

# THE CIVIL WAR AND DUTCHESS COUNTY, NEW YORK

Part I

Dutchess County Historical Society  
2015 Yearbook • Volume 94

Candace J. Lewis, *Editor*



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Cover: Rich Mountain, Beverly, West Virginia, 2011. Living history event.  
Photograph taken at the summit of Rich Mountain, approximately 1:00 p.m.  
Arrived at this point after a six hour march. The fog obscured the view  
so individuals on the march had few clues as to where they were.  
Collection of Mike Peets.

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from the period of the arrival of the first Native Americans  
until the present day.*



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This issue of the Dutchess County Historical Society's yearbook has been generously underwritten by the following:

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“Common looking people are the best in the world;  
that is the reason the Lord makes so many of them.”

Abraham Lincoln: Recounting, to his  
secretary, John Hay, a remark made in his  
dream, December 23, 1864.

*Shirley M. Handel*



*LTC Gilbert A. Krom*



*Lou and Candace J. Lewis*



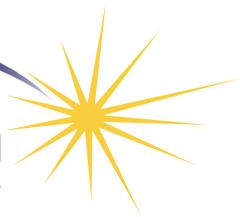
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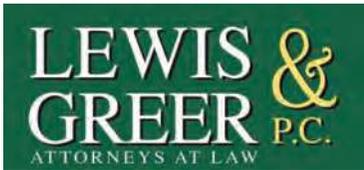
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# Introduction



This year marks the 150th anniversary of our Civil War's conclusion in 1865. While surrenders at Appomattox Court House in Virginia and Bennett Place in North Carolina formally concluded hostilities between Union and Confederate forces, the echoes of that great fratricidal conflagration remain with us today. Dutchess County soil did not feel the primary impact of that conflict: no battles were fought here nor was our county occupied by enemy forces. Thousands of Dutchess County men, however, bled and died on far-flung battlefields, while the civilian population at home worked tirelessly to support military actions to the southwards.

The following pages explore the many facets of our Civil War's impact on Dutchess County life. The Forum section includes firsthand accounts from Dutchess County veterans mixed with scholarly perspectives on the Civil War's deep roots in Dutchess County, including connections with the 1788 Constitution Ratification Convention in Poughkeepsie and our home-grown abolitionist movement. A special photo essay probes the experience of the Civil War Living History hobby. The General History Articles section explores a variety of other stories from our county's past, including the apple industry, summer camps, and family stories. This volume continues the Yearbook's sterling record of linking local perspectives to our nation's greatest events.

by *William P. Tatum III*  
*Dutchess County Historian*

## *Letter from the Editor*

Now, in 2015, we are looking back over 150 years to the end of the greatest conflict in American history and the one that, arguably, has most shaped our nation. For decades before the first shot was fired at Fort Sumter in the harbor at Charleston, South Carolina, the nation was ripping itself apart over how American life was to be shaped then and in the future. The words from the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence rang with a clarion call: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal...” But not all citizens heard the same message. Many in the South sought to maintain a way of life built on upholding the principle of States’ Rights, the cultivation of cotton, and the free labor of African-Americans; in addition they sought to extend their laws into western territories and new states. Meanwhile, many in the North took a contrary view that “all men created equal” meant that slavery should end.

The Forum section for the 2015 yearbook is devoted to topics relating to the Civil War. We have had a great many submissions on this subject and, thus, will continue the theme of the Civil War next year. The narrative of a young soldier from Amenia and his father shortly after the battle of Gettysburg is the starting point for our look at the Civil War and Dutchess County, as the war touched every soldier and every civilian in the northern States and the southern states, not least our own county. This story is followed by four essays related to slavery and events preceding the war and, then, two eye witness accounts of the war by men who were soldiers. There follows an essay describing how we today attempt to re-create the life and times of the Civil War through living history. Finally, as part of the Forum section, we offer a compelling scholarly account of the final months of fighting in 1865 as the war drew to a difficult close. In the Articles section, yearbook 2015 also presents materials on the general history of the county with essays on a new collection from a family with an apple orchard business, a Yiddish camp in Beacon, a memoir of life in the mid-twentieth century, and a genealogy of a Rhinebeck family.

By the election of Abraham Lincoln as President and the start of the war in 1860 and 1861, the focus of the conflict between North and South had shifted dramatically from the issue of slavery to the question of preservation of the union of the United States of America. Soon young men of Dutchess County would be signing up to fight in the Union army for duty and country. Working as editor of this volume, I had my own discoveries—one of them being this fact, that is—that at the beginning of hostilities in

1861 and thereafter, there was a significant shift in the written words of ordinary people from discussions of the expansion of slavery into new territories to discussions of keeping the country together. Not until twenty-five years later would many men who had fought in the war—such as Judge Gildersleeve in this issue—look back with pride and say that one of the primary objectives had been to free the men and women in slavery.



The outcome, sad as it was for so many—with over 600,000 young men and civilians losing their lives—ushered in a new nation. Was it all worth the carnage? Debate on this and many other points continues to swirl. The union remained intact. At the end of the war, when a man spoke of our country, he no longer said these United States, he said the United States. At the end of the war, unlike the beginning, men and women could no longer legally be held in bondage. They walked free.

— *Candace Jenks Lewis*



Maj. Henry A. Silderleeve

Engr. Col. B. B. Post. New York. 1862. New York City

FORUM





# After the Battle of Gettysburg: The Death of Dutchess County Soldier, Albert Reed

*by Newton Reed*

*Over a year ago, I received this letter and accompanying note from Logan Reed, a member, who wanted to inform me of an aspect of his family history. He has consented to our request to publish his family letter from his great grandfather as an example of how the Civil War touched the lives of people in Dutchess County. Thus, we begin this issue of the Dutchess County Historical Society Yearbook with this personal story of a young boy, eighteen years old, who begged his father to let him join his comrades and march off to war. ....C. Lewis, editor.*

August 26, 2014

Dear Ms. Lewis,

In the little Village of Amenia Union, there is a small cemetery with headstones of the graves of many of my ancestors. One of the headstones represents my Great Great Uncle Albert Reed who died right after the Battle of Gettysburg. A couple of years after his death, his father, my Great Grandfather Newton Reed, wrote a commentary for the family about his experiences in going to the battlefield to meet his son, hear his last words, and subsequently escort the body home. In the 1930s, my mother, Elizabeth Reed, discovered the handwritten notes and transcribed them to typewritten form.

I believe this commentary opens a window into the times and emotions of a brave and patriotic family who lived through the most tragic period of the history of our country.

Sincerely,

Logan B. Reed  
Pawling, New York

*A Letter written by Newton Reed to his family in Amenia, New York. Date c. 1865.*

“Father, may I enlist” was the first distinct declaration of Albert’s desire to give himself to the service of his country, in this dreadful war. I had feared, and watched with intense anxiety any indications that his purpose was becoming fixed.<sup>1</sup> I could not endure the thought or allow for a moment that such a thing could be. Any indications that way were distressing, and I remember with what relief I learned that the enrolment was begun a few weeks before his age exposed him to be taken. But when he expressed the above mentioned wish, I could only say “Perhaps it may be necessary for you yet”, fully believing that I could not be prevailed upon to give my consent very soon. But the note of war sounded louder. Our country was in great peril, the leading patriot citizens of our country were giving themselves and their sons to the cause. The best young men of our town were forming themselves into a company. It was necessary. I approved of it and aided it. And when that question came again, “May I enlist?”, with entire submission to my will, I began to fear it must be so, though it seemed impossible that one so tender and of such home attachment should be able to live a soldier’s life. I was greatly distressed with the anticipation that home sickness should break his spirits, and make him unhappy and useless. I could not yet give my consent. It now began to be waged that from present appearances, the time would soon come, when all who could be spared must go and it would be far better to go with his acquaintances, his cousins, in our own company, and under officers, whom we know and have confidence in. Some weeks had passed, and the conviction that it was his duty to go seemed settled in Albert’s mind, which he always expressed with cheerfulness, and submission to my will.

We were moved to give our consent finally in view, I think, of these high and serious considerations. This war is eminently just, to which we are called by our duty to our country, a duty that we cannot deny. Our son is evidently called in the providence of God to give himself to this service. He has a good understanding of the question, a just and conscientious apprehension of his duty, and is moved by an elevated principle. He is a christian(sic), and says he has prayed much over the question, and puts his trust in God. We do not dare to check these noble aspirations, which show the germ of a true manly character. And if this service is his duty, we do not dare to forbid it. The path of duty is the only safe path. Shall any selfish interests detain him? No, our country is in danger. We have no right to refuse her call. We make this most costly sacrifice. Father, mother, sisters, and brothers all say “go”.

It was a brief period from the time of his enlistment to the mustering in. With flinging caps the young soldiers moved among us a few days, and bright and cheerful countenances, and the final leave taking of the company from our town was with music and banners, but with some of us it was only tears and anguish of heart. From Pokopsie(sic) he made us one brief visit, and took his last leave of home early in the morning, while it was yet dark. Never will be effaced from our memory that sad farewell.

We were much relieved by his letters giving an account of his journey to Baltimore showing that he was cheerful and contented(sic), and during all his stay there we had the consolation of knowing that he was sustained by a manly spirit from any great distress of homesickness, which I had feared from the tenderness of his feelings. There also was rapidly developed under the direction and encouragement of his excellent chaplain, his decided christian(sic) character. He at once came forward among those who formed a prayer meeting, and continued to the end one of the most punctual and ready in this service. He was much of the time the chosen companion of his chaplain, with whom he found an intimate friendship, and who has given in his funeral discourse a precious testimony of his regard for his christian(sic) character and personal worth. He had opportunities, while in Baltimore, to show his decision of character under temptations and experienced the worth of settled habits of freedom from the use of tobacco and intoxicating drink. The 150th was singularly fortunate in the number and rank of its officers who were praying men, and in the character of its chaplain.

At the first battle of Gettysburgh(sic) the 150th had their first experience of conflict with the enemy. Of course till we heard of the safety of our own, we had much anxiety. He seized the first opportunity, even before the close of the fight to write a few lines, which not only assured us of his safety but gave us the comforting testimony of his firmness, and equanimity(sic) in the time of danger. In those trying marches which followed the battle of Gettysburgh(sic), in pursuit of the retreating rebels to the Potomac, and then to the Rappahannoc(sic) in the heat of July and August, Albert's endurance was tested. No one in his company endured that march better which was ascribed to the cheerfulness of his spirits and that care of himself, which he showed in personal cleanliness and other strictly regular habits. His health remained firm.

His letters at this time show that he had time and inclination to observe the interesting features of the country through which he passed, and we were assured of his faithful attention to his duties as a soldier and a christian(sic).



**Figure 1.** *A Regiment in camp. Photograph. From Benson J. Lossing, A History of The Civil War, 1861-65, and The Causes that Led up To the Great Conflict (A Chronological Summary and Record compiled from The Official Records of the War Department, Illustrated with fac-simile photographic reproductions of the Official War Photographs Taken at the Time by Mathew B. Brady. (New York: The War Memorial Association, 1912), 203.*

About the first of Sept. a letter from himself tells us that he is sick. It was a note of alarm. The regiment was encamped near Kelly's ford, an unhealthy location, and they were becoming affected by miasmatic fever. Soon we had a note from one of his cousins informing us that he was seriously sick, and in a few days a telegraphic dispatch. "Albert is much worse, come quick." In an hour, I was on my way to Washington which I reached early on Sabbath morning, where I was obliged to remain till the middle of the next day and where I made the necessary preparations in securing a pass to the front. I reached Bealton on the A & O railroad, and found a welcome entertainment in the tent of the christian(sic) commission. The next morning I set out on one of the army waggons(sic) for the headquarters of the twelfth corps, about ten miles southeast of Bealton, near the Rappahannoc(sic). There they showed me the tents of the 150th to which I instantly directed my steps across the field about a mile. I had heard no word since leaving home, and could scarcely hope to find my dear child alive. With what anxious fear I met the first soldier of the regiment, whom I found carrying water from a little stream not far from the camp. Oh, what a sad change in that countenance, one so fair. He knew me instantly and said, "Dear papa, I knew you would come." His little bible lay open on his pillow as if in constant use.

The arrangement(sic) of a soldier's tent are simple as possible, but the excellent and attentive surgeon of the regiment had decided that his case would be more hopeful if he remained in his tent than if removed to the hospital.

How thankful that I should find him not only alive but in the full possession of his mind, and enjoying the consolation of religion, and a submissive patient spirit. The bitterness of my grief for his death, which seemed inevitable and near, was almost taken away. I read at his request some portions of scriptures and offered prayer. He was greatly comforted, and expressed his confident hope in Christ. Again and again he expressed his joy that I had come to him, and would take him home. From the time I came to him till he died he was unwilling that I should be out of his sight. He addressed me only by the endearing title of "papa", in the very sweetest tones of his childhood. I did what I could for his comfort through the day; it was but little that he needed. He had a kind word for the officers and men who called upon him. He quick recognized the voice of one of them who had been absent, a prisoner. I sat by his bed in his little well arranged tent, so small as only just to hold us, through the day and all night. What a night was that. It was beautifully clear and balmy, and how strangely were mingled the sights and sounds of war. Our regiment was upon an elevated field, that gave an extensive view of the encampment of the twelfth corps. The large fields of those old Virginia farms were covered with tents, and



**Figure 2.** *Scene in camp. Photograph. From Benson J. Lossing, A History of The Civil War, 1861-65, and The Causes that Led up To the Great Conflict (A Chronological Summary and Record compiled from The Official Records of the War Department, Illustrated with fac-simile photographic reproductions of the Official War Photographs Taken at the Time by Mathew B. Brady. (New York: The War Memorial Association, 1912), 28.*

moving regiments were coming into camp in various directions from near the headquarters of General Sherman. Afar off in the north west I could see the Blue Ridge. As the evening came on, all the camps were lighted up and had the appearance of a great city, with its lighted streets. As soon as the evening had come, prayer meetings were held, two in our regiment, and afterwards a number of the christians(sic) of our regiment went over to the camp of a New Jersey regiment, where there was a large number of praying ones, and visited with them. These meetings were held in the open air, and the voice of singing from such a number of strong voices filled the air for a great distance. What a scene. The tunes and very words of these sweet hymns were wafted to our tent, and Albert recognized them well. It seemed to me then that he would pass away, in the midst of their singing, "In heaven above where all is love."

For a few hours only, silence reigned in all the camps, for it had been whispered that they had orders to move in the morning. And before night the camp fires were burning for the preparation of the morning meal. The order was read at daylight. And in an incredibly short time, the regiment had moved off towards the Rappahannoc(sic) and the ambulance trains with all the sick towards the railroad. Though this long ride of ten miles over a very rugged road was excessively trying, yet was my dear boy animated by the thought of moving toward home, and the long delay which the train encountered, by coming in contact with a corps of Meade's army was more distressing to him than the most violent motions of the ambulance. He understood the locations, and made enquiries concerning the delay, but was unable to look up. To me it seemed many hours that we stood in the burning sun while the long trains of artillery, then of infantry, and then of cavalry passed on before us. They were going to meet the enemy on the other side of the Rappahannock. Meade and Sykes with a showey(sic) cavalcade of horsemen passed on. These were wonderful scenes, but they could not draw me away from that one object of all my care.

I cannot forget the attention that was bestowed by the surgeon, Dr. Bennet, who had the charge. He made great exertions for the sick, for my own in particular. After much delay he was placed on the cars for Alexandria. But there was no relief for him, weary and failing, though he slept some. It was about the middle of the afternoon when we were waiting at the station at Manintou(sic) junction that his exhausted spirit gave up, and he calmly said "I must die, good by papa, kiss me good by." "Good by, Uncle John", for that excellent and extraordinary man, John Vassar, was with us, in this trying time.

Late at night we came to Alexandria, and the remains were sent to the Mansion House Hospital where in the morning I found the Chaplain to be Rev. Mr. Hopkins, and that we had sent to him and to that hospital repeatedly those things which were welcome to the inmates. He gave me his tenderest sympathies, and rendered me all the assistance which I needed in having the body prepared for sending home, and took upon himself the service of sending it by express.

The remainder of the day I spent in Washington, and looked over some of the monuments of our nation's greatness, with feelings of solemn awe and sadness, the Capitol unfinished and the nation threatened with overthrow.

After a little delay in transportation, the body was brought home, and we have this consolation, that his precious dust is laid where we also expect to come.

The service at our home, and the address by his Chaplain were appropriate. Every one seemed to feel an assurance of the blessed state of our dear one.

What an eventful week, for I found on my return that in the work of grace then in progress in our church, new voices had been opened in prayer and confession of Christ, those of my dearest friends. The Lord had prepared us somewhat by his grace for our great sorrow.

And now though it is more than two years the remembrance of those affecting scenes, that tender affectionate tone, that sweet most pathetic voice was as fresh in my mind, as if it were only yesterday.

Not only were the tenderest bonds of affection broken, but our high hopes were blasted. For it was not a parents partiality alone that saw in our son a superiority of character that gave us high hopes of his honorable and useful position in life.

For one not yet nineteen years old, he had marked maturity of judgment. He was decided in his convictions, prompt in action, and very firm, though mild in his adherence to right. We always had full confidence that he would keep himself from the contaminating influences which surrounded him constantly in the camp. We have abundant testimony that he was never the least seduced by any of the vitiating habits of his comrades. He was not only strictly moral, but maintained an elevated christian(sic) character. We had feared that his tender love of home might overcome the firmness of his spirit, but we had abundant reason for thankfulness for the evidence in his letters and otherwise of his growth in manliness and heroic fortitude.

Through all this year of the war, our thoughts were of course constantly with our absent one, and morning and evening he had a place in our prayers. When he came no more into our prayers, then it was indeed that we realized the affecting truth that he had gone to another world.

How fondly had I indulged the expectation that he might perhaps occupy the same position with respect to myself in the decline of life, which I had occupied in relation to my own honored and beloved father. The relative age was the same, and also the same as between my father and his father.

But we have unusual cause of thanksgiving in those who are yet spared to us, and in the blessed hope of an unbroken family at last.

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<sup>1</sup> We are grateful to Logan Reed for bringing this letter to the Dutchess County Historical Society Publications Committee for our consideration. Our thanks to Carla Lesh, archivist at the Society and a member of the Publications Committee, for her kind offer to transcribe this letter into a format for publication.

# The New York Constitutional Ratification Convention of 1788, Slavery, and the Coming of the Civil War

by John Barry

“...I cannot see any rule (that gives)...privileges to those people who were so wicked as to keep slaves... it is to be admitted that this rule of apportionment was founded on unjust principles, but that it was the result of accommodation; which, I suppose, we have to admit if we meant to be in union with the Southern States, though it is utterly repugnant to my feelings...”

— *Melancton Smith, speaking at the New York Constitutional Ratification Convention in Poughkeepsie, June 20, 1788*<sup>1</sup>

“...It is the unfortunate situation of the Southern States, to have a great part of their population, as well as property in blacks. The regulation complained of was one result of the spirit of accommodation which governed the Convention; and without this indulgence, no union could possibly have been formed...”

— *Alexander Hamilton, speaking at the New York Constitutional Ratification Convention, June 20, 1788, in response to Melancton Smith's comments above*<sup>2</sup>

This essay is a report of a lengthy personal inquiry: Could the men who wrote and ratified the Constitution in 1787–1788 have abolished slavery? Would it have been therefore possible for the delegates to the New York Constitutional Ratification Convention at Poughkeepsie in 1788 to take an uncompromising stand favoring slavery's abolition? In the following essay I have tried to look anew into this question by allowing the Framers<sup>3</sup> to speak for themselves, without necessarily accepting or rejecting uncritically the conclusions of prominent historians. We hear many echoes of this question today in our culture and politics. Rather than write a polemical brief for either side of this question, I have tried in the lines that follow to encourage readers to decide this question for themselves.

The United States Constitution (1787), ratified by New York State at the Dutchess County Courthouse in 1788, contained compromises about slavery. The three main ones were 1) the “3/5” provision that reduced the political power of the slave states in the House of Representatives; 2) the twenty-year delay in outlawing the slave trade, a provision demanded by the Southern states; and 3) the provision that called for the States to cooperate with each other in returning escaped slaves, which was included not as a federal Constitutional power but as a matter of interstate comity.<sup>4</sup>

We know that the institution of slavery was a primary cause of the Civil War. For some in the North, the cause was the South’s monomaniacal drive to expand slavery into the western territories. For others it was the worry, after the Dred Scott case of 1857, that a Southern cabal in the national government would make slavery legal in the Northern states. Slavery was extremely profitable. For others, especially in the South, it was a deeper cultural divide between the two sections, a perceived different way of life in the North and the South including their “peculiar institution” of slavery, that would lead to war. But everyone knows that slavery “was somehow the cause of the war.”<sup>5</sup>

One thing that New York Federalists and Anti-Federalists agreed on was their disdain for slavery, and their belief that it had to be abolished as soon as possible.

In 1785, three years before they gathered in Poughkeepsie to debate the new Constitution, Melancton Smith,<sup>6</sup> John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton founded and were active participants in the New York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves (generally referred to as “the New York Manumission Society”). This group conducted an active campaign to protect free blacks, established the African Free School, sponsored lectures and publications, and petitioned the New York legislature for a plan of gradual emancipation of slaves in the state. They saw slavery as one of the evils of their day. Hamilton chaired a committee of the Society that developed an aggressive plan by which New York slave owners could responsibly free their slaves.<sup>7</sup>

In 1788, at the time of the New York ratification convention, the Southern states contained 51 percent of the total population of the country and 95 percent of the nation’s slave population.<sup>8</sup> The largest state at that time, Virginia, contained 21 percent of the total United States population. Virginia was also the home of the only American that everyone considered capable of unifying the new nation as its first president—an important

consideration at the time. Thus, in the minds of many, if the State of New York were to be part of the newly constituted United States of America, its future would have to be wedded to that of Virginia. The interests of the Southern States had to be taken into account if the young United States were to stay together.

### ***Schools of Thought: Slavery and the Constitution, 1800-2015***

Two principal schools of thought have developed over the years on the question of slavery and the Constitution. One is that the Framers had critical Union-threatening problems to contend with, and they believed it was more important, in 1788, to keep the Union together than to take an uncompromising position on slavery. This view has been advocated by historians from George Bancroft in the early 1800s to Brown University's Gordon Wood today. Another is that the Framers' failure to rid the new nation of slavery, as well as their failure to accomplish other major reforms such as the enfranchisement of women and Native Americans, was a "tragic failure," to use historian Gary Nash's characterization.<sup>9</sup>

#### ***1. The "Union First" Interpretation***

In the thirty-seven years between 1760 and 1797 Americans had a sea of troubles to contend with, and their leaders had to make some trade-offs.

In the 1780s, Americans were living through an economic depression that some modern analysts believe was as bad as the Great Depression of the 1930s. In order to pay off war debt, the new government imposed taxes that were three or four times as heavy as they had been under British rule before the war. Few people had "real" money—silver and gold coin—and the State and National bonds given in payment of soldiers' salaries and army supplies were being traded for pennies on the dollar. The Revolutionary leaders (with the sole exception of Hamilton) did not understand banking nor did they have any grasp of monetary policy; thus, they pursued policies that left the ordinary American starved for credit and a serviceable money supply.

The national government was bankrupt and insolvent; it had no army or navy to protect American interests, counter foreign invasion, or protect western settlers from marauding Indians. Farmers were organizing local armed rebellions to protest what they thought were unfairly high taxes and aggressive debt collectors. Inflation was ruining lenders and debtors alike. Debtors had persuaded the State legislatures to shield them from the

efforts of bondholders trying to raise taxes, and from efforts of individual creditors trying to force debtors to pay their obligations.

These same state legislatures issued paper money that quickly became nearly worthless. The Constitution's advocates, on the other hand, blamed all the problems on the farmer-debtors themselves, claiming they were living beyond their means. In short, the debate over the Constitution was in significant part a struggle between two groups who saw the American situation in entirely different terms. There was little point in making an issue over slavery if they could not come to grips with farmers and small business people taking up arms, as they had already done in Virginia and Massachusetts, to close courthouses to protest what they saw as misrule on the part of the financially incompetent elites, i.e. Hamilton and Washington.<sup>10</sup>

As if that were not enough, when the New York convention met in the summer of 1788, there were still British troops garrisoned in western New York. British officials in Canada were intriguing with maverick leaders of eastern New York, now called "Vermont."<sup>11</sup> Spanish forces were interfering with American traffic on the Mississippi River and making trouble in Florida. Hostile Indian tribes in the western region provided ripe allies for powerful foreign opportunists. It was a time of struggle that seemed at least as dangerous as had been the years of war with England.

There was still more for the New Yorkers at Poughkeepsie to worry about. The proposed Constitution provided that when nine States had voted to ratify, the new Constitution would go into effect "...between the States so ratifying...."<sup>12</sup> By the time the New York delegates assembled in Poughkeepsie on June 17, eight states had already voted to ratify. So, if just one more State voted to ratify before New York did, the old "United States" would be officially dissolved and a new government would be triggered. On June 17, when Smith, Hamilton, and the other sixty-three delegates convened at Poughkeepsie, the ratifying conventions of Virginia and New Hampshire were already in session.<sup>13</sup> For all intents and purposes, because of the nine-state ratification rule, Virginia's or New Hampshire's ratification vote could change the New York delegates' purpose overnight from the merits of the Constitution *per se* to whether New York would join or remain apart from the new United States of America.

There was a general feeling among American leaders in the 1780s, before the invention of the cotton gin made slavery vastly profitable, that slavery was a dying institution.<sup>14</sup> The Constitution of 1787 gave Congress

more power to constrain slavery than the old constitution (the Articles of Confederation) had, by virtue of the power to prohibit the importation of slaves after 1807. Most men at the time believed (wrongly, as it turned out) that shutting off the foreign slave trade would suffocate the institution of slavery itself. Thus risking disunion over the issue seemed inherently nonsensical.

There were other reasons why the Poughkeepsie delegates chose not to take on the slavery abolition issue. Cotton was almost as essential to the economy of the United States and the world in the eighteenth century as corn and wheat are today. Slavery was an indirect economic benefit to the northern states too. In the same speech quoted above, Alexander Hamilton added a typically Hamiltonian (and Federalist) commercial and compromising twist:

...The first thing objected to, is that clause which allows a representation for three fifths of the negroes.<sup>15</sup> Much has been said of the impropriety of representing men, who have no will of their own...It is the unfortunate situation of the Southern States, to have a great part of their population, as well as property in blacks. The regulation complained of (by Smith, above) was one result of the spirit of accommodation (to the Southern States), which governed the Convention; and without this indulgence, no union could possibly have been formed. But, Sir, considering some peculiar advantages which we derive from them, it is entirely just that they should be gratified. The Southern States possess certain staples, tobacco, rice, indigo, etc. which must be capital objects in treaties of commerce with foreign nations; and the advantage which they necessarily procure in these treaties, will be felt throughout all the States....<sup>16</sup>

## 2. *The “Tragic Failure” Interpretation*

In recent years a few historians have argued that the Founders should have freed the slaves during the 1770s and 1780s. They have written that ending slavery was the most important issue that faced the Revolutionaries in 1775-1796, and that all of the other issues should have been secondary. This view tends to argue that the Constitution of 1787 was a pro-slavery document, and that it required a revolutionary change in 1860 for Lincoln and the North to remove slavery via war and Constitutional amendment. Its major advocates also say that while the North has always blamed the South for the more than 600,000 deaths in the Civil War, in truth the North was equally blameworthy.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the failure to abolish slavery was a “tragic failure” on the part of the Revolutionary generation.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps the most influential modern advocate for the “tragic failure” school of thought, historian Gary Nash, has suggested the Framers were remiss for overlooking two possible ways to eliminate slavery—one by compensated emancipation and the other by an uncompensated emancipation strategy.<sup>19</sup>

### ***Plan A – Compensated Gradual Emancipation***

According to this modern theory, slavery could have been abolished in the 1770s and 1780s by using the revenues from Western land sales to compensate slaveholders. The half-billion acres of territory in the trans-Appalachian West could have been sold to settlers for between \$1 and \$2 per acre, thus providing ample funds to pay off Southern planters. The same vast region could also have been used to resettle the former slaves, if necessary.<sup>20</sup> This land sale strategy would have avoided the problem posed by levying onerous and politically impractical taxes on the free citizenry.

### ***Plan B – Uncompensated Gradual Emancipation***

Another way the Founders could have freed the slaves in the 1770s and 1780s, according to some recent historians, was by availing themselves of a clever plan of *uncompensated* emancipation, such as the one proposed in 1796 (eight years after the Constitution was ratified) by St. George Tucker, a prominent Virginia lawyer and judge. He proposed the following low-cost emancipation plan:

...all female children of slave women would be born free, and thus their children would also be born free. Male children of slave women, however, would remain slaves for life. Thus, for a significant period of time, almost all black men in Virginia would be slaves, while an increasing percentage of black females would be born free, subject to a twenty-eight year indenture. Any children born to these black females would be born free, but they would be subject to indenture until age twenty-one. Thus, slavery would linger in Virginia for more than a century, and bondage would continue after that...<sup>21,22</sup>

Example: this abolition plan went into effect on January 1, 1801. A female child of a slave born on December 31, 1800 would be a slave for life. If she had had a son, that son would also have been a slave for life. If she had borne a son when she was forty and he had lived past age sixty-five, then there would have been at least some slaves in Virginia for well more than 100 years. 120 years or more might have elapsed before all the slaves in the commonwealth had died, or about the year 1922.

