

# THE LONG ISLAND HISTORICAL JOURNAL



One of "The Janes who made the planes"  
at Grumman in World War II

Fall 1999

Volume 12 • Number 1



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

*Walt Whitman*

*Fall 1999*

Volume 12 • Number 1

**Published by  
The Department of History  
State University of New York at Stony Brook**

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**ISSN 0898-7084**

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**Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in  
*Historical Abstracts and America: History and Life.***

The editors gratefully acknowledge the support of the Office of the Provost and of the Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences, USB. We thank the Center for Excellence and Innovation in Education, USB, and the Long Island Studies Council for their generous assistance. We appreciate the unstinting cooperation of Gary J. Marker, chair, Department of History, USB, and of past chairpersons Wilbur R. Miller, Joel T. Rosenthal, and Fred Weinstein. We also thank Wanda Mocarski and Susan Grumet for their technical assistance.

The *Long Island Historical Journal* is published twice a year, in May and November. Annual subscriptions are \$15, single copies \$8. Address articles, correspondence, books for review, and subscriptions to:

The Editor, LIHJ  
Department of History  
University at Stony Brook  
Stony Brook, NY 11794-4348

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*Cover:* Maxine Couvalt, working on the aft fuselage of a Grumman *Hellcat* fighter plane. Photo, 30 August 1944, courtesy Northrop Grumman History Center, Bethpage, L.I.

# TABLE of CONTENTS

EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE JANES WHO MADE THE PLANES:  
GRUMMAN IN WORLD WAR II

*By Christine Kleinegger - 1*

THE "ENCOURAGEMENT OF SEMINARIES OF  
LEARNING": THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF  
EARLY LONG ISLAND ACADEMIES

*By Natalie A. Naylor - 11*

"FOR GOD, COUNTRY, AND HOME":  
THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE  
CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS USA, 1935-1957

*By David L. O'Connor - 31*

NASSAU CHALLENGES  
GOV. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT'S  
PROGRAM FOR COUNTY REFORM

*By Constantine E. Theodosiou - 54*

LOYALTY AND DISSENT:  
FREE SPEECH AT  
ADELPHI UNIVERSITY, 1964-1968

*By Daniel Rosenberg - 76*

## **Secondary School Essay Contest Winners**

WOMEN OF THE UNION:  
THE BROOKLYN AND LONG ISLAND  
SANITARY FAIR OF 1864

*By Melissa Brewster - 92*

LONG ISLAND'S ERA  
OF OCTAGONS

*By Jessie Mee - 101*

THE 1939 WORLD'S FAIR AND ITS  
VISION OF THE FUTURE

By Lindsey Gish, Bryan Harmon, and Matthew Jensen - 108

REVIEWS - 114

Edwin Burrows and Mike Wallace.  
*Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898.*  
By Joshua Ruff

Robert P. Crease. *Making Physics: A Biography of  
Brookhaven National Laboratory, 1946-1972.*  
By Peter B. Kahn

Averill Dayton Geus. *From Sea to Sea:  
350 Years of East Hampton History.*  
By Mary Petrie

Kenneth C. Beady. *Arthur S. Greene, 1867-1955:  
The Life and Work of a Long Island Photographer*  
By Suzanne Johnson

Mary Feeney Vahey. *A Hidden History: Slavery, Abolition, and the  
Underground Railroad in Cow Neck and on Long Island.*  
By Kathleen Velsor

Roberta Halporn. *New York Is a Rubber's Paradise:  
A Guide to New York's Cemeteries in the Five Boroughs.*  
and  
SCOPE Staff. *Where to Go and What to Do on Long Island*  
By Gaynell Stone

Terry Walton. *Cold Spring Harbor...  
Rediscovering History in Streets and Shores.*  
By Christine King

Book Notes - 132

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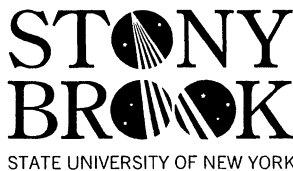
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TOM TWOMEY is president of the East Hampton Library and serves as an officer of the Guild Hall Cultural Center of East Hampton. He served as a vice-chair of the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Town of East Hampton Committee and chair of its Lecture Series Committee. Previously, he edited *Blueprint for Our Future: Creating Jobs, Preserving the Environment*. He lives in East Hampton, New York.

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

This issue presents exceptional insight into the history of Long Island, addressing the role of women as wartime workers; the creation of secondary schools; the modernization of county government; a veterans' organization in the era of World War II; and a Cold War controversy over academic freedom.

Women as wartime industrial workers are featured in Christine Kleinegger's "The Janes Who Made the Planes." Kleinegger, a historian at the State Museum in Albany, interviewed female assembly-line veterans, illuminating these unsung heroines' service. Natalie A. Naylor, director of Hofstra's Long Island Studies Institute, explores the origin and growth of Clinton Academy in Suffolk, Erasmus Hall in Brooklyn, and Union Hall in Queens. Constantine Theodosiou examines adoption of the county executive system. Dean Theodosiou, of Beach Channel High School, analyzes the conflicting aims of Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt's Democratic Party and Nassau County's Republican leadership headed by J. Russel Sprague. Two superbly researched interpretations discuss tension during the World War II and Cold War periods. David L. O'Connor, a USB doctoral candidate, scrutinizes the Catholic War Veterans of the USA, an organization formed in Queens in 1935. Daniel Rosenberg, of Adelphi University, probes the 1960s' struggle between Adelphi's administration and a politically leftist professor. In addition are three outstanding essays by high school students, on the Civil War efforts of Long Island women, the 1939 World's Fair, and the history of octagonal houses. Finally, our reviews begin with Pulitzer Prize-winning *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*, by Mike Wallace and, we say proudly, Ted Burrows, a member of our advisory board. Also reviewed is Bob Crease's *Making Physics: A Biography of Brookhaven National Laboratory, 1946-1972*, parts of which appeared first in our journal; Averill Geus's history of East Hampton; books about slavery on Long Island, a notable Port Jefferson photographer, and other significant titles.

All-in-all a great issue, one we hope will encourage readers to renew and also find new subscribers. Still \$15 a year, the *LIHJ* is an ideal gift for the many who cherish their heritage.



# THE JANES WHO MADE THE PLANES: GRUMMAN IN WORLD WAR II

*By Christine Kleinegger*

In March 1942, three months after the United States entered World War II, six women walked on to the factory floor at Grumman's Plant No. 1 in Bethpage, Long Island, to become the first female aircraft workers on Long Island. Eight thousand more women would ultimately join the "Grumman War Productions Corps" by the end of 1943. Comprising roughly 30 percent of Grumman's 25,400 workers at the peak of wartime employment, the "Janes Who Made the Planes" built *Wildcats*, *Hellcats*, and *Avengers* for the Navy.<sup>1</sup>

This case study of women aircraft workers is based on research conducted for an exhibit, "'The Janes Who Made the Planes': Grumman in World War II," at the New York State Museum in Albany. In many ways it follows the "story line" of women who worked in defense industries all across America: recruitment, training, working conditions, balancing work and family life, and, for most at the end of the war, lay-off. Sources include interviews with nine women who worked at Grumman during the war; documents, photographs, and artifacts from the Grumman History Center in Bethpage, Long Island; and Grumman's employee newspaper *Plane News*.<sup>2</sup>

The Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation was founded in 1930 by Leroy (Roy) Grumman and Leon (Jake) Swirbul, chief engineer and general manager, respectively. The employees numbered all of twenty-one, but Grumman was destined to become the biggest employer on Long Island for more than half a century. From the start, the Navy was the primary customer (for which Grumman produced more than seventeen thousand planes during World War II), but the firm broadened its customer base by manufacturing amphibious aircraft for commercial use, luxury planes for civilians, trucks, busses, and even canoes. Grumman would ultimately make significant contributions to aerospace engineering, including the development of the Apollo Lunar Module used in the 1969 moon landing. However, the federal government's decision in the early 1990s to drastically cut back defense spending spelled the end for Grumman, which had become overly dependent on production of the *F-14 Tomcat*. In 1994, after a period of financial troubles, Grumman was acquired by Northrop Corporation, headquartered in Los Angeles, California, to form Northrop-Grumman. The operations on Long Island closed. The end of the Cold War marked the demise of Grumman.

But this story looks back to an earlier period of massive arms build-up. As millions of men left their jobs for the military, it became clear that the Arsenal of Democracy would have to be partly "manned" by women. On 28 May 1943,



the *Port Jefferson Times* informed its readers that, “if enough fighters and torpedo bombers are to reach our boys in the Pacific and European fronts, their wives and mothers, sisters and sweethearts, are going to have to help build them.” Nationwide, half a million women were building planes by 1944.<sup>3</sup>

Grumman’s rate of production went from forty planes per year before the war, to forty planes per month after 1940, and reached a record high of 664 planes in the month of March 1945. To meet its rapidly expanding need for labor, Grumman gave preference to local residents in order to avoid the problems associated with boom-town growth. Thus, an indigenous population—women—was a perfect pool of potential workers for Grumman. Presumed to be unsuited to aircraft production before the war, women suddenly became “ideal” aircraft workers after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Often commended were their alleged patience with repetitious, monotonous tasks, their dexterous fingers, their docility in taking orders, and their ability to squeeze into small, awkward spots. Women soon predominated in certain departments. The Electrical Department of Plant 14 had fifty-two women and only two men. (John Porter, the department head, reported in *Plane News* that “the girls learn quickly and in many instances are much more capable than men in assembling delicate parts”).<sup>4</sup>

Grumman offered training to women at several “aviation schools” around Long Island. In six-to-ten-week courses, women learned the rudiments of riveting, blueprint reading, sub-assembly, and other semi-skilled functions associated with aircraft fabrication. Many women enjoyed learning new skills. Ethel Nelson Surprise was animated when she recalled her training: “I remember coming home and telling my father about the different things we were doing and he’d shake his head and say ‘I can never imagine my daughters riveting and working at a drill press.’ We’d sit around the table and talk about things we learned that day and he couldn’t get over it.”<sup>5</sup>

College-educated women were also recruited as apprentice engineers to assist (male) Grumman engineers in designing aircraft. These women were given crash courses in drafting, calculus, mechanics, and aerodynamics. Even so, Margaret Carvo, a pharmacist recruited because of her scientific training, recalled that on her first day in the Experimental Engineering Department, she had to ask, “What’s a rivet?”<sup>6</sup>

Grumman was also the first company to hire women to test military aircraft as it came off the line. Pilots Barbara Jayne, Elizabeth Hooker, and “Teddy” Kenyon were no doubt the most glamorous and famous of Grumman’s female defense workers, featured in magazine advertisements for cosmetics and cigarettes. Although female test pilots did a vital job in insuring the safety and reliability of warplanes, sex role stereotypes prevented them from performing the full range of testing procedures. These trained, experienced female fliers were not permitted to test experimental planes or fly “sticky” ships suspected of serious problems. Other women fliers, such as Jacqueline Cochran, director of the Women’s Air Force Service Pilots, dismissed the more prosaic role of women test pilots as “aerial dish washing.”<sup>7</sup>

Grumman did not have to try hard to persuade women already in the work force to give up their low-paying, traditionally “female” jobs and switch to high-paying defense work. All the women interviewed cited money as well as patriotism as prime motivators in seeking jobs at Grumman. In this instance, patriotism was profitable. Typically, an unskilled woman worker earned around twenty-five cents an hour at the start of the war; Grumman paid them \$1 an hour for semi-skilled work. Twenty-two year old Lucille Saccareccia, who had worked at a soda fountain at Woolworth’s, quadrupled her wages when she became a riveter at Grumman. While working at Grumman, the Nelson sisters, Dorothy and Ethel, brought home far more money than their father, who was a carpenter. Their greater earning capacity did not overturn patriarchal authority, however, since they handed their paychecks over to their father.

For African American women and men the war provided an unprecedented opportunity to break into a virtually all-white industry. Nationwide, only 240 blacks were working in aviation in 1940—mostly as janitors. Early in 1941, Grumman and other Long Island area aircraft companies (Republic and Brewster) were cited for racial discrimination by New York’s Lt. Governor Charles Poletti. By August 1941, these companies had expanded job opportunities for blacks, and Grumman promised to train every qualified black man in Nassau and Suffolk counties. By 1942, black women were recruited as well. Because Grumman hired mostly local residents, and the black population on Long Island in the early 1940s was not large, the pool of black workers for Grumman was relatively small. In 1940 only 3.3 percent of Nassau’s population was nonwhite. The eight hundred African American women and men who worked at Grumman by 1943 comprised roughly 3 percent of Grumman’s work force, mirroring the area’s overall racial composition. It is likely there were more African American females than males residing on Long Island, because the more affluent suburban households employed the women as domestic servants. For domestic servants, a job in a defense plant represented upward mobility, autonomy, and the opportunity to learn a skill and earn higher wages. Some of these women were able to save enough money to buy homes after the war, although de facto segregation prevented them from purchasing homes in many new developments, including Levittown.<sup>8</sup>

The war represented a watershed in American history by introducing the new working woman—middle-class, middle-aged, and married. The average age of women working at Grumman was thirty-six, although these women ranged from recent high school graduates to grandmothers in their sixties. Management understood that in order to recruit mothers of small children and reduce absenteeism, some consideration had to be given to the family responsibilities of working women. Non-union Grumman was a model of corporate paternalism. The influx of thousands of women into its plants during World War II coincided with, and arguably may have caused, the creation of company-sponsored social welfare programs, many of which benefitted male

as well as female workers. Cafeterias, exercise breaks and recreational sports, morale-boosting social activities and entertainment, comfortable rest rooms, a lending library, and a service for running errands were wartime innovations designed to make life easier or more pleasant for harried Grumman defense workers. Women counselors were hired to orient new women workers to factory life, and to help solve family problems that interfered with productivity. Greater turnover among the female workers was a reality. In January 1944, women comprised 31 percent of the workforce, but made up 64 percent of the workers who quit. Family obligations might have been the reason women left their jobs at a rate disproportionate to that of men.<sup>9</sup>

The chief problem for many working mothers was the need for child care. Grumman operated three “war-time nurseries” in nearby communities that accommodated up to fifty children between the ages of two and five, and cost fifty cents a day. Yet, with eight thousand women working at Grumman, clearly most mothers relied on more informal forms of child care—usually relatives or neighbors. Dorothy Nelson Rabas, an inspector at Grumman during the war, had to quit her job when her neighbor would no longer take care of her daughter. When asked why she had not used the war-time nursery, Rabas recalled it was too far away. Car pooling and gas shortages, in addition to the ten-hour work day, made child care in neighboring areas impractical for many mothers. The “war-time nurseries” were aptly named, for they were disbanded after the war, reflecting the view that child care was a war emergency measure and not an employment benefit of working parents. Despite the public relations value of the nursery schools (and Grumman played this up), the women interviewed seemed largely unaware of these child-care services, although all of them recalled the annual Christmas turkey each worker received.<sup>10</sup>

This limited corporate vision of day care was symptomatic of the general ambivalence about working women in the first half of the 1940s. Within a relatively short period—roughly three and a half years—cultural prescriptions regarding working women reversed themselves. The cultural flip-flop regarding women’s place—in the home, in the defense plant, and in the home again—must have made some women’s heads spin. Early in the war, in December 1942, an editorial in *Plane News* entitled “A Merry Christmas to the Ladies” presented a feminist analysis of the war: “The place of women in the world is one of the points of issue in this war and the outcome of the war will determine whether she is to be an inferior creature according to the Nazi scheme or a free person of equal rights which she holds in the democratic way of life.” The editorial went on to predict that women in the shop would have further opportunities ahead of them.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the war, *Plane News* printed dozens of editorials, cartoons, articles, and features on individual women that applauded women’s patriotism and celebrated their skill and perseverance. In this way, Grumman management motivated women and, at the same time, may have minimized male doubts about women’s ability to do the job. It is unrealistic to imagine

that the men in the shops were wholly receptive to the idea of women joining the ranks of a traditionally male industry. Even women who recalled their male coworkers treating them with comradely friendliness and cooperation also reported practical jokes played on them, like being sent on errands for bogus tools. While these pranks were also played on new male workers, certainly wolf whistles were reserved only for women. However, the responses of the women to this form of male attention varied, especially in an era less conscious of sexual harassment on the job; an eighteen-year-old farm girl, Janet McGaughran, retaliated by whistling back. When asked if men exhibited resentment about women coming into the plant, Lucille Saccareccia had fond memories of that period of her life:

Oh, no, there was no resentment. I mean it was “Hallelujah.” You have to picture—twenty-two years old and you’re walking down an aisle...and there’s nothing but men on either side, right? and there’s five women—they’d bring you in about half a dozen at a time. And five women walking down this aisle—and the whistling and the yelling. You’d go to a fountain to get a drink and all of a sudden there’s twenty guys around you, you’re like “wow.” I got reprimanded quite a bit for attracting too much attention...but it was fun.

Saccareccia ultimately married one of her coworkers, and *Plane News* was full of gossipy columns about shop floor flirtations. Squibs such as this were typical fillers: “Al Dobler, leadman in Dpt. 59, Pl. 2, and Doris Pignataro, same Dpt., are taking the fatal step on June 20. It’s a Grumman romance.”<sup>12</sup>

Today, practical jokes and wolf whistles might be considered elements of a “hostile” work environment, especially for new workers learning new tasks in an alien setting. In an article in *Plane News* marking the two-year anniversary of the first woman workers, one foreman recalled the first day on the job for those assigned to his shop: “Catcalls and whistles followed the girls from the minute they appeared that morning. All day long the men employed paraded past the Inspection Crib, rubber-necking at those ten new girls. They were quite a curiosity.” Not surprisingly, the women, in turn, reported being slightly confused by all the attention, plus the newness of the work.<sup>13</sup>

The only short story featured in *Plane News* during the war years revolved around the antagonism and sexual tension felt by a macho welder toward the “frail dame” he was charged to train. Significantly, it was called “Private War—The Story of a Girl Aircrafter.” The male author hardly employed the language of good-natured camaraderie in his description of Molly’s first day on the job: “Bill Norton grinned from ear to ear like a wolf watching an unsuspecting dinner fall into his lap.” Molly’s eyes were described as “frightened.” Already the gang behind [Bill] were making loud and funny remarks about Bill’s new helper.” Sexual innuendo was obvious when Bill predicted Molly “would faint every time he lit his torch.... Slowly his eyes went

over the girl....He could tell she knew he was looking her over...from the nervous way her hands fluttered.” In addition, Bill pulled a trick on Molly, giving her a pair of safety goggles purposely dipped in soot. By the end of the story, however, Molly had earned Bill’s respect by her determination and hard work. On the surface, the story dealt with the establishment of male-female comradeship, but the description of Molly’s first day was of a threatening and threatened environment. At best, it resembled a male initiation rite in which the raw recruit was tested. No wonder Grumman hired women counselors to help orient new women workers to this alien male environment.<sup>14</sup>

One of *Plane News*’s “Woman of the Week” mini-biographies describes the first day of a woman welder in the formerly all-male Tank Department of Plant 12: Cecelia Murphy “had been trained for welding, but she hadn’t been prepared to cope with the situation that was to confront her.” She herself recalled, “I was never so scared in my life and I wasn’t there any time at all when I burst out crying. I just didn’t know what else to do.” Her foreman remembered that it was quite a problem to know what to do with a female welder.<sup>15</sup>

Several months after the war ended *Plane News* published an article asking men what they missed most about the women who used to work in the shop. Some men commented that they missed “the sweaters and slacks,” and the “distractions...those hourly parades to the ‘lounge’ were really something!” Men may have been more candid when the war was over and the pro-woman worker propaganda had ceased, because their comments were mostly negative, such as “I don’t miss them at all, except like a toothache.” According to the article, life in the shops without women was not as exciting, but it was safer and saner. Quotes from male workers suggest that the presence of women inhibited the full expression of a male work culture. One man remarked that,

Women are okay; they did a swell job helping us get out the planes, but, darn it, no matter how hard they tried they never could stand the gaff like men They wanted all the equality of man, but you couldn’t talk to them like you’d talk to a man. They’d cry if you bawled ‘em out, and they’d cry if you praised ‘em.

Another man echoed this belief that women co-workers inhibited male behavior:

The men could never be natural with the women around. You couldn’t swear if you had to; you have to be a perfect gentleman all the time, and no guy can do that and get his work done, too. Women are okay—I married one, didn’t I?—but they don’t belong in the shop with men.

The consensus was, “Sure, we miss the women; they brightened up the place, but honestly, work is more enjoyable without them. The ‘strange interlude’ is over; now we can be ourselves again.”<sup>16</sup>

As with other defense industries after the war, aircraft companies lost most of their government contracts and needed far fewer employees. Economic reality dictated that Grumman reduce its labor force to one-fourth its wartime size. However, it was prevailing ideas about sex roles that dictated *who* would have to be let go—women.

Women employed specifically for the “Grumman War Production Corp” knew they were hired only for the duration of the war—the name itself was clear about that. As the war wound down, foremen were asked to make lists of their workers in order of proficiency to plan the massive lay-offs that soon would occur. Apparently, no women were deemed proficient enough to retain, despite three and a half years of accolades from management about how well they performed on the job. The day after V-J Day, Grumman laid off all its employees; two weeks later only male employees were called back. Ironically, by calling back the most highly skilled mechanics, who happened not coincidentally to be male, Grumman’s production manager found himself without a single riveter. Riveters were lower on the skill scale but essential to building planes, and certainly thousands of women were trained as riveters. Yet, even when emergency telegrams were sent out to riveters to be rehired, no women were invited back.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, seniority also played a role in who was asked back. Roy Grumman instructed the personnel office not to cut anyone hired during the company’s first ten years, 1930 to 1940, when it happened that no women worked in production. Thus, in addition to ideological presumptions about women’s place, the seemingly objective criteria of skill level and seniority militated against rehiring women in production. Consequently, by 1947 only 213 women worked at Grumman, compared to some eight thousand at the height of war-time production in 1943. Of those 213 women, 210 were office workers and only three worked in production.<sup>18</sup>

Dorothy Nelson Rabas, an inspector at Grumman during the war, summed up society’s contradictory expectations of working women in the 1940s: “You did know that as a woman you were able to do a man’s job—and you could gracefully withdraw from it and turn it back to the men.”

This very contradiction has proven to be a puzzle to historians. Some wish to view “Rosie the Riveter” as a feminist heroine or foremother—a physically strong, spunky pioneer in a man’s world. But there is historic irony in this vision: the war was followed almost immediately by the era of “the Feminine Mystique,” when femininity was once again defined in terms of submissiveness and domesticity. Thus, women were expected to return to their homes, to their roles as wives, mothers, and full-time homemakers. Many of them did, some happily throwing down their rivet guns and bucking bars to take up electric mixers and baby bottles.<sup>19</sup>

Yet 86 percent of women surveyed in Nassau County in August 1945 said they expected to work after the war. Many American women, through economic necessity or the desire for a career, did continue to work after the

war, either part-time or in alternating periods of employment and child rearing.<sup>20</sup>

All but one of the Grumman women interviewed continued to work after the war—mostly in lower-paying “pink collar” jobs ranging from running a luncheonette to stringing pearls. Most of the women regretted that they were unable to stay at Grumman, which they considered the best job they ever had. These women had been more than willing to accommodate themselves to the demands of industrial work, given the alternatives. All the women interviewed had overwhelmingly positive memories, enhanced by several factors: they were mostly young, in their early twenties; five were single; six had no children at the time; they were energetic, had relatively few household responsibilities, and could take advantage of after-work sports programs and dances; and war work was a glamorous and exciting adventure compared to what life might have held for them otherwise. Even the sexual attention may have been viewed as a plus by young, single women interested in dating or marriage. Older married women, coping with child care, housework, ration books, food shortages, and drop-dead fatigue, might have reported more job-related stress. Finally, fifty years may have put a nostalgic patina on the war years, especially in interviews timed for the fiftieth anniversary. In any case, these women largely viewed their wartime work experience as the most exciting period of their lives.

The war, and working in defense plants, did not liberate American women but set the stage for later generations of women who would consider satisfying, well-paid work their right. During the war, “Rosie the Riveter” and the “Janes who Made the Planes [at Grumman]” embarked on what has become the modern woman’s challenge: balancing work and family.

## NOTES

*I wish to thank these nine women for sharing their stories: Margaret Carvo; the late Frances P. Ewen; Alyse Foote; Virginia Gordon; Marion Jackson; Janet McGaughran; Dorothy Nelson Rabas; Lucille Saccareccia; and Ethel Nelson Surprise. Joseph F. Meany, Jr., co-curated the exhibit “The Janes Who Made the Planes.”*

1. Grumman statistics for Oct. 1943, found in comparative employment statistics for 1942, 1943, and 1944, Grumman History Center; my title is based on a World War II song “We’re the Janes Who Make the Planes,” cited in Richard R. Lingeman, *Don’t You Know There’s a War On?* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1970), 222; Lingeman also cites “The Lady at Lockheed” and the better known “Rosie the Riveter” as other songs that sang the praises of women aviation workers.

2. The ages of the nine women interviewed ranged from sixty-nine to ninety, but most were in their early seventies; thus, the cohort best represented worked for Grumman in their early twenties, although the average age of women at Grumman during the war was thirty-six. As mortality precluded more interviews with women who were middle-aged or older during the

war, my small sample is not entirely representative of the new prototype of working woman—middle-aged and married. Five of the women interviewed were single when hired, three were married, and one (the oldest, now deceased) was a widow. Two are African Americans. Three had children. All but one (a high school student) had been employed before the war; one had a college degree in pharmacy at the time she was hired by Grumman.

3. "Grumman Plant Is Seeking Workers," *Port Jefferson Times*, 28 May 1943; 486,100 women worked in the aircraft industry in Nov. 1943, compared to 23,100 women in Jan. 1942 and 28,500 in Oct. 1944 (*Aviation Facts and Figures*, Washington, D.C.: American Aviation Publications, 1959.) 74.

4. "Grumman's World War II Airplanes," F4F Series (*Wildcat*), 1; Richard Thruelsen, *The Grumman Story* (New York: Praeger, 1976), 148; "In the Grumman Spot Light," *Plane News*, 23 July 1942, 5.

5. Author's interview with Ethel Nelson Surprise, 6 Sept. 1991.

6. Author's interview with Margaret Carvo, 6 Sept. 1991.

7. Charles Paul May, *Women in Aeronautics* (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962) 167-8; for example, an advertisement for Camel cigarettes featured "Teddy" Kenyon in *The Saturday Evening Post*, 10 June 1944, 47; Deborah G. Douglas, *United States Women in Aviation, 1940-1985* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990) 17-19.

8. A. Russell Buchanan, *Black Americans in World War II* (Santa Barbara, Cal.: Clio Books, 1977), 41; "Survey Says Aircraft Firms Bar Negroes," *PM*, 2 Feb. 1941, 18; "Bigotry in Hiring Employees Almost Wiped Out in State," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 25 Aug. 1941; New York State Commission Against Discrimination, *Nonwhites in New York's Four "Suburban" Counties* (Division of Research Trend Reports, No. 3, June 1959), 2a.

9. However, overall turnover at Grumman was only half of the average for the aircraft industry (*Time*, 11 Sept. 1944, 86); Report on Labor Turnover, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1944, showing females quitting at rates consistently higher than males from December 1943 through May 1944.

10. The journalist Agnes E. Meyer estimated that the largest group of youngsters in need of care were two-year-olds born after Pearl Harbor; she noted that at the start of the war Grumman's personnel department tried to reject women with small children, but that was not feasible as the "nurseries were a great asset to Grumman because they gave them the pick of the superior type of woman who will not work unless she can make proper provisions for her children"; Meyer cited the three nursery schools where "women can conveniently leave their children before they go to work" (*Journey Through Chaos*, New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1943) 283); author's interview with Dorothy Nelson Rabas, 6 Sept. 1999.

11. "A Merry Christmas to the Ladies," *Plane News*, 24 Dec. 1942, 4.

12. Author's interview with Lucille Saccareccia, 5 Sept. 1991.

13. "Award Two-Year Stripes to Women Who First Invaded Men's Domain," *Plane News*, 2 Mar. 1944, 4.

14. John F. Anthony, "Private War: The Story of a Girl Aircrafter," *Plane News*, 9 Dec. 1943, 7

15. "Woman of the Week: She's the First Woman to Enter Syosset Tank Dept.," *Plane News*,



13 July 1944, 4.

16. "Men Miss Slacks, Sweaters Most but Won't Admit It," *Plane News*, 7 Nov. 1945, 1; soon after women "invaded" the factory floor, a *Plane News* gossip column reported the establishment of a "profanity club" in Dept. 34—each swear word costing a worker a nickel ("Heard Around the Shop," 29 Apr. 1942, 2).

17. Thruelsen, 217, 220.

18 Ibid, 219; Report on Employment and Payrolls (NYS Dept. of Labor, Division of Placement and Employment Insurance, Bureau of Research and Statistics), Oct. 1947.

19. Betty Friedan identified the ideal of "the Feminine Mystique" in her book of the same name (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963).

20. N.Y.S. Dept. of Labor Survey (Division of Industrial Relations, Women in Industry and Minimum Wage); Aug. 1945, 23.

# THE "ENCOURAGEMENT OF SEMINARIES OF LEARNING": THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY LONG ISLAND ACADEMIES

*By Natalie A. Naylor*

Long Island's early academies set the pattern for later academies in the nineteenth century. In 1784, Governor George Clinton recommended to the legislators the "encouragement of seminaries of learning." The first two incorporated academies in New York State were organized on Long Island—Clinton Academy in East Hampton and Erasmus Hall in Flatbush, now part of Brooklyn. Five years later, Union Hall in Jamaica, Queens, was incorporated, the third academy on Long Island and the eighth academy chartered by the Regents of the University of the State of New York.<sup>1</sup> Thus, each of the three counties then in existence on Long Island had an academy before the close of the eighteenth century.

Academies flourished in the antebellum years, competing for students with both colleges and common (public elementary) schools. The quasi-public academies which dotted the landscape throughout Long Island and the new republic were sources of community pride. With the development of public high schools after the Civil War, many of the academies ceased operating or merged with the new high schools. Institutions that fail to survive, however important they may be in their own time, far too often disappear from history. Furthermore, historians of education tend to focus on growth of public schools while neglecting private institutions, including academies, female seminaries, institutes, and entrepreneurial schools. Examination of the origins and history of early Long Island academies, together with state policy and legislation affecting them, enables us to understand the origins of secondary education. Indeed, these academies became models for later institutions and illustrate patterns and practices of other Long Island academies whose records have not survived.

## **Beginnings**

After the Battle of Long Island in Brooklyn in August 1776, Long Island was occupied by British soldiers and their Hessian and Tory allies for more than seven years. Many Long Island patriots fled to the Connecticut mainland, and schools and education were disrupted. Less than two months after the British finally evacuated Long Island and New York City, Governor Clinton,

in his January 1784 message to the legislature, stated:

Neglect of the Education of Youth, is among the Evils consequent on War. Perhaps there is scarce any Thing more worthy your Attention, than the Revival and Encouragement of Seminaries of Learning; and nothing by which we can more satisfactorily express our Gratitude to the supreme Being, for his past Favours; since Piety and Virtue are generally the Offspring of an enlightened Understanding.<sup>2</sup>

In New York, the state began at the top of the educational ladder with higher education, which individual families or local communities could not provide on their own. In May 1784, the legislature's first education law created the Regents of the University of the State of New York. This law, introduced by Senator James Duane (who was also mayor of New York City), revised the charter and changed the name of King's College, founded in the city in 1754, to Columbia.<sup>3</sup>

In 1786, the Regents named a committee to revise Columbia's unwieldy governance structure. Duane chaired the committee, which included among its members Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and John H. Livingston, a Dutch Reformed minister. Their report, issued the following year, included this recommendation on academies:

Your committee are of the opinion that liberal protection and encouragement ought to be given to academies for the instruction of youth in the languages and useful knowledge; these academies though under the grade of Colleges are highly beneficial, but owing their establishment to private benevolencies labor under disadvantages which ought to be removed; their property can only be effectually preserved and secured by vesting them in incorporated trustees....Your committee also conceive that privileges may be granted to such academies which will render them more respectable, and be a strong encouragement to emulation and diligence both in the Teachers and Scholars.<sup>4</sup>

Among the original twenty-four regents was Ezra L'Hommedieu, who served until he died in 1811. A key figure in the law chartering academies, L'Hommedieu was a native and resident of Southold, a graduate of Yale College, and a distinguished lawyer, state senator, and holder of many other public offices.<sup>5</sup> Most important for education, he is the "Father of the University of the State of New York" or the New York Board of Regents, because of his role in the 1787 bill that modified the original 1784 law to its more permanent form. The draft of the 1787 state senate bill was in his handwriting, and he was influential in effecting compromises between the assembly and senate bills. Section twelve of the bill authorized the regents to incorporate academies "for the Promotion of Literature," while other sections detailed powers of academy trustees. This was the Magna Charta for

academies.<sup>6</sup>

It was under this legislation that the first two Long Island academies were chartered in November 1787. Clinton Academy in East Hampton had opened in 1785, and its principal, the Reverend Samuel Buell, had petitioned the legislature for a charter. Erasmus Hall in Flatbush, however, was named first in the bill, and the two institutions have vied for the honor of being New York's first incorporated academy.

Most incorporated academies began with subscriptions from individuals in a community. They charged tuition and, if incorporated by the regents in New York, were required to have their own building, be governed by a board of trustees, and impose no religious test on students or faculty. Some later academies were chartered by the legislature rather than the regents. Most academies enrolled girls as well as boys, particularly in their English Departments, or had separate "Female Departments." Some schools were single sex; those for females were more popular and often called "seminaries." Indeed, by 1847, girls were in the majority in the academies in New York State.<sup>7</sup>

The ages of students usually ranged from five or six years to the late teens. Academies had day students, but most attracted some students from beyond the local community. They offered boarding facilities, usually with "approved families" in the community, perhaps with the principal's family, or under the auspices of the institution.

Even more numerous than chartered academies were the private ventures—unincorporated academies, select schools, and private schools which had no charter or state supervision. These were usually the entrepreneurial creations of a schoolteacher who literally hung out his shingle, advertising in the local press. Although most of these schools were in operation for only a relatively short time, they greatly outnumbered incorporated academies.<sup>8</sup>

As the historian Lawrence A. Cremin summarized the situation:

The academy, which reached the height of its development during the nineteenth century, became a characteristically American catchall school that enrolled such students as it could attract and taught them such subjects of the English or Latin-grammar curriculum as seemed appropriate."<sup>9</sup>

Many of today's surviving academies transformed themselves into elite college-preparatory institutions, or were established in a second wave of academy founding in the late nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Most are quite different from the typical antebellum educational institutions. The history of the earliest academies provides information on the most popular form of secondary education in the nineteenth century.

