsey, the first acting curator of the American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and a member of a prominent and old Southampton family, saw antiques from the colonial era as a way of checking "the influx of foreign ideas utterly at variance with those held by the men who gave us the Republic."⁴

The roots of the colonial revival go back several decades prior to the Civil War, if not earlier. While many early examples exist of a kind of hagiography, and Revolutionary War-hero and ancestor worship that was taking place throughout the young nation by the 1840s and 1850s, such as the restoration of George Washington's estate, Mount Vernon, or the small New England town pageants that celebrated local centennials and bicentennials, it was America's 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia that helped to propel the colonial revival into its full-blown form. A popular New England Kitchen display at this Philadelphia Fair included a baby cradle said to date to the Mayflower voyage of 1620, the first clock brought to Andover, Massachusetts, and a 200-year old flax wheel from Plymouth, Massachusetts—in short, coveted material links to hallowed ancestry.⁵

In years to come, architects such as Arthur Little began publishing studies of early American architecture, focusing especially on individual details such as old doorways, mantles, and window treatments. Professionals began to translate these studies into actual commissions for their clients by the 1880s. A circa 1910 trade book by E.S. Child, *Colonial Houses for Modern Homes*, offered model homes from \$11,500 to \$30,000, built "for people who wish their dwellings to be distinctive, tasteful and characteristic." One featured model, design number 842, was "a square

house with the wide old-fashioned shingles, taken from the much admired Rockwood Hall on Long Island."⁶

Simultaneously, the colonial revival began to influence decorative arts as well. Clarence Cook advised an eager public to decorate their homes with antiques in *The House Beautiful* (1881). Irving Whitall Lyon published a pioneering study on American furniture, *The Colonial Furniture of New England* (1891). Alice Morse Earle, who lived much of her life on Long Island (Brooklyn Heights) and eventually died in Hempstead in 1911, wrote enormously popular books about colonial material culture and life, such as *The Sabbath in Puritan New England* (1891), *Colonial Dames and Good Wives* (1895) and *Home Life in Colonial Days* (1898). In *Home Life*, Earle divided her descriptions regionally, surveying New England, Virginia, and Maryland, but often coalesced these segments into a single, unified, passionately-praising voice: "the kitchen in the farmhouses of all the colonies was the most cheerful, homelike, and picturesque room in the house...a warm glowing hearth that spread light and welcome."⁷

As Earle's writings indicate, more than anything else, the colonial revival objectified and idealized the rural domestic life of the past. A "warm glowing hearth" with sparse but appropriately old-fashioned decorations and women gleefully captive to the domestic sphere was the perfect antidote to the cluttered Victorian present, where family harmony and traditional gender roles seemed more in question. Painters such as Jean Leon Gerome Ferris and Edward Lamson Henry depicted figures of the colonial era surrounded by romantic old-fashioned domestic scenery, both utilizing vast personal collections of antique props.⁸ Certain colonial revival paintings, such as *Pilgrim's Grace* (1897) by Henry Mosler (Fig. 2), which took an East Hampton farmhouse as its backdrop, exuded a quiet, orderly sense of early American home life.

Formal history painting often stepped out of the domestic sphere and onto the battlefield or political arena in order to lionize America's earliest heroes. Alonzo Chappel, who lived much of his life on Long Island in Brooklyn and later near Middle Island, was an avid reader of history who painted and illustrated depictions of early American milestones, including *First Meeting of Washington and Hamilton* (1857) and *Drafting the Declaration of Independence* (1862). His *Battle of Long Island* (1858) became the most famous rendering of the British victory in Brooklyn in 1776. Chappel's work circulated widely in publications of the 1850s and 1860s, supplying the American imagination with a fertile visual account of the nation's noteworthy historic moments. Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, most Americans would have encountered colonial imagery in these accessible forms, and in illustrations by artists such as

Howard Pyle that accompanied history articles in *Harper's Weekly* and *Century Magazine*.⁹



Figure 2: *Pilgrims Grace*, 1897. Oil on canvas. Henry Mosler (1841-1920). Courtesy of the Allentown Art Museum.

Mass marketing was another means by which colonial imagery reached the general public. In 1890, food manufacturers Bennett and Sloan began selling canned foods with the brand names "Pilgrim" and "Old Homestead."¹⁰ Wallace Nutting, a former Congregational minister, brought his evangelic fervor to replicating early Americana through popular hand-tinted photographs of staged hearth-side colonial scenes; by 1917, he was reproducing "furniture used by our ancestors."¹¹ Both advertising imagery and reproduction decorative arts supported the increasing nostalgic momentum into the early 1940s.

It is therefore easy to see how nostalgia and the colonial style infiltrated Long Island in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, just as it was consuming the rest of the country. In studies of other areas of the United States, scholars have also recognized the important roles that the colonial revival played in late nineteenth and early twentieth century

regionalism, as well as how it fulfilled modern exigencies. One such effort examined the ways in which New England villages and areas, such as the Piscataqua region of Maine and New Hampshire, "were finding ways to exploit their old resource, the sea"—by nurturing and promoting the historic tourist trade.¹² Other studies have found the colonial revival was also well suited to progressive efforts at urban and rural renewal.¹³ Historian Michael Kammen places the colonial revival in the context of long-standing American traditionalist movements that have connected "collective memory and national identity," manufacturing a "usable past" to give "shape and substance" to this collective. In this way, Kammen finds linkages between the colonial revival and other American traditionalisms, including nostalgic uses of the Civil War and the late-Victorian eras.¹⁴

Just as it has been one among many types of traditionalism, the colonial revival was one of a multitude of competing voices and influences for America's sense of identity and style in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The Arts & Crafts movement, which shared much with the colonial revival and was at times a direct influence on it, posited the inherent strengths of pre-industrial craftsmanship. Americans of this period were also intrigued with the growth of the aesthetic movement, orientalism, and European styles transported from abroad. More than just a theatrical means of escape into an exotic, "other" world, these different aesthetics were often recombined and integrated into people's lives, whether through the homes they chose to live in or the events they chose to participate in. But the colonial revival proved to be especially enduring due to its wide adaptability and the very Americanness at its core. Even if things were never quite as perfect and ordered as the sanitized images which depicted ruddy-cheeked early Americans, such scenes were palpable and gave people a common visual currency to identify with their heritage. A simulated, if anachronistic, past could also serve as a cultural compass for the present and future.

Transition and Tradition on Long Island

At Southampton's 250th Anniversary in 1890, an occasion which saw the display of Revolutionary War muskets, the parading of an old whale boat on wheels down Main Street, and the display of a Native American wigwam meant to direct attention towards the "fast vanishing race of the Shinnecock" Indians, Reverend Samuel E. Herrick reflected on the massive recent changes that had come to the region:

The war and the railroad have made a new Long Island...there is certainly a new Southampton. And with all our laudation of the past today, I do not suppose that

any of us desire that the good old town should be remanded to the Puritan times. Many things that were good in their day ought to become obsolete...It is not the good old customs that need to be preserved but the good old spirit...

The best way to preserve this "good old spirit," Herrick argued, was to engage in a wholesale rescue of important documents, rare books, and artifacts "which ministered to the narrow comforts" of early settler's lives. While not in any way discouraged by the changes that had taken place, Herrick wanted to ensure a proper memorialization of the "unbroken lineage" of the area that often extended back "six, seven, or eight generations."¹⁵

In fact, such efforts to preserve, protect, and maintain, were well under way on Long Island by the time of the reverend's speech and would continue to gain momentum into the next century. Inspired by a growing national interest in preserving historic objects and buildings from colonial times, local individuals and groups began to actively weave their unique thread of local heritage into the overall tapestry of American history. The Long Island Historical Society, established in 1863 and located in Brooklyn, brought traditionalists together from Kings, Queens, and Suffolk counties. The institution grew quickly and assembled a library of local history and genealogy, as well as a collection of historic objects. The L.I.H.S. was not simply seeking the acquisition of items of local provenance, as demonstrated by the acceptance of a donation of original letters by George Washington to his manager at Mount Vernon. On the other hand, the L.I.H.S. published three volumes of local history between 1867 and 1878 that were intended to further general interest in local history, especially in Long Island's role in the Revolutionary War. Henry P. Johnson's *The Campaign of 1776 Around New York and Brooklyn*, published soon after the flush patriotism of the Centennial, argued that the area was immersed in history and readers should take the kind of active interest in colonial history that New Englanders had been engaged in for years. He called the region, especially Brooklyn, "pre-eminent 'Revolutionary soil.'...As at Boston in 1775, so here in 1776, we had the war at our doors and all about us."¹⁶

Other historically-minded organizations on Long Island came to fruition following the inspiring Centennial in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The Suffolk County Historical Society was formed in 1886, committed to preserving material culture related to the island's earliest occupants (Native American and European both) and their trades, farming and whaling. Its charter members included powerful men with

deep family roots on Long Island, such as Theodore W. Smith, Henry W. Halsey, and Samuel Tuthill.¹⁷

Prompted both by the 250th anniversary celebration and the words of Reverend Herrick, the Southampton Colonial Society was established in 1898, and organized an exhibition in 1900 that showcased the finest antiquated articles the community had to offer. A photograph of the display shows a splat-back chair, a portrait of Washington, an early transferware china plate, chintz bed curtains, and a spinning wheel. Two colonial-costumed women bearing serious facial expressions complete the historical tableau (Fig. 3). Outside the walls of this traditional setting, the Southampton community was rapidly becoming a booming resort for the nationally prominent New Yorkers, such as secretary of war Elihu Root and financier James L. Breese, who chose to build their homes there. Connecting with the colonial past could become one of the few common enterprises between wealthy, conservative newcomers and their less economically fortunate neighbors, who were losing public access to beaches and watching their village's political focus change.¹⁸

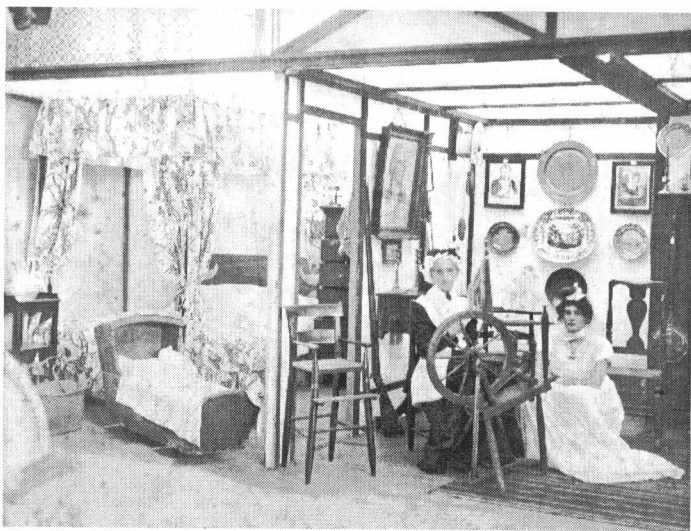


Figure 3: Exhibition at the Southampton Colonial Society, 1900. Courtesy of the Southampton Colonial Museum.

Women were also central to the formation of the Huntington Colonial Society (later the Huntington Historical Society) in 1903, which like Southampton, was an outgrowth of the community's 250th anniversary of European settlement. Women of Huntington that year were invited to

organize and serve “a dinner such as one (that) might have been enjoyed with General Washington at the table when he passed through Huntington in 1790.” In addition to the dinner, the committee formed an exhibition to display objects of historical interest at the St. John’s Parish House on Stewart Avenue. Based upon this success, this select group—made up of both relative newcomers and members of old Long Island families—resolved to “preserve articles used by early settlers and founders of the Town” in an organization that mirrored the efforts of people across the country.¹⁹

Individual Long Island historians were also increasingly inspired to document the colonial period in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Martha Bockée Flint wrote *Early Long Island: A Colonial Study*, in 1896. Flint’s book was far more than just an interpretive history of the area. Her lucid prose romanticized the region as an area marked by its distinctive look. She glorified its history of sea captains and rugged farmers from centuries past and often painted an unbroken line between past and present. To the degree that the colonial revival was much about evoking an image of the past, she is worth quoting at length:

Many a comfortable old farmhouse is shingled to the ground with cedar shingles bleached by the storms of a hundred winters, and shaded, perhaps, by the very locusts which Captain John Sands...first brought from Virginia to Long Island, on a return voyage of his coasting schooner, full two centuries ago. One may chance upon a block house, with its story of Indian assault or Revolutionary struggle, or the gaunt windmills of the Hamptons, or beneath venerable, sheltering willows, such a rude moss-grown mill with splashing wheel...²⁰

Morton Pennypacker, a tireless collector of historical regional ephemera which became the basis of the Long Island collection at the East Hampton Library and the author of many articles and several books, including *General Washington’s Spies on Long Island and New York*, devoted his primary intellectual energy to work on the Setauket spy ring and Long Island’s place in Revolutionary War history: “I’m doing this because I love Long Island and its history makers. They were splendid men and women. If people knew how interesting it all is, there would be more of them following in my lines.”²¹

Beyond these early organizations and historians, numerous individuals developed important collections of early American material culture during this time period. William Efner Wheelock, an East Hampton doctor, began collecting early Long Island and lower New England

furniture in the 1890s; much of this collection now resides at the East Hampton Historical Society.²² Family heirlooms were another type of local preservation project: in one notable example, the Ketcham family of Amityville saved an important Queen Anne armchair for generations that George Washington reputedly sat upon in his visit to Long Island in 1790 (Fig. 4).²³



Figure 4: Wainscot Armchair, c. 1740. Courtesy of the Winterthur Museum.

Such impulses to commune with the past were also seen in schemes to revamp entire historic interiors, as an examination of East Hampton's famous "Home Sweet Home" suggests. As early as 1874, the house that had reputedly been the inspiration for John Howard Payne's famously nostalgic song was recognized for its venerable interior: "the old house is held very sacred by the villagers, and the ancient kitchen, with its antique fireplace, stands to-day just as it did when Payne left it for his homeless wanderings over the world;" "let no sacrilegious hand touch the old timber of this precious relic!"²⁴

But by 1910, the home had been touched by several heavy, if not "sacrilegious," hands. Owner G. H. Buek fully redecorated the interior of the house, filling it with antique china and furniture in an effort to capture a

familiar, old-fashioned ambience. To the *Home and Garden* author who profiled the house, these efforts achieved their aims: "once within, a hundred or more years fall away. Here no suggestion of modern life intrudes itself...Everything is as it should be, and it seems as equally fitting that the grandfather clock in the corner should lend its dignified presence...in all the Colonial treasure gathered to rehabilitate the place, there is nothing to mar the sentiment nor offend the taste."²⁵

To those that could afford them by the 1910s and the 1920s, antiques offered legitimacy and authenticity; while collecting European art and artifacts was still in vogue, early American paintings and furniture were fast gaining ground, spurred on by the colonial revival. A number of wealthy antique collectors inspired by this national fixation found Long Island to be the perfect stage for their growing largesse. Emily Lockwood de Forest filled her colonial revival country house, "Wawapek" in Cold Spring Harbor, with colorful Pennsylvania German artifacts, many of which were later donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and became the basis of its Pennsylvania German galleries. Bertha King Benkard of Oyster Bay devoted special attention to New York furniture, and prime examples are now in the collection of the Museum of the City of New York. Henry Francis du Pont was the most prodigious collector of these three and his holdings would later form the basis of the Winterthur Museum in Delaware.²⁶

Du Pont's "Chestertown House," his colonial revival estate built facing the ocean on Dune Road in Southampton in 1926, became virtual museum galleries for his fine collection of ceramics, early American textiles, and an impressive variety of furniture styles. The house was an experiment for du Pont, who integrated woodwork and paneling from early American homes of Maryland and Massachusetts into his new residence, working out through trial and error many aesthetic concepts that would later be utilized in the renovation of his ancestral home, Winterthur, in Delaware. Though du Pont was often silent on the subject of personal motivation, creative development, and his own feelings about the nation's colonial past, his skillful collecting and brilliant decorating spoke for itself. He created a traditional mood that had a powerful effect on all who visited the home, as evidenced by a "thank you" note from an early guest shortly after the home was opened: "the pieces that you have assembled in your rooms are such perfect examples of their periods and are so appropriately installed that all may be studied and enjoyed...I know of no institution that contains such specimens of early Americana as your beautiful house holds today." In fact, du Pont came quite close to acting on this praise, very nearly making his Southampton home the decorative arts museum that he eventually opened at Winterthur.²⁷

Immigration and Colonial Revival Reproductions

Immigrants were also changing the human landscape of Long Island by the turn of the twentieth century. As communities such as Glen Cove, Port Washington, and Huntington received their first numbers of Italians and Jews by the late 1890s, signs of resistance were sometimes openly expressed. For example, Long Island Rail Road president and resort developer Austin Corbin, Jr., announced that "we do not like Jews as a class. There are some well behaved people among them, but as a rule they make themselves offensive to the kind of people who principally patronize our road and hotel, and I am satisfied we should be better off without than with their custom."²⁸ Such attitudes were often in direct correlation with colonial revivalists, as the writings of preservation architect Harold Donaldson Eberlein make clear, in *Manor Houses & Historic Homes of Long Island and Staten Island*. Eberlein ranted against the "pathetic wreck" that the historic Van Brunt house (est. 1658) of Brooklyn had become, "tenanted by foreigners and rapidly falling to pieces." To Eberlein, the multi-ethnic areas of Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn were a possible forecast for the rest of Long Island. The area's colonial character would only remain intact, he suggested:

Until the surging waves of polyglot and racially nondescript overflow of population from New York City, aided and abetted by local landboomers and speculative builders, completely submerge the ancient characteristics of one of the fairest spots on the Atlantic coast...Heaven avert that day as long as may be...²⁹

Ironically, but certainly of no surprise, it was actually immigrants who would help to manufacture colonial revival reproductions for two Long Island companies, the Company of Master Craftsmen, of Flushing, and the Alvin Silver Company, of Sag Harbor. The Company of Master Craftsmen (1925-1942), a subsidiary of furniture giant W. & J. Sloane, imported European immigrant artisans to make their colonial style furniture from a Flushing factory, a large brick building which appropriately featured a Georgian cupola. The company worked closely with the Metropolitan Museum of Art's American Wing, reproducing rare pieces from the collection to decorate the offices of the rich and powerful, including the president of the New York Stock Exchange. A series of advertisements in *The Magazine Antiques* in 1926 and 1927 showcased the company's abilities in reproducing Duncan Phyfe furniture (despite the fact that Phyfe was not a "colonial" furniture maker but rather an early nineteenth century

maker of prominence, it is again important to note that the colonial revival was often liberal with chronology).³⁰

The Alvin Silver Manufacturing Company arrived in Sag Harbor in 1895 from New Jersey, and began creating popular silverware based on historical patterns. Many of its early employees were Eastern European Jewish immigrants. Its flatware lines such as the “William Penn,” “George Washington,” and “Molly Stark” were advertised in national publications, such as *Ladies Home Journal*. A trade catalog from 1905 posited the company’s “William Penn” line was a proper combination of old-fashionedness and sophisticated taste, even if this particular style of flatware was just appropriating a colonial name, not a template:

The ‘William Penn’ pattern is a design of old colonial style and the significance of the name was the fulfillment of a definite purpose...Besides the sentiment of ancestral association, the ‘William Penn’ carries with it good taste...³¹

But the company’s profitable colonial reproductions brought it in direct competition with the prominent Gorham Company of Providence, which purchased and relocated Alvin to its Rhode Island plant in 1928.³²

Building Old for New: Colonial Revival Architecture on Long Island

Colonial revival architecture was the most noticeable way in which historical influences were used on Long Island to adapt to present-day requirements. Neo-colonial structures could be the embodiment of national styles, such as McKim, Mead & White’s Independence Hall-inspired Garden City Hotel (1893-1901) and a spate of Mount Vernon replicas, such as the aforementioned firm’s Breese House in Southampton (1898-1907). And Long Island vernacular architecture also proved adaptable, as seen in both “updated” old farmhouses and new Dutch colonial revival houses.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, responding to the many wealthy clients wanting to make Long Island their part-time home, architects offered historically-based country house architecture in many different styles, including Tudor, French, and Italianate. But the colonial revival proved to be the most adaptable—and the most American—of historical genres. New colonials were built on massive scales that had never been seen in early American times and ignored painstaking historical accuracy in favor of creative beauty. As architect Charles Adams Platt, who designed many homes around Glen Cove, explained to one writer, “the Colonial Classic should be our guide;...we should build as the Colonial

builders would have built had they had the same palette, the same wide range of materials and conveniences."³³

In this way, the colonial revival meshed well with the demands of country house architecture, supporting both stately elegance and palatial size for Long Island's wealthiest residents. Hundreds of such houses were built throughout the area, often transporting features from other American regions. Platt's house, designed for John Teele Pratt of Glen Cove (1909-1915), was probably inspired by two of the architect's favorite colonial-era houses, "Homewood," near Baltimore, and "Whitehall," near Annapolis. The Lloyd Stevens Bryce Residence of Roslyn (1900), designed by Ogden Codman, Jr., recalled Palladian styles similar to those found in early Philadelphia and Virginia homes. Architect Ernest Flagg's "Indian Neck Hall" of Oakdale (c. 1900), built for Singer Sewing magnate Frederick G. Bourne, had a north façade with massive columns based upon the White House.³⁴

Fascination with popular early national forms was also in vogue for the design of schools, post offices, courthouses, and virtually every kind of government building imaginable on Long Island. The desire for a national style, something distinctly American, seemed most natural in a public setting. The Huntington Town Hall, designed by Peabody, Wilson & Brown in 1909, won accolades from the national journal *Architect* several years later as a good model for other American public buildings. Southampton High School (now Southampton Town Hall), 1912, built by William Lawrence Bottomley, was the product of a national contest that had mandated entry designs to be colonial, in order "to blend with the existing architecture of the town."³⁵ Although these and many other Long Island civic buildings of the period were actually, strictly speaking, Georgian revival, by the 1910s the colonial revival often encompassed early English models in architects' quest for a common stylistic language of tradition that would work well across the country.

The tendency to reference and use actual early Long Island indigenous architecture was not as common, but could be found especially in the creative re-use of old local farmhouses. A number of important homes designed by McKim, Mead & White, including the Breese House, the Devereux Emmet Residence, and architect Stanford White's own home, "Box Hill," had actual old farmhouses at their core. Isaac Henry Green, a native Long Island architect who designed many houses in the burgeoning south shore communities of Islip and Sayville, as well as a number of notable homes on the north shore, was especially sensitive in his work to the link between regional history and vernacular design, leading him to create Dutch colonial revival houses. In addition to his own family background and his study of history, as president of the Oystermen's Bank and Trust Company from 1899 to 1924, in West Sayville, Green had a

continual Dutch inspiration due to a late-nineteenth century influx of immigrant baymen who came to the south shore from the Netherlands. His houses often featured sweeping gambrel rooflines and interior Dutch doors. His George Munroe Residence (1888) of East Hampton was one of the first Dutch colonial revival houses in the United States.³⁶

Interest in vernacular architecture extended into many local publications concerned with both early Dutch and English structures. In 1904, Perriton Maxwell published an essay on old Dutch homesteads of New York that was illustrated with pictures of eight standing houses in Flatbush, Brooklyn. Harold Donaldson Eberlein's *Manor Houses and Historic Homes of Long Island & Staten Island* (1928), mentioned previously, was the most comprehensive survey of early regional structures in its time.³⁷

Vernacular buildings also appealed to prominent American artist F. Childe Hassam, who spent the last sixteen summers of his life in East Hampton. Hassam, who himself lived in a 1722 house on Egypt Lane and had long celebrated his early American ancestry in both written and artistic form, set to work after 1916 producing a series of etchings, pen-and-ink drawings, and paintings of the community's old buildings and antiquated scenery. His work detailed the village's historical features in etchings and paintings, helping to solidify the area's traditionalist image.³⁸

Colonial Revival Becomes the Choice of Long Island Suburbs

As Long Island's population exploded in the first decades of the twentieth century, boosters of the region managed what might seem at first thought to be contradictory impulses: to both encourage suburban growth and to continue to stress the traditional charm of individual communities, painting images of a seemingly static colonial character. Real estate developers, the Long Island Rail Road, and regional and national publications all played key roles in selling the area's historic features to would-be tourists and new residents. The colonial revival continued to shape both the promotions of and the responses to suburbanization.