Under Tucker's plan, the female children of slaves, while legally free, would be bound to serve the families that owned their mothers for twenty-eight years. Any children they bore during this period would be bound to serve until age twenty-one. Thus, at the beginning of the program, almost no change would occur in the source of labor in Virginia or in the relationship between slaves and masters.<sup>23</sup>

When they turned twenty-eight, free-born females would have been completely free, and each would have been given some money and some clothing to begin their lives as free people. But what would have happened to these women at this point? Even with the ability to own land, without tools or much in the way of skills, most likely without training or education, these "free" women would have been free to a life without any means of support. The men of their age group would still be slaves for life. If these ex-slave females had been married, their husbands would almost certainly have been slaves. Thus, the fully emancipated women would be forced to remain with their former masters, or the masters of their husbands, working for them, perhaps for no wages, but only for food, clothing, and the right to live on their former masters' lands or the lands of the masters who owned their husbands—at the discretion of their husbands' masters. This might have been an improvement over slavery because at least their children could not be sold away from them. Such a life vulnerable to destitution, coercion, and exploitation is hardly what we think of as emancipation.<sup>24</sup>

According to this 1796 plan, the free blacks would have been excluded from most civil liberties, including voting, owning guns or land, office holding, marrying whites, testifying against whites, or having a will. This low-cost, limited rights, glacial approach might be viewed as "harsh" but less so than sending all newly freed negroes back to Africa.<sup>25</sup>

According to its modern advocates, this "females first" uncompensated (very) gradual emancipation plan not only had the advantage of having been "revenue neutral," in that no one would have to sell land or pay taxes to finance it, but it would also have solved the social problem of black assimilation presented by any more abrupt emancipation plan, because it would have given blacks approximately a century to acquire the "skills and behaviors" needed to gradually live successfully with whites.<sup>26</sup>

### *Critique of the "Tragic Failure" Interpretation*

What if the Indian tribes that occupied the trans-Appalachian West had not liked the idea of Congress selling off their lands to hoards of white settlers

in order to get cash to buy freedom for the slaves? And what would they have thought about several hundred thousand newly freed African Americans being re-settled into their territory? There is plenty of evidence to suggest they would have vigorously resisted this plan, including attacking the white and black settlers. According to one major historian, the United States government was losing money on its land sales during this period, selling land for only 16 cents an acre (rather than the \$1 to \$2 assumed in the “tragic failure” school’s plan), because of the cost of maintaining U. S. troops in Western forts, and the fact that Indian raids hampered land sales. It was a circular problem: Congress could not afford a large enough army to protect the settlers needed to buy the Western land so that Congress could afford to purchase freedom for the slaves.

The land sale strategy would only have worked if the Indian tribes were somehow persuaded or pacified or relocated, or extinguished. To remove the Indians from their land would have required a United States army far larger than the Congress could afford at the time.

So much for the problems of Plan A. How about Plan B? Recall the complicated plan of St. George Tucker above. Modern historians who cite Tucker’s idea fail to mention that, shortly after he presented his “low-cost” emancipation plan, St. George Tucker himself repudiated it and withdrew it, saying it was too utopian and impractical. Judging from the reception it got in the both the North and the South at the time, it is clear that political leaders and newspaper editors throughout the nation had apparently already come to the same conclusion.<sup>27</sup>

## *Conclusion*

In the late 1800s, historians tended to see the Revolution as an intellectual and conservative period.<sup>28</sup> In the early twentieth century, there came historians who argued that economic motivations drove the founding generation. Then a group of famous authors made the case that the Revolution was more about internal American political and class conflict than about separating from Britain.

At present, however, the Revolution, like the nation it created, has come in for some very serious criticism. Indeed, some historians today are more apt to stress the failures of the Revolution... (that it) ‘failed to free the slaves, failed to offer full political equality to women... failed to grant citizenship to Indians... failed to create an economic world in which all could compete on equal terms.’ Such anachronistic statements suggest a threshold of success that no eighteenth-century

revolution could possibly have attained, and perhaps tell us more about the political attitudes of the historians who make such statements than they do about the American Revolution. In some sense, these present-day historians have simply inverted the first generation's heroic celebration of the Revolution...<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps the most telling evidence of the weaknesses of the current 'failed revolution' school of historical writing is their consistent failure to deal realistically with the twin questions of first how to have financed emancipation and then what would have become of the hundreds of thousands of newly-freed individuals. None of the race and gender oriented modern critics of the Revolutionary leaders have provided thoughtful explanations of how their total transformations could have worked in the 1770s and 1780s. They seem to describe how we should think today rather than what realistic options were available to the men who wrote and ratified the Constitution in 1787-1788.

What would Alexander Hamilton, Melancton Smith, and the other delegates to the New York Constitutional Ratification Convention in Poughkeepsie have said if they had known, somehow, that the sixteenth president of the United States would be an unusually capable man committed to the following principles?

1. Slavery was a great moral and political wrong, and ought to be treated in such a way as to encourage its ultimate extinction.
2. The national government had no legal power to interfere with slavery in the states where it already existed, but it did have the power to prohibit slavery in the federal territories and should do so in order to prevent further expansion of the institution.
3. Both the North and the South shared in the responsibility for slavery.

We will never know for sure how Smith and Hamilton would have responded to such a revelation, of course, but based on their speeches and writings in 1787-1788 we can infer that they would have regarded these views of Abraham Lincoln as being entirely consistent with their own.<sup>30</sup>

And from reading their words at Poughkeepsie in 1788, we can conclude that those men understood and were sincere about the progressive character of the Constitution of 1787 and the ideals of the Declaration of Independence.

We know for certain how Lincoln viewed the intentions of the Founders:

...They meant to set up a standard maxim for a free society which should be familiar to all—constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even, though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people, of all colors, everywhere...<sup>31</sup>

...The struggle of today is not altogether for today; it is for a vast future also.<sup>32</sup>

Perhaps the issue of abolishing slavery during the Revolutionary Era can be better evaluated by defining the Revolutionary Era functionally, rather than by the usual publishers' and historians' arbitrary blocks of time. One of the preeminent modern historians of that period recently observed, "... The Civil War is the fulfillment of the American Revolution. I think you can see it in those terms. And certainly Lincoln tended to see it in those terms..."<sup>33</sup> It is probably now utopian of the modern critics to say that because the Founders did not abolish slavery just the way they (the critics) now think best—humanely, peacefully, swiftly, and in a certain fifteen years or so—that they were guilty of a "tragic failure."<sup>34</sup> It might have been possible to achieve one or two of those four ideal standards, but not all four. Thus, the years roughly between 1760 and 1860 more naturally define the real revolution in early American life.

In his magisterial biography of Alexander Hamilton, Ron Chernow observed of Hamilton: "Throughout his career, he operated in the realm of the possible, taking the world as it was, not as he wished it to be, and he often inveighed against a dogmatic insistence upon perfection."<sup>35</sup> This would be a good standard for modern Americans to use in evaluating the Revolutionary generation.

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<sup>1</sup> This exchange between Smith and Hamilton relates to Article I Section 2 clause 3: "Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, *three fifths of all other Persons.*" (Emphasis added.)

<sup>2</sup> Harold C. Strett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, Digital Edition*. University of Virginia Rotunda Project, Vol. V, p. 24. Alexander Hamilton's 20 June 1788 speech to the

New York Constitutional Ratification Convention (Francis Childs's version). <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=ARHN-print-01-05-02-0012-0005>  
 The Hamilton Papers contain three versions of Alexander Hamilton's 20 June speech – the Francis Childs, John McKesson, and Melancton Smith versions, based on their respective contemporaneous notes. I chose not to use the Smith version because Smith was a party to this day's debate with Hamilton, on the effects of slavery and compromise with the Southern States, whereas Childs and McKesson were not.

- 3 In the context of the Constitution of 1787, the term "Framers" usually refers to the famous "Thirty-nine" who signed the original document in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787. But it is fair to say that the thirteen state ratification conventions really shaped the document as much by their pressure to add what became known as the Bill of Rights. In many ways since 1788 the most significant provisions of the Constitution are contained in those first ten amendments. They were added as a result of the turbulent struggles over ratification. 1,648 individuals served as delegates to the thirteen state ratification conventions. 28 of them also attended the national convention in Philadelphia. So a good case can be made that the term "Framers" should really refer to the 1,620 more representative individuals, from all walks of life, who truly shaped the government under which we live.
- 4 The "3/5" provision is found in Article I, Section 2, Clause 3. The twenty-year delay in outlawing the slave trade is found in Article I, Section 9, Clause 1. The "fugitive slave" provision is found in Article IV, Section 2, Clause 2.
- 5 Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865. Don E. Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln Speeches and Writings 1859-1865*. (New York: Library of America, 1989), 686.
- 6 Melancton Smith's first name sometimes appears Melanchton or Melancthon. His grandson, the Melancton Smith (1810-1893) who served as a senior officer in the United States Navy during the Civil War, spelled his first name Melancton; this is probably the best indication of his family name-spelling tradition. Another Civil War era Smith (1829-1881), who served as a Confederate army officer, spelled it Melancthon, but he was not apparently related to Poughkeepsie's Melancton Smith. The unusual first name may have been derived from Philipp Melancthon (1497-1560), a leader along with Martin Luther of the Protestant Reformation.
- 7 Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 214-216.
- 8 The principle North-South compromises as to slavery in the Constitution *as written*: the "three-fifths" clause in Article I Section 2 clause 3 which compromised the power of Southern States in the House of Representatives; the twenty-year moratorium on prohibiting the importation of slaves in Article I Section 9 clause 1 which delayed the new power given Congress to prohibit the slave trade; the "fugitive slave" provision in Article IV Section 2 clause 3 which called upon the States to cooperate as to the return of escaped slaves; the limitation of amendment provision of Article V which barred amendments to the moratorium on prohibiting the importation of slaves. The Southern States were (in order of percentage of total United States population in 1790: Virginia (21%), North Carolina (11%), Maryland (9%) South Carolina (7%), Georgia (2%), and Delaware (2%). These were the states that contained 95% of the total slave population of the country in 1790. Four of these Southern states seceded in 1861, and Maryland and Delaware were at risk of seceding during the Civil War crisis.

- <sup>9</sup> Gary Nash, “The Failure of Abolition,” chapter two in *Race and Revolution*. (Madison, Wisconsin: Madison House Publishers, 1990), 25-55.
- <sup>10</sup> The best account of this aspect of Revolutionary America that I have found is Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007). In particular, see the first three and the last chapters.
- <sup>11</sup> During the Revolutionary era, New York and New Hampshire claimed the western and eastern parts, respectively, of what is now Vermont. Until the late 1780s Vermonters considered themselves to be citizens of the independent “Vermont Republic.” Vermont became the 14th state in 1791, well after the 1788 adoption of the Constitution.
- <sup>12</sup> Article VII, first sentence.
- <sup>13</sup> States ratifying before New York’s convention convened, in order of ratification: Pennsylvania 12/12/87, Delaware 12/7/87, New Jersey 12/18/87, Georgia 1/2/88, Connecticut 1/9/88, Massachusetts 2/6/88, Maryland 4/28/88, South Carolina 5/23/88. The ratifying conventions of Virginia and New Hampshire convened on 6/2/88 and 6/18/1788, respectively, and voted to ratify on 6/25/88 and 6/21/88, respectively.
- <sup>14</sup> Pauline Maier, *American Scripture – Making the Declaration of Independence*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 146-147.
- <sup>15</sup> See note 3 above as to the Constitutional provision under debate here. Importantly, Hamilton’s statement “...for three fifths of the negroes.” is a significant misstatement of the Constitution’s actual language. To be accurate Hamilton should have said “...for three fifths of the slaves,” not “...for three fifths of the negroes.” In their effort to be precise, the Committee on Style at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia the previous summer was careful to distinguish “free persons” from “other persons,” so that free blacks would be treated the same as whites in Article I Section 2 clause 3. This is a big difference in evaluating the Framers and the Constitution.
- <sup>16</sup> Harold C. Strett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, Digital Edition*. Ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> The six southern States in 1787, for the purposes of the Constitutional compromises (with slave population as percent of free population in 1790): Virginia, including what is now West Virginia (69%), Delaware (18%), Maryland (47%), North Carolina (34%), South Carolina (76%), Georgia (57%). The seven northern States in 1787 for the purposes of the Constitutional compromises (with slave population as percent of free population in 1790): New York, including what is now Vermont (7%), New Jersey (7%), Connecticut (1%), Rhode Island (1%), Massachusetts, including what is now Maine (0%), Pennsylvania (0%), New Hampshire (0%). See also Gary Nash, “The Failure of Abolition,” chapter two in *Race and Revolution* (Madison, Wisconsin: Madison House Publishers, 1990), 25-55.
- <sup>18</sup> As to “...slavery was the most important issue that faced the Revolutionaries in 1775-1796...” see John P. Kaminski, writing in the Forward to Gary Nash’s *Race and Revolution* (Madison, Wisconsin: Madison House Publishers, 1990), viii.
- <sup>19</sup> This indented summary is drawn from: Gary Nash, *Race and Revolution* (Madison, Wisconsin: Madison House Publishers, 1990). For Nash’s estimate of the aggregate value of the slaves, as property, and his appraisal of trans-Appalachian real estate, see pp. 36-37. For his “opportune time” evaluation, see p. 6. For his formulation of resettlement proposals, largely based on the 1796 writings of Virginian St. George Tucker, see p. 43. For

the “females first” 100-year plan, see p. 46, wherein Nash summarizes St. George Tucker’s widely ignored 1796 no-compensation/no-resettlement idea. For “The North has always blamed the South for the 600,000+ deaths in the Civil War, but in truth the North was equally blameworthy,” see p. 50. Nash is a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, formerly co-directed the development of the National History Standards in U.S. and World History from 1992–94, when they were published by the National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS), where he served as Associate Director from 1988–94. He became the Director of NCHS in 1994 and oversaw the revision of the National History Standards published in 1996.

- <sup>20</sup> In the 1780s the trans-Appalachian West generally referred to the land bounded roughly by the Appalachian mountains, the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River, and the Florida border. This encompasses the area that is now Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Minnesota; or about 400 million gross acres.
- <sup>21</sup> Paul Finkelman, ‘The Dragon St. George Could Not Slay: Tucker’s Plan to End Slavery,’ 47 *William & Mary Law Review*, (2006), 1213. The cited quote is at p.1236. <http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmlr/vol47/iss4/5> citing St. George Tucker, *A Dissertation on Slavery: With a Proposal for the Gradual Abolition Of It*, in *The State of Virginia* (1796) Negro Universities Press, 1970, 89. Tucker’s *Dissertation on Slavery* was first published in 1796 by Mathew Carey. Id. Tucker then reprinted it in an appendix in his five-volume edition of Blackstone’s Commentaries.
- <sup>22</sup> St. George Tucker, *Dissertation on Slavery with A Proposal for the Gradual Abolition Of It*, in *the State of Virginia*. (Dedication by the author: to the General Assembly of Virginia, to whom it belongs to decide upon the expediency and practicability of a plan for the gradual abolition of Slavery in this commonwealth, the following pages are most respectfully submitted and inscribed. Williamsburg, in Virginia, May 20, 1796.) Mathew Carey (printer), Philadelphia, 1796. Tucker was a lawyer, law professor, and judge. The pages in the original pamphlet were unnumbered; after a long commentary, Tucker’s plan begins with “1. Let every female born after the adoption of the plan be free...” twelve pages from the end of the pamphlet. Tucker was a life-long slave owner, and as a judge wrote opinions that upheld slavery because it was the positive law of Virginia (which he referred to as his “country”).
- <sup>23</sup> Paul Finkelman, ‘The Dragon St. George Could Not Slay: Tucker’s Plan to End Slavery,’ 47 *William & Mary Law Review*, (2006). The cited quote is at p.1236. <http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmlr/vol47/iss4/5> citing St. George Tucker, *A Dissertation on Slavery: With a Proposal for the Gradual Abolition Of It*, in *The State of Virginia* (1796) Negro Universities Press, 1970, 89. Tucker’s *Dissertation on Slavery* was first published in 1796 by Mathew Carey. Id. Tucker then reprinted it in an appendix in his five-volume edition of Blackstone’s Commentaries.
- <sup>24</sup> Paul Finkelman, ‘The Dragon St. George Could Not Slay: Tucker’s Plan to End Slavery,’ 47 *William & Mary Law Review*, (2006). The cited quote is at 1237. <http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmlr/vol47/iss4/5> citing St. George Tucker, *A Dissertation on Slavery: With a Proposal for the Gradual Abolition Of It*, in *The State of Virginia* (1796) Negro Universities Press, 1970, 89. Tucker’s *Dissertation on Slavery* was first published in 1796 by Mathew Carey. Id. Tucker then reprinted it in an appendix in his five-volume edition of Blackstone’s Commentaries.

- <sup>25</sup> Gary Nash, *Ibid.* 46.
- <sup>26</sup> Paul Finkelman, 'The Dragon St. George Could Not Slay: Tucker's Plan to End Slavery,' 47 *William & Mary Law Review*, 1213 (2006). The cited quote is at p.1236.
- <sup>27</sup> Paul Finkelman, *Ibid.* ' <http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmlr/vol47/iss4/5> citing St. George Tucker, *A Dissertation on Slavery*. *Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> 'Conservative' here is used in the generic sense: it refers to the idea, common among certain schools of historical thought about the American Revolution, that the famous American leaders of the 1770s were trying to maintain the political and economic autonomy status quo that they had been enjoying in North America for decades before the Revolution. That is, they were trying to resist what they saw as a creeping program of oppression by George III and Parliament, and were not seeking the kind of radical overthrow that was characteristic of the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions.
- <sup>29</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution – A History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), Preface, xxiv-iv.
- <sup>30</sup> Don E. Fehrenbacher, *Slavery, the Framers, and the Living Constitution*. Compiled in Goldwin, Kaufman, ed., *Slavery and its Consequences: The Constitution, Equality, and Race* (Washington, D. C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1987), 17.
- <sup>31</sup> Abraham Lincoln, speech on the Dred Scott decision, Springfield, Illinois, June 26, 1857. Don E. Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln, Speeches and Writings 1832-1858* (New York: Library of America, n.d.), 398. Lincoln quoted this sentence again in the final debate with Stephen A. Douglas at Alton, Illinois on October 15, 1858. See *Speeches and Writings 1832-1858*, 794.
- <sup>32</sup> Abraham Lincoln, Annual Message to Congress, December 3, 1861. Don E. Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln, Speeches and Writings 1859-1865*, 297.
- <sup>33</sup> Gordon S. Wood: "... The Civil War is the fulfillment of the American Revolution. I think you can see it in those terms. And certainly Lincoln tended to see it in those terms..." 'History Has To Engage the Whole Public,' *Part two of a two-part, 9,000-word interview of Gordon S. Wood by The World Socialist Web Site; The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI)*. <http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2015/03/03/wood-f03.html> The idea that the Civil War was the fulfillment of the American Revolution has gained considerable currency in our modern culture. For example see Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Civil War Isn't Tragic" continuing series in *The Atlantic* (magazine) <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/08/the-civil-war-isnt-tragic-cont/243713/>
- <sup>34</sup> Gary Nash, *Ibid.*, 6.
- <sup>35</sup> Ron Chernow, *Ibid.*

# “We Support No Man Who Votes Against Liberty”

*by F. Kennon Moody*

In 1838, a broadside published by the Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society carried this proclamation “We Support No Man Who Votes Against Liberty”—a claim that was evident in all their activities. In this essay, I chronicle the formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society, the Poughkeepsie Anti-Slavery Society, and the Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society—with particular emphasis on the last of these three, the Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society. For three decades prior to the start of the Civil War, the Society worked to provide a legacy of freedom to all people in Dutchess County and the nation, fearlessly organizing in support of its anti-slavery mission.

## *The Beginnings of Anti-Slavery Beliefs and Political Activity in Dutchess County*

The roots of abolitionism in Dutchess County are found in the eighteenth century as part of the religious beliefs of the Quakers (the Society of Friends). The political activity of the New York legislature moved the county toward what would become the active abolitionists’ activities of the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s. In 1790, there were 1,856 slaves and 440 free African Americans in Dutchess County, equaling 5.1% of the total population.<sup>1</sup> Fishkill was the fourth, and Poughkeepsie the seventh, largest African-American community in New York State north of New York City.<sup>2</sup> Dutchess County contained one of the largest free African-American populations in New York.<sup>3</sup>

The Oblong Quaker monthly meeting (eastern Dutchess County) was the center of agitation among Dutchess County Friends concerning whether the keeping of slaves was inconsistent with the religious principles of the Society of Friends. In July 1763, the Nine Partners preparative meeting brought complaints to the Oblong monthly meeting at Quaker Hill against two members each for purchasing a slave. Eventually one of the two, Jonathan Lapham, was dismissed from the meeting.<sup>4</sup> By 1779, the Oblong meeting had achieved its goal of being a meeting with no slave-holding members. During the latter decades of the eighteenth century, the Society of Friends was a primary anti-slavery voice in Dutchess County.

## *Abolition Beyond the County*

The issue of abolitionism was raised at New York's first constitutional convention in 1777, but was not dealt with in any way. The issue was raised again as a gradual abolition bill in 1785, but failed. However, the growth of abolitionism continued and would eventually succeed in freeing any African-American slave who was brought into the state. Michael Groth has claimed that "Ultimately the success of abolition in the United States at the end of the eighteenth century rested upon two fundamental questions: How would owners of slaves be compensated for the loss of their human property and, how would freed slaves be incorporated into society."<sup>5</sup>

As the century ended, the first New York State law freeing slaves was passed: "An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery." It declared that all children born of slaves in the state after July 4, 1799, were to be deemed and adjudged free, but stipulated that all such children were to serve their mothers' masters until the age of twenty-eight for males and twenty-five for females. Slave-owners were to register, within nine months, the births of any children of slave women with the town clerk of the local city. However, the master could legally abandon any right to the child's service within one year of its birth.<sup>6</sup> The result of these 1799 and 1801 laws caused the slave population in Dutchess County to decrease from 80.6% of the total African-American population to 31.3% of the total—from 1,856 to 772.

Near the end of this period, on February 13, 1819, James Tallmadge (a member of the Congressional House of Representatives from Dutchess County) introduced the "Tallmadge Amendment" as to the disposition of lands acquired in the vast Louisiana Purchase of 1803. In it he proposed that:

...the Missouri Territory only be accepted as  
A state on stipulation " that the further introduction  
Of slavery or involuntary servitude into the said  
State, be prohibited" and that all enslaved children  
Born in Missouri after statehood be freed at the  
Age of twenty five.<sup>7</sup>

The Amendment is widely regarded by historians as a critical turning point in the rise of slavery as a political issue. Impetus for this change also came from the great Protestant movement known as the Second Great Awakening. Implicit in the revival movement was the belief that individual men and women could change the world rather than passively accept whatever happened. The movement gained momentum after 1820 and 1830. In 1835

and 1840, the French diplomat Alexis de Tocqueville would write that he was impressed by “the propensity of Americans” to form voluntary associations to accomplish a wide range of social goals.<sup>8</sup>

Running through many reforms were common Themes...one of the most important of which was a passionately held belief that individuals must be able to act as free moral agents.... Abolition was the ultimate expression of the antebellum reform impulse.<sup>9</sup>

As the calendar moved towards the second quarter of the nineteenth century, abolition debates and activities became more frequent. July 4, 1827 marked the date in New York State when all slaves would be freed. In 1829 and 1831, the Virginia legislature debated abolition. Also in 1829, David Walker published his *Appeal in Four Articles*. Born in Wilmington, North Carolina, the son of a slave father and a free black woman, Walker had become the leading spokesman in Boston against slavery. Walker’s *Appeal* was considered the most radical of all anti-slavery documents—calling for slaves to revolt against their masters.<sup>10</sup>

In 1831, Nat Turner raised concern over slavery and possible freedom. Fears of abolition and violence led to a tightening of laws governing slave behavior, but the possibility of abolition was discussed more often and more openly. On August 21st, 1831, approximately seventy slaves led by Nat Turner revolted, killing sixty whites in the most noted slave uprising of this time.<sup>11</sup> The story of his thoughts, and documents related to the revolt are found in the *Confessions of Nat Turner*.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society and the Poughkeepsie Anti-Slavery Society***

The 1830s saw the formation of a national and local organization to expand efforts to change the minds of citizens and to embrace the cause of freedom through abolition. In 1833, the American Anti-Slavery Society was founded in Philadelphia. One year later, Dutchess County witnessed the formation of the Poughkeepsie Anti-Slavery Society—110 persons signed the original constitution and bylaws.<sup>13</sup>

Any resident could become a member by signing an agreement with the constitution of the Society. The articles clearly stated the purpose of the Society.

Article 1. This Society shall be called the Anti-Slavery Society of Poughkeepsie auxiliary to the American Anti-Slavery Society.

Article 2. The fundamental principles of this Society are that Slavery is a stain upon the national character; that it is founded on injustice and is consequently a sin.; that to be silent and inactive is a tacit assent to its perpetual existence as a national evil while a powerful moral influence is the only weapon which ought to be used against it.

Article 3. The principal object of this Society is to express and endeavor to increase this moral influence till it is coextensive with our common country and thereby effect the entire abolition of Slavery; also to encourage and promote the intellectual, moral and religious improvement of the colored people thereby endeavoring to remove that prejudice which makes color and not intellectual and moral worth the criterion of character and acceptability, but we will never countenance the injured and oppressed in vindicating their right by physical force.

### *The Poughkeepsie Anti-Slavery Society Facing Opposition*

For a group which expressed in its constitution a firm opposition to the use of physical force to obtain rights, the group was itself at times the object of physical force. The Poughkeepsie Anti-Slavery Society was represented at the New York Anti-Slavery Society Convention in Utica, New York on October 19, 1836, by one of its members, David B. Lent. Mr. Lent was selected as a Vice President of the society at the convention. At its first gathering, a large boisterous group of local Utica citizens (the committee of 25) disrupted the meeting which then adjourned to meet at Clarke's Temperance House. A decision was made to reconvene at Peterboro, New York, which was twenty-seven miles distant. Assured that they would be welcome there, they resolved to meet the next day in Peterboro where the business of the convention would be continued.

Shortly thereafter in the following year, the Poughkeepsie Anti-Slavery Society experienced a second meeting disruption at an event in Poughkeepsie. In February 1837, the Poughkeepsie Anti-Slavery Society invited abolitionist Samuel Gould to speak. The site of the lecture was the Second Presbyterian Church located on the corner of Mill and Vassar Streets. An anti-abolitionist mob swarmed the pulpit and attacked the speaker. Seeking shelter at the home of his host, Dr. Thomas Hammond, Gould was pelted with rocks. The mob then continued to wreak havoc, damaging other buildings in the area. Following the incident, community leaders,

editors, and local clergy did not blame the rioters, but the abolitionists, for their “incendiary remarks.”<sup>14</sup>

When a third talk was announced, an unnamed group circulated a handbill stating:

OUTRAGE. Fellow Citizens, an abolitionist of the most revolting character is among you, exciting the feelings of the north against the south. You are requested to attend and unite in putting down and silencing by peaceable means this tool of evil and fanaticism....<sup>15</sup>

The Second Presbyterian Church in Poughkeepsie had been organized two years earlier, in June, 1835, when 71 members received letters of dismissal from the First Presbyterian Church. The new group erected a new church building on the corner of Mill and Vassar Streets. Following the mob reaction to the abolitionist Gould, the members eventually sold the church to the First Congregational Church which was organized on September 10, 1837. Many members of the First and Second Presbyterian churches were angered by the unwillingness of their ministers to oppose slavery. Deciding to take a strong stand they “came out” from their churches to create the First Congregational Church—57 from the Second Presbyterian and 24 from the First Presbyterian. In August of 1837, they purchased the Second Presbyterian Church which became their house of worship until 1859 when the present building on Mill Street was built and occupied.<sup>16</sup> The new church pledged to oppose “buying and selling human beings or holding them in involuntary servitude.” The new church called as its first minister the Rev. Almon Underwood (No. 185 on the list of charter members of the Poughkeepsie Anti-Slavery Society).

### *African Americans of Dutchess County and their organizations*

From its very beginning the Poughkeepsie Anti-Slavery Society had a bi-racial membership. However the African-American population was also engaged in forming additional societies for the improvement of life in Dutchess County. In the fall of 1837, the *Poughkeepsie Telegraph* in its November 1, 1837 issue told of the Children’s Improvement Society.

The Children’s Improvement Society. This is the title of an association formed not long since among the colored population of this village. The object is to improve the colored children of both sexes in many branches of common education....There is a spirit around among the colored inhabitants of our village which has elevated them very much.<sup>17</sup>

This was also the period during which one of the major African-American churches was formed, as African-American members of the Washington Street Methodist Church withdrew to organize the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A. M. E. Zion) Church. In 1843, the group erected the Catharine Street A. M. E. Zion Church. This congregation would later become the Smith Street Metropolitan A. M. E. Zion Church.

Education was a major concern of both African-American and European-American members of the community. In its issue of May 9, 1838, the *Poughkeepsie Telegraph* read: "...we understand the colored school will probably be discontinued for want of necessary support.... We consider it an important duty for our enterprising citizens...to extend their aid to this needy class of our population." As a result, the Board of Education, on May 1, 1844, rented space in the Primitive Methodist Church on Church Street to establish a school for the African-American students.<sup>18</sup>

### ***Opposition to the Abolitionists***

Writing in *Struggles for Freedom of Expression in American History*, Michael Kent Curtis suggested that the central political question in the period 1835-1847 was: "Would the government prohibit abolitionists from criticizing the institution of slavery and from calling for its abolition?"<sup>19</sup> The core discussion was "moving from limiting slavery in the South to embracing liberty in the North."

In the published proceedings of first annual meeting of the New York Anti-Slavery Society, state officials (particularly Governor Marcy of New York) and the national religious governing bodies expressed anti-abolitionist positions. Governor Marcy's comments were noted as more unfounded, abusive, and reckless than the comments of others. Under his leadership, the legislature asserted it a capital offense to promulgate the doctrines of Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and John Jay respecting inalienable human rights.<sup>20</sup>

The same proceedings also noted the action of the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church to stifle the positions of the abolitionists. At the general conference of the Methodist Church in Cincinnati, the abolitionists were subjected to direct and heavy censure. The mob in Cincinnati was similar to the mob at the first annual meeting of the New York Anti-Slavery Society in Utica the previous year.