## Clinton Academy

The prime leader in the founding of Clinton Academy in East Hampton was the Reverend Samuel Buell, the minister of the East Hampton Presbyterian Church from 1746 until 1798, who was appointed to be a regent in 1784.<sup>11</sup> Like many other academies, Clinton Academy began with subscriptions from the community and region. Of the nearly £935 contributed, more than half came from twelve donors who subscribed from £23 to £88 each. Buell was the third largest benefactor, giving £65, the equivalent today of more than \$2,500. He even supervised the construction of the building. "Our Academy has especially engrossed my attention and care," he wrote in October 1784. The three-story, 50'x25' building with brick gabled ends and "near 40ty windows" was "finished" in an "elegant manner." Buell explained that he was unable to visit his friends in Connecticut because the "twelve or fourteen men...daily at work...continually want my advice."<sup>12</sup>

Buell also wrote about his goals for the academy:

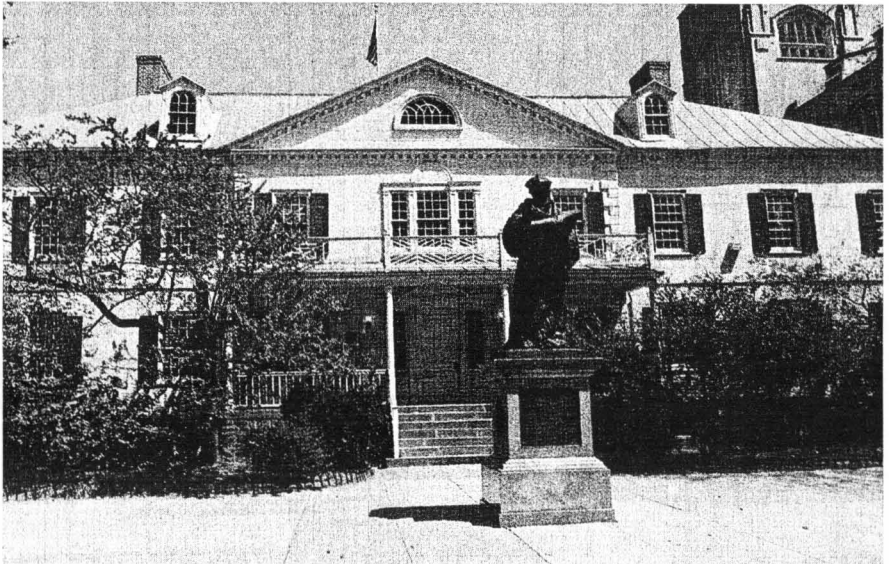
The proprietors of this building propose having the best instructors and tutors that can possibly be obtained. There is now one of the best English schools kept here and all learned languages [Latin and Greek] will be taught here, and the French tongue. In short, any gentleman may send his son here for instruction in any branch of useful knowledge for a longer or shorter term of time as he pleases and have him under the best advantage for improvement. We have it in contemplation to put it under the patronage of his Excellency Governor Clinton—which he seems fond of—and of giving us a charter.<sup>13</sup>

The East Hampton Academy opened on 1 January 1785, with Buell preaching a sermon, and John Gardiner (from one of the leading local families) delivering an address. The next day a notice appeared in a New York City newspaper stating that the academy has been "founded for the benefit of society, as a Seminary of education upon the most liberal and effectual plan." Scholars were promised "good accommodations."<sup>14</sup>

The academy had considerable success in enrolling students. In February 1786, a newspaper reported that nearly fifty had participated in exhibitions which included a play with orations, *Columbia and Britannia*, written by the classical teacher. The newspaper writer was "impressed that after one year in so remote a place" there should be such "remarkable specimens of improvement." Although the public notices and advertisements seemed to be directed to males, the newspaper noted "the number of young ladies and little misses who presented themselves with all the ease and elegance of an Assemblyman, joined with the elocution of a theatre." Later that year, Buell wrote a friend, "Our Academy appears at present to be in a flourishing situation. There are about 90 scholars that belong to it. It has growing fame abroad."<sup>15</sup>



**Clinton Academy. Photo by Raymond Spinzia, ca. 1988. Courtesy  
Spinzia Collection, Hofstra Univ. Special  
Collections/L.I. Studies Institute**



**Postcard, "Erasmus Hall High School & Academy of the Arts."  
Photo, n.d., by Thomas J. Lenihan (the statue in front is of Erasmus)**

It was soon officially named Clinton Academy, and Governor Clinton visited and presented the institution with a bell. Buell continued to hold the title of principal, leading morning prayers daily and lecturing on theology on Saturdays. The first teachers described their program in an advertisement in the *Connecticut Gazette*, published in New London:

Every branch of literature and science in common use, may be learned here—Reading, Grammar, Rhetoric, Composition, Penmanship, Arithmetic, Navigation, Geography, with the use of the Globes, &c. &c. also the French, Latin, and Greek languages. Particular attention will always be had to the immediate application of the several branches of science and literature to their practical use, and full latitude allowed to those advantages of genius which individuals may happily possess.<sup>16</sup>

This broad curriculum was typical of academies, in contrast to the earlier colonial Latin grammar schools, which focused almost exclusively on Latin, Greek, and arithmetic to prepare boys for college. The range of subjects expanded in the nineteenth century, although they all were not studied by all the students.<sup>17</sup>

The original trustees included Buell and four other ministers, nine men listed as "Esq.," an East Hampton physician, and William Floyd from Mastic, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. A few were related to Buell by marriage, while some were from other communities in Suffolk County which were quite a distance from the academy.<sup>18</sup>

Clinton Academy attracted students from Connecticut, other states, and the West Indies, as well as from Long Island. By 1794, it had printed a twelve-page *Rules and Regulations*, which divided the students into three departments: classical; English academical; and the common school. Tuition was thirty shillings per quarter in the classics; twenty shillings for English academical; and nine shillings, six pence to twelve shillings for common school. Fuel was an additional expense. The hours were from 8 to 11 in the morning and 1 to 4 in the afternoon with a 9 P.M. curfew. Students were expected to attend the two church services on Sundays.<sup>19</sup>

In 1796, the regents reported eighty scholars at Clinton, including those in the common English (or elementary) school. The chief teacher had left, and they warned "there is reason to fear, that without some encouragement more than tuition money, it must further decline." The following year, enrollments increased to ninety-two, but only seven were studying classics, and seventy-two were in the elementary school.<sup>20</sup>

Buell died in 1798, and his successor, Lyman Beecher, was not as interested in teaching at the academy, although apparently he was, at least nominally, the principal. In fact, to augment his salary, he helped his wife operate a competing private school for young ladies in their home.<sup>21</sup>

Teacher turnover was high, and enrollments fluctuated over the years. The enrollments dropped to twenty-four in 1805, following the death of the

principal teacher, but peaked in 1815, with 156 students. Tuition rates were more stable—\$5 a quarter in 1805 and still \$5 in 1866 for more advanced subjects; lower rates prevailed for reading and writing (\$1.50 in 1805). Tuition for English grammar and ciphering was \$2.50 in 1805, and rose to \$4 by 1866. In 1827, the academy advertised that "good board in town" was available for \$1.50 a week, considerably more expensive than tuition. The stated goals of the academy were to "prepare young men for entrance into any of the colleges...or for engaging in the active pursuits of life. Young ladies may be here instructed in all the useful branches of a female education."<sup>22</sup>

In the 1840s, Clinton Academy was on the decline, which the newspaper attributed to "inattention, indifference, and general apathy" on the part of the leading men in the community, and the "want of experience and qualifications requisite in the Instructors."<sup>23</sup> The newspaper did not mention that East Hampton and other communities now had tax-financed common, or public, schools (though parents also had to pay rate bills until the 1860s), or that other academies were available on Long Island and in Connecticut, all of which provided alternative educational possibilities for potential students.<sup>24</sup>

Clinton Academy ceased instruction in the late 1860s. Its records are rather sparse, making it impossible to document its history fully. Nonetheless, in its more than eighty years of existence as an academy, it educated hundreds of students. It survived longer than most academies and, as the first incorporated academy in New York State, it is a landmark institution.

## **Erasmus Hall**

The history of Erasmus Hall is more complete than Clinton Academy's, because many of its records are available, and it is an institution which has survived, albeit now transformed into a New York City public school. Located in Flatbush (one of the original Dutch towns in western Long Island), it is about five miles from the East River which separates Long Island from Manhattan.

Flatbush had a long tradition of providing education for its children. Schoolmasters were employed from the 1650s, with the language of instruction Dutch for more than a hundred years. There had been a private Latin grammar schoolmaster in Flatbush just before the Revolution, and the town had an English schoolmaster during and after the war.<sup>25</sup> Under special legislation, the Dutch Reformed Church donated land for the academy.<sup>26</sup>

Under the leadership of State Senator John Vanderbilt and the Reverend John H. Livingston, a subscription was begun in Flatbush in February 1786, for a "Public School" to teach "English, Latin, and Greek Languages, with other branches of learning, usual in Academies." Vanderbilt contributed £100 (\$250 then, \$4,000 today) for the academy, and thirty-nine others, including Governor George Clinton, Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, and Flatbush



citizens, subscribed amounts ranging from £5 to £60 for a total of £915. A two-story, 100' x 36' building, nearly twice the size of Clinton Academy, was erected at the cost of \$6,250—considerably more than had been raised by subscription.<sup>27</sup>

The Reverend Dr. John H. Livingston, a minister of the New York City Collegiate Church with a country home in Flatbush, was named principal. Apparently he did little or no teaching but rather undertook the responsibility of securing good teachers. In 1785, the Synod of New York of the Dutch Reformed Church had appointed Livingston "Professor of Sacred Theology," assigned to educate ministerial candidates in theology. He was also an original member of the New York State Board of Regents and a member of the committee which recommended revisions in education policy in 1787.<sup>28</sup>

At their second meeting, the trustees voted that, "As this Institution is designed to be superior to a common English School the Board Resolved that no Scholars shall be admitted into the Hall but such as have begun to write." They adopted rules establishing a Classical Department in which Latin and Greek would be taught, and an English department with instruction in grammar, writing, arithmetic, and bookkeeping. The classics teacher was first in rank. Erasmus Hall offered fewer subjects initially than Clinton Academy advertised, though it did teach history. (Clinton offered mathematics, science, and logic, but not history in its classical department.) Subjects in the English department were identical at the two institutions and included public speaking or elocution and French. Quarterly examinations, conducted in the presence of the trustees and principal, were oral with declamations and speeches.<sup>29</sup>

Students were expected to attend Sabbath worship at the Hall; when there was English preaching in the Flatbush church, the students would attend together. Scholars from Flatbush were charged lower tuition in the common school and a lower entrance fee to the academy in order to attract students from the local community. There had been opposition to the academy from residents who held a "strong and decided attachment to the village school." The trustees felt that if they did not charge lower rates, they would not attract local children, especially if there were a teacher in the village school of equal ability. In 1803, the village school merged with Erasmus Hall.<sup>30</sup>

Erasmus Hall teachers, who were often responsible for collecting tuition from students, kept most of it for their salaries, settling accounts periodically with the trustees. Sometimes these tuition payments might be in lieu of a regular salary; this was the normal pattern for the French teacher, whose subject required extra tuition. Peter Wilson, the classics teacher and principal from 1792 to 1797, continued to hold the title of principal for the next seven years while a professor at Columbia College.

In 1795, the trustees sought aid from the Regents for a teacher of natural and moral philosophy. They had received state money for philosophical apparatus (science equipment), but argued that the teacher did not have time to teach science. In 1796, they sought permission to conduct a lottery to raise funds for the school. Apparently, neither effort succeeded, although the

regents did provide some funds for academies at this time.<sup>31</sup>

The trustees' minutes focus on the appointment of teachers and their salaries. Occasionally the board discharged a teacher, but more often it was the teacher's decision to leave, and he sometimes requested a recommendation for future employment.<sup>32</sup>

In 1804, a total of 107 students enrolled at Erasmus Hall. Thirty-three were in the Classical Department where tuition was \$20 a quarter; twenty paid \$14 tuition (probably for the English Department), and forty-seven, \$8 (most likely for common school tuition). The building was valued at \$6,250. Inexplicably, only twelve of the thirty-three in the Classical Department were studying Latin and Greek—or as the regents report designated, the "Dead languages." The cost of boarding with families in the community averaged about \$80 a year—an amount equal to or more than tuition charges. In 1806, the trustees appointed a steward to reside in Erasmus Hall. Catharine Van Dyke was charged rent and apparently boarded students. A few years later, Principal Richard Whyte Thompson was granted the house and gardens on the same terms. The trustees also waived the entrance fee for any students whom Thompson brought to Erasmus Hall from the academy where he previously taught.<sup>33</sup>

The enrollments and reputation of the institution rose and fell with the quality of its teachers. Turnover was high. Most of the classical teachers averaged about two years; two or three had five-year tenures. Erasmus Hall flourished under Jonathan Kellogg, who was in charge for twelve years, from 1823 to 1834. Kellogg divided the English or common school into male and female departments with separate teachers and even separate entrances. This change brought the first woman teacher, Maria Jones, to Erasmus in 1828. Most of the women taught only a year or two. As the institution prospered, it needed more space, and a 50' x 25' wing was added in 1826.<sup>34</sup>

## **Union Hall**

Even as academies began to be chartered by the state, the older pattern of the local minister and private schoolmaster teaching classical languages and other subjects in their own homes or in rented rooms continued. In Queens County, the Episcopal ministers in Hempstead conducted such a school, and there is evidence of one in Jamaica by 1787.<sup>35</sup>

In 1791, a number of citizens from Jamaica and Flushing gathered at a local tavern "for the purpose of carrying into effect the building of an Academy." Twelve men were appointed to circulate subscription lists in Jamaica, Flushing, Newtown, and New York City. The subscription papers stated:

We the subscribers considering the importance and utility of Seminaries of Learning to be instituted in all places convenient, that knowledge and useful learning may be thereby more generally diffused and from these

considerations do think it useful and necessary that an Academy be erected in the Town of Jamaica."<sup>36</sup>

Union Hall was an appropriate name, not only because the institution reflected the unified effort from the three western towns of Queens County (Newtown, Flushing, and Jamaica), but also because it was a union of the ministers from the three religious denominations in Jamaica. The Dutch Reformed minister chaired the organizational meeting, and the Episcopal and Presbyterian ministers were original trustees. In contrast, Clinton Academy and Erasmus Hall each reflected the greater religious homogeneity of their communities, Presbyterian in East Hampton and Dutch Reformed in Flatbush. Union Hall continued to receive support from ministers of the three congregations in Jamaica. In 1833, the Dutch Reformed minister was president of the board of trustees, which included the Presbyterian and Episcopal ministers in Jamaica.

Maltby Gelsten was appointed principal in 1791, with "his compensation the profits arising from the tuition of scholars."<sup>37</sup> This pattern was fairly common, especially for institutions in their beginning years or in financial straits. Moreover, as at Erasmus Hall, the teacher usually had to collect tuition himself. At the end of the first year, Gelsten reported to the trustees that there had been fifty scholars, and he had employed an "usher" or assistant (at his own expense). Most of the students were in the "common English branches"—indeed, a majority in "Reading only." There were only two "on the languages" (Latin and Greek) and three on "higher branches of science."<sup>38</sup>

Gelsten soon resigned, and several other teachers served briefly, but Union Hall was fortunate to have two principals who spent most of their careers there. This provided a stability and continuity that most academies lacked, including Clinton and Erasmus. Lewis E. A. Eigenbrodt taught at Union Hall for thirty-one years, from 1797 to 1828, and Henry Onderdonk Jr. for thirty-three years, from 1832 to 1865.<sup>39</sup>

Union Hall built a new 80' x 40' two-story building in 1820, at some distance from its original site, turning the older buildings over to the female department. Those original buildings were lost to fire in 1841, after which a Greek Revival building was constructed for the Female Seminary.<sup>40</sup>

The records of Union Hall include reports from the principal to the trustees, providing insight into its operations. Clearly, the "halcyon days" were during Eigenbrodt's tenure in the early decades of the nineteenth century. German-born and educated in Europe for the ministry, he came to Union Hall shortly after he arrived in America and taught there until he died at the age of fifty-four in 1828.<sup>41</sup>

Union Hall attracted students from beyond the immediate region. In 1797, the year Eigenbrodt became principal, he reported six "foreigners" among the



**Union Hall. From Benjamin F. Thompson,  
*History of Long Island*, 3d ed., 1918, facing 2:636.**

total enrollment had more than doubled to ninety-four, including fourteen Latin scholars (contrasted with only one in 1797). The principal urged the trustees to raise tuition in order to offer better salaries to support able assistants.<sup>42</sup>

The trustees apparently did raise salaries and increased tuition increased by 25 percent, which initially resulted in some decline in the enrollments. However, the numbers always fluctuated, even within the same year, usually peaking at the time of the public examinations. In 1802, fifty-nine were enrolled in February, and 102 in August. A few students attended only a half day. Reports for February and April 1808 indicate totals of ninety-six and eighty, with nineteen "Latinists" and three "Grecians" each quarter. By 1819, enrollments had increased to 132 in February and April, and 160 in October, with fifty-two in the Classical Department. In 1821, Eigenbrodt was being paid \$1,500, and the four other teachers from \$450 to \$750. Tuition for 1833 ranged from \$6 for reading and writing to \$14 for Latin and Greek per twenty-three week session, while boarding with "respectable private families" was \$125 a year.<sup>43</sup>

Eigenbrodt boarded students in his rooms in the Hall. In 1802, he wrote to the trustees that he needed more rooms to satisfy "pupils from abroad entrusted to the special care of the teacher who unless well accommodated will be lost to the institution." Some interior modifications may have been made to

provide space for boarders. Eigenbrodt proposed an addition in 1812, and forced the issue when he informed the trustees he had purchased a house in the area for the "comfort of his family," and wanted to be exempt from rent for his quarters. The trustees then agreed to build an addition, because they felt it would benefit the institution if the principal lived in the academy.<sup>44</sup>

### **State Regulations**

In 1792, the Regents made their first appropriations to academies, designating the money for library books, science equipment ("philosophical apparatus"), and scholarships for needy students. The money was apportioned on the basis of total enrollments until 1817-1818, when it was based on the number of college preparatory students studying the classics. New York State organized its common school system in 1812, and began state aid to the public elementary schools. Most New York district schools levied a rate bill on parents until 1867, based on the number of days their children attended school.

Virtually all the academies enrolled pupils studying elementary subjects; in 1807 and 1818, these accounted for two-thirds of the total enrollments of New York State academies. The three Long Island schools fit this pattern; each enrolled large numbers of elementary students. The number of classical students generally increased significantly after 1818, when the regents began to appropriate funds to academies on the basis of their numbers.<sup>45</sup> Nonetheless, although the academies offered what we would designate "secondary education," they were multipurpose institutions and never exclusively college preparatory schools. Classical students might enter college as sophomores or juniors, while many preferred to attend academies rather than colleges because of the broader curriculum offered.

In the middle third of the century, some common schools began to expand their curriculum to include more advanced subjects (such as composition and history), but in 1850, only a few public high schools existed in New York State, all of which were located upstate.<sup>46</sup> An 1853 law permitted union free schools to establish academic departments comparable to academies and also allowed academies to unite with union schools. Some of these academic departments levied rate bills to parents of students. The 1853 law was the beginning of the end for most traditional academies, whose fate was sealed when New York abolished its rate bill for all public schools in 1867. The number of public high schools increased after the Civil War, though most originally were called union school academic departments, and some were designated as free academies. The public high schools in New York did not surpass the academies in numbers or enrollments until the mid-1870s.<sup>47</sup>

## **Fate of the Academies**

Clinton Academy last reported to the Regents in 1869, though the trustees later rented the building to a private school for a few years. It became a community center and, after restoration in 1921, is now a local historical museum operated by the East Hampton Historical Society.

Erasmus Hall followed another typical pattern for academies, merging into the public school system of Brooklyn in 1896. Today, Erasmus Hall is a large New York City public high school with the original wooden building in a courtyard encircled by twentieth-century stone structures. It has been restored as a local and regional history of education museum, with a vocational program to train museum guides.<sup>48</sup>

Union Hall closed in the early 1870s and sold its buildings, which eventually were demolished in 1930. Union Hall Female Seminary, however, continued into the 1890s, but its history is beyond the scope of this article. Today, the only vestige of Union Hall in Jamaica is the name of a street and a stop on the Long Island Rail Road; few are aware that these were named for what had been a thriving academy and female seminary for a century.

Other early Long Island academies illustrate variations on these patterns. The Huntington Academy began in 1793, with subscriptions, but apparently never was incorporated or chartered by the state. It received an endowment of \$10,000 from Nathaniel Potter in 1841. Its last principal, Algernon S. Higgins, became the first principal of the Huntington Union School in 1858, and Potter's legacy was transferred to the public institution. The Oyster Bay Academy (1800) merged with the public school in 1835, and Sag Harbor's Academy became the public high school in 1862.<sup>49</sup>

The Reverend William Augustus Muhlenberg, rector of St. George's Episcopal Church in Flushing, founded the Flushing Institute in 1827. When it flourished, Muhlenberg attempted to expand the academy into St. Paul's College and Grammar School, moving it north to a new site on Flushing Bay which he named College Point. The combination of a financial panic in 1837 and Muhlenberg's departure from Long Island to become pastor of a church in New York City in 1846 soon doomed the expanded institution to extinction, leaving its legacy of a community's name.<sup>50</sup>

A few of Long Island's later academies in more populous Brooklyn were more successful in making a transition to a college. The Brooklyn Female Academy, founded in 1847, changed its name in 1854 to Packer Collegiate Institute and was the first junior college chartered in New York State in 1919. However, it discontinued its college division when the school became co-educational in 1972. Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute, founded in 1853, was authorized to confer degrees in 1869 as the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, while St. Francis Academy, founded in 1859, received a college charter in 1884. Adelphi Academy of Brooklyn, which began in 1869, became a college in 1896, and moved to Garden City in 1929. Pratt Institute, founded

by Charles Pratt in 1887, became a degree-granting institution in 1936.<sup>52</sup>

### Summary and Conclusions

Governor Clinton and the legislature sought to encourage "seminaries of learning." Citizens at the local level organized academies, erected substantial buildings, and hired teachers to implement the ideals of the revolutionary generation on the importance of education in the new republic. In terms of subscriptions, trustees, and enrollments, each of these academies represented a community and, usually, a regional enterprise—not just the village where the institution was located, but also the town and surrounding area. Incorporation and community support provided a "public" character to the academies.

Local ministers took the lead in organizing these educational institutions, often serving as principal, president, or trustee. Classical teachers usually were recent college graduates, sometimes preparing for the ministry or awaiting a call to a church. Erasmus Hall attracted two instructors from college positions.<sup>53</sup>

None of these pioneering academies had the benefit of an endowment from a wealthy individual such as Phillips Andover in Massachusetts and Phillips Exeter in New Hampshire received from the Phillips family. Moreover, except for Erasmus Hall, they had few large contributions from wealthy individuals. Nonetheless, each was able to construct a substantial building for its school, just as each experienced frequent turnover of teachers, especially in the early years. Both Clinton Academy and Erasmus Hall named principals who did not have teaching responsibilities. Each struggled to meet expenses. Tuition charges were relatively modest, ranging from \$5 at Clinton Academy to \$20 at Erasmus Hall in the early nineteenth century. Local students sometimes paid lower tuition and, of course, could live at home, saving the considerable cost of board.

Each of these academies was located in a village, but not in the most populous settlements in their counties. None was a boarding institution in its early years, but all advertised that boarding was available with families in the community. The principal often augmented his salary by boarding students in his own home (his wife or servants doubtless assumed the additional responsibilities this incurred). Sometimes the principal and his family lived in the school building in rooms rented from the academy trustees.

These and other academies taught a range of subjects, from elementary reading and arithmetic to Latin and Greek, with the majority of students studying elementary subjects. According to George Miller, a historian of the academies in New York, the curriculum of Clinton Academy and Erasmus Hall "served as models for the incorporated academies of the state for the first quarter of the nineteenth century." All three of these early Long Island academies enrolled girls as well as boys; Union Hall created a Female Seminary that outlived the male academy by some two decades. Their vacation

and examination schedules were almost identical in their early decades, with two three-week vacations in April and October after examinations.<sup>55</sup>

Each of the academies served its community's educational needs and flourished for a time. As more academies opened by the middle third of the nineteenth century, these first ones attracted fewer students from a distance. In the transitional period for American secondary education, in the decades after the Civil War, these academies closed or merged with public schools. The eighteenth-century buildings of two have been restored and survive in very different settings. Clinton Academy is open in the summer for tourists in the Hamptons, and Erasmus Hall has created a museum to give inner city students a glimpse of nineteenth-century life and schooling. These three early academies reflect typical patterns for the quasi-public academies which served the educational needs of rural areas before the development of public high schools.<sup>54</sup>

## NOTES

1. Early upstate academies incorporated in this period were North Salem Academy in northern Westchester County, 1790; Farmers' Hall in Goshen, 1790 (a continuation of a classical school where Noah Webster had taught in 1782); Montgomery Academy in Orange County, 1791; Washington Academy in Salem in Washington County, 1791; and Dutchess County Academy in Poughkeepsie, 1792. George Frederick Miller, *The Academy System of the State of New York* (1922; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1969), 86-97; and J. H. French, *Historical and Statistical Gazetteer of New York State* (1860; reprint, Interlaken, N.Y.: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1986), 130-34, which includes statistical data on academies from the Regents Report of 1859, 128-30, and a convenient contemporary listing of academies, 128-34. It is puzzling that a mid-nineteenth century history of Flatbush states that Erasmus Hall was the third academy to be incorporated in New York State. Thomas M. Strong, *The History of the Town of Flatbush in Kings County, Long-Island* (New York: Thomas R. Merceen, Jr., Printer, 1842), 136.

2. Quoted in Miller, 19.

3. Bruce B. Detlefsen, *A Popular History of the Origins of the Regents of the University of the State of New York* (Albany: State Education Department, 1975), 60-69.

4. Quoted in Detlefsen, 91. Hamilton is sometimes credited with being the author of the report, but other committee members, including James Duane and John H. Livingston, played important roles. Detlefsen 89, 91, 97-98, 105-6; *Dictionary of American Biography (DAB)*, s.v. "L'Hommedieu, Ezra."

5. L'Hommedieu represented Suffolk County in the Provincial Congress, was a delegate to the Continental Congress, a member of the New York Assembly, and, for twenty-five years beginning in 1783, represented Long Island, New York City, Staten Island, and Westchester County in the New York State Senate. He also served as clerk of Suffolk County from 1784 to 1810 and was a founder and vice president of the New York Society for Promoting Agriculture, Arts and Manufactures. Clarence A. Wood, "Ezra L'Hommedieu, Island Statesman," *Long Island Forum* 12 (September 1949): 163; Detlefsen, 94-98; *DAB*, "L'Hommedieu, Ezra."



6. Detlefsen, 105-6; Miller, 21.

7. Ellwood P. Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States: A Study and Interpretation of American Educational History*, rev. ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934), 251. Cubberley's interpretations have been widely criticized, but his book is still a useful source of information; see Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Wonderful World of Ellwood Patterson Cubberley: An Essay in the Historiography of American Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1965).

8. The Flushing Institute in Queens County is an unusual example of a private unincorporated school that survived for more than fifty years. It incorporated after more than a quarter century of operation in order to be exempt from property taxes, but the teachers and their relatives were the trustees rather than a more broadly based governing board from the community. Vincent R. Seyfried, *A Long Island Academy: The Flushing Institute, 1845-1901* (Garden City: the author, 1997), 39.

9. Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 389.

10. See James McLachlan, *American Boarding Schools: A Historical Study* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970); and Nancy Beadie, "Emma Willard's Idea Put to the Test: The Consequence of State Support of Female Education in New York, 1819-67," *History of Education Quarterly* 33 (Winter 1993): 557.

11. Buell (1716-1798), the third minister in East Hampton, was born in Coventry, Connecticut, graduated from Yale in 1741, and studied divinity with the Reverend Jonathan Edwards in Northampton, Massachusetts. Edwards, the famous revivalist preacher and theologian who is often credited with initiating the Great Awakening in New England, preached at Buell's installation in East Hampton in 1746. Benjamin F. Thompson, *History of Long Island from Its Discovery and Settlement to the Present Time*, 3d ed., revised and greatly enlarged with additions and a biography of the author by Charles Werner, 3 vols. (New York: Robert H. Dodd, 1918), 2:129-31; see also John Turner Ames, "Leading the Way: The Political Force of the First Four Ministers: Thomas James, Nathaniel Huntting, Samuel Buell, and Lyman Beecher," in *Awakening the Past: The 350th Anniversary Lecture Series, 1998*, ed. Tom Twomey (New York: Newmarket Press, 1999), 67-72.

12. Buell to Mr. and Mrs. Elisha Pitkin, 6 October 1784, quoted by Amy Osborn Bass, "Clinton Academy," n.d. [c. 1955], Clinton Academy Records, East Hampton Library; all Clinton Academy materials, unless otherwise indicated, are in these records in the Long Island Collection at the East Hampton Library. See also, "Clinton Academy: History, Architecture, and Documents," material compiled primarily by Sherrill Foster for the East Hampton Historical Society's exhibit at Clinton Academy in 1990 (East Hampton Historical Society, photocopied typescript, 1989, not paginated), which includes a list of the major donors with the amounts they contributed. The \$2,500 figure was calculated from Table A-3 in John J. McCusker, *How Much Is That in Real Money? A Historical Price Index for Use as a Deflator of Money Values in the History of the United States* (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1992), 333, and updated by using the Consumer Price Index in *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1998*, 489.

13. Quoted by Samuel Hedges, "Clinton Academy History," typescript, 1943, 2 (also printed in *East Hampton Star*, 15 July 1948).

14. Typescript copied from unidentified newspaper, 2 January 1785, in East Hampton Library.

15. Unidentified newspaper clipping, 2 February 1786, in East Hampton Library; Hedges, "Clinton Academy History," 2-3.
16. *Connecticut Gazette*, 2 December 1785, clipping in East Hampton Library. Jabez Peck and William Payne (the father of John Howard Payne, the author of the song "Home Sweet Home") were the first teachers; Payne's home on Main Street in East Hampton is now an historic house museum. See Charles A. Huguenin, "Jabez Peck, Teacher-Playwright," *Long Island Forum* 19 (November 1956): 203-4. On curriculum, see also 2 January 1785 newspaper clipping; *Rules and Regulations of Clinton Academy* (Sagg-Harbour: David Frothingham, 1794), 3-4; and Miller, 111.
17. Miller, 101-30.
18. Petition to Regents, 21 September 1787, typescript. David Rose was the minister in Middletown (now Middle Island), the Reverend Aaron Woolworth, Buell's son-in-law, in Bridgehampton, and Benjamin Goldsmith in Aquebogue. Trustees were identified in Thompson, *passim*; see also Foster, "Clinton Academy," n.p.
19. *Rules and Regulations of Clinton Academy*, 1794, 3-5.
20. Regents Report, 1796, 219, and 1797 ms.
21. Thomas Hotchkiss, "Clinton Academy," typescript, 1934, East Hampton Library; *The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher*, ed. Barbara M. Cross (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1961), 1:98-99.
22. A night school was conducted in the late 1790s. Enrollments in 1797 included sixty-seven day and fifty-four night students; by 1799, the day students had increased to eighty-four, and the evening numbers declined to twenty. In 1794, tuition was 30 shillings (\$3.75) per quarter for classical studies (vs. \$5 in 1805 and 1866); tuition for English studies was \$2.50 in 1794 and 1805. For 1999 equivalencies, the 1806 figures would be multiplied by 11.2 and the 1866 figures by 8.6. *Rules and Regulations*, 1794; George R. Howell, "Clinton Academy," *East Hampton Star*, n.d., East Hampton Library; 1827 advertisement, unidentified newspaper, East Hampton Library; McCosker, 326, 328, 332; *Statistical Abstract*, 489.
23. *Republican Watchman*, 17 April 1843, May 1843 (specific date not indicated on clipping), and 29 May 1843, newspaper articles in East Hampton Library.
24. New York State established its common school system in 1812-1814. Rate bills, levied on parents based on the number of days their children attended, were not fully abolished until 1867. In addition to those discussed in this article, academies opened in Huntington in 1793, Oyster Bay in 1800, Flushing in 1827, Southampton in 1831, Miller's Place in 1834, Riverhead in 1835, Hempstead Seminary in 1836, Southold in 1837, Sag Harbor, in 1848, Hempstead Institute in 1858, and others in western Queens and Kings counties and in Connecticut (which was convenient by boat across the Sound); information on most of these institutions is very sparse. French, 133-34, 637-38.
25. Located near the center of Kings County, Flatbush was the site of county offices. Its church (built 1654-1665) was the first Dutch Reformed Church on Long Island and still had its services and sermons in Dutch in the 1780s. English was introduced in 1792, but Dutch services continued into the 1820s. Strong, 108-10, 119-21; Peter Ross, *A History of Long Island* (New York: Lewis Publishing, 1902), 1 266-67; Willem Frederik (Eric) Nooter, "Between Heaven and Earth: Church and Society in Pre-Revolutionary Flatbush, Long Island" (Ph.D. diss., Vrije [Leyden] Universiteit, The Netherlands, 1994), 131-48.

26. A rider to a copyright bill, passed by the New York legislature in April 1786, authorized the trustees to sell six acres of land for "erecting an academy." Detlefse+n, 88.
27. Interestingly, Clinton specified that his contribution was "for any place in Kings Co." An additional \$1,500 was raised by the proprietors' donating their share from the sale of common land in Twillers and Corlear Flats, but the building debt was not paid in full until 1825. Strong, 123-27.
28. Livingston trained ninety candidates in his "parsonage seminary" in the years from 1784-1809. He moved his classes to Flatbush in 1796, to be near the "flourishing Academy," but returned to New York City the next year, unable to support himself on a half-time salary from the church. When New Brunswick Theological Seminary was organized in 1810, Livingston became professor and also nominally held the post of president of Queens (Rutgers) College. David D. Demarest, "Historical Discourse," *Centennial of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in America, 1784-1884* (New York, 1885), 82-87, 95, 109, 353, 462-63.
29. Minute book of the Corporation of Trustees of Erasmus Hall Trustees, 3 April 1788, Erasmus Hall Archives, New-York Historical Society (all references to Erasmus Hall records, not otherwise identified, are to the Trustee Minute books in the New-York Historical Society in New York City); Miller, 111.
30. Strong, 130; and *Chronicles of Erasmus Hall* (Brooklyn: Erasmus Hall, 1906), 60, 62-63. In 1814, by legislative act, Erasmus Hall received common school tax monies to gratuitously educate poor children from "Old town." *Chronicles*, 62.
31. Strong, 127.
32. Their agreements specified three months' notice on either side for a teacher's leaving; occasionally the board mediated conflicts between their teachers. Minutes, 10 January 1811, October 1808, and 15 September 1813.
33. Minutes, *passim*.
34. Strong, 132-34. Strong includes names of many of the Erasmus teachers, 130-35.
35. Henry Onderdonk Jr., *Queens County in Olden Times: Being a Supplement to the Several Histories Thereof* (Jamaica: C. Wellings, 1865), 69, 70, 85. Episcopal ministers in Hempstead taught Latin and Greek from 1742 to 1779. William Webb Kemp, *The Support of Schools in Colonial New York by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (1913; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1969), 182-83; Miller, 17-18.
36. Onderdonk, 77; Manuscript Subscription list, Union Hall Academy Records, Long Island Collection, Queens Public Library, Jamaica (all Union Hall records cited are from this collection).
37. Onderdonk, 80. Names of subscribers, first textbooks, and two of the rules are in Onderdonk, 79-80.
38. Principal's Report, 6 September 1792, Union Hall Records.
39. Onderdonk is best known today as the historian who published several books chronicling the colonial and Revolutionary War history of Long Island. A president of the board of trustees, the Reverend Jacob Schoonmaker, also provided continuity for Union Hall since he was a trustee for many years. Schoonmaker had a long pastorate at the Jamaica Dutch Reformed Church from 1802-1850, with responsibility as well for the Newtown (Elmhurst)

Church. It is interesting to note that Schoonmaker had attended Erasmus Hall. Strong, 129.

40. Thompson, 2:633.

41. *Ibid.*, 2:634-36.

42. Eigenbrodt's Quarterly Report to Trustees, 5 November 1801, Union Hall Records. The Flushing Academy also enrolled many foreign students (Seyfried, 27, 31, 56-58). Eigenbrodt's predecessor, the Reverend George Faitoute, minister of the Jamaica Presbyterian Church, announced that he had "removed his school from the Academy to his own house, where he continues to teach the Latin and Greek languages, sciences, &c. The school has been and still is in a flourishing condition. Board may be had in genteel families" (Onderdonk, 87). It is not known how many students followed Faitoute or how long he continued to teach in his parsonage. There were a number of other private, unincorporated schools operating in Jamaica at various times during Union Hall's existence; information on them is very sparse, particularly in terms of enrollments and duration.

43. Tuition and board with the principal cost from \$160 to \$200 per year, more than with private families (Principal Reports and correspondence; printed statement dated 15 October 1833, with handwritten addition on board with Instructor, Union Hall Records). Harriet Stryker-Rodda reproduced a "Nine-Year Course of Study at Union Hall Academy" in her "Early Nineteenth Century Academies on Long Island, 1790-1850," *Long Island Courant* 1 (October 1965): 41; although undated, it reflects mid-century curriculum, since it mentions graded readers which were uncommon in earlier decades.

