

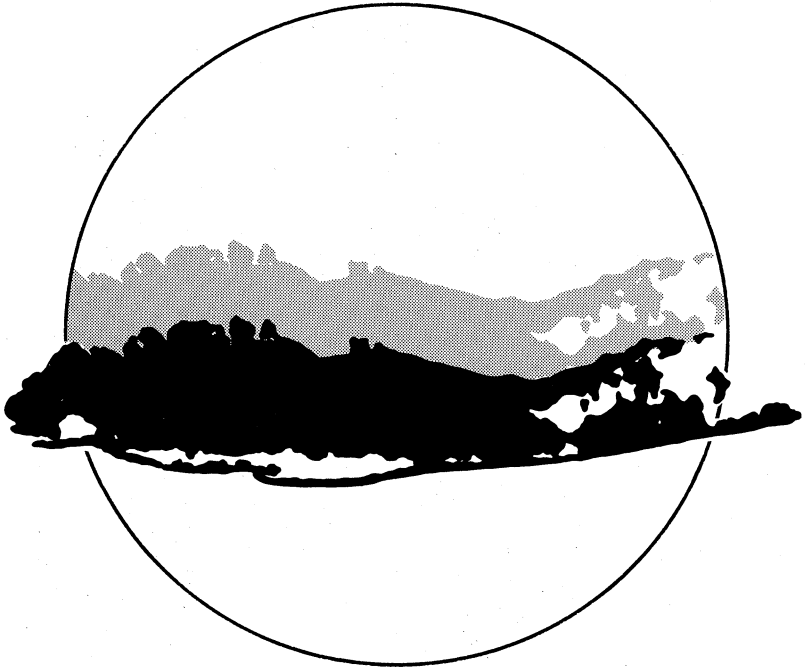
THE LONG ISLAND HISTORICAL JOURNAL



Fall 1991

Volume 4 • Number 1

The Long Island Historical Journal



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

Walt Whitman

FALL 1991

Volume 4 • Number 1

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THE LONG ISLAND HISTORICAL JOURNAL

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An interdisciplinary membership group of scholars, teachers, librarians, archivists, historians, and others interested in the study of Long Island and its heritage, invites readers of the Long Island Historical Journal to its dinner-lecture meetings and site visits.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

In this era of rising costs and shrinking budgets, your journal depends on you, its friends and readers, to underwrite the study of Long Island as America. We thank all who have done their bit, and urge those who have not to do so at once—a subscription form is in the back.

This issue presents another comprehensive assortment of articles and reviews. Three studies consider present and former ways of making a living on Long Island: Francis P. Hession and Ann-Marie Scheidt discuss the High Technology Incubator on SUNY at Stony Brook's Campus, and two nineteenth-century industries are examined in Marc J. Stern's article on the Setauket rubber works, and Richard F. Welch's piece on shipbuilding on the North Shore. Politics as a career is the subject of two more articles: Richard P. Harmond's impressive study surveys the seventy-one individuals who have represented Long Island in the House of Representatives, from the first Congress under the Constitution until the end of the nineteenth century, and Suffolk County Legislator Maxine Postal analyzes the problems faced by woman who seek public office. We take pride in the study of seventeenth-century Dutch and English mapping of Long Island by the cartography scholar, David Y. Allen; in Steven R. Coleman's scrutiny of *Frothingham's Long Island Herald*, the Island's first newspaper; and in Carolyn A. Zenk's account of "History in the Making: Hampton Hills and Land Preservation in Suffolk County." Finally, we are pleased to offer an informative article by the directors of the Henry George School of Long Island on George's life, message, and relevance for Long Island; we invite the response of readers who wish to comment.

We also call your attention to a collection of especially interesting book reviews. Unfortunately, we ran out of room for the "Lost and Found" book department, but we promise to renew it in Spring 1992, our next issue.

Do not hesitate to submit articles, reviews, and suggestions—the pages of your journal are open to everyone who has something to say about any aspect of Long Island history. Please subscribe for yourself, sign up a friend, and keep up the good work of putting the *LHJ* in the hands of all who care about this Island and its history.

Growing the Region's Economic Future: The Long Island High Technology Incubator

By Francis P. Hession and Ann-Marie Scheidt

The Long Island High Technology Incubator is the first dedicated facility on Long Island for nurturing start-up companies and other new ventures in information technology, electronics, biotechnology, and environmental technologies. Architectural design of the new 42,000-square-foot facility is to be finished and construction is to begin this year, with completion planned for the summer of 1992. The Incubator will be located on the campus of the State University of New York at Stony Brook, with access to the academic and research resources of Long Island's major research university. Through the New York State Small Business Development Center at the W. Averell Harriman School, it will have access to management assistance and business planning support.

Even before the facility design commenced, the Long Island Incubator qualified as a success. An interim program using space in campus buildings has already "graduated" three companies into a local research park, and the record number of companies currently participating in the program will exceed the forecast for incubator occupancy by opening day next year. The success of the Long Island Incubator is based on an extraordinary public-private partnership, and an outpouring of support from state and local government, the region's business and industrial leadership, and its higher education and research communities. In its origins and development, unique in Long Island's economic history, the program is a pioneering effort to revitalize and reshape the region's economic future. The incubator also demonstrates an important aspect of the role of Long Island's major research university, and more broadly the changing role of higher education in American society at the end of the twentieth century. The following narrative presents some of the highlights of the Long Island Incubator story.

BACKGROUND

Incubators assist start-up companies by providing quality space at reasonable rents, technical support and shared clerical services, access to business and professional services, and potential access to financial and other resources. The creation of new business incubators emerged as an economic development strategy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Rapid growth

occurred in the mid-1980s. According to the National Business Incubation Association, there were fewer than fifty incubators in 1983, concentrated in half-a-dozen states. By 1990, incubators could be found in every state in the nation and totalled more than 400 in a variety of forms.¹ Although usually established by local governments or economic development agencies on a not-for-profit basis, about one in seven is profit-making.² Affiliation with a university is another common form of sponsorship; the National Business Incubation Association's headquarters are at the Ohio University Innovation Center. Many major industrial countries—England, Germany, Canada, France, Japan, Italy, Ireland, Israel, Australia, and South Africa—have included incubator programs in economic development planning.

One reason for the widespread interest in incubators to promote economic growth is their character as facilitators of new business development. They focus a region's resources in technology, capital, business assistance, professional services, and education to produce new economic entities that will augment the tax base and generate jobs. The record of the Long Island Incubator offers evidence of the results of new-business incubation. One of the its first "graduates," Curative Technologies, started in 2,400 square feet with fewer than half-a-dozen employees; it now occupies 14,000 square feet in a local research park and employs fifty people. These growth rates typify the national experience with incubator companies.³

Incubators differ significantly in their sponsorship—by municipalities, universities, and private sector sources—and in their programs (for example, not all provide dedicated physical facilities with low rents) and the mix of support services and assistance programs. They are consistent, however, in seeking to provide a nurturing environment to develop and strengthen new business ventures in their initial, most vulnerable stages of growth.

The promotion of job growth is one of the keys to the incubator concept. David Birch, who lectures in urban studies and planning at MIT, gained prominence for his published work by emphasizing small business as the prime generator of new jobs.⁴ Although challenged in recent years, his analysis has created strong support for fostering the growth of small firms to maximize job creation. Paralleling this policy's emphasis on small business was a burst of new economic energy, expressed in the development of path-breaking technologies by start-up companies. Companies to produce and market the products of technological innovation seemed to spring full-size from the imagination of the garage entrepreneur, a new folk hero. From Hewlett Packard to Xerox to Apple Computer, it became apparent that starting small did not have to mean staying small. Although incubators stimulate the growth of many kinds of business, their suitability for promoting high technology development was recognized by some of the early incubator programs, such as University City Science Center in Philadelphia, Science Park in New Haven, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, in Troy, New York.

The R.P.I. incubator, New York's first to be dedicated to high technology industry, was the brainchild of the NASA alumnus and R.P.I. president,

George Low. With the help of such leading corporations as General Electric and IBM, Low persuaded Governor Hugh Carey that the incubator would provide a much-needed lift to the economies of the Capital District and the state; the program included the Center for Industrial Innovation, a state-funded campus facility to foster applied research relevant for high technology industry, and a high tech research park developed on campus-owned land.⁵

Another argument for incubators is that they work. By the mid-1980s some managers reported that, after three years, approximately 90 percent of their companies were still in business (some remaining in the incubator, others out on their own). This virtually reversed the conventional wisdom that as many as 80 percent of new businesses fail in their first few years. To an extent, the success of incubator companies results from the imposition of selection criteria and an admission process. Incubators require prospective tenants to present a planning document and submit to some form of screening. For example, the Stony Brook interim program requires a simple business plan that is reviewed both for scientific or technological validity and commercial potential.

In recent decades interest has been growing nationally in the promotion of high technology industry. Following World War II, the earliest and strongest concentrations of high tech industry grew up along Route 128, near Boston, and in the San Francisco Bay area. In more recent years the growth rates of this type of industry have exceeded those of more traditional smokestack industries. Because the level of skills demanded call for high pay rates, this type of industry is an attractive form of industrial development for localities, as well as a rewarding investment for venture capital that provides the funds for such growth.

These early concentrations of industries of the future shared an important characteristic, the presence of at least one major research university—MIT in Boston and Stanford in Silicon Valley—actively collaborating with industrial scientists. Indeed, the scientific and technical advances that fueled the growth of these new companies often came out of university laboratories. As technology was transferred from the campus to the marketplace, in some spectacular instances like the establishment of Digital Equipment near MIT and Hewlett Packard near Stanford, scientists, engineers, and even students became entrepreneurs. The more common pattern was for new technologies to grow from contractual research conducted by university faculty members for private enterprise or for the federal government.⁶ The relatively benign environmental impact of high technology offered a powerful additional appeal, sharply contrasting with “smokestack” industry. Moreover, in pushing forward the frontiers of innovation, high tech carried with it the hope of solving any problems it might create. Government took note. In the 1970s the preferred mode for state or regional economic development programs was still to assemble packages of cost-saving incentives, including tax breaks and other cost reductions, to lure established companies to new locations. By 1988, some 550 high technology-based economic development programs

were in place in every state in the nation, some with the help of strategic state initiatives encouraging the development of new home-grown enterprises through partnerships between industry and academia.⁷

The high tech option is singularly well-matched to Long Island's mix of economic assets and constraints, as the region seeks to break out of the fluctuations of its historically defense-based economy. Indeed, high tech may be the Island's only choice for a healthy economic future. On the one hand, defense has built a strong base of high technology industry and the region is blessed with an extraordinary concentration of strong research centers and a diversity of higher education institutions. On the other, the island setting limits its prospects for economic development. As a transportation "dead-end," its industries must focus on products less sensitive to shipping costs. As a fragile environment, with a sole-source aquifer for all residential and commercial water supplies, its economic choices must be consistent with the protection of its high quality of life.

New York had one of the earliest university-industry initiatives, the Centers for Advanced Technology program, created by the legislature and the governor in 1982.⁸ Overseen by the New York State Science and Technology Foundation, the program provides incentives for commercially-oriented research collaboration between universities and industry. One of the CAT Centers, which receive a million dollars a year in state matching funds for generating a million dollars in corporate research funding, was designated at the State University at Stony Brook, in medical biotechnology. The Long Island Incubator program took shape under the aegis of this state-supported center. The CAT Center has been substantially responsible for the growth of the Long Island-New York metropolitan region as a national center of the biotechnology industry, manifested in the founding last year at Stony Brook of the state's first trade association for this industry, the New York Biotechnology Association.

The academic landscape has changed so dramatically in the last generation that it is worth recalling the critical contribution of these incentive programs in transforming the relationships of universities with industry. It is now common for academic scientists to consult and perform contract research for industry, invite industrial scientists to work in their laboratories, send their graduate students to work in companies, and act as principals in profit-making enterprises growing out of their research activity. Yet as recently as the 1970s, such relationships were rare outside the professionally-oriented settings of engineering and business schools.

There is not room in this article to recapitulate this transformation in all its aspects, nor to review the confluence of economic, technological, and political forces that brought it about. It does, however, provide an important additional perspective on the Long Island Incubator. By agreeing to support the creation of an incubator facility on its campus to promote high technology industry, USB and its president, Dr. John H. Marburger, not only made a fundamental regional commitment but also joined in a national movement to

link the academic and research resources of universities with the revitalization of the national economy.

LONG ISLAND CONTEXT

Long Island is the high technology center of New York state and one of the nation's main concentrations of industry based on scientific advance and technological change. Fully one-third of New York's high tech manufacturing firms are on the Island.⁹ Formerly perceived as a series of "bedroom" communities for the metropolis, the Island, after World War II, developed a varied economic base that included its historic marine industries and agriculture—Suffolk is still New York's most agriculturally productive county¹⁰—as well as tourism, defense manufacturing, and the earnings of high-salaried residents employed elsewhere. However, defense was the primary engine driving the Island's postwar growth, marked by fluctuations tied to the ebbs and flows of the federal defense budget.

This activity expanded the Island's economic base; in the most recent decade, four-of-five employed Long Islanders worked in Nassau or Suffolk. The population has grown increasingly diverse. Although still substantially composed of white residents, the proportion of African Americans, Hispanic people, and new immigrants has grown, and there is a rising number of older persons. These changes have augmented the need for a variety of public services, along with the tax base to sustain them.

The defense basis of the regional economy took on a different character in the 1980s. A Long Island Regional Planning Board report (funded under a U.S. Defense Department program to assist localities experiencing economic dislocation due to shifts in defense spending), stated:

The forces which contributed to Long Island's rapid economic growth during the 1980s—the massive national defense buildup, the rapid growth of financial and related service jobs in New York City, the migration of back-office jobs to Long Island and the catch-up of population-serving jobs to prior population growth on Long Island—have run their course.¹¹

The report pointed out that these changes were occurring simultaneously with a structural transformation of the defense sector nationally. Because of fundamental changes in the domestic procurement process, as well as the profoundly changed character of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the nation's defense spending appears destined to shrink. This impact has already been felt locally. In 1989, Long Island experienced a net loss of jobs for the first time in fifteen years.¹² As the 1980s' growth cycle topped out, and permanent changes began in the defense sector, the Island's historical growth conditions—vacant land, low-cost energy, available skilled labor—began to decline.

Long Island's bad news was also its good news. A developing regional transition, conspicuously discarding the promise of "booms" dependent on

federal defense spending, offered to stave off the “busts” of defense-spending declines by diversifying the economy and broadening its base.

ROLE OF LONG ISLAND’S MAJOR RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

The State University of New York at Stony Brook was uniquely positioned to respond to this economic transition. When the decision was made in 1960 to augment the role of New York’s public university system by creating new centers for graduate education and research, Long Island was the only region initially singled out. The explicit goal was to enhance the region’s “technical and scientific industries”—the concept of “high technology” industry had not yet come into its own.¹³ The *de novo* development of a major research university “standing with the finest in the country” is a story that richly deserves to be told. Suffice it to say here that USB, in the 1980s, reached a level of maturity that enabled it to begin to target areas in which it could make a fundamental contribution to the regional economy, in fulfillment of the mandate prescribed two decades before. State Senator Kenneth P. LaValle, who still chairs the Higher Education Committee, pointed out the importance of strengthening critical partnerships between universities and industry in a prescient report, *High Technology Parks: A Marriage of Higher Education and Industry*.¹⁴ USB President Marburger, who arrived in 1980, gave early consideration to the notion of providing a suitable environment for new high technology companies started by university faculty members or other entrepreneurs. The incubator, Marburger believed, could help balance the relationship between Long Island’s industrial base, heavily developed in aerospace and electronics, and its research capacity, whose greatest collective strength is in the life sciences. In addition to the university, research assets included a major federal research facility at Brookhaven National Laboratory, whose pioneering work in nuclear medicine was overshadowed by its more visible activities at the frontiers of physics, and a highly distinguished private research facility at Cold Spring Harbor, whose director was the co-discoverer of DNA.¹⁵

Assemblymen I. William Bianchi Jr., of the Ways and Means Committee, and Lewis Yevoli, chair of the Committee on Commerce, Industry and Economic Development, endorsed the incubator concept as a vehicle for new-enterprise development. The involvement of key legislators brought favorable notice to the project from Senate Majority Leader Ralph J. Marino, and Assembly Speaker Mel Miller. The Urban Development Corporation, which assisted in the development of the R.P.I. incubator, was an early supporter of the concept on Long Island.

Another crucial factor was the state’s designation of USB’s Center for Biotechnology, in 1983, as a Center for Advanced Technology in Medical Biotechnology. This pioneering program provides \$1 million a year in matching funds to stimulate industrial research collaboration with New York universities in high technology fields identified by a consulting study as targets of opportunity. Suffolk County Executive Patrick G. Halpin, who considered

biotechnology, in particular, as a new high technology option for Long Island, became a strong supporter of it and of the incubator. Without a specific brief for the incubator, the Center for Biotechnology nonetheless found that its mandated outreach activities revealed a need for appropriate space on the part of biotech start-ups, and played a leading role in responding to this need.

The importance of manufacturing in the regional economic mix received continuing attention. Manufacturing was losing jobs on Long Island by the beginning of the 1990s, while the service sector was one of the areas of greatest job growth. A report of the Long Island Regional Planning Board showed that a healthy manufacturing sector—which would be encouraged by the incubator—was essential for service growth and overall economic well-being. The report showed that about one-third of the impact of increased manufacturing occurs in the service sector, but that only 5 percent of service increases affect manufacturing.¹⁶ The service sector, whose jobs tend to be lower paid, could not be counted upon to take up the slack from lost manufacturing.

PRELIMINARY STEPS

An initial incubator planning grant of \$700,000 was appropriated in 1985, with the leadership of Senator LaValle, his Assembly colleagues, and the Urban Development Corporation. During the next few years the state invested more than \$100 million in university-based high technology development projects, mostly at private institutions. In the same period the state university's board of trustees adopted guidelines defining conditions for using campus facilities for incubators. The system, as well as the campus, was participating in the national trend toward greater university-industry cooperation for economic development. However, the growth of Long Island's economy in the 1980s caused the development of the incubator to go forward deliberately, without the urgency of later years. It was decided that a memorandum of understanding, endorsed by Governor Mario M. Cuomo, would define the roles of the state, the public university, and the private sector in this pioneering partnership, with a planning consultant, KPMG Peat Marwick, hired for the project.

In an experiment under the SUNY guidelines, the campus allowed a small research corporation performing consulting services for the CAT Center to occupy space on the campus in 1985. Once the dimensions of the need for such space was apparent, the campus initiated a formal program allowing new ventures to occupy temporarily available academic space, at a break-even rent, as an interim measure until the completion of a new dedicated facility. One of the first occupants under this program, in 1987, was Biocogent, Ltd. (since renamed Collaborative Laboratories), which sought to develop novel methods for controlling the delivery of drugs and other substances, based on biomembrane mimetics.

Another important development was the new biotechnology and medical instrumentation initiative of Olympus Corporation USA. Based in Lake Success for twenty-five years, Olympus was looking for a place in which to

apply its expertise in precision instruments and medical devices to the development of sophisticated instrumentation for automated blood analysis. In 1988, USB accepted Olympus Biomedical Research Center in the incubator program. Unlike the small start-up firms, Olympus was charged at the market rate, reflecting its difference from the fledglings in the interim incubator program. This experience led to the concept of “anchor” tenant, analogous to the “prime” tenant in a conventional real estate development, providing fiscal stability for the incubator program and a technology role model for the start-up company tenants. The final program design for the incubator relies on occupancy by one or more anchor tenants.

In 1987, a group of public- and private-sector leaders agreed to serve on the independent review committee required by SUNY’s incubator guidelines. These included the economic development directors of the New York state regional office, representatives of Nassau and Suffolk counties and the town of Brookhaven, and several private-sector delegates. This ensured the alignment of the incubator initiative with the goals of Long Island’s economic development programs.

Statutory authorization, enacted in 1988, enabled SUNY to lease a portion of USB’s campus to a not-for-profit entity for the construction of the incubator facility. It was essential to establish the incubator’s status as a non-state facility to remove policy and procedural constraints on entrepreneurial activity. The state policy on patenting, for example, retained title for the university’s Research Foundation to inventions made in SUNY facilities.¹⁷ To risk the loss of patent protection as a condition of occupying incubator space would be unacceptable to prospective tenants.

In 1989, Long Island High Technology Incubator, Inc., was incorporated as a not-for-profit membership corporation of the Stony Brook Foundation and the State University Research Foundation. The principal responsibilities of the new corporation would be to become leaseholder for the campus incubator site, complete the financing arrangements, contract for design and construction of the incubator building, and then manage the program. The mix of private sector and university representation on the board of directors, chaired by USB’s Marburger, balanced the participants’ interests while establishing a sound business orientation and a proper degree of independence from the university and the state. The establishment of a federally-assisted New York State Small Business Development Center at Stony Brook in 1989, in the Harriman School for Management and Policy, provided a delivery point for business assistance programs to the tenants.

THE HISTORICAL MOMENT

The national recession of the late 1980s struck the Island with particular intensity, providing the impetus to move the incubator from the planning stage to implementation. The downturn was comprehensive, but the decline in defense was dramatic. As this journal goes to press in the summer of 1991, Congress has not yet adopted a budget for fiscal 1992; the termination of

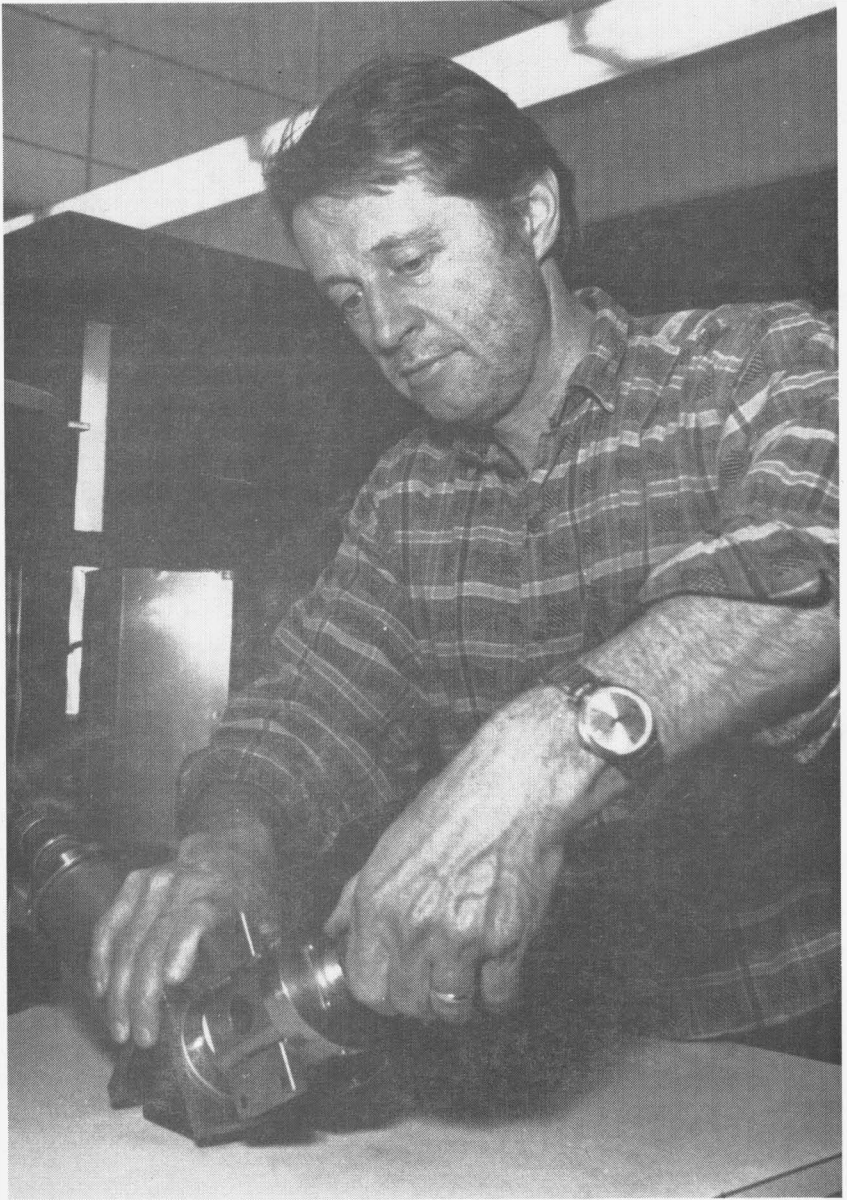
Grumman's F-14 contract would mark the first time in more than a generation that no Long Island company held the prime contract for a major defense program. An extraordinary coalition of business and labor groups, the higher education and research communities, the two county executives, and Suffolk town supervisors strongly supported the effort of the Long Island delegation in the legislature to secure state financial assistance in the difficult budget year of 1990. With the support of Marino, Miller, and Cuomo, the arrangement, which called for a \$500,000 grant and a \$2,300,000 low-interest loan, was signed into law. Later that year, the design contract was awarded to Ehasz Giacalone Associates, of Garden City. Norstar, a bank with a strong regional commitment, entered negotiations to complete the financing package, in cooperation with the New York State Job Development Authority.

Fifteen companies currently occupy nearly 20,000 square feet in the interim incubator program, and it appears that the planned space for start-up companies will be at least 75 percent subscribed when the incubator opens next year. A sign of the maturing of the program is the diversity of the occupants' technologies, which include advanced materials, electronics, computer software, biotechnology, and biomedical instrumentation.

Advanced Materials. One of the program's busiest tenants is Moltech Corporation, formed by a scientist from Brookhaven National Laboratory to develop a broad range of new materials including conducting polymers with such applications as thin film rechargeable batteries for lap-top computers; biosensors; and high temperature superconductors. Moltech, with collaborations with USB's Departments of Chemistry and Materials Science and Engineering, has received a record sixteen grants through the federal Small Business Innovation Research program. The SBIR program sets aside a portion of federal agency research budgets exceeding \$100 million a year for projects awarded to small companies on a competitive basis. A second materials company is about to enter.

With two national facilities contributing to advanced materials development, Brookhaven National Laboratory's National Synchrotron Light Source, and the National Science Foundation Science and Technology Center for High Pressure Research at Stony Brook, as well as focused programs in local industry, Long Island has a strong base in this emerging area. It has critical implications for the technologies cited below, and for such other developing fields as MAGLEV (magnetically levitated high speed mass transportation).¹⁸

Biotechnology. Half of the interim program's companies are in biotechnology, including the development of: a proprietary product derived from animal plasma for a wide array of surgical applications; more sensitive, gold-labeled antibodies and other products for medical research and diagnosis; dosage forms for pharmaceuticals; new forms of treatment for disorders related to blood clotting; and disease-specific diagnostics and therapies. The program also accommodates the headquarters of the New York Biotechnology Association. All three of the interim program "graduates" are biotechnology companies.



Dr. Terje Skotheim, president of Moltech, Inc., a tenant in USB's interim incubator program, adjusts a deposition vacuum system in his facility in a campus building.

Electronics. Expert Diagnostics, Inc., a new venture by individuals with decades of experience in electronics, seeks to exploit the growing market for testing devices for electronic systems, based on off-the-shelf components computer-operated by expert systems software. Because of Long Island's strong installed base, as well as the enormous growth potential of this developing industry, more incubator activity is foreseen in this area.

Information technology. Three incubator tenants deal with information systems and technology. Professional Data Management Systems develops customizable off-the-shelf software systems for financial planning and management applications. Three young men, recent college graduates, founded Progressive Computer Consulting, Inc. to develop interactive computer graphic software utilizing state-of-the-art techniques. Innovata Inc., founded by a recent computer science graduate of SUNY at Stony Brook is writing software for the publishing industry and for the NEXT computer.

One company in the environmental technology field is about to enter. The variety and fragility of the Island's environment make it a natural laboratory for the development of model solutions to environmental problems. Significant future development is anticipated at the incubator in this field.

The three companies that "graduated" from the interim program into commercial space in a local high technology research park are **Collaborative Laboratories, Curative Technologies, Inc.,** and **Olympus Biomedical Research Center.** Collaborative Laboratories, formed by a local industrial scientist to develop products based on biomembrane mimetics and controlled delivery for diagnostic and therapeutic applications, entered in October 1987 and exited in spring 1991. Curative Technologies, originally developed at the University of Minnesota and without prior connection with USB, based its initial products on a unique approach to the treatment of chronic, cutaneous wounds like those afflicting diabetics and chronically bedridden patients. Its future plans include research, development, and sale of products involving the use of locally acting growth factors to decrease morbidity and mortality. It entered in February 1988, and exited in March 1989. Olympus Biomedical, the initiative of Nassau-based Olympus USA, develops diagnostic and clinical reagents and associated hardware, enabling health care facilities and individual practitioners to perform mass screening of human samples for infectious diseases and conditions including autoimmune diseases and cancer, as well as blood testing and typing. The company entered in January 1988, and left in January 1990.

The record of the "fledglings," who successfully took wing from the sheltering nest of the incubator to brave the commercial marketplace, has important implications for incubator policy. The wide variation of periods of occupancy, from thirteen months for the shortest to three and one-half years for the longest, demonstrates the undesirability of rigidly time-based exit criteria. The time required for a company to achieve stable independence is more likely to depend on the character and complexity of its business, its market, or the volume of relevant regulation, than its size or level of capitalization and support.

The interim incubator program provides a home for a spectrum of technologies that offer important new economic potentials for the regional economy. The technology mix, which reflects key regional strengths, builds on the established industrial and research base, and capitalizes on existing economic and research resources.

CONCLUSION

Long Island is in transition. From its traditional agricultural-maritime past, and its more recent role as a prosperous, rapidly growing suburb, it has emerged as a richly endowed but vulnerable economy. The most significant public needs of its heterogeneous population are region-wide, but the political jurisdictions that must respond are numerous and fragmented. The incubator project, which received strong support and funding last year, is poised as a key component of Long Island's survival kit, a new departure in the development of a sustainable, long-term economy. This strategic initiative offers a focus and a rallying point for shaping Long Island's economic future.

The Incubator cuts across jurisdictions and levels of government as a public-private partnership to develop new technologies for a revitalized economy. The involvement of USB, the Island's major research university, as a provider of talent and technology assets, reflects a national trend of mobilizing the higher education and research communities as critical economic resources. America's place in the developing global economy will largely depend on the ability of its high technology centers, including Long Island, to outperform their competitors elsewhere. If Long Island, cradle of aviation, source of the vehicle that placed human beings on the moon, and producer of innovations in war and peace lives up to its past, the future is bright.

NOTES

1. "Wall Street Journal Report," *NBIA Review* (Spring 1991): 3. The Association held its first national conference in 1987.
2. Mary Rowland, "Nurturing the Fragile Start-Up," *New York Times*, 14 April 1991, D9.
3. Peter Collins, "Incubators are Finding the DNA of Business Success," *Coopers & Lybrand Emerging Business Newsletter* (March-April 1990): 11.
4. See Birch's latest book, *Job Creation in America: How Our Smallest Companies Put the Most People to Work* (New York: The Free Press, 1987).
5. New York was the home of the nation's first new-business incubator, the Batavia Industrial Center, which opened in 1959, and at which one of the original tenants raised chickens (Rowland, "Nurturing").
6. See Roger Miller and Marcel Cote, "Growing the Next Silicon Valley," *Harvard Business Review* 63 (July-August 1985): 116.
7. Lois S. Peters and Patricia A. Wheeler, *Technology-Based Regional Economic Development: An Overview* (Troy, NY: Center for Science and Technology Policy, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 1988), ii.
8. Chapter 562, Laws of New York, 1982.
9. *A Statistical Report on High Technology Industries in New York State* (Albany: New York State Department of Commerce, 1987), 23.

- 10. The census of agriculture taken in 1987 shows that Suffolk remains the state's leading agricultural county based on the wholesale value of its agricultural products—\$114 million. (Wyoming County was second, with \$84 million.) This occurred despite a reduction over the last five years in both the number of farms and their acreage, reflecting a shift to higher-return, more profitable crops. Potatoes showed the biggest loss of acreage, wine grapes the biggest gain (William J. Sanok, "Suffolk County Remains Number One," *Suffolk County Agricultural News*, May 1990, 3).
- 11. *Maximizing the Potential of Long Island's Defense Sector in an Era of Change—1988* (Hauppauge: Long Island Regional Planning Board, 1989), xv.
- 12. *Newsday*. 12 January 1990, 39.
- 13. Marion B. Folsom, John W. Gardner, and Henry T. Heald, *Meeting the Increasing Need for Higher Education in New York State: A Report to the Governor and the Board of Regents* (Albany: New York State Education Department, 1960), 31.
- 14. Committee on Higher Education, New York State Senate, *High Technology Parks: A Marriage of Higher Education and Industry* (Albany, 1982), 7.
- 15. See Robert P. Crease, "The History of Brookhaven National Laboratory: The Graphite Reactor and the Cosmotron," *LIHJ* 3 (Spring 1991): 167-86; Elizabeth L. Watson, "Long Island Born and Bred: The Origin and Growth of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory," *LIHJ* 2 (Spring 1990): 145-62, and Lee R. Hiltzik, "The Director, the Laboratory, and the Genome Project: An Interview with James D. Watson," *LIHJ* 2 (Spring 1990): 163-169.
- 16. Pearl Kamer, *The Economic Link Between the Manufacturing and Service-Producing Sectors: Implications for Public Policy*, draft report to the Long Island Regional Planning Board, 1990.
- 17. Article XI, Title J, Section 1 of the Policies of the Board of Trustees, State University of New York, approved 19 September 1979, amended 16 November 1988.
- 18. See Lee E. Koppelman, "MAGLEV," *LIHJ* 3 (Spring 1991):217-25.

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The Social Utility of Failure: Long Island's Rubber Industry and the Setauket *Shtetle*, 1876-1911

By Marc J. Stern

Manufacturing in the United States made rapid strides after 1820, first in textiles and, subsequently, in such products as firearms, agricultural implements, sewing machines, and clocks and watches. By 1860 the factory system, according to George R. Taylor, was “rapidly becoming important in practically every industrial field and the stage was set for its phenomenal development in postwar years.”¹

Unlike Manhattan, the island to the west, nineteenth century Long Island was hardly a center of manufacturing. Though Patchogue claimed the nation's third cotton mill in 1800, it took twentieth-century warfare to establish and sustain manufacturing in the region on any scale. Riverhead's bonnet factory and Huntington's brickyard aside, Suffolk County in 1850 was known for its whaling, agriculture, fishing, and shipyards. The county's workshops, like most throughout the nation, usually employed fewer than ten workers. But the Industrial Revolution did not bypass Long Island entirely. Despite the seemingly obvious lack of transportation, raw materials, and adequate labor, some residents promoted industry to counteract the decline of craft manufacture.²

This essay treats one of the largest and most significant efforts to establish manufacturing on Long Island during the late nineteenth century. It traces the short, tumultuous life of the several rubber companies of Setauket. It demonstrates the difficulty of establishing a locally-funded, owner-managed enterprise in an increasingly capital-intensive industry geared to national markets. It also examines the role the factory played in diversifying, momentarily at least, the village's remarkably homogeneous ethnic environment through the addition of immigrant Russian-Jewish workers. Although Setauket's rubber companies were failures, they helped sustain the local economy for almost a quarter-century.

The Birth of the Blues

Suffolk's population more than doubled between 1790 and 1860. Much of this slow growth—compared with that of the national population which doubled every twenty years—occurred in Brookhaven, the county's largest town, which claimed almost a quarter of its 43,000 residents on the eve of the Civil War. Sixteen-hundred Brookhavenites lived along Long Island Sound

in the Three Village Area (Stony Brook, Setauket and Old Field). Most of these were white, Protestant, New York state-born farmers and mariners of colonial descent. They shipped their cordwood, fruits, vegetables and grains for sale in New York City, upstate via the Hudson River, and across the Sound in New England. Setauket's shipyards also provided work for large numbers of artisans. Railroads only figured as a direct factor in local development when the Smithtown-Port Jefferson Railroad connected this section of the North Shore to New York in 1872. Even then, however, coastal shipping remained the cheapest available transportation for local products.³

With two-thirds of the area's population, Setauket was also the most occupationally diverse of the villages, but it paled beside its neighbor, Port Jefferson, northern Brookhaven's regional center. The latter's carriage-making shop ranked "among the principal manufacturing establishments on the island," and its steam-powered flour mill marketed products in both New England and New York. Enough interstate trade occurred for Connecticut merchants to advertise their wares in Port Jefferson's newspapers.⁴

Agriculture and ship-crafts dominated the area, but seemingly incongruous manufactures also left their mark on the area during the nineteenth century. The first, piano manufacturing, began in 1839 in small Stony Brook workshops run by local artisans. One piano shop, with six workmen and a reported product value of \$5,000, was large enough to be noted by the 1855 New York state census. Five years later, the federal census mentioned the shop of one Frederick A. Pfeiffer, a German-born artisan with three workers who made ten pianos a year using hand-powered tools. His shop was small compared with many around the nation. On average, U.S. pianoforte manufacturers employed thirty-two workers, each earning more than \$500 a year in 1860. Pfeiffer's workers earned only \$300 per year.⁵

Local piano-making reached a crescendo in 1861 with the birth of northern Brookhaven's first real factory, Robert Nunns and Sons Co., in Setauket. The English-born Nunns previously ran a large and, until 1858, successful piano company with his brother-in-law, John Clark. They made heavy, rectangular pianos well suited to American homes, and the firm grew during the early 1850s' boom. But an examination of the company's books after Clark's death during the 1857 depression exposed the firm's insolvency, and Nunns closed shop in 1860.⁶

Rather than fade away, he made a beeline to a ninety-acre farm he had purchased in Setauket in 1854. Nunns probably learned of the area from Stony Brook pianomakers or from his longtime employee Bryant C. Hawkins, a Setauket native. In any event, he and his sons borrowed enough money from family and neighbors by 1861 to build a new, four-story, steam-powered factory on their land atop the hill in Setauket astride what is now New York State Route 25A. Nunns imported his skilled workers from New York City. He employed eighteen men in 1865, including twelve foreign-born workers. Germans figured prominently among these workers, as they did throughout the American piano industry. At \$46 per month, they were the

highest paid artisans in northern Brookhaven. These craftsmen manufactured ninety pianos per year using a limited division of labor. Nunns's firm was the most heavily capitalized enterprise in the area at \$60,000, but observers noted from the start that "it will be hard for him to build up a bus[iness] or get cre[dit]." Local demand for pianos on rural Long Island had its limits. In the Connecticut, New York City, Brooklyn and Long Island coastal markets, on the other hand, Nunns tried to compete with nationally-known New York and Boston pianomakers who produced the vast majority of the nation's pianofortes in larger, more efficient shops.⁷

Nunns was deep in debt by 1865. The business ended two years later when the local mortgage-holders foreclosed on his land and factory. By then he owed over \$5,000 to his workmen. The resulting clearance sale advertised "celebrated pianos at low prices, for cash. Now is the time to purchase as the stock being small will soon be disposed of." Most of his workers left when the firm collapsed. Competition and the limited local market apparently doomed the firm.⁸

The decline that characterized the Three Village economy through the late 1860s accelerated with the depression of the mid-1870s. A developing national economy and new technologies put small, craft enterprises at risk throughout the land. Shipyard work geared to wooden sailing ships slowed through no fault of Setauket's small yards. This sparked the exodus of more local craftsmen. In turn, agriculture became more important locally. Setauket's population fell by almost one-fifth to a little more than nine hundred by 1870. This trajectory contrasts with Suffolk County which, as a whole, grew by 1 percent, and differs sharply from neighboring Port Jefferson, where more heavily capitalized shipyards and a better port made the village "the busiest bay on the shore."⁹

"An Empty Boat At Sea"

The "mammoth building" and piano-factory lands in Setauket changed hands several times on a speculative basis between 1867-76 but remained vacant. Few saw much hope for Setauket's deteriorating factory, especially after the onset of depression in 1873. But in 1876 it attracted the attention of several Trenton, New Jersey, and Connecticut entrepreneurs. They descended upon Suffolk County to solicit support from local farmers, businessmen, and banks for their plan to revitalize Setauket's troubled economy. Setauket, they promised, could share in returns from the nation's young rubber industry. Craft industry might disappear, but manufacturing would save Setauket from becoming a backwater on the Sound.¹⁰

The scheme's mastermind was Robert S. Manning, of Trenton, one of the nation's principal centers of rubber manufacture along with several Connecticut towns and Boston. A former Presbyterian minister with experience in the rubber trade, Manning was "so well known in Trenton that no one has any confidence. St[an]d[in]g and char[acter] are below par. There are judg[ments] vs. him which he will not pay...He left the city under a

cloud.”¹¹ Manning’s partners, Edwin and Joseph W. Elberson were also known for running a brokerage business “without any success whatever.” But Suffolk County worthies faced with declining shipyards and an ongoing depression cast their lot with this motley crew.¹²

The *Long Island Leader* endorsed the project. A rubber factory would, it said, do “incalculable good.” It would employ 100 to 200 workers, “all of whom would have to be sustained in the village.” The paper hoped that the company “might call [Setauket] to the attention of other capitalists” who would also invest in the area. Rubber could begin a glorious industrial future for north-central Suffolk County. This scenario seemed plausible given the area’s New England connection.¹³

Manning and the Elberson’s presented their case at a town meeting on 25 July and canvassed potential investors throughout Suffolk County. They obtained permission from several local dignitaries to use their names as investors in exchange for stock in the company. Edwin Elberson purchased the factory building and two and one-half acres in early August 1876, and on August 19 the *Leader* reported that “the opening of the rubber factory...has now become a settled fact.” The newly-formed Long Island Rubber Company (LIRC) set to rebuild and refit Setauket’s factory on the hill. The will to believe was very powerful in Suffolk County during those depression-darkened days.¹⁴

Setauket prepared to bounce into the industrial age. Residents eagerly followed the factory’s renovation with interest. But even the *Leader*’s supportive Setauket editor, John B. Mount, saw humor in the situation. He gleefully mocked the despair of rural boosters

eager to profit yet their fear of losses or of becoming of slight benefit to someone other than themselves makes their condition truly miserable. And which shall it be—government bonds or rubber stocks?—is now the problem undergoing solution in the cranium of these rustic financiers. Like an empty boat at sea they will probably be carried where the tide sets.¹⁵

Even more to the point was his anthem to industrial progress and economic growth, “Rubber On the Brain: A Parody,” which, sung to the tune of “Oil on the Brain,” observed in its first verse that:

Men talk of undiscovered wealth
Of regions filled with gold;
Of railroad princes made from naught,
And buccaneers of old.
To profit in some sudden way,
Setauket folks have aimed;
And now the heads of all display
Rubber on the brain.