### *The Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society and Freedom of Expression*

During this period, another abolitionist society was formed in Dutchess County—the Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>21</sup> The Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society was active politically as it sought to express its freedom of expression in ways designed specifically to change society. One item on an early agenda was a call for “political action.”

In 1838, the society formed an “Enquiring Committee.” At a general membership meeting at the home of Daniel Emeigh in Washington Hollow, Dutchess County, a discussion centered around “the propriety of selecting good men and true who would best further their views on slavery.” The enquiring committee prepared a letter and questionnaire to be sent to all announced candidates for the coming election for both Congress and the state assembly.

The questions for candidates for Congress were three:

1. Do you believe that Congress has the Constitutional power to abolish Slavery and and the Slave trade in the District of Columbia and will you use your influence to procure this abolition?
2. Do you believe in the right of petitions and will you endeavor, if elected, to maintain due deliberations on all petitions presented to the House of Representatives?
3. If elected, will you oppose the annexation of Texas and all other slave holding states to territories to the United States?

For candidates to the state assembly the same three questions were used, plus an additional one:

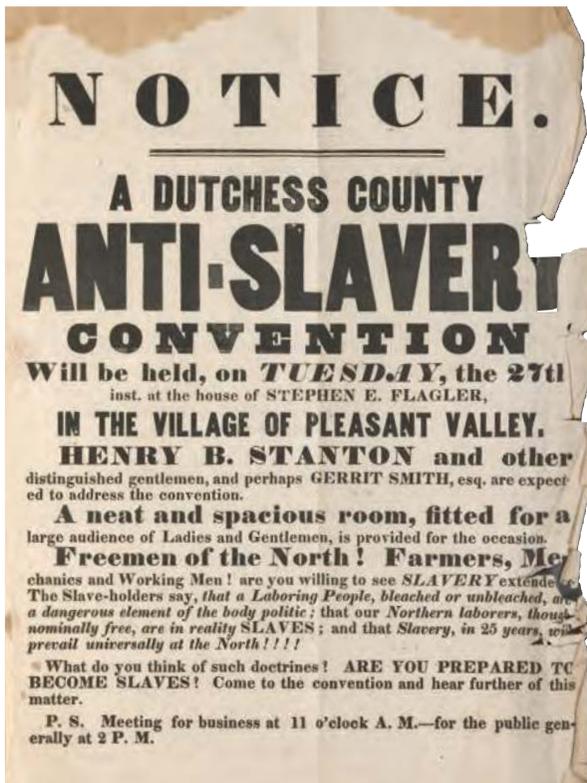
4. Will you (if elected) endeavor to give colored men a trial by jury when claimed as fugitive slaves?

In a publicly distributed flyer, “To the Anti-Slavery Electors of Dutchess County,” the committee sought to make its case for mailing the questions.

Brethren: We believe that the time has now fully arrived when prompt and vigorous political action is required at our hands on the subject of Slavery and circumstances connected herewith...what good can we possibly offset by our political actions for we have no Slaves here.... We can sustain men who do not turn traitor to the principles of humanity.

One sentence in the flyer eerily forecast the story of the fugitive slave John Bolding who was taken in such a manner, but was returned to Poughkeepsie after local citizens raised sufficient money to purchase him back from his South Carolina owner.<sup>22</sup>

The members of the enquiring committee read the response and decisions were made.<sup>23</sup> The responses from Senator Seward and Governor Marcy were deemed unsatisfactory and the committee voted not to support either. In the race between A. Titus and Charles Johnson, support was given to Johnson. Several sent no reply and Mr. Booker and Mr. Lisson were dropped from the ticket. It was voted to support Beckwith, Barculo and Conklin. The committee moved to have 1,500 tickets printed containing the names adopted with their letters and answers, together with the address of the questioning committee.<sup>24</sup>



**Figure 1.** Poster announcing the Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Convention planned for Tuesday, November 27, 1838, at the home of Stephen E. Flagler in Pleasant Valley, Dutchess County, New York.

An additional brochure entitled “To the Anti-Slavery Electors of Dutchess County” was also distributed at this time. A member, David Lent, claimed the distribution of such a letter was hurting the chances of Charles Johnson for election because it identified him too closely with the *Abolitionist*. The committee decided that Ira Armstrong (the chairperson) would write an address “To The Anti-Slavery Electors of Dutchess County” and distribute it publicly at his discretion. This controversy over the distributed information led to the publication of a final broadside: “WE SUPPORT NO MAN WHO VOTES AGAINST LIBERTY.” Their basic institutional goals were expressed in this title.

Notices were posted announcing a Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Convention, to be held on Tuesday, November 27, 1838, at the house of Stephen E. Flagler in Pleasant Valley. Henry B. Stanton, a nationally known writer and orator in the cause of abolition, and the husband of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, was to be the main speaker (Figure 1). There was a possibility that Gerrit Smith, a cousin of Elizabeth Cady, might also be present to speak. Stanton, an abolitionist since his days at Lane Seminary in Ohio, believed that the abolition of slavery must come about as a political solution—a belief shared by the members of the Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society.

The wording of the broadside for the convention clearly gave expression to their goals:

FREEMEN OF THE NORTH! FARMERS, MECHANICS,  
And working men! Are you willing to see SLAVERY  
extended? The Slave-holders say that a Laboring  
People, bleached or unbleached, are a dangerous  
element of the body politic; that our Northern  
laborers, though nominally free, are in reality  
SLAVES; and that slavery in 25 years, will prevail  
universally in the North!!! What do you think  
of such doctrines? ARE YOU PREPARED  
TO BECOME SLAVES? Come to the convention  
and hear further of this matter.

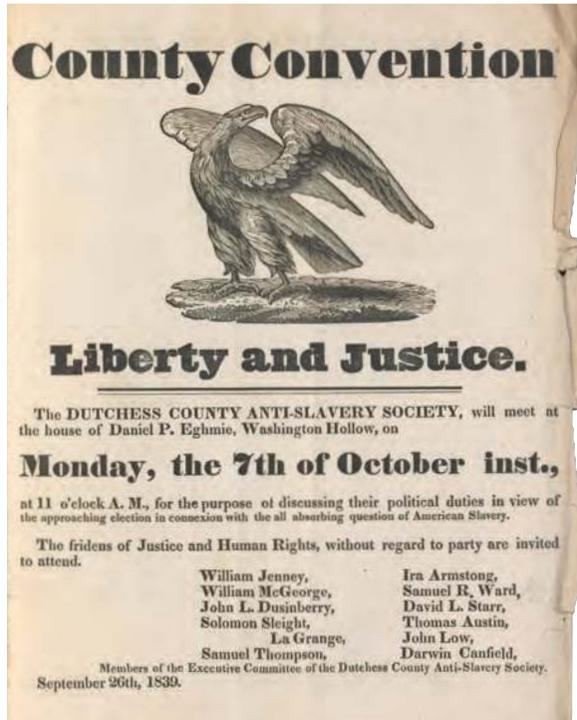
The first annual meeting of the Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society was held on Thursday, April 25, 1839, at the home of Stephen E. Flagler in the village of Pleasant Valley. During the mid 1830s, the interest of the abolitionist had changed to defending the freedom of expression. The broadside for the annual meeting contained the message that “all who feel an interest in the PRESERVATION ON THEIR LIBERTIES are respectfully invited to attend.”

The executive committee was appointed at this meeting.

Philetus Roberts	Pleasant Valley	President
David L. Starr	Poughkeepsie	Vice President
Doctor Stanton	Amenia	Vice President
Solomon Sleight	LaGrangeville	Vice President
Charles Lacey	Hyde Park	Vice President
Edward Dorland	Washington	Vice President
Peter F. Dubois	Pleasant Valley	Vice President
Isaac Holmes	Pleasant Valley	Vice President
Thomas Hammond	Dover	Vice President
Wm. N. Layer	Pine Plains	Vice President
Darwin Canfield	Pleasant Valley	Corres. Sec.
Thomas Austin	Poughkeepsie	Recording Sec.
Ira Armstrong	Poughkeepsie	Treasurer
Samuel Thompson	Poughkeepsie	Board of Managers
Wm. McGeorge	Poughkeepsie	Board of Managers
John L. Dusinberry	Poughkeepsie	Board of Managers
William Jenny	Poughkeepsie	Board of Managers
Samuel R. Ward	Poughkeepsie	Board of Managers
Nathan Blount	Poughkeepsie	Board of Managers
John Lown	Poughkeepsie	Board of Managers

At a meeting held August 8, 1839, the chairman and secretary were unanimously appointed to a committee to write to all the ministers in this town to ask them to read notices from their pulpits of prayer meetings for “the enslaved of our land.” (For a meeting later in the year, see Figure 2.)

In January 1840, the results of the survey were reviewed. Samuel Thompson had contacted the Reverend S. Eaton of the Presbyterian Church. Thompson said Eaton had informed him that “he already had read notices for more meetings than was attended to.” Thompson asked if he was to understand that Eaton would not read the notice. Eaton replied, “yes,” he meant to keep the abolitionists out of the church. A few days later, Thompson called on the Reverend McMann of the Dutchess Reformed Church and put to him the same question. McMann replied, “as respects himself he had no kind of objections to read them, but for the effect upon his congregation he was willing.”<sup>25</sup> Dr. Babcock of the Baptist Church was next. Thompson reported, “He had made it a point not to read notices for similar meetings the same evening as he held his own meetings as it had a tendency to draw his members against him” and Monday evening was generally taken up. It was noted that the third Monday evening was not occupied.



**Figure 2.** *Poster announcing a County Convention and meeting to be held in Washington Hollow, October 7 1839. Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society.*

Dr. Babcock then observed that he hoped the reasons he had given would be satisfactory.”<sup>26</sup>

The Reverend Carpenter of the Methodist Church was just as negative. He observed, “After having witnessed the bad influences of the abolitionists on the church, the unkind feeling between members and the difficulties that grew out of it, he had made up his mind to have nothing to do with it [abolitionism].”<sup>27</sup>

The only positive response came from the Reverend Mr. Underwood of the Congregational Church who said, “there was no need of asking him that question, for I knew he always would read them.”<sup>28</sup> Finally, though most of the Poughkeepsie organized churches were hesitant to lend support to the abolitionist activities of the Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society, support did come from a local newspaper. The Poughkeepsie Eagle, owned by the Platt family, was the first newspaper to be sympathetic to the abolitionist cause.

### *The Abolitionists of Dutchess County and National Politics*

The abolitionists of Dutchess County also sought to act on the national scene. Periodically groups of citizens met to discuss major questions and prepare petitions addressed to Congress.<sup>29</sup> Major areas of concern were interstate slave trade, slavery in the District of Columbia, and the annexation of Texas. One of the petitions, for example, came from the village of Fishkill, “The undersigned respectfully pray you honorable body, so to regulate the commerce in slaves among the several states, as that it may be immediately prohibited.” The wording of a second petition from Fishkill was, “we respectfully pray your honorable body not to admit any new state to this union whose Constitution tolerates domestic slavery.”<sup>30</sup>

The residents of LaGrange were concerned about slavery in the nation’s capital. They petitioned: “...to protest against the continuance of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia, and to pray your honorable bodies to exercise your Constitutional powers for their immediate abolition.”<sup>31</sup> (See insert box.)

A group of residents in Pleasant Valley petitioned Congress: “...not to admit any New state to this Union whose Constitution tolerates domestic slavery and promptly to reject all proposals for the annexation of Texas to the Union, from whatever source they may come.”<sup>32</sup>

In 1839, one very active member of the Society, the Reverend Nathan Blount, resigned in order to accept the pastorate of a congregation in Rhode Island.<sup>33</sup> Also in 1839, the First Congregational Church accepted another teacher from the Colored Lancastrian School as a member—the writer and abolitionist speaker, Samuel Ringgold Ward. In a few months, he became an agent for the New York Anti-Slavery Society. The First Congregational Church also hosted his ordination, enabling him, in 1841, to accept a pastorate in the Congregational Church of South Butler, Wayne County, New York. Frederick Douglas would later say “...as an orator and thinker Ward was vastly superior to any of us.” The New York Times once described Ward “...as the ablest and most eloquent black man alive.”<sup>34</sup>

The increasing tensions between the ante-bellum South and the North provided an opportunity for the abolitionists in Dutchess County to act out their beliefs in a spectacular manner.<sup>35</sup> In 1840, John Bolding, a slave in South Carolina escaped from slavery and made his way to Poughkeepsie with his younger brother and a female escaped slave named Susan. In Poughkeepsie, he eventually opened a tailor shop and achieved a measure of success in business as a free man. After the passage of the federal

TO THE HONORABLE THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of *LaGrange* humbly sheweth,

That your petitioners feel themselves bound by their duty to their country, to their fellow-men, and to their God, to protest against the continuance of SLAVERY and the SLAVE-TRADE in the District of Columbia, and to pray your honorable bodies to exercise your Constitutional powers for their immediate abolition.

Remembering that the traffic in *human flesh*, when practiced on the ocean, has been solemnly declared piracy by our own, and that it is so considered by almost all Christian nations, your petitioners do most earnestly implore that Slavery, the necessary cause of the traffic, may no longer be permitted to exist in the Capital of this Republic.

*Rev. Milton Buttolph*

*James D. Pettit*

*Silas S. Pettit*

*Augustus R. McCall*

*Amantill Downsend*

*John D. McCall*

*John Wilkinson*

*Stephen D. Scobey*

*Jacob Washburn*

*James E. Dutcher*

*Margaret Washburn*

*Joseph Tallmadge*

*Samuel Colwell*

*Eliaser Taylor*

*George S. Taylor*

*Joseph E. Taylor*

*Betsy Buttolph*

*Keppeth Kebe*

*David (Eli) Buttolph*

*Carol Buttolph*

*Mannah J. Downsend*

*Ann E. Downsend*

*Anna McCall*

*Louisa McCall*

*Jane W. Wilkinson*

*Debrah Wilkinson*

*Jane Hewitt*

*Elizabeth Tallmadge*

*Sarah Tallmadge*

*Jane Anne Taylor*

*Petition*

*by F. Kennon Moody*

In 1835, abolitionists organized to send massive amounts of antislavery literature through the mails. By 1836, the abolitionists began sending hundreds of petitions to Congress. Many, like the one shown here from LaGrange in Dutchess County, New York, demanded the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Others were against the annexation of Texas as a slaveholding state. And always there were petitions that called for an end to the interstate slave trade. In response, Congress devised a “gag rule” whereby Congress tabled antislavery petitions without reading them. The petitions were often from groups of friends and neighbors in towns like Fishkill, Pleasant Valley, and Poughkeepsie.

TO THE HONORABLE THE SENATE AND HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of LaGrange humbly  
showeth,

That your petitioners feel themselves bound by their duty to  
their country, to their fellow-men, and to their God, to pro-  
test against the continuance of SLAVERY and the SLAVE  
TRADE in the District of Columbia, and to pray to your hon-  
orable bodies to exercise your Constitutional powers for their  
immediate abolition.

Remembering that the traffic in *human flesh*, when practiced  
on the ocean, has been solemnly declared piracy by our own,  
and that it is so considered by almost all Christian nations,  
your petitioners do most earnestly implore that Slavery, the  
necessary cause of the traffic, may no longer be permitted to  
exist in the Capital of the Republic.

(signed by 16 men and 14 women of LaGrange, Dutchess  
County, New York State)

Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, Bolding was recognized by a white visitor from South Carolina. In 1851, Bolding was seized, appeared before a court in New York City, and was returned to slavery in South Carolina. Led by local abolitionists, local citizens raised sufficient funds (\$1,750) to purchase his freedom. By November 1851, the transactions were complete and John Bolding was returned to Poughkeepsie and his tailor shop.<sup>36</sup>

## Conclusion

The three decades prior to the beginning of the Civil War were times of political struggle and public education for local abolitionists. Their publications, their conferences, and their activities served to remind the citizens of Dutchess County that the public disagreements were about both the abolition of slavery and freedom of expression.

On Sunday, March 3, 1861, on the eve of Abraham Lincoln’s inauguration, the pastor of the First Congregational Church, the Reverend Moses Coit Tyler, preached a remarkable anti-slavery sermon. He called for “no further concessions to slavery” and declared, “If adhering to the right will not save the Union then the Union is not worth saving.” Eloquently he declared the principles of the anti-slavery abolitionists, “...while disunion and war and devastation are a great evil, there is yet one evil, evermore and everywhere infinitely greater—that is slavery.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Evarts B. Greene and Virginia D. Harrington (comp.), *American Population before the Federal Census of 1790* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 96-105.

<sup>2</sup> Michael E. Groth, *Forging Freedom in the Mid-Hudson Valley: The End of Slavery and the Formation of a Free African-American Community in Dutchess County, New York, 1770-1850*. ( SUNY Binghamton: Ph.D. dissertation, 1994), 7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Groth, 73.

<sup>5</sup> Groth, 100.

<sup>6</sup> Laws of New York, 40th Session, Chapter 137. In 1802 the law was revised to say that all slaves born prior to July 4, 1799 were to be free on July 4, 1827.

<sup>7</sup> F. Kennon Moody (editor), *Slavery, Antislavery, and the Underground Railroad: A Dutchess County Guide*, Mid-Hudson Antislavery History Project, (Poughkeepsie, 2010), 16.

<sup>8</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, (New York: George Dearborn and Company, 1835).

- <sup>9</sup> Ronald Walter, *Abolition and Antebellum Reform*, Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, History, Nov 5, (Fall 2005).
- <sup>10</sup> David Walker, *Appeal in Four Articles, Together With a Preamble to the Coloured Citizens of the World, But Particular, and Very Expressly, To Those of the United States of America*, (New York, New York: Hill and Wang, 1829).
- <sup>11</sup> Jerry Bisson, *Nat Turner, Slave Revolt Leaders*, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Chelsea House Publishers, 2005).
- <sup>12</sup> Thomas R. Gray, *Confessions of Nat Turner, the Leader of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, Virginia*, (Baltimore, Maryland: Lucas and Deaver, Printers, 1831).

As fully and voluntarily made to  
THOMAS R. GRAY

In the prison where he was confined, and acknowledged by  
him to be such when read before the Court of Southampton  
with the certificate, under seal of  
the Court convened at Jerusalem,  
Nov. 5, 1831, for his trial.

ALSO, AN AUTHENTIC  
ACCOUNT OF THE WHOLE INSURRECTION,  
WITH LISTS OF THE WHITES WHO WERE MURDERED,  
AND OF THE NEGROES BROUGHT BEFORE THE COURT OF  
SOUTHAMPTON, AND THERE SENTENCED, &C.

- <sup>13</sup> Slavery documents, Dutchess River Valley and Dutchess County Historical Manuscripts Collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. These documents were purchased in 1916 from the Anderson Auction House, New York, New York.
- <sup>14</sup> The website of the First Congregational Church United Church of Christ, Poughkeepsie: [www.opentogod.org/history](http://www.opentogod.org/history). The First Congregational Church was an important presence for anti-slavery activity.
- <sup>15</sup> *The Poughkeepsie Journal*, March 1, 1837.
- <sup>16</sup> Webster D. Hasbrouck, *A History of the First Presbyterian Church of Poughkeepsie, New York* (Poughkeepsie, New York: The Church Historian, 1928), 14.
- <sup>17</sup> Quoted in Amy Pearce Ver Nooy, "The Anti-Slavery Movement in Dutchess County 1835-1850.," *Dutchess County Historical Society Yearbook*, vol. 28 (1943), 62.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> Michael Kent Curtis, *Struggles for Freedom of Expression in American History* (New York, New York: Wilsted and Taylor Publishing Service, 2000).
- <sup>20</sup> *Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting New York State Anti Slavery Society* (Utica, New York: Published for the Society, October 19, 1826), 27.
- <sup>21</sup> *Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society Executive Committee minutes, 1837-1840* (Poughkeepsie, New York: manuscript, May 29, 1838 – May 11, 1840). See Manuscript Collection 868, Manuscript and Archives Division, New York Public Library, New York, New

York. The wording of meeting notices, broadsides, committee and membership activities are taken from these documents.

- <sup>22</sup> The responses of the successful candidates were published in an edition of *The Bow of Promise*, a short lived newsletter of the Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society. The only copy of the *Bow of Promises* is found in the Manuscript Collection 868, Manuscript and Archives Division, New York Public Library, New York, New York. The Bow contained articles, speeches, poetry, news from other states and even a short notice about the slave ship, the *Amistad*.
- <sup>23</sup> *Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society Executive Committee minutes, 1837-1840* (Poughkeepsie, New York: manuscript, October 8, 1838.), See Manuscript Collection 868, Manuscript and Archives Division, New York Public Library, New York, New York.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> *Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society Executive Committee minutes, 1837-1840*. Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> The petitions to Congress mentioned in this paper are from the National Archives and Records Administration collections. Photocopies of these petitions are in the collections of the author.
- <sup>30</sup> Guide to the *Records of the United States House of Representatives at the National Archives, 1789-1989*. Bicentennial Edition (Doct. No. 100-245) By Charles E. Schamel, Marpy Rephlo, Rodney Rioss, David Kepley, Robert W. Coren, and James Gregory Bradshwer, Washington, DC. National Archives and Records Administration, 1989. 25th Congress, HR25A, Record Group 233.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup> *Dutchess County Anti-Slavery Society Executive Committee minutes, 1837-1840*. (Poughkeepsie, New York: manuscript, 6, November 1839.), See Manuscript Collection 868, Manuscript and Archives Division, New York Public Library, New York, New York.
- <sup>34</sup> Samuel Ringgold Ward, *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro in the United States, Canada, and England*. (London, England: John Snow, 1855).
- <sup>35</sup> Helen Wilkinson Reynolds, “John Bolding, Fugitive Slave,” *Dutchess County Historical Society Yearbook*, vol. 20 (1935): 51-55.
- <sup>36</sup> “Case of the Fugitive Slave, John Bolding, Before U.S. Commissioner Nelson,” *Poughkeepsie Eagle*, September 6, 1851, 2.
- <sup>37</sup> Moses Coit Tyler, “Our Solace and Our Duty in this Crisis,” *Samuel J. May Anti-Slavery Collection*, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.



# John A. Bolding, Fugitive Slave

by Helen Wilkinson Reynolds

*As part of Henry Clay's famous Compromise of 1850, a group of bills that helped to calm agitation for secession by the South, a second, and more harsh Fugitive Slave Act was passed (the first had been in 1793). It compelled citizens to assist in the recapture of escaped slaves, placed the burden of recapture on federal commissioners, and increased penalties. We are reprinting a 1935 article by the indomitable Helen Reynolds, local historian and former editor of the Dutchess County Historical Society Yearbook. She wrote about our own John Bolding, an African-American who had escaped slavery in South Carolina, traveled north with his brother and a female escaped slave, then found freedom and a livelihood here in Poughkeepsie, only to be recaptured and returned to servitude in 1851 shortly after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act.<sup>1</sup> ....C. Lewis, editor.*

John A Bolding was born about 1824 in South Carolina, a slave. He was a mulatto, almost white in color. About 1846 he escaped from his owner and in some way, now unknown, came north and settled at Poughkeepsie. He obtained work as a tailer(sic) in a shop on Main street(sic) near what was then the Eastern House (later the Morgan House and still later the Windsor Hotel) and early in 1851 married; his wife, a resident of Poughkeepsie, being also a mulatto.

Some six months after John Bolding was married a southern woman, staying in Poughkeepsie, reported his presence there to his owner, Robert C. Anderson of Columbia, South Carolina, and Mr. Anderson instituted in New York City proceedings to recover him. As Bolding was at work in the tailer's(sic) shop on August 25th, 1851, a United States Marshal, Henry F. Tallmadge, arrived at the door in a closed carriage, seized Bolding forcibly, placed him in the carriage, drove to the railroad and took his prisoner to New York. There, in the next few days, the case was tried before United States Commissioner Nelson and by his decision Bolding was returned to Mr. Anderson. Two columns regarding the trial appeared in the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, which were reprinted in *The Eagle* of Poughkeepsie on September 6th, 1851.

Meanwhile the forcible seizure of the fugitive slave at Poughkeepsie by the United States Marshal, Mr. Tallmadge, had excited that northern village community to white heat and at once a popular subscription was opened

for the purpose of buying the slave and giving him his freedom. It was stated in *The Eagle* on September 6th, 1851, that the owner asked \$1,500.00 for the slave and \$500.00 for expenses and that if \$1,000.00 were raised in Poughkeepsie the second thousand must come from New York City.

No record is at hand of what was done in New York but fortunately there is information as to the action taken locally. A fund was started at Poughkeepsie, the treasurer of which was John Grubb,<sup>2</sup> a much respected citizen, and the notebook in which he recorded the contributions to the fund is now in the possession of his grandson, John B. Grubb of Poughkeepsie. Through the courtesy of the latter, there is appended below a list of the names of those who are recorded in the notebook as having given to the fund for the purchase of the slave. The contributions ranged from fractions of a dollar, through one, two and three dollars up to seventy-four entries of \$5.00 each, twenty-two of \$10.00 each, ten of \$20.00 each and one of \$50.00, sums which show how general an appeal the cause made to the public. Ninety dollars is credited a having been collected in Albany by "Mr. Waldo" and \$37.00 was received from seven residents of Kingston.

Further, the notebook contains the statement that on September 9th, 1851, a draft for \$1,109.00 was sent by Mr. Grubb to Mr. Tallmadge, United States Marshal, that sum being the amount raised locally in behalf of John Bolding. But that more money was raised elsewhere or that the owner reduced the price for the slave is evident, inasmuch as the purchase of the slave was effected. John Bolding returned to Poughkeepsie and spent the remainder of his life there in self-supporting industry, a free man.

The directories for Poughkeepsie mention John A Bolding from 1860 onward as a tailor(sic). Apparently he worked on Main street (he was employed for a long time by Hayt and Lindley, a well known firm of custom tailors(sic) and lived on Pine street. Between 1860 and 1868 his home was a number 14 Pine street, at which time the house numbers on Pine street ran from Market street west to the river. In 1868 or 1869 the numbering was changed to begin at the river and run east and from 1868 to 1876 John A. Bolding was set down in the directories as living at number 129 Pine street. Today, number 129 Pine street is a house bearing indications, architecturally, that it was built in the early nineteenth century, certainly long before the 1860s, and so it is fair to infer that the small structure, now standing, ---built on two levels and with a roof that slopes low in the rear, --is the one that sheltered the last years of the fugitive slave who was given his freedom. John A. Bolding died on April 30th, 1876, in his fifty-second year, and was buried in the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery.



**Figure 1.** “Southside of Main St., East of Wood’s Drug Store, May 19, 1863.” View of Main Street, Poughkeepsie in 1863 where John Bolding worked as a tailor. Photograph. Collection of Dutchess County Historical Society. PH 840.

### ***Contributors To The Fund Raised For Buying The Fugitive Slave***

James H. Allen, Joseph E. Allen, E.H. Andrus, E. Andrus. S. Andrus, Charles Anthes, \_\_\_\_ Armstrong.

Henry Baker, \_\_\_\_\_ Baker?), Joseph Barnard, Joseph Bartlett, Robert Bell, Wm. Berry, S. G. (Beuley?), Jacob Bockee, , Jas. W. Bogardus, James Bowne, Boyd & Wiltsie, B. Briggs, Andrew J. Broas, Isaac Broas, J. T. Brooks, Isaac Butler, E.A. Buttolph. P.S.B.

Chas. Cable, F. Cable, Joh M. Cable, George Carson, \_\_\_\_ Cheever, Wm. Coffin, J.D. Colburn, John W Corliss, Squire Corliss, Chas. Cornwell, M. Cramer, Peter S. Cramer.

(Moses Dame?), Mr. Darrow, Genl. Davies, John Davis, \_\_\_\_ Davis, Aaron Dean, Dobbs & Brittain, Dodge & Campbell, Jas. H. Dudley.

E.Q. Eldridge, James Emott, F. Evarts.

George W. Farrington, \_\_\_\_\_ Fitchett, Judge Forsyth of Kingston, D.C. Foster, Robt. Foster.

Geo. Gausman, John (G)emmill, N. Gifford, Mr. (Gladkey?), A. Gould, Geo. Graham.

J. (B.?) Hale, George Hannah, Mr. Hart, A.B. Harvey, J.C. Harvey, Dr. Hasbriuck, J.H. Hasbrouck of Kingston, Nat Hill, L. Hine, H. Holliday, Jas. Holligan, O. Holmes, Jas. Hooker, the Rev. Mr. Hoose of Kingston, Elias G. Hopkins, Lemuel Hopkins (S.O?) Hoyt, J. Hunt, Liberty Hyde, A.J.H.

George Innis.

Richd. Kenworthy, Mr. Keynton, E.B. Killey, Thos. Klegg.

D.B. Lent, G.H. Linsley, Wm. Livingston, B.J. Lossing, Chas. P. Luckey, J. Luckey.

A. McArthur, \_\_\_\_\_ McKenney, D.C. Marshall, George C. Marshall, Wm. Maston of Kingston, S.H. Maxon, James Maxwell, John Montgomery, (Mr.?) Morey, H.W. Morris, John Mullem, Mr. Murfitt, H.D. Myers.

Jno. P. Nelson, Mr. Nelson.

E.K. Olmstead, John H. Otis.

Eliza Palmer, J. Palmer, J.B. Palmer, John G. Parker, Thos. R. Payne, Wm. Peabody, Geo. T. Pearce, A. Pease, E.R. Pease, Geo. Pelton, E. Pitts, Daniel W. Platt, Isaac Platt.

Jno. Ransom, Daniel Reed, G.G. Reynolds, W.W. & J. Reynolds, J.K. Rice, J.A. Robertson, J.J. Roe, Mr. Rosenbaum, John Rutzer.

