THE LONG ISLAND HISTORICAL JOURNAL

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The Long Island Historical Journal

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

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Long Island Studies Council

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

As we enter our third year of publication, we call on all our readers to renew or begin their subscriptions. We thank all who have sent in their $15 and hope soon to hear from those who have not yet done so—we depend on your support.

The current issues presents a strong and varied collection of articles. Louisa Hargrave, the co-founder, owner, and manager of the pioneer Hargrave Vineyards, offers the first historical survey of winemaking on Long Island. John Strong, a foremost scholar of Native American culture, examines the dealings of early settlers with Indian whalemen, as recorded in the account book of William "Tangier" Smith. Roger Wunderlich surveys the colorful, nineteenth-century village of Modern Times, a libertarian laboratory and center of social reform. Deborah Johnson, the Art Curator of the Museums at Stony Brook, and Lloyd Becker, an English professor at Suffolk Community College, each explores the life and works of the Long Island painter, Shepard Alonzo Mount, and Connie Koppelman describes the subject of her Ph.D. thesis, the Tile Club, a group of prominent artists whose sketching trips to eastern Long Island helped to make it a summer resort. Through interviews with women pioneers of the Levittown era, Rosalyn Banxandall and Elizabeth Ewen, professors of American Studies at SUNY College at Old Westbury, reveal the differences between myth and the lived suburban experience. Last, but far from least, Bernice Braid, professor of Comparative Literature, Long Island University-Brooklyn Campus, discusses the image of Brooklyn in terms of its neighborhoods and the writers who loved them; and Donald Simon, dean of Institutional Services at Monroe College, summarizes the origin and development of Prospect Park. Our reviews include succinct commentaries on seven important books, one VHS, and one exhibit.

Our next issue, Spring 1991, will feature articles on the Brookhaven National Laboratory, the (Jackson) Pollock-Krasner House, Montauk Lighthouse, auto racing in 1904, the homespun art of quilting, and many other absorbing phases of the Island's rich and diverse history. We want our readers to know that we welcome articles, reviews, or comments. And when you subscribe, or convince someone else to do so, you are "doing your bit" to advance the study of Long Island as America.

A History of Wine Grapes on Long Island

By Louisa Hargrave

Most cultures have some sort of alcoholic beverage. The Mayans imbibed a concoction called "balche," fermented from honey and tree bark. People in early-Medieval Europe drank beer, as did the inhabitants of Africa long before the beginning of European colonization. Many, among them the ancient Greeks, Hebrews, and Romans, preferred wine. Because they found grapevines growing wild, the Vikings are said to have called the New World Vinlund:[1] whether this be legend or fact, the presence of the wild grape proved that the fertile eastern shoreline of North America was an easy place to grow wine grapes—the one fruit that can be preserved for safe drinking without the need for adjustments of sugar or acidity.

Wine grapes originated in Persia, and were carried throughout the world, wherever they could be cultivated, by explorers and conquerors alike. Along with the olive branch, the grape vine came to symbolize peace and plenty—a chance to settle in one place and cultivate basic foods. Grapevine motifs are ubiquitous among Phoenician, Arabic, Greek and Roman ruins. The point is not that the ancients craved the taste of grapes, but that in every part of the world that was settled, water became polluted by settlers and was not safe as a drinking supply. Since the human need for drink is even more vital than the need for food, it has been imperative always to have a safe, transportable beverage that can be preserved through times when other sources of liquid are unsafe or unobtainable. When ripe, the original wine grape—the oval *kishmishi*, and all its hybrid kin—provides this sort of beverage, because the sugar it contains, when fermented, will naturally produce sufficient alcohol to kill any spoilage organisms. Nine-or-ten-percent alcohol is a base-line requirement for preservation, presupposing a sugar content of more than 20 percent in the fruit. Few other fruits ripen to this high a sugar level, and, if they do, they lack the grape's acidity, the second *sine qua non* of freedom from harmful microbes. The pH of naturally-fermented wine grapes is less than 4.0, a level at which no microbe harmful to man can live. (There are microbes that can spoil the taste of wine at this pH, but only in the presence of oxygen.) These two factors—sugar to produce alcohol, and acidity to purge germs—are intrinsic in the proper proportions to no other fruit than wine grapes, and are the foundation of the grape's popularity as a tool of civilization. Considering that Noah's first act after the Flood was to plant a vineyard, it is easy to see how compelling in human history has been the concept of grape cultivation.

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With so many grapevines growing wild, why did not the early American colonists have a plentiful supply of wine? And why do today's Americans consume soda, beer, and milk more commonly than wine? To be brief the wild grapes of America (*Vitis labrusca, riparia, rupestris*, etc.) were quickly found to be different from the noble wine grape (*Vitis vinifera*) of Europe and Asia. They flourish without help from farmers, but do not ripen with enough sugar naturally to preserve the juice. Twelve percent sugar is common, but 20 percent is needed. They have too much acidity to be palatable—commonly over 2 percent, where three-quarters of one percent is desirable. Therefore, wine from *labruscan* grapes is too low in alcohol, and too high in acidity, to make a safe or acceptable beverage, much less be marketed in world-wide trade. What is worse, the flavor of native American grapes is dominated by a strong and overwhelming fruitiness (now known to be caused by the presence of methyl anthranhilate, which most people find disagreeable). This taste is commonly described as "foxy." (The origin of this derogatory term is open to debate). Even when they adjusted the sugar of the grapes by adding honey or lowering the acidity by adding water, the settlers were displeased by the flavor and aroma of native wines, and relied for their daily beverage on fermented grains—their traditional beers and ales; distilled spirits like rum, made from molasses from the West Indies; and milk from cows brought from Europe, although milk spoiled so easily it was not considered safe. Tea and coffee became more important because they were made with boiled—and therefore sterile—water.

Yet many people believed that if the native grapes were so easy to grow, the wine grape, *Vitis vinifera*, should be also. In 1616, Lord De La Warr (Thomas West), the first governor of the Virginia colony, impressed by the "thousands of goodly vines running wild,"[2] petitioned the London Company to send some French vine dressers to Virginia, along with the best varieties of French grapevines. The Old Dominion was colonized primarily as a moneymaking venture, so the London Company fostered American winemaking as a source of trade. They not only sent Frenchmen with cuttings, but also sponsored laws requiring every colonial household to plant ten cuttings and learn how to dress them.[3] The vineyards were thought to have failed because of the laziness of the colonists, or because of sabotage by Frenchmen resentful of having to work as underlings for the English: the reason became moot when, in 1622, Indians massacred all involved.

In the early years of colonization, persistent efforts were made to promote making wine as a business. In 1639 and 1660, the Virginia Legislature offered premiums to growers of grapes and makers of wine. In 1662, Lord Baltimore (Charles Calvert) planted three hundred acres of wine grapes in Maryland. In 1700, a colonial administrator, the Earl of Bellomont (Richard Coote), promised the Lords of Trade in London that he could make enough wine to "supply all dominions of the crown." Thomas Jefferson was an outstanding "wine expert...[who] favored raising wine grapes for personal consumption [and] experimented with raising

grapes from his earliest years at Monticello." However, despite a lifetime of trying, Jefferson "never succeeded in making a bottle of fine wine at Monticello."[4] Unfortunately, as Jefferson and his compatriots discovered, the imported *Vitis vinifera* was much more sensitive to variables of climate and soil than any native American *Vitis*. Native grapevines have tough, woody roots, but *vinifera* roots are soft and fleshy, vulnerable to widespread soil pests which did not exist in the Old World. Settlers planted their cuttings, only to see them wither and die in a few years, as soon as the phylloxera root louse or the root knot nematode decimated their roots. When cuttings of American grapes were planted in Europe in the 1870s, the phylloxera brought on their roots spread totally out of control, destroying most of the continent's vineyards, which were then replanted on resistant American rootstocks.

Tender European vines planted in eastern North America also were subjected to funguses which the leathery leaves of native grapes resisted, and which were not present in Europe. By the mid-nineteenth century, these, too, were unwittingly introduced to France from America, and withered the fortunes of European grape growers. A French botanist, Pierre-Marie-Alexis Millardet (1838-1902), discovered a treatment for *oidium* mildew. Because his wines grew along a busy public thoroughfare, tempting hungry travelers to eat his crop, he cleverly painted them with a mixture of copper and lime in hopes that the brilliant, fluorescent-green color would discourage foragers. After a while, he noticed that these vines had no mildew. It took him a few years to claim his discovery, by which time another farmer was taking the credit and a minor battle ensued.[5] In any event, this Bordeaux mixture has been the most widely used fungicide in history, for grapes and other mildew-sensitive crops. Had it been known in 1600 instead of 1900, New World plantings of *vinifera* would have been far more successful.

European wine grapes are more sensitive to frost than their hardier American cousins, which greatly limits the boundaries within which they thrive. Besides their sensitivity to pests and funguses, they do not tolerate temperatures below zero degrees Fahrenheit. A prolonged winter cold snap, or early spring frost, may easily destroy their tender fruiting buds. We must bear these limitations in mind as we consider the history of commercial wine grape production on Long Island.

Native American Long Islanders, called Indians by the Europeans, cultivated maize, beans, squash and tobacco, and made use of the wild fruits that grew in profusion, including grapes. An English colonist testified in 1763 that on Indian Neck, in the town of Southold, the Indians "did Improve sd Neck untill aboute Seventeen Years ago they planted a Nussory and an orchard"[6] which may have included grapes. Before the arrival of Europeans, the Native Americans had no experience with alcoholic beverages and did not cultivate wine grapes. Unfortunately, the colonists used the Indians' susceptibility to alcohol as a tool of conquest. For example, a committee, set up in 1671 by the pious Brookhaven town meeting to negotiate purchase of land in Setauket, was authorized to carry

"some likers with them to the Indians upon the towne's account."[7] The nineteenth-century Long Island historian, Benjamin Franklin Thompson, recalled Daniel Denton's observation, in 1670, that "'where the English come to settle, a Divine Hand makes way for them by removing or cutting off the Indians, either by wars, one against the other, or by some mortal disease.'"[8]

Even with Indians out of the way, it was extremely difficult for the settlers to produce a crop on the scale required for commercial winemaking. Most of the Island was in a wild state into the early 1800s. The wooded area along the Sound on the North Fork was called the "Devil's Belt" because of its rattlesnakes, bears, wolves, and wildcats. Fearing invasion by Narragansett Indians, or by European powers at war with England, settlers avoided this vulnerable area.[9] It took a tremendous amount of labor to clear land (although once trees were felled, sheep could be used to eat away briars and shrubs). Lands already cleared by the Indians were expanded, especially in Oysterponds (Orient), where tobacco was grown for export, and in Cutchogue, where corn, wheat, and barley were raised in common and any surplus was traded in Connecticut. Montauk had the largest expanse of open land for grazing domestic stock, a tract that as late as 1823 "was peculiar in having no flies for their annoyance."[10] Salt pork and apples were sent to the West Indies in return for rum and sugar.[11] In his 1907 history of grape growing in New York State, Ulysses P. Hedrick contended that there were more attempts at wine-grape growing in Southern colonies than in New York or New England, because in the North,

> rum seems to have been preferred to wine, and as its manufacture from molasses is very simple and the latter was to be had from the West Indies at small cost, wine making and grape growing received small attention.[12]

Town records show that the purchase of rum was authorized for the use of the justices in Cutchogue;[13] early pastors of Mattituck Presbyterian Church received rum as part of their salaries.[14] Wine for sick indigent was carried at municipal expense (six shillings per gallon in the early 1700s).[15] The Presbyterian churches of Suffolk used wine at their semiannual communion services (increased to four times a year in 1843),[16] a significant practice considering that many early town governments were Calvinist theocracies.

The source of the grapes for these wines is unknown. Cutchogue's historian, Wayland Jefferson, mentions Moses Fournier, a Frenchman "whose great vineyards were an outstanding feature of the town" in the early-eighteenth century.[17] However, the records of the town of Southold for the corresponding period do not mention any Fournier (as landowner, taxpayer, trustee, student, etc.). Perhaps he was omitted for being a foreigner. An 1809 newspaper story referred to a Peter Fournier, who was "knocked overboard while passing through Shelter Island Ferry...and died."[18]

The English of the East End were excited by their ability to grow plants that had never survived in England. Besides tobacco and other Indian crops, they experimented with herbs, spices, and fruits brought in trade by sea captains. Figs, pomegranates, persimmons, and ginger came in at Sag Harbor, a busy port of entry. Nathaniel Sylvester and his family, the lords of the manor of Shelter Island, imported black currants from England. Known as "bush grapes," these became popular and were used by families to make their own wine.[19] Apparently, when it came to making wine from Vitis vinifera, the English left it to the French or Italians. In colonial times, the people of Suffolk County traded primarily with Connecticut, not Manhattan. Maritime trade was easier than overland; taxes were higher in New York City; and Connecticut-oriented East Enders disliked dealing with the royal government based in New York, after the English ousted the Dutch in 1664.

In an adverse way, the Duke of York's provincial regime had a hand in the history of grape growing on Long Island. The first English governor of New York, Colonel Richard Nicolls, a member of the Stuart establishment, "united in himself all the attributes of despotic authority,"[20] antagonizing the settlers by raising revenues by devious means, especially to benefit himself and his friends. For example, in his first year in office he granted Paul Richards a monopoly on winemaking, stipulating that Richards could make and sell wines free of impost, and tax any person who planted vines five shillings an acre for thirty years.[21] This type of favoritism did not encourage the growth of viticulture. However, a clause in the so-called Duke's Laws of 1665 directed "no person to follow the business of brewing beer for sale, but those skilled in the art"[22]—perhaps an indication that when it came to their preferred beverage, the English practiced the merit system.

The East End was slow to welcome foreigners, whose numbers might have included potential winemakers. As late as 1821, a census of the town of Southold showed that the population of 2,968 included only one foreigner.[23] Manhattan, Brooklyn, and western Queens, first settled by the tolerant Dutch, were more heterogeneously populated and more commercially oriented than the towns of Suffolk and eastern Queens. Dutch visitors to Coney Island reported seeing vineyards of wine grapes in 1679:

> Although they have several times attempted to plant vineyards, and have not immediately succeeded, they, nevertheless, have not abandoned the hope of doing so by and by...although they have not, as yet, discovered the cause of the failure.[24]

Three years later some Huguenots, fleeing persecution in France, came to Flushing where, according to Thompson, they became exemplary citizens, known for the variety and excellence of their fruits. We can only assume that these included *Vitis vinifera*, which, as other eastern plantings, probably suffered from soil pests and mildews. In 1750, the most ambitious attempts to grow wine (and other) grapes began, also in Flushing. The

first of three generations of the Prince family planted the first eight acres of their "Linnean Botanic Garden" (commonly known as Prince Nurseries), which increased to twenty-four acres in 1793, and to sixty by 1840. According to Thompson, Prince and other local nurseries raised "the finest, well-grown fruit trees, among which were at least 30,000 grafted English cherry trees." After British troops occupied Flushing in the summer of 1776, there was no demand for "so valuable an article...and immense quantities were disposed of for hoop-poles [stock for barrel staves]...the only use which then could be made of them." To his credit, the British commander, Sir William Howe, "posted a guard for the protection of the garden and nurseries...so long as... required for safety and preservation."[25]

William R. Prince (1795-1869) was particularly interested in propagating grapes. His *Treatise on the Vine* was the most influential work on grape growing in America since Edward Antill's grossly untrustworthy essay was published in 1771. Prince experimented with every known variety, but his inability to control fungus led him to grow only native plants in his later years.[26] (The Bordeaux Mixture was not discovered until after he died.)

Andre Parmentier, a Belgian-born American horticulturist, also made noteworthy efforts to propagate *Vitis vinifera* in Brooklyn during the early 1800s. When these failed he encouraged others to plant American varieties, especially in the Hudson River Valley, which became a center for grape growing until the industry moved to the Finger Lakes. At about the same time, another Frenchman, Alphonse Loubat, planted forty acres of wine grapes in Utrecht (Brooklyn). These suffered so badly from mildew that he tried putting paper bags over each cluster, an effort doomed to failure. The result of such attempts was pithily stated in 1846 by Nicholas Longworth, of Cincinnati, "the father of American grape culture": "I have tried the foreign grapes extensively for wine at great expense for many years, and have abandoned them as unfit for our climate."[27]

While the eastern and western parts of Long Island were developing agricultural economies, the middle-Island remained largely neglected, particularly in areas not adjacent to water. Writing in 1823, Horatio G. Spafford described Brookhaven, the Island's largest town, as little cultivated and marked by extreme poverty. Most crops from this area of more than three hundred square miles were such natural resources as salt hay, firewood, and timber. The soils, reported Spafford, which were (and still are) excessively light, were beginning to be improved by the application of fertilizers, including wood ash imported from New York, Philadelphia, Albany, Hartford, and Boston, the end result of residents' selling firewood to city folk and buying back the ashes.[28]

The fertile soil of the vast and treeless Hempstead Plains, America's first prairie, was used for grazing livestock rather than raising commercial crops, a policy against which Benjamin Thompson railed:

> Along the North side of this immense heath...are some of the best farms in the country, and if the whole of this open waste was disposed

> of and enclosed in separate fields the agricultural products of this portion of the island would be nearly doubled. A stupid policy, consequent upon old prejudices, has hitherto prevented any other disposition of it, than as common pasturage.

Thompson hoped that temperatures would rise as more of the Island was cleared, making it a better place to grow fruits.[29]

All over the East Coast, repeated attempts to grow French wine grapes resulted in the almost complete abandonment of vineyards in the early 1800s. An 1825 survey of commercial American vineyards found "only 60 of 1 to 20 acres each, altogether 600 acres in 1825."[30] The grape industry began to grow when Prince and others affirmed the desirability of working with native varieties in spite of their limitations, and techniques were developed to minimize their organoleptic problems. Their strong flavors were not so bad if wines were made to imitate sherry, sauternes, or sparkling wine. A new wine industry emerged in the Finger Lake region of New York State, especially around Keuka Lake.

A major revolution occurred in grape growing after 1845, when Dr. William W. Valk, of Flushing, hybridized an American vine with a French vine to create a new and popular table grape called "Ada." Botany became a national passion, with many Americans engaging in the avocation of hybridizing and naming of all sorts of plants, especially grapes and apples. At the same time, a religious movement took hold along the frontiers of upstate New York and Ohio, stressing teetotaling in its morality. A grape-growing prohibitionist, Thomas B. Welch, used a new hybrid called Concord to get rich making unfermented grape juice for Methodist communion services. Welch's grapes are still a major factor in the economy of the Lake Erie shores. By 1890, four-fifths of all grapes grown in New York were for the table or for juice, with most of them produced upstate.

As the twentieth century opened, agriculture on Long Island remained largely diversified. Innovative technology affected its future profoundly when, in the town of Southold, Daniel Y. Hallock devised a crude potato weeder and digger in 1888. Because it eliminated some labor, the device made Long Island potatoes competitive in the world market.[31] Many of the hardworking Polish immigrants who had come to the East End at the turn of the century bought out their American employers and expanded the potato industry. By the end of World War II, when most of the growers' capital was invested in tractors and potato combines, potatoes had become a virtual monoculture on the Island. Even when the Colorado Potato Beetle threatened the viability of their crop, it did not occur to them to return to growing a labor-intensive crop like grapes.

One Cutchogue farmer, John Wickham, who tilled land that had been in his family since the 1600s, recognized the North Fork as ideal for raising fruit crops. Wickham had been trained as an engineer at Cornell University, and also had farmed in California. He was aware of modern advances in grafting and pest management, and felt that historic difficulties could be overcome, particularly on the North Fork. Because of the way

that its narrow land mass juts into the sea, the North Fork has a remarkably stable temperature, which protects fruit crops from frost in the spring and fall and keeps temperatures above zero in winter. Clouds and fog coming off the Atlantic Ocean are absorbed by the larger mass of the South Fork, leaving Cutchogue the sunniest town in the state. This enables fruit crops fully to ripen, with summers not sufficiently hot to damage flavor. Not far from where the Indians had their orchards three hundred years before, Wickham planted peaches, apples, pears, plums, cherries, apricots...and grapes. A teetotaler himself, he planted only table grapes, among his varieties some of the most cold-sensitive Mediterranean types, thus demonstrating that *Vitis vinifera* could survive here. He worked on developing new varieties with plant scientists at Cornell's research facility in Geneva, New York. Since the funds for agricultural research came from the citizens (via taxation), the Legislature decided it would only be fair to develop plant varieties that could be grown in all parts of New York State. This justified the location of the fruit research center at Geneva, where winter temperatures always fall below zero, and it reinforced the idea that *Vitis vinifera* could not be grown in the state. Besides, all funding for wine research had ceased during Prohibition; the tenured professors working in food-processing research were largely teetotalers, so it was not until the late 1960s that any significant state-funded research was done to benefit New York's wine industry. The apple and grape juice industries prospered in cold areas of the state; any help for the wine industry in the Finger Lakes was focused on growing and dealing with the problems of native grapes, or of cold-hardy hybrid crosses.

Because of his association with Cornell, John Wickham was able to secure the attentions of state-funded scientists, who became acquainted with his success in raising grape varieties that could not be grown in other parts of New York. John Tomkins, a Cornell professor of pomology, worked closely with the Wickhams in developing a seedless table grape, a hybrid variety which they called Suffolk Red.

In 1972, Alex and Louisa Hargrave, a young couple whose organoleptic interest in wine led to their desire to grow wine grapes, approached John Tomkins for advice on where to plant a vineyard. They were interested only in growing *Vitis vinifera*, particularly Cabernet Sauvignon. Cabernet Sauvignon is the principal red wine grape of Bordeaux; it is the latest-ripening variety and must be fully ripe to be palatable. After spending a year on the West Coast, where this *Vitis* is extensively grown, the Hargaves concluded that California's hot climate produced wines that were typically higher in alcohol and tannin, and lower in acidity and complexity, than what they hoped to produce. While they knew that Cabernet Sauvignon had not been successfully grown on the East Coast, they felt that if a proper site could be found, the wines might be superior to other American wines.

The Hargraves' interest in growing Cabernet Sauvignon was also a reflection of broader trends in American wine growing. In colonial times, wine was regarded as a product for export, a medicine, or, by the wealthy,

a status symbol and a food with great sensory appeal, especially if imported from France. Throughout the nineteenth century, although an American wine industry developed in regions of upstate New York, the Midwest, and California, it never succeeded in making wine a popular, everyday beverage. In their recent book, *Through the Grapevine*, Jay Stuller and Glen Martin note that: "Brutal competition and nefarious acts of sabotage by vintners in rival American wine regions created internecine warfare that drove the public to drink: to drink almost anything but wine."[32]

The arrival of large numbers of Italian immigrants in the late 1880s opened a new market for American wine. Two of every three California wineries had folded in the wake of the Panic of 1873, revived, and again faced ruin when passage of the Eighteenth Amendment almost wiped out the industry. Once it was legal to make wine again, in 1934, the industry that developed was an offshoot of wineries that survived Prohibition by making communion or medicinal wine, or by illegally selling the two hundred gallons permitted by Congress for family use. There was no premium-wine industry in the United States; wine was seen as an agricultural commodity, a daily beverage of the Italians who were its main producers. In California, due especially to the efforts of viticulturalists at the state university at Davis, the varieties of grapes being grown were gradually upgraded, at the same time that advances were made in winemaking technology. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, as the sale of premium wines began to spread beyond California, other investors expanded the effort to produce premium American wines on a par with Europe's.

The Hargraves had no formal training in viticulture or winemaking, but while graduate students at Harvard (in Chinese Studies and History) they developed an interest in fine French wines which spurred them to explore the possibility of making similar wines themselves. At first their interest was limited to red wines in the styles of Bordeaux and Burgundy, which they preferred to others because they were convinced that the ultimate test of a wine region is its ability to produce red wines with body, aroma, and complexity. White wines are simpler to produce, but less interesting. Since their financial resources were limited, the Hargraves were encouraged to believe it was feasible to start their own winery when they went to California, in 1971, and saw examples of good wines produced on a very small scale. When they returned to New York they consulted Cornell for help in choosing a vineyard site.

At this time, Cornell actively was promoting the planting of French-American hybrids for commercial wine production in New York. They felt these new varieties would make wine that was more acceptable to the consumer, since they did not have the strong methyl anthranhilate taste of native varieties. Furthermore, they were cold-resistant, and could be grown in most parts of the state. All over the Finger Lakes, Concords were being pulled out and Baco, Chelois, and Seyval 5279 were being planted. What the plant professors lacked was a wine-research facility good enough to tell them that the wines from these varieties would prove to

be insipid cousins of *Vitis vinifera*—palatable, better than *labrusca*, but no match for what was coming out of California.

Tomkins advised the Hargraves to think about growing hybrids if they wanted to stay on the East Coast, but when they persisted in wanting to grow *vinifera*, he suggested they get in touch with John Wickham, in Cutchogue. Before visiting Wickham, the Hargraves met Dr. Konstantin Frank, who was fiercely devoted to the premise that *vinifera* can be grown almost anywhere, and who had a vineyard of *vinifera* wine grapes on Keuka Lake. Dr. Frank, who had been a wine-grape specialist in Russia and then in Germany, had considerable experience in growing cold-sensitive grapes in hostile environments. He was a genius at getting his vines to ripen early, so they could survive the winter (mostly by limiting crop size); he also designed a type of plow to bury his vines every winter so they would not freeze. When he came to America, he went to work for the New York State research farm at Geneva, where, instead of seeking his help in grape studies, the authorities had him weed blueberries. He was a proud man, with strong opinions, and while he eventually prospered enough to plant his own vines and have his own winery, Dr. Frank remained furious with Cornell, waging a noisy war against their new hybrid varieties which he insisted were poisonous.

The Hargraves decided that while Dr. Frank had succeeded in growing certain white *vinifera* varieties, he had one of the few sites in the Finger Lakes that were warm enough to do so; his red varieties, especially Cabernet Sauvignon, had not ripened enough in the short growing season to be worth planting as a new venture. Therefore, when Tomkins mentioned Wickham's success with very delicate table grapes, the Hargraves determined to meet him and evaluate for themselves the potential of Long Island. Wickham was generous with his time and his knowledge of the North Fork's micro-ecology. While he argued that starting a new type of agriculture in an area was a risk no young couple should take, the Hargraves felt that his example as a pioneer of new crops was compelling, and turned their search for a vineyard site to Long Island. After researching soils and climate, they concluded that the North Fork offered a unique opportunity to grow premium *Vitis vinifera*. From the carefully documented soils maps at the U.S. Soils Conservation Service, in Riverhead, they learned that this area of Long Island had particularly good soils for growing the *vinifera*. These sandy loams offer the excellent drainage essential to keeping the fleshy roots of *vinifera* dry, while giving access to the sort of minimal nutrients that make for the best fruit quality. The phylloxera root louse is a lesser threat in sandy loams, because, unlike clays, the sand does not form cracks in which the pests can travel. This area is also in an infrared radiation belt that is considerably less intense than that of the Napa Valley of California, but provides the same degree days during the growing season. This means that the fruit can reach ripeness without sun scald or the destruction of the natural fruit acids which give fine wine its balance and aroma. Besides many other shared similarities, the average rainfall is the same as that of Bordeaux, France.

In early 1973, the Hargraves bought a sixty-six-acre potato farm in Cutchogue. That year, they planted seventeen acres of Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, and Sauvignon Blanc grapes. The following year they planted Chardonnay, Merlot, and Riesling, and in 1975 they harvested their first crop of commercial wine grapes. Two years later they purchased and planted an additional eighteen acres, and in 1988 added seventy more. Their winery, the first to be bonded[33] on Long Island, released its first wines for sale in June 1977.

From the beginning, the Hargraves resolved to make only premium wines. They wanted to operate on a small scale, as a family farm, doing much of the work of tending the vines and making the wines themselves. They felt that their commitment to quality would result in better and more marketable products. There are certain economies of scale in producing wines of any sort: for example, a grower needs a tractor for one acre as much as for twenty acres; a three-thousand-gallon fermenter costs not much more than a one-thousand-gallon fermenter (because they need the same fittings, and so on).

The Hargraves have attempted to build a business large enough to serve its market without resorting to advertising. Demand has been created essentially by the national media, which have, from the inception, reported the company's efforts because they heralded a new enterprise for Long Island. The Hargraves operate as Long Island Vineyards, Inc., and label their wines "Hargrave Vineyard." For fifteen years they have produced from one to ten thousand cases a year (each case containing twelve 750 ml bottles). Because they neither advertise nor have sales representatives, most of their wines have been sold in the New York metropolitan area. By selling directly to retail stores and restaurants instead of through distributors, they have been able to price their wines more reasonably than products of comparable quality, a policy which has helped to gain consumer acceptance. At first, they were surprised that consumers generally did not recognize the varietal grapes that were named on the labels: the wines sold as curiosities. As the national press (Robert Parker, Frank Prial, *The Wine Spectator*, Robert Schoolsky, Richard Nally, Josh Wesson, and Hugh Johnson, among others), gave recognition to these wines, people started to seek them out for their quality. According to Stuller and Martin, many premium wineries in America have "made wine seem like the drink of a specialized and recondite fraternity that only the extremely astute, talented and wealthy could penetrate."[34] Viewing this attitude as a danger to the premium-wine market, the Hargraves actively have tried to familiarize the public with fine wines by pricing their products to make them accessible, and by offering winery tours and seminars of much greater depth than the average, tourist-oriented, walk-through.

From the late 1970s into the 1980s, white wine has, to some extent, replaced distilled spirits as a popular, pre-dinner beverage. While the Hargraves are especially concerned with producing wines to accompany food, they have acknowledged this trend by making more white wine than they originally intended. Many consumers are initiated to wine by drinking

white wine casually, proceeding to red wine as their tastes demand more complexity.

When the Hargraves commenced to grow grapes and make wine, they relied for guidance on textbooks by professors at the University of California at Davis.[35] These were helpful, but the information supplied did not apply to viticulture on Long Island, where the climate is so different from California's. The Hargraves were forced to use their wits and their experience—as they gained it—to learn the methods appropriate for their situation. A French text, *Connaissance et Travail du Vin*, proved more useful than works by Californians.[36] Cornell University was willing to offer advice, but its expertise was so focused on hybrid and native varieties that it was often inappropriate for *vinifera*. At the small grape-research plot it set up on Long Island at its vegetable study center in Calverton, Cornell planted mainly new hybrids, ignoring the organoleptic and commercial superiority of *vinifera*.

Those farmers still left on Long Island were not prepared to convert their crops to wine grapes, but several would-be investors took note of the Hargraves' success and planted more acres. Because a ton of *vinifera* is worth over $1,000, while a ton of hybrid grapes might fetch $300 (if a buyer could be found), and *labrusca* are unsalable, nearly all the new growers planted *vinifera*, regardless of what Cornell recommended (although most were persuaded to trellis their vines on six-foot-high wires as if they were hybrids, a process now being changed wherever possible).

At the present time there are fifteen legally-bonded wineries on Long Island, including two on the South Fork and one in Nassau County, and the industry is a significant factor in the economy of the East End. On a scale on which one hundred is highest, several Long Island wines are rated in the eighties and nineties by numerous wine critics. They have won awards in international competitions, and are becoming generally recognized for their excellence. As in any new industry, there have been a few failures, all due to incautious over-investment by largely absentee owners. Successful winemakers on Long Island do not necessarily share the same goals; some are more interested in tourism, or are more commercially-minded than others. However, in the last two years, they have recognized the importance of working together to present Long Island as a region, and for this purpose have formed the Long Island Wine Council.

The wine industry has been faced with constant challenge, from the drought of 1908 and the excessive rain of the following year, to the hurricane of 1985, and the current neo-prohibitionist movement whose insistence on health-warning labels on bottles has reduced the public's enthusiasm for wine. The best of the growers and winemakers are resilient enough to cope with these problems, which are typical of those confronted today by producers of agricultural products. Our area's potential for further economic expansion is limited only by pressure from the real estate market to convert farmland to housing. Of all regions along the East Coast, we have the most favorable soil and climate conditions for growing all

temperate-zone crops. The success of the new wine industry will help to protect Long Island agriculture far into the future.

NOTES

1. Thomas Babor, *Alcohol: Customs and Rituals 1* (New York, 1986), 93, 33, 96, 24-32; Robert Wernick, *The Vikings* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1979), 150-151.

2. Ulysses P. Hedrick, *The Grapes of New York* (Albany: New York State Dept. of Agriculture, 15th Annual Report, 1907) vol. 3, part 2:6.

3. Ibid., 7, 9.

4. Ibid., 12; Jack McLaughlin, *Jefferson and Monticello: the Biography of a Builder* (New York: Henry Holt, 1988), 234-35.

5. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "Millardet, Pierre-Marie-Alexis."

6. *Southold Town Records, 1683-1856*, 1983 reprint, III:345.

7. Richard M. Bayles, "Brookhaven," in *A History of Suffolk County* (New York: W.W. Munsell, 1882), 3 (each chapter's pagination begins with 1).

8. Benjamin F. Thompson, *A History of Long Island* 3 vols. (Hempstead, 1849: reprint ed., Port Washington: Ira J. Friedman, 1962) I: 103; Daniel Denton's sketch, *A Brief Description of New York, Formerly called New Netherland* (London, 1670) was the first account of Long Island written by an English settler.

9. Wayland Jefferson, *Cutchogue—Southold's First Colony* (New York, 1940), 5.

10. Horatio Gates Spafford, *Gazetteer of the State of New York* (Albany, 1824: reprint ed., Interlaken, New York: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1981), 509.

11. Jefferson, *Cutchogue*, 21.

12. Hedrick, *Grapes of New York*, 35.

13. Jefferson, *Cutchogue*, 37.

14. George Borthwick, *The Church at the South: a History of South Haven Church* (Cutchogue, 1989), 64.

15. Jefferson, *Cutchogue*, 37.

16. Borthwick, *Church at the South*, 82.

17. Jefferson, *Cutchogue*, 13.

18. *Long Island Star*, 23 October 1809, cited in *Long Island Source Records*, Henry B. Hoff, ed. (Baltimore: Baltimore Genealogical Publishing Company, 1987), 599.

19. Jefferson, *Cutchogue*, 49, 47.

20. Thompson, *Long Island* I:209.

21. *Deeds of New York* (Albany: Office of the Secretary of State) II: 87.

22. Thompson, *Long Island*, I:189. The Hempstead Plains remained a common pasture until 1869, when the town of Hempstead sold more than 7,000 acres to A.T. Stewart (see Vincent F. Seyfried, *The Founding of Garden City* (Uniondale, 1969), 6-7.

23. Spafford, *Gazetteer*, 445.

24. "Journal of a Voyage to New York in 1679-89," quoted in Hedrick, *Grapes of New York*, 11.

25. Thompson, *Long Island* III:29-30.

26. Hedrick, *Grapes of New York*, 15, 22.

27. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "Parmentier, André"; Hedrick, *Grapes of New York*, 22.

28. Spafford, *Gazetteer*, 60.

29. Thompson, *Long Island* I:18.

30. Constantine S. Rafinesque, *American Manual of the Grape Vines* (Philadelphia, 1830), 43.

31. *Southold Town, 1636-1939* (Southold: the Town of Southold, 1939), 93.

32. Jay Stuller and Glen Martin, *Through the Grapevine: the Business of Wine in America* (New York: Wynwood Press, 1989), 79.

33. Wineries must purchase a bond insuring payment of the federal per gallon tax on production of alcoholic beverages.

34. Stuller and Martin, *Through the Grapevine*, 344.

35. They relied mainly on A.J. Winkler et al., *General Viticulture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), and Maynard A. Amerine and M.A. Joslyn, *Table Wines: The Technology of their Production*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).

36. Emil Peynaud, *Connaissance et Travail du Vin* (Paris: Bordas, 1981), published in the United States as *Knowing and Making Wine*, trans. Alan F. Spencer (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1984).

The Pigskin Book: Records of Native-American Whalemen 1696-1721

By John A. Strong

Richard Baldwin, of the Bellport-Brookhaven Historical Society, recently called my attention to a pigskin-bound account book of colonial whaling activities, now in the collection of the society's museum. Although brief references to this book have been made by Long Island historians, none has systematically analyzed its contents.[1] Mr. Baldwin, a curator at the society's Barn Museum, removed this rare document from the display case where it had been viewed by museum visitors more as an artifact than as an archival source. After reading it carefully, together with the typed transcription made in the 1950s by George Morse, a founder of the society, he recognized its historical significance. All who cherish Long Island's past are indebted to Richard Baldwin and the Bellport-Brookhaven Historical Society for preserving this key archival source, and making it available to scholars.

The book is a ledger started in 1696 by Colonel William "Tangier" Smith, an early settler of Brookhaven. Smith acquired his exotic nickname for serving Charles II as mayor of Tangier until the British abandoned the city in 1683. He then came to Long Island, was granted a huge tract of land from the Sound to the South Shore, and established himself as a leading citizen and office-holder of Suffolk County.[2] From 1696 until 1721, the Smiths used the book to keep the accounts of Native Americans working for their whaling company. After "Tangier" Smith died in 1705, his wife, Lady Martha Tunstall Smith, ran the estate until her death, four years later. After 1721, the occasional entries made in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries included family accounts, biographical essays, and, of special interest, five indenture agreements for African American children.

As the only ledger yet found concerning whalers on Long Island, the book is one of the few extant documents which provide detailed information about the economic interaction of Native peoples with English colonists during the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. A similar book, bound in sheepskin, is in the archives of the Peter Foulger Museum in Nantucket, Massachusetts.[3] The Nantucket book, kept by Mary Starbuck and her son Nathaniel, contains the accounts of Native American whalers entered between 1721 and 1768. The Starbuck ledger deals with the era of whaling developing after 1715 when large sloops of twenty-five tons or more began pursuing whales into deeper waters beyond

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the continental shelf and along the Atlantic coast as far south as the Carolinas. The importance of the pigskin book is that it records transactions during an earlier period when small, twenty-eight foot, cedar boats carrying six-man crews hunted whales within a few miles of the shore. The Native American crews were hired by English company owners, who provided the boats and equipment.[4]

The book, wrote Richard Baldwin, correctly, "is a gold mine of information regarding Long Island Indians and Long Island whaling,"[5] recording transactions involving thirty-one Native American whalers over a twenty-five year period. 14¼ inches long, 9½ inches wide, and about 1½ inches thick, its format resembles a modern spread sheet, showing debits on the left-hand pages, and credits (seasonal earnings) on the right (the Starbuck book was set up the same way). The debit pages itemize goods sold to whalers on credit, along with nameless "sundries." Table 1 is a list of products, followed by the number of whalers whose accounts were charged for them.

TABLE 1.
ENUMERATION OF ITEMS SOLD TO WHALERS ON CREDIT

Product	Number	Product	Number	Product	Number
Powder	(23)	Coats	(6)	Shirt	(1)
Shot	(22)	Rum	(5)	Cheese	(1)
Corn	(19)	Shoes	(5)	Gun	(1)
Stockings	(16)	Shoe Leather	(4)	Dutch Blanket	(1)
Cider	(16)	Shoes	(4)	Flint	(1)
Mittens	(12)	Britches	(3)	Corn Drink	(1)
Cotton	(11)	Thread	(2)		
Duffel*	(7)	Knives	(2)		

SOURCE: William Smith account book (applies to subsequent tables).

*NOTE: duffel was a rough cloth with a thick nap used to make blankets and winter coats.

The total value of the goods was entered for each season but prices were seldom listed for individual items. An Indian named Wahamehoe, for example, was charged ten pounds, ten shillings and six pence for duffel, corn and shot, but there is no indication of the quantity or the price per unit.

Entries on the left side of the ledger always began with a debit carried over from the previous year. The 1696/97 entries, for example, often referred to debits carried over from the "old book." Unfortunately, that earlier document has not been found. Credit earned for each whaling season was entered on the right hand side of the ledger. In most cases the number of barrels of oil and the weight of the bone were listed, followed by the value of the share in English currency. This amount was

then deducted from their debt after each season. None of the men in the account book ever ended a season out of debt.

Apparently, Native American whalers were seldom involved in cash transactions. The company owner provided them with goods, and then deducted their cost from the monetary value of whale oil and bone allotted to each man as his share. The share, or "lay system," which became common in the whaling industry during the nineteenth century, may have had its roots in the procedure developed by these pioneer whaling companies. However, an important difference distinguished the lay system used in shore-whaling from that of the later, long-distance whaling system.[6] Shore-whalers, who received no cash payments and thus had no opportunity to buy their goods in the marketplace, were forced to purchase what they needed from the owner, or his designate, at whatever price was set.

This lay system worked efficiently for the owners, but put Indian whalers at a decided disadvantage. Tangier Smith, for example, enjoyed a monopoly over his Native American customers who could not buy goods from anyone else. Daniel Vickers, one of the scholars who studied the Starbuck ledger, calls the system a form of "debt peonage"; although "...a gentler solution" to a labor problem than slavery, "the principle involved was little different."[7]

Information about the number of whales taken in a season is scattered and very general. One early report indicates that a relatively small number of whales was taken during the industry's first two decades. A 1669 report informed New York Governor Richard Nicolls that "12 to 13 whales were taken" that year.[8] By 1687, according to colonial documents gathered by George Rogers Howell in his *Early History of Southampton*, there were fourteen private whaling companies operating along the southern shore of Long Island and averaging about four whales a season.[9] None of these sources, however, provided a detailed list of whales caught by each company in a given season, or recorded the amount of oil taken from each whale. Thus, one of the major entries in the pigskin book is a list of the number of whales killed for the 1706/07 season, and how many barrels of oil and bone taken from each. Table 2, based on entries in that memorandum, fills a gap in the data base.