Chorus - Stocks par, stocks up
Stocks on the gain
Everybody's troubled with
Rubber on the brain.¹⁶

There was apparently no discussion of the trade's noxious odors and chemical waste. The *Leader's* readers learned, however, that, by some wonderful fluke, the facility "is exactly adapted to the rubber business," and that "the projectors...have already secured a market for all the goods they can manufacture." Delay thus became a financial cross borne by the noble entrepreneurs. In reality, the long-deserted plant required costly renovations, new out-buildings, and gas lighting to accommodate the new equipment—some of which the company bought with stock certificates. By December 1876, however, the business was nearly ready to open.¹⁷

The LIRC issued \$184,000 in stock, and sold, traded, or gave out \$138,150 of this by 1878. It entered the market with their Long Island-made boots, shoes, belting, car springs, and other rubber goods, with Robert Manning as President, Joseph W. Elberson as treasurer and plant manager, and Edwin Elberson as sales manager. They established an office in New York City, from which they sold goods to the West and South. These goods were shipped from Setauket to New York by schooner for distribution. By early 1877, the firm shipped its products regularly, but Dun reported that the LIRC was "in need of \$" and indebted for "a large amount." Undercapitalized and hard pressed to meet their bills, stockholders elected Lyman Beecher Smith, a wealthy Smithtown businessman with investments in real estate and wool, as their new president after he agreed to shore up the firm with another \$50,000. But his largess failed to stabilize the company's worsening financial position. After investing everything in machinery and materials capable of producing 1,400 pair of boots and shoes daily, the LIRC could not pay its bills. Providence also frowned on the firm with two consecutive mild winters. "Goods," explained (now-vice-president) Manning, "have accumulated in the hands of jobbers and retailers." Market prices plummeted accordingly. He noted in January 1878, however, that given the depression, "all kinds have failed, and we should be satisfied today if a new institution like ours has held its own." While correct, this did nothing to ease the LIRC's cash-flow crisis. The firm went under a month later. It owed most of its \$75,000 debt to the employees. To their dismay, shareholders learned that they were responsible for the company's debts as partners rather than as investors in a general corporation. A dramatic shakeup followed when Manning "decamped" leaving family and friends in a lurch.¹⁸

After assessing themselves a \$50-a-share penalty to cover outstanding debts the stockholders chose Joseph Ridgeway, a wealthy Port Jefferson miller who had recently moved to Setauket, as receiver for state bankruptcy proceedings. Ridgeway, Elberson, and Smith ran the plant while the firm reorganized. Following litigation, Smith purchased the firm for \$20,000 to

recoup some of his considerable losses. He justifiably rechristened this venture the L. B. Smith Rubber Company.¹⁹

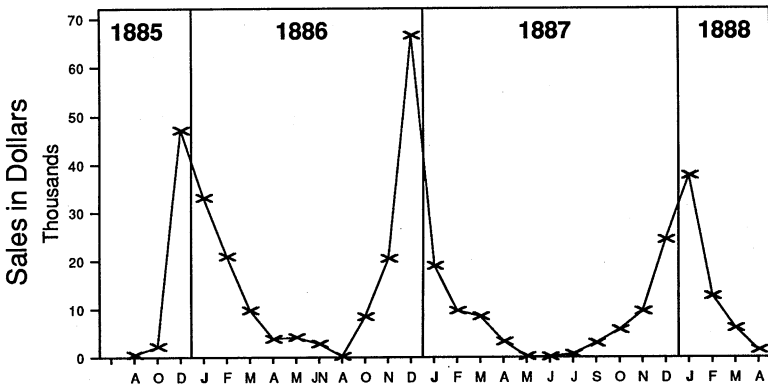
The Rubber Industry

Setauket’s rubber factory was the newest addition to the young U.S. rubber industry. Rubber production increased rapidly after 1840 and included everything from weather-resistant clothing to industrial products. The federal census listed 102 firms engaged in manufacturing rubber goods of various sorts in 1880. The nation’s nine rubber footwear makers dominated the field averaging 500 workers, \$269,000 capital, and a million dollars in product value per year each. Most general rubber-goods makers averaged only seventy workers, \$67,000 capital, and \$153,000 product value per year. Setauket, with 125 workers and a capital of \$25,000, claimed production worth \$100,000 at that accounting. The Long Island venture was clearly undercapitalized compared to the general trade and its work force.²⁰

The rubber industry’s ebb and flow depended on many factors. Americans imported raw rubber from Brazil through a highly speculative world-market system. Prices fluctuated erratically. Players coped with frequent attempts to corner the market prior to the emergence of large rubber import trusts in the late 1880s. Weather-resistant rubber clothing sales and, consequently, production, were seasonal and varied with the severity of the weather (see figure 1). Mild winters played havoc with the smaller firms’ cash flows, and woe to companies with shallow pockets. The success of the firms’ annual post-season auction often meant the difference between bankruptcy and survival. Seasonal sales and varied production discouraged cost-cutting by

SMITH RUBBER CONSIGNMENT SALES

AUGUST 1885-APRIL 1888



Source: N.Y. Consignment Sales Book

inhibiting continuous-production techniques. Market prices also fluctuated despite efforts by trade associations to regulate rates for first, second, and third quality goods. Jobbers marketed products on consignment throughout the nation; large companies did not establish their own sales divisions until the 1890s. Given the competitive nature of the market, trademarks became crucial to differentiate manufacturers. The quality of Setauket's goods, however, soon left their trademark with little value on the open market. The L. B. Smith Company, like its predecessor, produced low-quality goods under Elberson's direction.²¹

Production required expensive machines, chemicals, raw rubber, water, and labor. Almost everything had to be imported into Setauket. The company probably brought its grinders, calenders, and dryers from Connecticut, New Jersey or Massachusetts. It also purchased new steam engines to drive them. Equipment and supplies—including thousands of tons of coal per year—arrived by ship at Setauket harbor and were hauled by wagon and team a quarter-mile up the hill to the factory or three-quarters of a mile on the flat from other harbor sites. Transportation during the winter was especially torturous and required considerable work by local teamsters. The lack of convenient transportation facilities placed Setauket's rubber company at a significant cost disadvantage compared to larger firms with convenient rail, canal, or coastal service. There is no evidence that the company ever constructed a siding to connect the plant to the Smithtown-Port Jefferson line. Rail deliveries therefore involved substantial carting from the station which was even further from the plant than was the port.²²

Each firm closely guarded its rubber recipes as trade secrets, but the basic process was identical. Workers first washed sheets of raw rubber. Water for cleaning and cooling rubber, reported one analyst, "is as fundamental [for success] as that of a location upon a railroad." But as with the railroad, water was a problem in Setauket; by 1885, Elberson was struggling to construct a water system to supply his plant. After workers cleaned the rubber, they fed it into grinders for mastication. The chewed rubber then dried for several weeks before a skilled worker treated it with chemicals. Workers then ran the rubber sheets through a calender which forced it into thin sheets around a fabric base. A skilled workman then assembled shoe pieces on a last. These were glued, varnished, and vulcanized by dry-heating. Different calenders and recipes were used for the soles and uppers of boots according to the style and thickness of each piece.²³

The variety of rubber products encouraged short production runs and the high per-unit costs inherent in batch as opposed to continuous production. Machine breakdowns, disruptions in raw material supply lines (e.g., coal or rubber), seasonality, and violent swings in demand enforced additional production discontinuities. This meant both severe under- and unemployment alternating with periods of intense work—including the addition of a night shift. Skilled workers in Setauket, as elsewhere, probably worked to set output, or "ticket," per day and were free to leave after they completed their

work. Less skilled workers probably faced eleven-hour days and six-day work-weeks. But work was never so rigidly controlled that hands ignored a traveling circus or an important horse race. As elsewhere, employees viewed these events as justifiable grounds for absenteeism.²⁴

Even with only 125 workers in 1880, the company was the largest manufacturer in Suffolk County. The mill employed skilled formers, who arranged the rubber on the last, rubber-, last-, and mold-makers, engineers, and supervisors, in addition to the more numerous unskilled workers. Many agricultural workers probably found work in the mill during the winter months. In Setauket, as elsewhere, one-third of all rubber workers were women, and most undoubtedly fell into less-skilled categories. These new residents, most of whom came to Setauket to work in the factory, sparked a construction boomlet in company-owned dormitories and houses. As anticipated, the factory provided a market for local farmers, and created many jobs in construction, transportation, and service. It also created a considerable stench. But residents endured the unpleasant side-effects in order to garner the plant's economic benefits.²⁵

The mill became even more significant as the village's shipyards sent their last vessel into the water in 1879. The number of ships' craftsmen fell from forty-nine to nine between 1870 and 1880. Even during the slow days of 1879-80, factory employees accounted for over 16 percent of Setauket and East Setauket's labor force. Significantly, only 29 percent of rubber workers in the 1880 census were also listed in 1870; most emigrated into the Three Village area. Though the foreign-born population still represented only 5 percent of the total, it accounted for one-tenth of the rubber work force. New York-born African American workers constituted 12 percent of the work force. These figures may distort the "normal" pattern of the factory because, when the firm shut down in 1879, the newspapers reported the departure of "the belles of Boston." Under more active circumstances, an even larger female and foreign work force probably toiled in the factory and lived in town. The rubber factory was beginning to change Setauket's population.²⁶

Boom and Bust

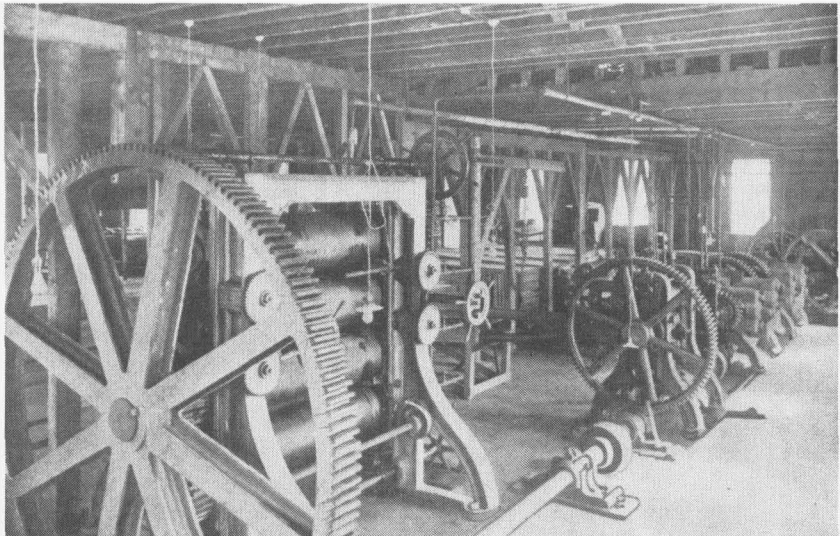
Through attention to business and some good fortune, Joseph Elberson and the L. B. Smith Company were well on their way toward recovery by 1881. Smith died that year—his death, some suggested, hastened by the company's difficulties—but Elberson pushed ahead. The company's productive capacity rose sharply as he plowed profits back into more buildings, machines, and housing. Despite several bad moments, the 1880s' boom proved the tonic the company needed. By 1885, the firm's product was estimated at more than a million dollars. It exported to Europe. Elberson bought a dock on Setauket harbor and planned to "run an independent transportation line" as a cost-saving measure. There was even talk of starting a rubber company bank. The firm reached its high-water mark with the construction of a short-lived branch factory in Canada in 1886.²⁷

Although financial analysts expressed concern for his abilities, Elberson believed he could “skate on ice as thin as any one.” He expanded his empire to Port Jefferson in 1885, founding the Suffolk Shoe Company with another local entrepreneur. The fifty workers in this plant manufactured leather shoes which, like his galoshes, sold in the West and the South. Port Jefferson residents subscribed funds to this venture on condition that it stay in town for five years and employ “a certain number of hands.” Rubber, however, remained the heart of Elberson’s empire.²⁸

The Smith Company’s 300 to 400 workers made it the county’s largest manufacturing firm. The managers claimed that “a man can get employment for his entire family as they employ boys and girls, from 12 years of age up.” At least five stage-loads of workers commuted from Port Jefferson each day. It also drew from Stony Brook, and townfolk there called for an enterprise of their own “...in which our rising population can find employment.”²⁹

The factory introduced new ethnic groups into Setauket. By 1881, there were enough Irish workers to hold a St. Patrick’s Day Parade, “a novelty in this vicinity.” Growth in Irish employment led to the area’s first Catholic mass at the Mission of St. James by 1887, and the founding of a Catholic church in Setauket one year later.³⁰

Following the economic recession of 1884 many industries boomed. Workers organized unions at a frenetic pace during this period. Much of this growth occurred within the Noble Order of the Knights of Labor. This “union” organized workers into both mixed (multi-craft/trade) locals and more traditional craft-based assemblies. Unlike most craft unions, the



Calendar used for coating and friction. 185 H.P. engine in distance. Photograph courtesy of the Three Village Historical Society.

Knights organized both skilled and unskilled workers, including women and African Americans.³¹

At least some of Setauket's rubber workers responded to the Knights' call for labor unity. These rural-industrial workers founded Local Assembly (L.A.) 7544 in 1886. One of only five assemblies on Long Island, L.A. 7544's activities are shrouded in mystery. But Setauket's local, along with ten other rubber worker assemblies, asked the Knights' General Assembly (G.A.) for permission to form their own trade district assembly, or national trade union, within the Order. Nothing more was heard from L.A. 7544 after the G.A. denied this request on procedural grounds in 1887.³²

The absence of evidence suggests that Setauket's rubber assembly made little sustained impact on the area. But L.A. 7544's failure was not unique. Other rubber assemblies also failed, although many fought unsuccessful actions against their employers. Few skilled, let alone unskilled, workers maintained effective unions during these years.

The L. B. Smith Company's declining market position undoubtedly undermined the Order's bargaining power in Setauket. Between 1885 and 1889, Joseph Elberson's kingdom on the Sound fell apart; there was little for the workers to win. As early as 1886, credit evaluators noted that the "firm seemed to be giving checks dated ahead," and appeared "too much spread out." In debt to his suppliers, Elberson borrowed money from investment firms in New York City and rode the thin ice of mild winters and glutted markets. In May 1888, the ice finally gave way, and the L. B. Smith Company went under. Elberson's Suffolk Shoe Company also folded in July 1889.³³

Big Business Comes to Setauket

The rubber factory reopened within weeks of its closing in 1888. Elberson still managed the plant, but a board of directors now ruled the roost. This board was made up of L. B. Smith Company's creditors who accepted stock in the newly formed Brookhaven Rubber Co. rather than partial payment in bankruptcy proceedings. In addition to local investors, the board claimed representatives of New York City's financial houses and Charles R. Flint, head of the nation's largest raw rubber importer, the New York Commercial Co. The Setauket firm probably owed money to the Commercial as its raw material supplier. Other members of New York's financial community on the board included representatives of the Manhattan Trust Co., French & Ward, Charles Lowenthal, and H. B. Claflin. Their involvement goes to the heart of the rubber industry's expansion. By 1890, firms required more operating capital than they had only ten years earlier. Average capitalization rose by almost 50 percent, as did the value of product manufactured. Not surprisingly, many firms borrowed money in New York City's capital market.³⁴

The Brookhaven Rubber Co. manufactured under the "Excelsior" brand name by late 1888. That year, over 400 workers made almost one million pair of third-quality rubber boots and shoes, valued at over a million dollars. Though industry analysts judged the firm to be making "considerable

progress," company bonds inspired no confidence and traded below par. Elberson's association with the venture probably compromised these issues, but he suffered little from this change and continued to earn \$5,000 a year. Others were less fortunate. Following a 10 percent cut in workers' wages, the firm ceased production in April 1889. It reopened in the fall, but shut again in 1890 with a "loss of \$118,000 on the year." As ever, Setauket immediately felt this "public misfortune." Real estate values fell and skilled employees departed for Connecticut's rubber shops "with the understanding that they will return here when this factory resumes work."³⁵

Amazingly, Setauket's rubber company rose like a phoenix once more, this time as the Manhattan Rubber Shoe Co. The "Manhattan" manufactured products to cover excess orders taken by Flint's New York Commercial Co. and its subsidiaries. "Often shut down," Elberson's presence graced this venture with a name "sufficient to wreck it," and liquidation seemed inevitable. Though "doing well" in late 1891, the company existed solely as a stop-gap measure until the trustees arranged the resolution of the Brookhaven Company's affairs in January 1893.³⁶

The Brookhaven, a.k.a. Manhattan, relied on an immigrant Jewish work force. According to Samuel Golden, Elberson brought large numbers of Russian and Hungarian Jews into the plant during the late 1880s. Golden, an elderly long-time Setauket resident and former rubber worker, recalled in a 1980 interview that his grandfather, father, mother, and sisters all worked in the rubber factory, on and off, from the late 1880s, before his father established a saloon for rubber workers. They came to Setauket at the beginning of Jewish migration to the area. Sam's father, a young man peddling dry-goods from a sack, learned of a need for workers and brought his family to Setauket.³⁷ Whether these workers supplanted or supplemented the original laborers, Jewish hands soon figured prominently for the firm and town. Elberson recruited workers by the boatload "right out of Ellis Island." Almost one hundred Jewish families lived in Setauket by 1892. Jewish workers were so central to production that the High Holy Days induced a general plant shutdown. Many understood little English. Others were illiterate. Yet those who gained citizenship took part in local elections. Some Setauket residents cast votes for candidates of the "Socialistic Labor Party," but no union activity was reported among these immigrants. They were, Golden recalls, always "too weak" to organize. The economic instability of the late 1880s and 1890s made organization unlikely even if the workers had been a unified, craft-based, homogeneous body.³⁸

The workers might have benefited from unionization. Wages were low and working conditions poor in Setauket by any standard. Children worked for as little as \$1.50 per week, and seasoned semi-skilled piece-workers earned up to \$7, far below the \$10.13 average earned by New York rubber workers. Such low wages probably encouraged high labor turnover, discouraged skilled rubber men from moving to Setauket, and contributed to shoddy production. The firm, on the other hand, often received its wages back as rent in a company

tenement or boarding house near the factory. Rent for a house ranged from \$20 to \$30 per month. A family of four with three members working for \$7 per week might have afforded one, but few others could. Boarding was apparently common. Indeed, local residents joked about the number of Jews per house, commenting that “by packing them in a condensed form we may have a good many of them on hand without being suspected of it.”³⁹

If families supplied several workers, they received their earnings in one envelope. The company often paid in company scrip redeemable at Charles Smith’s general store. A consumer with a dollar could buy a dozen eggs (\$.30) and a pound each of rice (\$.10), steak (\$.18-.20), lard (\$.13), and a quart of oil (\$.17), and receive a dime in change. Thirstier individuals might take \$.85 of that dollar and buy a quart of whiskey. Those who owned or rented houses could supplement their income by boarding co-workers, raising small animals, and growing fruit and vegetable gardens. It took skill to survive on a single person’s earnings, and layoffs and part-time work threw everyone into the same leaky boat.⁴⁰

Most rubber workers lived near the factory in East Setauket, as opposed to the Setauket and Old Field areas. They remained culturally isolated from Setauket’s Christian farmers, and craftsmen, and their Irish fellow workers. Eastern European Jews were a new and different element in Setauket’s all-too-homogeneous “melting pot.” A socially-understood boundary separated these districts at the Methodist Church; Jews and Gentiles rarely socialized together. As Golden recalled, “if you [Jewish children] stepped over [the line at the church] you had to fight.” Anti-Semitism infected the local newspapers and the communities. Local pundits saw no contradiction between praising the happy workers as they “trip along...with their faces swathed in smiles,” and cautioning against concern for the presence of Hebrews, for “avarice brought them and avarice will yet cause them to move on.” Nativists condemned the “ignorant” Jews who sought citizenship and the right to vote. The latter salved their souls in their newly-formed synagogue Agudas Achim, or “Good Fellowship,” opened in 1893. A saloon catering to the workers’ less spiritual needs also prospered.⁴¹

The Brookhaven factory differed fundamentally from the old version when it reopened in 1893: the United States Rubber Company now held 1251 of the 2500 shares of common stock. Founded in 1892, U.S. Rubber initially owned nine of the nation’s fifteen rubber footwear firms. This rubber “trust” was, in part, the brainchild of the international financier and Brookhaven Rubber trustee, Charles Flint, a man dubbed “the father of the trusts” by journalists for his role in creating mergers. U.S. Rubber pursued consolidation aggressively. It sought, like many other mergers during the 1890s, to increase profits through market control and efficiency. Beginning with one-third of the U.S. footwear market in 1892, it acquired half by 1893. In 1902 it owned or controlled all but two of the nation’s rubber footwear concerns and claimed three-fourths of the market. The firm systematically purchased—and sometimes destroyed—its competitors. In the long run, it sought to minimize

competition and guarantee steady profits by providing economies of scale, price stability, and centralized production and marketing in an unstable industry. Unlike several other trusts, however, U.S. Rubber was slow to integrate its operations. Effective vertical and, surprisingly, horizontal integration took over a decade to achieve, although centralized raw material purchasing and coordinated marketing began during the 1890s. The company's constituent firms retained considerable independence of operation and management. For all U.S. Rubber's involvement, that left Joseph Elberson in charge. Local residents expressed optimism on learning of the arrangement with U.S. Rubber. Though concern about trusts was often a feature of American life and politics during the 1890s, Setauket probably viewed U.S. Rubber as a knight in shining armor come to save their land from destruction.⁴²

Attempted arson at the factory in July 1893 might have warned that all was not well. Whatever the cause—sabotage by U.S. Rubber cannot be ruled out—the trust began planning to dispose of its interests in the Setauket plant in early 1894. Edwin Elberson signed a contract in March that required him to work for U.S. Rubber and to refrain from re-entering the “boot and shoe business” as an independent manufacturer. The factory shut three months later. Local newspapers reported “500 hands are thrown out of employment” because of “trouble...with the rubber trust.” The loss of the \$3,000 weekly payroll sent the town into panic, although fears abated when the plant reopened in July. But that September, U.S. Rubber also bought out Joseph Elberson, who agreed to abstain from competitive activity in the rubber footwear trade. This left the corporation with control of the shoe lasts and metal dies. U.S. Rubber sent a crew to Setauket that October to publicly destroy these necessary tools of Brookhaven's trade. Only Elberson's intervention and promise to build a new company restrained workers “then on the verge of rioting” from attacking these corporate agents. The dogged, if hapless, entrepreneur swore publicly that the new plant would honor its agreement and abjure rubber shoe production. But local investors privately determined to build a new tennis-shoe factory down the hill on Setauket harbor.⁴³

Joseph Banigan, president of U.S. Rubber, explained their purchase of Brookhaven Rubber “at a sacrifice of more than \$200,000 [as] for the sole purpose of stopping such a low grade production, and to protect the public from such a deception.” There was probably some truth in this, but New York State Assembly investigators suggested an alternative explanation during hearings in 1897. Interrogating Charles R. Flint, U.S. Rubber's treasurer and founder, they argued that the trust purchased Brookhaven and other small firms to eliminate competition. This permitted the trust to raise prices by 30 percent during the depression. Flint denied this and defended price increases in light of increased higher raw-material costs, but he lied when he disclaimed any knowledge that U.S. Rubber representatives demolished the Setauket plant's equipment. He also denied the existence of non-competition agreements, noted that the Elbersons probably owned U.S. Rubber stock themselves, and asserted that competition benefited everyone. He capped this

disingenuous testimony by suggesting that U.S. Rubber's economies of scale and centralization allowed the firm to pay more to its workers than did Setauket's shoddy shop. The investigators seemed less than convinced, but Flint was probably right on that point.⁴⁴

For all their disagreements, Flint, U. S. Rubber, and the Elbersons maintained cordial relations. The Elbersons forged ahead without trust endorsement in 1895, founding the North American Rubber Company on the hill, run by Joseph Elberson, and the Liberty Rubber Company in the harbor. The latter sported B. F. Jayne, a local capitalist, as president and Edwin Elberson as secretary-treasurer. It appears that Flint secretly backed this redevelopment. U.S. Rubber, after all, was itself disunited, and the "no competition" pledge mattered little. But in 1895, "the most disastrous fire which ever took place in Setauket" damaged \$60,000 worth of storage buildings and raw materials at the uninsured North American and idled over 400 workers. The Liberty, on the other hand, continued to ship products, including 2,000 rubber boots per day.⁴⁵

Setauket rubber shoemaking did not escape U.S. Rubber's notice, but an injunction barring the Elbersons' participation based on earlier agreements fell on appeal. The corporation then entered into third-grade production itself. It priced goods below even Liberty's rock-bottom price and forced the Setauket company to suspend activities.⁴⁶

A new round of mergers again brought Setauket's plants into U.S. Rubber's syndicate by combining the Liberty and North American plants into the Empire State Rubber Company under J. W. Elberson's management in 1897. This time, however, the corporation vowed to improve the plant's output. It sent in more skilled workers and paid the 400 workers higher wages. The factory's \$150,000 annual payroll remained Setauket's lifeblood.⁴⁷

Elberson managed to keep his plant in production until June 1898 though mild winters induced four-day workweeks. But another year of trashy production and mismanagement apparently tried the trust's patience. Setauket's inefficiency was too much to bear. Although residents again expressed fears that "our city on the hill will soon be without inhabitants," most Jewish workers departed with the plant's closure on 12 September "leaving the Rabbi without support." He soon followed his flock to New York City. Skilled workers departed for the rubber mills at Naugatuck, Beacon Falls, and Bristol, Connecticut. Rents fell and despair rose.⁴⁸

That October, an even more powerful conflagration damaged the recently vacated factory building as well as the local post office, a coal yard, a store, and several other buildings. Out-migration accelerated. Residents troubled by "Rubber On the Brain" since the 1870s sadly noted that the rise and fall of rubber "has squeezed the vitality out of several places besides ours, until scarcely a spark of life is left." Misery apparently found some solace in company.⁴⁹

The 1900 census testified to the company's collapse. Twelve—not 400—tiremakers, shoemakers, and engineers toiled in Setauket's tiny rubber factory

on the harbor. Over 1,100 people still lived in Setauket, but few worked in industry. Even building tradesmen formed only 6 percent of the work force. Farming, on the other hand, claimed more than one-fifth of employed people. Similarly, the population had already returned to its pre-factory characteristics. Only 6 percent of the residents were Jewish reminders of Setauket's *shtetle* on the Sound, and they worked as peddlers, store owners, and shirtmakers.⁵⁰

With Flint's help, Elberson started other short-lived rubber companies from 1903 to 1907. But they still lacked adequate markets and capital, and they still produced low-grade products. Competition with better-managed plants in better locations with more abundant financing simply overwhelmed these ventures. The Setauket rubber industry's viability declined further when the factory on the hill "burned to the ground" in 1904, at a loss of \$150,000.⁵¹ The rubber company on the harbor sputtered on with sporadic attempts at production into the late teens or early 1920s. It slowly sold its property during the 1920s and 1930s. Thus ended Setauket's eighty-year experiment in manufacturing.⁵²

J. W. Elberson, meanwhile, "went downhill." He ended his active life as a buyer for David Golden, Sam Golden's father, in the family's general store. The Goldens' continued presence in Setauket marked one of the village's few remnants of Eastern European immigration in town.⁵³

Conclusion

Though they failed in the long run, Setauket's rubber companies sustained the village during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Without them, Setauket would have experienced a decline similar to its neighbor, Stony Brook. The residents of Setauket did everything they could to keep the factories in operation. They wanted industry in their bucolic paradise, even one as noxious as rubbermaking. The factory meant work for large numbers of local craftsmen and customers for farmers and shopkeepers, but Setauket was hardly an ideal location for manufacturing. Neither ship nor rail transportation was convenient to the factory, the location of which was determined by pianomaker Robert Nunns's property holdings rather than concern for efficiency. This is hardly surprising given that no rail service existed when the factory was built, and that the Smithtown and Port Jefferson Railroad was constructed while the building lay empty. In any event, everything had to be hauled to-and-from the depots and the factory, and costs increased accordingly.

Problems with the firms and their owners were equally important in this saga. They lacked capital and rarely survived cyclical downturns. They paid low wages which allowed them to operate on the cheap, but their stinginess discouraged competent workers from staying in the area. Their low-quality production left them with the bottom end of a market which was increasingly flooded by higher-quality wares. Furthermore, whatever J. W. Elberson's virtues—and personal charm and a charismatic ability to inspire hope were undoubtedly among his gifts—managing a large enterprise was hardly one of them. As Sam Golden recalled, he "wanted success in the worst way," but he

continually “tried to cut corners.” He overextended himself during the mid-1880s, one period when things really looked up for his company. That he did so on eastern Long Island demonstrated that for all his experience in manufacturing, Elberson never grasped certain fundamental logistical problems.⁵⁴

Finally, Long Island’s shoddy-shop never stood a chance against U.S. Rubber Company. Though U.S. Rubber lacked the market control of the more advanced combinations before 1900, it began to shift towards increased efficiency by means of internal integration. Even the trust’s worst-managed plant was undoubtedly more efficient than Setauket’s. U.S. Rubber benefitted from coordinated raw material purchasing and sales. Setauket’s willingness to charge low prices, pay low wages, and produce low-quality goods could not withstand U.S. Rubber’s ability to wage a price war with its deep pockets. Setauket’s debt problems forced it to become dependent on its competitors in the person of Charles R. Flint. There was little doubt of the outcome of any battle between these combatants from the beginning. U.S. Rubber, for all its disorganization, was more efficient and more committed to superior production than was Setauket’s operation. Location, mismanagement, and competition doomed Setauket’s nineteenth-century foray into manufacturing.

NOTES

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1. Stuart Bruchey, *Enterprise: The Dynamic Economy of a Free People* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), 151; George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (New York, 1951), 234.
2. Richard M. Bayles, “Brookhaven,” in *History of Suffolk County, New York, With Illustrations, Portraits & Sketches of Prominent Families and Individuals* (New York: W. W. Munsell, 1882), 40, 44-45, 52; Manuscript Schedule of Manufactures, Suffolk County, New York, *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*. The average American enterprise employed 8.15 workers in 1869 (David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans, 1862-1872* [New York: Basic Books, 1972], 8. In 1860 Suffolk County averaged only 5 workers per shop (Manufactures of the United States in 1860, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, 402).
3. *History of Suffolk County*, 44, 67; Thomas R. Bayles, *Early Mills, Roads and Industries in Brookhaven Town* (Brookhaven: Town of Brookhaven Bicentennial Commission, 1976), 7. 1860 census data suggest that only 4 percent of Stony Brook’s population and 7 percent of Setauket’s were foreign-born; 100 of Setauket’s 1,160 residents were African American. For shipbuilding in Setauket and Port Jefferson, see Richard F. Welch, “The World the Shipbuilders Made: An Entrepreneurial Elite on Nineteenth-Century Long Island” in this issue of LIHJ.
4. Edwin Adkins, *Setauket, The First Three Hundred Years*, 2nd. ed. (East Setauket: Three Village Historical Society, 1980), 81-88; Population, manuscript schedules, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*; Richard M. Bayles, *Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Suffolk County and Its Towns, Villages, Hamlets, Scenery, Institutions and Important Matters* (Port Jefferson: the author, 1874), 246; Bayles, “Brookhaven,” 45. One-fourth of the Three Village’s working people engaged in agriculture, one-fifth in sailing, one-tenth in ship-building (based in Setauket), plus some shopkeepers, innkeepers, artisans, laborers, and servants. Seasonality affected these trades, with occupational crossover common.
5. Several of these men belonged to the artistically-inclined Mount family either by birth or marriage. Mount’s brother-in-law Charles Seabury held a patent on a new piano action. He opened his shop after putting “out his farm on shares” (Alfred Frankenstein, *William Sidney Mount* [New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1975], 59, 102-3); William Sidney Mount Papers, The

- Museums at Stony Brook, #0.11.3092(7); *Census of the State of New York for 1855* (Albany: Charles Van Benthuyson, 1857), 403; Manufactures, Manuscript Schedule, Suffolk County, town of Brookhaven, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, 738.
6. Daniel Spillane, *History of the American Pianoforte* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 150-53, 194, 216; Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959), 460-63; See R. G. Dun & Co. Collection, New York, vol. 368:444, Baker Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration, according to which William Astor held the note on their mortgage.
7. Dun, *ibid.*, and vol. 411:39; Statistics for Agriculture, Setauket, *New York State Census of Suffolk County, 1865*; *Independent Press*, 22 August 1867. New York and Massachusetts produced four-fifths of the nation's pianofortes (*Compendium of the Ninth Census* [Washington, D.C., 1872], 921). Overland transportation difficulties undoubtedly compounded the company's problems with local sales. The starting date illustrates the difficulty of using census material, because the firm's rise and fall in Setauket occurred between the 1860 and 1870 counts.
8. *Liber* 145, 100-105, Office of the Suffolk County Clerk, Riverhead; Manuscript schedule, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*. Only one Setauket-made Nunn's piano is known at this time. Several Nunn's children remained in the area.
9. *Independent Press*, 29 July 1867; *Liber* 151, 418, Office of Suffolk County Clerk; Manuscript Schedules, vol. 97, Suffolk County, Roll 1100, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*; Long Island Railroad, *Long Island Today* (New York: Charles M. Heald, 1894), 74. By 1880 Port Jefferson had more than 1,700 residents, compared with Setauket and East Setauket's combined 1,000 (*Tenth Census of the United States, 1880* for Setauket and Port Jefferson).
10. *Liber* 151, 418; Bayles, "Brookhaven," 40.
11. Dun, New York, vol.584: 573.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Liber* 224, 41; *Long Island Leader*, 22 July 1876. For statistics on the rubber industry, see vol. 2, Report on the Manufactures of the United States, *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*, 68, 96, 131. Rubber manufacture, after all, flourished in nearby Connecticut and Massachusetts.
14. Dun, New York, vol.584: 587, vol.585: 763; *Long Island Leader*, 5, 19 August, 2 September, 14 October, and 18 November 1876; *Long Islander*, 17 January 1879; *Patchogue Advance*, 13 September 1879; J. Lawrence Smith, *The History of Smithtown* (Smithtown: Smithtown Historical Society, 1961), 38-39; Harry D. Sleight, *Town Records of Smithtown* (Smithtown, 1929), 450-52. Another major investor was R. T. Goldsmith, president of the Southold Savings Bank.
15. *Long Island Leader*, 16 October 1876.
16. *Ibid.*, 18 November 1876. The full song has seven verses.
17. *Ibid.*, 2, 30 September, 4, 25 November, and 2 December 1876; Dun, New York, vol.584: 573.
18. *Long Island Leader*, 2 December 1876, 9 March 1878; Long Island Rubber Co. Certificate of Incorporation, 19 August 1876, Office of Suffolk County Clerk; Dun, New York, vol.584: 573, 587; *Patchogue Advance*, 26 January, 23 February 1878, 13 September 1879; *The Corrector*, 16 February 1878.
19. *The Corrector*, 16 February 1878; *Leader*, 9 March 1878; *Advance*, 23 February 1878, 13 September 1879; Dun, New York, vol. 5, 84: 587, vol. 585: 763; Sleight, *Town Records*, 450-51; Howard Klein, *Three Village Guidebook*, 2nd. ed. (Setauket: Three Village Historical Society, 1986), 112. Ridgeway's holdings were valued at \$80,000 in 1870 (*Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*, manuscript schedules for Suffolk County).
20. Vol. 2, Report on Manufactures, *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*, 9, 13, 314.
21. Glenn Babcock, *The History of the United States Rubber Company* (Bloomington, Ind.: Foundation for the School of Business, Univ. of Indiana, 1969), 21-27; Victor Clark, *History of*

Manufacturing in the United States (New York: Peter Smith, 1929), 2:480; "Testimony of Charles R. Flint, 18 February 1897," *Report and Proceedings of the Joint Committee of the New York Assembly Appointed to Investigate Trusts* (New York: Wynkoop Hallenbak Crawford Co., 1897), 602-3.

22. *Leader*, 16 September, 30 September, 18 November 1876, 2 May 1885; 2 June, 6 October 1883.

23. Clark, *History of Manufacturing*, 479; William C. Geer, *The Reign of Rubber* (New York: The Century Co., 1922), 39, 29-47, 168-86; *Port Jefferson Times*, 18 July 1885.

24. *Port Jefferson Times*, 17 April and 25 September 1880; Adkins, *Setauket*, 72; Samuel Golden, interview with author, 1980. Such work patterns were the rule rather than the exception in nineteenth-century manufacturing (see Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America* [New York: Random House, 1977], and Bruce Laurie, *Artisans Into Workers* [New York: Hill and Wang, 1989]).

25. *Manufactures, Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*, 68, 314; *Long Island Leader*, 19 August, 2 September, 7 October 1876.

26. Statistics calculated from Manuscript Schedule, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*, and *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*; *Patchogue Advance*, 1 March 1879; *Port Jefferson Times*, 17 April and 22 May 1880; problems at the company in May led the *Times* to chuckle about "rubber pocket fools" losing everything they had.

27. *Port Jefferson Times*, 27 October 1883, 8 November 1884, 10 January, 2 May, 20 June, 5 September 1885, 30 June 1886; *Long Islander*, 19 May 1882; Smith, *Smithtown*, 38-9; the firm owned two store fronts, four tenements, one boarding house, four brick factory buildings, one factory, and had the capacity to make 10,000 boots a day by 1889 (Dun, *New York*, vol.585: 1015).

28. Dun, *New York*, vol.585: 795, vol.586: 192; *Patchogue Advance*, 5 December 1885, 22 December 1887.

29. *Port Jefferson Times*, 25 September 1880, 5, 12 November 1881, 22 December 1883; *Long Island Newsletter*, 11 April 1885; *Long Islander*, 28 March 1884; Dun, *New York*, vol.585: 763, 795.

30. *Port Jefferson Times*, 25 September 1880, 26 February 1881; Klein, *Three Village Guidebook*, 113. The influx of Irish workers may have brought less cheerful aspects, as well. According to one Long Island newspaper violence flared in 1882 when long-time African American residents defended themselves and their homes with shotguns against the attacks of Irish workers. The presence of African American rubber workers in 1880 suggests that contention over jobs may have increased hostility (*Long Islander*, 10 November 1882). The number of Irish residents in 1890 is difficult to determine because of the destruction of that year's census manuscripts.

31. See Leon Fink, *Workingmen's Democracy: The Knights of Labor and American Politics* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1983). At their peak in 1886 the Knights enrolled almost 700,000 members

32. *Minutes of the 1887 Session of the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor*, 1299; see also Jonathan Garlock, *Guide to the Local Assemblies of the Knights of Labor* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982), 348; and Garlock, *Knights of Labor Data Bank*, Univ. of Michigan Political Science Consortium. Other Suffolk County assemblies were in Sag Harbor (L.A. 3521 1884-89) and Waverly Station (L.A. 4666-b 1887); by the early 1880s most assemblies lost strikes as early as 1885 (New Jersey Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Industries, *Tenth Annual Report*, 1886 [1887], 161-62). Local newspapers recorded only one note on the organization, a letter calling for "Organization and Education" following the Haymarket Massacre in 1886 (*Newsletter*, 25 September 1886).