P.W.L Sage, Wm. Schram, D.N. Seaman, Chas. W. Shaffer of Kingston, H.R. Sherman, J.C. Skinner, George Slee, Robert Slee, Mr. Smith, Dr. Smith, Genl. Smith of Kingston, Revd. Mr. Smuller of Kingston, R.C. Southwick, W.C.& G.H. Sterling, M.C. Story.

Jno. P.H. Tallman, (Gil?) Thielman, E. Tillou, N.C. Trowbridge, S.B. Trowbridge.

A. Van Kleeck, Geo. M. Van Kleeck, H.D. Varick, M. Vassar, John Vermong.

Mr. Waldo, C.B Warring, Wm. B. West, Wm. H. Wheeler, (G.M. Wilkes?), George Wilkinson, Wm. Wilkinson, Mr. Williams, Capt. Wiltsie, John Wines, W.H. Worrall, Joseph Wright.

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<sup>1</sup> This article is reprinted from the *Dutchess County Historical Society Year Book*, Vol. 20, (1935), 51-55.

<sup>2</sup> Note from the original publication: John Grubb was a Scotchman, born at Edinburgh in 1839, who came to Poughkeepsie in 1837. To many useful years spent first in his bookstore and later on the staff of the Fallkill National Bank he added services as secretary of the Poughkeepsie Lyceum. When he died the *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle* of March 17, 1890, said: "The great success of (the Lyceum), almost unequalled among the literary associations of the country, was largely due to Mr. Grubb's discrimination and activity in securing the services of the best lecturers for its platform. The number of orators, authors, scientists, statesmen, poets, travellers(sic) and specialists in every department who were presented to our people through his agency was very large. At one time or another he was brought into correspondence with nearly every distinguished man in this country and his qualifications caused him to be as highly respected and esteemed by them as he was at home."



# John A. Bolding: The Rest of His Story

by Eileen Mylod Hayden

“John A. Bolding died April 30, 1876 in his fifty-second year and was buried in Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery.”<sup>1</sup>

On May 16, 1998, one hundred twenty-two years after John Bolding’s death, Dutchess County Historical Society’s Black History Project Committee, acting on information provided by local history scholar James Storrow, held a tomb stone dedication ceremony at Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery. Michael H. Graham, representing the cemetery board and Lorraine M. Roberts of the Dutchess County Historical Society presided at the event. The Reverend Debra Gause gave the invocation; a color guard of Girl Scouts from Poughkeepsie High School led the Pledge of Allegiance; and Lucinda Ransome offered a musical selection of four spirituals. Poughkeepsie Mayor Collette LaFuenta welcomed those assembled with these words: “This ceremony is a moment of dignity and nobility. With this recognition, John Bolding has achieved a lasting place in our history.”<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 1.** *The Gravestone of John A. Bolding dedicated in 1998, at the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery. The plot had been purchased by Mr. Bolding during his lifetime. Text: “John A. Bolding. Born a slave about 1824 in South Carolina. Escaped to Poughkeepsie and became a tailor. Freedom purchased in 1851 by Poughkeepsie area residents for \$1,109. Died April 30, 1876. Marker placed in 1998 by Dutchess County Historical Society, Black History Committee.”*

The Hon. Albert M. Rosenblatt, New York State Supreme Court Justice, gave a stirring account of Bolding’s arrest and provided historical perspective to the occasion. Judge Rosenblatt remarked that it was usual for

public ceremonies to be held for notables but John Bolding, although once a slave, was not at all extraordinary but was a man of courage and a symbol of the plight of many others who sought freedom. He was deserving of such a celebration. Following closing remarks by the society's executive director, those assembled gathered a few yards away for the unveiling of the Bolding stone by Mrs. Roberts and Carmen Magill. The handsome stone sits upon the plot purchased by Bolding for \$11.25.<sup>3</sup>

Use of the cemetery for such an event although not unique, was ideal for the occasion. The collaboration of the society with Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery, Weidner Memorials, and Gotham Bronze provided a grand opportunity for interpreting local history.

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<sup>1</sup> Helen Wilkinson Reynolds, "John A. Bolding, A Fugitive Slave," *Dutchess County Historical Society Year Book*, Vol. 20, (1935), 51-55.

<sup>2</sup> *Poughkeepsie Journal*, May 17, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery records.

“From your son...”  
The Civil War Letters of  
Pvt. Evert Traver  
Company C, 128th Reg’t, N.Y.S.V.I

*by Dean Thomas*

*By the summer of 1862, the American Civil War had been underway for over a year. General McClellan, head of the Union forces, had not been able to capture the Confederate capitol at Richmond, Virginia nor win any decisive victories. The battles, when they came, were bloody and costly. More men were needed. In July, the 128th Regiment New York State Volunteer Infantry was formed under Colonel David S. Cowles. The regiment was to be mustered on September 4, 1862 for three years.<sup>1</sup> The soldiers came from Columbia and Dutchess Counties, four companies from Columbia and six from Dutchess.*

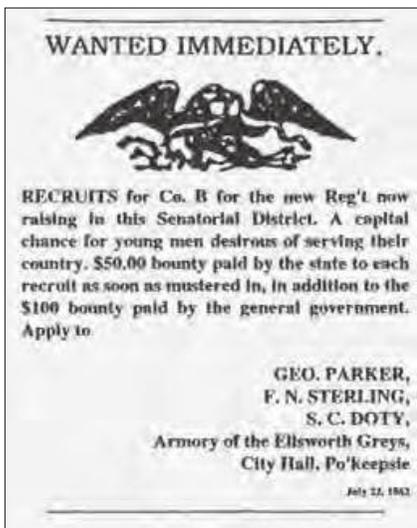
*Immediately, on September 5, the regiment moved out, leaving first for camp at and near Baltimore, Maryland where it served in the Middle Department, 8th Corps. By December of 1862, the regiment had moved to New Orleans. It served with the 1st Brigade, Sherman’s Division, Department of the Gulf from January 1863. In April 1863, while serving with General Sherman, the infantrymen took part in the long siege of Port Hudson. They then moved on to Baton Rouge, where they spent over nine months in garrison duty. They later participated in the famous campaign in the Shenandoah Valley under General Sheridan. Finally, near the end of the war, the regiment served in Savannah and North Carolina where it took part in the last push before the surrender of Confederate General Johnston in April 1865.*

*The regiment paid a high price for victory. They lost their colonel and many men. The regiment returned home in 1865 with 400 men of the 960 original volunteers and 173 recruits. 269 men died, 41 lost in battle to the enemy. ....C. Lewis, editor:*

By mid-1862, the Civil War was already in full swing. In the North, President Abraham Lincoln made a call for more volunteers. Great rallies were held; signs were hung; and ads were placed in all the papers. A sampling of the shouts heard across Dutchess County, New York, through the various media included “Fall in boys and fill the ranks”, “Come on, Old Dutchess on Deck”, “Attention Volunteers!” “The Country Calls!” (Figure 1)

Evert Traver was eighteen years old when he enlisted in the 128th Regiment New York State Volunteer Infantry on August 13, 1862, no doubt swept up in the momentous events. A great adventure was about to begin. A day later, up in Hudson, New York, where the regiment would first assemble, he mustered in as a private in Company C of the regiment for three years’ service.

Here presented are a small set of letters written by young Traver. Evert called Rhinebeck, a town in northern Dutchess County, New York, his home. While his letters span only a short period just after the war started, his words, his handwriting, and the cadence of the letters all help to bring a small part of the war to life. Evert would be swept up in the excitement of the war; head south to fight; become sick and die before his regiment participated in any fighting. The events and misfortune that befell Evert and his family were mirrored through his regiment, his town, and across the land.



**Figure 1.** “Wanted Immediately,” *Recruitment Advertisement*. Poughkeepsie Telegraph, July 22, 1862.

The regiment gathered on the Hudson Fairgrounds naming it Camp Kelly in honor of a local politician. They stayed there organizing and making final arrangements until departing with great fanfare for the seat of war on September 5. The 128th took a steamship down the Hudson River to New York City where they disembarked and got on railroad cars for the trip to Baltimore, Maryland. Once in Baltimore, they received their guns as well as their tents. The regiment set up their camp on a plain overlooking the city and the camps of other Union regiments.

Evert Traver Thursday Sept 11<sup>th</sup>  
 1862  
 Camp near Baltimore  
 Dear parents we did not go  
 to Washington as we expected to  
 we are south of Baltimore now  
 we are expect to leave to head  
 some where in the day but Camp  
 now Baltimore is every way please  
 there is are <sup>all</sup> Rebels here  
 We stayed one day in New York  
 and then we went to Philadelphia  
 and got every good supper  
 We got there three o'clock  
 in the morning and then we  
 went to Baltimore we got here  
 Sunday night about 4 o'clock  
 we had to camp on the ground  
 that was nice we slept good  
 but now we have tents now  
 But they are poor things

Figure 2. September 11, 1862 Letter from Evert to his parents. Collection of Dean Thomas.

At Camp Millington, outside of Baltimore, the soldiers of the regiment began perfecting their drill and learning how to handle their weapons. While younger boys at home were starting school, Evert was learning to shoulder and fire his Springfield rifle musket or Enfield rifle. His first letter home describes Baltimore as very “ruff” and says there are “half Rebels here”, insinuating that he had better keep an eye open at all times. At the age of eighteen, a simple farm boy from upstate New York, he had probably never been this far from home, certainly not as far south as the Mason-Dixon line.

**Letter 1: September 11, 1862 Letter from Evert Traver to his parents (Figure 2).**

Evert Traver, Thursday Sept 11 1862  
Camp near Baltimore  
Dear parents

Whe(sic)<sup>2</sup> did not go to Washington as whe expected to. Whe are south of Baltimore now whe are expect to leave to Fredrick soon. Whe are in (very?) ??? camp now. Baltimore is avery ruf plase thare are half rebels here.

We stopped one day in New York and then whe went to Philadelphia and got a very good supper. Whe got there three O’Clock in the morning and then whe went to Baltimore. Whe got here Sunday night about 4 O’Clock. Whe had to camp on the ground that was nice whe slept good. But now we have tents and they are poor things. Whe have got good and whet

Father did you get the 10\$ I sent with mister Mr Tater. Kiss Manty and Grify for me. I am well now Is there anything new From your son Evert Traver good bye now.

Direct your letters to Evert Traver Baltimore Maralend,(sic) Co C; 128th NY Vol In care of Capt Keys

In this first letter home to his parents (Figure 2), Evert mentions that the tents are “poor things” and “we have got good and whet.” This has a bit of foreboding. In his next letter, he says, “I am well at present”; this will not last for long. Whether it was having to live and sleep in cold wet conditions, being exposed to so many new people and the germs they carry, or possibly even the army food, soon his health would turn.

**Letter 2: Undated (but postmarked Sept 20, 1862) letter from Evert Traver to his parents (Figure 3).**

Dear Parents

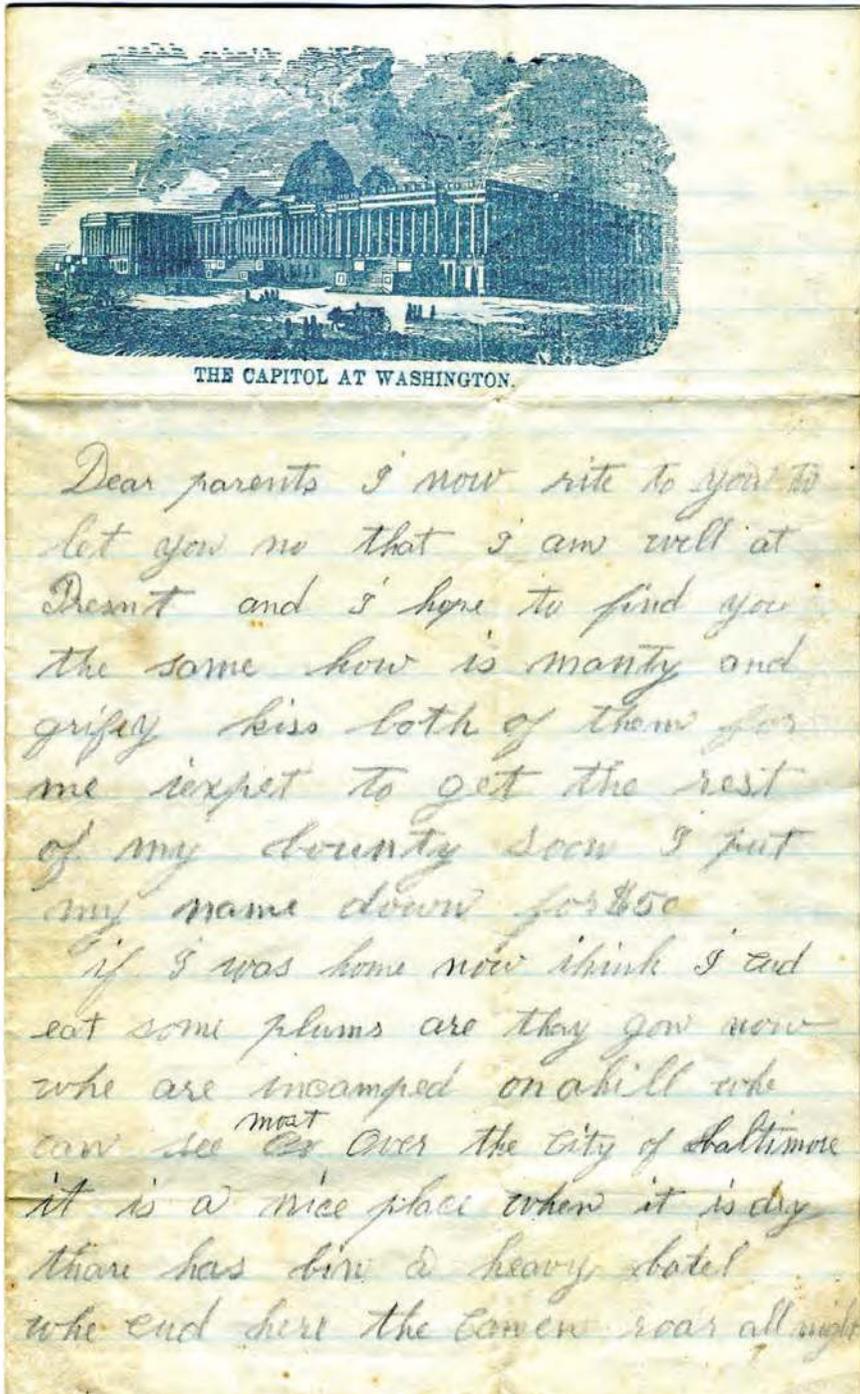
I now rite(sic) to you to let you no that I am well at present and I hope to find you the same. How is Manty and Grifey kiss both of them for me. I expect to get the rest of my bounty soon I put my name down for \$50. If I was home now I think I wd eat some plums are they gone now. Whe are incamped on a hill whe can see most over the city of Baltimore it is a nice place when it is dry. Thare has bin a heavy batel. Whe end here the canen roar all night but whe have won the day. Whe are givin it to the rebels now they will have to give up soon thare goes past here about fore or five case loads every day sometimes moe Whe stopt to New York when whe came down then whe went to Philadelphia and then whe went to Baltimore and thare whe are now. Whe expect to stay there some time. How is gran father and gran mother is her foot any beter and how is Julious and ant Lucy. Tel Julious he must right to me and tel me how thay all git along.

I like it good whe git plenty to eat and drink. Will you please to send me some postage stamps thay are scarce her now. I will have stop now so good by all.

Direct your letters to Evert Traver Baltimore Maralend, Co C;  
128th NY Vol In care of Capt Keys

Right as soon as you get this leter(sic) from your son  
Evert Traver

With the sounds of battle nearby, the excitement was building in the regiment and everyone was yearning to get into the action (Figure 3). For Evert, so far so good; plenty to eat, and he remained healthy and in good spirits. While camped in Baltimore, the 128th's first attempt to engage the enemy took them on a rapid jaunt to Gettysburg in an effort to confront Gen. J. E. B. Stuart's Confederates who were on the prowl in the area. This proved uneventful however as Stuart and the Southern Rebels disappeared upon learning of the Union Army's approach.



Dear parents I now write to you to  
 let you no that I am well at  
 Drcant and I hope to find you  
 the same how is manny and  
 grifey kiss both of them for  
 me expect to get the rest  
 of my bounty soon I put  
 my name down for \$50

if I was home now i think I cud  
 eat some plums are they you now  
 we are incamped on a hill we  
 can see <sup>most</sup> over the city of Baltimore  
 it is a nice place when it is dry  
 there has bin a heavy abel  
 we end here the Coner road all night

**Figure 3.** Undated (but postmarked Sept 20, 1862) letter from Evert to his parents. Collection of Dean Thomas.

## *Image of United States Capitol in Washington, D.C.*

*by Candace J. Lewis*

The note paper that Evert Traver used to write home carried an image of the United States Capitol in Washington, D. C. (Figure 3). The image was printed at the top of the page on average quality lined paper. It was printed as a wood engraving in a shade of dark green-black, this printing technique being the most popular technique in use for newspapers and inexpensive magazines of the mid-nineteenth century.

The image itself is quite interesting for it was not taken from life, but, rather, presented a version of the design submitted by the architect, Thomas U. Walter, for the competition in 1851 to redesign and expand the Capitol building (for another version of the design, see Image 1). The competition had been organized because of increased need for space within the building with the admission of new states to the Union. President Millard Fillmore would lay the cornerstone for the new building on July 4, 1851. The project would take seventeen years.<sup>1</sup>



**Image 1.** *Thomas U. Walter, Design for a newly renovated Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. as part of the competition in 1851. Drawing in ink and washes. Thomas Walter would be selected as the architect for the project. From <http://www.aoc.gov/history-us-capitol-building>*

The new plans called for expansion of the rooms for the Supreme Court, the House, and the Senate, a new facade, marble sheathing, and a new dome. However, there would be many changes during design and construction, the most notable being the redesign of the dome to create the very large dome with its tall silhouette that would complete the Capitol by the end of the Civil War.

At the Inauguration of President Abraham Lincoln in March 1861 (Image 2), the ceremony was held on the steps of the Capitol building with the unfinished dome overhead. In 1862, Evert Traver lay sick and dying, never to visit Washington, D. C. and the Capitol, although he mentioned them in his letters. The dome was still a year away from completion. The city and the building stood as symbols of the unity of the United States of America and of the willingness of our people to govern themselves through law, but the solidity and longevity of both seemed fragile. A bitter war between armies of the North and South continued.



**Image 2.** *The Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. on the occasion of the Inauguration of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States of America on March 4, 1861. The ceremony was held out of doors on the steps of the Capitol which was, at the time, still a construction site with the dome only partly finished. The redesign of the dome into a tall three-tiered construction encircled by columns and engaged columns and topped by a newly commissioned statue is partially evident in this image. Photograph. From [wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Capitol](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Capitol)*

<sup>1</sup> “History of the U.S. Capitol Building,” <http://www.aoc.gov/history-us-capitol-building>.

**Letter 3: Sept 26, 1862 Letter from Evert Traver to his parents (Figure 4).**

Baltimore, Friday Sept 26th 1862

Dear Parents

I now right to you again to let you no that I am not so very well now I haven't but one leter yet from you yet I would like you to right as often as you can. I expect to stay where whe are all winter. I would like you to send me a small box now if you please. Is thare anything new in the neiber hood. How is the folks on the hill and all over. I have bin on Picket gard the other night whe had it nice whe had a nice house to sleep in plenty to eat and drink and a Peach Oarchard whe took fore prisoners

Do you here any thing from the ware. whe git the news every day. I think the ware wont last long more I saw a soldier that came from Virginy he said that Ritchmen wis fool of wounded soldiers and that the rebels would half to give up soon. Tel James Asher that he must right tel Alfred Lewis to and James Wesley to

So good by now right as soon as you get this leter. Your son  
Evert Traver

Direct your letters to Evert Traver Baltimore Maralend, Co C;  
128th NY Vol In care of Capt Keys

A few more days have gone by and Evert for the first time has now mentioned that he is "not so very well" (Figure 4). There also seems to be a bit of longing for home in his words. His parents no doubt sense this. In just three weeks, the war has already caught up to him, and the regiment has not even seen a hostile Rebel.

Baltimore Friday Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> 1862  
 Dear parents I now right  
 to you again to let you see  
 that I am not so very well  
 now I havent got but one  
 letter yet from you yet  
 I would like you to right  
 as often as you can expect  
 to stay where we are all  
 winter. I would like you  
 to send me a small box  
 now if you please is there  
 any thing new in the  
 niber hood how is the the  
 Folks on the hill and all  
 over I have bin in Picket  
 yard the other night who  
 had it nice who had a  
 nice house to sleep in plenty to  
 eat and drink and a Pease Candy  
 We took fore priseners

Figure 4. Sept 26, 1862 Letter from Evert to his parents. Collection of Dean Thomas.

Baltimore Oct 3<sup>th</sup> 1862  
 Dear Parents I have received  
 your letter and I am glad  
 to find you all well I  
 now write to you to tell you  
 about the times down  
 here the boys have just gone  
 on Picket Guard they go about  
 seven or eight miles from Camp  
 Meade to Frederick where the  
 battle was fought but there  
 isent any rebels there now  
 you told me to tell you  
 what was the matter with me  
 it is in my bowels all the  
 time that is all that ails  
 me and you sed to  
 tell you how to direct it  
 Direct it as you would a

Figure 5. October 3, 1862 Letter from Evert to his parents. Collection of Dean Thomas.

**Letter 4: September 30, 1862 Letter from Evert Traver to his parents.**

Baltimore Sept 30th 1862

Dear parents

I have just received your leter and I am glad to here that you are well. I am sorry to here that Mr Travers barn is burnt down and that William Hainer is hurt. I have bin not very well but I am beter now. Whe went six miles on a march thare was about a twelve that gave out but I stud it well. Tell grant father and mother and ant Lucy and Julious and Charly I send my love to them. Tell grant father that I be home next sumer to drink cider with him again I hope to. I think that the war will stop soon . Did you git the paper that I sent him. Mr. John M Keys was down her he came one Saturday and stad til Monday morning and then he whent home. I was glad to see a Rhinebeck friend onse more. Will you please to send me a box is soon as you can I didnt no that you got the leter that I spoke of the box be fore or not Tell Uncle John William that I am glad to here that he has got a young soldier. Whe dont want any girls now till the war stops.

Tell Charly and Julious that thay must right soon as they can and as often as they can thay have more time to right than I have I hant got mutch time to. Whe have to drill fore hours a day some times six hours it is warm down here now in the day time and cold at night. Whe have no rane down here. Whe had one rane about one ore to wheakes ago. Whe had nothing but litel tents and whe got as whet as rats but we have good tents now.

Whe have got big times down here with the gards the officers come to them at night and say to them how is your guns? let me see it and thay hand it to them and then thay walk of with it and then they go in the gard house. 22 gards got served so The other night thay cant catch me so tell all the boys that I send my best respects onto them all boys and girls. so good by at present. Right as soon as you can from your son Evert Traver I have got paper anuf.

Direct your letters to Evert Traver Baltimore Maraland, Co C;  
128th NY Vol In care of Capt Keys

Though Evert has “bin not very well”, it appears that, considering the events he mentioned, he was still up and about, and carrying-on in order to shoulder his responsibilities—marching, drilling, and working around camp.

**Letter 5: October 3, 1862 Letter from Evert Traver  
to his parents (Figure 5).**

Baltimore Oct 3th , 1862

Dear Parents

I have received your leter and I am glad to find you all well. I now right to you to tell you a litel about the times down here. The boys have just gon on Picket gard they go about seven of eight miles from camp most to Fredrick where the battle was fought but thare isn't any rebels thare now. You told me to tell you what was the mater with me. It is my bowels all the time that is all that ails me and you sed to tell you how to direct it. Direct it as you would a leter. Rite it with paint on the top of the box, don't send any meat because it will spoil. Send buter and sweet meats pickles and such stuf is that. I wouldn't send yet but I think that it might stop my bowls send some chease if you can send what you think fit to send. Thare was one fellow that had a box sent to him that all the meat spoiled, he had three turkeys lot of cheese and lots of stuf he had to throw it all away. You spoke to about the bounty I ount git till next month at least. I haven't got a sent now you told me to right all about the war thare isn't any thing mutch new at present thare was a rumor of Pease but I think that it is not so. Thare is so many stories here that you cant belive muso of them at all but I can tell you what I do think. I think that we will be home next sumer maby befor maby not then maby not at all. The boys think that they will be home next week so thay say. I cant right many leters more because I havent got many stamps anymore or no money to by them with. It is giten very hot now. Have you had any frost up there yet. I heard you had. Tell them on

the Hill that the musent Drink to much Cider but thay must drink some fore me. Whe have got good cider down here to but it is dear five cents a glass. Whe can git lots to eight if whe had money but whe are plum out. All I care for is milk it is fore cents a pint it is not like ours it is half water. Now I must tell you the water here it is bad. I must come to a Close. From your affectionate son Evert Traver right as soon as you can kiss all for me.

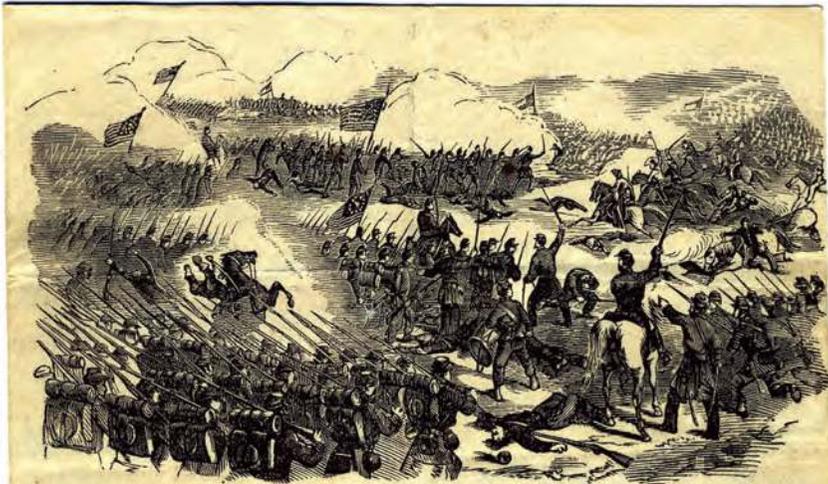
Evert's letters now began to be less frequent. He mentioned, "You told me to tell you what is the matter" and "It is my bowls all the time is all that ails me" (Figure 5). Thoughts of home and all the comforts it brings were obviously at the front of his thoughts. The war was turning out to be less than it was cracked up to be.

**Letter 6: October 22, 1862 letter from Evert Traver to his parents (Figure 6).**

Oct 22nd

Dear parents I have just received you kind leter and I am glad to here that you are all. Well. I have got a very bad cole. Whe have been on a march to Ginleys burg but whe went on the cars it was a lot of rebels thare. You want to no how I git my washing don I wash my self and whe sleep in the tents. Whe don't git mutch to eat whe git bread and coffee most of the time an some time fride beef. It is not like home. I am glad that you are going to send a box. Tell gran father that I thank him for the postage stamps. Thay are scarce down here. You cant git nice ones here unless you go down town. I am going down town to stay all day then I will have a good diner. I wish that father could come down and see the city it nice city. The 150th regt is in campt close by us thay have got a nice band and the 135 is in campt close by us. I will have to stop soon. The weather is cole. Whe had a heavy frost the other night. How is the buck wheet. good. I hope that you will have a good crop.

Kiss Grify fore me and Manty. So good by at present from your son Evert Traver.



Battle at Pittsburgh Landing.

Oct 22<sup>th</sup>  
Dear Parents i have just  
received your kind letter  
and i am glad to here  
that you are all well.  
I have got a very bad  
cold. we have bin on a  
march to ~~Lincolnsburg~~ here  
we went on the cars at  
was a lot of Rebels there  
you want to no. how i got  
my washing done i wash my  
self and we sleep in the ten  
tents. we dont get much to  
eat we get bread, an coffee

Figure 6. October 22, 1862 letter from Evert Traver to his parents. Image of Battle at Pittsburgh Landing. Collection of Dean Thomas.

## *Image of the Battle at Pittsburgh Landing*

*by Candace J. Lewis*

By the end of October, 1862, young Evert Traver was still in camp writing home to his family. He was using new writing paper, this time decorated with a design of the Battle at Pittsburgh (Pittsburg) Landing (also known as the Battle of Shiloh) (Figure 6). As in the former example of a letter sheet with an image of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. (Figure 3), in this case, the image is printed in very dark ink at the top of the page of lined paper. In this image, a battle scene is represented with ranks of infantrymen, some holding the Union flag, led by their mounted officers, on an open field pushing forward against the enemy seen at the right flying two Confederate flags. Distant clouds from the raging battle are depicted in the background.

This battle had been fought earlier in the year at Pittsburgh Landing near the little Shiloh Church along the Tennessee River in western Tennessee. The battlefield was located 22 miles north of the city of Corinth, Mississippi. After the first day of fighting on April 6, 1862, Confederate forces, first under the direction of General Johnston, then after his death, under General P.G.T. Beauregard, were in the ascendency. However, on the second day, April 7, Union forces, under the command of General Ulysses S. Grant, repelled their enemy.