TABLE 2: WHALES TAKEN DURING THE 1706/1707 SEASON

Date	Whales taken	Barrels of Oil
January 16	1 "guit" whale	28
January 24	1 yearling whale	27
February 4	1 "stunt" whale	4
February 22	1 yearling whale	36
February 24	1 "scoule" whale	35
March 13	1 yearling whale	30
March 17	2 yearling whales (27 and 14)	41
	Total Barrels	201

The species of whale was not recorded, but they were undoubtedly "right" whales (Eubalaena glacialis). The right whale, which migrates along the Atlantic coast from late November to early April, was the primary prey of shore whalers from New Foundland to Long Island.[10] These slow-moving, surface-feeding leviathans were vulnerable to hunters in small boats. An adult right might produce as much as sixty barrels of oil. "Stunts" were young right whales, which had just been weaned and yielded only half as much oil as an average adult. The "stunt" whale taken on February 4 apparently was shared with another whaling company. The entry reads: "Inden Harey, with his lance strucke a stunt whale and could not kill it. Caled for my bote to help him. I had but a third which was four barrels." Since no Indian whaler named Harey is registered in Smith's book, he may have been with another company hunting in the same area. Apparently, Smith's company received a small share for helping Harey's crew bring in the whale. A similar situation occurred on 22 February when, according to the ledger, Smith's crew was aided by "Floyds botes." This time, Smith got a half share (eighteen barrels). The total amount of oil credited to Smith's company, therefore, was 183 gallons.

Table 3 shows how whalers' accounts were drawn up for the same season.

TABLE 3. CREDITS FOR 1706/07 SEASON

Name	Share (Oil)	Share (Bone)	Value in Pounds
Pumpsha	7 Barrels, 8 gal.	54 lbs.	17:04:00
Nero	7 Barrels, 8 gal.	54 lbs.	17:04:00
Tony	7 Barrels, 8 gal.	54 lbs.	17:04:00
Toby	7 Barrels, 4 gal.	47 lbs.	16:14:00
Tom	7 Barrels, 3 gal.	49 lbs.	16:12:04
Quogue	6 Barrels	45 lbs.	14:05:00
Will Beane	5 Barrels	43 lbs.	12:18:03
Wamahow	4 Barrels, 13 gal.	24 lbs.	10:00:00
Natutamy	3 Barrels, 19 gal.	23 lbs.	08:06:09
Total:	63 Barrels, 53 gal.	393 lbs.	181:05:16

Three whalers, Pumpsha, Nero, and Tony received similar shares which were larger than the others. There is no explanation about the smaller shares for Natutamy and Wamahow, but the differences may reflect the amount of time spent at sea,or perhaps the level of skill required for different tasks. Harpooners and steersmen, for example, may have received larger shares than oarsmen. Unfortunately the book does not record pay scales.

Early whaling contracts in the town records of East Hampton, Southampton, and Brookhaven generally gave the Native-American whalers one-half of the oil and bone to divide among themselves.[11] Lady Martha Smith's totals for the 1706-07 season, however, indicate that whalers in her employ received only about one-third of the oil, leaving

her a sizeable net profit of 120 barrels. A barrel brought two pounds sterling on the market, giving Mrs. Smith an income of 240 pounds for the season. Most of this was clear profit because her only expense, after the initial purchase of the boats, harping irons, and trying kettles, and the annual purchase of barrels, was the labor needed to strip off the blubber, try out the oil, and put it in barrels. East Hampton town records for 1696-98 set a laborer's rate for a full day's work at three shillings.[12] If done by indentured servants, the cost would have been even less.

The 1706-07 crew did not fare so well. One pattern shared by Native American whalers employed by the Smith family was their endless cycle of debt. Tables 4 and 5 are based on the debit side of the ledger for each man in the 1706/07 crew. The monetary value of goods taken was calculated, and a fee charged to them for trying their share of oil from the raw blubber, and barreling it. These charges were deducted from the monetary value of the whaler's share for the season. If the charges were more than the whaler's share for the season the difference was added to the old debt over from the previous year and the new balance was determined.

TABLE 4: ACCOUNTS FOR THE CREW (1706/1707)

Name	Goods Received	Value Of Goods	Services	Total Deductions
Pumpsha	powder, shot, rum and cider money	08:11:00	05:02:00	13:13:00
Nero	duffels, shot powder, corn drink	22:11:00	05:01:00	27:12:00
Tony	powder, shot, corn, rum, cider, shoes, mittens, stockings	16:14:00	05:01:00	21:15:00
Toby	"sundries"	——	——	27:1?:06
Tom	duffels, corn powder, shot, cider, coat, rum, pants	19:10:06	04:19:00	24:09:06
Quogue	"sundries"	13:19:04	04:04:00	18:03:04
Will Beane	duffels, shot, corn,powder, mittens, stockings	09:12:09	03:08:00	13:00:09
Wamahow	duffels, shot, corn, powder	10:10:06	02:16:00	13:06:00
Natutamy	duffels, shot, powder,cider, rum money, corn	05:05:00	02:10:00	07:15:00

TABLE 5: DEBITS FOR SEASON AND NEW BALANCE

Name	Share (Pounds)	Charges Season	Balance Season	Old Debt Carried Over	New Balance
Pumpsha	17:04:00	13:13:00	+03:11:00	45:11:10	41:19:10
Nero	17:04:00	27:12:00	-10:08:00	04:06:03	14:18:06
Tony	17:04:00	21:15:00	-03:11:00	08:09:09	10:04:03
Toby	16:14:00	27:1?:06	-10:??:06	———	05:00:06
Tom	16:12:04	24:09:06	-07:17:02	24:12:06	24:09:03
Quogue	14:05:00	18:03:09	-03:18:09	11:19:06	13:01:04½
Will Beane	12:18:03	13:00:09	-00:02:06	———	25:17:09
Wamahow	10:00:00	13:06:00	-03:06:00	17:11:00	———
Natutamy	08:06:09	07:15:00	+00:11:09	———	13:19:03

The pattern of constant indebtedness is demonstrated by looking at the totals for all of the whalers employed by Smith over the years. The result of a season of arduous and dangerous labor was a higher debt.

TABLE 6: DEBT BALANCES, FIRST AND LAST ENTRIES

NAME	PAGE	FIRST SEASON Amount	Year	LAST SEASON Amount	Year	Seasons
Abraham	46-47	01:08:09	1711	10:09:0	1721	11
Andrew	33	——	——	——	——	——
Conjamyis	21-22	——	——	——	——	——
Cownus	17-18	22:18:00	1697	27:15:00	1707	9
Hary	45	——	——	——	——	——
Gataeus	35	——	——	——	——	——
James	39-40	04:17:09	1699	11:04:09	1702	2
John	21-22	00:14:00	1697	09:06:00	1699	1
Kellis	11-12	22:18:00	1697	12:00:00	1708	2
Linaus(Fox)	3-4	05:04:00	1696	33:06:00	1708/09	4
Natutamy	31-32	09:00:00	1703/04	04:19:00	1708/09	3
Nero	13-14	10:07:03	1703/04	14:18:06	1707	4
Nultwhos	19-20	——	——	——	——	——
Pown	16-16	05:15:09	1697	10:11:06	1700	1
Pumpsha	9-10	25:07:05	1697	11:07:06	1718	10
Quogue (Tim)	25-26	06:00:06	1704/06	03:09:06	1718	3
Robin	41-42	10:04:03	1704/03	20:00:06	1707	4
Sacutacca	29-30	26:14:08	1697	06:06:08	1707/08	10
Samons	25	——	——	——	——	——
Soquatash	23-24	13:00:00	1703/04	21:04:03	1705/06	2
Straphons	7-8	04:15:06	1697	02:17:00	1699	1
Tapshana	5-6	05:05:06	1697	08:02:07	1698	2
Toby (Pudding)	33-34	06:18:00	1703/04	07:19:09	1717	6
Tom	43-44	00:06:00	1703	03:12:07	1719	6
Tony	37-38	04:14:03	1704/05	17:13:03	1721	9

Towntuck (Sam)	23-24	33:18:00	1697	21:04:03	1705/06	9
Waukus	29	——	——	——	——	——
Wawaheo	13-14	19:05:01	1697	13:06:06	1706/07	——
Wawpachukis	13-14	12:16:00	1697	19:19:06	1697	1
Weramps	2,7	49:10:08	1705	52:00:00	1707/08	3
Will Beane	35-36	04:10:09	1704/05	20:00:00	1707/08	3

The data in table 6 again raises the obvious issue of economic exploitation. The lay system is viewed by Vickers and other scholars as inherently exploitative, while others argue that it was simply a practical response to the shortage of currency in the colonial economy. Elizabeth Little, an authority on Native-American whaling on Nantucket, studied the Mary Starbuck ledger and disagreed sharply with Vickers. She compares whalers with average Boston seaman who made far less than the yearly value of goods that were taken on credit by whalers.[13] The validity of that comparison is open to question, because the seaman ended his employment free of debt and with some money in his pocket which he could spend wherever he pleased. However, this issue will not be resolved until more data are found.

Another question concerns the economic base of Native American communities during the post-contact period. The kinds of material goods most highly valued by Native American whalers provide some important insights. The clear preference for gun powder, shot, and corn (see table 1) suggests that Long Island's Indian communities still relied heavily on hunting and gathering. The pattern of incipient agriculture, at the time that white settlers arrived on the Island, hardly changed. Native American communities raised small amounts of corn, squash, and beans, but never depended entirely on agriculture.[14] Early-eighteenth-century European observers observed that coastal Indian communities frequently ran out of corn supplies in mid-winter. Apparently, rather than develop a self-sufficient agricultural base, Native Americans sold their labor to buy corn.

Also of interest are the entries of Native-American names, which, together with those found in other contemporary records, have been added to a steadily-growing computer file at the Southampton campus of Long Island University. Five of the whalers, Tom, Toby, Abraham, Hary, and Towntuck (Sam) were listed as Shinnecock men in the 1698 Town of Southampton census.[15] Toby's name also appears on the 1703 deed which transferred the Shinnecock land to the Town of Southampton.

Two other whalers, Weramps and Taphsana, were of the Unkechauge band, located west of Shinnecock near St. George's Manor, the Smith estate. Weramps must have been a village headman, and, perhaps, an important advisor to Tobaccus, the Unkechauge sachem. In 1685, Weramps joined Tobaccus and several other Unkechauge men to support Brookhaven's challenge of Southampton's claims to a tract between the two towns. The land in question, purchased from the Montauk sachem,

Wyandanch, by John Ogden, was sold to Southampton in 1666. Tobaccus protested Wyandanch's right to sell Unkechauge land and affirmed his own sale of the same land to Brookhaven. Five years later, Weramps participated in negotiations about the use of land in Brookhaven. Tobaccus, with Weramps and five other Unkechauge leaders, confirmed an earlier deed and then gave the English settlers the right to build several roads, graze cattle, and cut timber on this land. In 1700 Weramps and Tapshana were involved with the negotiation which led to the establishment of the Poosepatuck Reservation.[16]

Weramps, who must have been in his mid-forties when he went out on a whaling crew in 1707/08, was extended an unusually high rate of debt (see table 6) while employed by the Smiths. Pumpsha, whom the family employed for ten years, was allowed a debt balance of forty-five pounds sterling, three times more than the average level (see table 6). Weramps may have been granted a larger balance because of his influence on his people, or, to make sure he would gain it. Colonial leaders often manipulated the political systems of Native American villages by selecting headmen willing to endorse policies favorable to the settlers, and by providing him or her with the artifacts and patronage to build a strong base of support.

Another aspect of the pigskin book worth observing is the occasional appearance of Christian names, a practice which increased noticeably at the end of the seventeenth century. For example, in 1666, only three of twenty-four Indian signers of the deed to Quogue used English names, compared with more than half of the forty-seven Shinnecock who did so on the Southampton census of 1698.[17] The following whalers used both English and Native American names, as recorded in the book:

Linaus alias Fox
Wawpachukis alias Humphries
Nultwos alias Ned
Towntuck or Sam
Quogue alias Timothy
Toby alias Pudding
John of Hog's Neck alias (no name listed)

These whalers, listed as "Indian," had only English-inspired names (a man named Nero—on the list, but not identified as Indian—was probably African):

Indian Tom, jr.
James the Indian
Tony Indian
Abraham Indian
Indian Robin

The significance of names was not the same in English and Native-American cultures. English male children were christened with names they kept for life, but Native Americans might change theirs several times to

reflect traumatic experiences or traditional rites of passage, such as puberty, when the boy "dies" and the man is "born." For example, an entry in the pigskin book assigns two alias to a Native American—"Sacutacca or Sowano." The "jr." in Indian Tom's name suggests that his father, who must have been among the first to adopt an English name, also followed the English custom of handing down a name from father to son. Native Americans often had two names, one for use in their villages and the other, an English name, used when dealing with settlers.[18] It appears that the adoption of Christian names was a matter of business convenience rather than evidence of conversion. Missionaries were not active on eastern Long Island until the Great Awakening, in the mid-eighteenth century.

CONCLUSIONS

The pigskin book illuminates a poorly understood phase of the relationship of the first two generations of English settlers with the Native American communities. The broad issues of land, labor, trade, and armed conflict have been thoroughly addressed by scholars, but the Long Island variations call for more detailed analysis. Paucity of information encourages romantic and racially-biased speculation, inclined more to stereotypical than verifiable findings. The popular notion that the Native peoples gave away their land for trinkets and liquor is one of the more common myths. The pigskin book clearly demonstrates that Indian whalers, when given a choice, selected useful and practical items. In greatest demand were such English manufactured goods as powder, shot, winter clothing, and footwear, none of which could be replicated in their own villages. It should be emphasized that alcoholic beverages seldom were requested.

The fact that they were not manipulated with useless baubles, or plied with rum, does not mean that these whalers were not exploited. The nature and degree of exploitation in the lay system may not be as easy to determine as Daniel Vickers suggests, just as it probably was more extensive than Elizabeth Little is willing to concede. More work is needed to resolve this critical issue. The Smith's ledger lists the prices of some goods sold on credit to whalers, but these should not be compared with colonial market prices in general to determine whether or not the whalers were cheated by artificially inflated charges. That research is beyond the scope of this brief essay.

All the questions raised in this article require more research, particularly of Long Island and Nantucket records to obtain comparative data. A wealth of insights into the role of Native-Americans remains to be gleaned. Such investigations are encouraged by the staff of the Barn Museum and the members of the Bellport-Brookhaven Historical Society, who welcome students of Long Island history to examine the pigskin book.[19]

THE LAMPS OF AMERICA WERE ILLUMINATED WITH WHALE OIL
By Maxwell Corydon Wheat, Jr.

They moved down from Greenland
off the New England coast
off Amagansett, the Hamptons, the Rockaways
Herds of leviathans
a half-mile off shore

The young watcher on the dunes
a morning in late autumn
could see their wedge-shaped blows
the breaching of dark-toned tonnage
huge gnarled heads
mouths that were caverns of baleen

"Whale Ho! Whale Ho!" the Long Islander would shout
cupping his mouth
his calls carried to the village
on Atlantic winds
"Whale Ho! Whale Ho!"

The shove of whaleboats through surf
Men straining of long oars
their boats leaping
plunging into troughs
Harpooners balancing in the bows

These mammals were the Right Whales
They swam slowly
They floated in their own streams of blood

NOTES

1. See N.R. Howell, "Long Island Whaling," *Long Island Forum* 4 (September, 1941), 207-216, and Benjamin F. Thompson, *History of Long Island*, 3 vols. (New York: R.H. Dodd, 1918), I:438.

2. For William "Tangier" Smith, see Harold Donaldson Eberlein, "The Manor of St. George," *Manor Houses and Historic Homes of Long Island and Staten Island* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1928), 84-106; Ruth Tangier Smith, *The Tangier Smith Family* (Smithtown, 1978); and Richard M. Bayles, "The Town of Brookhaven," in *History of Suffolk County, New York 1683-1883* (New York: W.W. Munsell, 1882), 24-28.

3. See Elizabeth Little and Marie Susseck, "Index to Mary Starbuck's Account Book With Indians," *Nantucket Algonquian Series 5* (Nantucket: Nantucket Historical Society, 1981); Elizabeth Little, "Nantucket Whaling in the Early Eighteenth Century," in William Cowan, ed., *Papers of the Nineteenth Algonquian Conference* (Ottawa, Canada: Carleton University Press, 1988) 111-31.

4. See John A. Strong, "Shinnecock and Montauk Whalemen," *Long Island Historical Journal* 2 (Fall 1989):29-40.

5. Richard Baldwin to John Strong, 15 November 1989. "The book," continues the letter, "came into the possession of Egbert Tangier Smith (1796-1879) who wrote his name in large letters on the front page and added genealogical data to the ledger. Egbert left the book to his son, Charles Geoffrey Smith, who had no children. Charles then gave the book to his cousin, Miss Ruth Woodhall, who in turn, gave the book to the Bellport-Brookhaven Historical Society in the late 1950s."

6. For analysis of the nineteenth-century lay system, see Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Maritime History of New England* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 318-23.

7. Daniel Vickers, "The First Whalemen of Nantucket," *William and Mary Quarterly* 40 (1983):583.

8. W. Noel Saintsbury, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, 1669-1674* (London, 1889), 20.

9. George Howell, The Early History of Southampton (Albany: Weed, Parsons, & Co., 1887), 181-182.

10. Strong, "Shinnecock and Montauk Whalemen," 30.

11. Ibid., 32.

12. Little, "Nantucket Whaling," 116.

13. Archaeological evidence for late-prehistoric cultures on the Atlantic coast indicates limited dependence on agriculture: see Kathleen Bragdon, "Native Economy on Eighteenth-Century Martha's Vineyard," in William Cowan, ed., *The Papers of the Seventeenth Algonquian Conference* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1986), 27-40; Barbara Leudtke, "The Calf Island Site and the Late Prehistoric Period in Boston Harbor," *Man in the Northeast* 20:25-76; and Lynn Ceci, "Method and Theory in Coastal New York Archaeology: Paradigms of Settlement Patterns," *North American Archaeologist* 3:5-36.

14. Howell, *Early History of Southampton*, 42-43.

15. *Records of the Town of Brookhaven up to 1800* (Patchogue: Town of Brookhaven, 1880),

69-70.

16. Ibid., 75-76, 91-92.

17. John A. Strong, "How the Land Was Lost," in Gaynell Stone, ed., *The Shinnecock Indians: A Culture History* (Lexington, MA: Ginn, 1983)

18. John A. Strong, "From Hunter to Servant," in Joann P. Krieg, ed., *To Know the Place: Teaching Local History* (Hempstead: Long Island Studies Institute, 1986), 20.

19. The Barn Museum, at 31 Bellport Lane, Bellport, is open Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m., admission one dollar for adults, fifty cents for children.

Scale Model of Liberty: The Thirteen Years of Modern Times (1851-1864)

By Roger Wunderlich

> The name Modern Times was chosen as most fitting for the undertaking—in view that the principles we hoped to embody were wholly new and the name distinctive from all other Social Experiments.
>
> --Charles A. Codman, "A Brief History of "The City of Modern Times,' Long Island, N.Y."

This article traces the history of the village of Modern Times, a libertarian laboratory where people lived as if each were his or her own sect and nation. Never more than a few hundred strong, on a plat of ninety acres, here was a haven for nonconformists, its currency words, its religion discussion, its standard of conduct free and easy. A thirteen-year demonstration of an unorthodox counterculture gave it a controversial and somewhat immoral reputation. In September 1864, the settlers stepped out of the limelight by giving Modern Times its present and unprovocative name of Brentwood.[1]

Modern Times affected the history of the communitarian movement from which it evolved, the reform movement with which it was linked, and the Long Island culture with which it blended. Each phase was rich in contrasts. Although it is often classified as a "commune," Modern Times was exactly the opposite: families were nuclear, not universal; housing was separate, not unitary; ownership of property was private, not communal. As a generator of reform, it was handicapped by a promiscuous image inspired generally by its indifference to whether couples were legally married, and particularly by the activity of a handful of sexual radicals. In its third and historically overlooked aspect as a factor in Long Island's development, Modern Times was an eastern frontier in the era of westward expansion, a reverse movement of pioneers who proved the value of the pine barrens and the Long Island Railroad when neither was well regarded.

Forty-one miles by train from the city, and four miles inland from Great South Bay, Modern Times was a clearing in the wilderness that covered the interior of the Suffolk County town of Islip. The village was founded in 1851 by Josiah Warren, a musicologist, master of manual arts, and printer noted for his inventions of rotary presses and stereotyping methods. The creation of Modern Times by this self-taught social planner climaxed a lifetime of work for collaboration of equals, free of any arrangement

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that did not leave

> every individual at all times at liberty to dispose of his or her person, time, and property in any manner in which his or her own feelings or judgment may dictate, WITHOUT INVOLVING THE PERSONS OR INTERESTS OF OTHERS.[2]

The co-founder was Stephen Pearl Andrews, Warren's writing partner and editor, a lawyer, linguist, reformer, and sociologist who never resided at Modern Times but whose books, lectures, and legal services were indispensable to its formation.[3]

Modern Times was designed as a living test of Warren's major premises—sovereignty of the individual and cost the limit of price. Individual sovereignty meant that everyone had the right to live as he or she pleased, so long as this did not impede the right of another to do the same. Shunning any form of combination—religious, political, or economic—the village had

> no organization, no indefinite delegated powers, no Constitutions, no laws nor bye-laws, "rules" or "regulations" but such as each individual makes for himself and his own business.[4]

Cost the limit of price was an economic order of barter, with goods and services swapped at cost instead of sold at market value—for example, a carpenter trading skills with a tailor. They also could be paid for with labor notes, the self-coined circulating medium written by individual sovereigns and promising payment in hours of work at the issuer's occupation. The hub of the system was Warren's "time store," where merchandise was sold at cost plus a small mark-up to pay the clerk for his time in transacting a sale. This harbinger of the discount store also served as employment office and clearing house, where posted offers by makers and users accomplished "adaptation of the supply to the demand."[5]

Warren and Andrews fused sovereignty of the individual with cost the limit of price, and called it "equitable commerce." No goods or services were to change hands at a penny more than cost, precluding profit, speculation, usury, inflation, and "insecurity of condition," that "foundation evil of the world" which Warren held responsible for the "universal scramble for property and money."[6]

The Long Island Railroad was built in the early 1840s as a link in the rail and ferry connection between New York City and Boston. In the summer of 1844, the line was completed from Brooklyn to Greenport, from which palatial steamers carried passengers and freight across the Sound to Stonington where the New York, Providence, and Boston Railroad whisked them off to Boston. Rejecting a route along the Sound or the Bay, where most Long Islanders lived, the company built the line from four to six miles inland from the southern shore because this was the fastest and easiest course. When, to the promoters' dismay, a line was

opened on the mainland at the beginning of 1849, the financially mismanaged LIRR was forced into receivership.[7] Its problem of proving itself to Long Islanders as a local instead of a through carrier was compounded by the series of devastating fires ignited by sparks from the smokestacks of its word-burning puffer-bellies. Forests of oak, cherry, and walnut were ravaged, leaving only the tangle of fire-resistant pitch pine and scrub oak known as the pine barrens.

This was the moment of Modern Times's formation, on the south side of the railroad tracks, three-quarters of a mile east of the whistle-stop, Thompson's Station. It was the first new community on a line desperate for settlements along its empty right of way. The land was available, the climate was healthful, and the disparaged soil of the "barrens" would be proven to be tillable. Thompson's Station was near enough to the city for potential settlers to reach it easily, but far enough not to become a mere satellite of the metropolis.

The plat of Modern Times was a grid of eight avenues running from east to west, crossed by seven streets running from north to south; the railroad tracks formed the diagonal northern border of an otherwise rectangular village. Avenues and streets were numbered, beginning with "First" and proceeding in order. There were 220 lots, all one-acre square except for seven sliced smaller by the angle between the tracks and First Avenue.[8] With Andrews handling the legal papers, the sale of lots began in the spring of 1851 on the premise of cost the limit of price. At first applicants had to be approved, but this practice soon was dropped because screening and sovereignty did not jibe. Each square block contained four of the one-acre lots; no buyer could purchase more than three,

> as the object is not agriculture on the large scale, but a town of diversified occupations. The amount of land thus limited is ample for gardening purposes, play and pleasure-grounds, retiracy [sic], fresh air, etc. Those who desire to procure farms can do so in the neighborhood of the town.[9]

The expounders of equity commerce preferred truck gardens to sizeable farms, and a closely-knit community to the isolation of rural life. The price of $20 to $22 an acre included land, roads, surveys, deeds, and other expenses: "Nothing in the shape of profit or speculation has any place in the operations of the 'Cost' principle," declared Warren. In April 1853, "A Card—To the Public" announced to readers of the *New York Tribune*

> who are desirous of bettering their conditions in life by escaping from hostile competition and obtaining and *retaining* for themselves the full results of their own labor, that an opportunity is presented, at this point, such as we believe exists nowhere else.[10]

A few hardy settlers braved the hardships of frontier life in the spring of 1851. In his memoir, Warren recalled the beginning:

One man [William Metcalf] went on the ground alone, and built

> a little shanty, ten or twelve feet square [on the southeast corner of 5th Street and 4th Avenue]. There was not...even a cowpath in sight, among the scrub oaks that were everywhere breast-high.[11]

In letters to the London *Leader*, Henry Edger imparted to English readers his knowledge of Modern Times. Before becoming a resident he inspected the site and reported that, soon after construction of the first dwelling began, "Mr. Warren went down and built a house, subsequently sold 'at cost'..." Edger's description of the purchaser (Benjamin Franklin Bowles) fit many of the sovereigns: he was "a good practical mechanic, a smith and boilermaker; but like most Yankees, able to turn his hand to anything, and in particular is a well-skilled carpenter."[12]

Building material was scarce, but Warren's ingenious method of making bricks out of sun-dried mortar, combined with the savings accomplished by swapping instead of paying for labor, brought the cost of land and construction within the means of pioneers short of cash. There was, recalled Warren,

> nothing on the land to make lumber of, and even the winter fuel (coal) had to be brought from the city. Even with these drawbacks, houses seemed to go up...without means: *and those who never had homes of their own before, suddenly had them* [emphasis added].[13]

Warren lived at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Fourth Street, where he operated his time store, print shop, and "Mechanical College," a prototype of the vocational school in which he gave lessons in various trades from printing, stereotyping, bricklaying, brickmaking, and carpentry to the art of instrumental music. Henry Edger described the "college" as a

> square brick building, thirty-two feet each way, containing two stories and attics. The ground floor was occupied by the time store and several workshops—a smithy, carpenter's shop and printing press. The upper part is dwellings—already in part occupied by people whose houses were under construction.[14]

After almost twenty years, recalled Charles A. Codman, the oldest survivor and author of the village's most reliable memoir, "Time, wear-and-tear and the ravages of the elements impaired its condition and about 1870 gravitation laid it low."[15])

In 1852, one year after his first visit, Henry Edger marveled at the progress made at "the sturdy young village." In a letter that the editor captioned "Hard Times at Modern Times," he wrote that:

> Houses of various sizes and styles of architecture from the rude log cabin to the neat and almost elegant cottage residence, were dotted here and there where a year ago I left dismal stunted pines and tough oak brushwood...I found gardens that seemed struggling into existence amid the piles of lumber, lime, sand, mortar, bricks...lying around everywhere.[16]

The following fall, a New York City reporter described the village as combining the raw look of a frontier town with the features of individual sovereignty:

> In that open door we see a tinsmith at work: there is a shoemaker. Outside this unfinished building is a whiskered and mustachioed mason mixing mortar; and over the way, a tolerably pretty girl, with Bloomer pants, is sitting in the window with her feet on the sill, trying to poke music out of a common looking banjo! The houses are each one different from its fellow:—they plaster the *outside* and leave the interior unfinished. Some of the roofs are of paper: there are a profusion of sunflowers and crimson princess' feathers. There is no shade—no shrubbery, except the natural scrub oaks—there are no barns, no big woodpiles—no stacks of hay or grain.[17]

Equitable commerce did not lend itself to large farms or industries. Sizeable agriculture was discouraged by the three-acre limitation, favoring growth of a closely-knit, garden village instead of spread-out and isolated farmhouses. But by taking up land considered worthless and making it blossom as the rose, the sovereigns proved that "barrens" was a misnomer. At first, recalled Codman, wind, drought, and ignorance resulted in meager pickings. Undaunted,

> the pioneers planted trees along the streets and avenues as windbreaks and for shade and ornament—cherry and apple trees so that even the wayfarer could eat freely of the fruit, satisfy his hunger and slake his thirst without let or hindrance...[18]

Champions of all sorts of causes were attracted to the free-wheeling hamlet, the scope of its platform attracting, according to Codman, "many persons of extreme and radical opinions..." Modern Times, he went on, was a sounding board for

> Every kind of reform...from... Abolition of Chattel Slavery, Woman's Rights, Vegetarianism, Hydropathy, (and all the pathies), Peace, Anti-Tobacco, Total Abstinence, to the Bloomer Costume.

The sovereigns loved to discuss reform as much as or more than working for it. "Every new and strange proposition," continued Codman,

> was welcomed by a respectful hearing—debated and considered—and the latest "Anti" was often thought the truer as being the result of latest experience or riper knowledge...[19]

In the village's formative years, its permissiveness made it a magnet for cranks and faddists. One man, wrote Warren, did not believe in youngsters' wearing clothes and "inflicted some crazy experiments on his [own] children in the coldest weather!"A woman picked up the idea "and kept her infant naked in the midst of winter." Another young women had a "diet mania," and died after living "for about a year...almost wholly on beans without salt." Because expulsion was inconsistent with equity,

settlers whose conduct was unbecoming were given the silent treatment until they left. Stronger action was taken, however, against

> a German who was wholly or partly blind and paraded himself naked in the streets, with the theory that it would help his sight. He was stopped by an appeal to the overseer of the Insane Asylum.

This restrictive solution, invoking the power of outside authority, seems at odds with the doctrine of personal freedom; apparently, public nudity exceeded Modern Times's limit of tolerance. Warren was sure that some of these cranks had been sent to discredit Modern Times by maliciously adding to the image of eccentricity already fastened to the village. They failed to deter the gathering of a small but versatile band of "capable minds," but their antics probably hindered future growth.[20]

In contrast to the "crotcheteers," a center of stability was the contingent of pioneers from Massachusetts who came in 1857. The "Boston group" included the Codmans—Charles A., his wife Carolyn Adelaide ("Ada"), and his father, William P. Codman; William Upham Dame; Edward Linton; and Peter and Abigail Blacker (Blacker's brother, James D. Blacker and his wife, Eliza, had lived at Modern Times for the past five years). Dame, a skilled carpenter and cabinet-maker, built the well-preserved octagon house on the east side of Brentwood Road (Modern Times's Fifth Street) between Third and Fourth Avenues. He converted the second floor into an assembly room he named Archimedian Hall, where, recalled Codman, "for some years we danced and held our meetings"(given landmark status by the Town of Islip, Dame's house is now a residence of the Sisters of Saint Joseph). The Blackers combined zeal for the equity movement with concern for village affairs and an aptitude for business. James D. Blacker, active in school affairs, was one of the first Modern Times/Brentwood people (along with Henry Edger) to plant "a nursery of fruit trees." The Peter Blackers ran a harness and saddlery in the village until Peter's death, in 1884. Frank E. Blacker, their son, grew up to serve in the Civil War and be Brentwood's first notary public as well as its three-times postmaster.[21] Their daughter Eleanor was Modern Times's first school teacher; her tragic death at the age of eighteen dismayed the village. Little is known of Codman's father, William F. Codman, except that he was listed as a day laborer on the 1860 census, and died in 1878, at the age of eighty. The Bostonians typified the majority of civic-minded sovereigns who came to build a village as well as a model of equity commerce. In the long run their cause did not take took root on Long Island, but they did.

Best qualified to be called pioneers were the settlers who, in 1854, made the six-week trip from Ohio in Isaac Gibson's covered wagon. Gibson, at thirty-five, was advised to move to the balsamic air of the Long Island pine woods where he might put off his death from tuberculosis. He "fooled his doctor," observed Verne Dyson, the historian of Brentwood: "He recovered completely from his malady and died of old age a half-century later." With Gibson came seventeen-year old Mary Jane "Jenny" Frantz,

who soon became Mrs. William U. Dame. Jenny lived in Modern Times-Brentwood until her death in 1911, the only first-comer to outlive Codman, if only by six weeks. Other travelers in Gibson's wagon from the Western Reserve of Ohio to the salubrious forest of Islip were "Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins [Zachariah and Mary] and two little children [first names omitted] and Mr. I.[Isaac] Haines," all of whom, including Jenny, "were attracted by the Equity program."[22] Most sovereigns were strangers to husbandry, but the pioneers from Ohio belonged to the green-thumbed minority.

Lack of worldly goods was no bar to boundless enthusiasm. Putting their faith in the future, the congenial sovereigns were willing to forego material comfort because they were sure that their version of justice and freedom would be, in Codman's words,

> a light to all the world, a beacon to show the way out from the evils of competition and tyranny which had for all time dominated in human relation...and the sacrifices of pioneering in the howling wilderness would be of short duration, sure to be followed by enduring peace and plenty.[23]

In December 1854, Warren estimated in his newsletter that "there were between sixty and seventy inhabitants." Several families had left, however, for want of enough employment, while others "refrain from coming" because of unfavorable publicity "and "the conduct of professed friends." The problem of Modern Times's future expansion required serious study:

> true and healthy growth will be only in proportion as capable minds can be reached, and as we counteract the first crude impressions of newsmongers, and the worshippers of mere novelty.

The population never came near to the five hundred to one thousand families hoped for by Warren. The New York State census of 1855 numbered 85 residents, a total that reached 126 on the Federal count five years later.[24]

Modern Times was one of ninety-one model communities organized in the United States between 1780 and 1860.[25] No matter how varied the species, each belonged to the genus communitarian, hoping that by its witness a golden age of harmony would save the nation from Mammon worship. The common goal was defined by Albert Brisbane, one of the movement's leading ideologues:

> ...If we can, with a knowledge of true social principles, organize one township rightly, we can, by organizing others like it, and by spreading them and rendering them universal, establish a true Social and Political order.[26]

The largest, most prosperous, and longest-lasting groups consisted of religious collectives who practiced "Bible communism," imitating the early Christians by pooling their assets and living communally, taking their wages in room and board and the certainty of salvation. Such groups as the Shakers, Mormons, and Oneida Community were congregations of

believers who accepted codes of behavior derived from works held sacred, with which members conformed on pain of expulsion. Shaker celibacy, Mormon polygamy, and Oneidan "omnigamy"—the system of "complex marriage" in which every man was married to every woman—were articles of faith maintained by the preaching of the unprovable to the unquestioning. As tightly structured as Modern Times was loose, they practiced what Louis J. Kern has aptly termed "ordered love." Rejecting any "doctrine of complete sexual freedom for the individual," noted Kern, all adopted "some form of community regulated sexual relation that differed from the monogamic."[27]

Modern Times took the opposite course of ordering nothing and cherishing everything friendly to individual freedom. The sovereigns engaged in unordered love, according to choice, and never by rule. In place of a father figure was Josiah Warren, an anti-leader allergic to use of the pronoun "we."[28] Warren's only wielding of leadership was to defy the crusaders' effort, in the summer of 1853, to change the mating pattern of Modern Times from free choice to free love. Had this succeeded, the village would have fallen in step with the doctrinaires by "ordering" its style of love. The assault was repulsed but not before a rousing fight, in which Warren beat back the charge of the free love brigade commanded by Dr. Thomas Low Nichols and his wife, the flamboyant Mary Gove Nichols.

Free love was a more comprehensive concept than cohabitation. It meant variety of sexual partners to some, the union of equal lovers to more, but to most of its upholders it signified the right of women to marry, divorce, cohabit, and raise children in parity with men. Beginning in 1852, and for several years thereafter, a vanguard tried to make Modern Times the barricade of an ultra-free-love revolution. Although Josiah Warren and most Modern Timers refused to enlist in their army, the activity of this militant minority expanded the aura of sin that already illumined the village.

Free love began as the brain-child of John Humphrey Noyes, the Oneida Community's founder and leader, extending Bible communism to the bodies as well as the goods of the saints. Noyes declared monogamy null and void, citing Jesus (Matthew 22:23--"In the resurrection, they neither marry nor are they given in marriage") as proof that the institution of marriage, assigning exclusive possession of one woman to one man, does not exist in the Kingdom of Heaven. This was the keystone of "complex marriage," the system by which all Oneida men and women were married to one another. When God's will be done on earth, as it is in heaven, declared Noyes,

> *there will be no marriage.* The marriage supper of the Lamb is a feast at which *every dish is free to every guest*...I call a certain woman my wife—she is yours, she is Christ's, and in him she is the bride of all saints.

When outside reformers preempted free love and made it a secular

movement, Noyes rued the day that he coined the phrase, which he now denounced as a "terrible combination of two very good ideas—freedom and love."[29]

One object of his wrath was the fire-eating team of Dr. Thomas Low Nichols and his wife, the redoubtable Mary Gove Nichols. They began where Noyes left off. The issue, trumpeted Mary Gove, was not male lust alone or even the unfair double standard, but woman's right to determine by whom and when to bear her child:

> The woman who is truly emancipate...needs no human law for the protection of her chastity...Such a woman has a heaven-conferred right to choose the father of her babe.[30]

This was the law and the prophets of free love. Claiming that wives were legitimized prostitutes serving the passions of husbands to whom they were legal inferiors, the free love movement demanded an end to gender-based discrimination.

Late in 1852, in the *New York Tribune*, Stephen Pearl Andrews took part in a series of round-robin letters in which he debated with its editor, Horace Greeley, the defender of "indissoluble monogamy" (the proclaimer of "Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men" excluded "Free Love" from his list—he protected monogamy as ardently he did the tariff), and Henry James, Sr., who favored liberalized laws of divorce. Andrews pointed with pride to Modern Times, "the freest spot...upon the face of the earth," where

> There is no heresy because there is no instituted or established church...no seduction and no bigamy, and no adultery, when there is no legal or forceful institution of marriage to defend, when woman is recognized as belonging to herself and not to a husband.

His answer to James was that divorce destroyed the definition of marriage as union for life. Instead of the compromise of divorce, why not do away with marriage itself, along with all artificial controls over men and women by government? In his reply to Greeley, who condemned individual sovereignty for being "in palpable collision with the purity of society and the sovereignty of God," Andrews echoed the words of Mary Gove:

> You...cannot mean that the time is never to come when woman shall possess the freedom to bestow herself according to the dictates of her own affections, wholly apart from mercenary considerations... and to choose freely at all times the father of her child.[31]

The argument over the use of Modern Times as the bastion of anti-marriage militants had burst out in 1852, the village's second summer. George Stearns, of Lowell, Massachusetts, came to the village in May of that year to learn about equity commerce, only to leave abruptly in August. Shocked by what he saw as a plot to scuttle marriage, Stearns reported that free love conspirators, based in Manhattan, were infiltrating Modern Times until they were strong enough to "throw off the mask and defy

public opinion." Meanwhile, these libertines

> ridicule the sensibilities of one who refuses to barter connubialities. *Wife* to them is synonymous with *slave*, and *monogamy* is denounced as a vicious *monopoly of affections*.[32]

It was true that the free love lobby of Andrews, the Nicholses, and others, were friends but not residents of the village. But one year later, Andrews convinced the Nicholses to come there and build their School of Life, an ambitious but still-born project. The Nichols were hyperbolic champions of an endless series of movements, ranging from water cure to phrenology, mesmerism, unbolted flour, spiritualism, hygiene, the Bloomer costume, homeopathy, and, in their short and stormy sojourn, free love at Modern Times. Their battle with Warren erupted when, no sooner were their bags unpacked, they tried to enlist an army of free lovers under the banner of individual sovereignty.

To Warren, sex and mating were personal matters for couples to handle as each saw fit, but never a rule to which all must conform. He longed for the quiet growth of Modern Times as an incubator of equity, far from hostile criticism until it was sturdy enough to survive it. The Nichols rejected this cautious approach; in August 1853, Mary Gove called for volunteers for martyrdom in the cause of sexual freedom:

> Each person who wishes to go to Modern Times must answer readily and affirmatively such questions as the following:
>
> Have I the honesty and heroism to become of no reputation for the truth's sake?
>
> Am I willing to be considered licentious by the world, because of my obedience to a law, higher than worldlings can conceive of?[33]

Furious at the suggestion that Modern Times promoted free love in the name of individual sovereignty, the usually mild-mannered Josiah Warren dashed off *Positions Defined*, a broadside against the Nichols, which he nailed to the village bulletin board so that all who agreed could sign:

> An impression is abroad...that the "Equity movement" is necessarily characterized by an unusual latitude in the Marriage relations—I as one, protest against this idea.

Whatever its marital status, no couple was under compulsion to follow any directive except its own. Modern Timers were under no compulsion to answer questions, follow a specified order of love, or be responsible for anyone else's acts or words: "The Sovereignty of every Individual is as valid a warrant *for retaining the present relations*, as for changing them; and it is equally good for refusing to be drawn into any controversy or even conversing on the subject." Under the signature of "An 'Individual'" was the italicized "NOTE: *Although this is written in accordance with the INDIVIDUALITY which it asserts, it may be signed by any number of persons with equal propriety as by one.*"[34]

Thus, when the Nicholses broke the unwritten rule and spoke in the name of all, Josiah Warren followed suit by stating what "I" feel on behalf of "us." No record of how many signed is preserved, but the Nicholses' hasty departure suggests that most of the sovereigns sided with Warren. Here was the Achilles' heel of individual sovereignty. It was vulnerable when threatened, forced at that moment to waive the independence of each from all and let the majority rule. Philosophical anarchism is a beautiful bird that cannot fly, a means of exposing the pretense of power but hard-pressed to cope with decision making. If the response to the Nicholses' edict to forsake reputation for free love's sake had threatened the individuality of a scant six-dozen sovereigns, how would schisms be reconciled in a village ten or more times that size?