33. Dun, *New York*, vol.585: 763, 795, and vol.586: 192; *Patchogue Advance*, 30 August 1889. Claiming the need to be close to its markets, and to an available source of cheap natural gas

(compared to reliance on coal, a more expensive fuel, in Port Jefferson), the other principals moved the shoe company to Indiana, where it was known as the Muncie Shoe and Leather Co. The ownership and fate of the new Muncie organization is unknown.

34. Dun, New York, vol.585: 1015-16; *Compendium of the Eleventh Census, 1890*, part 3, (1897), 682. The difference of 50 percent underestimates the rise because real capital must be computed on deflated currency. In real terms, the increase was closer to 60 percent.

35. Dun, New York, vol.585: 1014-5; *Patchogue Advance*, 15 March 1889, 27 September 1890; *Port Jefferson Times*, 20 June, 4, 11 July, 1890.

36. Minutes, Board of Directors, New York Commercial Company, 30 October 1890, 89 (Charles R. Flint Collection, New York Public Library); Dun, New York, vol.586: 495.

37. Samuel Golden, interview with author. There were 166 Russians, 111 Poles, and 54 Hungarians in Suffolk County in 1890 (*Compendium of the Eleventh Census, 1890*, part 2 (1894), 656).

38. *Port Jefferson Times*, 4 November 1892; *Echo*, 24 September 1893; Sam Golden, interview.

39. Sam Golden, interview; *Compendium of the Eleventh Census, 1890*, part 3 (1894), 806-7; *Port Jefferson Times*, 11 March 1892. Based on oral testimony taken almost ninety years after the fact, they are subject to challenge, but testimony at hearings in 1897 suggests that Setauket's rubber factory generally paid 25 percent below the industry's average (Committee to Investigate Trusts, 615).

40. Sam Golden, interview; prices, compiled from the day books of the C. E. Smith General Store, private collection, are from 1906, but Bureau of Labor Statistics price series suggest that they are appropriate for the 1890s (*Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*, [Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1975], part 1, 211). There is no evidence whether scrip was discounted in Setauket, as it was in most environments; this method of payment meant higher prices and lower real wages, unless a firm chose not to discount merchandise sold in its company store.

41. Sam Golden, interview; *Port Jefferson Times*, 26 February 1890, 26 February 1892, 18 November 1892; North Shore Jewish Center, *90 Proud Years: An Historical Perspective* (Setauket, 1983), 4.

42. *Echo*, 28 June 1893; Memorandum, 13 October 1893; Agreements in re Rubber Goods Mfrg., Flint Papers; note on January 1894, purchase of stock, L. B. Smith Rubber Co. papers, The Museums at Stony Brook, Stony Brook; Charles Ranlett Flint, *Memories of an Active Life* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1923), 286; Glenn D. Babcock, *History of the United States Rubber Company* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1966), 19, 34-36, 39. According to Alfred D. Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, 1977) 433-38, U.S. Rubber's lack of integration reflected the lack of technical expertise in rubber manufacture among the founders, and their lack of prior participation in "railroad management" and such successful trusts as Standard Oil, which stressed centralized control and accelerated throughput (the "speed and volume of the flow" of goods through a plant and into the distribution stream).

43. Contract, Edwin Elberson and U.S. Rubber Co., 9 March 1894, Agreements in re Rubber Goods Mfrg., Flint Papers; *Echo*, 14, 22 July 1893, 30 June, 3 November 1894; *Long Islander*, 3, 17 November 1894.

44. *Second Annual Report of the United States Rubber Co.*, 1894, 8; *Committee To Investigate Trusts*, 535-37, 591-92, 600-3.

45. Deeds, *Liber* 426, 175-80; *Echo*, 12 January 1895; *Long Islander*, 13 April, 17 May 1895; J. W. Elberson to C. R. Flint, 19 December 1895, Flint Papers.

46. *Long Islander*, 31 July 1897.

47. Correspondence, Flint Papers; *Echo*, 14 August, 13 November 1897, 22 January, 12 February, 11 June 1898. The new merger took place only weeks after the 1897 New York state hearings.

48. *Echo*, 17, 23 September 1898.

49. *Long Islander*, 30 October 1898; *Echo*, 14, 28 December 1898; *Port Jefferson Times*, 28 December 1898.

50. Compiled from *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, New York, vol. 623, Microfilm roll 1165.

51. *Long Islander*, 21 October 1904.

52. For a picture of the second rubber plant, see Frederick Ruther, *Long Island Today* (Hicksville: Essex Press, 1909), 264. Another feeble effort failed in 1911. Plant closing dates are approximate, derived from conversations with local residents.

53. *Ibid.*, 247; Sam Golden, interview; North Shore Jewish Center, *90 Proud Years*, 8-9. The synagogue closed its doors permanently in 1918.

54. Sam Golden, interview.

The World the Shipbuilders Made: An Entrepreneurial Elite on Nineteenth-Century Long Island

By Richard F. Welch

During the first half of the nineteenth century the building of wooden ships emerged as one of the nation's leading industries. While Philadelphia, Boston, and New York City became its major centers, the trade was practiced in many villages along the North Atlantic seaboard. These peripheral areas survived the collapse of shipbuilding after the Civil War and enjoyed an "Indian summer" in the trade which lasted until about 1885. This article examines the building of ships in one such region, the North Shore of Suffolk County.

Shipbuilding on Long Island can be traced back to the colonial period, though none of the areas recorded as having produced vessels in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries survived to become important in the nineteenth century.¹ In the first half of the nineteenth century, three regionally important centers emerged: Northport, Setauket, and Port Jefferson. The North Shore's deeply indented harbors, ready access to the port of New York with its supplies and financial houses, the availability of cheap materials, and the industry's easily-learned techniques all served to promote shipbuilding as economically feasible.

American shipbuilders benefited from a comparative advantage over those of competing nations such as Great Britain. In 1825 a three-hundred-ton ship cost from \$75 to \$80 a ton to build in the United States, \$90 to \$100 a ton in Canada, and \$100 to \$110 a ton in England. In 1847, the cost of a large, first-class ship had not changed in the United States, which retained its competitive edge even though British costs had fallen to \$87 to \$90 per ton.² The reason for this advantage was the abundance of lumber in the United States, particularly oak, white pine, and pitch pine. At the beginning of the period some usable lumber was available on Long Island, but even that which had to be imported was relatively inexpensive until after the Civil War.

The great antebellum shipbuilding boom, in which the Long Island builders participated, began in earnest in the 1840s and reached its peak in 1855. Repeal of the mercantilist British navigation acts opened American vessels to the imperial system, and a flourishing grain trade developed, carried primarily in American-built ships which were purchased by British as well as American shippers because of their lower cost.³ Immigration from Germany and Ireland, and the rise of cotton as the nation's leading export, also fueled the shipbuilding boom. The discovery of gold near Sacramento created an instantaneous demand for transportation to California, which

further increased the demand for ships. The domestic coastal trade remained a constant factor in ship construction throughout the century.

Shipbuilding was essentially a craft industry, taught in the yards through on-the-job training. The basic principles could be learned after a few seasons' work, and relatively little capital was required to enter the business. Consequently, at least sixty-two men appear in the historical records as builders of wooden ships in Suffolk between 1820 and 1914. Of these, only six can be classed as major builders in terms of longevity in the trade, or in output. Indeed, the appearance of a "master builder"—occasionally two—in a village was usually necessary to establish the industry as a major economic activity.

The failure of such a person to materialize seems to have been the decisive factor in the inability of seemingly prime locations like Cold Spring Harbor and Sag Harbor to develop significant shipbuilding industries. Conversely, Port Jefferson, Setauket, and Northport became important regional centers under the leadership of men who shared a common background in training and outlook. These "boss" shipbuilders were Bayleses and Mathers in Port Jefferson, Nehemiah Hand in Setauket, and Jesse Carll in Northport.

A strong interrelationship, both familial and apprenticeship, existed among the major Suffolk County shipbuilders. All of them were connected with the shipbuilding tradition established by the pioneer builder, John Willse, who emigrated from New Jersey to Poquott in 1779 and, by 1797, was building ships in Port Jefferson Harbor. In 1809 the trustees of the town of Brookhaven granted him "the privilege of extending a wharf into the bay from his land." Richard Mather, who married Willse's daughter Irena, was first an apprentice, then "engaged with him [Willse] in the business, and afterward [after Willse died in 1815] continued it." From this union sprang a succession of shipbuilding Mathers, who turned out vessels until 1908. By 1809 Elisha Bayles had moved from Mt. Sinai to Port Jefferson (called Drowned Meadow until 1836), where he worked as a rigger and caulker. It seems likely that he received his training in Willse's yard, because his family's background had been in such landlubbing trades as shoemaking, masonry, and milling. His sons Charles Lloyd Bayles, and, more importantly, James M. Bayles opened their own establishment in 1836. James M. and his son, James Ebert Bayles, became the largest shipbuilders in the village, the firm carrying on the trade until 1917. Setauket's leading builder, Nehemiah Hand, worked in Bridgeport for Titus Mather, Richard's brother, and possibly in the Mather yard in Port Jefferson, as well.⁴ The brothers David and Jesse Carll learned their craft in the Bayles's Port Jefferson shipyard, before they founded what became Northport's most active shipyard in 1850.⁵ Surely, Willse's enterprise exerted pervasive influence on the shipbuilding industry in Port Jefferson, Setauket, and Northport throughout the nineteenth century.

A nineteenth-century shipbuilder depended on skill, energy, marketing ability and, no doubt, luck. A shipyard owner, or boss, bore ultimate responsibility for completing his vessels according to the specifications of contracts, or with the demands of the market in mind. The proprietor's

products were figuratively stamped with his name, their durability and seaworthiness determining his reputation and degree of success. It is not surprising that the boss oversaw, and sometimes took part in, construction of vessels long after financial security removed his need to do so. When describing the work habits of James E. Bayles in 1885, the *Port Jefferson Times* reported that, "He superintends personally, the laying out of all new vessels in their yard, and seldom entrusts to others the supervision or planning of the delicate work of outlining and setting up his forms."⁶

While the deeply indented North Shore harbors provided the natural settings for shipbuilding, it often was necessary for the builders to construct docks and marine railways, or undertake more extensive projects, to insure the profitability and success of their enterprises. Sometimes a builder moved within a village, shifting his yard's location to a more advantageous site. The most ambitious program of improvements was carried out by William L. Jones (John R. Mather's stepfather), who made extensive renovations on the eastern side of Port Jefferson harbor during the antebellum period. He purchased high ground, filled in low-lying areas, and built an elevated causeway along what is now East Main Street. By 1870, fully 40 percent of the village's businesses were conducted on land that Jones had rescued for future use.⁷ In the 1870s, Port Jefferson also benefited from the federally funded dredging and construction of the twin jetties which stabilized the harbor. No other Suffolk shipbuilding port received such extensive improvements as did Port Jefferson—and no other proved so successful in the industry. In Northport and Setauket, construction to aid the business was limited to the building of docks and marine railways.

Although markedly family oriented, the composition of Long Island shipbuilding firms was fluid, and partnerships were made and broken with speed and ease, especially before 1870. In this aspect, the business resembled house building and other undercapitalized, small-scale industries. Partnerships in shipbuilding were most common between 1850 and 1870, a phenomenon probably stemming from the increasing cost of ships and a concomitant rise in capital requirements. After 1870, partnerships were fewer and seemed to reflect a growing division of labor, with one partner serving as business manager, the other as naval architect. John T. Mather's late nineteenth-century alliance with the ship designer Owen Wood exemplified this pattern. Shipbuilders frequently assumed partial ownership in their vessels, perhaps to hold down costs, although speculation played its part. Jesse Carll often retained part-ownership in vessels he constructed, and the Bayleses owned shares in fifty-to-sixty vessels of all types between 1880-1890, not all of which were their own handiwork.⁸

The most complete account of vessel costs and partial ownership was provided by Nehemiah Hand of Setauket. Table 1 is Hand's list of ships constructed between 1836 and 1878, when he handed the business over to his son, George N. Hand, his partner since 1863.

An analysis of these vessels yields several conclusions, beginning with the

TABLE 1: NEHEMIAH HAND'S ACCOUNT OF HIS OUTPUT,
1836-1878

1836-1860

Year	Name	Type	Tonnage
1836	Delight	schooner	41
1837	Eliza Jayne	sloop	35
1839	Hardscrabble	"	74
1841	Helen Jayne	"	43
1843	Dart	"	18
1844	Commerce	"	84
1845	Nancy Mills	schooner	109
1847	Mary A. Rowland	"	35
1847	Albemarle	"	154
1848	South Hampton	"	180
1849	Marietta Hand	"	137
1850	Nassau	"	169
1851	N. Hand	brig	263
1852	Chase	schooner	181
1853	Flying Eagle	"	182
1854	C. W. Poultney	bark	487
1855	T. W. Rowland	brig	471
1856	Urania	bark	405
1857	Andromeda	schooner	261
1859	Palace	bark	368
1860	Aldebaran	schooner	180

Total: 21 vessels (5 sloops, 11 schooners, 3 barks, and 2 brigs); Total tonnage, 3,977

1862-1878

1862	Mary E. Rowland	brig	280
1864	Americus	"	498
1868	Mary E. Thayer	"	272
1870	Dezaldo	bark	492
1871	Daisy	brig	476
1872	Thomas Brooks	barkentine	460
1873	N. Hand	schooner	191
1875	Ferris S. Thompson	bark	500
1877	Irene	brig	475
1878	Lottie Moore	bark	933

Total vessels: 10 (1 schooner, 5 brigs, 3 barks, and 1 barkentine); total tonnage, 4,577

SOURCE: "Shipbuilding And Tonnage," *Bi-Centennial History of Suffolk County* (Babylon: Budget Steam Print, 1885), 120.

chronological evolution of Hand as a specialist in large vessels. Of the twenty-one ships finished between 1836 and 1860, when depression brought the great age of American shipbuilding to an end, three were barks, two were brigs, both larger, partially square rigged vessels, while eleven were schooners and five were sloops—generally smaller craft designed primarily for coasting. Of the ten vessels he built between 1862 and 1878, three were barks, five were brigs, and one was a brigantine—again, larger vessels. Only one schooner left his ways during this period. Aggregate 1836-1860 tonnage stood at 3,977, while his 1862-1878 total was 4,577.⁹ Hand's increased production of larger vessels was not unique. Contemporary observers and researchers have noted the trend in post-Civil War shipbuilding towards fewer shipyards, engaged in building larger ships. Hand revealed to Richard M. Bayles that he owned shares in almost 50 percent of his output.¹⁰

Shipbuilding generated considerable ancillary business activity. Sailmaking proved one of the larger and more enduring subsidiary maritime industries, carrying over to the yachting days of the present century. Reuben H. Wilson, of Port Jefferson, established what became the largest sail loft in Suffolk county. Wilson, who may have been brought to Port Jefferson by James M. Bayles, began his operations in 1837 at the foot of Jones Street. In addition to Wilson's sail loft, Port Jefferson also boasted tinsmiths, ship smiths, and chandlers, who were largely if not exclusively dependent on the shipbuilding industry. Because shipbuilding was vulnerable to economic downturns and changing market and technological conditions, it is not surprising that the builders themselves often took part in some of these enterprises. The Bayles ran a ship chandlery and a general store for much of the nineteenth century. Similarly, John R. Mather engaged in a combination general store and lumber business during the latter part of the century.

Several of the major shipbuilders took a leading role in promoting a more revolutionary method of transportation—the railroad. In 1861-1862, Nehemiah Hand and James M. Bayles joined Carll S. Burr, Joel Smith, and a "Mr. Shipman" to form the Smithtown and Port Jefferson Railroad. In 1870, Bayles was president of the line, with Hand serving as one of its directors.¹¹ Somewhat later, James E. Bayles became director of the line, serving until its acquisition by the Long Island system. Apparently, the builder-investors always envisioned their line's absorption by the Long Island Rail Road, which was arranged later in the century. Today the Smithtown and Port Jefferson survives as the eastern section of the LIRR's Port Jefferson Branch. What, if anything, the original investors realized from this venture is not known. Without doubt the shipbuilders' railroad program played an important role in opening north-central Suffolk to development. Paradoxically, the extension of rail service may have reduced the volume of freight being shipped along the Sound in Port Jefferson's sloops and schooners.

One of the most important steps any town or village could take to facilitate its development was the founding of a bank to furnish loans and investment capital. Several of the important builders engaged in such activities. James E.

Bayles was a prime mover in the establishment of the Bank of Port Jefferson in June 1889, serving as a director until 11 December 1924, when he became president of the institution. At the time of his death, in 1927, the bank held assets of \$1,787,211.¹² Similarly, Jesse Carll was a leader in founding the Bank of Huntington, and sat on its board of directors until he died, in 1902. While Nehemiah Hand did not help to start a bank, he provided one of banking's key functions—the lending of money. At the time of his death on 19 November 1894, five notes with a total principal and interest value of \$1,827 were due him.¹³

The major occupation of the shipbuilders, of course, was shipbuilding, the industry in which they made or lost the bulk of their wealth. A shipbuilder's personal wealth is difficult to gauge precisely, because bank accounts and other crucial financial records have not survived. Shipbuilders ordinarily reported personal assets when asked about them by nineteenth-century federal census takers. However, these were voluntary evaluations in which the builders revealed only what they wished. R. G. Dun and Company's professional agents, who estimated the wealth of the major shipbuilders throughout the nineteenth century, presumably were closer to the mark regarding their subjects' incomes.

The most accurate evidence of the wealth of the shipbuilders is in their wills and estate estimates, compiled or revealed after their deaths. This information demonstrates that both the census and R. G. Dun reports drastically underestimate the wealth of the Suffolk shipbuilders. The will of Jesse Carll, the Northport builder, dated 7 June 1892, does not itemize all of his assets but specifies cash bequests amounting to \$113,300. When he died in 1902, the local newspapers estimated his entire estate, including property, at \$250,000,¹⁴ compared with \$40,000, the last available estimate made by R. G. Dun And Company agents in January 1885. Upon his death in 1928, John T. Mather left an estate of \$1,820,917, far more than the \$35,000 estimated by R. G. Dun agents in 1889.¹⁵ While the R. G. Dun assessments were made before the builders' deaths, it is unlikely that so much money would have been added toward the end of their lives, when their businesses were declining or being sold off. The bulk of Mather's estate, \$1,433,439, went for the construction of what is now called John T. Mather Memorial Hospital.

Mather's major Port Jefferson competitor, James E. Bayles, died in 1899. His cash assets were given as only \$9,000, with an additional \$9,000 in real estate, a long way from the \$25,000 that R. G. Dun agents believed he was worth in 1890.¹⁶ The enormous disparity between the estates of the two highly successful shipbuilders is not readily explicable. Bayles's yard produced more ships than Mather's, and the family had other investments. It may be that Mather's other economic interests were more profitable, and that he lived more frugally than Bayles. Both were out of the shipbuilding business for more than ten years when they died.

Contemporary observers frequently commented on the importance of the shipbuilders' enterprises to their respective villages. In his history of Suffolk

County, published in 1874, Richard Mather Bayles judged Northport to be the most prosperous village in Huntington town, largely because of three flourishing shipyards then in operation. When writing the "Brookhaven" article for Munsell's 1882 history of Suffolk, the same author stated that the Port Jefferson "firm of J. M. Bayles employs 50 men year round, thus largely contributing to the prosperity of the village." Nor were his isolated opinions. After James M. Bayles died in 1889, the *Port Jefferson Times* concluded that, "While his shipbuilding enterprise may have been of great pecuniary advantage to himself, it also was of considerable benefit to Port Jefferson—more so than any other business enterprise here."¹⁷

The villagers demonstrated their appreciation and respect when their leading shipbuilders passed away. Upon the deaths of James M. Bayles and Jesse Carll, the flags in their respective villages and harbors flew at half-mast. When the last of the great shipbuilders, James E. Bayles and John T. Mather, died in the late 1920s no such dramatic public tribute was paid. By that date, shipbuilding was so extinct that such a gesture would seem anachronistic, if not incomprehensible.

Considering their wealth and prominence, it is unsurprising that shipbuilders played important roles in political and social life. Their strongly Democratic orientation owed much to the party's opposition to the high tariffs which, the shipbuilders believed, drove up the costs of their vessels and put them at a disadvantage with British-built vessels in the post-Civil War period. The most politically active Suffolk builder was James E. Bayles, "Eb" to his friends, who began his political activities in the 1870s and remained active in Democratic affairs until well into the twentieth century. By the time of his unsuccessful bid for the state assembly in 1876, he was an inside member of the Democratic hierarchy in Suffolk, where he often plotted strategy with Henry A. Reeves. Reeves's Greenport paper, the ironically named *Republican Watchman*, was a Democratic mouthpiece.¹⁸

As a behind-the-scenes power broker, Bayles sought and sometimes secured positions for friends and relatives. He never sought appointive office for himself, but eventually stepped into the spotlight, in 1884, to run for Brookhaven Town Supervisor. Successful in this second electoral bid, he won reelection the following year. While he never entirely relinquished his political interests, Bayles reduced his activity after 1890.

Shipbuilders often were members, and sometimes leaders, of social and quasi-political groups. In addition to belonging to such professional organizations as the National Association of Engineers and Boat Builders, the Navy League, the American Geological Society, and the Belle Terre Club, James E. Bayles was a creator and the first president of the Port Jefferson Volunteer Fire Department. Frederick Wilson, who succeeded his father as the proprietor of the village's leading sail loft, devoted much of his time to the founding of the Law and Order League, and later became an agent for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Wilson also served as president of the Cedar Hill Cemetery Association, which provided Port

Jefferson with a place of interment on the then-fashionable garden cemetery model.

In common with most of the residents of Suffolk County, all the leading shipbuilders were Protestants. However, not many were especially active in their churches. Nor were they heavily involved in reform movements, although James M. Bayles took “an active interest” in “temperance matters,” and was a “warm friend of the common school system.”¹⁹

Certainly, the more successful shipbuilders knew how to throw a party. Among the most important occasions for villagers and the villages was the launching of a new vessel. Launching festivities, which began in colonial times, were carried out throughout the nineteenth century. In June 1841 a Northport builder, Samuel P. Hartt, invited neighbors to his home for refreshments to honor the launching of a new sloop. As the industry grew, so did the celebrations and the builders’ roles in them. When Jesse Carll launched a new pilot boat for New York Harbor in 1885, he presided over festivities of impressive proportions. Three hundred pilots, their friends, and their relatives attended, while Carll provided “everything to quench the thirst and to satisfy the hunger...[while] a band of music from the city...played many popular airs.”²⁰

It was a sign of how times had changed when, in 1902, John T. Mather refused requests to celebrate the launching of the 218-foot schooner, *Martha E. Wallace*. He feared someone might be hurt in the process. Nevertheless, some two thousand people watched the event from the ferry dock on 2 August 1902, despite a heavy downpour.

Family celebrations could be equally festive and elaborate. When James E. Bayles and his first wife celebrated their tenth anniversary, they held a masquerade party at which local reporters found that “Great pains and no little expense had been resorted to...” Perhaps the most opulent celebration by a shipbuilding family occurred when Jesse Carll’s daughter Hanie married Carll S. Burr, the scion of a wealthy and influential Commack clan. Too hundred and fifty guests attended a gala at which “the ladies were attired in elegant silks and satins and the glitter of jewels would dazzle the eye of one unaccustomed to such an elaborate scene.” Bernstein’s band from New York City, apparently one of the favored society orchestra, provided the music, with floral decorations under the auspices of the celebrated Seagram of Brooklyn

...The supper was under the management of Dexter of New York fame. The game pie, an immense pyramid and magnificent specimen of culinary art from Delmonico’s, was a present from Mr. Joseph Rudd of New York to Messrs. Jesse Carll and Carll Burr.²¹

The *Long Islander*’s somewhat dazed reporters proceeded to chronicle the impressive and expensive list of wedding presents.

The world the shipbuilders created or grew up in, the world of launching parties, masques, opulent weddings, and gentrified amusements, was fast

coming to an end by 1885. The low wages paid Suffolk shipyard workers no longer offset the increasing costs of raw materials, the improvement of steam technology, and the competition from British metal-hulled ships. The Suffolk shipbuilders rose with the national shipbuilding industry and, through their energy and intelligence, enriched themselves and their communities. Their talents enabled them to keep the regional industry healthy for twenty years after it vanished from its former centers of strength in large cities. But ultimately their skill in the technique of building wooden ships, and their ability to maintain a low wage scale, proved no match for economic and technological change. Fifteen years after Jesse Carll gave his daughter away amid jewels, silk gowns, and New York City caterers. Shipbuilding was a rapidly failing industry, its previous vitality turning into memory as it slid down the ways into extinction.

NOTES

1. See Geoffrey L. Rossano, "Prosperity on the Ways: Shipbuilding in Colonial Oyster Bay, 1745-1775," *LIHJ* 2 (Fall 1989): 21-28.
2. Henry Hall, *The Shipbuilding Industry of the United States*, vol. 8, *United States Census of Population, 1880* (Washington, D.C., 1884), 87.
3. Robert G. Albion, "Foreign Trade in the Era of Wooden Ships," in Harold F. Williamson, ed., *The Growth of the American Economy* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1957), 222.
4. Richard M. Bayles, "Brookhaven," in *History of Suffolk County, New York* (New York: W. W. Munsell, 1882), 44, 82-83; *Port Jefferson Times*, 10 November 1883, 7.
5. Charles R. Street, "Huntington," in *History of Suffolk County, New York* (New York: W. W. Munsell, 1882), 87.
6. *Port Jefferson Times*, undated 1885 clipping, Frances Child Collection (private).
7. Gordon Welles and William Proios, *Port Jefferson: Portrait of A Village* (Port Jefferson: Port Jefferson Historical Society, 1977), 10-11.
8. "Well Worn Ways." Typescript, ca. 1960, Frances Child Collection.
9. Bayles, "Brookhaven," 85-86; *Bi-Centennial: A History of Suffolk County* (Babylon: Budget Steam Print, 1885; reprint, Suffolk County Tercentenary Commission, 1983), 120.
10. Bayles, "Nehemiah Hand," in *ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, 86.
12. *Port Jefferson Echo*, 10 June 1927, 4.
13. Administrator's papers, Nehemiah Hand, file 13041, 12 March 1895, Suffolk County Surrogate's Court, Riverhead.
14. Will of Jesse Carll, 7 June 1909, *Liber* 41, 488-89, *ibid.*; *Long Islander*, 31 October 1902, 1.
15. R. G. Dun and Company Collection, New York, 1, Suffolk County, 581, courtesy of Baker Library, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration; *New York Times*, 25 — 1929, clipping, Frances Child Collection.
16. R. G. Dun, New York, 2/1, 893, and 272, 80.
17. Richard M. Bayles, *Historical and Descriptive Sketches of Suffolk County with A Historical Outline of Long Island* (1874; reprint, Port Washington: Ira J. Friedman, 1962), 162; Bayles, "Brookhaven," 62; *Port Jefferson Times*, 1 April 1889, Bayles Scrapbook, Frances Child Scrapbook.
18. For Reeves's attack on the Republican-backed tariff and Reconstruction, see *Republican*

Watchman, 4 June 1870, 1.

19. Bayles, "Brookhaven," 62.

20. *Long Islander*, 25 June 1841, 2 and 14 August 1885, 3.

21. *Ibid.*, 20 November 1885.

Dutch and English Mapping of Seventeenth-Century Long Island

By David Y. Allen

This article focuses on the cartography of Long Island during a crucial period of approximately seventy-five years following Henry Hudson's voyage of discovery in 1609. It builds on the research of Preston R. Bassett's valuable overview of the history of Long Island maps, and on the work of Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes, whose erudite survey of the cartographic history of the New York metropolitan area is still in some respects unmatched.¹

What can be learned from these early maps? Much of their fascination lies in their documentation of Europeans' perceptions of what was then truly a new world. Maps reflect the values and social contexts of the people who made them. They tell us what mapmakers thought was important to know concerning the newly discovered lands, and they indirectly document exploration and settlement patterns.

In spite of their apparent crudeness, a good deal of information about human and natural geography can be extracted from seventeenth-century maps of Long Island. They are particularly important as sources of historic place names. To get the most out of old maps, they should be compared with each other and read in conjunction with other types of sources. To understand their message fully it is necessary to examine them with care, look at as many as possible, analyze the interrelationships between them, and interpret them in the context of the circumstances in which they were made. Like other historical sources, they speak only when queried.

Long Island maps are powerful teaching tools. Their artistic impact makes them one form of historical source that appeals directly to novices, who may be repelled by the difficulties of interpreting printed or manuscript sources. They also illustrate many of the characteristic problems and pitfalls of interpreting early maps in general. Hence the lessons learned from their study can be applied to other areas in the history of cartography.

The maps described here are not the first to depict Long Island. Stokes and Bassett discuss several sixteenth-century maps that show what is now known as Long Island. Europeans had been sailing up and down the east coast of North America for nearly a century before Hudson's discovery of the river that bears his name. Giovanni Verazzano and probably others had even entered New York harbor. But these early explorers did not recognize the insular nature of Long Island, and no details of the Island are recorded on

their maps. The most important of the early maps showing Long Island derive from the voyages of Verazzano, and reflect his route along the South Shore as he sailed from New York Harbor to Narragansett Bay. Long Island, which Verazzano called “Flora,” appears on these maps as a peninsula projecting from the mainland.

Hudson himself was unaware of the existence of Long Island, but his discoveries unleashed a wave of exploration and settlement that literally put the Island on the map. The first easily recognizable map of Long Island was made by Adriaen Block, following his circumnavigation of the island in 1613/14. Block was a Dutch fur trader and explorer. His little vessel the *Onrust* (restless) was the first ship built in what is now New York State, and is commemorated in the name of the research vessel owned by the Marine Science Research Center of the University at Stony Brook. After Block’s return to the Netherlands in 1614, his discoveries were recorded on a manuscript chart generally known as the “Adriaen Block chart.” The existing version of this chart is probably a defective copy of another chart that may have been drawn or modified by Block himself—a circumstance that complicates the interpretation of some of its details.² This chart depicts with remarkable accuracy the general outline of Long Island, and in this respect compares favorably with some maps produced more than a century later. Block captured reasonably well the overall proportions of the Island, including the two forks at its easternmost end and some of the bays on the North Shore. The precocious accuracy of his chart comes in part from the fact that Block was one of the few seventeenth-century Dutch cartographers of New Netherland who based his map on observations actually made on site. All of the later printed Dutch maps of New Netherland were made by mapmakers in Holland who got their information second-hand.

The “original” of the Block Chart—which, as noted above, is itself probably a copy—is in the *Rijksarchief* (Dutch National Archives), at the Hague. Many of the facsimiles in local libraries are based on hand-drawn nineteenth-century copies that to some extent “interpret” this copy. Because the depiction of Long Island is hard to make out on the “original” copy, it is omitted from the illustrations for this article. (Copies of several facsimiles of the Block Chart, as well as all other maps discussed in this article, are available at the Melville Library of the University at Stony Brook.) A good idea of the general appearance of the Block chart can be obtained from the Blaeu map, which is illustrated below (figure 1). The few place names on the Block chart include “Manhates” (Manhattan), “Hellegat” (Hell Gate), “Hoek van de Visschers” (Point of the Fishers or Montauk Point), and “Adrian Blocks eylandt” (Block Island), which bears the name of its discoverer. Block may have named Montauk Point “Point of the Fishers” because of aboriginal fishing activities conducted there. The only place name that appears on Long Island itself is “Nahican.” This name, which appears on Long Island only on the Block chart, is clearly of Native American origin. William W. Tooker, the author of the most comprehensive book on early Long Island Native place



Figure 1. Detail of Willem Janszoon Blaeu, *Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova*, 1635.

names, speculated that it may have been placed on Long Island by mistake (possibly a copyist's error), for "Nahicans" is a Dutch version of the name known to the English as Narragansett.³

The earliest printed Dutch maps of New Netherland were based largely on the Block chart. The most important of these is Willem Janszoon Blaeu's *Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova* (New Belgium and New England), published in 1635 (figure 1). Blaeu was the head of a renowned family of Dutch mapmakers, and his map of New Netherland was incorporated in the 1635 edition of the pioneering atlas, the *Theatrum orbis terrarum*.⁴

The Blaeu map of New Netherland is an outstanding example of seventeenth-century Dutch cartography. Delicately hand colored, it is notable for its fine engraving and decorative illustrations. Its drawings of Natives and wildlife were widely copied in the seventeenth century, and many of its other features appear on later maps. As progenitors of numerous cartographic offspring, such maps are called "mother maps" by specialists in the history of cartography.

The animals and Native Americans on the Blaeu map were not purely decorative, although they had a decorative function: the paintings of seventeenth-century Dutch masters, such as Vermeer, frequently show such maps on the walls of homes. These drawings were also serious efforts to inform map users of conditions in the newly discovered lands. There are no fanciful unicorns or dragons here. The Blaeu map tried, by and large successfully, to depict the typical native animals of what was to become the northeastern United States. In addition to such widely distributed species as rabbits and bears, the map illustrates such characteristic North American animals as otter, elk (wapiti), beaver, and turkey.⁵

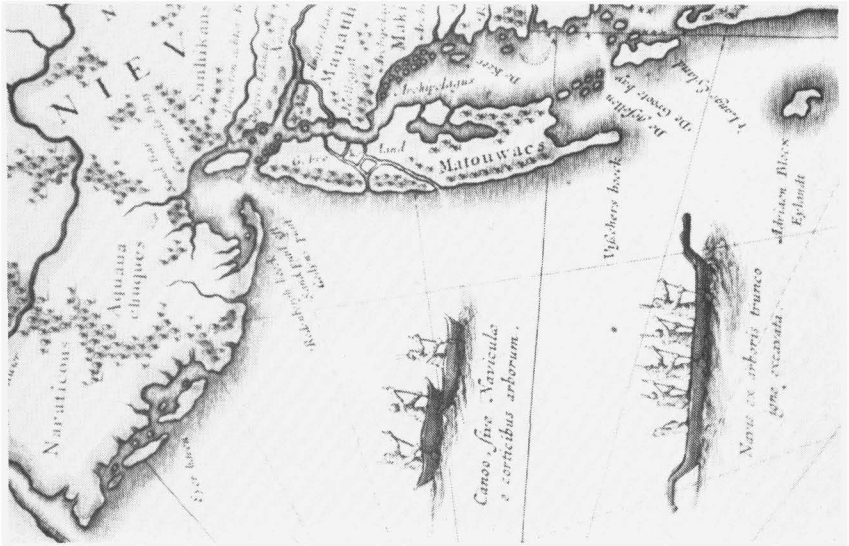


Figure 2. Detail of Blaeu, *Nova Belgica*.

The accuracy of the depiction of Native Americans on the Blaeu map is more open to question. The couple on each side of the cartouche look suspiciously like Dutch models dressed as fanciful Natives. More realistic are the drawings of boats in the ocean to the south of Long Island (figure 2), labeled (in Latin) “canoe, or little boat made from the bark of trees,” and “boat made from a tree trunk hollowed out by fire.” Birch-bark canoes would probably not have been used in the Atlantic, although they would have been found on the inland waters of what is now upstate New York. Large log canoes were, however, regularly used by Natives in the waters off Long Island for communication with the mainland and even for whaling. Palisaded villages, labeled “manner of dwelling among the Mohegans,” are also shown on the Blaeu map. These images have caused considerable controversy among archaeologists. There were palisaded Native “forts” in eastern North America, including on Long Island.⁶ But at best these pictures are highly idealized, with only the circular fort bearing much resemblance to reality. In interpreting these drawings, it is important to remember that they were made by artists in Holland working with written descriptions and crude sketches brought back by traders and explorers. This method of compiling maps left much room in which the imagination could frolic, and these palisaded villages doubtless represent some artist’s idea of how a palisaded Native settlement village ought to appear.

The depiction of Long Island on the Blaeu map closely resembles the Block chart, which was its primary source. But there are some interesting changes and additions. “Nahican” no longer appears on Long Island, but “Nahicans” does appear on the mainland near Narragansett Bay. Instead, on

Long Island we find “Matouwacs,” which appears to be the most widely used Indian name for Long Island. (Neither the better-known “Paumanok” nor “Sewanhacky” appears on any early map of Long Island.) The name “Matowacs,” which may be related to “Montauk,” can be found on maps of Long Island up to the time of the American Revolution. On many later maps, this name appears only on the South Fork. Some other familiar place names are on the Blaeu map. On the west end of the Island, we find variants of Manhattan and Hell Gate. At the opposite end, at Montauk Point, Block’s “Hoeck van de Visschers” is transformed into “Visschers Hoeck,” a name it retains on most seventeenth-century Dutch maps.

The most peculiar feature on the Blaeu map is the network of channels dividing the Island into several parts in the vicinity of the town of Hempstead. This area is labeled “Gebrokene Land” (broken land), a name that appears on many seventeenth-century maps of Long Island—even long after mapmakers realized that the waterways through the center of the Island were non-existent. Similar waterways appear on the Block chart, although they are barely visible on the earliest copy of the chart.⁷ Basset probably hit upon the correct explanation for the appearance of these channels.⁸ Long Island had not yet been explored by land, and the early Dutch maps were based on the reports of Block and possibly others who made their observations from ships sailing around the Island. Now, a prudent sailor circumnavigating a little-known island would keep his boat well away from the coast to minimize the chances of encountering shoals or rocks, or of being driven ashore by adverse winds. From a distance, anyone looking at the deep harbors on the North Shore and the inlets on the South Shore might well think they were the ends of continuous channels, and this is most likely what happened. There is something similar in the treatment of the North Fork on both the Block chart and the Blaeu map. On both maps the North Fork appears as a chain of islands, and probably for much the same reason. Viewed from a distance, the low-lying areas of the North Fork would sink below the horizon, making the Fork as a whole appear as a chain of islands. On the Blaeu map and some other Dutch maps of the period these “islands” are grouped together with Plum Island and the Gull Islands, and quaintly named “Die Gesellen” (The Companions).

The next important Dutch map to depict Long Island is the famous Jansson-Visscher map (figure 3).⁹ Like many early maps, it was reissued many times and exists in a number of “states.” (A “state” is a variant edition of a map, and a new state may result from nothing more than an alteration in the copper plate used to print a map.) The first state of the Jansson-Visscher map appeared about 1650. It reflects the growth of Dutch and English settlements on Long Island, and the corresponding increase in geographical knowledge about the island since the publication of the Blaeu map in 1635. The names of settlements including “Breukelen” (Brooklyn) appear at the western end of the island, and to the east are the English settlements of “Heemstee” (Hempstead), “Hamton” (with no distinction between the settlements of



Figure 3. Detail of Nikolas J. Visscher, *Novii Belgii Novaque Anglia nec non Partis Virginiae tablua multis in locis emendate a Nicolao Joannis Visschero, 1656.*

Southampton and East Hampton), and “S. Holt” (Southold). By now the Dutch understood that “t’Lange Eylandt” was not an archipelago, although the name “Gebroken Landt” (broken up land) remains attached to the area around Hempstead. The stippled area labeled “Gebroken Landt” appears to be the first cartographic representation of the Hempstead Plains, which are shown on most colonial maps of Long Island. Their appearance reflects the unusual ecology of these grasslands and the economic importance of the sheep and cattle pastured on “America’s first prairie.”¹⁰

The Dutch had by this time acquired some knowledge of the geography of eastern Long Island. Although the Dutch population of New Netherland never measured more than a few thousand, and Dutch settlements were restricted to the western end of the Island, they carried on a fair amount of coastal trade with the English and the Native Americans on eastern Long Island. Almost from the beginning of the Dutch settlement, eastern Long Island was the chief source of wampum, which was obtained from the coastal Natives and traded by the Dutch for beaver pelts in what is now upstate New York. The importance of this trade for New Netherland is reflected in the names of several Native American settlements on the Jansson-Visscher map, including the villages at “Rechtkawack” (Rockaway) and “Maresipe” (Massapequa). The name “Matowacs” appears twice—once denominated an “alias” for Long Island, and again on the eastern end of South Fork, where it apparently serves to identify the Montauks. Other place names on eastern Long Island include Visschers hoeck for Montauk Point, “Garners Eylant” (Gardiner’s Island) and Peconic Bay, which the Dutch

appropriately called “Cromme Gouwe” (Crooked Bay).¹¹

There are a couple of mysteries on the Jansson-Visscher map. The first is the absence of any indication of Fire Island or Great South Bay. This omission is puzzling, since by this time the Dutch were aware of the existence of these features. Thus, Adrian Van der Donck, whose *Description of the New Netherlands* was published with a version of the Jansson-Visscher map as its frontispiece, remarked:

Along the seacoast of Long Island there are also several safe, commodious inlets for small vessels, which are not much frequented by us. There also are many spacious inland bays, from which, by the inlets (at full tide), the sea is easy of access; otherwise these are too shallow.¹²

Most likely the failure to depict these features reflected a kind of intellectual inertia characteristic of early cartographers. These mapmakers were so used to copying from their predecessors that they frequently failed to change established models, even when they were contradicted by available evidence. A more famous instance of this conservatism is the persistent depiction of California as an island on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century maps. This cavalier attitude toward plagiarism is also seen in the exact copying of virtually all of the animals from the Blaeu map on the Jansson-Visscher map.