Initially, the reaction in the North was severely negative. With over 23,000 men killed and wounded—counting troops from both North and South—civilians were becoming aware that this war was a very costly one indeed. General Grant, so recently a hero for conquering Fort Donelson in Tennessee, now was vilified for lack of preparedness. Newspapers of the North ran stories painting him in a very poor light and suggesting that Pittsburgh Landing was a defeat, not a victory.<sup>1</sup>

This same image of Pittsburgh Landing on an envelope has been published by Steven Boyd in his very interesting, scholarly, and useful work on the subject of patriotic envelopes printed during the Civil War.<sup>2</sup> Regarding this image, he made the point that the message was not entirely clear, unlike that of nearly all the other images on Union and Confederate envelopes and letter sheets. In nearly every case, the designer chose to represent a symbol that would be readily

understood by the viewer—for examples, an image of Abraham Lincoln, the Goddess Liberty, the Union flag with 33 or 34 stars, always with appropriate text. In the case of Confederate envelopes which were produced from the beginning of the war for about two years until 1863, designs included the Confederate flag, images of Jefferson Davis, or allegorical figures with appropriate text. However, this image of the Battle at Pittsburgh Landing created for a Union audience was not so clear in its message. Boyd has suggested that it may have had the purpose of educating soldiers and civilians alike to the magnitude of the armies assembling on the battlefields.<sup>3</sup> While this was certainly possible, it seems more probable that a pro-Union mission of propaganda was dominating the process of design, printing, publishing, and distribution of this humble product.

Here with the October 1862 letter of Evert Traver, we have a firmly dated example of the image of the Battle of Pittsburgh Landing (Shiloh) in the hands of the troops. Did the negative portrait of General U. S. Grant, based upon stories about his performance at Shiloh, still hold sway? The existence of this image printed on letter sheets and envelopes by the fall of 1862 suggests that, for some at least, a contrary view was beginning to prevail—and more quickly than is usually recognized. That is to say, that by placing this image of the Battle of Pittsburgh Landing on letter sheets for soldiers (and civilians), the publisher was ready to promote the idea that the Battle at Pittsburgh Landing 1) had been a success for the North, 2) should be seen as a big step forward for the Union army in the western theater whether it was pushing south from Tennessee towards the Mississippi River or north up the river from New Orleans (as was the case for the 128th Regiment of which Private Evert Traver was a member), and 3) should be seen as an inspiration for all Union soldiers as they continued their fight.

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<sup>1</sup> James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 413.

<sup>2</sup> For a more complete discussion of the imagery on these envelopes and letter sheets, see the very interesting study: Steven R. Boyd, *Patriotic Envelopes of the Civil War: The Iconography of Union and Confederate Covers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

It had been two weeks since his last letter. Evert was glad everyone at home was well; he however was not, stating, “I have got a very bad cole” (Figure 6). The regiment was still outside of Baltimore but soon would head further south. The first death in the 128th occurred on October 8, 1862, at Baltimore. Men of the regiment would take ill and die in Baltimore and many points along the route south where they would eventually engage in battle. In documents of the regiment, the many causes written down as the trail of death lengthened included “typhus fever”, “congestive lung disease”, “chronic diarrhea”, “dysentery”, “pneumonia”, “hemorrhage of the bowels”, “consumption” and just plain old “disease” or “fever.”

### Letter 7: October 25, 1862 Letter from Evert Traver to his parents.

Oct 25th

Dear parents I will rite you a gain an tell you had bad luck I had with the money you sent me in your last leter. I lost to dolars of it my pocket and I will have to send is fore three dolars more on a count of the box I cant git the box for less than a dolar. I am a litle better now. Send it before the box comes. So good by at present Kiss all fore me dus Grify go to school all of the time Tell him to learn to right as soon as he can so that he can right to me. So good by. From your son  
Evert Traver

Evert’s letter of the of October 25 is noticeably short, mentioning that the regiment will soon head south aboard the Steamship *Arago*. Until now, the regiment, from an organizational standpoint, had been attached to defenses of Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, Maryland. In December, they would finally board a ship, destination unknown, and head south. The regiment would be attached to General Nathaniel Banks’ Department of the Gulf whose ultimate goal would be to open the Mississippi River to the Union. While aboard the ship *Arago*, the ranks would be afflicted with minor sickness and more serious disease. After a stop at Fortress Monroe where the regiment would witness some of the famous Union ships, including the ironclad Monitor, the regiment would make its way down to New Orleans. During their transport, the men were kept below deck, and in the tight quarters sickness spread rampantly. Soldiers died aboard ship and were buried at sea or shortly after arrival in the South.

**Letter 8: November 10, 1862 Letter from Evert Traver to his parents.**

Nov 10th

Dear parents

I now right a few lines to you to let you no whare I am at present I am at Forttress Monrow Ya whe went from Baltimore to Forteess Monrow on a ship we are living one mile from shore on a ship. Whe don't know whare we are agoing yet whe expect to git pade off soon. The wheather was very cole when whe started whe had a snow storm but it is warm now it is a very nice morning the sun shines hot. I am well at present and when you reseive this leter I hope you all will be the same I want you to send me a cupel of postage stamps whe cant git any down here I send my love to Grifey and Manty I hant got any time to rite much of a leter at present I will rite more the next time I rite so good by From your son Evert Traver

Direct your leter to Evert Traver Co C 128 regt NY SV Forttress monrow a in care of Capt Keese

I will have to rite a few lines more I have just seen the Monitor. She is a litel boat most under water so good by

The last letter from Evert mentions being at Fortress Monroe and seeing the famous *Monitor* steamship and that "I am well at present". His return to good health must have been a short-lived aberration. After the trip to Louisiana, sick men were first isolated at Quarantine Station along the Mississippi River south of New Orleans, and then in separate quarters at Camp Parapet on the outskirts of the city. Evert is listed in the history of the regiment as having died at Camp Parapet on February 20, 1863. Thirty-five men of the 128th had died even before Evert, a total of seventeen at Camp Parapet alone.<sup>3</sup>

**Letter 9: February 9, 1863 letter from Evert's Father to Evert Traver (Figure 7).**

Rhinebeck, Feb 9 1863

You asked if i got the ten dollars and the check, I got the check but not the ten dollars I want to no what ten dollars you mean. If it is the ten dollars of got of Ed Tator or not if you have sent other I haven't go it. Mr Keese handed the check to your grandfather no ten dollars only what I heard in your letter about the war General Hooker has got command of the Army of the Potomac now and he is going to hook them all out. Aunt Lucy sends her love to you she says she turn a fortune in a cup every day to see the news to see the flag your grandpa has his old complaint again that he has every winter I will send you some government stamps in this letter. They will be better than bank bills so you needent tear im in to I will send \$3 dollars worth if it should get lost it wont be so much loss as if sent more it is better to send a little at a time and send often I will do all I can for you. Your grandpa says he will exchange with you give you some apples for your oranges. We are all well and are glad to hear that you are well and hope you will remain so. I sent you a letter the 26th of January with paper and envelopes in Uncle John Williams folks and o we were all up grandpa's Sunday. Samantha and Griff send their love to you and we all send our love you spoke about Robert Haner and Nathan Day they were both brought home I tended Roberts funeral

From your father Stephen Traver, Rhinebeck, Dutchess Co.,  
New York

The next letter in the grouping is from Evert's father, sent to Evert on February 9, 1863 (Figure 7). However, it appears that Evert would never read the letter; it would be returned to Stephen Traver unopened by the Captain of Evert's company sometime later. Sadly, the letter mentions other boys who had also succumbed to disease and whose bodies had recently arrived home for burial. One of these was Nathan Day, also of Evert's Company C . Per his gravestone found in the Hudson cemetery, Nathan was just shy of his twentieth birthday when he died on January 6.

Rhinebeck, Feb. 9th. 1863.

Evert you asked if i' got the ten dollars and the Check, i' got the check but not the ten dollars, i' want to know what ten dollars you mean if it is the ten dollars i' got of Ed. Tater or not if you have sent any other i' havent got it. Mr. Keys handed the Check to your grandfather no ten dollars only what i' heard in your letter about the war Gen. Hooker has got the command of the Army of the Potomac now and he is going to ~~to~~ hook them all out Aunt Lucey sends her love to you she says she turn a fortune in a

Figure 7. February 9, 1863 letter from Evert's Father to Evert Traver. Collection of Dean Thomas.

## Letter 10: February 26, 1863 Letter from Captain Francis Keese to Evert Traver's parents.

Camp 128th reg NYV – Feb 26, 1863

Mr. Stephen P Traver

Sir

I this day forward to you by Adam's Express Co. a box containing the clothes etc in the possession of Evert at the time of his death, not doubting that they will be valuable in your eyes, as mementoes of the departed. He had no money in his possession, so I shall not prepay the expressage. Hoping that my course in sending this box will meet your approval, thank you may you receive comfort from him who alone can comfort the afflicted. I am sir

Yours respectfully Capt F.S. Keese, Co C, 128th NYV

The enclosed letter arrived since his death F.S.K.

Finally, the last letter in the collection came from the Captain of Evert's company C, Francis Keese, also from Rhinebeck. The job of a Captain in the Union Army was not one to be envied. Handling and managing a hundred men was no doubt difficult. Carrying the message of soldiers' deaths back to loved ones at home had to have been almost unbearable.

### *Conclusion*

In summary, while he did not participate in any of the Civil War's great battles, Evert Traver's words certainly help to take us back to a set of events and circumstances that were terrible for his family and typical for many families. After Evert's death, the 128th regiment would go on to fight in many real battles, not against disease, but against Confederate soldiers, in the Deep South in Louisiana and up north in Virginia. Whether they died from disease or from the fighting, soldiers fell in the thousands. Events like these rippled through the towns and counties and across the country on a scale that is hard to imagine.

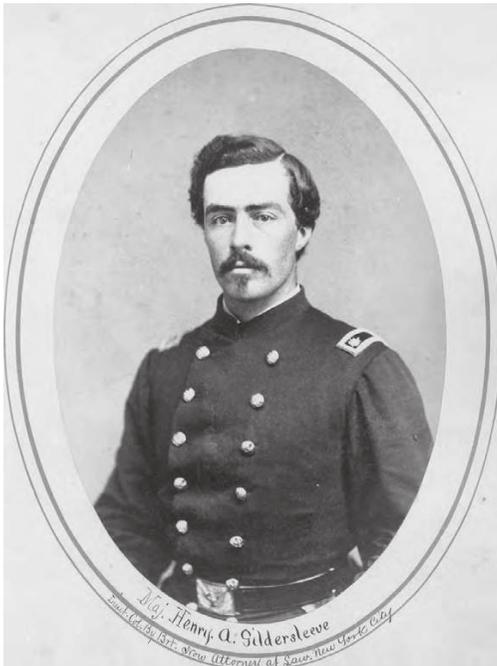
- <sup>1</sup> From Frederick Phisterer, *New York in the War of the Rebellion*, 3rd ed. (Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, 1912). See also *The Union Army: A History of Military Affairs in the Loyal States, 1861-1865—Records of the Regiments in the Union Army—Cyclopedia of Battles—Memoirs of Commanders and Soldiers*, Vol. II (Madison, WI: Federal Publishing Co., 1908).
- <sup>2</sup> Hereafter in this essay, words with unusual spelling or grammar that appear frequently in Evert Traver’s letters will not be followed by the acknowledgment (sic), because, in this case, there would be too many (sic)s thus interfering with the flow of the language. We hope the reader will be patient with, and perhaps even enjoy, the puzzle of reading these letters. .... C. Lewis, the editor.
- <sup>3</sup> D.H. Hanaburgh, *History of the 128th*. (New York: published by James B. Lyon, State Printer 1894, Enterprise Publishing and the Annual Report of the Adjutant General of the State of New York, 1895, Vol. II).



# Oration at Gettysburg

by Henry A. Gildersleeve

*This address was delivered at Gettysburg in July, 1889 to dedicate a monument in memory of the 150th Regiment New York Infantry Volunteers, 2nd Brigade (Lockwood's), 1st Division, 12th Corps, that is: "the Dutchess County Regiment" that fought on July 2 and 3, 1863 at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. At the time of the engagement in this fearsome battle, the first major test for the Dutchess County Regiment, the author, Henry Gildersleeve, was a young man, a soldier, new to war, a captain in the unit of 80 young men he had enlisted. Later he would become a major, a colonel, and then, in civilian life, a judge. His account gives a vivid picture of the young men of Dutchess—their great enthusiasm for signing up, their training, and their bloody and desperate fight on Culp's Hill during two hot days in July against Confederate soldiers led by General Lee. The excerpt here ends with the Battle of Gettysburg, the first battle for the Dutchess County soldiers. ....C. Lewis, editor.*



**Figure 1.** Major Henry A. Gildersleeve of the 150th Regiment, New York, Company C, where he began his service in the Civil War as a Captain. Photograph. Collection of the Dutchess County Historical Society.

## COMRADES AND FRIENDS:

We stand here today on ground made famous by the defenders of the Union. Here was fought, more than a quarter of a century ago, the most important battle of our great Civil War.<sup>1</sup> While from other fields may be gathered as appalling records of slaughter by contending armies, Gettysburg was the most decisive in its results, and in history it will be the most conspicuous. On the escutcheon of nations, written with the blood of heroes, France had its Austerlitz, England its Waterloo and the United States its Gettysburg.

The One hundred and fiftieth Regiment, New York Volunteer Infantry, were of the troops who fought and won that battle for the United States. It was a victory that insured the perpetuity of the Federal Union; made permanent the establishment of republican government among the nations of the earth; cast off the fetters of 3,000,000 bondsmen, and abolished slavery in America forever....



**Figure 2.** Stone monument dedicated to the 150th Regiment New York Volunteer Infantry that served and fought at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania on July 2 and 3, 1863. Photograph. From *New York at Gettysburg, July 1-2-3-1863: Final Report on the Battlefield of Gettysburg.* (Albany: New York Monuments Commission, Vol. III, 1900), opposite p. 1022.

The victories and battles of the Revolution that made our republican form of government possible, we never lose an opportunity to celebrate, and the noble deeds of that memorable war are our choicest heritage, and the subject of constant commemoration. The men who fell on this field are entitled to no less grateful remembrance than those who fell at Bunker Hill and Valley Forge. We cannot claim originality for the ceremony we now celebrate, but when we look about us and are reminded of the brave men who gave up their lives, and recall the causes that made the terrible battle necessary, we do proudly claim that for no nobler cause did patriots ever fight, that for no grander country did heroes ever die. Yes, and thank God, they died for the whole country, today the homes of 60,000,000 freemen. The triumph of the Union armies on this field was a victory for the Constitution and the Union, and took no rights away from the South. The blessings flowing from a preserved

*(INSCRIPTIONS on the MONUMENT)**(Front)*

150th  
 NEW YORK INFANTRY  
 2ND BRIGADE (LOCKWOOD'S)  
 1ST DIVISION  
 12TH CORPS  
 JULY 2 AND 3, 1863  
 THE DUTCHESS COUNTY REG'T.  
 THIS REGIMENT DEFENDED  
 THESE WORKS ON JULY 3,  
 FROM 6.30 TO 9 A.M., AND  
 FROM 10 A.M. TO 12 M., AND  
 CAPTURED 200 PRISONERS.

*(Reverse)*

CASUALTIES.  
 KILLED.

CORP'L JOHN VAN ALSTYNE, Co. A.	PRIVATE JEDEDIAH MURPHY, Co. E.
PRIVATE CHARLES HOWGATE, " A.	B.C. BURNETT, " G.
" LEVI RUST, " A.	WM. H. BARNES, " L.
" JOHN P. WING, " A.	

## ENGAGEMENTS

GETTYSBURG  
 RESACA,  
 NEW HOPE CHURCH,  
 KOLB'S FARM,  
 PEACH TREE CREEK,  
 SIEGE OF  
 ATLANTA.

SHERMAN'S  
 CAMPAIGNS OF  
 GEORGIA AND  
 THE CAROLINAS,  
 SAVANNAH,  
 AVERASBOROUGH,  
 BENTONVILLE,

8TH CORPS

12TH CORPS

20TH CORPS

*(Right)*

MUSTERED IN OCTOBER 11, 1862

*(Left)*

THIS REGIMENT WAS RECRUITED TO 1,277 MEN. KILLED IN BATTLE:  
 OFFICERS, 2; ENLISTED MEN 44.  
 DIED FROM WOUNDS AND SICKNESS IN SERVICE,  
 3 OFFICERS AND 59 MEN. TOTAL LOST IN SERVICE, 106.  
 TRANSFERRED TO 60TH NEW YORK, JUNE 8, 1865, 176 MEN.  
 MUSTERED OUT 524 MEN AND 36 OFFICERS.  
 MUSTERED OUT JUNE 8, 1865.

From *New York at Gettysburg, July 1-2-3-1863: Final Report on the Battlefield of Gettysburg.* (Albany: New York Monuments Commission, Vol. III, 1900), 1022.

Union reach all the states and the fountain it feeds are those of universal liberty and prosperity, at which the Confederate soldier is as welcome to come and drink as the Union volunteer.

### *Memorial Monument for the 150th Regiment*

The State of New York, by its representatives in the legislature assembled in the year 1887, appropriated the sum of \$1,500 to each New York regiment that took part in the battle of Gettysburg, to be expended in providing a suitable memorial to its members who fell in that battle. The survivors of the One hundred and fiftieth Regiment and its friends, principally residents of Dutchess County, contributed and added to the \$1,500 given by the state, about the sum of \$3,000, and the manner in which the money has been expended by the faithful and able Monument Committee of which General Smith is chairman, is evidenced by the beautiful monument before us which we have assembled to unveil and dedicate (Figure 2).

### *The Organization of the 150th Regiment*

Let us for a few moments brush up our memories of the past; recall the organization of the One hundred fiftieth Regiment, and follow it to these now historic hills of Pennsylvania, where it became a part of the famous Army of the Potomac, and was first bathed in blood.

At the end of June, 1862, the war had been in progress about fifteen months and over 800,000 volunteers, including three months' men, had entered the service of the United States. The actual strength of the Federal army on duty at this time was about 500,000. In the west the Union forces under Grant, Buel and others had secured very creditable results. Shiloh, Fort Donelson, Pittsburg Landing [Shiloh], Corinth and other points of strategic importance had been captured by the Union armies. The general result of the campaign in Virginia was not considered to reflect much credit upon the Union army, and in consequence thereof there was a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction in the North. Lukewarm Unionists and Southern sympathizers began openly to proclaim their faith in, and announce their adherence to the Southern cause. This unarmed army in the midst of us, too cowardly to fight in the open field, and without an excuse for their treachery, retarded enlistments at home, encouraged foreign interventions, and in every way possible gave aid and support to the Rebels.. I can forgive the Southern Rebel for taking up arms against the Union, grasp him warmly by the hand and call him brother, but not a Northern copperhead—well God may have mercy on him, but I cannot.

On Thursday, June 26, 1862, the powerful and thoroughly equipped Army of the Potomac was intrenched(sic) in works vast in extent and most formidable in character within sight of Richmond, and it was confidently hoped that the battlecry of "On to Richmond" would soon be realized. Within a few days the remnants of that threatening host were upon the James River, thirty miles from Richmond, seeking to recover, under the protection of their gunboats, from the effects of a series of disastrous defeats. This routing of McClellan's army thoroughly aroused the government to the danger in which the country was placed, and an earnest determination was manifested to provide against its consequences. On July 2, 1862, the President of the United State issued a proclamation calling for 300,000 men to serve for three years or during the war. In answer to this call the Dutchess County regiment was organized.

The prompt response of the State of New York, led by the loyal citizens of Dutchess County, to this proclamation of the President, in those dark days of the Rebellion, gave impetus to enlistments throughout the whole loyal North, and under the call, 431,958 volunteers were mustered into the Federal army. This rush to the standards of the Union was the strongest evidence of the willingness of the Northern people to stand by the government. It was conclusive proof of their unflinching loyalty, and it showed a fixed determination to suppress the Rebellion by force of arms. It not only gave great additional strength, but a morale to the armies already in the field, and to the men in high station upon whom rested the grave responsibility of conducting the war, the greatest encouragement. Prior to this, large numbers of Dutchess County men had enlisted in the Union armies. Some marched to the front with the Twentieth New York, and others followed the colors of the One hundred and twenty-eighth.

### *The Appeal to Serve, August, 1862*

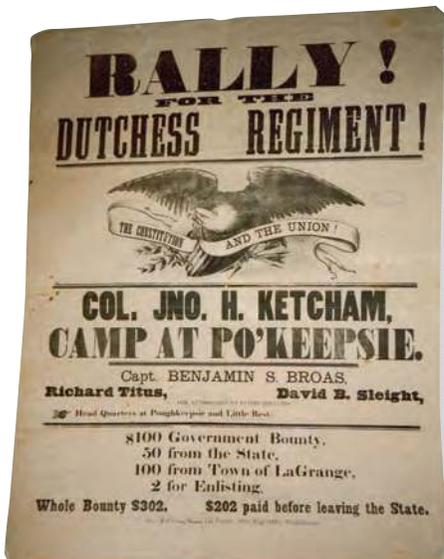
On Thursday, the 21st day of August, 1862 Mrs. Benson J. Lossing caused to be published an appeal asking for a Dutchess County regiment. Isaac Platt of the *Poughkeepsie Eagle*, indorsed(sic) the appeal by favorable comment, and during that day, and the next, eighteen young men handed to A.B. Smith, of Poughkeepsie, as one of the resident members of the General War Committee, requests to recruit and enter the United States service in a Dutchess County regiment. We have not a complete list of the names of these young men. Among them were Cogswell, McConnell, Gildersleeve, Titus, Woodin, Wickes, Gridley, Broas, Cruger, Underwood, VanSteenburg, Van Keuran and Tripp. Gen. A.B. Smith drafted a resolution for the board of supervisors of Dutchess County and it was offered

by Henry W. Shaw (better known as Josh Billings), who was at that time a member of the board, and passed unanimously. It read as follows: “Resolved That the County of Dutchess will pay \$50 bounty to each man who will enlist in a Dutchess County regiment, and the Executive War Committee is requested to procure the permission from Governor Morgan to raise such a regiment, with camp located at Poughkeepsie.” Provided with a certified copy of this resolution, and letters of introduction from Congressman Baker and Judge Emott, Mr. Smith, under instructions from the War Committee, went to Albany on August 23d(sic) to make application to Governor Morgan for authority to recruit “a Dutchess County regiment,” and returned with the following authorization, viz.:

“To Hon. James Emott, Chairman of Executive War Committee of Dutchess County:

“Permission is granted to your War Committee to raise a Dutchess County regiment, with camp located at Poughkeepsie. Edwin D. Morgan, “Governor “Hillhouse, A.A.G.”

Previous to this, Governor Morgan had appointed a General War committee for the congressional districts, with William Kelly, of Rhinebeck, a chairman. From the general committee an Executive War Committee was chosen, consisting of James Emott, Wm. Kelly, Ambrose Wager, George W. Sterling, Benson J. Lossing, James H. Weeks, Stephen Baker, Joseph



**Figure 3.** Civil War Poster calling for enlistment in Company I of the Dutchess Regiment (the 150th Regiment led by Colonel John H. Ketcham). Company I was led by Captain Benjamin S. Broas supported by Lieutenants Richard Titus and David B. Sleight. Collection of The Dutchess County Historical Society. Photo by Candace Lewis.

F. Barnard and John H. Ketcham, and the work of bringing into life, form and discipline the Dutchess County Regiment was entered upon in earnest. It was then that the home pride was fully aroused, and the patriotism of the citizens of Dutchess County reached its climax. Many, from the first breaking out of the war had felt inclined to enlist, but were restrained by business engagements they could not well forgo, or by home ties that were too painful to sever, had frequently declared that when a Dutchess County regiment was organized they would join it.

### **Recruiting**

That day had come, and the sons of Old Dutchess(sic), true to their vows, led on by Ketcham, rallied around the American flag, eager to become members of the One hundred and fiftieth New York Volunteers. O, the golden memories of those days! The conflicts between love of country and love of kindred; private business interests and public duty, in which patriotism triumphed. Sad and depressing were the partings, but, comrades, your courage did not fail you in the hour of your country's peril. Resolute and brave, though tender and loving, the good-byes were said with moist eyes and aching hearts. What act of your life would you not now sacrifice to give place to this? Those were indeed busy, anxious, exciting days. Do you recall the duties of the recruiting officers? How the constant explanations necessary to young men contemplating enlistment occupied the days at the several recruiting offices, and the war meetings in different parts of the country filled in the nights.

Our headquarters were at Poughkeepsie. Four and six horse teams carrying young and enthusiastic men who had already enlisted drove to different parts of the country with banners flying and bands playing, to attend war meetings and secure enlistments (Figures 3 and 4). There was scarcely a place in the county, sufficiently large to support a post office, that did not have one or more war meetings each week. Washington Hollow, Stanfordville, Bangall, Pine Plains, Dover, Pawling, Amenia, Hyde Park, Rhinebeck, Red Hook, Schultzville, and many other places, were the scenes of



**Figure 4.** *Colonel John Henry Ketcham, leader of the 150th Regiment New York State Volunteer Infantry. Photograph. Collection of the Dutchess County Historical Society.*

enthusiastic gatherings at which the bands played patriotic airs, and from barrels, stoops, wagons and horse-blocks the assembled crowds were harangued with war speeches until the excitement ran high and many names were added to the enlistment-roll.

From the sheriff's office in the courthouse in the city of Poughkeepsie, which was turned into a recruiting office, was displayed a banner bearing these words: "Come in out of the draft." Their significance was apparent and caused no little amusing comment. To the indifferent they were a gentle reminder of what might be expected if a sufficient number of volunteers were not promptly forthcoming; and to those anxious to enlist, who were restrained by relatives and friends, they furnished a powerful argument for consent. The threatened drafts and liberal bounties undoubtedly brought some men into service, but pure patriotism was generally the sole moving



**Figure 5.** *Captain Henry A. Gildersleeve, the 150th Regiment, Infantry, New York, Company C. In order to receive his commission, H. A. Gildersleeve had to sign up eighty soldiers as infantryman to form the company for which he would serve as captain. Photograph, Collection of the Dutchess County Historical Society.*

power. And especially was this true of the One hundred and fiftieth Regiment, composed as it largely was of intelligent and thoughtful men. They hastened to the defence(sic) of their country with a spontaneous impulse, born of a correct knowledge of the true nature of the cause for which they were about to suffer fatigue, exposure, hunger, thirst, and the perils of battle—believing that their country’s cause was their personal cause, and that the success for the Union arms was a victory for their individual principles.

The Union volunteers were not mere machines, entitled, disciplined and ranged in living palisades before the enemy, but were men with ideas, who could, when occasion required, think and act for themselves.

The work of recruiting went briskly on. As soon as eighty were enrolled by any one recruiting officer he went to Albany and received his commission as captain and also commissions for a first and second lieutenant. The captains took rank according to the date of their commissions, and the companies received their alphabetical designation commencing with “A” in the order in which their respective captains were commissioned (Figure 5). On the 11th day of October, 1862, at Camp Dutchess, just outside the city of Poughkeepsie, the regiment was mustered into the service of the United States. It was then we felt we were real soldiers, and for the first time fully realized the importance of the step we had taken, and imperfectly outlined in our imaginations the life that was before us.

### *The Regiment Travels to Baltimore, Maryland*

On October 13th we arrived in Baltimore, Md., where we remained on guard duty until the following June, with excellent opportunities for drill and instruction in the duties of a soldier. Once during this period, on the 9th of December, we were ordered out to check an unexpected Rebel raid, and proceeded by cars to Adamstown near Monocacy Junction. We were not permitted the satisfaction of meeting the enemy, and returned to Baltimore with virgin swords. The only blood shed on that cold campaign, for the temperature was at about zero, was from two opossums captured by some men on picket duty.

### *Anticipating Action*

The battle of Chancellorsville had been fought and lost. Ewell had taken up his march down the Shenandoah Valley; Milroy had been defeated at Winchester, and the triumphant Rebel army, led by Gen. Robert E. Lee, the foremost military officer of the Confederacy, was marching into the

State of Pennsylvania, when on the 25th day of June, the Dutchess County Regiment moved with the First Maryland Home Brigade, General Lockwood in command, to join the Army of the Potomac. We had become tired of garrison life in Baltimore and hailed with delight the orders that sent us to the field. Thoroughly drilled and disciplined, the One hundred and fiftieth(sic) with full ranks, in bright uniforms, with unsoiled colors, and to the strains of martial music, moved out of Camp Belger, and turned faces towards the enemy. For two days our line of march could be easily followed by the surplus clothing, camp and garrison equipage dropped by the way and abandoned.

The most intense excitement and alarm prevailed throughout the North, and the authorities at Washington were filled with fear and consternation. It seemed a question of a few days only when the Rebel host would be sacking the cities of the North, levying contributions upon its citizens, and demanding entrance to the capital of the Nation. All the horrors of civil war(sic) were at the doors of the men who were defending the Union. The timid were disheartened and discouraged, but the strong, with full reliance upon the justice of our cause and the valor of our soldiers, nerved themselves for the impending struggle, determined to beat back the invaders. The fate of the Nation rested with the Army of the Potomac, then under the command of a noble son of Pennsylvania, Gen. George G. Meade.

Our regiment reached Monocacy Bridge near Fredrick City, on June 27th, and with Lockwood's Brigade was attached to the First Division of the Twelfth Corps, which division at that time was commanded by Gen. Alpheus S. Williams, the corps being commanded by a distinguished soldier from our home state, Gen. Henry W. Slocum. Do you remember our camp on the hill near Monocacy Bridge, from which point we first saw a portion of the Army of the Potomac of which we had read so much? For the first time we saw them bivouac, and listened to the music from their brigade band as it pealed forth upon the air on that still and solemn night. Thousands of campfires lighted up the region around, and we stood spellbound by the sight of the vast enginery of war that was before us. It was at this camp, inspired by this spectacle, we imbibed the true spirit of war, and nerved ourselves for the trying scenes we knew we must encounter, and desperate deeds that were before us.

### *Advancing to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania*

Our cavalry, under Gen. Buford had occupied the vicinity of Gettysburg, and the First and Eleventh Corps were thrown forward to join the cavalry.