In 1908, a broadside advertising the new Jamaica Park South development featured an illustration of Father Knickerbocker (Fig. 5), the embodiment of New York City from Washington Irving's classic *History of New York* (1809), showing the development to a young middle-class family. In his tricorne hat, breeches, and buckled shoes, the ad's Father Knickerbocker still transmitted the look of a sharp, modern, no-nonsense realtor.³⁹ Looking further east, *Long Island Resorts*, a promotional brochure published by the Long Island Rail Road in 1911, gloried in Huntington's "monuments commemorating Revolutionary characters," Southampton's "specimens of the early dwellers' architecture," and East

Hampton’s “fine trees, which suggest the oldest of the New England villages.” That same year, the popular national magazine *House & Garden* encouraged readers to consider relocating to the region which was “dotted with such farm-houses...from Colonial times” that provided “splendid opportunities for remodeling.” It also recognized Hempstead as “particularly attractive on account of its Revolutionary associations.” *The Sunrise Homeland*, published by the LIRR throughout the 1920s and 1930s, gave similar hyperbolic praise that was tempered with the acknowledgment of the emerging residential patterns: “here are homes of every variety, from the ultra-urban apartments of Brooklyn to the quaint farmhouses of Colonial days.”⁴⁰



Figure 5: Jamaica Park South, 1908. Broadside, ink on paper. Courtesy the Long Island Museum archives.

Some of the new communities being developed in Nassau and Suffolk counties were consciously built in a manner consistent with such idealized images. Munsey Park, incorporated in 1930, was a model village created by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which had acquired the land upon the death of newspaper publisher Frank A. Munsey. Through colonial revival architecture for the village’s new residents, the museum ensured “the Munsey acres were developed in such a way as to be an asset to the community as well as to the museum.” In 1932, William S. Coffin, then the president of the museum, put his seal of approval on the project by noting “I doubt if there could be found anywhere a community which contains so many authentic replicas of the best and most beautiful in early American

architecture and of the most tranquilly charming of Colonial furnishings and decorations.”⁴¹

The local suburban developments that were being incorporated on Long Island in the 1930s and the 1940s often took their architectural cues from the national neo-colonial styles that were now being targeted for the middle class. Popular American architects, including Royal Barry Wills, Cameron Clark, and John W. Stedman, Jr., featured simplified, scaled-down versions of Cape Cod and Federal-style homes on the pages of national magazines during this era. Particularly telling was the New York World's Fair in Queens, where colonial revival houses were presented and celebrated as the choice of the future in the fair's "Town of Tomorrow" exhibit.⁴²

In Stony Brook, shoe magnate and real estate entrepreneur Ward Melville was inspired in part by the opening of Colonial Williamsburg in 1932 to begin a massive renovation campaign of the village center from 1940-1941, melding real estate development and retail sales aspirations with the desire to "return" to a mythic past. Melville and his architect Richard Smythe did this to remedy, in his words, the "hodge-podge of structures of no beauty, crowded in among a few residences well built in the Colonial tradition." In fact, the two had collaborated in a campaign to erase the Victorian aesthetic with their local colonial revival project since 1929, when Melville hired Smythe to remodel his own house after Mount Vernon and to design his residential investment Old Field South. In 1937, Melville and Smythe set to "restoring" Caroline Church (1729) of Setauket, despite having very little historic evidence to proceed with the work.⁴³

Though Melville credited his parents with the idea of colonializing Stony Brook (Fig. 6), the project began after their death and was only possible after local businessmen and residents conceded to this vision in a village meeting held in January of 1940. Completed in a lightning-quick construction period by July of 1941, the new seventeen-unit shopping center utilized the addition of shutters, classically-styled doorways, shingles, and a predominance of white paint to solidify the community's structures. Not surprisingly, the work included the eradication or severe alteration of several Victorian houses which did not conform to the colonial program. The small-town charm that Melville and Smythe had tried to effect was articulated through the overall simplicity of design. Melville quipped that "Stony Brook today is what might have been at the start of the nineteenth century, had it needed at that time as many as fifteen stores, a firehouse and a post office."⁴⁴ But the nostalgic feel was also to be found in the individual details: a large public green, landscaped to look like a New England town center; an American eagle over the Post Office that flapped its wings as the clock on the cupola struck the hour; even a modern necessity, the gas station, was thoroughly consistent with the surrounding colonial look.

Reminiscing on the project in a speech to the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia in 1956, Melville justified it as a necessary response to the demands of the auto age and suburban encroachment into Long Island's north shore, saying that Stony Brook "had more or less fallen asleep when twenty years ago the motor age began bringing a reasonable influx of visitors and inhabitants. The village found itself unprepared for this influx, and so the need for more retail stores resulted in haphazard, shoddy, and unattractive construction..." For Melville, the village's overhaul could also have broader implications: "perhaps Stony Brook's action may serve as an example to other places with similar problems."⁴⁵



Figure 6: Stony Brook Village, c. 1950. Courtesy of the Long Island Museum archives.

The Colonial Revival's Survival

Even if Melville may not have inspired many other communities to undertake the same massive revisions, he need not have worried. In the years after World War II, suburban developments on Long Island were frequently influenced at least in part by colonial designs; the Dutch colonial

gambrel roofline, and of course the Cape Cod, best replicated in Levittown (est. 1947), indicate the evolution of the colonial revival to a common American domestic idiom. While historical organizations on Long Island, such as the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities (founded 1947) eventually developed far more nuanced interpretations of colonial history and material culture than their forebears, the general public's fixation on the colonial period has never fully subsided.

Even the word "colonial" has been appropriated for both commercial enterprise and to put a stamp of taste and tradition on the company that chooses to use it: a perusal through the Suffolk County phone book finds "colonial" shopping malls, travel agencies, delis, taxi companies, and even a surgical supply company. There are "colonial"-named developments and roads to be found in villages across Long Island. And as Disney and Hollywood enterprises repeatedly emphasize, Americans (Long Islanders included) have continued to put less emotional energy towards historic authenticity than in simply identifying with a sense of the past.

And so the colonial revival continues to surround us—from the designs of houses and public buildings to Revolutionary War reenactments and mass-marketed furniture—and its popularity shows no signs of waning. It has proved remarkably durable and adaptable, as each generation selectively uses and modifies colonial history to serve present needs. Today, the colonial revival continues its work of bringing together Americans of disparate origins and providing us with a common stylistic language—as it also continues to oversimplify the complexities and nuances of our history. The colonial revival has long helped Long Island communities to validate an idealized attachment to the past, while giving their blossoming suburban present a veneer of tradition.

NOTES

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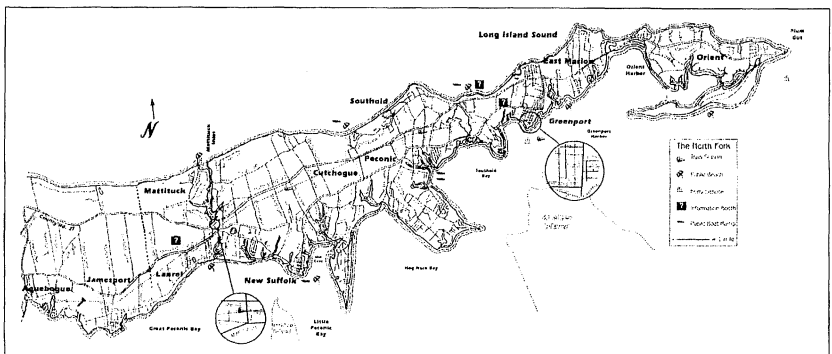
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FROM POTATO PATCH TO WINE ORCHARD: SOUTHOLD TOWN'S PATH OF RURAL PRESERVATION

By Michael Rokofsky

In 1977, *Suffolk Times* columnist Richard Suter knew that the neighborhood he called home was at a crossroads. He wrote that the North Fork of Long Island was undergoing change, lamenting the slow demise of the small family-owned store, the cozy village feel, and the openness of farmland. “Those quaint little villages...have become small islands surrounded by uncharitable seas of suburbia and highways.”¹ In short, everything charming and unique about the villages of the North Fork was under threat of being swept away in a tide of development and suburbanization.

A shopping mall had been proposed for the hamlet of Mattituck. In the past, the only hindrance to a shopping mall in the North Fork had been a population too small to support one. The population had risen considerably by the time of Suter’s editorial, making the possibility of a shopping mall feasible to a developer. But “the small town, after years of suffering and neglect, is starting to fight back [against suburban development such as shopping malls].”²



Map of Long Island's North Fork, courtesy of North Fork Promotion Council, Inc.

Figure 1: Map of Long Island's North Fork. Courtesy North Fork Promotion Council, Inc.

Suter's words were an accurate portrayal of the North Fork's resolve to preserve its rural character. While much of Long Island embraced the eastward development from New York City, the North Fork had several plans for rural preservation. Some of these plans were to be successful at preserving rural character, thus contrasting this region from the rest of post-World War II Long Island. Others were well-intentioned designs that solved one problem while creating another. The theme throughout is that the residents of this region, in general, have always been steadfast in their desire to maintain a rural flavor. For decades now, these residents have had to combat economic temptations that make development the much easier choice. They have been able to weather the storm, making rural preservation an economically viable choice.

Long Island's ecosystem and proximity to New York City have shaped its suburban development more than any other factors. The sandy beaches on the South Shore's Atlantic coast are only twenty miles from the rocky beaches on the North Shore's Long Island Sound. In between, farms and woodlands had traditionally taken up the vast majority of the land. As early as the mid-nineteenth century, Long Island's shorelines had been playgrounds for such wealthy tycoons as *New York Post* editor William Cullen Bryant, Theodore Roosevelt, the Vanderbilt family and many others. Yacht clubs, tennis clubs, and golf links provided vacations for wealthy tourists, and the Long Island Railroad made travel to and from New York relatively easy.³ One need look no further than F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* for a sense of the high society that existed in parts of Long Island. By the 1920s, Long Island became accessible to the middle-class. Fostered by the construction of Sunrise Highway (the main route of travel along the South Shore) and eventually the establishment of Jones Beach as a state park and resort area, several communities sprang up along the waterfront areas.⁴

The baby-boom period marked the formative years in Long Island suburbanization. The GI Bill of 1944 guaranteed returning WWII soldiers housing loans through the Veterans Administration (V.A.). Immediately, developer William Levitt capitalized on the opportunities that the GI Bill afforded to the veterans. Since returning soldiers were guaranteed easily approved, low-interest mortgages with no down payment, with the federal government as the guarantor, the market for new homes was all but assured. Additionally, the Federal government, which assumed most of the risk, financed the loans. One result of such politics was Levittown, which has come to be known as the archetype of post-war suburbia. Other developers built on Long Island as well, though Levitt is widely credited as pioneering post-war suburban development. As a result of this new housing trend, 67.4% of homeowner loan applications in Nassau County in the early 1950s were through the V.A.⁵ The sales figures might have been even higher, had

Levitt not contained clauses barring African-Americans from purchasing these homes.⁶

Eventually, Long Island's population growth moved eastward, fostered by the developing highway infrastructure, which was an extension of the New York City road network. In 1939, preliminary plans for the Long Island Expressway were drafted. The Queens-Midtown Tunnel was built in 1940, and piecemeal construction of the highway to the Nassau County line went on until 1960. In 1953, tentative plans were laid out for the completion of the expressway. It would extend approximately seventy

Extent as of 1940 ———
 Extent as of 1953 ———
 Extent as of 1962 ———
 Extent as of 1970 ———
 Extent as of 1972 ———
 Orient-Rhode Island Bridge Proposal ———
 Robans Island Bridge Proposal ———

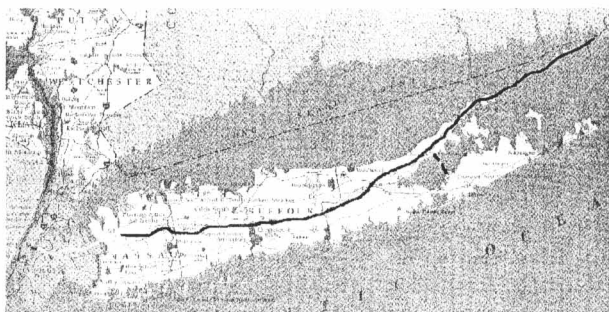


Figure 2: Stages of the Long Island Expressway. Reprinted from *1994 Outdoor Recreation Resources of New York State*, courtesy New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

miles from Manhattan to Riverhead, the Long Island Expressway's current endpoint. Extensions to the Suffolk County line were completed in 1962. As of 1970, the furthest advance was Holbrook, twenty miles from the planned terminus. These twenty miles of highway were hastily completed by 1972 (see Figure 2).⁷

Suburban development and population booms moved eastward concurrent with the construction of the highways. In 1930, when only limited-access roads existed, even in Nassau, the population density of Nassau County was six times the density of Suffolk County.⁸ From 1930-

1970, the Nassau population increased 370%, with the sharpest escalation occurring in the 1950s and leveling off around 1960. The Suffolk population increased 700% in that same period, with the population almost tripling in the 1950s and doubling yet again in the 1960s. Juxtaposing highway extensions and population increases shows the relationship between the two. The population density rose in places that were very close to the furthest extent of the Long Island Expressway. Highway accessibility allowed the population to increase since people could buy newly developed houses and travel more easily to work.

The description that journalist Steve Wick gave for the North Fork in his book *Heaven and Earth: The Last Farmers of the North Fork* perfectly describes the region:

The North Fork is a peninsula of sand, woods, and topsoil poking out from the main body of Long Island. In places, it is little more than a road wide, salt water on both places. It pokes north and east in a jagged fashion and arcs slightly toward the south near its eastern tip, like a tired finger bending over. On its north side are high sandy bluffs; wide necks jut out into the bay on its southern side.⁹

Southold had been an agricultural community from its earliest days. The mid-eighteenth century saw the rise of commercial farming in Southold, and further advances in farming tools and techniques allowed for greater productivity. The Long Island Railroad, chartered in 1834, allowed the farmers to transport their potatoes and cauliflower more easily to New York City. The farmers of the North Fork had always, rightly or wrongly, felt that their soil was the finest in the country.¹⁰

During the Great Depression, Southold's agricultural economy lagged, along with much of the country.¹¹ One effort to re-invigorate the local economy was a 1931-1932 proposition to connect Shelter Island to the North and South Forks by constructing two bridges, financed by the sale of \$5 million in bonds.¹² The large public works project would have created jobs and infused outside funds into the North Fork economy, as well as provided residents with easier access to Shelter Island. In 1936, at the direction of President Franklin Roosevelt, designs were drawn up for the Works Progress Administration to construct the two bridges. Opposition on the part of the residents of Shelter Island delayed the plans, until the idea was scrapped altogether. Subsequently, the North Fork became a center for military and industrial production during World War II, which elevated the local economy.¹³

After World War II Southold, like the rest of Long Island, underwent a great deal of change. Several outside factors left the people of Southold searching for a new direction. The people of the region chose to break from being strictly rural and bring in modern amenities while keeping the development rate under control. In Greenport, the cornerstone for a modern hospital was laid in 1949, along with the construction of a larger post office.¹⁴ However, the end of the wartime economy depressed Southold's economy once again.¹⁵ These conditions, along with the increased numbers of shopping centers and industrial production operations in the western part of the Island, caused several long-established businesses to close down, most notably the fish freezing and processing plant in Greenport.

New businesses replaced the old ones when the tourist industry began to grow in the mid-1950s. The old ferry slip to Shelter Island was replaced with a new one adjacent to the Long Island Railroad station, giving newly-arriving tourists the choice of easily riding the train into the village of Greenport and/or walking to the Shelter Island Ferry. Construction of a new hotel overlooking Peconic Bay was finished in time for the summer tourist season of 1958. The region was pulling itself out of the wake of the Great Depression.¹⁶

The mid-1950s also saw a rise in the real estate market in Suffolk County. Residents of Southold took note and were alarmed by the prospect of their town becoming a suburban outpost of New York City. The rising demand for land resulted in increased property values, and decrease in farm profits led many farmers to sell part or all of their land to developers.¹⁷ In response, Southold Town wrote new zoning laws that were intended to preserve open spaces, limit the number of buildings that could be constructed, and cause businesses to maintain a small-town flavor, rather than the large shopping centers on the western part of the island. One problem with development is that the infrastructure (roads, schools, sanitation, drinking water, electricity) must be carefully planned to accommodate the population. A substantial population without an appropriate infrastructure results in the inability to support the populace living there.¹⁸ Prevention of this situation, along with the people of the Town of Southold's desire to protect open spaces, resulted first in the establishment of the town zoning commission in 1955, and eventually zoning laws in 1957.

The first mention of zoning was a petition by the Southold Citizens Committee for Zoning with eighty-three signatures at a 1954 town meeting that urged the formation of a zoning board to draw up maps to separate the districts. A 1955 town meeting expressed the town's "desire that the Township be zoned" and that "effective zoning ordinance is highly

desirable and in the best interest of the Town of Southold."¹⁹ The powers of the zoning commission would be:

restricting the height, number of stories, and size of buildings and other structures, the percentage of lot that may be occupied, the size of yards, density of population, location and use of buildings, structures and land for trade, industry, [and] residence or other purposes.²⁰

At several meetings over the next two years, ideas were proposed about what the aims of the zoning commission and what the zoning laws would entail. These laws were intended to prevent houses from being packed together too tightly and on small plots of land. The idea was that spread-out homes would preserve the open spaces, thus separating Southold from places like Levittown. The different kinds of properties (residential/agricultural, business, industrial) were separated into districts to keep the residential areas quiet and separate from business and industrial areas.

District "A" encompassed residential and agricultural land. Land plots in the "A" classification were to be no less than 12,500 square feet (roughly one-third of an acre), buildings could be no taller than three stories or thirty-five feet and occupy no more than 25% of the land plot. Minimum standards were also set for the amount of space between structures on two different plots of land and the amount of required space in the front and rear of the buildings. Buildings that fell into this category, essentially, were residential homes, churches, parks, and farms. Professionals who had an in-home practice could operate, as long as they lived in that home and hung a small shingle on their front yard.²¹

The business district (Zone B) was zoned away from the residential district to separate the bustle of customers from peoples' homes. Homes could exist in the business district under "A" zone codes and with no more than twenty families per acre.²² Any business was allowed to operate in zone "B," except for those that were deemed a "public nuisance of court record." Business structures could be no higher than fifty feet and take up no more than 70% of the land plot. The size of the signs outside could be no larger than six feet by ten feet and three feet from the ground, presumably to maintain the image of a small, personal, and independent shop.²³

District "C" was the industrial zone. With rare exception, any type of industrial operation needed a permit from the town board. Potentially dangerous industries, such as ones that posed a fire hazard, emitted harmful fumes, noise, or unpleasant odors, would need to be approved by the zoning board of appeals.²⁴ Similar restrictions were placed on camper or trailer

parks. The only camping that was allowed without special permit were temporary camping units of the Boys Scouts or Girl Scouts.²⁵ In all likelihood, this was to prevent trailer parks or other elements that were seen as lower class from springing up in open areas.

The problem with these laws and their intent is that members of the Zoning Board were ordinary pillars of the community and not development experts. Under the new ordinance, a one-hundred-acre tract of land could be broken up into about 300 uniform housing plots (See Figure 3). Without further planning, roads leading to these houses would need to be built. The intentions of the codes were to preserve open spaces, but may have just as easily destroyed open spaces, since all of the land on the farms that would be sold could be developed.

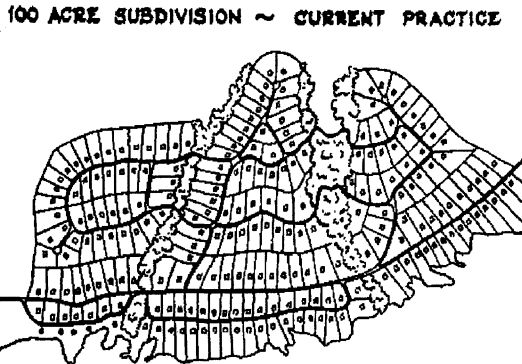


Figure 3: 1962 Zoning Patters. Reprinted from *Planning Seminar*, 13 June 1962, 12. Courtesy Suffolk County Department of Planning.

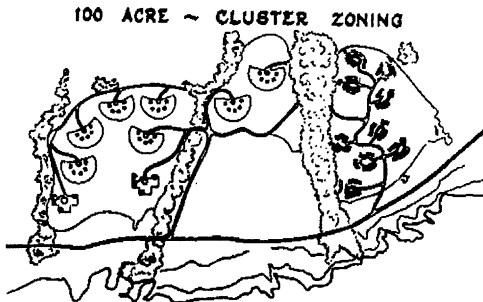
Feeling that the new legislation would hinder their ability to sell their land to developers, struggling farmers opposed the zoning codes. (The price of potatoes was depressed, making an acre of potato land worth barely \$1,000 on the open market.) While the ordinances did not exclude development per se, the minimum plot requirements made the land less valuable to a developer who would want to build on the land as they wished. As the *Suffolk Times* newspaper stated, "The sole purpose of zoning and planning is not to work a hardship on any individual, but to insure the residents of Southold that their investment in their homes and businesses will be protected against undesirable ventures."²⁶ Still, the

farmers very often sold their farms for what seemed to be a great deal of money.

One example is the King family farm in Orient. With no male heirs and a plummeting potato market, Edwin King sold his seventy-five-acre farm in 1957 to Walter Uhl, a developer, for \$2,000 per acre, or \$150,000. Thinking that he had sold his farm for a fortune, King observed in horror as the developer divided the land into half-acre plots, and within six months, sold five undeveloped plots of land for \$25,000 each.²⁷ What was the King Farm is now the housing development "Orient By The Sea."

In 1960, the need for a comprehensive commission to oversee the growth of the fastest growing county in the United States resulted in the creation of the Suffolk County Department of Planning. This commission helped plan the development of roads, sanitation, housing construction, population growth, public parks, and also aided local towns and villages in planning their own growth. Lee Koppelman, director of the Planning Board, urged local towns to enact "cluster" zoning (See Figure 4). Under cluster zoning, small housing developments would be grouped together and connected through a network of roads. The map of a cluster zone looks like an apple tree, with the apples as the houses and the branches as the roadways.²⁸ The open space that remained would become a part of the public domain in the form of parks and recreation areas.²⁹

A key aspect to civic planning is the careful development of roads and bridges. In 1962, at the Suffolk County Department of Planning seminar, plans were unveiled for two major bridge projects: one joining the North and South Forks via Robins Island, and another that would extend the Long Island Expressway to Orient and eventually connect to Rhode Island



Figures 1 and 2 reprinted with permission from Suffolk County Department of Planning, *Planning Seminar, June 13, 1962*, page 12.