Warren's concern was to guard Modern Times against attack, once the *Tribune* debate had exposed it to scandal-mongering critics. Yet compared with his economic program, which had no chance of prevailing against the surging factory/market system, the reformation of marital law was an idea whose time was near. Warren won the battle and lost the war: the Nicholses left, but their influence lingered. Their campaign heightened perception of Modern Times as Sodom in the pine barrens, but drew attention to the need for sexual-marital reform. In one of their parting salvos, they accused Warren of evading the issue. "The World wants light on this more than on all the other subjects," they thundered, "and it shall have what light we can give it! Are we right or wrong ?"[35]

To this question, the rank and file sovereigns might have answered a qualified "Yes, and no." Yes, you are right to raise the issue of free love, but no, you are wrong to expect us to join your crusade. Modern Times may be Armageddon to you, but to us it is home, the first that many of us have been able to own. The settlers rejected confrontation. Talk was their surrogate for action: they were far more social than socialist. Modern Times was a non-stop seminar, in which all took positions on every subject and guarded the right of the others to differ. As for marriage relations and free love, mused Codman,

> 'Twas a fruitful topic for discussion. This "Freedom of Affection" was misinterpreted as "Free Love"...which was found to mean *in the minds of our critics* "Free Lust" and we called "Free Lovers" as a term of opprobrium.[36]

"Do you hold to marriage?" a reporter asked a settler, soon after the Warren-Nichols schism. "Well," replied the settler,

> folks ask no questions in regard to *that* among us. We, or at least some of us, do not believe in life-partnerships, when the parties can not live happily...We don't interfere: there is no eavesdropping, or prying behind the curtains.[37]

The answer typified Modern Times's motto of mind your own business. Deed and census records reflect a five-to-one preponderance of married to unmarried couples. No matter what mudslingers said, recalled Codman,

"the married remained in...matrimony and the unmarried did not drop into immorality." He recalled only two children born out of wedlock, one by choice of a "lady who lost no credit among our people," the other to a "mother who was later married":

> many of the "Sovereigns" upheld the Mother's choice of the Paternity of her child, yet 'twas a theory hardly ever put into practice but was a favorite text for many an argument for Freedom in all domains of thought and action.[38]

Modern Times was a crack in the wall of proper behavior, its settlers unterrified hedonists at a time when right-minded folk believed in the duty to work, not the joy of sex. If arraigned at the bar of marital format, the sovereigns might have pleaded monogamy with an explanation—that loving mating depended neither on ring nor rite. The question of whether couples were married, cohabitants, or merely friendly roommates, is answered partially by deeds in the office of Suffolk County's Clerk. The 1860 census reports Rebecca Cornwall's living with Myndert Fish, but their several recorded deeds reveal that Rebecca was actually Mrs. Fish. An 1852 list of settlers is signed by Robert Gray and Angeline Skinner, but their house deed shows they were man and wife. Essentially, Modern Times was a beach for victims of marital shipwreck, a haven for men and women to reshape their lives in the wake of failed marriages. When the Practical Christian Republic of Hopedale condemned them for adultery, Henry Fish and "Sister" Seaver fled to Modern Times the way fugitive slaves sought the underground railroad. William Metcalf shared his home with his lady, the grass widow Sophia Hayward: late in life, they legalized long years of cohabitation, after the death of Sophia's husband. Charles Codman and his second wife lived together before his divorce, and once they were married, remained so forever: their devotion was further proof that Modern Times did not deserve the scarlet hue of debauchery.

As seen through the eyes of its pioneers, the culture of Modern Times was "Low Living and High Thinking"[39]—a band of genial and under-financed eccentrics, thrashing out every aspect of social reform, aiming to understand, not to judge. Short of funds, rich in ideas, the women with short hair, the men with long, the days and nights of the sovereigns were bright with talk, song, music, and drama. A reporter for the *New York Weekly Leader* described a party at which women

> dressed in the Bloomer costume, and...the girls ask(ed) the men to dance. This custom is not exclusive; some times the men ask the women...By the by, how those Modern Timesers do dance.[40]

An asylum for fugitives from marriage, Modern Times refused to become the bastion of all-out war on the institution. Most couples were married, some were not: many of the unwed later tied the knot for life. But the double stigma of unconventional marital mores and use of the village to promulgate free love resulted in its public perception as a den of fornication and a dagger thrust at decency's heart. This was the problem

that tarnished its image, stunted its growth, and led the settlers to rename it Brentwood in 1864.

No future crisis matched the drama of Mary Gove and Thomas Nichols's call on the sovereigns to pledge, in support of free love, their names, lives, and sacred honor. Once Stearns's defection, the *Tribune* debate, and the rout of the Nicholses were past if not forgotten events, the village settled down for a spell of calmer growth. The settlers who came after 1854 were friendly to equity commerce, without being militant in its defense. The self-reliant life style of neighboring Islip was not very different from theirs, but did not require its people to storm the ramparts of Mammon and Grundy. Its easy-going attitude, linked to a general absence of deference, was consistent with the tolerant stance of the sovereigns of Modern Times.

The modest pull of the ideal village movement, to which location was incidental to program, gave way to the force exerted by the village's Suffolk County habitat. In the late 1850s and early '60s, some wealthier settlers moved into Modern Times. Unconcerned with remaking society, these newcomers were attracted by the healthy climate and natural charm of the pine woods, where land was cheap and the setting ideal for a rich man to build an estate. Opulence was a new factor, impressive to Modern Timers accustomed to functional poverty. When land prices rose on Long Island, the sovereigns bent their ideals and took what the traffic would bear. Quietly but irrevocably, the cost principle broke against the power of the dollar.

At the same time that rising property values lowered the sovereigns's commitment always to trade at par, the pressure of patriotism superseded their anti-statist bias. Nothing proved the changed mood of the village more than the enlistment of fifteen men in the army fighting to save the Union. On 7 September 1864, the residents of Modern Times decided to give their village the new name of Brentwood. "As time passed, and free lovers left, made happy marriages, or died," observed John C. Spurlock, "the town... became more moderate and discreet, changing...from a bastion of radicalism into a sleepy village with a shady past."[41]

By proving the viability of the pine barrens and the railroad, it played a meaningful role in the development of Long Island. But, as a raft of cooperation adrift in the sea of competition, Modern Times could not survive. The village was handicapped economically, unendowed with business acumen. Its program helped pioneers short of cash to acquire homesteads, but otherwise was a form of subsistence richer in ideas than output. Labor exchange was suited to hand-made products or self-performed services, not to the new regime of commodities manufactured in factories, on machines, for a burgeoning national market. Modern Times was too small, underfinanced, and restricted to private but profitless enterprise for its sovereigns long to accept the frugal standard of living to which they were bound. Although it enabled settlers to own their own homes in fee simple, its program denied the equally prized American drive to sell the fruit of one's labor for more than it cost to produce. Most of

the skilled mechanics and food producers the village needed for its base were disinclined to trade at par with no provision for financial gain. To seekers of advancement bold enough to take a risk, the United States may have been the real utopia, poised on the threshold of growth and abounding in opportunity. If the ideal villages were, as Arthur Bestor put it, "patent office models of the good society," then the patent at Modern Times remained pending.[42]

Sovereignty of the individual was at odds with cost the limit of price: the personal freedom of sellers meant little if they were barred from setting the value of goods made or services rendered. Anarchism is not a system of government, but rather a vision of pure freedom. It is hard put to operate even a hamlet because, at the first sign of controversy, majority vote or the will of a leader subvert the splendid premise that each be his or her own sect and nation. In an era of rising political tension, the practice of equity commerce excluded the need for concerted action. It presumed that problems like slavery, sectional rivalry, urban and industrial growth, immigration, and supervision of the Territories could be solved by turning back the nation's clock to simpler times of barter and local autonomy.

Yet Modern Times was remarkable for the creativeness of its polity, the calibre of its reformers, and the quality of its pioneers. Its thirteen years were a brief but significant effort to plant the seeds of individual sovereignty and private but profitless enterprise. Its settlers built homes for the homeless, respected each other's independence, and demonstrated that man was not made for the company, state, or sabbath. There was no incidence of crime in spite of the absence of police and court. And by defying restrictions on cohabitation and raising the issue of woman's rights, the village pointed the way toward parity between the sexes.

In its small way, Modern Times dented, if it did not breach, the facade of Victorian prudery. The sovereigns practiced the mating customs for which they refused to be hucksters; removing the stigma from cohabitation, each pair chose its form of bonding in a manner now taken for granted. The hot light of marital reform seared Modern Times's reputation, but pointed the way to the future. Its willingness to experiment with sexual-marital reform was its most significant contribution, affecting the future far more profoundly than equitable commerce, the purpose for which it was founded.

In her often insightful study of ideal communities, Rosabeth Moss Kanter defines "success" in terms of longevity: a community had to last for at least twenty-five years, "the definition of a sociological generation...to be considered successful." The time stipulation restricted her list of successes to eleven of ninety examples, with one (Icaria) considered "unclassifiable."[43] But at Modern Times, longevity for its own sake was not a criterion highly esteemed.

In the opinion of William Bailie, Josiah Warren's biographer, Warren and his adherents "did not expect their villages, even if these became numerous, to solve the social problem." The sovereigns accepted the world as it was; their intent was to show what might be done by the practice

of Equity, "by labor, free from the curse of monopoly and the blight of authority." The main cause of Modern Times's "nonsuccess [was the] scarcity of employment other than that of agriculture"; the village was too short of capital to start factories in which to make goods for sale in the outside world. If a rumored box works ever existed, it ended swiftly or maybe died a-borning in the 1857 depression. Labor-for-labor notes were useful as internal currency, but no help in dealings with people who "neither understood the principle nor accepted the practice of Equitable Commerce."[44] The only industry mentioned by Codman was a proposed cigar-making enterprise that the sovereigns, in spite of their need for income, rejected because they abhorred the "vile weed."[45]

Why emulate the Shakers and Rappites, who prolonged a fossilized existence for decade after decade once the Millennium for which they were shaped had failed to fulfill its prediction? The Modern Timers made their point to a heedless and often disdainful world, after which they quietly dropped out of the model community movement into the easy-going ambience of their adopted Long Island habitat.

The sovereigns perceived the Millennium as a metaphor, not a real event. To them, Modern Times was no union of saints preparing to walk in a New Jerusalem, but a practical blend of reason with social justice. In place of religion they practiced freedom of thought, which to them was the marrow of Protestantism. Modern Times was a scale model of liberty, its pioneers nonsectarian counterparts of the Puritan settlers of eastern Long Island who took up "their residence in the trackless wilderness, for the rights of conscience and the enjoyment of liberty."[46]

NOTES

1. For analysis of Modern Times, see Roger Wunderlich, "Low Living and High Thinking at Modern Times, New York (1851-1864)," Ph.D. dissertation, SUNY at Stony Brook, 1986; James G. Martin, *Men Against the State: the Expositors of Individualist Anarchism in the United States, 1827-1908* (Colorado Springs: Ralph Myles Publishers, 1970), 1-87; and, for a comprehensive nineteenth-century study of model communities which includes a section on Modern Times, see also John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (reprint of 1870 ed., New York: Hillary House, 1961), 93-103.

2. Josiah Warren, *Practical Details in Equitable Commerce, Showing the Workings, in Actual Experiment, During a Series of Years, of the Social Principles Expound ed in the Works Called "Equitable Commerce," by the Author of This, and "The Science of Society," by Stephen Pearl Andrews* (New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1852) 13. Also see Stephen Pearl Andrews, *The Science of Society* (New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1852; reprint ed., Weston, MA: M & S Press, 1970). For Josiah Warren's life, see William Bailie, *Josiah Warren, the First American Anarchist: A Sociological Study* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1906), and Ann Caldwell Butler, "Josiah Warren: Peaceful Revolutionist" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ball State University, 1979).

3. For the life of Andrews, see Madeleine B. Stern, *The Pantarch: A Biography of Stephen Pearl Andrews* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968).

4. Josiah Warren, *The Peaceful Revolutionist, Devoted to the Practical Details of Equitable Commerce* II (May 1848), 132. The passage alluded to Utopia (Smith's Landing, Ohio),

an earlier village of equity formed in 1847, but applied to Modern Times as aptly as the sobriquet "Peaceful Revolutionist" (the name of his first newsletter) fit Warren.

5. Warren, *Practical Details*, ix.

6. Josiah Warren, *The Periodical Letter on the Principles and Progress of the "Equity Movement," to Those Who Have Not Lost All Hope of Justice, Order, and Peace on Earth*, I (February 1855), 106. This monthly newsletter written, printed, and published by Warren from 1854 to 1858 was datelined Thompson P.O., Long Island, N.Y.(except for a few numbers issued from Boston). Thompson, short for Thompson's Station, was the post office address for Modern Times.

7. For the LIRR, see Edwin L. Dunbaugh, "New York to Boston Via the Long Island Railroad," in *Evoking A Sense of Place*, Joann P. Krieg, ed. (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1988), 75-84, and Mildred H. Smith, *Early History of the Long Island Railroad: 1834-1900* (Uniondale: Salisbury Printers, 1958).

8. "Map of the City of Modern Times," *Liber of Maps* 34, p. 19, Suffolk County Clerk, Riverhead. This map, made 20 March 1851 by Ebenezer Hawkins, surveyor, and recorded 18 January 1859, was the map of reference for all deeds executed at the village.

9. Stephen Pearl Andrews, Preface to *Practical Details in Equitable Commerce*, by Josiah Warren (New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1852), vi.

10. Warren, *Periodical Letter* I (September 1854), 34; "A Card—To the Public," *New York Daily Tribune*, 4 April 1853, 5.

11. Warren, *Practical Applications of the Elementary Principles of "True Civilization"* (Princeton, MA.: the author, 1873), 17.

12. Henry Edger, London Saturday *Leader* III (27 March 1852). 299. Not only was Modern Times a countercultural matrix, but a smaller movement developed within it, competing with its host. For the failed but strenuous effort of Henry Edger to make Modern Times the American seat of Auguste Comte's Religion of Humanity, see Richmond L. Hawkins, *Positivism in the United States (1853-1861)* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), and Robert E. Schneider, *Positivism in the United States: the Apostleship of Henry Edger*, Rosario, Argentina: 1946, both of which contain excellent source material about Modern Times.

13. Warren, *Practical Applications*, 17.

14. Edger, *Leader* III (27 March 1852), 299. Warren's plan for private education was not enough for the residents, much less their immediate neighbors. On 19 February 1853, William Nicoll, Superintendent of Common Schools of the Town of Islip, authorized squire Francis Moses Asbury Wicks to call a meeting at his house for the purpose of forming School District 12 (*Minute Book of School District 12, 1853-1890,* Office of Superintendant of Schools, Brentwood). The one-room schoolhouse, the second of Modern Times's octagons, opened in 1857 and stayed in use for fifty years, when "it was sold and removed from the site" to make way for a larger building (Codman,"Modern Times," 18, a note inserted by Dr. William H. Ross, to whom Codman delivered his Ms.). For generations this architectural heirloom stood unused and in disrepair, a museum awaiting a sponsor. Fortunately, it has been donated to the community by its owners, the Oliveri family of Brentwood, and now sits on the edge of the high school property while the Brentwood Historical Society searches for funds with which to restore it.

15. Charles A. Codman, "A Brief History of the 'City of Modern Times' Long Island, N.Y.—and a Glorification of Some of Its Saints" (Brentwood, *ca.* 1904, a pencilscript in

the Modern Times collection of the Suffolk County Historical Society, Riverhead), 18. Citations in this article are from the Society's 27-page typewritten version (copies of which are in the Brentwood, Smithtown, and Huntington public libraries).

16. Edger, *Leader* IV (8 January 1853), 32.

17. B. D. J., "A Peep into Modern Times," *New York Sunday Dispatch*, 9 October 1853, in A. J. Macdonald, "Materials for A History of Ideal Communities" (New Haven: Yale University Library, Ms., ca. 1854, Microfilm 145), 139, also cited in Noyes, *American Socialisms*, 101.

18. Codman, "Modern Times," 5.

19. Ibid., 14, 15.

20. Warren, *Practical Applications*, 20.

21. Codman, "Modern Times," 3, 21; for the Blackers and other pioneer families who stayed on as residents of Brentwood, see Verne Dyson, *A Century of Brentwood* (Brentwood: Brentwood Village Press, 1950), passim.

22. Dyson, ibid., 52; Codman, "Modern Times,", 13. Gibson died in 1898, 48 years after contracting tuberculosis, and 44 after coming to Modern Times. He and a score of the sovereigns are buried at Brentwood Cemetery, Madison Avenue, Brentwood.

23. Codman, ibid., 3.

24. Warren, *Periodical Letter* I (December 1854), 69; *Census of the State of New York for 1855, Prepared from the Original Returns* (Albany: 1855), in *KTO Microform*, Millwood, NY, fiche A267, card 1; Manuscript Schedule of Population, Islip, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, Washington, NARS Microfilm, 1967, (Reel 865), 68-70.

25. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 244-45. Kanter's total of 91 is a condensation, to avoid repetition of Shaker, Harmonist, Oneida, and other multiple villages, of the 124 listed in Arthur Bestor, "Checklist of Communitarian Experiments," Appendix to *Backwoods Utopias* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970 [first pub. 1953]), 277-284.

26. Albert Brisbane, *Association: or, A Concrete Exposition of the Doctrine of Association, or Plan for the Reorganization of Society* (New York: Greeley and McElrath, 1843), quoted in Bestor, ibid., 231.

27. Louis J. Kern, *An Ordered Love: Sex Roles and Sexuality in Victorian Utopias—the Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 5. See also Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 15-20 and passim.

28. "Mr. Warren has a great repugnance to being *represented* by or held responsible for others. He is an individual and scarcely ever uses the personal pronoun plural" (Thomas Low Nichols, "Individuality—Protest of Mr. Warren—Relations of the Sexes," in Nichols' *Journal of Health, Water-Cure, and Human Progress* 1 (October 1853):52. Even while battling with Warren over marital practice at Modern Times, the Nicholses respected his unyielding individualism, much as Warren always spoke highly of Robert Owen, with whose top-down style of leadership he completely disagreed.

29. John Humphrey Noyes, "History of the *Battle Axe* Letter," quoted in Taylor Stoehr, *Free Love in America: A Documentary History* (New York: AMS Press), 1979, 497; Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, 638.

30. Mary Gove Nichols to Stephen Pearl Andrews, January 1853, in Stephen Pearl Andrews, *Love, Marriage, and Divorce, and the Sovereignty of the Individual: A Discussion between Henry James, Horace Greeley, and Stephen Pearl Andrews, and a Hitherto Unpublished Manuscript—Love, Marriage, and the Condition of Woman by Stephen Pearl Andrews*, Charles Shively, ed. (Weston, MA: M & S Press, 1975 [Andrews collection of all the *Tribune* debate letters, including those like Mary Gove's that the fastidious Greeley refused to print, was first published in 1853], 71.

31. Andrews, ibid., 46, 48, 55

32. George Stearns in William S. Heywood, "Modern Times," *Practical Christian*, 9 October 1852, 3 (the George Stearns who went to Modern Times is sometimes mistaken for the same-named abolitionist). The *Practical Christian* was the house organ of the Practical Christian Republic, Hopedale, MA, the religious/pacifist ideal village founded by Adin Ballou.

33. Mary Gove Nichols, "The City of Modern Times," *Nichols' Journal of Health, Water-Cure, and Human Progress* 1 (August 1853), 15.

34. Josiah Warren, *Positions Defined* (Modern Times: the author, August 1853), a leaflet.

35. Thomas Low Nichols and Mary Gove Nichols, "Individuality— Protest of Mr. Warren— Relations of the Sexes," *Nichols' Journal* 1 (October 1853), 52. After leaving Modern Times, the volatile Nicholses converted to Roman Catholicism, renounced free love, and, at the time of the Civil War, expatriated themselves to England where they pressed for sexual purity, food reform, water cure, and hygiene for the rest of their long and useful lives.

36. Codman, "Modern Times," 17.

37. B.D.J., "A Peep into Modern Times," 101.

38. For all deed and census references to Modern Times, see Wunderlich, "Low Living and High Thinking," passim; Codman, "Modern Times," 17.

39. Codman, ibid." 15. The sovereigns adapted the Brook Farm slogan, changing "plain" to the more vivid "low."

40. D. P. W., "Modern Times," *New York Weekly Leader*, 29 July 1854, in Schneider, *Positivism in the United States*, 49.

41. John C. Spurlock, *Free Love: Marriage and Middle-Class Radicalism in America, 1852-1860* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 137.

42. Arthur Bestor, "Patent-Office Models of the Good Society: Some Relationships Between Social Reform and Westward Expansion," *American Historical Review* LVIII (April 1953): 505-526.

43. Kanter, *Commitment and Community*, 245.

44. Bailie, *Josiah Warren*, 63.

45. Codman, "Modern Times," 15.

46. Nathaniel S. Prime, *A History of Long Island, from its Settlement by Europeans, to the Year 1845, with Special Reference to Its Ecclesiastical Concerns*, 2 Parts (New York: Robert Carter, 1845), II:408-409.

Shepard A. Mount, A Long Island Artist

By Deborah J. Johnson

In addition to its renowned collection of art works and the personal papers of the American genre-painter, William Sidney Mount (1807-1868), the art collection at The Museums at Stony Brook includes a substantial holding of paintings and drawings by William's older brother, Shepard Alonzo Mount (1804-1868). Shepard Mount's pictures indicated his preference for portraiture, still life, and landscape subjects, but very little was previously known about the artist's life or work. The artistic and technical merit evident in Mount's paintings and drawings prompted research on his career that culminated in 1988 with The Museums' exhibition and publication, both of which were titled *Shepard Alonzo Mount: His Life and Art*. In conjunction with the exhibition and publication, The Museums organized a lecture series comprised of seven presentations which addressed Mount's work within the context of American art history and regional social history.[1]

Shepard A. Mount was born on 17 July 1804, in Setauket. His parents, Julia Ann (Hawkins) and Thomas Mount had five children who survived past infancy: Henry Smith (1802-1841), Shepard Alonzo, Robert Nelson (1806-1883), William Sidney, and Ruth Hawkins (1808-1888). After Thomas Mount died, in 1814, Julia moved with their five children to the Stony Brook home of her parents, Ruth (Mills) and Jonas Hawkins.

Three of the Mount siblings painted professionally. Henry operated a sign and ornamental painting business in New York City, and composed still life pictures. William attained lasting international recognition for his genre paintings, depicting aspects of American rural life. Shepard was respected during his lifetime as an accomplished artist who specialized in portraiture. His work in still life and, to a much lesser extent, landscape, also received recognition.

Shepard Mount left few personal documents of his life and career. When he died, in 1868, his son Joshua Elliott Mount felt inadequate to compose an obituary, for there was "no sketch of his life or record of his work except a few memorandums and newspaper criticism."[2] There are, however, some references to Mount's professional and personal activities in contemporary publications and in the personal papers of his immediate family. Especially valuable are the journals, letters, and a bound collection of newspaper clippings (called the *Setauket Scrapbook*) kept by William Sidney Mount.[3]

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As a young man, Shepard Mount was apprenticed to James Brewster, a carriage builder in New Haven, Connecticut. In Brewster's shop Mount was trained in carriage trimming, a specialized branch of carriage decoration involving the selection of fabrics and materials to provide upholstered comfort for the passenger and pleasing adornment to the carriage. Carriage literature of the period likened the concerns of the trimmer—the selection and harmonic application of texture, color, pattern and form—to the same issues confronting the fine artist. As was the case for many early-nineteenth-century artists, Mount's introduction to the elementary principles of fine art was through the practical arts.

Shepard Mount remained in New Haven until 1827, when Brewster opened a branch of his carriage manufacturing firm at 52 and 54 Broad Street in New York City. The transfer reunited Mount with brothers Henry and William. Henry had operated his sign and ornamental painting business in New York City since 1824, and William worked in Henry's shop. While their livelihoods centered on the ornamental arts, both were active in the National Academy of Design, organized in 1826; Henry was elected artist of the Academy in 1827 and William was enrolled in drawing classes. The three brothers practiced drawing together at Henry's home during the evening hours, and studied prints after paintings by European masters. Shepard began to paint in 1828, his talent largely self-developed. Like his brothers, Shepard Mount became active in the National Academy of Design. He was elected an associate in 1833 and a full member in 1843. The Academy was the most prominent organization to exhibit one's work, and Mount contributed to forty-one exhibitions in which he showed a total of 127 paintings.

The first picture Mount exhibited at the Academy, in 1829, was a still life. During his formative years he continued to exhibit still lifes depicting fish and birds, an unusual career decision for a young painter intent on impressing his peers, critics, and potential patrons. There existed at the time categories of subject matter ranked in importance of artistic merit. The higher orders included dramatic depictions from history or inspirational landscapes. Still life paintings were placed among the lowest orders because they were considered mere imitations of nature. Perhaps this condemnatory attitude explains why Shepard painted so few still lifes; it is estimated that he composed no more than ten. Only a handful survive, but they are the most remarkable works he painted.

The earliest-located fish still lifes, dating from the 1840s, were painted in Athens, Pennsylvania, a favorite retreat for the artist and the residence of his aunt and uncle, Deborah (Hawkins) and John Shepard. Mount was an avid fisherman and his fish pictures were, in all likelihood, documents of actual catches. In a work dating from 1842 (collection of the Art Institute of Chicago), he paints the fish in a natural setting, a break from the traditional indoor "game" or "meal" pictures prevalent before this time. The fish are painted close to the picture plane, and the intense contrast between the dark background and the light mass of the fish thrust the objects forward, diminishing the aesthetic distance between object and

viewer. Surface texture is greatly amplified and the loosely rendered and thickly applied pigments catch light, simulating the flickering qualities of scales in sunlight. Unusual in this work is Mount's application of thick impasto, a technique more pronounced in later works. In a letter to William, Shepard expressed his belief that the act of painting a subject was more important than the subject itself: "I am more convinced than ever—of the fact—that it's the way you do things—that gives them their value—not so much what you undertake to do."[4]

This still life from 1842 was probably one of two fish pictures the artist exhibited at the Academy that same year. The original and accomplished handling of the pictorial elements in these paintings prompted a critic to write: "In that class of pictures they deserve a very high rank, being unique and masterly."[5]

Continuing to paint "in that class of pictures," Mount developed his subject further both compositionally and technically. In a still life from 1847 (collection of The Museums at Stony Brook), the artist abandons the horizontal format for the vertical. Gone, too, is the placement of the subject on the ground. These fish are suspended in mid-air from a twig that extends diagonally out of the composition toward an unseen anchor. Like the fish, the viewer is suspended. Thickly applied prismatic colors—red, ochre, green, and blue—define the forms. The texture and pigments of the fish are repeated in the landscape, so that the rocks seem almost to assume the characteristics of the fish. The application of the paint approaches the sculptural—indeed, the fish appear to be carved out of the landscape. When Mount completed the painting he wrote to William that, "for truth of representation and transparency of color I have never approached it."[6] When it was exhibited at the Academy, a critic perceptively grasped the illusionistic realism achieved in the work. This critic wrote that Mount's bunch of fish

> seems to breathe and move, so exquisitely life-like, so admirably drawn and so richly colored are they. We have often seen pictures of trout, but none so perfect a one as Mr. M. seems here to have thrown off, in some few happy moments.[7]

Mount, too, recognized his achievement. To William, he wrote that "You must allow me to brag a little on fish as I sometimes think (and not without some reason) that they are the only subjects I can paint really well."[8] In the treatment of the subject, Mount's fish still lifes have no parallel in American art of the time.

It was Shepard Mount's ardent admiration for nature that prompted him to paint landscapes. Early in his career he composed a considerable number of oil and pencil sketches depicting landscape scenes. It was not until the late 1840s, during a trip to Athens, Pennsylvania, that he began to pursue the subject in earnest.

Edward Buffet, a biographer of William Sidney Mount, questions the wisdom of Shepard Mount's removal to Pennsylvania to paint landscapes, suggesting that if the artist had depicted the scenery of Long Island he

might have gained "prestige by forming a landscape school of his own."[9] But the topography of Long Island in the mid-nineteenth century was not compatible with contemporary doctrines and attitudes regarding the artistic interpretation of the American landscape. The landscape artist served as a "spiritual messenger" who sought to interpret the truths of God's creation and enduring presence through such picturesque landscape components as mountains, bodies of water, and unspoiled scenery, making use of those forms symbolizing nature's virtues and interjecting artistic imagination with the intent of realizing a concrete expression of larger religious and moral issues. Long Island was then a flat and cultivated region; the axe had cleared the land and there was little of the "wilderness" so desirable to the landscape painter. Mount found inspiration for his major landscape paintings along the Susquehanna River at the New York-Pennsylvania border. Here the artist found the grand river, the mountains, and other natural beauties exemplary of God's dramatic handiwork.

All of Mount's major landscape pictures reflected the artist's romantic and sentimental tendency to interpret the American landscape as an Eden in which mankind dwelt harmoniously with nature. In *Landscape with Cows*, dated 1850 (collection of The Museums at Stony Brook), the expressive hand of the Creator is visible in massive, weathered tree stumps, dense forests, and majestic mountain ridges. Cows symbolize the pastoral ideal in an image devoid of cultivated fields or substantially cleared parcels of land. In the lower right corner, a single cow looks toward the viewer, a welcoming entrance into a world of repose where the common man, engaged in simple pleasures, peacefully takes his place in nature. Modest dwellings where home fires burn are nestled within the heavily wooded scenery. Wild ducks swim contently, unalarmed by the proximity of man and domesticated beast. There are children in the painting, their presence synonymous with the innocence of nature and a promise for the future. A figure in a rowboat glides across the river, a silent participant in the "voyage of life."

When Mount exhibited two large landscapes in 1851 at the National Academy of Design, Asher B. Durand, a prominent landscape artist and current president of the Academy, studied both paintings. He remarked to William Sidney Mount that his brother's landscapes were "infamous attempts."[10] Durand, who was moving toward greater naturalism in his landscapes, most likely found Mount's pictures idealized and artificial. Perhaps because of Durand's adverse criticism, Mount rarely exhibited his landscape paintings after 1851, yet he continued to paint and sketch landscape subjects throughout his career.

The majority of Mount's surviving works are portraits, the greater portion of which were undertaken on commission, providing financial support for the artist. Portrait painting was an extremely competitive field, and urban areas, like New York City, attracted scores of talented artists. To assure a steady flow of income, Mount frequently traveled to find commissions throughout Long Island and New York City, as well as portions of upstate New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and New Jersey.

The most remarkable portrait he painted during his early period was a likeness of Tamer, a former slave who lived with the artist's relatives, the William Wickham Mills family of St. James. The portrayal of Tamer, dated 1830 (Private Collection), conveys a familiarity between artist and subject. As Mount painted her, Tamer's eyes meet the artist's gaze, while a smile forms on her lips. The artist rendered her features and apparel with quickly executed strokes of color. When Mount completed the portrait, he inscribed Tamer's name above his own on the reverse.

This intimate portrait differed from the formal portrait compositions that constitute the majority of his work. A substantial number of his patrons were from the growing ranks of New York City's mercantile and professional upper-middle class. The amount of money his clients were willing to spend dictated the size of the picture, the length of the figure, and the addition of background elements. The majority of his portraits were bust and half-length studies. To exhibit a finished portrait, Mount needed the permission of the owner; consequently some of his finest works in portraiture were never publicly shown.

On Long Island, Shepard painted farming families with economic backgrounds similar to that of the Mounts, small-town professionals, and prosperous landed families. The extended and intermarried Mills, Floyd, "Bull" Smith, and "Tangier" Smith families of Long Island provided him with numerous portrait commissions. The Jones family of Cold Spring Harbor, members of which were also commercially active in New York City, were patrons from 1847 until the artist's death. He painted three generations of the Jones family from life, posthumously, and from photographs. Mary Townsend Jones was sixty-four years of age in 1854 when she posed (collection of the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities). She was a devout Quaker, as indicated by her dress and the Bible placed on the table. The next year Mount painted Mary's brother and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hewlett Jones (nee Elizabeth Gracie Gardiner). Charles Hewlett Jones, a prosperous entrepreneur, owned brickyards at Cold Spring Harbor and Haverstraw, in addition to considerable agricultural property on Long Island. The couple enjoyed substantial social and economic influence in western Long Island. In Mount's portrait of Mrs. Jones (collection of the Nassau County Museum), he incorporated (possibly at the request of his patrons and definitely with their approval) conventions associated with "the fashionable portrait"; she is positioned before a stone balustrade on a terrace that overlooks a romantic, mountainous landscape. To her right is a neoclassical architectural form whose function appears solely decorative. Since the Cold Spring Harbor home of Mr. and Mrs. Jones included neither such impressive architectural details nor landscape vista, these elements were apparently created to complement the subject's self-image and social position.

The majority of Mount's portraits, such as that of Mary Townsend Jones and those of an unidentified Long Island couple (collection of Richard and Eileen Dubrow), projected honesty and simplicity in their

compositional elements and approach to the subject's relationship with the viewer. The Long Island historian Benjamin F. Thompson (1780-1849), who knew many of Mount's sitters, considered the artist's work "correct and faithful delineations of personal features."[11] A critic for *The Literary World* thoughtfully observed:

> The principle merit of Mr. Shepard Mount's portraits is that they are faithful likenesses, and drawn with great care and accuracy. They are not calculated for striking exhibition pictures because he does not aim at startling effects. The quiet, truthful effects render them desirable home acquisitions.[12]

Mount's skill in capturing accurate, "truthful" likenesses enhanced his reputation. By the 1850s, he was referred to in print as a "successful" artist who ranked among "the best of the Portrait Painters."[13]

Among his loveliest portraits is one of his bride, Elizabeth Elliott Mount, painted in 1838 (see the cover of this issue). The oval format of the picture is echoed in the graceful lines of Elizabeth's face, necklace, and torso. She holds a portfolio and stylus; a colored engraving lies on the table. These objects refer to her skill in needlework, in which engravings frequently served as design sources. This portrait marked a turning point in Mount's career. He exhibited it in 1838 and immediately wrote to William about its reception:

> I have more than realized my anticipations in Elizabeth's Portrait...on a line with Inman and Ingham—the latter has two of his best female portraits near it...Mr. Morse [president of the National Academy of Design] says I don't suffer in comparison with either of them.[14]

One of the Museum's lecture series participants, Linda Ferber, made several astute observations about this portrait, which she considered to be Mount's finest. As depicted in this work, Elizabeth does not engage the viewer directly, but instead is introspectively occupied with her own thoughts. This pose, combined with the inclusion of the portfolio and engravings, place the portrait within the implied theme of "The Muse" awaiting inspiration.

Ferber compared Elizabeth's portrayal to earlier American portraits of young women portrayed as muses of the arts by Thomas Sully and Samuel F.B. Morse. The latter's much-admired depiction of his daughter as muse was exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1837. Shepard Mount no doubt was aware of Morse's portrait. Ferber also noted that, like Sully and Morse, Mount turned to family members as models.

Shepard's favorite model was Ruth, his only daughter, nicknamed "Tutie." She was, according to a line from one of Mount's poems, "The babe in girlhood grown to be the idol of her father's heart."[15] In 1850, he painted a portrait of her titled *Rose of Sharon* (collection of The Museums at Stony Brook). Mount's favorite landscape elements—lush summer scenery, a body of water and a mountainous backdrop—provide

a picturesque setting for the lovely young girl. She has been gathering flowers in her apron and their colors are echoed in her dress. In one hand Tutie holds a rose of Sharon blossom whose milky-pink color complements the bloom of her complexion.

While Mount was painting this portrait at his Stony Brook studio, a visitor commented on the piece, describing it as a "fancy portrait,"[16] a term referring to a type of picture much in vogue during the nineteenth century. Brilliantly colored and smoothly finished, "fancy" pictures typically depicted the idealized beauty of young women. Flowers often appeared in such pictures and their presence could imply a specific allegorical or symbolic message complementing the sitter's situation or countenance. For instance, rose of Sharon, according to the symbolic language of flowers, signified delicate beauty.[17] On a more basic level, a plucked flower alluded to the temporality of beauty and life for both floral and human subjects. *Rose of Sharon* was reproduced as a lithograph in 1852 for international distribution by Goupil et Cie., a successful Parisian publishing firm. Fancy pictures were also reproduced in the popular "gift books," which contained fiction and poetry with sentimental and moral themes that appealed predominantly to women.

A gift book, *The Rose of Sharon*, was published by Tompkins and Mussey of Boston in 1850, the year Mount painted the portrait. The book, subtitled "A Religious Souvenir," was edited by Mrs. Caroline M. Sawyer and contained uplifting, spiritual verse, short stories with Christian themes and six illustrations depicting innocent children, virtuous mothers, and serene landscapes containing mountains and picturesque scenery emblematic of God's creation. Taken together, Mount's portrait *Rose of Sharon*, its lithographic reproduction by Goupil for the mass market, and the gift book's title and thematic content strongly imply a cultural and social significance that warrants additional investigation.

The artist's most potent application of floral symbolism is found in a later still life, *Rose of Sharon: Remember Me*, dating from 1863. By the time of this work, he had suffered terrible personal losses. His wife, Elizabeth, had died in 1858 and Tutie, whom he deeply loved, died in 1861 at the young age of nineteen. Mount's anguish over the loss of his wife and daughter was compounded in 1863. His eldest son, William Shepard Mount, had been living in Mississippi when the Civil War erupted. Against his will, William Shepard was drafted into the Confederate army. When he attempted to join the Union troops near Vicksburg, in October 1863, his allegiance to the North was disbelieved and he was arrested as a spy and imprisoned at Alton, Illinois. Shepard Mount desperately tried to secure his son's release, but to no avail.

Rose of Sharon: Remember Me is a family portrait in metaphor. Again the artist employs the flower as a symbol. In a vase inscribed "Remember Me" are four flowers in various stages of life. The vessel and the water contained in it constitute a life force. The permanency of the vase, coupled with its message, "Remember Me," denotes an enduring, universal theme of life's transience. The flowers are temporary—they will bloom and die.

Shephard A. Mount, Rose of Sharon: Remember Me, *1863. The Museums at Stony Brook; Bequest of Miss Dorothy Debevoise Mount, 1959.*

The largest rose of Sharon in the vase is old, with time-worn petals and a wearily drooping pistil, a decaying blossom which represents Mount himself. Shielded behind the large white flower are two buds, one beginning to unfurl and the other still within its protective casing. These signify the artist's younger sons, Joshua and Bobby, who were eighteen and ten in 1863. The red flower in the vase is separated from the others, threatened by leaves resembling grasping fingers. This bloom symbolized William Shepard and his uncertain fate in the grip of the Civil War. A bud ripped from its stem and separated from the source of nourishment represented the departed Tutie. Between the bud and stem was a small half-shell with a thin veil of water falling from its rim, signifying both a cup of sorrow and a vale of tears. Above the still life, a brilliant shooting star, representing Tutie's soul, rises toward the heavens. The picture is an overtly autobiographical work in which similes growth and decay convey the artist's emotional torment and fears.

In February 1864, Mount encountered a fellow artist, Francis Bicknell Carpenter, who was leaving New York City to paint President Abraham Lincoln in the nation's capital. Mount told him the story of his son's imprisonment and asked Carpenter to call the young man's plight to the attention of the president. Mount provided a statement of the case, and his friend, William Cullen Bryant, the editor of the *New York Evening Post*, forwarded a letter endorsing his plea. Carpenter presented the letters to Lincoln and testified to Mount's sincerity and patriotism; taking Bryant's letter, Lincoln wrote on the reverse an order for William Shepard's release.[18]

With his family now secure, Shepard Mount returned to painting. Aside from periodic trips to New York City, and an excursion to Connecticut in 1865, he remained on Long Island, painting for the Joneses and other patrons. On 12 September 1868, he contracted cholera and died in Stony Brook six days later, at the age of sixty-four.

Shepard Mount was aware that his life's work constituted no great force in the annals of American art. This must have been especially apparent in light of the contributions made by several of his contemporaries, including his brother, William Sidney Mount. Nevertheless, Shepard Mount was a thoroughly competent artist who was recognized as such by his peers. His career in many ways was representative of a substantial group of lesser-known nineteenth-century artists whose lifelong commitment to their profession has resulted in only minor distinction, yet whose works illustrate the history, economics, and preferences of nineteenth-century American taste as effectively as those of artists who gained greater fame. If Shepard Mount followed, rather than directed, the currents of contemporary art as well as prevailing philosophical and sentimental attitudes, his works attest to an enduring, admirable talent.

NOTES

1. The speakers and their topics for the October-November 1988 lecture series, *Shepard*

Mount's Long Island, 1830-1860, were: Deborah J. Johnson, "Shepard Alonzo Mount: His Life and Art" and "The Mount Brothers: The Artistic and Familial Relationships of Shepard Alonzo Mount and William Sidney Mount"; Linda Ferber, Chief Curator and Curator of American Painting, The Brooklyn Museum, "Portrait, Landscape and Still Life Painting: The Artistic Context of Shepard Mount's Work"; Lloyd Becker, Professor of English, Suffolk Community College, Eastern Campus, "Emblems of the Familiar and the Eternal: The Cultural Context of Shepard Mount's Work"; Doris Halowitch, Ph.D. candidate, USB, "Antebellum Long Island and New York City: The Social and Economic Context of Shepard Mount's Work"; Henry Hoff, historian and genealogist, "Portraiture and Patrons: Stony Brook, Smithtown and Beyond"; and Elizabeth Watson, architectural historian and preservationist, "Portraiture and Patrons: The Jones Family of Cold Spring Harbor."

2. Joshua Elliott Mount letter to William Sidney Mount, 1 November 1868. The Museums at Stony Brook, Stony Brook.

3. The most frequently consulted sources for this study include the Mount family archives, a substantial collection of documents generated by the Hawkins-Mount families, in the collection of The Museums at Stony Brook; documents pertaining to William Sidney Mount's life and career in Alfred Frankenstein, *William Sidney Mount* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1975); *The Setauket Scrapbook*, in the Emma S. Clark Library, Setauket, a collection of newspaper reviews and clippings saved by William Sidney Mount that refer to himself, Henry Smith Mount, and Shepard Alonzo Mount, few of which are identified or dated; and Edward P. Buffet, "William Sidney Mount: A Biography," *Port Jefferson Times*, 1 December 1923 through 12 June 1924, a series of 56 chapters in which Buffet transcribed many Hawkins-Mount family documents that are unlocated today.