The situation indicated to Gen. Meade that it was in the vicinity of Gettysburg that the Confederate commander had decided to concentrate his forces. The First Corps passed through Gettysburg to Willoughby Run, just beyond Seminary Ridge, where they came up with Buford's Cavalry, and found them hotly engaged with the advanced forces of the Rebel column. Here a sanguinary conflict ensued in which the First Corps and a part of the Eleventh, together with Buford's Cavalry participated. It lasted from 9 o'clock in the morning until late in the afternoon. Gen. John F. Reynolds, the brave and able commander of the First Corps, was killed in this fight. The first noise of real battle that came to our ears was the boom of the distant cannon as we passed on toward the battlefield.

We did not get in sight of the contending forces that day. Getting into camp at a late hour we, for the first time, slept on our arms. It was not yet daylight when we were in line again and ready to resume the march. Do you remember the voice of Col. Mautsby, who commanded the First Maryland Regiment that had gone into camp adjoining us, as on that morning he told his men of the perils that were before them, and in patriotic words encouraged them to do their duty? We had no speech from our regimental commander. It was not his custom to harangue us with loud-sounding phrases, but he passed quietly down the line and whispered in our ears, valuable instruction and sound advice.

### *Joining the Battle of Gettysburg*

We moved on in the direction from whence we heard the cannonading on the day previous, and the first unmistakable indications we discovered of a battle were the slightly wounded who were able to get back to the hospitals without assistance. Then we began to encounter ambulances loaded with those who had been seriously wounded. Field hospitals were passed; we could hear the rattle of musketry and see the smoke of the conflict near at hand, and we soon found ourselves a part and parcel of the grand Army of the North, fighting among these hills, the battle of Gettysburg. The first missiles of war we saw were shells from some Rebel batteries passing over our heads, entirely too close to be comfortable, and bursting just beyond our lines. We were resting on our arms when we first heard the shrieks of these flying projectiles, to us a new, ominous and peculiar sound. We turned our heads one side, eyes upward, trying to see them as they passed, much as a flock of turkeys will do to catch sight of a hawk. The novelty soon wore off but we never forgot the identity of the sound, and ever after it was readily distinguished.

### *Gettysburg: the Afternoon of July 2*

On the afternoon of July 2d, we were hurriedly moved to the left to reinforce the gallant soldier Gen. Sickles. As we passed a farmhouse on our line of march we were told he was inside undergoing the operation to have his leg amputated. By this time the killed and wounded were around us on every side. The rapidity of our movement clearly indicated that a sudden emergency had called us to that particular portion of the field, and the scene before us presented all the evidence of disaster to the Federal line of battle. With our full ranks, bright colors and clean uniforms, we were readily distinguished from the veteran regiments of the Army of the Potomac, who had shared its fate in manoeuvres and battles from the time of the fight at Bull Run to that day. All seemed to know who we were. Can you ever forget the almost fiendish shouts of the maimed and dying men who had just fallen in the struggle as they shouted out "Go in, Dutchess County! Give it to them boys. Give it to them!"

Marching in column four abreast, we soon swung by the right into line, and, for the first time, were in the line of battle facing the enemy. The fight at this point had been so severe and deadly that but a few troops remained on either side. The lines were broken and staggered. Such Rebel forces as were at this point must have fallen back on the approach of reinforcements, for we did not come up with them. We recaptured three cannon, but were not called upon to fire a gun. The artillery fire, however, was constant and terrific. After dark that night we were marched from that portion of the field, and you remember how difficult it was to escape treading on the dead and dying. The cries of the wounded for water, which we could rarely give, constantly fell upon our ears. We heard no complaints, however and each dying soldier accepted his fate without a murmur. No sadder spectacle was witnessed than that of a beautiful horse, hobbling about on three legs, having had one leg severed from his body by a cannon ball. The service he rendered will never be known. Of the thousands of dumb brutes that toiled, suffered and died in the war, but one is immortalized, and he is the horse that won the day by carrying Sheridan from Winchester to the battlefield.

### *Gettysburg: July 3*

The following day, July 3d, we had our full part in the fighting. We were called upon to repel the furious attack of Gen. Ewell, which we successfully accomplished here on Culp's Hill. From this point we were ordered to Cemetery Hill to reinforce the lines upon which the Rebel General Pickett made one of the most desperate and famous assaults of the war. While

marching rapidly towards the hill we noticed a lull in the musketry—a softening of the din of battle, and then, through the smoke and above the noise of the conflict came a volume of cheers from the Union troops that proved to be the glad cry of victory for the North. We received orders to halt, and in a few minutes, long lines of Confederate prisoners were seen coming over the hill.

Our regiment captured that day about 200 prisoners. Many members of the regiment fired more than 200 rounds of ammunition each. Our colors were riddled with bullets and we lost 48 men in killed and wounded. Their names are on the monument....

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<sup>1</sup> Henry A. Gildersleeve, “Oration at Gettysburg” (1889), in *New York at Gettysburg, July 1-2-3-1863: Final Report on the Battlefield of Gettysburg* (Albany: New York Monuments Commission, Vol. III, 1900), 1026-1034. Our gratitude to Eileen Mylod Hayden, former President and Director of the Dutchess County Historical Society and present member of the Publications Committee, for transcribing this article. We would also like to thank Stephen Farfaro for loaning this rare book to us.



# Living History: History taken out of the Book and in to the World

*Peter S. Bedrossian and Michael Peets  
150<sup>th</sup> New York*

This is an account about living history (Figure 1), not reenacting. We say this because reenacting and living history, while they overlap, are not the same. Reenacting typically involves the recreating or acting out of battle events of different periods of history. Examples of battle reenactments include the Battle of Gettysburg, in which the members of the 150th New York have participated. The public typically participates as passive observers at reenactment events. They may purchase tickets, or simply go to the event at the appointed time and watch the activity unfold. There is little direct interaction with the majority of reenactors at these events. At a typical reenactment event, a battle or skirmish may be acted out (Figure 2).



**Figure 1.** 1st Sergeant Mike Peets (left) and 1st Lieutenant Pete Bedrossian (right), Company I, 150th New York. King Street Park Poughkeepsie, site of Camp Dutchess August-October 1862. The event commemorated the 150th anniversary of the founding of the regiment, and occurred in 2012. Photograph. Collection of Pete Bedrossian.



**Figure 2.** *Museum Village Civil War Reenactment, 1995. Photograph. Collection of Pete Bedrossian.*

Note that the visitors are behind yellow security tape, and are watching a “battle” but there is no narrative to explain the action. For the public, it is merely an observational experience.



**Figure 3.** *Hyde Park Community Day 1992, FDR Site. Mike Peets explaining his gear and equipment for visitors. Note the display of gear by the tent. Photograph. Collection of Pete Bedrossian.*

Living history, by contrast, is more focused on portraying specific events, activities, or scenarios that depict military and civilian life during a particular historical timeframe. Although the term “living history” may seem to be an oxymoron, it could be regarded as a term that carries the meaning of transmitting historical information and culture into our own day. In

addition, living history utilizes direct visitor-living historian interaction as well as theatricality (Figure 3, see also Figure 4). One might perceive it as a regression to earlier times when storytellers were the guardians of the history and culture.



**Figure 4.** *Civilian living historians of the Hudson Valley Ladies Aid Society c.1997. Battle of Antietam reenactment. Photograph. Collection of Pete Bedrossian.*

The authors of this article represent the 150th New York Living History Association (150th NY) (Figure 5). The 150th NY is chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, and is an educational organization founded in 1989. The organization strives to commemorate the American Civil War through the preservation of the history of the “Dutchess Legion.” This was the nickname of the 150th Regiment New York Volunteer Infantry, as it had the distinction of being composed solely of men from Dutchess County. This was not typical in the era, and there were only a small number of regiments recruited within a single county.

The original regiment was recruited in the late summer and early fall of 1862. Their first battle was at Gettysburg. They then participated in the Atlanta Campaign, the March to the Sea, and the Carolinas Campaign. Their final battle was at Averasboro, North Carolina. They were present on April 28, 1865 for the surrender of Joseph E. Johnston to General William T. Sherman. They came home to a jubilant Poughkeepsie and Dutchess County in June of 1865.



**Figure 5.** *Westminster Living History, The 150th New York in Westminster, Maryland, 2009. This event represented an actual historic event in the history of the regiment. A Provost Guard of fifteen men were in the town when J. E. B. Stuart's Cavalry invaded the town just prior to the battle of Gettysburg in 1863. Photograph. Collection of Pete Bedrossian.*

By its nature, living history tends to promote active learning by both the visitor and the living historian. The visitor learns through speaking with the living historians, examining gear, asking questions etc. (Figures 6-7). The living historian learns through traditional research activities as well as “immersion” events as will be discussed below.

Living history events may be categorized in three basic ways: 1) as “living exhibits” where the people portraying the soldiers present from a third-person perspective, 2) or they may be involved in first-person events, where the living historian assumes a persona in the 1862-1865 timeframe. He will not break that persona for the duration of the scenario (if only part of an event) or for the duration of the entire event. 3) The third format is a hybrid which will feature discrete “first-person scenarios” of fixed duration, after which the public can interact directly with the uniformed interpreters.

In some instances, the public may also participate in the first-person scenario. This style of living history is perhaps best exemplified by Plimoth Plantation in Massachusetts. There, the living historians “live” in the

1620-24 timeframe and do not break from their first-person personae. It is the apex of living history and far beyond the presentation level found in the Civil War hobby.



**Figure 6.** *Holy Trinity School Talk, Poughkeepsie c. 2000: Mike and Pete demonstrating “load in nine times.” For this program we are “Blue and Gray” (Yankee and Rebel): Mike is dressed as 150th New York. Pete (right) as 3rd North Carolina. Pete and Mike arranged for a student to demonstrate how teens younger than 18 got in to the Army: he put the number “18” on a piece of paper in his sock. When asked if he were “over 18,” he said yes: Not lying, just answering a different question. Photograph. Collection of Pete Bedrossian.*



**Figure 7.** *Display of an officer's desk, with personal items and books typical of the time. Wayras Park, Poughkeepsie, 2013. Photograph. Collection of Pete Bedrossian.*

The “Living History” framework is utilized at historic sites, parks, museums, in school programs, and in local history events sponsored by historical societies. For example, Will Tatum, the Dutchess County Historian, in conjunction with the town of Dover Plains, hosted a living history weekend at Boyce Park in Dover Plains June 13-14, 2015.

By its nature, living history is a labor intensive endeavor. Those wishing to participate must satisfy the three P's: Passion, Preparation, Performance.

## *Passion*

This represents a strong desire to commit significant financial and time resources to learning about the historical period as well as a willingness to share that knowledge. It entails obtaining period-correct clothing and equipment usually requiring an initial expense on the order of \$2,000. Time is needed to develop a sufficient fund of knowledge not only about the Civil War in general, but also about the specifics of the regiment one portrays; the military tactics of the time; social customs; vocabulary, and food customs of the time.

## *Preparation*

This preparation typically begins with well-regarded secondary references. As the living historian evolves, he or she relies more extensively on primary source documents. These include official records, census data, published regimental histories written by the original regimental members, and the letters and diaries of participants. Research on non-military aspects of nineteenth century life can be obtained from period books and pamphlets, covering subjects such as nineteenth century etiquette, games and amusements, recipes and formulas for household items, ink, water-proofing paint etc. The idea is to be versed in the all aspects of the nineteenth century.



**Figure 8.** *Andersonville Living History Weekend, Andersonville National Historic Site, Georgia, March 2014. The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Camp Lawton as it was known: eastward view of the living history camp. The northeast corner of the stockade has been reconstructed to appear as it would have appeared in 1864. Photograph. Collection of Pete Bedrossian.*



**Figure 9.** *Andersonville Living History Weekend, Andersonville National Historic Site: Mike and Pete in our “shebang.” Note the rebuilt stockade is out of view to the right. Photograph. Collection of Pete Bedrossian.*

While all of this background research serves to prepare the living historian for third person interpretation, it is also the foundation for first person interpretation. First person preparation requires the creation of a persona that can be internalized and used when the occasion warrants. After the basic period information is learned, the next step is to craft this persona. The basic rule is to stay as close to your current life and experience as possible. For example,

I (Pete Bedrossian) have a number of back stories, but the most basic is centered on my life in Poughkeepsie. I am currently a warden at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. St. Paul’s was founded in 1835 and so my nineteenth century persona includes my connection to St. Paul’s. I currently work in historic preservation, so that is not something I can use. However, I can be an agent for Mr. Vassar’s brewery. (I enjoy beer, and know something of the industry). This also gives me access to the Hudson River and New York City). I assume a background of an Anglo-Irish immigrant who came as a child to Eastchester, N.Y. (now Mount Vernon) as this is consistent with my maternal lineage. I was trained early on by my grandfather in the trade of blacksmithing, but when he died, my family felt it better to educate me to use my mind, so while I retain some of the skill, I am not a smith, but with my formal education, became an agent for Mr. Vassar.

I (Mike Peets) have taken a similar tack in that I have created a persona which incorporates two facets of my family history. My actual maternal grandfather had a team of horses “Molly & Prince” and on my paternal side most of my relatives were involved in the lumberjack trade. So in the nineteenth century persona I am a lumberman, I pull logs out of the woods with my horse team. I have woven this into the regimental history by saying that before the war I supplied logs to Noah Gridley who operated a pig iron foundry in Wassaic. Mr. Gridley had several charcoal kilns in which he rendered the logs into charcoal for his iron production. Mr. Gridley’s son, Henry, was an officer in the 150th and I signed up under him when the regiment was formed.

## *Performance*

This is the presentation when all of the materials come together. First person works best when several people can perform at the same level. It can be thought of as historical improvisation. Imagine several living historians placed into a situation without a script who seamlessly interact, carrying on conversations as if genuinely in the nineteenth century. For someone who enjoys living history, the thrill of the hobby is when you find those moments where you truly feel that you have been transported back in time.

Such activity not only entertains the visitor, but can also motivate both visitor and living historian to learn more about their subject. For the living historian, such an immersion experience may validate certain information learned in text-based study. It also strengthens the ability to present to future audiences, as comments made are now experience based, not merely memorized facts. This translates to a more personalized first person sincerity when speaking with the public. We have been told by numerous visitors over the past twenty years that this format has provided a unique, dynamic, and inspiring experience for them.



**Figure 10.** *Rich Mountain, Beverly, West Virginia, 2011 Photograph taken at the summit of Rich Mountain, approximately 1:00 p.m. Arrived at this point after a six hour march. The fog obscured the view so individuals on the march had few clues as to where they were. The fog intensified the “immersion” nature of the event. Collection of Mike Peets.*

*The Immersion Experience: The Dunker Church, Antietam, Sharpsburg, Maryland and Rich Mountain, Beverly, West Virginia.*

**1. The Dunker Church, Antietam.** One of the most dramatic examples of this was when a large number of 150th members were by chance chosen to portray wounded soldiers in the Dunker Church as part of a candle light tour on the Antietam battlefield. Although given the broad scenario, no scripted vignettes were offered. The participants drew upon their knowledge of similar situations, based upon letters and diaries describing such events.

Spectators were led through a number of stations, (e.g. McClellan's headquarters, etc.) then they were cycled through the church lawn where wounded soldiers were being treated. As they approached the church, an orderly would open the door and throw severed limbs onto a pile. As spectators entered the candle lit church, they were first met by the smell (this was Saturday evening and we had arrived Friday night). As they travelled from the entry of the church and ultimately out the back they passed a number of scenes. I (Mike Peets) was involved in one with a friend who was outfitted to appear as though he had a sucking chest wound. My role was to comfort him, telling him he would not die, as I had promised his mother I would bring him home alive. He, in turn, did die, leaving me all the more upset. Later the Lieutenant (Pete Bedrossian) joined us and here he will pick up the story.

As I (Pete) entered the building I had to find the dim corner where "my boys" were. I had come ostensibly to see how they were. Coming upon them, my focus was Mike and Tom (the sucking chest wound). As Tom vomited blood (he was given a red syrup to drink) he would cough sputter, and pass away. I would ask him to hold the cross which I wore as my ID tag. He would clutch that, go in to seizure and die. Mike would become distraught as he had failed in his promise to keep Tom safe. I then had to shift my focus to consoling Mike. This unrehearsed scenario was played out perhaps a dozen or more times during the course of the evening. By the end of the evening, we were all physically and emotionally drained. As powerful as this was for the visitor, it left an indelible impression upon those of us presenting this scene.

**2. Rich Mountain, Beverly, West Virginia, 2011, 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Rich Mountain.** As dramatic as the above can be, there are other immersion experiences which are never seen by the public. What

these experiences do for us is similar to the above described scenario. They also contribute firsthand knowledge to further enhance our ability to relate the experiences of people and specifically soldiers of the nineteenth century. The image in Figure 10 depicts a march up Rich Mountain, Beverly, West Virginia. We were awakened at about 3:30 a.m. to stand in the mud for about an hour; then we proceeded to march up a mountain that was horribly rocky where we were literally in the clouds. We believe the image conveys the feeling of marching along not knowing how long we marched, what time it was, or how much longer we had to go, but simply behaving as soldiers just plodding along putting one foot in front of the other.

### *The “Typical” Living History Event*

Most typical of living history events though are the third person based events that combine living history displays, drill and firing demonstrations, camp life, and discussions with the spectators. The most enduring of these has been the annual living history program the 150th New York presents each October at the Gettysburg National Military Park in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The Friday-Sunday event is part of a National Park Service Program, which provides living history weekends 30 weekends each year. The 150th NY was vetted by National Park Service fourteen years ago and has been presenting a living history weekend each Columbus Day Weekend ever since.



**Figure 11.** *Firing Demonstration of the 150th New York at Gettysburg, 2003. Each Columbus Day Weekend since 2001 the 150th New York has presented a living history program at the Gettysburg National Military Park. This image shows the company firing from the area of the Union line on July 2nd and 3rd, across the field toward the Confederate lines. This field was the one well-known for Pickett’s Charge, July 3, 1863. Photograph. Collection of Pete Bedrossian.*



**Figure 12.** *The 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg Living History: Regimental sized Living History encampment, Gettysburg National Military Park, July 1-3 2013, 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. The 150th NY is the first long row of dog tents on the right. The 150th was one of twelve living history units at this event. The regiment is part of the National Regiment, an umbrella organization of living history units. Photograph. Collection of Pete Bedrossian.*



**Figure13.** *Ground level view of Gettysburg camp 2013, with spectators visible on the right. Tentage, and the items seen are correct to the 1863 timeframe. Photograph. Collection of Pete Bedrossian.*

This event begins with the arrival, on either Friday evening, or early Saturday morning. Tents are erected, the fire is started, gear and equipment are laid out for the public and then the unit falls in for a weapons inspection. This is a requirement for the Park Service, but is also done as a standard safety practice. It also provides an interpretive moment for visitors. The Park Service schedule calls for five firing/drill demonstrations (three on

Saturday and two on Sunday)(Figure 11). The Park is open from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and the public may enter the camp at any time during these hours. In our experience, visitors take full advantage of this time.

The public is made aware of the demonstration times, but is also explicitly invited to come back in to the camp at the end of the demonstration. These maneuvering and firing demonstrations run approximately 35-40 minutes. Each demonstration is narrated so that the public is made aware of what we are doing, as well as what it represents. At the conclusion, the visitors are given a chance to ask questions, and a few members of our regiment will stay behind to field questions from spectators.

Once visitors enter the camp, they are greeted, and the majority of the time is spent with third person interpretation. On occasion, if there are young visitors or people seem amenable, we will lapse in to a brief “first person” response mode in order to stimulate further discussion. While we often start by answering the question “who (or what) is the 150th NY? with a brief history. There is no set format and visitors are free to ask whatever questions they wish. The result is an evolving and often ongoing discussion of who we are, what we do, and what we have as display items. We were unaware of the impact this had until we questioned a family who came to the event five years in a row. We asked what kept bringing them back to speak with us as we were the same fellows. They replied that we always had something new to talk about. We kept updating ourselves and this was transferred to our presentations.

While such discussions generally begin either by our tents, or by the colors (flags), the fire pit is also part of the interpretive experience. We cook period-correct food items, such as slab bacon, hoe cakes and stews. We also bring whole bean coffee, crush the beans and boil them in our camp cups until “done.” These activities alone attract people who only use ground coffee, or sliced bacon and are unfamiliar with hoe cakes. (Hoe cakes are made by mixing cornmeal, flour and water to make a batter which is then fried in bacon grease. The name derives from being able to make this by frying it on the blade of the farming implement of the same name.)

Every activity can be interpreted. These events are not simply theatrical displays of musket firing but glimpses into the entire experience of the soldier. From the weapons inspection through the scheduled demonstrations and back into camp, no activity is “off limits.” For example, after the firing demonstrations, soldiers often clean their weapons. The public is welcome

to watch, and ask about the process. This is something the soldiers all did, and it offers a springboard for discussing weapons technology as well as the simple question: “how did you do that?”



**Figure 14.** *Cooking fire at Gettysburg. Note the coffee boilers (top) and the shovel frying pan with hoe cake [cornmeal and flour mix] and bacon (bottom). As digging is prohibited on National Park property, this fire is built on an exposed boulder. Photograph. Collection of Pete Bedrossian.*

## **Conclusion**

One significant point of living history is that it focuses on the history of the common person, rather than concentrating on the “Great Man” approach to history with which most people are familiar. Living history allows for the presentation of a personal side of history that can be relevant to visitor and historian alike. It can be immediate and vivid—a lived experience. It was indeed common people who made up the majority of those who actually made military history. The immediacy of military life is emphasized by what we do and our first person personae. People often say that history happened long ago and far away. We cannot change the timing, but through living history, we bring that “far away” closer to home.



# The Second Surrender: Sherman's 1865 Campaign in the Carolinas and the End of the Civil War

*by Keith Altavilla*

The Civil War is full of enduring images. We celebrate the bravery and sacrifice of American soldiers who fought to end slavery and keep united the nation that Lincoln referred to as “the last best hope of earth.” We can picture the dead on previously little known places like Shiloh, Antietam, and Chickamauga, and Lincoln calling back to the nation’s founding “four score and seven years ago” at Gettysburg. As we mark the end of the war’s sesquicentennial, our thoughts understandably turn to the war’s conclusion, of Grant and Lee shaking hands at Appomattox and binding the nation’s wounds in a spirit of reconciliation. But wars do not end that easily, or that quickly. Lee holds an outsized position in the American mind, and the surrender of his army had a significant impact on the conflict’s conclusion. Appomattox, though, was not the end; rather it represents the beginning of the end, the start of a long process by which rebels across the South slowly laid down their arms. William T. Sherman’s campaign through the Carolinas, culminating in the surrender of a large Confederate army under Joseph E. Johnston at Durham Station, was a significant part of this process. His marches demonstrated to the South that further resistance would only lead to greater devastation. The controversy that surrounds this surrender also, in its own way, reveals the deep uncertainties that characterized the slow end to the Civil War.

As the calendar turned to 1865, the situation for the Confederacy appeared dire. Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia barely hung on to their positions against Ulysses S. Grant at Petersburg. At the same time, Sherman’s army waited in Savannah after his famous March to the Sea, which had demonstrated the South’s inability to check his advance, while additional Union armies controlled the Mississippi River valley and central Tennessee. Perhaps most importantly, Abraham Lincoln had been overwhelmingly re-elected to the presidency the previous November. In handing “Honest Abe” a second term, northern voters had clearly demonstrated the depth of their resolve to continue the war until the Confederacy surrendered. Furthermore, continued implementation of the Emancipation Proclamation as Union armies advanced across the South wrecked the

slave system that underpinned southern society. Even if the Confederates had found some way to earn their independence, it is not clear what kind of a victory they could celebrate.

And yet the Confederacy fought on. Lee's army had not broken at Petersburg, even after a six-month campaign that came directly on the heels of Grant's bloody advance to the city from the Rappahannock River. Though fewer than their Union foes, Lee's men stayed—battle-hardened veterans committed to defeating their old foes in the Army of the Potomac. Additional Confederate troops gathered in the Carolinas, eventually under the command of the capable, if uninspiring, Joseph E. Johnston. By March, Confederate president Jefferson Davis would appoint Lee to the position of general in chief, and the Confederate congress seriously debated arming slaves to bolster their ranks. The South was desperate, but not beaten.

For Sherman, this deep Confederate resolve only furthered his desire to inflict destruction upon the South. This arose not from personal animus toward southerners, but rather a deep concern for the devastating power of war. Sherman had a great fondness for southerners, having spent a good deal of time there as president of the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy (now Louisiana State University). "War is hell," he would repeat for the rest of his days, and secession, which begat anarchy, which had started this war. Sherman was determined to bring the reality of disunion to those responsible, to show them the error of their ways through unrelenting destruction. The sooner Sherman could bring the war's devastation to the southern heartland, the sooner they would learn to end the fighting. The March to the Sea had been merely the first leg of a proposed long advance through the untouched regions of the Atlantic South. In explaining his plan to Grant in November, Sherman proposed moving first toward Savannah, and following that, "I could re-enforce our armies in Virginia." The Confederates abandoned the coastal city on December 20, 1864, and Savannah's mayor surrendered the town to Sherman that same day, allowing the general to present this prize to Lincoln, "as a Christmas gift." Union troops spent over a month in the city, resting and refitting while Sherman consulted with his superiors regarding the path to Virginia. Grant and the Army's chief of staff Henry W. Halleck agreed that it would be best for Sherman to march overland through to the Carolinas rather than attempt a lengthy overseas transport operation. His first target would be Columbia, the South Carolina capital, before eventually moving toward Goldsboro, North Carolina. Then, if time and Robert E. Lee allowed, he would join Grant outside Richmond.<sup>1</sup>

## To the Carolinas

On February 1, 1865, Sherman departed from Savannah with two veteran armies commanded by experienced leaders of his choosing (Figure 1). Leading the march, after a feint toward Charleston, would be the Army of the Tennessee, now led by Oliver Howard. Long nicknamed “the Christian soldier” for his noted religiosity, Howard was a capable leader and loyal to Sherman. He had commanded the heavily German XI Corps through disasters at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, then their successful fights at Chattanooga and towards Atlanta. When he left Savannah for the campaign, Howard’s army contained two corps, the XV and XVII, led by a pair of so-called “political generals.” John A. Logan, an Illinois Democrat who led XV Corps, was a capable combat leader who Grant and others regularly considered for higher command. Francis Preston Blair, Jr., commanding XVII Corps, was a member of the powerful Blair family, and a close



**Figure 1.** *Sherman and His Generals: Seated front and center is Sherman, surrounded by many of his trusted generals from the marches through Georgia and the Carolinas. Oliver O. Howard (standing, far left), Jefferson C. Davis (standing, second from right), John Logan (seated, left), and Henry W. Slocum (seated, right). Photograph. Library of Congress. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cwpbh.03225>*

friend of Sherman. On Sherman's left was Henry Slocum and the Army of Georgia, comprised of the XIV and XX Corps, who were to push inland along the Savannah River to threaten Augusta. One of the army's youngest major generals, Slocum had previously commanded both the XII and XX Corps. He was a tough, no-nonsense leader, though his unhurried actions at Gettysburg had earned him the nickname "Slow come." Jefferson C. Davis, a fiery and combative general with an unfortunate name, remained in command of XIV Corps, while the gentlemanly Alpheus Williams took over XX Corps. Marching under Williams, as part of the 2nd Brigade, First Division, was the 150th New York, now under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Alfred B. Smith. Following their first taste of combat at Gettysburg, the Dutchess County Regiment had remained with XII Corps, and then gone west to participate in the Atlanta Campaign and the March to the Sea.