Figure 4: 1962 Zoning Pattern. Reprinted from *Planning Seminar*, 13 June 1962, 12. Courtesy Suffolk County Department of Planning.

via Great Gull Island and Fishers Island. These bridge proposals were initiated by members of the North Fork community to spur both short-term and long-term growth. The short-term growth would come from the jobs that would be created for constructing the highway extension and the bridge. The long-term growth would extend out of the increased accessibility and commerce that the highway and bridge would offer.³⁰

Over the years several plans for a bridge connecting Long Island with New England have been proposed. The Orient-Rhode Island bridge would have taken the place of the Orient Point ferry that has been in existence for over a century. Ralph Quinton, who was then the mayor of Greenport and a member of the planning commission, first broached the idea to Koppelman. Quinton's rationale for the bridge was short- and long-term growth. However, Quinton's proposal was probably also influenced by his real estate investments in the region.³¹ The increased accessibility would have made the value of his land holdings skyrocket.

The proposal never came to fruition for two main reasons: logistically, a bi-state pact for a bridge would require joint agreement between New York State and Rhode Island (and possibly Connecticut), and interstate public works projects require congressional approval. Additionally, the residents of the North Fork realized that such a project would take away the rural flavor of the region. Other residents objected to the bridge because they felt that it would only transform the region into a throughway from New England to New York. The car exhaust would leave pollutants in the air with no guarantee that the motorists would stop to shop or eat.³² All of these complications ended talk of a Long Island Expressway extension and/or a bridge.

In 1964, the Planning Commission claimed that "virtually all of Suffolk's 920 square miles are suitable for development."³³ However, this did not mean that all this land would be developed, rather that Suffolk County residents were fortunate enough to have the choice of where to build and where to preserve open space. As already mentioned, the growth of an area needs to be commensurate with that area's ability to contain a certain amount of people, which was a key aim of the commission. It also suggested that towns make use of all of their space by limiting or eliminating vacant (unused) land, and planning the denser parts of town in the center with farmland branching out to provide a buffer from community to community. According to Koppelman, one of the aims of the commission was to "preserve the rural character of the North Fork." The Town of Southold contains 33,900 acres, 10,000 of which were recommended to remain farmland.³⁴

Development continued, though in a much different fashion from Nassau and western Suffolk, where the preservation of open spaces was emphasized much less. New housing and commercial facilities went side-

by-side with the preservation of open spaces. New businesses were established and homes built, but many golf courses and parks were built as well. Houses were built on the land that was purchased by developers (768 houses during the 1960s),³⁵ but the town also purchased beachfront property that was converted into a park while at least three golf courses opened in the early 1960s.³⁶ No apartment buildings, trailer parks, or large shopping centers were established.

By the mid-1960s, new additions to the North Fork left it with a beautiful balance of open farmland and business centers – the quintessential town and country combination. Yet the growing tourist industry and expanding real estate market left the town with the realization that they needed to be even more careful in planning their communities.³⁷ At the urging of the Suffolk County Department of Planning, the town of Southold applied for \$55,000 in state and federal aid to hire Raymond and May, a planning consultant. Under the plan they formulated, farmland south of State Route 25 would become developed, while farmland north of the road would be preserved. The funds also supported the establishment of more small parks and recreation areas.³⁸

The fact that the town requested the funds was a final realization that potatoes would not fund the North Fork's economy. Instead, the region would be brought into a more suburban economy without bringing in full suburbanization. The tourist economy flourished and the new real estate developments attracted more residents.

The development that Southold saw in the 1960s conformed to the theme of preservation of open spaces and only welcoming businesses and development that fit the town's character. In Greenport, a new bowling alley, modern drug store, auto service station, and automobile dealership were established; all were businesses that had been welcomed by the village. Several real estate developments on beachfront properties were built, and a number of gift shops and motels were created to take advantage of the new tourism industry.³⁹ At this point, the rural flavor of the region might have permanently collapsed, but it did not. Two major changes in the North Fork that solidified the preservation of farmland and open spaces were the growing wine industry and the sale of agricultural land development rights to the government.

In 1973, Alex and Louisa Hargrave, proprietors of Hargrave Vineyards, planted their first wine grapes. In 1975, they opened the North Fork's first major commercial winery. According to the Long Island Wine Council, there are forty-seven vineyards, covering 2,700 acres, and twenty-three wineries (including the South Fork).⁴⁰ Wine was much more profitable than potatoes and at the same time preserved the beauty of the open fields. Wine has an upper-class connotation, raising the image of the North Fork and making vacationing there even more attractive to tourists.

Today there are sixteen Long Island Wine Council member wineries on the North Fork.

Farmers still sought to sell their land to developers. A program initiated by the Suffolk County Department of Planning in 1971 encouraged farmers to sell permanent building rights to the county and state governments. This helped farmers by giving them money, and helped communities at the same time by ensuring that the farmland would never be developed.⁴¹

The plan was passed by the county legislature in September 1976, with the first transactions occurring in September 1977. Nathaniel Talmage sold development rights on 131 acres of Baiting Hollow farmland to Suffolk County for \$356,975. George Reeve sold development rights of eighty-four acres of his Aquebogue farmland for \$261,900. Reeve said that he planned on using the money to invest in farm equipment. The county-wide plan allotted \$21 million for the purchase of the development rights to 3,883 acres. Any farmer selling these rights to the county not only would receive money, but also the property tax benefit of that land being assessed exclusively as farmland, rather than developable land.⁴² As of 2002, Suffolk County and Town of Southold have purchased the development rights on 1,400 acres and 1,286 acres in Southold, at a cost of \$8.5 million and \$10.4 million, respectively.⁴³

Several wineries have sold their development rights to the town and county governments, but the manager (not owner) of one of the vineyards believes that this plan is foolhardy and shortsighted. Wine-making is not a money-making operation, as he states. "The only solid way to make money in vineyards on Long Island is to buy development-rights-intact land, sell the rights, use the cash to plant vineyard, turn around and sell it to a rich investor (who is more) interested in the lifestyle (than turning a profit)." Starting up a winery solely for profit-driven reasons is very difficult. Selling development rights, in his opinion, is a quick, feel-good solution that will hamstring landholders when they attempt to sell the land, be it for agricultural or developmental purposes.⁴⁴

The people of the North Fork wanted to limit suburban growth. What they received were piecemeal plans by ordinary citizens, not a comprehensive long-term plan. The residents were responsible for the idea to curb development. The Suffolk County Department of Planning was responsible for the proper comprehensive planning to limit suburban sprawl. The zoning laws that the Town of Southold enacted did not eliminate land sales and population growth, but they did send a message that residents wished to distinguish themselves from the western parts of Long Island. They enacted zoning codes to regulate building when what they wanted was a moratorium on building altogether. Their ideas may just as well have resulted in substandard development, rather than the pretty

scenery that has remained. If not for the Suffolk County Department of Planning's advisory role, which made many of the proposals for parks, infrastructure improvements, and open spaces, the town may very well have planned the development so poorly that road access to the residential areas would have been very shoddy.

In the end, all of these efforts would have been for naught had the discovery of Long Island's ability to produce wine never happened. The transfer of development rights bolstered this by allowing farmers to potentially open vineyards and wineries while selling their building rights to the government.

Over recent years, the restraint on suburban elements such as these is slipping, with no guarantee that the North Fork will always maintain its open spaces. Several signs on vacant pieces of land advertise properties for sale along Route 25. Also, in the western hamlets of Jamesport and Mattituck, there are suburban-style strip-malls right across from vineyards.

In 1994, the Southold Town Stewardship Task Force surveyed all of the hamlets to determine the direction of the town. Information was collected from local citizens. Most of the hamlets called for new businesses to attract tourism. They also proposed bike paths and beachfront improvements to enhance community beauty and attractiveness to tourists. Shopping centers were urged to improve their landscape by adding shrubs and trees, so as to not stand apart from the surroundings. The only hamlet that completely shunned development and tourism was Orient, whose residents claimed that new development would "mar waterfront areas and walking paths" and urged "obtaining conservation easements and purchasing land or development rights."⁴⁵

In recent years, population demographics have changed markedly. The latter half of the 1990s saw a sharp rise in the price of housing. Shuttle buses make stops along the North Fork and then jitney to Manhattan. This allows people to live in eastern Long Island and commute to work in New York City. While the ride is almost three hours, a person could get on the bus at around 6:00 AM and be at work in mid-town by 9:00. Such new residents are much different from the ones that had moved there in the 1970s, people who lived and worked in the community. The new residents are wealthier and not as active in the local events. Neighborhood activities such as volunteer firefighting, was once a large aspect to village life. This sense of community is on the decline, according to one resident, which shows that the transformation of the North Fork is not yet complete.⁴⁶

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1. Richard Suter, "Main Street or MAIN STREET," *The Suffolk Times*, 1 Sept. 1977, 16A.
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3. Edward J. Smits, "An Ecodeterminist View of Nassau's Growth," in *Nassau County: From Rural Hinterland to Suburban Metropolis*. eds. Joann P. Krieg and Natalie A. Naylor, (Interlaken, NY: Empire State Books, 2000), 167-168.
4. Smits, 170-172.
5. Hugh A. Wilson, "The American Welfare State and the Growth of Suburbia: Nassau County, A Case Study," in *Nassau County: From Rural Hinterland to Suburban Metropolis*. eds. Joann P. Krieg, and Natalie A. Naylor, (Interlaken, NY: Empire State Books, 2000), 196-198.
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18. Suffolk County Department of Planning, *Planning Seminar, June 13, 1962*, 4.
19. Southold Town, Town Meeting Minutes, 16 February 1954. Southold Town, Town Meeting Minutes, 15 March 1955.
20. Southold Town, Town Meeting Minutes, 15 March 1955.
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22. Since Article II specifies that homes must be a one-family dwelling and Article III calls for residential homes in business districts to comply with Article II, this is a contradiction.
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32. Koppelman interview. Reeves interview.
33. Lee E. Koppelman, "*Planning for Open Space in Suffolk County*," Suffolk County Department of Planning, 1964, 16.
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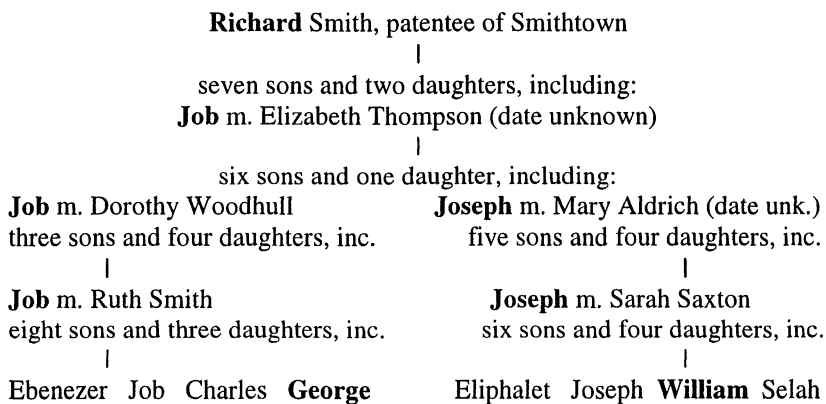
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“THE DEVIL’S OWN IMPONDERABLES”: TWO SMITHTOWN MEN IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

By Elizabeth Shepherd

John Adam’s phrase describing New York politics before the Revolution might equally have applied to public attitudes toward two descendants of Job Smith, the third of the seven sons of Smithtown’s patentee (see Figure 1). These cousins, William Smith and George Smith, were born around the middle of the eighteenth century, raised in their grandfather’s houses near Stony Brook Harbor, and acquired the skills and habits demanded of boys on a farm. William (1758-1837) was the third of six sons with four sisters, George (1742-1822) the third of eight sons with three younger sisters. For all the apparent similarities, the cousins reacted to – and acted in -- the Revolution very differently, George’s model patriot, William as “a very bad man,” too bad, relatives said, to bury in the church cemetery. The hero, for all his noble deeds recorded in historic documents, has been forgotten. His cousin’s unsavory reputation has lingered despite scant evidence of any wrongdoing. It seems that bad deeds titillate the imagination more than good. How otherwise can one explain the way personal reputations become fixed in local history regardless of facts?¹

Figure 1: A Partial Family Tree



Before the outbreak of armed hostilities between Britain and her American colonies, Smithtown was caught, geographically at least, between

the more radical east end and the generally conservative west end. The families of George and William reflected this split on the day in May 1775 when all male citizens were asked to sign the statement of general association -- the Articles of the Association of Freeholders and Patriots -- affirming their commitment to the patriot cause:

Persuaded, that the Salvation of the Rights and Liberties of America, depends, under GOD, on the firm Union of its Inhabitants, in a vigorous Prosecution of the Measures necessary for its Safety; and convinced of the Necessity of preventing the Anarchy and Confusion, which attend a Dissolution of the Powers of the Government; We, the Freeholders, and Inhabitants, of [name of town to be filled in], being greatly alarmed at the avowed Design of the Ministry, to raise a Revenue in America; and, shocked by the bloody Scene, now acting in the Massachusetts Bay DO, in the most solemn Manner resolve, never to become Slaves; and do Associate under all ties of Religion, Honour, and Love to our Country, to adopt and endeavor to carry into Execution, whatever Measures may be recommended by the Continental Congress; or resolved upon by our Provincial Convention, for the Purpose of preserving our Constitution, and opposing the Execution of the several arbitrary, and oppressive Acts of the British Parliament; until a Reconciliation between Great-Britain and America, on Constitutional Principles, (which we most ardently Desire) can be obtained; And that we will, in all Things follow the advice of our General Committee, respecting the Purposes aforesaid, the Preservation of Peace and good Order, and the Safety of Individuals, and private property.

Ninety-seven men signed in Smithtown, fifteen formally recused themselves while thirty-two others avoided taking a public stand or, being away on the appointed day, signed in another town. For example, George Smith, who was clerking with attorney William Nicholls in Islip at the time, signed the Articles there. In his family, support for the Association was clear-cut from the first. His father and two elder brothers, not to mention the husbands of his two elder sisters and his two Smith uncles, all signed the Articles. His brother Charles, whose name was not among the signers, promptly enlisted in the militia and apparently served with the Continental forces through most of the war. In contrast, William Smith refused to sign. As it happened, three or four men of that named then lived in the town, of

whom two were descended from the patentee. Not one was included on the Smithtown list of associators, and only one on the list of recusants. Although one William later enlisted, Job Smith's grandson has traditionally been considered to have the recusant. In his immediate family, only one brother – Joseph -- signed the Articles; Joseph and his sixteen-year-old brother Selah enlisted. Their father did not sign in Smithtown or anywhere else, and although two of his brothers supported the Association, the other two did not. Curiously, it was the great-grandson of one recusant uncle who refused church burial for William. By “breaking off all commercial intercourse with Great Britain, Ireland and the English West Indian Islands,” the town resolution, approved eight months earlier, had surely created hardships for those involved in coastal shipping and so might explain the family's reluctance to subscribe to further protests.²

Even as Smithtown men were signing (or not signing) the Articles, local committees had started arming and training recruits despite the serious lack of weapons and power. Each man, aged sixteen to fifty, was expected to attend regular training, equipped with gun, ammunition, and “bayonet, sword, or tomahawk.” George Smith was actively recruiting militiamen for the Smithtown company, one of a dozen local companies making up the First Regiment under the command of another of the patentee's descendants, Colonel Josiah Smith of Moriches Neck. (George's father had attended the regiment's committee meeting that year.) To George's credit his company was judged “compleet” with eighty-two men and weapons; other companies remained short of men or weapons or both. Smithtown residents dealt officially and on the record with these matters for the first time at their annual meeting in April 1776. (The minutes were recorded in George's hand.) After much other business, the town “voted, That Bayonets and Cartouch boxes be provided for the Militia by the Town, the expense thereof to be levyed on the town by the assessors...” A month later George was one of the three men confiscating much needed weapons from Loyalists. Earlier in the year the Chairman of the Suffolk County Committee for the First Regiment, Judge William Smith of St. George's Manor, had complained to the Second Continental Congress of the need for weapons and money as well as training; in March he applied for a loan of £500 toward such expenses. “We make no doubt the Continent[al Congress] proposes to protect this Island, hope a sufficient force may be stationed here.” On 30 July 1776, Captain Nathaniel Platt received “the Sum of 290 Dollars to pay 5 Dollars a man” to his Smithtown Company.³

Militia and minute men (the two were merged in June) “exercised” through spring into early summer spurred on by rumors of a British invasion of the east end. Although enemy warships had remained in New York harbor, a large fleet was assembling in Gardiners Bay. Their crews went ashore with disturbing regularity to commandeer provisions from local

residents. If they were to invade, Long Island might fall into British hands, become the larder for the royal forces. The enemy fleet could then cut off New England off from the colonies to her south, and Long Island from everywhere. To guard against such a disaster, the Provisional Congress stationed Suffolk County's Second Regiment on the east end. Eager, apparently, to be among the first in action, George Smith, by then a lieutenant, served in one of its twelve companies along with *two* William Smiths, neither one from Smithtown. Thus deterred from landing in Southold or Southampton, the British fleet under General Sir William Howe sailed for Staten Island; ironically enough, it was the First Regiment that was called up on 12 August. The campaign for Long Island lasted less than a week, beginning with the invasion of Brooklyn by the British and ending in the strategic retreat of the Continental forces. The First Regiment was evacuated to the northern end of Manhattan. From there Colonel Smith and his men crossed into Westchester, eventually found "vessels," and headed home, many of them aiming to join the Second Regiment on the east end. By this time, however, the Second Regiment had sailed to the mainland, carrying with them ammunition and weapons, including four cannon, nine swords, and eight cutlasses, not to mention 3,129 sheep and 400 "horned" cattle. The militiamen, George Smith among them, formed, in effect, a regiment of refugee guerrillas, (officially, the Fourth Regiment of the New York line), based in New Haven with Long Island Sound its principal battlefield. Other island militiamen like his bother Charles served with the regular Continental forces.⁴

Even as Washington's troops in Manhattan, General Howe's dragoons fanned out the length and breadth of Long Island. By 5 September they had reached Smithtown, and less than a week later Southampton, their mission "to prevent stock or persons going off the island." Indeed British ships had already taken livestock and other provisions from residents in the vicinity of Huntington and Wading River, and the wealthy New-York born Oliver De Lancey, by then Brigadier General for the British forces, had given orders to take "all the fat cattle and sheep in Suffolk County ... keeping a distinct account of those cattle &c, that belong to the people who are in actual rebellion, whose cattle must be forced down for the refreshment of the King's Troops. This order must be speedily obeyed, or the county will otherwise feel the resentment of the King's Troops." After all there were more than 32,000 troops to be fed in New York City and on the island. The Commissary General's orders were "to take into custody all the grain, forage, and creatures you can find on LI...[and] to impress boats, wagons, horses, drivers, mills, barns and what other conveniences you may require for the benefit of his Majesty's service..." However, General Howe made immediate promises to protect the persons if not the property of "those who remained peaceably on their

farms.” Word of the defeat had of course preceded the enemy horsemen, and many prominent members of the town committees had fled immediately and “put themselves under the protection of the rebels,” as the British noted scathingly. Others followed thanks to the tireless efforts of various crews on numerous vessels all along the Sound. Lt. George Smith was named in a Connecticut newspaper, dated 24 September 1776, for his part in assisting in the escape of some Setauket families. In the end something like five thousand patriot families became refugees, taking what food and other belongings they could against the winter to come.⁵

On 19 October 1776, Smithtown’s Committee effectively surrendered: “being assembled by permission of his Ex. the Hon William Tyron, Esq., Governor of [the Province of] New York and the Territories dependent thereon in America, do hereby dissolve ourselves, and do disclaim and reject the Orders of Congress and Committees;...totally refusing obedience to them...” Not surprisingly patriots had to turn in their arms unless they chose to fight for the kind which Governor Tyron strongly “recommended” they do. If they wished “to preserve their lives and estates,” they should “enlist in the regular service for the term of the present war; if not fit to bear arms, to send one of their cons to enlist in their stead; if no sons, then to perform some unasked signal service, that may merit the protection of Gov’t.” A month later, Governor Tyron reportedly reviewed the provincial enlistees then assembled in Smithtown though no list of them survives. Each man, whether or not he enlisted, had to swear an oath of allegiance to George III and to sign that oath publicly. Again, though Oliver DeLancey noted in an undated journal entry of September 1776 that “William Smith of _____[blank in document] administers oaths of allegiance,” the identity of this William remains unknown. Unlike his cousin George, the recusant William lacked any legal training and was an unlikely choice, given his age, for the task assigned. Governor Tryon reported that he had given the inhabitants “the alternative either to take the oath or remove with their families and furniture to Connecticut; not one of the whole chose the latter, even the hottest Rebels said, my proposal was generous.” By 24 November 1778, when he submitted his report to Lord George Germain, 2,677 Suffolk County men had taken the oath, the list a virtual census with ages and occupations of the men then on the island. William had taken the oath along with his father and his brother Joseph. George’s father and brothers Ebenezer, Charles, and 16-year-old Nicholas had done the same. The other members of those families were apparently in Connecticut. Tryon further expected that the newly loyal British subjects “deliver up all persons known to be active enemies.” Had William turned in a relative, say George’s twenty-year-old brother who died ten days before Tryon dispatched his list? Such a deed would have earned the epithet attached to his name, but there is no evidence of any such thing.⁶

British and Hessian officers meanwhile had taken over the houses of refugees, which had the desired effect of preventing the owners from salvaging any part of their property, including livestock. Where the patriot owners remained, the officers took over the most comfortable rooms, generally including the kitchen, and demanded bedding, meals, and other services. “It was not an uncommon occurrence for them to shelter their steeds in the east end of the dwelling,” wrote a descendant of George’s brother Charles, “and then march before daylight.” That particular dwelling had been a recent wedding present built by his father. De Lancey repeatedly ordered his commanding officers “to attend to the Injury their men [were] doing the inhabitants by plundering their Gardens and destroying their new Hay.” At the same time the hapless soldiers were reprimanded for failing to supply the barracks with adequate hay and firewood, and foraging parties were routinely sent out to gather needed provisions. Milking the cows of nearby farmers was also cited as a “Shameful and Scandalous practice.” One group of soldiers was punished with five hundred lashes each on their bare backs for stealing two oxen and a cow, their sentence of one thousand lashes having been commuted because of “extenuating circumstances.”⁷

Tree-cutting was in progress along both shores of the island, and local people had to contribute their labor, wagons, and oxen to the hateful project, and often to accommodate Loyalist refugees from free Rhode Island, who were cutting the trees. In local bays and harbors, scows and sloops – often owned by patriot residents – waited to take the firewood. To those compelled to harvest or transport the wood or simply observing the loss of the great trees, the troops burned an inordinate amount even for those bitterly cold winters. When they lacked for firewood, they burned fences and the very floorboards in Smithtown’s Presbyterian Church, “by an exact Computation 6396 feet.” De Lancey threatened “severest punishment” for any soldier wantonly destroying fences, which enclosed livestock or farm fields, but to little avail. These burdens were filtered out of the minutes of Smithtown’s annual meeting in 1777. Nothing, not even the most guarded of phrases, hinted at the presence of any soldiers in Smithtown or of any resulting problems, not a single word to incur the king’s displeasure. However, after five years of enemy occupation – if not necessarily continuously in Smithtown – there would be no fence viewers appointed in 1782. The main business at that meeting, as so many before and after, the matter of hogs running loose. There must have been remarkably few hungry soldiers in that area!⁸

Within a month of the Battle of Long Island, refugee militiamen on the mainland, George no doubt among them, were making their own raids on occupied Long Island. Using whatever vessels they could – sloops, schooners, whaleboats – they worked their way west along the north shore,

taking off families, livestock, and gunpowder with the blessing and funds of the congresses of both New York and Connecticut. Every steer, every bushel of grain seized meant that much less for the enemy – and vital food for the Patriot refugees. Clothing, lead, and salt were among the other scarce items collected. Numerous dispatches iterated the need for salt; without it there was no reliable way to preserve meat for the troops. On occasion these vessels were apprehended by De Lancey's men, once reportedly just as the whaleboat crews were "ready to push off." Easily rowed or even sailed under the right conditions, the whaleboat was well adapted to its new use. Most whaleboats measured about thirty feet overall and had a sharply pointed bow and stern. The sheathing, wrote historian Benjamin Thompson, was often not more than half an inch thick; this meant that the boat was "so light as to be easily carried on men's shoulders." Depending on size, the boats carried from two to twenty men, each manning an oar on alternate sides of the boat. Despite the limited size and lack of decking, the whaleboats managed to evacuate not only people but livestock and household belongings, frequently under the watchful eyes of British or Loyalist forces ashore. Of course the Long Island men knew every twist and turn of the shoreline, and if they did not, they took advantage of maps like the ones Dr. Samuel Thompson had made, giving the "drafts of the harbors of Setauket and Stony Brook...including a description of the beaches and lands between them, with their length and distances." The whaleboatmen could drift quietly ashore, haul their boat, carry it to a safe place, hide it, and proceed with their mission. The *Rivington Gazette*, a Tory newspaper in New York City, claimed (2 December 1778) that Smithtown Bay had been cleared "of the piratical crew that infested it, and look upon the greater part of the inhabitants to be disaffected to Govt, and believe they give every intelligence, as well as subsistence to the rebel party."