4. Shepard A. Mount to William S. Mount, 11 September 1841, in Buffet, "William Sidney Mount: A Biography," chap. 19.

5. Unidentified newspaper review of the National Academy of Design's 1842 exhibition, *Setauket Scrapbook*, Emma S. Clark Library, Setauket.

6. Shepard A. Mount (Factoryville, New York) to William S. Mount (Stony Brook), 19 September 1847, in Buffet, "William Sidney Mount," chap. 27.

7.Unidentified newspaper review of the National Academy of Design's 1848 exhibition, *Setauket Scrapbook*.

8. Shepard A. Mount to William S. Mount, 19 September 1848, in Buffet, "William Sidney Mount," chap. 27.

9. Buffet, ibid. chap. 19.

10. William S. Mount, *Journal*, 19 April 1851, The Museums at Stony Brook.

11. Benjamin Franklin Thompson, *The History of Long Island*, 2nd ed., Vol. 2 (New York: Gould, Banks & Co., 1843), 528.

12. *The Literary World* 1 (1 May 1847), 304.

13. William Alfred Jones, "A Sketch of the Life and Character of William S. Mount," *American Whig Review* 14 (August 1851), 126; unidentified newspaper review of the National Academy of Design's 1846 exhibition, *Setauket Scrapbook*; and unidentified newspaper review of the National Academy of Design's 1847 exhibition, *Setauket Scrapbook*.

14. Shepard A. Mount to William S. Mount, in Buffet, "William Sidney Mount," chap. 14.; undated, written shortly after the 23 April 1838 exhibition opening at the National

Academy of Design.

15. Shepard A. Mount, *Winter*, The Museums at Stony Brook.

16. "A New Picture," unidentified newspaper notice, 1850, *Setauket Scrapbook*.

17. Henry Gardiner Adams, *Flowers: Their Moral, Language and Poetry* (Halifax, 1851), 277.

18. Frank B. Carpenter, "Abraham Lincoln," *The Peterson Magazine* 6 (June 1896), 567-573.

Scenes of the Familiar, Emblems of the Eternal: Cultural Contexts of Shepard Alonzo Mount

By Lloyd Becker

This article explores the life, works, and artistic philosophy of the painter Shepard Alonzo Mount (1804-1868), an accomplished craftsman who worked in the genres of still life, portrait, and landscape. Mount's life embraced a wide range of human experience: marriage, family, commercial success and critical acclaim, frustration, tragedy, disappointment, estrangement, grief, and depression. Far more than his self-absorbed, bachelor brother, William Sidney Mount, he participated in middle-class family life, with all its attendant joys and woes.

The nation in which Shepard Mount lived, and from which he drew his themes and subjects, was undergoing radical transformation. Population was rapidly increasing, borders were expanding, and the issues which ultimately led to the Civil War were being argued in newspapers, from pulpits, and in the places of government. At the same time, Americans were discovering the benefits of increased leisure. Carl Bode notes that during the 1840s reading for pleasure became popular: "The number of literate nearly doubled...[and] appreciation of the arts increased. More pictures were sold, more concerts given, more sheet music printed, than ever before."[1]

Popular taste leaned toward the melancholy and sentimental. Popular art extolled home and all things domestic; preoccupied with death, it looked fondly backward to a simpler America that was rapidly receding. Their native landscape was being discovered by artists and writers, inspired by nationalistic zeal to develop American forms of expression.

Mount was driven both by love of his craft and by economic necessity. Because he had to sell paintings to support his wife and four children, he spent much of his energy on the commissioned portraits that provided a steady income.[2] He was successful in this, although apparently he found the emotional side of the ledger more difficult to balance. Prone to depression, bereft of his beloved daughter, Tutie, who died shortly after her marriage, and betrayed, he believed, by his wife's infidelity, Mount seemed doomed to experience life as a series of minor triumphs, major tragedies, and random disappointments.

In her essay for the catalogue of the 1988 exhibition at the Museums at Stony Brook, *Shepard Alonzo Mount: His Life and Art*, Deborah Johnson recounts Elizabeth Mount's bitterness at being left in Stony Brook with their young children while Shepard engaged in commissions far from

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home. Her anger at being "shut up for life in a corner of this house," and for the presence of William, who kept a studio and bedroom there, might have induced Elizabeth to have an affair with her brother-in-law.[3]

All the elements were in place for the kind of domestic intrigue which sold as well in the 1840s as it does today. Russel Nye observes that "the most prolific type of fiction of the period...was the sentimental-domestic novel, produced by what Hawthorne once angrily called 'a damned mob of scribbling women.'" Nye cites the emergence of gift books, annuals, and women's magazines like *Godey's* and *The Token* as evidence of a new audience, favoring stories that

> dealt with children, husbands, love and marriage, illness and death, and all the sorrows and joys of domestic life. Their plots...show ...that bliss could come from suffering; that conventional morals were best; that church, home, and family were anchors against unhappiness and evil.

These stories were sentimental but socially useful, defining moral problems and advising how to cope with them.[4]

Perhaps, for the Mounts, the tensions of separation created bitterness that led to misunderstanding and recrimination. Shepard's journal entries and correspondence indicate that he assumed his wife had been unfaithful, and he composed a florid poem of anguish and betrayal that echoed the sentiments of popular fiction:

> What! the girl I adore by another embraced!
> What! the balm of her breath shall another man taste?
> What! pressed in the whirl by another's bold knee!
> What panting, recline on another than me!
> Sir, she's yours, you have brushed from the grap[e] its soft blue,
> From the rose-bud you've shaken the tremulous dew...[5]

Mount's conventional and emotional style suggests that Hawthorne's "mob of scribbling women" spoke to a male as well as a female audience. Righteous indignation was as much the province of the deceived husband as it was of the wronged wife.

In addition to jealous rage, Mount was fluent in the *lingua franca* of domestic sentiment. Late in his life, recalling his childhood in Stony Brook, he wrote a poem in which the old double door of the family home elicits youthful memories:

> I am gray-haired now, but still I can see,
> This old hall door as it looked to me
> In early life—when a wild young boy,
> I o'er it bounded with mirthful joy.
> I often think with a dreamy eye
> Of those golden hours so long gone by;
> Of that sweet sleep I shall know no more
> At the sunny side of this old hall door;

Shephard A. Mount, The Old Double Door, ca. *1863, The Museums at Stony Brook; Bequest of Miss Dorothy Debevoise Mount, 1959.*

The Old Double Door, the broad panel door,
And the long iron hinges it turned on of yore.

The home of my childhood, is home to me still,
Though shadows have passed o'er the time worn sill;
The faces have vanished that made it dear,
And lights have gone out that once shone here.[6]

A similar sentimental and elegiac tone had been employed in most popular descriptions of hearth and home since the 1840s. The poem typified the often bathetic associations evoked by the mere mention of home, especially in a rural setting. Mount's small oil painting, *The Old Double Door*—obviously a companion-piece to the poem—places his family home in its requisite pastoral context as a "country cottage...surrounded with grass and trees," a counterpart to the dwellings featured in the songs of Stephen Foster and the lithographs of Currier & Ives.[7]

That Mount, a painter, should turn to verse to express his deepest feelings about home was inevitable in an age that revered poetry. The extent of the mid-nineteenth-century audience for poetry is almost inconceivable today, observes Bode: "Housewives, merchants, ministers and clerks often had a little volume of verse handy at their table or bedside," especially the emotional poetry that, like the sentimental novels of the 1850s, appealed "to the softer side of the American character," suspending aggressiveness and materialism.[8]

"Home," an anonymous essay in an 1847 issue of *Farmer and Mechanic*, reflected in flowery language on that word's evocative power:

> It is not merely friends and kindred that render the places so dear, but the very hills and rocks and rivulets throw a charm around the place of one's nativity...No songs are sweet like those we heard among the boughs that shade a parent's dwelling...We may... mingle in the 'world's fierce strife,' and form new associations and friendships,...but... fancy bears us back to childhood's scenes, and we roam again amid the familiar haunts, and press the hands of the companions long since cold in their graves...melancholy steals over us, which...is pleasant, though mournful to the soul.

From this nostalgic viewpoint, the streams of the past flow more clearly and its skies shine more brightly than those of the present. The rose that bloomed in the garden where one wandered in early, innocent years is "lovely in its bloom," and even "lovelier in decay."[9]

This aesthetic corollary presented the popular nineteenth-century association of beauty and death in colloquial American terms. Doing this in the context of extolling home was particularly illuminating. If home could evoke melancholy associations in the minds of adults decades removed from its familiarity and comfort, death in a domestic setting could raise the sharpness of these associations to an exquisite pitch.

Edgar Allen Poe's "Lenore," a poem lamenting the death of his

beloved, is but one example of the beautiful ailing or dead young women who figured deeply in the American imagination during the nineteenth century. These tragic figures, like the rose in "Home," seemed to attain a lustre in death that they did not enjoy in life. In *The Puritan Way of Death*, David Stannard notes that this association pervaded all levels of nineteenth-century American consciousness. He cites a rural New York schoolteacher's diary description of a younger sister's death:

> The broad snowy brow grew more & more fair her eyes beamed with almost unearthly lustre & the bright crimson spot upon her cheek rendered her even more beautiful than when in her usual health. Consumption seems to delight to deck its victims just as they are to be hid in the tomb.[10]

Nowhere did death make its presence more deeply felt than in the home. Infant mortality rates were high, people of all ages succumbed to cholera, typhoid, and other epidemics, and medical procedures were often crude and dangerous. Before safety regulations were enacted, everyday life was infinitely more dangerous. Accidents were common, notes Margaret M. Coffin:

> there were few if any safety regulations in industry and only inadequate inspections of...public transportation...Newspapers, letters and diaries [from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries] are filled with calamities that never would have happened had modern safety regulations been in effect.[11]

Popular taste reflected the pervasive presence of death. The most frequently read mid-nineteenth-century poets were Mrs. Felicia Hemans and Mrs. Lydia Huntley Sigourney, both of whom celebrated, in the latter's words, "the whole sweet circle of the domestic affections—the hallowed ministries of woman, at the cradle, the hearth-stone, and the deathbed." Death was but one more event within the domestic province. Mrs. Hemans emphasized death and grief in such poems as "The Hour of Death," "Dirge of a Child," and "The Funeral Genius." Mrs. Sigourney "painted far oftener than Mrs. Hemans the picture of a dying child," and at least some of this concern with death, particularly of children, may be ascribed to the high infant mortality rate. "It was a rare family," writes Bode "that did not lose a tiny son or daughter."[12]

Even school books were filled with descriptions of, and reflections on, death. *McGuffey's Fourth Eclectic Reader* contained twenty-nine "Poetical Lessons," sixteen of which discussed death.[13] Everywhere, death was acknowledged, contemplated, described, and portrayed.

Deathbed and posthumous portraits were in vogue. A vast supply of visual symbols, usually simple, natural objects with a rural accent, were available to artists who worked in these genres. Flowers, birds' nests, watches, fruit, shells, and other objects carried important associations of life, death, and eternity. They spoke eloquently to a public attuned by popular poetry to the pathetic and the melancholy, and prepared to look

for symbolic meanings in the petals of a rose of Sharon.

In common with many of his compatriots, Mount experienced the tragedies of losing first a child and later a grandchild. In December 1861, four months after her wedding, his daughter Ruth, known affectionately as "Tutie," died of consumption. Two years later Mount completed one of his rare floral still lifes, entitled *Rose of Sharon: "Remember Me."*[14] In 1868, his granddaughter Camille, the child of his son Joshua, died in infancy. Shepard, who had sketched the baby during her brief illness and was present at her death, composed a posthumous oil portrait that showed her surrounded by clouds, beneath a shining star, and above an open pocket. Calling it "one of the best portraits of a child that I ever painted," he discussed the meaning of its symbols in a letter to his son, William Shepard:

> I painted her with [her maternal grandfather] Mr. Searing's watch lying open in the foreground. The hands pointing to the hour of her birth while she is seen moving up on a light cloud—the image of the lost Camille."[15]

Although this portrait provided an outlet for Mount's grief and a means of expressing his deep sense of bereavement, portrait painting remained an economic necessity rather than a therapeutic pastime. Like his brother William, Shepard relied on portraits for his living. From the first decade of the century, when Aaron Burr urged John Vanderlyn to return home from Paris to profit from the "rage for portraits" engulfing America, until well after the Civil War, portraits provided painters with their best livelihood.[16] Newly-wealthy merchants, farmers, and tradesmen wished to have themselves recorded for posterity on canvas. What had been, especially in Europe, the prerogative of the aristocrat suddenly was available to the rising middle class. The novelist and essayist, John Neal, took a jaundiced view of this phenomenon, noting that portraits were regarded as "necessary" acquisitions for self-styled gentlemen and ladies:

> You can hardly open the door of a best room anywhere without surprising, or being surprised by, a picture of somebody plastered to the wall and staring at you with both eyes and a bunch of flowers.[17]

Mount struggled through the 1830s in the competitive New York City art world, fighting with the National Academy of Art's hanging committees (which usually consigned work by lesser-known artists to places beyond the normal sight lines or in dark corners), or vying for critical notice with such established artists as Samuel F.B. Morse and Henry Inman. Both Inman and Luman Reed, an important patron of the arts, encouraged him to persevere, and eventually he attracted patrons from among the city's successful merchants and professionals.[18] Although Reed died unexpectedly, before he could award the commission promised to Mount, the support that he and Inman provided evidently helped the young artist to continue his efforts. Mount accumulated patrons of the wealth and status of the clothier, Henry Brooks; three generations of Cold Spring

Harbor Joneses, including the insurance executive, John Divine Jones; and Charlotte Hall Kirby, the future wife of the heir to the Erie Railroad fortune, but his real interest as an artist lay elsewhere.[19]

Mount was drawn to still life and landscape, genres which traditionally were deemed less worthy than portrait or historical painting. John Howatt outlines the "relatively minor place" of landscape painting in eighteenth-century Europe and England, when

> Sir Joshua Reynolds...advised that...the most admired seventeenth-century landscape masters, had 'the same right...to the name of a painter, which a satirist, an epigrammatist, a sonneteer, a writer of pastorals, or descriptive poetry, has to that of a poet.'[20]

Just as he patronized the landscape, Reynolds also scorned the still life, especially the fish and game study at which Mount excelled. As William Gerdts points out, "when [the fish and game study] was mentioned at all—and that was seldom—it was usually denigrated as a theme not worthy of serious consideration by either critic or artist."[21]

As the nineteenth century began, Americans continued to be influenced by European and English standards of art. In 1827, for example, Daniel Fanshaw, reviewing the annual exhibition at the National Academy of Design, listed ten categories of painting in descending order of importance, from epic and historic through landscape and copies. Still life and game painting ranked eighth, indicating that Reynolds's prejudice against them persisted in the minds of later critics. Noting Fanshaw's contention that "exactness of imitation is not the chief aim of painting...it ranks low when considered separate from other and higher qualities," Gerdts observes that, "in nineteenth-century critical terms, transcriptional representation was aesthetically inferior to invented images, and still life painting for such critics could only be transcriptional."[22] A review of an 1831 exhibit at the Boston Athenaeum, published in the *North American Review*, stated the case against the humble still life in unequivocal terms:

> We do not think the country would be much benefitted or its character much elevated, if our artists could paint brass-kettles...or dead game...The painter who copies such things is indeed likely to be somewhat more refined than the tinker or the cook who handles the originals.[23]

However, changes under way in Europe and the United States resulted in challenges to such assumptions. Mount was influenced by those changes and by the movement which bore them to American shores—Romanticism. American Romanticism took on a nationalistic flavor. The desire to develop a particularly American art and literature spurred the best and most interesting minds and talents, among them Cooper, Bryant, Irving, Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman. In painting, it helped to produce the Hudson River School. Nye assesses Romanticism, "inchoate and complex mass of ideas that it was," as guiding American painting in two directions: one toward "the 'picturesque (emphasizing

the pictorial quality of the subject), the other toward the 'naturalistic' and 'real' (an imitation of nature, visually accurate)." The road followed by William Sidney Mount, George Bingham, and, later, Currier and Ives, was "genre painting of the native, 'true,' everyday experience. The other led toward Thomas Cole, Asher Durand, Henry Inman, George Inness—to the 'Hudson River' and landscape painters."[24]

Fighting both the neo-classical aesthetics of Reynolds, who had warned painters against concentrating on "low objects," and the opinion of British and continental critics that American culture was too "materialistic" to produce significant art or literature, Americans began developing their own standards.[25] The most eloquent case for an American aesthetic was made in 1837 by Ralph Waldo Emerson in his Phi Beta Kappa Oration at Harvard, "The American Scholar." Emerson summed up the frustration of a generation of American writers who had struggled to break free from European domination. In opposition to the criteria of Reynolds and his followers, he called for "the gradual domestication of the idea of Culture." His program turned away from the kind of hierarchy that had dominated aesthetic thinking, and embraced an entirely different, more radical set of assumptions:

> I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic; what is doing in Italy or Arabia; what is Greek art, or Provencal minstrelsy. I embrace the common, I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar, the low...What would we really know the meaning of? The meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan; the ballad in the street; the news of the boat; the glance of the eye; the form and gait of the body.[26]

Articulating a primary article of Romantic faith, Emerson declared "the familiar" a fertile ground for spiritual enlightenment. Hence, "the common....the familiar, the low" and their artistic correlatives, genre painting and still life, are no longer improper subjects for a serious artist. Emerson found the "sublime presence of the highest spiritual cause lurking as it always does in these subjects and extremities of nature." Thus he proposed a new, democratic aesthetic which granted importance to hitherto "low" subjects and recognized their ability to evoke a transforming vision:

> Let me see every trifle bristling with the polarity that ranges it instantly on an eternal law; and the shop, the plough, and the ledger referred to the like cause by which light undulates and poets sing;—and the world lies no longer a dull miscellany and lumber room, but has form and order; there is no trifle, there is no puzzle, but one design unites and animate the farthest pinnacle and the lowest trench.[27]

In part as a result of this re-evaluation of the old hierarchies, and in part as a response to the Romantic interest in wild nature, landscape painting began to assume central importance to American artists. As Bode observes, Mount lived in an age when "the American public had rediscovered nature."[28] In his "Essay on American Scenery," in many

ways an artistic companion piece to "The American Scholar," a transplanted Englishman, Thomas Cole, declared the superiority of the American to the European landscape. Cole refuted the notion

> that it is rude without picturesqueness, and monotonous without sublimity—that being destitute of those vestiges of antiquity, whose associations so strongly affect the mind, it may not be compared with European scenery.

Cole praised the special grandeur of the Catskills and the White Mountains, with their "gorgeous garb" of foliage:

> When the woods 'have put their glory on,' as an American poet has beautifully said, the purple heath and yellow furze of Europe's mountains are in comparison but as the faint secondary rainbow to the primal one.[29]

Such terms as "sublime" and "picturesque" had important meaning for the landscape painter at this time. Sublime originally carried with it associations of terror, awe, pain, and danger that could be elicited by the depiction in art or literature of wild, natural scenes. Cole modified the terrifying aspect somewhat in his discussion of American scenery: "...I have alluded to wild and uncultivated scenery; but the cultivated must not be forgotten, for it is still more important to man in his social capacity—necessarily bringing him in contact with the cultured." Later, he remarked that in places like the White Mountains, nature combines "grandeur and loveliness...the sublime melting into the beautiful, the savage tempered by the magnificent."[30]

To William Gilpin, a champion of the Westward movement whose *Essays on the Picturesque* were widely read, picturesque meant beauty without terror, and applied particularly to landscapes touched by the cultivating hand of human civilization. Noah Webster defined it as: "Expressing that peculiar kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture, natural or artificial..."[31] Cole's admonition that "the cultivated must not be forgotten" acknowledged the importance of the picturesque, and served to redefine the sublime in a way that combined two important intellectual currents of the time: worship of the American wilderness and belief in the Jeffersonian ideal of agrarian progress.

Barbara Novak has traced the evolution of "sublime" from the eighteenth century to the 1830s:

> The sublime was being absorbed into a religious, moral, and frequently nationalist concept of nature, contributing to the rhetorical screen under which the aggressive conquest of the country could be accomplished. The older sublime was a gentleman's preserve, an aristocratic reflex of romantic thought. The Christianized sublime...was more democratic, even bourgeois... Thomas Cole...offered a clue to still another shift in meaning...

> Nature is both sublime and sanctified. The task of artist and spectator is to unveil, to *reveal* the hidden glory...But Cole...also suggested that revelation, as an experience of the sublime was not necessarily apocalyptic.[32]

Cole found, as did other artists who followed his example, that American scenery with its rugged mountains, rushing cataracts, and awesome vistas could inspire a new sort of landscape painting, different from that practiced in Europe. Nye observes that, to painters of the Barbizon school,

> a landscape ought to be perceptible at a single glance, to be taken in as a whole. The Hudson River painters, and other American landscapists...saw the scene as a large horizontal stage, to be 'read' by the viewer as his eyes travelled across it in 'panoramic' style.[33]

One manifestation of this redefined notion of how a landscape could be conceived and viewed was the panorama. A panorama presented sketches or paintings of vast natural scenes, fastened to large rollers, and slowly unrolled to musical and narrative accompaniment, before rapt audiences in cities and towns throughout the nation. The process, frequently taking several hours, was a highly-theatrical event. Viewers of Henry Lewis's *Mammoth Panorama of the Mississippi*, for example, enjoyed an experience Novak calls both "cumulative and extended in time."[34]

Fiction was another medium through which the American landscape and its singular beauty could be celebrated. Before Cole began to change the direction of American painting, writers like Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper were accumulating a body of work in which scene and action were intertwined and explicitly American. The American landscape became a presence often as significant as the characters who moved across it. To browse through Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* or Irving's *The Sketch Book* is to encounter long, descriptive passages which are literary equivalents of the paintings of Cole, Asher Durand, and others.

In "Rip Van Winkle," Irving's description of the Hudson Valley has obvious painterly overtones:

> In a long ramble of the kind on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled to one of the highest parts of the Catskill mountains. He was after his favourite sport of squirrel shooting, and the still solitudes had echoed and re-echoed with the reports of his gun. Panting and fatigued, he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll, covered with mountain herbage, that crowned the brow of a precipice. From an opening between the trees, he could overlook all the lower country for many mile of rich woodland. He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson, far, far below him, moving on its silent but majestic course, the reflection of a purple cloud, or the sail of a lagging bark, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom, and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.[35]

Here are all the elements of the classic Hudson River landscape, the elevated perspective from which is revealed a rich pastoral scene, as mists punctuate the horizon and the river meanders in the distance.

Similar moments exist in Cooper's novels, as in this excerpt from *The Pioneers*:

> Immediately beneath them lay a seeming plain, glittering without inequality, and buried in mountains. The latter were precipitous, especially on the side of the plain, and chiefly in forest. Here and there the hills fell away in long, low points, and broke the sameness of the outline; or settling to the long, and wide field of snow, which, without house, tree, fence, or any other fixture, resembled so much spotless cloud settled to the earth. A few dark and moving spots were, however, visible on the even surface...so many sleighs going their several ways, to or from the village.[36]

It is not surprising, then, that Shepard Mount was inspired to paint landscapes. His first attempts coincided with a period of emotional stress in his life, during which he sought surcease from his cares in the tranquility of the countryside.[37] In the spring of 1841 he traveled to the Wyoming Valley in Pennsylvania, ostensibly to visit his uncle, John Shepard, a prosperous mill and oil distillery owner in Athens, directly south of the Susquehanna River. In his chronicle of the Mount family, Edward Buffet suggests that the artist was recovering from a nervous breakdown and needed time away from his immediate family. As Buffet noted, "all Long Islanders have a yearning for any hill that resembles a mountain,"[38] and Mount was no exception. After the flat, domesticated vistas of Suffolk County, the Susquehanna Valley seemed wild and provocative.

When Mount hiked from his uncle's home to find an unspoiled vista to sketch, he no doubt wished to produce work in the style of Cole, whom he greatly admired. In 1841, there still were parts of the Pennsylvania countryside where industry and commerce had not yet encroached, offering the necessary components of the ideal landscape—sublime as well as picturesque. Seated beneath a large tree, with the valley spread out below him, Mount began a series of sketches in preparation for an eventual canvas. He described a typical day in a letter to his friend, Charles Lanman, a New York artist:

> I behold...the pearly waters go silently along. Fit emblem of eternity this never changing stream, its course is onward, onward, and it returneth not...I am wrong in saying no change is apparent here; on all sides I behold the strongest evidence that here too it exists in its most terrible form—the rude pile on which I am sitting was forced above its natural level by the furious waters that rushed madly down from the mountain tops, mighty trees have been torn from these sunny banks...whose loftiest branches an hundred years before have sported with the winds of heaven, while many others...from their lacerated sides and distended roots, show that they too like

Jacob of old, have wrestled with the God of storms.

These images evoke the wild power of nature and the awe which this power elicits in the viewer. Immediately after observing this, however, Mount's tone changes:

> But I have looked on the picture only in part, was the tempest sent in wrath? Oh no, the waters have long since slept upon those inundated fields now overshadowed with the 'golden grain.' I have this moment been listening to the happy voices of the husband-men joined in merry song of harvest home, and as they handle the new-bound sheaf with gladdened hearts, are not unmindful of the bounteous hand of the giver.[39]

The shift of mood revealed that Mount shared Cole's view that "the cultivated must not be forgotten." The letter reflects the full range of sublime and picturesque association available to landscape painters of the time.

Mount's weeks in Pennsylvania yielded a series of landscape paintings in the style of Cole and Durand. *Landscape with Cows* was conceived in terms of the contrasts established in Mount's letter to Lanman. The meditative mood evoked by the calm, smooth river and gentle evening light is somewhat broken by the splintered and partially-uprooted tree trunk in the right foreground.[40] Figures of farmers and fishermen, and the small house on the riverbank, smoke gently curling from its chimney, are evidence of a cultivating, human hand.

Set next to Cole's *The Ox-Bow*, however, *Landscape with Cows* looks contrived. Whereas Cole establishes a sense of the sublime through his elevated perspective, with the sort of dizzying view that makes viewers feel they are looking down from a precarious height, the flatness of Mount's perspective and the bland, subdued tones of the painting cancel its dramatic effect.

These failings were not lost on Mount's contemporaries. It is reported that Durand shook his head in bewilderment upon viewing some of Shepard's efforts at a New York exhibit in 1851, and asked William why his older brother—so obviously gifted as a portraitist—would waste his time with such "infamous attempts" when his skills lay elsewhere. Perhaps discouraged by such reactions, Shepard Mount showed landscapes only occasionally after 1851, but he did not completely stop painting them. He composed some smaller, plein-air studies which, according to Johnson, "display a spontaneity, freshness and technical experimentalism absent from the works he composed in the studio."[41]

Ironically, Shepard A. Mount's most significant contribution to American nature painting was not in the noble exercise of landscape panorama, but in the modest field of fish and game study. This homely stepchild of the still life was far removed from the rarefied air of philosophical inquiry which enveloped discussions of the sublime, the picturesque, and the beautiful. Its subject was the small and ordinary,

rather than the large and awesome, and its attention to "the common...the familiar, the low" made it an ideal example of the new, democratic, American aesthetic.

Mount may have been unaware of Emerson's comments at Harvard, but his fish and game studies confirm their artistic relevance. In these small, striking paintings one may observe the liberating consequences of looking closely at the "near at hand." Mount presents nature from a perspective neither panoramic nor allegorical. Instead of viewing the world from a mountain top, or contrasting the peaceful side of nature with its destructive and violent one, his studies come down to ground level and look at things close-up. Detail is important, but so too are color and contrast; the contraction of artistic energy into a single object or small cluster of objects yields energy of a different sort than does evocation of the sublime in any of its keys.

Mount's fish are not cliches of folksy "gone fishin'" sentimentality. Their scales sparkle against the dark forest background. Light is reflected in brief, surprising flashes of pigment, moist and tactile. Like the perch and pickerel which Thoreau described in Walden, they have beauty and integrity. They are creatures of nature, presented unsentimentally and directly, free of allegorical references. Looking at the "low [and] near at hand," Mount found richness and inspiration.

Squirrel (1829), an excellent example of Mount's early work in this area, depicts a gray squirrel poised on its haunches, nibbling an acorn in front of a large tree. The dominant colors are dark greens and browns, although a bit of blue sky is visible at the upper left of the canvas. While paintings of animals were in vogue, usually presented stuffed or mounted as trophies, this work presents the animal at home in its own domain. The perspective from the floor of the forest suggests that a squirrel, or any creature, is best seen on its own terms, "placid and self-contained," to borrow a phrase from Whitman,

Mount's fish studies, which span two decades, reveal a similar willingness to depart from convention. In *Fish* (1842) he presents a string of Largemouth Bass on a dark bank, their scales glistening in contrast to the dark woods in the background. As in the study of the squirrel, Mount uses the brownish-green background of forest and river bank to emphasize the brightness of his subject. In Fish (July 1847), Mount suspends two Smallmouth Bass from a line at the top of the canvas. Their scales glisten silver, highlighted with flashes of green and yellow, their pink and orange irises glow. They seem to move sinuously, their tails twisting into the brown darkness that envelops the bottom third of the painting. It is as if they continue swimming even when out of the water—a remarkable effect. Except for a patch of sky at the upper left, the painting is dark, the suspended fish providing its only light. The picture has an underwater quality, as if the viewer is watching the bass at the moment of the strike, twisting in the dark water of the stream as it heads up and out toward the sunlight.[42]

Such studies departed from the cliches attached to the painting of fish.

Early nineteenth-century custom demanded that the catch be displayed in the kitchen, underscoring the importance of the domestic in relation even to the most masculine of pastimes. Gerdts points out that this convention was later displaced by the "catch in the wild" motif. In the second half of the nineteenth century, he notes, American artists were

> concerned with fish and game as trophies—records of the catch or the bag—that were representations of not the cook at the stove but of the hunter and fisherman in the woods and at the stream.[43]

While *Boy with a Line of Fish* (1841), or *Landscape with Fish* (1861), contain such masculine elements, Mount seems to have avoided the temptation to do "trophy paintings." He steered clear of human or narrative elements in these paintings, although *Landscape with Fish* (1861) is somewhat of an exception. In it, a pile of freshly-caught Large and Smallmouth Bass lie on a riverbank, along with crab claws and spotted frogs. In the distance mountains rise, a hawk circles, a river meanders. A solitary fisherman casts his line on the bank. If the angler's presence brings a human, anecdotal dimension that *Fish* (1842) lacked, Mount was clearly more interested in the spatial arrangement of the fish, frogs, and other objects in the foreground. The artistic perspective in the fish and game studies implies a different attitude to nature than that expressed in the Hudson River landscapes which Mount strove, unsuccessfully, to create. The smaller paintings do not imply what Novak calls an "apocalyptic experience of the sublime," or establish "an anthropomorphic tie to the ego in the midst of experience."[44] Instead, Mount offers a world where the squirrel is confronted at eye level, and where the fish sparkle against the looming darkness of the forest.

Perhaps the most useful parallel to Mount's perspective lies not in painting but in literature. In *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849), Thoreau discusses the benefits of close observation of nature:

> When compelled by a shower to take shelter under a tree, we may improve that opportunity for a more minute inspection of some of nature's work. I have stood under a tree in the woods half a day at a time, during heavy rain in the summer, and yet employed myself happily and profitably there prying with microscopic eye into the crevices at my feet.[45]

This "microscopic eye" is exercised throughout Thoreau, and its probing yields abundant evidence of the richness which lies ignored, underfoot. Like Emerson, Thoreau speaks passionately for the importance of this "unpoetic" side of nature:

> The scenery of Walden is on a humble scale, and, though very beautiful, does not approach to grandeur, nor can it much concern one who has not long frequented it or lived by its shore.[46]

Emerson's belief in the inherent importance of the humble is given a

new dimension in the writing of Thoreau and in the fish and game studies of Shepard A. Mount. Both look closely at nature; what they find is rich and rewarding. Together they indicate that beauty on a small scale offers delights not available from a mountain top.

NOTES

1. Carl Bode, ed., *American Life in the 1840s* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), xviii.

2. Deborah J. Johnson, *Shepard Alonzo Mount: His Life and Art* (Stony Brook: The Museums at Stony Brook, 1988), 40-43.

3. Ibid., 46.

4. Russel Blaine Nye, *Society and Culture in America: 1830-1860* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 97-98.

5. Johnson, *Shepard Alonzo Mount*, 46.

6. Ibid., 10.

7. Bode, *American Life*, 55.

8. Bode, *Antebellum Culture* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1959; reprint ed., New York: Arcturus Books, 1970), 188.

9. "Home," *Farmer and Mechanic*, 21 October 1847, quoted in Bode, *American Life in the 1840s*, 56.

10. David Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 174.

11. Margaret M. Coffin, *Death in Early America* (New York: Elsevier/Nelson Books, 1976), 18-19.

12. Lydia Huntley Sigourney, "Essay on the Genius of Mrs. Hemans," quoted in Bode, *Antebellum Culture*, 190, 195, 192.

13. Stannard, *Puritan Way of Death*, 175.

14. For *Rose of Sharon: "Remember Me,"* Mount's rare floral still life that shows the care with which artists of the period employed visual symbols, see Deborah Johnson, "Shepard A. Mount," in this issue of the *LIHJ*.

15. Johnson, *Shepard Alonzo Mount*, 54.

16. James Thomas Flexner, *The Light of Distant Skies* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1954; reprint ed., New York: Dover Books, 1969), 200; Nye, *Society and Culture*, 184.

17. Flexner, ibid., 200.

18. Johnson, *Shepard Alonzo Mount*, 40-43.

19. Ibid., 40. Mount's portrait of John Divine Jones is on the cover of the Spring 1990 *LIHJ*, courtesy of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

20. John Howatt, *The Hudson River and Its Painters* (New York: Viking Press, 1972; reprint ed., New York: American Legacy Press, 1983), 28-29.

21. William H. Gerdts, *Painters of the Humble Truth* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1981), 21.

22. Ibid., 23.

23. Nye, *Society and Culture*, 176.

24. Ibid., 162.

25. Gerdts, *Painters*, 20-23, 25.

26. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," in Stephen E. Whicher, ed., *Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 78.

27. Ibid.

28. Bode, *Antebellum Culture*, 66.

29. Thomas Cole, *The Collected Essays and Prose Sketches*, Marshall Tymn, ed. (St. Paul: John Colet Press, 1980), 100-103.

30. Ibid., 100, 103.

31. Richard J. Schneider, "Henry David Thoreau and American Landscape Painting," *ESQ* 31 (Second Quarter, 1985):67-88; Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (Springfield, 1861); for discussion of American landscape painting within the context of Western painting, see also Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape Painting 1825-1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) 228-234.

32. Novak, ibid, 38-39.

33. Nye, *Society and Culture*, 181.

34. Novak, *Nature and Culture*, 23.

35. Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle," in Nina Baym, et. al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), 814.

36. James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers* (New York: New American Library [Signet Classics], 1964), 37.

37. For discussion of the peace and tranquility of the new sublime, see Novak, *Nature and Culture*, 39.

38. Edward. P. Buffet, "William Sidney Mount: A Biography," *Port Jefferson Times*, 1 December 1923 through 12 June 1924, chap. 19.

39. Johnson, *Shepard Alonzo Mount*, 24, 26.

40. For discussion of still water as a symbol of tranquility and inner peace see Nye, *Nature and Culture*, 40-41.

41. Johnson, *Shepard Alonzo Mount*, 31.

42. Ibid., 21. Revealing further experiment with perspective, *Suspended Fish* (1862) shows a sharply rendered trout, the hook in its upper jaw, hanging from a tree. As Johnson points out, the perspective places the viewer in an unusual position, suspended above the ground. Again, the background is less important than the trout.

43. Gerdts, *Painters*, 131. Mount's fish paintings earned him a good deal of praise. A popular periodical called *Suspended Fish* "equal, if not superior, to any saltwater fish painting we have ever seen"; another critic wrote that Mount's "admirable pictures of still life...defeat competition with others of like kind, from any other hand" (Johnson, *Shepard Alonzo Mount*, 21-22). Evidently, Mount was aware of his talent in this field of painting, remarking with self-effacing candor: "you must allow me to brag a little on fish as I sometimes think (and not without some reason) that they are the only subjects I can paint really well"(ibid., 23).

44. Novak, *Nature and Culture*, 39, 43.

45. Henry David Thoreau, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (New York: New American Library [Signet Classics], 1961), 258.

46. Thoreau, *Walden and Civil Disobedience*, Sherman Paul, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 121.

Back to Nature: The Tile Club in the Country

By Connie Koppelman

> "Why not go to Long Island?" asked "Polyphemus."...
> "That sand place?" said the Gaul.
> "There's nothing there," said the "Bone."...
> "How do you know?" said "Polyphemus."
> "Why," said the "Grasshopper" conclusively, "nobody ever was known to go there!"
> "What!" said the "Owl,""Nobody ever went there! Then that's the place of all others to go to!"[1]

The exclusively male group of artists, writers, and musicians known as the Tile Club began meeting weekly in New York City, during the fall of 1877. At these gatherings members decided in whose studio they would meet, where they would go for their next sketching adventure, and how they would pay for these excursions. Also discussed, both seriously and lightheartedly, were the proper subjects and future of art in America. Unlike the dozens of professional organizations then forming, members of the Tile Club joined primarily for camaraderie and thought of themselves as a secret, fraternal lodge like the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. In seeking a purpose and name for their group they decided to paint on eight-inch square tiles (an appropriate endeavor, they thought, in a "Decorative Age"), and call themselves the Tile Club.

Group excursions or sketching trips on various New York State waterways and the Long Island Rail Road were also on their agenda; the funds realized from the publication of stories and illustrations produced during these vocation/vacation adventures kept the club solvent. In such contemporary illustrated periodicals as the widely-read *Scribner's Monthly*, club scribes humorously documented club activities and discussions.[2] They deliberately titillated the public by drawing attention to their unconventional behavior, which was meant to provoke curiosity about artists and the environment from which they drew inspiration.

Several of the places on Long Island that the Tilers visited, wrote about, and depicted soon attracted large numbers of artists, followed by other vacationers and art patrons who appreciated being in the same milieu as the artists, enjoying the natural beauty of towns like East Hampton and Southampton. Members of the Tile Club were not the first to recognize the bucolic amenities of these places; however, unlike their predecessors, they published their thoughts and sketches in magazines aimed at the growing number of middle-class vacationers. Thereby, they incidentally

TILE CLUB MEMBERS

NAME	LIFE SPAN	CLUB NAME
Abbey, Edwin	1852-1911	Chestnut
Boughton, George	1834-1905	Puritan
Bunce, William Gedney	1840-1916	Bishop
Chase, William Merritt	1849-1916	Briareus
Dielman, Frederick	1847-1935	Terrapin
Frost, Arthur Burdett	1851-1928	Icicle
Gifford, Robert Swain	1840-1905	Griffin
Homer, Winslow	1836-1910	Obtuse Bard
Laffan, William Mackay	1848-1909	Polyphemus
Maynard, George	1843-1923	Bird Of Freedom
Millet, Francis	1846-1912	Bulgarian
O'Donovan, William	1844-1920	O'Donoghue
Paris, Walter	1842-1906	Gaul
Parsons, Alfred	1847-1920	Englishman
Patton, William Agnew	1848-1918	Haggis
Quartley, Arthur	1839-1886	Marine
Reinhart, Charles Stanley	1844-1896	Sirius
Saint-Gaudens, Augustus	1848-1907	Saint
Sarony, Napoleon	1821-1896	Hawk or Scratch
Shinn, Earl [Strahan]	1837-1886	Bone
Shugio, Heromichi	N.A.	Varnish
Smith, Francis Hopkinson	1838-1915	Owl
Truslow, Charles W.	N.A.	The Boarder
Twachtman, John	1853-1902	Pie
Vedder, Elihu	1836-1923	Pagan
Weir, Julian Alden	1852-1919	Cadmium
Wimbridge, Edward N.A.		Grasshopper
White, Stanford	1853-1906	Beaver

HONORARY MEMBERS

Baird, William	N.A.	Baritone
Knauth, Antonio	N.A.	Horsehair
Kobbe, Gustav	1857-1918	Husk
Lewenburg, Dr. J. N.A.		Catgut

became the catalyst for the rise of the resort industry and the beginning of "out-of-door" summer art schools.

The Tile Club was a short lived (1877-1887), loosely organized (no by-laws or dues), small group of artists of disparate ages. No more than twelve

members were allowed at any given time; in the ten years of the club's existence only thirty-two men participated, four of them musicians and honorary members. The original twelve were:

Edward Wimbridge, an English architect;
Walter Paris, an architect who preferred painting with watercolor;
Edwin Abbey and Charles Reinhart, who were primarily illustrators;
William O'Donovan, a sculptor;
Edward Strahan (pseudonym for Earl Shinn) an art critic;
F. Hopkinson Smith, a writer, illustrator and marine engineer;
William Laffan, a journalist;
Julian Alden Weir, Arthur Quartley, Winslow Homer, and Robert Swain Gifford, who were primarily painters.

Of these, Strahan, Smith, and Laffan served as the club's scribes.

New members were admitted only when original members resigned, resided or traveled extensively abroad, or died; election required a unanimous vote. Consequently, there was a dynamic to the group that included much serious talk about contemporary art, both in Europe and America, but also abundant gaiety, conviviality, and numerous farewell and welcome-home parties:

> A new arrival was not to be spoiled...but was to be used for what he could teach....The little circle consisted at first of painters; a sculptor or two, modeling with wax in a snuff box lid, or with clay on a tablet, swelled the number soon; then as some of the members were fair amateur musicians, they introduced virtuosi of their acquaintance, and an impromptu concert enlivened every club meeting. Soon it became a question, how to keep the flood gates of the club against Society, which beat at the barriers demanding admission, for not a few of the members had a demonic talent for talking an after dinner story, for improving a monologue...[3]

One of the most creative story-tellers was Edwin Abbey, nicknamed "Chestnut" (colloquial for an old joke). In all the publications, he, like all of the members, was referred to by his club name. These were often derived from nature—"Owl," "Bird of Freedom," "Terrapin," "Icicle," "Grasshopper"—or were a play on the artist's given name or birthplace, as in "Griffin" for Robert Gifford, and "Gaul" for Walter Paris. Some assigned names referred to the subject of the artists' work, as with "Pagan" for Elihu Vedder, or "Marine" for Arthur Quartley. The prolific artist, William Merritt Chase, was called "Briareus" after the Greek monster of a hundred hands, and William MacKay Laffan, who had one glass eye, was known as "Polyphemus," a reference to the one-eyed Cyclops.