A real enigma on the Jansson-Visscher map is the appearance of “Sickete Wachly” on the South Shore. This is the only place name on the Long Island portion of the map that cannot be readily identified. A number of hypotheses have been propounded to explain the meaning of “Sickete Wachly,” which appears, variously spelled, in several written Dutch documents as well as on maps.¹³ Another article could attempt to unravel the location and identity of Sickete Wachly, but here only the cartographic evidence will be considered. Two things should be noted about the appearance of Sickete Wachly on this map. First, the name appears next to what seems to be a river or an inlet through the barrier beach. Second, immediately below the last letter of the name are two symbols for houses intended to indicate both Native American and European settlements. The next map to be considered provides some additional clues about the nature of Sickete Wachly.

The final phase of Dutch mapping of New Netherland is represented by the remarkable Roggeveen chart (figure 4), drawn about 1665, and published in his atlas *Het Brandende Veen (The Burning Fen)* in 1675.¹⁴ This chart belongs to a different cartographic tradition than the Blaeu and the Jansson-Visscher maps. The Roggeveen chart is typical of the austere style of nautical charts prepared primarily for the use of sea captains. The contrast between this style and the more decorative style of maps made for such groups as courtiers and merchants goes back to the Portolan charts of the Middle Ages. The Roggeveen chart is uncolored and, in keeping with its navigational intent, uncluttered with illustrations or inland place names. Shoals are carefully delineated, and the usefulness of the chart as a navigational tool is enhanced by soundings and rhumb lines (the criss-crossing lines emanating

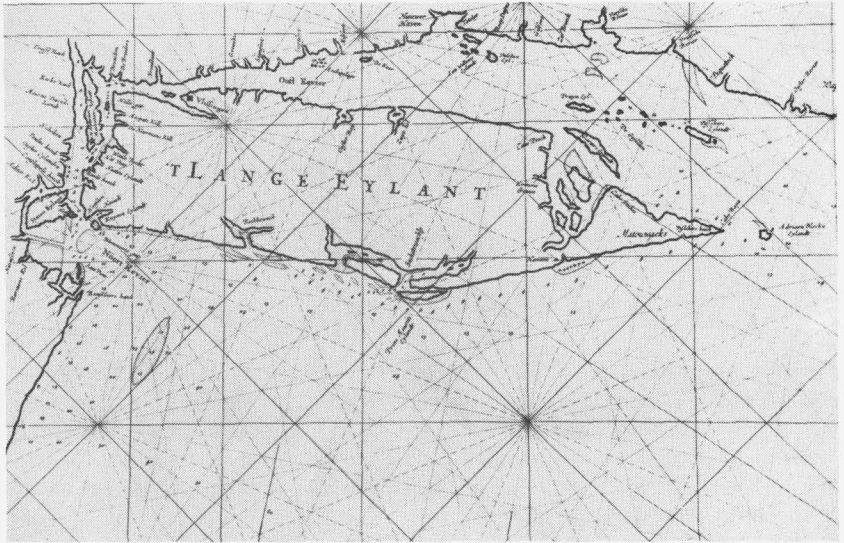


Figure 4. Detail of Arent Roggeveen, *Pascaerte van Nieu Nederland Streckende vande Noordt Revier tot Hendrick Chrstians Eylandt*, 1675.

from multiple compass roses on early sea charts; these lines were used by mariners to help correct their course by triangulation).

Such nautical charts had a reputation for accuracy, and many details on the Roggeveen chart show that he struggled to provide its users with exact and up-to-date information. But any captain who relied on this chart for navigating the waters around Long Island would have been in for some surprises. In more than one respect, this chart illustrates what could go wrong in seventeenth-century mapmaking.

Like most early mapmakers, Roggeveen started by adapting earlier maps. To produce a distinctive and superior product, he modified these maps by incorporating new information derived from recent notes sent back by voyagers. His chart can be described as a partially failed effort to reconcile new information with pre-existing models.

The Roggeveen chart is strikingly less successful than some of its predecessors (including the original Block chart) in capturing the over-all shape and proportions of Long Island. It is, however, more accurate in this respect than some subsequent maps. From the end of the seventeenth through much of the eighteenth century a succession of maps depicted Long Island as either greatly compressed or highly elongated. The explanation for this probably lies in the inadequacy of available technology for mapping a large island from on board a ship. Distances had to be calculated from the speed of a ship. That speed was, at best, measured by throwing overboard a piece of wood (known as the “chip log” or simply the “log”) attached to a rope, and then calculating the ship’s progress by the speed with which the log receded.

The result was entered, logically enough, into the log book. Such a method of measuring speed and distance could be thrown off by offshore currents, of which there are many around Long Island. The method worked fairly well on a straight reach, such as along the north or south shore of the Island. Hence, approximate distances on early maps between landmarks on such stretches are usually reliable. But the offshore currents could wreck havoc with the charting activities of any ship that circumnavigated the Island. Consequently, the overall shape of the Island and the alignment of opposing coasts were subject to severe distortions.

In addition, Roggeveen seems to have been misled by a piece of misinformation from one of his unknown sources. Unlike most Dutch maps of Long Island, the Roggeveen chart has Peconic Bay oriented north-south instead of east-west. To accommodate this shift, Roggeveen had to do away with the North Fork. To find room for Southold (“Zuyt Hol” on his map), he moved it westward along the North Shore to an unnamed embayment, which appears on earlier maps, and probably originally represented modern Huntington Bay or Port Jefferson Harbor.

On the other hand, Roggeveen’s depiction of the South Shore was more detailed and reliable than earlier maps. He delineated the strategic neck of land at Canoe Place (where the Shinnecock Canal now is), and gave some indication of an inlet and embayment (probably Jones Inlet and a portion of Great South Bay) near Rockaway.

The most interesting and distinctive feature on the Roggeveen chart is the depiction of the area on the South Shore around “Suketewachly” (the Sickete Wachly of the Jansson-Visscher map). Here are several clues to both the nature of Sickete Wachly and to one of the sources Roggeveen used to compile his chart (figure 5). Note the name “Prins Mourits Eylandt,” given to one of the fragments of the barrier beach. This island must have been named after the *Prince Maurice*, a Dutch ship bringing settlers to New Amsterdam that was wrecked off the South Shore in 1657—one of the more dramatic and well-documented events in the history of New Netherland. Briefly told, the ship foundered off Fire Island and its passengers were cast upon the barrier beach in late winter. Nearby Natives brought word about the plight of the emigrants to Manhattan, and Peter Stuyvesant himself directed a small fleet of boats that saved all the passengers and much of the cargo. These events were described in reports sent back to the Netherlands, some of which survived to be translated and published.¹⁵

The section of the Roggeveen chart depicting the area around Sickete Wachly is clearly based on information relating to the wreck of the *Prince Maurice*. Read in conjunction with the surviving Dutch documents, the chart sheds considerable light on the mystery of Sickete Wachly. Judging from the nature of the rescue mission, the wreck must have taken place far from the settlements on western Long Island, but well short of the English at Southampton. This is consistent with the representation on the Roggeveen chart. It is also clear, both from the map and the written sources, that there

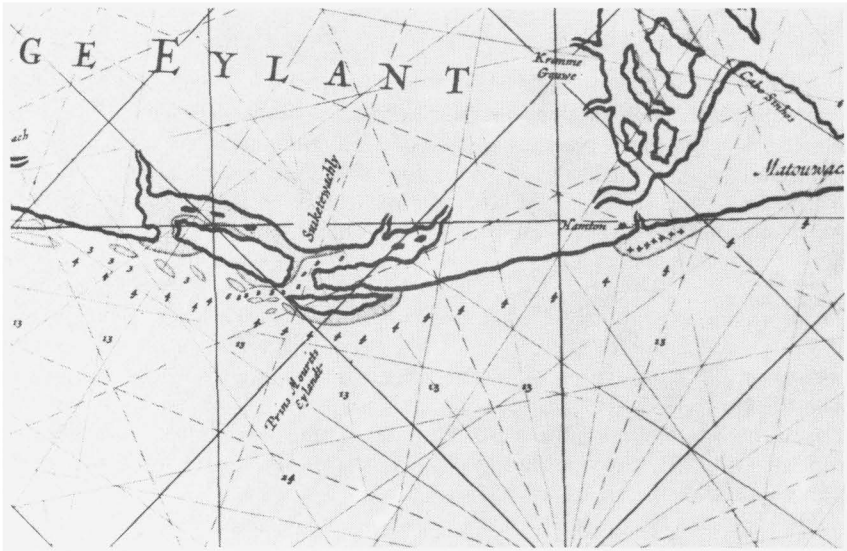


Figure 5. Area around “Suketewachly,” from Roggeveen, *Pascaerte van Nieu Nederland*, 1675.

was a break in the barrier beach and a river at Sickete Wachly. This break could not have been Fire Island Inlet, which did not come into being until the winter of 1690-91. It thus seems likely that the river at Sickete Wachly was either the Carmans or the Connetquot. Given the configuration of the river on the chart (and the apparent depiction of a second river to the west), I suspect that it is the Carmans River. The inlet would then have been in the general area still known as Old Inlet, on Fire Island National Seashore not far west of the Carmans River. This agrees with the location of “Sickete Wachly” on the Jansson-Visscher map next to a river. The documented presence of small Native settlements in the vicinity of the Carmans River also coincides with the indication of a village on the Jansson-Visscher map, as well as with the reports that the stranded settlers were helped by local Natives.¹⁶

The capture of New Amsterdam by the English in 1664 marks the end of the creative phase of Dutch mapping of what became New York; new developments are associated with English mapmakers. The English were slow in mapping the New York area. In spite of their relatively populous settlements in New England and eastern Long Island, they appear to have produced no detailed maps showing Long Island as a whole before the 1670s, relying instead on Dutch cartography. When the Duke of York separated New York from New Jersey in 1664, he reportedly used a copy of the Jansson-Visscher map to establish the boundary between the two provinces. An error in that map led to extensive subsequent boundary disputes.¹⁷ As late as 1676, a version of the Jansson-Visscher map was inserted in John Speed’s *A Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World*, the standard English atlas of the time. The reliance of the English on Dutch cartography is explained by the technical



Figure 6. Portion of John Seller, *A Chart of the Seacoasts of New-England, New Jarsey, Virginia, Maryland and Carolina from C. Cod to C. Hatteras, 1675.*

superiority of contemporary Dutch mapmaking and publishing. English map publishing was still in its infancy, but once the English began to produce maps of Long Island they quickly overtook the Dutch—in part because they had a superior knowledge of the inland areas of central and eastern Long Island.

The earliest English map I have been able to locate that depicts Long Island as a whole is a manuscript map of New England drawn by John Scott around 1668. The original Scott map is at the British Museum; I have been able to locate only two copies in the United States. Because of its large size and extensive detail, this map is impossible to reproduce here, but a general idea of its appearance can be derived from the Seller map of New England discussed below (figure 6). Interested readers can also consult a copy of the Scott map (made from a photostat belonging to the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University) in the map collection of the USB Library.

John Scott was one of the most colorful and controversial characters in the history of Long Island. In the course of his eventful career, he was a pirate, a mercenary soldier, a lawyer, a real estate speculator, a politician, a surveyor, and a spy. At one point he even eked out a living making maps, and held the unsalaried position of Royal Geographer to Charles II. During the 1650s and 1660s, Scott lived on Long Island and became prominent in local politics, as well as engaging in real estate speculation and working as a surveyor and attorney for several towns. As a speculator in Long Island real estate, Scott compiled a record unmatched by any of his talented successors. He succeeded, through dubious purchases from the Natives, in obtaining title to about one-third of Long Island—most of the area between the English and

the Dutch settlements. He started to build a manor house near what is now Port Jefferson, and, in general, to live the life of a great lord before the Long Island portion of his career was shipwrecked on the political reefs.¹⁸

Scott's entrepreneurial and surveying activities gave him a knowledge of the geography of Long Island unequalled by any of his contemporaries. Some of that knowledge is reflected on his map. Scott's map is the first to provide a reasonably accurate depiction of the barrier beach, and to show the morainal hills in the center of the Island. Scott shows only one inlet on Fire Island to the west of Shinnecock Bay, a feature confirmed by other late seventeenth-century English maps, indicating that the inlet at Sickete Wachly must have closed sometime between 1657 and 1666. The Scott map contains a number of place names that appear only on this map or on maps derived from it. Some of these, including "Brabourne" and "Smeeth," are names of Scott's devising "recalling his English forebears."¹⁹ The map also shows the location of "Scotts Hall" near Port Jefferson, where Scott began the construction of his manor house, and the only cartographic representation of the Montauk Fort near the tip of the South Fork. Other Native settlements are indicated by long houses sketched in at several locations.

In spite of the map's accurate detail and Scott's experience as a surveyor, its proportions are highly distorted. It was drawn from memory in England rather than as the result of an actual survey of the Island. A curious feature is the exaggerated size of many streams and inlets, particularly those emptying into Great South Bay. To understand how these features came to be depicted in this way, we need to imagine how a contemporary of Scott would have experienced the less developed parts of Long Island. At this time the southern portion of central Long Island was still uninhabited by Europeans, and other areas had large undeveloped tracts. Scott's real estate transactions must have made him one of the few people who actually forged into these areas. In such places, he must have had great trouble making his way through woods and marshes, and around estuaries and streams. I suspect that the exaggerated size of many bodies of water on his map reflects his perception of them based on the time and effort it cost him to make his way around them—a striking example of how the subjective perceptions of a mapmaker can influence his work.

Although Scott's manuscript map is almost unknown, it influenced several closely related printed maps of New England produced by John Seller around 1675. These are his "Mapp of New England," which exists in two "states," and the more polished *Chart of the Seacoasts of New-England, New-Jersey, Virginia, Maryland and Carolina from C. Cod to C. Hatteras*, which was published (London, 1675) in his famous *Atlas Maritimus* (figure 6). All three of these maps were influenced by the Scott map, although the influence is most obvious in the presumably later version in the *Atlas Maritimus*.

The relationship between the Scott and Seller maps has not previously been recognized. A commentary accompanying a facsimile of the second state of the Seller New England map published by the Yale University Library states: "Many of [Seller's] efforts were copies of Dutch prototypes.

Others, including his map of New England, broke new ground and cannot be identified as copies of earlier works.²⁰ But the existence of the Scott map does much to explain the origins of Seller's New England map, which combines information derived from Scott with earlier Dutch maps, although Seller may have drawn on other still unidentified sources as well. Many of Scott's unique place names appear on the Seller map, and the oversized bodies of water on the southern part of the island are reproduced and even exaggerated in size. The estuaries on the Scott map now appear as lakes with streams leading into Great South Bay. Seller, unlike Scott, names these bodies of water, some of which can be readily identified, including "Massapeague" (Massapequa) and "Connetticut" (Connetquot). Some of the more easterly of these lakes bear names that are completely enigmatic (for example, "Nepos"). As is typically the case when a mapmaker cannot check his information first hand, the deviations between the Scott and the Seller maps are usually in the direction of inaccuracy by Seller. Thus, the barrier beach, which Scott carefully delineated, is reduced to a kind of stippled shoal area by Seller. Similarly, "Scotts Hall"—John Scott's manor house—appears rechristened by Seller as a name for present-day Port Jefferson or Mount Sinai harbor, "Scots Hol." This last piece of evidence, which appears only on Seller's chart in the *Atlas Maritimus*, proves that Seller, who bore the title of Hydrographer to the King, used the manuscript map that Scott, the Royal Geographer, had recently drawn in England.

An even closer hitherto unrecognized relationship between a manuscript map and a published counterpart is that between Robert Ryder's map of Long Island (ca. 1675) and John Thornton's *Part of New England, New York, East New Iarsey and Long Iland*, published in *The English Pilot: The Fourth Book* (1689) Although the Ryder map was not published until this century, it is well known to local historians and cartophiles. The best-known version (figure 7) is housed at the John Carter Brown Library, where it forms part of *The Blathwayt Atlas*.²¹ Facsimile editions of this map have been widely distributed.

The Ryder map, a landmark in the cartographic history of the British North American colonies, is beautifully colored and decorated, making it one of the most attractive maps of any area of colonial America. More important, the map is far more accurate than any previous map of Long Island, or than any subsequent map produced before at least the middle of the eighteenth century. The title explains why: *Long Illand Sirvaide by Robartt Ryder*. Ryder was a professional surveyor, who probably lived in Gravesend (now part of Brooklyn) on the western tip of Long Island. His map is clearly based on extensive surveys, probably using such techniques as direct measurement, plane tabling, and triangulation. Moreover, the earlier of its two versions is thought to be the first map of an extensive area of colonial America based on an actual survey.²² The version of the map at Brown University includes not only all of Long Island, but also coastal Connecticut and parts of New Jersey and the lower Hudson Valley. The appearance of the map strongly suggests that Ryder established the basic shape of Long Island by surveying the

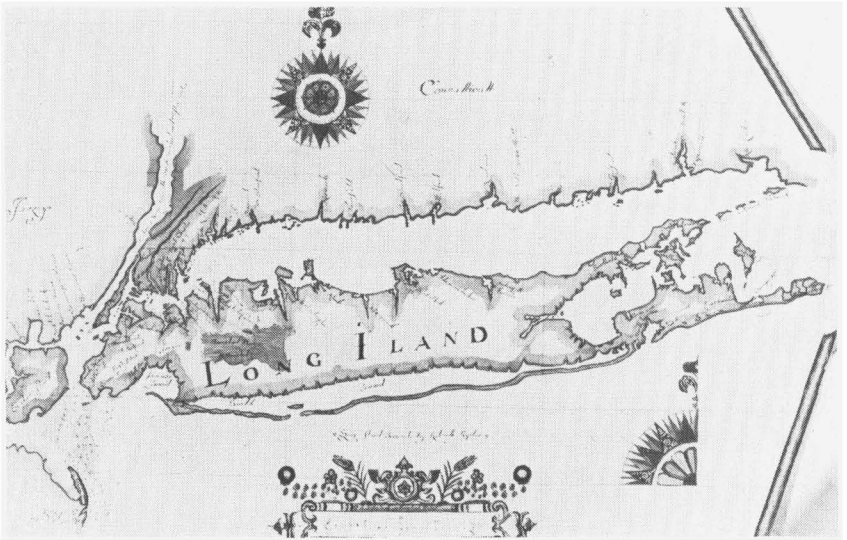


Figure 7. Detail of Robert Rhyder, *Long Island Sirvaide by Robartt Ryder*, ca. 1675.

distances between major landmarks on the coastline, probably using triangulation.

A revealing feature is the stylized treatment of the area along the South Shore of Long Island. Ryder's detailed surveying included the North Shore and the two forks, but he seems to have left the South Shore untouched. This is another reflection of the "no man's land" character of this part of the Island in the 1660s and 1670s. The difficulties of traversing this wilderness reflected in the depiction of the area on the Scott map are reflected in a very different way on the Ryder map. Ryder seems to have been so daunted by the prospect of crossing these little-known swamps and woods that he stayed out of the southern part of Long Island between Southampton and Hempstead. It is also notable that Ryder depicted neither Shinnecock Bay nor Lake Ronkonkoma.

Easily overlooked on the Ryder map are the numerous faintly dotted lines on Long Island indicating boundaries. Most of these are town borders. A few seem to show major land purchases—Topping's Purchase in western Southampton is definitely shown²³—but a detailed analysis of these boundaries has yet to be made.

The Ryder map had a previously unrecognized reincarnation in *The English Pilot: The Fourth Book* (figure 8). At an early date the Ryder map made its way back to England, and was in the Office of Lords of Trade and Plantations in 1683 when it was combined with other maps to form *The Blathwayt Atlas*. There John Thornton, who was Hydrographer to the Hudson Bay and East India Companies, must have had access to it. There is a close, although not complete, resemblance between the Ryder map and Thornton's *Part of New England, New York, East New Iarsey and Long Island in The*



Figure 8. Detail of John Thornton, *Part of New England, New York, East New Jaersey and Long Iland*, 1689.

English Pilot. Many place names and some details on the two maps are different, but they cover the same geographic area, and the outlines of the coasts are virtually identical. Some of the distinctive peculiarities of the Ryder map, such as his schematic treatment of the South Shore and the odd “crook” in the South Fork around Canoe Place are reproduced almost exactly by Thornton. Where the two maps diverge, the Thornton map is almost invariably the less accurate—again, typical on a copy of a map made by a cartographer working far from the area depicted. Many details of the coastline on the Ryder map are slightly simplified or distorted by Thornton, as one would also expect on a copy.

In spite of its inferiority to the Ryder map, the Thornton chart has been praised for its accuracy, and some speculation has been devoted to its sources. William P. Cumming, a distinguished historian of colonial American cartography, writes:

For British trading in North America and for the colonists there, the publication of *The English Pilot: The Fourth Book* must have been a godsend...To modern eyes the charts are crude and sparse of detail; but to the navigator of American waters in that period it was his Bible. Whatever its shortcomings, there was really no substitute, no real competitor, for over sixty years.²⁴

Stokes, too, was impressed by the accuracy of the Thornton chart, but, like all other writers on the subject, failed to recognize its relationship to the Ryder map (the existence of which he was probably unaware). Stokes even

speculated, somewhat strangely, that there might be a relationship between the Thornton and Roggeveen charts.²⁵ Stokes may have been misled by the stylistic similarity of these two uncolored nautical charts, with their sparse detail, lack of decoration, soundings, and rhumb lines.

After the publication of the Ryder and Thornton maps, there was a long pause in the progress of the mapping of Long Island. Nothing comparable in quality to the Ryder map appeared until the 1750s, when the British military began systematic surveying of their North American colonies. In some respects, the Ryder map remained the most accurate map of Long Island until the early nineteenth century. The best maps of Long Island published between 1690 and 1750 were more or less accurate copies of the Thornton chart. Many greatly inferior maps were also produced, some of which show Long Island as either squashed together or greatly elongated—largely for the reason noted above in connection with the Roggeveen chart.²⁶ One of these maps, by Captain Cyprian Southack, which shows a thin, etiolated Long Island, even replaced the more accurate Thornton chart in some editions of *The English Pilot*, and similar maps were published by the French throughout the eighteenth century. If nothing else, the relative accuracy of the Ryder-Thornton maps shows the importance of land-based surveying for accurately measuring the proportions of large areas before the nineteenth century. It was only when extensive land-based surveys were once again undertaken on Long Island after the middle of the eighteenth century that the Ryder map became obsolete—but that is another story.

NOTES

1. The first two volumes of Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909*, 6 vols. (New York, 1915-28), contain a great deal of information on maps covering the entire New York region, including all of Long Island. Although dated in some respects, Stokes' profusely illustrated work is more detailed and comprehensive than that of any cartographic history of this area. Also useful is Preston R. Bassett, "A History of Long Island Maps," *Journal of Long Island History* 7 (1967): 1-24. Bassett overlooks a number of important maps and commits some errors of fact and interpretation, but nonetheless provides a generally reliable overview of the mapping of Long Island from the time of Verrazzano through the first half of the nineteenth century.
2. Much of the older literature refers to the Block Chart as the "first figurative map"; for the origins of this chart see Robert Putman, *Early Sea Charts* (New York, 1983), 92-93, and, especially, Stokes, *Iconography*, II:68-75.
3. William Wallace Tooker, *The Indian Place-Names on Long Island and Islands Adjacent with Their Probable Significations* (1911; reprint, Port Washington, 1962), 150.
4. For the background of the Blaeu map see Seymour I. Schwartz and Ralph E. Ehrenberg, *The Mapping of America* (New York, 1980), 102-08. An original print of the Blaeu map has recently been acquired by the Department of Special Collections, Melville Library, University at Stony Brook.
5. The depiction of wildlife on the Blaeu map is analyzed by Wilma B. George, *Animals and Maps* (Berkeley, 1969), 94-98.
6. See Lorraine Williams, "The Montauk Fort and Forts Corchaug and Shantok," a presentation delivered 2 March 1991 at Guild Hall, East Hampton, as part of the exhibit seminar on "The Montauk Native Americans of Eastern Long Island." to be published in *The History and*

Archaeology of the Montauk rev. vol. III, *Readings in Long Island Archaeology and Ethnohistory* (Stony Brook: Suffolk County Archaeological Association, forthcoming).

7. As early as ca. 1617, Blaeu published a small-scale chart of the West Indies and the Atlantic Ocean in which these waterways are indicated and the name "Gebroken Lande" appears. The waterways mysteriously disappear on the 1621 edition of this map (although the name Gebroke Land is retained). The channels reappear in greatly accentuated form on a 1630 map by Joannes De Laet, and on the 1635 Blaeu map (see Stokes, *Iconography*, II:138, 151, and plates 27-28).

8. Bassett, "Long Island Maps," 7-9.

9. This map is frequently known as the "Visscher map" because its best-known states were published by Nicolaes Visscher. It is now established that the earliest state was published by Jan Jansson. However, to assign authorship to the publishers of early maps is an arbitrary convention insofar as the publisher may not have drawn the map; several (often anonymous) people were likely to have had a hand, and there is generally no way to tell who drew any particular portion. In any event, mapmakers compiled much of their information from previous maps. Typically, the makers of the Jansson-Visscher map copied most of the animals from the Blaeu map. Thus, early maps (with the exception of some manuscript maps) are closer to works of collaborative craftsmanship than to works of art produced by an identifiable creator. The Jansson-Visscher map is another prime example of a "mother map," which was reprinted numerous times in the seventeenth century and the first part of the eighteenth century. Maps in this family are described in detail in Tony Campbell, *New Light on the Jansson-Visscher Maps of New England*, The Map Collectors Circle No. 24 (London, 1965).

10. For the Hempstead Plains see Wayne G. Seyfert, "The Hempstead Plains: America's First Prairie," *Nassau County Historical Society Journal* 33 (1973): 3-18; Carole Neidich, "The Hempstead Plains and the Birdfoot Violet," *Long Island Forum* 43 (1980): 108-15 (reprinted in 50th anniversary issue 51 (1988): 54-62; Maxwell C. Wheat Jr., "The Hempstead Plains," *Nassau County Historical Society Journal* 39 (1984):15-23; Bernice Schulz, "The Pastoral Period of Western Long Island," *The Nassau County Historical Society Journal* 39 (1984): 24-32.

11. To decipher place names on Dutch maps of New Netherland, see the useful (though fallible) guide in a table compiled by G.M. Asher appended to his "List of the Maps and Charts of New-Netherland," a supplement to his *A Biographical and Historical Essay on the Dutch Books and Pamphlets Relating to New Netherland* (Amsterdam, 1854-1867; reprint, Amsterdam, 1960).

12. Adrian van der Donck, *A Description of the New Netherlands*, trans. Jeremiah Johnson, and ed. Thomas F. O'Donnell (Syracuse, N.Y., 1968). The book first appeared in 1655; the map was included in the second edition, which was the basis of Johnson's translation, *Collections of the New-York Historical Society*, 2d ser., vol. 1 (1841), [125]-242.

13. Tooker, *Indian Place-Names*, 243, and most nineteenth-century historians of Long Island interpret Sickete Wachly as "land of the Secatogues," but this is doubtful, and written documents are ambiguous about the meaning and location of Sickete Wachly. The cartographic evidence lends itself more easily to a single line of interpretation. The Dutch may have used the name, at different times, for several different places on the South Shore; it does not appear in any English source I have seen.

14. For background on the Roggeveen chart see Cornelis Koeman, *Atlantes Neerlandici* (Amsterdam, 1967-71), 4:450-53. The peculiar title of the atlas is both a pun on Roggeveen's name and a reference to the practice of burning peat to guide mariners with flames and smoke.

15. See E. B. O'Callaghan, *History of New Netherland; or New York under the Dutch*, 2 vols. (New York, 1846; reprint, 1966), 2:334-36.

16. Jacob Alrichs, the commander, wrote that "we ran aground at a certain place opposite Long Island near a river which is called by the Indians or the bearer of this Sichawach," which, Gehring notes, could be either the Carmans or the Connetquot River (Charles T. Gehring, trans. and ed., *Delaware Papers (Dutch Period)*, vol. 18 of *New York Historical Manuscripts: Dutch* (Baltimore, 1981), 98, 350; O'Callaghan, *History of New Netherland*, 2:335, places the wreck near Fire Island inlet). For the origins of Fire Island inlet see Osborn Shaw, introduction to the

first volume of the *Records of the Town of Brookhaven* (Patchogue, 1976), v.

17. John Parr Snyder, *The Mapping of New Jersey; the Men and the Art* (New Brunswick, 1973), 14-15.

18. A detailed and scholarly account of Scott's life is Lilian T. Mowrer, *The Indomitable John Scott: Citizen of Long Island, 1632-1704* (New York, 1960); for Scott's dealings with Native Americans, see Lara M. Strong and Selcuk Karabag, "Quashawam: Sunksquaw of the Montauk," *LIHJ* 3 (1991): 195-97.

19. Mowrer, *ibid.*, 101.

20. Text accompanying 1973 facsimile published by Yale University Library of Seller's map of New England.

21. Ryder made two known copies of his map of Long Island. One, which is probably earlier and lacks the section for eastern Long Island, is at the New-York Historical Society; the other forms part of a compiled seventeenth-century atlas of printed and manuscript maps. The John Carter Brown Library sponsored publication of the entire atlas: *The Blathwayt Atlas: A Collection of 48 Manuscript and Printed Maps of the 17th Century Relating to the British Overseas Empire in that Era, Brought Together about 1683 for the Use of the Lords of Trade and Plantations*, facsimile edition edited and with commentary by Jeanette D. Black (Providence, 1970-75)

22. Black, *The Blathwayt Atlas*, vol. II, *Commentary*, 101.

23. Topping's Purchase, a large tract purchased from the Native Americans by Thomas Topping, a Southampton settler, in 1662, comprised present Southampton west of Quogue; its ownership was disputed for several decades between the Topping family and the town of Southampton (see George Rogers Howell, *The Early History of Southampton, L.I., New York: with Genealogies*, 2nd ed. (Albany, 1987), 25, 172, 453-54.

24. William Patterson Cumming, *British Maps of Colonial America* (Chicago, 1974), 34.

25. Stokes, *Iconography*, 2:158.

26. Basset, "Long Island Maps," 9-13, provides examples of these maps that show Long Island greatly out of proportion.

Class, Status, and Power: Long Islanders in Congress, 1789-1899

By Richard P. Harmond

A central question in any governmental unit concerns the locus of power. Is power lodged with a small elite, or located broadly among the citizenry? If within the grasp of an elite, what is the socio-economic make-up of that elite? And does the composition of the elite change over time, or remain relatively stable? In an effort to answer these questions, this article examines the issue of social mobility in terms of Long Islanders elected to Congress from the start of the federal government until the end of the nineteenth century. It does not deal with the further and complex issue of how—or if—their social status affected the legislative positions these Islanders took in the House of Representatives.

Historians, political scientists, and sociologists deal extensively with these questions. Given the differences among the disciplines, the number of studies involved, and other considerations, it is not surprising that scholars reach a variety of answers. It is fair to say, however, that most of these efforts can be placed in either of two schools of thought. One, Floyd Hunter's theory that community decisions are made by the business elite and carried out willingly by the bureaucracy, contends that local political power is held by a small and well-entrenched group. The second, or pluralist school, as advanced by Robert A. Dahl, asserts that the composition of the leadership elite changes over time, and that power is dispersed among different groups in the community.¹

In their studies of the local class-power relationship, Hunter, Dahl, and other researchers have concentrated on specific communities; Dahl explored the problem in New Haven, Hunter in a Southern community he called Regional City. But testing these opposing views in other sorts of governmental jurisdictions offers a different perspective, and, one hopes, a gain in breadth of understanding. Accordingly, this article addresses status, class, and power within a sub-region by focusing on the seventy-one members of the House of Representatives from the counties of Kings, Queens, and Suffolk from 1789 to 1899.² Socio-economic portraits were prepared by consulting a variety of sources, with the object of establishing the social class of each congressman.³ In the main, these findings fit the pluralist model.

The Search for a Pattern

Before proceeding, an explanation and some definitions are in order. Scholars have, at times, developed conceptually elegant social class

hierarchies. For example, the social scientist, William Lloyd Warner, was partial to a six-level class system ranging from upper-upper to lower-lower.⁴ For the present study, however, biographical data frequently was not sufficiently full for such precise distinctions. Therefore, we shall deal with a basically three-tier social class structure of upper, substantial-middle, and lower.⁵ I say "basically" because, where possible, an effort is made to distinguish "local" from "national" upper-class members.

Upper-class designation is reserved for congressmen whose fathers—or, at any rate, families—had social position, enjoyed considerable wealth, and exercised public influence, perhaps holding public office. As the definition implies, one can not earn one's way into the upper class; in the words of Dixon Wecter, "the traditional aristocrat is born not made."⁶

The substantial-middle class includes those whose fathers—or families—could offer their children such advantages as an education but lacked the assets, political punch, and social prestige of the upper class. Finally, the category of lower class applies to congressmen whose fathers could offer little or no help to their sons, and who typically were required to go to work at an early age.

These are relatively simple and straightforward definitions. However, to establish a congressman's place in the social hierarchy is often far from a simple and straightforward exercise. If a reliable biography which details a congressman's family background is available, one usually can determine that individual's class. Unfortunately, such biographies have been discovered for fewer than half of the men under scrutiny.

In other cases, a representative's social status had to be inferred from certain kinds of biographical information, such as his education, occupation, religious persuasion, ethnic background, organizational affiliations, and place of residence.⁷ Thus, to have graduated from college in these years when only a small segment of the population could afford post-primary-school training suggests at least substantial-middle-class status. Whether a subject of the study was a merchant, lawyer, doctor, carpenter, dirt farmer, or saloon keeper was likely to be germane to that person's social-class standing. Membership in certain churches, especially the Episcopal, suggests a higher social standing than membership in, say, the Baptist or Catholic churches at this time on Long Island. One may also expect that upper- or substantial-middle-class ranking correlates positively with English, Dutch, or Scots-Irish parentage. Again, affiliation with private organizations like the Union, Metropolitan, and Brooklyn clubs, as well as active connection with prominent charitable and cultural institutions, suggests upper-class status. Because the rich tended to live in the same neighborhoods, the location of a subject's residence offers a clue to his social standing.

No one of these criteria is necessarily definitive. For instance, many congressmen from nineteenth-century upper- and substantial-middle-class homes did not go to college. On the other hand, it was possible—though not usual—for someone of relatively humble lineage to work his way through college. In other words, the possession of a college degree is a useful clue but

no guarantee of an individual's social status.

Similar reservations apply to the other criteria. Not every Episcopalian or member of an elite social club belonged to the upper class, nor did everyone to the manner born belong to the Episcopal church, or reside among the mansions of the rich and powerful.

The researcher's task is to discover a *pattern* within the evidence, indicative of the life style of a particular social class. Sometimes such a pattern proved difficult to discern, and, no doubt, errors were made here and there in assigning congressmen to one class rather than to another. Still, one can say with confidence that there is more than sufficient data to justify several general observations.

First, from 1789 to about the middle of the nineteenth century, the congressional delegation from Long Island was drawn almost exclusively from the upper class. Second, a significant shift occurred in the make-up of that delegation during the 1850s, when the voters began electing men from the substantial-middle class. And third, beginning in the 1860s, there appeared a number of congressmen from lower-class backgrounds. These changes were considerably more pronounced in the Brooklyn than in the Queens/Suffolk contingent, although men from the upper class continued to be elected in all three counties throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.

The Ascendancy of the Patriciate

As might be expected, the men who served in Congress from 1789 to the mid-nineteenth century—most of whom were lawyers, merchants, landowners and “farmers”—included representatives of some of Long Island's most eminent families. Among these were General William Floyd, of Mastic, one of the select company who signed the Declaration of Independence, and his grandson, John Gelston Floyd; Thomas Tredwell, a distinguished Suffolk County lawyer; John Smith, a member of an established Suffolk family, who spent more than thirty years in public office; Samuel Riker, of the Riker's Island Rikers; and Joshua Sands, of the Sands Point Sandses.⁸ Other members of well-known families were Eliphalet Wickes, a successful corporation lawyer who was a lineal descendant of an original patentee of Huntington; Selah Brewster Strong, of Setauket, whose father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather were Suffolk County judges; John W. Lawrence, of Flushing, a descendant of one of the incorporators of that community, and a director of the New York branch of the Second Bank of the United States; and John T. Bergen, a member of an old and affluent Brooklyn family.⁹

Not all of these patricians stemmed from Long Island families. James Maurice, a respected and wealthy Queens County lawyer, as well as a generous contributor to the Episcopal church, was of British parentage. Henry C. Murphy, a small, spare, clean-shaven man described by one historian as a representative of “Old Brooklyn,” had an Irish-born grandfather. Others were from well-connected New England families. John

A. King, for example, one of nineteenth-century Long Island's most distinguished political figures, was the son of the Massachusetts-born Rufus King, a nationally prominent Federalist leader and antislavery spokesperson. Abel Huntington, an active East Hampton physician, office-holder, and sportsman "fond of both gun and rod" (according to his biographer), was born in Norwich, Connecticut. Ebenezer Sage and Frederick W. Lord also had their family roots in Connecticut soil.¹⁰

For years, the voters of Long Island, as elsewhere in the young American republic, regularly elected to important political offices upper-class types like King and Lord, Floyd, Lawrence, and Bergen. But for a number of reasons, including the advance of the democratic ideology and the growth of political parties, by the 1840s the people were increasingly less disposed to pliantly honor the claims of patricians to office. Indeed, politicians, deferring to the electorate, began to trumpet their humble origins, which sometimes were far from humble. A classic illustration was the presidential campaign of 1840, when Whig party managers fancifully claimed that their candidate, William Henry Harrison, was born in a log cabin. As Edward Pessen observes, the truth was that Harrison "spent his childhood on a truly lavish plantation, attended by a corps of slaves and servants."¹¹

The Shift toward Democracy

Inevitably, in the wake of the nineteenth-century's democratic revolution, candidates with less impressive social credentials than those of the patriciate were swept into office. Within the Long Island congressional delegation this shift first manifested itself in Brooklyn, where, beginning at mid-century, the substantial-middle class candidate made his appearance.