The rebels have constant information by signals from many disloyal Islanders residing between Huntington and Setauket of every vessel passing up the sound, as well as of the situation of persons and things...in L.I; and they also convey all the information their emissaries daily procure...in N.Y. City.⁹

By whaleboat and sloop, the raids became bolder as the war went on, often occurring in broad daylight. For example, as a New Haven paper reported:

Ap. 11, [1778] was taken from Stonybrook Harbor by 2 whaleboats, manned with 13 Continental troops, a sloop

and schooner, loaded chiefly with wood. The schooner is of 60 tons, and armed with 4 swivels; the sloop of 40; both arrived in safe ports with 4 prisoners.

The crews collected supplies from the island, supplies sometimes purchased illicitly in New York City expressly for the continentals, harried enemy shipping, and attacked enemy forces whenever and wherever they could. George Smith visited the island frequently, inspired perhaps by the example of his idol, Henry V, who had snatched victory from defeat against overwhelming odds. He used his voyages to observe enemy movements on the island and in the Sound. He duly reported his observations to Continental officials; a number of his dispatches to Brigadier General Horatio Gates from 1778 to 1782 survive among that general’s papers. These dispatches, like one he wrote in July 1779, were meaty, including current news from Europe and the likelihood of war between Britain and France. He noted such specifics as the amounts British troops had already expended on war (\$32 million) and the number of British troops lost (20,000), information gathered in the city as well as on the island. He reported in detail on the movements of enemy troops, for example: “Two thousand troop at East End of Long Island under command of genl Ashle [?]. They have got a number of Flat Bottomed Boats at Sagg harbour, and are busily employed in Building more” perhaps to go against New London and other seaports. He wrote of supplies, of the shortage of bread in New York City, of a shipment of 6,000 barrels of flour and beef from Cork. Local inhabitants sensed that British had given up and would soon leave, he declared, an optimistic opinion he expressed repeatedly in various ways.¹⁰

Apparently George not only participated in the whaleboat raids, but might be encountered almost anywhere on the island, reconnoitering for supplies. He wrote (5 December 1778) to General Gates of one close call. He had ridden from the north to the south side of the island, appearing “to be a gentleman from NYork and was Taken up by the British Guard, consisting as the Officer told me of fifty Light Horse, and a hundred of foot. I past a very Severe Examination, while on Horse back.” Then when told he would have to spend the night, he asked to speak to the gentleman of the house. While they were calling him, “And a Guard of Seven was around me I put spurs to my horse and bid them good night!” A few days earlier, he and his cousin Isaac Smith were reported to have “beset” the house of Colonel Benjamin Floyd of Setauket with twelve men. According to the *Gazette*, “George obliged a domestic to show him where the Col. slept, whom he surprised and led tot he thieves waiting at the door. They then triumphantly hurried him over to Norwalk.” The “rebels” went back the following year to carry off more of Floyd’s goods.¹¹

Upon the death of his father in 1780, George visited Smithtown even more openly, his visits now officially sanctioned by both the British authorities and the first governor of the State of New York, George Clinton. "All the stock I have are threatened to be taken off the Place on Account of my being here," George wrote in his application for a pass. "And my Family which consists of about Twenty Souls left to the Mercy of a Cruel and Relentless Enemy, with no one to take care of them, except a Brother [Woodhull] of fourteen years of Age." Passes were commonly granted to refugees needing to visit aged relatives or settle family estates. George seized the occasion to take away goods worth £2,500, most of which he promptly contributed to the Continental Army toward badly needed uniforms. At about this time he seems to have joined the spy ring of Major Benjamin Tallmadge of Setauket. Clinton himself was actively recruiting spies on Long Island, "a disagreeable business" he said. Tallmadge vouched for George as "capable from his knowledge & opportunities with which he is peculiarly favored, of giving information to be depended on." He had the endorsement too of another important member of the spy network, Abraham Woodhull, on whose farm documents were hidden awaiting transmittal. Woodhull had recently informed Tallmadge that the whaleboatman who picked up and carried his messages across the Sound was becoming weary of his task. Perhaps George was replacing him. "The troops are very thick," Woodhull had warned them, "and are like to stay some time." Among other things, George was eager to follow up a worrisome report made by Woodhull earlier (13 March) that year: "I have just heard that the enemy hath made a demand from Smith Town of a thousand cords of wood and that all the wood lying near our harbor is to be cut for them – and two regts. is to be stationed in this Town." Woodhull had urged colonial forces to attack quickly. No such attack had occurred, though the constant small raids likely had some deterrent effect. Subsequently, George confirmed this intelligence:

We expect a Fort to be built at the mouth of Stony Brook Harbour, and another at the head of Said Harbour for the protection of the [Rhode Island] Reffugees in Cutting Wood. If they Get footing they will ruin the Two Towns, and put a Stop to every Idea of Intelligance. Few dare Give it now. None will do it then. Prevent their coming if you can.

There were already forts at Huntington, Fort Slongo, and Setauket, built under duress by local people. George also notified Tallmadge that 3,500 troops and 300 light horse were expected to be stationed in the area. In any

case, Loyalist forces regularly patrolled the north shore, resulting in frequent skirmishes with the whaleboatmen.¹²

Probably George filled in wherever needed, gathering information in New York City one week – “I dined last Wednesday with several officers from both the Navy & Army” – and taking “corduroys, calicoes etc at Corum” the next. If caught, of course, he faced immediate execution or slow death by disease and starvation on one of the British prison ships. But spying was the least of his pursuits. For example, in November, he joined Tallmadge’s eighty-man force to row across the Sound, with their first target Judge William Smith’s manor house on Moriches Bay, now fortified to protect Loyalist refugees cutting wood. Tallmadge and his men had to wait out an entire day in the rain before marching the twenty miles to the south shore. After taking the fort – with bayonets only – in less than ten minutes, they went on to destroy a supply ship loading in the bay. Returning to their boats at Mount Sinai, with forty-four prisoners (destined to be exchanged for Continental prisoners) and what dry goods the prisoners could carry, a small contingent rode off on confiscated horses to burn some 300 tons of hay stockpiled on the Middle Country Road near Coram. Not surprisingly, Tallmadge dropped his original plan to attack De Lancey’s brigade in Smithtown as well. It is not known if George participated in Tallmadge’s other raids on Long Island, but his part in this one alone surely should have earned him a role in local legend regardless of any contemporary ambivalence about the work of spying. And yet it did not.¹³

Hardly slowed down by his marriage in October 1781 to a young Connecticut woman named Lucy Beers, George resumed his activities, perhaps also assisting refugees who were beginning to return to the island. A visible presence at the Smithtown annual meeting in April 1782, he was elected to serve on a committee “to settle the towns accounts as assistants to the overseers of Townsmen.” Indeed he was to write the committee’s report. His reports to Tallmadge of troop movements might have led to the aborted attack in the forts in Huntington before either man had learned of the preliminary peace treaty, signed on 30 November 1782. While the negotiations for the final treaty were in progress, the British instituted a board of commissioners to settle accounts owed Long Island folk for food and livestock, for lodging and blankets, for the use of horses, oxen, and wagons, for corn, oats, and “the best hay,” and so on and on. Ultimately, the commissioners sailed for England “without attending to them,” and “the people from whom the property was filched left without redress.” George received a pension for his espionage work; he practiced law briefly in Smithtown, then in Huntington, and finally in Stratford, Connecticut. Apparently none of his descendants returned to live on Long Island; perhaps that is why no stories of his wartime activities survive in local tradition.¹⁴

While George's exploits are a matter of record, nothing is now known of William's. At the time he swore his oath of allegiance to the king, his occupation was given as "farmer." His father died soon after the occupation ended, naming William and his eldest brother as executors. Far from being ostracized by his family, he was to share equally with Joseph, the militiaman, the remaining family "land and meadows in Smithtown and Stony Brook Harbor with [the] buildings and improvements." Joseph and his wife moved into the family home with his widowed mother and younger siblings. The following year, William married Charity Smith, great-granddaughter of the patentee's sons Job and Adam; the couple either built or rented a house across the road, with his recusant uncle Gershom on one side and his patriot father in law on the other. William's name appeared – along with the other local Williams – in the United States census enumerations of his times. In the first one in 1790, his household included one male over sixteen years (himself), one male under sixteen years (his son Nathan, born in 1787), and three white females (his wife and two daughters, born in 1788 and 1790), but no free colored persons or slaves, in contrast to his slave-owning in-laws. Despite any wartime misdeeds he was still living in the thicket of family. His wife died in the fall of 1791, and unlike most widowers with young children, William did not soon remarry. Probably he and the three children lived with his in-laws, at least until his daughters were married. The 1810 census listed for this farm seven white people (two infants) as well as four "free persons," and three slaves. By that time his youngest brother-in-law had inherited and maintained the place with an increasing number both of slaves and of emancipated slaves. He named his first child Wilhelmina presumably for her uncle; "the Very Bad Man" was also the namesake for William's two firstborn grandsons.¹⁵

In 1798, William Smith was listed with another local man as the crew on the forty-three ton sloop *Fame* under Master Thomas Rudyard, a relative of Charity's. Of course they might have been trading in Connecticut and Rhode Island before the sloop was registered in the Port of New York, and William might well have gone to sea much earlier as an apprentice on some relative's ship. Within five or six years or the peace treaty Smithtown boatyards were launching sloops, first on the west side of the Nissequogue River and then on Stony Brook Harbor. William's cousin Gershom Smith, Jr., built the forty-five ton sloop, *Suffolk* at the head of that harbor. Later on, his nephew Gideon Smith was building fishing boats and larger merchant shops on the same or a nearby site. By 1801 William was registered as master of the forty-ton sloop *Mercantile* with a crew of three. He himself was listed as the builder. Given the relatively small size of his ship, he likely carried cargo up and down the coast, sailing as far as the Carolinas or Boston or perhaps simply to New York and New Haven, returning home after these short trips. For example, in 1806, New Haven

alone imported 1,500 cords of firewood from Long Island. Perhaps William carried some of that. Gershom Jr., before his death in 1816, took comfort in knowing that his widow and two eldest sons would be able to "cut as much wood immediately with what I have cut...as will discharge the debt I have contracted in the purchase of a farm." He was confident too that the wood would amply satisfy other smaller debts as well. In about 1810, a new and lucrative "crop" entered the coastal trade: whiskey and perhaps cider and apple brandy also. Jonas Hawkins, Jr., was operating a distillery near the Hitherbrook Landing on Stony Brook Harbor. About the same time, John Keenan, one of William's neighbors, opened a store on Moriches Road, supplied with goods brought in by sea.¹⁶

Idlers in Keenan's store and around Hawkin's dock would have found no end of serious matters to discuss, among them the Barbary pirates in the Caribbean, the war between France and Britain, and then the unfriendly presence of British warships around Long Island. Their frigates had begun harassing small sloops in island waters and routinely seized their cargos. By threatening to burn larger schooners, they exacted exorbitant ransoms from the owners. Angered by the feeble defense efforts from Washington, New York merchants financed a privateer, the *Governor Tompkins*, for protection, and thirty gunboats out of Boston actually traded shots with British warships. Yet by early 1813 the blockade of Long Island was complete. Foraging parties regularly descended on Setauket and Port Jefferson harbors, the shoals of Smithtown Bay reportedly discouraging such raids. Unfortunately, William had berthed his sloop *Mercantile*, not in his home harbor, but in Setauket. In 1814, two British warships found their way across the shoals there, burning the *Oneida* and pirating the *Mercantile* and three other sloops off to Canada where they operated "for many years."¹⁷

During his enforced leisure, William courted a young widow Sarah Carman. She was twenty-seven years old – his son Nathan's age exactly. About this time, Nathan relocated to Cornwall, N. Y. and did not marry until 1830. However, he still owned some land near his father's and, in 1826, he was enrolled as crew on the sloop *Aeronaut*, whose captain was his cousin Selah. For all the biographical facts, there are few indications of what William did next, good or bad; his name does not appear among the crews of surviving local ships or as a builder. Beached with his new family, which included Sarah's two sons from her first marriage, he might have turned to farming and woodcutting. Concern for the education of his six-year-old daughter was reflected in a new role, that of trustee of the Third School District. Up to this time there had been no public schools in the area. Many of William's generation were illiterate, including his brothers Joseph and Selah; some could not even sign their names. In 1812, twelve families had arranged housing and firewood supply to entice a teacher to

their midst; a few years later, John Keenan's wife held classes in one end of his store. In 1823, Charles Smith contributed land on the Three Sister's Hollow Road, and a public school was built at last. There was no lack of students in the neighborhood, what with the fifty-odd grandchildren, and children of William's brothers, cousins, and in-laws. Sarah's son Samuel Carman was soon to start a family, and in due course his two young half-brothers would attend.¹⁸

In 1831, William sold Carman his own house and land. Two years later, he buried his wife on the hill about that house and four years later was buried there himself. He left his remaining real estate to his two young sons in the care of executors (who included their twenty-one-year-old sister) until the youngest came of age. His other heirs included the children of his own first marriage, but not Sarah's sons. By 1865, only her son Samuel Carman remained on the family land with Gideon Smith, grandson of the recusant Gershom, next door.¹⁹

There Gideon's three sons grew up, and two of them lived until they died. Unlike their father, these men knew neither the old captain nor his sons. Nathan had died before they were born, although his sister Charity Oakes still lived in Stony Brook. Stories about her children and grandchildren survive, but whatever she knew of her father's past, she kept to herself. However, Gideon's sons were quick to voice the century-old epithet when a new family of Smith descendents took over William's former property. Their new neighbors asked them to remove from a prospective pasture the remains of William and Sarah. (The house had previously been demolished). Gideon's sons adamantly refused and unfortunately, no one ever asked them what William had done that was so very bad. Shakespeare's adage remains unchallenged. "The evil that men do lives after them/ The good is oft interred with their bones."²⁰

NOTES

1. Frederick Kinsman Smith, *The Family of Richard Smith of Smithtown, Long Island, Ten Generations* (Smithtown, 1967), 134-135, 139-140; inhabitants of various New York counties who refused to sign a pledge support to the Continental Congress were "sometimes called 'Recusants,' 'Very Bad Men,' &c." Frederic Gregory Mather, *The Refugees of 1776 from Long Island to Connecticut*, (1913; reprint, Bowie, Md.: Heritage Press, 1990), I:142.

2. Mather, II:1050.

3. Mather, II:1063-1064, 995-996; I:142; Smith, 134-135, 139-140, 141-142, 132. The 1776 census counted 555 whites (with 144 white males in the age categories "16-50" and "over 50") and 161 Negroes in Smithtown; one of the other Williams in the town was the husband of William's eldest sister and a descendant of the patentee's son Samuel, about whom only his nickname Jersey Bill is known, see Smith, 158, 232.
4. Mather, I:568; Benjamin Thompson, *History of Long Island from its Discovery and Settlement to the Present Time* (1849; 1918; third edition, Port Washington: Friedman, 1962), I:295; Smith, 123; William S. Pelletreau, *Records of the Town of Smithtown, Long Island, New York* (Smithtown, 1898), 111-113; Virginia Malone, a former Smithtown historian, came to recognize George's handwriting as a result of her research. See *Smithtown News* 23 April, 21 May, and 2 July 1959); see also Mather, II:996, 998, 1006, 1012, 1015-17; I:104. Mather gives short biographies of three William Smiths, including Judge Smith of the Tangier Smith family, and two from Richard Smith's family who did not live in Smithtown, I:576-577; "This book should have been written 100 years ago while many of the Refugees, or least their children, were still alive. It is hard to obtain satisfactory results in dealing with great-grandchildren. Moreover, many documents have been lost, or destroyed" Mather, I:10; see also Smith, 168.
5. See Col. Josiah Smith's diary for the period 23 July – 7 September 1776 in Mather II:1010-1012, see also I:572-4.
6. Henry Onderdonk, *Revolutionary Incidents of Suffolk & Kings Counties* (New York: Leavitt, Trow & Co., 1846), 47, 54; "Orderly Book of the Three Batalions of Loyalists commanded by B-G Oliver De Lancey, 1776-1788," New-York Historical Society, New York, N.Y. (hereafter NYHS).
7. Onderdonk, 46; see also "A 1778 List of Persons in Suffolk Co., L.I., N.Y. (as documented by Wm. Tryon Govr)," Public Records Office, London, Colonial Office Papers, Class 5, Vol. 1109:2-29. (Courtesy Henry B. Hoff).
8. From a clipping contributed to the New York State Inventory by Janice (Boe) Thompson, a descendant of Charles Smith; Historic District Inventory, 305, Head of the Harbor, Folder 41, Smithtown Public Library; Smith, 196; "Orderly Book," NYHS.
9. Epenetus Smith Account Book, Smithtown Historical Society (hereafter SHS); "Orderly Book," NYHS; Pelletreau, 110.

10. Berthold Fenow, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co., 1883), 15:78 lists by barrel such provisions as “pork, codfish, rum, small beer, potash, flour...pounds of mutton, lard, bacon, veal, pork (sides and shoulders), butter, smoked beef, tallow, tobacco, bushels of potatoes, wheat, corn, turnips, peas, rye, and buckwheat, quarts of milk, gallons of soap, loaves of bread, loads of wood, yards of linen, pairs of shoes. Also barrels of apples, beets, cyder, flax seeds.” Thompson, 1:316, 298; Onderdonk, 78, 73 (16 May 1778).

11. Onderdonk, 72; Henry Monmouth Smith, George’s grandnephew, told F.K. Smith 9263) that George “was interested in the study of history and an admirer of Henry V of England, called ‘Henry Monmouth’” and accordingly named his second son for his hero; “Intelligence Reports to General Horatio Gates,” NYHS, are available on microfilm; Virginia Malone recognized George’s handwriting above the signature “S.G.” on a number of the secret dispatches forwarded to General Washington during the war. Some dispatches were addressed to Gates, others to Tallmadge. Those signed S.,G., Malone observed, were sent from occupied country, those signed George Smith from free Connecticut.

12. “Intelligence Reports,” NYHS; Onderdonk, 78; also 88-89.

13. Mather, II:1081-1083, 928, 929; I:92-93, 76, 174-176; Woodhull was later to marry William’s sister-in-law Dorothy Smith, see Smith, 197; “Abstract of Will of Job Smith,” Pelletreau, 50; Morton Pennypacker, *George Washington’s Spies on Long Island and in New York* (Brooklyn: Long Island Historical Society, 1939), 74; “Intelligence Reports,” NYHS, 15 July 1781; Woodhull had gone to Connecticut in March 1781, exhausted by the strain of the past few years, and had petitioned the General Assembly for permission to remove personal property from Long Island, Mather II:941-942.

14. Mather, I:576; one readily imagines George as one of Tallmadge’s “officers of high spirit.” See Onderdonk, 95-99.

15. Smith, 195; Mather, I:189-192; Pelletreau, 114; “Intelligence Reports,” NYHS; see also Epenetus Smith Account Book, SHS; Onderdonk, 85; Thompson, I:317-318.

16. Abstracts of Joseph Smith’s will appear in Pelletreau, 51-52; the younger brothers inherited £50 each, the sisters shared in the personal

property, and the eldest brother has received his share when he married. William’s father-in-law Micah Smith lived next door in a house valued at more than \$900 in 1798, owned at least three slaves, and cultivated 424 acres, whose orchards, given the land’s high value (\$10,000) must have been spared by loyalist woodcutters. Of the town’s 145 residents, about ninety-two percent owned houses valued at considerably less. William’s house was valued at \$400, his 272 acres for \$816. See Edward H.L. Smith III, “1798 Property Valuations for Western Suffolk County,” *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, 127:1 (January 1996); Smith, 210, 169-170, 245. Micah’s son Jonas Smith inherited two “Negro boys Charles and Isaac,” the slave James having been freed when the estate was settled in 1797. Isaac was freed in 1817. By the time of the 1800 census, however, Jonas had six slaves on the farm, age and sex not given. One named Reese was freed in 1804 (Pelletreau, 187). Before the next census four children had been born “in my Family,” so Jonas reported to the town, two “female Blacks” and two “Black Mails.” In 1811, a girl was born “of a slave,” and in 1813, a boy.

17. The sloop *Fame* was lost with all hands aboard in “a violent storm” on 4 June 1825. William B. Minuse, a descendant of one of the early Setauket shipbuilders with a special interest in old ships and shipbuilding, generously shared his research notes with the author, including notes from *Special Lists #22: List of American Flag Merchant Vessels that Received Certificates of Enrollment or Registry at the Port of New York, 1789-1867* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives & Records Service, 1968), vols. 1 and 2; Smith, 212; Elizabeth Shepherd, “The Downs and Ups of Samuel Carman (1809-1881),” *Long Island Historical Journal* 9:1 (Fall 1996), 47-64. Hawkins’ property appears as a complex of buildings between the head of the harbor and Sherewog in F.R. Hassler, *U.S. Coast Survey*, 1837, No. 31; Pelletreau, 189, 210; Historic District Inventory, Smithtown, Folder 20, SHS.

18. W.W. Munsell, *History of Suffolk County, 1683-1882* (New York: Munsell, 1882), 31-43, 62-65.

19. Smith, 210, 296-297; “List of Freeholders in the Town of Smithtown in 1810, qualified to serve as jurors,” in Henry B. Hoff, ed., *Long Island Source Records* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1987). Daniel Williamson of Stony Brook was recorded as builder of the fifty-nine ton vessel and also as a crew member, see *Special Lists*; Smith, 245, 264-269; Shepherd, “Samuel Carman,” 47-64; Deed, Charles Smith to Third School District, Suffolk County Clerks Office, Riverhead, NY, Liber E: 60 (hereafter SC Clerk).

20. *United States Census*, 1850, 1865; SC Clerk, Liber G:301.
21. Smith, 296-298, 305; interview with Kate Carteret Lefferts, 11 April 1986 whose grandmother had William's houses torn down; *Julius Caesar*, III, ii, 79.