The origins and meanings of some sobriquets, which were understood only by the inner circle of the Tile Club, have been lost. However, members were not completely successful in their attempt at anonymity, since their contemporaries in the art world knew to whom those odd nicknames

belonged long before the club's scribes revealed their identities in *The Book of the Tile Club*, published in 1887.[4] Club members enjoyed their alternative names and often used them in correspondence, especially during the club's existence. As late as 1912, when Francis Millet went down with the *Titanic*, obituaries in New York newspapers referred to him by his club name, "Bulgarian," a reference to his experiences as a journalist during the Russo-Turkish War.[5]

The following are a few of the most prestigious artists on the Tile Club roster printed at the beginning of this article. Arthur Burdett Frost, whose illustrations appeared for over fifty years in popular magazines, lived in Huntington (1883-1887) where he hosted many club outings. Aspet, the summer home of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, the sculptor, became the focal point of the Cornish, New Hampshire, art colony (*ca.*1885-1907), and is now an historic site, part of the United States National Park Service. Julian Alden Weir and John Henry Twachtman were instrumental in the development of plein-air painting and American Impressionism. They fostered these ideas in summer art classes in Connecticut (1890-1897) as did William Merritt Chase, who organized an "out-of-doors" art school in the Shinnecock Hills of Southampton, (1891-1902). The country home built for Chase, which still stands, was designed by his fellow Tile Club member Stanford White, who, in 1880, joined the architectural firm that shaped much of late-nineteenth-century architecture, McKim, Mead and White.

Francis Hopkinson Smith (a grandson of Francis Hopkinson, of New Jersey, a signer of the Declaration of Independence), was a multi-talented author, illustrator, lecturer, and engineer. Among other projects, he designed the base of the Statue of Liberty. Long after the Tile Club ceased to function, Smith kept its Bohemian spirit alive in fiction and non-fiction in which he repeated many stories told for amusement at club meetings.[6]

William MacKay Laffan was a passenger agent for the Long Island Railroad when the club was organized; his travel handbooks published by the LIRR were written at that time.[7] Laffan probably influenced the club's choice of travel sites, since he was familiar with the Island's landscape, and also could provide free passage. For several years he wrote an art column for the English edition of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, one of many Harper publications to which Edward Abby, Arthur B. Frost, Winslow Homer, Francis Millet, Charles Stanley Reinhart, and Elihu Vedder contributed illustrations. From 1884 Laffan was associated with the *New York Sun*, eventually becoming the owner in 1897. In addition to his literary talents, Laffan was recognized for his connoisseurship. He wrote about art and advised such wealthy collectors as W. T. Walters of Baltimore, J. P. Morgan, and Charles Dana.[8]

A remarkable number of Tilers played significant roles in the advancement of American art. They were involved spokesmen for their time, not only through the club but in the Society of American Artists, the New York Etching Club, and the Society of Decorative Art, all of which were organized in the same year as the Tile Club, soon after the

Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 gave impetus to artistic pursuits. Toward the end of the century, men of the now-defunct Tile Club helped to organize the Ten (a group of American Impressionists), the American Academy at Rome, the American Fine Arts Federation of New York, and the World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. As individuals, and as a group, they promoted public and governmental support of the arts.

To that end, and because it was the custom of the day, almost all of them joined gentlemen's clubs in addition to organizations devoted to the arts. Membership in these clubs gave them middle-class respectability and helped to dispel false notions about Bohemian artists living alone and starving in their garrets. One of the benefits of joining these groups was the opportunity to make contacts with possible patrons; in addition, organizations with permanent quarters, such as the Century Club, often sponsored art exhibits of members' works.[9]

Experiences and attitudes related by Tile Club scribes add to the understanding of how nineteenth-century artists contributed to social and cultural change. As spokesmen for their time, they are representative of other artists and of contemporary trends in art. Space does not permit extensive discussion of their biographies, which cumulatively extended for more than a century, 1822-1935. However, a summary of their club discussions and the subject matter of their art will serve to reveal the artistic issues of their day.

Members of the Tile Club were part of a long tradition of itinerant limners and authors who sang the praises of American scenery in its natural state. In fact, the natural environment—landscapes, seascapes, flora, and fauna—dominated the art of nineteenth-century America. Like many other contemporary artists and writers, Tilers often traveled in search of subjects; however, they offered new opinions concerning locales worth depicting. Unlike the Hudson River school artists, they did not believe in grandiose, dramatic, awesome scenes of nature, often permeated with the light of a God-like presence. Rather, they were attracted to peaceful scenes of country life in selected areas of New England and the Long Island countryside. At club meetings, "there were satirical discussions concerning the Hudson River School of Art and the work of its members, and of the good old mossy, geographical landscapes which used to crowd the holy precincts of the National Academy."[10]

Earlier in the century, American artists such as Thomas Cole, Asher Durand, Albert Bierstadt, and Frederich Church traveled, usually to northern or western regions, to paint unexplored areas. Armed with sketchbooks and notebooks they recorded with topographical exactitude, or visions of the sublime, as they explored the lakes, waterfalls, mountains, and other wonders of the untouched wilderness. These sketches then became the basis for paintings, often huge, completed in studios and exhibited at the National Academy of Design.

By contrast, the intimate renderings of everyday life and the landscape of the countryside, which were first introduced during the Jacksonian era

by artists like William Sidney Mount (1807-1868), of Stony Brook, were more frequently represented in the post Civil War period. Younger artists who had studied abroad were aware of new European methods and subjects favored by the Barbizon school and other plein-air painters.[11] They emphasized everyday occurrences, and preferred to paint in the open air, directly from nature. Members of the Tile Club, unlike the Hudson River school painters, favored peaceful scenes of country life which included local people and places.

Prior to their first group excursion, conversations at meetings centered on where to find appropriate art in less established sketching grounds than the Catskills, the Adirondacks, the Isles of Shoals, or the coast of Maine. If their published accounts are to be believed—humor and exaggeration abound in Tile Club articles—they pictured themselves as heroic artists in search of subjects in unexplored territory. Their trips were in the tradition of western expeditions which had earlier enticed artists to travel.

With tongue-in-cheek they chose the less familiar Long Island where "nobody" ever went, to create an illustrated article about their journey that would be sold to "a grasping publisher." The piece was accepted by *Scribner's Monthly*, as were the three others based on club activities. Three of the four are travel narratives relating events in a jocular vein. The fourth describes the formation of the club and, like the others, is in a short story format. The whimsical picture that emerges from the articles might be called "exaggerated Bohemianism". Yet the verbal imagery, and the illustrations by Tile Club artists reveal a good deal about attitudes held in common by members of the club.

In each adventure the Tile Club arrives in some remote area of the Northeast by various modes of travel. The charm of the landscape, the age of the architecture, and the quality of the local inhabitants are consistently imbued with historical relevance. The seemingly lighthearted message is really a serious, nationalistic contention that the United States has a history to be proud of, one that compares well with European models, and may be found, not in the cities, but in the uncorrupted countryside where families with long-established roots reside.

Considering that artists and writers regarded their audience as unsophisticated, the intent of the articles and illustrations is clear. They were promoting vacations in the country for a growing middle class. In 1877 it was still assumed that America was a young nation, with a derivative culture and few historic sites of importance, and that there was little comparable to European ruins or cathedrals for vacationers to visit. A typical summer for wealthy travelers included a lengthy stay in England and/or on the continent; the purchase of foreign manufactured goods, as well as art and antiques, augmented the pleasure of vacationing abroad. An alternative was to summer at an established resort like Newport or at one's ancestral homestead in America. The new middle class could aspire to this role model or recognize the possibilities of a new one, as suggested by the adventures and destinations of the Tile Club.

In the Tile Club articles, a great deal of space is devoted to travel by

water, possibly a reference to the necessary ocean voyage to European vacation sites. In "The Tile Club at Play," members recall their trip to Long Island by boat, wagon, coach, and railroad. "The Tile Club Afloat" has the artists happily ensconced in a canal boat for most of the time, and, reluctantly, in a cutter for part of the way through the waterways of upstate New York. In "The Tile Club Ashore," a tug boat brings them to a wrecked beached ship near the headwaters of Port Jefferson Harbor.

On some excursions, the Tilers brought civilization with them in the form of unlimited bric-a-brac and "stuffs" domestic and oriental: divans, pillows, tapestries, a piano, violins, a dining table, arm chairs, hammocks, glassware, cutlery, Chinese lanterns, an ice box, ice, a cooking range, a great deal of food, and a cook and his assistant. The utilization of such inelegant vessels as a tug and a canalboat, in which they tried to establish all the comforts of home, was a humorous comment on the manner in which European-bound vacationers traveled by steamer. Their elaborate preparations, described in minute detail, were also a way of demonstrating the amount of "work" involved in finding appropriate subject matter worthy of an artist's effort. More than likely they were also promoting the concept that later generations would call "See America first." Ultimately, they were commenting on the negative aspects of urban life, and suggesting that all means of transportation should lead the vacationer away from the industrial cities,

Edward Abbey, Sketching at Easthampton. *Woodcut. "The Tile Club at Play," Schribner's Monthly 17 (November 1879), 476.*

> out into the open country, among the beautiful lowlands, amidst scenery the most enchanting and simple, away from the smoke and the chimneys, the steamers and the tugs, the bustle and the industry of the busy river and the tireless railroads.[12]

In "The Tile Club Ashore," they traveled by tugboat, the *P. B. Casket*, owned by T. J. Coffin Esq. (another example of Tile Club humor). Their destination was a large, beached schooner, near Port Jefferson Harbor, which they planned to appropriate as living quarters for a week or two. When mosquitoes invaded their territory, causing sleepless nights, they abandoned the ship in favor of a walk to the nearest town, "a place of peace and cheapness," Port Jefferson, a terminus of the Long Island Railroad.[13]

This article, with its twenty illustrations, was partially an advertising campaign promoting the vacation potential of the Stony Brook, Port Jefferson area. The author's knowledge of the historical importance both of the port and "the generations upon generations [who] had built all manner of stout wooden ships" added flavor to the narrative of the adventure. The article did not directly address the decline of shipbuilding on Long Island, an issue with far-reaching economic consequences. Rather, it focused on the importance of shipbuilding to the esthetics of this part of the North Shore, the efficiency of travel by rail, the beauty of the surroundings, and the availability of inexpensive boarding facilities.

The artists covered the town from all angles, sketching the houses and boats at the waterside in addition to the hills, slopes, valleys and orchards. They enjoyed the simple recreations of swimming and walking along the beach, and took pleasure in recapturing "the homely and quiet atmosphere of the countryside, so reserved, so shy, and so simple in its unspoiled beauty," that had inspired a fellow genre-artist of another generation, William Sidney Mount, who lived in the nearby village of Stony Brook.[14]

Significantly, they emphasized Mount's relationship to the area, since their artistic approach to local subject matter matched the "spirit of place" that Mount captured on canvas. As illustrations in popular magazines, of course, their work was seen by a wider public than were Mount's canvases. This is an important point when considering art as a device for promoting vacations in the country, whatever the artist's intent. The vast increase in publications—often illustrated with rural and marine views—and their growing popularity attest to their potential influence.[15]

East Hampton is one of the places the Tile Club is frequently credited with popularizing, an assumption based on the influence of "The Tile Club At Play," published after their vacation on Long Island in 1878, and on the subsequent growth of tourism in East Hampton. It began when eleven members of the Tile Club went in search of the picturesque. The first segment of the voyage took them, by sloop, from Hunter's Point to Cap Tree Island. The next day "the artistic argonauts" proceeded by boat and on foot to Sayville, and then to Ronkonkoma, where a boat ride on the lake was the main attraction. The journey continued by rail, which they

considered a "commonplace" method of travel. At Bridgehampton, the end of the line, the club took a coach to the "sleepy, charming," town of East Hampton. "The Tile Club at Play," was profusely illustrated with scenes of Amagansett, Montauk, and Bridgehampton: of beaches, dunes, boats, windmills, houses, Montauk Lighthouse, local people and themselves, at work and at play.

Here also the club scribes emphasized the historical importance of the town of East Hampton:

> The town consisted of a single street, and the street was lawn. An immense 'tapis vert' of rich grass, green with June, and set with tapering poplar trees, was bordered on either side of its broad expanse by ancestral cottages, shingled to the ground with mossy squares of old gray 'shakes'—the primitive split shingles of antiquity. The sides of these ancient buildings, sweeping to the earth from their gabled eaves in the curves of old age, and tapestries with their faded lichens...Not the Warwickshire landscape, not that enchanted stretch from Stratford to Shottery which was Shakespeare's lovers' walk, is more pastorally lovely.
> Every other house in these secluded villages is more than 200 years old...[16]

They were fascinated by Native American legends, a common phenomenon at a time when Indian culture was simultaneously being destroyed and applauded. At Montauk, the remainder of a once proud nation could be seen on its original territory. The artists took the opportunity to sketch the dying David Pharoah, "king" of the Montauk, and relate the history of the "friendly and once valorous Montauk tribe...reduced to a pitiful handful."[17]

The Tilers were impressed with the story of John Howard Payne, who wrote his famous song, "Home Sweet Home," in England in 1823, supposedly about East Hampton. The men boarded at Mrs. Baker's, whom William O'Donovan immortalized in a bas-relief as Rosalie, the child sweetheart of John Howard Payne.

The importance the artists attached to the "virgin soil" of East Hampton was also significant, not only in terms of their choice of artistic subject matter, but also for their emphasis on the contrast between the city and the country. At Hither Woods, at Montauk, the artists emerged

> from the enclosed region and the pressure of damp, tropical vegetation...[coming] upon a scene of freshness and uncontaminated splendor, such as they had no idea existed a hundred miles from New York...all was pure nature, fresh from creation.[18]

The whole of East Hampton, or so it appeared to the Tilers, had "an artistic consciousness" (a painter's gold mine) which permeated a landscape that typified the duality of unspoiled nature and the domestication of the land. Everywhere they went, the scenes seemed to be set out in beautiful compositions, whether of shipwrecks, draining milk cans, or calves at the

fence. To the Tilers, East Hampton was still the way John Howard Payne remembered it, "like a vignette perpetuated in electrotype."[19] They were reminding their readers that picturesque life still existed, and was not only the product of the imagination of artists and writers.

The Tile Club found what the modern historian, Robert Wiebe, might call an "island community."[20] That is, the sense of community and shared interests that people looked for in club activities in the city had never been lost by the villagers of East Hampton. Their sense of community came from the security of experiences shared with neighbors they had known all their lives. Many families traced their lineage to 1648, when the first English settlers came to East Hampton; some current residents still held title to the original land allotments deeded to their ancestors. Several families lived in early-nineteenth-century mansions built on the profits from whale oil. By the last decades of the century the whaling industry had declined, but East Hampton still was populated by former whalers, and the sense of "good old days" had not dissipated.

The water, the beach, the lighthouse at Montauk, and the port of Sag Harbor attracted summer visitors for almost a century before 1870, when the building of summer houses began in earnest. The first summer builders at East Hampton were no strangers to the area. The Reverend Stephen L. Mershon (1827-1874) was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church from 1854 to 1866. In the early 1870's before leaving for a pulpit in Connecticut, he purchased six acres and built three summer cottages. His wife's brother, the Reverend T. Dewitt Talmage (1832-1902), also bought land and built several cottages for summer rentals. These brothers-in-law were not only able and admired clergymen, but also astute businessmen. They attracted so many clergymen who rented and eventually bought or built houses in one area that it became known as Divinity Hill. During the 1870s, only four additional structures were built for summer occupancy by their owners. All of these were lavish houses owned by men of substantial wealth.

In 1874 a *New York Times* reporter described East Hampton as

> one of those ancient places which, without any mercantile or manufacturing interests, and without the blessings of a railroad and steamboat connections with the busy world, are still alive, and by reason of the modern drift of society from the great cities during the summer months, have been rejuvenated...upwards of 500 congregate here during the summer months. There are no large boarding houses,...but the larger part of the families take boarders through the summer, while many rent their rooms, and table board is obtained outside.[21]

By 1873 there were eight boarding houses and one hotel on the main road into East Hampton. Local residents, at first reluctant to allow any change in their life style, considered boarders peripheral to the economy of the village. Ruth Moran (the daughter of Thomas and Mary Nimmo Moran, the first artists to build a summer home in East Hampton, in 1884),

said that, "the village people didn't want us at first. They were standoffish, those independent farmers of the 1870s and 1880s. They would take us into their homes reluctantly and sold to us under the pressure of necessity."[22] Gradually, the more conservative residents perceived the economic benefit that could accrue to individuals and to the town if the resort idea were further promoted. By 1891, an *East Hampton Star* article emphasized that,

> no stone should be left unturned in the efforts to attract city people to East Hampton. Those who want summer boarders send details to the nearest station agent for incorporation in a pamphlet of Long Island boarding houses to be published by the Long Island Railroad.[23]

By the 1890s the summer people had begun to exert an influence on the development of the town. The new vacation industry blossomed with a concomitant need for architects, builders, carpenters, stores, and services of every description. The vacation business became the principal occupation of the village.

The artists arrived after the clerics and the wealthy, but they did much more to publicize this new resort idea, and, incidentally, to provide the "local color" that attracted additional visitors. Beginning with the eleven members of the Tile Club in the summer of 1878, there was a steady increase in the number of artists who were summer residents, especially after the Tile Club introduced the Morans to East Hampton. The Moran home became the meeting place for artists at convivial evening entertainments. Between 1870 and 1900, at least seventy-eight artists are known to have worked in East Hampton.[24] One writer suggested that it was the most popular sketching ground for New York artists; another described the "charm" and "pastoral simplicity" of East Hampton in an article titled, "The American Barbison" (*sic*), a reference to a group of French landscape artists who were much admired at the time:[25]

> From the 1880's art became the fashion for the entire summer colony of East Hampton. Farmers complained that they could hardly get out to their back yards to milk the cows, the easels and mushroom umbrellas were so thick.[26]

It is often suggested that the Tile Club was the catalyst in the development of East Hampton as an artists' colony. The illustrated article that the Tile Club published about East Hampton may have been a stimulus to its growth as a summer resort and artists' colony, but it was far from being the only one. There were, however, temporal signs of change, and there is no doubt that the artist population grew. In East Hampton, as elsewhere in the nation, the period from 1870 to 1900 witnessed profound changes, particularly economic ones. Aside from the natural amenities of specific vacation areas, several factors led to the expansion of summer resorts. In some places, population declined when farming and fishing no longer sufficed to sustain the populace. Land became more lucrative

as real estate than as fertile soil. United States currency, rather than barter, became the acceptable medium of exchange, thus creating the need for rural areas to develop a dollar economy. For some localities, such as East Hampton, taking in boarders and building cottages filled that need.[27]

The expansion of the railroad, and new modes of transportation such as the bicycle and, later, the automobile, transformed patterns of travel, encouraging trips to the country and the development of resort areas. Other inventions, such as electricity and the telephone, contributed to changing life-styles. Vacations, formerly available only to the wealthy, became commonplace for increasing numbers of a growing middle class seeking outlets for its expanding financial resources and leisure time. These factors were in some cases the cause, and in others the effect, of the population expansion and the movement to urban areas; industrialization and professionalization kept city dwellers, as one advertisement suggested, "denatured." The "back to nature" trend gained momentum as increasing numbers of workers received vacations and participated in recreational activities like boating, camping, golf, tennis, and bicycle riding. Vacations in the country became part of the American Dream, and the optimistic illusion of unending progress. Ironically, industrialization created the means by which the new middle class prospered and from which it wanted to escape back to nature.

As for the Tile Club artists, after 1887 most of them lived and worked too far from the New York area for the club to continue as it had in its heyday. There is ample evidence, nevertheless, in correspondence, exhibition catalogs, and other published sources that notes the continued friendships, working arrangements, and occasional visits to Long Island by individual Tilers. None of the Tilers built permanent residences in East Hampton, and only two had summer homes on Long Island: William Laffan lived in "Laffan House," in Lawrence, and William Merritt Chase established an art school in the Shinnecock hills, where he inspired a new generation of vacationing artists.

Although the city afforded greater opportunities for teaching, and associating with other artists, dealers, and patrons, their determination to capture typically-American rural scenery and people led many artists to the countryside. Many local residents could not understand the appeal of the rustic landscape to vacationers. Yet it was to the advantage of both the city and the country folk to preserve the attractive features of such landscapes. By calling attention to the beauty of everyday surroundings, artists heightened awareness of "the spirit of place" that helped these vacation areas to retain their rural charm.

The members of the Tile Club and those who followed them brought the culture of the city to the residents of the Long Island countryside, and, in the process, helped to create what Leo Marx has called the "middle landscape," that happy balance "between the opposing forces of civilization and nature."[28] As observed by the prominent critic Van Wyck Brooks, most summer resorts in America were discovered by

> artists and writers, people who gauged life by other standards than

the pragmatic one...: sensitive to the environment, they served like the hazel wand to indicate the places where the springs of life were still flowing.[29]

NOTES

1. William MacKay Laffan, "The Tile Club at Work," *Scribner 's Monthly* (November 1878), 409.

2. Ibid., 401-09; Laffan and Edward Strahan [Earl Shinn], "The Tile Club at Play"; ibid. (February 1879), 457-78; and "The Tile Club Afloat," ibid. (March 1880), 641-70; Laffan, "The Tile Club Ashore," *Century* (February 1882), 481-98 (after 1881 the name of *Scribner's Monthly* was changed to *Century*).

3. William Mackay Laffan and Edward Strahan, *A Book of the Tile Club* (Boston: Houghton, 1887), 9, 27.

4. Ibid., see credits: also Julian Alden Weir, *An Appreciation of His Life and Works* (New York; The Century Club, 1921), 78.

5. "Millet, Servant of Art," *New York Herald Magazine*, 12 May 1912, 1: for a fuller discussion of the biographies and nicknames see, Constance Koppelman, "Artists of the Tile Club: A Prosopography," in "Nature In Art and Culture: The Tile Club Artists 1870-1900," (Ph.D. dissertation, SUNY at Stony Brook, 1985), 92-169; see also Ronald Pisano *Long Island Landscape Painting 1820-1920* (Boston: Little Brown, 1985).

6. Francis Hopkinson Smith, *Novels, Stories and Sketches of F. Hopkinson Smith*, 23 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902-1905), vols. 7, 8, 9.
7. William Mackay Laffan, *The New Long Island, A Handbook of Summer Travel* (New York, 1879).

8. Edward P. Mitchell, *Memoirs of an Editor* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), 352

9. Koppelman, "The Tile Club in the City: Bohemianism vs. Professionalism," in "Nature and Culture," 52-91.

10. Laffan and Strahan, "Afloat," 647.

11. The Barbizon school (1830-1890) was an informal group of French landscape painters whose center was the village of Barbizon, near the forest of Fontainebleau. These artists advocated painting out-of-doors rather than sketching in the open and painting in the studio; see Michael Jacobs, *The Good and Simple Life: Artist Colonies in Europe and America* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1985). For William Sidney Mount, see Alfred Frankenstein, *William Sidney Mount* (New York, 1975); Vince Clemente, "William Sidney Mount: 'In the Morning I Wrote in Frost,'" *LIHJ* 1 (Fall 1988), 55-70; the collection of the Museums at Stony Brook; and the two articles on the work of his brother, Shepard A. Mount, in this issue of *LIHJ*.

12. Laffan and Strahan, "Afloat," 650.

13. Laffan, "Ashore," 495.

14. Ibid., 498.

15. The number of periodicals published in the United States rose from approximately one hundred in 1825 to six hundred in 1850, thirty-three hundred in 1885, and, by the end of the century, fifty-five hundred, many of which were illustrated to satisfy an apparently

insatiable demand for pictures (Frank Mott, *History of American Magazines*, 5 vols. [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938-68] 1:210-11, 3:6).

16. Laffan and Strahan, "At Play," 464.

17. Ibid., 475; for an analysis of the Montauk and Shinnecock Indians, see Gaynell Stone, "Long Island as America: A New Look at the First Inhabitants," *LIHJ* 1 (Spring 1989): 159-169.

18. Laffan and Strahan, "At Play," 475.

19. Ibid., 471.

20. Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 44.

21. *New York Times*, quoted in the *Sag Harbor Corrector* 17, (30 May 1874,) 489.

22. Ruth Moran, "Notes on the Tile Club," Moran MSS. Collection, Pennypacker Long Island Collection, East Hampton Free Library.

23. *East Hampton Star*, 13 February 1891.

24. *Artists and East Hampton: A 100-Year Perspective* (East Hampton: Guild Hall, 1976), 12-17, a Bicentennial Exhibition Catalog.

25. Lizzi Champney, "The Summer Haunts of American Artists," *Century Magazine* (October 1885), 848; Charles Burr Todd, "The American Barbison," *Lippincott's Magazine* (April 1883), 322.

26. Ruth Moran, "Notes."
27. Sherrill N. Foster, "Boarders to Builders: The Beginning of Resort Architecture in East Hampton, Long Island, 1870-1894" (M.A. thesis, SUNY at Binghamton, 1977).

28. Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden : Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 23, and passim.

29. Van Wyck Brooks, quoted in Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1938), 210.

Picture Windows: The Changing Role of Women in the Suburbs, 1945-2000

By Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen

This article addresses the history of women in postwar suburbia, comparing the lived experience with the dominant mythology. To illuminate a corridor between Long Island's past and present, the authors conducted individual and group interviews with women in three proximate Nassau County suburbs: Levittown, the overwhelmingly white pioneer of the single-family, tract-house suburb; Freeport, an established, racially-mixed community; and Roosevelt, composed almost entirely of African Americans.

Before turning to the spoken recollections of women about their suburban experience, some historical background is needed. From early-nineteenth-century stirrings to the tidal wave after World War II and continuing today, Americans have been moving to suburbia, now the national way of life.[1] Yet suburbanization, a migration as crucial as the journey west, the immigrants' voyage, and the black migration to northern cities, is the least studied of all these movements.

After two decades of depression and war, the American economy set out to fill the pent-up demand for consumer goods on a scale never witnessed before. All the conditions for boom were in place: conversion from military to civilian production; a federal government eager to stimulate the growth of suburbs by assuring easy credit to buyers of houses and all that went in them; and the determination of millions of ex-GI's and their spouses to start families of their own.

The proportion of people who own their own homes is uniquely high in the United States, where homeowning is a cherished ideal, not only for individuals but as a panacea for social ills. "A nation of homeowners, of people who won a real share in their own land, is unconquerable," declared President Franklin D. Roosevelt. "No man who owns his house and lot can be a Communist. He has too much to do," claimed William Jaird Levitt, the builder of the prototypical, low-cost suburb. In the words of Dolores Hayden, "The Levitt Cape Cod house [became] the single most powerful symbol of the dream of upward mobility and homeownership for American families."[2]

When completed, Levittown consisted of 82,000 residents living in 17,400 separate houses, the largest housing development ever put up by a single builder.[3] As the first postwar, preassembled, mass-produced, instant suburb, it became a model copied across the nation. The three criteria for acceptance were minimum income, veteran status, and

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membership in the Caucasian race. Families were white, with nine of every ten supported by one wage earner, at least half of whom worked in Manhattan. More than three-fourths of all couples were married for less than seven years; the average number of children per family was, or would be, three; and some four of every ten men and women had college experience.

Levittown was designed to resemble the traditional small American town, immune to the discontents of urban life. The builders hoped that Cape Cod houses, curvilinear streets called Lanes—Harvest, Prairie, and Cobbler, to name a few—seven "village greens," ten baseball diamonds, nine swimming pools, and sixty playgrounds would give Levittown a Norman Rockwellian look. According to William Levitt,

> We began to dream of a low income community, complete in every phase with shops and amusements and planned houses and parks and 1,000 other things. We realized that the dream was not a new one, but the achievement of the dream would be.

Unfortunately, the original dream did not include "trees, schools, churches, or private phones. Grocery shopping was a planned adventure," and mail had to be picked up in Hicksville. Tension between uniformity and picturesqueness quickly developed. According to the Levitts,

> At first, we picked themes for subdivisions, like the celestial section, the homesy set, but we soon ran out of ideas and for each section we picked a letter of the alphabet and named all streets in the area of words of that letter.[4]

As a result of this alphabetizing, residents recognized their section prosaically by letter —they lived in the T section, for example.

Each house, commonly called a "project," came with a Bendix washing machine, a built-in General Electric stove, refrigerator, and an outdoor, foldable, clothes-drying rack; the eight-inch television set provided was paid for in long-term, monthly installments. An on-site hardware store stocked electrical and plumbing fixtures that fit only Levitt houses. In the early years, the Levitts mowed any neglected lawn and charged the resident for the service.

The community was called Island Trees until 1948, when the builders unilaterally changed the name to Levittown. When angry residents challenged their right to do this, Bill Levitt responded imperiously that "Levitt and Sons as owners and developers are the only people with the right to name this community as they see fit."[5]

In 1950, two families were evicted for inviting black children to play with their youngsters. Although restrictive covenants were banned by the Fair Housing Act, a law upheld by the courts, William Levitt justified his practice of *de facto* segregation in a *Saturday Evening Post* interview. It was, he said,

> not a matter of prejudice, but one of business. As a Jew I have no

> room in my mind or heart for racial prejudice. But...if we sell one house to a Negro family, then 90 or 95 percent of our white customers will not buy into the community.[6]

The policy of exclusion was so effective that Levittown remains predominantly white.

The conformity for which it was criticized was by no means confined to Levittown, but applied in general to main-stream, postwar America. As William Levitt argued,

> It seems...myopic to focus on...uniformity in housing and fail to see the broad fabric of which it is a part—the mass production culture...[It] is not just our houses that are uniform but the furniture...appliances...clothes...cars... It's something to glory in—just so long as we keep in mind the difference between material values and those of the mind and spirit.

"The reason we have it so good in this country," he added, "is that we can produce lots of things at low prices through mass production. And with mass production, of course, uniformity is unavoidable."[7]

Rather than the exception, Levittown proved the rule. It set the pace for a new mass-market, geared to the soaring number of families living apart from their roots and their cultural advisors. Television, the freshly-born voice of unity, a source of news, entertainment, and endless commercials, became an indispensable component of every-day life. Suburbs like Levittown, observed Harry Henderson, "are the first towns in America where the impact of TV is so concentrated that it literally affects everyone's life. Organizations dare not hold meetings at hours when popular shows are on." Henderson noted the leveling prospect of veterans and their families, turning what once were potato fields into settlements free of stratification:

> socially these communities have neither history, tradition nor established structure, no inherited customs, institutions, socially important families or big houses. Everybody lives in a good neighborhood: there is, to use a classic American euphemism, no wrong side of the tracks.[8]

The new style of American life, dubbed "Populuxe" by Thomas Hine,[9] was a modernized version of the nineteenth-century ideal of owning a home on the city's outskirts, enjoying the benefits of privacy, homogeneity, and separation from the tensions of city life. New features like outdoor barbecues, fast food outlets, casual clothing, modern interior design, relaxed and informal social customs, and an almost obsessive child-centeredness distinguished the postwar suburbs from their nineteenth-century antecedents. Popular magazines, including the home-remodeling quarterly, *Thousand Lanes: Ideas for the Levitt Home*,[10] were also among the pacesetters. Early-American and modern furniture, advertised in magazines and on TV, became standard in Levittown houses; rarely did

settlers bring with them the heirlooms prized by tradition-bound families. The egalitarian shedding of the past was a hallmark of daily life. Henderson noted that instead of formal dress,

> slacks or shorts are standard wear for both men and women at all times including trips to the shopping center. Visiting grandparents invariably are shocked and whisper 'Why nobody dresses around here!' "[11]

However, the modern, relaxed style of life was difficult to finance, masking economic insecurity. As one Levittowner remarked, "the community is completely mortgaged."[12] Payments on houses, screens, storm windows, cars, appliances, and repairs had to be made every month from the residents' pockets. In addition, the cost of desperately needed public schools fell almost entirely on individuals: unlike the city or the wealthier Long Island school districts, there was very little industry to share the burden of taxes. Most families struggled to make ends meet. Those with the least trouble had husbands working locally in unionized, blue-collar, skilled jobs. Ironically, white-collar people employed in the city and faced with the constantly rising price of commuting were often more hard-pressed financially. Many suburbanites relied on relatives for loans.

During the first two decades most women did not seek employment outside the home, for reasons stemming from a complex interaction of the ideology, economics, and culture permeating the suburban ideal. In his peevishly overstated satire, *The Crack in the Picture Window*, John Keats expresses the standard cliché that suburbia "drives mad the pyramids of housewives shut up in them." Ironically, the feminist novelist, Marilyn French, also stereotypes suburban women, who, like their counterparts in ancient Greece, "are locked into the home, and see no one but children all day." At least, concludes French, "Greek women saw slaves, who might have been interesting. Suburban women have each other." Fighting against the mass media's depiction of the happy home maker and the psychological establishment's attempt to make that image the norm, Betty Friedan maintains that over-educated housewives were trapped in boring, repetitive, and isolated lives, without even a language to describe their condition.[13]

Friedan's critique of the misdirected, unhappy housewife describes this problem with no name, but fails to analyze the historical forces responsible for the burgeoning of suburbia. Since the nineteenth century, the ideal middle-class family consisted of the stay-at-home wife and the bread-winning husband, whose wife, children, and home reflected his status. By the turn of the century, the premise of home as a sanctuary, far from industry, dirt, and conflict, was used to fault immigrant urban families, whose life style did not conform to this pattern.

In the 1950s this concept was fused with patriotism and the democratization of the middle-class ideal, with which the suburbs became synonymous. In place of nineteenth-century moralists, the virtues of middle-class life were preached by representatives of consumer industries, the mass media, and a host of professional "experts," all with a stake

in Mrs. Consumer, the housewife who kept prosperity coming.

The message was often contradictory or unclear. According to Clifford Clark, middle-class life represented a "tension between self-sufficiency and ineptitude." Cut off from her roots, in a context of total newness, the suburban housewife was fair prey to agencies of communication eager to inform her existence and meet her every need.[14] William Levitt sponsored condescending kitchen ads "for the magazine reading, ruffled chintz housewife"; he also ran home-decoration contests, judged by New York professionals, with prizes of $250 to $1,000. When asked for the economic logic of putting washing machines in every house, he replied that

> the Bendix washing machine, which like all the rest of the kitchen equipment goes with the house and also gets under the mortgage is worth twice its price for the way it stirs the acquisitive impulses of the average bride.[15]

Mrs. Suburbanite made her house shine, her work ethic a peculiar blend of efficiency and relaxation. "The first thing I did," wrote one of them, describing her system of housekeeping, "was to arrange my kitchen [to] save the most time and energy possible." She had three working centers—one for babies, one for baking, and one for cleaning. She washed two loads, every other day, of clothes made of fabrics that did not need ironing, and saved more time by preparing casserole and quick refrigerator desserts:

> It means that Bob and I have just about as much social life as we ever did. Naturally, I don't gad about, but there's always time to have people over. On Saturday night we usually have a television party. Refreshments are simple... it's just as relaxing for me as the guests.[16]

Child care consumed the most time and energy. In Levittown, a.k.a. "Fertile Acres," or "The Rabbit Warren," pregnancy, "our major industry," was "the Levittown look." The major product of Levittown was its children. Young children, mainly two years apart, were the center of all three communities in this study—they bound mothers' lives together. Rare were the parents who did not abide by the teachings of Drs. Benjamin Spock and Arnold Gesell.[17] The new ethic of child-raising, as of housekeeping, was permissive. The children, for their part, loved suburbia, the first American environment built for them.

A unique aspect of early Levittown was that everything had to be built from scratch, with women playing a leading role in forming a system of public education from nursery school through high school, and a large public library. Suburban women were often thought of as engaging in endless kaffeeklatches, gabbing about trivia. In reality, they were building a world for themselves, their children, and their community. This is best seen from the perspective of oral history. The validity of this view, in contrast to the received wisdom, is evident from oral accounts of community development.[18]

LEVITTOWN

The early settlers of Levittown refer to themselves as "pioneers." Matilde Albert, who moved there from Brooklyn in the opening year of 1947, was one of "the first hundred families to move into a Cape Cod rental house":[19]

> There were no telephones, no shops. In the blizzard of 1947 the only telephone booth blew down. There was no grass, no trees, just mounds of dirt, and snow covered it all...We ran out of oil. I was stranded and couldn't even drive...but everyone was most helpful; everyone helped everyone else.

Clare Worthing, Matilde's neighbor in W section, was one of the few women on Willowbrook Lane who could drive:

> On Thursday we would pile up in my car and go to Hicksville with the kids and come back with the packages filling up my little car. Hicksville had a bakery. Oh, how we loved that bakery. I ended up teaching my neighbors how to drive.

Doris Kalisman described coming to Levittown screaming and crying, experiencing culture shock:

> As a city person I wouldn't dream of living... where every house looked the same. But...I couldn't find any other place and I had a baby. It was the boon docks. I was dependent. I didn't drive and there was nothing to walk to. I had to wait for someone to take me and it was a terrible feeling. Neighbors were wonderfully generous. There was a need we had for each other...because we were lonely and locked in our little houses.

Loneliness led to action. Virginia Crowther, of Weaving Lane, recalls baby-sitting arrangements:

> I'd watch my neighbor's kids, she'd watch mine. The group got bigger and we would baby-sit each other's children and we even had intercoms between houses. Out of this a group of women started the first Nursery School. We hired a teacher but we all participated.

More elaborate baby-sitting co-ops developed, in which "one mother keeps...a record of how many hours you sit as well as how many you use. You are all allowed to go into debt fifteen hours or get ahead fifteen hours."[20]

Martha Mordin, a Levittown daughter still living on Whisper Lane, told us that "living here was like being in an extended family. There were lots of mothers. If you couldn't talk to your own mother, you could talk to someone else's."

Helga Baum, of Wildwood Lane, confirmed this from the adult point of view:

> I lived on a block where five families had children...within three

> months of each other. One afternoon a boy not ours fell and broke his arm [when] his mother wasn't home. When [she] got home the child had already been taken care of. Someone knew they belong to the Health Insurance Policy (HIP) program, a cast was put on...It was just that kind of sense of community.

Some people participated in more commercialized companionship. Doris Kalisman describes Tupperware parties in T section:

> That was the big thing in 1951 and '52...a real big event. That was the only way I got to meet people, so I would go. They used to all talk about what they used to clean the various parts of the house with. I was a very poor housekeeper...I was so miserable at these...parties but it was a way of getting to know women, even though I was a Tupperware snob at the time.

An alternative to Tupperware parties was politics, mainly of education. In three years, the system mushroomed from a three- room schoolhouse into fourteen schools with twelve thousand pupils. Acrimonious contention broke out between "liberals" pressing for progressive curriculum and expanded services—which required higher taxes—and "conservatives" stressing moral training, discipline, and holding the line on taxes. Many women took part in these continual educational battles. The school was the focal point, the meeting ground of concern for one's own children, combined with active participation in broader political issues. Roberta Stims, of Whisper Lane, explains what often appeared to be polarization of the community: "There was an absolute division. You were either right or left. There were two school philosophies, one conservative...and one liberal."

Since no one could acquire prestige through an imposing house or inherited position, community activity became the basis of prestige. Women gained self-confidence and know-how from these school battles. Many with no past experience in organization became leaders of the PTA and took part in political campaigns; however, as observed by Roberta Stims "The officers very often were men and the workers were women."

School controversies lasted for days, and late into the night of each meeting. At these times, recalls Barbara Croswell, "I used to bring my mother out to take care of the children. For days we would argue and sometimes the meetings ran 'til six in the morning."

A high point of struggle was over a 1954-55 proposal to ban a phonograph record about President Abraham Lincoln's assassination, "The Lonesome Train," by Earl Robinson,[21] as instructional material in the public schools. Conservatives claimed it was "loaded up with communist propaganda and should be banned." Matilda Albert, then president of the PTA, reports:

> Conservatives called everything that was progressive Communist. They wanted to ban this record and most of us were opposed to book- or record-banning. I organized meetings and marches. The meetings

were held on Friday nights and went on 'til early the next morning. Thank God my husband watched the kids on Saturday for this was real important to me.

Although controversies were divisive, "We were all pioneers," maintained Helga Baum:

> We were in the same situation, we all came in together. It's like the Senate. No matter what party you don't attack another senator; it's a club. We had the same kinds of desires and needs; fought the same kinds of battles; no matter what sides we were on there was a camaraderie.

This camaraderie did not extend to everyone. Although some liberals challenged the "Caucasian only" clause in Levittown deeds, the dominant ideology remained racially discriminatory. Outsiders were ostracized. The Arroyos were one of two Puerto Rican families who moved to Levittown in the late fifties. Like most immigrants, the father came first, working as a machine-operator to pay for his wife and children's passage. When his brother's family, already in Levittown, found them a house, the Arroyo newcomers were hardly welcomed by Levittowners. The mother and father worked full-time and often at night, had five children, and spoke Spanish—differences which resulted in their subjection to ethnic harassment by the community and the schools.

Nancy Arroyo, the eldest daughter, recalled the situation:

> Not a day went by when we weren't called "spics." The people next door even taught their three- and four-year-old grandchildren to say racial slurs. The neighbors on the other side...would throw dirt onto my mother's kitchen. It took ten years for things to calm down somewhat. Still, after twenty-six years we are not yet full accepted.

The harassment extended to the schools:

> The teacher would put me aside. I had a cousin who was darker and always in fights. My younger sister had a problem with a teacher...She was terrified to go to school. My mother, suspecting racism, took off work and in her broken English confront[ed] the teacher:..."What is the problem that my daughter is so terrified? Is it prejudice?" After that the teacher was nicer. On another occasion the school even came to our house and told my mother not to speak to us in Spanish. What else could she speak to us in?