44. Eigenbrodt, 6 May 1802; correspondence in Principal Reports, 1812, Union Hall Records. In November 1801, he had reported that two young ladies were boarders. Principal Reports, Union Hall Records.

45. Miller, 24-25, 36-37. Other changes, basing the funds on the number of students passing regents exams, were adopted in 1864 and 1882, after the period of focus of this article. Because the sources examined did not provide complete enrollment data for the three Long Island academies, conclusions are based on fragmentary statistics.

46. Many of the early high schools were founded as stock companies, charged tuition, and were not under public control. Those operating in 1850 which received money from local taxation included Rochester High School (founded 1827, became a collegiate institute in 1839), Gouverneur High School (1828), Newburgh High School (1829), Clyde High School (1834), and Troy High School. Paul Monroe, *Founding of the American Public School System: A History of Education in the United States, From the Early Settlements to the Close of the Civil War* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), 411-12; and Miller, 40-54. As late as 1875, the regents noted: "there is much confusion in names [of high schools], produced mainly by many having been organized under special laws" and some academies, "though connected with public schools which in other departments are free, are supported by the payment of tuition." Miller, 52.

47. Miller, 29, 53.

48. *An Architectural History and Adaptive Use Plan for Erasmus Hall Academy, Brooklyn, N.Y.* (John Milner Associates, 1986), copy at Brooklyn Historical Society; "Erasmus Hall Museum of Education Guide," (n.d.); author's telephone conversation with Dr. Thomas J. Lenahan, Museum Curator, Erasmus Hall High School, 22 July 1998; Erasmus Hall High School, "A Guide to the Museum of Education."

49. Romanah Sammis, *Huntington-Babylon Town History* (n.p.: Huntington Historical Society, 1937), 62-63; Miller, 55, 93.
50. The only connection between Muhlenberg's Flushing Institute and a longer surviving school of the same name was that they were in the same building (Seyfried, 5-7). According to James McLachlan, the example of the Flushing Institute and Muhlenberg's writings on education did exert an important influence on later Episcopal schools (McLachlan, 105-6). After the Civil War, Muhlenberg founded St. Johnland in Kings Park, Long Island. See Virginia B. Colyer, *Dr. Muhlenberg's St. Johnland: An Informal History, 1866-1991* (Kings Park: Society of St. Johnland, 1992).
51. Carol Lopate, *Education and Culture in Brooklyn: A History of Ten Institutions* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Educational and Cultural Alliance, 1979), 24-32. Other nineteenth-century Long Island academies not previously mentioned in the text and their dates of incorporation (or admission by regents or founding) include: Astoria Institute (1844); Berkeley Institute for Young Ladies in Brooklyn (1886); Cathedral School of St. Mary and Cathedral School of St. Paul in Garden City (both in 1890); Conrad Poppenhusen Association in College Point (1890), St. Agnes Female Seminary in Brooklyn (1895); St. James Academy of Brooklyn (1897); and Friends Academy in Locust Valley (1898). Miller, 86-97.
52. Peter Wilson was Professor of Languages at Columbia College when he accepted a position to be "the chief [classical] teacher" in Erasmus Hall at an annual salary of £400 in 1792; he returned to Columbia in 1797, and resigned as principal of Erasmus Hall in 1805. Joseph Penny, who taught at Erasmus Hall from 1819-1821, left the presidency of Hamilton College to become principal of Erasmus Hall in 1839 at a salary of \$1,200; he resigned in 1841. *Chronicles*, 48-49, 53, 84.
53. Miller, 111; Cubberley, 251. Union Hall's principal urged the trustees to extend vacations from two to three weeks to conform to the practice in other academies, but it is uncertain if this change was made (Eigenbrodt to trustees, 7 January 1805 and 7 May, 1814, Principal's Reports, Union Hall Records). Erasmus Hall changed in 1850 to a nine-week summer vacation with classes from September to July (*Chronicles*, 97). Public schools generally retained the pattern of spring and fall vacations geared to an agrarian society until well after the Civil War.
54. Theodore R.Sizer characterizes the academy as "fundamentally a rural institution, a school uniquely appropriate for a population thinly spread" Sizer, *The Age of the Academies* (New York: Bureau of Publication, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964), 40. For the development of public high schools, see William J. Reese, *The Origins of the American High School* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1995).

# **“FOR GOD, COUNTRY, AND HOME”: THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE CATHOLIC WAR VETERANS OF THE USA, 1935-1957**

*By David L. O'Connor*

The Catholic War Veterans of the United States of America (CWV) is an association of Catholics who served in the U.S. armed forces in foreign conflicts. Founded in 1935 in Queens County at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, the CWV grew into a nationwide institution with more than two hundred thousand members at its peak in the 1950s. The organization was dedicated to the promotion of strict Catholicism, fervent patriotism, and virulent anticommunism. In 1936 its founder, Monsignor Edward J. Higgins, aided by the Reverend Edward Lodge Curran, the creator and leader of the International Truth Society, drafted a constitution proclaiming the mission of the CWV:

We, American Citizens, members of the Catholic Church, under the spiritual authority of our Holy Father the Pope, Bishop of Rome, and who have served in the wars and campaigns of the United States in order that we may be bound by a greater spirit of faith and patriotism, and that we may be of greater service to God and our Country and to one another, and in order to perpetuate our ideals and ideas, establish a permanent organization.<sup>1</sup>

This statement was part of an effort to resolve a core dilemma of American Catholic identity: how to fuse adherence to a transnational, hierarchical Church with allegiance to a democratic, multi-denominational republic in which church and state were separate. The CWV's solution, drawn from American and Catholic sources, was to combine intense nationalism with strident anticommunism. This article examines the origin and growth of the CWV from 1935 to 1957, with emphasis on its role in the construction of a conservative American Catholic identity.

Edward J. Higgins, born in Brooklyn in 1890, served in several Brooklyn parishes before becoming an army chaplain in World War I. According to his official biography, “The most treasured garments in his wardrobe were his cassock, the Lieutenant’s uniform he wore from 1917-1919 and, later, the uniform of the CWV.” After the war, Higgins returned to the priesthood in Brooklyn and Queens, and, in 1933, was appointed pastor of the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Long Island City. The style of his biography

typified the CWV's full-blown blending of piety and patriotism:

Next to his love for Christ and His Church, came his love for Country and for those who dedicated their lives to our country's welfare in war and peace. In 1935, he realized that Catholics who served in our Armed Forces should continue to live their lives for the preservation of these beloved United States of America against all of its enemies. Thus the Catholic War Veterans was born, one of the greatest and noblest patriotic organizations within the entire history of our Country and our Church. This alone is evidence of his greatness.<sup>2</sup>

Higgins's zealous patriotism, tireless efforts over the decades, and unflinching condemnation of communism made him an irreplaceable role model for many Catholic veterans.

The CWV based itself on two chosen principles of "Americanism"—military service and anticommunism. Its campaigns ranged from drives to liberate Catholic clerics imprisoned in Eastern Europe to lobbying Congress for legislation supporting its crusade "For God, For Country, and For Home."

### **The CWV and Americanism**

From colonial times to the twentieth century, American Catholics have suffered meaningful discrimination because of their minority status and association with a foreign power, the Vatican. Although the level of prejudice fluctuated, it was a potent force for centuries. Anti-Catholicism, from the mid-nineteenth-century Know-Nothings to the twentieth-century Ku Klux Klan, exerted considerable influence. "In the 1930s and 1940s," observes the historian John T. McGreevy, "even as the traditional anti-Catholicism of the Ku Klux Klan and Protestant evangelicals faded from public view, intellectuals feared that Catholicism might create a disposition amenable to authoritarian rule." Many influential pundits, including John Dewey, argued that the Roman Catholic propensity for hierarchy, parochial education, and isolation from non-Catholics was repugnant to the spirit of democracy. In the 1930s, American Catholic support for fascist leaders like Benito Mussolini and Francisco Franco, combined with the popularity of the demagogic radio priest, Father Charles E. Coughlin, exacerbated fear of Catholic disloyalty and antipathy for democracy. After a lull in the Second World War, these concerns resurfaced once the Cold War began.<sup>3</sup>

In *American Freedom and Catholic Power* (a Book of the Month Club recommendation), Paul Blanshard asserted:

The problem as I see it is not primarily a religious problem: it is an institutional and political problem. It is a matter of the use and abuse of power by an organization that is not only a church, but a state within a state, a state above a state, and a foreign controlled society within

American society.

Blanshard accused Pope Pius XI of sympathizing with fascism. In 1951, in *Communism, Democracy, and Catholic Power*, Blanshard contended that while the Church was publicly anti-Communist, its goals, tactics, and hierarchy resembled those of the USSR, and that its power presented an equal threat to U.S. freedom and security: "The Vatican and the Kremlin are both dictatorships. That simple and unpleasant fact, which is as obvious as the sunrise, is consistently avoided by most 'responsible' journalists in the West." Blanshard maintained that Catholics could not be counted on to support American democracy: "We have been thoroughly aroused to the necessity of defending our freedoms against one form of totalitarian power [the Soviet Union]; we have been astonishingly apathetic concerning the perils of another [the Catholic Church]." Catholic organizations like the CWV interpreted the almost quarter-million-copy sale of Blanshard's books as evidence of continuing anti-Catholic sentiment.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to Blanshard, some observers charged that Catholic families and parochial schools instilled blind obedience in their children, rather than encouraging the reasoning process needed in a democracy. Catholics were singled out in Theodor Adorno's 1950 psychological study, *The Authoritarian Personality*, for their "overly restrictive, religious families whose children might channel their frustration into fascist politics." The success of Blanshard and others' critiques reminded Catholics that many Americans viewed their Church with suspicion. The CWV set out to allay these misgivings, not by rebutting specific charges but by the time-honored Catholic stratagem of citing service to the nation in every war in its history. Ironically, the CWV's restrictive version of patriotism contributed to the perception of Catholics as indifferent to civil liberty.<sup>5</sup>

The Catholic leadership, from the naming of John Carroll of Baltimore as the country's first Catholic bishop in 1790, worked within the political system to guard its adherents from persecution, speaking on behalf of people who lacked the education, status, and political power to protect themselves. One important defense was to show absolute allegiance to America, especially in times of war.<sup>6</sup>

The Catholic Church in America traced its roots primarily to Ireland, where Catholicism and Irish identity meshed. As observed by Dorothy Dohen, this encouraged the fusion of Catholicism with nationalism in the United States. Military service was proof of patriotism, from the Revolution to Vietnam, even when this involved war against countries with Catholic majorities, such as Mexico in the nineteenth century and Italy in the twentieth.<sup>7</sup>

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Catholics organized numerous fraternal organizations as havens from social persecution and economic uncertainty, such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Catholic Central Verein,



and Knights of Columbus. According to Christopher Kauffman, "The Ancient Order of Hibernians became a Catholic defense organization during the nativist period; Bishop Hughes called upon it to provide guards for the churches of New York when they were threatened with anti-Catholic violence." The CWV shared many characteristics with its nineteenth-century predecessors, including the construction of an intensely nationalistic identity, combined with close ties to the Church, which in many ways facilitated the rapid growth of the organization.<sup>8</sup>

Under the direction of Monsignor Higgins and National Commander John M. Dealey, of Queens, the CWV quickly and skillfully expanded by forging close ties to the hierarchy from the Vatican to the diocesan level, and by publicizing itself in the religious and secular media. As soon as the organization was formed, Higgins wrote to Thomas E. Molloy, bishop of the Diocese of Brooklyn—which in 1935 included Kings, Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk counties—requesting recognition and support. Molloy, a fervent patriot and anticommunist, warmly received the news of the CWV's formation, and responded to Higgins: "I can see no objection to your interest in the Catholic War Veterans' Association especially since an opportunity may thus be provided of promoting the religious and spiritual welfare of the members of this organization." He wished the fledgling group "every success in this very zealous undertaking." As an enthusiastic supporter, he appeared at many CWV functions throughout the diocese.<sup>9</sup>

With Molloy's approbation, the CWV announced its formation on 12 May, 1935, at the Eleventh Annual Mother's Day Communion Breakfast of the Holy Name Society, at the Commodore Hotel in Manhattan, an event covered by the *New York Times*, *Herald Tribune*, *Long Island Daily Star*, and *Daily News*, as well as the Diocese of Brooklyn's weekly paper, *The Tablet*. The event also proved the group's ability to garner political support. James C. Sheridan, Democratic leader of Queens, attended and voiced his support: "We want this organization to become national in scope, so that we can point with pride to Catholics who have served on the field of honor." An audience of more than one thousand people cheered the announcement of the CWV's formation, and its recognition by Bishop Molloy and the Secretary of State for New York.<sup>10</sup>

In December, Higgins informed Molloy of the CWV's growing support:

The Hierarchy have received letters form the National Office seeking the good will and approbation of the Bishops, Arch-Bishops, and Cardinals of the country. Three of the four Cardinals have approved our organization, namely Cardinal Hayes, Cardinal O'Connell, and Cardinal Dougherty.

Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago's approval completed unanimous support of the CWV by American cardinals in the 1930s.<sup>11</sup>

Higgins traveled to Rome in June 1935 for a private audience with Pope Pius XI, at which he presented an oil painting of the organization's coat of

arms and explained the purpose of the group. In July, Higgins returned with an autographed papal blessing for the CWV. Through correspondence with Vatican Secretary of State Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli (later Pope Pius XII), Molloy informed Pius XI of the CWV's mission and reasons for its support by local church officials: "They try to serve their country by the defense of sacred institutions, and they are against failed doctrines, and in a special way, they fight against communism."<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the Vatican's endorsement, proudly proclaimed to all concerned, the CWV secured an unlikely ally in the 1930s and 1940s—the Jewish War Veterans of the United States (JWV). Amidst strains of Catholic anti-Semitism, as evidenced by Father Coughlin's popularity, the CWV and JWV worked together on many issues, from securing benefits for veterans to preventing the spread of communism. In a newsletter of JWV Post 75, in Richmond Hill, Queens, Post Commander Abraham Stern wrote:

Greetings, Catholic War Veterans of the U.S. We welcome you cordially amidst the ranks of War Veteran Organizations. Yours is a righteous cause, you have a definite place and definite duty to perform which can best be accomplished only by an organization such as yours. Your objectives can more readily be realized through the concerted action of a cohesive, unified body. Who shall refute your right to organize?

Citing examples of persecution of Catholics, Stern commended the patriotism of Catholic organizations, with many examples of their support of American ideals and foreign conflicts:

We feel exceptionally proud that the origin of your organization has taken root amongst our neighbors. We hail Astoria Post No. 1., CWV of the United States in a true spirit of comradeship; and to National Commander John M. Dealey we extend our hearty congratulations and sincere best wishes for many accomplishments.

Similar ties were forged with the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, increasing the visibility and facilitating the rapid growth of the CWV.<sup>13</sup>

Thousands of Catholic veterans of World War I flocked to the organization to affirm their dedication to their faith and nation. *The Tablet* observed: "In six months time 120 posts have been organized from Maine to California, and United States insular possessions. The five boroughs can boast of fifty flourishing posts, with county chapters and a State department ready to function in 1936." Nearly half the posts were in Brooklyn and Queens, with membership cutting across ethnic and class lines. These two counties dominated the national organization for decades, producing a vast majority of its officers. The organization grew steadily in the 1930s, but its membership increased most dramatically in the aftermath of World War II. By the early

1950s, the CWV boasted hundreds of posts in all fifty states, with a membership of more than two hundred thousand.<sup>14</sup>

To promote its version of Americanism, the CWV developed its Five Point Program of Unity for the “Unification of all echelons of Catholic War Veterans in a constructive program ‘for God, Country, and Home.’” The program, explained in the *Officers’ Manual*, included Americanism, Catholic Activity, Leadership, Membership, and Veterans Affairs. All facets of the program were designed to enhance the prestige of the organization and encourage members to promote its vision of patriotism in the public sphere. The *Officers’ Manual* proclaims: “We believe in action. ‘It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.’ No program no matter how magnificent, can be effective unless it is acted upon. Remember this—and act.”<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Five Point Program was that devoted to promoting Americanism, which was often narrowly defined by the CWV as a heroic form of patriotism, based on military service. Members were encouraged to celebrate such patriotic occasions as Columbus Day, Thanksgiving, Election Day, Statue of Liberty Day, and Flag Day. The *Officers’ Manual* even included Christmas and St. Patrick’s Day as important patriotic holidays. Members were implored to exercise their civic responsibilities, including voting, jury duty, participating in community activities such as forming youth groups, holding patriotic celebrations and parades, and opposing subversion in all forms. Posts were encouraged to publish pamphlets to educate the public on subversion:

Be ever alert that the new prospective member truly qualifies for Membership in the CWV. Do not become lax in your vigilance. Keep in mind the excellent rule ‘when in doubt don’t,’ and you will not embarrass your unit or your organization. Report any information on subversion concerning any individuals or groups to the appropriate authorities...And above all keep your head.<sup>16</sup>

The rituals at meetings and parades of the CWV are important for understanding the patriotic identity of this organization. Rituals, observes Mary Ann Clawson, play a critical role in all fraternal organizations:

Like art, ritual can both express and generate sensibilities, styles of feelings, aesthetically satisfying interpretations of social experience. At the same time, ritual is a collective experience that creates social relationships as it creates meaning. The cognitive ‘truth’ of ritual is thus confirmed for its members not simply by its seeming factuality or intellectual consistency, but by the aesthetic power of the images it offers and the character of the social relations that are created and cemented by the ritual experience.

Through its symbols, rituals and public displays, the CWV sought to affirm its faith in the Roman Catholic Church, by insisting on allegiance to the papacy

only on spiritual matters, and loyalty to the United States in temporal affairs.<sup>17</sup>

The CWV's official insignia, located on all of its official publications, is a Celtic Cross, with "U.S." on a star in the middle, and an olive leaf down the center of the bottom portion of the cross. According to the *Officer's Manual*:

The Celtic Cross represents to us the symbol of Christianity preserved and protected by valiant forefathers. The letters U.S. on the star are for these United States and stand for the Constitution on which are based our principles. The Star stands for the glory of victory. The Circle denotes the perpetuity of the Church which will last until the end of time as guaranteed by its founder Jesus Christ. The Olive Branch of peace signifies our attitude toward all men in fulfillment of our Lord's behest, 'Love thy Neighbor as Thyself.'<sup>18</sup>

Since 1935 the CWV has used parades to promote Americanism. Parades displayed the organization's ideals to the public in a carefully constructed manner, promoting images of military service and loyalty, illustrated in Higgins' marching song:

Sound the drum,  
Here they come,  
Catholic soldiers  
Hearts so true  
Caps of Blue  
Catholic soldiers  
They March down Coast to Coast  
The Nation's Greatest boast  
With steady beat on Town and Village Street.  
Our Posts will go down with time  
For the honor of Old Glory.  
Our men always right on time  
With a smile that will tell the story.  
We'll fight, and we'll fight to win, Any foe we'll hold at bay.  
We are with Uncle Sam,  
And we're there to a man,  
Carry on for the U.S.A.!<sup>19</sup>

In December 1936, Higgins boasted of Catholic patriotism to the Diocesan Union of the Holy Name Society, at the Immaculate Conception Church in Long Island City:

About fifteen months have passed since I spoke to the Vicar of Christ on Earth regarding the organization of Catholics who had served their country in time of war. I was amazed to find that over two million

Catholic men and women had served their country loyally and effectively, and no bond of union existed in this great force in our beloved land. Continually we were challenged with the assertion that Catholics were not patriotic; that we served foreign interest; that our school system was contrary to American ideals.

The CWV gave living refutation of these charges:

Having the permission of the Most Reverend Thomas E. Molloy and the Holy Father's approbation, the press of America heralded...that there was in the field shock troops of Catholicism under the Banner of the Cross, with the slogan for God, for Country, and for Home.<sup>20</sup>

Beginning in 1936, the CWV sponsored an annual ceremony in Prospect Park to commemorate the four hundred Catholic soldiers from Maryland who died in the Battle of Brooklyn in 1776. The annual event reminded the public that Catholic allegiance to the United States extended back to the Revolution, and attracted large crowds into the 1950s. In September 1953, more than a thousand veterans, including four hundred from Maryland CWV posts, attended the Seventeenth Annual Maryland Monument Memorial Exercises. After a parade, County Commander Rosario Scibilia and New York City Mayor Vincent Impelliteri spoke at Grand Army Plaza in praise of the Catholic martyrs who helped prevent the annihilation of George Washington's army.<sup>21</sup>

Even in the early years of the Cold War, American Catholics came under attack for disloyalty. In 1946, Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, president of the Federal Churches of Christ in America, a Protestant-centered organization, made several speeches about the American Catholic Church which led to sharp protests from the CWV. Speaking to the Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Churches of Greater Boston in March 1946, Oxnam voiced concern with Catholic commitment to democracy: "Catholic pressures on newspapers, radios and other sources of information together with political activities constituted threats to both religious and political freedom." Again, in June, Oxnam gave a speech deemed offensive by the CWV, in which he objected to American diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Oxnam contended that American Catholics could not be loyal to the United States and "to another political state and its political ruler, if the two states differ in international diplomacy."<sup>22</sup>

Edward T. McCaffrey, National Commander of the CWV, responded in an open letter:

You [Oxnam] are challenged to cite a single instance of so-called political schism when a Catholic was obliged to make a choice between loyalty to Country and loyalty to Church. Do you charge that the more than eight million Catholic men and women who served in our armed

forces fought in Europe and the Pacific with mental reservations? Catholics cannot envision any occasion when there could be a difference because the very fundamentals of our ageless religious beliefs are firmly grounded in the basic laws of our beloved country.

McCaffrey and the CWV saw no contradiction in Catholic loyalty, as charged by Oxnam, Blanshard, and other critics: “Catholics of America have one indivisible political loyalty which no man may assail. Catholics have one religious loyalty which comforts us in that we know as good Catholics we must be good Americans.” However, the CWV’s definition of Americanism did little to incorporate American ideals of liberty and justice; instead, it propounded a narrow concept of loyalty based on military service.<sup>23</sup>

### **The CWV and Anticommunism**

The CWV contended that communism, domestic or international, was anathema to American and Catholic ideals. Anticommunism helped define the CWV from its inception, and became its most important issue for decades. This position, partially based on nineteenth and twentieth-century papal encyclicals, was infused with rhetoric characteristic of American anti-radicalism dating back to the post-World War “Red Scare.”

Until the late nineteenth century, the Church avoided direct criticism of existing economic and political systems. Popes condemned specific economic practices, such as usury, but offered no broad critique of the feudal, mercantilist, or capitalist systems, and refused to align itself with any particular social system. Instead, to secure itself in diverse cultures in virtually every nation, the Church “followed successfully the norm of rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.” The eschatological mission was to save souls, not reform political systems.<sup>24</sup>

From the earliest stages of its anticommunist crusade, marked by the publication in 1891 of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical, *Rerum novarum*, the Church predicated its opposition not on the teachings of Marxist Socialism—with which it shared many declared ideals—but rather on the ideology’s atheistic materialism. In 1937, Pius XI issued *Divini redemptoris*, the major encyclical addressing communism, assailing the Stalinist version prevalent in the Soviet Union. Pius called on Catholics to defend their faith against the threat of atheistic communism, because the Church was the only institution that could “offer real light and assure salvation in the face of communistic ideology.”<sup>25</sup>

While the Vatican promoted a stridently anticommunist philosophy, it dealt flexibly with communist governments, first in the Soviet Union, and then in postwar Eastern Europe. According to Hansjakob Stehle, its policy was oriented “toward the preservation and protection of religious observance and freedom of worship and maintaining the church structures necessary for those

purposes.” The Church required diplomatic contacts to bring faith to the people in communist societies: “Without the pope there can be no bishops; without bishops, no priests; without priests, no sacrament; and without the sacraments there is no salvation.” The Church had to function as any other government; the Vatican opposed the USSR and other communist countries whenever possible, but compromised with these governments whenever necessary. This dexterous foreign policy was frequently at odds with positions of American Catholic organizations such as the CWV.<sup>26</sup>

For American Catholics, anti-communism served as the ideal political issue to move into the mainstream. Catholic leaders assailed the USSR’s execution of the Vicar-General of the Roman Catholic Church in Russia as part of its antireligious campaign, citing it as an example of why the U.S. should not grant diplomatic recognition. In 1933, Catholics became a constituency that Franklin D. Roosevelt believed he had to placate on this diplomatic issue. Father Edmund Walsh, a Georgetown University Jesuit professor and leader of Catholic resistance to recognition, was invited to the White House for a personal interview with the president, who promised to push Soviet Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov to make concessions on the issue of religious liberty: “Leave it to me, Father. I am a good horse trader.”<sup>27</sup>

In June 1935, the CWV’s National Board of Officers, meeting in Long Island City, launched its “official” campaign to oppose communism:

Whereas...we are opposed to Communism because it strikes at the heart of the ideas and ideals—God, Country, and Home...Be it Further Resolved, that we...propose to immediately use every means within our power to stamp out this vitriolic form of Un-Americanism that is slowly creeping into our institutions.

While the CWV embraced the Vatican’s anticommunist message, it neither endorsed the vision of social justice expressed in papal encyclicals nor demonstrated the Vatican’s flexibility in its relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>28</sup>

The CWV asked for support of the resolution from New York members of Congress, a strategy that met with considerable success. Rep. James W. Wadsworth (R-N.Y.) wrote: “I rejoice that your organization has resolved to fight Communism in all its forms. The Country needs the peace-time service of your men just as it needed their wartime service. The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.” “I assure you,” responded Rep. Hamilton Fish (R-N.Y.), “of my full cooperation with this matter.” Rep. Thomas H. Cullen (D-N.Y.) supported the resolution and promised to “file it in the Congressional Record.”<sup>29</sup>

The crusade took many forms at all levels of society. Although strongest in Brooklyn and Queens in the 1930s, the CWV led a nationwide series of parades, rallies, petition campaigns, and picketing of businesses suspected of being procommunist, and, in street-level demonstrations, did not shrink from violence. In May 1937, the Richmond Hill Post, commanded by Walter

McClenahan, accused a stationery store, at Liberty Avenue and Lefferts Boulevard, of distributing communist propaganda as well as "immoral" literature on birth control. Several members picketed, carrying placards reading: "By not patronizing this store, you help us fight communism." The owner, Al Siegel, defended his First-Amendment rights: "My newsstand is as it should be—an open forum. The sidewalk in front of my store is free, too. It has never been anything else. It never will be."<sup>31</sup>

As the boycott and picketing gained support from Catholic clerics throughout Queens, the Reverend Peter W. Fox, pastor of Saint Monica's Church in Jamaica, declared:

Attacking sources of communist propaganda in each neighborhood seems a logical step. While a national campaign against the spread of communism is necessary, a supplementary neighborhood campaign should prove helpful. Waged together, the crusades will have the very desirable effect of keeping the public aware of the danger of communism in the community and the nation.

The Reverend Cosmos Shaughnessy, director of the Immaculate Conception Monastery in Jamaica Estates, also lent support: "Anything pertaining to communism is un-American. I should like to confer with the veterans and learn the facts that led to the picketing." The CWV defended its tactics: "If the forces of the left may use picketing as a means to achieve their ends, then picketing may be used to counteract radicalism."<sup>31</sup>

The action by the CWV prompted a response that ended in riot. On 26 May, the American League Against War and Fascism held a counter-demonstration that attracted close to a thousand people, many of whom were members of the CWV. At the close of the rally, a fist fight broke out when James McCourt, a member of the Richmond Hill Post, objected to how a demonstrator held the American flag. When the youth ignored him, McCourt responded: "It's an American flag and there are regulations about how it should be carried. The blue field should always be up." At that point, according to McCourt, the melee began, with both sides throwing punches. Dr. Benjamin Lurie, chairman of the Jamaica branch of the League, told reporters, "Police stopped the fighting quickly, but a youth was arrested because he is supposed to have held a flag upside down." Unabashedly admitting that he and other veterans were responsible for much of the heckling of the League's speakers, McCourt warned his opponents: "The next time the members of the American League hold a meeting in Richmond Hill, there'll be a real riot. We've decided this business of communism must be stopped."<sup>32</sup>

Ironically, the CWV had agreed to withdraw its pickets four hours before the outbreak of violence. James Gilhooley, an attorney from Jamaica who represented the veterans at a conference with Al Siegel earlier that day, told reporters: "The Richmond Hill CWV stopped picketing the Siegel store



because Siegel promised he will not permit the Communists to use his store or his newsstand to spread its literature...Siegel told us that literature was being inserted in his papers without his knowledge, and we believe him." Street-level agitation, combined with connections to the Church and utilization of local media, secular and religious, earned the CWV what it considered a major victory in Richmond Hill.<sup>33</sup>

Immediately after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the CWV, along with the hierarchy, ended its isolationist stance and gave full support to the war effort, while continuing opposition to the "godless atheism" of the nation's new ally, the USSR. According to the historian George Sergiovanni,

Catholics feared the Soviet-American alliance would blur the politico-ideological lines and confuse Americans into accepting communism as a respected, even benign philosophy. This is why the U.S. Catholic press, with a circulation of well over nine million, persisted in assailing communism as vigorously as it criticized Nazism and fascism.

While the CWV's attacks on the ideology of the Soviet Union never developed into support of the Axis Powers, they earned the opprobrium of the federal government and the media, and, for the first time, made the CWV openly critical of the Roosevelt Administration.<sup>34</sup>

Despite opposing the policies of the nation's Soviet allies, the CWV energetically organized events in support of America's war effort. In February 1943, at a meeting attended by four hundred people inaugurating the Saint Joan of Arc Post in Jackson Heights, Monsignor Higgins recounted the purpose of the organization to affirm its members' allegiance to God, Country and Home. According to *The Tablet*, the singing of "We're There to a Man for Uncle Sam," written by Higgins, "was a most thrilling sight when the entire audience stood up and joined in the chorus." Speeches extolled heroic Catholic soldiers from Queens, and donations of blood were solicited for men returning from North Africa and Europe.<sup>35</sup>

The CWV routinely sponsored requiem masses for those who died in the war. In March 1943, the Richmond Hill Post sponsored a mass for soldiers, preceded by a parade, at the Church of Saint Joseph Benedict Labre. The Reverend Edward S. O'Sullivan called for victory, not only for the United States, but also for the ideals of the CWV:

We pray...that this war...will soon cease; that victory will be ours; that a just and lasting peace will be secured; that the subversive influences of Nazism, Fascism, Communism and Atheism will be hurled down into the depths of Hell where they belong; and that this Government of the United States of America will go down into history not only as the greatest country on the face of the world, but as a nation that has known God, that has loved Him and has observed His Ten Commandments.

O'Sullivan implored the worshipers to work at home for unity, stay vigilant against subversives, and pray for those killed in combat.<sup>36</sup>

Notwithstanding its support of the war effort, the CWV continued to assail the Soviet Union and Stalin's apologists in the United States. At its New York State Convention in May 1943, Father Matthew Toohey, National Chaplain of the CWV, condemned domestic and international communism, along with its "fellow travelers," urging Americans not to be fooled by Stalin's "trickery." Although he accepted the alliance, he insisted that Americans were helping themselves and Russia, not the Soviet system. "It is high time we ceased making a tin-God out of Stalin and a super-state of Russia...Russia is fighting for her own integrity and we're helping to save Russia." Ignoring that the Soviet Union at no time faced fewer than 60 percent of German forces, he claimed that the United States changed the course of the war with its intervention in North Africa. Toohey minimized the USSR's contributions to the Allied war effort, suggesting that it was ungrateful to the United States for lend-lease assistance and carried out policies antithetical to the American war effort: "If Russia wants to help in the United war effort, she can do America a great service and manifest her gratitude by suppressing the Communist Party in America."<sup>37</sup>

The CWV's anticommunist position extended to when and where the United States should open a second front in Europe, a major source of tension with the Soviet Union. In May 1943, Walter J. Campbell, the New York State commander assailed the leaders of a rally at Yankee Stadium to support a second front:

Our leaders in the Armed Forces are men of experience and knowledge. They are the ones to determine the need of a second or even a third front. Many of those now advocating a second front were advocating work stoppages and defiance of Selective Service officials just before the Soviets were attacked. President Theodore Roosevelt once said. 'There can be no 50 percent American. You are either a 100 percent American or you are not an American at all.' There is no place in America for those advocating anything but Americanism. Communism, Fascism, or Nazism do not conform with our American way of life and should not be encouraged.<sup>38</sup>

Attacks on the Soviet Union by American Catholic institutions, including the CWV, led to tension with the Roosevelt administration. In November 1943, the CWV objected to Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes's criticism of two stridently anticommunist diocesan papers, *The Witness*, in Dubuque, Iowa, and *The Tablet*, in Brooklyn, for undermining the American war effort. In a letter to Roosevelt, John Scully, chair of the Catholic Action Committee of the CWV, defended *The Tablet*, which had publicized the organization since its inception, as "the official organ of the Diocese presided over by

Bishop Thomas E. Molloy, whose real Americanism no one can question, and from whose diocese many of our fine American boys are serving their country.” While the theme was hardly new, the confrontational tone was different from previous correspondence with the president: “Such a performance [Ickes’s speech] calls for the most vigorous protests possible and you can be assured that as a National Representative of an organization of veterans...my voice will be raised in protest every time an attack is made by a member of your cabinet upon Catholics.”<sup>39</sup>

The CWV’s membership increased dramatically during World War II, abetted by its contention that the alliance with the Soviet Union did not mean an end to communist influence in the United States. W. M. Healey, Second Vice Commander of the Queens County Chapter, warned that in New York City:

Communistic and other subversive groups are working day and night to destroy the Catholic Church in America. Many in their ranks hold key position in the government at Washington, D.C., are very prominent in the field of radio and trade unions, under the so called American Labor Party.

He implored prospective members:

To join our organization to further the welfare of the veterans in the World War...You can also assist in helping the Church to defend her ideals and ideas against her enemies who seek to undermine our American belief in God, Country and Home. Join Now! Get ready for the many post-war emergencies that are to come.

This rhetoric, intended to inspire patriotic action, in retrospect appears ominous. The sweeping generalizations and suggestions of unnamed insidious forces lurking in high places perpetuated and exaggerated fears of communist infiltration, foreshadowing the emergence of the Red Scare rhetoric of the Cold War. The end of World War II and the rapid demise of allied unity ushered in a period of tension between the U.S. and the USSR, and enabled the CWV’s vociferous anticommunism to become part of mainstream political discourse.<sup>40</sup>

During the Cold War, the CWV confronted communist expansion in Eastern Europe and sought to protect Catholics from state-sponsored persecution in Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. Condemning the broad principles of the Eastern European states, the CWV frequently focused on specific instances of religious persecution, from assaults on parochial education to arrests of leading clerics, issues it confronted from the halls of Congress to the streets of Brooklyn and Queens.

The CWV mounted campaigns in support of Archbishop Aloysius Stepinac of Yugoslavia, and Jozsef Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary, two perceived

martyrs around whom American Catholics could rally. Aloysius Stepinac (1898-1960) became the archbishop of Zagreb, Yugoslavia, in December 1937, serving in one of his country's most controversial periods. He supported Catholic Action and raised money for charities, but his relationship with the Ustasha, Germany's wartime puppet state in Croatia, continues to be debated. The CWV and other Catholic groups maintained that although he supported Croatian independence, he was critical of the Ustasha's support of Nazism. What is clear is that as an outspoken critic of Tito's regime, Stepinac played a crucial role in the postwar anticommunist movement.

In September 1946, Tito's communist government tried him on charges of collaborating with the Ustasha and sentenced him to life in prison after what many Catholic sources claimed was a mockery of justice. Stepinac was released from prison in 1951 but kept under house arrest. By refusing Tito's request that he leave the country, in which he remained for the rest of his life, Stepinac became a worldwide anticommunist martyr and hero.