The earliest example is David H. Bokee, a somewhat transitional figure. Born in 1805 in New York City, and descended from an old and well-established Knickerbocker family, Bokee belonged to the local upper class by birth. Before his fifth birthday his father died, after which he was cared for by relatives, obtained only a common school education, and left school at the age of twelve, according to his biographer "to battle with the world alone, without the aid of friends or fortune." Still, the rapidity and the nature of Bokee's rise in the world suggests persuasively that if he missed out on the full-blown advantages of upper-class status, his family's background and connections were distinct assets. He lived for a time in Georgetown, South Carolina, where he was elected several times to the office of alderman. In 1834 he returned to the North, made his home in Brooklyn, and "immediately formed a connection with one of the largest and most respected mercantile houses in New York City." A little more than a decade later, Bokee reportedly was worth \$40,000—a goodly sum in the mid-1840s. Subsequently, he was elected to Congress for a term, and then chosen by President Millard Fillmore to succeed the aristocratic diarist, Philip Hone, as naval officer of the Port of New York. In short, Bokee's tale is far from that of a self-made man, though not quite that of a fully privileged member of the upper class.¹²

Closer than Bokee to the middle-class prototype was James Stranahan. Of Scots-Irish ancestry, Stranahan was born on a farm in upstate New York. When he was eight years old he lost his father and soon was needed on the family farm. Yet, farm chores or no, he attended public schools, acquired training at an academy, and before he was twenty-one became a schoolmaster. He proceeded to successive employment as a land surveyor, wool merchant, and railroad contractor. After moving to Brooklyn, Stranahan earned a deserved reputation as that city's "first citizen"; among other accomplishments, he was instrumental in the creation of Prospect Park and was an enthusiastic supporter of a New York-to-Brooklyn bridge. All in all, Stranahan's was a nineteenth-century middle-class success story.¹³

There were other such stories among Brooklyn's nineteenth-century congressmen, including: Henry W. Slocum, a native of upstate New York, who was a West Point graduate and Civil War general-hero (for whom an East River excursion boat was named the *General Slocum*); Stephen V. White, raised on an Illinois farm, who practiced law for a time in Iowa and then moved East to become a daring Wall Street "stock manipulator," as well as a trustee of Plymouth (Congregational) Church and a friend of the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, its minister; and Israel Fischer, the son of a German-born furrier, who was a lawyer, a Republican party functionary, and Brooklyn's first Jewish Congressman.¹⁴

The "Self-Made" Man Goes to Congress

Still more arresting, however, as early as the 1860s men of lower-class origins were elected to Congress from Brooklyn. Among them was William Wall, a native of Philadelphia. Wall started as an apprentice ropemaker, but, by dint of "sound judgement, alert enterprise, and solid stamina," according to a contemporary, established his own rope factory and prospered mightily. At the time of his death, Wall was worth an estimated \$2,000,000.¹⁵

Another poor boy who made good was Martin Kalbfleisch. Born in Holland, he arrived in the United States in 1826, "poor and friendless," according to the *Brooklyn Eagle*. He worked as a clerk, and as a porter, but persevered until he acquired what the *Eagle* called a "princely fortune."¹⁶ Two Irish-born self-made men who served in Congress were Thomas Kinsella and Denis Hurley. Kinsella, who became the editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle*, was, in the opinion of his biographer, "a splendid example of the immigrant...boy rising to wealth and honored position in the country of his adoption." Hurley, a carpenter and contractor, was described by the *Brooklyn Eagle* as "plain of manner, blunt of speech, and showing in many ways his early lack of educational advantages." Hurley nevertheless must have impressed the patriciate of his adopted city, for he was a member of the exclusive Brooklyn Club.¹⁷

Other examples could be cited. Of the thirty-three Brooklynites who served in Congress between 1861 and 1899, at least nine were from the lower end of the social scale. This is not surprising when considered in conjunction

LONG ISLAND CONGRESSMEN, 1789-1899

Name	Term(s)	Social Class	Occupation	College	Party
QUEENS and SUFFOLK					
1. William Floyd	1789-91	Upper	Landowner	—	Dem-Rep
2. Thomas Tredwell	1791-95	Upper	Lawyer	Princeton	unstated
3. Jonathan Havens	1795-1801	Upper	Public office	Yale	Dem-Rep
4. John Smith*	1801-05	Upper	Politics	—	Dem-Rep
5. Eliphalet Wickes	1805-07	Upper	Lawyer	—	unstated
6. Samuel Riker	1807-0	Upper	Public office	—	Dem-Rep
7. Ebenezer Sage	1809-15	Upper	Doctor	Yale	Dem-Rep
8. George Townsend	1815-19	Upper	Farming	—	Dem-Rep
9. Silas Wood	1819-29	?	Lawyer	Princeton	Ind
10. James Lent	1829-33	Upper	Merchant	—	Dem
11. Abel Huntington	1833-37	Upper	Doctor	—	Dem
12. Thomas Jackson	1837-41	Upper	Landowner & lawyer	—	Dem
13. Charles A. Floyd	1841-43	Upper	(?) Lawyer	—	Dem
14. Selah B. Strong	1843-45	Upper	Lawyer	Yale	Dem
15. John W. Lawrence	1845-47	Upper	Merchant & banker	—	Dem
16. Frederick W. Lord	1847-49	Upper	Doctor	Yale	Whig
17. John A. King	1849-51	Upper	Landowner	European schooling	Whig
18. John G. Floyd**	1851-53	Upper	Lawyer	Hamilton	Dem
19. James Maurice	1853-55	Upper	Lawyer	—	Dem
20. William Valk	1855-57	Upper	Doctor	South Carolina	Know- Nothing
21. John A. Searing	1857-59	Lower(?)	Farmer	—	Dem
22. Luther C. Carter	1859-61	Middle	Merchant	—	Union-Rep
23. Edward Smith	1861-63	Upper	Farmer	—	Dem
24. Stephan Taber	1865-69	Upper	Farmer	—	Dem
25. Henry A. Reeves	1869-71	Middle	Newspaperpublisher	Univ. of Mich.	Dem
26. James W. Covert	1877-81 1889-95	Upper	Lawyer	—	Dem
27. Perry Belmont	1881-89	Upper	Lawyer	Harvard	Dem
28. Richard C. McCormick	1895-97	Middle	Businessman journalist	—	Rep
29. Joseph M. Belford	1897-99	Middle	Lawyer & banker	Dickinson	Rep
BROOKLYN					
30. Joshua Sands	1803-05 1825-27	Upper	Merchant	—	Federalist
31. John T. Bergan	1831-33	Upper	Farmer & merchant	—	Dem
32. Abraham Vanderveer	1837-39	Upper	Bank director	—	Dem
33. Henry C. Murphy	1843-4 1847-49	Upper	Lawyer	Columbia	Dem
34. David A. Bokee	1849-51	Middle	Lawyer & merchant	—	Whig
35. Thomas Cumming	1853-57	?	Drug business	—	Dem
36. James Stranahan	1855-57	Middle	Railroad conductor	—	Whig & Rep

37. George Taylor	1857-59	Middle	Lawyer	—	Dem
38. James Humphrey	1859-61	Middle	Lawyer Amherst	—	Rep
39. Moses F. Odell	1861-63	Middle	Public employee	—	Dem
40. William Wall	1861-63	Lower	Manufacturer	—	Rep
41. Martin Kalbfleisch	1863-65	Lower	Manufacturer	—	Dem
42. John W. Hunter	1865-67	Upper	Wholesale grocer	—	Dem
43. Demas Barnes	1867-69	Lower	Drug business	—	Dem
44. William Robinson	1867-69 1881-85	Middle	Journalist	Yale	Dem
45. John G. Schumacher	1869-71; 1873-77	?	Lawyer	—	Dem
46. Henry W. Slocum	1869-73 1883-85	Middle	Soldier & lawyer	—	D e m
47. Thomas Kinsella	1871-73	Lower	Journalist	—	Dem
48. Stewart L. Woodford	1873-75	Upper	Lawyer	Columbia	Rep
49. Simeon Chittenden	1873-81	Upper	Dry goods merchant	—	Rep-Ind
50. Philip Schuyler	1873-75	Upper	Lawyer	—	Rep
51. Archibald M. Bliss	1875-83	Upper	(?) Business	—	Dem
52. William Veeder	1877-79	?	Lawyer	—	Dem
53. Daniel O'Reilly	1879-81	?	Lawyer	—	Dem
54. J. Hyatt Smith	1881-83	Lower	Minister	—	Ind/Rep
55. Felix Campbell	1883-89	Lower	Manufacturer	—	Dem
56. Darwin James	1883-87	Upper	Spice importer	—	Rep
57. Peter P. Mahoney	1885-89	Lower	Liquor wholesaler	—	Dem
58. Stephen V. White	1887-89	Upper	Lawyer	Knox	Rep
59. William C. Wallace	1889-91	Upper	Lawyer	Wesleyan	Rep
50. John M. Clancy	1889-95	Lower	Saloon owner&Real Estate	—	Dem
61. Thomas F. Wagner	1889-95	Middle	Lawyer	Columbia Law	Dem
62. Alfred C. Chapin	1891-93	Upper	Lawyer Williams	Dem	
63. William C. Coombs	1891-95	Middle	Exporter	—	Dem
64. Joseph C. Hendrix	1893-95	Upper	Journalist & banker	Cornell	Dem
65. John H. Graham	1893-95	Middle	Hardware	—	Dem
66. Denis M. Hurley	1895-97	Lower	Carpenter & contractor	—	Rep
67. Francis H. Wilson	1895-97	Lower	School teacher&lawyer	Yale	Rep
68. Israel F. Fischer	1895-99	Middle	Lawyer	—	Rep
69. Charles G. Bennett	1895-99	Upper	Lawyer	New York Law	Rep
70. James R. Howe	1895-99	Middle	Dry Goods	—	Rep
71. Edward H. Driggs	1897-99	Upper	Insurance	—	Dem

Source: *Biographical Directory of The American Congress 1774-1971* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1971).

*General John Smith, of Mastic, a descendant of William "Tangier" Smith, also served in the United States Senate, 1804-1813.

**John Gelston Floyd was elected to Congress twice (1839-1843) from Utica, New York, before he moved back to Mastic; after leaving Congress, in which he served as a Democrat, he joined the Republican party upon its formation in 1856.

with Brooklyn's vibrant and diversified economy during the closing decades of the century. By 1890, Brooklyn was the fourth-largest industrial center in America, noted for sugar and oil refining, distilling, baking, shipbuilding, and the manufacture of machinery, hats, and cordage. The city offered an abundance of opportunities to able, ambitious "outsiders" like Wall, Hurley, and others who became business and political leaders.¹⁸

A Sampling of Long Island Congressmen

Along with these "rags to riches" triumphs, men from the upper social strata continued to represent Brooklyn in Congress, although some are better categorized as members of the local upper class. This designation applies, for example, to Charles G. Bennett, whose father, a native of Britain, founded the *Brooklyn Times*, and to Edmund H. Driggs, a Brooklyn businessman whose grandfather had been the mayor of Williamsburg, and the founder of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank.¹⁹ It is difficult to judge whether—or to what extent—the influence of such other patrician congressmen as Simeon Chittenden, Steward L. Woodford, and William Wallace transcended the relatively small world of Long Island politics.²⁰

However, there is no question of Alfred C. Chapin's possession of the status, wealth, and power to place him in the national-upper class. Chapin, a direct descendant (eighth in the line) of the seventeenth-century founder of Springfield, Massachusetts, graduated from Williams College (to which, over the years, he donated more than \$2,000,000), and Harvard Law School. Described by the *New York Times* "as an intimate associate of President Grover Cleveland and Samuel Tilden," he served two terms as mayor of Brooklyn before representing that city in Congress. In keeping with the upper-class's preference for intermarriage, Chapin's wife belonged to the wealthy Schieffelin clan and his only daughter married Hamilton Fish, Jr. And, as the privileged class liked to associate with one another, it was also fitting for Chapin to belong to several upper-crust clubs, including the highly exclusive Union Club.²¹

As the voters of post-Civil War Brooklyn at times chose members of the upper class to represent them in Congress, so did the voters of Queens and Suffolk. Three such individuals were Stephen Taber of Roslyn, James W. Covert, of Flushing, and Perry Belmont, of Babylon. Both Taber, "a farmer" who also happened to be a director of the Long Island Railroad and the first president of the Roslyn Saving Bank, and Covert, described by a local newspaper as "for many years one of the most prominent citizens of Queens County," were rather typical representatives of the local upper class.²² Perry Belmont, on the other hand, was clearly a member of the national-upper class.

Of the men who represented Long Island in Congress during the nineteenth century, only four belonged to the Union Club: the fourth, in addition to John W. Lawrence, John A. King, and Alfred Chapin was Perry Belmont. As impressive as were Lawrence, King, and Chapin's pedigrees and connections, their social credentials pale somewhat beside Belmont's. He was

the son of August Belmont, a German-born international banker, and Caroline S. Perry, the daughter of Commodore Matthew S. Perry, and the descendant of an old and prominent American family. Raised as an Episcopalian, Perry Belmont studied at the University of Berlin, and was a graduate of both Harvard College and Columbia Law School. He went on to a long life (he died in 1947 at the age of 96) and a full career in the law, diplomacy, the army, and politics. While a resident of Babylon in the 1880s, he served four consecutive terms in Congress, during two of which he was chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee. Of all the Long Islanders serving in Congress during the nineteenth century, Perry Belmont, the aristocrat from Babylon, was the most socially distinguished and probably the most nationally prominent.²³

Belmont was outstanding, but his prominence should not obscure the fact that the largely rural area east of Kings County was also affected by the trend toward a more socially varied congressional delegation.²⁴ With the probable exception of John A. Searing (for ten years a conductor on the Long Island Railroad), nineteenth-century Queens and Suffolk voters failed to elect to Congress anyone of lower class origins.²⁵ However, they selected men from substantial-middle-class backgrounds, such as Henry A. Reeves and Joseph M. Belford. Reeves, the son of a Sag Harbor cooper, graduated from Union College, and subsequently became the owner and editor of the *Republican Watchman*, a conservative Democratic newspaper published at Greenport. Belford, whose father was a "merchant tailor," went to Dickinson College, a small school in Pennsylvania. After graduating he taught for a time, and then transferred his interests to law and politics, at both of which he did well.²⁶

Conclusion

The evidence, though not always complete, points to a decided shift in the social composition of Long Island's congressional delegation between 1789 and 1899. In general, that shift—more pronounced in Brooklyn than Queens or Suffolk—was from the upper class to the middle and lower classes.

This pattern conforms to the pluralist model,²⁷ although at no point did the upper class withdraw from the political arena. Still, the old families that once dominated the Island's politics had to make room for the new. On the whole, an impressive degree of upward mobility marked nineteenth-century Long Island congressional politics.

NOTES

1. Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1953); Robert A. Dahl *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1961); see also C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1958), and Carl V. Harris, *Political Power In Birmingham, 1871-1921* (Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1977), 4-8.

2. From 1789 to the 1820s, Kings, Queens, and Suffolk formed one congressional district. In the 1830s and 1840s, Kings formed a district with Richmond County, and Queens-Suffolk composed another. After 1850 Kings (including, of course, Brooklyn) made up a single district, and then

was divided into several, with Queens, Suffolk, and Richmond composing a district of their own.

3. Among the most useful sources were the *Dictionary of American Biography*, 20 vols. (New York, 1936), hereafter cited as *D.A.B.*; the *National Cyclopedia of American Biography*, 51 vols. (Ann Arbor, 1967-1969), hereafter cited as *N.C.A.B.*; obituaries, particularly from the *New York Times* and the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*; local histories; and autobiographies and biographies in the Charles Lanman Collection, New York State Library, Albany.

4. W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, *The Social Life of a Modern Community* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1941). More recently, Edward Pessen adopted this six-tier system in his study of the social backgrounds of American presidents, *The Log Cabin Myth* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1984).

5. For a similar three-tier system, see David Rothman's study of the United States Senate in the Gilded Age, *Politics And Power* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), 111-36.

6. Dixon Wecter, *The Saga of American Society* (New York, 1937), 9.

7. For analysis of the various marks of social class, see Edward Pessen, *Riches, Class, and Power Before the Civil War* (Lexington, Mass., 1973), especially 154-62, 228-45, and 262-78.

8. For the Floyds see *D.A.B.* s.v., Floyd, William and Floyd, John, and *New York Times*, 7 October 1881, 5; for Tredwell see *N.C.A.B.*, s.v. Tredwell, Thomas, and E. Wilder Spaulding, *New York In The Critical Period, 1783-1789* (New York, 1922), 240; for John Smith see Richard M. Bayles, "Brookhaven," in *History of Suffolk County, New York, With Illustrations, Portraits, & Sketches of Prominent Families And Individuals* (New York: W. W. Munsell, 1882), 69, and Spaulding, *New York In The Critical Period*, 212, 240; for Samuel Riker, see *History of Queens County, New York...* (New York: W. W. Munsell, 1882), 369, and Pessen, *Riches, Class and Power*, 98; for Joshua Sands, see Benjamin Franklin Thompson, *History of Long Island from Its Discovery and Settlement to the Present Time*, 3rd. ed., revised and greatly enlarged with additions and a biography of the author by Charles Werner, 3 vols. (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1918), 3: 588-90, and Pessen, *ibid.*, 68.

9. For Wickes, see *N.C.A.B.*, s.v. Wickes, Eliphalet, and Ebenezer Halley, "A Sermon On The Death of Eliphalet Wickes, With A Biographical Note" (New York, 1850); for Selah B. Strong see Bayles, "Brookhaven," 75-81, and Charles B. Moore, "Biography And Reminiscences of The Hon. Selah B. Strong," *The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, 4 (April 1873): 50; for John W. Lawrence, see Margherita A. Hamm, *Famous Families of New York* (2 vols., New York, 1901), I: 229, 240, and Annie T. Lawrence, "Family History of the Townsend and Lawrence Family of Long Island," Townsend Lawrence Collection (New York Historical Society), 117; for John T. Bergen see Teunis G. Bergen, *The Bergen Family; or the Decendants of Hans Hansen Bergen* (New York, 1860), 111, 137-38.

10. For James Maurice, see *Brooklyn Daily Times*, 6 August 1884, 4, and *Long Island Star*, 8 August 1884, 3; for Murphy, see *D.A.B.*, s.v. Murphy, Henry C., and David McCullough, *The Great Bridge* (New York, 1972), 116; for King see *D.A.B.*, s.v. King, John A.; for Abel Huntington, see Peter Ross, *A History of Long Island From Its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time*, 3 vols. (New York and Chicago, 1903) 2: 17-8; for Ebenezer Sage, see Richard Hammond, "Ebenezer Sage of Sag Harbor: An Old Republican in Young America." *The New York Historical Society Quarterly*, 17 (October 1973), 309-25; for Frederick W. Lord, see *The Sag-Harbor Express*, 31 May 1861, 2, and Pessen, *Riches, Class and Power*, 100.

11. Pessen, *Log Cabin Myth*, 20.

12. *The American Whig Review*, XIV (August 1851): 171-5; John Lomas and Alfred S. Peace, *The Wealthy Men and Women of Brooklyn and Williamsburgh* (Brooklyn, 1897), 11.

13. For Stranahan, see *D.A.B.*, s.v. Stranahan, James; Ross, *History of Long Island* 2: 1-7; for the creation of Prospect Park and Stranahan's part in it, see Donald E. Simon, "A Plan for All Seasons: The Design of Brooklyn's Prospect Park," *LHJ* 3 (Fall 1990), 121-135.

14. For Slocum, see *D.A.B.*, s. v. Slocum, Henry W., and Lyman Horace Weeks, ed., *Prominent Families of New York* (New York, 1897), 511; for White, see *D.A.B.*, s.v. White, Stephen V., and Ross, *History of Long Island*, 2: 20-22; for Israel Fischer, see *New York Times*, 17 March 1940,

- 48, and Samuel P. Abelou, *History of Brooklyn Jewry* (Brooklyn, 1937), 291-96.
15. J. Evans to Charles Lanman, 6 July 1861, Box 1 Folder 183, Charles Lanman Collection; Henry R. Stiles, *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History, And Commercial And Industrial Record of the County of Kings...New York, From 1683 to 1884*, 2 vols. (New York: W. W. Munsell, 1884), 2: 719-20.
16. *New York Times*, 13 February 1873, 5; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 13 February 1873, 3.
17. For Kinsella, see *D.A.B.*, s.v. Kinsella, Thomas, and Stiles, *County of Kings*, 2: 1185-87; for Denis Hurley, see *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 27 February 1899, 1.
18. Harold C. Syrett, *The City Of Brooklyn, 1865-1898: A Political History* (New York, 1944), 13-16, 242-43.
19. For Charles C. Bennett see *New York Times*, 4 January 1885, 2, and 26 May 1914, 11, and *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 25 May 1914, 1; for Edmund H. Driggs see *New York Times*, 29 September 1946, 62, and Edward R. Driggs, *Driggs Family History: Book One, Beginnings in America* (Salt Lake City, 1959), 94.
20. See *D.A.B.*, s.v., Chittenden, Simeon, and the *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, 20 (April 1889), 40; *D.A.B.*, s.v., Woodford, Steward L., and *Brooklyn Eagle*, 14 February 1913, 13; for William Wallace see *Brooklyn Daily Times*, 4 September 1901, 1.
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22. *New York Times*, 26 May 1947, 5, 12; David Black, *The King Of Fifth Avenue: The Fortunes Of August Belmont* (New York, 1981), 693-94.
23. *New York Times*, 3 October 1936, 17; *New York Herald Tribune*, 3 October 1936, 12; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 3 October 1936, 11.
24. For the rusticity of nineteenth-century Queens and Suffolk, see Charles Reichman, "Profile of Long Island Farms In Mid-19th Century," *Long Island Forum*, 48 (August 1985), 158-60; Grania Bolton Marcus, "Patterns Of Power In A Mid-Nineteenth Century Town: Huntington, Long Island, New York, 1848-1862" (Ph D. dissertation, City Univ. of New York, 1983), 12-89; *New York Times*, 9 July, 9, and 4 August 1882, 2.
25. For John A. Searing see *Long Island Democrat*, 9 May 1876, 2, and John A. Searing to Charles Lanman, 14 May 19??, Box 1, Folder 152, Lanman Collection.
26. For Henry A. Reeves see *Portrait And Biographical Record of Suffolk County (Long Island), New York* (New York and Chicago, 1890), 934-35, and *Suffolk County News*, 10 March 1916, 1; for Joseph Belford see *Portrait And Biographical Record*, 588-89, and *Riverhead News*, 11 May 1917, 2.
27. As does David A. Hammack in his useful study of New York City, *Power And Society: Greater New York at the Turn of the Century* (New York, 1982).

Politics As A Career for Long Island Women

By Maxine Postal

Editor's note: This "State of the Island" commentary discusses problems faced by women who run for public office. The author represents the 14th District in the Suffolk County Legislature. We encourage the response of readers with varying points of view.

Women in the United States have been empowered to vote for more than seventy years, but their proportion of elective offices falls far below that of men. Although they compose 51 percent of the population, women hold only 6 percent of the nation's highest offices, with but twenty-nine of 435 seats in the House of Representatives, two of one hundred in the Senate, and three of fifty state governors. Not one Suffolk County woman is in Congress or either branch of the New York State Legislature; only three are in the eighteen-member Suffolk County Legislature; and only one is among the county's ten town supervisors.¹ This article examines the problems of Long Island women who run for public office.

In Suffolk—and no doubt in other counties across the nation—it is harder for women than for men to obtain nomination, and even harder to win the general election. Party leaders, moneyed interests, and even women themselves tend to doubt the credibility of female candidates.

In spring 1987, the town of Babylon's Democratic Committee asked me to run for the 14th District's seat in the Suffolk County Legislature. Although well-known in the Amityville area as a trustee of School District 8, the founder of a youth athletic club, the owner of a large day-care center, and an active member of many other community-service organizations, I had taken no part in politics. I was unaware that the nomination was offered to me after others had rejected an effort perceived as futile in a town which had not polled a Democratic majority for more than one-hundred years, in a village which had never elected as trustee either a Democrat or a woman, and in which voter enrollments showed a three-to-one Republican advantage. Apparently, a woman would be nominated only when it appeared that victory was out of the question. According to India Edwards, for many years an officer of the Democratic National Committee, "If the party backs a woman you can be pretty sure they do it because they think it's a lost cause but they know they have to have some candidate."² After noting the election of women

to school boards across Long Island, I mistakenly assumed that voters now appraised candidates without regard for gender. I failed to realize that, as the population ages and tax revolt looms, the unpaid job of school-board member has become a liability to a political career. Statistics show a greater number of women than men in the lowest-salaried public positions.³

With optimism born of naiveté I accepted the nomination, anticipating a campaign financed by the party and staffed by committee people: I quickly discovered that reliance on party support would not even assure my name's reaching the ballot.

Like most successful female candidates, I started early. Women require a longer lead time than men do to accomplish the same goal of voter contacts, and without comparable financial armament. By mid-June I had invested \$1,000 of my savings to rent a store-front campaign office in a highly-visible location and to install two telephones in it. Rather than to intrude on someone's home, it is important to provide a comfortable, pleasant headquarters where volunteers can congregate and where the candidate can be reached.

Women frequently hesitate to donate their own money to their campaigns, thus manifesting reluctance to take risks. Clearly, a small sum like mine can not fund an aggressive campaign. I might present cogent positions on every issue, but voters would never know about them unless I had money to print and mail my literature. Although we scheduled a covered-dish, fund-raising kickoff late in June for ten dollars per person, the \$2,000 collected would not permit the campaign to wait for additional money until an August cocktail party. Many male candidates hold fund-raising affairs, with high admission fees, for business and professional colleagues or for service organizations like Rotary or Kiwanis. My network, like many other women's, consisted of people I knew in the fields of education and youth activity, principally housewives unemployed outside their homes. Moreover, it soon was evident that women resist making donations on a scale comparable to men's. As Ross Graham learned when she tried to run for a Manhattan assembly seat, "Women were clearly not prepared to spend as much as they would on a dress or a pair of shoes...Women don't give money."⁴

In early July, I desperately made a long list of everyone I knew, and for the next month spent two hours an evening phoning each for a contribution. I received several one-hundred-dollar checks, but most were far smaller. Eventually, I raised nearly \$5,000 but it remains a humiliating experience that I have been forced to repeat in three later campaigns. In the words of Representative Patricia Schroeder, of Colorado, who also complains that too much of her time is spent in soliciting funds, "We just fought for nickels and dimes...Our average contribution is \$7.50, so you can just imagine what time it takes...You feel like you're begging."⁵

To insure victory, female candidates must almost always recruit an army of volunteers. Pat Schroeder mustered her troops from near-by universities, and a Texas legislator, Frances "Sissy" Farenthold, brought together women who never had taken part in partisan politics. In her first race for Congress,

Elizabeth Holtzman, of Brooklyn, formed a cadre of supporters to campaign at super-markets, on subways, and elsewhere.⁶

My past diverse activities provided me with a network of friends and associates, many of whom accepted tasks. The majority of my staff was female, many with years of experience in voluntary community work, skilled at persuasion and used to working with no pay and few resources. Their addressing of flyers by hand, and conducting of telephone polls and other surveys saved thousands of dollars. Although it entailed a great deal of time and effort, door-to-door or telephone rapport with an unjaded volunteer—who often is a neighbor—is more effective than the impersonal reception of literature in the mail.

Female candidates often question their qualifications to run for office. Maurine B. Neuberger, a former United States Senator from Oregon, said that “From my own experience I have found that women perpetuate the prejudices against themselves. They denigrate their own abilities and are uncertain that they can deal with the problems of the cities, of taxation and international diplomacy.” Women also are taught that they must show humility. Neuberger pointed out that, “As young girls they are indoctrinated with the quality of modesty, but a politician has to go before the Chamber of Commerce or the Farm Bureau and say, ‘Look at me. I can do it better.’”⁷

In that 1987 campaign I felt terribly audacious in presuming to assume the responsibility of governing. I sought information on every issue, spending long hours studying power sources, solid waste disposal, health care, substance abuse, and other basic problems. However, my years in the classroom (as a teacher of fine arts in Brooklyn high schools) failed to provide me with the skill to debate, handle hostile situations, and speak with authority in public. As Karen De Crow, a former president of the National Organization of Women and a former mayoral candidate in Syracuse, warns: “If a man says, ‘Solid waste is the solution,’ and it’s not, women just aren’t inclined to say, ‘That’s not true.’ They have to learn how to confront men on substantive issues and disagree with them.” Or, as observed by Betty Friedan, the author of *The Feminine Mystique*, “political and feminine are mutually exclusive...a woman who fights for her beliefs is shrill.”⁸

I learned that running for office presents a woman with many added requirements. Certainly, her appearance and behavior are judged differently from men’s. Bars and cocktail lounges are unacceptable places for us, and a male escort other than a close relative can be an invitation to gossip. Women’s shoes are far less suited than men’s for campaigning in all sorts of weather. It is difficult for women to be warm and comfortable at 5:30 a.m. on a windy railroad platform in October without thermal underwear layered under a pair of trousers. Jewelry and cosmetics are required, but must be understated. Standard attire is a business suit, and hosiery, whether the thermometer reads 95 or 45 degrees. Margaret Heckler, of Massachusetts, conducted her first campaign for Congress wearing a grey flannel suit at every appearance.⁹

Campaigns are stressful for all candidates, but especially for traditionally under-funded women. Without adequate financing to pay for extensive

direct-mail campaigning or to purchase media time, I resorted to garnering free publicity by distributing weekly press releases; once I jogged through the district for thirty-five miles, followed by a van bearing my campaign signs. A typical day begins as early as 4:30 a.m. to visit a railroad station, and goes on until after midnight, with activities planned seven days a week—I lose twenty pounds during most campaigns.

Women who run for office face increased family pressures. Heavy scheduling leaves little time for one's spouse and children. Dinner-time is usually most effective for door-to-door voter contacts. Other members of the family must assume responsibility for meal preparation, housecleaning, laundry, and other chores usually performed by a wife and mother. Unless active in the campaign, her family sees very little of the candidate for months. Geraldine Ferraro, a former member of Congress and candidate for vice president, contends that "Men in public life have always had that kind of quiet support from their wives. But in the new world of two-career couples, not all husbands have the security and self-confidence to back their wives all the way."¹⁰

Concern that she is neglecting her family responsibilities can take a severe emotional toll on a female candidate. I recall my father's berating me for depriving my family, prompting me to remind him that were I a man he probably would praise my dedication to furthering my career. Pat Schroeder sums up this double standard, recalling that:

My husband ran for the State House two years ago, and they would tell me how nice it was to see a young wife out supporting her husband. I come back as a candidate and knock on the door, and they tell me to go home and be with my kids."¹¹

To be a "family man" is a political plus for a male, but having young children is a serious disadvantage for a female contender. Young children are negatively perceived by voters who believe that their mother should look after them instead of pursuing political office. This additional hazard leads women not to enter the public arena until their children are fully grown, thus leaving a shorter period in which to ascend the political ladder (when I first ran my sons were fifteen and eighteen, old enough to be relatively independent). Fewer than 1 percent of women in public office have children under the age of ten.¹² Most women who attain public office run for a vacant seat. It is extremely difficult to unseat an incumbent, especially when the challenger faces the additional obstacle of being female. The three women in the Suffolk County Legislature all were first elected to open seats—Rosa Caracappa, in District 4; Sondra Bachety, in District 12; and myself, in District 14.

Once in office, a woman must work especially hard to build credibility with her colleagues. Her legislative committee assignments are often limited to the field of health and human services, and she is denied access to those which consider budget, finance, law enforcement, defense, or public works. The assumption is that her interest and comprehension are restricted to issues relating to children, women, and families. Geraldine Ferraro had to fight to win a spot on

the prestigious House Budget Committee, and former United States Senator Margaret Chase Smith waited five years after her election to the House of Representatives before achieving her goal of serving on the House Naval Affairs Committee. Rep. Martha Griffiths became the first woman elected to the powerful House Ways and Means Committee in 1962, after an eight-year effort.¹³

Female politicians are usually handicapped by exclusion from the fellowship and camaraderie exploited by males to develop loyalty and reciprocal voting. In the Suffolk County Legislature, many important agreements are reached when male legislators go out for drinks together after meetings are adjourned. "Women are on the outside when the door to the smoke-filled room is closed," lamented Millicent Fenwick, a former New Jersey legislator and director of Consumer Affairs.¹⁴ Denied the perks of "brotherhood," women rely on their own effectiveness to pass legislation.

As women move into mainstream politics in increasing numbers, the percentage of female Long Island office holders lags far behind that of men. Although nowadays it is more the exception than the rule, the two-parent nuclear family with the "little woman" who stays at home is still the ideal of the voting public. Many Long Islanders may agree with former President Richard M. Nixon's advice to a thirteen-year-old girl who wanted to go into politics: "You're too pretty, you'll probably get married instead."¹⁵

NOTES

Editor's note: Maxine Postal wrote this article before the start of the 1991 campaign for the Suffolk County Legislature. The LIHJ went to press too soon to know the outcome of Legislator Postal's bid for re-election against her Republican opponent, Joan Scariati, in a rare case of both major parties' naming women to run for the same position.

1. An excellent source of data pertaining to women in public office is the Center for the American Woman and Politics at the Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08901.
2. Peggy Lamson, *Few Are Chosen: American Women in Political Life Today* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968), xxii.
3. Susan Tolchin and Martin Tolchin, *Clout, Womanpower and Politics* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1973), 65.
4. *Ibid.*, 85.
5. *Ibid.*, 191.
6. *Ibid.*, 196; Peggy Lamson, *In the Vanguard: Six American Women in Public Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), 78.
7. Lamson, *Few Are Chosen*, xiii.
8. Tolchin, *Clout*, 96.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Geraldine A. Ferraro, *Ferraro, My Story* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1985), 55.
11. Tolchin, *Clout*, 88.
12. *Ibid.*, 89.
13. Ferraro, *Ferraro*, 53; Lamson, *Few Are Chosen*, xxv, 11.
14. Tolchin, *Clout*, 14.
15. *Ibid.*, 15.

History in the Making: Hampton Hills and Land Preservation in Suffolk County

By Carolyn A. Zenk

In April 1989 the county of Suffolk purchased a 1,641-acre tract known as Hampton Hills, in the town of Southampton. This article examines this largest and perhaps most controversial purchase ever made by the county, from the point of view of the Group for the South Fork [the Group], an organization devoted to the protection and preservation of land in the towns of Southampton, East Hampton, and Shelter Island. The author, a former environmental analyst, is employed by the Group as its in-house counsel.

Without an adequate supply of pure drinking water, no society can achieve greatness, much less survive. Here on Long Island, the drinking water for the 2.6 million people of Nassau and Suffolk is obtained not from reservoirs but solely from the consolidated layers of sand and gravel beneath our feet,¹ which the Environmental Protection Agency has designated a “sole-source aquifer.” The quality of these reserves is directly linked to the intensity and nature of development above them. If industries discharge toxic wastes above ground, or if farmers apply poisonous pesticides, these chemicals can find their way into the drinking water supply.²

The most critical part of our water supply is contained beneath the pine barrens, into which water discharges most deeply into the water supply, remains the longest, and has the most profound effect on other parts of the water system. The area is extremely important for several reasons. First, because the remaining 100,000 acres of pine barrens in central and eastern Suffolk constitute the largest contiguous, largely undeveloped tract of critical watershed land on the Island, the water supply beneath it is relatively pristine. Second, because much of the water that eventually ends up in other parts of the system begins here, the quality of water emanating from this area, like the quality of water at the headwaters of a stream, determines the quality of numerous parts of the water system, including water contained in our inland wetlands, streams, rivers and bays.³

In recognition of the vital importance of this water supply, in 1987 the Suffolk County Legislature passed a Drinking Water Protection Program, shifting a 1/4 percent sales tax levied to pay for the Southwest Sewer District to the purchase of thousands of acres of land above the pine barrens water supply.⁴ This article examines the largest purchase made under that program.

Field-Checking the Site

It was a windy day in June 1988, one of those brisk, clear days that seem to reach out to eternity and touch it. Yet another subdivision had come before the town of Southampton's planning board for approval. As one of the Group's environmental analysts, my job was to field-check the site and review the record. At 1,641 acres, Hampton Hills was the largest subdivision ever proposed in Southampton town—the developer, Barry Beil, planned to build 307 houses.⁵ The parcel was of particular concern to the Group because it lay at the heart of the pine barrens over some of the deepest portions of the groundwater aquifer. Furthermore, it was composed of the sandy Carver Plymouth soil association usually found on moraines,⁶ through which pollutants easily wash to the groundwater below. Hampton Hills also contained the seventy-acre Wildwood Lake, one of the Island's few large freshwater bodies still fit for swimming and fishing, as well as part of the Dwarf Pine Plains, one of the few such ecosystems on the planet.

I located the site and walked down a trail toward Wildwood Lake, shimmering blue amidst the green of the pines. As I stood on the bluff overlooking the lake it was hard to imagine three hundred new houses breaking the silence of the trails and the wind. "We can not lose this beautiful place," I resolved.

Preparing for the Hearing: A Question of Design

With Hampton Hills slated for a hearing before the Southampton Planning Board on 14 July 1988, time was of the essence. As the property was of enormous environmental importance, the board needed the environmental impact statement required by the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act. At first glance, the developer's subdivision design seemed relatively good, attempting to lessen environmental harm by utilizing the "cluster" concept. This legal tool empowers the government to require the developer to cluster future home sites to one side, leaving the rest of the property in permanent open space. Under the law, the developer's "yield" (the number of houses he can build) remains the same. The plan left about 70 percent of the site in open space by reducing the size of house lots, and by clustering the proposed houses between Wildwood Lake, to the north, and an existing golf course in the middle of the tract. The Dwarf Pine Plains, in the southern half of the site, were left untouched. The open space was preserved in a relatively large, contiguous block, a valuable design criterion that environmentalists encourage. Contiguous open space supports a greater variety and number of species than do fragmented pieces of open space, because less "edge" is exposed to development pressures. For example, a long, narrow, open piece can be developed along its entire length, leaving wide, interior sections of open space undisturbed.⁷

However, analysis revealed serious problems. The proposed plan to locate hundreds of septic systems adjacent to Wildwood Lake and its "area of influence" was bound to cause serious problems. A modest buffer was

planned along the lake front, but septic system effluent and runoff from the roads—major sources of contamination—would end up in the lake and spell its demise. Similar practices forecast the ecologic doom of numerous lakes on Long Island, including Lake Ronkonkoma, Artist Lake, and Belmont Lakes.

To place several hundred septic systems in this fragile area posed a problem, not only for the water quality of Wildwood Lake but also for the Peconic Bay Estuary System, into which the lake drains. The Peconic labored for years under the burden of the “brown tide,” so named because it turned blue water brown. Between 1985 and 1988, this pico plankton bloomed so feverishly that it choked out nearly all life in the bay’s ecosystem. The condition became so serious that skin divers and fishermen began to call the previously fertile body of water “the great wet desert.” Numerous scallopers and fishermen already were driven from business. Some believed that the scourge was connected to the sort of pollution that Hampton Hills would only increase.⁸

The site design was problematic for other reasons. Hampton Hills contained valuable aboriginal remains, on top of which the developer’s plan located future houses. The area was occupied or used from at least 3500 B.C. until European contact in the A.D. 1600s, making it one of the longest-utilized sites on Long Island. Furthermore, the majority of formally studied pre-historic sites on the Island are on or near the coast. Hampton Hills provided a rare opportunity to study an inland aboriginal site with a freshwater orientation. Lastly, the site was in good condition, while similar sites had been plowed under by farmers or plundered by artifact collectors. Hampton Hills presented a unique opportunity for study.⁹

The majority of Suffolk’s residents depend on the water beneath their feet for a drinking water supply. Land use above that supply directly affects the quality of groundwater below. Hampton Hills contained the most vulnerable and valuable part of the groundwater system—the groundwater divide—running through the site’s middle-to-northern portions. If clean water were recharged at Hampton Hills it would cleanse the system on its way north to the bay, or south to the sea. If contaminated, that water would poison the same area. Houses, lawns, and septic systems were planned on top of this divide.

Problems with the Environmental Impact Statement

Not only did the subdivision design pose problems, but the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was substandard and failed to comply with legal requirements. The Environmental Quality Review Act requires that developers perform a “hard look” (meaning thorough analysis) of environmental concerns in the EIS; that reasonable alternatives to the proposal be included; that environmental harm be lessened; and that, consistent with social, economic, and other essential considerations, the most environmentally protective design and mitigation measures be undertaken. Despite these requirements, the species inventory was poor, failing to include fundamental scientific data. The species living on the site were unknown, and their habitat requirements were lacking. Instead, the EIS guessed at what species might be found there, based on

vegetation. It was unclear whether the archaeological data was thorough because much of it was concealed elsewhere. Key alternatives were missing; in spite of the crucial significance of the site, its importance to groundwater, potential recreational value, and that several million dollars were immediately available for its purchase, no alternative acquisition was explored. Hampton Hills qualified for preservation under Suffolk's 1/4 percent sales tax program, an aquifer protection program unique in the nation.¹⁰ In 1987 and 1988 referendums, voters had shifted the 1/4 percent sales tax levied to help pay for the Southwest Sewer District toward purchase of land in the pine barrens, to ensure available drinking water for all generations to come. The measure, passed by an overwhelming 90 percent, was hailed as a landmark victory by preservationists. In a time of fiscal hardship, voters twice chose to tax themselves to save the pine barrens and the water supply beneath them. The EIS did not include an alternative that provided a generous natural buffer around the lake, despite the importance of an open lake front for wildlife habitat, recreation, beauty, and as a buffer for water quality.