In response, the Arroyos relied on each other, their extended family becoming their community. "We kept to ourselves," continued Nancy, "We had a strong family structure. We maintained each other, we partied together, we were always together, we defended each other."

Community solidarity also excluded those who were not in traditional families. When Betty Scott, a white woman twenty-six years old, came to Levittown in the late fifties with her husband and five children, she

seemed acceptable to the community, even though having five children was more than most families wanted. Atypically, she and her husband were musicians, who worked sporadically. When they divorced three years later, Betty, who was from Michigan, had no family support-network and was forced to go on welfare. Her neighbors generally avoided her, and the men were often hostile:

> I remember remarks like, "you are draining our tax dollars, why don't you get a job?" In truth, I would have loved to work, but I had five young children and it was chaos. My kids had trouble in school...constantly...singled out because they didn't have a father. I did have a lover and they didn't like that either. In fact, after Lennie, my lover, gave me a new car, a neighbor reported me to welfare and I was cut off.

Her sense of isolation was tempered when some of the women came to her aid.

> While my next door neighbor's husband made nasty cracks, his wife secretly gave me food. I remember how she used to bring me pork chops, claiming she had extras. We both knew that was a white lie. Another neighbor gave me a used car. In a way I think they felt sorry for me.

ROOSEVELT, FREEPORT, and LEVITTOWN

The only African Americans seen in Levittown in the 1950s were gardeners, who worked in groups and to whom the community referred as the "chain gang."[22] By the 1970s, a substantial number of black middle-class families moved to the suburbs. Levittown remained white, but neighboring areas either were integrated, like Freeport, or predominantly black, like Roosevelt. Other changes included the entrance of women into the labor force, a sharp rise in the rate of divorce, the pressure of inflation, which tended to increase the cost of living faster than income could keep step, and the rapidly-spreading impact of the women's liberation and civil rights movements.

The black suburbs were not newly-built, but resembled early Levittown in that many of the women had small children, were not gainfully employed, and believed they were living the American dream. Contrary to the common assumption that black women always work, these women were part and parcel of the middle-class consumer culture. Clara Gillens, a black woman who came to Roosevelt after growing up in a Harlem project, explains:

> I came out from New York City, first to go to the Upward Bound Program at Hofstra. I got married and bought a house in Roosevelt. None of my friends got out of the projects... When you move out to Long Island everyone thinks you're living in the gold coast, after all you live in suburbia and you own a house.

Clara proceeds to describe her suburban existence:

> I was fortunate. I use that term because everyone uses that term. I was able to live the typical suburban type of life, a house, a dog, two kids, a pool in the backyard. I didn't have to work. I had a husband who preferred to have a wife at home...I was the woman on the block that everyone would laugh at. My son would go outside in his white sailor suit, with white ankle socks and the little white shoes to play... I was perfect, good at it, the floors shined, the counter tops sparkled. My biggest concern was what was for dinner and getting all my women friends out of the house before my husband came home.

One of her neighbors, Barbara Ware, depicts herself.

> I'm a Roosevelt born and bred baby, my husband and I met in high school. I was a cheerleader, he was the football player, my knight in shining armor who became the fire chief and we were the pillar of the community citizens. I had a little daughter, we bought a house in Roosevelt. I was Susie Homemaker. Believe me, I baked bread, I cooked and prepared every meal. I mean I took menu orders for breakfast, pancakes for one, French toast for another and scrambled eggs and on down the line. I was everything that the TV and media told you that you should be if you were quote unquote "a good housekeeper."

Women friends counseled Barbara to do things differently, but she didn't listen:

> I believed all these women who were telling me to go out and work and make it your own way were wrong because society and the TV and my own middle-class family told me that's the way it was done. I had no imagery to follow except what was on TV and in magazines. I got a recipe file with cards, that's how I learned to bake bread and all those things you were supposed to do.

Some women embraced the feminine mystique with gusto, at least for a while. Others stayed home but felt bored and constrained. According to Roberta Coward, a Freeport mother of four,

> I never liked staying home. If I had continued staying home, my children would have been in Creedmore or drug addicts or something. It didn't work. I was hyper. I'd scrub the floor five times a day, clean the house, scrub the walls; I was going crazy. I had to go to work. My husband didn't like my going to work at all. After I had my last kid I added an extension to my house and went into such debt, but this was just an excuse to get me back to work. I got better after I worked.

Like the Levittown women, these black women developed a tightly-knit community centered around small children and, increasingly, their own

dissatisfaction and boredom. As Clara Gillens puts it,

> There was a whole group of us. We did a round robin at each other's house during the day. Barbara and I were tight and we had another buddy and we did the home party thing for a while, selling jewelry, Tupperware, Avon products. Then we got bored with that and all enrolled in a class and took up typing. We'd decided to become executive secretaries. At that point I decided I wasn't getting any younger. What am I doing here? I asked. I decided once and for all I'm going back to work.

Barbara Ware confirms Clara's feelings.

> I was just bored. I sold things. Finally I put my daughter in nursery school because that was what you were supposed to do. I had nothing to do. Literally, how can you clean your house and watch stories all day? I was brainwashed as a housewife. You had to be home, there were all these regulations and stipulations. Then after my son, Junior, was six months old, I decided I'd driven myself crazy and I was going to work.

She was a high school dropout but felt she was well prepared for work, although she had no idea what kind. She went to the Community Economic Training Agency (CETA), saying: "I don't know what I have to offer people, but I've run a house. I know how to budget, I think good, and whatever you give me to do I'd be good at." CETA was administered by the South Nassau County branch of NOW (National Organization of Women). There Barbara met her future business partner, Pat Sullivan, who was of Italian extraction, the mother of three, and grew up in Levittown. When she was an adolescent, her mother advised her to go to nursing school for the following reason:

> My mother said you should get an education for a rainy day. In my marriage this nursing came in handy. I worked when my husband allowed me to, when we needed a second salary to get a loan or add an extension on to the house. Then I wanted a full time job. My husband had a fit. The skies opened up, it poured. This was one of the final steps leading to my divorce. Funny, nursing was always a decent salary as a second salary, but when I became a single parent it wasn't enough. I didn't stay with nursing. I went to NOW to get some new skills.

These women went to NOW not only for career counseling but also to find companionship, emotional strength and sustenance, and a new sense of self. In the early '70s NOW acted as a bridge between the private domestic sphere and the wider world of employment and independence. As Pat Sullivan says:

> When I was going through rough times in my divorce some friends brought me to NOW. At NOW they said all these things I had been saying all along only nobody listened to me. My neighbors thought

> I was cute and crazy because I had these radical thoughts like demand orgasm, like don't let him get away with it. In my neighborhood everyone liked me, I was very popular, but I was different. I thought things were unfair in my marriage but my neighbors told me stop talking feminism. "You made your bed, you sleep in it. You have a cross to bear." At NOW I was not different, I could talk and people listened and even agreed with me.

Barbara Ware initially went to NOW for a job, but quickly developed a new consciousness which led to problems, both with her family and the community.

> The only thing before this I knew about NOW in my black community was bra burning and white middle class. When I came home and said I was working for NOW, and talking pro- choice and women doing men's jobs, my family creamed me, the community started to cream me and it put me in a very delicate situation.

Ware and Sullivan both worked for CETA, training women for non-traditional work, particularly in construction. After the CETA grant ran out they continued on their own and started JOW (Job Opportunities for Women), a growing and prosperous business that receives state and local contracts for carpentry, plumbing, electrical work, and energy-saving weatherizing.

They attribute their business success to the fact that they were good homemakers. Barbara puts it succinctly:

> We have never lost money on any job. I attribute everything we achieve to good management that comes from our both having been housewives, period. Homemakers really bring a lot of skills into the work force. You are the ultimate manager, you manage finances, banking, time I mean you do all that. For women who say I can't lift things when you're lifting a forty-pound toddler, laundry, groceries and putting the key into the door and without dropping anything you're lifting a hundred pounds. We're clear thinkers because we have to be. We can get Johnny from the baseball field, Sally from the dance lessons—I mean the coordination capabilities of women are incredible.

Despite the overwhelming bias of the male-oriented construction industry, Barbara sees another reason for JOW's achievements:

> The secretaries on all the jobs really plug for us. When a boss tells them to say "call back, he's busy," the secretary says "Oh I think you should take this call, it's important." Sisterhood has stood us in good stead.

NOW also had an impact on Clara Gillens, whose working led her to divorce, as it did Pat Sullivan.

> I think my working and becoming more receptive to the world around

> me really contributed to the breaking up of my marriage...Once you are exposed to things there is no going back, you can't be the same kind of person. My husband put a lot of pressure on me to continue doing the things he wanted me to do and it was totally impossible. When I got divorced I took a good look at my life and my divorce led me to feminism. NOW also had a lot to do with helping me get rid of a lot of my inhibitions.

Clara found employment, first in banking and then in accounting. In 1983, she and a friend from NOW started their own business, doing financial consulting, mainly for non-profit organizations. Her office in Hempstead is in the same building as JOW. Clara attributes her success to her support network and staunch friends.

> We all go back to the diaper days when we raised our children together and hung out in the backyard by the pool. We all sat around and did nothing together. We sold jewelry together. We went through NOW together and now we all own our own businesses. Some people think you can't own your own business and have a social conscience. But that's just untrue. We all have both. It comes out of our experience as women.

During the 1970s, the women's liberation movement was making an impact on the pioneer settlers in Levittown. Their children were grown, inflation was hard to keep up with, and community work was no longer sustaining. Many went back to college, into the work force, and joined the women's liberation movement.

Helga Baum, of Levittown, clarified this:

> We all went through the women's movement. I was active initially in 1969. I joined a consciousness-raising group because we could now have time for ourselves. We could actualize ourselves. We felt a freedom. We had freedom for the first time to do the things we wanted and needed to do for ourselves.

Work, not divorce, was the road to freedom for Levittown settlers ten or more years older than later suburbanites. Divorce occurred more frequently to their children. As one pioneer said, "In our generation, we just coped." Like their younger suburban neighbors, homemaking and community activity prepared them for the world of work, where they became social workers, job counselors, and teachers. Matilde Albert, of Levittown, commented ironically that "as the husbands retire, the women go to work."

Some worked because they no longer felt needed at home. Rose Cimino, of Levittown, had been a contented mother whose "dream was to be a housewife and watch my children grow and mold them." But as her two children reached adolescence, she felt that they "didn't need or want me anymore. I felt I should be there for them, but they didn't feel it. They were pushing me aside." Taking her daughter's advice to take a job, she

wound up working at Grumman at the very position for which her daughter had applied and been rejected. Work was good for Rose:

> It was very good for my self confidence, I felt like a person, not just a person who cooks and cleans and takes care of the house. I got dressed up. I was a lady. I was needed in another capacity now. I made lots of good friends at work.

Grumman, the largest employer on Long Island, was divided into two divisions—aerospace, where most men worked, and data systems, where most women worked. The company, which was anti-union, assumed a social function as well as providing employment. It offered its workers diverse activities, from bowling, CB radio, and tap-dancing clubs to dances and picnics. Rose Cimino became a secretary in the personnel department of the data systems, where she formed close friendships with Dorothy Bass and Donna Gagliano, among others. This integrated work group became a new kind of community, in spite of differences in background.

Dorothy Bass, for example, a black, divorced mother of three, who always had worked, described herself as "not too domesticated." After starting at Grumman as a night-shift key-punch operator, she worked herself up to becoming a secretary. She remembered her work-group as

> a department of fourteen. We were very personal, very close, ...on the job and off the job friends. We shared problems at work, but also family matters, children, and when anyone had a need we were all there for support. We know each other over twelve years. We were inspirations for each other.

For example, when Donna Gagliano was getting divorced, Dorothy, the only divorced woman she knew, was her model:

> She made it and she's not a bad person. She works, she raised three kids, and even owns her own house. When she was getting divorced she went to school to maintain her sanity and graduated from New York Tech. She also told me things she had been reading, articles about women which said you're a person too, not just an appendage, you're important too.

Donna's husband was

> very male chauvinistic, and impressed with money and things. The epitome of success in his mind was going to work in a three-piece suit, because he was a baker and wore whites to work and that bothered him. I wore dresses and he didn't like that. I was changing and doing very well and he didn't like that either. I went back to school and that bothered him. Then we got divorced.

One source of tension between Donna and her husband was his effort to achieve middle-class status by the compulsive acquisition of "the best" consumer goods, in hopes that this would gain him the prestige denied on the job:

> It drove me up the wall. He kept up with the Joneses. We were very friendly with our neighbors and [they] bought a boat. So he decided he had to buy a boat. So we ended up buying a boat and it was basically the same kind of boat, except my neighbor had the Cadillac of boats and we didn't and that bothered him. My neighbor went out and bought a bigger engine. Now, this really bothered my husband, so he had to buy a bigger engine. We argued for days over this stupid engine and the only thing he said is, "If Carl and I were on the water racing he would definitely beat me." This was the last straw.

A bromide of the literature of suburbia is that wives drove their reluctant husbands to higher and higher levels of consumption in order to keep up with the neighbors. The following incident reveals a startling reversal:

After Donna Gagliano's divorce, she faced a problem of young suburbanites that today is even more threatening. For some time, the cost of a house has been astronomical, with hardly any for sale at reasonable prices, and even fewer to rent. Moreover, the high divorce rate means that many women have to move in with their parents, often with children of their own. Houses built to accommodate a mother, father, and young children now contain blood-related adults, each with a car and a separate routine. Multiple-family situations can cause conflicts, especially between mothers and daughters. As Donna tells it,

> I'm at my mother's right now and it's hard, very hard. Your mother is always your mother. As much as I do and come and go as I please, it's always put your coat on, you're going to get a cold, you're working so hard. You're like a little kid again.

Karen Roberts, at the age of twenty-five, lives in Freeport with her mother, Roberta Coward, and has a three-year-old son. She had gone to college, joined the service, and married, but once divorced she had no alternative except to return home:

> I had too many expenses, rent, day care, car payments, all that stuff. It was easier to come to Mom and pay $25 a month rent...If it was up to my father we'd never leave home, we'd just put extensions on the house. He's West Indian and believes children should never leave home.

Although Karen says that she "appreciated it more coming back home because you're not at the age when you're fighting all the time," her mother, Roberta Coward, sees it differently:

> When I come home from work I can't stand seeing piles all over the place. I mean you could shove everything in a closet, just don't let me see it. Karen's a let-me-see-everything-type kid and we fight about this all the time. Karen's lucky that I'm a stay at home mother and she's a go-out-at-night-kid because this provides her with babysitting.

To Karen, her mother "is one of these people who sees dirt everywhere. I'm not. When I have my own house, then I'll be neat. Back home I revert to being a child."

Another alteration in suburbia today is the taking in of boarders to help make ends meet. Although this is illegal, more and more residents are partitioning their houses and charging rent to one or more tenants. Homes built for nuclear families now shelter grown children, as well as non-related adults. This is done for companionship, protection, and, especially, income. Many divorced and widowed women maintain their mortgage and tax payments only by means of the revenue derived from boarders.

Dorothy Bass, for one, explains this phenomenon:

> When I got divorced I used the money from my settlement to buy a house. I was lucky. For two years I had a good roomer. It's against the law, but as long as you don't cause problems it's okay. If anything happens, your insurance is void. I partitioned the house and made a separate entrance. I wanted a single guy. They tend to be out a lot and they don't cook. I was here alone with my son and if the neighbors don't see a male there might be problems. I needed him for protection. It helped a lot. We never saw him and he paid his rent on time.

Boarding could solve family problems, as Rose Cimino knows:

> I was very surprised when my daughters decided to leave my home and go out on their own. In the old Italian family no one leaves the house until they get married. I was very hurt when one of them told me she would like to get her own apartment. I said why would you want to do a thing like that? You have everything you need right here. She said "well I'd like to learn how to be independent and live on my own. I don't want to go right from my house to being a married person." I said you can be an independent person right here. You can pay your own car insurance, but neither one of them bought it.

The solution was that the Ciminos' daughters moved into their parents' old Levittown house, now lived in by Rose's grandmother, partitioning two separate apartments with a common kitchen. The daughters pay rent to their mother and provide companionship to their grandmother.

CONCLUSIONS

In many ways, this is not the house that Levitt built. The house built for mom, dad, and the kids has expanded to include three generations and a reconsolidation of family. Originally, the postwar move to the suburbs meant leaving your urban past behind; to cut oneself off from kinfolk was the first step into this new life. Now the suburbs are their own reference points, housing several generations of families who live and work near each other and view the city as tourists. In the present period, some people's extended families have become their communities.

Roberta Coward sums up this pervasive theme:

> I socialize mainly with my seven sisters and brothers. My brother lives up the street. Everybody lives in Roosevelt or Freeport. My thirty nieces and nephews are all here. We all had children at the same time, if one had a child, we all had a child. My youngest, Nikki, is eight and the only one I had by myself. They all said, "Go ahead fool, we're not following you this time."

Karen Roberts, her daughter, makes the same point from a different perspective: "We all hung out together in one family, all the older boys were like brothers. Most...are still living at home. In our family they don't leave their mommies easily."

Unlike the earlier decades, from the 1970s on most women work, and many are divorced, with no time or energy to arrange cooperative child-care or maintain community services. One continuing complaint of divorced and single mothers is that there are not enough day-care and after school programs. Public transportation is almost non existent in these communities so children must be chauffeured, another problem for working mothers. To compound the problem, the suburban ideology remains that of a nuclear family, with the mother at home.

Nancy Arroyo, now a divorced, working mother who lives with her family in Levittown, elucidates:

> There's a real problem here for working mothers. PTA and teacher meetings are always in the afternoon. They closed up this school rather than rent it to social services and use it for a day care center. After-school activities have mainly boy things—basketball and sports. What if you have a girl and she isn't athletic? What if it rains and there's no sports that day? The high school principal at my brother's graduation even had the nerve to say that Levittown should remain with its traditional background and mothers should stay home with their children.

Given this situation, the extended family stretches itself to provide the needed support networks. Nancy Arroyo's family schedules summer vacations on a staggered, two-week basis, so that everyone can take turns minding Nancy's daughter. Other families arrange their work schedules to meet the daily needs of the children. Even couples that stay married face the constant problem of juggling work and family. As Barbara Ware complains,

> I need...a lot of connecting devices which allow me to work. I have to function as if I'm a single parent because my husband doesn't participate. My children have had the same baby-sitter since they were six-months old. The microwave was the best thing that ever happened to the working women. I can leave them home-cooked, nutritious meals, with no worry about them using the stove.

Kenneth T. Jackson contends that with all its faults and negative

consequences—banality of design, absence of minorities or the elderly, isolation of nuclear families, inadequate public transportation, and deterioration of urban neighborhoods, "the creation of good, inexpensive suburban housing on an unprecedented scale was a unique achievement in the world."[23] But the homogeneity afforded by the postwar, pioneering generation has given way to a potpourri of singles, married, old residents, new residents, female-headed households, homosexual couples, widows, boarders, college students, and two-and three-generation households.

Suburbia as a utopian middle-class ideal has faded. Separation between work and home has eroded in the wake of the proliferation of military and high-tech industry on Long Island. We now witness the coming of the suburban metropolis, the aptly designated "technoburb" where large numbers of Americans work, live, and cope with problems similar to those that plague city-dwellers: crime, pollution, bureaucracy, absentee landlords, racial tension, drugs, and anomie. Robert Fishman defines the technoburb, this new kind of decentralized city, as a viable socioeconomic unit perhaps as large as a county:

> Spread out along its highway growth corridor are shopping malls, industrial parks, campuslike office complexes, hospitals, schools, and a full range of housing types. Its residents look to their immediate surroundings rather than to the city for jobs and other needs; and its industries find not only the employees they need but also the specialized services.

"With the rise of the technoburb," claims Fishman, "the history of suburbia ends."[24]

If the ideal of the 1950s was community based on homeownership, perhaps the most telling evidence of its decay is this rueful description by Bobbie Stims, a member of the pioneer Levittown generation:

> In the old days we prided ourselves in being good neighbors. About fifteen years ago, my next door neighbors sold their house and moved to Florida. A landlord bought the house and I went over to introduce myself to four guys who moved in. I brought them a cake and invited them to my house to meet the neighbors. Then they moved out and another group of guys moved in and I went over with my cake and invited them to my house. Then they moved out and two couples moved in. I was a bit taken aback when I went over with my cake and found out they believed in some whacky religion, but still I invited them over. A year or so later somebody else moved in and I'm not sure I even went over to introduce myself. Right now the house is occupied by someone I have never met.

NOTES

1. See Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) 7-9, and Joe Schwartz, "On the Road Again," *American Demographics* (April 1987, 39-42.

2. "About two-thirds of Americans own their own dwellings," Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*,

7; Franklin D. Roosevelt, quoted in ibid., 190; William Levitt, quoted in Dolores Hayden, *Redesigning The American Dream* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), 8; Hayden, ibid., 6.

3. Jackson, ibid., 235. Other recommended sources for Levittown are John Liell, "Levittown: A Study in Community Development," (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1952); Barbara M. Kelly, "The Politics of House and Home: Implications in the Built Environment of Levittown, Long Island" (Ph.D. dissertation, SUNY at Stony Brook, 1988), and "Learning from Levittown," *LIHJ* 1 (Fall 1988), 39-54; and Henry J. Gans, *The Levittowners: Ways of Life and Politics in A New Suburban Community* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967).

4. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 236; Liell, "Levittown," 216, 231, 226; Abraham Levitt, William J. Levitt, and Alfred S. Levitt, *Levittown* (New York: Levitt and Sons, 1948).

5. Liell, "Levittown," 184.

6. *Saturday Evening Post*, 7 August 1954, 72, quoted in Hayden, *Redesigning The American Dream*, 6-7.

7. William Levitt, "What! Live in a Levittown?" *Good Housekeeping* (July 1958), 176.

8. Harry Henderson, "The Mass Produced Suburbs," *Harper's*, (November 1953), 28, 25.

9. Thomas Hine, *Populuxe* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 23.

10. "The title is a play on the fact that most street names in Levittown end in 'Lane' "(Kelly, "Learning from Levittown," 52, n. 12).

11. Henderson, "Mass Produced Suburbs," 39.

12. Liell, "Levittown," 176.

13. John Keats, *The Crack in the Picture Window* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956), as quoted in Clifford Edward Clark, Jr., *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 217; Marilyn French, *The Woman's Room* (New York: Summit Books (Simon & Schuster), 1977), 75; Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963), especially chapters 1 and 2.

14. Clark, *American Family Home*, 210.

15. Liell, "Levittown," 110; "Some Rooms, Varied Decor," *Life* (14 January 1952), 90-93; Liell, "Levittown," 121.

16.Elizabeth Sweeney Herbert, "This is How I Keep House," *McCall's* (April 1949), 41-44.

17. Benjamin M. Spock, *The Common-Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1946, pub. as *The Pocket Book of Baby and Child Care* (New York: Pocket Books, 1949; fortieth annual ed., rev. ed., 1985); Arnold C. Gesell and others, *The First Five Years of Life: A Guide to the Study of the Pre-school Child* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1940).

18. From June 1985 to May 1987 the authors interviewed forty-one women between the ages of twenty-three to sixty-two, in groups and individually, concerning their suburban experience over a forty-year period. Most interviews were conducted at homes in Levittown, Roosevelt and Freeport, with a few at people's workplace or at McDonald's. We did not interview women in the more affluent suburbs which also expanded during the postwar years, but recommend an equivalent study of women in, for example, Great Neck, Manhasset, and

Garden City, to ascertain the extent to which their experience matches that of Levittown, Freeport, and Roosevelt women. Our Levittown interviewees recalled their decade (1947-57) as pioneers more vividly than any other period of their lives. Aware that oral history is not to be solely relied on, we checked memory with the historical record and found no discrepancies in their accounts.

19. At first, Levitt houses were rentals, with tenants allowed to apply payments against future purchase. From 1951 on, the company offered its houses for sale.

20. Henderson, "The Mass Produced Suburbs," 31.

21. Joseph Maloney, "The Lonesome Train in Levittown," Inter-University Case Program (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1958), 1.

22. Liell, "Levittown," 444.

23. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 245.

24. Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987) 184, 17.

Public Spaces, Private Places: Images of Brooklyn

By Bernice Braid

Brooklyn has often been perceived as a rough-hewn backwater, but a backwater with a colorful image that captured the world's imagination. The present article examines this duality in terms of Brooklyn's internal boundaries, those actual or imagined lines of demarcation that define who may or may not enter, and who may or may not belong. Boundaries, of course, can be double-edged. They separate, so they provoke crossing over; they protect, and therefore resist being crossed. A brief scan of the rich stock of oral, pictorial, and literary impressions of Brooklyn will illustrate these inconsistencies, as a closer look at Alfred Kazin's interpretive study will clarify the impact of boundaries on people on either side of them. These examples all portray Brooklyn in a mixture of appealing, down-home nostalgia and distasteful, raucous notoriety. The psychological power of boundaries, whether actual or imagined, accounts in large measure for this ambivalence.

Brooklyn emerged early on as a place that time passed by. Boss Plunkitt's famous line that every Brooklynite is "a natural born hayseed, and can never become a real New Yorker,"[1] may have been prompted by the rural past of Brooklyn as a vast, underinhabited, and self-contained place. Overlaid on that history was Brooklyn, the haven for hundreds of thousands of immigrants who, because many were unschooled or spoke no English, were seen as uncouth, ignorant, naive, and gullible. The mechanism which transformed the County of Kings into a shelter for the unwashed masses—and simultaneously made it an object of bemused contempt—was its neighborhoods, the self-contained zones where, mostly with others of their own kind, great numbers of people sought security and acceptability within the context of an alien environment.[2]

Early, pastoral Brooklyn enjoyed a high standard of living derived from abundant food, mild climate, and easy access by water. With the coming of industrialism and the influx of armies of immigrants, placidity was displaced by formlessness—a social and political hodge-podge inimical to organization and resistant to control. By the end of the nineteenth century, when the City of Brooklyn surrendered its independence to become one of Greater New York's five boroughs, these disparate impressions congealed into contradictory images of a community close to but not comparable with Manhattan, the archetype of urban sophistication.

Perceived variously as the city of churches, the city of homes,

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Manhattan's bedroom, the city of immigrants, and the city of industry, Brooklyn fundamentally was not thought of as a city at all, and the concept of neighborhood as refuge exacerbated this still-existing anomaly. Brooklynites tend to identify their place of residence by the neighborhood's name; they think of themselves as living in "Bay Ridge," "Park Slope," or "Bedford-Stuyvesant,"[3] much more than do Manhattanites, most of whom say that they live in "New York," or "the city."

Since it, too, had notable neighborhoods, significant numbers of immigrant groups, and, at one time, farms, why was Manhattan never thought of as the bailiwick of "hayseeds"? An inescapable suspicion is that what constitutes a "real" city is its identification with power, money, and style. This suggests that it is largely an issue of class that makes the image. Even during its village days, a high volume of commerce—from trading to large-scale shipping—was transacted in Brooklyn, but the banking and political power was always in Manhattan. Thus, the "heights" of Brooklyn became attractive as bedrooms for prosperous New Yorkers, but not the reverse.

Another surmise is that the sense of identification, shared even by immigrants if they lived in Manhattan rather than Brooklyn, related to the presumption of sophistication breathed in with the air of "the city." Some people of means and elegance were attracted to Brooklyn for secondary, out-of-town housing, but it was settled first by farmers, and later by workers—often with little knowledge of English—and middle-class people. Even if they did not live there, it was largely working folk on their day off who were drawn to Brooklyn for recreation, in multitudes.

This crowded mix of people at work, at home, and at play suggests that Brooklyn is classless, or worse—declassé. Inherent in the wide-spread image of Brooklyn as appealing is a perception of vitality: crowds, warmth, humor, energy, humanity, and low-priced recreation suggest that its allure is its liveliness, small-town good nature, and, in the best sense, classlessness.

Brooklyn's best-known sobriquet is the "City of Churches." From Old Bushwick Church, well-known in 1776, to Brooklyn Church and Duffield House; from the Old Dutch Reformed Church, on a site continuously used since 1655, to the A.M.E. Church in Weeksville, the first free black settlement in New York; and from Plymouth Church, where the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher drew crowds from all directions every Sunday for forty years, steeples rose over the flat lands above a multi-denominational panorama. Another familiar landscape reinforced the sense of Brooklyn as waterbound. The ferry was the umbilical cord binding Brooklyn to its glamorous neighbor. Rowboat service existed as early as 1640, and, by 1746, the ferry house was a pivotal spot. Long into the nineteenth century, trading close to the ferry landing coexisted with farming all the way to the shoreline, as recorded in prints like Jacob Patchen's *The Last of the Leather Breeches* (1865), or the 1905 photograph of Lott Farm, in Flatlands.[5]

The charm of the waterfront was one of Brooklyn's most attractive features. As early as the eighteenth century, some of New York City's

patricians built summer homes in the style of Newport. Once steam ferry service to and from Manhattan began in 1814, Brooklyn became, according to Kenneth T. Jackson, "the first commuter suburb." This distinction, concludes Jackson, did not belong to communities close to London, Boston, or Philadelphia, none of which

> offered the numbers of commuters, the easy access to a large city, and the bucolic atmosphere of Brooklyn Heights, which grew up across the harbor from lower Manhattan in the early decades of the nineteenth century.[6]

In Brooklyn, reported Walt Whitman, people "of moderate means may find homes at a moderate rent, whereas in New York City there is no median between a palatial mansion and a dislapidated hovel."[7] As years went by, prospective homeowners ventured into the inner regions of Brooklyn, where it was possible to build imposing houses on large tracts of land until well into the nineteenth century.

Brooklyn was also considered the "country," where people came for outings, as noted by a French visitor at the end of the eighteenth century:

> New York's greatest amusement is to drive to Long Island on Sunday. On Sunday afternoons, moreover, thousands of people from New York go for walks in Brooklyn, where they eat and destroy all the fruit, even green, that they can reach. The owners don't dare to stop them, and the waste is deplorable.[8]

Brooklynites strolling along the promenade today may find this passage a fine example of the aphorism, "the more things change."

Though the ferry district was always a center for commerce and a favored location for working-class housing, the Heights quickly filled with wealthier people.[9] The section most prized was the bluffs overlooking the water, its commanding view of the harbor and the island on the other side a favorite subject of etchings and lithographs. Most notably, the work of Currier and Ives left a rich sampling from before, during, and after the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge, all of which emphasized long-range vistas of Manhattan.

Slums were not unknown, as close to the ferry as Talman Street, between Manhattan Bridge and the Navy Yard. Awareness of such concentrations of poverty failed to blur the image of Brooklyn as unusually blessed by its waterfront. Most extant views, through the 1930s, concentrate on the cliff dwellers' absorbing view, and on the heavy water traffic of clipper ships.[10] Ernest Poole, whose family moved to Brooklyn while Henry Ward Beecher still was active, wrote of the excitement of that harbor. Indeed, he cited Beecher's use of "harbor" as the metaphor for a sermon, projecting it as a safe haven. The boy, already aware that this harbor was anything but snug, conjured up images of adventure of which the harbor became his symbol. On the docks, he mused, were

> palm oil from Africa, cotton from Bombay, coffee from Arabia,

> pepper from Sumatra, ivory from Zanzibar, salt from Cadiz, wines from Bordeaux, whale oil from the Arctic, iron from the Baltic, [and] tortoise shell from the Fiji Islands.

The harbor was not an enclosure for him, but a window on an exotic world, proffering an irresistible temptation to wander:

> And though all the years since that Sunday at Plymouth Church have been for me one long story of a harbor, restless, heaving, changing...never...a haven where ships come to dock, but always a place from which ships start out—into the storms and the fogs of the seas, over the "ocean" to "heathen lands." For so I saw it when I was a child, the threshold of adventures.[11]

An invitation to the world. So hypnotic is the effect of the water that even the Brooklyn Bridge salutes it with a walkway, from which pedestrians stand looking down in most illustrations of that structure. This suggests that tide watching and salt-air sniffing were as important for the popular imagination as the bridge's nominal function of "getting across."

Common to visual records of Brooklyn is bustle—many vehicles, many bodies, many transactions—and the presumption of much noise and smell. Industry attracted workers by the thousands, from across the river as well as from Brooklyn. Streets branching out from the ferry soon were clustered with shops that catered to workers. By 1857, Fulton Street was one of the region's most densely utilized thoroughfares. The public transportation system, to this day more elaborate on the surface than undergound, made access easy and travel fast on a network of lines converging along the Fulton Street/ferry district axis. The large sugar refinery in Williamsburg, Havemeyer and Elder, one of the waterfront's most beautiful structures, was also one of the busiest during the 1870s.[8] By 1890, observes Kenneth T. Jackson, Brooklyn's factories and mills produced hats, chemicals, iron products, candy, coffee, and syrup: "Only Chicago had a larger dressed-meat operation, and no place on earth had larger sugar-refining and grain-deposit operations."[12]

The high density of residential and industrial buildings can be accounted for in several ways: open markets in the ferry district; trading along Fulton Street; low-cost housing for workers; summer residences for the more affluent, eager to escape heat and disease elsewhere; churches; and places to stroll and eat other people's fruit. Starting in the mid-1800s, non-residents arrived in earnest, joining the local patrons of an increasing variety of recreational enterprises, which, in turn, became more accessible as transportation became more available.

The desire for space and quiet, offset by the crush to get to them, epitomized the image of Brooklyn throughout the nineteenth century. Prospect Park, built from 1866-1874, offered tranquility amid urban bedlam. Horse racing offered excitement and status; in the 1870s, Coney Island Concourse gave large numbers of the middle class an opportunity to enjoy a fashionable sport. The prospect of a Sunday of relaxation at

the track carried the magic of country pleasures: a race track one and one-half miles long and parallel to the surf, with sailboats on the horizon, was one such pastime captured in illustration.[13]

Twenty years later, true mass appeal was realized by the enlargement of Coney Island and the establishment of a world of fantasy—Dreamland and Luna Park were triumphs. From 1890 on, all public amusements in Brooklyn were designed to accommodate overflow crowds at the elbow-to-elbow spectator sports that were now its hallmark. An 1857 cartoon, *The Crowds Had Begun to Come Early*, provides a satirical comment on attitudes. The motley crew bursting ashore at Fulton Ferry is a mixture of farmers, gentry, and laborers, shabby and well-dressed, black and white, native and immigrant. The name of the ferry, the *Go Ahead*, hints that Brooklyn made room for anyone, just as the cartoon suggests that those who came pushed, and maybe even smelled. A whimsical caption reports that the picture had been found in the ruins of "the Excavated City of Gotham."[14]

The crowds at Steeplechase, the vulgarity of amusements like the Airhole, where male watchers were titillated by the show of women's legs as skirts blew up in the jet stream, the social equalizing inherent in this appeal to grossness and prurient interests—all bespoke a naive and appealing kind of democratization which was pure Americana. At the same time, they leave an aftertaste that is vaguely unappetizing, typical of Brooklyn's ambivalent images.

Millions were drawn to the amusements, to Coney Island, to the beaches, to baseball parks. Reginald Marsh was not the only artist who recorded the ebullient mountains of flesh whose good-humored plenitude came to stand for Brooklyn. Coming and going, at work and at play, Brooklyn and its throngs emerged gradually in the public eye. *Straphangers*, a 1938 cartoon,[15] shows a car of the 7th Avenue Express at Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn. Among other things, it is an ethnic stereotype: Jewish women in furs on the right, an Irish nun staring blankly ahead on the left. The cartoon, another example of boundaries and self-imposed limitations, makes a visual argument that the declassé nature of Brooklyn is rooted in the kind of people found there, a function of class and ethnicity.

This drawing also relates to the perception that once in Brooklyn one might as well be in the Sahara, and that to get out is virtually impossible. It is not that Brooklyn is foreign and therefore exotic, but that it is foreign and therefore unacceptable—truly "Other." In an article, "On the Meaning of Brooklyn," Norman Rosten expresses this sense of entrapment, humorously but tellingly. Finding himself in a Greenpoint bar, he asks directions to Borough Hall, to which his drinking neighhbor responds by asking,

> "How did you get here by car?"
> I no longer remembered my route, and opened a map. He leaned back perilously. "You drove here with a *map*?"[16]

Borough Hall and Greenpoint are not far apart, but one is a municipal

center, the other a neighborhood. That means they are worlds apart, and might as well be separated by an ocean as by streets. Disbelief at the thought of finding Brooklyn's streets on a map matches the intended irony of seeking directions back to the municipal center of Brooklyn from the outpost of Greenpoint. The sense of being in a universe apart and somehow primitive is an aspect of seeing Brooklyn as a comical backwater, whose inhabitants are, at best, a simple-minded lot.

Popular culture records a huge cast of imagined characters swept by tides and eddies in this backwater existence. The Brooklynite as one who is simple in his political corruption, naive about economics, and not yet caught up to the twentieth century repeatedly appears in print in ways that are intentionally derogatory. But the stereotype of the Brooklynite as hayseed, reinforced by the crudity of his or her forms of amusement, is belied by observers who do not share the heritage of Brooklyn's popular culture. Many of the well-known authors who made it their home, however briefly, have chosen to write about Brooklyn, perhaps to exorcise themselves of its taint.

Writing as exorcism is provocative and revealing, a gesture, in literary terms, of making magic. If done well, the magic rubs off on the reader, accounting for its peculiar and persistant power. Those who left their stamp on the image of Brooklyn now shared by the world include Edgar Allen Poe, who attended and presumably read at literary salons in Brooklyn while it was still a loose collection of villages, and Walt Whitman, for whom the harbor's unity and creative energy was a source of inspiration for his vision of individuality.

For the novelist, Thomas Wolfe, the unforgettable symbol of Brooklyn was its bridge:

> The Bridge made music and a kind of magic in me, it bound the earth together like a cry; and all of the earth seemed young and tender. I saw the people moving...back and forth across the Bridge, and it was just as if we had all just been born. God, I was so happy I could hardly speak!

In similar fashion, Hart Crane's sense of being alive was bound up with the splendor of the harbor and the power of the bridge, which he made the central symbol of his longest and most ambitious poem, "The Bridge."[17]

Of all who wrote for exorcism, those born and raised in Brooklyn are the magic-makers *par excellence*, which is surely not a coincidence in the perspective of this discussion. Henry Miller, whose German-born parents brought him up in Williamsburg and Bushwick, found that to know what those neighborhoods meant for him he had to write about them. In *The Cosmological Eye* and *Plexus*, he sought the thing which lies hidden in terrifying coal bins—a recurring image of tenement literature—and in the mystery of "commingled speech," which the "others" identified as foreign, or just plain Brooklyn.[18] Many writers bent on self-expurgation were immigrants, or immigrants' children, who came to Brooklyn on a

well-worn trail, mostly in steerage and always on overcrowded boats with few amenities. They arrived at Ellis Island from which they went to their presumed utopia, where, unhappily, the streets were not paved with gold. Finding others who at least understood them when they spoke, they settled in many and varied neighborhoods, more often than not in Brooklyn, where they could keep their language and feel "at home." They built communities, bought familiar food and cooked it in familiar ways, celebrated traditional holidays, and, as much as possible, lived familiar lives in a strange land. There is considerable evidence, at least in literature, that some of these immigrants (and their older children), never tried or simply failed to assimilate.

Markets and churches were open to all, but the best bridge to mainstream culture, for those who felt the need, was the public library. Most writers who deal with growing up in Brooklyn refer to this discovery; Brooklyn, especially for them, is a matter of boundaries to be transcended, for which the library is the most accessible instrument. Visible boundaries—the East River, the subway lines, Ocean Parkway—and invisible ones—differences in clothing, speech, gestures, and food—lead to anticipation of rejection by the world beyond those boundaries.

Several writers struggle with the phantom of these boundaries, as Richard Gambino in *Blood of My Blood* and Helen Yglesias in *Family Feeling*, but the most intensive treatment of boundaries, coupled with the exorcistic function of writing-out-memory, is Alfred Kazin's *A Walker in the City*.[19] These three share the conviction that the center of their world was the kitchen, where language, food and custom converged. In Kazin's words, "As a child I felt that we lived in a kitchen to which four other rooms were annexed." The kitchen is where the characteristics distinguishing those who belong from those who do not become the configuration of the boundaries themselves. Kazin's unmarried cousins, for instance, so proud of their interest in political issues and of their "culture" (i.e. their connection to the larger world outside Brownsville), felt superior. "They felt they belonged not to the 'kitchen world' like my mother, but to the enlightened tradition of the old Russian intelligentsia."[20] Unlike Kazin's mother, they could read English, as well as foreign tongues, and therefore were able to think and talk about America in ways that she could not.

Gambino, Yglesias, and Kazin identify an outer periphery, neither visible nor concrete, that serves as a barrier between themselves and the world. One is so used to thinking of the world as accessible—within a token's reach of the 42nd Street Library—that it comes as a shock to learn that until 1897 tolls were collected near the Brooklyn-Queens border, at Jamaica Avenue and Hemlock Street. That, at least, was tangible. For the poor, even a token was an investment; everything had to be within walking disance—work, shops, school, play, and worship.

Intangible boundaries, like those related to language, were even stronger. For the immigrant, language is a barrier which can even grow up between generations of the same family, as suggested by the dispute between Kazin's

older mother and somewhat younger cousins. In these cases, the children look at their parents with the eyes of "Americans" (or Russian intelligentsia?) and find them wanting, not for their individual attributes but for something more painful—group traits.

At the heart of even the comic images of Brooklyn is the painful suspicion that despite education and a token, some linguistic traits of the group rub off and stick. For Kazin, Brownsville is the felt place that binds him with invisible ties inside his invisible boundaries. "We were of the city, but somehow not in it"(Kazin, *Walker*, 11). The clue to the centrality of Kazin's sense of othernesss comes immediately. He begins *A Walker in the City* with two quotations, the first from Walt Whitman's poem, "On Crossing Brooklyn Ferry":

> The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and hearings—
> on the walk in the street, and the passage over the river.