The CWV's campaign on Stepinac's behalf aimed to influence policy makers in the United States at the local and national level. Its campaign drew no distinction between the Yugoslav government, which was autonomous of Soviet control, and the satellite Eastern European states, whose communist parties were dominated by Moscow. It began in 1946 with a terse message urging President Harry S. Truman to call for Stepinac's release more assertively:

Previous wires to you were referred to the State Department and an entirely unsatisfactory reply was received. Please state your foreign policy reflecting your attitude in this vital matter. The United States government should demand the immediate release of Archbishop Stepinac.

Although Truman did not respond favorably, the CWV demonstrated more influence at the local level.<sup>41</sup>

CWV chapters urged institutions and leaders to put pressure on the Truman administration. On 16 March 1947, a rally sponsored by the Mary Queen of Heaven Post drew hundreds of supporters to Public School 203 in Brooklyn. The Reverend Charles J. Bermel, chaplain of the Kings County Chapter, called for prayers for the Catholics of Yugoslavia, who were victims of an atheistic campaign. After a Fordham University professor, James J. Flynn, explained the historical background and criticized the United States and Great Britain for abandoning the Catholics of Eastern Europe, the Reverend Edward Lodge Curran assailed the Truman administration's inaction. In support of the rally's objectives, City Councilman Hugh Quinn (D-Queens) called on the City Council to support Rep. John J. Rooney's (D-Brooklyn) congressional resolution on Stepinac's behalf. The trial of the archbishop, Quinn argued, had been, "notoriously unfair, prejudicial, and

without any regard whatever for his rights as a citizen of his country, and a mockery of human justice." The City Council ultimately adopted Quinn's position and encouraged the U.S. Congress to pass Rooney's resolution.<sup>42</sup>

Max Sorenson, who succeeded McCaffrey as the CWV's national commander, went to Europe in August 1947, hoping to combine a visit to the imprisoned Stepinac with a private audience with Pius XII. Sorenson received another papal blessing for the CWV, and word that the Vatican favored its campaign to free the archbishop. However, Yugoslavia did not allow him to visit Stepinac or even obtain a visa. After coming home, he used the issue to illustrate the duplicity of Tito's communist government and to attack communism in general.

The second Eastern European prelate championed by the CWV was Jozsef Cardinal Mindszenty (1892-1975) of Budapest, Hungary. Mindszenty, an outspoken critic of Hungary's postwar communist government, was arrested in 1948 on charges of treason for his resistance to secularization of Catholic schools. After being forced to sign a confession, he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

On 28 February 1949, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Kings County Chapter of the CWV sponsored a rally to publicize the need for political action on his behalf. Monsignor Bela Varga, a former speaker of the Hungarian Parliament, described Mindszenty's efforts to withstand "communist torture" and not give in to demands that he sign a confession to the crime of treason. Drawing on what he alleged were Hungarian sources, Varga asserted that although Mindszenty's captors imported the best "third degree" experts from the Soviet Union, the cardinal withstood the pressure until, "The team found...he had one human weakness: he loved his mother. He could not stand by and see the misery to which his mother was being subjected." In Mindszenty's *Memoirs*, however, he denied signing the bogus confession because of his mother, but rather because of his own intense torture: "In my pain and fear I momentarily believed that this threat would be carried out. To conceive of my mother in this place was unbearable. But gradually I realized that it was altogether impossible for them to bring her here by morning." Varga's assertion of the mother's torture was indicative of the emotional rhetoric employed at CWV rallies.<sup>43</sup>

Again, the CWV demonstrated its ability to draw large crowds and gain the support of politicians. In addition to fifteen hundred veterans who marched through Brooklyn to the rally, five New York assembly members attended, along with Deputy Mayor John Bennet and Rep. Rooney, a supporter of the CWV's campaign for Stepinac. Rooney, whose opponent in his first primary contest for Congress accused him of being a communist, needed to establish his own anticommunist bona fides. "Soviet Russia," he said at the rally,

stated again and again...that she does not intend to be restrained from advancing her purpose of continental dominion by the Agreement of Potsdam, which provides that nations shall be free to establish

governments of their own choosing. What has happened in Hungary...is happening elsewhere and illustrates anew the determination of Moscow to enslave Europe.

The Brooklyn Democrat called on the United Nations to impose harsh economic sanctions on Hungary and Yugoslavia for their religious persecution in general, and the imprisonment of Mindszenty and Stepinac in particular.<sup>44</sup>

On 13 March, 1949, the Saint Joan of Arc Post in Jackson Heights held an even larger parade and demonstration for Mindszenty. The rally combined speeches by city officials with a prayer session for the conversion of the Soviet Union, a practice assiduously promoted by the CWV that became widespread for American Catholics during the Cold War. The prayers were predicated on the alleged revelations in 1917 in which the Virgin Mary instructed three peasant children in Fatima, Portugal, to pray for an end to communism. The Bishop of Leiria, Portugal, conducted a seven-year inquiry, found the visions of 1917 authentic, and authorized the Cult of Our Lady of Fatima. The Church does not require acceptance, but allows Catholics to believe in the apparitions if they so choose.

After the Jackson Heights parade, the marchers assembled at the site of the school being built by the Our Lady of Fatima Mission, to be led in reciting the Rosary by the Reverend Maurice P. Lenihan. In a brief sermon, the Reverend Thomas F. Code of Bayside declared: “We must re-dedicate ourselves to the immaculate Heart of Mary as Our Lady requested at Fatima, and to the Constitution of the United States to fight the octopus of Communism that is trying to twine around the world and destroy freedom.”<sup>45</sup>

The CWV worked for federal legislation enabling hundreds of thousands of Europeans displaced during World War II to obtain asylum in the United States. On 1 April, 1947, a conservative congressman, William G. Stratton (R-Ill.), introduced the Emergency Temporary Displaced Persons Admissions Act to authorize a “fair share in the resettlement of displaced persons in Germany, Austria, and Italy by permitting their admission into the United States in a number equivalent to a part of the total quota numbers unused during the war years.”<sup>46</sup>

A protracted debate on the Stratton Bill inspired passions on both sides and divided traditional political alliances. According to the historian David Kenney:

Many who were in favor stressed the moral or idealistic argument—“the least we can do.” Others saw the bill as means of reuniting divided families. Those who were opposed feared the competition for scarce housing, the entrance of Communists and “too many Jews,” and the threat of un-American ideas.

Supporters ranged from the American Legion to the American Civil Liberties

Union. The CWV, despite its constant fear of communist infiltration and subversion, lobbied for the bill in Congress and supported it in the media.<sup>47</sup>

In July 1947, McCaffrey—a past national commander of the CWV—delivered impassioned testimony before the House Subcommittee on Immigration and Naturalization, replete with stories of heroism and martyrdom of victims of communist governments. He centered his plea for the refugees on the ideal of religious freedom:

These people have refused to return, because they are strongly religious and Russia, despite her protestations, continues to persecute to the death the free exercise of religion; because they are political refugees, they will not bow before state totalitarianism, whether Nazi or Communist; they have been denied equal economic opportunity because of their race or their creed. No Christian, no Jew, no single human being who professes a belief in God will bow in fealty to the godless states of Russia, Poland, or Yugoslavia.

McCaffrey also entered a supporting Jewish War Veterans' resolution in the *Congressional Record*.<sup>48</sup>

To support the Stratton Bill, CWV chapters in Queens and Brooklyn circulated petitions, lobbied elected officials, and issued press releases. A letter to *The Tablet* addressed the subversion question:

We should not...forget that these poor Unfortunates, the victims of Nazi or Red Fascist totalitarianism, have been undergoing screening in the DP [displaced persons] camps for upwards of two years...subjected to the same strict...requirements of our immigration law...Their health, their political beliefs, their potentiality for being self-sustaining after entry, all will be carefully inquired into.<sup>49</sup>

The CWV did not embrace ultra-right-wing xenophobia, but its fear of communism at home drew it close to the extremist views of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy (R-Wis), and was unflagging in its support of the controversial senator's actions, rhetoric, and tactics. Much of its own vocabulary on international conspiracies and domestic subversion prefigured the red baiting that characterized American political discourse during the Cold War. McCarthy's meteoric rise gave credence to its own anticommunist activity. It is hardly surprising that the CWV stood with McCarthy as he faced censure in the Senate.

Significantly, the Queens County Chapter, led by Vincent J. Ferraro, of Glendale, spearheaded the campaign. According to the historian David Crosby:

Nowhere in America did Catholic fraternal organizations have the combination of large numbers and conservative political power that they

enjoyed in New York. The CWV had chapters all across the nation, but none as large, as effectively organized, and as politically active as in Queens and Brooklyn.

In November 1954, the Queens Chapter sponsored a nationwide petition drive to “save McCarthy.”<sup>50</sup>

The campaign climaxed when Ferraro went to Vice President Richard M. Nixon’s Senate office to present McCarthy (recipient of the CWV’s Americanism award in January) with twenty-two books containing the signatures of two hundred fifty thousand supporters, only minutes before the Senate began deliberations on the Watkins Report, which recommended McCarthy’s censure. The efforts of the CWV did nothing to protect the senator from the rebuke of his peers, but indicated the overwhelming support he received from the organization. Coverage of the campaign and the meeting in the vice president’s office in New York’s Catholic and secular press helped sustain the image of Catholics “mindlessly” supporting McCarthy, even as his Senate colleagues condemned him.

*The Tablet* wrote that McCarthy was deeply moved by the CWV’s support in his time of trouble. Upon receiving the petitions, he expressed his gratitude to Ferraro:

It is hard for you to realized how important this type of moral support is. I assure all 250,000 of you and the rest of the American people, I will continue to work even if the Senate censures me—and I think they will—for fighting the dirtiest fighters in the world, Communists. I will go on...until the communists lose or we die.

McCarthy maintained the need for his brand of anticommunism, despite the rebuke from the Senate, and the CWV continued to laud him, even after his death.<sup>51</sup>

On 7 May 1957, at McCarthy’s funeral mass in Appleton, Wisconsin, the CWV served as color guard around the coffin. Six weeks later, in Forest Park, the Queens County Chapter sponsored a “field Mass of Requiem for the repose of the soul of Senator Joseph McCarthy.” The Reverend Joseph A. Grogan, Queens County Chaplain of the CWV, gave the eulogy and celebrated the requiem mass, attended by thousands of veterans from thirty-three posts in Queens. McCarthy was praised as “the fighting Marine for American liberty and national independence, and for his fight for national integrity against the menace of atheistic communism.”<sup>52</sup>

After the Requiem Mass, Edwin G. Hood, Queens County Commander of the CWV, presented Jean McCarthy, the senator’s widow, with a citation which reached new heights in praising McCarthy:

When God in His wisdom saw fit to send us Joseph R. McCarthy, He



showed His love for us, because as an individual and as a United States Senator, this man emptied himself by undergoing every kind of personal humiliation and condemnation so that the menace of atheistic Communism might be disclosed. Joseph McCarthy worked hard and fought toward peace in order that we, as children of God, might know peace. On their behalf, the Queens Chapter...offers a pledge of gratitude and fealty to this man who was not content with giving anything less than life itself as the measure of his love and devotion.

The CWV's representation of McCarthy as martyr ignored the unpalatable truth that McCarthy disclosed no real communist spies, discredited genuine counterespionage, and died from alcohol abuse, not persecution.<sup>53</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The CWV's ideology proved too narrow to sustain its large membership and influence from the 1960s on. Its claim of intense patriotism, based on military service and sacrifice, and its stridently unrelenting anticommunism, which once held great appeal, failed to attract significant numbers of veterans of the Vietnam War. Both the American political establishment and the Vatican reexamined their policies toward communist states in the 1960s, which challenged the fundamental premises of the CWV's ideology. The Vatican under Pope John XXIII pursued his program of *Ostpolitik* to improve relations with the Kremlin and its satellite states, and the Nixon administration offered detente. Thus, the moral certainty of the CWV's "my-country-right-or-wrong" nationalism and vociferous anticommunism became anachronistic for many. Unable to maintain active members, the CWV has lost scores of posts across the nation. Nearly half the posts in Queens and Brooklyn have closed, and all but one in Nassau and Suffolk counties.

However, at its zenith in the 1950s, the CWV was able to galvanize support for many causes. Anticommunism was a powerful theme to demonstrate its unquestioning allegiance to the United States and the Catholic Church. Drawing on Catholic and American sources, the organization campaigned with extraordinary zeal against whatever it chose to identify as domestic and international communism. Its clear, consistent, often overstated message, combined with potent patriotic symbols, produced an organization a quarter-million strong, capable of organizing campaigns at the national and grassroots levels. Although its influence has dwindled, the history of the CWV illuminates the construction of an intensely nationalistic American Catholic identity in the century's middle decades, a reminder of the powerful mixture of religion and politics in the United States

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# NASSAU CHALLENGES GOV. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT'S PROGRAM FOR COUNTY REFORM

*By Constantine E. Theodosiou*

We want to mobilize each person [and].make this the best livable county in New York State.

— The Reverend Dr. Oscar Maddaus  
Secretary, Nassau County Association, 1914<sup>1</sup>

## **The Advent of the Greater City and Nassau County**

Just over a century ago, the Queens County board of supervisors approved a measure to change the sum and substance of its beloved county. To resolve jurisdictional confusion over New York harbor, and, ostensibly, to share New York City Mayor Abram S. Hewitt's vision of an "imperial destiny," Queens County consolidated with New York City. According to the historian, David C. Hammack,

By any criterion [consolidation] was one of the most important decisions ever taken in the metropolitan region Touching at once on economic, political, social, and cultural life, consolidation established enduring new boundaries and institutions for the region and affected the relative value of the resources possessed by most of its residents.<sup>2</sup>

As the county began to decline in the 1890s, many residents viewed union with the Greater City as the agent of progress needed to ensure Queens's stake in the future. Spearheading the move was Long Island City, Queens's only incorporated municipality, then scandalized to the point of financial ruin.. The venerable town of Flushing, however, stood alone in its refusal to go along. Troubling officials and residents alike was the perception that Queens was a backward—if still rural—county, structurally and fiscally unable to provide for the ongoing needs of its citizens. By integrating with New York City, Queens stood to tap into an abundant source of revenue—about \$4.5 billion—resulting in expansion considered implausible if it clung to its old county ways. Queens's addition also contributed 360 square miles of territory (only to lose two-thirds of it with the founding of Nassau one year later), helping to raise Gotham's population to 3.4 million. In turn, New York

emerged as a world-class city, second only to London in size and wealth. Seen on these terms, consolidation seemed wise: by becoming part of a Greater New York, Queens made itself viable for the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, critics of the landmark decision one hundred years later contend that far as Queens is concerned, the prospect of an imperial destiny is a promise largely unfulfilled. Some indicate growing frustration in Queens over the city's highly centralized and indifferent bureaucracy, the accompanying need to control its own quality-of-life issues, and the demographic shift toward the suburbs. Others derisively refer to the permanence of virtually one-party rule throughout New York City as a direct result of consolidation and the economic decline such domination fostered through the years. Of course, Queens County's leaders could not have foreseen all this. Their concerns were more rudimentary—supplying residents with electricity and water, paved roads, street lighting, and railroad crossings. Still, Paul Kerson, a Queens historian, maintains that while consolidation was at first good for Queens, current problems stem from the city's subsequent failure to satisfy the needs of its outer boroughs. And so it appears that the evolution of Queens has come full circle. Today, rather than applaud Queens's decision to join forces with an imperial destiny, many regret the loss of autonomy for what amounts to the status of stepchild. In Kerson's pithy judgment, "What was gained was empire, what was lost was democracy."<sup>4</sup>

The three eastern, most rural, and least developed towns of Queens—Hempstead, North Hempstead, and Oyster Bay—were omitted from the consolidation process. City leaders, the future reform mayor Seth Low among them, asserted that these areas could not justify the expense necessary to bring them to par with the western towns. Just as well: the prevailing eastern view, abetted by Republican leaders hostile to Manhattan's seamy brand of politics, was to reject consolidation, refusing even to participate in the referendum of 1894. A new county composed of the three eastern towns was deemed essential to avert inequitable tax burdens should the region be consolidated, as well as further unleashing of the dreaded Tammany tiger.<sup>5</sup>

In the year after consolidation took place, residents of the three eastern towns were forced to put up with an awkward system of government under the jurisdiction of Queens County but not that of Greater New York. According to Kerson,

Queens was going to send a delegation to the New York City Board of Alderman and Municipal Assembly and Board of Estimate in lower Manhattan. But, Queens was also going to continue to have its own supervisors, now known as Ward Board Members, on the Queens Board of Supervisors, together with the supervisors of the three Queens County towns now outside of the City of New York, namely most of Hempstead, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay.<sup>6</sup>

The answer to this vexing situation was the founding of Nassau County on New Year's Day 1899. To relate the events that led up to this would only repeat existing, well-known sources. The focus of this article is on Nassau's initial form of government, patterned directly from the memory of its parent county. However, as quaint as this seems it was hardly a virtue. County Executive J. Russel Sprague mused more than three decades later that, in its infancy, Nassau County's government was organized no better than that "which existed in England at the time Oliver Cromwell may have wallowed through muddy roads in high boots."<sup>7</sup>

Sprague's fanciful image alluded to what civic societies in the early part of this century dubbed the "county problem." It was believed that traditional county government (what Nassau was at first) could not cope with modern societal demands. Despite this, counties stuck to their dated methods, preserving their bureaucratic weaknesses while—in a bitter pill—raising residents' taxes to offset rising administrative costs. Patronage abuse and official corruption were common.<sup>8</sup>

Throughout its first thirty years, Nassau County struggled with a model of government designed for the time when towns and counties beyond the jurisdiction of cities were sparsely settled and often isolated. As late as 1919, Nassau, apart from its county offices, contained the governments of its three towns, seventeen incorporated villages, and one city. Moreover, the onset of suburbanization caused greater disarray; according to the Nassau County Association,

[Nassau] has so increased in population and the facilities of transportation have so steadily advanced that the county has now grown into a compact community while [its] government...remained unchanged. What is important, furthermore, under the system of government in towns and counties now existing—there has been a lack of responsibility in any one official or set of officials and a duplication or confusion of governmental powers and responsibilities has resulted.

The increased services of the Long Island Rail Road, meanwhile, played a key role in the region's growth; despite this, as well as its proximity to Greater New York, the association noted that Nassau's costs had "increased to a wonderful degree entirely out of proportion with...normal growth."<sup>9</sup>

Dubious ties to the local machine invariably were found, in which the self-interest of Nassau's political leaders often prevailed. Hard data are not readily available, but in 1922, Robert Moses, as secretary of the New York Association, offered a glimpse of questionable practices and blurred distinctions:

The political leadership of Nassau has its headquarters in the board of supervisors and consists of an old-fashioned, unintelligent ring, living on road and other patronage, and principally engaged...in...dodging



**Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt, frontispiece,  
James Malcolm, ed., *New York Red Book* (Albany, 1931)**



**J. Russel Sprague, photo, Paul F. Bailey, ed. *Long Island: A History of  
Two Great Counties, Nassau and Suffolk* (New York, 1949), 3: opp. 6**



indictments...A host of independent elective county and town officers...serve to share or further scatter administrative authority. Nassau is the only county in the state which has developed an independent county road commission under the exclusive control of the board of supervisors, the entire expense of which is a county charge. County road contracts are not usually let by competitive bids. In order to avoid state supervision and competitive bidding Nassau has not come forward to get its proper share of state aid.<sup>10</sup>

In 1914, a commission's finding that radical changes were needed led to the prolonged effort to reorganize Nassau's government. One can imagine the utter frustration of reform advocates when their efforts met with little success. In 1915, voters statewide rejected the proposed state constitution, with its provision for greater centralization to take effect in Nassau. Shortly thereafter, a city form of government was considered for Nassau, but this, too, was dropped for sentimental as well as more cogent fiscal reasons.<sup>11</sup>

Next came the proposal, in the latter part of the decade, that Nassau be administered by a supervisor-at-large, a countywide official to replace the less powerful sitting chairman of the board of supervisors. The supervisor-at-large would oversee a redefined board, and, in the name of greater efficiency, have an unprecedented conferral of executive powers and duties. These included limited power to veto, a step aimed at curbing the free hand enjoyed by individual supervisors; sharing budget decisions with the board; transferring auditing responsibilities to the comptroller; and having the commissioner of highways and public works assume the board's jurisdiction over county roads. A bill containing these provisions was submitted in the state legislature in March 1919, but was not reported out of committee, pending enactment of a constitutional amendment to resolve its legality. Moses noted vaguely that it was apparent, by now, "that advantage has been taken of the removal of constitutional restrictions on the transfer of town and other local functions."<sup>12</sup>

Later in the reform struggle, now directed by a prominent lawyer, William Pettit, greater efficiency was still the main thrust, but what emerged as the proposed charter of 1923 (Chapter 863 of the Laws of 1923) failed outright. Causing this was a change of heart by ranking Republican leaders, whose impressive electoral victories one year earlier gave them the self-assurance to abide by the status quo. Substantively, however, Nassau's leaders bitterly opposed the charter for fear it would do away with the autonomy of the county's towns, cities, and villages, and "place Nassau County in line for annexation by New York City." The loss of patronage resulting from the proposed charter's elimination of the twelve locally elected justices of the peace and the twelve constable positions involved also lingered in the backs of some minds.<sup>13</sup>

Although Governor Alfred E. Smith noted Nassau's problems in the mid-1920s, it appears that his successor was more intent on resolving the "county problem" statewide. But, not long after Franklin D. Roosevelt asserted

himself, Nassau's leaders expressed skepticism over his ability—even willingness—to take the county's interests fully into consideration. County Attorney H. Stewart McKnight, a prominent Republican whose sincerity on this issue could not be questioned, contended that any blueprint of Roosevelt's would be only to Nassau's detriment, believing instead that special districts and incorporated villages of its own making were truer to its social fabric. Steeped in traditionalism, such reasoning was cherished by Nassau's leaders. From the other side, the Democratic County Committee supported a bill sponsored by State Senator Stephen F. Burkard (D-Queens), in March 1929, once again to designate a city charter for Nassau. It failed to become law, but left Nassau sharply divided. To what extent did politics, including those of Franklin D. Roosevelt, now a stone's throw away from the presidency, figure in the reform equation? If any compromise were necessary, what form would it take?<sup>14</sup>

The posturing between Albany and Nassau over reforming county government statewide when Roosevelt sat as governor revealed the extent to which Nassau desired and jealously guarded its autonomy. Nassau entered the 1930s still a "complex system of administration with differing levels and many overlapping functions."

Its collected revenue rose more than five times above that of the decade before, from \$6,369,060 to a whopping \$32,991,573. At the same time, incongruously, the average tax rate per thousand dollars of assessed valuation remained steady at \$34.44 versus \$35.92, a modest amount considering that the value of assessed property had soared from \$184,000,000 to \$918,000,000. Nassau residents had come to expect that their government would implement fiscal oversight for countywide projects; after all, it was their tax dollars involved.<sup>15</sup>

## **H. Stewart McKnight and the Special District**

County Attorney H. Stewart McKnight, a native Pennsylvanian, moved to Queens after earning his law degree in Washington, D.C. In the seventeen years he lived in Queens, he headed the McKnight Realty Company, a key firm in Queens's development, before turning extensively to public affairs. From 1894 to 1898, he was a justice of the peace in the town of Flushing, a member of the town board, and, until 1897, the board of health. In addition, from 1896 to 1907, he served as an assemblyman.<sup>16</sup>

A champion of home rule, McKnight disputed the argument for the state to centralize its authority to relieve the onus at the local level. To him, incorporated villages and special districts were healthy indications of citizens taking the necessary steps to better their communities. McKnight felt that the state was precluded from encroaching on essentially local concerns, thus avoiding the heaping of costs on residents outside the improvement in



**H. Stewart McKnight, photo, in George Von Skaal, *History of the Borough of Queens, New York City* (New York: F. T. Smiley, compiled for the *Flushing Journal*, 1908), 128**

question. Conceived as a conduit for state services, county government facilitated this process. Potential difficulties arising under the status quo might mean a change in the law, but not, as McKnight insisted, “from the State, County, or Town, *but from the subdivided areas where the problems exist.*”<sup>17</sup>

The county attorney classified Nassau into two sections of subdivided and unsubdivided areas, with the subdivided separated into blocks and lots, and the unsubdivided not. Fifty-four percent of the town of Hempstead was underdeveloped by 1930, contrasted with 74 percent of North Hempstead and 94 percent of Oyster Bay. Subdivided areas comprised 30 percent of the county, and it was there that most of the pressure for greater county services originated.<sup>18</sup>

At the same time, roughly two-thirds of Nassau’s assessed property valuation fell within the same territory. This was significant for McKnight, who felt that to initiate countywide improvements, special legislation would necessarily target the subdivided 30 percent, provided that costs were commensurate with residents’ ability to pay. To incorporate Nassau County as a city and diffuse the fiscal burden involved was unacceptable to McKnight, because “it would be confiscatory on the 70 percent of farms and area

receiving no benefit. This would be taking property without due process and unconstitutional”:

[i]t is stated to be a fact that the population of the County is growing so rapidly the County and Town government is obsolete and inadequate to meet the problems growing out of this increase in population is this a fact? Where is this increase in population? *It must be in the subdivided area of the county...If there are problems growing out of the increase of population it must be in this thirty per cent area...Are we to make a City of the whole County because thirty per cent of its area has problems due to increase in population?...If the answer is no, then the County and Town Governments must be continued without change to provide the government that seventy per cent in acreage is entitled to have* (emphasis added).<sup>19</sup>

Though he distinguished varying necessities across the region, McKnight insisted that the solution was universally applicable. In what he designated as “small” areas, common concerns centered on the quality of streets, sidewalks, lighting, fire hydrants, fire protection, water dispersal, playgrounds, and waste disposal. In areas designated “large,” he cited arterial highways, parkways, maintaining public order, hospitals, trunk sewers and disposal plants, garbage incineration, the water supply, and parks:

[i]f small areas incorporated as villages and special districts are the best units to provide and administer minor improvements then the entire subdivided area should organize into villages and districts to accomplish this purpose. If a large area as the county is the best unit to provide and administer major projects then special laws constituting the county a special district with the corporate power to accomplish the purpose, should be enacted by the legislature.

McKnight rebuffed the claim that representative government in villages was obsolete, believing that village boards of trustees were intimately concerned with the affairs of their own communities.<sup>20</sup>

McKnight recommended varied solutions to Nassau’s administrative failings. To avoid higher tax burdens, residents must balance their needs with their means. He favored amending education laws to accommodate a countywide school board, to address the need to build new structures as well as furnish a curriculum above the eighth grade “as a County School District charge.” He called for the revocation of town improvement district laws, while enhancing the self-rule capability of incorporated villages to monitor expenditures. Next, he proposed shifting major highway works to the county road system, while conceding that some consolidation was necessary (but only within the existing arrangement). Last, he advocated an all-out effort to limit

future legislation creating new government services that would result in more taxes.<sup>21</sup>

The position espoused by McKnight played into the hands of his critics, who maintained that special districts wrought uneven rates of taxation across the county. Turning a colorful catch phrase, the *New York Times* was quick to assert:

It would not do to call the people of New York fossils, but they are reposing under the accumulated debris of these numerous governmental strata and doing as much about it as so many long-dead mastodons and saber tooth tigers. In these rural sections (having obviously least need of them) there are the most "layers." There are actually 13,544 units of government in New York, most of them unnecessary. There are 10,000 school districts, one for every twenty farms, many with only a scanty handful of pupils. No wonder then the taxes of many farms exceed the farmers income, and that the area of farm land has shrunk 4,500,000 acres since 1880!<sup>22</sup>

### **The state's position under Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt**

"When you come right down to it," stated Governor Roosevelt in the waning days of the 1929 campaign, "local government affects our lives and our pocketbooks to an even greater extent than State Government or Federal Government." Like his predecessor, Roosevelt often juxtaposed historical references with present trends to hasten county reform. Given the "big business" aura of the 1920s, he shrewdly alluded to practices of the private sector:

For Americans to be proud of their business efficiency...economic progress and...improvements...during the past generation is highly inconsistent with the attitude of the average citizen who, without objection, allows local government to continue in its timeworn groove of efficiency. I assert that not one percent of the towns and counties of the United States but could save great sums of money for the taxpayers, if they were reorganized along modern business lines.<sup>23</sup>

The governor appeared aware of the mounting cost of local government in the past fifteen years. The rise from 1928 to 1930 alone neared \$45,000,000; state aid at the time was \$31,000,000, and the increase in property taxes approached \$13,100,000. Both Westchester and Nassau figured prominently within these sums, with nearly \$4,000,000 given in state aid (about 13 percent), and a \$14,747,600 raise in the general property tax (surpassing what the state collected by \$1,640,000). Their rising cost to administer local

government was \$18,700,000 (about 42 percent); both counties numbered first and second, respectively, in each category.<sup>24</sup>

Roosevelt was quick to blame the rising costs confronting taxpayers on the excessive layers of government under which they lived. By so doing, he exposed the partisanship this issue had long taken on—with Republicans like those in Nassau supporting bureaucratic decentralization, and Democrats advocating greater consolidation of state authority. This, argued FDR, ranged from the federal level “down to the smallest school or special district”:

No citizen of New York can live under less than four governments: federal, state, county and city. If one lives in a town outside of a village, he is under five layers of government: federal, state, county, town and school. If he lives in an incorporated village, another layer is added. If he lives in a town outside of the village he may be in a fire, water, lighting, sewer and sidewalk district, in which case there are ten layers of government.

A citizen so situated has just too much governmental machinery to watch. He may not...realize that ten sets of officials are appropriating public funds, levying taxes and issuing bonds. His attention is not usually centered on local government, for seldom, if ever, does he know what sums are being appropriated, what taxes are being levied or what bonds issued...I question whether there is any real need for so many overlapping units of government. I incline strongly to the view that much can and will be accomplished by reorganizing and simplifying local government.<sup>25</sup>

As Smith did for cities, FDR advocated home rule for counties, as the impetus for empowering local citizens to bring desired improvements. Taking a cue from the Institute of Public Administration, the governor also proposed to eliminate, or at least consolidate, town governments and special districts to pave the way for larger units of local administration. The time was ripe for state and local government to clarify their roles regarding each other. Examples FDR cited were problems rising from how state highways were managed from region to region, and the decentralized nature of health services.<sup>26</sup>

Roosevelt abided by the institute's advice for a legislative commission to study local problems for possible constitutional amendments. The institute's first proposal was that counties become the undisputed local authority by assuming the reduced functions relegated to individual towns and special districts; this policy would facilitate the improved organization of the legal and political jurisdiction of counties, while surrendering town government as the local administrative core.<sup>27</sup>

Next, Roosevelt, the consummate partisan politician, disingenuously

observed that newly revised counties would remain at their best if they concentrated on the needs of their constituents, and shunned the distraction of partisan politics. It followed that individual boards of supervisors needed to be reduced, and that county executives should preside, akin to city managers. He also pushed for local appointments which would reduce costs often associated with patronage.

Third, the institute recommended that the state continue its practice of assuming costs formerly shouldered by towns and counties, such as highways, tuberculosis hospitals, and alms-houses. A fourth proposal called for a state reserve to eliminate lines between sparsely populated counties, such as the Adirondack and Catskill preserves. Fifth was submitting consolidation of some of the smaller and poorer counties to a referendum, and sixth was state oversight of such key county officials as district attorneys and medical examiners.

The seventh proposition, contradicting the sixth, provided for county departments of education in which locally appointed superintendents would oversee matters in compliance with the mandates of the State Department of Education. The eighth proposal would establish cities and villages with fewer than 25,000 people as limited municipal corporations. This would help county government assume vital services, such as policing, health, real estate valuation, and tax collection. Cities with between 25,000 and 100,000 residents would be allowed to vote on the viability of such an option. Cities with 100,000 or more inhabitants would be independent from the surrounding county (an arrangement that FDR went on to say would effectively abolish the Greater City).<sup>28</sup>

Finally, the survey suggested dividing the state into four zones to determine the best way to administer the disparate needs engendered by local trends and physical conditions. Zone A would consist of unorganized territory over which the state would assume administrative control. Zone B would consist of large cities where no need for county government was apparent and therefore would be eliminated. Zone C would be areas where small cities, towns, villages, and territory classified as suburban justified the services rendered by municipal government, and Zone D would be rural areas where county government would provide the best agent of administration.<sup>27</sup>

Roosevelt, never popular in Republican Nassau, incurred deeper resentment by what were seen as spiteful vetoes of measures favored by county leaders. As Election Day 1930 approached, an editorial in the *North Hempstead Record* denounced his rejection of the Nassau Normal School Bill, suggesting it was solely on the recommendation of the Democratic county leader, Philip Krug, and of another bill that would have allowed the town of Hempstead to increase the number of justices to ease the volume of cases. The editorial accused Roosevelt of being unsympathetic to reapportioning Nassau so as to increase its representation in Albany, and concluded just short of calling for an outright vote against him: "The Tammany issue and other statewide issues are of keen interest to Nassau voters but their decision on election day, might well rest on

what the Governor has done for Nassau...Franklin. D. Roosevelt is no Friend of Nassau County.<sup>30</sup>

## **The Kirkland Bill**

Hostile sentiments like the *Record's* were widespread, underscoring grassroots opposition to the governor's reform initiative. Yet, genuine concern for reform surfaced, with perhaps the most significant proposal to emerge during FDR's tenure—the Kirkland Bill (later Chapter 634 of the Laws of New York of 1932), introduced by Leigh Kirkland, a Republican state senator and a farmer by vocation, one of the first directors of the Farm Bureau at the time it was established in his home county of Cataraugus.<sup>31</sup>

Geared more to improve the current Town Law, the bill countered the liberal preference for a greater degree of state consolidation. The proposal was endorsed by influential citizens in Nassau, who believed it to be a real break from the past because it would end the legislature's timeworn practice of merely readjusting present laws affecting localities.

Article two placed towns with approximately ten thousand people in two categories, with exceptions that did not apply to Nassau. There were two categories, termed classes by William Pettit: first class towns, among them all three of Nassau's, contained more than ten thousand people; second class towns did not. Article three revised the duties of the town supervisor and four councilmen (with a provision for six should the need arise), from two to four justices of the peace, the superintendent of highways, and the receiver of taxes. Town boards could determine the number of policemen, replacing the post of constable. Unlike the comptroller, the clerk and the assessor would be appointed instead of elected, along with the town policemen.<sup>32</sup>

The crucial fourth article reorganized the boards of first-class towns, replacing justices of the peace with councilmen elected at large or by wards. Supervisors and councilmen would be vested with powers, but subject to the will of the state legislature. Article six moved town elections from spring to fall, a welcome step that saved "many thousands of dollars."<sup>33</sup>

Article seven called for a permissive referendum, in line with Village Law, which enhanced the concept of self-rule by enabling voters to reject "certain acts or resolutions" passed by a town board after the fact. Within thirty days after passage of a resolution, any qualified voter could file a petition, secure its backing by 5 percent of the vote for governor in the last election, and, if at least one hundred others protested, submit the proposal to popular vote. Again, such a measure was well-received, for making the government "more flexible, and yet it affords protection in certain emergencies." Though largely unrelated to Nassau, the eighth article was significant because it redefined the manner of conducting town finances. The advanced stage of development, unique to Nassau County earlier on, required its officials to change the old system that,



remarkably, did not require the county to observe its fiduciary responsibilities.<sup>33</sup>

Article twelve prevented creation of “haphazard districts,” and consolidated existing ones, though Pettit was skeptical over its implementation. Nevertheless, article thirteen made such revision effective statewide. Financing local improvements was the subject of the fifteenth article, which addressed the issues of bonds, the nature and quality of local assessments, and the broadening of fund raising methods. The last article dealt with how town boards could execute different portions of the act, stipulating repealed laws, temporary provisions, and the “saving clause.” preserving existing laws.<sup>34</sup>

### **Nassau Reacts to the Kirkland Bill**

The Kirkland Bill’s reception in Nassau was lukewarm, at best. Officials resigned themselves to its passage, but discussed excusing the county from its provisions by evoking the saving clause, viewing the bill as applicable mainly to counties that lacked Nassau’s suburban character. One major skeptic was the Republican leader and County Supervisor J. Russel Sprague, to whom the Kirkland measure signified a step backward for a county already making necessary adjustments to cope with societal demands. Sprague criticized the move to strip justices of the peace of their function, claiming it was too costly as well as heedless of the intimacy between JPs and their constituent population. Also, removal of special district commissioners would not save Nassau taxpayers the money promised them. Instead, Sprague held that additional costs would be needed to fund the bureaucracy created to assist councilmen to perform the same workload the commissioners handled alone. Moreover, he opposed making the superintendent of highways an appointed post, “since [he] is charged with \$1,000,000 annually and should be responsible to the people.”<sup>35</sup>

Sprague’s objection extended to Nassau Assemblymen Edwin Wallace and Edwin Linde, who opposed the bill on grounds that it would rescind the state constitution’s guarantee of the right to a referendum, “before any change in their form of government can be held.” As the *Nassau Daily Review* claimed:

Without the approval of the board of supervisors of this county and apparently without consulting any of the county administration, Senator Walter W Westall [R-Westchester] has presented. a measure that permits the board of supervisors of Westchester and Nassau counties to pass on any bill relating to a changed form of government any time it is presented and wipes out the law that submits such matter to the vote of the people.