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS:

“LONG ISLAND HAS BEEN A SCHOOL TO ME”: THE 1825 LETTER OF AN INSTRUCTOR AT SCHOOLS AT ROCKAWAY AND GREAT NECK

By James R. Greve

Education on Long Island in the nineteenth century has been the subject of few articles. Different essays center on various aspects of the schools and academies that taught young students -- the curricula offered, the instructors, the pupils, as well as histories and descriptions of the institutions themselves.

Recently, a letter was discovered on an online auction site that discusses many of these aspects. The letter, written in 1825, is now in the possession of the Great Neck Public Library. The author of the letter, Gideon Joseph Holt, was an instructor at a school at Rockaway and then later at North Hempstead. The recipients of the letter were his parents, Benjamin and Lucy Holt of Saybrook, Connecticut. The letter sheds new light on the important subject of early education in the United States and, specifically, on Long Island. It also touches on other subjects, including the people of the area, religion, and the shipping industry so important to the region -- topics that Holt observed with interest. It was a place, he wrote, “where I have seen and learnt more of the world than I ever knew before.”

Holt was born on 12 September 1800 in New London, Connecticut. He was the son of Capt. Benjamin Holt (1767-1839) and Lucy Southworth (b. 1774), who were married in Saybrook, Middlesex County, Connecticut on 14 December 1797. Gideon Joseph Holt was the second of ten children. He married Frances Tyler in Saybrook on 12 September 1830.¹ Prior to his marriage, Gideon Holt was an instructor at educational institutions on Long Island. In his letter to his parents, he writes about his reasons for seeking new employment, his wages and his students at his new school. He also describes the people in the area, including their religious observances, as well as personal and family matters. At the end of his letter, he describes in detail a shipwreck near Rockaway shortly before he left for his new home in Great Neck. In his article, “Education in the 18th and 19th Centuries in a Long Island Community,” George L. Williams writes, “Little is known about educational practices in the 18th and early 19th century on Long Island.”² This recently discovered letter, now available to all, will help to further our understanding.

Natalie A. Naylor quotes Walt Whitman in her essay, "Diligent in Study and Respectful in Deportment": Early Long Island Schooling," when he wrote that instructors "earn little cash" for their efforts. Naylor also writes that lower salaries for women accounted for their dominance in the profession.³ Scholars agree that turnover at the academies among instructors was high and Gideon Holt was no exception. His move, he maintained, was a direct result of his search for higher wages. His new job at Great Neck, he wrote, paid him \$13.33 per month. Yet, near the end of his letter, he suggests to his parents that if they know of anyone looking to teach, his former position in Rockaway was available for \$12-14 per month. It appears that a different location, perhaps greater accessibility to New York City, was the determining factor in his changing schools. It is also interesting to note that Holt was offered more money to stay in Rockaway, which would have been raised by subscriptions. Evidently he was a very popular and respected teacher.

Writers on the subject of education on Long Island agree that there was a strong commitment to providing a solid academic background to young students. Naylor writes that the academies established in this period "were sources of community pride."⁴ Indeed, Holt supported this idea, writing to his parents that people in his new community were as "wealthy, moral and respectable and have ever paid great attention to the education of their children."

Holt's letter also suggests that he was quite religious. Not only does he begin his letter with strong religious overtones, but later he comments on the religious life of the community and that "the people pay some attention to the concerns of their souls." He writes about the number of meeting houses in the vicinity commenting that "meeting is held in some, or one, or all of them, every Sabbath."

Holt continues to write about his concerns for his family back home in Connecticut, including financial and land matters in which his father was involved, and the health and schooling of his siblings. Research on these topics would undoubtedly give further insight into this early nineteenth century educator. Finally, Holt mentions a shipwreck on Christmas Day in 1824, shortly before he left Rockaway, in which Captain William G. Pease of the famed Black Ball Line, ran his ship *Nestor* ashore at Fire Island Inlet. Pease had the distinction of wrecking two Black Ball ships in his first, and also last, year of command.⁵

The reader of Holt's letter to his parents on New Year's Day in 1825 will discover some aspects of the life of a teacher in Long Island's early schools. This primary source is helpful to our understanding of the individuals who taught young scholars, the students themselves, and the schools. Undoubtedly this letter sheds new light on educational practice, as

well as the people, religious practices, and the shipping industry on Long Island in the early nineteenth century.

Gideon Holt’s letter

North Hempstead, Great Neck, Janry 1st 1825

Honored Parents,

A happy New Year to you all, it is now about 3 months since I have heard from you, and by this time you may well suppose that news from home would be very acceptable, and as it is some time since the date of my last letter, which was addressed to Mother, I have concluded to begin the year 1825 by writing another, in hopes that it may be answered by some of you, whether it merits an answer or not. And may these lines find you, as they leave me in the full enjoyment of health, peace, and a small share of prosperity. I do not wish you a large share of the latter, for it has a strong tendency to make people proud, and worldly minded, as so cause them to forget that this world is not their home. When I look back to the commencement of the year just past, and recollect the dealings of Providence with me from that time to this, I cannot help exclaiming surely mercies and blessings have attended me through 1824, a year the most interesting in the annals of my life. And shall I be so ungrateful as to forget to return thanks to Him, who art the fountain of all goodness, and the author of all my blessings and mercies, Oh no! let me rather thank Him, for the past [torn] trust to him for the future. You see by the date of this, that I am not at Rockaway, that place I left last Thursday. You would like to know what induced me to leave that place. I must first inform what was not the cause of my leaving it, it was not because they wish’d to have me leave them, for unless their words and actions deceived me very much, they would have been glad to keep their school under my care for a year to come, and after they found I was in earnest about leaving them, they got up a subscription to induce me to stay. I do not tell of this to boast, but to prevent erroneous conjectures. Neither did I leave them because I had any strong aversion either to the people or school. But I left them for a better place, a better school and, what is still more, for better wages. My wages at Rockaway have been quite small, and Messrs. Cone and Jones and Saxton advised me to leave Rockaway for this place. They heard the school here was vacant, and learnt the wages that might be obtained, and accordingly called on me at Rockaway and informed me of it. Soon after I went up to North Hempstead and made an agreement with the Trustees to take their school. They are to give me 13 1/3 dollars per month and my board and washing.

I began the school yesterday, but as the people had but short notice of my commencing, only 8 scholars attended, but they were very good ones. The school will amount to about 30. It has been under the care of Yankee masters, and those 8 scholars that attended yesterday are the best taught of any of their ages that I have seen on the Island. The people here are wealthy, moral and respectable and have ever paid great attention to the education of their children. They have a large new convenient schoolhouse, very different from that of Rockaway. Mr. John Hayden, a native of good old Saybrook, lives near by the schoolhouse where I keep my trunk and things. I have to board around among the people, and am now boarding with Mr. Walters, one of the Trustees, a very fine man, and possessed of a pleasant family, and a large property. His house stand on the west side of Cow Bay [now Manhasset Bay], where our coasting vessels frequently go to grave. It is about 20 miles from New York and about 3 miles southwest from Landis Point Lighthouse, and about 18 miles from Rockaway. The land about this place is somewhat hilly, but very good. They have some very fine orchards, and consequently good apples and cider, to which you know I have no aversion. I think my present situation much better than it was at Rockaway. I am now where the Sabbath is kept, and where the people pay some attention to the concerns of their souls. There are 3 meeting houses within 3 miles of the place, and meeting is held in some one, or all of them, every Sabbath. I can also go or send to New York every day in the week, excepting Sunday. So I am in the hopes that I shall hear from home oftener than when at Rockaway, and possibly you may hear from me rather oftener now, as I am now within the vicinity of a post office.

It would be highly gratifying to me if I could spend about a week in old Connecticut about these days, and tell over to some of my acquaintances there, some of the scenes which I have witnessed since I left it. Could I take a seat with you around the fire this evening and there pass the night, I would tell you more than my pen can ever communicate. Long Island has been a school to me where I have seen and learnt more of the world than I ever knew before, and as yet my tarry on the Island gives me not occasion of regret, and possibly I may spend a year or two on it. But next Spring or next Summer I calculate to make you a visit, and if I can spend time, shall calculate to visit Millington, - but hush; (you may tell stories) ha, ha. The interest on the note I gave Esqr. Warner becomes due today. I hope you have not failed to pay it. Father I wish you would get the deed of the land soon if you have not already got it, for I don't like to pay interest for land without having a good title to it.

You must look out, and have all the business concerning the transfer of the land done correctly and according to law, that there may no difficulty arise about it hereafter. I wish you would speak to Esqr. Colt about my debt there. It amounts to 3 dollars and 20 or 30 cents. If he is

unwilling to wait for it until I return, I wish you would settle it, and place it to my account. Were it not for paying double postage I would sent the Bill with money in this letter. It is getting to be nearly night, and an end must be put to this epistle. You must give my respects to Uncle Clark and his family and also to all my friends and relation who enquire after me. If you know of any smart, active, steady, well inform'd young man who wants to take a school this winter, send him immediately to Rockaway. He can make 12 or 14 dollars a month there I presume this winter in that school, and they want a teacher very much. If A. Webb has not got a school, he can have that by applying soon. I am confident it will not be taken up short of 3 weeks, for school masters are not to be had here at the present time. The school that I am now in has been vacant 4 or 5 weeks for the want of an Instructor.

All the family must write to me as often as convenient, and give me all the news that is stirring in Chester, and tell me how you all fare at home. Have you any winter, or rather cold weather there yet (we have none here). How does the colt come on, is he doing well, or is he dead. Whom have you got for a school master this winter. How does Charles, Mary and Harriet get along with their learning. Has Chad any fits lately. Mr. Keeling at Rockaway had a daughter subject to exactly such fits as his, and was cured entirely by a woman, a Mrs. Bogardus, who now resides up the North [Hudson] River, I believe at New Brigh [Newburgh?], but of that I am not positive. It is now dark and I must bid you farewell. Please to direct your letters to Great Neck, North Hempstead. My respects of course to Father, Mother, and all the family. That health, peace and prosperity attend you through life, and everlasting happiness in the life to come, is the sincere wish of your

Absent son,
G. J. Holt

Janry 2 – Last night we had quite a heavy wind, and snow fell about 2 inches deep. This is the first snow of any consequence that I have seen this season. Today the weather seems to have come in earnest. There is a sloop lies at anchor off against the house here, pitching her bowsprit under. Her situation is a cold one. I have no desire to be on board of her. Last Christmas day, or rather the night before, the large packet ship Nestor, Capt. Pease from Liverpool, with 6 passengers and a cargo of dry goods of great value, drove ashore about 3 miles east of Rockaway beach, and bilged soon after. As there are some folks along that coast who are ever ready to help those in distress, that they may have an opportunity to help themselves, the ship early in the morning was throng'd by these [illegible] wreckers, and I verily believe they had a Merry Christmas. It is supposed by some that the ship was run on shore purposely; for the night was calm and not very dark. It is reported that the Nestor is the 3rd ship which has been cast away under

the command of Capt. Pease in the course of 3 or 4 years. She is a ship of 575 tons burthen, and is the 3rd vessel that has been cast away on the Rockaway coast since last summer. Don't fail of writing to me soon, and if you have any news from Middletown, please to communicate it. You will please to excuse the errors, and to expose the contents of this imperfect, unconnected, unintelligible Epistle. Yours with esteem

G.J. Holt

Benjamin Holt
Saybrook, Chester Post Office
Connecticut

NOTES

1. Family Group Record for Benjamin Holt, Ancestral File, www.familysearch.org; Frederick W. Bailey, *Early Connecticut Marriages as Found on Ancient Church Records Prior to 1800, Vol. 1: Chester* (New Haven, CT.: Bureau of American Ancestry, 1896-1906), 94; *Vital Records of Connecticut, 1647-1834, Series 1: Towns, Vol. 9: Vital Records of Saybrook* (Hartford, CT.: The Connecticut Historical Society and the Connecticut Society of the Order of Founders and Patriots of America, 1948), 86.
2. George L. Williams, "Education in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries in a Long Island Community: Academies and Moral Precepts for Girls and Boys," *Long Island Forum* 56 (Winter 1994): 9-21.
3. Natalie Naylor, "The 'Encouragement of Seminaries of Learning': The Origins and Development of Early Long Island Academies," *Long Island Historical Journal* 12 (Fall 1999): 11-30.
4. Ibid, 11.
5. Robert Greenhalgh Albion, *Square-Riggers on Schedule: The New York Sailing Packets to England, France, and the Cotton Ports* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938), 220.

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

An update to the article published in the Spring 2001 issue of
the Long Island Historical Journal

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

When reporting on a work in progress one accepts an implicit responsibility to update that report when ongoing research results in significant corrections, additions, and clarifications. That is the case here. Although all three authors have again made meaningful contributions, the majority of the new material was discovered and developed by Robert J. Young.

1. We have now established that Edmund Ranger was not mentioned in the wills of either Edward or Joyce Eaton Ranger, although two sons were acknowledged therein by name. Based on this it seems unlikely that they were the parents of Edmund. The hunt continues.

2. It is now thought that Edmund Ranger probably did not marry in England. It is more accurate to say that we cannot demonstrate that he did. Upon more critical examination, his supposed Canterbury marriage appears to have been a misinterpretation of the seventeenth-century parish records—a case of mistaken identity—specifically, a misreading of Raynor as Ranger. Edmund's first well-documented marriage was in the Massachusetts Bay colony town of Dedham. He married two more times in Boston, and fathered at least eight children. (Authority for 1st marriage is "Boston Transcripts," 121:53.)

3. The newly-found will of Samuel Ranger, born 29 March 1680 in Boston, the first son of Edmund Ranger and his third wife, Mary Gatcliffe, establishes that he, not his half-brother John (as previously reported), was the father of the Samuel of Wrentham, Massachusetts who married Esther Dering there. Thus Samuel, the son of Edmund, was the American-born progenitor of the Long Island branch. He is, accordingly, our rightful Samuel I, and the Samuels enumerated as I-IV in the previously published article are rightfully Samuels II-V. (Ref. for birth: William S. Appleton, *Boston Births, Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths, 1630-1699*.)

The first known "official" reference to Samuel I does him no honor. The publication *New England Ancestors* quotes from the *Records of the Court of General Sessions, 1702 to 1732* "Samuel Ranger of Boston Taylor being

Complained of for evil Intreating his Servant or Apprentice named William Russell, Son of Thomas Russell deced and being heard thereon; Ordered that the said William Russell be dismissed from the Service of his said Master Saml Ranger . . .” The date of the court action has not yet been determined. (Ann S. Lainhart, “Research in Boston Through the Centuries,” *New England Ancestors 2* (Spring 2001):16)

Sometime before 1737, Samuel I removed from the Boston area to Stonington, Connecticut. His will also states that he was a “Taylor,” the same trade he is known to have pursued in his Boston days. (New London Probate District, Docket #4274 (1750), Connecticut State Archives.)

4. Samuel I married Sarah Pitman. It is thought that their son, Samuel II, was born in Massachusetts prior to the family’s removal to Stonington. The aforementioned will establishes that Samuel I married second Katherine (or Catherine) Fanning of Stonington. She survived him and married second Joseph Page of Stonington. (E. Glenn Denison, et al., *Denison Genealogy* (Stonington, CT: Pequot Press, 1963), 314. See also Richard Anson Wheeler, *History of the Town of Stonington From Its First Settlement in 1649 to 1900 With a Genealogical Register of Stonington Families* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1977), 502.)

5. Samuel II, the eldest son of Samuel I, removed from Stonington to Wrentham, Massachusetts, to land conveyed to him in 1737 by his father’s younger brother, Stephen of Wrentham. The conveyance document specifically identifies the recipient as “Samuel Ranger, the son of my brother Samuel Ranger of Stonington, Connecticut.” (“Rainger to Rainger,” 21 April 1737, Bristol County Probate Records, microfilm at New England Historical Genealogical Society Library (NEHGS), Boston, Massachusetts).

6. Samuel Ranger II sold this same Wrentham land in 1752. (“Ranger to Cox,” Bristol County Probate Records, NEHGS)

Despite having been a landholder of many acres in Wrentham, Samuel II died in early summer of 1756, leaving an estate valued at slightly more than seven pounds. The court-appointed administrator filed expenses of six pounds, leaving the poor widow Abigail destitute. A small scrap of paper contained in the probate packet shows Abigail begging the court for a portion of Samuel’s estate. (Ibid.)

7. As previously mentioned, Samuel III was a Massachusetts soldier at Ticonderoga, New York, in 1761. He removed to Stonington, where he appears on the 1762 muster rolls of the Tenth Company, First Regiment,

Connecticut Militia. (Bristol County Probate Records, NEHGS; "Connecticut Men In The French and Indian War," Connecticut State Archives.)

In 1763 Samuel III married Elizabeth Parsons at East Hampton, Long Island, New York. The circumstances of their acquaintance are not presently known to us, however, there was active cross-Sound commerce between the two towns, and that may well have been a factor. The weight of evidence, presented in the original article, suggests that Samuel III and Elizabeth lived in East Hampton for a few years before removing to Williamstown, Massachusetts. From there the story continues as originally published.

8. The death date of 1838 originally attributed to Samuel II (now III) is probably that of his son. Although Samuel III was alive and resident in East Hampton in 1810, federal census data (actually, the lack of it) suggest he probably died before 1820.

9. William Ranger (7), the lost son of Stephen (6) of Northwest, who married Harriet Smith Leek, and left for Illinois in 1868, has been found. At the time of the 1880 census the family was living in Williams, Hamilton County, Iowa. Based on the births of their three children (Effie abt. 1869 in Illinois, William abt. 1872 in Iowa, and Frank abt. 1878 in Iowa), William and Harriet removed from Illinois to Iowa in the mid 1870s. (U.S. Federal Census for 1880, National Archives Film #T9-0342, 166A.)

SECONDARY SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST

We are pleased to present the following three winning essays in our Secondary School Essay Contest, a yearly event co-sponsored with the USB Center for Excellence and Innovation in Education, Dr. Eli Seifman, director emeritus. These papers illustrate the high quality of secondary education on Long Island. We encourage social studies teachers to submit papers by their students exploring any aspect of Long Island history. The papers are presented in alphabetical order of the authors.

BLACK MIGRANT WORKERS ON THE EAST END OF LONG ISLAND DURING THE 1950s AND 1960s

By Caroline Axelrod

Paul D. Schreiber High School, Port Washington

During the 1950s and 1960s the North Fork of Long Island took on a new name—Migrant Alley. Thousands of temporary farm workers, mostly black, crowded into approximately one hundred farm labor camps, ranging from large camps created by an association of farmers to bungalows housing as few as five workers provided by single farmers. Although there were responses at county, state and local levels after the migrants became a large part of farming society, many people were appalled at the lives of these workers who journeyed to Long Island from the South during the harvest season. The number of workers dwindled in the mid-sixties after the advent of potato harvesting machines, the broadcast of Edward R. Murrow's TV documentary *Harvest of Shame*, and complaints from civil rights workers about the workers' lives.

After World War II there was a surge of migrant labor on Long Island. The migrant population at the time was 4,500 people, 3,500 of them black, and the rest largely Puerto Rican. The early migrants harvested crops such as strawberries, cucumbers, cabbage and cauliflower, yet during the 1950s and 1960s the primary crop was the potato. The workers provided an inexpensive means to harvest this flourishing crop. In 1949, the *Patchogue Advance* wrote, "Long Island produces more potatoes than all the rest of the State of New York combined...The annual potato yield of Nassau and Suffolk counties ranges between 18 and 22 million bushels."¹

Two types of agricultural workers came to Long Island—migrant workers and seasonal workers. Cutchogue farmer and former Town of Southold Supervisor Tom Wickham, who was a teenager when the North

Fork was called Migrant Alley and had some interaction with the migrants, defined both.

As it's normally understood, migrant help are people who come from overseas, or at least from the deep south. They start out in Florida because the crops first become ripe in the southern states because it's warmer. And as the spring and summer progresses, those same crops become ripe further north and they will move up with the harvest. That's the classic definition of migrant help.²

The "migrant" workers along the Atlantic Coast completed their route in either Long Island, upstate New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, or Maine. Wickham said that his farm never used migrant help but rather had seasonal workers.

What we had normally were the same families who would go back to their homes in the South and every year they would come back and work with us during the summer. And not just in the harvest. In the spring we have to plant the crops, and in the summer we have to hoe them, weed them, and look after them, and then finally in the fall we start harvesting. . . They worked usually seven months.³

Tom Wickham, his brother, and two or three other locals constituted one half of their labor force. After the harvest was complete, the seasonal help returned to their homes in the south where they occasionally had what Wickham calls "low-intensity" jobs. After World War II, both types of workers were especially needed for the booming Long Island potato crop in the 1950s and 1960s.

When the migrants began their trip up north, they traveled in groups or with families. They rode in overcrowded flat-bed trucks or condemned school buses and faced the dangers of defective brakes, worn-out tires, bad lights, and faulty machinery. Exacerbated by fatigued, drunken, or poor drivers, their trips sometimes resulted in devastating and fatal crashes. Oftentimes, the workers embarked on this journey after crew leaders, black men from the south who had a contract to hire a certain number of migrants for a particular farmer or group of farmers, recruited them down south. The crew leaders provided transportation up north, found camps or farms to work on, regulated the workers' pay by taking a fraction of the money, and often sold their workers liquor. Some crew leaders were more honest about money and wages than others.

In Long Island's Migrant Alley that stretched from Huntington to Greenport, there were approximately one hundred camps for the migrants, which were generally in poor condition. Wickham described the Eastern Suffolk Farmers' Cooperative's Cutchogue Labor Camp, the largest migrant labor camp on Long Island, as "crowded." The camp included a few barracks and platform tents from the army. They later became one-and two-room units with corrugated aluminum roofs that housed up to 400 people. These buildings formed a small one-street village fenced from the road by barbed wire isolated from the community. The buildings were unpainted, crowded, and described by the camp's teacher, Ms. Helen Prince, as "drab and colorless." Little vegetation covered the land and the roads were comprised of only sand, weeds, and "mangy looking oaks." This set up was similar to many of the other camps on Long Island, although the quality and amenities of the camps did vary. These cramped and often dilapidated conditions created dangerous situations and tragic deaths. In October 1961 at the Cutchogue camp, four workers died in a fire caused by an illegal kerosene stove. Camp manager John Murphy did not assume responsibility for the code violation, claiming that the migrants themselves brought in the stoves. According to Ms. Helen Prince, one died because he went back in to get his shoes. The situation further exposed the dangerous and hazardous conditions of the migrants and prompted other help.⁴

Halfway down the small street lay the concrete community bath and toilet building with unkempt and inadequate facilities. This bathroom was unusual to migrant camps as it had flush toilets. Outside the washroom were a few large shallow sinks where laundry was done. Across from the washroom was the office and store with an adjoining apartment for the manager. The store operated during breakfast, lunch, and when the workers returned from the fields. It sold meat, dairy, and canned goods for slightly higher prices than other stores. Prince believes that the prices, although sold at higher prices than retail, were fair. She also noted that the migrants could not go to a public store to get less expensive food because they did not have cars or a means of transportation. Adjacent to the store was the Dixie Bell Restaurant where single men could buy meals for twelve dollars a week. Rent at the camp cost about three dollars a week.⁵

All migrant workers prized their nights and free time. Some camps, such as the one in Cutchogue on Cox's Lane, provided entertainment. At this camp, the concession stand had a jukebox. Another means of entertainment was the recreation room with chairs and benches and a jukebox. This room provided a space for socializing and dancing. There also was a television rolled into the camp's office at night for the migrants. Drinking played a big role in many migrants' lives. Wickham commented on this important part of migrant life.