The Hampton Hills Hearing

We detailed our concerns in an eight-page document dated 22 July 1988, which I presented to the planning board. In addition, the Group hired an archaeologist, Peter Dunham, to review the archaeological data. Dunham told the board that he was profoundly concerned that the methodology used to examine Hampton Hills was fundamentally inadequate, and that the individuals who performed the archaeological work lacked the credentials required under state and U.S. Department of the Interior standards. He recommended that a preservation alternative be pursued, especially because of the site's potential significance.¹¹

I presented the Group's concerns about the site's layout and the inadequacies of the EIS. Suffolk County Legislators Steven Englebright, a geologist, and Fred Thiele, an attorney, echoed many of our concerns and emphasized the vital importance of the site. They asked the board to ensure that the final EIS, to be prepared as a result of the hearing, examine the possibility of the county's purchasing the parcel. They told the board that Suffolk County Executive Patrick G. Halpin intended to buy the parcel, presenting a letter from him to that effect.¹² Speaker after speaker emphasized the significance of the site, making it clear that Hampton Hills was an integral part of an even larger greenbelt in the pine barrens. Yet the planning board seemed unconvinced of the need to change anything or to obtain further information. We remained hopeful that the presentations had made a difference.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement

Several weeks later, our worst fears were confirmed. The final EIS, prepared by the town, left the original plan intact and addressed public comments in cursory fashion. I went to Town Hall for a third time to inform a key planner about the Group's special concern with the gaps in the

archaeological record. The planner replied that the problem was insolvable because it was simply a battle between the experts, with ours saying one thing and the developer's (who never produced any credentials) another. I emphasized that the town need only confer with the state to confirm which expert was correct. The town took no further action on these matters. On 9 March 1989 the planning board approved the second, or preliminary, subdivision map without changing the design.¹³

Deciding Whether to Go to Court

The situation was critical. The subdivision design was about to solidify in a manner that spelled the end of Wildwood Lake and possibly of the archeological site. The underlying data base remained incomplete. We could wait until the developer was given a final approval on the map, but that could prove fatal. Certain rights can vest after preliminary approval is granted,¹⁴ and the law was unclear as to whether the Group would be barred from suing on the final map if it failed to sue on the preliminary map. In addition, the statute of limitations is only thirty days in cases against the government—as opposed to five-or-ten years in other actions. If our papers were not received by the court before the deadline we would be barred from any remedy.¹⁵ The Group had to act fast.

Our only remedy was to bring a special court action known as an Article 78 proceeding,¹⁶ a difficult decision to make. We knew that a more thorough review by the planning board would yield the necessary environmental data as well as a superior design, yet our being right would not be enough to win the suit. Legally, the Group had to prove not only that our assessment of the case was correct, but also that the board had acted “arbitrarily and capriciously.” This would be difficult, especially because the developer proposed to “donate” 70 percent of the open space created by clustering housing units around Wildwood Lake.

Preparing the Case

First was the matter of experts. Who would provide the data to show that had the Planning Board done the thorough analysis required by law, the data base would be substantially different, and that a different design would result? Larry Penny, an ecologist and former Group staff member, now the natural resources director for the town of East Hampton, was hired to assess the impact of the Hampton Hills development on species as well as on Wildwood Lake and the Peconic Bay Estuary System. John Cryan, a specialist on the subject, was engaged to assess the impact of the development on pine barrens' ecology. He had served in a successful series of similar cases in Albany, known as the Pine Bush cases, which revealed the richness and diversity of wildlife on the site. Hampton Hills supported game species, including the ruffed grouse, American woodchuck, black duck, and wood duck; such threatened and endangered species as the red-shouldered hawk (there are fewer than five breeding pairs on Long Island), and the osprey; and rare species, including the black-crowned night heron, common loon, buck moth, spotted turtle, and spotted salamander.

Marilyn England, an ornithologist, and Karen Blumer, an environmental activist, were brought on board to assess the affect of the development on the northern harrier (marsh hawk), a threatened species known to frequent the site.¹

The subdivision record, more than a foot-and-one-half thick and weighing more than forty pounds, generally supported the Group's position, while many of the planning board's advisory agencies recommended the pursuit of an alternative plan.¹⁸ The archaeology record was harder to obtain. It should have been available under the Freedom of Information Act, but the planning department had removed it from the files. In the meantime, our archaeological scholar withdrew from the case a few days before the action had to be filed. Apparently, he was over-extended with other projects, and also feared damage to his career should he be overly critical of the developer's plans or of government officials.

Hours before the deadline, I called Peter Dunham to re-enlist his services. Although he had to attend a conference in Atlanta in two days, he drove down from Albany, prepared and typed an affidavit, and returned to Albany in time for his flight. His eleventh-hour involvement lent a bit more last-minute suspense to an already overwrought drama.

The experts went to work, most of them *pro bono*. My legal research over the past few months reduced the time needed for preparation. Material was express-mailed nightly to our out-of-house counsel in New York City, David Neufeld, the attorney of record on the case. Early in the week, we conferred by phone and later met in New York to put the papers together.

The suit alleged that the Planning Board failed to perform the legally-required thorough analysis of the environmental impact on Wildwood Lake, on archaeological resources, and on wildlife habitat, including that of threatened and endangered species. The petition alleged that the board failed to include all reasonable alternatives in the Environmental Impact Statement, among them the acquisition alternative. as well as one which left a meaningful natural buffer around the lake. Acquisition was particularly reasonable, the petition contended, because special legislation had made available county money to purchase the site immediately. The petition maintained that information on archaeology was illegally withheld in violation of the Freedom of Information Act. Lastly, the Group argued that the planning board had to consider the cumulative impact of Hampton Hills on the ecology of the pine barrens, in conjunction with other developments pending in that area. We called the court's attention to a Southampton Town Board resolution of 28 March 1989 that authorized a generic (general environmental) review of the barrens in the western part of the town, but left out Hampton Hills, the largest and most significant parcel. Our last legal argument was based on a series of cases from the Albany area which successfully argued the same point for a much smaller pine barrens area.¹⁹ Given the gaps in the information base, the planning board could be brought to task on any of the causes of action, each of which had a solid foundation in law and fact. The Group for the South Fork sued the Southampton Planning Board on 7 April 1989.

Fall-Out

Despite the merits of the case, the development community and the local government yelled “foul.” The suit was frivolous, they claimed, intended solely to buy time for Suffolk County to purchase the site. In an unorthodox maneuver, the planning board passed and released to the press a special resolution accusing the Group of abusing the SEQRA process by “ambushing” government after the fact with new material. The resolution was interesting because our staff repeatedly brought the same issues to government’s attention—once at the hearing, once in writing, and, finally, in a private interview.

The weeks that followed were torturous. Some members of the media and the development community distorted or failed to report the facts; many who covered the story either neglected to read the legal papers or simply did not understand them. A great deal of our staff’s time was spent undoing poor press reports with releases informing the media of the merits of the case. The development community was particularly threatened by the Hampton Hills suit, perhaps confounded by the large “donation” of land proposed; their own proposals had no such “donation.” The Long Island Builders’ Association went so far as to set up a debate between the developers, the planning board, and the Group for the South Fork. The notice for the event promised a lively debate, stating that “More than dinner will be served up hot.” The builders made it clear that they opposed the suit. But before sending out its flyers, the Association forgot to take one key step—to invite our organization. (As we were engaged in litigation, we would not have attended in any case).

Several editors and developers argued against the increasing public sentiment to purchase Hampton Hills. “Why buy what you can get for free?” they asked. This proved a serious stumbling block. The statement referred to the developer’s plan, which, by clustering houses at Wildwood Lake, could keep hundreds of acres of pine barrens clear. Because development rights were removed from this area, the land was effectively sterilized from further development. Once development rights were transferred off this property and put around the lake, it made good sense for the developer to “donate” the open land. In this way, he and future residents could avoid additional taxes or liability. The Group’s rebuttal was that under Southampton’s town code, the planning board legally was required to “save” 65 percent of the area by clustering on any subdivision in that district—known as the Aquifer Protection Overlay District. The developer’s plan to “save” 70 percent of the site was redundant, because the law required it.²⁰ The developer did not give up the rights to a single house lot; the logical conclusion of his argument was that none of the 1/4 percent sales tax should be spent in Southampton, because 65 percent of a site would be “saved” in any case. Moreover, 83 percent of the electorate voted to preserve these kinds of open spaces, regardless of whether they could be clustered. To cluster an equal number of houses, along with their septic tanks, above the water supply would not protect groundwater quality.

We argued that the water supply under the pine barrens was analogous to that of an open reservoir. Merely to anchor boats (i.e., build houses) at one end

of that reservoir without reducing their number, while allowing the release of septic waste into the water, would not ensure the purity of drinking water supplies. Also, the cluster design eventually would destroy Wildwood Lake. Ironically, a 1976 Park Advisory Study performed by the natural resources director in Southampton town advised against further development in the area. We attacked the “why buy what you can get for free argument?” by warning of open space fragmentation. All open spaces are not created equal. Our pine barrens expert, John Cryan, set forth in his affidavit the theory of island biogeography as it related to Hampton Hills. The heart of the argument is that species diversity and abundance are best maintained where contiguous open habitat is preserved, rather than interrupted, by development. By imposing a huge development in the heart of relatively undeveloped land, far too much “edge” (areas contiguous to development) would be exposed to disturbance, more species destroyed and lost. For example, a large, circular, piece of wildlife habitat is far more valuable than isolated rectangular pieces. Hampton Hills rested at the heart of several magnificent public land holdings, including Cranberry Bog Park and the Department of Environmental Conservation’s Sarnoff Preserve. It was part of some of the Island’s last contiguous, open, forested areas. Complete preservation rather than clustering was the only way to maintain its ecologic integrity.

The barrens stretch as far as the eye can see, a rare occurrence these days on Long Island. It is important to acquire rather than cluster the pieces. From an ecological perspective, it means greater species abundance and diversity, a sure sign of ecological health. Purchase of the site would enable the preservation of an essential ecological niche at Wildwood Lake, a niche unavailable elsewhere on the site. As Larry Penny’s affidavit emphasized, certain species could live only in close proximity to Wildwood Lake. The developer’s argument, which assumed that all open space was the same, failed to consider that the cluster plan, which completely ringed Wildwood Lake with development, would cut numerous species off from their water supply. Contiguous open space, uninterrupted by suburban housing tracts, would also mean that a near-wilderness experience could be available in this area—an experience rapidly fading from the Long Island mindscape as well as its landscape. In the final analysis, the open space at Hampton Hills was not free at all.

The County Executive’s Office

The county executive pressed for the purchase of Hampton Hills. Emphasizing the site’s importance, Patrick G. Halpin’s letter of 14 July 1989 asked the Southampton Planning Board to include the acquisition alternative in the Environmental Impact Statement. Clearly, the site was crucial, for reasons mentioned above and because of its pivot allocation at the heart of hundreds of acres of remaining pine barrens, near large tracts of already preserved state and county lands. Its acquisition would complete a missing link of open space. When the developer steadfastly refused to sell, the county doubled its efforts.

Pine Valley Comes into Its Own

The developer, Barry Beil, faced additional legal and political problems from a newly-formed village, Pine Valley. Almost all of the Hampton Hills subdivision was within its jurisdiction; in fact, most of Pine Plains was Hampton Hills. Press reports rumored that the village was formed by developers for developers, and that its incorporation was solely for the downzoning of sections of the town of Southampton. Battle lines solidified, with Hampton Hills at the eye of the storm, as usual. Two trustees of the fledgling village—Joseph Colao and Vincent Scandole—resolved to fight against overdevelopment and to preserve as much as possible. To both the Group and the developer, Pine Valley represented something akin to a wild card.

Most of the hard-working, deeply concerned citizens had no civic experience, let alone that of founding a new village. One wild story after the next emerged. The new government operated in a resident's basement for a while. Pro-development forces attempted to push through a new master plan in less than a week. Shouting matches were common. At one point, the situation came to blows when an allegedly pro-development person shoved a public official, who turned around and hit him.

Pine Valley wrangled with the town of Southampton, arguing that the village's approval was necessary before Hampton Hills could go forward, because the subdivision was partially within its jurisdiction. Pine Valley argued that by continuing to process the Hampton Hills application, the town planning board violated a moratorium halting development. On 13 April 1989, the developers sued the village, contending that it lacked the authority to stop the town of Southampton from approving the development.²¹

The Pine Barrens Society, dedicated to protecting the pristine water supply beneath the pine barrens, energetically gathered support in Pine Valley for the purchase of Hampton Hills. The Society strongly believed that Hampton Hills represented one of the most important parcels of land to acquire in Suffolk County; Richard L. Amper Jr., its energetic executive director, rallied citizens to the cause. The Society collected letters and signatures, attracted media attention by its involvement with the new village, and stimulated political support for the preservation of the site.

An Early Victory

After a 19 April court decision allowing developers to intervene in the suit, the owners of the Hampton Hills property, the town of Southampton, and the Group for the South Fork were all embroiled in the litigation.²² Judge Donald Kitson was assigned to the case. During a heated discussion in chambers, the attorneys for the town and the developer inferred that the Group brought the suit to delay development. While it is proper to bring a meritorious case which results in some delay, it is unethical to bring a suit solely for that reason. The Group objected to the charge. Both the town and the developer moved to dismiss the action on procedural grounds, which would avoid addressing the merits of the case. Ironically, the developer's

motions delayed the case considerably. The lawyers argued that the Group had no “standing” (right to appear in court); that the information brought to the court’s attention was “new” and the Planning Board never had a chance to address it; and that the Group must wait for a final decision on the subdivision, and could not sue on the earlier preliminary, or second, map.

On 17 October 1989, Judge Kitson decided against the motion to dismiss the case, ruling against the respondents on every major argument.²³ The Group won a major victory; the decision repudiated the planning board’s contention that the suit was without merit, and that it had been ambushed with new material. The case would be decided on its merits, after all. The judge’s decision lent further strength to our position as well as to the public perception that Hampton Hills was worthy of maximum protection.

The Pine Barrens Review Commission Gets Involved

A turning point was a well-attended hearing in Hampton Hills before the Pine Barrens Review Commission. If this body decided against the design, and the Suffolk County Planning Commission concurred, the decision could be overturned only by a majority-plus-one vote of the Southampton Planning Board. More than one hundred people attended the hearing, many carrying placards calling for preservation of Wildwood Lake and the pine barrens. Speaker after speaker called for the land’s protection, citing the importance of fresh drinking water and open spaces. The hearing presented a colorful medley of community concern, with only a few opposed to preservation.

When the Pine Barrens Review Commission unanimously denied the map as designed, declaring that it was “unacceptable and extremely harmful to the environment,” the news spread like wildfire in *Newsday* and the local press. The political ramifications of the denial cannot be overstated; it sharply stimulated support for the public purchase of Hampton Hills. The Suffolk County Planning Commission’s subsequent override of the denial reinstated the original map, an anticlimactic reversal far outweighed by the sentiment generated in favor of preservation.

In the meantime, the very existence of Pine Valley came into question. To be or not to be was the local refrain. A referendum calling for abolishment of the new village was hotly debated. Paradoxically, the faction that initially opposed formation of the village, alleging that it was formed by developers for developers, became its strongest proponent. In particular, Joe Colao and Vincent Scandole saw a new and better opportunity to protect Hampton Hills by implementing zoning regulations. The faction originally in favor of forming the village did an about-face and advocated disincorporation. The ramifications of the existence of the village for the Hampton Hills site were enormous. The village was developing a master plan and zoning code which could mean either further preservation of the Pine Barrens by means of upzoning, or possible destruction of the landscape by downzoning, depending on who was in control. All too often, at least according to the press, it seemed that no one was in charge.²⁴

On 20 March 1990, in a hotly contested referendum, the citizens of Pine Valley voted to disincorporate the village and return the prodigal son to the town of Southampton. However, this adventure in self-government left that part of the town in a legal quandary. Some contended that Pine Valley had no zoning, others that Southampton's zoning ruled, and still others that newly adopted zoning was in place.

Victory

The Hampton Hills saga ended abruptly. After eighteen months of negotiation, the county, helped by the Nature Conservancy, closed a land deal with Barry Beil through his attorney, William Esseks. The developers finally relented, exactly why only they can say. Certainly, they faced tremendous obstacles, including two lawsuits, a public fiercely devoted to preserving the site, a determined county executive's office, and a sagging real estate market. Finally, an attractive offer probably made the difference; the county purchased 1,423.37 acres of the property, at an average price of \$10,924 per acre, and, to preclude future development, also bought the development rights for a 209-acre core area that included a golf course.²⁵ Real Estate Commissioner Joan B. Scherb was instrumental in the transaction; Kevin Law, an assistant to the county executive, also played an important role.

The Hampton Hills purchase, together with other acquisitions in the pine barrens, totaled more than \$72 million. Of more than 4,700 acres of pine barrens acquired under the Clean Drinking Water Protection Program, Hampton Hills, in the words of Patrick G. Halpin, was "the largest and far away the most important purchase the county has ever made in its land acquisition program because of its size, habitat, and ecologic value."²⁶

On 20 April 1989, the day following the event, *Newsday* featured the purchase as its cover story. "This Land Is Your Land" read the caption, above an aerial photo of thousands of acres of open pinelands. Dozens of citizens, officials, environmental groups, and the developers themselves applauded the purchase amidst assorted flags and congratulatory placards. Standing on top of what seemed like the world that day, on the crest of a hill with a sea of green all around, I could not help but feel that it truly was our land.

Epilogue

There remain 100,000 acres of the Island's central pine barrens; of these, the fate of 42,000 acres involved in proposals for development is at stake. In a court proceeding initiated by the Long Island Pine Barrens Society against Suffolk County and the towns of Brookhaven, Riverhead, and Southampton, the Society argued that the 224 developments pending across these 42,000 acres had to be comprehensively analyzed rather than studied piecemeal, to ensure the quality of the water supply beneath the pine barrens and the entire pine barrens ecosystem. On 30 November 1990, Judge Paul J. Baisley of the New York State Supreme Court ruled against the Society. The Society has appealed to the Appellate Division of the State Supreme Court, in Brooklyn;

Richard L. Amper Jr. is optimistic that the judge's "circular decision" will not be sustained.²⁷

(*Editor's note: this issue went to press before the appeal was heard in September; for information on the outcome, write to Richard L. Amper, Jr., Long Island Pine Barrens Society, P. O. Box 429, Manorville, NY 11949.*)

NOTES

1. Group for the South Fork, *Groundwater Management A Handbook for the South Fork* (Bridgehampton: Group for the South Fork, 1982; reprint, 1985).
2. The Environmental Defense Fund, the Long Island Pine Barrens Society, the Brookhaven Land Resources Council, and the Group for the South Fork, *The Long Island Pine Barrens Last Stand* (n.p.: n.p., 1987).
3. *Ibid.*
4. Suffolk County Code, Article XII, Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Program C12-1 [Added 7/14/87 by Local Law No. 40-1987].
5. "Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Hampton Hills," on file at the Southampton Town Planning Board's office, Main Street, Southampton, filed under Hampton Hills, containing numerous details concerning the proposal.
6. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Soil Conservation Service, *Soil Survey of Suffolk County*, New York, April 1975.
7. The original subdivision design is at the Southampton Town Planning Department, Southampton Town Hall, in a file entitled "Hampton Hills"; the Open Space Law, Chap. 247, Southampton Town Code, section 247-8 G, requires that "where a parcel is located in Residence Zone CR-200 ...and is in the Aquifer Protection Overlay District, at least 65 percent...of the parcel shall be preserved."
8. See the affidavit of John Cryan, a pine barrens expert, in *Group for the South Fork vs. Planning Board of the Town of Southampton*, index number 89-7229 Supreme Court of the State of New York, County of Suffolk Index No. 6655/89, filed 7 April 1989.
9. For the environmental impact of septic systems and road runoff on the water quality of Wildwood Lake and the Peconic Bay Estuary System, see the affidavit of Larry Penny in the Group's suit; for the impact of development on archaeological resources, see the affidavit of Peter Dunham, a qualified archeologist, *ibid.*; New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR), Part 617.6 (g)(2)(iii)(1987); 6 NYCRR 617.14 (f)(5) (1987); 6 NYCRR 617.9(c)(4) (1987); 6 NYCRR 617.9 (c)(3) (1987).
10. Suffolk County Code, Article XII, Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Program C1 1 [Added 7/14/87 by Local Law No. 40-1987].
11. Exhibit 3, Dunham affidavit, *Group for the South Fork* suit, 17 July 1988; Exhibit 2, *ibid.*
12. County Executive to Planning Board, Exhibit J, *Group for the South Fork* suit, 14 July 1988.
13. The Final Environmental Impact Statement is in the Hampton Hills file, Planning Dept., Southampton Town Hall.
14. The New York Court of Appeals recently settled the question in Index #90-7141; applicants must sue after preliminary approval or lose their right to sue.
15. The Civil Practice Law and Rules provides that proceedings against bodies or officers must be undertaken as Article 78s at §7801 through §7806.
16. Town Law §282 of the New York statutes.
17. For the expert analysis for Hampton Hills, see the affidavits in the *Group for the South Fork* lawsuit.
18. The record for Hampton Hills is in the Planning Department, Southampton Town Hall.

19. See *Group for the South Fork* lawsuit.
20. The Open Space Law is in Chapter 247, *Southampton Town Code*.
21. *Hampton Hills v. Village of Pine Valley*, New York State Supreme Court, index 89-8290.
22. *Group for the South Fork v. Planning Board of Southampton*, New York State Supreme Court, 89-7229, 2 May 1989.
23. *Ibid.*, 17 October 1989.
24. "Panel Opposes Pine Barrens Project," *Newsday*, 9 August 1989; "Panel Evaluated," *Newsday*, 7 September 1989.
25. Suffolk County Executive, press release, 19 April 1990. The golf course remained private, but up to 160 Suffolk residents would be able to play on Mondays, the day that public courses were closed.
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Long Island Pine Barrens Society v. Planning Board of the Towns of Brookhaven et.al.*, Supreme Court, County of Suffolk. Index #89122885 (30 November 1990); Index 89/22885, 30 November 1990, Office of Suffolk County Clerk, Riverhead; Richard L. Amper, telephone interview, 17 July 1991.

Political Journalism in the 1790s: *Frothingham's Long Island Herald*

By Steven R. Coleman

Frothingham's Long Island Herald, published in Sag Harbor from 1791 to 1798, was the first and, during its tenure, the only newspaper on Long Island. The *Herald*, its sponsor, Henry Packer Dering, and its printer-editor, David Frothingham, deserve a place in the history of American journalism.

This article examines the history of the paper in terms of Dering's control of its policy, as he and Frothingham moved from Federalist to Republican leanings.¹ It focuses on the editorial stance of the paper as it reacted with alarm to crises overseas and increasingly sympathized with Jefferson's vision of a democratic America.

A prominent feature of the American press in the 1790s was its development as an organ for the Federalist and emerging Republican parties. Most of the *Herald's* news reports dealt with Franco-British rivalry, a conflict that provoked anxiety, mistrust, and fears of conspiracies in the newly-formed United States. The successive uplifting and savage stages of the French Revolution aroused first the highest hopes and then the deepest fears of America's founding generation. Assessing these tensions, the historian, Paul Goodman, comments that,

If the French were defeated, Republicans believed, England would tyrannize the oceans and undermine American independence... [Federalists] regarded England primarily as the bulwark against the spread of Gallic influence and the key to the nation's economic health.²

The Federalist and the Republican Parties competed for public support:

Men's positions in the social structure shaped their responses to the events of the decade...the complex array of entrenched officials together with the older families and their professional and mercantile allies, led the Federalist party.³

Threatened by the specter of revolt of what they perceived as the common rabble, the Federalists held that only by an alliance with England could they protect their social standing, prosperity, and political authority. The *Herald*, however, is witness that Jefferson's appeal extended to some of the established elite, who accepted the Republican platform and refused to entrust their future to an alliance with Britain. Henry Packer Dering, the

patron responsible for the publication of the *Herald* in Sag Harbor, was a member of a well-placed mercantile family who gradually parted ways with the Federalists and endorsed Republican policy.

According to Harry D. Sleight, a Sag Harbor historian,

His grandfather, Henry Dering, in partnership with Thomas Hancock, the uncle of John Hancock, and others, was the first to introduce the manufacture of paper into New England and was granted the sole privilege of manufacturing it there.⁴

His father, Thomas Dering, moved to Shelter Island when his wife, Mary Sylvester, inherited the Sylvester mansion with its twelve-hundred-acre farm. A "successful and respected farmer," Thomas Dering made loans to prominent people on Shelter Island, Sag Harbor, and Southampton, totaling approximately 2,500 pounds sterling. He was a member of the New York Provincial Congress, and a delegate to the Poughkeepsie convention to draft the state constitution. He and his friends, Jonathan Havens, of Shelter Island, and David Gelston, of Bridgehampton, were at the center of the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary political structure of eastern Suffolk⁵ As the second son, not directly in line to inherit the manor on Shelter Island, Henry Packer Dering was sent to Yale College in preparation for a career befitting his social position. Opportunity came his way in 1790, when Congress designated Sag Harbor as an official port of entry, and he was appointed collector. Alexander Hamilton, as Secretary of the Treasury, was in charge of the Customs Service. Knowing that collectors would wield considerable influence in the seaports of America, Hamilton was determined that they agree with his Federalist policies. Although his criteria for appointment to federal positions included a candidate's reputation for integrity (in contrast to the often corruptible and ineffective customs officers under the Articles of Confederation),⁶ these jobs also enabled Hamilton to reward influential backers of the Constitution.

His appointment as collector launched Dering's career both in the national government and in the growing maritime trade of Long Island. The prestige of being the sole local official of the federal government, appointed by the venerated George Washington, enhanced his status in Sag Harbor. To a community with an economy based on maritime trade, the importance of the official who licensed vessels, inspected all cargoes, and collected duties and tariffs can hardly be overstated. As the volume of trade increased and the Customs Service expanded, collector Dering exercised his authority to appoint inspectors, gaugers, measurers, and boatmen.

As shown by the editorial tone of the *Herald*, Dering believed in a strong federal government, responsive to the needs of Long Island's farmers, fishermen, mariners, merchants, and other working people. He endorsed an unfettered maritime trade as critical to the prosperity of the Island and the nation. Committed to these policies, he decided to sponsor a newspaper in which he could promulgate the benefits of the new constitutional govern-

ment, as well as lobby that government on behalf of his fellow East Enders. Within a year of his appointment, he began his negotiations to establish a newspaper in Sag Harbor.

Such a venture was not unique. According to one historian of early country newspapers,

A man of some means who had investments in the new country, who was interested in politics, or who was the principal citizen in the growing community, might employ a printer and provide an establishment to serve his purposes.

From the Stamp Act crisis through the Revolution, the press “taught the political organizers and the manipulators of public opinion how useful newspapers could be to them.”⁷ A newspaper would be an ideal vehicle for Dering to promote the fortunes of both the East End of Long Island and the central government, and in so doing solidify his own position of influence.

With the assistance of a coterie of influential East Enders, Dering induced David Frothingham, a journeyman printer in New York City, to come to Sag Harbor. A tavern keeper’s son born in Charlestown, Massachusetts, Frothingham served his apprenticeship in Boston during the years of the Revolution. Considering that his relatives, and the Boston press, supported the patriot cause with vigor,⁸ it is likely that he took an anti-British political point of view.

This would have been welcomed by Dering, whose family, among many others, fled its Long Island homestead during the British occupation. In the words of Beatrice Diamond,

In 1778, Governor Tryon and 1200 [British] soldiers traveled from one end of the Island to the other and took all the cattle, grain, and provisions that lay in their path...The estimated loss to Long Islanders as a result of the British occupation was one-half million dollars.

John Foster, one of the few Sag Harbor fishermen who did not escape and used his ship as a privateer preying on the British fleet, “lost a ship worth \$10,000 that was destroyed by the British.” Losses at the Dering farm included 3,500 cords of wood, a principle export of Sag Harbor.⁹

Having arrived in Sag Harbor without personal resources, Frothingham was dependent upon his patron for his material needs and for his introduction to the community. Correspondence indicates that to set himself up in business, the printer-editor negotiated with his sponsor for lodgings for himself and his wife, a print shop, and firewood. He augmented his income by selling books and stationery, printing religious tracts and ships’ log books, and offering binding services. His and Dering’s shared family roots in Boston, and their similar political sentiments helped to foster a mutually beneficial relationship. Thus began the patron-printer partnership which produced the first newspaper on Long Island, commencing on 10 May 1791.¹⁰

The writing and editing of a country newspaper in the eighteenth century

was primarily a job of compiling items from larger domestic or foreign papers, adding contributions and letters from local citizens, setting them in type, and laboriously printing copies for the few hundred subscribers.¹¹ The task which distinguished the printer from a mere mechanic was deciding which items to include. With the development of an opposition press early in Washington's first administration, there were clearly articulated editorials available on both sides of all issues. In addition, frequently arriving English, French, and Dutch newspapers provided a variety of opinions concerning the extraordinary events in Europe, and diplomatic affairs between the old and new worlds.

Frothingham printed the *Herald* on a single sheet, which when folded produced a conveniently held four-page, eight-by-seventeen-inch paper. The three columns per page (a four-column format was used briefly in 1797), contained no headlines as we know them, but bold-type headings broke up the vertical space by introducing **European News**, **American Affairs**, **Sagg Harbour** (the old spelling of Sag and the English-style spelling of harbor), and others. Anonymously contributed essays, also headed in bold type, ranged from **Moralist** and **Philanthropist** to **Humorist**. Advertisements exhibited the printer's most graphic creativity, with numerous type styles and sizes, liberal use of bold type, and the picture of a ship to illustrate advertisements of sailings between Sag Harbor and New York or New London. The paper's durable, rag-content paper stock withstood the handling of every issue by many people.

Pages one through three were devoted to foreign, domestic, and local news, in that order. Events abroad, especially in the critical year of 1795, captured the lion's share of the space, with advertising, poetry, and anecdotes mainly relegated to page four. Frothingham interspersed news reports with colorful items, offering his readers the vicarious thrills of murders, executions, accidents, and reports of hostilities between settlers and Native Americans in the Territories. Amusing incidents and commentary from abroad included a report on a six-mile foot race in Ireland between a sixty-year-old woman and a twenty-four-year-old man (won by the woman), and the following assessment of George III of England:

...former Kings of England usually kept FOOLS for the amusement of themselves and their ministers. Being a rigid economist, it is suspected that his present majesty is determined to spare the drained purses (*sic*) of his subjects, by playing that part HIMSELF.¹²

The *Herald's* editorial column was a journalistic innovation of growing popularity.¹³ This feature appeared on page three beneath the heading, "Sagg Harbour." The expression of opinion, unsigned but not attributed to any other paper, represented the editor's viewpoint. Because Frothingham was dependent upon his patron, the editorials reveal Dering's political ideology. The "Sagg Harbour" column, and the articles taken from other papers, indicated the issues which caused his shift in "party" affiliation.

Excerpts from the first months of publication affirmed support for

Washington's administration in general, and for Hamilton's bold economics in particular. The statement that "superior light and information appear to direct the public mind" in a government "whose administration has immediately realized the best wishes of the friends of our country, and opened the brightest prospects for posterity"¹⁴ reflected Dering's enthusiasm for George Washington's first administration. The *Herald* supported Hamilton's fiscal program, based on the federal government's assumption of debts incurred by the states and the Continental Congress during and after the Revolution.

After the compromise of 1790¹⁵ paved the way for enactment of Hamilton's agenda, the *Herald* declared that, "this is one of the many proofs of the wisdom and enlightened mind of the officer who first recommended that measure." The paper gave a further vote of confidence to Hamilton by observing that America's "revenue laws [are] so well regulated that at the close of the first two years experience of her new constitution, she found in the public treasury...a million of dollars towards the discharging of the public debt."¹⁶

However, the *Herald* did not endorse the administration's pro-English foreign policy. While not averse to trading with Britain—"perhaps a commercial treaty might be beneficial to both"—it pleased him that "America at present can well dispense with the service of other nations in the carrying trade." A report from Liverpool, reprinted from a Jamaica paper, boasted that on 23 June 1791, there were twenty U. S. flag vessels bound for America, compared with only five flying the British flag. The *Herald's* antipathy for Britain was shown by its sarcastic treatment of the reopening to Americans of trade with the British West Indies:

When the West Indians find they cannot exist any longer, without the assistance of the Americans, they are graciously pleased to condescend so far as to allow the Americans free liberty to enter their ports, with provisions, to keep them from starving!!¹⁷

Five weeks later the paper sounded a pro-French note by printing the first instalment of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*, and the following extract from a French paper, *L'Argus Patriote*:

Having lived to see the liberty of the press expire in England, it is with peculiar pleasure I can tell you, that I have also lived to see it revive in France. The carcass indeed I have left behind me in England, for worms and insects to gnaw upon, and have come to rest upon a renovated body, which I here find to be in every respect salutary...

To express support of France at England's expense—a position at odds with that of Dering's superior, Hamilton — foreshadowed the Republicans' break with the Federalists over this issue. But later that year, the *Herald* again reflected the Federalist fear of the Jacobins. A report of the massacre at Verdun of 4,000 suspected enemies of the French Republic concluded: "Thus the difficulties of France increase from enemies without, and misconduct within...Americans! beware of a spirit of licentiousness."¹⁸

Hostility toward Britain was not Dering's only divergence from Federalist doctrine. He also strongly believed in Jefferson's agrarian ideal. From its inception, the *Herald* promoted the concept of the yeoman farmer as the bulwark of the new republic. In the first issue, an essay "On Agriculture" sings the praises of husbandry, an indispensable occupation through the ages, "even practiced by WASHINGTON, the Cincinnatus of modern ages." The article urges farmers to be industrious, frugal, and temperate, asserting that they are the "pillars of society." Five months later an editorial expounded upon the Western Territory's potential, if kept "from the grasp of unprincipled land-jobbers":

What an asylum for the oppressed! Divided upon agrarian principles, what multitudes may here find freedom and support. America "opens wide her arms to embrace millions, and waits to crown all the industrious and virtuous with plenty and happiness.

The passage is reminiscent of Thomas Paine's stirring lines in *Common Sense*: "O ye that love mankind! Ye that oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth...O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind."¹⁹ It illustrates Dering's departure from the viewpoint of Hamilton and the Federalists.

Dering pursued additional patronage positions. Friends in Congress advised him on pending appointments, and to whom applications should be made. After an unsuccessful bid for the position of excise officer in 1791, his opportunity came in 1794 with the establishment of a route connecting nine new Long Island post offices, one of which was Sag Harbor.²⁰

Since colonial times the conveyance of newspapers was largely accomplished by mail, with many of them published by the town postmasters. Some of these were printers, while others hired or sponsored printers to produce the papers. Postmasters were in a position to oversee (and control) the process of news gathering, as virtually all items were received through the mail through newspaper "exchanges" with other publishers, or by the perusal of personal correspondence. Postmasters, who could deliver free of charge to subscribers by using their franking privileges, were sometimes accused of interfering with the distribution of what they considered to be objectionable newspapers.

Postmaster General Timothy Pickering, according to Carl E. Prince, was the man "most responsible for establishing the political criteria that came to govern post office appointments." On the recommendation of David Gelston, he awarded the job of postmaster of Sag Harbor to Henry Packer Dering.²¹ Prince contends that Pickering, aware of the power of the press to influence public opinion, often selected Federalist editors of newspapers as postmasters. In 1794, Dering and the *Herald* were thought of as administration supporters. By garnering the only other federal patronage plum in Sag Harbor, Dering increased his prestige and power; he now controlled jobs and contracts related to both the postal and customs services.

He also invested in private businesses. According to notices in the *Herald*,

he acquired shares in the town wharf. As all ships paid docking and loading fees to the proprietors of the wharf, this investment added to Dering's ties with Sag Harbor's maritime enterprises. He entered into partnership with John Fordham in the largest general store in the village, for which he ran full-column advertisements in the *Herald*, and he held the mortgage on Frothingham's press and office. In addition to his government posts and commercial interests, Dering was clerk to the town trustees, a trustee of the Presbyterian Church, a member of the public school committee, and the executor and administrator of many estates.²²

Dering's position at the center of the political, economic, and social life of Sag Harbor enhanced his value to the Washington administration. He no longer depended on any one member of the government as the source of his patronage. All these factors enabled Dering to flex his political muscles when United States policy seemed, by 1795, to threaten not only Long Island's well-being but the existence of the nation.

The escalating war between Britain and France endangered American seamen and merchant vessels. Searching for deserters, the crews of British warships boarded United States vessels, often beating American sailors and pressing them into the Royal Navy. In June 1793 Britain declared a blockade of France that included wheat and other products supplied by American merchants via the French West Indies. A British raid in December captured 250 American merchant ships in the Caribbean and took them to British ports for condemnation, at an enormous loss to the American owners.²³

The administration's response to Britain, culminating in November 1794 with the signing of the Jay Treaty, was viewed by the French as a violation of American neutrality and drew the United States close to war with France.²⁴ There are no extant copies of the *Herald* for the period between the confiscations of American vessels in 1793 and Jay's return home in mid-1795; however, by then Dering's paper no longer toed the Federalist line.

Britain's arrogant actions and failure to make concessions in the Jay Treaty, added to the appearance of an alliance between the United States and England at the expense of France, were too much for the *Herald*. The forced evacuation by patriots, and the ransacking of their Suffolk County homes by the British army of occupation, were not forgotten, as in this editorial written during the spring of 1795:

...shall free and enlightened republicans of this new world...be deceived...into a disgraceful alliance with one of those free-booting monsters;...at the moment when his dying struggles cannot be hid from the world? **Does there exist an independent America so lost to all recollection of the past conduct of the British government**, as to place the least reliance on that deathbed repentance, so suddenly produced by the terror of the French bayonets? No, it cannot be!...an injured public shall insist on sequestration as the only pacific measure for securing ample and speedy justice to the injured individuals, and grossly insulted government of the United States (emphasis added).²⁵

Federalists and Republicans attacked each other in the press, slinging mud at personal reputations as well as at national policies, with no concern for truth or accuracy. Yet, although critical of the administration, the Herald was not a completely Republican organ. While the editor's sympathies were clear, Frothingham sometimes made good his repeated promise of impartial presentation of news. For example, as the Senate debated ratification of the Jay Treaty, the front page of the 8 June 1795 *Herald* reprinted a letter from "Franklin" to the editor of the *Independent Gazetteer*, in Philadelphia:

[Britain] is the nation of brokers in treachery and blood, on whose honor and humanity we have built our hopes of security and peace! The federalists...are beginning to lament the attachment which the people discover for the French republic...although the people are on the side of France, our administration is on the side of Great Britain!! Citizens of America...your only security depends upon France, and by the conduct of your government, that security has become precarious.

Yet the same front page reports the New York City Union Society's celebration welcoming John Jay back from London.

On 6 July, the "Sagg Harbour" column published the fifteen toasts offered at the local Fourth of July festivities. Of strongly Republican sentiments, they reflected prevalent fears and high emotions. Glasses were lifted to:

1. The United States of America
2. The President of the United States - may he never lose sight of the cause for which he fought, and led forth his countrymen to victory...
4. Republic of France; may she be victorious in the cause of liberty...
10. May the combination of ancient Tories and modern Aristocrats be defeated.
11. Eternal alliance between all free republics.

To the citizens of Sag Harbor, the threat to democratic government came from the aristocratic element, whether foreign (British) or domestic (Federalist). Dering and his fellow townfolk, sharing the "widespread belief in the essential frailty and impermanence of republican governments,"²⁶ feared for the independence of their nation. They aligned themselves with France for economic, as well as ideological reasons.

In colonial times, two of the Northeast's main exports were dried fish to the West Indies in exchange for rum and molasses, and whale oil used to light the streets of London.²⁷ After the Revolution, England barred American ships from trading with its West Indian colonies, and imposed prohibitive duties on American whale oil. To replace these lost markets, Sag Harbor's merchants traded with the French. Paul Goodman points out that in Massachusetts "The economies of both the fishing communities and the whaling towns, with their largest markets in the French empire, required peaceful ties with the new French Republic." Similar ties, coupled with the memory of the British

occupation, made Suffolk County a stronghold of Republicanism in New York state. It did not hurt that in February 1791, when he was Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson petitioned Congress, albeit unsuccessfully, to aid and protect the whaling and fishing industries.²⁸

The *Herald's* pro-French, anti-British editorials were not its only expression of Republicanism. The paper again took issue with abuses in the distribution of the public domain. It advocated the Jeffersonian ideal of yeoman farmers settling the wilderness, with the government receiving fair value for land sales. Both Republican and Federalist politicians and businessmen engaged in land speculation, but in speaking both for the small farmer against the monied interests, and for a morally responsible government, Dering reinforced his Republican ideology.

"Cautious Hints to Congress Respecting the Sale of Western Lands," a pamphlet reprinted in the *Herald*, advised Congress to follow Connecticut's method of selling land. It urged division of the public domain into two-hundred-acre lots, to be surveyed and valued, with the values posted for six months, after which the government would sell them at public auction for not less than their assessed value. Lots not settled within a limited time would revert to the government; no grants would be issued until the terms were complied with.²⁹

By the middle of the decade, the language of the press reached such a frenzy that even George Washington was dealt with ignominiously. Despite his Farewell Address, with its warning against factionalism, party warfare raged. Compared with the vituperative polemics of many papers, the *Herald* was probably seen as moderate, an important factor after John Adams's election as President in 1796. The new administration sought to stifle the voice of the opposition, employing as one of its methods the removal of critics from government jobs. According to one historian, Adams's "appointment ideology was primarily aristocratic in nature," advocating the selection of college-educated, propertied men with life-time, and even inheritable, tenure. Given these criteria, one would expect Adams to leave Dering in office. Yet Republicans were removed wholesale from the customs and postal services. Dering's association with Jonathan Havens, then serving in Congress, was well known; In a letter to Dering, Havens refers to Federalists as "a party of Men capable of imposing upon the people by an almost infinity of Lies."³⁰

Dering, a skilled politician, retained his federal appointments in spite of his break with the Federalists. Perhaps the scales were tipped his favor by his entrenchment in Suffolk County. Knowing that he had to carry New York to be re-elected in 1800, Adams tried to win over the influential Dering, or at least not offend Suffolk County by removing him from office. Adams narrowly lost New York and the Presidency; it is not known for whom Dering voted, but the issue was moot because of the *Herald's* demise two years before the election.