The position taken by Nassau’s state and local leaders prevailed when twenty-

five of them persuaded Kirkland to exempt the county from some of the mandates in his bill. The North Hempstead Republican leader, James Dowsey, secured a promise to continue commissions in special districts and keep the office of superintendent of highways elective. Kirkland also agreed to keep Nassau's town clerks subject to popular election should a majority favor this in the referendum, and, that Nassau's three towns could continue to elect their four justices of the peace. In return, Nassau's leaders agreed to have four elected councilmen preside with the town supervisor, and to create the office of town comptroller.<sup>36</sup>

Though it fell short of his expectations, Roosevelt signed the Kirkland bill in April 1932, to go into effect at the start of 1934, the delay enabling a legislative session to act on expected amendments, or possibly to repeal the bill. To the *North Hempstead Record*, the issue was far from over:

Most anything can happen at Albany next year. An effort to repeal the law will doubtless be made. Numerous changes will be sought, if repeal is impossible. The problems of the scores of towns in the state are so varied and complex that it is held no one law can cover them all. It is possible that when next year's Legislature gets through with the law, it will hardly be recognizable as the measure...signed by Governor Roosevelt.

Nassau opinion remained mistrustful, with officials blaming Roosevelt for the bill's enactment, and continuing their opposition. Nevertheless, a *Record* editorial endorsed the Kirkland Law as a small but positive step forward, hinting that its implementation would upset current office holders with stakes in the status quo, an outcome that could lead to diminished patronage. It stirred up new questions as to the bill's original intent:

Opposition...will come mainly from office holders. Those who have jobs are naturally more concerned with their security than they are with progress. But perhaps it can be shown that progress and security are not incompatible. In the meantime our legislators can do a great service for Town government by adding to and improving the bill rather than stripping it of its best features.<sup>37</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Beneath all the rhetoric, Franklin Roosevelt hoped that modernization would diminish Republican power in upstate counties. An effective statewide campaign would not only help to re-elect him, but also make Democratic inroads in the legislature. He also sought a victory impressive enough to warrant his running for president two years later, in 1932. By canvassing long-

overlooked counties beyond the Greater City—where Republicans outnumbered Democrats in all but Albany County—FDR hoped to tap into local dissatisfaction with county government and to be rewarded with additional votes. This strategy helped him to defeat his Republican opponent, Charles Tuttle, by a margin of 725,001 votes, at that time the largest plurality in the state's history. By pointing to the Republican counties he carried, Roosevelt poised himself to discredit a vulnerable GOP early on in the Great Depression. However, despite his statewide landslide, he was soundly defeated in Nassau County.<sup>38</sup>

Nassau was fast emerging as a Republican party stronghold, ranking tenth in votes cast for governor in 1928, and sixth in 1930. This could not have escaped FDR's notice amid a self-defining reelection campaign. Winning Nassau would have lent greater significance to his victory and status.

For its part, Nassau bluntly rejected the governor's proposals for reform. Its leaders felt that they best understood their county's needs, and that Roosevelt had little regard for their devotion to local control. Concerned that their power would be imperiled if a Roosevelt-backed plan were passed, they pressed hard against the his re-election: Charles Tuttle carried Nassau by 7,070 votes, his largest margin of victory in the fourteen counties he carried.<sup>39</sup>

In the 1930s, the question of government reform polarized county politics as both Democrats and Republicans adhered to their familiar themes. A charter considered by the Democratic Law Committee under Judge Thomas Cuff, whose participants included McKnight, was suggestive (again) of a city government. A streamlined bureaucracy was outlined, but the very idea of consolidated county services smacked against McKnight's continued insistence on the need for special districts. After county supervisors refused to endorse the committee's measure, it died in the state legislature early in 1933. The committee was reinstated in mid-year, without McKnight, while another, nonpartisan panel was created by the board of supervisors.

The rejected proposal then was re-introduced in the legislature as separate bills. Staunchly opposing each was a rising Oyster Bay Republican, Assemblyman Leonard Hall, who took the customary stand that their passage would extend Tammany's illicit practices to Nassau County. Despite Hall's objection, the charter passed, enacted as Chapter 938 of the Laws of 1935, subject to a November referendum. As expected, Nassau's leaders campaigned hard to defeat it, and did, by a vote of 41,492 to 27,507. However, the same election ratified the Fearon Amendment, which transferred specific governmental functions to the county once voters gave their assent. The Fearon Amendment (article 3, section 26 of the state constitution), pertained to

the organization and government of counties and shall provide by law alternative forms of government for counties except counties wholly included in a city and for the submission of one or more such forms of government to the electors residing in such counties.<sup>40</sup>

After the election, the Nassau board of supervisors backed an official Charter Commission, with J. Russel Sprague as chairman of the board. Two related concerns guided its thinking: curbing costs and fairly distributing county services. Almost paradoxically, the commission also accepted the premise of two-layer government as fundamental to Nassau's character. The lower level of special districts, villages, two cities, and three towns, would maintain the semblance of home rule, with reform affecting the upper level, the county government itself. This entailed a county budget for the first time, as well as new assessment, health, and welfare departments, district courts, and a medical examiner. Most notably, though not without dissension within the commission, was the call for an elected county executive whose powers would include a selective veto of budgetary items.<sup>41</sup>

Given the conservative predilection of Nassau's citizens, the commission thought it necessary to educate the public on the merits of the proposed charter, and secure its full support prior to enactment. The charter reflected the commission's reluctance to institute changes "that would offend or violate local sentiments, traditions and associations." But all in all, Sprague felt satisfied that enough of a break from the past was at hand. With the establishment of a county executive, in particular, he felt that "county consciousness" would be restored to Nassau in a new and more vibrant form:

It [the new charter] lifted the vision of residents beyond their communities, their villages, cities and towns to the County center at Mineola. Occasions arose later when it became necessary to remind our friends that the charter did not take over *all* governmental functions and services. There remained the "two layers" of government. However, the county layer has been changed.<sup>42</sup>

Sprague and Hall spearheaded the charter in the legislature, where general agreement prevailed. Governor Herbert H. Lehman, who agreed in principle with its contents in his 1936 legislative message—particularly for a county executive—signed the bill into law with the proviso that this should not be construed as his endorsement. Nevertheless, with this much in hand, Sprague and the commission set out to win the decisive referendum in Nassau.<sup>43</sup>

Under Sprague's watchful eye, an all-out effort was waged in the form of public meetings and printed material. Sprague maximized the energy of such politically active Republican women as Genesta Strong, who organized meetings emphasizing "the benefits that would accrue from centralizing the numerous departments of health and a single countywide tax assessment board." Changes in Nassau's "upper level" of government were rigorously stressed.<sup>44</sup>

Serous obstacles threatened passage of the charter. Opposition mounted from the Democrats, who unsuccessfully challenged its constitutionality (later on, state senatorial candidate Dr. Willoughby Pendill and congressional

candidate Gerald Morrell proceeded to back the charter). Various civic groups decried the reduction of village authority, along with the corresponding expansion of county power. Even some of the local GOP rank and file protested, fearing the loss of patronage; Sprague prevailed on them, maintaining that the party would never put politics ahead of the needs of the people. Just before the referendum he sparred with Democratic County Leader John Thorp, who asserted that the charter was not as progressive or cost-effective as Sprague would have citizens believe. Sprague countered by invoking the unsavory prospect of Nassau's annexation to New York City should the charter fail to be enacted.<sup>45</sup>

In 1936, the year of a Democratic landslide for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Nassau County, as usual, voted solidly Republican. The GOP-supported charter won approval by a count of 57,336 to 37,258: its defeat in North Hempstead and Oyster Bay was more than offset by a better than two-to-one majority in Hempstead. The county executive system went into effect in 1937, but it took another fifty-nine years to install a county legislature in place of the old-style board of supervisors.<sup>46</sup>

As we commemorate Nassau's centennial, we will do well to remember how the preservation of self-rule defined this county's political tradition. For more than thirty years, this priority eclipsed the structural reform Nassau's government needed to meet the demands of suburban growth. We can question such a priority today, but also need to bear in mind Nassau's leaders concern with an eastward spread of Tammany Hall's unsavory brand of politics. Resistance to Roosevelt's program for county reform was not surprising; any policy advocated by this Democratic governor was, as if by definition, repugnant to Nassau's passion for independence.

In the end, though J. Russel Sprague's reference to a "county consciousness" was slow in coming, its arrival marked a fundamental shift in Nassau's self-perception. Henceforth, its cherished autonomy would be an affirmation, not merely of its own version of democracy, but also as a moral principle triumphant.

## NOTES

1. Quoted in Edward J. Smits, "Government in Nassau: Its Formative Years 1900-1930," *Nassau County Historical Society Journal* 29 (Winter-Spring 1969): 36.

2. David C Hammack, *Power and Society Greater New York at the Turn of the Century* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1982), 185; Paul E. Kerson, "Union of Queens with New York City: What Was Gained and What Was Lost," paper at conference on 350 Years of Life in Queens, Queens Borough Public Library, Long Island Division, 15 April 1988; Gary McLendon, "100 Years of New York City," *Queens Tribune*, Western Queens ed., 15 Jan. 1998, 12; for the term 'financial ruin,' see analysis of *Edward Woolsey v. Long Island City* and *Moses Mehrbach v. Long Island City*, *erson*, 2-7.

3. Queens voted as follows in the 1894 consolidation referendum:

<u>Town</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>
Long Island City	3,529 (82%)	792
Newtown	1,267 (57%)	946
Flushing	1,144 (45%)	1,407
Jamaica	1,381 (52%)	1,263
Hempstead (part)	478 (54%)	412
Total	<u>7,599 (61%)</u>	<u>4,820</u>

(Jeffrey A. Kroessler, "The Greater City and Queens County," *LIHJ* 11 (Fall 1998): 6).

4. "No one moves from Nassau County to Queens," in McLendon, 12. For Democratic opposition to consolidation, see Matthew Carolan and Raymond Keating, "Thank God the City Stopped at Queens," *Newsday*, Queens ed., 6 Jan. 1998, A34; perhaps the most dramatic example of what Queens was able to do once it became part of the Greater City was construction of the Queensboro Bridge, opened in 1909.

5. Edward J Smits, "The Creation of Nassau County," *LIHJ* 1 (Spring 1989): 176; among other City Club members were former Mayor Abram S. Hewitt and Elihu Root; see John A. Krout, "Framing the Charter," in Allan Nevins and John A. Krout, eds., *The Greater City, New York, 1898-1948* (New York, 1948), 54.

6. Kerson, "Union," 11

7. J. Russel Sprague, "The Nassau County Charter," in Paul Bailey, ed, *Long Island, A History of Two Great Counties, Nassau and Suffolk*, 3 vols. (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing, 1949), 2:221; for the most recent analysis of the creation of Nassau, see Edward J. Smits, "Creating a New County: Nassau," *LIHJ* 11 (Spring 1999): 129-44.

8. Such groups as the National Short Ballot Association brought the "county problem" to light; in Nassau, the Nassau County Association, with help from the New York Bureau of Municipal Research, did so; for problems of county government see the author, "Local Government in New York State: From Rise to Reform and Response," M.A. thesis, Queen's College, 1995, 61-73.

9. John Fleischer, secretary, Nassau County Association, "Nassau County Plans a New Government," *National Municipal Review* 8 (July 1919): 348-49.

10. Robert Moses, "Home Rule for Two New York Counties," *ibid.* 11 (January 1922): 5; Nassau Republican Leader G. Wilbur Doughty "ran one of the most corrupt political machines in the state—in Nassau County," one observer said, 'zoning was bought and sold like potatoes'—and much of the corruption revolved around public works"; Doughty's brother-in-law, "Uncle Andy" Weston, president of the county's largest contracting firm, Booth and Weston, benefited greatly from Doughty's munificence, as did Hendrickson Bros., Inc.: Since many GOP county committeemen happened to be on their payrolls, the two construction firms helped Doughty keep them in line (Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 208-9, 1189-90.

11. See Smits, "Government in Nassau": 18-42, 37; cogent reasons are the amounts of state aid to which towns are entitled. The *North Hempstead Record*, 28 Nov. 1929, reported that 68 percent of Nassau's citizens were registered Republicans; one year later, the paper upbraided Roosevelt for wanting, unlike Gov. Smith, "to break up county and town matters to suit his fancy; the same man who cries out for home rule so loudly Other counties, did we say? We mean with the exception of New York City, which is overwhelmingly Democratic"

(ibid., 23 Oct. 1930);

12. These powers were less than a city mayor's, but "substantial and sufficient to enable him to be an efficient chief executive." The supervisor-at-large, forerunner of the county executive, had a limited veto of resolutions and actions of the board of supervisors: he could propose the annual budget which determined the annual tax levy; make recommendations prerequisite to the county's borrowing money or issuing bonds; appoint and remove heads of county departments, though not their subordinates, who were subject to civil service law; oversee county offices; purchase supplies; and negotiate contracts (Fleischer, 351). In the context of what prevailed in Nassau, the supervisor-at-large plan was ambitious and sophisticated, providing oversight to block corrupt acts by individual supervisors (Smits, "Government in Nassau": 38, Moses, "Home Rule," 6).

13. The offices proposed by the charter included a president, elected county-wide; departments of budget, public works, welfare, health, and police; and a planning and zoning commission. Strong executive functions were vested in the president, with the board of supervisors given planning and zoning power within towns, outside the limits of incorporated villages and cities; justices of the peace were replaced by four district courts, two in Hempstead and one each in Oyster Bay and North Hempstead; and town boards were converted into five-member boards of directors (Smits, "Government in Nassau," 40- 41).

14. Alfred E. Smith, "Is New York County Government Archaic?" speech, in *National Municipal Review* 15 (July 1926): 399-400, citing Nassau and Westchester counties and noting that blanket reform was nearly impossible because all counties in the state were inherently different from one another; for FDR as governor, see Frank Friedel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Triumph* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1956, and Bernard Bellush, *Franklin D. Roosevelt as Governor of New York* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1955), though neither stresses the issue of county reform, a generally overlooked subject of historical research.

15. Smits, "Government in Nassau":42.

16. George von Skaal, *Illustrated History of the Borough of Queens New York City* (New York: F T Smiley, compiled for *Flushing Journal* 1908), 121.

17. H. Stewart McKnight, "Is There Need to Change the Forms and Method of Local Government?" pamphlet, distributed by L. I. Chamber of Commerce, ca. 1930, 12.

18. Ibid., 8.

19. Ibid., 12, 8.

20. Ibid, 9.

21. Or, as McKnight stated, "to provide public improvement under limitations governing appropriations of money and issuing bonds based upon the population and assessed value of the property in the village" (ibid, 22).

22. *New York Times*, 24 Jan. 1932.

23. Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Morals of Good Government," radio address, 29 Oct. 1929, FOR Speech File 0347, FDR Hyde Park Library; FDR referred to the state as "a business organization expending between \$250,000,000 and \$260,000,000 annually with 11,000,000 stockholders and not as efficient as private enterprise," and himself as a temporary business manager, when explaining the legislature's equalization of rural-area taxes, which, "in addition to abolishing the direct tax on real estate," made counties pay 35 percent of the costs

of state highways and "abolished the laws under which towns paid for maintenance of highways" (*New York Times*, 12 July 1929): conversely, McKnight was dead set against equating government with business.

24. FDR, "The Rising Cost of Local Government," radio address, 8 Feb. 1932, FDR Speech File 0461; a chart that accompanied the text showed a miscalculation for Erie County which may have skewed the totals.

25. "Governor Roosevelt's Address at the Virginia Institute," *New York Times*, 7 July 1931.

26. Changes should be consistent with the principle of home rule, allowing localities to decide "whether they want to adopt some new form, providing for consolidations, elimination of officials, or even the setting up of new administrative methods. [I want] people in the towns and counties and in the smaller cities to have a referendum on whether or not they want to change"; Roosevelt assailed the plethora of departments, town and county, which, for highways, totaled 958 in addition to the State Highway Department; as for health, "Is the preservation and improvement of health a State function, or a county function, or a town function? Why not find out whose job it is?" (FDR, "Reorganization of Local Government, County, and Town," radio address, 29 Feb. 1932, FDR Speech File 0466).

27. "Under the plan proposed the county government would administer local town functions and improvement of district functions with perhaps provision for some measure of home rule or local representation" (*ibid.*).

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

30. Editorial, *North Hempstead Record*, 23 Oct. 1930.

31. For Kirkland, see James Malcolm, ed., *New York Red Book* (Albany: J. B. Lyon, 1932): 31

32. William Pettit analyzed the bill as "the most important piece of legislation affecting Town governments passed in this State in the last century" (*North Hempstead Record*, 29 Dec. 1932).

33. *Ibid.*; The Nassau budget plan forced local officials to spend within their means but without a provision to collect money to begin with. To Pettit, this made the town of Hempstead the bane of title companies and other searchers: "Whereas in New York City and other municipalities where they had the budget system, taxes were collected in advance here they were collected in arrears"; the problem was later solved by an amendment compelling county officials to issue receipts for two years of taxes although they collected only for one, "purely a matter of bookkeeping, and today we are on a sound budget basis in this Town," although the auditing processes of Nassau's three towns were "still far behind progressive municipalities" (*ibid.*).

34. Section 341, subdivision 2, provided that not later than 15 January 1933 the town board must make the office of town clerk elective, rather than appointive, by a resolution subject to referendum. Subdivision 3 provided that the superintendent of highways be appointed rather than elected, also subject to referendum; other subdivisions provided for establishment of the office of comptroller by a resolution adopted before 1 August 1933, and submission to the electors (owners of at least 25 percent of real property) for sewer, water, park, refuse or garbage, and public dock districts. Subsection 13 was the important saving clause, which



preserved “existing laws, and many progressive special acts, in general form, affecting our towns will be preserved and not affected by the passage of Chapter 63 (ibid.).

35. Sprague: “Our justices are fully familiar with county problems. If four new councilmen are elected to the places it will mean additional salaries to men who will be ignorant of the needs of the people” (*Nassau Daily Review*, 23 Jan. 1931); this invoked the fundamental virtue of town government on Long Island, the citizens’ traditional access to and familiarity with officials from the time the first towns were founded in 1640; Sprague the politician also may have been mindful of the loss of patronage should JPs be eliminated. “I cannot see how the passage of the Kirkland Bill can be prevented,” declared Supervisor Robert Anderson, “but I would like to see Nassau exempt from the provisions of the bill. A bill drafted to take care of townships with a population of 10,000 persons cannot be applied to a township such as Hempstead which has 182,000 residents” (*North Hempstead Record*, 1 Jan. 1931).

36. *Nassau Daily Review*, 19 Feb. 1931.

37. *North Hempstead Record*, 5 Mar. 1931. To Supervisor James Dowsey of North Hempstead, the bill “increases the number of officials in the Town without an adequate return, and solves none of our problems”; according to Judge Egbert LeCluse, “Roosevelt vetoes every good bill and is in favor of every bad bill as far as Nassau is concerned”; he hoped the law would “never go in effect for the good of North Hempstead” (ibid., 14 Apr. 1932).

38. For FDR’s strategy, see Edward J. Flynn, *You’re the Boss* (New York: Viking, 1947), 78-82, the candid reflections of the Bronx Democratic boss and Roosevelt ally.

39. *New York Red Book*, 1930: 423, 425. Moreover, Nassau’s population in 1915 was 116,825, and by 1930, 303,053 (*Legislative Manual* [Albany: J. B. Lyon, 1935]:844) Out of the 81,453 votes cast in Nassau for governor in 1930, Tuttle beat Roosevelt, 41,604 to 34,534 votes (*New York Red Book*, 1930::395), and all local Republican candidates defeated their Democratic challengers (*New York Times*, 5 November 1930).

40. Smits, “Nassau,” 69; the Fearon Amendment paved the way for Nassau to have its first County Executive (author’s interview with Edward J. Smits, 7 May 1999).

41. Sprague knew a charter was vital to Nassau’s future, but observed separately that “we had do a real job of getting a good new charter or the Democrats would be back at it again with another of their own and we’d be on our way out” (Smits, “Nassau,” 70); for further reference to “two-layers” of government, see Sprague, “Nassau Charter,” 224-25; Sprague noted a community pride and desire to participate in local government on the part of the two cities, the incorporated and unincorporated villages, and unincorporated areas of the three towns: “Many residents thought of government as being their Town Boards or in their Village Boards. A lesser number were conscious of the County Government” (ibid., 222); Sprague broke the commission’s seven-seven deadlock in favor of a county executive rather than a county manager appointed by the board of supervisors.

42. “Any new instrument which changes the administrative, legislative and judicial character of town governments, which have been in existence for more than two centuries, would naturally be accepted and digested by the people slowly and carefully and only then, without too radical an alteration in fundamentals...” (unattributed quotation, Smits, “Nassau,” 70; Sprague acknowledged that the charter “could have been written along more ideal lines,” but that, eventually, the balance struck between change and tradition was the wisest course for Nassau (ibid., 71); Sprague, 231.

43. Smits, “Nassau,” 70.

44. Genesta Strong, the wife of Plandome's cofounder, Ernest Strong, served in the assembly from 1944 to 1959, was elected to the state senate in 1959, resigned for reasons of health soon after, and died in 1972; Smits, 71-72.

45. *Burke v. Krug* (291 N.Y.S 897-907); Sprague was satisfied that "the party had kept faith with the people by placing its unanimous stamp of approval on the proposed charter" (Smits, "Nassau," 72).

46. 1936 referendum vote:

<u>Town</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>
Hempstead:	42,453	20,414
N. Hempstead:	8,180	9,232
Oyster Bay:	4,246	5,167
City of Long Beach:	1,837	1,045
City of Glen Cove:	620	1,400
Total	54,336	37,258

*Source:* Election board records, kindly provided by Edward Smits.

Neighboring Suffolk, which did not adopt the county executive system until 1959, installed its county legislature in 1970, twenty-six years sooner than Nassau.

# LOYALTY AND DISSENT: FREE SPEECH AT ADELPHI UNIVERSITY, 1964-1968

By *Daniel Rosenberg*

Adelphi University, in Garden City, became the focus of two significant academic freedom cases during the mid and late 1960s. One involved the controversial discharge of Allen Krebs, a professor of sociology. Some claimed that Krebs was unfairly fired because of his leftist political views, while others saw nothing wrong in dropping a teacher who apparently used his classroom to propagandize his students. The second case was the repudiation, by some professors, of a loyalty oath required of teachers in New York State. Both instances generated heated and lengthy deliberations: educators were concerned with the rights of professors to dissent, and administrators with their own right to limit the promulgation of ideology in purportedly objective courses.

A number of historians maintain that academic institutions generally crumbled before the onslaught of the loyalty oaths, name-citing, and blacklisting that typified the politics of higher education in the 1950s, despite the protests of many faculty and staff members. Certainly, censorship and bans on speakers of certain political orientations prevailed through the 1950s. In fact, New York's municipal colleges prohibited anyone convicted under the Smith Act from speaking on campuses. (Widely perceived as repressive, the Smith Act, also called the Alien Registration Act, was passed in 1940 to check subversive activities. In a split decision, its constitutionality was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1951 (*Dennis v. U.S.* 341 U.S. 494, 1951).

Adelphi's pre-1960s history does not appear particularly notable in suggesting a track record in academic freedom cases. A professor who came to the university in 1956 could not recall any such cases. A longtime member of its faculty terms Adelphi's pre-Vietnam mores and moods "rather conventional," while another disagrees. A historian points out that the faculty became organized in the 1930s under left-wing leadership, but that this was not unusual at the time in education.<sup>2</sup>

Student persuasions may have been more difficult to gauge. In an Adelphi campus student straw vote taken in 1936, at the peak of the New Deal and the year of a Democratic electoral landslide, President Franklin D. Roosevelt barely eked out victory over his conservative opponent, Alfred M. "Alf" Landon, hardly an indication of national moods, particularly among young people. However, the university maintained a certain spirit of philanthropic concern and support for the progress of women and social welfare. According to a beneficiary, Adelphi's School of Nursing recruited and welcomed

Japanese American women students during the inhospitable period after Pearl Harbor.<sup>3</sup>

An administrative decision to balance the budget in 1940 by dismissing five members of the faculty generated contention. Though it had no chapter at Adelphi, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) put the university on its "blacklist" for ten years. At the same time, the American Association of University Women removed Adelphi from its approved list "because of its lack of endowment."<sup>4</sup>

Despite the urging of a visiting major general that the school link its mission to Cold War sensibilities, archives reveal an independently oriented AAUP chapter in the 1950s and 1960s, spearheaded by the early national-Jacksonian historian, Robert Ernst, and a noted scholar of America's literary past, Donald Koster, along with a well-functioning academic senate which gave the faculty significant input. Koster recalls a number of occasions during this period when the faculty was united rather tenaciously. In contrast, students seemed disinclined to protest before the Vietnam era.<sup>5</sup>

Some at Adelphi supported national developments on campuses in favor of free speech in the early 1960s. Relevant instances emerged close to home. A long effort to overturn the ban on radical speakers at New York's public colleges bore fruit by the end of 1961, preceded by a strike of thousands at Hunter, City, and Queens Colleges. Free speech campaigns were not limited to the city university system: St. John's University also experienced protest in 1965, when a faculty strike (students did not take part) involving the issue of academic freedom resulted in the administration's refusal to renew the contracts of thirty-three professors, mostly from the department of philosophy. It is no wonder, then, that at one point in the early 1960s, Adelphi students, too, demanded an "open speaker" policy, with many carrying signs reading "We Are Responsible Enough to Have Controversial Speakers."<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, when Adelphi hired sociologist Allen Krebs as an assistant professor for fall 1963, a routine calm prevailed, matching the serene landscape of the campus itself. Its seventy acres, not far from New York City but so pastoral in contrast, with a dozen or so buildings, many of them ivy-draped, suggested a natural sanctuary. Krebs carried outstanding credentials to Adelphi: a B.A. from Northwestern, an M.A. from the University of North Carolina, and a doctorate from the University of Michigan.<sup>7</sup>

The controversy which ensued seemed directly to follow administrative discovery of his political sympathies. Initially, however, he began at a salary of \$7,000, which rose to \$7,300 one semester later, and, surprisingly, to \$7,650 before the end of the spring 1964 term. The university awarded the last increase, which coincided with his appointment to direct graduate studies, in "full appreciation of your qualities of teacher and scholar, and with utmost good will," according to Dean of Faculty Mary C. McGrillies. A faculty veteran remembers that Krebs was considered something of a "genius" that first year, which accounts for his rapid rise.<sup>8</sup>

If Krebs ruffled any feathers at that early date, recalls a leading professor,

it had more to do with the way in which relatively staid individuals regarded his perceived idiosyncrasies—he wore his hair long and dressed unconventionally. Those few others who dressed similarly at that time were also somewhat suspect. In addition, some found his manner abrasive. Even among the strongest supporters of his academic freedom, several fail to praise him as a person. He had dirt under his nails, was unnecessarily slovenly, and lived in needless squalor in a small Greenwich Village apartment.<sup>9</sup>

Krebs traveled to Cuba with a group of students in summer 1964. Although such visits had been prohibited by the State Department since the break in relations with Cuba in 1961, a number defied the policy even after the tensions of the Cuban missile crisis. Group leaders tended to be leftists of some sort, associated with such marginal trends as the Maoist Progressive Labor party, and several were indicted for travel violations. Although he stressed Marxism in his two semesters of teaching, Krebs claimed to have encountered no administrative criticism for doing so. Moreover, he had never publicized his Adelphi affiliations while abroad. Koster strongly suspects, however, that the Federal Bureau of Investigation took note of Krebs's travels, informed university administrators, and pressured them to take steps.<sup>10</sup>

Krebs noted a marked decline in cordiality toward him upon his return from Cuba. Though some professors admired his audacious traveling to Cuba (and others his Marxist orientation), still others criticized him for going. His superiors chastised him for dismissing students quite early on the first day of the fall 1964 semester, for administering a "gravely deficient" exam which seemed to anticipate Marxist answers, and for spending too much of the semester on Marx in the course "Development of Sociological Thought." After being informed that, "In the best interests of the Department" he would not teach that class in the spring, Krebs learned on 23 December 1964 that he would not teach at all. His contract was not renewed, he was given "terminal leave" for the spring semester, and the university moved quickly to strike his name from the catalog of courses for the coming academic year.<sup>11</sup>

Krebs demanded his job back, and was supported by a score of students at a sit-in staged in the administration office. Things were not so simple, however. The dean of faculty lost no time in responding, averring that the university was under no compulsion to clarify the status of someone "in the probationary period of appointment," but would proceed in light of Krebs's just-circulated "résumé of events." She charged that Krebs himself had requested the second of his spring semester raises, which the university granted with reluctance. He had used the identical examination for courses at two different levels, which to her "reflected a concentration of subject matter and an emphasis in interpretation that could not be reconciled with the content requirements" of either course.<sup>12</sup>

The administration drew upon the report of an early December 1964 meeting between Krebs and the chair of the Sociology-Anthropology department. Krebs acknowledged teaching all three of his courses with the same approach, emphasis, and requirement that the *Communist Manifesto* be

read. He defended his use of the same methods and examinations in different-level courses on the grounds that he found no difference in the level of the students. The consensus of the department members, however, was that Krebs's conduct was "professionally indefensible." Accordingly, the sociology chair had rescinded Krebs's reappointment due "to the conduct of his courses"; his politics were of no relevance. The faculty personnel committee supported the move, and the university administration, the dean of faculty concluded, had followed suit, notwithstanding the protests of some of Krebs's students. In the opinion of Donald Koster, who became Krebs's defense counsel, the charges were poor camouflage for the political discomfiture which Krebs gave the university.<sup>13</sup>

Krebs clung to his leftist principles in and out of the classroom. His admissions concerning teaching style showed a rigidity possibly derived from inexperience combined with an inflexible political outlook. Krebs's classroom thrust at Adelphi might have been his own spin on the questioning attitude increasingly popular in the contemporary academy, but he indeed tended to limit the range of choices in response. Outside politics, remembers a faculty member, Krebs's slovenly dress and arrogant bearing may have put off professors who claimed not to be concerned with his views. Some rationalized their objections by alluding to his individual peculiarities. Several maintained that his views had nothing to do with his case. The AAUP later contended that Krebs stood aloof from the faculty in his own right, and his faculty counsel recalls him as ungracious and unappreciative toward those who backed his academic freedom. In contrast, several of Krebs's former students with left-wing sympathies were able to work with an array of other Adelphi constituents—including the Sociology chair, Robert Endleman—on such issues of common concern as the war in Vietnam, to which many Adelphians were opposed as early as 1965.<sup>14</sup>

Though not an AAUP member, Krebs appealed to its Washington office, which suggested he choose between Ernst and Koster to advocate on his behalf. He chose Koster. A committee of seven faculty (drawn from across the disciplines: two, for example, were from the natural sciences, one from history, another from nursing) then deliberated in a series of all-day sessions in spring 1965, and rejected three of the four key charges against Krebs. Nearly two dozen witnesses, including Krebs and Endleman, testified. By a one-vote majority, the committee accepted the accusation that Krebs failed to follow departmental stipulations for three of his courses. The minority held that these latter accusations were vague in the first place, but the finding prevailed that "Krebs did display teaching deficiencies and the charge should be sustained."<sup>15</sup>

Though some expressed concern with his use of the same exam for courses at different levels, the committee unanimously concluded that these exams fell within acceptable pedagogical limits, and that his use of the *Communist Manifesto* in three courses was not narrow or ill-considered. Rather, he had "prescribed" the *Manifesto* and "recommended" other readings, in the same

loose sense that instructors did in many courses, thus within acceptable borders. Also by a one-vote majority, the committee rejected the charge that Krebs's course in nineteenth-century sociological thought neglected major writers outside the Marxist tradition. Evidence suggested that his assignments, while often as general as those of other professors, did cover a range of thinkers. Despite Krebs's imprecision, the charges constituted a "gray area" and were "general, ambiguous, and contradictory," making "the decision to suspend him from his teaching duties...a grave step, which, under the circumstances, was not justified."<sup>16</sup>

The faculty committee forwarded its report, which Krebs himself characterized as "courageous," to the board of trustees in the summer 1965, which attempted to extricate the university from a murky situation that evidently had not been anticipated. In an early November 1965 report, the board accepted the recommendation of its personnel committee that Krebs's status be adjudicated forthwith, as the existing guidelines did not "adequately cover the procedures which should be followed in suspension or dismissal cases."<sup>17</sup>

A week later, Adelphi president Arthur W. Brown told the press that the university would offer Krebs a one-semester reinstatement with a slight raise, as an error had been made in dismissing him without following AAUP procedures. "We are taking a stand on a principle. This is not a capitulation," Brown said. Accordingly, Dean McGrillies put it in writing to Krebs, stipulating a \$4,000 salary for one term, with full benefits, and a four-course load for the spring 1966 semester. Two of the courses were to be at the graduate level. He would conduct one night class, unlike before, and teach four days a week instead of three. In describing the move as a recognition of "the total findings and conclusion of the Faculty Hearing Committee," an Adelphi press release nevertheless made clear that no renewal for the 1966-67 academic year was contemplated. While acknowledging that the AAUP had proposed rehiring Krebs for a full year, President Brown declared: "No outsider can dictate to us on an internal matter like this." Through his attorney, Krebs rejected the offer, stating that, "When a university whimsically dismisses a person as if it were dropping garbage into a trash can, there are legal proceedings that can be brought to bear against it."<sup>18</sup>

Krebs remained out of the fold, while the administration hardened its stance in the early weeks of 1966. Dean McGrillies bluntly told some fifty student demonstrators::

No student or student group is going to tell this university how to run its affairs Dr. Krebs is being dismissed because he has not followed the curriculum in his classes. We decide upon that curriculum, not you, and if any student doesn't approve of our curriculum, he is free to leave the university.