They drank a lot. Drink was a big problem. In a migrant labor camp, drink and women--and drink and women are related, are probably the biggest source of difficulty. Every once in a while the cops have to come out...The husbands almost all drank. Drink was a serious problem. The wives, no, they were the people that kind of held things together. They had arguments and fights once in a while. Women would talk and could really lace into somebody verbally, but they wouldn't really hit anybody. But the men you couldn't quite know where they would come from.⁶

Indeed, drinking and violence were serious problems. Drink was often obtained from crew leaders who bought moonshine through bootleggers. The migrants frequently obtained liquor on payday, Saturday, for there were no other activities. Excessive alcohol consumption or long periods of inactivity caused fights among migrants. These brawls were often fought with knives, razors, and iron pipes. Some recognized the danger in these situations and chose to avoid them. Eddie Clark, a migrant who arrived at Cutchogue in the 1960s said, "It was a hellhole. A bunch of shabby cabins up next to each other. I didn't much care for the folks who lived there, either. Too much booze, too much fightin'."⁷

Because the workers were paid by the amount they harvested, many factors, including the weather, caused fluctuations in earnings. The absence of a minimum wage, compulsory workmen's compensation, unemployment health benefits, and a union compounded the problem. Workers received anywhere from zero (in times of inclement weather) to ninety dollars per week. A survey taken in 1959, however, reported that the average weekly wage of the Suffolk migrant worker was \$26.23. This wage was generally formed from seven cents per bushel of potatoes. Some workers, however, such as those on Wickham's farm, received hourly pay that Wickham believed was comparable to year-round jobs that required manual labor. Although she did not know the exact wages of workers from the Cutchogue camp, Prince claimed, "I felt they were fair. Many laborers asked the cooperative to keep their wages until they left at the end of the season so they couldn't spend it or someone couldn't steal it from them."⁸

Unlike other migrant camps, between 1949 and 1961 the Cutchogue camp had a school. At the time, it was the only migrant labor camp school in New York State. The camp's school was created because the East Cutchogue school district could not accommodate thirty more students in their three-room school for seventh and eighth graders. In addition, most of the migrant children could not read beyond the third grade level. As sole teacher of the school, Helen Prince received \$80 a week as

stated in her eight-week contract. The first classroom was about 400 square feet, one half of the recreation room that provided entertainment for the migrants, and was "dismal, dark, airless and viewless." The first few years student enrollment was high, and the children were "scrappier, older, and harder to handle." They frequently engaged in fighting. Prince also faced the problem of teaching thirty children at different academic levels. She noted that the students were rarely within two years of their appropriate grade level. Prince made a great effort to teach the children, although George Stelzer, head school trustee and President of the Cooperative said, "But Helen, you don't have to teach them anything. You just have to keep order!"⁹

There were problems with the facility as well. A leaking sewer ran past the step of the school and often disrupted the class with its smell. The heater in the room did not work well and once blew up in the teacher's face. Another disturbance was a woman who frequently entered the adjoining recreation room and blasted tunes on the jukebox. The classroom was not equipped with a phone and Prince had difficulty contacting others in an emergency.

In 1952, the state Welfare Department set up a child care center in the camp with three black women to take care of children ranging from three months to seven years old. One of the barracks functioned as the child care center during the summer and the classroom during autumn. Prince says the room was "lighter, more pleasant, and a lot larger than my first classroom." She also had a phone, a kitchen with shelves, a sink, and a stove.¹⁰

In 1955 the school was replaced with "a low modern brick building" with lockable cupboards, a linoleum floor, four classrooms, an auditorium/cafeteria, kitchen, and a supply room and principal's office. Mr. Alfred E. Dart was the principal and seventh and eighth grade teacher. In the new school, special activities also included preparing a chicken dinner and refinishing a small table.¹¹

In early 1957, the State Legislature passed a bill making it legal for school districts whose farmers got their workers from a co-operative migrant labor camp (one sponsored by a group of farmers) to donate up to \$300 a year for five years to build a school for children in the camp. As a result, the Co-operative bought a 2000-foot barracks from I.M. Young which became a new child care center/recreation room in the summer (until September) and school in the fall. It had twenty-four windows with Venetian blinds, vinyl tiles, a large locker, book cupboards and coat hooks, blackboards, and cork panels. This classroom never exceeded sixteen pupils. Although there were improvements, Prince said, "There were unfortunate children without hope for any kind of future." The education the children received at this camp was unusual for the time. Most camps

did not have these facilities and children either did not receive an education at all or were forced to move from public school to public school and never truly absorb information or become accustomed to the classroom.¹²

Proposals for similar centers were made by both New York State and the Suffolk County Migrant Labor and Slum Clearance Advisory Committee. The latter suggestion not only addressed the need for a child care center, but also proposed a "Suffolk Community Center" that would benefit migrants of all ages through programs and facilities.

However, the example of child education in Cutchogue was not the only attempt to educate the migrants. The Suffolk County Migrant Labor Committee recognized that adult education was necessary for the migrants to improve their living standards through education in health, sanitation, and nutrition. They hoped to reactivate clinics, implemented by the state, that had previously tried to reach these goals. As of June 1956, however, the clinics had not been established, and throughout the county, only three full-time and one part-time camp chaplains provided life skills education for the migrants.¹³

In addition to the educational needs of the migrant and seasonal workers, various levels of government addressed the social and economic needs as well. In 1943, the New York State government was the first government to respond to the problems when they developed The Interdepartmental Committee on Farm and Food Processing Labor. This was developed by the governor "to improve the living and working conditions of those people who come into the state each year to help in harvesting and processing farm crops. The responsibility of the Committee is chiefly to improve the effectiveness of the work through joint planning, mutual assistance and understanding, and through study and evaluation of the problems and program." In 1951, the state continued its efforts and published its goals and achievements. The state made other investigations and projects based upon complaints of others. Although the state began efforts to improve the conditions, much of the work had to be done on a local level because Long Island was not the only area of New York State with migrant workers. All types of people and governments helped the workers in various ways. They included laws requiring farm labor registration, state police inspection of camps and living quarters, nurses provided by the county and the state, schools for the children, and child care centers.¹⁴

Farm labor registration laws included requirements for growers, contractors or crew leaders, labor, the labor camp commissaries, child labor, and wages. Under these laws, growers were compelled to supply information on wages, housing, and working conditions as well as secure a Certificate of Registration from the Industrial Commissioner before they could bring in or employ ten or more workers in New York State. The

information was required to be submitted and then given to each worker as well as the local labor camps. Furthermore, the growers were not allowed to use the services of contractors/crew leaders that did not have a certificate of registration form the Department of Labor.

The contractors/crew leaders also had restrictions. Before hiring workers they had to register each year with the Industrial Commissioner and acquire a Certificate of Registration that was to be kept on hand at all times. The state also required that the crew leaders keep payroll record on hand at all times to show to a representative of the Industrial Commissioner. Each worker was required to receive upon payment of wages a written statement displaying the wage rate, number of hours worked, amount earned, and legal withholdings. The laws called for wages to be paid every week or every two weeks without deductions aside from legal withholdings. The state also restricted child labor, prohibiting children under fourteen from working on farms. Those between fourteen and sixteen needed a "Farm Work Permit" to work which the employer had to sign and those between sixteen and eighteen needed a "standard employment certificate." Lastly, before such permits could be given, the minor needed proof of age, parental consent, and certificate of his/her physical fitness. Any singular violation of these provisions was considered a misdemeanor and was punishable through fine and/or imprisonment.

Many citizens and public officials were concerned about the workers' living conditions. As reported in 1957, New York State law mandated that any farmer housing more than five migrant workers be considered the operator of a migrant labor camp, thus falling under the regulations demanding minimum housing standards. By 1960, the registered camps in Suffolk County were required to meet the health and housing requirements of the New York State code. The requirements included fire-resistant new construction, hot and cold running water, forty square feet of floor area per person, one showerhead per eighteen people and one flush toilet or privy seat per fifteen people. Suffolk health department inspectors made regular inspections. Many farmers avoided compliance with the law by housing numerous workers in separate "camps" each containing fewer than five people. Some operators of larger camps were caught without permits and often without water, heat or toilets.¹⁵

Throughout the period, there was a certain amount of tension between local farmers and camp operators, and government authorities. Farmers, seeking to minimize labor costs, believed the camps provided adequate conditions, while government and other groups sought to improve conditions, particularly after the original broadcast of *Harvest of Shame* and the growth of the civil rights movement. In 1957, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) condemned the Cutchogue Labor Camp previously named by state officials as a model

camp. In response, a joint state legislative committee and Governor Averill Harriman's Advisory Council on Migrant Labor investigated the charges. Farmers defended the camp and angrily accused the NAACP of misrepresenting conditions, misquoting the price of bread in the commissary, spending only one hour in the camp and actually gaining entry by posing illegally as Jehovah's Witness Bible salesmen. The NAACP denied the accusations. The State Police also controlled the activities of the camp through regular inspections. During these times they made arrests for various misdemeanors related to alcohol, violence, robbery and disorderly conduct.

The need for migrant workers diminished as farming became largely mechanized. Beginning in the late 1950s, machines slowly began to replace migrant labor until the late sixties when machinery was even more prominent. One of the machines that was largely responsible for the replacement of workers was the potato harvester. These machines dug up the plants, separated the potatoes and sent them by conveyor directly to trucks for sorting by grade. Previously, the machines only brought the potatoes to the surface of the ground to be picked by hand.

Although the machines reduced the need for migrant workers, after the sixties, the migrants that remained were no longer black. Hispanics dominated this type of work. Wickham believes this change has specific roots.

What has happened in recent years, since the 50s and 60s, it really started I guess in the 70s, Hispanic people took their place. The black people, who were good and liked it and were effective, settled down here. And many of them translated, transferred, into year round employees and they became well established, productive citizens with professional jobs, year-round positions here. And black people either did that—settled down, or they sort of dropped out of the migrant business. And they were replaced by Hispanic migrants. First mostly from Puerto Rico, now from Guatemala...It was a black migrant community and it ended rather...if not abruptly, quite clearly and beginning the next year it was mostly Hispanics. Many black people had aspirations as Americans higher than just being a farm worker. It was just after the civil rights movement, and there was no stigma as being a migrant as such a stigma of being a farm worker—dusty, poorly paid. It's like being a laborer—a janitor, and if people could aspire to better jobs they did...To come New York and work even at

modest wages as so called migrant labor, put a lot more money in [Puerto Rican's] pockets than they knew at home.¹⁶

Aside from Wickham's belief, the civil rights movement prompted many to want to help the black migrant situation. This desire to help and publicize the condition of the migrants was also reflected in Edward R. Murrow's CBS Documentary *Harvest of Shame*. This account of the migrant workers, shown on 25 November 1960, exposed the lives of the workers thus disgracing their employers. The documentary contained a few clips of the Cutchogue labor camp as well as the notorious slums in Riverhead called "The Bottoms," where workers were occasionally forced to move in between seasons or after they stopped working the fields. Wickham feels that the removal of the camps from Long Island is related to the dislike of association with such descriptions.

Migrants today are not put in camps and farmers usually have the workers find their own housing so the farmers do not get blamed for poor living conditions. Aside from different housing and a different population of workers, the type of work is different. Potatoes are no longer as prominent on Long Island and the farming land on the North Fork is dedicated to vineyards, nurseries, and other crops.

NOTES

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THE BIRTH OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN LAKE SUCCESS

*By Erika Brown
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Before the Allied victory against fascism was predictively clear, the Allies met to begin building a world based on international co-operation. On New Year's Day in 1942, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Poland, the Soviet Union, the Union of South Africa, Yugoslavia, and representatives of occupied France and Denmark converged to sign a pledge of mutual support, the Declaration of the United Nations. They hoped that an organized international peace-keeping organization would benefit mankind and increase relations and thus understanding between countries. Two years would pass before the Allied nations met again. They met at Dumbarton Oaks, a mansion in Washington, D.C., and developed the three-fold structure of the United Nations (UN). The General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat were devised and specific duties outlined in initial guidelines. Later, at the San Francisco Conference in April 1945, 51 nations, including those countries that had declared war on Germany or Japan as of 1 March 1945 and which had signed the Declaration of the United Nations, convened. Delegates from these countries planned to create a legitimate charter for the new United Nations, based on the guidelines set at Dumbarton Oaks. Although hopes ran high that operations would begin in the immediate future, an immediate pressing problem arose: the search for a permanent home.¹ That search led the nascent world organization to Long Island and ultimately to the community of Lake Success.

In the 1940's, Lake Success was an affluent community located adjacent to Great Neck. The residents were primarily Protestants of Anglo-Saxon descent. The village epitomized Gold Coast suburbia with a penchant for a country-club lifestyle. Cornell, Hicks, Bedell, Seaman, Van Nostrand, Vanderbilt, Allen and other American aristocratic families kept homes there through the years.² Lake Success would be a reluctant host to the United Nations. The community was not amenable to the physical congestion and multicultural personnel that came with the organization.

Lake Success was not the United Nations' first choice. The question of where to headquarter the United Nations had become a frustrating one. Many localities, including Geneva and London, were

considered. Both of these sites were rejected, particularly by the Soviet Union, which was still recovering from the devastation of war and was eager to choose a non-European setting. The Soviets, just coming out of a war torn by allies and mistrust, feared that the United Nations would produce more tension and so they wanted it to be located in a more neutral location. In December 1945, the United States Congress voted unanimously to invite the United Nations to make its permanent home in America. Sites in Boston, Massachusetts, Atlantic City, New Jersey, Greenwich, Connecticut, San Francisco, California and New York City were recommended.

Greenwich won the most initial favor within the United Nations; the United Nations inspection committee for the organization's permanent headquarters recommended it. However, many wealthy and influential citizens of the town were reported as being "heatedly opposed" to having the United Nations Organization (UNO) capital in their midst. In addition to the UN's proposed site for meeting areas, the extension of another hundred square miles to better house all the workers disturbed the citizens. The small homeowners of Stamford, Westport, Norwalk and other populous communities began to realize the move there would mean, in a modest estimate, \$100 million of taxpayers' money.³ Arguments from the UN side stating that residents would receive benefits from spending by UN employees did not stop hundreds of residents from signing petitions asserting that Greenwich wanted to remain a residential community and asking the UN to go elsewhere.⁴

In addition, Australia objected to the Greenwich site because the cost of acquiring the proposed land alone was estimated as \$10 million to \$12 million.⁵ France also objected to the Connecticut site, but for a different reason. The French representative told the permanent headquarters committee that the area contained too many foreign colonies and the UNO would suffer from "exasperated nationalism." It was not that there was a deluge of foreigners in Connecticut, but that he felt there were pockets of certain nationalities with intense loyalties that would influence UN neutrality. Most of those, he supposed, would be anti-France.⁶ After the UN's apparent defeat in Connecticut, British representatives seized the opportunity to renew their demands for a settlement in the Boston area. A Russian delegate bristled at a site "anywhere in the state of Massachusetts" because of anti-Russian sentiment at a recent Boston rally.⁷ As for a location on the West Coast, China and Russia were vehemently opposed, claiming that it was not a central location for a world capital. A representative from New York wanted to establish the UNO on an artificial "autonomous island off the Atlantic coast" where it would remain isolated.⁸ There seemed no solution to this pressing problem.

Then on 2 February 1946, the United Nations inspection committee announced it had found the ideal location and would reveal its discovery before taking off from LaGuardia Field for England that night. It had leaked that Dr. Stoyan Gavrilovitch, chairman of the UNO group, appeared to like New York City.⁹ The naming of New York City as interim home of the United Nations Organization during the five-year period it would take to build a permanent headquarters in the United States appeared certain after hotel officials agreed to provide accommodations for 5,000 persons whenever the Assembly convened.¹⁰

The United Nations planned a series of visits to the deserted Sperry Gyroscope Plant, located in a suburb just outside New York City. Purchase of the plant would end local problems associated with the company's move from Lake Success to Long Island City. There was a deep fear that the industrial giant would be left unsold, a white elephant that nobody wanted to buy. If such were the case, Lake Success would have lost a tremendous sum of money—nearly half of the village's total assessed valuation of \$9,675,198.¹¹ On a visit with Grover Whalen, Robert Moses, and a member of the French delegation, Secretary General of the UN Trygve Lie was quoted in the *New York Times* as being "very impressed."¹² Soon it was settled: Lake Success would be the new UN site.

The United Nations would use the Sperry Gyroscope plant at Lake Success as interim office headquarters for the Security Council. The New York City Building at the former World's Fair grounds in Flushing Meadow, Queens, would be used as a meeting place for the General Assembly. Nassau County Executive J. Russell Sprague, concerned about who would pay the UN's taxes if it took over the Sperry site, declared in a statement on 2 February 1946 that "the affable Secretary General and others have given me reason to believe that they are willing to pay their fair share of taxes." Sprague later commented, "although I have appointed a committee, headed by Henry Root Stern, which has conferred with UN officials to ascertain the extent of their needs here, we have not yet been specifically informed." Besides the ambiguous tax issue, he also addressed the housing problem by promising that "the homes of no Nassau residents shall be appropriated and that the county's housing program for veterans will not be delayed." Mayor William O'Dwyer stated that New York City would guarantee housing units to accommodate 4,000 UN employees, ready for occupancy by 1 January 1947.¹³

Many citizens applauded the selection of the former City Administration Building at Flushing Meadow Park as interim headquarters for the General Assembly of the United Nations for the following three to five years. Besides being centrally located and immediately available, it was the symbol and legend of the once-mighty World Fair, "The World of Tomorrow."¹⁴ The situation with the Sperry plant, however, was a bit more

complex. Besides the obvious irony of locating the new peace-keeping organization in an abandoned munitions manufactory, under the sweeping plan announced by the mayor of Lake Success, the Sperry plant had to be remodeled for use by the world organization.¹⁵ Major renovation had to be done to the plant to subdivide the one-room structure into many meeting rooms. The largest of the meeting rooms was designed to accommodate the Security Council, with delegates from fifty countries present. Next to the council room would be the office and meeting room of the Economic and Social Committee, and nearby were rooms housing the Atomic Commission, the Health Assembly and the Committee of Experts. According to the plan, ceilings over all the offices and meeting halls would have special acoustical effects built in and the whole UN area would be air-conditioned.

Auxiliary services also had to be considered. For example, telephone experts would have to explore the plant.¹⁶ Still, solutions had to be found in the matter of taxation, policing, traffic, schools, zoning and housing.¹⁷ Nevertheless, on 11 April 1946, Trygve Lie signed a document addressed to Mr. J. Russell Sprague, of which its fourth bullet clearly reads, "We have selected as best meeting our office needs the Sperry plant at Lake Success, L.I. and are proceeding to secure a lease of part of the plant." The needs of the UNO had been met by renovations to the Sperry Plant. Meeting the housing needs of the UNO staff would prove to be more difficult.

The main problem posed by the UN's establishment in Lake Success was that of housing, which was needed for the thousands of workers and officials connected with the UN. Their housing needs directly conflicted with those of the many returning World War II veterans. This heightened tensions in an already tight housing market. By 31 March 1946, a total of 40,000 veterans sought the aid of the Brooklyn Veterans Service Center.¹⁸ The nation's first emphasis was to provide shelter for the homeless families to be found in virtually every city in the United States.¹⁹ UN officials concentrated on trying to induce home-owners to rent to UN delegates and employees who had to provide larger quarters for their families. Advertisements in the metropolitan press asked Long Island summer residents to rent or lease their homes to UN personnel during the fall, winter or spring months when the houses were unoccupied.²⁰ W. Spencer Thompson, the director of housing for the United Nations, sent out 75,000 letters in a housing campaign. All homeowners in Great Neck, Garden City, Flushing, Stewart Manor and Jamaica received this letter, which cited the "urgency of the appeal" because the employees were expected to begin work on 10 August 1946.²¹

Concrete action to supply housing for the UN met with opposition. For example, Sol Atlas, builder of two apartment buildings containing 159

units in the village of Great Neck Plaza, came in for severe criticism by the community, which accused him of favoring UN staff over returning veterans for his rental units. Atlas declared in a statement to the *Great Neck Record* that he started construction on the buildings recently leased to the United Nations without any priorities, that he was not depriving veterans of anything, that he made no definite promises of apartments to anyone, and that, in fact, the United Nations promised to help him secure priorities and materials for three additional apartments, in which first preference would be given to veterans. The text of his letter said specifically that "when the United Nations selected the Sperry Plant at Lake Success for their interim headquarters, it was apparent and obvious that they could not utilize these headquarters unless some of the key personnel of the secretariat, who were brought from all over the United States and some from overseas were to have a place to live."²² Seven village officials urged the UN to cancel its lease for plaza units. They added their voices to those of veterans, county officials and local residents who protested the United Nations' signing a lease for 150 units of the apartment houses Sol Atlas was building in Great Neck Plaza.²³ The Walter H. Novell Post Number 372 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of Great Neck wrote a scathing letter to the UN charging that the veteran problem was ignored, claiming that high rental of units might threaten inflation in the area.²⁴ The letter stated "that we condemn the action of any public official or any official of the United Nations who permits any housing to be allotted to United Nations personnel or to any other organization until the needs of the local veterans are satisfied."²⁵ In the end, an agreement between the United Nations and the Great Neck Veterans Service Committee was reached. Approximately eighty-eight units of the apartments would be available to veterans. Officials cited UN cooperation as a step in right direction, but did not laud the decision.²⁶

Another issue was the vehicular congestion that might result because of the masses of employees, officials and family members of the UN traveling back and forth to the Lake Success location. In an effort to solve the anticipated transportation problem, it was announced that special trains, buses, and a fleet of UN automobiles would handle the assignment. Instructions were issued to chauffeurs to obey scrupulously all city, county and state laws. "The police department will issue tickets to any persons breaking the laws, and all fines will be assumed by the chauffeurs breaking such laws" was a statement put out by officials. The Long Island Railroad rebuilt its station at Flushing Meadows, which was formerly used for the World's Fair, and renamed it "The United Nations."²⁷ As unenthusiastic as the community was about the special provisions made for the delegates, the negative feelings only intensified as other problems arose. For example, in May 1948, the wife of the Chilean ambassador to the UN, Hernan Santa Cruz, got into a car crash with Mary Friedberg of Great Neck, and

Friedberg subsequently sued for \$55, 000 in damages, only to have an appellate court rule that Santa Cruz' diplomatic immunity extended to his wife.²⁸ Many anticipated the acute parking situation would worsen due to the addition of 2,500 to 3,000 people.²⁹

Besides the logistical problems, there were some attitude differences that made Lake Success a reluctant host to the United Nations. The editor of the *Great Neck Record*, who hopped the wrong train to Great Neck and wound up on the UN train, wrote a passage about his experience. He superciliously referred to the car "full of persons of all shapes, sizes, colors and last but not least, languages." He imitated a Frenchman's accent by quoting him as saying, "Lake Succezz—that is part of New York, no?" and "that ees a funnee name, no?" The editor leaves the scene "amid a babel of strange and different voices, all probably asking each other 'Is this Lake Success?'"³⁰

Many members of the community grew increasingly disgruntled. They searched for reasons to jeopardize the United Nations' position in Great Neck. At one point, over a thousand UN employees congregated to criticize cut in allowances, job insecurity, lack of housing, the high costs of food and the lack of transportation. At this protest, they were joined by a number of citizens of Great Neck and its environs.³¹

Though citizens of Lake Success were opposed to having the United Nations in their midst, some cooperative efforts were made by the community to welcome the staff and their families. A group of children of UN personnel all were cared for in one of the Island's most historic houses, the Tanner's Pond House. This house, a major source of pride for Long Islanders because it contained the signatures of Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, symbolically welcomed the future generations to America and Long Island.³² Great Neck was community host to a few major US governors feted by the UN at a luncheon aimed to garner support for the organization. These governors, on a tour of the UN, were warmly received at the Town Club. Among those present were Governor and Mrs. Vail Pittman of Nevada, Governor and Mrs. Val Peterson of Nebraska, Governor and Mrs. George Michaelson of South Dakota, Governor and Mrs. C. A. Robins of Idaho. United Nations representatives were Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Secretary General of the United Nations Trygve Lie, Assistant Secretary General Byron Price, Mexican delegate Padillo Nervo, and French delegate Alexandre Parody.³³ Children of staff members of six United Nations consulates were guests on Saturday, 9 March 1946, at a birthday party celebrating the 34th anniversary of Girl Scouting in America.³⁴

For all the stress and fuss that attended the UN arrival in Long Island, there was little public reaction when it left. The UN's move to Manhattan created but a tiny ripple in the stream of Long Island society.