These lines establish both the image of separation and of the need to "cross over." The second quotation is from William Blake's "London," a poem of social protest that sounds the double-meaning of boundaries as real and as conceptual:

> In every cry of every man,
> In every infant's cry of fear,
> In every voice, in every ban,
> The mind-forg'd manacles I hear.[21]

In his quest for self-discovery, Kazin has to break his own self-imposed manacles so as finally to be a man. He does so on a metaphorical and actual walk that takes him, chapter by chapter, "From the Subway to the Synagogue" backwards in time and space to "The Kitchen," forward to "The Block and Beyond," and finally to a connection between himself and "the shape and color of time in the streets of New York (Kazin, *Walker*, 170)," in "Summer: The Way to Highland Park." It is a deceptively simple itinerary for a stunningly revelatory journey. As he puts it in the opening figure:

> From the moment I step off the train at Rockaway Avenue and smell the leak out of the men's room, then the pickles from the stand just below the subway steps, an instant rage comes over me, mixed with dread and some unexpected tenderness (ibid., 1).

Out of this confusion of emotions comes the walk out of "the early hopelessness"—a kind of sleep-walking to plumb the depths of his childhood memories in order to burst into wakefulness in that last chapter. He does so finally because of the central discovery, that "Brownsville is that road which every other road in my life has had to cross."(ibid., 12).

The question that nags him is whose mind has forged those manacles? Has it something to do with parental attitudes or values? Or is it a self-created protection against otherness, in which "boundary" takes on such freighted meaning?

> We were the end of the line. We were the children of the immigrants who had camped at the city's back door, in New York's rawest, remotest, cheapest ghetto, enclosed on one side by the Canarsie flats and on the other by the hallowed middle-class districts that showed the way to New York (ibid.).

Occasionally, he wanders into houses of worship other than his own and is amazed to discover that other people are not so different as he had expected. On occasion he glimpses his parents as "just people" and again, amazed, makes an important discovery:

> I worked on a hairline between triumph and catastrophe. Why the odds should always have felt so narrow I understood only when I realized how little my parents thought of their own lives (ibid., 21).

Kazin discovers here the burden of the "first American child," as he begins to grasp the enormity of the tensions inherent in living bounded by "others'" worlds. It troubled him that he "could speak in the fullness of my own voice only when I was alone on the streets, walking about" (ibid., 24).

One ramification of these tensions relates to class. Brownsville was unlike its closest neighbors because it not only was full of foreigners, but was poor. "No one," observes Kazin, "chose to be there" (ibid.). At its worst, the burden of boundaries is the claustrophobia of life-imprisonment. One protective gesture aimed at the invisible yet unscalable walls of that prison, his neighborhood, is a kind of bonding:

> There was another synagogue halfway down the block, much larger and no doubt more impressive in every way; I never set foot in it; it belonged to people from another province in Russia (ibid., 43).

Another gesture is taking up life within strong lines of fortification, for example, inside the kitchen. That room's nurturing and consoling effect was evident from the start, but it took Kazin a long time to grasp the way in which it was a self-created prison for his mother, a talented woman, but one who never learned to read English, and, as a result, rarely ventured outside its walls. Not until he understands that her world is the kitchen, where she is a dressmaker, wife, woman, mother (even a failed matchmaker), can he salvage what he needs from the room to respond to what "beckoned...from that other hemisphere of (my) brain beyond the East River...(ibid., 52)."

Time is a discovery, too: "Beyond was anything old and American"(ibid., 90). This comes from the realization that one can accidentally breach boundaries by getting off the subway at the wrong stop, and walking. In so doing, one finds America's past: streets named for heroes of the Revolution; parks and museums; the streets of nineteenth-century America. Walking becomes Kazin's way to discover America and himself, as well as a means to appropriate himself in the process. By breaking through the limits of his otherness, walking allows him to become

something larger than a native of Brownsville, Borough of Brooklyn.

It is no accident that the geographical breakthrough occurs simultaneously with a revelation about the nature of language. The beauty of a walk across the Brooklyn Bridge at dusk is a prelude to the perception of how poetry works. He recalls the New Testament given to him by a man on the Fifth Avenue steps of the Library, and how he had "flipped the pages and then turned back to where the book most naturally lay flat: *For now we see through a glass, darkly.*"[22] Suddenly, he knows that the famous sentence of Paul's is, simply, "right":

> ...I tasted the rightness of each word on my tongue. It was like heaping my own arms with gifts. There were images I did not understand, but which fell on my mind with such slow opening grandeur that once I distinctly heard the clean and fundamental cracking of trees... Images were instantaneous; the meaning alone could be like the unyielding metal taste when you bit on an empty spoon. (Kazin, *Walker*, 160)

At last, he sees how images work—images of poetry, images of his own past. First the image, then the meaning. Kazin must return to Brownsville, smell the pickles, taste the sweat on his lips on a hot day, to determine the meaning of the place and its significance for him. This is how he discovers what boundaries are, the physical, mental, linguistic, real, and illusory barriers which become the "mind-forg'd manacles," and which must be broken for breath to come freely. In the end, he sees that Brownsville is not his prison, but only a crossroads.

Kazin learns that walking takes him backwards into another America. The importance of the nineteenth century in this voyage of discovery is that it suggests a path to larger crossroads, not only of the city but of America itself. Beyond the neighborhood Gestalt is the cultural and cultured world, the largest of all intellectual and imaginative contexts.

Writers feel like outsiders in proportion to how deeply they are rooted in their neighborhoods. They long to justify their existence as citizens of the world by recreating themselves, first within the same boundaries they seek to transcend; they often break the grip of a smothering past by mentally reimmersing themselves in it. However, when the place in question is Brooklyn, the task is doubly troublesome because the image the writers have of Brooklyn is that it, too, is "outside."

What helps, and is insufficiently acknowledged, lies in the root problem of being from Brooklyn in the first place. Those who seek to write out of the local—but still may be rooted in it—are grateful to the place that enables them to recognize the "unexpected tenderness," along with the restrictive or suffocating attributes which need to be exorcised. It is a response to what is warm, human, vital, and humorous in the image of Brooklyn shared by the world. To Carson McCullers, a visitor-resident, "Brooklyn, in a dignified way, is a fantastic place." In her essay, "Brooklyn Is My Neighborhood," she described the short street she lived on as having a

> quietness and sense of permanence that belong to the nineteenth century...there are comfortable old houses, with gracious facades and pleasant backyards...on the next block, the street becomes more heterogeneous, for there is a fire station; a convent; and a small candy factory. The street is bordered with maple-trees, and in the autumn the children rake up the leaves and make bonfires in the gutter.[23]

Her notion of neighborhood is not disparaging or uncomfortable, and certainly is not connected to shackles or barriers. Middagh Street, in Brooklyn Heights (the "old America" Kazin discovered by accident), exemplified upper-class prosperity. Within walking distance of Manhattan across the Brooklyn Bridge, it was a far cry from Brownsville. But for McCullers it is a quintessentially urban experience of the Brooklyn sort—a neighborhood. Here there is only the bosom which makes her welcome and gives her identity. Perhaps it is important that she is not a foreigner, speaks English, and is not one of the permanent poor for whom invisible shackles, even more than visible tokens, are potent barriers.

The contrast is stark between the Brooklyn left behind by the modern world—the recurring image in popular culture—and the Brooklyn rich with history and the sense of containment. Both are the persistent stock of images into which we all dip to pull out something resembling a picture of Brooklyn as it was and as it is. Looking back over cartoons, jokes, travelers' diaries, fiction, and social commentaries, we witness the emergence of an urban center which, contrary to critical expectation, is far removed from its satirized image of backwater imperfections. The place is in no way "simple." Its complexity stems from the mixture of the naive and the sophisticated caught by these same cartoons, jokes, and poetic voices.

Perhaps what is so distinct as to be prototypically "Brooklyn" is precisely the admixture which compels Kazin to declare himself "in but not of the city." From it comes a flavor that is extraordinarily difficult to separate into component parts. By now, it is this very flavor that is characteristic of the place and its people.

NOTES

This article is a revised and extended version of a lecture presented for Brooklyn Rediscovery, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

1. William L. Riordon, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* (New York, 1963), 41.

2. The best nineteenth-century history of Brooklyn is Henry R. Stiles, *The Civil, Political, Professional and Ecclesiastical History and Commercial and Industrial Record of the County of Kings and the City of Brooklyn, New York, from 1683-1884*, 2 vols. (New York, 1884); of many useful current works, see Ruth Seiden Miller, ed., *Brooklyn U.S.A: The Fourth Largest City in America* (Brooklyn, 1979), and David Ment, *The Shaping of a City: A Brief History of Brooklyn* (New York, 1979).

3. Although this article deals mainly with European immigrants, large numbers of African Americans from Harlem, the South, and the West Indies have migrated to Brooklyn. For Bedford-Stuyvesant see Clarence Taylor, "Whatever the Cost, We Will Set the Nation Straight: the Ministers' Committee and the Downstate Medical Center," *LIHJ* 1 (Spring

1990): 136-46; see also Harold X. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn* (New York, 1977).

4. For an interesting perspective on Frederick Douglass, speaking at Beecher's church after the Civil War, see Mary White Ovington, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down* (New York, 1970), 7.

5. Jacob Patchen, *Last of the Leather Breeches*, etching (1865); photograph of Lott Farm (1905), Picture Collection, Brooklyn Historical Society.

6. Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: the Suburbanization of the United States* (New York, 1985), 25.

7. Walt Whitman, *I Sit and Look Out* (New York, 1932), 145, cited in Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 28.

8. Anna S. Roberts and Kenneth Roberts, trans. and eds., *Moreau de St. Mery's American Journey, 1793-98* (Garden City, 1947), 173.

9. See Clay Lancaster, *Old Brooklyn Heights* (Rutland, Vermont, 1979); for Prospect Park, see Donald E. Simon, "A Plan for All Seasons: the Design OF Brooklyn's Prospect Park," in this issue of *LIHJ*.

10. See Picture Collection, Brooklyn Rediscovery, Brooklyn Educational and Cultural Alliance (BECA), Pratt Institute.

11. Ernest Poole, *The Harbor* (New York, 1915), 5.

12. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, 30; for the industrial growth of Brooklyn, see Harold Coffin Syrett, *The City of Brooklyn, 1865-1898: A Political History* (New York, 1944), 13-16, 233-44.

13. Picture Collection, Brooklyn Rediscovery, BECA.

14. J.M. Nevin, 1857, from a series, Manners and Customs of the "Great Republicans," collection of Edward W.C. Arnold, cited in John A. Kouwenhoven, *The Columbia Historical Portrait of New York* (Garden City, 1953), 264.

15. Artist unknown, *Straphanger*, 1938. Picture Collection, Brooklyn Rediscovery, BECA.

16. Norman Rosten, "The Meaning of Brooklyn," *Holiday Magazine* 27 (March 1960), 770-836. Rosten may have borrowed the humorous use of a street map from Thomas Wolfe's classic short story, "Only the Dead Know Brooklyn," *The New Yorker*, 15 June 1935 (also published in Wolfe, *From Death to Morning* [New York, 1935]), in *The Thomas Wolfe Reader*, C. Hugh Holman ed. [New York, 1962]), 466-67; see also Joseph Dorinson, "Brooklyn: the Elusive Image," *LIHJ* 1 (Spring 1989): 135.

17. Thomas Wolfe, *The Web and the Rock* (New York, 1937: reprint ed., New York, 1960), 410; Hart Crane,"The Bridge"(1929), in *Poems of Hart Crane*, Marc Simon, ed. (New York, 1986); for Brooklyn Bridge and its influence on Whitman, Crane, and others, see Bernice Braid, "The Brooklyn Bridge in Literary and Popular Imagination," *LIHJ* 2 (Fall 1989), 96-106.

18. Henry Miller, *Plexus*, vol. 3 *The Rosy Crucifixion* (New York, 1963), 229-241.

19. Richard Gambino, *Blood of My Blood* (New York, 1974); Helen Yglesias, *Family Feeling* (New York, 1976); Alfred Kazin, *A Walker in the City* (New York, 1951), 64, 54.

20. Kazin, *Walker*, 14.

21. Walt Whitman, "On Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," *Leaves of Grass*, eds. Sculley Bradley and Harold W. Blodgett (New York, 1973), 160; William Blake, "London," *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, David V. Erdman, ed., commentary by Harold Bloom (Garden City, 1963: 4th rev. ed., Berkeley, 1982), 26. Significantly for the context of this article, "London" is one of Blake's *Songs of Experience*.

22.1 Corinthians 13:12

23. Carson McCullers, "Brooklyn is my Neighborhood," *The Mortgaged Heart* (Boston, 1965), 216.

A Plan For All Seasons: The Design of Brooklyn's Prospect Park

By Donald E. Simon

In 1955 the *Brooklyn Eagle* ceased publication.[1] In 1957 the beloved Brooklyn Dodgers played their last game at Ebbets Field before leaving for a new home in California. Clearly, the 1950s were hard times for Brooklynites. Yet, despite the loss of the *Eagle* and Dodgers in but two years, the borough still had several attractions of world-wide fame. One was Coney Island, another was the Brooklyn Bridge, and the third was Prospect Park. Brooklyn's great park was the skillful creation of talented designers who molded the living landscape into what is recognized as one of the world's most successful urban pleasure grounds.

The loss of the *Eagle* and the Dodgers was an especially difficult blow to Brooklyn's psyche. After all, Brooklynites were always being looked down upon by their brethren in Manhattan. Although Brooklyn once was the third largest city in the United States,[2] the borough suffered from an inferiority complex of heroic proportions. A partial explanation for this sense of domination by New Yorkers dates from the 1686 Dongan Charter, that granted New York Colony the right to regulate commerce on the East River to the low water mark on the far shore. Thus, the wharfs and ferry slips in Brooklyn were regulated and governed by New York (first the colony and later the city—a situation that continued until New York and Brooklyn merged in 1898). The potential for conflict from this arrangement was almost unlimited. From the perspective of most Brooklynites, New Yorkers did their best to ensure that reality was as close as possible to the potential.[3]

Despite this one-sided competition and the extent to which New York eclipsed Brooklyn in most aspects of commercial, social, and cultural life, happily, there was one area where in competition with New York, Brooklyn proved to be superior. The design and execution of Prospect Park is superior to New York's Central Park due in part to the mistakes made by the designers in New York and corrected in Brooklyn, and in part due to the more suitable site with which the landscape architects had to work.

The creation of Central and Prospect parks was a direct response to the transformation of America from an agrarian society into one that by the middle of the nineteenth century had a number of significant cities. For example, Brooklyn grew from 4,402 people in 1810 to 7,175 inhabitants in 1820. When Brooklyn became an incorporated city in 1834, its population reached 24,310. By 1865, Brooklyn (by now including

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Williamsburgh and Bushwick) contained 296,378 people, an increase of more than 150,000 people in only 15 years.[4] Within the memory of many people, block after block of row buildings were constructed where once crops had grown and cattle had grazed. The growing urbanization of Brooklyn denied ever-increasing numbers of people access to open space. Even prior to acceptance of the germ theory of disease, people recognized that dark, airless buildings and the lack of sanitary sewers and safe drinking water were causes of pestilence. Thus, it was not difficult to gain adherents to proposals that would bring some form of nature back to the city.

The story of Prospect Park begins across the East River in New York, where a larger population and greater magnitude of development created pressures in support of public parks at an earlier date than was the case in Brooklyn. Since the experiences of both cities were so intertwined, it is necessary to set the stage for what happened in Brooklyn by describing the situation in New York. One of the earliest and most influential advocates of the development of large, public parks was William Cullen Bryant, the editor of the New York Evening Post. In an editorial in mid-1844, Bryant argued that the municipal government should provide a "shady retreat" within the city so that it would not be necessary for the citizens to leave the city for refreshment. He noted that "the heats of summer are upon us, and while some are leaving the city for the...country," most citizens do not have the opportunity to escape from "these sultry afternoons" and that the municipal authorities ought to give "our vast population an exclusive pleasure ground for shade and recreation."[5]

One of Bryant's closest associates was Andrew Jackson Downing, a nurseryman who showed an early interest in the relationships of plants, architecture, and layout. Known today as the father of landscape architecture, Downing gained many supporters for his idea that landscaping was more than mere decoration and could be used to produce a harmonious environment in which man could live in peace.[6] Downing, the editor of the *Horticulturist*, a popular journal of design and commentary, wrote that "a more fraternal spirit in our social life" could be developed if "refined public places of resort, parks and gardens, galleries, libraries, museums, etc." were established.[7]

As a popular and much-in-demand designer, Downing saw his landscape and architectural practice grow beyond his ability to carry out all the work himself. He hired assistants whose expertise complemented his own. Thus, in the early 1850s he surrounded himself with students of horticulture, design, and architecture who cooperated in completing the commissions he received. One of these associates was Calvert Vaux, an Englishman whom Downing induced to join his practice in 1850. Vaux had been trained in architecture and had a philosophy of design that was compatible with Downing's images of what a country residence should be.

This linkage of landscape designer and architect worked well. The two soon became involved in the growing debate over the need for a large public park for New York. Both candidates in the mayoral election of 1850 had

advocated the creation of such a retreat. The victor, Ambrose C. Kingsland, proposed in April 1851 that a 153-acre site along the East River from 66th to 75th streets be acquired for that purpose. Downing urged park advocates not to celebrate until a site of at least 500 acres was secured.

Sadly, Downing's voice was silenced in 1852 when he drowned while trying to save victims of the *Henry Clay*, a steamboat that burned in the Hudson River near Riverdale.[8] However, his influence prevailed, and in 1853 the area between Fifth and Eight avenues and 59th and 106th streets was proposed as a setting for a "central park." Three years later the property was acquired and proposals for its development were advanced. Fears that the new public works venture would become an object of political scandal, together with the desire of the New York State Republicans to take control of the project away from the New York City Democrats, led to the creation of an independent Board of Commissioners of Central Park. The new board was composed of park advocates, with the addition of Andrew Haswell Green as treasurer and Egbert L. Viele, a civil engineer of wide fame, as chief engineer.

Work on the park began with the clearing of woods and draining of some swampy lands under Viele's direction. There still was no design for the overall development of the park. The members of the park board recognized that their accomplishments would set a pattern for the entire nation. Accordingly, they determined to secure the best possible plan of development. To do this, they decided to hold a design competition with a prize of $2,000. The competition was announced on 13 October 1857. All entries had to be submitted by 1 April 1858.[9]

In the year of Downing's death, Frederick Law Olmsted, a student of scientific and experimental farming and a well-known author whose account of the antebellum South won great acclaim, published an account of his recent journey to England, revealing his observations on public parks, principally the newly-developed Birkenhead Park in Liverpool. Olmsted saw, as had Downing, the democratic nature of public parks. He was amazed that Birkenhead, in "providing its magnificent pleasure-ground," had been able to accomplish what no American city had done. A local baker who had shown him Birkenhead Park impressed Olmsted with his love of the park and with his apparent pride of ownership.[10]

Olmsted was approaching middle age at the time of the Central Park design competition. Born in 1822 in Hartford, Connecticut, he spent the first 35 years of his life engaged in various enterprises which seemed headed nowhere. His years spent as a "scientific farmer" were a failure; his notable collection of despatches chronicling the conditions in the slave states were very well received, but were not followed by additional projects of equal worth. Indeed, until Olmsted's association with Central Park it seemed as if he were destined to lead a mediocre existence worthy of little attention.

With no pun intended, Olmsted was obviously a late bloomer. In the years after his involvement with Central Park, first in association with Vaux and then in collaboration with his son, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., he emerged as the nation's leading urban and landscape designer. His hand

touched such varied enterprises as Riverside and Morningside parks in New York, Prospect Park and the chain of parkways in Brooklyn, the grounds of Biltmore, the Vanderbilt estate in Asheville, North Carolina, and his last great undertaking, the site plan for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Sadly, Olmsted spent the last years of his life in an asylum racked by insomnia and failing memory.[11]

Calvert Vaux's life also had its share of successes but a multitude of failures. Born in London in 1824, he was apprenticed to the famed architect Lewis Cottingham, a leading exponent of the emerging Gothic revival style. By the time he met Downing, Vaux was not only an accomplished architect but was thoroughly familiar with both English and American plantings and had a fine appreciation for public parks. Thus began an association that was to continue until Downing's death. The collaboration with Olmsted was the time of Vaux's finest work. They worked together on Central and Prospect Parks and teamed up again in 1887 to prepare a design for a park at Niagara Falls. Vaux spent most of his professional life as the chief landscape architect for the New York City Parks Department.[12] In later years Vaux would come to resent the fame that Olmsted achieved and Vaux's relative anonymity that, Vaux felt, was the result of a conscious effort by his former partner to deprive him of his due.

In reality, much of the disparity of reputation results from the abundance of correspondence that the meticulous Olmsted left behind. Vaux, an affable yet intense man was considered the eccentric. After working for hours on a sketch, he would tear it to shreds because one feature was deemed unsuitable. Ironically, the few papers of Vaux that have survived are part of the Olmsted collection in the Library of Congress. His death was equally tragic. On a foggy morning he stepped off a Brooklyn ferry pier and drowned.[13]

The Central Park design competition was initially of little interest to Olmsted. Vaux, who had been impressed with Olmsted's *Walks and Talks of An American Farmer in England*, became a close friend of Olmsted in the years following Downing's death. At Vaux's urging, Olmsted had applied for and been appointed Park Superintendent, with responsibility for managing the crews at work on the park site under the overall direction of Viele.

Vaux's offer to submit a joint plan seemed too tempting to resist. The combination of talents possessed by Olmsted and Vaux gave them a great advantage over other entrants. As park superintendent, Olmsted became familiar with every detail of the site, giving the team an added advantage. Yet, the essence of their "Greensward Plan" was that it would accommodate vast numbers of people in an environment distinct from the city. Viele in his unsuccessful submission had urged that the natural configuration of the surface should be the basis for the park's development. He referred to the hills, valleys, and streams as "nature's pencillings on the surface of the earth," calling their alteration a desecration.

Olmsted and Vaux went beyond garden design in their submission. Their scheme was a combination of landscaping and urban planning. They were

not just planting a garden. They were creating a "paraphrase of the countryside" with large earth mounds that would immediately separate the park from its surrounding streets. There was extensive use of the curved line to provide illusions of distance within the park. The carriage roads were made especially winding to prevent racing; crosstown traffic was placed in depressed transverse roads that would allow commerce not to be impeded by the presence of the park, yet this commercial activity could take place independently of the recreational activities happening in close proximity. By 1858 New York had a plan for development of its park that was founded in the English tradition but clearly responsive to the American context in which the designers were working. The origins of the plan can be traced back to the early park advocates in both the United States and Europe, and through the intellectual ideals of theorists and practitioners such as Bryant and Downing.[14]

In the early 1820s a spirit of fiercely competitive sectionalism became a major trend in the nation. With it came a more specific manifestation in the form of the booster spirit, an intense local pride defined by a modern historian as a way of "thought and life which arose from how fast they grew, from their hopes and illusions, from their sense of destiny, from their reaching for the future." This competitiveness resulted in plans to improve the physical appearance of cities and, it was hoped, their ability to attract new residents and commercial enterprises. Clearly, the impetus behind the creation of Central Park may be traced to this spirit of limitless destiny.[15] Brooklyn, too, was caught up in the spirit of boosterism that overtook America's cities. As early as the 1820s there were calls for the creation of a public park to provide recreation for the community's growing population. The first park to be established in Brooklyn was the ten-acre City Park (located at what are today named Flushing Avenue and Navy Street and now called Commodore Barry Park) in 1835. A small open space in the area northeast of the city's population center, the park did little to provide the relief that Brooklyn's park advocates sought.

The first significant park was at the site of Fort Greene, a hill that had been fortified during the Revolution and the War of 1812. This dramatic setting is on a 30-acre parcel between what are today named Myrtle and DeKalb avenues, extending west from Cumberland Street. Walt Whitman, then the editor of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* and one of the staunchest supporters of a proposal to create this park, led the movement that eventually succeeded in obtaining what would be Washington Park (now Fort Greene Park). This required overcoming the objections of property owners, who feared the taxes needed to pay for it, and the animosity and jealousy of some residents of Brooklyn Heights opposed to providing a park for the eastern portion of the city, especially since that region was populated by large numbers of Irish immigrants. The intolerance of the 1840s was a very potent factor in local affairs. But far-sighted people like Whitman prevailed, and in 1847 Washington Park was opened. Despite the victories in Brooklyn and New York, the park movement gained little popular support for the reservation of large-scale parcels of land for park

purposes. It was the creation of Green-Wood Cemetery, in 1838, that gave Brooklynites and New Yorkers an opportunity to experience the benefits of a large, landscaped tract of land. Unlike the parks then in existence, Green-Wood gave visitors the opportunity to enter a gardened world, distant from the sights, sounds, and odors common to most city streets. The popularity of Green-Wood as a park continued until the increasing presence of graves and monuments discouraged those who sought a visit to the countryside. Indeed, the success of Green-Wood for its intended purpose was a strong prompt for those agitating for a true park of similar proportions and embellishment.[16]

Calls for parks that would provide the "shady retreats" demanded by Bryant were echoed by the transcendentalists like Ralph Waldo Emerson, and even by the more "radical" of that group, Henry David Thoreau, who believed that no city should be without a park of at least 500 acres reserved "as a common possession forever."[17] By the 1850s, the desire to provide such pastoral refuges was accepted not only by philosophers and urban boosters; large numbers of citizens now were joining the effort.

The story of Prospect Park in many ways parallels the events that were taking place in New York. In the mid-1850s, the demand for the reservation of a large tract for a public park became an issue in Brooklyn's mayoral elections. By 1859, the state Legislature created a commission "to select and locate public parks for Brooklyn."[18] Continuing the similarity to the scenario in New York, the members of the commission included some of the community's most vocal park advocates and its leading citizens.

The commission was to weigh all possible sites and to prepare a plan which would provide open spaces for all regions of the city. From the outset, one site received nearly unanimous public endorsement—the area surrounding Prospect Hill, the current location of the Central Building of the Brooklyn Public Library. At a meeting of the commission on 22 September 1859, Egbert Viele, the engineer who prepared the initial proposal for Central Park only to see it discarded, offered a plan of development for the Prospect Hill site. The proposed park was to contain 303 acres and would be bisected by Flatbush Avenue. The commission issued a report calling for the creation of three large parks of approximately 300 acres each, at Prospect Hill, in Bay Ridge near the site of Fort Hamilton, and around the Ridgewood Reservoir. A military parade ground was to be created in Flatbush, and the entire city was to be tied together by a chain of new boulevards.

The *Brooklyn Standard* editorialized in favor of the large-sized parks:

> If we are to have parks, let them be parks, where we can breathe free air, where tree and shrub and grass and flower will not be sicklied by the stench of foul gasses and filthy smoke. We want parks where flowers will wear their native hues and native bloom, where the rattle and bustle on the streets will not send its hoarse, crackling voice; where the song of the bird and the ripple of the rill will not

> disturb but quicken meditation, and fire the higher efforts of genius. There and there alone, the care and labor-worn can regain their recuperative vitality; there the old may feel again the pulse of youth bound within them, and the memories of youth revive; there the sick may breathe the breath of health, where, if but for one delusive hour; there weakness, hope, faith, thought, fancy, love, will find something to gladden, to inspirit, to comfort, to console, and to inspire.[19]

In an interesting parallel with New York, one of the strongest supporters of the park plan was James S. T. Stranahan, a businessman who became the "father" of the Brooklyn park system, a forceful proponent and later director of the Brooklyn Bridge Company, and a leading advocate of the consolidation of New York and Brooklyn. In New York, Andrew Haswell Green, who first joined the park board as treasurer, eventually became its president and later was involved in leading roles in both the Brooklyn Bridge and consolidation efforts. Statues of both men grace their respective parks in places of honor.

Thus, the scene was set for Brooklyn to begin the development of a system of public parks. Sadly, the elaborate plan for parks and boulevards was opposed by those who objected to the cost of site acquisition and eventually of their construction. A compromise was enacted into law on 17 April 1860,[20] calling for the construction of a 320-acre park at Prospect Hill and providing for a military parade ground. James Stranahan was named one of the commissioners and, at the first meeting of the newly-created board, he was elected its president by the membership of the commission. The act of 17 April 1860 limited the commissioners by specifying the boundaries of the park, although there was neither an adequate survey of the site nor a plan for its development. Despite these restrictions, the commissioners began their task. Egbert Viele was retained to prepare "accurate surveys, general plans, and careful estimates of the entire work." The commissioners saw their undertaking as vital to "furnish to all the constant means of peaceful and healthful enjoyment, and to aid in the cultivation of cheerful obedience to law, and the general promotion of good order among its citizens." Significantly, they also noted that their park site had "great possibilities and superior advantages" and would be a truly "magnificent undertaking."[21]

Viele presented his engineering report on 15 January 1861. He based his improvements on the "natural topographical features" of the site. His 45-page report proposed the inclusion of an "open parade," a wide lake, and even an ornamental "botanical garden." It also described in detail how the work was to be accomplished, what materials should be used, and what theories of design should be employed.[22] Having completed his work, Viele awaited a call from the park board to take charge of the construction of the park he designed.

Unfortunately for Viele, the outbreak of the Civil War interrupted (but did not end) all progress on the park. Yet, as the commissioners wrote in their annual report, "1861 was not a propitious year for carrying

forward" work on the park. The work would resume only after "peace and prosperity shall awaken to new life the now repressed energies of our beautiful city." At that time, the report continued, Prospect Park will have to be conceded as "the great natural park of the country."[23] Even in the depths of war-time gloom, the booster spirit was not extinguished. Despite Viele's anticipation, the park commissioners were not willing to adopt his design of 1861. Perhaps, because of the Central Park experience they felt they could obtain a superior plan of development. One immediate shortcoming of Viele's approach was the absence of a grand entrance for the park. The commissioners noted that "the subject of approaches is of much more importance than has generally been observed." They did not want to leave Brooklyn in the same predicament as London and Paris, where costly public works had to be destroyed to "give place to tardily comprehended improvements."[24] This makes reference to the large number of buildings and embellishments in each of the cities, some of which had been constructed only a few years before, that were obliterated to permit the development of parks and boulevards.

In January 1865, in anticipation of the resumption of work on the park, Stranahan, on behalf of the park commission, invited Calvert Vaux to view the grounds in the hope that he would agree to prepare a plan of development. After walking over every portion of the site, Vaux wrote to Olmsted in San Francisco (where Olmsted was preparing to manage a mining operation) that there might be another chance for the two men to work together, adding cautiously that "nothing may come of it." Vaux told Olmsted that he viewed the present 320-acre site as unsuitable for a park because much of the ground was barren and because of the "objectionable feature" of Flatbush Avenue's cutting the site nearly in half. As an alternative, Vaux proposed that lands to the west and south of the existing parcel be purchased to provide an uninterrupted setting, which would allow for a "large pond of at least forty acres," and which would give him a site more suitable for the naturalistic style of development he contemplated.[25] The letter and accompanying sketch indicate that Vaux alone was responsible for the design of Prospect Park and for its siting in relation to the principal entrance.

Apparently Stranahan was pleased with Vaux's preliminary survey, which contained an entrance of size and proportions in keeping with the image the commissioners had developed. Vaux submitted his preliminary plan on January 10. In late February he had not heard from the board but wrote again to Olmsted, stating that he was still optimistic. Moreover, Vaux expressed the hope that should he be asked to design the Brooklyn park, Olmsted would join him in the work.[26]

Olmsted wrote to Vaux in March that the design for the park was "excellent," noting that Vaux went "at once to the essential starting points." After months of waiting, Vaux was notified on May 13 that he would be asked to undertake the development of a plan for the park along the lines outlined in his letter of January 10. The formal offer came on 30 May 1865, and the contract was approved by the commissioners at a

meeting on June 13.[27]

Olmsted left California in October to join Vaux in the work on Prospect Park. By early 1866 a complete plan for the park was finished. It included the lands that Vaux had recommended adding to the site, although the legislature had not acted upon the proposal. Stranahan and the park board were so impressed by the design that they ordered Olmsted and Vaux to proceed in anticipation of favorable action in Albany. Indeed, the commissioners' report for 1866 stated that the plan "ought not be changed in any manner."[28]

Olmsted and Vaux's report to the park board described the purposes of a public park as well as the means by which they intended to achieve their goals. They expressed a belief that there was a "pleasure, common, constant and universal to all town parks, and that it results from the feeling of relief experienced by those entering them, on escaping from the cramped, confined and controlling circumstances of the streets of the town." This "*sense of enlarged freedom*" was believed to be "to all, at all times, the most certain and the most valuable gratification afforded by a park." Parks, they wrote, were to accommodate "numbers of people, desirous of moving for recreation among scenes that should be gratifying to their taste and imagination."[29] To be successful, they felt a park was to be more than a mere imitation of nature. The park had to blend nature into a realistic scene. The magic of the urban park was to convince the visitor that it possessed many more charms than it actually had.

Based on their experience with Central Park, the designers opposed placing of museums or other educational buildings within the park. They felt that the park should be part of the educational and cultural matrix of the community, but that the structures housing those activities should ring the park, but should not be within it.

In April 1866, the legislature approved the acquisition of the lands proposed by Vaux, to be included in the park and for the principal entrance, now known as Grand Army Plaza. The lands to the east of Flatbush Avenue which were acquired for the original park scheme were held for other public purposes. Thus, the site of the present-day Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Brooklyn Public Library's Central Building are part of the land acquired, but never used, for Prospect Park. The dream of Olmsted and Vaux to have their park unencumbered by structures serving ancillary or unrelated activities was realized because of the existence of large parcels of publicly-owned land on which such structures or activities could be placed. The balance of the unused site, north of Eastern Parkway, was sold to private developers in the 1880s.

There is another irony here. Egbert Viele, twice passed over in favor of Olmsted and Vaux, became the leading opponent of the sale of the lands east of Flatbush Avenue because, he believed, so long as they were held by the park board there was still a chance that his plan would be adopted. Sadly for him, his vision of a great urban park was never to be executed. His contribution to urban park design was considerable, and his voice in favor of Prospect Park was of considerable importance as a result of his

reputation and the experience he gained in the early stages of the development of Central Park.

Finally, on 29 May 1866, Olmsted and Vaux were appointed "Landscape Architects and Superintendents of the Park." Within weeks the development of Prospect Park began and the last step necessary for a complete victory for the park advocates was taken.

By the autumn of 1867 the park started to take shape. The *Brooklyn Eagle* commented that "the place bears traces of a family resemblance to Central Park." George Templeton Strong, the New York diarist, noted that he had his "first glimpse of the unfinished 'Prospect Park,' " which, he admitted, "will soon become a formidable rival to our Central Park. It begins its career with well-grown trees, and I am told, it commands a noble outlook over the two cities, the harbor, and the sea."[30]

In April 1866, the park board acquired a parcel of land for a parade ground. By virtue of this, there was a 39-acre site suitable not only for military parades of the nineteenth century, but equally valuable as a setting for twentieth century sports. Its existence and use as a site for formal, active recreation served the needs of Brooklyn for nearly a century. Thus, until the 1950s, when the ball diamonds on the Long Meadow were constructed, the mile-long meadow that spans the park from Grand Army Plaza to Prospect Park Southwest was left unspoiled.

By 1871 the primary work of developing the park was completed. Stranahan wrote that "the park...is so thoroughly delightful...; I am prouder of it than of any thing that I had to do with." That same year George Templeton Strong returned to the nearly finished Prospect Park and concluded somewhat reluctantly that "this park beats Central Park ten to one in trees. Its wealth of forest is enviable...it beats us [New York] in views and is a most lovely pleasure."[31] But it was not just those who viewed the park in its earliest form who praise it. Lewis Mumford cited Prospect Park as a "consummate example of romantic planning: deliberate separation of pedestrian paths, carriage drives, and equestrian traffic: a mutation that anticipated the organization of the modern city."[32]

In the first year following the start of construction more than 54,000 people visited the park site. Most of these were curiosity seekers who came to inspect the progress. Yet, even at this early date, there were people who took advantage of the opportunity to enjoy a day out-of-doors strolling or eating a casual picnic.

Prospect Park was an immediate success. In 1871, it attracted four and one-half million people. The purposes for which people came to the park included strolling, picnics, boating, concerts, croquet parties, church congregation outings, and family gatherings. The park boasted what the *Eagle* referred to as "convenient and pleasant resting places for lunching, reading, and quiet social meetings."[33]

Unlike contemporary times, the reports of the park commission show a notable absence of criminal activity. The park was patrolled by a special police force and was closed after dusk except along the perimeter. Yet, descriptions of the park and its use, such as a popular "park handbook"

written in 1874, reflect a positive atmosphere to which Brooklynites could retreat to enjoy a rustic environment. The *Eagle* captured this spirit in an article describing how the "public's fancy had been captured by the park and that everyone regardless of rank...enjoys baseball, cricket, football, a picnic ground, ice boat sailing, skating, and lover's walks." The *Union-Argus* observed that "there was a homogeneous character to the people who frequented the site, and the absence of a transient population that served to secure to all classes of citizens freedom from many restrictions which, in other cities, it is found necessary to impose on those who visit the parks."[34]

Yet, in but a few years, the problems of crime invaded Prospect Park; the problems of the city became the problems of the park. Of course, to expect otherwise would be beyond reason. No park can exists in a vacuum if it is to serve the public. Sadly, in modern times people retreat to private domains, such as Disney World, to achieve the same carefree recreation that was experienced in Prospect Park on a regular basis by Brooklynites of a century ago. Park crime must be in its proper context. In 1964, New York City Police Commissioner Michael Murphy observed that "there are fewer incidents of crime in Prospect Park...than in any other area of the city. However, when something does occur, it gets the headlines because it happened in a park." Lewis Mumford summed up the situation observing that "violence in parks is part of a much wider problem—the increase of violence in every part of our civilization."[35]

Finally, just as crime must be viewed in the context of the community in which it exists, it also must be recognized as something with which people can learn to cope. Police Department statistics indicate that the crime rates in large parks like Central and Prospect have not increased dramatically over the last decade.[36] Despite today's crime-permeated society, the past twenty-five years have seen Prospect Park achieve record levels of use. The closing of the park's drives for bicycling, the growth of jogging as a popular sport, and the use of the park as a setting for family gatherings on holidays—even if the next family is but a few feet away—demonstrate the validity of the park idea and the flexibility of the original design. Prospect Park as a naturalistic setting, with divisions maintained by the topography and horticulture, enables thousands of people to picnic within yards of the setting of an informal soccer game with neither activity impinging on the other. Olmsted and Vaux's design functions so well because it permits park users to make their own decisions about how they will spend their leisure time. The ultimate success is that it allows people to make choices in a setting where they are not conscious of making a choice.

Between 1871 and the end of 1873, Olmsted and Vaux completed the planting and architectural details of the park. With the dawn of the new year, the management of the park was directly in the hands of the park board. The designers, their task completed, moved on to other projects.

The Board of Commissioners of Prospect Park ceased to exist as of 15 June 1882, replaced by a municipal parks department under the direct

control of the mayor. Impetus for this change came during the mayoral campaign of 1881, in which the leading candidate, Seth Low, urged reform that would combine authority with responsibility. Since the park board was a creature of the state legislature, the mayor had little direct influence in its affairs. With Low's election came the implementation of his idea. After 22 years of public service, Stranahan turned over the park to the new commissioner in a ceremony that ended with a brief statement wishing the new keepers every success.

Following assumption of office, the new park commissioner ordered an audit of the books and records of the prior body. The city comptroller's audit turned up a shortage of $10,604.42. On 12 December 1882, shortly after the results of the audit were released, Stranahan stated his reaction in a letter to the comptroller:

> acting upon the principle by which I have been guided during twenty-two years of gratuitous service to the city, I hand you my check to cover such deficiency [as there exists] so that the books and accounts of the Park Commission can be correctly balanced as of the date of expiration of my term of office.

Ludwig Semler, the City Comptroller who conducted the audit, noted that "the discrepancy had occurred over a period of 22 years during which the Board had spent in excess of $8,000,000." Semler added that Stranahan's action was "in keeping with [Stranahan's] acknowledged public spirit and nice definition of his responsibility."[37]

The essence of the park's design was to create in the eye of the beholder the illusion of spatial distance, visual diversity, and horticultural naturalism. Thus, there was no place for a straight line in the park's scheme. Every pathway and road undulated along its course. And, not to be left alone, carefully placed clumps of shrubs, bushes, and trees blocked the view beyond adding to the intended purpose. Meadows suddenly open upon strollers who but a moment before were in a shaded forest. A pond or stream appears when but a few steps before it was invisible. The large trees native to the site were used to their best natural purposes; combinations of branch shape, color of leaf, and texture were emphasized to avoid monotony while adding a sense of natural "disorder."[38]

The work of the designers was hardly noticed after the construction and planting were finished. Few realized that hundreds of full-sized trees were moved to their best advantages. The fifty-seven-acre lake was entirely dug by hand. The soil from the excavation was used to create berms of earth around the perimeter to further divide the park from the surrounding city. Also far ahead of the general level of urban design were the engineering works that provided fresh water for the fountains, streams, and the lake or the elaborate system of drains, sewers, and catchment basins that maintained a dry, pleasant setting which was a sharp contrast to what was common to the city. The use of an early form of macadam paving gave the park all-weather roads which was also hailed by the public as a

significant step forward.

Prospect Park's successful design was the result of a happy combination of circumstances. Designers in the team of Olmsted and Vaux created a plan that skillfully combined the natural attributes of the site with the objectives of their commission to create a true paraphrase of the countryside. Leadership in the person of Stranahan ensured that the project proceeded with a minimum of political meddling or administrative interruptions. But, most of all it was circumstance—the natural configuration of the site gave the designers a site for a fifty-seven-acre lake, a body of water that creates the illusion of vast distances. The soil and topography resulted in the hills and valleys, the thick woods and the undulating meadows. The shape of the park permitted the designers to create glens and a secluded ravine where all sense of the nearby city is obliterated. The natural meadow along today's Prospect Park West gave rise to the Long Meadow which stretches for over a mile. The existence of the Parade Grounds and the unused lands east of Flatbush Avenue made it unnecessary to encroach upon the park itself for institutional buildings and sports fields. Clearly, the park is a gift of nature carefully molded and pruned to obtain the best advantages. Equally, Prospect Park is a tribute to those whose foresight made it a reality.