Several protesters stated why they opposed Krebs's removal. According to one,

“a small-minded university like Adelphi—located right in the middle of suburbia and with a lot of rich, conformist businessmen on its board of trustees—can’t tolerate a radical.” Another contended that “Dr. Krebs more than followed the course content. Perhaps Dr. Krebs is ten years ahead of Adelphi, and it’s Adelphi who should keep up.” “An injustice has been done,” opined a third, “and we were not given the truth.”<sup>19</sup>

The university stood pat on its final offer to Krebs throughout the spring 1966 semester, while pledging cooperation with an AAUP investigating committee arriving that May. Awaiting redress from Adelphi, Krebs sent out his résumé and obtained a job offer from the New School for Social Research. At the last minute, however, the New School refused to hire him for fall 1966 because he would not sign an oath of loyalty to the federal and state constitutions, a requirement of the school in conformity with a New York State law of 1934. The oath, as soon noted by both the *New York Times* and the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU; the AAUP would be less involved in the ensuing contention), was not to be confused with the state’s Feinberg Law, which explicitly barred “subversives” from the teaching profession; the *Times* advocated compliance, the NYCLU resistance. Ironically, Adelphi administrators were not aware of that oath obligation until the New School brought it up with the state education department in connection with Krebs. After Krebs told New School officials that Adelphi had never required an oath, Brown confessed: “I have never even heard of this.”<sup>20</sup>

While AAUP representatives looked into the Krebs case, the second academic freedom case, concerning the loyalty oath, then emerged as if out of the cocoon of the earlier controversy. Adelphi professors returned for the fall 1966 term to learn of New York Education Law 3002, obliging American citizens in the teaching profession to swear allegiance to the two constitutions. They found a memo from the administration in their September pay-check envelopes, with a loyalty oath attached for signature no later than 7 October. A state education department spokesperson admitted that they did not regularly monitor professorial compliance with the swearing of allegiance to the federal and state constitutions. “It’s not something we usually check. This time someone just happened to come across it,” he said. A faculty council request that the oath signing be deferred to allow joint consideration by faculty and administrators led to weeks of speculation on and off campus concerning the consequences of refusal. A week after the original deadline, a third of the professors had refused to return the oath forms enclosed in their pay envelopes.<sup>21</sup>

President Brown, hitherto unaware, anticipated that faculty members would sign expeditiously, but large numbers continued to hold out as the semester progressed, even as they learned that “the law forbids the university to employ teachers who refuse to sign the oath.” Late in November, twenty-seven Adelphi professors announced their intention to file suit against the requirement. They contended that the oath was a “compulsion of thought and expression,” the right to refrain from which was “no less protected than the



right to speak freely [which could] only be infringed upon a showing of the most urgent need.”<sup>22</sup>

While one veteran recalls it as a “tempest in a teapot,” many faculty were more exercised over this issue than they had been over the predicament of Krebs. Here, it appeared, was a free speech matter with broader relevance, though, to be sure, the faculty hearings had supported Krebs’s rights. Robert Ernst remembers the loyalty affirmation as pressure to conform and unconstitutional. Donald Koster interpreted it as an invasion of privacy, a pledge not required even by the federal or New York constitutions. Besides, the state constitution is so contradictory that swearing to it would impart allegiance to opposing attitudes and policies.<sup>23</sup>

The NYCLU complaint, filed 29 November 1966 on behalf of the twenty-seven professors, argued that the oath law struck at the protection of the First, Fifth, Ninth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the federal Constitution: It “unlawfully discriminates against plaintiffs and deprives them of equal protection of the laws...insofar as the oath is required only of teachers, and only of those teachers who are citizens.” Submitting affidavits, the NYCLU cited numerous cases in which courts dismissed oath requirements as restrictive to academic freedom.<sup>24</sup>

A federal judge, Dudley Bonsal, issued an immediate restraining order barring enforcement of the oath, leading Arthur Brown to promise no recriminations against non-signers pending resolution of the dispute, averring that he did “not know, or care to know, who has refused to sign.” Bonsal then accepted a motion to send the loyalty oath case to a three-judge panel. The legal brief filed by the twenty-seven put Education Law 3002 in the historical context, confirmed by standard sources, of “anti-intellectualism and anti-radicalism” during the

somber aftermath of World War I...In 1931, a general movement to enact teachers’ oaths began in earnest and more than half of the thirty state laws pertaining to teachers’ loyalty currently on the books belong to the period between 1931 and 1937.

According to the brief, the law had been passed in 1934 “at the height of the fever.” Its essence was “an expression of distrust of the teaching profession.” Whether the spirit of the recent McCarthy period had anything to do with the revival of the “fever,” the brief did not say.<sup>25</sup>

The plaintiffs feared that in requiring “support” for the constitutions the relevant meanings of the term might come into play. For instance, they feared that a display of obedience to the nation’s symbols or government might be expected even though such obligations had been struck down by numerous Supreme Court decisions. Moreover, the brief took issue with the State Education Department’s assertion (backed by other defenders, including the *New York Times* and the professors who had signed) that the oath was unrestrictive of private opinions:

the defendants' contention requires a conclusion that the legislature passed and the state enforces an oath without purpose, which is not designed to limit in any way the beliefs or expression of beliefs of the taker; that accordingly the state has the power to utter meaningless slogans without any showing of public need.

Even worse,

the clear implication of the oath requirement is that those teachers who subscribe to the oath believe something different than those teachers who will not. The former may be hired. The latter may not.<sup>26</sup>

The three-judge panel, which heard arguments in May 1967, rendered a decision within a month. The judges did not agree with the twenty-seven plaintiffs, who had found precedents on their behalf in a host of previous Supreme Court determinations. Rather, the judges cited a Supreme Court ruling in a Georgia case that negated the contention that an oath requirement violated the Constitution. Indeed,

a state does not interfere with its teachers by requiring them to support the governmental systems which shelter and nourish the institutions in which they teach, nor does it restrict its teachers by encouraging them to uphold the highest standards of their chosen profession.

The panel dismissed the professors' case against the loyalty oath.<sup>27</sup>

As some faculty petitioned the New York State Constitutional Convention to add a ban on loyalty oaths to New York's Bill of Rights, the NYCLU vowed to appeal to the Supreme Court. Until the appeal was heard, a stay prevented the state or Adelphi from enforcing the statute. In this context, the Krebs case, still alive, achieved its own outcome. For several months in 1966, AAUP investigators (never as absorbed by the loyalty case as civil liberties advocates had been) studied the Krebs case at length, taking months to reach a decision. Awaiting the results, Krebs became an even more involved political activist.<sup>28</sup>

Not long after his suspension from Adelphi, Krebs became director of the Free University of New York, which was part of a loose national movement, prefixed "Free." Linked by vision to similar institutions operating in Europe—particularly in West Berlin and London—the Free University of New York attempted to stimulate educational innovation and lower the barriers between faculty and students to somewhat more appreciable levels. Krebs's wife, Sharon Krebs, who had a degree in Slavic languages, taught there as well. Although the school was identified within the Progressive Labor orbit, it attracted teachers across a span of left opinion, including the historians Staughton Lynd, Leonard Liggio, Gerald Sorin, and James Weinstein, the poets Ed Sanders and A. B. Spellman, the radical civil liberties

attorney Conrad Lynn and the writer Truman Nelson.<sup>29</sup>

By obvious dint of his experience at Adelphi, Krebs gave a course called "The American University Establishment," at roughly the same time as the AAUP began investigating his predicament at Adelphi. His syllabus indicated a mixture of elements in his approach to pedagogy. Readings included the AAUP Bulletin, books by respected scholars (Thorstein Veblen, C. Wright Mills, Karl Mannheim, Clark Kerr, and Jules Henry), a pamphlet by the Berkeley Free Speech leader and communist, Bettina Aptheker, a novel by John Dos Passos, and works by Marx and Engels. A work by China's Defense Minister, Lin Piao, was the sole exception to an otherwise scholarly literature. In general, Krebs's syllabus appeared academic, akin to his Adelphi course guidelines vindicated by the faculty committee hearings at the university. However, the evidence suggests that Krebs saw himself in rigid terms as an activist-scholar. While at the Free University, he helped found a still narrower body, the American Liberation League, along with others on the perimeter of the left.<sup>30</sup>

His challenge to Adelphi yet unresolved, he became involved in a confrontation with the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) in summer 1966. By then, the Free University inaugurated a number of courses on and against the war in Vietnam. With several other antiwar advocates, Krebs was subpoenaed to testify in a HUAC subcommittee investigation into those giving aid to "any hostile power" fighting against the United States. At first, Krebs and his fellow witnesses succeeded in getting a judge to void the proceedings, in affirmation of free speech, but the HUAC subcommittee began the hearings nonetheless. On a contentious first day, the chair ordered Krebs's attorney ejected from the room after the lawyer "failed to respond to the Congressman's order to sit down during a heated argument on legal points involved in the hearing," but not before a witness against Krebs testified that the Free University distributed North Vietnamese literature. Stating that "the inquisition of the sixties has now begun," Krebs walked out to protest the removal of counsel. (One of the witnesses speaking later that day against Krebs and his antiwar colleagues was the future Republican attorney general, Edwin Meese).<sup>31</sup>

When Krebs never reappeared to answer questions, failing to respond when his name was called, the committee put off his testimony. Instead, Krebs launched a challenge to the constitutionality of the House Committee on Un-American Activities itself, by no means the first such appeal made under civil liberties auspices. His case consumed several years, going as far as the Supreme Court, which ultimately refused to hear it. Press coverage throughout the confrontation brought in the Adelphi connection as the prime background fact in Krebs' biography. An early story simply called him "a former professor of sociology at Adelphi University," without explanation. One report mentioned that "his dismissal [from Adelphi] was attributed to a visit he made to Cuba," without giving the source. Another specified that Krebs himself stated "the reason was that he went to Cuba in 1964."<sup>32</sup>

Surrounded by controversy, Krebs found it difficult to make a living, and subsequently left the United States to head up the Free University in London, a more established and respected institution of the left. Once there, he re-evaluated his New York activities, particularly in the Free University of New York, concluding that it had “drifted into a political sect. It became occupied with one specific theme—revolutionary movements in the Third World.”<sup>33</sup>

It was in London that Krebs first learned of the AAUP’s report on his Adelphi experience. The investigators concluded more strongly and formally than ever that the university owed Krebs either a one-year teaching appointment or a year’s salary instead of a job. Above all, the AAUP faulted the administration for overstepping its bounds in firing Krebs, thus failing to follow due process. In a report made public in spring 1967 (virtually coincident with the three-judge panel’s rejection of the loyalty oath challenge), the AAUP asserted that Krebs’s Marxist views and Cuba trip were, to some extent, key points of reference for the controversy, because the case concerned “the substance of freedom in the classroom.” Indeed, the AAUP threatened to censure the university once again if a more equitable personnel plan were not adopted.<sup>34</sup>

Though it recommended temporary reinstatement, the AAUP severely criticized Krebs’s approach to teaching:

As we understand Dr. Krebs’ view of himself as a teacher, his function was to disorient. He set little store by usual classroom procedures; he did not take grades seriously; he believed that, if students were sufficiently stimulated, they would set their own pace; consequently he disliked assigned reading, preferring instead to mention a number of works in class and to allow his students to explore them as their interests dictated.

For all his success in stimulating his students (or some of them, at any rate, there is no doubt that Dr. Krebs construed his role as a teacher narrowly. Teaching for him carries with it no feeling of identification with or obligation to his university as an institution; Dr. Krebs made it perfectly plain to us that he had very little regard for Adelphi, the community in which it is located, many of his colleagues, and many of his students. His role as a teacher, useful though it might be, was really a way of supporting his professional life: he thus presents a curious analogy to those teachers of whom we have all heard so much in recent years who neglect their pedagogical and institutional functions for their “outside activities.” In Dr. Krebs’ case, these activities were not publications, rounds of conferences, government consultation, and frequent leaves; he wanted to pursue his own idiosyncratic sociology and a free intellectual life—extramural matters that interested him far more than intramural matters, ordinary academic procedures and appearances, or even the sensibilities of some of his students. But the result is the same in both cases: neglect of institutional obligations and of those students who did not share (for whatever reasons)

his personal enthusiasms.<sup>35</sup>

Despite this negative endorsement, Krebs and Adelphi at last came to a settlement on his dismissal. According to Donald Koster, the university awarded him “somewhere in the neighborhood of \$15,000...[but] the final impact of the case was a wholesome one” because procedure, protection, and due process now were assured. (These established the basis for an invigorated personnel plan with substantial faculty rights that prevailed until the late 1980s, when then-president Peter Diamandopoulos moved to discard it, according to his correspondence with Koster). Interviewed in London, Krebs accepted the package, “because to do so would suggest to others that to fight against the spirit of the middle ages..ultimately means that one doesn’t fight alone and one doesn’t fight without the possibility of victory.”<sup>36</sup>

At almost the same moment, the U.S. Supreme Court gave its decision in the Adelphi loyalty oath case. The Court upheld the state’s contention that the oath was not repressive, agreeing that it was comparable to that taken by public officials. The twenty-seven dissenting professors declared that they would comply with the law, which the university announced would be enforced. #Some were resigned to it. “I will be signing the oath,” averred philosophy professor Thomas Knight, whose name headed the original petition. “I suspect I will,” added another professor of philosophy. Inasmuch as the Supreme Court is “the final resort,” stated Emil Dillard (English), “I’ll now be willing to sign.” Others signed less compliantly, among them Donald Koster and Robert Ernst. The latter treated the oath as if the Court had not ruled upon it, declaring, “I think I’d rather know more about it first, [but] probably will sign it.”<sup>37</sup>

Together with his soon-to-be-rejected case before the Supreme Court, Allen Krebs neared the end of his run in the public eye. The name Krebs—this time that of his former wife—appeared again in headlines at the end of 1970, with her implication in a plot to blow up a bank. Unlike her former spouse, Sharon Krebs had gone headlong into a sect, in her case the one called Weathermen. An editor at the radical newspaper *RAT* and after that at Random House, and a member of the extremist SDS remnant, she was among those arrested while placing several containers of gasoline and benzine outside a branch of the First National City Bank in New York City. Here too, press reports invoked the Adelphi connection, remote though it was. Sharon Krebs was identified as “divorced from Dr. Allen Krebs, a former professor of sociology at Adelphi University in Garden City, L.I., who founded the Free University of New York.”<sup>38</sup>

In conclusion, it may be said that Krebs won his case. Simultaneously, a fairly well-organized faculty—not all of them admirers of Krebs—waged a long battle against the loyalty oath, only to lose in the nation’s highest court. In assessing the two controversies, the evidence indicates that Krebs defeated a somewhat weaker foe—a university administration that, by its own admission, violated established procedures. Krebs enjoyed less support among

the faculty than did the twenty-seven dissenters in their campaign against the loyalty oath. However, he did receive the backing on principle of the AAUP, much as this organization decried his method of teaching. While finally it became clear that while the university was “no longer willing to offer Professor Krebs a teaching appointment,” and believed it was “not in the best interests of the University for Professor Krebs to return to teaching at Adelphi,” the administration sued for peace and offered a financial settlement.<sup>39</sup>

Faculty Council minutes suggest that the loyalty oath case agitated professors more than did the status of Krebs. Even then, only twenty-seven went on record in defiance of the oath requirement. Civil liberties lawyers took up the case against perhaps greater odds than Krebs faced—a state law, which colleges in New York customarily applied, to which professors in the state normally acceded (the oath is still incorporated in the text of Adelphi contracts). The evidence indicates a greater sense of concern with the dangers to academic freedom posed by the oath than by the harassment of Krebs. However, the dissenters confronted a long tradition of enforcement and compliance, though one to which the victorious Krebs referred as seemingly rooted in the thinking of the “Middle Ages.”

Thirty years of accumulated acquiescence by the New York college community to a statute of such dubious necessity created a major obstacle to the twenty-seven Adelphi plaintiffs: it gave them the appearance of hyperventilating over something that other faculty simply inhaled. In one participant’s view, that helps explain the small number of plaintiffs and the long list of faculty at Adelphi who signed the oath right away. The matter of free speech in their case also appeared distorted, as the plaintiffs were claiming the right not to speak as ordered.<sup>40</sup>

Hence, judges in the Adelphi loyalty case ruled that such oaths derived not from constraint but rather from the honorable fulfillment of tasks, ideals, and services. Why should educators not be held to the same noble standards as people elected on a public mandate? Should teachers, whose training enabled them to help mold and shape the lives around them, not be asked to swear, through national symbols, that they have society’s best interests at heart?

Demurring, the New York Civil Liberties Union contended that restriction and conformity were, indeed, at issue, and carefully documented the historical location of a thought-control trend. Moreover, the post-World War II years had witnessed an entirely new emphasis on professions of loyalty, integrating individual testimony of fidelity to apparent principle into job descriptions and each employee’s expected contribution to American foreign and domestic policy, well beyond the workplace. Though the academic freedom disputes at Adelphi developed after the McCarthy period, the pressure to conform obviously failed to disappear. As in the Krebs case, McCarthyism left its imprint on the meanings of loyalty, whose opposite was “treason,” among the more loaded images of the 1950s. That shadow marked the immediate prehistory of the loyalty oath case at Adelphi.

It made little difference whether the oath was to constitutions rather than to antisubversive legislation. Oaths had been electrically charged in the '50s, and one did not split hairs over loyalty to what. They were invoked to make accommodation instinctive.

Because the Adelphi loyalty case had off-campus ramifications, it veered into broader boulevards than the Krebs case. Perhaps that explains why the NYCLU took the case, while the AAUP played a lesser role. Most Adelphi faculty may have found several intimidating elements in the dispute, such as the possible loss of their jobs for refusing to take the pledge, and the spilling over of the controversy into areas they would rather not have ventured. Taking the oath was easy enough. Presumably, one could then get on with teaching, publishing, committee work, and the like.

However, what happened to Krebs showed that one could not teach freely, either. Both disputes concerned how an educator is to think, one within the classroom, the other before she or he even reaches the classroom or receives a salary. Obtaining a financial settlement for Krebs, the AAUP reiterated the tie between procedures and the rights of professors. Without emphasizing that a man of Krebs's views had a place in the academic world or that his presence would promote exchange and dialogue, the AAUP made that point indirectly by censuring Adelphi for failing to give him a fair shake. Thereby, the AAUP again made clear that faculty owned a piece of their jobs, from which they should not easily be severed. The twenty-seven professors in the loyalty oath case attempted to press a similar point: that they owned their own minds.

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# SECONDARY SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST

*The following three articles are winners of the 1999 “Long Island as America” contest we sponsor, in conjunction with the SUNY at Stony Brook Center for Excellence and Innovation in Education, Dr. Eli Seifman, director.*

## WOMEN OF THE UNION: THE BROOKLYN AND LONG ISLAND SANITARY FAIR OF 1864

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In 1866, Frank Moore wrote in his tribute, *Women of the War*: “We may safely say that there is scarcely a loyal woman in the North who did not do something in aid of the cause—who did not contribute, of time, or labor, or money, to the comfort of our soldiers and the success of our arms.” The Civil War propelled many Northern women, usually but not exclusively of the middle class, to transcend their assigned antebellum gender roles and become more self-reliant, resourceful, and active. While a small but significant number donned uniforms and marched to the battlefields as soldiers, spies, and couriers, most Northern women served either as nurses or members of local aid societies. Women on the home front confronted unfamiliar tasks, as the men’s departure for war often required them to hold family businesses and households together single-handedly. The “average” women enervated conventional notions of female frailty, emotional instability, and overall weakness: their effective work with men gained men’s cooperation and respect. The collection and distribution of bandages, clothing, and medicine pushed women beyond the boundaries of their homes, local societies, and churches into larger-scaled organizations, thus threatening popular images of middle-class women as “angels of the household.”<sup>1</sup>

Though public opinion held that “decent” women, “ladies” in particular, had no right to participate in military activity, women refused to accept that the war was no place for them. They declared themselves citizens and patriots who had every right and duty to take part in the Union’s defense. According

to Mary Ashton Rice Livermore, of the Western Sanitary Commission,

If men responded to the call of the country when it demanded soldiers by the hundred thousand, women planned money-making enterprises, whose vastness of conception, and good business management, yielded millions of dollars to be expended in the interest of sick and wounded soldiers.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, thousands of women joined "bonnet brigades," developed from church groups, benevolent societies, and sewing circles in response to the firing on Fort Sumpter in April 1861. Women took the lead in forming soldiers' aid societies, using their sense of commitment and previous experience in societies advocating women's rights, temperance, education, missions, and the abolition of slavery.<sup>3</sup>

The Long Island home front typified any in the Union. Towns conducted fairs for the benefit of the Sanitary and Christian Commissions, two separate organizations, as women knitted socks and gloves, raised funds, wrote letters, prepared lint bandages, and expressed their utmost support for the men at all times. Long Island women volunteered willingly to raise money to purchase bandages, blankets, medicines, and food for the Union army. In 1863, women's organizations on Long Island raised \$5,000 for soldiers' relief. One group from Flushing opened a home for children of Union soldiers killed or crippled during the war. On 23 and 24 December 1863, the Ladies Loyal League of South Brooklyn held a fair at the Athenaeum for the benefit of sick and wounded soldiers.

However, Long Island women's paramount contribution was the Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair of 1864. Sanitary fairs were bazaar-like events organized to raise money, collect food and clothing for the poor, and help wives and children of draftees. Men, women, and children of all ages and social classes joined to create one of the Union's most successful Sanitary Fairs. Although this was an event in which men and women effectively worked together, it could not have taken place without the women's efforts. Unwittingly, these women challenged existing ideas about women's incapacity for professional work and public leadership. Long Island women not only made hand-crafted goods, prepared foodstuffs, and staffed the booths but also exerted influence on the decision-making process hitherto reserved for men. Because the Brooklyn Fair was such a success, women gained respect and gratitude from men. According to the Reverend Henry Bellows, an influential Unitarian minister and head of the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC), women acted with "business-like thoroughness in details" and in "thorough cooperativeness with the other sex." The Brooklyn and Long Island Fair grossed an astonishing \$400,000, which was used for the relief of soldiers and their families.<sup>4</sup>

In 1861, the health and welfare of Northern troops aroused anxiety.

Regiments arrived in the Washington, D.C. area under emergency conditions, with troops transported in dirty, crowded cattle cars, few provisions for food and drink, and scant preparation for their reception. When they arrived at camp they received poor rations and uncomfortable sleeping quarters. Bellows speculated that 50 percent of the volunteers would quickly be killed or incapacitated by disease if no preventative measures were taken. By April 1861, there were independent relief and ladies aid societies, but there was no system or method of cooperation.<sup>5</sup>

In April 1861, Bellows and Dr. Elisha Harris called for a general meeting at the Cooper Institute in New York to deal with army relief. There were already three organizations in New York: the Women's Central Association of the Relief for the Sick and Wounded of the Army; the Advisory Committee of the Board of Physicians and Surgeons of the Hospitals of New York; and the New York Medical Association. On 18 May 1861, Bellows, Harris, V. H. Van Buren, and Dr. J. Harsen sent an address to Secretary of War Simon Cameron, stating that:

The hearts and minds, the bodies and souls, of the whole people and of both sexes throughout the loyal states are [trying to help in the war effort]. The rush of volunteers to arms is equaled by the enthusiasm and zeal of women of the nation and the clerical and medical professions vie with each other in their ardor to contribute to the success of our noble and sacred cause.<sup>6</sup>

By mid-June 1861, the USSC was formed as a national umbrella organization for the coordination of soldier relief. It later fostered the flow of money and goods from each part of the country to places where it was most needed.

Bellows defined the commission as "the national sympathy for the soldier and his friends, organized and systematized in its operation."<sup>7</sup> The male leaders of the USSC requested (and expected) New York women's support in hopes that the "gentler sex" could revive the spirits and alleviate the pains of war-torn soldiers. Ultimately, the USSC was run by men and led by women. After the war, several thousand women continued to work as volunteers and as salaried agents of the USSC.

In May 1863, a meeting of the Soldier's Aid Society in Brooklyn decided to form the Woman's Relief Association (WRA), headed by Marianne Fitch Stranahan, who became an instrumental leader of the executive committee of the Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair. That October, James H. Frothingham, a member of Brooklyn's War Fund Sanitary Committee, suggested a great fair for Brooklyn as a fund-raiser. The WRA feared that local church bazaars planned for autumn would suffer gravely, but agreed that a fair might work in February. On 20 November 1863, the WRA united with the women of New York to prepare for a great metropolitan fair. As enthusiasm for the project swelled, the WRA sent notices to sewing societies

of various churches and to towns and villages all over Long Island. The response from all quarters was immediate and cordial.<sup>8</sup>

On 4 December 1863, the WRA enlarged its executive board. Dwight Johnson, secretary of the War Fund Sanitary Committee, proposed that the WRA, which was competent enough to enlist the aid of thirty thousand Brooklyn residents, should work on an independent Brooklyn Fair. Nonetheless, the women decided to follow the original plan. On 5 December, the War Fund Sanitary Committee resolved that a committee of sixty men confer with the WRA to coordinate and arrange a great metropolitan fair. The men, who offered suggestions and encouragement, worked effectively with the women to achieve their common goal.

When the New York side of the fair opted to postpone the opening from 22 February 1864, the commemoration of Washington's birthday, to 28 March, the Brooklyn women disagreed. At a WRA meeting on 30 December 1863, when enthusiasm for the fair was at its peak, the women, with the men's approval, decided to proceed without New York.

The Brooklyn and Long Island Fair was scheduled for 22 February 1864. Only the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher expressed doubt about the success of the fair, claiming that although Brooklyn had a substantial population, it had little wealth and could therefore expect meager results compared with profits garnered by fairs in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. George S. Stephenson, chairman of the Gentleman's Committee, requested that all citizens ignore party or sectarian lines in aid of the noble charity. By January 1864, most towns had held public meetings and appointed efficient committees. Successful communities, nation-wide, pressured Brooklyn to work even harder. Cincinnati's cry, "We have swept up \$24,000—Brooklyn, beat us if you can!" kindled Brooklyn's ebullience.<sup>9</sup>

The Brooklyn and Long Island Fair resulted from the combined efforts of the War Fund Committee of Brooklyn and the Brooklyn Auxiliary of the USSC, with the WRA largely responsible for the efficiency, precision, and patriotic images. Thirty-nine influential women served on the executive committee, along with thirty-six men, and scores of other women joined the majority of subcommittees. Marianne Fitch Stranahan, president of the WRA and wife of the Brooklyn civic leader, J. S. T. Stranahan, was, in the words of the Brooklyn historian Henry R. Stiles,

the right woman in the right place. She gave her time to the work with a zeal and perseverance that never faltered, and with a hopefulness for her country, which yielded to no discouragement or despondency. As a presiding officer [of the executive committee], she discharged her duties with a self-possession, courtesy, skill and method, that commanded universal admiration. No woman ever labored in a sphere more honorable, and but few women could have filled her place.<sup>10</sup>

On 22 February 1864, the Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair, held at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, opened to the public. It was an exhibition of patriotism and a symbol of new civic life and progress. An article in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported that some men believed that the women's preparations would come to naught, and that after the first day's glory the Academy of Music would stand alone. To their probable dismay, the fair was an enormous financial and social success. Hundreds of people from all sections of the city flocked to the fair: women met their neighbors, prejudice was dismissed, new acquaintances were formed, and suggestions for improvement were propounded. Wounded men in Brooklyn and on Long Island donated boxes of war mementos, which kept the purpose of the fair in the foreground. After the fourth day, the *Brooklyn Eagle* stated that Brooklyn might have had larger gatherings but never such a rush of people. Sanitary fairs in other cities could not boast of such widespread attendance: "The Boston Fair was a great success, but it was to this like the old-fashioned oil taper to our argon gas-burner."<sup>11</sup>

The Sanitary Fair featured merchandise booths, a popular restaurant, the famed New England Kitchen, an impressive art gallery, the Taylor Museum of Curiosities and Relics, the Hall of Manufactures, and a daily newspaper. Visitors, conveyed free of charge by the Long Island Railroad, could have their fortunes told, listen to music, find out the latest war news, and send letters and messages through the fair's post office. The Sanitary Committee employed every tactic imaginable to extract money from these visitors, demonstrating the business acumen of the women who organized the event.<sup>12</sup>

The Sanitary Committee accepted donations of any kind or value. Almost every town and major village on Long Island was represented, chiefly through cash donations, but also with goods that ranked among the fanciest and most elegant shown at the fair.<sup>13</sup>

The women arranged to sell ornamental and useful items, from penny whistles to grand pianos. Homemade merchandise included millinery, knitted garments, beadwork, and children's clothing. The women divided the goods into "classes" so that consumers could find what they wanted with ease. This system of organization was partly responsible for raising the \$400,000 collected at the fair. It also illustrated women's ability to plan large-scale events outside of the immediate community.<sup>13</sup>

The duty to provide refreshments proceeded with misgivings, because restaurants at other fairs had been failures. However, the energy and perseverance of the women who organized the refreshment department, as well as the generosity of the donors, made Knickerbocker Hall an unrivaled success. Thousands of visitors dined in Knickerbocker Hall, which held five hundred people, on donations of foodstuffs from Long Island, raising some \$24,000, a considerable sum. The environment emphasized patriotic images, with an American eagle hovering in mid-air, red, white, and blue draperies adorning the walls, and small jets of gas blazing the words, "In Union Is Strength." The decorations served as a reminder of the cause the men and

women championed.<sup>14</sup>

The New England Kitchen, another highlight, embraced a colorful theme to show children what life was like in the "old days." Waitresses in colonial attire served traditional favorites like yellow hasty pudding and milk, Johnny cakes, fried apples, baked and boiled beans, doughnuts, coffee, and cider. Long Islanders donated 88 percent of the meat, poultry, fish, fruits, vegetables, crackers, pies, cakes, and jellies needed to accommodate the throngs of hungry visitors. There was such a flux of people that the Kitchen Committee raised the price of admission from fifty to seventy-five cents. Nevertheless, people were more than willing to pay the extra quarter to experience the New England Kitchen.<sup>15</sup>

The artists of Long Island, male and female alike, exhibited their finest paintings, statues, and sketches in the Assembly Room of the Academy in what the *Brooklyn Eagle* claimed was Brooklyn's finest-ever collection of paintings notable for their artistic excellence and historical interest. The Taylor Museum of Curiosities and Relics presented an oriental collection, a gallery of engravings, and a room devoted to the sale of photographs and autographs. A subcommittee on relics, curiosities, and war memorials solicited items with a revolutionary theme to provoke patriotism, the objective of the executive committee. The Hall of Manufactures had a burglar alarm, telegraph, several parlor organs, stoves, carriages, a cotton gin, lamp and gas fixtures, hay presses, a pump, and a steam engine to represent the manufacturing interest of Brooklyn and the rest of Long Island. *Drum Beat*, the first full-fledged journal of the Sanitary Fair, with a daily circulation of six thousand copies, was as "an effective agent to keep alive, and augment the popular interest and the popular efforts in behalf of the Fair."<sup>16</sup>

At the Woman's Relief Association Depot, women prepared and packaged clothing and supplies for soldiers and hospital use. The executive committee acknowledged the travail, strength, and devotion of the women there:

Here was to be seen the proof that the soldiers of the Republic are not alone the manly braves who bear up her glorious banner where blows fall thickly, and shrilly hum the bees of death but that there were other soldiers working and fighting with woman's sublime constancy and faith.<sup>17</sup>

The Calico Ball, which closed the Fair on 11 March 1864, was a grand success, especially because only two days were allotted to make arrangements, sell tickets, secure music, and procure refreshments. Women wore plain dresses made of coarse, brightly colored cloth, and the men wore burlap clothing. The \$2,000 raised was used for the benefit of soldiers and their families; many of the charitable women sent their calico dresses to the Academy to be distributed among the soldiers' wives and daughters.

The fair had its share of disagreements. At a meeting of the executive



committee, Judge Lott railed against holding a raffle. His opponents declared it the custom of all fairs to raffle off expensive or unsalable goods. Countless citizens wrote to the editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle*, expressing approval or disapproval of the raffle. The outcome: raffling continued, disguised adroitly in a dozen different names and procedures.

The executive committee also responded to visitors' complaints. One person wrote to the *Brooklyn Eagle* that she thought admission prices were unfair, and that the orphan, the poor clerk, the overworked seamstress, and the widow or soldier's wife would not be able to pay for entrance. The committee eventually reduced the admission price from two dollars to fifty-five cents for complete admission.

The Sanitary Fair raised the impressive sum of \$400,000, three-quarters of which was paid directly to the treasury of the USSC. The USSC never before received as large a sum for relief of service men and their families. The women decided to use the balance to pay for supplies and purchase their own flannel, burlap, sheeting, boxes, thread, and buttons for uniform repair.

The executive committee argued that the fair, in aid of the USSC, was the "first great act of assertion ever made by the City of Brooklyn." Through the success of the fair, Brooklyn declared her independence from New York. Before the fair, Brooklyn had a flourishing, growing economy but little status. As a result of the fair, declared the executive committee,

Brooklyn, especially, has seized and secured new vantage ground for future consideration and respect throughout the land, and for the truest greatness, attractiveness, and enjoyment within herself. She has nobly illustrated her resources. She has shown the taste, the wealth, the co-operative energy of her population. She has proved incontestably the generous loyalty of her citizens.<sup>18</sup>

The fair inspired other groups to aid the war effort, including school children. The corresponding secretary of the executive committee, Fred A. Farley, heartily thanked the pupils of School No. 2 at New Utrecht for their small contribution. On the afternoon of 3 March 1864, ten girls, ten through twelve years of age, held a fair of their own in South Brooklyn, and presented the Academy with an impressive \$164. Separate from the fair, on 19 March 1864, nine schoolchildren, five through eight years of age, raised \$52 for the Brooklyn Christian Commission in aid of the war. On 13 December 1864, the Female Employment Society received \$100 for the widows and orphans of deceased soldiers from the "little girls of South Brooklyn," who held their own fair.

The monumental success of the Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair motivated New Yorkers and New Jerseyites and set a standard for many grand-scale charitable sales. On 4 April 1864, the great Metropolitan Fair opened in New York City with hopes of raising \$1,250,000. There were striking similarities between the Brooklyn and New York fairs. Women were again

active in preparation, and everyone united for the cause. On 4 April 1864, the *New York Times* reported that,

The ladies of the Metropolis have taken from their delicate hands their jewels and offered them on the altar of patriotism...all professions, sexes, and classes have been desired to loan or give, according to their capacity, in aid of the great and sacred cause of national unity.<sup>19</sup>

Throughout the Civil War, the patriotic women of the WRA in Brooklyn and the rest of Long Island worked for the Union cause with the same fervor and commitment as other women's groups in the North. They raised money for the soldiers, donated cash and goods unselfishly, packaged food, prepared clothing and lint bandages, and sent letters to the men on the battlefields. Their most prodigious contribution to the cause was the Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair of 1864. These women transcended conventional gender roles by sharing executive power and working effectively with men. Women's organizational skills made the fair not only feasible but a huge success, shattering prewar conceptions of female frailty and incapacity to function on a professional level. By engendering a new perception of women's strength and talent, they vastly augmented opportunities for postwar women in fields similar to those in which they worked during the Civil War.<sup>20</sup>

## NOTES

1. Moore, quoted in Elizabeth D. Leonard, *Yankee Women: Gender Battles in the Civil War* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), 169-70, 185, xix.
2. *Ibid.*, 197, 12, 198, xviii-xix.
3. James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 480.
4. Leonard, xxviii, 102-3.
5. Jan P. Romanovich. "The United States Sanitary Commission: A Short History," <http://www.netwalk.com.>, 1995.
6. *Ibid.*
7. David M. Cory, "Brooklyn and the Civil War," *Journal of Long Island History* 2 (Spring 1962): 13.
8. Henry R. Stiles, *A History of the City of Brooklyn* (Brooklyn: subscription, 1869), 2: 461.
9. Cory, 13-14.
10. Stiles, 465.

11. Stiles, 459; "The Great Sanitary Fair: The Third Day's Doings," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 25 Feb. 1864, 2; Executive Committee, *History of the Brooklyn and Long Island Fair* (Brooklyn: "The Union" Steam Presses, 1864), 27; Harriet Mott Stryker-Rodda, "Brooklyn and Long Island Sanitary Fair 1864," *Journal of Long Island History* 4 (Winter 1964): 5; "The Great Sanitary Fair: The Fourth Day's Doings," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 26 Feb. 1864, 2.
12. "The Fair of the Sanitary Commission," *Hempstead Inquirer*, 20 Feb. 1864, 2.
13. Executive Committee, 39-40
14. *Ibid.*, 65.
15. "The Great Sanitary Fair: The Fourth Day's Doings," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 26 Feb. 1864, 2.
16. Executive Committee, 91-92.
17. *Ibid.*, 82.
18. *Ibid.*, 5-6; Stiles, 97.
19. Alice Ross, "Long Island Women and Benevolence: Changing Images of Woman's Place," in Natalie A. Naylor and Maureen O. Murphy, eds., *Long Island Women: Activists and Innovators* (Interlaken, N.Y.: Empire State Books, 1998), 109; "The Great Metropolitan Fair: The Grand Opening Today," *New York Times*, 4 Apr. 1864.
20. Leonard, 189.