Only one article eulogized its' departure in the *Great Neck Record*. The article was short and simple, not nostalgic and not without a few final jabs at the UN. The entire article amounted to little more than one hundred words, yet managed to cite when "the Pakistan delegation spattered beetle juice over the draperies of a North Shore mansion" and to quote Timothy O'Neill, a motorcycle officer, reporting that the "Russians drove too fast."³⁵ Even in the end, Lake Success society was not ready to embrace cultural differences. The delegates, employees and families were sent off without much fanfare and with an almost audible sigh of relief. Referred to at best as "neighbors" and never as "friends," Great Neck had to be forced many years later to adapt to different heritages and habits of flocks of immigrants, many from the Middle East.

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JUPITER HAMMON: AMERICA'S FIRST BLACK POET

*By Marshalette Gillings
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Until recently, Phillis Wheatly was credited with being America's first black author. Twentieth-century scholarship has now determined that Jupiter Hammon was almost certainly the first black American whose work appeared in print.¹ He was born a slave on the estate of Henry Lloyd in Lloyd Neck, Long Island, and served the family for three generations from the eighteenth to the early nineteenth century. He spent most of his days reaching out to his fellow slaves by writing uplifting poems to help guide them to freedom.

The exact birth date of Jupiter Hammon, as was discovered, is 17 October 1711. It appeared in Henry Lloyd's handwriting in a list of birth dates of his slaves, in the back of a ledger.² He was born on the Lloyd's family farm in Huntington to one of their slave couples, probably Opium and Rose. Opium was the male commanding the highest price and appeared several times in Henry Lloyd's records. He served the family for seventy years after his purchase. He fell ill in his forty-fifth year, and then again twenty years later, but this time he was under the supervision of Jupiter Hammon. Rose was the first slave mentioned in Henry Lloyd's papers. She was hired out in 1687 to one of his tenants, Edward Higby. She probably arrived with the Lloyd's first shipment of slaves from Barbados in June 1687. Rose most likely had Hammon in her late thirties and was sold when he was quite young.³

As a household slave, Hammon was given many privileges not available to other slaves.⁴ On Lloyd's family estate, he received his education along with other children living on the Manor. A small school was erected in Queen's Village, as the Manor was called between 1685 and 1790, and the instruction was supplied by the Lloyd family, or by schoolmasters such as Nehemiah Bull, a Harvard graduate later to become a noted New England divine. Not only did Hammon receive a better education than the average slave, but he was probably allowed to use the library of the Lloyd Manor House.⁵ Hammon alluded to works by Burkitt and Beveridge, English divines whose works were in the Lloyd's library, in his writing. In May 1733, Hammon purchased a Bible with Psalms, for seven shillings six pence, from his master. This was an indication of the depth of his religious commitment, his thriftiness, and the nature of his master's benevolence.⁶ Apparently, his owners were less oppressive than

some slave-owners, since he wrote, in *An Address to the Negroes of the State of New York*, 1786:

I have great reason to be thankful that my lot has been so much better than most slaves have had. I suppose I have had more advantages and privileges than most of you who are slaves now have ever known, and I believe more than many white people have enjoyed, for which I desire to bless God, and pray that he may bless those who have given them to me.⁷

Jupiter Hammon lived through the years when the church in America was being democratized. This was the same period when revolution was remaking the thought of the country. He lived on until the definite establishment of the United States as a nation.⁸ He grew into manhood in the years when the Wesleyan revival was making itself felt in England and America and was strongly influenced by the hymns of Charles Wesley, John Newton, and William Cowper.⁹ During his lifetime, it was also customary for slaves to accompany their masters to church, where special seats were reserved for them. Such attendance at church in the case of Hammon must be presumed as certain. At church, under the highly theological and intellectually stimulating preaching of the learned teachers of the day, Hammon gained those insights, which together with his knowledge of Bible scriptures, are in evidence almost on every page of his writings.¹⁰

He was a dutiful servant, so highly esteemed by the Lloyds that they assisted him in placing his verses before the public.¹¹ The Lloyds were slave traders, but since Hammon's work was not critical of slavery, they were willing to help him publish his work. His poetry is sincere and enthusiastic and is primarily religious. Hammon's poetry reflects his great intellectual and emotional involvement with religion, to the point where it approaches intoxication. The poem that established Hammon's priority as a black American versifier, was his very first, entitled *An Evening Thought. Salvation by Christ with Penitential Cries: Composed by Jupiter Hammon, a Negro belonging to Mr. Lloyd of Queen's Village, on Long Island, the 25th of December, 1760.* This was the first composition by a black American printed within the present limits of the United States.¹² Hammon was evidently much interested in salvation, as that word appears no less than twenty- three times in this poem.

There is evidence in the verse that the sense of sound is the most distinguishing characteristic of black folk poetry. A word that appeals to his ear he uses repeatedly, in order, it seems, to cast a spell with it. According to historian Vernon Loggins, any impressionable sinners who

might have heard Jupiter Hammon chant the poem when in the ecstasy of religious emotion no doubt went away haunted by the word salvation if not by the idea.¹³ Prayer is the essential theme of this first publication, and the speaker had one thought in mind -- slavery. Eighteenth-century readers, well schooled in Old Testament identifications, understood that the emphasis placed on "salvation" implied deliverance from slavery. In his first poem, Hammon challenged the idea of racial prejudice. His stance was compatible with the needs of the ostracized Africans in American society, and it remained a dominant theme in his writings.¹⁴ *An Evening Thought* appeared as a broadside, evidently printed at New York, early in the following year. Apparently the distinction of publication and the prestige it brought his owner contributed to the poet not being freed upon Henry Lloyd's death in 1763. Instead, he was inherited by Joseph, one of four sons. Henry Lloyd's dying words were: "My old Negroes are to be provided for."¹⁵

In 1776, Joseph Lloyd, an American patriot, fled from the British Army that was approaching Long Island during the Revolutionary War. He took his family and slaves with him to Stamford, Connecticut and later to Hartford. During the war, Hammon published several influential pieces that were aimed at other slaves, but were also acknowledged by some owners. He said in 1786, "When I was in Hartford, in Connecticut, where I lived during the war, I published several pieces which were all recieved, not only by those of my own color, but by a number of white people, who thought they might do good among the servants."¹⁶ His second piece was another broadside issued from Hartford, Connecticut in 1778, entitled *An Address to Miss Phillis Wheatly [sic], Ethiopian Poetess in Boston, who came from Africa at Eight Years of Age, and Soon Became Acquainted with the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. He addresses Phillis Wheatly to remind her of her good fortune in being brought from savagery to a Christian land and to urge her to make the most of her possible advantages from such a providential turn in her affairs.¹⁷ As usual, the poet reminds his readers that ultimate freedom and joy is not earthly but heavenly:

While thousands muse with earthly toys,
And range about the street,
Dear Phillis, seek for heaven's joys,
Where we do hope to meet.¹⁸

In 1779 came *An Essay on Ten Virgins*, of which no copy seems to exist. That it was published, however, is not doubted, since it was advertised in the *Connecticut Courant* for 14 December 1779.¹⁹ His first published sermon indicates that Hammon was under fire from his black brothers and sisters for his otherworldly view of freedom. *A Winter Piece*:

Being a Serious Exhortation, with a Call to the Unconverted: and a Short Contemplation on the Death of Jesus Christ, published in Hartford in 1782, attempts to explain his alleged betrayal of his people's struggle for freedom in this life:

My dear Brethren, as it hath been reported that I had petitioned to the court of Hartford against freedom, I now solemnly declare that I never have said, nor done anything, neither directly or indirectly, to promote or to prevent freedom; but my answer hath always been I am a stranger here and I do not care to be concerned or to meddle with public affairs, and by this declaration I hope my friends will be satisfied, and all prejudice removed, Let us all strive to be united together in love, and to become new creatures.²⁰

This latter production, *A Winter Piece*, was for the most part a sermon in prose, but on the last two pages was *A Poem for Children, with Thoughts on Death*.²¹ This poem describes the consequences for children who die before they become Christians. It is also evident that this poem also has its elements of protests, since Hammon rejects the more liberal colonial religious doctrine that regarded the children of the "elect" as saved through their parents' status without any action from the children themselves.²² His thoughts on death for children are thoughts on damnation and salvation.²³ His next production, *An Evening's Improvement, Shewing, the Necessity of Beholding the Lamb of God*, written towards the close of the war, has special autobiographical interests, and show that he is true to his apolitical, religious philosophy of life.²⁴ As it stated:

And now my brethren, I am to remind you of a most melancholy scene of Providence; it hath pleased the most high God, in his wise providence, to permit a cruel and unnatural war to be commenced... Have we not great cause to think that this is the just deserving of our sins... Here we see that we ought to pray, that God may hasten the time when the people shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, and nations shall learn war no more.²⁵

An Evening's Improvement contained a potential dialogue entitled, The Kind Master and the Dutiful Servant.²⁶ This poem was written to encourage slaves to be as humble to their earthly father as to their heavenly one. It portrays a kind master leading an obedient slave to heaven and the

servant at the outset willingly accepts the master's command. The first two stanzas stated:

Master:

Come my servant, follow me
According to thy place;
And surely God will be with thee
And send thee heav'nly grace

Servant:

Dear Master, I will follow thee,
According to thy word,
And pray that God may be with me,
And save thee in the lord.²⁷

His kindly master is a person in the Holy Trinity and is not to be mistaken as a mere human slave owner, like any one of the Lloyds, for instance. Therefore, his dutiful servant is a wise seeker after the peace that passed all understanding, the blissful peace of immortality.²⁸ It is an interesting coincidence that most of Hammon's poetry was published at Hartford at a time when that Connecticut town was the literary capital of America.²⁹

During this time, tragedy had come to the exiled Lloyd family. In June 1780, Joseph Lloyd, hearing of the surrender of Charlestown and believing it to be fact, thought the American cause was lost and in a despondent mood, took his own life. The effect upon the family must have been devastating. It was as great for Jupiter Hammon, for it meant a new master, John Lloyd, Joseph's grandson, and a return to Lloyd Manor.³⁰ After his return to the Manor, Hammon maintained a private garden, worked as a clerk in the community store, and often acted as a banker by managing accounts and handling money for the Lloyds.³¹ He wrote his last piece in 1787, *An Address to the Negroes in the State of New York*. Although it is dedicated to the African Society of New York, its effect was felt far beyond the state. This was Hammon's biggest attempt to reach out to his people. The *Address* was published two years after slavery was outlawed in the state and a year before New York became the eleventh state to ratify the Constitution. Since Hammon was seventy-six at the time he intended this discourse to be the "last . . . dying advice, of an old man."³² While he hoped for freedom for his fellow slaves, he did not want it for himself. Now that he was older, he felt that he could not make it on his own, as was stated in the *Address*:

For my part I do not wish to be free, yet I should be glad if others, especially the young Negroes were to be free; for many of us who are grown up as slaves, and have always had masters to take care of us, should hardly know how to take care of ourselves; and it may be for our own comfort to remain as we are.³³

That this advice was valuable is proved by the fact that the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery ordered the book to be reprinted in an edition of five hundred copies. His plea for the liberation of younger black Americans seems to have had an effect on his owner for in his will, dated 1795, John Lloyd, Jr. directs that certain of his slaves, whom he names, should be given their freedom on reaching the age of twenty-eight.³⁴

The Revolution must have raised bright hopes among the black Americans themselves about their emancipation, especially in the North where the movement for their manumission made rapid gains. There were other slaves, however, who did not believe in drastic measures in behalf of their own freedom. Jupiter Hammon was one of them. There seemed to have been no doubt in his mind that African Americans should be free, a belief which is documented by appeal to the American Revolution itself, and to his own inner witness. As he said: "That liberty is a great thing we may know from our own feelings, and we may likewise judge so from the conduct of the white people, in the late war. How much money has been spent, and how many lives have been lost to defend their liberty!" Undoubtedly most African Americans and many whites on the American side in the war believed the same thing.³⁵

It is understandable why many African Americans during the critical years of the Revolutionary War regarded Hammon as a traitor to their race, which of course he was not. To those slaves whose experience with cruel masters had been one long terrifying nightmare, his failure to offer no other hope for their liberation than a mere appeal to the reason and conscience of these masters was a manifestation of either inexcusable stupidity or gross wickedness.³⁶ Hammon's conciliatory attitude towards slavery led to his work being disregarded by early black leaders and his name dropped into oblivion soon after his death.³⁷ It is likely that more people would have been interested in his verse if he had written about some of the events transpiring around him during the War for Independence and the years that followed that struggle. However, he stands unique in the annals of American poetry and his works must not be too harshly judged. The disadvantages under which he composed them were probably far greater than we can imagine.³⁸

Jupiter Hammon was a slave of unusual native intelligence and seems to have had considerable influence among the members of his race. The opportunities and privileges extended to him by his masters were undoubtedly in recognition of his ability to improve himself.³⁹ Hammon wrote primarily for a black audience, and his work was religiously evangelical. His themes were biblical, concerning themselves with prayer, salvation, Christ, God's love and life after death. Although he rightfully receives his due as the first black poet, critics have often savaged his works.⁴⁰ An entry in the Lloyd's account books indicates that Hammon was alive in 1790. Based on eulogistic language in an 1806 reprint of the *Address*, he had died by that year.⁴¹

Hammon's importance as a poet is essentially historical and sociological. His blind faith in the kindness of whites and the kingdom of heaven are a strong illustration of the ambiguous political role of too many early African-American integrationist writers and preachers. This dual consciousness was both a blessing and a curse in the struggle of blacks for independence. In any case, Hammon's achievements as a writer, thinker, and folk preacher at a time when the enslavement of Africans was considered right, proper, and economically necessary, marked him as a worthy founding father of black American literature.

NOTES

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39. Vertanes, 6-7.
40. DeWan, 46.
41. O'Neale, 127.

BOOK REVIEWS

Frank Cavaoli, Ph. D., *State University of New York at Farmingdale*. The College History Series. Charleston, SC.: Arcadia Publishing Inc., 1999. Illustrations. Pp. 128. \$19.99.

Effectively blending a well-researched text and pictures spanning its rich history, Dr. Frank Cavaoli gives an informative history of Long Island's oldest college, the State University of New York at Farmingdale. The changing mission of this respected college, from agricultural to agricultural/technical to technical, is clearly presented. Pictures of the persons who guided the college through the years bring its history alive and make the book worth reading. It is more than a stroll down memory lane; it is the chronicle of the evolution of a college and its mission.

As one views the pictures and reads the equally informative captions, the full history of SUNY Farmingdale unfolds in a thoroughly enjoyable way. Readers will find themselves fascinated by these snapshots of the school's history through photos which effectively trace the history of the institution from its founding in 1912 as the New York School of Agriculture on Long Island to the present.

Through the photos, the changes and growth of the college come alive as one sees the administrators and faculty who played important roles in the life of the institution as they were in bygone days. Were the reader to visit the campus today, many of the names of these persons would be seen on various buildings on the campus, attesting to the valuable role each played in the college's development. After reading this book, a visitor to the campus can not help but relive some of this history as he or she sees the names of these persons on the various college buildings. Hooper, Horton, Knapp, Conklin, and Gleeson Halls will now represent benchmarks in the college's history for the reader.

The faculty of the college are introduced to the reader in a manner that makes the introduction far more personal than would a mere listing. Seeing them in the settings in which they helped change the course of the college's history brings that history alive.

The reader is struck by the pictures of students in this pictorial history where history itself is revealed. The dedication and determination of the students, as well as both the history of the college and of Long Island, are evoked in each photo. One can not help but wonder what lay ahead for each of these students, although the success of some is documented in the text and captions. Several went on to become faculty at SUNY at Farmingdale. There can be no better validation of the value of a college's

curriculum than to have its students return to continue to participate in its life as faculty members and administrators.

Perhaps the strongest validations of the college come from the support of the governmental officials who helped found and ensure the college's continuation. Governor Dix signed the co-sponsored bill of Senator Thompson and Assemblyman Harte on 15 April 1912, which founded the college. Assemblyman John Lupton had originally proposed a school of agriculture on Long Island earlier in 1909 but his bill was vetoed by Governor Dix who supported the idea but requested that a committee plan for the institution. Visits by subsequent governors are documented with photos, including Governors Roosevelt, Dewey, Rockefeller and Cuomo. Each of these photos reflects an important change in the college.

The influences of Halsey Knapp are seen in the early chapters in establishing a strong foundation for the college. The middle chapter shows the college during the 1940s and 1950s. The later chapters cover the various transition periods in the college's history led by Charles Laffin and Frank Cipriani. Each of these chapters captures the changing times and a changing institution. The pictures in these chapters help tell the Farmingdale story in the highly effective and enjoyable manner.

Dr. Cavaioli's book is fascinating reading for those interested not only in the history of the college but the history of Long Island as well. In many ways the history of the college mirrors Long Island's recent history. Cavaioli, without intending to do so, makes that connection very effectively with photos and text.

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John A. Strong. *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001. Part of the series, *The Iroquois and Their Neighbors*, Lawrence Hauptman, ed. Illustrations, bibliography, notes, index. Pp. xx, 196. \$ 26.95 (hard cover).

This small volume consists of nine chapters, chronologically organized by time period (1649-1999) and topic. Much of this story has been known since 1993 from John Strong's chapter, "How the Montauk Lost Their Land," in *The History & Archaeology of the Montauk*, Gaynell Stone, ed., 1991 (77-122). As well as extended discussion of the Native people of western Long Island, similar information is also part of his book, *The Algonquian Peoples of Long Island from Earliest Times to 1700* (1997:191-

213, 221-233, 240-265, 267-293). Another examination of the Montaukett's loss of land occurs in Strong's "Who Says the Montauk Tribe is Extinct?" reprinted in the *Long Island Historical Journal* 10 (Fall 1997):39-55. His slim pictorial book, "*We Are Still Here!*" *The Algonquian Peoples of Long Island Today*, 2d ed., 1998:17-26 briefly recounts the struggle for the land, but with more emphasis on the Shinnecock Indians.

The most expanded information in this volume is the interpersonal intrigue and leadership rivalry between Montaukett factions seeking Federal recognition -- a key step in securing return of at least some of the land or recompense for it (164-176). One wonders how the Montaukett feel about this public exposure of their intra-group actions. Interesting aspects of this account are the requirements for Federal recognition -- daunting -- but being addressed by both groups, and Strong's chronology of the use of Montaukett land by East Hampton Town, Suffolk County, New York State, and the Federal government (160-163).

In the "Clash of Cultures," the colonial political dealings between Native groups and the settlers and between the various Native groups are so intricate that only the most dedicated reader will follow the minutiae. But in this account, based largely on original documents, is valuable new detailed information for this area's history. A quibble is Strong's description of the "first permanent settlers" as 4,000 years ago(4); most area archaeologists would feel that is too late in time, as there are quite a few living sites Carbon-14 dated to 5,000 years ago and more.

Chapter Two's "From Accommodation to Subjugation" not only deflates the popular legend of Wyandanch as "Grand Sachem of Long Island," but offers an insight into the quirks of leading colonial figures; for example, the Rev. James of East Hampton excommunicated his congregant Thomas Baker because Baker complained to Governor Lovelace about the private purchase of Montaukett land by James and others, contrary to the Duke's Laws.

In "Land and Labor," Strong describes how Montaukett labor was integrated into the new European economic system, as well as the series of deeds (1648-1794) which unceasingly took the Montaukett land. The Natives were a major part of the workforce needed by a labor-intensive colonial system, which led to indenturing many children and some adults for their labor (43). Traditional Native skills were used in making baskets and woodenware for sale. These skills were illustrated more extensively in the 1991 Guild Hall exhibit and catalog, "The Montauk: Native Americans of Eastern Long Island," Gaynell Stone, Guest Curator. Strong lists fence-building, cattle-watching, and whaling as major jobs for Montaukett men. Interestingly, some Montaukett had their own cattle ear marks, which indicated they were now raising cattle (55). On page 49 John Strong relates

a fierce-looking creature etched on a slab of mica (found in Brookhaven Town) to the Montaukett involvement with whaling. However, it is most likely the Great Horned Serpent (evil force), enemy of the Thunderers (protective force) in Algonkian cosmology, also illustrated on Long Island by a figure on a pottery sherd from Sebonac, in Shinnecock territory. (See *Languages and Lore of the Long Island Indians*, G. Stone and N. Bonvillain, 1980:224). A Lenape Great Horned Serpent, similar to the Long Island figure, is illustrated in Ives Goddard, "The Delaware," in Bruce Trigger, ed. *The Northeast*, Vol. 15, *Handbook of the North American Indians*, 1978:233.

"Missions, Migrations and Protest" recounts the efforts to Christianize the Native people (not very successful) through Rev. Azariah Horton and his successor, Samson Occom, a Mohegan who became the teacher and later minister to the Montaukett. Continuing pressure by the East Hampton government against Montaukett survival resulted in petitions by them to Governor Lovelace and Sir William Johnson, British Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Northern Province, which unfortunately did not bring help (71,73,75). Occom's solution for survival was exodus: in 1784 a group of Montaukett and other northeastern Native groups left for Oneida Territory and founded Christian Brothertown(79).

"Continuity and Change" is a continuation of the colonial scenario into the 19th century – only here the Montaukett complaints of ill-treatment go to New York State legislators. Strong outlines a depressing litany of East Hampton settler chicanery. Many Montaukett were now settled in enclaves at Freetown, East Hampton, Eastville, Sag Harbor, and many areas throughout the Island. In 1870 the Montaukett initiated the first in a series of law suits to protect their land rights, which were recognized by the judge, but ignored by the East Hampton trustees when they auctioned the Montauk peninsula to high bidder Arthur Benson in 1879.

In "The Engine of Progress" and "The Trial," Strong reveals the racist nature of American society at the turn of the century and how the press set the tone with negative reporting of the Montaukett and other groups seen as marginal (123-126), since they were in the way of "development." He reports the extensive details of the second lawsuit by the Montaukett in 1909 in which Judge Blackmar, a year later, ruled there was no Montaukett "tribe" subject to the protection of the laws of the State of New York or the federal government (139). Strong believes many of the arguments and precedents cited during the trial would not be admissible today (130-139). Unfortunately, many of the photographs illustrating the Montauketts involved in these actions are murky.

"Appeal and Defeat" details the efforts of Montaukett diaspora members to appeal Blackmar's decision in 1911, 1915 and 1917, at great cost to themselves. Appeals to the Federal Commissioner of Indian Affairs,

Bureau of Indian Affairs, and congressional representatives are negative, ignored, or not acted upon (148-152). In Chapter 9, "Nadir and Resurgence," Strong lists some of the many ways in which the Montaukett maintained their traditions and customs, and how they acted to protect ancestral burial grounds and other sites in a developing East Hampton (160). Here also is the detailed accounting of the thrust to seek Federal recognition and the tensions over leadership.