Toward the end of the decade, when his career was at a critical point, Dering's strategy was to reduce the visibility of his views, particularly in

light of the next move by the Adams administration. The Alien and Sedition Acts, passed in 1798, attempted to silence the stridently critical Republican press. Charges of libel and sedition were brought against publishers, and convictions, obtained in courts presided over by Federalist judges and stacked with Federalist juries, resulted in the closing of the most prominent opposition papers.³¹ Given this witch hunt by an increasingly paranoid administration, it was not a mere coincidence that the *Herald* ceased publication on 17 December of the same year.

Two days later Frothingham attended the rally at Bridgehampton that marked "the start of the Presidential campaign for Thomas Jefferson on Long Island." There he accepted an offer from Aaron Burr to come back to New York City and run the presses of the *New York Argus* for the widow of its publisher, Thomas Greenleaf. As foreman of the *Argus*, Frothingham earned eight dollars a week. By promoting state legislation permitting Burr to charter a bank in competition with Hamilton's Bank of New York, the *Argus* earned the enmity of the former Secretary of the Treasury. Hamilton took his revenge on 9 November 1799 by having Frothingham arrested for libel for a letter, reprinted in the *Argus* on 6 November, accusing Hamilton of attempting to suppress the publication of the Philadelphia *Aurora*. Although defended during his well-publicized trial by Brockholst Livingston, a subsequent Supreme Court justice appointed by Thomas Jefferson, the jury found Frothingham guilty. Judge Radcliffe, a former Federalist assemblyman, then sentenced Frothingham to four months in Bridewell prison, and a fine of one hundred dollars. After his imprisonment, Frothingham vanished from history. His conviction, coupled with sedition charges pending against its publisher, Ann Greenleaf, forced the *Argus* to close.³²

Dering did not bring out a new Sag Harbor paper until 1802, when the Republican party was firmly in office. At that time, his correspondence revealed his insistence that subsequent printer-editors espouse Republican politics. For the next twenty years, interrupted only by the War of 1812, Dering successively sponsored Selleck Osborn's *Suffolk County Herald* (1802-1803), Alden Spooner's *Suffolk Gazette* (1804-1811), and Samuel Seabury's *Suffolk County Recorder* [which became the *American Eagle*] (1816-1820), as a mirror and mold of public opinion in Sag Harbor.³³ Dering remained collector of the port as well as postmaster of Sag Harbor until his death in 1822.

Henry Packer Dering's name rarely appeared in the *Herald*, and then only in his official notices as clerk or trustee of a civic body. But his influence over the paper, as patron, postmaster, and lienholder on the press was predominant. This well-to-do manipulator, an accomplished wielder of patronage, used his paper to promote a mercantile, Republican ideology rooted in eastern Long Island. His career is proof that among Long Island's moneyed elite of the 1790s were firm believers in Jefferson's vision of opportunity for farmers, mechanics, and merchants.

The most significant aspect of the press of the late eighteenth-century was

its idea-centered content. Newspapers were primarily forums for the presentation and debate of concepts such as democracy, republicanism, parties, policies, independence, and morality. Events reported, domestic or foreign, "were often prompted by or used as a basis for discussing ideas." An event-centered orientation did not characterize the press until the 1850s.³⁴

Guided by Dering, the printer-editor, Frothingham, met his responsibility to his readers. The *Herald* for eight years encouraged and reflected the growing Republican sentiments of Suffolk County. As part of the democratic revolution that carried Jefferson to the Presidency, Dering and Sag Harbor prospered. True to its motto, the *Herald* courageously aspired to

Eye nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise.³⁵

NOTES

1. The term Republican refers to the opposition to the Federalist Administrations which began with the formation of Democratic-Republican societies in 1793, and solidified into the party backing Jefferson in the election of 1800.
2. Paul Goodman, *The Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964), 71-73.
3. *Ibid.*, 75.
4. Harry D. Sleight, *Sleights of Sag Harbor. A Biographical, Genealogical and Historical Record of 17th, 18th, and 19th Century Settlers of Eastern Long Island and the Hudson Valley in the State of New York* (Bridgehampton: Hampton Press, 1929), 95.
5. *Dering Genealogy from 1135*, Dering Papers, Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities (SPLIA), L70.2; list of outstanding bonds dated 1750-1768, *ibid.*; Benjamin F. Thompson, *History of Long Island*. 2nd ed., 2 vols. (New York, 1843) 2:7; for the Poughkeepsie Convention, Havens, and Gelston, see Luise Weiss, "The Election of Long Island Delegates to the New York State Convention to Consider the Federal Constitution," *LIHJ* 1 (Fall 1988): 71-80.
6. Sag Harbor was a port of entry before independence, with John Gelston, of Bridgehampton, serving as collector both for the Crown and the Continental Congress from 1778 until Dering's appointment in 1790 (George A. Finckener, Sr., "Sag Harbor History" (Sag Harbor, 1980), n. p.; Carl Prince and Mollie Keller, *The U.S. Customs Service. A Bicentennial History* (Washington D.C.: Dept. of Treasury, 1989), 35.
7. Milton Hamilton, *The Country Printer. New York State, 1785-1830* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1936), 54. Hamilton cites Dering as an example, as well as Judge William Cooper and Captain Charles Williamson as patrons of newspapers in Cooperstown and Genesee, New York. See also Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History: 1690-1960*, 3rd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 107.
8. David Frothingham to Henry Packer Dering, 7 February 1791, East Hampton Free Library, Morton Pennypacker Long Island Collection, No. KR23; Beatrice Diamond, *An Episode in American Journalism. A History of David Frothingham and His Long Island Herald* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1964); Isaiah Thomas, *The History of Printing in America*, 2 vols. (Albany: Joel Munsell, 1874). Dering's nucleus of friends included state senators David Gardiner, Jr. and David Gelston, Dr. Ebenezer Sage, and the Rev. Samuel Buell.
9. Harry D. Sleight, *Sag Harbor in Earlier Days. A Series of Historical Sketches of the Harbor and Hampton Port* (Bridgehampton: Hampton Press, 1930), 193-95; Diamond, *Episode*, 26-29; Sylvester Dering to his aunt in Nova Scotia, 15 July 1783, SPLIA Dering Papers. For the patriot evacuation, see Frederick Gregory Mather, *The Refugees of 1776 from Long Island to*

Connecticut (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1972).

10. Diamond, *ibid.*, 38-40, 80-83.

11. For the technique of late eighteenth-century newspaper printing, see Rollo G. Silver, *The American Printer 1787-1825* (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1967).

12. *Herald*, 6 December 1792.

13. Mott credits Noah Webster with the creation of the editorial column in the "American Minerva" (*American Journalism*, 153).

14. *Herald*, 25 October 1791.

15. In a deal struck among Hamilton, Madison, and Jefferson, in exchange for locating the national capital on the Potomac River the four representatives from the affected districts of Maryland and Virginia switched from opposition to support of Hamilton's plan for federal assumption of debts incurred by the states.

16. *Herald*, 20 December 1791.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, 9 February and 6 December 1792.

19. *Ibid.*, 10 May and 25 October 1791; Thomas Paine, *Common Sense and The Crisis* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1960), 42.

20. George Storers to Col. William Smith, John Adams's son-in-law, who was the revenue service supervisor in New York City, 14 May 1791, typewritten copy at John Jermain Memorial Library, Sag Harbor; John L. Kay and Chester M. Smith, Jr., *New York Postal History: The Post Offices and First Postmasters from 1755 to 1980* (State College, PA: American Philatelic Society, 1982), 250-62, 314-24.

21. Carl E. Prince, "The Federalist Party and the Creation of a Court Press, 1789-1801," *Journalism Quarterly* 53 (Summer 1976): 238; Letter to Sebastian Bauman, signed C.B., at General Post Office, Philadelphia, 25 September 1794, National Archives Record Group 28, 492-93.

22. Sleight, *Sleights of Sag Harbor*, 90-91; mortgage between David Frothingham and Henry Packer Dering, et. al., 1 February 1797, East Hampton No. KR23.

23. Forrest McDonald, *The Presidency of George Washington* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1974), 135-36.

24. Chief Justice John Jay, sent by Washington as a minister plenipotentiary to London, negotiated compensation for seized American vessels, trade concessions with Great Britain, and withdrawal of British troops from the Ohio Territory. The resulting improved trade agreement between the U.S. and Britain, coupled with Britain's continued right to seize even provisions as 'contraband' from American ships, infuriated the French.

25. *Herald*, 25 May 1795.

26. John R. Howe, "Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790s," *American Quarterly* 19 (1967): 154.

27. Edward Byers, *The Nation of Nantucket. Society and Politics in an Early American Commercial Center 1660-1820* (Boston: Northeastern Univ. Press, 1987), 140.

28. Goodman, *Democratic-Republicans*, 118; William Palmer, "The Whaling Port of Sag Harbor" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1959), 50-52.

29. *Herald* 13 April 1795.

30. Sidney Aronson, *Status and Kinship in the Higher Civil Service* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964), 7; Carl E. Prince, *The Federalists and the Origins of the U.S. Civil Service* (New York: NYU Press, 1977), 11; Jonathan Havens to Henry Packer Dering, 19 December 1796, EH No. (x)DG 36.

31. The *Aurora* in Philadelphia, the *Argus* in New York, and the *Independent Chronicle* in Boston.

32. Diamond, *Episode*, 50. For Frothingham's trial see *ibid.*, 50-67; Francis Wharton, ed., *State Trials of the United States During the Administrations of Washington and Adams* (Philadelphia: 1849), 649-51; and James Morton Smith, "Alexander Hamilton, the Alien Law, and Seditious Libels," *Review of Politics* 16 (July 1954) 305-333.

33. William S. Pelletreau, "Southampton," in *History of Suffolk County* (New York: W. W. Munsell, 1882), 38. Pelletreau incorrectly assumed that Frothingham sold the *Herald* to Selleck Osborn in 1802; for Dering's role as patron of succeeding papers, see Selleck Osborn to Henry Packer Dering, 9 December 1801, 4 February 1802, 24 February 1802, 14 April 1802, and 5 May 1802, EH No. KR23; Hamilton, *Country Printer*, 58, 180-81; and a note signed Alden Spooner 1 March 1811, EH No. RF 260. In 1822 Dering corresponded with printers to sponsor yet another paper (Thomas Miller to Henry Packer Dering, 19 June 1822, EH No. KR23).

34. Hazel Dicken-Garcia, *Journalistic Standards in Nineteenth-Century America* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1989) 71-82.

35. The quotation from Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Man* (1733-34) was printed under the masthead of the *Herald*.

Henry George: America's All-But-Forgotten Economist and His Relevance for Long Island

By Stan Rubenstein and Gerald McGuirk

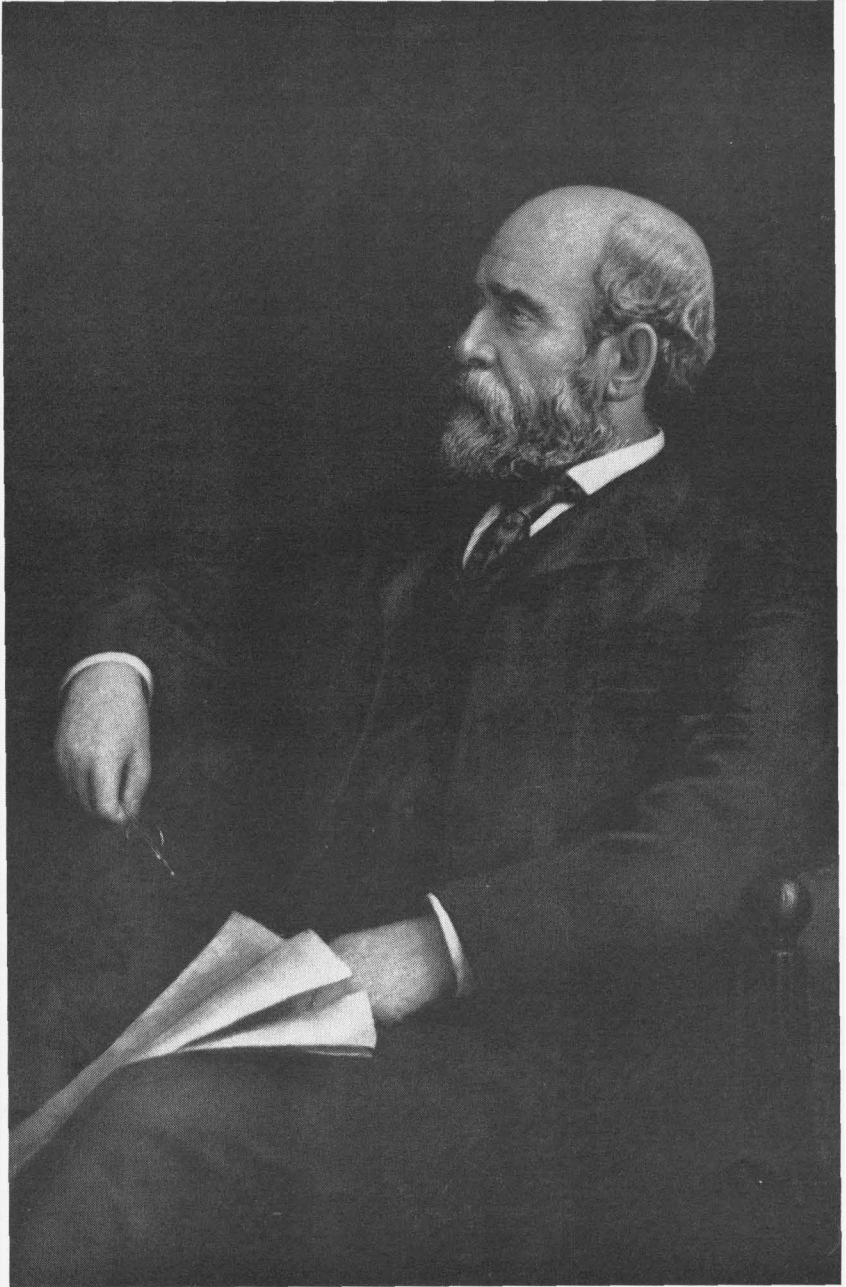
Henry George addressed his master work, *Progress and Poverty*, "To those who, seeing the vice and misery that spring from the unequal distribution of wealth and privilege, feel the possibility of a higher social state and would strive for its attainment."¹ The passage characterized the economist and reformer whose speeches, books, and articles influenced tens of thousands during the late nineteenth-century. Our article traces the teachings of this seminal thinker who called the nation's attention to the unwarranted presence of poverty in the midst of potential abundance. It examines the man and his message, his relevance for the present, and the Long Island school that promulgates his philosophy.

Henry George was born in Philadelphia in 1839. A venturesome lad, he sailed as a cabin boy to the Pacific Ocean as early as 1855, making port in Australia and then in India, where he was struck by the chasm that separated rich from poor. This early experience planted in his mind the theme that became a moral crusade: Why, in the face of advancing wealth, did there remain great pockets of need and poverty amongst the masses of humanity?

George settled in California in 1858, becoming a printer, free-lance writer, and newspaper editor. In 1871, he wrote *Our Land and Land Policy*, a pamphlet that was the forerunner of *Progress and Poverty* (1879). His thesis was that monopolization of land was the primary source of injustice; that speculation and holding of land from use denied opportunity to the many; and that increases in land values, from which individual landholders benefited, derived from increases in population (growth of communities) and productive uses of land (creation of wealth).²

George continued his crusade with more writings as well as with lecture tours of the United States, Great Britain, and Ireland. In 1886 he ran for mayor of New York City, finishing second in a three-man race (a promising new Republican contender, Theodore Roosevelt, finished third). He died eleven years later during the course of a second mayoral campaign; almost a century later, his ideas are still disseminated by the unique school which bears his name.

Modeled on the national and international school founded in 1932 in New York City, the Henry George School of Long Island was established in 1967 by its founder and current director, Stan Rubenstein. Its purpose is to foster public understanding of economics, with emphasis on the doctrines of the Classical



Henry George

economists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Thomas R. Malthus, and John Stuart Mill.³ In the light of George's analysis, the school examines the discrepancy between civilization's ability to produce and its failure to deliver concomitant benefits to humanity, with attention to current versions of this anomaly's causes and cure.

Forbidden by its charter from engaging in politics, the school promotes its ideas by offering adult education courses and other activities in more than twenty Nassau and Suffolk school districts and libraries. Adults who complete the initial course may proceed to a second course that interprets the national debt, foreign trade, and other contemporary problems according to Geogist principles. The school conducts seminars and radio talks on the property tax, as well as a series of free lessons to high school social studies classes and adult education groups on the role of land, free trade, and George's place in history.

Following the Civil War, the blossoming of American industry transformed the national economy. Powered by federal land grants and an intense desire to link the country from coast to coast, the building of railroads progressed rapidly, as did consolidation of lines, with the major companies swallowing up the trunk lines. As railroads consolidated, other industries followed suit. Between 1870 and 1880, John D. Rockefeller's control of the oil refining industry escalated from 10 to 90 percent of the total. His counterpart in the steel business, Andrew Carnegie, controlled an ever-larger portion of steel produced in the United States. Monopolies, trusts, and pools were the practice of the day, with trusts triumphant in meat packing, sugar refining, tobacco, and a host of other economic endeavors. Competition differed from pre-Civil War business practice. The 1870s and 1880s experienced revolutionary change in industrialization, urban growth, the development of unions, and the relationships among capital, labor, and government. As a few large companies in each major industry sought domination of their respective fields, the competitive edge was found in greater efficiency and control of the market through alliances in the form of trusts, and, when the trusts came under legal and legislative attack, by means of holding companies. This period of developing managerial skills was featured by corporate system building, a task successfully carried out by industrial magnates and their ingenious lawyers.⁴

The trend toward concentration of ownership in the hands of profit-motivated corporations profoundly influenced Henry George, whose experience led him to consider another, and, to him, an even more important phenomenon. Because of increased industrialization, an exodus from farm to city was inevitable. With its growing dependence on rail transportation, and its profit margin reduced to a minimum, the agricultural sector's portion of the gross national product decreased in importance. In 1873, the United States experienced its first industrial depression—which lasted six years—bringing with it economic problems on an unprecedented scale. Mass

unemployment, lower wages, poverty, and homelessness resulted. Labor and industry seemed poised for a massive struggle. The railroads endured the great strike of 1877, a dispute that led to the killing of some workers and was a harbinger of things to come. Workers reacted to these developments by joining unions by the tens of thousands, through which a new dimension in labor relations entered their lives.⁵ The search for the cause of these conditions— increased poverty and diminishing wages amid ever increasing production of wealth—became an abiding passion for Henry George.

As conditions worsened for particular segments of the population— notably farmers, and then workers—organization became the means for attempting to reverse the tribulation of the times. Farmers formed groups such as the Granges, whose main purpose was to influence state legislatures. With the Knights of Labor and particularly with the birth of the American Federation of Labor in 1886, labor unions became part of movements seeking remedial legislation at all levels of government. The reform movement also included the Farmers' Alliances, the Populists, and a host of disparate groups campaigning for expansion of the democratic process in general and the eight-hour day, woman's rights, temperance, and land and currency reform in particular. There were also assorted versions of socialism from evolutionary to revolutionary, including Nationalism, the movement inspired by Edward Bellamy's novel, *Looking Backward* (1888); the incipient socialist party led by Eugene V. Debs, the Marxist Socialist Labor Party, and sections of the First International, all proclaiming that only government ownership could tame unrestrained capitalism. In this turbulent milieu Henry George, with his large following, emerged as a vital force, his philosophy and economic ideas offering "to discontented workers, farmers, small capitalists, and intellectuals an alternative to Marxian Socialism that promised social justice while preserving the old individualism."⁶

Progress and Poverty, written in 1879, represented the essence of George's economic philosophy. It explored the causes of poverty, particularly in a civilization where productive forces were increasing rapidly. For civilization not to come to grips with this dilemma, he felt, was to court disaster. He wrote in his Introductory, called "The Problem," that:

This association of poverty with progress is the great enigma of our times. It is the central fact from which spring industrial, social, and political difficulties...It is the riddle which the Sphinx of Fate puts to our civilization and which not to answer is to be destroyed.⁷

George's methodology was that of the Classical school of economics. Unlike today, when much of economic thinking revolves around the supposedly value-free description of phenomena and governmental fine-tuning thereof, the classicists attempted to identify natural laws of economic behavior. George's brand of political economy stemmed from two axioms that are fundamental to economics and hence to human nature: first, that people seek to satisfy their desires with the least amount of effort; and

second, that human desires are unlimited. As in mathematics and the scientific disciplines, axioms are often self-evident, and so it is with these two. Nevertheless, many less obvious principles of economic behavior can be deduced from them.

George placed great stress on the precision and consistency of definitions, as he sought to resolve a problem which, in his judgment, rendered political economy incapable of accomplishing its mission. He began by defining wealth, the principal concept and reason for the study of economics:

Wealth, as alone the term can be used in political economy, consists of natural products that have been secured, moved, combined, separated, or in other ways modified by human exertion, so as to fit them for gratification of human desires.⁸

This definition leaves little room for subjective interpretation. For George's work to receive scientific approbation, precision was essential. Therefore, the only meaning of wealth would be material produced by human labor, satisfying human desires, and having exchange value. That did not mean that wealth was the same everywhere, but the definition clearly stated what things were and were not wealth.

Central to George's thesis was the emphasis on land and the search for economic laws that pertain to it. George accepted and used the conventional division of the factors of production—the ingredients needed to produce wealth—into three distinct parts: land, labor, and capital. The avenues of distribution—how wealth was divided—included rent, wages, and interest. Since land played a dominant role in George's thinking, the search for a law of rent received major attention. George identified an economic concept of land which is essentially different from common usage. Land, he said, encompassed all of nature, excluding people and their products. The oceans, mineral resources, virgin forests, wild animals, the air above, and even outer space were all defined as land in his political economy. In other words, land was everything in the universe that was not labor or wealth.

George used "the term rent, in its economic sense, to distinguish that part of the produce which accrues to the owners of land...by virtue of their ownership." This differs from the common meaning of paying rent for the use of buildings or machinery. These are capital, and the payment for their use is interest. Capital and labor are active elements in the production of wealth, land is the passive element. Rent or land value, which represented no intrinsic aid to production, said George, gave the landowner power to extract part of the produce. Where free land is available, equal in value to other lands, no one will pay rent for it; rent arises only when valued land is occupied. From this, George derived his first law of distribution—the law of rent: "The rent of land is determined by the excess of its produce over that which the same application can secure from the least productive land in use."⁹

His next step was to discover the basis for wages and interest, a relationship which he presented algebraically as: "Produce = Rent + Wages +

Interest.” According to his law of rent, rent increased as more and more land of different value was occupied, pushing wages and interest to a lower level with each increase. It was at the margin—the best land that can be obtained without the payment of rent—that the levels of wages and interest were based. As production increased, rent absorbed a larger portion of productive effort, leaving a smaller share to the other two factors. Therefore, “Produce - Rent = Wages + Interest.” By identifying the tendency for rent to take an increasing share of aggregate production, George explained why even though civilization advances and wealth increases, wages do not.¹⁰

Land and capital were not interchangeable, the former being a gift of nature and the latter the result of human effort. Both were part of the productive process, but each responded to market forces in a qualitatively different way. Therefore, to understand the distribution of wealth it was essential to keep land and capital separate and distinct. Rent was the portion that flowed from land, interest the portion that flowed from the use of capital. Further confusion arose from interchanging the terms profit and interest, thus making profit include a return on all three factors, including interest. To followers of Henry George, this formulation, while useful for some types of economic analysis, hopelessly muddles attempt to understand the distribution of wealth in society.¹¹

The returns to the productive factors change as production increases (or decreases). Rent, for example, continually rises as population increases and places a greater demand on land. More population places a greater demand on inferior land, lowering the margin of production and hence reducing wages and interest. Continual improvements in technology, however, tended to counteract the fall of wages and interest rates. Advances in what George called the “productive arts” would raise wages on all lands, if usable free land were available.

How were George’s ideas received by contemporaries? In 1885 the American Economic Association was founded, based on the ideas of the German historical school and the Austrian school of economics.¹² Henry George, who did not finish high school, was considered an amateur with a naive and anachronistic emphasis on immutable natural laws. A leading tax economist, Edwin R. A. Seligman of Columbia University, declared that:

There are today economists, worthy of the name, who are protectionists; there are economists, justly so called, who are socialists; but throughout the wide world today there is not a single man with a thorough training in the history of economics, or an acquaintance with the science of finance, who is an advocate of the single tax on land values.¹³

Such was the atmosphere surrounding George as he sought to acquaint the public with what he saw as basic truths. In retaliation, he scathingly characterized the typical academic scholar as “a monkey with a microscope, a mule packing a library, such are fit emblems of the men—and unfortunately there are plenty—who pass through the educational machinery and come out as learned fools.”¹⁴

Francis A. Walker, another contemporary economist, epitomized the criticism leveled against George's theories. Disputing the view that rent increases were at the expense of wages, Walker presented evidence that salaries had indeed improved, and that George was wrong in concluding that rent continually absorbed any increases in production. Walker asserted that improvements in transportation

actually operate...in reducing the demand for land. Whatever quickens and cheapens transport, acts directly in the reduction of rents...since it throws out of cultivation the previously in use for the supply of the market, enabling the better soils at a distance to take their place, thus raising the lower limit, or, as it is called, the margin of cultivation, and thus reducing rents.¹⁵

However, Walker failed to see that improvements in transportation tended to enhance rent of other lands—particularly urban areas and land near heavily-traveled routes.

Other facets of George's economic philosophy were scrutinized and rebutted. Strong objections were raised to land nationalization; George, however, never advocated that. Many argued, then and now, that land is a form of capital and not a qualitatively different factor, as George defined it. Some claimed that a land value tax would be passed on to consumers, like a sales tax—a contention almost universally rejected today. The issue of the difficulty of separating land values from improvement values aroused much debate; today such separation is mandated in most states, including New York. It also was asserted that George's remedy for the plight of farmers would affect them adversely.

George's political economy drew criticism from socialists. When he ran for mayor of New York City in 1886, he initially received the nominal support of various socialist groups, based broadly on the theme of labor versus capital, although that was hardly the tenor of George's campaign. Later, substantive differences became clear, and George drew fire from a number of socialist economists. Socialists stressed the need for public ownership of the means of production, capital as well as land. They pursued economic equality and the elimination of class distinctions, while George espoused competition in the marketplace, and the mutual interests of capital and labor. George claimed to propound "scientific truth applicable to all ages and conditions," while socialists claimed that their theory, which sprang "from modern economic conditions," would be realized as a direct result of the "concentration and socialization of industry."¹⁶

Nevertheless, George and his followers were vaguely lumped with socialists and other dissident "ists" by opponents. For example, Abram S. Hewitt, the steel magnate, philanthropist, and victorious Democratic candidate in the 1886 mayoral race, said in his letter of acceptance:

The injurious effects arising from the conclusion that any considerable portion of our people subscribe to the ideas of Anarchists, Nihilists,

Communists, Socialists, and mere theorists for the democratic principle of individual liberty, which involves the right to private property, would react with greatest severity upon those who depend upon their daily labor for their daily bread¹⁷

George acknowledged that the impact of the industrial revolution in all countries raised the wage level as the margin (the best land that can be obtained without the payment of rent) was raised. However, he believed that its effect eventually would recede as poorer and poorer land came into use, a process accelerated by the all-important phenomenon of land speculation. Land temporarily taken out of circulation to hasten increases in rent—and thus selling prices—tended to lower the margin, because labor and capital had no alternative but to turn to less productive, inferior land. This happened, and still goes on, continually in the development of cities and suburban communities. Urban or suburban sprawl occurs as land is held out of use, effectively forcing any newer population to move further out from the center. Thus, forces constantly operate to lower and then to raise the rent portion of what must come out of society's production. The Henry George School contends that George's analysis of land speculation has been demonstrated repeatedly on Long Island, especially since World War II. Population growth has not only enhanced the value of land—understandably and acceptably—but has led to land's being held out of use. This causes such land to appreciate beyond its natural worth (market price), as its holders "warehouse" it until a speculative price is paid. Nassau County represents a classic case of this type of inflation in land value.

When it became a political entity in 1899, the population of Nassau was approximately 55,000. Three-quarters of a century later the total was nearly 1.5 million, a startling growth by any measure. The lure of pristine land on which to settle and build a home seemed almost instinctual. On top of the growth of suburbia was an influx of returning veterans of World War II and their growing families, while others saw the commercial promise of aviation, agriculture, industry, business, and retail stores, all promising growth and prosperity. The Long Island Rail Road encouraged commuting to the city, and such other assets as an expanding highway system and locally-controlled school districts tempted many occasional visitors to relocate permanently. Finally, a host of professional developers and speculators benefited from the influx of people they did their best to stimulate.¹⁸

It is prudent to separate developers from speculators, although often they wear the same hat. The former offer something tangible, whereas the speculator seeks to anticipate what will be sought, gain control of it, and wait until the price is right. Land as an investment is an integral part of Long Island and the nation's history. Before the Great Depression, land on Long Island was bought and sold over short intervals, with prices jumping more than 100 percent in the process. This pattern escalated when, within twenty years after our entry into World War II, the population of Long Island more

than tripled. The pattern of growth in Levittown illustrates how population growth enhances land values and fosters speculation. Planned to provide returning servicemen with modest, affordable homes, the project was to consist of 2,000 rental homes on a flat, treeless area south of Hempstead Turnpike. After work began in mid-1947, the response was so great that additional property was purchased to put up another 2,000 houses. In the four years of growth to completion, Levittown became a community of 17,447 homes containing 83,000 people. The project fueled an increase in land price from \$300 to \$3,000 an acre; by the time construction ended in 1951, houses selling for \$7,000 in 1947 now cost \$9,000 to buy. Within twenty years, improved original homes sold for \$25,000, with the appreciation in land values representing a large share of the increase.¹⁹

This extraordinary increase in land prices was replicated throughout Long Island and across the country, with the national increase in residential land price averaging almost 2,000 percent from 1956 to 1981, according to the Department of Commerce. The price of raw land increased 1,600 percent in the same period, another illustration of how land prices sped ahead of all other major indicators. Land prices constitute such a burdensome part of housing costs that they largely explain the present dire shortage of affordable housing. Unlike in the Levittown years, land prices now make up from 30 to 40 percent of housing costs. Even where acreage has been untouched for centuries, as on Robins Island, there is little effect on skyrocketing prices. In the early 1970s, Robins Island's 435 acres were offered to Suffolk County for \$1.2 million, and rejected. A few years ago, the owners were offered \$14 million for the same property, on which no improvements were made in the interval.²⁰

We submit that George's conclusions concerning land prices and speculation have been verified in many Long Island communities. His relevance for today is also apparent in his views on taxation. To abolish poverty and its concomitant ills, he felt that it would be necessary to make land common property, but did not suggest either nationalization, or division of large holdings, as commonly associated with land reform. His solution was the collection of economic rent—the portion of wealth that accrues to the landowner as the result of increasing demand for land. With one stroke, this reform would effectively eliminate land speculation, for now there would be no profit in simply holding land. If every increase in land value were followed by an increase in taxation, no one would profit from speculation, and all land taxed would tend to be put to its best economic use. Eliminating speculation in land contrasts sharply with speculation in commodities; land is a limited product of nature, but commodities, as products of labor, tend to equalize their supply and demand.²¹ In addition to raising wages, a single tax, on land, would lower prices because sales taxes paid by consumers also would be eliminated.

Taxes on production are necessary evils for providing public services, but they reduce consumer spending power and economic vitality. George proclaimed his own four "canons of taxation":

1. That it bear as lightly as possible on production.
2. That it be easily and cheaply collected, and fall as directly as possible on the ultimate payers—so as to take from the people as little as possible in addition to what it yields the government.
3. That it be certain—so as to give the least opportunity for tyranny on the part of officials, and the least temptation to lawbreaking and evasion on the part of taxpayers.
4. That it bear equally—so as to give no citizen an advantage or put at a disadvantage, as compared with others.²²

Would the implementation of this grand plan require a revolutionary change in our tax structure and an additional bureaucracy? The tax structure in the United States rests on three levels: federal, state, and local. A number of taxes are tapped on all three, but the tax on land values (i.e., the collection of economic rent) is generally at the local level, where almost every governing body collects a tax on land. Of course, the local property tax—or more precisely, its portion based on land value—is only a minor portion of all taxation. Although it was a larger source of revenue formerly than today, a mechanism for collecting taxes on land rent still exists. In every state, within the property tax is the basis to implement a land value tax (the collection of economic rent). Even now, some economic rent is collected at the local level, but the practice is marred by inequitable application, unrealistic assessment practices, and by unwise, punitive taxes on improvements.

Long Island has the dubious distinction of being one of the nation's most highly taxed areas—in some years, the highest. About 15 percent of our income is taken by state and local taxes, with the property tax accounting for a bit more than half of the total. There is some variance from town to town, and between the two counties, but it remains a sobering fact that the property tax is twice the average found in the United States. A \$200,000 home in Smithtown pays twice the property tax assessed on a similar home in the suburbs of Boston, with similar public services.²³

Historically, the property tax is one of the most unfair taxes on Long Island, because there is too little correlation between assessment and market value. A community in need of more revenue does not have to raise its assessments but only its rates, which are percentages. For example, a district with a one-hundred-million-dollar tax base that raises ten million dollars in revenue has a tax rate of 10 percent; however, if assessments are based on market value—in this case, say five hundred million dollars—and the need for revenues remains constant, the tax rate would be only 2 percent.

Nassau County's assessments are not based on the property's worth in the current market, but on the construction costs of houses in 1938. Because there have been no general reassessments since then, a haphazard system developed; land prices have skyrocketed over the years, yet this is not routinely or consistently reflected in assessments. Newer houses are assessed at higher values than comparable older ones, and houses in poorer areas at more than comparable houses in wealthier areas. Poorer communities bear

more than twice the burden of wealthy communities. In addition, assessment errors abound on the Island, as well as in the rest of the state. And in Suffolk County a 1985 study showed that houses in East Hampton, Southold, and Southampton could be assessed at 32 percent above or below market value.²⁴

Before the ratification of the federal Constitution, the state of New York required property to be assessed at market value. However, for a long time this has not been done, on Long Island or in the rest of the state. Property has been assessed at a not always uniform fraction of market value, which differs from house to house and community to community. This has led to inconsistencies in a property tax system which some believe to be illegal and unconstitutional. Although confusion and inequities are rampant, the wheels of change are moving to correct abuses. Two New York State Supreme Court cases—*Hellerstein vs. The Town of Islip* (1975), and *Chasalow vs. Board of Assessors of Nassau County* (1989)—are having an impact. However, it may take time for those decisions to affect the average resident, with the lag in response as much to do with the law as with the concept of fair taxation.

In mid-1975, Dr. Jerome Hellerstein, who lived in the village of Ocean Beach, purchased a residential lot on Fire Island. Upon receipt of his first tax billing, he found his property assessed at market value. The result was a land-tax rate glaringly higher than that of his neighbors and of others in the area. The neighborhood consisted mainly of seasonal bungalows, or summer homes. The trend in real estate values was upward through the 1960s and 1970s, while taxes on properties remained modest. However, when property changed hands, this favorable circumstance was denied the new owners, with newly acquired properties assessed at, or close to, market value. After Hellerstein won his suit against Islip, the town's appeal was denied by the New York Court of Appeals.²⁵

The town of Islip implemented the court's ruling starting in March 1977, and into 1978, by collecting the data necessary for reassessing all properties in its jurisdiction—some 96,000 parcels. When the data was computerized, a new standard of equity seemed ready for implementation, but the hope was short-lived. By 1980 the winds of protest gathered such force that Islip moved to halt its reassessment program. Realizing that the entire system of assessment in New York state was legally in doubt—that is, that property should be assessed at market value—the legislature passed a law curtailing further litigation. A 1981 measure repealed the law mandating assessments at full market value, and directed each assessing unit to continue existing methods. A two-tier system was put in place, designating properties as homesteads or non-homesteads in political units (cities or counties) with populations of more than one million, with a few other modifications. However, the 1981 law essentially legitimized an illegal assessment system in New York state.²⁶

The Legislature had a difficult task in coming to grips with a system developed haphazardly over the decades; nevertheless, it did little or nothing to remove the arbitrariness and entrenched inequities of the property tax system. Among numerous court cases concerning allegedly unfair assessments, one

recent decision—the landmark *Chasalow vs. Board of Assessors of Nassau County*—has the potential to overturn the method of taxing used in Nassau County. Nassau uses 1938 construction costs for determining assessments, but has injected inconsistent elements of market value. Therefore, Judge Leo F. McGinity, of the state supreme court, declared in 1989 that Nassau's assessment system was illegal and unconstitutional. By its use of two sets of assessments it violated the United States Constitution, notably the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. For example, homeowners on the South Shore pay more in taxes than those on the North Shore, even when properties have identical market values.

Recognizing that the factor of land has been relegated to a minor consideration in the overall picture, Judge McGinity found that Nassau's method

ignores the most important factor in the appraisal of real estate and that is the location of the subject property. Obviously location is one of the most important considerations of a prospective purchaser in determining the purchase price of a new or resale home.²⁷

Although not unique to Nassau County, land has historically been under-assessed, while improvements have been over-assessed.

The property tax, as we know it, is two types of taxes—one on land, and one on buildings and other improvements. These two taxes have different economic effects. Buildings and improvements to buildings, including factories and commercial establishments, are items of wealth, produced by labor. When production is taxed, its manufacture is discouraged. Taxes tend to raise the price of goods, and, in the case of physical improvements on land, to place an annual burden on property owners. They penalize the creation of wealth, as if its formation were a disadvantage to the community. Demonstrably, the taxation of buildings and improvements fails the test of George's "canon of taxation." On the other hand, land derives its value from the acts of society, not those of individual owners. If land be taxed, its use is encouraged; by increasing the land value portion of the property tax, and decreasing the improvement portion, many inequities of local taxation can be diminished. According to an experienced urban economist,

The land value tax is the economist's ideal: it is equitable; it is neutral in its economic effects; and it is positively desirable as a replacement for the conventional property tax with its many bad economic effects.²⁸

From a political and practical perspective, the reform of the property tax should be the beginning of an overall reform to ameliorate our economic conditions. The Georgists' focus on land places emphasis on the part that it plays in our economy, a role ignored or trivialized by many modern economists. In the words of Henry George,

It is not in the relation of capital and labor; it is not the pressure of population against subsistence, that an explanation of the unequal development of our civilization is to be found. The great cause of

inequality in the distribution of wealth is inequality in the ownership of land. The ownership of land is the great fundamental fact which ultimately determines the social, the political, and consequently the intellectual and moral conditions of a people.²⁹

Adherents of Georgist teaching accept a latitude of views, including right-wing, left-wing, libertarian, or “green” politics. But there is overwhelming agreement on George’s central theme that natural opportunity should be open to all on equal terms, that socially created value be socially appropriated for the public good, and that the fruits of individual effort should be inviolate from the claims of others. The collection of public revenue, say the Georgists, should be based on the principle of benefits received from society.

In his *Essay on the Principles of Population*, in 1798, Thomas R. Malthus (1766-1834) reasoned that population increases geometrically while the means to produce subsistence increases only arithmetically. The Malthusian doctrine continues to be offered in various forms as the explanation for poverty. But Henry George contended that the earth can support vast numbers of people in comfort. It is, he said, the pattern of use and ownership of land that determines the distribution of wealth—and whether there will be poverty in the midst of plenty. The lot of the masses of poor people, in the Third World or in the United States, has not improved—and George warned of the consequences:

So long as all the increased wealth which modern progress brings goes but to build up great fortunes, to increase luxury and make sharper the contrast between the House of Have and the House of Want, progress is not real and can not be permanent. The reaction must come. The tower leans from its foundations and every new story but hastens the final catastrophe.³⁰

NOTES

Editor’s note: for information on the school, write to the Henry George School of Long Island, P.O. Box 553, Cutchogue, NY 11935.

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2. For George’s ideas, see John L. Thomas, *Alternative America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1983); George R. Geiger, *The Philosophy of Henry George* (New York: Macmillan, 1933); and Charles Albro Barker, *Henry George* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1955); see also Robert V. Andelson, *Critics of Henry George* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1979).