# LONG ISLAND'S ERA OF OCTAGONS

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Is the square form the best of all? Is the right-angle the best angle? Cannot some radical improvement be made?....Nature's forms are mostly spherical...Then why not apply her forms to houses?

— Orson Squire Fowler, 1856<sup>1</sup>

When Orson Squire Fowler published his book about octagon houses in 1856, he could not anticipate the influence that *A Home for All* would have on the nation's architectural history. There have been more influential writers and better-known architects, yet the fact that Fowler, the long-time champion of "practical" phrenology, was new to the architectural field makes his impressions even more noteworthy.<sup>2</sup>

The octagonal revelation of Fowler's was not the first of its kind. The use of the octagon for building structures dates back to the Tower of the Winds in first-century B.C. Greece; it was present in Italy, Holland, France, Germany, and other parts of Europe well into the sixteenth century. The "octagon fad" in this country took place in the 1850s and 1860s, when industrialization replaced the age of homespun and the issue of slavery moved to center stage. It was the time in the history of architecture when the elaborate Victorian style supplanted that of the Greek Revival, giving builders far wider choice. Americans were open to new architectural ideas and drawn to more eccentric and unique designs. Additionally, steam-powered mills could saw great quantities of lumber, and new machinery was capable of mass-producing door hinges, thumb latches, and other building devices. These factors aided the public's acceptance and facilitated the construction of Fowler's octagon houses.<sup>3</sup>

Results of this architectural revolution can be seen in more than twenty states, as well as Canada. However, the greatest number of these buildings is in New York, with six of an original eleven or more remaining intact on Long Island. This article explores the history of these six along with a significant seventh.

## Why Octagonal?

According to Fowler,

Since a circle encloses more space for its surface than any other form, of course the nearer spherical our houses, the more inside room for the outside wall, besides being more comfortable...Of course the octagon, by approximating to the circle, encloses more space for its wall than the square, besides being more compact and available.

In addition to conserving space, he contended, octagonal received twice as much direct sunlight through the windows than did conventional four-sided houses. In addition, they were easier to heat because they had fewer exterior surfaces, therefore lessening heat loss. In summer, a draft could be produced simply by opening the windows.<sup>4</sup>

Some people claimed they built octagons to remove the howling of winds around right-angle corners. Reflecting contemporary superstition, other builders explained their adoption of the form to prevent being cornered by the devil.<sup>5</sup>

Although Fowler could find no reason not to build an octagonal house, many builders disagreed. The editor of *Moore's Rural New Yorker*, for one, declared that,

With the octagon...we were never much pleased, and never recommended such to our readers. They require more labor in their construction than square buildings of the same dimensions; and it is difficult to arrange the rooms in a desirable form without the loss of space.

He was only one opponent; the builders of the houses also had a bone to pick with Fowler and his followers.<sup>6</sup>

## Octagonals on Long Island

At the height of Fowler's popularity, there were at least eleven octagons on Long Island. Many of these have been razed or altered; the six that remain "alive" are in Brentwood, Huntington, Mattituck, Patchogue, Westhampton Beach, and Yaphank. A seventh was destroyed, but left a great deal to discuss. A look at the history of these odd yet magnificent structures provides a different view of Long Island's past.

## Modern Times/Brentwood

Before its name was changed to Brentwood in 1864, this village was called Modern Times, a utopian community founded in 1851 a pair of philosophical anarchists, Josiah Warren and Stephen Pearl Andrews. This libertarian experiment was created as a living test of Warren's basic premise, the placing of "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."

Each person could live as he or she pleased as long as this did not impede the right of another to do the same. The village's economy was based on what Warren called "cost, the limit of price," according to which land and goods changed hands without mark-up and residents bartered labor and coined their own money, called "labor notes. At a time when the law was skewed to favor husbands women's rights were promoted, from wearing the bloomer costume to equality with men. A minority of sexual radicals briefly promoted "free love," which actually signified equal rights for women rather than sexual promiscuity, but stamped Modern Times with a scarlet reputation it could not shed; after thirteen years in the spotlight, the settlers changed its name to Brentwood..However, Modern Times left behind more than a few "should haves" and "could haves." Its version of "private but profitless enterprise" could not compete with the rising tide of mass production and corporate growth, but its design for living contributed the now common practice of couples living together with or without a wedding ring.<sup>7</sup>

During its turbulent existence, Modern Times was also distinguished by the construction of two Octagonals, both of which still stand. On what is now Brentwood Road, William Upham Dame, a popular citizen and skilled carpenter, built the octagonal which is one of the few original structures left. The second floor, known as Archimedian Hall, was used as an assembly room for frequent meetings and dances. In his memoir of Modern Times, Charles A. Codman recalled endless discussions of every reform from the "Abolition of Chattel Slavery, Woman's Rights, Vegetarianism, Hydropathy (and all the pathies), Peace, Anti-Tobacco [*sic*], Total Abstinence to the Bloomer Costume."<sup>8</sup>

In an article in the *Brooklyn Eagle* in 1904, Mayor William J. Gaynor of New York City, a guest at Dame's house, said, "I asked him why he had built it [the house] that way [octagonal] and he responded that he had done so for economy of space, no space being lost in the acute angles. When I asked him why he needed to economize on space... he only smiled."<sup>9</sup>

Nowadays, the Dame house is the residence of three Sisters of St. Joseph. The house, which still has its original frame and doors, is three stories high with only one four-sided room—a porch exterior to the main frame. All the other rooms, like those of all Octagonals, have anywhere from five to eight sides. Dame's octagonal has been named a Registered Land Mark of the town of Islip.<sup>10</sup>

### The Octagon School House of Modern Times/Brentwood

In 1856, the trustees of the newly established School District 12 decided to build a schoolhouse on lot 56 of Modern Times, purchased at a cost of \$9.25. Approximately \$775 was spent on this glass-roofed, one-room octagon, completed in June the following year. After Modern Times became Brentwood, the school board granted use of the building to the Congregational Church on Sunday afternoons and the Farmers Club on Saturday evenings.<sup>11</sup>

Before its construction, Eleanor Maria Blacker, the first teacher of Modern Times, held classes in private homes. After Eleanor's tragic death at the young age of eighteen in 1855, two years before the school was completed, the position of teacher was held by Mary Swain.<sup>12</sup>

The schoolhouse was used for fifty years, from 1857 to 1907, and then slowly lapsed into disrepair. In 1989, the Brentwood School District decided to move it to the grounds of the high school, next to the Anthony Felicio Administration Center, and, with the help of the Brentwood Historical Society, restore it to its original condition (It had been donated to the school district by the Olivieri family of Brentwood). Because of a lack of financial endowment, the school house has not yet been restored, a situation the Brentwood Historical Society is striving to rectify.<sup>13</sup>

### Huntington: The Prime-Klaber House

In 1859, Ezra Prime, a silversmith, built the two-story octagonal on Prime Avenue, Huntington that is still in use as a residence. More than likely, Prime read Fowler's book because the plan of his house is similar to one illustrated in *A Home for All*. It is two stories high with a flat roof and a cupola. Ownership passed to an M. Whelan in 1872. For fifteen years the house had been vacant, and after the hurricane of 1944 was in dilapidated condition until John J. Klaber, an architect, purchased it and restored it to mint condition. Prime built another octagon further down the same street, which was demolished in 1930.<sup>14</sup>

### The Mattituck Octagon

Between 1854 and 1855, master builder Andrew Gildersleeve built an eight-sided residence, with a store attached, within yards of the Long Island Railroad station in Mattituck. The building has been considered a National Landmark since the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

The Mattituck Octagon, as it is called, played a major role in commercial growth of the village. The wing continuously functioned as a store, while the octagon, which served as a gathering spot, agency for local produce, and a

center for trade, contributed to the summer tourist trade in the late 1800s. It also was the location of the early post office. The house was a residence until the 1930s, and a boarding house for many years after.<sup>16</sup>

Amazingly, the interior plan remains basically the same as when it was built. The window panels, fireplace mantels, trim, newel post, balusters and rail, and stairway of "modified elliptical form" all are as they were in 1855. Of all the octagons on Long Island, it is the least altered.<sup>17</sup>

The building now is owned by Alan Cardinale, a local businessman who purchased it to renovate it and give something back to the community. After obtaining original photographs from the Southold Historical Society, he had an architect use them as the basis for the restoration of the building. Now that the renovation is almost complete, Cardinale hopes to add the porches that were part of the original. The house is on Love Lane, at the intersection of three streets.<sup>18</sup>

### **Patchogue's Octagon**

Owned and possibly built by a man named Fishel in the 1880s, this two-story octagon is on Maple Avenue at the northeast corner of Oak Street, in Patchogue. The Polk family lived there in the late 1800s and early 1900s. According to the local historian Anne Sweezy, the house at one time had a glass cupola with a stairway going up to it. It was kept in excellent condition until recently, when it was rented to welfare recipients and neglected by its owners.<sup>19</sup>

### **Westhampton Beach**

Around the 1880s, this eight-sided structure was built on Beach Lane in Westhampton Beach. With a stucco exterior and red-tiled roof, it is thought to have been designed and built by the famous architect Stanford White. Although it is known that he constructed several houses in the Hamptons, it is not clear if this is another of his masterpieces. The beautifully maintained exterior fits in with the landscaped garden behind the high privet hedge. The house is now a private family residence.<sup>20</sup>

### **Yaphank**

Former Chief Herbert Davis of the Yaphank Fire Department remembers the years before 1926, when this octagon was a schoolhouse. He recalled that he and his friends would throw shot gun shells into the coal stove during class, causing "the doors to blow off" so that school would be canceled. The school, which had no running water, consisted of only one room. Davis, his brothers,



and his father all attended this school before it became a firehouse in 1926. Doors had to be added to make this old school house suitable for fire trucks, and planks were added to prevent trucks from falling through the floor. Thirty years later, a new firehouse was built; three years before, in 1953, the schoolhouse-turned-firehouse had been razed.<sup>21</sup>

For the Yaphank Fire Department's fiftieth anniversary, a model of the original firehouse, eight sides and all, was constructed. Fifty feet square. It now stands behind the current firehouse.<sup>22</sup>

### Today's Octagon

"The Octagonal Village Cluster is the ultimate house design for the 21st century," screams a web page on the Internet. "Why?" it asks, and then quickly answers its own question:

[O]f all of the designs presented by the Shared Living Resource Center this is the most ecologically sustainable, energy efficient, socially supportive, and innately attractive... This is now Americans can fight global warming, reduce their consumption of energy, and still have more by using less.

This house apparently does it all. "This is the house for the having your cake and eating it too."<sup>24</sup>

Odd it is that more than a century ago Orson Squire Fowler had the same brilliant idea as the modern architect, Kenneth Norwood, the brain behind the "Octagonal Village Cluster." Or is it? Maybe great minds do work alike; maybe everyone should live "octagonally" today. Even if the "octagon fad" never catches on again, reminders of the "home for all" still stand within reach of every Long Islander.

### NOTES

1. Orson Squire Fowler, *A Home for All; or, the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building* (New York: Fowler & Wells, 1856; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1973), 82.

2. Ibid.; for Fowler and his brother Lorenzo's career as phrenologists, reformers, and publishers, see Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers 1815-1869* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979), 160-61.

3. At the top of each of the eight sides of the Tower of Winds is a relief representation of a wind, symbolized by a male figure with the appropriate attributes and its name inscribed in stone; the restored tower (also known as the Horologion of its builder Andronicos) has been used as a church, a baptistery, a temple for Aeolos, and a tekke of the Dervishes (Hellenic Ministry of Culture (<http://www.culture.gr/2/21/211/21101n/e211an01.html>)). Carl Schmidt, *The Octagon Fad* (New York: Carl F. Schmidt, 1958),.

4. Ibid., 4.
5. Ibid, 8.
6. Ibid.
7. Josiah Warren, quoted in Roger Wunderlich, *Low Living and High Thinking at Modern Times, New York* (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1992), 2, and passim. Warren's books were published by the firm of Fowlers [Orson and Lorenzo] and Wells; one of the original fifteen one-acre plots at Modern Times was purchased by Samuel R. Wells, of that firm (ibid., 28).
8. 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. 1905), pencilsript, collection of Suffolk County Historical Society, Riverhead, 10.
9. Verne Dyson, *A Century of Brentwood* (Brentwood: Brentwood Village Press, 1950), 61.
10. Author's interview with Sister Victoria of the Sisters of St. Joseph, 26 Mar. 1999.
11. Wunderlich, 48-52, Dyson, 90-92.
13. Wunderlich., 48, 50
13. Ibid., 51.
14. Schmidt, 73.
15. Building-Structure Inventory Form (Albany:: New York State Dept, of Parks and Recreation, Division of Historic Preservation, 1973).
16. Ibid.
17. Author's interview with Alan Cardinale, 8 Apr. 1999.
18. Ibid.
19. Author's Interview with Anne Sweezy, 9 Apr. 1999.
20. Schmidt, 95; author's interview with Westhampton Beach owner of the octagon house, 25 Mar. 1999.
21. Author's interview with Herbert Davis, 9 Mar. 1999.
22. Ibid.
23. Ken Norwood, "The Octagonal Village Cluster," Webpage. "<http://www.sharedliving.org/villageoctagonalhouse.html>.

# THE 1939 WORLD'S FAIR AND ITS VISION of the FUTURE

*By Lindsey Gish, Bryan Harmon, and Matthew Jensen  
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Editor's note: We selected this paper for publication from among the many outstanding papers presented on 28 May 1999 at the Science, Technology, and Western Society Conference for History Students, sponsored by Smithtown High School, the Smithtown Central School District, and the Center for Excellence and Education at the State University at Stony Brook.

Between a crippling depression and the mounting tensions of what soon became World War II, the 1939 New York World's Fair provided a glimpse of hope. Held in Flushing Meadows, Queens, the fair commemorated the 150th anniversary of the inauguration of George Washington. The fair's president, Grover A. Whalen, assured that,

The Fair will exhibit the most promising developments of ideas, products, services and social factors of the present day in such a fashion that the visitor may get a vision of what he could obtain for himself, and for his community, by intelligent, cooperative planning toward the better life of the future.<sup>1</sup>

The fair offered many predictions of the future, forecasting advancements in transportation, air travel, housing, and home life. In fact, the slogan of the fair was "The World of Tomorrow." This article examines the accuracy of the fair's grand image of the future.

Some predictions were fairly on target, others became parts of everyday life long after their predicted dates, but most of the fair's bright hopes have yet to come about, more than sixty years after the opening of the great event.

The New York World's Fair, which opened on 30 April 1939 and cost nearly \$155,000,000, was the biggest, most expensive fair ever held at the time. With more than three hundred buildings and covering 1,216 acres, it housed the largest assortment of wonders and entertainments yet assembled, ranging from television to international rocket travel. Drawing approximately thirty-nine million patrons, the fair exhibits represented sixty nations. The central idea was summed up by the Perisphere and the Trylon, the former symbolizing the world around us, and the latter our aspirations.<sup>2</sup>

Of the thousands of people involved in construction of the fair, the most influential was Robert Moses. Moses designed and built the Grand Central

Parkway and Triborough Bridge that connected Manhattan and Queens County, where the fair was to be held. Among numerous other projects, he was responsible for the creation of Jones Beach State Park, which opened in 1929, and the Belt Parkway, which opened in 1940. Moses was a powerful figure in New York at the time of the fair, and it was under his authority that the site was cleared. Moses held multiple positions in New York, including city parks commissioner, state parks commissioner, chairman of the Triborough Bridge Authority, sole member of the City Parkway Authority, and executive officer of the city's World's Fair Commission. His swift role in clearing and grading the site was a huge help in getting construction of the fair underway in summer 1936, so as to be ready to open in 1939. He agreed to help to construct the fair on condition that his office would receive the first \$2 million of profit so that he could turn the grounds into a park once the fair came to an end.<sup>3</sup>

Upon entering the fair, visitors were greeted with exhibitions and buildings displaying inventions and ideas for the "World of Tomorrow." After exploring these new and wondrous concepts, patrons could dine on cuisine from all over the globe. Individuals attending the fair could spend the whole day for seventy-five cents. In essence, the fair opened a world to which average people were not accustomed.

The central theme was the world of the future. No exhibit portrayed this vision of the "World of Tomorrow" better than the General Motors Futurama, designed by Norman Bel Geddes, one of the country's leading industrial designers. Few people went to the fair without seeing Futurama, the main focus of which was its vision of the highway and transportation system of the future.<sup>4</sup>

Futurama was filled with predictions, many of them fairly accurate, such as the growth in popularity and affordability of the automobile. Geddes estimated that by 1960 there would be 38 million cars on the road, a number many times greater than that of 1939. As it turned out, sixty-one million cars were in operation by 1960, but Geddes was on the right track. He correctly predicted "smaller but roomier" cars to come, although larger vehicles were the trend for decades after his forecast. He also foretold more flexible car interiors, as if envisioning today's mini-vans with adjustable and removable seats. He foresaw air-conditioned cars, more comfortable to ride in, more economical to operate, and capable of higher speed. All these predictions were accurate.<sup>5</sup>

According to one of the fair's historians. David Gelertner,

Futurama's most important and deeply held belief was that super-highways eventually would be everywhere; would run sheer across the country; would let people work, shop, and play miles from home; would make it possible for urban workers to live in the green countryside; and would allow the whole nation to spread out, and it was right.<sup>6</sup>

These super-highways began to appear in 1956, when Congress passed the

Interstate Highway Act. This extremely expensive public works program authorized the building of a 41,000-mile system of expressways that would stretch across the United States. The expressways accelerated suburban growth, heightened dependency on cars and trucks, hastened the decline of the nation's rail lines, contributed to the decay of central cities, exacerbated air-pollution, and drastically increased gasoline consumption

Geddes was "on the money" with some of his predictions, but many of his visions were either incorrect or have not taken place as quickly as first envisioned. For example, he predicted that a 1960 car would cost approximately \$200, a small fraction of the actual price, even adjusted for inflation. He believed that auto manufacturers would design teardrop-shaped cars by the 1960s, on the grounds that this more aerodynamic design would help cars reach higher speeds and increase gas mileage. Although present in some cars, these features are by no means in all vehicles today.<sup>7</sup>

Geddes foresaw an elaborate federal system of highway control to increase safety and prevent accidents, including look-out towers at five-mile intervals. He predicted that speeds would be maintained, and that entrances, exits, and merges, effected automatically by a collaborative partnership between the car and the highway system, would increase the safety of highways. However, Geddeses' plan was far too costly to carry out, and thus his highway control system never received serious consideration.<sup>8</sup>

Air travel in the future was the focus of the aviation building, sponsored by General Motors and Ford, and housing designs for bigger, faster, and more comfortable airplanes. One prediction of an aircraft of tomorrow was Airliner Number 4, a colossal "cruise ship" of the sky. With a gymnasium, a ballroom, and staterooms, Airliner Number 4 would redefine comfort levels. However, the closest the airlines have come to this comfort level has been the introduction of first-class seating. Predictors had higher hopes for roomy and luxurious aircraft travel than that offered today to first-class passengers. Though air travel has never reached the degree of comfort envisioned at the fair, the speed of planes has surpassed the expectations of most fairgoers.<sup>9</sup>

General Motors's predictions for air travel spilled over into Futurama. The ideal city of the future required new, improved airport design. The airport of the future would float on a pool of liquid that would facilitate turning of runways to accommodate wind and weather. Nonetheless, today's airports still do battle with Mother Nature.

Another erroneous prediction about air travel was that of the "rocket port of the future." This involved a passenger-carrying rocket that would be shot from a cannon and arrive at another city, yet another idea that failed to materialize.<sup>10</sup>

Experts at the fair believed that in the future everyone would own a plane, and every car driver would also be a pilot. Fairgoers envisioned suburban homes within half an hour's flying distance from work, a concept that many of them welcomed. In a 1939 poll, roughly 40 percent of responding adults expressed interest in learning to fly. These mass-produced planes were

predicted to be as convenient and affordable as cars. Perhaps this prediction will come true on a distant day in the future, but experts first have to work out the logistics of mass-airplane travel.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to Futurama, "Democracy," sponsored by the Theme Committee, was one of the largest attractions at the 1939 World's Fair. Housed in the Perisphere building, this attraction stood at the center of the fair. Inside was a scale model of a futuristic utopian city, the creation of Henry Dreyfuss. His world of 2039 was based on an orderly, harmonious society, in which work and home life were separate entities. The main goal of Democracy was to give the people of 1939 hope for the future. Working in cities did not require living in them.<sup>12</sup>

Democracy was a whole new world, with forests, meadows, and streams that stretched to the horizon. Here, farms and homes stood beside gleaming streams, with factories placed away from residential areas. Cities of 1939 were looked down upon by many as noisy, filthy, and marred by crime-ridden slums; those of the future would be cities where "no one lived," used only as places of employment. Centerton was the suggestive name of the fair's new-function city. Centerton and its counterparts would be perfectly planned, with each identical, modern building finding its place in a precisely formed row. Each row of evenly spaced buildings would extend from a central skyscraper. Historic sites would be replaced by new, modernized buildings for the industrial, non-agricultural workers.<sup>13</sup>

Democracy's roads would follow the example of the General Motors' Futurama, connecting Centertons to areas of home life. These scenic, well-landscaped roads would wind through the countryside, much like the original Long Island Parkway system designed by Moses. An important feature was that roadways never passed through detached home or garden apartment areas, leaving home life free of hazard and noise. Cities would not be residential, but places only of business. In other words, the future would lead to ghost cities. In some ways this has happened, in the wake of middle-class flight to the suburbs.<sup>14</sup>

Garden apartments were possibilities for home life. These landscaped complexes were placed on the rims of Centertons or factory locations, to combine easy access to jobs with a relaxing rural home life. Besides apartments, the most common home sites of Democracy would be Pleasantvilles, small, countryside, suburbs to which people would retreat after their workday in the city. These small communities were to be built on hills or close to riverbanks, in order to utilize fertile, flat land for farming. In essence, Democracy would be part of a conformist society. A recent movie, *Pleasantville*, portrayed how that kind of society could produce a narrow-minded way of life.<sup>15</sup>

The last type of home life predicted for the future were Millvilles, in which farms would be set on the flattest, most fertile land. Democracy strongly emphasized the idea that all levels of society would work to support one another by assigning the best land to farming and using what was left over for

living. The predictions of Pleasantvilles and Garden Apartments can be closely associated with today's suburbia. The prediction that suburbs would become a major part of life was absolutely accurate. Today's suburbs are not far removed from the rural and landscaped view of Democracy. However, the Millville prediction did not come true, because the surge of suburban growth preempted the former farmlands, and areas once devoted to agriculture turned into thriving communities.<sup>16</sup>

Democracy called for a new way of life in the brand-new world of 2039, a world of interdependence in which people of every background could succeed. A few of its predictions came true, but most have yet to appear. However, other ideas expressed at the fair appeared sooner in American life. In the World of Tomorrow, women would be free of the drudgery of cooking, which they would do for recreation and only when they wanted to, with devices that made it enjoyable. This would be achieved through vastly increased production of packaged, processed, and synthetic food. Many Americans welcomed this type of food. Processed food stood not for tastiness but for safety and hygiene. Today, with increasing numbers of women working, packaged food greatly simplifies the chores of cooking at home.<sup>17</sup>

New electrical appliances would also free housewives to pursue other activities. For example, fairgoers were shown the electric dishwasher, which would save both time and effort, and without which no future home would be complete. Today, one sees the accuracy of this forecast of progress. Models of new inventions, and the prediction that they would be in all homes in the future, were well received. However, the fair failed to deal with the separate roles of males and females, or to point out how new household appliances and processed foods would help men as well women. Preparing meals and washing dishes were considered woman's work. The prediction that processed, synthetic food would give women more time for recreation did not extend to women using their newly found free time to pursue careers of their own. A 1938 Gallup survey taken just before the fair indicated that 78 percent of the men and women polled disapproved of a married woman's working for pay outside the home, "if she has a husband capable of supporting her."<sup>18</sup>

The 1939 New York World's Fair provided an optimistic look toward the future during a time of many hardships and difficulties. It gave the people hope of a better life that might await them. As Grover Whalen declared,

It will demonstrate the vital interdependence of communities, people, and nations. Thus in submitting to the world of today a new layout for life, we are engaged in building a world of tomorrow. The New York World's Fair will predict, may even dictate, the shape of things to come.<sup>20</sup>

Many predictions of the fair became realities, such as the increased popularity of the automobile and the nation-wide expansion of highways that spurred the growth of suburbia. However, many far-fetched predictions, like

those of rocket travel, mass-produced planes, and abandoned cities, may never become realities.

The fair began as an optimistic event bringing many nations together, but by the time it ended in 1940, the world was on a collision course and World War II had started. Nevertheless, the World's Fair of 1939-1940 contributed a bold and challenging vision, giving its patrons hope for the "World of Tomorrow."

## NOTES

1. David H. Gelertner, *The Lost World of the Fair* (New York: Free Press, 1095), 343.
2. Mel Lerner, Herbert Rolfes, and Larry Zim, *The World of Tomorrow: The 1939 New York World's Fair* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988) 29.
3. Gelertner, 76, 77.
4. *Ibid.*, 35.
5. *Ibid.*, 34, 35.
6. *Ibid.*, 34.
7. *Ibid.*, 35.
8. *Ibid.*, 180.
9. Lerner, Rolfes, and Zim, 12.
10. Gelertner, 179, 180, 181.
11. Lerner, Rolfes, and Zim, 29, 11.
12. Lerner, Rolfes, and Zim, 39; Gelertner, 67, 72, 62.
13. Gelertner, 68, 69.
14. Gelertner, 67, 72; Lerner, Rolfes, and Zim, 39.
15. Gelertner 72, Lerner, Rolfes, and Zim, 39.
16. Gelertner, 71.
17. Lerner, Rolfes, and Zim, 54; Eve Jochnowitz, "Feasting on the Future: Food at the New York World's Fair, 1939-1940," <http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/eve-wf>, 22.
18. Jochnowitz, 22.
19. Gelertner, 129.
20. *Ibid.*, 343.



# REVIEWS

Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace. *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. Illustrations, references, bibliography, index. Pp. xxiv, 1,383. \$49.95.

Midway through their massive synthesis of New York City's history to 1898, the authors offer a quotation from an 1856 *Harpers Weekly* lamenting the constant mutability of the city that never sleeps:

Why should it be loved as a city? It is never the same city for a dozen years together. A man born in New York forty years ago finds nothing, absolutely nothing, of the New York he knew (695).

While *Gotham* offers some evidence for the perception of a dizzying pace of transition, it also suggests the alternative view that New York has certain antiquated characteristics that have not changed much over the years. Buildings may come and go, but New York has always been a city defined by commerce and ethnic diversity. Unfortunately, the income disparity between the working poor and the wealthy few has also been an egregious constant. The seventeenth-century governor of New Netherland, Petrus Stuyvesant, seems a kindred spirit of one Rudolph Giuliani, both sharing the need to exert strict regulations over the city's populace in the name of "quality of life." Other intriguing similarities between past and present abound throughout *Gotham*, deservedly the winner of the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for history. Its readers will never again walk through the streets of Manhattan without a vastly increased appreciation of legacies.

Reserve space on your bookshelf—considerable space—because this well-illustrated, engagingly written tome is a phenomenal achievement, examining three centuries of history and a wide variety of issues normally studied separately. The book is the result of a twenty-year collaboration between two excellent historians and talented writers. Though they worked closely together on the entire product, Edwin G. Burrows, a professor at Brooklyn College, was responsible primarily for the colonial era and early republic, up to 1815; Mike Wallace, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, concentrated on the remainder and also the introduction, and will write the pending second volume concerning the twentieth century.

It is not the duo's intention neatly to stitch this study together via a single, unifying theme. Such an endeavor probably would cordon off many intellectual avenues for a wide-ranging book that gives substantial consideration to the contributions of, among others, the speculative financier Jay Gould; the early feminist Fanny Wright; the writers Walt Whitman and Washington Irving; and mayors DeWitt Clinton and Fernando Wood. Indeed, *Gotham* is history

at its versatile best, a book that consistently weighs economics, labor, architecture, culture, politics, race, class, leisure, and gender. It also effectively integrates biographical sketches of the city's important players with broader portrayals of the working, middle, and upper classes.

However unwieldy this may seem, Burrows and Wallace have several selective areas of analysis that help to inform and organize their study. They aim to relate how New York's dramatic shifts (and periodic stagnation) have been affected by a global economy in the midst of perpetual change, and to examine the minutia of important social and cultural events against the backdrop of the city's changing relations with the nation and the world.

At its highest points, Gotham achieves nothing less than the re-creation of atmosphere: one is able to envision 1630s' New Amsterdam, a trading outpost (New York was a city of economic primacy from the beginning) organized by the Dutch West India Company and composed of a variegated assortment of Dutch, Walloon, English, French, Irish, Swedish, Danish, and German settlers, along with Africans in bondage. Readers are taken back to the founders' wonderment at the surrounding natural splendor, and their intrigues and conflicts with one another and their Native American predecessors.

Equally vivid are the descriptions of the gradually segregated working-class and poor sections of the city, including the multiracial, crime-ridden slum known as Five Points; the authors cite these areas as catalysts for later entertainment and reform efforts. Fast forward to Coney Island in the late 1880s, as *Gotham* examines several contiguous but "wildly diverse communities"—Norton's Point, West Brighton, and Brighton Beach—through the eyes of an imaginary couple traversing the entire area. Burrows and Wallace also breathe life into dramatic events such as Leisler's Rebellion and gruesome execution in 1691; the various Callithumpian bands of poor and working-class revelers of the eighteenth century; the catastrophic patriot loss of the Battle of Brooklyn, in August 1776, after which Long Island was occupied by British, Tory, and Hessian troops until the end of the Revolution; the infamous Draft Riots of 1863; and the raucous celebration of Greater New York's consolidation on New Year's Day, 1898.

The narrative proceeds semi-chronologically, in five separate sections: "Lenape Country and New Amsterdam to 1664"; "British New York (1664-1783)"; "Mercantile Town (1783-1843)"; "Emporium and Manufacturing City (1844-1879)"; and "Industrial Center and Corporate Command Post (1880-1898)." The sixty-nine individual chapters tend to be framed thematically, which lends to occasional overlap but ensures that complicated subjects—among them Tammany politics, great public works projects, wealthy Francophiles, and the burgeoning printing industry—all get their due.

The city stressed its commercial role from the beginning of the Dutch-Indian fur trade through the rise of a shipping-oriented economy. Blessed with a better harbor than Philadelphia's, New York expanded quickly in the eighteenth-century as it became an integral destination on the profitable West

Indian sugar trade route. The city continued to expand in population and prosperity throughout the development of the early republic, though it did not long remain the nation's capital. New York was the federal seat from 1788 to 1790, but

Its raw juxtapositions of wealth and poverty, its preoccupation with commercial profit, its tolerance (even laxity) in matters of religion and morality, its raucous crowds—none of these recommended the city to the nation's overwhelming rural and agricultural population. (300-301)

*Gotham* brings many other milestones of New York City history into context. The Panic of 1837 is considered within the broader history of the enormous expansion of credit and speculation in Europe as well as the United States. Likewise, the Croton Aqueduct, a major water-bearing system completed in 1842, is depicted not simply in paeanistic terms for its vast size, but as a contributor to much-needed city employment and pride during depression years. The authors emphasize the elite's efforts toward regulatory control over the working class in Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux's Central Park, which ironically did not work as initially conceived: "once again, a cultural enterprise designed to mitigate the divisiveness of metropolitan life had served only to exacerbate it" (795). Finally, New York City's consolidation of 1898 is explained as the result of effective annexationist pressures applied by municipal leaders on the state level in an effort to subsume competition from Chicago and other rising cities, as well as to combat the problems of "garbage, smoke, stench, bad drainage, (and) noxious manufactories" (1224). The authors' expansive analysis never loses sight of either the broader, underlying story or the critical results of specific historical developments.

Burrows and Wallace are also attentive to the city's hinterland—Westchester County, New Jersey, and especially of interest to readers of the *LIHJ*, our own region from Fort Hamilton to Montauk. While Brooklyn and western Queens evolved a symbiotic relationship with their powerful urban neighbor, the terms were not always equal. For example, after the British ousted the Dutch in 1664 and Long Island farmers complained about having to ship through New York at exorbitant prices, the royal governor, Edmund Andros, "told them to pay up or leave the province" (85). Later, in the 1830s, when the Erie Canal proved a boon to the New York City economy, Burrows and Wallace note that it also had the effect of forcing Long Island farmers to diversify their crops, as they became aware that their grains could not compete with those flowing eastward into Manhattan (431).

While these and other examples of Long Island's linkage to the city are addressed in the book's first half, and Brooklyn and Queens remain vital to the narrative throughout, the authors arguably are less concerned with eastern Long Island by the end of *Gotham*. This is a minor shortcoming, yet one long

for some discussion of the significant fact that a number of major New York figures chronicled during the post-Civil War years—William K. Vanderbilt, A. T. Stewart, and Stanford White, to name a few—spent much of their lives coexisting between their country houses on Long Island and their offices in the city.

There is one other minor fault deserving comment. *Gotham* is not a synthesis of the same caliber as Eric Foner's *Reconstruction* (1988) or Alan Dawley's *Struggles for Justice* (1991), two other outstanding books which not only pull together massive episodes in American history, but also inject new viewpoints in their own respective genres. One problem with providing synthesis without historiographical discussion is that, as Burrows and Wallace concede, *Gotham* does not offer footnotes that "differentiate between those interpretations we support and follow and those which we disagree with," due to a lack of publishing space (1237). While the book, despite its size, is clearly intended for a wider audience beyond academia, perhaps the authors occasionally could have pulled back from their narrative to offer their explanations of and disagreements with current scholarship. *Gotham* is an outstanding reference tool for general readership, but does not offer explicit thoughts on where future scholars might focus more of their time and energy.

This should not detract from the authors' achievement, which is substantial. Certain to be a benchmark for years to come, *Gotham* provides a rich antidote to the compartmentalization of New York City history. This reviewer eagerly anticipates Mike Wallace's second volume, which will tackle the twentieth-century.

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Robert P. Crease. *Making Physics: A Biography of Brookhaven National Laboratory, 1946-1972*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xii, 434. \$38.00

*Editor's note: The LIHJ is proud to have published six of Robert P. Crease's articles on the history of BNL.*

Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) is a great institution that has made, and continues to make, major contributions to scientific knowledge. From its inception in 1947, it has been dedicated primarily to basic (pure and applied) research in an atmosphere that encourages the free exchange of ideas. First-rate scientists wish to spend some time there, often early in their careers, with short-term appointments as visitors or in one of those few spots that guarantee long-term attachment. In the world of science, BNL has set a standard of excellence to which others aspire.

Its birth and initial years of development, from 1947 through 1972, are elaborated in detail in this fascinating book by Robert P. Crease, the historian

at BNL who also is a professor of philosophy at SUNY at Stony Brook. Crease's well-written book presents a pictorial overview, balancing science, politics, and public affairs, while keeping the broader issues firmly in the forefront—the circumstances, decisions, and actions that led to BNL's becoming a great laboratory.

Crease begins by explaining that the idea of building a new national laboratory relied on a fortuitous mix of the right time; outstanding leadership; a well-articulated mandate and mission; location; and government support, all of which were present when a group of scientists started planning a peace-time nuclear physics laboratory. World War II was over, and scientists associated with the Manhattan District and Radiation Laboratory were dispersing. In 1947, a group of leading universities formed Associated Universities Incorporated (AUI), a loosely woven administrative fabric that served to establish the mission of the proposed laboratory. After long deliberation of the laboratory's location, AUI selected Camp Upton, the Army's famous induction center in World Wars I and II. Although the government wanted a Northeast-coast site, the compromise choice surprised everyone. Upton, out on Long Island, was far from New York City and had no base of scientific personnel from which to draw. Crease recalls the critical first step of choosing Philip Morse as director. Morse, forty-four years of age, a well-known, experienced physicist, researcher, educator, and war-time consultant, approached the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) to start funding the laboratory. He attracted excellent physicists to BNL, including two married couples, the Blewetts (Hildred and John) and the Goldhabers (Trudy and Maurice) at a time when anti-nepotism rules were in place in universities. He also brought in experienced scientists eager for freedom to bring forth and accomplish their own ideas.