A major strength of this volume is John Strong's extensive use of original documents to underpin his contemporary view of a highly complex story. For a more accurate history of the Island, this dark side of our past needs to be known.

GAYNELL STONE, PH.D.

Suffolk County Archaeological Association

Natalie A. Naylor, ed. *"The People Called Quakers": Records of Long Island Friends, 1671-1703*. Foreword by Elizabeth H. Moger and introduction by Mildred Murphy DeRiggi. Publication of the Long Island Studies Institute, Hofstra University. Interlaken, NY: Empire State Books, 2001. Appendices, bibliography, indices, illustrations, notes. Pp. 174. \$18.00 (paper).

Quakers and Quaker meetings were a significant part of western Long Island during the colonial period. The first traveling Quaker ministers reached New Amsterdam in 1657 and by the following year there was, at least in embryo, the beginnings of formal Quaker meetings. Long Island Quakerism thus preceded the settlement of Quakers in Pennsylvania by a quarter century.

The People Called Quakers, with a foreword by Elizabeth Moger, former Keeper of the Records for New York Yearly Meeting, an introduction by Mildred Murphy DeRiggi whose dissertation "Quakerism on Long Island: The First Fifty Years, 1657-1707" (SUNY Stony Brook, 1994) is the most detailed modern treatment of the early history, and a preface by Natalie Naylor, director emerita of the Long Island Studies Institute, is a significant work. The introductory material provides a brief but very solid overview of the topic. Also included as appendices are selections from the Quaker leader George Fox's visit to Long Island in 1672 and a section from nineteenth-century historian Henry Onderdonk Jr.'s *Annals of Hempstead* (1878), covering the development of Friends' meetings on Long Island to 1703. While Onderdonk's work is still useful,

readers should be cautioned that his extensive quotations from the *Journal of Thomas Story* (first published in 1757) about Story's several visits to Long Island between 1699 and 1704 are severely condensed. The serious researcher would be advised to consult the 1757 edition. The Onderdonk passage also quotes from the still-unpublished journal of English Quaker Roger Gill, now at the Long Island Historical Society.

The heart of the book is the transcribed and edited minute book of the Flushing Monthly Meeting, Flushing (later Westbury) Quarterly Meeting and Flushing (later New York) Yearly Meeting from 1671 to 1703. The original minute book, formerly in the Haviland Records Room of New York Yearly Meeting, is now at the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College. A light editorial touch and clear explanations of editorial practices by both John Cox Jr., who transcribed the minutes in 1898, and Naylor, who is responsible for this version, result in a readable version that is close to the original. The minutes themselves are not easy reading and users will be thankful for the full indexes to the book.

Genealogists should be aware that there is also a membership register for the Flushing Monthly Meeting, begun in 1685, but incorporating earlier Flushing records, which is also available at Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College.

While Quaker meeting practices were not as formalized in the 1600s as they would become in the following century, many of the concerns for the behavior of their members, concerning for example marriages, and Quaker testimonies against war, tobacco and alcohol are evident. Concern about slavery, an issue that would take up considerable energy in the 18th century, is absent. The only reference to slavery comes in 1685 (p. 54) when the meeting provides aid to a Friend to complete the "purchase of a negro man." Slavery would not end entirely among Long Island Quakers until the 1770s and 1780s.

Of particular interest to Quaker historians are the early rules of discipline and related documents from George Fox (pp. 105-110), prepared about 1670, that are among the earliest formation of Quaker meeting practice. These "Cannons and Institutes" are known from English Quaker sources, but this is the earliest usage in North America. The minutes also contain references to a group or groups of people variously referred to as Young Friends, New Quakers, or Ranters, who troubled Quaker meetings on Long Island from the 1670s to after 1700. Ranters have been studied in their English context, where they appear to have all but disappeared after the English Civil War in the 1670s, but are less well known in the religious history of Long Island and northern New Jersey, where groups of Ranters seem to have persisted on the fringes of Quaker society for an additional thirty years.

The People Called Quakers represents solid editorial practices and scholarship. Quakers were an important part of early Long Island and New York history and this book provides a useful and an accurate look at Quakerism through their own records. It is a book that deserves to be in every significant collection of early New York history or North American Quaker history.

CHRISTOPHER DENSMORE
*Curator, Friends Historical Library
Of Swarthmore College*

Tom Montalbano. *Images of America: Syosset*. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2001. Illustrations. Pp. 128. \$19.99 (paper).

Lifelong Syosset resident Tom Montalbano has compiled a slender, but fascinating, photo-history of Syosset. Part of the *Images of America* series, the book is the result of twelve years' worth of research based on interviews with longtime residents, historical photographs, postcards, and town documents. More than 200 rare photographs and news clippings were used in this 128 page volume with anecdotal captions attached to each photograph.

The book is divided into ten broad categories which chronicle Syosset's history from 1650–1950 and includes such topics as mail delivery, religion, education, recreation, agriculture, the Great Depression, the Gold Coast era, and transportation. Since the book lacks an index, these categories are quite important in locating topics easily. The book concentrates primarily on Syosset's history up to the first half of the twentieth century, leaving the avenue open for an additional volume with a more in-depth treatment of the ensuing years at a later date.

The Syosset community, which dates back to the seventeenth century, was originally known as Eastwoods. Englishman Robert Williams exchanged a few dollars' worth of fabric with Pugnipan, the Matinecoc leader, for a large tract of land that today includes Syosset, Woodbury, and Jericho. It was not until the 1840s that the northwest section of Eastwoods became known as Syosset. The name became official in 1854 when the Long Island Railroad named its new station Syosset. From that time on, the farming community started to boom and to gradually evolve into a bustling suburb.

While not a definitive history, *Images of America: Syosset* is so much in demand as a readable document that its first printing of 1,550 copies sold out within five weeks. A second printing is also almost sold out. This book is an excellent introduction to Syosset's history.

KAREN COOPER
Local History Librarian
Syosset Public Library

BOOK NOTES

Foster, Marilee. *Dirt Under My Nails: An American Farmer and Her Changing Land*. Bridgehampton, NY: Bridge Works, 2002. Observations on farming in Sagaponack.

Harrison, Helen A. and Constance Ayres Dennis. *Hamptons Bohemia: Two Centuries of Artists and Writers on the Beach*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002. Illustrations, Pp. 176. \$40.00 (cloth).

Havemeyer, Harry W. *East on the Great South Bay: Sayville and Bayport, 1860-1960*. Mattituck: Amereon, 2002. Illustrations, bibliography, index, Pp. 303. \$29.95 (cloth). This nicely illustrated work is a companion piece to the author's *Along the Great South Bay: The Story of a Summer Spa, from Oakdale to Babylon*.

Naylor, Natalie A., editor. *Journeys on Old Long Island: Travelers' Accounts, Contemporary Descriptions, and Residents' Reminiscences, 1744-1893*. Interlaken, NY: Empire State Books, 2002. Illustrations, notes, index, Pp. viii, 344. \$22.50 (paper). Among the twenty selections in this volume are George Washington's 1790 tour, Timothy Dwight's 1804 journey, and reprints from historians Daniel M. Tredwell, Nathaniel S. Prime, and Richard M. Bayles.

Shea, Barbara. *Discover Long Island: Exploring the Great Places from Sea to Sound*. Melville, NY: Newsday, 2002. Illustrations, Pp. 320. \$19.95 (paper).

Stoff, Joshua. *Historic Aircraft and Spacecraft in the Cradle of Aviation Museum*. Mineola: Dover Publications, 2001. Illustrations, index, Pp. x, 86. \$10.95 (paper). This superbly illustrated work containing fascinating

information about aircraft and other items, ranging from kites to Grumman's Mobile Lunar Laboratory is a must-have companion volume to author Joshua Stoff's other works on aviation: *Transatlantic Flight: A Picture History, 1873-1939*, *Picture History of Early Aviation, 1903-1913* and *World War II American Aircraft Production*.

White, Willis H.. *The Tillotson Family of Long Island, New York: Three Generations of the Descendants of Samuel Tillotson*. Privately Printed. Notes, index, Pp. 118 (paper). This richly detailed genealogy of a Suffolk County family is enhanced by copious end notes.

FILM REVIEW

Pollock. Feature, color, 122 minutes. A film by Ed Harris, released by Sony Pictures Classics, 15 December 2000. Rated R. Starring Ed Harris, Marcia Gay Harden, Amy Madigan, Jeffrey Tambor, Bud Cort, Jennifer Connelly, Val Kilmer, Robert Knott, Norbert Weisser.

The motion picture *Pollock* is based in *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga*, by Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith. Published in 1989, the 934-page biography, which earned its authors a Pulitzer Prize, justifies its somewhat grandiose subtitle. It tells the story of the abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock (1912-1956) in panoramic terms, tracing his ancestral lineage, exploring his artistic heritage, and developing a complex background milieu that ranges from the intimate to the tangential. A host of colorful characters populates this vast biographical landscape, enriching Pollock's personal chronicle by charting his course through a dynamic cultural environment.

The book's broad scope presented a serious problem in terms of cinematic adaptation. Although the biography was immediately optioned for the screen, no Hollywood studio was seriously interested in the project. It was too big, too sprawling, overpopulated by characters few people had ever heard of, not the least the artists themselves. Films about artists, even widely recognized masters like Michelangelo and Van Gogh, played by big stars like Charlton Heston (*The Agony and the Ecstasy*, 1965) and Kirk Douglas (*Lust for Life*, 1956), have never been box-office dynamite. The creative process is largely an interior dialogue between the artist and the muse – a mechanism that is neither narrative nor linear. Often, the film maker's answer to this dilemma has been to focus on the artist's eccentric personality and tangled relationships, as in *Camille Claudel* (1988), *Carrington* (1995), *Surviving Picasso* (1996) and *Basquiat* (1996), recent films about artists that slight the art in favor of drama, romance and conflict.

In other words, the fact that the protagonist is an artist is secondary to the main scenario.

In *Pollock*, however, the film makers had a man who believed deeply that, in his own words, “art and life are one.” His work was not a job or even a profession – it was the essence of his being. Apart from the necessity of distilling a screenplay from the mass of raw material in the book, the screen writers (Barbara Turner and Susan J. Emschwiller) needed to describe an individual for whom painting was as natural as breathing. That said, they were reluctant to dispense with a conventional story line, if only to make sense of Pollock’s evolution from an unknown but promising artist who struggled against alcoholism and depression to become the acknowledged leader of a movement that dominated international modernism in the years immediately following World War II. They also had a true-to-life romance in Pollock’s relationship with his fellow painter, Lee Krasner, which provided a focal point for genuine drama and conflict that needed no exaggeration. And above all, they had Ed Harris, the actor who was born to play the title role.

Without Harris, it is unlikely that *Pollock* would ever have been made. Even before Naifeh and Smith’s book was published, Harris’ father had sent his son an earlier biography (Jeffrey Potter’s *To A Violent Grave: An Oral Biography of Jackson Pollock*, published by Putnam’s in 1985) with Pollock’s photograph on the cover, pointed out the physical resemblance and told him, “you should play this guy.” Over a period of some ten years, Harris immersed himself in the Pollock literature, studied the paintings first-hand, sought out people who knew the artist and his wife, and developed a deep commitment to bringing the story to the screen. When the proposal failed to attract studio interest, Harris became actively involved in promoting it to potential backers, put his own money into the independent production and ended up directing the film as well. He also worked on the script, helping to whittle down a gargantuan draft, running time six hours, to a tightly-focused two-hour story. Much of the background that made the book so panoramic was lost – as, incidentally but not accidentally, were suggestions of Pollock’s latent homosexuality and analogies between his paint-pouring technique and urination, notions that Harris did not buy.

After an introductory scene at the opening of Pollock’s 1950 solo exhibition at the Betty Parsons Gallery – where the uncomfortable artist, pressed for an autograph by an admirer, is surrounded by his masterpieces – the story begins in November 1941, when Pollock, about to turn 30, is on the verge of being discovered. We then follow his progress for the next eight years, during which he becomes the toast of the avant-garde art world. Flashbacks to his childhood in the Southwest and his developmental years in New York City were eliminated, as was his period of decline from late

1950, at the peak of his creative powers, to the summer of 1956, by which time he had become a hopeless wreck, no longer painting and seemingly bent on self-destruction.

To propel the narrative and keep the running time down to two hours, the film does take some liberties with the literal truth, primarily by compression and simplification. For example, in one scene set in 1947, Pollock's dealer and patron, Peggy Guggenheim (wonderfully played by Harris' off-screen wife, Amy Madigan), arrives at the East Hampton studio with the critic Clement Greenberg, the artist and collector Alfonso Ossorio and his companion Ted Dragon in tow. She is encouraging Ossorio to buy the first of several Pollocks he would own. In fact such a studio visit never took place. Ossorio first encountered Pollock's work at the Betty Parsons Gallery in 1948, the year after Guggenheim closed her gallery and moved back to Europe.

The film is, however, almost uncannily authentic in its evocation of what Pollock was like, according to those who knew him best, whether sympathetic or hostile observers. Harris presents Pollock as a fully formed entity. His early history is dispensed with in a few deliberately clumsy lines of conversation with Krasner, who is dazzled by his art and equally captivated by the brooding, tongue-tied artist who seems to reserve all his powers of expression for his work. Indeed, this is the key to Pollock's character, as interpreted on-screen by Harris – a portrait borne out by the historical record.

In framing this role on-screen, Harris the director emphasizes Pollock's physicality. His presence often dominates the scene, and there are few long shots, even outdoors. Much of the action takes place in close quarters – an apartment, a bar, a gallery in Manhattan, and later inside the Long Island country house to which Pollock and Krasner moved in 1945. In these surroundings, especially in social situations, Pollock is often ill at ease, visibly anxious, or behaving inappropriately – as when he relieves himself in Guggenheim's fireplace during a party, a scene that Harris played fully clothed instead of naked, as legend says Pollock was. As Harris once remarked to an interviewer, he believed Pollock didn't know how to *be* in the world, how to act around people, how to conduct himself – *except* in the studio.

At work, Harris' Pollock is utterly transformed. He is completely at ease, his awkwardness replaced by natural poise, his movements fluent and controlled, even when he paints with great intensity. What is most surprising is that Harris achieves this state of grace not only when he adopts Pollock's famous pouring technique of applying liquid paint to unstretched canvas laid out on the studio floor. He is also totally convincing when he paints more conventionally, using artists' pigments applied from the tube or with brushes on an upright canvas. His evocation of Pollock creating his

mural for Guggenheim's town house is one of the film's highlights. In comparison to other actors' feeble efforts to simulate the act of art-making – Tim Roth's embarrassing parody of Van Gogh in *Vincent and Theo* (1990) is a good example of bad painting on screen; as the obsessed sculptor Camille Claudel, Isabelle Adjani's lusty relationship with her clay is a corny metaphor of her affair with Rodin; and in *Surviving Picasso*, Anthony Hopkins wisely turns the canvas' back to the audience – Harris' portrayal actually sheds light on the artist's creative process, which in Pollock's case relied on spontaneity, intuition, the physical discipline and stamina of a dancer, and a supreme self-confidence that stands in stark contrast to his everyday diffidence and insecurity.

Ultimately, however, we see Pollock as a man who cannot sustain this fragile equilibrium. The pressures outside the studio eventually overwhelm him. Paradoxically, in spite of the introspective and subjective nature of his work, which was seemingly designed deliberately to confound and even alienate an audience, Pollock was no ivory-tower aesthete painting only for himself. Although he was unwilling to compromise with popular taste, he wanted acceptance, acclaim and success. He was ambitious, yet profoundly mistrustful of the recognition he craved. Again, as with the lack of family and social background that might account for Pollock's troubled adulthood, the film makes no effort to explain why success proved to be his nemesis.



From *Pollock*: Top, Ed Harris as Jackson Pollock; Bottom, Marcia Gay Harden as Lee Krasner. Photos by Demmie Todd. Courtesy of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center.

This was a deliberate decision on Harris' part. He resisted answering any of the intriguing questions raised by the character's behavior because, for Pollock himself, they were never actually answered. Rather than speculate or offer simplistic explanations, Harris chose to leave the issues open. Why were all efforts to arrest Pollock's alcoholism unsuccessful? We don't know, nor did his real-life doctors, friends and family. Was he manic-depressive? In the film, none of his intimates speculate in the roots of his mental imbalance, and the real Pollock was never diagnosed. Why did he "lose his stuff," as the critic Clement Greenberg put it? Who can say. Not even Krasner, who had to grapple with his demons on a daily basis, offers clues to the mystery of Pollock's problems, any more than she tried to analyze his artistic genius. Harris serves up Pollock whole, with all of his contradictions intact, as the enigma he was.

As Krasner, Marcia Gay Hardin – who won an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actress – wades through the emotional quagmire with steely resolve. Her complex role – as the lover, wife, manager, enabler, co-dependent and, ultimately, the adversary of a man whose paramount appeal was his incredible creativity – is underplayed, but all the more convincing for its low-key intensity. She is least effective when she acts as his interpreter, as in the scene in their Greenwich Village apartment in which she tries to get him to discuss what he's doing on the canvas. Frustrated by her interfering presence and pedantic analysis, Pollock finally asks, "why don't you paint the fucking thing?" which is both a well-deserved putdown and a backhanded acknowledgment of her insightfulness. In fact, Krasner was often Pollock's mouthpiece, crafting his statements, encouraging support for his work, trying to explain the inexplicable. If this seems contrived on screen, it probably was just as awkward in reality. Pollock's resistance to discussing his work reflects his terror of being thought "a phony," someone who paints not from inner necessity but for an audience – as he did in the fall of 1950, when Hans Namuth filmed him at work, with disastrous personal consequences.

As Harris plays Pollock playing himself for the camera, we see the misgivings, the discomfort, and finally the loss of integrity that leads Pollock to believe he has been fatally compromised. Immediately after Namuth finished shooting, Pollock, who had been on the wagon for two years, drank several shots of bourbon and, in a drunken rage, overturned the dinner table. His return to alcohol, from which he was never again able to abstain, was seen by many people, including Krasner, as a direct result of Namuth's filming. Although it took several more years for his disintegration to become complete – and, to my mind, the film's major weakness is its neglect of this gradual and complicated decline – Pollock

lost something essential when he allowed the camera to invade his privacy and was never again able to regain his hard-won self-confidence.

Pollock is structured as a series of vignettes, chronologically coherent but thematically diverse, using discrete incidents to build a mosaic of characters and events. The unifying thread is, surprisingly, Pollock's art itself, which evolves in an orderly progression through the chaos of his personal life. When his art fails him, he falls apart. By choosing to focus on Pollock as an artist first and foremost, Harris broke new ground in the cinematic treatment of visual creativity, not as an adjunct to the narrative but as its *raison d'être*. Harden sums it up in a crucial scene, in which Krasner cuts to the heart of the matter as she flatly refuses to bear Pollock a child. Naively, without considering the consequences and responsibilities of parenthood, he insists that's what their union is about, but she sees it quite differently. "We are *painters*, Jackson," she reminds him, in a tone that nails her understanding of their relationship. Like the film, it's all about art.

Helen A. Harrison, an art reviewer and feature writer for the Long Island section of The New York Times is the Director of the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, the former home and studio of Jackson Pollock and Lee Krasner. The National Historic Landmark property, located in the East Hampton hamlet of The Springs, is administered by the Stony Brook Foundation, a non-profit affiliate of the State University of New York at Stony Brook. The Study Center was actively involved in the development of the Pollock screenplay, and all the film's house and studio exteriors were shot on location there during April, May and August 1999. A version of this review was presented as a paper at the V Congress of the Americas in Cholula, Mexico, in October 2001.

COMMUNICATIONS

27 December 2001

To the Editor,

While visiting my local library today, I pleasantly discovered your publication. I must say I was just thinking that it is a shame that there is not a publication which focuses on Long Island's history. As a resident of Suffolk County and New York City, it was a nice surprise to find. My eye was drawn to the cover for the Spring 2000 volume, which chronicles the construction of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial on Bald Hill. It is a very informative article which gives in great detail it's development and the climate from which it was created. Unfortunately, it misses a very important aspect of the story. One which is very close to my heart, and the hearts of Vietnam Veterans of Long Island.

My brother Alex Di Guardia was one of the first Vietnam soldiers killed from Long Island. My father, a veteran of WWII, was greatly concerned about the lack of reception that soldiers who served and lost their lives in Vietnam received. The war took many more lives than people realize. In 1971, my father, with the help of my uncle Iggy Di Guardia, Ralph Deluca and various other concerned citizens of Holbrook and the surrounding communities, formed a committee to build a memorial in Holbrook dedicated to their honor. It was the second only memorial built in the country and the first in New York. The first memorial was built in San Diego the previous year. I am surprised that the article written by Christopher Gennari does not even mention it. Especially with the close proximity to the Bald Hill monument. The article does not tell the complete history of our Long Island Vietnam Vets. Furthermore, it gives no credit to my father and his earlier efforts to recognize my brother or the veterans of New York and Suffolk County. Noting your dedication to Long Island and its history, I would hope you would do a follow-up article with the complete story. It is the memorial which was built in spite of little regard to the heroes of our community who had fallen during an unpopular war. Today, it holds a special place in the minds and hearts of our veterans and the surviving families who lost their sons and brothers in the name of our great country.

I would be happy to offer you any assistance in regards to the memorial's building and its history. Today, the memorial is on the verge of being made a county park. It had been owned by the South Holbrook Civic Association until October of this year. They defaulted on the taxes and it

has now been taken over by the county for non-payment of taxes. This is a story in itself.

Sincerely,

Edward Di Guardia
New York, New York

Mr. Gennari declined to comment on this letter. However, we would be happy to publish an article about the Holbrook memorial if Mr. Di Guardia or any other interested individual would care to submit one.

13 January 2002

To the Editor,

With reference to *Exploring the Past: writings from 1798 to 1896 Relating to the Town of East Hampton* (New York, 2000) reviewed in the Spring 2001 *Long Island Historical Journal*: the text of John Howard Payne's impressionistic description of East Hampton, one of the selections in the book, was taken without permission from " 'The Village of East-Hampton', A Sketch by John Howard Payne, Edited with an Introduction and Notes" by Robert P. Rushmore in the *Long Island Historical Journal* 10 (Fall 1997). The text of the piece is slightly different from the 1838 original. With the modern reader in mind, I re-paragraphed it (from nine to sixteen paragraphs), corrected the punctuation to conform with current usage, and in a few instances revised sentence structure in the interest of clarity. Also, though unacknowledged, notes 62-80 to the Payne piece in *Exploring the Past* appeared originally as notes 10-28 in my *LIHJ* article.

Your reviewer laments that there is little mention of women in the selections that make up *Exploring the Past*. However, the women of East Hampton are very visible in Payne's sketch. They are central figures in most of the vignettes that compose his piece.

Sincerely yours,

Robert P. Rushmore
Garden City, New York

The editor of Exploring the Past and the East Hampton Public Library, the distributor of the book, has noted this error. All remaining copies of the book contain the addenda:

The text of John Howard Payne's East Hampton article on pages 95-104 of this volume was taken from " 'The Village of East Hampton' A Sketch by John Howard Payne, Edited with an Introduction and Notes" by Robert P. Rushmore in the *Long Island Historical Journal* 10 (Fall 1997): 25-38, and notes 62-80 on pages 454-455 of this volume appeared originally as notes 10-28 in the Rushmore article.

The Journal thanks the editor and distributor of the book for their quick acknowledgement of this oversight and Mr. Rushmore for bringing it to our attention.

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