Complementing Sherman's numbers would be additional men stationed on the coast. John Schofield and the 21,000 men of XXIII Corps were underway from Tennessee to New Bern, North Carolina. At the same time, a detachment under John W. Terry headed toward the North Carolina coast to capture Fort Fisher and Wilmington. Grant gave Sherman access to these troops for additional support should he need it, placing all troops in the Carolinas under Sherman's command. By the beginning of April, Sherman would lead over 88,000 men in the Carolinas. This was a veteran army, with many men who had marched to the sea, prepared to follow "Uncle Billy" wherever he would lead them. Its leadership, in the judgment of prominent historian Joseph Glatthaar, was more experienced than any other Federal command.<sup>2</sup>

Moving north would pose a different series of challenges for Sherman from his previous campaign across Georgia. Whereas the march through Georgia had run parallel to the state's major rivers, now Union armies would have to cross nine major waterways, plus various tributaries, to reach Goldsboro. Difficult in good conditions, the march Sherman's men now embarked upon was during one of the wettest winters in recent memory. Slocum in particular remembered the long delays each river presented. Just to begin the march, in crossing the Savannah River at Sister's Ferry, a crossing they expected to find only "a few yards in width," was instead "covered with water, extending nearly half a mile from the river." Captain Daniel Oakey of the 2nd Massachusetts, remembered wading "in water knee-deep" at the crossing. This flooded crossing was a fitting start to the march that followed.<sup>3</sup>

Confederate leadership did not believe Sherman would be able to make substantial progress through the swamps (Figure 2). Joe Johnston wrote that it would be “absolutely impossible for an army to march across the lower portion of the State in winter.” To deal with the conditions, Sherman designated “pioneer battalions” of soldiers and freedmen to push in front of the main army. These pioneers built corduroy roads and bridges to provide passageways for men and wagons. Corduroy roads involved cutting down the many trees the army encountered to create makeshift roads for horses and wagons over the mud and swampy terrain. Though he thought little of the former slaves that trailed along with his army (they could only slow the march and consume rations), Sherman was able to find some use for freedmen in this circumstance. As in Georgia, scattered Confederate cavalry attempted to harass the march, but Union troops waded through chest-deep, reptile-infested water to brush them aside. Arguably, given the geographic circumstances, the march made by Sherman and his men in South Carolina was one of the most impressive of the war for any army on either side. Certainly Johnston thought so, for when he remarked on the pace and success of Sherman’s advance, he decided admiringly, “that there had been no such army in existence since the days of Julius Caesar.”<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 2.** *Through the Swamps: Sherman’s troopers built corduroy roads through the swamps of South Carolina, keeping their horses and wagons moving.* Drawing, *Battles & Leaders of the Civil War*. <https://ehistory.osu.edu/books/battles/vol4/681>

The men had additional motivation as they headed for South Carolina. This was the center of secessionist sentiment, the first state to attempt to leave the Union; and Union soldiers relished their opportunity to inflict damage. As one Iowa soldier wrote, “South Carolina cried out the first for

war and she shall have it to her heart's content." Even Slocum, who opposed much of the war's widespread devastation, remarked that, "It would have been a sin to have had the war brought to a close without bringing upon the original aggressor some of its pains." Even shortly after arriving in Savannah, Sherman shared with Grant his belief "that the whole United States, North and South, would rejoice to have this army turned loose on South Carolina to devastate that State." South Carolina had always been on Sherman's mind, while moving through Georgia reported to inquiring civilians that, "we were *en route* for that State."<sup>5</sup>

By way of comparison, stories of Union devastation in Georgia are somewhat overstated. Troops destroyed barns and factories, but notably protected private homes and other dwellings as much as possible. Similar reports of widespread rape and murder are sketchy at best, if not unreliable. According to historian Mark Grimsley, who has effectively coined the term "hard war" as a description of Union policy, Sherman and his commanders tried to keep the destruction there to items of military necessity (though he points out that Sherman never really gave any definition for what constituted "militarily advantageous"). In South Carolina, by contrast, destruction was widespread. While in Georgia, commanders could pin atrocities on "the few (ever found in large bodies of men) who were disorderly and vicious," they made no such effort after Savannah. Troops made a point of pillaging and destroying as many buildings as possible in the state. Also as in Georgia, Union soldiers wrecked southern infrastructure. They tore up railroads, wrapping the iron around trees into the famous "Sherman neckties." Perhaps the most fitting conclusion on this theme of destruction came from the memory of a South Carolina woman who, years after the war, recalled soldiers apologizing to women and children for their actions, telling them "South Carolina must be destroyed."<sup>6</sup>

As in Georgia, Sherman intended to supply his men off the land. This would theoretically give him greater freedom of movement, as he no longer needed to spare men for guarding a supply train. The constant need to feed his army would be Sherman's chief concern throughout the campaign, and he reported to Grant that he proposed moving through populated areas, reasoning that, "where other people live we can, even if they have to starve or move away." Sherman's foragers and bummers became famous (or infamous) for their tenacity and success. Every part of the army took part, and Captain Oakey described the foragers as "a picked force from each regiment...and were remarkable for intelligence, spirit, and daring." Upon finding a plantation house, foragers would immediately strip it of all

livestock and edible items. Furthermore, foragers had become practiced at searching out hidden stores, and commandeering whatever equipment was available to transport food back to the brigade. The 150th were active participants in these expeditions, and the numbers of their collection illuminates and the kind of material available to advancing armies, and what was necessary to feed a regiment. Lt. Col. Smith reported that, for the period from January 17 to March 24, the regiment destroyed 440 cotton bales, 6 cotton presses, and captured 55 mules, 20 horses, 40 cattle, 9,550 pounds of cornmeal, 1,500 pounds of flour, 100 bushels of potatoes, 200 gallons of molasses, 300 pounds of lard, and 12,000 pounds of salt meat.<sup>7</sup>

Sherman's operational feinting toward Charleston managed to fit well with Confederate thinking. If South Carolina had been the secession movement's most prominent state, then Charleston was its beating heart, the city that had ratified the secession ordinance and fired on Fort Sumter to begin the conflict. Charleston had already been effectively under siege by the Union navy since the summer of 1863. If Sherman were headed anywhere in the state, surely it was a coastal city with access to supplies by sea, and one the Union would relish the chance to destroy. Families on the coast transferred many of their belongings to Columbia, convinced it was one of the most secure places in the South. Furthermore, the difficult terrain the Union army would no doubt struggle with as they moved through South Carolina made Sherman's advance unthinkable to Confederate leadership. Pierre G. T. Beauregard, commanding what troops existed in South Carolina, saw his reports of Sherman's advance regarded with disbelief in Richmond. The arrival of Union troops in the state capital no doubt came as a great shock to many across the South.

Troops of Logan's XV Corps reached Columbia on February 17, 1865. To curry the soldiers' favor, locals turned out and, in the report of one division commander, "most unwisely furnished them with great quantities of intoxicating liquors, bringing it out in buckets, cups, and vessels of every description." Logan also discovered the city's streets littered with small fires and other items left by retreating Confederate forces on their way out of town. Upon Sherman's arrival in the city later that afternoon, he placed Howard in command of the city to restore some order. That evening, wind took the fire from smoldering cotton bales and spread it across the city. In the chaos, some soldiers continued to loot the town, others, still quite drunk, aided the fire, while still more tried to fight the growing blaze. It was not until nearly 4:00 in the morning that the wind died down, and Union troops got the fire under control. Though regularly



**Figure 3.** *The Burning of Columbia: Much of the South Carolina capital burned on the night of February 17, 1865 and various parts of the Union army occupying the city worked to either encourage or control the blaze. Library of Congress. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ppmsca.33131>*

accused of setting the fire (part of the greater historical trend castigating his wartime acts), Sherman never claimed responsibility. The next day, his diary recorded “high winds, Cotton in the streets fired by the enemy, and the General animosity of our own men” as the cause. Years after the war, Sherman would continue to refuse responsibility, saying that he would not try to cover up what happened given the way his men had so brazenly destroyed so many other buildings.<sup>8</sup>

### ***To Battle***

On February 22, 1865, the Confederates were finally able to build some organization to their resistance in the Carolinas. Lee appointed Joseph E. Johnston to command all Confederate troops east of the Mississippi with the exception of his own at Petersburg. Given the lack of territory currently under Confederate control, this effectively meant only the Rebel armies now gathering in North Carolina. Reflecting his long adversarial relationship with the general, Davis resisted Johnston’s appointment before Lee convinced him there was no other option. To soothe the president, Johnston would continue working with Pierre G. T. Beauregard, though he, Johnston, was clearly the commanding officer. Johnston had available

to him roughly three corps of infantry, under William Hardee, Alexander Stewart, and Stephen D. Lee, plus two substantial cavalry forces under Wade Hampton and Joseph Wheeler. Hampton had been with Robert E. Lee in Virginia, commanding the cavalry after the death of J. E. B. Stuart at Yellow Tavern. With little use for the cavalry at Petersburg, especially during the winter, Lee sent Hampton south to recruit. Hardee and Wheeler's men had ineffectively harassed Sherman through Georgia, while Stewart and Lee led remnants of the Confederate army nearly destroyed at Nashville. While hardly an imposing force, they were dangerous, and Johnston endeavored to split Sherman's force and defeat it in detail.

As Union troops continued north towards Goldsboro, cavalry scouts discovered that Hardee was blocking part of the road between the Cape Fear and Black Rivers that led to Averasboro. Johnston wanted Hardee to delay the Union advance in order to keep Sherman's men divided. Men of the XX Corps (including the 150th) made a night march so that early in the morning on March 16, they could push Hardee back and clear the road.



**Figure 4.** *Lieutenant David Sleight, commander of Company I in the 150th Regiment New York State Volunteer Infantry. Photograph. Collection of the Dutchess County Historical Society.*



**Figure 5.** *The Grave of David Sleight: Lieutenant David Sleight, commander of Company I in the 150th New York, was killed at the Battle of Averasboro, and is now buried at the LaGrange Rural Cemetery in Poughkeepsie. Photograph by K. Altavilla.*

Union troops drove to the Confederate defenses, and pushed through two lines before meeting stiff resistance. The 150th participated in the pushes, deploying on the brigade's right. They advanced two miles, captured eight prisoners, and took seventeen casualties. Lt. Col. Smith's report specifically mentioned the death of Company I's commander, Lieutenant David B. Sleight of LaGrange, whom he labeled, "a most worthy, efficient, and brave officer." Sleight's body was returned to New York, and he was buried in the Lagrange Rural Cemetery. While XX Corps settled into fieldworks, Slocum sent XIV Corps for reinforcements. The swampy ground delayed their deployment until nightfall, preventing further action. His work complete, Hardee withdrew overnight, and Union troops found the Confederate works empty on the morning of March 17. Effectively, the fight at Averasboro was little more than a skirmish. This designation, though, tells us little about the experience of the men who fought. Indeed, the historian Burke Davis reports that the Dutchess County Regiment had fought "ten hours without relief," and regimental histories would cite it as "the most severe action of the war."<sup>9</sup>

With his army gathered by March 19, two days later, Johnston prepared for a much larger confrontation, this time near Bentonville. The Confederates believed incorrectly that Howard's army, the Union right, was at least a day's march away from Slocum. Johnston seized on this as an opportunity to defeat the Union army in detail, likely his only path to stopping Sherman in North Carolina. Though Johnston's assessment of the situation was incorrect, Sherman held a similarly inaccurate view of the Confederates, which provided Johnston his opportunity. Sherman and his leadership were unaware that Johnston's army had united, and did not believe that he would attack with his rear so close to the Neuse River. On March 19, Davis and XIV Corps encountered some Confederates along the road to Goldsboro. Believing them to be only cavalry, his commander, Slocum, ordered one division to push them out of the way. These were infantry, though, and they repulsed the attack. Slocum ordered his men to fall back and prepare defensive positions until the rest of his army could arrive. That afternoon, the Confederates attacked, and drove back XIV Corps, nearly surrounding one of Davis' divisions. Late into the afternoon, Sherman believed that Slocum could not be facing the entire Confederate army, and was slow to call for Howard's army to move toward Bentonville. Elements of XX Corps were thrown into the fight as they moved into position, and desperate fighting well into the night saved the Union position.

Later the next day, Howard's army arrived, and extended the Union line. The rest of XX Corps came up as well, including the 150th New York.

Sherman ordered Howard to swing forward and attack the Confederates, but the day saw only light skirmishing as Johnston had already begun to pull back his army. He did not withdraw though, instead having his men fortify their ground. He hoped that Sherman would launch a frontal assault, and his men would be able to inflict severe casualties from a strong position. On March 21, Sherman authorized the division of Joseph Mower (part of Blair's XVII Corps) to launch a reconnaissance mission along the Confederate left. Mower found the position weakened, and continued driving forward, even overrunning Johnston's headquarters. A last minute counterattack by William Hardee saved the Confederate lines and maintained their avenue of escape across the Neuse. Heavily outnumbered, Johnston began to withdraw that night, ending the battle at Bentonville. Johnston had surprised the Union army, but because they were closer together than he knew, was unable to defeat either wing alone. Sherman, meanwhile, had erred in not keeping his traditional caution, allowing his army to be surprised. In response, he then became overly cautious, and allowed Johnston to escape, perhaps missing an opportunity to trap and destroy the Confederate army.

### *To Peace*

On April 9, 1865, Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox, thus finally putting into motion the end of the Confederacy. Though they had ceded Richmond, the Davis government was on the run, refusing to surrender. Still, Lee's defeat signaled for many southerners that the end was near. Though the destruction of telegraph lines prevented regular news from reaching North Carolina, the state's governor Zebulon Vance was no fool, and saw the developing situation. He began corresponding with Sherman regarding the state's official surrender. Discussions on April 11 were cordial, though Vance himself fled the capital the next day, preventing a proper surrender. Sherman and his men occupied Raleigh, and upon his arrival, Sherman held a review. His massive army marched in front of the state capital in front of crowds of curious, and sad, North Carolinians.

By this point, the Confederate government had reached Greensboro, where Davis and new secretary of war, John C. Breckinridge, met with Johnston and Beauregard. Though the president insisted that a new army could be raised and the fight continued, Johnston insisted on the ability to open negotiation with Sherman. Davis acquiesced, and continued south. Late on April 14, Johnston's message offering the surrender of his army reached Sherman. The general replied immediately, and offered Johnston the same terms Grant had given to Lee at Appomattox, that is parole for all Confed-

erate soldiers. When news of the proposal leaked, Union soldiers erupted in delight, throwing aside their hats, and their weapons. Sherman himself was more cautious. Johnston might be sincere, but it would be better to wrap up the surrender quickly, and not allow the Confederates space to disappear into roving guerrillas. He agreed to meet with the Rebel general on April 17 at the Bennett farmhouse in Durham, North Carolina. At the time, the town was little more than a railroad depot several miles west of Raleigh and known as Durham Station. On April 15, he telegraphed Grant and Stanton regarding Johnston's proposal, informed them of his intended terms, and otherwise offered, "not to complicate any points of civil policy."<sup>10</sup>

As he rode to meet Johnston, word arrived that Lincoln was dead, shot at Ford's Theater just days after Lee's surrender. A similar, unsuccessful, attempt had been made on Secretary of State William Seward, and according to Stanton, there existed "evidence that an assassin is also on your track." Upon meeting, Sherman presented Johnston with the telegram announcing Lincoln's death. Johnston quietly referred to the act as "the greatest possible calamity." While Sherman assured his foe that he did not blame the Confederate military for what had happened, he could not say the same for Jefferson Davis or his would-be government. The news also appeared to make Johnston even more amenable to surrendering, and furthermore, he offered the possibility that he could surrender all remaining Confederate forces. Sherman was quite willing to discuss the offer, but wondered about Johnston's ability to do so. While Johnston might not be able to make such a promise, John Breckinridge was nearby and could actually negotiate such a deal. The two sides agreed to meet the next day.<sup>11</sup>

Sherman announced the president's death upon his return to the army in Raleigh after his first discussion with Johnston. "Thus it seems that our enemy," he told his men, "despairing of meeting us in open, manly warfare, begins to resort to the assassin's tools." Sherman also further revealed his concern over the possibility that the war could extend without a clear resolution. He warned that his men "must now be prepared for [rebellion] in its last and worst shape, that of assassins and guerrillas." During the night, soldiers walked through the town looking for targets on which to pour their wrath, and sang "We'll hang Jeff Davis to a Sour Apple Tree." In order to prevent Raleigh from meeting the same fate as Columbia, Sherman posted guards around the city and rode through the camps.<sup>12</sup>

On April 18, Sherman returned at Durham Station to meet Johnston and Breckinridge (Figure 6). After rejecting a proposal drafted by Confederate postmaster general John Regan, Sherman wrote out his own agreement. In

it, he suggested very broad terms, far beyond those in his purview as a military commander negotiating the surrender of an army. Confederate troops would deposit their arms in state arsenals and submit to federal authority. The federal government would also recognize state governments that took oaths of loyalty and, more importantly, would guarantee the political, personal, and property rights of “people and inhabitants of all the States.” The document did not mention slavery, in part because, according to Sherman, “Both Generals Johnston and Breckinridge admitted that slavery was dead, and I could not insist on embracing it in such a paper.” At the end of the discussion, Sherman had a document that offered what he concluded was “an absolute submission of the enemy to the lawful authority of the United States.” He offered not just an end to fighting in North Carolina, but perhaps across the entire nation.<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 6.** *Sherman and Johnston: Less celebrated than Lee and Grant at Appomattox, the meetings between Sherman and Johnston at the Bennett House in North Carolina were just as important to determining the Civil War's end, and its meaning. Photograph. Library of Congress. : <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3b53123>*

However proud Sherman may have been of his work, it was not well received in Washington. His politically savvy subordinates Slocum and Logan both saw the deal as unworkable, while Grant passed it forward expecting a poor reaction. Their fears were correct, as Stanton, and new president Andrew Johnson, and the entire cabinet quickly rejected Sher-

man's proposed deal. Stanton in particular saw trouble in Sherman's work. In the aftermath of Lincoln's assassination, with the president dead, Seward also recovering, and Johnson unsure of his new position, Stanton had assumed a prominent role in governance. Lee's surrender had not ended the rebellion, and Davis' flight from Richmond made it possible that the South would continue to fight on in a guerrilla war. Stanton had also received a suggestion from Henry Halleck that prominent men in Richmond suggested Johnston's negotiations were meant to create a delay and allow Davis to escape. What Sherman saw as a quick return to order and stability, Stanton described as weakness. Furthermore, Sherman's proposal to re-establish state governments went well beyond his purview as a military commander, and the antagonistic press referred to him as a dictator. What was even more explosive politically was Sherman's ignorance of the slavery question. Combined with his previous expressions of antipathy towards freemen, it did not take much for Stanton and others to accuse Sherman of wanting to maintain slavery in the South. Making matters worse, Stanton's objections appeared in newspapers on April 23, before Sherman even learned of them.<sup>14</sup>

Stanton ordered Grant south to negotiate in Sherman's place, using only his more limited terms from Appomattox. Grant's arrival in Durham immediately suggested a problem to Sherman, and at that point, the subsequent rejection of his terms should not have come as a surprise. Looking to calm his old friend, Grant blamed the rejection on the hysteria surrounding Lincoln's death. Grant was also quite politically perceptive, and ignored other parts of Stanton's orders. He chose to remain quietly on the sidelines while Sherman presented this new proposal to the Confederates. Sherman wrote to Johnston, withdrawing the original terms and demanding his surrender. Like his counterpart, Johnston had little stomach for continuing the fight in any capacity, and agreed to a meeting. They met again on April 26, with Sherman offering only a new agreement that repeated the terms given to Lee. They signed the agreement, and Grant brought it back to Washington.

With the peace finally concluded, Sherman and his army made their way north. They passed through Richmond, then Fredericksburg, before arriving in Alexandria just outside the nation's capital. Nearly four months after departing from Savannah, the western troops now marched through Washington as part of the Grand Review on May 24. The day before, George Meade and the Army of the Potomac had paraded smartly in front of Grant, Johnson, and other assorted dignitaries. Sherman fretted over the day to follow, worried about the comparisons between the practiced easterners

and his rougher western army. The next day, after he passed the reviewing stand, Sherman would look back at his men, and proudly note they were “simply magnificent.” As another observer noted, these Union troops, conquerors of the Deep South, marched, “like the lords of the world.”

Rebellion, in some form or fashion, would continue for several months. Andrew Johnson had officially declared an end to hostilities on May 9, and Union cavalry captured Jefferson Davis near Irwinville, Georgia the next day. On May 12-13, armies clashed at Palmito Ranch, near the Texas-Mexico border, in the war’s last significant battle. The last Confederate army to surrender was that belonging to Cherokee chief Stand Wattie, who laid down their arms in Oklahoma on June 23. Finally, the crew of the C.S.S. *Shenandoah* became the final Confederates to surrender when they did so at Liverpool, England on November 6, 1865, almost seven months after Lee at Appomattox. The end of the Civil War, like the rest of the conflict, was a messy process, its outcome uncertain until its actual conclusion. The controversy that surrounded Johnston’s surrender in North Carolina reveals some of that uncertainty. Both well-meaning men, Sherman and Stanton disagreed about the nature of the war’s end, and what a defeated South should look like. That it spilled out in the way it did demonstrates the depth of feeling on both sides, and their sense of the stakes involved. With so many questions unanswered, the manner in which Sherman accepted Johnston’s defeat could have serious ramifications for the next struggle: that of defining the war’s legacy.

<sup>1</sup> Sherman to Grant, November 6, 1864, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 127 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), [hereafter cited as *OR*], ser. 1, vol. 39, pt. 3, 660; Sherman to Lincoln, December 22, 1864, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 44, 783.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph T. Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond: Sherman’s Troops in the Savannah and Carolinas Campaigns* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 17-21.

<sup>3</sup> Henry W. Slocum, “Sherman’s March from Savannah to Bentonville,” in Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1956) 4:684; Daniel Oakey, “Marching Through Georgia and the Carolinas,” *Battles and Leaders*, 4:671.

<sup>4</sup> Quotes from James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 827-828.

- <sup>5</sup> Quotes from Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond*, 79; Sherman to Grant, December 18, 1864, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. XLIV, 743; Sherman quoted in Slocum, "Sherman's March from Savannah," *Battles and Leaders*, 4:683.
- <sup>6</sup> Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians 1861-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 198-200; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 826.
- <sup>7</sup> Sherman to Halleck, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. XLVII, part II, 136; Oakey, "Marching Through Georgia and the Carolinas," *Battles and Leaders*, 4: 672-673; Report of Col. Alfred B. Smith, March 25, 1865, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 47, part I, 654.
- <sup>8</sup> C. R. Woods to Major Max Hall, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. XLVII, part 2, 457-458; John F. Marszalek, *Sherman: A Soldier's Passion for Order* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), 325.
- <sup>9</sup> Report of Col. Alfred B. Smith, March 25, 1865, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 47, part I, 653; Burke Davis, *Sherman's March: The First Full-Length Narrative of General William T. Sherman's Devastating March through Georgia and the Carolinas* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 229.
- <sup>10</sup> Sherman to Grant and Stanton, April 15, 1865, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 47, part III, 221.
- <sup>11</sup> Stanton to Sherman, April 15, 1865, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 47, part III, 221.
- <sup>12</sup> Sherman, Special Field Orders No. 56, April 17, 1865, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 47, part III, 239.
- <sup>13</sup> Sherman to Grant or Halleck, April 18, 1865, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. 47, part III, 243-244.
- <sup>14</sup> Halleck to Stanton, April 22, 1865, *OR*, ser. 1, vol. XLVII, part 3, 277.



*The Perfect Gift*



an APPLE

# ARTICLES

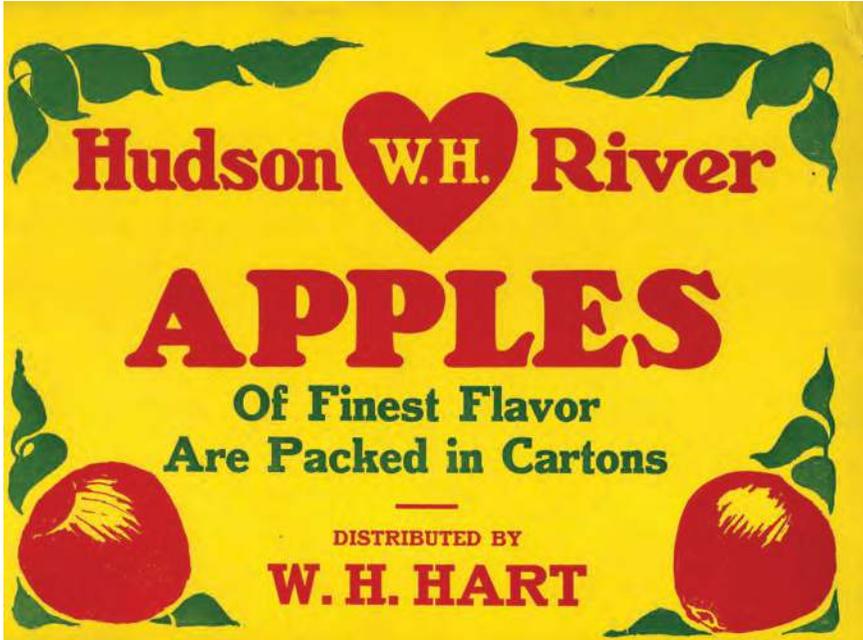




# The Hart-Hubbard Farm Records Collection

by Carla R. Lesh

Archivist, Dutchess County Historical Society



**Figure 1.** "Hudson River Apples of Finest Flavor are Packed in Cartons, Distributed by W. H. Hart." Small yellow and red flyer prepared for the apple growing business of the Hart and Hubbard family. Date c. 1930s-early 1940s. Photograph by C. Lesh. Hart-Hubbard Collection. Collection of the Dutchess County Historical Society.

Arrangement and description of the extensive collection of archival and photographic materials pertaining to the Hart-Hubbard family apple growing and wholesale business based in LaGrange, Dutchess County, New York (Figure 1), extended from fall of 2014 to the summer of 2015. The arrangement and description of this collection (Figure 2) was made possible by a matching grant from the Documentary Heritage Program of the New York State Archives, a program of the State Education Department, and was matched by the Lillian J. Cumming Streetscape Fund, Rhode Island Foundation. The collection is now available for use

by researchers. It has been entered into the Library of Congress National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections to inform researchers far and wide about the collection.

This collection includes detailed business and financial records of the apple growing and wholesale business of the Hubbard and Hart families, records and ephemera from the New York & New England Apple Institute, family diaries, graphic materials, and a small local ephemera collection. The Hart and Hubbard families' primary business was their large farm in LaGrange, Dutchess County, New York—just outside of Poughkeepsie. The family also owned a wholesale market in the Bronx, New York, and an orange growing business in Federal Point, Florida. The Hubbard Family Papers record the activities and finances of a large apple agriculture and wholesale business in New York's Mid-Hudson Valley from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s.



**Figure 2.** *The Hart-Hubbard Collection after archiving in 2014-2015. The collection, which had been accumulating at the family farm for over a hundred years, arrived at the Dutchess County Historical Society in many cardboard boxes. Our archivist, Carla Lesh, with assistance from an intern, checked, organized, and catalogued all the items and placed them in acid-free archival museum boxes. Photograph by C. Lesh. Collection of the Dutchess County Historical Society.*

In 1837, Benjamin Hall Hart purchased a 150-acre farm in LaGrange and moved his family there from Long Island to establish the region's first commercial orchard. He and his family completed their home, named "Heartsease," in 1838 on Overlook Road, and then housed the nine-member family (Figure 3). They planted fruit trees, established a tree nursery,



**Figure 3.** *View of the apple orchard at Heartsease, the Hart-Hubbard homestead in Lagrange, Dutchess County, New York. Photograph. Hart-Hubbard Collection. Collection of the Dutchess County Historical Society.*

raised livestock, and produced a variety of crops. Hart also purchased land in Federal Point, Florida, in 1867, where he established an orange-growing business.

Benjamin Hart died in 1875 and his son William Hall Hart took over the family business. William's sister, Louisa, married Edwin Smith Hubbard and the two—along with three of the other Hart siblings—moved to Florida to manage the family orange groves. Louisa and Edwin's two children, Edith and E. Stuart Hubbard, returned to the Poughkeepsie area for their education—with E. Stuart studying at the Riverview Military Academy. After his education, E. Stuart returned to Florida to help manage the family's orange groves with his father. He would travel back to LaGrange each fall to help his uncle, William Hall Hart, with the apple harvest, managing the sales and transport of apples at rail stations in Dutchess County. By 1917, E. Stuart Hubbard was residing permanently at Heartsease, and, in 1934 after the death of his uncle, William Hall Hart, he assumed ownership of the family business. He married Martha White and their son, E. Stuart Hubbard, Jr., was born in 1919. Young Stuart would eventually take over the management of the farm as well as greatly expand the family's business interests. His presence would become so central to the business that the farm would cease operations shortly after his death in 1962.

E. Stuart Hubbard Jr. (known as Stuart) was an active and influential member of New York's apple farming community. He was a founding member and president of the New York State Horticultural Society and he helped establish the New York and New England Apple Institute with another local farmer, Thomas E. Cross. The Institute was established in 1935 to combat what the farmers saw as increased competition from more exotic fruits like bananas, oranges, and pineapples, now entering the market because of more available transportation. They advocated for the increased consumption of apples. Stuart was a tireless promoter with a gift for public relations. He was the driving force behind the great number of colorful posters, pamphlets, and other promotional materials that so enrich this collection (Figures 1, 4). Before his death, Stuart Hubbard wrote a 30-page manuscript that detailed the first 25 years of the Institute. The organization survived until 1994 when it was reorganized with other groups to form the New York Apple Association.



**Figure 4.** "Hudson River Northern Spies Make the Finest Sauce and Pies." Date c. 1940. A promotional flyer. Hart-Hubbard Collection. Collection of the Dutchess County Historical Society.

The New York & New England Apple Institute papers of E. Stuart Hubbard Jr. pertain to his affiliation with the Institute, his history of that organization, and his writings on horticulture and farm production. This includes bulletins, pamphlets and other publications created by the Institute and related organizations such as the International Apple Shippers' Association. Also included are published lists of prices for apples across different



**Figure 5.** *!Apples! Not Spinach Did That!* by student: Dorothy Stone, 18 Pelhamside Drive, New Rochelle, New York. School: Isaac E. Young High School, 8th Grade. Art Teacher – F. Coulter. Poster from Hubbard Collection Apple Contest, 1941, entered by school children, high school and middle school, New York State. In need of conservation. Photograph by Carla Lesh. Collection of the Dutchess County Historical Society.

states and regions. The 1941 poster contest collection includes 77 hand-drawn and brilliantly colored posters submitted to the New York & New England Apple Institute contest by school children (grades 8 through 12, Figures 5-6). The posters are valuable for their artistic merit, their stunning colors (still fresh) and their designs. In addition, the collection of posters is quite unique as history—providing an opportunity to see the artwork and social interests of society through the special interests of school children. As the posters all date to one year—1941, they exist as a snapshot in time, just before the beginning of World War II. This small, discrete collection needs conservation; we are actively searching for a donor interested in this project.

Graphic materials include photographic prints that depict the Hart and Hubbard families' wholesale apple business. Images of apple trees, production facilities, storage, and transportation are present along with some images of the family members themselves. For example, one image depicts the Bronx Terminal Market Mayoral Committee in the office of Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia. Marketing materials include multi-color images used for labeling and marketing the apples and other produce.

The E. Stuart Hubbard Diaries Series includes the diaries of E. Stuart Hubbard Jr. The 24 bound journals are complete from 1949 to 1962 and provide daily entries describing life at Heartsease, the family farm, from ages 30 to 43. Journals kept by Martha White Hubbard are included in this series. The Hubbard family's work with the Town of LaGrange School District #12—1923-1927 and the LaGrange Cemetery Association—1915-1960 is included in the collection.



**Figure 6.** “The Perfect Gift: an Apple,” awarded Grand Prize in New York State and New England Apple Poster Contest. Poster from Hubbard Collection, Apple Contest, 1941, entered by school children, high school and middle school from New York State. The winning entry was submitted By Betty Torpy, Lancaster High, Lancaster, New York. Hart-Hubbard Farm Collection, Dutchess County Historical Society.