NOTES

1. This was especially heart-rendering since it came in the same year that the Dodgers finally won the World Series.

2. In 1855 the City of Brooklyn, comprised of the northwestern quarter of Kings County, merged with the City of Williamsburgh to form a city of 266,000 people, the nation's third-largest. By 1896, Brooklyn had merged with all of the towns in Kings County to become coterminous with the county. Two years later, Brooklyn was incorporated into the consolidated City of New York, losing its independence and relegated to subordinate status.

3. "Governor [Thomas] Dongan's Charter to New-York," *Acts Relating to the City of Brooklyn* (Brooklyn, 1840), 127-129.

4. *Third Census of the United States, 1810* (Washington, D.C., 1955); *Fourth Census of the United States, 1820* (Washington, D.C., 1959); Ralph Foster Weld, *Brooklyn Village, 1816-1834* (New York, 1938), 25, 274; *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850* (Washington, D.C., 1961); *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870* (Washington, D.C., 1963).

5. *New York Evening Post*, 3 July 1844.

6. George F. Chadwick, *The Park and the Town* (New York, 1966), 163-164; Andrew Jackson Downing, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (Boston, 1841), 48-53.

7. Andrew Jackson Downing, untitled essay, *The Horticulturist* III (October 1848), 154-156, 158.

8. Laura Wood Roper, *FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted* (Baltimore, 1973), 296.

9. *First Annual Report on the Improvements of the Central Park* (New York, 1857); Henry

Hope Reed and Sophia Duckworth, *Central Park: A History and a Guide* (New York, 1967), 13-15.
10. Frederick Law Olmsted, *Walks and Talks of An American Farmer in England* (London, 1852), 79, 81; Roper, *FLO*, 180-81.

11. Olmsted made three journeys to the south as an essayist for the *New York Times*. Collections of his dispatches were reprinted as *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (New York, 1856), *A Journey Through Texas* (New York, 1857) and *A Journey in the Back Country* (New York, 1858). Also see Roper, *FLO*, 182.

12. Roper. *FLO*, 388-99; Reed and Duckworth, *Central Park*, 14.

13. See M.M. Graff, *Central Park, Prospect Park—A New Perspective* (New York, 1985) 15-20, for a favorable treatment of Vaux's role, especially, in the creation of Central and Prospect parks.

14. The writings of Olmsted's son and colleague helped maintain the preeminence of Olmsted, Sr. See Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Theodora Kimball, *Forty Years of Landscape Architecture*, 2 vols. (New York, 1928) II: 41-43, 123-24; Reed, *Central Park*, 20. See also Albert Fein, *Landscape into Cityscape, Frederick Law Olmsted's Plans for a Greater New York* (Ithaca, 1967), especially the "Introduction," 1-42.

15. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The National Experience* (New York, 1966), p. 114.

16. Nehemiah Cleaveland, *Green-Wood Cemetery, A History of the Institution* (New York, 1866), 6-8, 168. See also Donald E. Simon, "The Worldly Side of Paradise: Green-Wood Cemetery," in Martha Pike and Janice Armstrong, eds., *A Time to Mourn: Expressions of Grief in Nineteenth Century America* (Stony Brook, 1980). 16.

17. *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau*, ed. Bradford Torrey (Boston, 1906), XII: 387.

18. "An Act to authorize the selection and location of certain grounds for public parks, and also a parade ground for the city of Brooklyn," *Laws of the State of New York*, Eighty-Second Session, Chapter 466, 1,077-78.

19. *Brooklyn Standard*, 3 December 1859.

20. "An Act to lay out a public park and a parade ground for the city of Brooklyn and to alter the commissioners' map of said city." *Laws of the State of New York*, Eighty-Third Session, Chapter 488, 964-76.

21. *First Annual Report of the Commissioners of Prospect Park* (Brooklyn, 1861), 28-30.

22. Egbert L. Viele, "Report upon the Topography and Improvement of Prospect Park," *First Annual Report of the Commissioners of Prospect Park* (Brooklyn, 1861), 39, 42, 44.

23. *Second Annual Report of the Commissioners of Prospect Park* (Brooklyn, 1862), 4-5.

24. *Fifth Annual Report of the Commissioners of Prospect Park* (Brooklyn, 1865), 5.

25. Calvert Vaux to Frederick Law Olmsted, 9 January 1865. Olmsted Papers, Library of Congress.

26. Calvert Vaux to James S. T. Stranahan, 10 January 1865; Calvert Vaux to Frederick Law Olmsted, 26 February 1865. On 27 February, Olmsted wrote to his wife that he would "like very much to go with Vaux into the Brooklyn park." Frederick Law Olmsted to Mrs. Olmsted, 27 February 1865. Olmsted Papers, Library of Congress.

27. Frederick Law Olmsted to Calvert Vaux, 13 March 1865; Calvert Vaux memorandum, 13 May 1865; Calvert Vaux memorandum, 30 May 1865. Olmsted Papers, Library of Congress. *Sixth Annual Report of the Commissioners of Prospect Park* (Brooklyn, 1866), 5-7.

28. *Sixth Annual Report*, 8.

29. Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, *Preliminary Report to the Commissioners for Laying Out a Park in Brooklyn, New York* (Brooklyn, 1866), 5-6, 7, 11.

30. *Brooklyn Eagle*, 21 October 1867; Allan Nevins and Milton Halsey Thomas, eds., *The Diary of George Templeton Strong*, 4 vols. (New York, 1952) 4:155.

31. James S. T. Stranahan, memorandum, 1871[?]. Olmsted Papers, Library of Congress. Nevins and Thomas, *Diary of George Templeton Strong*, 4:374.

32. Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York, 1938), 212.

33. *Brooklyn Eagle*, 15 June 1871.

34. E.B. Tripp, *A Handbook for Prospect Park* (New York, 1874), 16; *Brooklyn Eagle*, 9 October 1874; *Union-Argus*, 7 August 1877.

35. Michael Murphy letter to the author, 23 January 1964; Lewis Mumford letter to the author, 11 February 1964.

36. New York City Police Department, Public Information Office, telephone interview with the author, 1 May 1990.

37. As reported in the *Brooklyn Eagle*, 15 December 1882.

38. *Eighth Annual Report of the Commissioners of Prospect Park* (Brooklyn, 1868), 7-9, 33.

REVIEWS

BARBARA M. KELLY, ed. *Long Island: the Suburban Experience.* Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1990. Pp. 109. $20.00 (cloth), $10.00 (paper).

BARBARA M. KELLY, ed. *Suburbia Re-examined.* Contributions in Sociology No. 78. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989. Pp. 240. $37.95 (cloth).

Both of these volumes have their origins in papers presented to a Long Island Studies Conference sponsored by the Long Island Studies Institute at Hofstra University in June 1987. The first volume—appearing in the Long Island Studies Series by Heart of the Lakes Publishing—contains seven of the papers which deal exclusively with Long Island topics, while the second—published as 'Contributions in Sociology No. 78' by Greenwood—offers twenty-six papers re-examining 'suburbia' in general. This division makes sense since, from a Long Island perspective, it allows the Long Island papers to have a separate identity and catalogue description. Footnotes to the seven papers, together with a list of suggested readings on 'Suburbia' (the earliest work listed is Harlan Paul Douglass *The Suburban Trend* (1925), constitute a useful selection of pertinent sources for Long Island history, as well as general readings on American 'suburbs.' Footnotes to the papers in *Suburbia Re-examined* are likewise a valuable guide to recent secondary literature as well as to the sources used by authors in their particular investigations. The references indicate that this collection is by no means the first recent 're-examination of suburbia' by sociologists, at least, and one suspects that more 're-examinations of such varied and protean phenomena will appear as 'the non-place urban realm' further unfolds. History may have ended elsewhere, but not in 'the suburbs.'

Long Island's "suburban experience" is presented in three sections: 1) Brooklyn (Joseph Dorinson) and Queens (Jeffrey Kroessler) as 'classical suburbs'; 2) the Sands Point Gould/Guggenheim estate (Richard Winsche and Gary Hammond) and Ward Melville's 1940s 'Shopping Crescent Project' at Stony Brook as 'arcadian retreats: the suburban Gold Coast'; and 3) the Levittown utopia (Jenni Buhr); Port Jefferson and Patchogue, 'outfringe urban villages' as 'postwar automobile suburbs' (Margaret Boorstein); and finally the decline of the Great South Bay's shellfish industry as a consequence of suburban development along the South Shore (Jeffrey Kassner). The 'suggested readings' were compiled by Professor

Natalie A. Naylor, director of the Long Island Studies Institute, and the whole is introduced in a brief sketch of Long Island as 'A Suburban Place' by Barbara M. Kelly, the Institute's curator.

The larger of the two volumes contains twenty-six papers treating the triumphs, tribulations, and changing attributes of suburbia and its residents as these sometime 'bedroom communities' of nearby cities have evolved into outer cities of more or less urbanized regions. Sam Warner's keynote address put it very succinctly: "when suburbs are the city." Changes in transport and communication, and their effects upon city and suburb, workplace and home, are explored by specialists; perhaps the book's most distinctive contribution, besides 'up-dating' sociological findings, is the section on suburban real estate development and finance. This reader sometimes has the sense—as with so much publication in social sciences—that contributors have rediscovered the wheel and that the shape of the wheel at any time is very much in the eye of the beholder, except that, here and there, the wheel seems to have acquired a new spoke or two in the course of turning over a few more decades of urban transformation.

Perhaps too many papers were given at the conference. In order to include so many contributions, authors seem constrained to compress their findings into a comparatively small space—mean length of papers, 8.77 pages. Nevertheless, the Long Island Studies Institute of Hofstra University is to be commended for organizing and hosting a conference which produced two valuable publications. *Suburbia Re-Examined* furnishes some essential reading for students of recent urban change. Ten dollars for the paperback of *Long Island: The Suburbian Experience* is a bargain. The book deserves its place in the growing list of the Long Island Studies Series.

ERIC E. LAMPARD
SUNY at Stony Brook

Walt Whitman's New York, From Manhattan to Montauk. Henry M. Christman, ed. c. 1963; reprint ed., New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1989. Illustrations. Pp. 188. $9.95 (paper).

The Whitman of this reprinted collection of newspaper articles, written in 1861, is not the passionate, earthy Whitman we know from his poetry. Here he is a genial, chatty collector of stories and reminiscences about the history of Brooklyn and the scenery and people of Long Island. These articles, called "Brooklyniana" by the Brooklyn *Standard*, where they appeared, are a mixture of pride in the expanding, dynamic city of Whitman's day, and nostalgia for the simple, semi-rural village of half-a-century earlier. Like many mid-nineteenth century Americans, Whitman could be both a booster and an antiquarian.

In his booster mood, Whitman projects that by 1900 Brooklyn will become a larger city than New York, because "its situation for grandeur,

and salubrity is unsurpassed probably on the whole surface of the globe; and its destiny is to be among the most famed and choice of the half dozen of the leading cities of the world"(p.137). Then (as indeed now in some neighborhoods) Brooklyn's distinguishing architectural feature was "the hundreds and thousands of superb private dwellings, for the comfort and luxury of the great body of middle-class people" (p.57).

In his nostalgic mood, Whitman more expresses a tone than is explicit about what has been lost. His recovery of physical relics and personal recollections of the past is a collection of "interesting traditions and venerable facts of our city, giving it a broad an mellow light, a retrospective and antiquarian background"(p. 77) In one article, he lingers over Francis Guy's painting, *Snow Scene in Brooklyn*, now in the Brooklyn Museum, which depicts the early-nineteenth century village and includes portraits of old citizens among the people going about their daily activities. This painting was "one of the few relics left to remind the present inhabitants of Brooklyn of the days and scenes of their grandfathers"(p.19). Whitman was well aware that memory was short in an America always engrossed in the present: "Few think of the events and persons now departed from the stage, now in the midst of the turmoil and excitement of the great play of life and business going on around us." This loss of contact with history was especially true in rapidly growing cities, "filled with a comparatively fresh population, *not* descendants of the old residenters, and without hereditary interest in the locations and their surroundings" (p. 3).

Whitman sets about to encourage interest in the people and places of Brooklyn and Long Island. His twenty-three articles are a collection of material from histories, interviews with old citizens, recollections from his youth in Brooklyn, and his wanderings about the city and travels to Long Island. His organization is generally geographical, taking the reader east from Manhattan (despite this collections's subtitle, treated only briefly) and lingering lovingly in Brooklyn. He concludes with a railway trip (beginning in the recently rediscovered Atlantic Avenue tunnel) through the Long Island countryside's villages, "prairie-like and comparatively profitless" (p. 164), the Hempstead Plains, Hicksville, "that place of vanished greatness," a land speculation project gone bust (p. 165), the "brush" country around Farmingville, and on to the terminus at Greenport. There, while idly fishing off a dock, he was casually invited to join a delightful sail to Montauk Point.

Apart from the articles' eastward trend, Whitman's topics are randomly presented: he describes bits of the early settlement of Brooklyn, asserting that the Dutch made their first permanent settlement there, not in Manhattan, and then discusses such things as old houses, graveyards, churches, theatres, jail, the development of newspapers, and statistics of manufactures in Brooklyn, which, unlike the Manhattan of his poetry, does not seem to have a working class life. In general, the past is portrayed as cheerful, or, in difficult times like the Revolution, heroic.

One grim episode, though, that Whitman believed deserves a more

appropriate memory, is the tale of the British prison ships moored off Brooklyn during the Revolution. Hundreds of American prisoners died of disease in these hulks, and were buried in shallow graves along the shore. Whitman campaigned for a monument to their memory and a vault for their bones, which, in the early-nineteenth century, had been collected in a temporary wooden mausoleum, "probably the most slatternly and dirtiest object to be seen anywhere in Brooklyn"(p. 83). Whitman, who disliked "such absurd designs as by some adverse fates have been fixed upon all other American monuments"(p. 39), namely obelisks and columns, would be disappointed in the current monument in Fort Greene Park, constructed in 1908.

Whitman was not unique or alone among mid-nineteenth century Americans in his faith in progress and nostalgia for a simpler past. Local histories were becoming more and more popular in the 1840s and 1850s, and many people had a sense that not only a simpler but a more heroic and virtuous past was fast disappearing beneath the advance of urbanization, commercialization, and industrialization. Whitman's Brooklynites looked for anchorage in tradition and stability while they took pride in their modern city.

This collection of articles, nicely introduced by Henry M. Christman, is not profound, but is pleasant reading for Brooklynites whose interest in the past goes further back than the Dodgers, and for all who appreciate a writer who was equally at home in the city and the country.

WILBUR R. MILLER
SUNY at Stony Brook

T. H. Breen. Imagining the Past: East Hampton Histories. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1989. Illustrations, bibliography, index. Pp. xiv, 306. $19.95.

History has many uses. It may function as a cautionary tale, a paradigm for future action, a civic lesson, or a means of depth perception with which to understand the present. Additionally, it may serve as a source of community cohesion, or simply as entertainment. The best history operates on several levels. Such is T. H. Breen's *Imagining the Past*. This book sprang from Breen's tenure as East Hampton's "Resident Humanist," a somewhat pretentious title which went along with a grant the town received to hire Breen as an outside specialist to re-examine East Hampton's long and carefully guarded history. Breen's sojourn during a period of increasing developmental pressure and ecological problems, not only resulted in a new interpretation of early East Hampton history, but heightened his appreciation of how the present utilizes—and manipulates—the past.

Breen, a professor of American History at Northwestern University and a specialist in the colonial period, was hired to interpret the Mulford farmhouse, a late-seventeenth-century structure which is a showpiece of

the village's historic area. The farmhouse was closely connected with Samuel Mulford, a leading citizen, entrepreneur, and delegate to the New York Assembly. Before writing about the farmhouse, Breen studied the historical record and concluded that early East Hampton differed considerably from the tranquil, community-minded town presented in the self-congratulatory chronicles written by later boosters. Actually, he demonstrates, it took the better part of twenty years to jell as a community. This formative period saw the establishment of a rudimentary social and political hierarchy, and the evolution of a basic attitude towards the local Indians.

During this period many families lost the struggle to establish themselves, and there were other losers as well. Though East Hampton histories stress the "friendliness" of the Montauk Indians, Breen argues that these indigenous people had little choice. The Indians sold the original East Hampton lands as a means to gain European technology, especially the metal muxes (awls) used for production of wampum, then highly valued by the Indians and English alike. Unfortunately, the Montauks got into a war with the Naragansetts in which they did so badly that they had to ask the English for help. The help they got, but at a price. Their numbers were depleted by war and settler-introduced disease, while the rise of a monetary economy dried up the value of wampum. They had little of value except their land, which was sold or granted away by the sachem, Wyandance. By 1660 the Indians were a client people, living on the margins of society, their conduct determined by English East Hamptonites who reserved the right to punish them for what were perceived as transgressions.

Breen's main argument is that, contrary to being a tranquil, satisfied, self-sufficient community, the town was characterized by the commercial and economic self-interest that typified pre-industrial capitalism. Accordingly, the "golden age" was not the early years of settlement, but the succeeding period, from 1670 to 1730, when East Hampton became a "Puritan Boom Town." The source of prosperity was the "Whale Design"—the professionalization and rationalization of off-shore whaling—the profits from which brought East Hampton into the international trading system, and created a level of affluence perhaps not matched until the late-nineteenth century. The "Whale Design" provided the capital for a considerable volume of consumer goods from New York, Boston, and Europe. East Hamptonites were so hungry for the merchandise flowing into the town that they began to exploit their environment for anything marketable—cereals, wood, beef and, especially, whale products.

The town's major port was Northwest Harbor, where the principal merchants built warehouses for the import-export trade. The most successful was Samuel Mulford, the villager whose farmhouse Breen was hired to interpret. Breen concluded that Mulford's warehouse was as important as the port, since it symbolized the highly capitalistic nature of East Hampton's early history.

The busy docks and warehouses vanished when the economic boom

which created them collapsed. The cause of this collapse—the same of many of East Hampton and Long Island's problems today—was environmental. In pursuit of capital to finance their appetite for imported goods, the early settlers exploited their environment until they drained it of its wealth. By the early-eighteenth century, wood was so scarce that fences were difficult to maintain. Sheep denuded the fields of ground cover, and, most decisively, whales no longer appeared on the coastline. Breen compares the over-hunting of whales—which ruined the town's early prosperity—with the over-harvesting of striped bass which threatens the survival of today's baymen. Like the contemporary baymen, those involved in the "Whale Design" refused to admit that their activities had an effect on the disappearance of the species. Rather, they blamed the dearth of whales on bureaucratic meddling by the colonial government. By 1730 the great days of the "Whale Design" and East Hampton's first boom were over.

Coincidentally, just as Breen uncovered the significance of the "Whale Design" and the part Northwest Harbor played in it, an important proposal for development threatened the entire area. Though he stood outside the controversy, Breen could observe the leading players and learn how the town's perception of its history and tradition were used by those who wanted to halt the proposed development. In the end, the developer sold most of his Northwest Harbor land to the town, and the bulk of the area will remain as it was.

After many false starts, sometimes caused by local officials who knew less than they thought they did, Breen tracked down the approximate site of Mulford's warehouse. Ironically, shortly afterward he discovered that much of the building had probably been incorporated into the farmhouse by Mulford's descendants, who cannibalized the warehouse after its usefulness was over. Whether the site will benefit from an archaeological investigation remains unresolved.

By providing a fresh and convincing reinterpretation of the history of East Hampton from its founding until the collapse of the "Whale Design," Imagining the Past greatly expands the reader's understanding of Long Island and colonial history. Breen's premise is that from the beginning, East Hamptonites exploited the resources responsible for their wealth. The fate of off-shore whaling and the dismal state of the baymen today reinforce the growing consensus that growth has environmental limits, and that to ignore them invites disaster.

Additionally, and depressingly, tradition and history also are exploitable. Between 1730 and ca. 1890, East Hampton was the sleepy little provincial town described by early historians. Its subsequent prodigious growth in population and affluence was based on marketing its carefully maintained and polished image as a community which has preserved its unique and history-based traditions. As Breen sees it, what local realtors (and they are legion) now hawk is a sense of continuity, community, and lineage to an increasingly rootless, mobile, and transitory people. In other words, history sells. While this may disconcert some, it underscores the power—

perhaps the necessity—of history as a source of self-identity. In the end, that is what this thoughtful book is about.

RICHARD F. WELCH
Associate Editor, *Long Island Forum*

Constance J. Terry, ed. *In the Wake of Whales: The Whaling Journals of Capt. Edwin Peter Brown 1841-1847.* Orient: Old Orient Press, 1988. Illustrations, glossary. Pp. 408. $57.50.

Most people who have been exposed to the lore of whaling think of the whalemen as being on the run from morning until night, engaged in a constant succession of violent and perilous activities. They envision a hardy crew lower its boats, row for miles in heavy seas, harpoon and kill the quarry, laboriously tow it back to the ship, cut it up, and boil the blubber. The next morning, at the crack of dawn, comes the cry "Blows! Blows!" and the performance is repeated, until every cask is full of oil and the ship is ready to sail for home.

The popular concept of the whaler's life as one of almost continual toil, excitement, and peril has come largely from the pages of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. Melville, an authority on the techniques of whaling, wrote from personal experience. But the image he stamped in our memory of the whaleman's thrilling life at sea is not altogether authentic. The journals and letters of nineteenth-century whalemen show that the killing of a whale was an infrequent interruption of hours that turned into weeks when there was nothing to do. This premise is confirmed by a handsomely-produced recent book, *In The Wake of Whales: The Whaling Journals of Capt. Edwin Peter Brown 1841-1847.*

The Old Orient Press, a firm whose publications are dedicated to preserving eastern Long Island's historical heritage, has transcribed three of the journals and logs kept by Captain Brown. These records of the voyage of the whaleship *Noble* out of New Suffolk and the bark *Washington* and the ship *Lucy Ann*, out of Greenport, offer first-hand accounts of life aboard a whaler. For diehard fans of whaling and the sea, the journals bring to life the activity, and the long periods of inactivity, that the captains and crews endured.

A native and resident of Orient, Captain Brown typified the men that sailed from Long Island ports in the heyday of the whaling era. Born in 1813 in Oysterponds (Orient), Edwin Peter Brown was one of ten children raised in a farming family. In 1833, at the age of twenty, Brown signed on as boatsteerer on the whaling bark *Franklin*, out of Sag Harbor. His skill as a seaman caught the captain's eye, and with each of the *Franklin*'s succeeding voyages, his rank and responsibilities increased. By 1838, the owners put him in command of another of their vessels, the whaleship *Noble*; readers are introduced to Brown in the journals of his 1841-1843 voyage as master of the *Noble*.

In a ship's log or journal, the captain reported not only navigational

data and weather conditions, but also whale sightings, passing ships, and land seen on the horizon. Recorded as well were accounts of the capture and killing of whales, and the rendering of the by-products. The log included details of the ship's day-to-day maintenance, including illnesses, accidents, and other information about the crew. Brown embellished his logs with primitive drawings of sightings; his illustrations and log entries are reproduced faithfully in the book. Glimpses of his character are revealed in his references to family and home, and by a few emotional entries made as he neared the end of a voyage.

Of the many transcribed whaling logs, most remain on microfilm and few are published as books. Constance Terry, who edited this volume, deserves commendation for an interesting format. Each of the three logs is introduced with a brief history of the whaleship and a map charting the voyage.

Although Herman Melville was no stranger to the sea, men like Captain Brown, who supervised every detail on a day-by-day basis, provided the authentic account of nineteenth-century whaling.

INA KATZ
The Whaling Museum, Cold Spring Harbor

RON ZIEL. *The Long Island Rail Road in Early Photographs*. New York: Dover Publications, 1990. Illustrations, index. Pp. viii, 152. $13.95 (paper).

This latest volume from Dover Publications is a credit both to the publisher and the author. Printed in the familiar nine-by-twelve-inch format of the other Dover books on Long Island (*Nassau, Suffolk*, and *Brooklyn*), this new collection offers 225 well-selected photos, printed on semi-gloss stock that well reproduces the tones of the original photos. Like other volumes in the series, it is paper-bound and furnished with an eye-catching coated cover; it is a bargain at $13.95.

Mr. Ziel has chosen to call his book *The Long Island Rail Road in Early Photographs*, but the title is not to be taken seriously. There are plenty of early photos from the nineteenth century, but the majority date to World War I, the 1920s and '30s, and many are as recent as the 1950s. Railroad books, especially those slanted to the rail-fan audience, tend to suffer from an excess of locomotive close-ups and technical jargon, a fault of which some of Mr. Ziel's earlier efforts have not been free. In this volume, however, the temptation is resisted by a large number of full-train views, trains in stations, long right-of-way shots, and attractive scenic views along every type of the Long Island Rail Road's terrain.

The thirteen chapters cover a wide range of topics; about half give pictorial treatment to the physical railroad—the types of engines and cars in use from the 1860s to the 1960s; stations and structures (towers and roundhouses); the last years of steampassenger operation on the Main Line and on the Port Jefferson and the Oyster Bay Branches; and the yards at Morris Park and Bay Ridge. More interesting to the general public is

the involvement of the LIRR in our nation's history—troop hauling in the Spanish-American War and World War I, and Theodore Roosevelt speaking from the platform of an observation car; segregation (the Jim Crow Wainscott station with its "whites only, blacks only" waiting room (p. 76); the operation of trolley and storage-battery cars as well as of the conventional steam and diesel equipment.

Did you know that the LIRR was in the farm business? Ziel's photos of the experimental farms at Wading River and Medford show the line's efforts to refute the old idea that Long Island soil was too poor for farming. Hal Fullerton, the road's one-man public relations department in 1906, exhibits his melons and radishes in rebuttal.

Ziel's book recalls the days of the "LIRR Navy"—not just the ferries and tugs in New York harbor, but also the Great White Fleet on the East End—the big excursions steamers to New London, Block Island, and even Newport. Less glamourous but economically important were the car-float operations at Bay Ridge and Long Island City.

The human element on the railroad is thoughtfully included—the unseen but essential towerman, the parlor car porter, the proud engineers, and the humble crossing gateman. One chapter could have been omitted: "Leased Pennsylvania Locomotives." It is probably safe to say that most of those who read this book neither know nor care about the types and numbers of Pennsylvania engines on Long Island.

The finest feature is the quality and detail of the captions. An astonishing amount of Long Island lore is conveyed in the often lengthy but fascinating write-ups accompanying each picture. Mr. Ziel's dense text, evidence of the long hours he must have spent researching each picture, points out details that readers probably would not otherwise notice. Each caption relates to the history of the road and explains the photo's significance.

Finally, *The Long Island Rail Road in Early Photographs* is immensely nostalgic to those of us who remember back to the 1930s—the train gates at the Flatbush Avenue Station, the local service on Atlantic Avenue, the cavernous interior of Pennsylvania Station, and the cottage-like stations on the Montauk Branch before elevation.

VINCENT F. SEYFRIED
Garden City Historian

(editor's note: Vincent F. Seyfried is the author of The Long Island Rail Road, *6 vols. (Uniondale, 1961-66).*

WILLIAM E. GOLDER. *Long Island's First Inhabitants: Paleo—Archaic—Transitional—Woodland: A 9,000-Year History of the Indian Occupation of Long Island.* 3rd ed. Southold: Academy Printing, 1989. Illustrations. 98 pp. $12.95 (paper).

William E. Golder has written an introductory guide to the prehistory of Long Island. The product of a lifetime of avocational interest in the

subject, *Long Island's First Inhabitants* is full of insights into the experience and vision of a local collector and enthusiast. Unfortunately, it does not fare so well as an introduction to Long Island archaeology.

To begin with, many of Golder's basic interpretations of North American prehistory are of questionable validity. He asserts that it would have taken Native Americans 25,000 years to develop from using simple stone tools to the elaborate "fluted blade cultures of 25,000 years ago" (p. 1). Not only is it impossible to reconstruct how long a development of this sort might have required (one cannot assume a uniform rate of change, and no artifacts can be conclusively dated to the period in question), but few reputable archaeologists would defend a date much beyond 12,000 BP for the fluted tools.

Too many of the thirteen chapters bear little or no relation to the native past of Long Island. They deal with subjects that range from folk notions surrounding prehistoric European stone tools to a letter from chief Sealth (for whom Seattle is named) of the Duwamish, in Washington State, to President Franklin Pierce (pp. 46-47). The reader may be intrigued by the many detours, and even sympathize with Sealth's elegant ecological and indigenous manifesto, but one wonders what such materials are doing in a work on Long Island prehistory. A sense of integration and logical organization is lacking. The book reads like a potpourri of miscellaneous writings that are tangentially related at best.

Much of what Golder does have to say on the prehistory of Long Island is highly conjectural. For instance, he repeatedly contends that "if the Dutch and English hadn't replaced the Algonquin on Long Island, the Iroquois would have" (p. 36). Aside from the fact that there is little solid evidence to this effect, it is best to address the substance of the past and refrain from speculating on events that never took place. In particular, these comments can be misconstrued as providing a historical justification for European imperialism on Long Island.

To be sure, Golder decries the bloody inroads of European expansionism, although his indignation is blunted by language that, at times, is patronizing. While he routinely refers to males as men, he occasionally refers to indigenous women as *squaws* (e.g., "The men hunted and fish...the squaws took great pride in making the clay pots"[p. 33]). This word should be avoided by scholars, except when quoting historical sources. It has a pejorative connotation that many Native Americans find demeaning. Likewise, Golder invokes "the Indians' inherent desire to gamble" (p. 55), as if Native Americans were naturally predisposed toward gambling more than other groups. Such remarks have no place in scholarly discourse. They feed popular stereotypes and offend native peoples.

Golder fails to substantiate most of his interpretive claims with pertinent references. Not that he need provide multiple citations for every point, but the more contentious assertions ought to be documented. Similarly, inspired members of the general public would probably appreciate further direction on additional reading. The few sources recommended are dated, too technical, or of limited bearing on Long Island's prehistory. In fact,

Golder overlooks an entire body of relevant, recent material by professionals like Gaynell Stone, John Strong, and many others. He harbors a long-standing and deep-seated distrust of professional scholars that rings abusive and bitter. He complains that a prominent former State Archaeologist tried to "horn in on" an accomplished local amateur's "digging of the Orient Focus Culture" (p. 97) some forty years ago. Golder fails to note, however, that it was the State Archaeologist's job to follow up on major finds such as this one. In any event, the figures involved are long gone from the scene, and these attacks neither shed light on the situation nor heal old wounds. They simply increase the tensions between professionals and amateurs.

In addition, there is the question of production quality. This unindexed piece is little more than an extended pamphlet, and many of the illustrations are crude line drawings that do not add much in the way of illumination. One would like to see a higher professional standard.

In the end, Golder's book is mostly of interest for its personal reflections on collecting the artifacts and lore of prehistoric Long island. The histories of the Long Island Chapter of the New York State Archaeological Association and the Southold Indian Museum are especially revealing. They contain an insider's view of the development of a powerful institution in Long island archaeology. The varied contents of the book are all reconciled by the passion of one who loves his native soil and its history. Professional archaeologist would do well to look to this world for a glimpse into a perspective that we too commonly dismiss outright.

Long Island's First Inhabitants holds one final lesson for archaeologists. Local bookstores report that it is selling briskly, and there is no other introductory guide. People are in need of a concise, well-illustrated, and authoritative sketch of the indigenous heritage of Long Island. Professionals have been remiss in not supplying the public with an informative yet engaging account of this kind. It is long overdue, and its pursuit by qualified individuals is strongly encouraged.

Such a publication should not only take pains to acknowledge the substantial contributions of amateurs to our understanding of Long Island archaeology, but also should include input from Native Americans, who, as the subject of the discussion, have commonly been excluded from participation by both professionals and amateurs. It is time to gather the various parties with an interest in the prehistory of Paumanok. Together, we are truly far more than the sum of our parts.

PETER S. DUNHAM
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Producers, ALISON HAIN and ANN B. GLYNN; writer ALISON HAIN; historical consultant, NATALIE A. NAYLOR. *A School in Time and Place.* VHS, 16 minutes. Cold Spring Harbor: Cold Spring Harbor School District Productions, 1990. Video and guide, $49.00 plus $2.00 handling/mailing charge.

In the late eighteenth century Long Island children attended school in small, rude, one-room structures scattered across the rural landscape. Their short terms were scheduled to accommodate the area's farm economy. Goose quill pens were used for writing, books were scarce, and teachers were poorly trained. After a few years of rudimentary education, most boys and girls returned to the fields, barnyards, kitchens and assumed their adult responsibilities.

Two centuries later things could not be more different. Large, expensive, centralized schools shelter hundreds, even thousands, of students. Local education budgets total in the millions, required to pay for a large corps of professional teachers, athletic facilities, computer labs, and libraries.

In an effort to document this remarkable transition, and to provide some background on the changing face of Long Island across two centuries, the Cold Spring Harbor School District created a video entitled "A School In Time And Place," celebrating the bicentennial of the West Side School. According to tradition, President George Washington stopped to watch local residents work on the school during his 1790 visit to the region.

The video begins with views of Old Bethpage Village in winter, as schoolchildren in eighteenth-century dress make their way to the site's one room schoolhouse. We are then show a recreation of school being conducted in that far-off era. A combination of narrative and illustration create the context, describing the economy and society of post-Revolutionary Long Island and the story of the founding of the original West Side School.

In the nineteenth century Long Island expanded its contacts with the outside world through shipping, whaling, and the arrival of the railroad. The number of schools grew also, to accommodate the Island's increasing population. By 1850 free public education was official policy. Teachers often boarded with local families and were paid approximately $5 per week. Women frequently received less. Toward the end of the century new subjects appeared in the curriculum, such as health, while report cards make their appearance.

By the end of the nineteenth century, growth and prosperity were beginning to transform the area. Mansions were going up by the score, and several artists' colonies had appeared. Newer, larger schools contained graded classes. Some communities boasted new high schools. Cold Spring Harbor's West Side School outgrew its original home and moved to a new site. Students began studying music, art, physical education, industrial arts, and science.

By 1939 a still larger building was required, originally three classes with plenty of outdoor space for playing fields. The area's post-World War II suburban explosion has led to major expansion of the structure, which now contains all the required modern facilities.

The video concludes with an interview with the school's present principal which explores changes in educational philosophy in recent years, and finally with a quotation from Walt Whitman, Long Island's own poet, on the role of schools in society.

This project covers a big subject in a relatively short time, and by necessity some topics are slighted or telescoped. Nonetheless, it tells an interesting story about an important element in local life, while also sketching a picture of larger trends in Long Island history. Intended for a variety of audiences, it would probably be most appropriate for students in the upper grades of elementary school, or junior high school classes.

The video and guide may be purchased for $29.00, plus $2 for handling and mailing, from Cold Spring Harbor School District Productions, Goose Hill Road, Cold Spring Harbor, NY 11724.

GEOFFREY L. ROSSANO
Salisbury School

EXHIBIT REVIEW

"The Blessed Isle: Hal B. Fullerton and His Image of Long Island." Suffolk County Historical Society, 300 West Main Street, Riverhead. Through January 1991.

Hal B. Fullerton (1857-1935) was an outstanding photographer and horticulturist, who, beginning in 1897, publicized Long Island and its railroad as the LIRR's Special Agent. His dramatic photographs celebrated the Island for its scenery, farms, summer homes, fishing, boating, duck hunting, roads, bicycling paths, and every aspect of the railroad's service to city folk seeking recreation. In 1905 this transplanted Ohioan was put in charge of the LIRR's agricultural department. With the invaluable help of his wife, Edith Fullerton, a gardening expert from Long Island whose published books and pamphlets included *How to Grow a Vegetable Garden*, he started experimental farms in Wading River and Medford to demonstrate the merit and variety of the Island's vegetables, fruits, and plants. The Fullertons worked closely together, with Hal as photographer-planner, and Edith as writer-manager who put her husband's ideas to work.

To capture the Fullertons' engaging vision of this "Blessed Isle," the Suffolk County Historical Society, Barbara E. Austen, Curator, is showing a wide assortment of their photographs, printed works, and memorabilia. Charles Sachs, a curator at the South Street Seaport Museum, did the bulk of the research and wrote the text for this impressive exhibit, on view at the Society (well-worth visiting in its own right) at 300 W. Main Street, Riverhead. The exhibit, open Monday through Saturday from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m., will be on view until the end of December. Admission is free, with a donation requested.

THOMAS D. BEAL
SUNY at Stony Brook

BOOK NOTES

Paul Townsend, ed. *Long Island Almanac 1990.* Ronkonkoma: LI Business News, 1990. Pp. 76. $24.50 (paper).
This is *LI Business New*'s twenty-third annual collection of well-presented tables, surveys, and data on commerce and industry, population, government, technology, education, transportation, hotels, hospitals, and other aspects of the Nassau/Suffolk region. A four-page-wide foldout map presents a chronology of major events and information on climate, airports, point-to-point mileages, and travel times to New York City. The *Almanac* may be obtained from the Office of Economic Development of Nassau or Suffolk Counties, or directly from LI Business News, 2150 Smithtown Road, Ronkonkoma, NY 11779.

Embassy's Complete Boating Guide to Long Island Sound. Essex, CT: Embassy Marine Publishing, 1989. Illustrations, maps, charts, index. Pp. 440. $34.95 (paper).

This full-color, well-formatted, and informative book is an authoritative boating guide for the Sound, with material on the history, ecology, and geology of the Sound, followed by separate chapters on each of sixty harbor areas, complete with charts, navigational instructions, and descriptions of what to do and see. The guide includes a list of some 500 marinas and yacht clubs. More than 150 bait shops, chandleries, sail lofts, and other services are included, together with over 300 accessible restaurants, and information on fishing, birding, and scuba diving. The book is avilable at marinas and book stores, or can be ordered from Embassy Marine Publishing, 142 Ferry Road, Old Saybrook, CT 06475 (phone 800-999-1075).

Steve Dunwell, photographer. *Long Island: A Scenic Discovery.* Essex, CT: Embassy Marine Publishing & Foremost, 1985. Color photographs. Pp. 128. $30.00.

Following a rather bland three-page introduction, this handsome, coffee-table book consists entirely of color photographs, mostly of Nassau and Suffolk with a few bridge-shots of Brooklyn and Queens. There are, perhaps, too many aerial views of harbors, beaches, and lighthouses. A photo of a ploughed field at "Deerfield" may be a fugitive from one of the publisher's scenic books about New England. Let us hope that the next time around Steve Dunwell will focus his lens on the Island's schools and workplaces and, especially, on its people.

Jeffrey A. Kroessler and Nina S. Rappaport. *Historic Preservation in Queens.* Sunnyside: Queens Preservation League, 1990. Maps, illustrations. Pp. 88. $10 (paper). To be reviewed, Spring 1991.

Communications

Dear Professor Wunderlich:
I enjoyed your article on Lion Gardiner in the Fall 1989 issue of *LIHJ*, and am glad you pointed out [p. 9] that he had offered to sell what later became Smithtown to Daniel Searle. This is not mentioned in J. Lawrence Smith's account in Munsell ["Smithtown," *History of Suffolk County, New York* (1882)], or in the 1967 Smith genealogy.

If you intend to write about other Long Island manors, may I suggest Song Bok Kim's book, *Landlord and Tenant in Colonial New York* (1978), as a guide to determine which Long Island landholdings were actually manors. The only ones I am aware of that can be considered manors are the following (though some do not measure up to Dr. Kim's standards):
— Eaton, granted to Richard & Alexander Bryan
— Fisher's Island, granted to John Winthrop Jr.
— Gardiner's Island
— Plum Island, granted to Samuel Willys
— Queen's Village (Lloyd's Neck), granted to James Lloyd
— St. George, granted to William ("Tangier") Smith
— Shelter Island, granted to Nathaniel and Constant Sylvester

As you can see, the families of Floyd, Nicoll, and Van Cortlandt are absent from the list—as Mastic, Shirley, Islip, and Sagtikos were only patents.

Henry B. Hoff
New York, NY

Editor's response: We invite Mr. Hoff or any other scholar of Long Island's colonial manors and patents to write an article on this subject.

Dear Editor:
Our recent activities have included a trip to the Statue of Liberty, a Revolutionary War memorial, a lesson in eighteenth-century cooking, a Glen Head history night, and a Shinnecock Indian lecture. Right now, my most time-consuming project is trying to save the ninety-eight acres purchased from the Matinecocks in 1684 by John Underhill Jr. The land is on 25A, opposite C.W. Post/LIU. I am in my seventh year of this effort, which requires a bond issue....

How do we stop the skyscrapers from moving past Queens and on to Riverhead and Montauk? A girl called up today and said, "Mr. Peterkin, where are there any old houses?" She was not as depressed as I was...the

1990s are the last years to save what is left of historic Long Island. It's now or never.

John G. Peterkin
Cedar Swamp Historical Society

Dear Editor,
The *Long Island Historical Journal* continues to improve and serves a very useful purpose to educators on the Island...

The Henry George School has been involved in adult education for almost twenty-five years on Long Island and is interested in the concerns of our community. We are chartered by the University of the State of New York; our main school is in New York City. Beside classes, we hold periodic seminars on current economic topics...

The philosophy of the school is centered on the importance of land in America, historically and economically. Since we believe that land value should be taxed much more than presently, with a decrease in taxes on labor and capital, the issue of property tax receives much of our attention. If you feel there is a need for an article dealing with this, please let me know the details.

Stan Rubenstein
Director, Henry George School of Social Science, Cutchogue

Editor's response: we invite Mr. Rubenstein to submit an account of Henry George's ideas with reference to Long Island, just as we encourage all readers with something to say about Long Island as America to send us his or her work.

We welcome comments, proposals for articles or book reviews, or offers to help in whatever phase of our work you select.

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