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4. For the rise of large-scale business enterprise, see Matthew Josephson, *The Robber Barons: The Great American Capitalists 1861-1901* (1934; reprint, New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1962); Alfred D. Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1977); and Thomas C. Cochran and William Miller, eds., *The Age of Enterprise: A Social History of Industrial America*, rev. ed. (1942; reprint, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961).

5. For the Depression of 1873 and George's reaction, see Eric F. Goldman, *Rendezvous With Destiny: A History of Modern American Reform* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 24-28; for the 1877 strike, see also Robert V. Bruce, *1877: Year of Violence* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1950), 130.
6. Chester McArthur Destler, *American Radicalism 1865-1901* (1946; reprint, Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966), 13; see also Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing At Armageddon: The United States 1877-1919* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987); Edward K. Spann, *Brotherly Tomorrows: Movements for a Cooperative Society in America* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1989); George Brown Tindall, ed., *A Populist Reader: Selections from the Works of American Populist Leaders* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).
7. George, *Progress and Poverty*, 10.
8. *Ibid.*, 41-42.
9. *Ibid.*, 165, 168. George acknowledged that his definition was "sometimes styled `Ricardo's law of rent,'" and also was stated by Malthus, J. S. Mill, and others (*ibid.*).
10. *Ibid.*, 171.
11. *Ibid.*, 38, 156-58.
12. Lekachman, *A History of Economic Ideas*, 248-60, 276-83.
13. Edwin R. A. Seligman, *The Single Tax Discussion* (American Social Science Association, 5 September 1890), 85.
14. Henry George, Jr., *Life of Henry George* (New York: Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1900), 276.
15. Francis Walker, *Land and Its Rent* (Boston: Little Brown, 1883), 167, 175.
16. Morris Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1903), 276-77.
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18. Edward J. Smits, *Nassau, Suburbia*, U.S.A (Syosset: Friends of the Nassau County Museum, 1974) 1-4, 12, 151-53, 179; Geoffrey Rossano, "Long Island As America," *LIHJ* 1 (Fall 1988): 9-15.
19. See Barbara Kelly, "Learning from Levittown," *LIHJ* 1 (Fall 1988):39-54, and Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen, "Picture Windows: The Changing Role of Women in the Suburbs," *LIHJ* 3 (Fall 1990): 89-108; Bernie Bookbinder, *Long Island: People and Places, Past and Present* (New York: Harry A. Abrams, Inc, 1983), 224-26; Smits, *ibid.*, 195-96, 202;
20. *Newsday*, 28 April 1988, 5.
21. George, *Progress and Poverty*, 328, 436-37, 267.
22. *Ibid.*, 408.
23. *Newsday*, 22 October 1989, 5, and 13 May 1985, 4.
24. *Newsday*, 12 October 1985, 5, and 12 May 1985, 4.
25. *Hellerstein vs. Town of Islip* (1975); *Chasalow vs. Board of Assessors of Nassau County* (1989); *Hellerstein vs. Town of Islip*, New York State Court of Appeals, (1975).
26. Chapter 1057 of the Laws of 1981 (Senate Bill 1700).
27. *New York Times*, 23 May 1989, 1.
28. Dick Netzer, *Economics and Urban Problems* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 196.
29. George, *Progress and Poverty*, 294-95.
30. *Ibid.*, 10

REVIEWS

David Rosner. *A Once Charitable Enterprise: Hospitals and Health Care in Brooklyn and New York 1885-1915*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. ix, 234. \$37.50. Reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. \$11.50 (paper).

When it was first published in 1982, David Rosner's book, *A Once Charitable Enterprise*, exemplified a new trend in medical history. By interpreting the growth of the American hospital in light of urban history as well as scientific innovation, Rosner broke important new ground. Over the last decade, the social history of American medicine has flourished, and several important volumes on hospitals and health care have been written, including Charles Rosenberg's *The Care of Strangers* and Rosemary Stevens's *In Sickness and In Health*. Yet Rosner's more compact, focused book remains one of the best examples of the genre. For regional historians in general and Long Island historians in particular, Rosner's book provides a model of how local studies can illuminate larger social trends.

With its profusion of hospitals and medical schools, the greater New York area is one of the major medical centers in the world. Rosner's study focuses on hospital development during the decades from 1885 to 1915, when the city rose to medical preeminence. From a handful of institutions in the antebellum period, the number of hospitals exploded in the Progressive era; by 1924, there were 114 independent institutions. The rationale and organization also changed dramatically: In the late nineteenth century, the typical hospital was a small, neighborhood institution that catered to specific ethnic or religious groups, and dispensed as much charity as it did medical care. By the 1920s, hospitals had become much larger, more bureaucratic, more medically-defined institutions that attracted a new paying clientele.

Historians have usually credited medical science with transforming the late nineteenth-century hospital. The introduction of anaesthesia and a better understanding of the germ theory certainly changed the practice of medicine and surgery. Likewise the reform of medical education necessitated by the new scientific medicine of the period forced a reorganization of the hospital. But as Rosner argues persuasively, there were other important factors at work. "If we look at the history of institutions," he writes, "it becomes clear that significant changes in the shape of the hospital often occurred before new medical techniques were introduced" (p.7). To comprehend the new

form the hospital assumed by the 1920s, Rosner believes it is essential to analyze it as an *urban* institution. "The growth and transformation of the hospital is part of the transformation of the American city and illustrates some of the tensions, problems, and conflicts that arose during this significant moment in American history" (p.6).

Rosner links the hospital's history to a series of critical trends in New York City's evolution. First, he explores how economic and demographic changes broke down the intense ties between neighborhoods and hospitals. In Brooklyn, for example, the growing cost of land and congestion of the business district forced both hospitals and physicians to move to more peripheral, less densely-settled areas. Thus health care services gradually shifted away from the crowded working-class districts that needed them most.

The depression of the 1890s further accelerated the erosion of the hospital's charitable image. Swamped by the homeless and the hungry, hospital boards of trustees had to rethink their charitable mission. Realizing that the traditional sources of philanthropy were insufficient to their needs, a new breed of trustees pushed to restrict free services and bring in more paying patients to balance the hospital's ledgers. While the new emphasis on the "hospital-as-business" offended some of the older trustees, "With the financial crisis of the Depression, boards expanded and were forced to focus more on financial management than on caring" (p.61).

The new imperative to attract paying patients profoundly reshaped the hospital's organization. Larger institutions invested heavily in new private pavilions. "To attract the middle class, hospitals were increasingly portrayed as pleasant hotel-like places where people had freedom of movement and control over the activities of the day" (pp. 77-78). Still, while the number of paying patients increased, Progressive-era hospitals remained fundamentally blue-collar institutions; the main change was that working-class patients had to pay for their care, and the hospital's facilities and services became increasingly class-differentiated.

In their zeal to get paying patients, hospital boards had to open their institutions to local physicians. Before the late nineteenth century, hospitals restricted their medical staffs to a small number of attending physicians aided by a few residents. Medical authority was overshadowed by the lay values of the trustees and hospital employees. Now, to get local physicians to admit their patients to the hospital, boards had to surrender their exclusive authority and allow the doctors more voice in management. The accommodation was not a smooth one; trustees and physicians clashed over a variety of issues, from patients' diet to billing systems. But in the long run, Rosner concludes, "Trustees, seeking to modernize and stabilize financially troubled institutions, found themselves forced to hand real power over to private practitioners who had little or no interest in the paternalistic goals of the older charity hospital" (p.121).

Hospitals also became embroiled in the turbulent city politics of the Progressive period. As part of an effort to rein in Tammany Hall, a reformist

city comptroller improbably named Bird S. Coler changed the city's plan of disbursing public funds from a flat grant to a per-diem, per-capita system. To qualify for the per-diem funds, hospitals had to meet more stringent standards and submit to regular inspections designed to cut down on corruption and "charity abuse," that is, the provision of free services to those able to pay for them. As was true in so many other areas of Progressive reform, the smaller neighborhood institutions found it difficult to meet the new standards. Rosner writes that Coler's reform "commenced an ongoing process that forced small institutions to relate less to local community needs and more to the defined interests of central agencies far removed from local community pressures" (p.145). Similar issues led to the closing of the free-standing charity clinics and dispensaries that provided the bulk of the health care needs of working-class neighborhoods.

Rosner concludes his book with a fascinating case study of the "battle over Bloomingdale" waged by the New York Hospital, the city's oldest charity hospital. In 1888, as city growth was moving up the West Side of Manhattan, real estate speculators enlisted a local assemblyman to pressure the hospital to move its Bloomingdale Asylum, which sat on thirty-five prime acres on Morningside Heights, and allow the land to be developed. While unable to resist the development pressure, the hospital's governors used their influence to broker an advantageous compromise: they agreed to move the asylum to Westchester, in exchange for tax-exempt status on their new holdings there, and sold the Morningside Heights holdings to Columbia College, thus "guarantee[ing] the land's domination by prestigious public and private institutions of which the upper classes of the city could be proud" (p.183). So, while politics and economics combined to force many smaller hospitals either to relocate or to close, the New York Hospital's trustees used their social position and political clout to protect their class interests.

In his conclusion, Rosner notes the paradox "that just as New York was emerging as a working-class city, its charity and other health institutions began to turn away from the poor and to remodel their services around the needs of wealthier clients" (p. 187). The parallels with the current crisis of hospital finance are striking: as inner-city hospitals struggle to cope with the ravages of the AIDS epidemic, drug abuse, and cutbacks in social services, many institutions are desperately trying to find new sources of private revenue, from cosmetic surgery to eating disorder clinics, in order to survive. Then as now, hospitals remain deeply embedded in urban politics and economics, at the same time that bureaucracy and scientific imperatives hamper their ability to respond to community needs. Rosner's splendid analysis makes it clear that the forces threatening to destroy New York City's hospital system today have very long and deep historical roots.

NANCY TOMES
SUNY at Stony Brook

Craig H. Roell. *The Piano in America, 1890-1940*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989. Pp. xx, 396. Illustrations, bibliography, index, appendix. \$35.95. \$14.95 (paper).

During the course of the nineteenth century, the piano became the predominant symbol of musical culture in middle and upper-class American homes. Roell's recent study examines the role—both actual and symbolic—that the piano was asked to play, and the large, increasingly sophisticated industry that produced and marketed American-made pianos. About 1890, the opening year of this study, piano purchases peaked in the United States. Soon thereafter, home music making—and piano ownership—began to decline as Americans abandoned older forms of home-made entertainment for the novelty of mass produced “musical products” delivered initially by player pianos, and later by phonographs and radios.

Roell begins his study with a good, albeit not new, synopsis of primary and secondary materials describing the place of music in Victorian society. This is followed by a detailed description of the introduction of the player piano; the marketing and merchandizing of pianos in the decades before World War II; and the gradual but unceasing decline of an industry faced with rapid changes in the social, cultural, and economic fabric of America.

The author's central thesis is an interesting one. As the piano began to decline in popularity, he contends, those in charge of the industry's marketing and promotional campaigns increasingly turned to advertisements and slogans that presented an idealized picture of American family life with a piano at the very center of the household. Owning a piano, they assured the buying public, would act as a conservative backstop to help strengthen eroding public morals, and would assist parents to instill the virtues of hard work and concentration in their twentieth-century children. If that approach failed, piano companies also sought to associate their products with high culture and “The Immortals” of that culture by paying handsome inducements to renowned musicians to play and promote their firms' pianos. In the end, despite many valiant attempts, these promotions failed to restore the piano to its nineteenth-century predominance. They did succeed, however, in instilling a deep sense of guilt in generations of parents who felt (feel?) that some knowledge of the piano was an essential part of their child's education.

Despite much new information on trade practices and many illustrations, as well as the inherent interest of the subject matter, Roell's study remains somewhat uneven. Relying heavily on the records of two of the nation's largest piano firms—Baldwin and Steinway—the author reflects his business school background by focusing almost exclusively on marketing and promotional practices; mergers and internal reorganizations that resulted in the increasingly vertical integration of the industry; salesmen's conventions; merchandizing schemes; and advertising campaigns. Unfortunately, the author neglects to mention the craftsmen whose skills, attitudes, and craft-related traditions made the industry so unique. In addition, those with a

special interest in the history of this important Long Island industry will find little geographically-specific information about the piano trade.

During the nineteenth century, piano making was the fourth largest industry in the New York metropolitan area. On Long Island, in large shops such as Steinway's and Sohmer's, as well as in scores of smaller shops, thousands of immigrant workmen continued to view their "product" as pieces of "art," and to resist the mass-production techniques being introduced in other industries. The craftsmen's relationship with their factory owners—who, especially on Long Island, were often fellow German immigrants and skilled craftsmen in their own right—was also atypical in the history of nineteenth-century industrialization. This reviewer believes that the author, by focusing so tightly on the management and promotional aspects of the piano trade, has overlooked much of what made the piano making industry most interesting.

NANCY GROCE

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Amee Evans and Carol Saft, producers. *Shared Ground*. East Moriches: Mudfog Films, 1990. 20-minute video. \$125, from Mudfog Films, P. O. Box 699, East Moriches, NY 11940.

This well-made video examines a fragmented and degraded ecosystem in the process of being restored. It focuses on the Shinnecock Tribe Oyster Project, a hatchery for shellfish inside the Shinnecock Reservation on Shinnecock Neck, Southampton. The project, a model of creativity and cooperation directed by Mabel Cuffee, began in 1975; its purpose is to bring back the shellfish population while providing a viable income for the Shinnecock.

Produced by Amee Evans and Carol Saft, the film of the hatchery in operation emphasizes the meticulous, time-consuming work required to rejuvenate the Shinnecock economy. At the hatchery, a controlled environment where oysters, scallops, and clams mate and reproduce, the babies are fed special algae and cleaned with fresh bay-water every forty-eight hours, with the healthiest hatchlings sold to reproduce in the wild.

Shared Ground places the hatchery in historic context. The Shinnecock, Southampton's earliest inhabitants, relied on the waters for their livelihood, harvesting fish, shellfish, and mollusks during the lengthy prehistoric era and adding whaling in the historic period. Farming of the sea continues today, with the use of modern technology. Both change and continuity are depicted in the film, with the theme of persistence most striking. Although touching only briefly on the prehistoric period, *Shared Ground* explains the importance and slow evolution of maritime technology in Shinnecock culture. Detailed coverage of the 350-year historic period presents the revisionist interpretation of the hostile, exploitive, and sometimes violent relationship of the colonists with the Native Americans. The film recounts culture contact commencing in 1640, when the English first-comers met the Shinnecock, probably the largest

and most powerful Native group on the Island. The encounter left a legacy of death, migration, and loss of land, rapidly followed by the destruction of Native political, economic, and social systems.

Whaling was a skill of the natives exploited by the colonists, but prosperity did not result for the Shinnecock. Implicit in the scenario is the lack of self-esteem that these changes induced. The depiction of this period is accurate, although it might be noted that death by infectious disease, while a phenomenon of the contact period, most likely predated the English arrival.

Glimpses of the past are unveiled through old photos, sketches, and maps. The building of the railroad through Shinnecock Hills is portrayed, an event that caused the loss of remaining large tracts of land as the Shinnecock were pushed onto the reservation on Shinnecock Neck. Other photographs depict activities toward the end of the nineteenth century, and the evolution of a wealthy resort community. The visual impact of a changing landscape is especially impressive, ranging from a natural habitat teeming with wildlife to modern commercial and residential development.

Interwoven throughout the film is the coexistence of people and nature. The Shinnecock's affection for the land, waters, and wildlife is well-articulated; their harmony with the environment was interrupted by colonial settlement and neglected for the next 350 years. Only recently has the feeling for place and environment revived.

Shared Ground is the second documentary produced by Mudfog Films, a non-profit company directed by Carol Saft and Ameer Evans. It offers an accurate and poignant portrayal of a way of life that has been modified but not obliterated. The "Shared Ground" of the title is the common aspirations of residents for economic revitalization and preservation of natural resources. The town of Southampton is rich in economic potential and natural resources, as well as in traditions and cultures. The documentation of an alliance forged to preserve nature and, at the same time, let people sustain themselves economically is a tribute both to the film makers and their subjects.

LINDA BARBER
SUNY at Stony Brook

Joann P. Krieg, ed. *Long Island Architecture*. Interlaken, N.Y.: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1991. Illustrations, bibliography, index. Pp. 168. \$15.00 (paper).

Long Island Architecture is a collection of papers from a conference entitled "Building Long Island, Architecture and Design: Tools and Trade," organized by the Long Island Institute at Hofstra University in June 1989. The conference, which was co-sponsored by the Early Trades and Crafts Society of Long Island (ETC) and several other groups, was broad enough in scope to offer a veritable smorgasbord of presentations on architecture, planning and preservation, as well as exhibits mounted by ETC. While the resulting publication has some of the same inherent problems in "balance and

quality" to which Lee E. Koppelman alluded in his review of the published papers of the Institute's previous year's conference, "Robert A. Moses: Single-Minded Genius" (*LIHJ* 2 [Spring 1990]: 178-80), there is truly something here for everyone, with diversity making up for the lack of focus.

The first section, devoted to planning, includes a short piece by Michael A. LoGrande on the Nassau/Suffolk Bi-County Regional Plan of 1971, which, he contends, foresaw the growth patterns of the 1970s and had a pronounced influence. The plan was certainly prescient, but the extent of its influence seems to this reviewer hard to gauge.

J. Lance Mallamo, in "Learning from Long Island: Order and Chaos of the Vehicular Age," argues for the preservation of roadside landmarks and the Moses-era parkways. Indeed, many of these creations of the first decades of the automotive age are rapidly disappearing and their preservation should be addressed—but only when their excellence of design or uniqueness merits it. Let us stop short of landmarking every miniature golf course, drive-in, and prewar diner.

Two other articles under this heading are by the Bentels, the talented family of architects from Locust Valley who were co-sponsors of the conference. Paul Bentel's "The Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs, 1922-1931: Implications for the Long Island Suburb" is a fascinating look at this early instance of planning, which, in its attempt to deal with urban density, was to foster the suburban sprawl of the postwar period, with far-reaching consequences for the Island.

Maria and Frederick Bentel, in "Building for the Community," trace the evolution of public architecture on Long Island, and their own efforts to create a "more sensitive, complex, and enriched architecture [that would] value substance and experience, engage history without copying it and build a culture, not a memorial to it." Their article surveys a number of their award-winning designs, such as the Hillwood Commons at Long Island University's C.W. Post Center, in Greenvale, and one that was not quite as successful, the Carriage Museum at Stony Brook, where site limitations hampered creativity.

The papers on Long Island's architecture are divided between two categories—the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—without an explanation for the omission of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. John R. Stevens, a leading expert on Dutch-American buildings, places the "Dutch Buildings on Long Island" in a regional context, while reminding us that Dutch building traditions continued unabated long after English occupation, enriching the Island's wonderful legacy of vernacular architecture.

Alastair Gordon, who has done so much to uncover the origins of modern architecture on Long Island, writes of the modernist beach house phenomenon, noting that the "long thin ribbon of white sand that runs along Long Island's southern shore, its farmland, bays, inlets, ponds and salt water marshes all made ideal settings for the machine-age concepts of the Bauhaus, the DeStijl group, LeCorbusier, and others."

Mark Allen Hewitt, AIA, writing on the early Long Island country house commissions of Delano and Aldrich, the noted country house firm and real successors to McKim, Mead & White, covers ground already plowed in his 1989 *Antiques Magazine* article on the subject. Offering new material is Nicholas Langhart's entry on "Richard H. Smythe's Design Process in Stony Brook." While he was no Delano, and appears to have owed his entire career to his classmate, Ward Melville, Smythe's work in Stony Brook in the Colonial Revival idiom between 1929 and 1962 amounted to more than seven hundred commissions and is largely responsible for the continuity of design and ambiance still exhibited by that community.

Rounding out the collection is a short piece by Zachary Studenroth on an unrealized planned community at Lake Ronkonkoma; a paper by Vincent F. Seyfried on some not very utopian nineteenth-century factory housing in Queens; and a contribution by David Christman, a Hofstra professor, on "Architecture as History on the Hofstra Campus." While Stony Brook owed it coherence to Melville and Smythe, Hofstra had the versatile Aymar Embury, whose work spanned four generations in planning that university's "loose quadrangles," with Jefferson's University of Virginia in mind, so that "the buildings are close enough together to reinforce the appearance of its neighbor in general, but not [in] exact symmetry."

ROBERT B. MACKAY

Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities

Bradley L. Harris. *Black Roots in Smithtown: A Short History of the Black Community*. Smithtown: Office of Smithtown Town Historian, 1986. Pp. 80 (paper). Free.

Bradley Harris, Smithtown's Historian, has written an intensive study of African-Americans in Smithtown from slavery to the early decades of the twentieth century. The slim volume, based on a series of newspaper articles in the *Smithtown News*, was written by Harris in recognition of Black History Month. The book is divided into four parts, beginning with the roots of the African-American community. The Smithtown Historical Society assisted in identifying photographs and documents.

The village of Smithtown is nestled on the North Shore in the town of Smithtown, Suffolk County, Long Island. Today, less than 1 percent of the population is African-American. Harris relies on information from the federal census to document the presence of a much larger percentage of blacks during the nineteenth century. He reminds us that slavery was a fact of life in the state of New York and in Suffolk County until 1827. Richard "Bull" Smythe, the founder of Smithtown, owned at least two slaves before 1692, whom he willed to his sons that year. Edmond Smith and Thomas Tredwell of Smithtown were among the largest slaveholders on Long Island, each having twelve. Most African-Americans at the time of the American Revolution were slaves. The Smithtown census of 1776 shows that the town

had a population of 716 people, including 161 African Americans. There were no listings for blacks as heads of households; therefore, there were probably no free blacks in the village.

There was a significant increase in manumissions after the Revolution. To free a slave, an owner had to show proof to the local overseers of the poor that the slave was under fifty years of age, and would not be a liability on the town. Some owners seized this opportunity to free their slaves. One of the earliest manumissions in Smithtown was by Thomas Tredwell, who freed all his slaves.

In the North, in comparison to the South, very little money was invested in human capital. State legislatures voted to abolish slavery. However, concern for property rights caused them to favor gradual emancipation over immediate action. A New York State emancipation bill freed all male children born to a slave woman after 4 July 1799 at the age of twenty-eight, female children at the age of twenty-five. Slaves born before 4 July 1799 were freed by a second emancipation act, passed in 1818.

Harris traces the gradual transition from slavery to freedom in Smithtown. The census reports of 1800, 1810, and 1820 listed slaves and free persons of color. The emancipation process was longer for some individuals than for others. For example, in 1820 at least forty persons were listed as "indentured colored servants." When slavery finally was abolished in New York on 4 July 1827, eighty-four persons were still in bondage in Smithtown.

There were no slave markets or auction blocks on Long Island, and few instances of cruel punishment. However, the extent of the "condition of slavery" is indicated in "A Records of Children Born of Slaves." Each certificate of birth listed the name of the slave owner, but failed to record either the mother or the father of the child.

The most interesting part of the book is the "Record of Manumissions." The documents identify slaveowners, and state when each slave was freed. It was not unusual for a farmer on Long Island to purchase a slave to ease his work load, with several prosperous farmers in Smithtown and Suffolk County having more than one. Among slaveowners in Smithtown were Caleb Smith, Epenetus Smith, Benjamin Blydenburgh, and William Mills. The manumission papers are accurate documents of slavery in Smithtown from 1809 to 1826.

The author acknowledges that it was difficult to compile the history of blacks in Smithtown. In his pioneering effort he used the federal census to offer insight into the past. The census of 1850 lists the names of every resident of the community, their occupation, birthplace, and the value of real estate owned. The employment categories for males were laborer, farmer, servant, or boatman. In reality, black families were dependant upon male heads of households, who were employed in a variety of jobs. The economic status of African Americans changed very little between 1860 and 1900. If anything, occupational opportunities declined rather than improved for the black population, and as a result there was a significant turnover in the black community.

Between 1830 and 1870 Smithtown's African American population numbered more than 200 persons, but it dwindled to 130 by 1900. Harris

attributes this rapid decline to the arrival of European immigrants who replaced blacks as farm hands and laborers. In the black community, there were both native-born New Yorkers and individuals who migrated from other places. It was not unusual to find in black households different individuals who were either extended family or unrelated. An increase in boarders and lodgers in its households increased the African-American population, but also led to the instability of Smithtown's black community. This "transient" population decreased as the number of jobs available to them decreased.

Black Roots in Smithtown covers the historical and cultural aspects of the African-American population. Education for black children was a luxury rather than a privilege. Harris discovered that only seventeen of fifty-seven black children were enrolled in school in Smithtown in 1900. Many children left school and began working to help their families.

Harris's interviews with Smithtown's residents are a valuable resource. Several persons reminisced about their childhood in the rural village during the 1930s. African-Americans who lived and worked in Smithtown were neighbors and friends, with the little church on New York Avenue the center of their community. "Everyone in town went to the marvelous suppers whenever they were held, because this was the best food in town," they recalled. This Trinity African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church of Smithtown, at the corner of New York Avenue and Wildwood, was established by descendants of slaves in 1910. Harris did not include the historic church and its membership in his book, but this is understandable, as there are only thirty members and the majority do not reside in Smithtown.

As the white population increased, the always small number of Smithtown's African Americans declined drastically. During the first decade of the twentieth century, it declined to 5.4 percent of the population. Today, African-Americans are all but invisible in the area. The 1990 federal census lists 25,638 people in Smithtown; of these, a mere one hundred are black, an increase of only six from the 1980 count.

Brad Harris has written an impressive account of African-Americans in a local community. *Black Roots In Smithtown* is a valuable addition to New York State history, American history, and African-American history. Harris convincingly documents the struggles of blacks to survive. However, he relies heavily on information from the federal census to reconstruct the past. A second volume is needed to allow African-Americans to tell the story of their lives, organizations, and institutions in their own words.

FLORIS BARNETT CASH
University at Stony Brook

Kevin L. Stayton. *Dutch By Design: Tradition and Change in Two Historic Brooklyn Houses*. New York: The Brooklyn Museum in association with Phaidon Universe, 1990. Pp. 128. Illustrations, index, appendix. \$19.95 (8 1/2" x 11", paper).

Let me say this right up front. I really enjoyed this book. Having worked as a historian, museum consultant, and old-house restorer, I found Kevin Stayton's book appealing at several levels. Ostensibly the story of two Dutch-American farmhouses now preserved at the Brooklyn Museum, it is far more than that, weaving together themes which unite the fields of history, material culture, and museum interpretation. Intended to record and explain the most recent re-installation of certain period rooms, *Dutch by Design* tells a series of connected stories, linking the history of the Schenck family, two of their surviving houses, and Brooklyn's early Dutch population.

The volume is as much about process as about fact. How, for example, did this particular family and its housing needs and style change? In what complicated and only partially-understood ways did Dutch immigrants become Americans? How has the thinking of historians and museum professionals evolved, both in their interpretation of documents and surviving artifacts, and in their presentation of such changes to the general public?

Curator and author Stayton begins with an overview of the life of Jan Martense Schenck, who built a house and acquired a mill in the New Amersfoort (Flatlands) section of Brooklyn ca. 1675. His early farmstead, though altered in the ensuing centuries, survived largely intact until it was dismantled and moved to the Brooklyn Museum in 1952. Stayton provides an excellent analysis of the history of the structure, and the process by which it was disassembled and reinstalled in the museum.

Stayton's discussion rests on the principle that:

The choice and arrangement of furnishings in a museum period room present a daunting challenge, for one starts with the knowledge that it is really impossible to re-create the living dynamics of a specific room as they existed in the past when the room was in use...Our conclusions are but the vaguest of generalizations, blurred outlines of ghosts. Yet fantasy can play no part in the attempt at recreation.

With this caveat he takes us on a tour of the Jan Martense Schenck house as it currently appears at the museum, while also describing how earlier researchers and curators attempted to present the house. It is fascinating to watch the room arrangements and selection of objects change before our eyes. In the most recent effort, a vast array of inventories, paintings and engravings, travelers' descriptions, family documents, paint analysis, and surviving artifacts, along with a certain degree of educated guesswork were utilized to develop the room settings to present a realistic picture of Dutch-American life in the early eighteenth century.

The Brooklyn Museum is lucky to have two Schenck Farmhouses, the

second built by Nicholas Schenck, probably ca. 1770. It was acquired in dilapidated condition in 1929, and the four ground floor chambers and central stair hall were soon installed as part of the museum's program to create a series of period rooms. According to Stayton, in the century which separates the two houses,

the American colonies develop the characteristics that would define a new and independent nation. Over the course of these years New York came to share more with New England and the Southern colonies that it shared with the Netherlands...The Dutch of New York became less and less Dutch and more and more American.

In chapter 3 Stayton charts the slow process by which the descendants of Dutch immigrants absorbed developing national patterns, and emerged as Americans by the beginning of the nineteenth century. He persuasively presents an overview of the evolution of Dutch-American culture, especially its architecture, religion, language, and customs, though I suspect the transformation may not have been as thorough as he contends.

It is this emerging "Americanness" that the Nicholas Schenck House documents. Erected on a neck of land jutting into Jamaica Bay in present-day Canarsie, over time the building lost "most, though not all, of its Dutch character," and came to represent a "a new style of architecture that in its hybrid nature was quintessentially American." Chapter 4 explains that these architectural changes included introduction of the gambrel roof, new framing practices, and modified floor plans which more closely reflected English precedents.

Stayton returns to his theme of cultural evolution in chapter 5, where he again illuminates the process by which museum curators developed new furnishing plans for the Nicholas Schenck and Jan Martense Schenck houses. Curators decided to furnish the house to the period ca. 1820, when many Dutch-American farm families enjoyed relative prosperity, but without displaying great pretensions to style. In many ways such individuals combined the old with the new—the Dutch with the English—for by this time they were "fully American."

Dutch by Design is a first-class job. The story is clear and informative, the illustrations are well-chosen and revealing, and the color plates of high quality. There are insights aplenty regarding the process by which history is formulated and then presented to the public. This book should appeal to both the novice and the more advanced historian and museologist, for the challenges and problems confronted are universal in the field. Stayton's descriptions of the evolution of Dutch-American material culture, and the progression of museum installations in the twentieth century, are particularly valuable.

GEOFFREY L. ROSSANO
Salisbury School

Vincent F. Seyfried and William Asadorian. *Old Queens, N.Y. in Early Photographs*. New York: Dover Publications, 1990. Illustrations, index. Pp. 175. \$12.95 (8 7/8" x 11 3/4", paper).

In Dover Publication's latest collection of early photographs of New York City and its 'suburban hinterland,' Vincent Seyfried, historian, and William Asadorian, archivist, visually resurrect old Queens County. The product of their collaboration—a wide assortment of photographs, maps, lithographs, and advertisements from public archives and private collections—is a much-needed piece of history.

The book emphasizes the important role transportation played in peopling "Old Queens," as it prospered in Gotham's urban shadow during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Seyfried and Asadorian array newspaper advertisements from speculators and boosters employed at the turn of the century to make Queens a residential suburb. A basic characteristic of these settlements was their advertised low-cost housing and affordable rapid transportation to nearby Manhattan. The authors pictorially explore the building of suburban homes, apartments, and advances in public transport, which, along with the burgeoning 'recreation industry,' opened much of the Island for development.

Seyfried's introduction sums up the history of his subject from colonial times to the twentieth century, including the Dutch and English influence, the Revolution, the Civil War, the merger with New York City, the Queensboro Bridge, the Great Depression, the two World's Fairs, the construction of parkways and rapid transit, and many other topics. In describing suburban and industrial growth as factors that forever changed the landscape of Queens, he recalls the not-so-distant past when Long Island, covered with white oak and pine, was sparsely populated by craftsmen and agriculturists.

The contents are arranged geographically, with each major village or resort area introduced with a brief discussion. Each region is represented by from four-to-seventeen chronologically-ordered black and white prints. The earliest photograph is of the once-prominent Flushing Institute (1860), while the most recent is of Louis Armstrong's historic home, taken in 1989. Most of the pictures are interesting shots of shops, landmark houses, thoroughfares, and trolley lines.

Because only thirty-three of the book's 261 prints are from the nineteenth century, the reader's interest in 'early suburbia' is whetted but not fully satisfied. And, by depicting "Old Queens" as those parts that became a borough of Greater New York, the authors omit the towns of Hempstead, North Hempstead, and Oyster Bay (probably because of Dover's previously published and equally attractive *Nassau County, Long Island, in Early Photographs, 1869-1940*).

The prints of *Old Queens*, many given a full page, are handsomely reproduced. The authors provide an index in addition to a well-organized table of contents, both of which permit the reader easily to find photos of

sights once familiar but now extinct. The high quality of the photographs and the interesting subject matter make this book not only of general interest, but also a valuable tool for bringing the past to life in a classroom setting.

THOMAS D. BEAL
SUNY at Stony Brook

Joshua Stoff. *From Airship to Spaceship; Long Island in Aviation and Spaceflight*. Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1991. Illustrations by the author, bibliography, index. \$7.95 (paper).

From Airship to Spaceship is a concise, chronological history of Long Island's contribution and relationship to aviation, aimed at the younger reader. It is well-organized, with easy access to thirty-five monographs, each on a particular development. Written by Joshua Stoff, the curator of the Cradle of Aviation Museum, the book includes a map of major airfields on Long Island, an index, and nineteen biographical sketches.

An appealing feature is the collection of thirty-five drawings of different types of aircraft since the dawn of flight. Stoff's intricate, shaded drawings awaken a sense of wonderment and captivation rarely evoked by photographs. An outstanding illustration depicts Elinor Smith, "the most famous Long Island woman pilot during the Golden Age (35)" skimming under an East River bridge. Another shows a small airship, "something like our modern blimps (12)" flying over a crowded Brighton Beach in September 1902. Younger readers will enjoy scenes of more recent developments, among them the Long Island-built Space Shuttle, and NASA's planned Space Station.

Subjects addressed include ballooning off Long Island in the 1800s, the role of Brookhaven National Laboratory in conducting advanced research for the Interstellar Spacecraft, Lindbergh's flight to Paris from Roosevelt Field, and Grumman's construction of the Lunar Module for Project Apollo. There are sections on women aviators, Curtiss Field in Valley Stream, and experiments to make flying safer, conducted at Mitchel Field in the 1920s and 1930s by the Guggenheim Full Flight Laboratory.

The writing, like the drawings, is concise and easily understood, unencumbered by technical jargon. Stoff never loses sight of his intended audience; technical information is relevant and handled well. Although he provides no glossary, he offers definitions of key terms in his text.

This enjoyable book will be valuable in the classroom. The New York State Syllabus for social studies is divided into five areas—political, social, economic, geographic and historical—emphasizing fifteen major concepts. Teachers can be hard pressed to find source material that integrates these areas and concepts in any meaningful and interesting way. Stoff's work provides a means to relate the historical and the economic, and obviously

applies to the social change and technology areas. Teachers of primary grades will find useful information for preparing lessons on space and the dynamics of flight, and their students are at the stage when they will most enjoy drawing the aircraft themselves.

However, the reading level of the text makes the book more functional for intermediate and junior high school students, who are old enough to read for themselves about Grumman's Wildcat and Hellcat fighter planes used by the Navy in World War II, or about Republic's Buzz Bombs, the first American guided missiles. The drawings are suited to this age group, and offer an excellent basis for modeling activities. The quantity of information, along with the bibliography for suggested reading, makes the book an excellent source for research projects.

From Airship to Spaceship is not limited to any age group. Adults will share with younger readers an appreciation of aviation's role in the growth of Long Island, and an awareness of Long Island's contribution, through aviation, to important events and developments in the history of the country.

MARIE FITZGERALD, *St. Joseph's College*,
and PAUL BAKER, *Bayport-Bluepoint School District*

Kathryn St. John. *Dutchmen; The Tale of New Netherland*. Stony Brook: Quoin Publishing, 1990. Pp. 410. \$14.95 (paper) plus \$1.25 for postage, from Quoin Publishing, PO Box 51, Stony Brook, New York 11790-0051.

Kathryn St. John's book is the first in her projected series of action-filled novels intended to kindle interest in Long Island history. This tale of New Netherland traces the wanderings, adventures, and romances of colonist Peter Van Tyden, spanning the years from 1637 to the English conquest of 1664. The hero finds himself at the site of many stirring events of the period, in contact with such historic persons as the Indian fighter, John Underhill, the New Netherland directors William Kieft and Peter Stuyvesant, the Jesuit, Isaac Jogues, the explorer, David de Vries, and the principled Roger Williams. There is an element of melodrama as Van Tyden is exposed to the rigors of blizzards and hurricanes, the seductive charms of beautiful women, and the relentless hatred of a crazed killer.

As the action unfolds, St. John explores major themes in New Netherland's history: the conflict between Dutch and English; the social strains generated within a diverse population; the injustices of slavery and anti-Semitism; and the plight of Native Americans pressed by the Europeans' greed for land, and ravaged by diseases from which they had no immunity.

Based on her sympathetic research of Native American culture, the author portrays the tragic blunder of Kieft's aggressive policy, and John Underhill's perpetration of massacre as an acceptable means of winning the Indian war. However, she also promotes the same myths that she seeks to dispel in such incidents in the plot as cannibalism by the Mohegans, their abduction of the

Dutch heroine, her rape by several braves, and her later enslavement.

In "The White Indians of Colonial America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 32 (January 1975): 55-88, James Axtell presents a different view of the Native American practice of abducting Europeans. According to accounts of returning captives he studied, women were not sexually abused, which contradicts the colonial image of savages lusting after white women. The Native American men's apparent lack of sexual interest in female captives may have been partly aesthetic, because they esteemed darker pigmentation, but also might reflect the disgrace and tribal condemnation which they attached to the crime of rape.

Kathryn St. John is a writer and editor whose enthusiasm for Long Island history is evident. Her second novel, *Beneath Regulus: A Tale of the Revolution*, will soon be published, to be followed by *Erinn: A Tale of the Irish*.

MILDRED DERIGGI
SUNY at Stony Brook

Book Notes

Native Long Island Map. Stony Brook: L.I. Culture History Lab and Museum of the Suffolk County Archaeological Association, 1990. 3 colors, 25" x 38". \$13.00 postpaid from S/C Archaeological Assoc., P.O. Drawer AR, Stony Brook, NY 11790.

Miriam Tulin. *The Calderone Theatres on Long Island* (Hempstead: Long Island Studies Institute, Hofstra University, 1991. Pp. 35. Illustrations, notes. \$5 (8 1/2" x 11", paper). Available from the Long Island Studies Institute, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY 11550.

The LaGuardia and Wagner Archives of LaGuardia Community College/The City University of New York has published a third edition of its inventory on the records of the New York City Housing Authority Collection. The bulk of the records included in this inventory cover the period from 1934 to 1977. They consist of correspondence, memos, surveys, and official reports relating to construction, design policy, management, slum clearance, and tenants. *An Inventory and Folder Listing of the Records of the New York City Housing Authority at the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives*, third ed., costs \$5.50 plus \$1.75 for postage. Checks should be made out to the LaGuardia Education Fund. Please send requests to Dr. Richard K. Lieberman, LaGuardia Community College, 31-10 Thomson Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101 (718) 482-5065.

Communications

Dear Editor,

I have in hand your recent edition of the *Long Island Historical Journal*. It is wonderful, and I wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the continuing excellence of the articles contained in each issue.

Michele T. Pilo
Director of Education, Museums at Stony Brook

Dear Editors,

I enjoy and find useful each issue of *LIHJ*. What a pleasure it is to find so many articles by such a growing number of scholars, who are contributing so much material—much of it new—on the history of Long Island and its important place in the story of America.

As one who is doing research on the Shinnecock and the Montauk, and their participation in the whaling and maritime industries, I am, naturally, very much interested in Professor (John A.) Strong's work, especially pertaining to Native American involvement in whaling.

Russell Moore
New York City

Dear Dr. Wunderlich,

I found both issues of volume 3 of considerable interest and enjoyment, appreciated by all of us who cherish the history of Paumanok. The articles on the Long Island wine industry and the Montauk Point Lighthouse were particularly insightful. In addition, your contribution on *Modern Times* was extremely educational.

The Seaford Historical Society...has commenced sponsoring the "Long Island History Book Selection of the Month" in conjunction with the Seaford Public Library. Each month the Library Board Trustees will give us space in their newsletter for a review: we hope that will help to promote the reading and understanding of Long Island history.

Peter J. Ruffner
Seaford Historical Society

Dear Gentlepersons:

I have enjoyed your journals, not only as a little bit of home but it is fun to see how similar the two ends of America really are. We have a lot in common, especially where our histories cross.

Also found you quite a following here. Must be at least 30 people in Nome from Long Island, a pretty good percentage out of a total population of 3,000. I have no idea why we have so many. But you're more than welcome to come visit.

Lew Tobin
Nome, Alaska

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