The original charge, set forth by the scientific advisory committee of AUI, declared that,

The welfare and preparedness of the United States demand that fundamental research in physical, chemical, biological, medical and engineering aspects of the atomic sciences be pursued with utmost vigor...The world has still not recovered from the awesome effects produced when nuclear energy was released for military purposes. Everyone hopes for the benefits to mankind that come from harnessing of nuclear forces for peaceful activities. But further advances in the atomic sciences will largely await the collection of new fundamental scientific information. It is to this end that the research program of Brookhaven Laboratory is primarily directed (43).

Under Morse, continues Crease, the laboratory defined itself, both to the government and the scientific community. Mutual antagonism between Morse and the powerful General Leslie R. Groves, the officer overseeing BNL, made it difficult to establish ground rules with the AEC, but a first step solidified the

mandate to concentrate on basic research, with the implication that the laboratory's atmosphere would encourage the free exchange of ideas.

Crease reminds us that during the McCarthy and Cold War periods, restrictive AEC measures inhibited key appointments for the pursuit of unclassified research, but that the lab maintained its policy of openness, enabling scientists freely to share ideas. At the same time, the AEC provided funding and was receptive to innovative ideas, including such projects as the Cosmotron and Alternating Gradient Synchrotron (AGS).

When BNL decided to build an accelerator, Morse was disappointed by lack of support from Ernest Lawrence, head of the Berkeley lab, then the leader in high-energy accelerator technology. The balance shifted as BNL formed a powerful group, described in detail by Crease, which successfully challenged Berkeley's dominance. The development of high-energy accelerators that led to production of copious beams of new particles, and thus to brilliant advances in fundamental theory, forms a basic segment of the laboratory's story.

Development of the Cosmotron exemplified the scientific style nurtured at the lab. We learn how BNL engaged a group in the design of the most powerful machine yet to be built, with energy exceeding one billion electron volts. The first step in building the new accelerator involved choosing the energy, a decision requiring approval by the AEC, which, in turn, meant negotiations with Berkeley, described in detail by Crease. BNL's machine was smaller, but it became operational earlier, and, in May 1952, was the first to achieve an energy of one billion electron volts. BNL now was a laboratory to be contended with. Even as the Cosmotron was being built, plans were in place for larger and more powerful accelerators.

Cooperation, encouragement of innovation, and the free exchange of ideas proved to be the essential ingredients for building the lab. Accordingly, BNL informed rival scientists at Berkeley and at the "Center for Research Nuclear" (CERN) in Switzerland of its "strong focusing principle," with which CERN increased the energy of its new machine from 10 to 25 Bev. Soviet visitors to the lab in 1955 were also told of the principle, which they adopted for their machine. This willingness to share, essential for science to flourish, has always been a hallmark of the operational philosophy of Brookhaven.

Crease recapitulates reactor research at BNL and the establishment of a center dedicated to neutron cross-section research. As reactor physics flourished, in 1961 the lab planned for the significant upgrade to the High Flux Beam Reactor. A wide variety of excellent science was started and brought to fruition in succeeding years, enabling many scientists to make their reputations. Discoveries were made, and coveted prizes won for research at Brookhaven.

In my judgment, Crease pays insufficient attention to the lab's local impact. For example, the State University of New York at Stony Brook (USB), with no research facilities and a modest faculty, established its campus a few miles from BNL, in 1962. The proximity of BNL and its "university-like" atmosphere enabled USB to downplay its relative isolation and emphasize that

a world-class scientific institution was just down the road. Scientists at the laboratory, in turn, enjoyed the opportunity to teach at the new university.

Nonetheless, I like this book. The well-told story has a natural pace, and a wealth of details flesh out the picture. Perhaps Crease more generously should assess the role of the early directors in the establishment of the laboratory. However, the book makes it clear that Morse secured the lab's mandate and funding by the AEC; developed a working relationship with the AUI governing board, attracted and retained excellent scientists to a simulating place of work where they could pursue their projects; interfaced and stood firm with the government regarding security issues; made the primary mandate of the laboratory the pursuit of science with the free publication and exchange of scientific ideas; and established it so securely that it was free from outside control or domination. The next director, Leland Haworth, preferred personal involvement with the working of the laboratory, which worked well; during his years as director from 1948 to 1961, BNL's reputation was firmly established, based on the success of its projects. A world-class center at the forefront of many aspects of scientific activity, BNL became a "well-working engine." Crease elaborates on the "Goldhaber years, 1961-1972," when the laboratory matured and an organizational structure was set that remained throughout the years of AUI management. As director, Goldhaber, rather than doing everything himself, delegated authority and left management details to others. He also devoted himself to maintaining BNL's mandate in times of external stress, a "period of contraction" reflecting change in the country's attitude toward funding basic research, from which we have not fully emerged. Goldhaber worked hard to keep up morale, retain the lab's outstanding staff, and attract and hold bright young scientists.

During the early 1970s, a variety of problems emerged that became part of the science landscape. Money was tight, jobs were lost, new positions did not emerge, and spirits faltered. This bleak situation contrasted sharply with the early years, when generous funding enabled most projects to be developed to completion. As funding tightened, projects in development were canceled, as was the accelerator ISABELLE in 1983 by a panel of members of the high-energy accelerator community, portending the later cancellation of the Super Conducting Super Collider, (SSC).

Crease's engrossing story explains how BNL became one of the world's premier scientific laboratories, with a research program spanning a broad spectrum of disciplines. I recommend that you read the book.

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Averill Dayton Geus. *From Sea to Sea: 350 Years of East Hampton History.* West Kennebunk, Maine: Phoenix Publishing, for the 350th Anniversary Celebration Committee, 1999. Illustrations, appendices, index. Pp. 224. \$65.

East Hampton town celebrated 350 years of settlement in 1998. An event-filled year is over; the “shouting and the tumult” has died, but the decision of the Anniversary Celebration Committee to appoint Averill Dayton Geus to write its official history of the town has left a book to linger over for many years. As an “insider”—she traces her ancestry back to the earliest settlers—Geus had access to treasure-filled attics never before invaded by historians.

She starts the story far back in time, as the ice sheets shrank, depositing the sand and gravel that became Long Island. The first chapters detail early contacts between settlers and Native American, the land grants and patents. The book’s title refers not to the great oceans immortalized in song, but to a phrase in the first and most important of the land deals. The families who built around the spring which became town pond—now famous for its blue-lighted Christmas tree—secured in a deed from the Montaukett Indians the land east of Southampton to Napeague “from sea to sea,” all thirty-one thousand acres of it. The sale cost the white people twenty coats, twenty-four hatchets, twenty-four knives, twenty-four mirrors and one hundred muxes (awls). The fate of the Montaukett makes sad reading, as two disparate cultures clashed.

Separated by the dense pine barrens from the general turmoil as Britain won the struggle against the Dutch for control of Long Island, East Hampton worked out its town laws and social codes, expanded its farms, and prospered from a thriving whaling industry. Geus touches on the granting of the still-revered Dongan patent, the story of Samuel “Fishhook” Mulford’s journey to London to protest the tax on whaling, and—exciting times!—the elusive treasure buried by Captain Kidd on Gardiner’s Island.

On 20 April 1775, the freemen, freeholders, and inhabitants of East Hampton signed the Articles of Association, and thereby joined the Revolution. Early in the war, the British were foiled from attacking Montauk by an ingenious ruse, but the plunder of the countryside during the long British/Tory occupation generally led to a legacy of hatred. There is much detail as to raising of troops, with plenty of interesting asides such as the burying of silver in Sag Harbor gardens, pieces of which occasionally turn up in the soil there today. Then it’s on to the War of 1812 and much more about Sag Harbor and its ships and mills. Amazing to us today is the young age of the whaling ships’ crews, with skippers still in their twenties. This chapter is awash with wonderful photographs, and statistics: in the great fire of 1845, fifty-seven stores and thirty-seven houses were lost; in 1847, thirty-two vessels brought in 3,919 barrels of sperm oil, 63,712 barrels of right whale oil, and 605,712 pounds of whale bone. The forty-four thousand-square-foot cotton mill, built in 1849, had nine thousand spindles and two hundred looms, and so on.

The town rallied to the call to arms of the Civil War. The Rev. Mershon, of East Hampton’s First Presbyterian Church, preached rousing sermons. The 127th Regiment, with 435 men recruited from the East End, fought at Bull Run, Gettysburg, and was part of Sherman’s march to the sea.

The first summer visitors had begun tentatively to explore the area before



the Civil War; after it, the flood began and East Hampton was never to be the same again. Geese and cows were banned from Main Street, picket fences were built, and barns and wood piles moved to back lots. The Ladies Village Improvement Society was born. Chapter 5 charts subsequent improvements including the \$100,000 bond for road building raised in 1905, and the coming of electricity and water mains. There are delightful photographs of early stores, with their proud staffs aligned in front in hats and aprons; and a note that East Hampton was the first village to insist on preserving their street trees. What foresight! The town lost eleven souls in the First World War. One—Everit Herter, of the Creeks (now the Perlman estate), sold all his paintings to benefit the Red Cross before he enlisted and was killed in the trenches in France.

The twenties saw the beginning of the real estate boom, the rise of theatricals, and the opening of the town museum. A few years before the nation plunged into war again, the 1938 hurricane cut a swathe through the wonderful elm trees; photographs in the book record vividly the anguish of that terrible day. World War II ended, and the assault of tourists and second home-owners magnified. Text and pictures record the inevitable progression from family shop to fashionable boutique, and potato field to gracious home.

In her final chapters, Geus looks at each of the town's six villages—Amagansett, Sag Harbor and Eastville, Wainscott, Springs, Montauk, and East Hampton, followed by a brief history of farming and fishing. Do not miss the photograph of David Gardiner's cattle, the result of his experiments crossing buffaloes and cattle (the offspring were bad-tempered and unpredictable). And be sure to examine the many photographs of shipwrecks and storms; the sandy south shore of Long Island was (and is) no place to be in a north-easterly gale.

Inserted before the final chapter, "We the People" is a block of fifteen paintings of the local landscape in full and glorious color, excellently reproduced and worth having this book for alone. The final pages are devoted to a myriad of images—formal and relaxed—of townsfolk and "summer people," with biographies of the most interesting. My favorite is a picture of five young Sherrill cousins, all on the back of a pony held by another cousin.

There is an epilogue—a rallying call by the author to protect and preserve what is left of the town's heritage—which (as this is official anniversary record) is followed by lists of town and village officials, donors to the anniversary fund, and members of the 350th Society.

The bountiful illustrations, many by Doug Kuntz, the local paper's photography editor, the delicate vignettes and woodcuts which decorate the pages, and the "clipping" style insertions give this book a scrapbook-like quality, but this is said not to detract from the awesome amount of research embodied in the text. Geus manages to create a detailed record of 350 years of East End settlement, but painted with a light brush, so that just enough information is given to invite interest, never boredom. It is not a book for footnotes, nevertheless at times I found myself wondering as to the provenance

of some statements. Just who decided that eight thousand waves per day strike Long Island's shore? And although there is an index of persons, there is no general one, which would have been useful.

Several good histories of East Hampton already exist, and the price of this one is steep, although there may be some solace in knowing that a percentage goes toward preserving and expanding the town library's treasured Long Island Collection. But if you want only two on your shelf, choose this one along with the other East Hampton book reviewed in this issue of *LIHJ*, *Awakening the Past: The East Hampton 350th Anniversary Lecture Series 1998*

MARY PETRIE  
Wainscott

Mary Feeney Vahey. *A Hidden History: Slavery, Abolition, and the Underground Railroad in Cow Neck and on Long Island*. Port Washington: Cow Neck Peninsula Historical Society, 1998. Illustrations, bibliography, notes. Pp.49. \$10 (paper).

This slim but informative book presents a variety of information concerning slavery, abolition, and the Underground Railroad in general, with special focus on Cow Neck, the cattle-raising settlers' original name for the Manhasset-Port Washington peninsula. The author, Mary Feeney Vahey, a former curator of the Cow Neck Peninsula Historical Society, utilizes photographs and documents to help readers to visualize Cow Neck from the late-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century.

Vahey begins with a brief account of slavery in the New World, especially in Dutch and English settlements on Long Island. She explains how the "occupational range of slavery paralleled free labor (5)." Long Island slaves were often given the opportunity to learn a skill, and many became property owners after they were given their freedom. The book devotes short sections to such diverse aspects as early black settlement, family life, fugitive slaves, and Jupiter Hammon, the Lloyd family's slave who became the first published African American writer.

Although acknowledging that not all Quakers opposed slavery, Vahey outlines the antislavery inclinations of large numbers of Long Island Friends, many of whom practiced manumission as early as 1776. Two influential Long Island Quakers discussed are Elias Hicks and James Mott. Elias Hicks, of Jericho, was the pioneer abolitionist who led the campaign that legally ended slavery in New York in 1827. James Mott, of Cow Neck, and his wife, the feminist leader and abolitionist Lucretia Coffin Mott, belonged to the American Anti-Slavery Society, founded in 1835. Both also supported Hicks when he broke from orthodox Quakers over the antislavery issue to found the more liberal Hicksite sect. Vahey summarizes the Methodist endorsement of manumission in 1784; how 155 Long Island African Americans joined 1,200

African Methodists in 1821 to petition the mother church to ordain black ministers: and the move of a Flushing congregation to Valley Road, Manhasset, to form the Lakeville A .M.E. Zion Church in 1833. The book also recounts the creation of Quaker Charity Schools on Long Island and in New York City soon after the American Revolution.

Vahey briefly examines the Free Produce Movement engineered by Quakers, the manumission of slaves in Cow Neck, and the life of the Quaker minister, Phebe Willets Mott Dodge, who freed her slave Rachel in 1776. A pleasing feature of this book is the marginal inclusion of photographs, maps, and quotations, as in the words of Rachel's manumission document on page 16. Later chapters describe the antislavery movement, with emphasis on black abolitionists and the Mott family.

Chapter 7 explores the Underground Railroad from the origin of the term, when Quakers in Ohio helped fugitive slaves in 1831. The author mentions conductors around the country, and generally enables the reader to understand the magnitude of this event. The Underground Railroad may have helped as many as one hundred thousand slaves escape from southern bondage to safety in the North.

Vahey recounts how Long Islanders helped slaves on the road to freedom, with stories bolstered by family records, local lore, primary documents, and secondary sources. One episode reveals how the Mott family helped slaves escape from New York City to Sands Point. A similar account was rendered by Henry Hicks, in a 1941 speech about escaping slaves sailing from the Mott house in Cow Neck across the Sound to Westchester. Hicks also related how Rochester relatives of Long Island Quakers aided fugitive slaves to board boats across Lake Ontario to freedom in Canada. Vahey also points out that some runaway slaves decided to stay on Long Island. One of her sources, a third-generation descendent, remembers stories from his grandfather, Peter Johnson, who passed along the network to Jericho in the early 1800s.

The book concludes with analysis of emancipation and its economic consequences across the country. The final chapter, which discusses the aftermath of slavery, calls sharp attention to the prevailing racism that hindered freed blacks from gaining first-class citizenship. Three appendixes provide a genealogy of the interrelated Willets, Motts, and Hicks families; a slaveowner's will, dated 1759; and a chronological list of important dates.

Vahey offers a cogent, if rather truncated, overview of slavery, abolition, and the Underground Railroad, with considerable insight into Long Island's participation in one of America's most crucial movements. Her account is an excellent example of "Long Island as America, the premise of the *LIHJ* that the history of Long Island reflects as well as contributes to most major aspects of national life. The publisher, the Cow Neck Peninsula Historical Society, and its president, Joan Gay Kent, deserve high praise for sponsoring research on African American history on Long Island.

KATHLEEN VELSOR  
*SUNY College at Old Westbury*

Kenneth C. Beady. *Arthur S. Greene, 1867-1955: The Life and Work of a Long Island Photographer*. Landover, Md.: Colortone Pres+, 1999. Illustrations, notes. Pp. viii, 172. \$29 (includes tax, s/h) from Kenneth C. Brady, P. O. Box 663, Port Jefferson, NY 11777-0663.

Kenneth C. Brady, of Port Jefferson, has done a great service for the communities of the North Shore of Brookhaven Town. His book is the first to highlight the work of Arthur S. Greene, the photographer who chronicled the area as it moved from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Brady assembles images from his own extensive collection along with many from private collectors (most notably James McNamara), museums, libraries, historical societies, and the National Archives.

Because Greene's distinctive views are familiar mainly to postcard collectors, Brady sets out to demystify the man with the camera. Throughout the text, he uses the term "ubiquitous" to describe his subject who seemed to be everywhere at the same time. Unlike his contemporary, Hal B. Fullerton, the "special agent" who promoted the Long Island Railroad through his photographs, the self-employed Greene depicted the life of the area in and near his adopted hometown of Port Jefferson.

Brady searched for every possible image and artifact to illustrate his book with over 300 photographs, post cards, newspaper articles, buttons, diagrams, advertisements, cabinet cards, and blotters from public and private collections. He also corrects a misprint in *Port Jefferson: Story of a Village*, by Gordon Welles and William Proios (1977), who used Greene's photos but stated his first name as Albert instead of Arthur. Patricia Hansell Sisler and Robert Sisler included six of Greene's photos in their book, *The Seven Hills of Port: A Documented History of the Incorporated Village of Port Jefferson* (Port Jefferson: the authors, 1992).

This 9" x 12" paperback is attractively printed in sepia tones, like the postcards it displays. The large, lengthwise format allows Brady to reproduce Greene's scenic views with up to four postcard images on a page, and enlarged versions of Stony Brook harbor, Port Jefferson depot, cows and sheep grazing in Miller Place, and many others.

As did Fullerton, Greene photographed picturesque scenes of bathing, boating, farming, harbors, ponds, lakes, roadways, schools, and churches. However, while Fullerton emphasized "good roads," bicycling, stunts, and horticulture to promote the LIRR, Greene exploited the postcard craze that swept the country from 1905 to 1915. He printed his pictures on postcard stock, producing the "real photo" images that Brady identifies throughout the book. Many of his photographs were also mass-produced by the large postcard publishers of the day.

The book has two sections, text and photos. The text details Greene's busy life, beginning in England in 1867 and ending with his death in Bay Shore in 1955. The second part consists of views of fifteen North Shore villages from

St. James east to Shoreham and inland to Coram and Yaphank. The final section, "Faces from the Past," presents group and individual portraits of Port Jefferson-area residents.

Greene numbered but did not date his negatives, making it difficult to determine when they were taken. Although this is beyond Brady's control, the book could use an index: the table of contents serves as the only guide to communities included. The well-documented endnotes are printed in very small type: get out the magnifying glass!

Part one covers Greene's long career in Port Jefferson, where he settled with his English-born wife and business partner, Lavinia Wilson Greene, in 1894. Lavinia, a singer and actress who often performed at Athena Hall, participated in the social and religious life of Port Jefferson. The village's busy harbor and tourist activity provided Greene with many subjects. One trade newspaper, the *Industrial Recorder*, stated in 1905 that, "In the quality of his work and the extent and character of his patronage, Mr. Greene, of Port Jefferson, is the leading photographer of the North Shore" (10).

Greene was a proficient businessman whose ads reminded customers that "no better present...than a good photograph of yourself" (10). By 1905 he had 250 views of Port Jefferson, and began to branch out. He was hired to produce photographs promoting the new community of Belle Terre; these pictures later were introduced as evidence in an illegal sandmining scandal. His photos appeared in the influential vacation publications, *Long Island Illustrated* (1907) and Frederick Ruther's *Long Island Today* (1909), after which he expanded his coverage to other communities. His photographs of every structure imaginable are invaluable sources for architectural historians and preservationists.

When the US entered World War I, Port Jefferson was a shipbuilding center. Greene was hired as the official photographer of the site, where his "hundreds of photographs of what happened there" (16) are now in the National Archives, with several in Brady's book.

Greene became an American citizen in 1921, at the age of fifty-seven. In 1927, his work appeared in two Long Island Railroad travel brochures, *Along the Sunrise Trails of Long Island* (1924), and *Long Island: The Sunrise Homeland* (1926, 1927). Greene eventually relocated on North Country Road between Port Jefferson and East Setauket, in an imposing colonial-style abode he named Greenacres. This combined home and studio, which still stands, was listed in 1983 by the New York State Historic Buildings Survey. In 1930 the newly incorporated village of Poquott rented it as its office; Greene was appointed Poquott's treasurer, serving for more than twenty years until his health began to fail in 1954.

Following his death in 1955, Greene's belongings were disposed of. Although Joseph Emma, who purchased the house, saved some negatives and prints, it is not known how many were lost. A collection of glass plate negatives was purchased by the Long Island Division of the Queens Library. Another collection was given to William A. Jacobs, of Port Jefferson Station,

who displayed them in his (now-defunct) Wagon Wheel restaurant, and later sold them to James McNamara. Various historical societies and museums hold Greene's views in their collections.

A cursory obituary in the *Port Jefferson Times* mentioned merely that Greene and his wife "owned and operated a photography business for many years on East Main Street" (23). The time now is ripe for a public exhibition of his photos. We thank Kenneth C. Brady for uncovering the life and work of the "ubiquitous" Arthur Smedley Greene, whose photos of Port Jefferson will be the subjects of Brady's next book.

SUZANNE JOHNSON

*Longwood Public Library, Middle Island*

Roberta Halporn, compiler. *New York Is a Rubber's Paradise: A Guide to New York City's Cemeteries in the Five Boroughs* 2d. ed. .

Brooklyn: Center for Thanatology Research and Education, 1998. Illustrations, bibliography, cemetery index. Pp. 72. \$12.95 (paper), from The Center for Thanatology Research and Education, Inc., 391 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217, Tel: 718-858-3062.

This guide is a chatty, greatly expanded version of the first edition of 1984, a personal view of the author's passion for cemeteries and gravestones. It reprints interesting articles on the history of burial in New York City by Percival Jackson and on the ghosts of Gotham by Thomas E. Kelly, as well as sections on abbreviations, symbols, foreign languages, decoding Latin dates, and identifying the carvers of metropolitan gravestones.

It lists the colonial and Victorian cemeteries of the five boroughs, and gives the cemetery location, how to get there, and the telephone number and contact person to gain entry them. Halporn also provides an interesting history of the related church (if there is one) and the cemetery; her opinions and insights are often delightful. The book now includes the new topic of special interest cemeteries—those of the military and minorities. The minority cemeteries located so far are African American, Irish, Jewish, and Chinese.

The new focus of this edition reflects the fact that New York was not Puritan New England but the multi-cultural New Netherlands, later New York. That reality was documented in this reviewer's "Spatial and Material Images of Culture: Ethnicity and Ideology in Long Island Gravestones, 1680-1800" (Ph.D. diss., SUNY at Stony Brook, 1987). Halporn rightly identifies the spirit and vitality of immigrants, which has led to the variety of New York markers. Halporn's identification of carvers' work found in New York is a bit sketchy, and does not include the work of Robert Hartley, first identified by this reviewer, and Uzal Ward of New Jersey, as well as some of the New England carvers.

One caveat about the guide is the casual comment about rubbing gravestones to make one's own folk art, though she does warn against littering, marking the stones, etc. There is no instruction in the proper

materials to use or how to test for hollow or damaged stones which should *not* be rubbed. This enthusiasm could easily lead to more thoughtless treatment of vulnerable gravestones.

Halporn apparently is not aware of the WPA-inspired book, with maps, on the cemeteries of Queens at the Queensborough Public Library (Alice H. Meigs, ed., *A Description of Private and Family Cemeteries in the Borough of Queens*, Charles Powell, compiler, Queensborough Topographic Bureau, 1932). It led this reviewer to many more early cemeteries than Halporn lists, such as Wyckoff-Snediker in Jamaica; St. James Episcopal and Presbyterian/village in Newtown (today's Elmhurst); Friends, St. George Episcopal, and Brinckerhoff in Flushing; Rapelye in Astoria; Corona Dutch Reformed in Corona; Riker-Lent in East Elmhurst; Betts in Woodside; and Alsop and Schenck in Maspeth. Halporn also missed the New Lots cemetery in Brooklyn; this and other new "finds" are being provided in an addendum included with the book.

Besides the colonial cemeteries, she lists and describes twenty-four nineteenth- and twentieth-century cemeteries in Queens and nineteen in Brooklyn, evidencing the later ethnicity and ideology of industrializing New York. Evidently, a third edition of this unique and useful guide will be needed to add new cemeteries which augment her on-going research into the "special interest" cemeteries, especially those dealing with the ethnic peoples who built New York.

Another meaningful activity of the Center for Thanatology Research is the reprinting of important works in the field of gravestone studies; one is the "Bible" of colonial markers, *Gravestones of Early New England and the Men Who Made Them, 1653-1800*, by Harriet Merrifield Forbes (\$21.95), another is *Buried Treasure: The Art and Lore of Green-Wood Cemetery* by Margaret Wood and William Wood (\$6.95).

GAYNELL STONE

*Suffolk County Archaeological Association*

SCOPE Staff, Willard Hogeboom, consultant. *Where to Go and What to Do on Long Island*, 2d rev. ed. Mineola: Dover Publications, 1998. Illustrations, index, map. Pp. 220. \$4.95 (paper).

This resource and activity guide to Long Island is a melange of 240 varied places to go, under the categories of arts and crafts, communications, government and public service, historic sites and museums, nature, science and ecology, performing arts, recreational activities, transportation, and miscellaneous. Each site is listed by location, telephone, hours, fees, suggested age levels, group tour information, eating and restroom availability, and handicapped access.

The contents are listed first by county, then by the town in which the site is located. A keyed map and both topical and alphabetical indexes aid finding

a site, but the alphabetical index does not contain all the entries, so can be frustrating. It is obvious from the entry information that it is always wise to call a site first.

Some of the places listed to visit are surprising, such as sewage plants, radio stations, a pet hotel, jails, and animal shelters. This may be because the book also aims to serve teachers planning field trips: science and technology as exemplified at the Hempstead Resource Recovery Plant or the Port Washington Water Pollution Control District. New to this reviewer were the existence of the Tee Ridder miniature museum at the Nassau County Museum of Art, the Phillips House Museum in Rockville Centre, the Richard K. Lester Carriage Museum in Amagansett, the Empire State Carousel, the DIA Center for the Arts in Bridgehampton, and more. Many of the listings will be news even to long-time Island residents.

A compendium of this sort unfortunately becomes out of date almost as soon as it is printed. For example, the Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation will no longer be developing an aquarium in Riverhead; a new entity is developing the multi-million dollar Atlantis Sea World there. Strangely, the new home (the former SPLIA headquarters) and extensive offerings of the Three Village Historical Society in Setauket are not mentioned, nor is the Wading River Historical Society Museum.

The volume's compilers rely on the reporting agencies for the accuracy of their listings; unfortunately, some of the information is unreliable. The Hoyt House Museum in Commack has not been open in years, due to staff shortage. The Pharaoh (Montauk Indian) Museum in Montauk County Park also has not been open for several years, although the Theodore Roosevelt display in the Third House will be available again this year.

In addition, there are many interesting sites and programs not listed. If cruises on the Little Jenny (which actually may not be available) are listed, why not the paddle-wheel steamer cruises of the Peconic estuary from Riverhead? If sky-diving in East Moriches is listed, why not the glider rides and gliding school at Gabreski County Airport in Westhampton?

Since some non-museum-sited educational activities are described, such as the BOCES Outdoor Education programs, the Kids for Kids productions, and the Wilderness Traveling Museum, why not the Native Life & Archaeology and Colonial Life & Technology programs at Hoyt Farm Park and Blydenburgh County Park of the Suffolk County Archaeological Association? Or the Starflower Experience environmental programs, based in West Hills County Park, but available throughout the Island?

The extensive list of historic house museums makes one realize how rich is this heritage of the Island; their brief "Open" hours underlines the struggle of these volunteer groups to keep their enterprises afloat. Among those not listed is the Ketcham Inn Foundation in Center Moriches, a seventeenth-to-twentieth-century composite structure, once an early stagecoach stop, which is undergoing restoration (including extensive archaeological study). Another is the Van Wyck-Lefferts Tide Mill in Huntington Harbor, a rare example of



Dutch framing with the original wooden works. Reached only by boat, tours are given by the Nature Conservancy (instrumental in preserving it) and the Huntington Historical Society. And there are probably more gems which have not been discovered.

Those pursuing interpretation of their ethnic roots have slim pickings: only the Polish Museum in Port Washington is listed, while the various Polish Town activities in Riverhead are not. Also not noted is the Native and African American experience preserved by the Eastville Historical Society at St. David's AME Zion Church and cemetery in Sag Harbor (also soon to have its own Sears-Roebuck cottage headquarters), nor the African American Museum in Hempstead.

Among the generally unknown treasures to explore are the Goudreau Math Museum in New Hyde Park, the Pontoon "Discovery" Wetlands Cruise in Stony Brook, the American Armoured Foundation in Mattituck for the military buff, the Cultural Arts Playhouse in Old Bethpage, and more. Several sites—Caleb Smith State Park Preserve, South Shore Nature Center, among them—claim to be one of the "last tracts of undeveloped land on Long Island" or one of the "few areas left...where an ecological balance...has been preserved." Actually this is true of a good number of the environmental preserves listed herein: Wertheim Refuge, Morton National Wildlife Refuge, the many Nature Conservancy sites (few of which are listed in this guide), Merrill Lake Sanctuary, Tackapausha Preserve, Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park, Caumset State Park (which is not listed), and many more described here.

Long Islanders have many options for experiencing the former natural Isle. An inclusion that would make this guide even more useful, especially for new-comers, would be a complete listing of federal, state, county, and town parks, as only a sprinkling appear in the current book. Obviously, there will have to be another edition after the Cradle of Aviation and other museums create Museum Row in Garden City, more vineyards are established (not all are listed in this edition), even more art, crafts, and horticulture sites are created (almost none of the numerous ones on the South Fork are listed), and there are more ferries to ride (the book mentions only a few now in service, while ignoring major facilities like the Port Jefferson-Bridgeport and Orient Point-New London lines, which have recreational as well as utilitarian functions,

This having been said, this attractive book presents a collection of valuable information about Long Island's principal points of interest. An additional virtue of this useful portable guide is that, as with most Dover publications, the price is reasonable

GAYNELL STONE

*Suffolk County Archaeological Association*

Terry Walton. *Cold Spring Harbor...Rediscovering History in Streets and Shores*. Cold Spring Harbor: Whaling Museum Society, 1999. Illustrations, bibliography. Pp. 72. \$12.95 (paper)

This slim but informative book examines the rich history of Cold Spring Harbor, one of Long Island's most beautiful and significant villages. Terry Walton, the author, is a resident and a sailor willing to share her love and enthusiasm for her nautical community. Quotations from contemporaries pepper her text, enhanced by numerous reproductions of paintings, posters, and photographs. The book presents a vivid picture of how the village evolved, what it was like to live in it, and what it looked like through much of its history.

Its location on a deep North Shore harbor made it a natural site for a fishing village; the name was derived from the natural springs that bubble from low hills along the shoreline, furnishing water that has been bottled since colonial times (the word Harbor had to be added to avoid confusion with Cold Spring, a Hudson Valley village).

The first inhabitants, the Native American Matineocks, sold all the land from Oyster Bay to Northport in 1653 to early English settlers. After the patriots lost the Battle of Long Island in August 1776, British dragoons forced residents to help build Fort Franklin on Lloyd Neck. Because they wore pieces of red flannel petticoats to protect them from British assault, this labor force became known as the "Petticoat Brigade." Another story has President George Washington raising a rafter for the new village school during his visit to Long Island in 1790.

However, the discovery of petroleum in Pennsylvania in 1859 resulted in the rapid end of the industry (together with the Civil War and the high cost of longer and longer voyages). Those concerned with Long Island's whaling heritage can find no better place to learn about it than the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum, the publisher of this valuable book.

By 1868, the railroad reached the village. Merchants and bankers, now able to commute to Manhattan, built elegant houses along the North Shore. As steam ships, in turn, brought city dwellers on summer vacations, such fashionable hotels as the Glenada, Forest Lawn, and Laurelton Hall, were built to accommodate them. Two important institutions were born here at the end of the nineteenth century: the Cold Spring Harbor Fish Hatchery and Aquarium in 1883, and the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in 1890. The book provides brief descriptions of these and such other outstanding institutions located in Cold Spring Harbor as the Whaling Museum, the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities (SPLIA), and the DNA Learning Center.

A final chapter takes the reader on a walking tour of the village today, furnishing architectural information for key extant buildings, with handy references to page numbers on which they are mentioned in the text. A short, selected bibliography completes the work.

*Cold Spring Harbor...Rediscovering History in Streets and Shores* fulfills two useful purposes. First, it celebrates and preserves the history of a vibrant, lovely community with a long and exciting past. It also acts as an introduction and guide to the villages as it exists today. Easy to read and entertaining, it should interest residents, students, and visitors. It is an excellent example of Long Island as America, a reminder of the vital role of maritime history in the development of the nation as well as the Island.

CHRISTINE KING  
Purdue University

### Book Notes

Salvatore LaGumina, Frank J. Cavaoli et al., editors. *The Italian American Experience: An Encyclopedia*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1998. Illustrations, bibliographies. pp. 600. \$110, from Garland Publishing, % Taylor & Francis, Inc., 47 Runway Road, Levittown, Pa. 19057-4700. Telephone 800 821-8312.

The first encyclopedia to offer comprehensive coverage of the history and cultural contributions of Italian Americans, a major component of our population that has not received the attention it deserves.

Jacob De Gheyn. *The Exercise of Armes: All 117 Engravings from the Classic 17th-Century Military Manual*, with new introduction and captions by J. B. Kist. Mineola: Dover Press, 1999. Illustrations. Pp. 128. \$12.95 (paper); add \$5 s/h, from Dover Publications, Inc., 31 East 2d. Street, Mineola, NY 11501. This handsome reprint of one of the first and most famous manuals of arms presents a detailed portrait of seventeenth-century Dutch uniforms and weapons used by soldiers in Old and New Netherlands

### To be Reviewed in Spring 2000

*Awakening the Past: The East Hampton 350th Anniversary Lecture Series 1998*. Tom Twomey, ed. New York: Newmarket Press, 1999. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. xxiii, 463. \$39.95.

Please stand by until spring for our review of this informative collection of the twenty-seven lectures delivered last year to mark the town of East Hampton's 350th anniversary.

*Bibliography of Dissertations and Theses on Long Island Studies*, compiled by Natalie A. Naylor. Hempstead: Long Island Studies Institute, Hofstra University, 1999. Pp. iv, 46. \$6 (paper).

This comprehensive collection of Ph.D. dissertations, M.A. theses, and a few senior B.A. papers, arranged according to subject, is available from the L. I.

Studies Institute, Hofstra Univ. West Campus, 619 Fulton Ave., Hempstead, NY 11549 (516 463-6411).

Richard A. Winsche. *The History of Nassau County Community Place-Names*. Interlaaken, N.Y. Empire State Books and Hofstra University, 1999. Appendix, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. 160 (cloth).

This book traces the origin and history of the present and former names of more than one hundred Nassau County communities, including the date the locality was first settled, when the present place name came into use, who suggested it, and any efforts to change it.

Mark Linder and Lawrence Zacharias. *Of Cabbages and Kings Agriculture and the Formation of Modern Brooklyn*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999.

This aptly named book reconstructs the lost agricultural community: of rural Kings County, the site of Brooklyn's tremendous expansion during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Susan Kirsch Duncan. *Levittown: The Way We Were*. Huntington: Maple Hill Press, 11743. Illustrations. Pp. 191. \$10.95 (paper).

This first-person account recalls what it was like to be a baby-boomer growing up in Levittown.



**Long Island Historical Journal**

Department of History

State University of New York at Stony Brook

Stony Brook, NY 11794-4348

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