Personal correspondence spans 1862-1963 and documents Federal Point, Florida and Dutchess County, New York. Included in this series are memoir manuscripts written in the 1950s by E. Stuart Hubbard about life in Florida in the late 1800s, family history and the building of the family home, Heartsease.

The Ephemera Series consists of advertisements, music recital programs, pamphlets, and other material concerning local Dutchess County organizations and events—1797–1959. This includes material from many local churches, educational institutions—including the Cottage Hill Seminary, Dutchess Academy, Eastman Business College, and Riverview Military Academy. Also represented are many important Poughkeepsie organizations like the Collingwood Opera House and the Vassar Brothers Institute. Programs from the Tuesday Club cover the years 1898-1951.

The collection is particularly interesting because it is a complete business record from the early 1910s to the early 1960s and documents a prolific period of economic change in both New York and the United States. Included are records from the 1860s to the 1920s of the family orange groves in Federal Point, Florida. The consistency and comprehensiveness of the business records give the collection an extraordinary research value.

A sampling of materials and potential research topics includes:

- Economic change encompassing the business finances from the financial panics and world wars from the 1870s thru the 1960s.
- Transport of apples to European market via steamship in the 1900s and 1910s.
- Railroad and truck transport of apples to metropolitan markets including the Bronx Terminal Market.
- Holiday apple sales to individuals in the post-World War II years and into the 1950s.
- Income tax documents from the first year of tax filing in 1913 to 1963 document the changes of the New Deal leading to greater involvement of state and federal government in farm business.
- Personnel records show the transition of seasonal farm labor from local Dutchess County residents to migrant farm workers from southern



**Figure 7.** Flyer (apparently incomplete), Hart-Hubbard Collection. Photograph. Collection of Dutchess County Historical Society.

states. Included are the child labor law documents and names and addresses of the local farm workers.

- Posters from the 1941 New York & New England Apple Institute poster contest are a sampling of posters and list of the names, addresses and schools of the junior and senior high school students.
- Florida reminiscences, personal and business.
- Federal Point, Florida orange grove records from the 1860s thru the 1910s.
- Graphic materials from apple and produce sales marketing and promotional materials.

The Dutchess County Historical Society is pleased to offer the Hart-Hubbard Farm Records to researchers. A treasure trove of information about the Hudson Valley apple industry awaits exploration.

This article is drawn from materials created by Gregory Wiedeman and Melodye Moore. Reference information obtained from *Taconic Pathways: through Beekman, Union Vale, LaGrange, Washington, and Stamford*. Joyce C. Ghee and Joan Spence (Charlestown, SC; Chicago, IL; Portsmouth, NH; San Francisco, CA: Arcadia Publishing, 2000).

# Nitgedaiget: A Vanished Utopia

*by Diane Lapis*

Camp Nitgedaiget is a place as complex to explain as it is hard to pronounce. Nitgedaiget was a vacation resort for both Jewish progressive liberals and Communist sympathizers who held an idealistic worldview. Nitgedaiget attracted some of the leading entertainers, literary luminaries, and political activists of the times. Its origins, activities, even its mysteries and sudden demise, make this vanished utopia one of the more intriguing stories in Dutchess County history.

Camp Nitgedaiget, pronounced Nish-guh-die-get, meaning “no worries” in Yiddish, was also known as Camp Beacon. It was the first cooperative proletarian year-round adult vacation resort in the United States.<sup>1</sup> It operated from 1922 until the mid 1950s and was located in southern Dutchess County, New York, in the hamlet of Dutchess Junction, approximately two miles south of the city of Beacon.

Nitgedaiget was one of 27 socially progressive camps and resorts operating in New York State in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, 300 camps with similar philosophies were scattered across the United States.<sup>3</sup> The main purpose of these camps was to provide an inexpensive vacation for members of the working class while expanding their cultural horizons and strengthening their political values.<sup>4</sup> The camp founders and patrons sympathized with labor unions and the Communist Party USA (hereafter “CPUSA”) in order to achieve their common goals of decent working and living conditions, civil rights, social security, and health and unemployment insurance.<sup>5</sup>

## *The Beginnings: the United Workers Cooperative Association*

The story of Nitgedaiget begins around 1910, when a group of young, Yiddish-speaking immigrant garment workers, all who held similar social and political values, formed the United Workers Cooperative Association (hereafter “the Association”). The purpose of the Association was to improve living conditions for its members who were living in Lower East Side tenements. The group leased a five-story apartment house on 1815 Madison Avenue in New York City and created ten cooperative apartments, a restaurant, and a library.<sup>6</sup> Then in 1922, the Association purchased 250 acres of land in Beacon, New York, and developed a cooperative camp in

order that its members could vacation in the countryside with like-minded individuals.

By 1926, the Association grew to over 1,000 members. The founders' continuing efforts and the success of the camps led to the construction of cooperative housing on Allerton Avenue in the Bronx, called the Coops (pronounced as Coops, not Co-ops). According to the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, the Coops is considered "not only distinguished for its architectural merit, but is historically significant as one of the most important of the non-profit cooperative housing complex in New York City during the 1920s." Four buildings contained over 700 sunshine-filled apartments with cross-ventilation. Apartments faced either Bronx Park or beautiful courtyards and provided a respite from the factories and tenements. The founders theorized that the experience of running a large collectively owned enterprise would prepare Association members for the day when workers would govern society. Workers "would be able to participate in the democratic functioning of all types of educational, social, artistic, humanitarian, and economic enterprises." They also believed that this environment would provide an atmosphere that would enable their children to thrive both physically and mentally while developing a social conscience.<sup>7</sup>

While the Association originally sponsored the camp, the Needle Trades Union and the United Jewish Peoples Order/International Workers Order (Communist-affiliated insurance and fraternal organizations) purportedly funded the camp at different times throughout its tenure.<sup>8</sup> The Association posted advertisements for Camp Nitgedaiget in the *Daily Worker*, the official newspaper of the CPUSA, and its Yiddish language paper the *Freiheit*, as well as various garment industry magazines. The Association/Coops management arranged transportation for patrons from the Coops to Nitgedaiget. The camp was not restricted to garment workers and residents of the Coops. Patrons also came from the tri-state area and were engaged in a variety of working-class trades.

The Nitgedaiget property was located on both sides of Route 9D in Beacon. Starting modestly with only tents and dining under the stars, the camp quickly grew to accommodate up to 1,000 patrons daily.<sup>9</sup> The west or riverside of 9D featured a four-story hotel, a dining hall, sports facilities, a lake, and access to fishing and boating on the Hudson River.<sup>10</sup> The east or mountainside included a pool and waterfall, the business office, bungalows, platform tents, and a casino (casino is defined here as a large gathering hall for dancing, lectures, and entertainment, not for gambling games).

Photographs and postcards of the camp showed magnificent views of the Hudson River and the city of Newburgh.

Run as a not-for-profit organization, the camp advertised its rates as “reasonable” thereby allowing workers the opportunity to afford a vacation. For example, daily and weekend rates in 1933 were advertised at \$2.45 and \$4.65 respectively.<sup>11</sup> In 1937, the \$14.50 weekly rate included three meals a day and two of each of the following: sheets, pillowcases, blankets, pillows, and cakes of soap. A 25 cent donation to the CPUSA was included in the rate.<sup>12</sup>



**Figure 1.** *Postcard of hotel and bungalows at Camp Nitgedaiget, dated 1939. Collection of Roger and Rose Story.*

### *Layout of Camp Nitgedaiget*

The original hotel, known as the Winter Quarters, accommodated 80 guests. In the summers it was converted to a library and hospital.<sup>13</sup> Sometime in the late 1930s, a four-story hotel was built, connecting the two buildings with a passageway. The new hotel, called Hotel Nitgedaiget, featured 56 rooms and accommodated 200 guests. The steam-heated hotels enabled the camp to operate year-round. A hammer and sickle, a symbol of international proletarian unity, adorned the hotel’s main doorway as well as the bungalow doors, similar to ones that can still be seen at the Coops in the Bronx.<sup>14</sup>

Hundreds of guest bungalows dotted the mountainside. Each 7' x 7' unit contained two beds, a table, a closet and a small mirror. Behind each closet door hung a "Brother, The Daily Worker is My Paper" poster. Wooden platform tents in the woods were also available for guests.<sup>15</sup> Although Nitgedaiget was an adult resort, children would often accompany their parents on vacation.

The pool was one of the main attractions at the camp. In 1927, James Lynch and Sons, contractors and owners of a lumberyard in Beacon, created a large pool (180' x 70') formed by a man-made dam. There were five rows of stairs leading down into the pool enabling guests to sunbathe at the edge of the icy cold water. The dam was covered with large stones giving it a natural appearance. Beach sand covered the paths leading to the pool. Modern comfort stations with hot and cold-running showers were located nearby.<sup>16</sup> In 1937, a reporter noted campers being led in a sing-along on the pool stairs. The camp's cultural director stood in the shallow end with a small pamphlet, as he conducted the swimmers in singing the *Internationale*, a left-wing anthem, *Red Army March*, *Whirlwinds of Danger*, and *Sit Down*, a Negro spiritual.<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 2.** *The pool at Camp Nitgedaiget, 1929. Photograph by Joe Wiener. Collection of the Tamiment Library, New York University.*

Camp recreation facilities included a baseball field, handball and tennis courts, an area for track and field events, and a skating rink in the winter. Sports activities were scheduled throughout the day.<sup>18</sup>

The dining hall seated 800 guests, who called each other "comrade." Announcements for the day's events were made on a megaphone during and



**Figure 3.** *Ice skaters, undated. Real photo postcard. Collection of Roger and Rose Story.*

after the meal. Men were required to wear shirts in the dining room. A sign read, “Comrades, your bare backs are not inspiring to appetites. Comrades will not be admitted in the dining room without tops. Catch on?” The walls were decorated with a large portrait of Lenin, red banners, a 15’x10’ painted sign stating “Strong Farmer and Worker Party in this Country,” and a large scarlet hammer and sickle symbol.<sup>19</sup>

A bookstall outside the dining hall sold pamphlets, Marxist books, and newspapers such as the *Daily Worker*, the *Freiheit*, and the *New York Times*.<sup>20</sup> One reporter noted that the atmosphere was “electric” with patrons walking about with books and newspapers in their hands, reading, arguing, and lecturing about Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, and Engels.<sup>21</sup> Patrons sang Communist songs as they walked to and from activities. One girl commented to the reporter that “we have to fashion our minds for the coming war of the classes and we have to make our bodies strong for the same thing.”<sup>22</sup>

### ***Luminaries from the Entertainment and Literary World at Camp Nitgedaiget***

The casino featured a stage with two dressing rooms and a parquet dance floor. One thousand guests were entertained on a grand scale on Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings. The casino was an important venue

for Yiddish theater, Marxist dramaturgy, musical concerts, motion pictures, and guest speakers.<sup>23</sup>

Many leading musicians, actors, dancers, poets, and theater directors of the day, worked or performed at the casino. These artists were part of a larger cultural scene from New York City. They traveled to a variety of Jewish camps and resorts such as Unity, Kinderland, Lakeland, Boiberik, and Wo-Chi-Ca imparting leftist social and political values as well as Yiddish language and culture.<sup>24</sup> The Yiddish programs were more prevalent in the 1920's and 30s.<sup>25</sup>



**Figure 4.** Interior of dining hall. Postcard, dated 1939. Collection of Roger and Rose Story.

Vladimir Mayakovsky, the Russian Futurist poet, playwright, artist and actor was invited to recite his poems at Nitgedaiget during his American tour in 1925. He invited Ellie Jones, a woman he met and fell in love with during his stay in New York, to accompany him there. The two lovers quarreled, inspiring Mayakovsky to write a poem entitled *Kemp Nit Gedayge*. Loosely translated, the verse captures his anguish about the argument, as well as his negative feelings about the social conditions and capitalism in America..<sup>26</sup>

In 1926, Mike Gold visited Nitgedaiget. He was a champion for political action and social change, author of *Jews Without Money*, and columnist for the *Daily Worker*. He recalled a Friday night campfire in which Nicho-

las Buchwald, playwright and dramatic editor for the *Freiheit*, and Jacob Fenster, a Yiddish poet and playwright who worked as a camp waiter, read a burlesque weekly called the “Camp Yot” (Wise Cracker). Fenster’s camp song helped to build a sense of solidarity among the patrons.<sup>27</sup> The song, translated from Yiddish is as follows:

Camp Nitgedaiget	Kemp Nit Gedayget <sup>28</sup>
In our Camp Nitgedaiget	In unzer kemp Nit Gedayget
We are all family and friends (comrades).	Zaynen mir ale yatn un khaveyrim
Work and struggle has united us.	Arbet un kamf hot farbridert
Worry and need has made us friends.	Zorg un noyt hot unz bafraynt,
We come here from the city and factories.	Kumen mir aher fun shtot un shap,
Hey Comrades!	Hey, khaveyrim!
We sing this song and here is the song	Zingen mir a lid un ot iz dos lid
No worries, no worries, no worries.	Nit gedayget, nit gedayget, nit gedayget.

This refrain was included in a collection of camp songs arranged by Jacob Schaefer. Schaefer directed the Coops’ Yiddish School chorus and worked at Nitgedaiget. He founded the first left-wing Yiddish workers choir that later developed into an international organization. Schaefer is considered the “father” of Jewish proletarian music in the US.<sup>29</sup>

Jacob Mestel, a theater artist, writer, and historian, performed and directed Marxist plays as the camp’s entertainment director. In *Undzer Teater (Our Theater)*, Mestel noted that these plays helped to “educate actors politically as well as artistically.”<sup>30</sup> Mestel founded the left-wing theater collective *Artef*.<sup>31</sup> Nitgedaiget advertised in *Artef*’s tenth-anniversary journal laying claim that “the Yiddish Worker’s Theatre was born on the stage of Nitgedaiget.”<sup>32</sup> Mestel directed and performed in the play *Hirsh Leckert*, about an impoverished garment worker frustrated by corrupt unions, an oppressive government, and poor working conditions. Proletarian dramas like *Hirsh Leckert* “reminded its audience, that their harsh lives in Russia and the Socialist failures under the Czarist government were analogous to their present socio-political situation in the United States.”<sup>33</sup> Mestel subsequently directed and adapted plays for Yiddish film and radio, and performed in the television show *The Goldbergs* in the 1950’s.<sup>34</sup>



Always sympathetic to Communist causes, dancer Edith Segal performed and taught modern and Eastern European folk dances to audiences at the Coops, Nitgedaiget and Camp Kinderland.<sup>40</sup>

Nitgedaiget appeared in popular literature. Harvey Kurtzman, the founder of *Mad Magazine*, included a comic reference to Camp Nitgedaiget in a comic strip called “Mark Trail” in which Boy Scouts repeatedly ask to see the “habitat of the Nitgedaiget Girl Scout Camp.” His character Alfred E. Newman was the fictitious mascot for the cover of the magazine, and known for his signature phrase, “What, me worry?” Similar to Camp Nitgedaiget’s slogan “no worries”, both phrases attempted to make light of working class pressures.<sup>41</sup>

In 1936, S. J. Perelman, an American humorist, author, and screenwriter, known for his short pieces in *The New Yorker*, visited Nitgedaiget and wrote a play called *Waiting for Santy: A Christmas Playlet*. In the story, the main character is in love with his boss’ daughter. He tells her, “I can’t sleep, I can’t eat, and that’s how I love you. You’re a double malted with two scoops of whipped cream; you’re the moon rising over Mosholu Parkway; you’re a two weeks’ vacation at Camp Nitgedaiget! I’d pull down the Chrysler Building to make a Bobbie-pin for your hair!”<sup>42</sup>

The beat poet Allen Ginsberg referenced Nitgedaiget in *Kaddish for Naomi Ginsberg (1894–1956)*, a poem about the life and death of his mother.<sup>43</sup> Ginsberg and his mother spent a few weeks at the camp in the 1930s.<sup>44</sup>

Progressive political speakers were an integral part of the social and cultural scene at the camp. In 1924, William Z. Foster, the leader of the Industrial Workers of the World and General Secretary of the CPUSA spoke to a crowd of 3,000 guests. The evening activities also included entertainment by Metropolitan Opera stars and instrumental soloists.<sup>45</sup> An example of a schedule included guest speakers from the *Daily Worker* as part of the weekend entertainment.<sup>46</sup>

#### Saturday

- Morning – Track and Field meet (prizes given)
- Afternoon – Swimming races and tennis tournament, rowing on the Hudson
- Evening – *Daily Worker* concert program: Nitgedaiget Trio; *Daily Worker* Pageant; Children’s play “Why,” with a chorus of 50 voices; Nitgedaiget 4-piece Jazz Orchestra

## Sunday

- Morning - Carl Brodsky lecture on “The Role of the *Daily Worker* in the Working Class Movement”
- Afternoon – Baseball Game
- Dancing

In addition to the various musicians and entertainers who performed at the camp, dances with live music were held on Saturday and Sunday evenings at the casino. Local residents and other vacationers were invited to attend evening festivities for a nickel.

## *Local Reaction to the Camp*

Although its patrons held the camp in high esteem, many local community members were apprehensive and suspicious of the activities at Nitgedaiget. In 1927, the camp managers received a letter from the Ku Klux Klan. The infamous group wrote, “We demand that you withdraw from this territory or else we will take severe measures against you, and you know the methods and tactics that we apply. We close with despise and hatred to you.”<sup>47</sup>

A May Day “meleé” occurred, in 1931, at Bank Square in Beacon. The Worker’s Party of Beacon and New York City requested a permit to assemble in honor of the International May Day Parade. Beacon’s Mayor Russell refused the permit. Local and neighboring law enforcement anticipated 150 “imported Communists” from New York City to assemble, purportedly sponsored and housed at Nitgedaiget. In actuality, only five members of the Worker’s Party appeared. One individual stood on a folding chair waving an American flag and shouting, “Workers of Beacon! Demand your right to free speech.” When a police officer removed the first demonstrator from the chair, a second figure jumped on the chair and was immediately pulled down. The five activists were hauled off to the police station, but not before a hostile crowd of 1,500 locals attempted to maul them. Two of the demonstrators were from Nitgedaiget, the other three from New York City. Max Lieberman, the camp manager, acted in the role of negotiator from the International Labor Defense Fund to secure their bail and release from jail.<sup>48</sup>

Edward Folliard, a White House news correspondent for *The Washington Post*, reported on a “secret” Communist school in the basement of Hotel

Nitgedaiget in 1937. He claimed that the school trained seamen in the “red doctrine” thereby enabling them to gain a stronghold for the Communist Party on merchant ships. Banners supposedly adorned the classroom walls announcing the party goals: “Workers of the World Unite,” “A Communist Unit on Every Ship,” and “Communism is 20<sup>th</sup> Century Americanism”. The ten-week-course of study was said to include the history of the American labor movement, trade union and political action strategies and tactics. After Folliard’s exposé, the camp purportedly moved its “secret” school to Camp Unity and other locations in New York City.<sup>49</sup> Three years later, the editor of the *Beacon News* attempted to lay the matter to rest. The camp was flying the “Stars and Stripes” and not engaged in Communistic activity as in the past.<sup>50</sup>

### *The End of Utopia*

A number of political and social events brought about the demise of Nitgedaiget. The founding members’ goals of providing decent working and living conditions, social security, and health and unemployment insurance were largely achieved through labor unions and government programs. Many of the second-generation residents of the Coops moved from the working class to the middle class.<sup>51</sup> By 1945, the Association, through a series of poor managerial and financial planning efforts, lost ownership of the Coops. The building complex was sold to a private landlord and a tenant association was formed to work with the new management.<sup>52</sup>

Many Communist sympathizers became disheartened and disillusioned with the party when the political landscape changed due to the Hitler-Stalin pact that set the stage for WWII. The McCarthy period, starting in 1950, brought a sense of panic to left-leaning and Communist sympathizers. Five years later, the State of New York Legislative Committee on Charitable and Philanthropic Organizations began investigations into Communist camps. They set out to prove that the Communist party was infiltrating and indoctrinating children in Communist principles.<sup>53</sup> Harassment and fears of violence led many camps to close or move to new locations.<sup>54</sup>

It is not clear when Nitgedaiget shut its doors. Local residents guess that it closed between 1952 and 1954. The buildings and property lay barren until the hotel burned down in August 1963.<sup>55</sup> The dining hall and casino burned down four months later. After a thorough investigation, Fishkill Fire Chief Scofield believed that the fires were due to arson. Louis Ritter Realty of Beacon owned the property at that time.<sup>56</sup> In 1967, the 186-acre

property that included 168 cabins, a three-acre lake, the pool and roads, was put on the market for \$300,000.<sup>57</sup>

Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve purchased the land and it is currently nestled within a 6,000-acre natural preserve.<sup>58</sup> Today, hikers walking along the Notch Trail will discover rusty handrails and moss covered steps leading to a ravine and dam... all that remains of this once grand utopian enterprise.<sup>59</sup>



**Figure 6.** *The original pool at Camp Nitgedaiget, now part of the Hudson Highlands State Park, 2015. Photograph. Collection of Diane Lapis.*

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- <sup>1</sup> Andrew S. Dolkart, *United Workers' Cooperative Colony, The Coops, Borough of the Bronx*. (New York: Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1992), 2.
- <sup>2</sup> Joint Legislative Committee, *Communist Indoctrination and Training of Children in Summer Camp*. (Legislative Department, Albany: Williams Press, 1956).
- <sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Dilling, *Red Network: A "Who's Who" and Handbook of Radicalism for Patriots* (Kenilworth, IL: Published by the author, 1934).
- <sup>4</sup> Max Lieberman, "Nitgedaiget's Head Sets Forth Camp Position on Communism," *Beacon News*, Feb 9, 1933.
- <sup>5</sup> *The Coops, The United Workers Cooperative Colony 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1927-1977*, (Great Neck NY: Semi-Centennial Coop Reunion, 1977), 20.
- <sup>6</sup> The Coops, 7.
- <sup>7</sup> The Coops, 9.
- <sup>8</sup> Harold Orbach, "Mendele", vol. 5.268, <http://mendele.commons.yale.edu>, March 6, 1996.
- <sup>9</sup> "A Cooperative Camp." *The Co-operative League*, Vol. XII New York, January, 1926, 222.
- <sup>10</sup> A. B. Magil, "Growth of a Real Working Class Camp," *Daily Worker*, June 25, 1928.
- <sup>11</sup> Advertisement, *Daily Worker*, July 22, 1933.
- <sup>12</sup> Elliot Arnold, "Comrades on Vacation," *World Telegram*, August 2, 1937.
- <sup>13</sup> Magil, "Growth of a Real Working Class Camp."
- <sup>14</sup> Arnold, "Comrades on Vacation," August 2, 1937.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> "New Additions at Nitgedaiget Nearly Finished," *Beacon News*, July 1, 1927.
- <sup>17</sup> Arnold, August 6, 1937.
- <sup>18</sup> Advertisement, *Daily Worker*, July 22, 1933.
- <sup>19</sup> Arnold, August 4, 1937.
- <sup>20</sup> Arnold, August 2, 1937.
- <sup>21</sup> Arnold, August 3, 1937.
- <sup>22</sup> Arnold, August 4, 1937.
- <sup>23</sup> Arnold, August 7, 1937.
- <sup>24</sup> Paul Mishler, *Raising Reds: The Young Pioneers, Radical Summer Camps, and Communist Political Culture in the United States* (New York: Columbia Press, 1999), 94 .
- <sup>25</sup> Fradle Pomerantz Freidenreich, *Passionate Pioneers: The Story of Yiddish Secular Education in North America, 1910-1960* (New Jersey: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 2010), 427.

- <sup>26</sup> Vladimir Mayakovsky, *My Discovery of America* (London, England: Hesperus Press Limited, reprinted 2005). Special thanks to Mrs. Alexandra Dalton for translating the poem from Russian to English.
- <sup>27</sup> Jacob Schaefer, *Mit Gezang Tzum Kamf* (New York, NY: International Workers Order, 1932).
- <sup>28</sup> Special thanks to those members of the *Mendele Forum for Yiddish Language and Literature* for providing translations, stories, and resources.
- <sup>29</sup> Introduction to the finding Aid in the *Guide to the Papers of Jacob Mestel (1884-1958) 1910-1958*, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.
- <sup>30</sup> Joel Schechter, *Messiahs of 1933: How American Yiddish Theater Survived Adversity Through Satire* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 275.
- <sup>31</sup> Finding Aid to the *Guide to the Papers of Jacob Mestel*.
- <sup>32</sup> Schechter, *Mit Gezang Tzum Kamf*, 275.
- <sup>33</sup> James Fisher, ed., *To Have or Have Not: Essays on Commerce and Capital in Modernist Theatre* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2011), 167-8.
- <sup>34</sup> Finding Aid to the *Guide to the Papers of Jacob Mestel*.
- <sup>35</sup> Stephen Miller, "Jules Dassin, 96, Expatriate Film Director," *New York Sun*, April 1, 2008.
- <sup>36</sup> "John Garfield Biography," IMDb, <http://www.imdb.com>, accessed 2/1/2015. John Shebanie, interview with author, Beacon, NY, March 2, 2015.
- <sup>37</sup> Willa Skinner, "Nitgedaiget," *Beacon Free Press*, January 2, 1991.
- <sup>38</sup> "Protest Music in the Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives," exhibition notes from New York University's Mamdouha S. Bobst Gallery, 2015.
- <sup>39</sup> Steven Kurutz, "Pete Seeger's Guide to Surviving the Recession," *New York Magazine*, April 26, 2009.
- <sup>40</sup> Mishler, p. 92. Yok Ziebel, interviewed by the author, Beacon, NY, March 3, 2015.
- <sup>41</sup> Schechter, 275.
- <sup>42</sup> Jules Chametzky, ed. *Jewish American Literature: A Norton Anthology*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2000).
- <sup>43</sup> Allen Ginsberg, "Kaddish for Naomi Ginsberg (1894–1956)," *Collected Poems 1947-1997* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006).
- <sup>44</sup> Barry Miles, *Ginsberg: A Biography* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1990).
- <sup>45</sup> "Beacon Police Notified of Agitation Meeting to be Held at Dutchess Junction," *Beacon News*, July 19, 1924.
- <sup>46</sup> Advertisement, *Daily Worker*, July 22, 1933.
- <sup>47</sup> "Ku Kluxers Send Threatening Letter to Camp Nitgedaiget," *Daily Worker*, September 13, 1927.
- <sup>48</sup> "Five are Arrested For Riot," *Beacon News*, May 2, 1931.

- <sup>49</sup> Edward Folliard, "Soviet Camp in U.S. Training Red Seamen," *The Washington Post*, Nov 6, 1937.
- <sup>50</sup> "Red Annapolis Story has Whiskers," *The Beacon News*, September 26, 1940.
- <sup>51</sup> The Coops, 20.
- <sup>52</sup> The Coops, 13.
- <sup>53</sup> Mischler, 132.
- <sup>54</sup> Mishler, 132, 133.
- <sup>55</sup> "Camp Beacon Hotel Fire Under Probe," *Kingston Daily Freeman*, August 20, 1963.
- <sup>56</sup> "Beacon Hall, Casino Destroyed by Fire," *Kingston Statesmen*, December, 1963.
- <sup>57</sup> Lionel Cinamon to Mary Bogardus, Fishkill, New York, June 26, 1967. From the Collections of the Beacon Historical Society, Beacon, NY.
- <sup>58</sup> "Rocky Unveils Plans: Cold Spring – Beacon State Park," *Kingston Daily Freeman*, November 18, 1967.
- <sup>59</sup> "North Hudson Highlands State Park Trail Map," New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, <http://www.parks.ny.gov/parks>, accessed March 15, 2015.



# Memories: The Life I've Lived

*by Doris Muller Wheeler*

I was born near the start of the Great Depression and my life has been influenced by it in many ways. From the start, my mother was the breadwinner. My father had been thoroughly demoralized and degraded by the loss of the career in business that held such promise when he was married. I lived with my grandparents in Jersey City until I was nine. At that time, my father finally found a job in Poughkeepsie, New York, and we moved there, reuniting as a family. My sisters and brother would be born there later. Even though we were poor, I remember our growing-up years as idyllic—with love and purpose surrounding us.

## *Off to School I Go*

I can't wait. I'm excited but a little scared too. I had never played with other children, and I didn't know if they would like me. Mother took me the first day. After talking to the principal, we went to my classroom. It wasn't what I expected! No desks, just long tables and everybody busy cutting up paper and pasting things together. (Even now, 70+ years later, I tell everyone I failed cutting and pasting in kindergarten.)

I wanted to learn, read, write stories. Lucky for me, my grandmother took me to school every day, picked me up at lunch time then took me back, and grandpa picked me up after school. It gave me the breaks I needed from what I considered silly stuff. I started late in the year, then skipped first grade, started second grade, then we (Mother, Dad and I) moved from Jersey City to upstate New York. Dad had finally found a job after years of looking throughout the Depression. We arrived in Poughkeepsie in time for Thanksgiving in 1940. It was the first time I had lived with them since I was an infant.

Don't look for me on the 1940 Census, though. I remember when the enumerator came to our apartment in April 1940. I was seven years old and it was an event to have company. He must have been very drunk or otherwise incapacitated because the errors this man made are inexcusable. He misspelled my grandfather's name, entered him as age 40 instead of 71, changed my grandmother's name to Pauline (the name of our downstairs neighbor) and her age to 38 instead of 65. He added a mythical son Howard age 14 and omitted me entirely. He did get the correct address and the downstairs neighbor, which is how I finally found my family. But I digress.

Mother had been born in Hyde Park (but was adopted by a distant relative in New Jersey when her mother died), and, now that we were back in Dutchess County, she began to look up family members. We had a car for the first time, so we could visit her Aunt Ruth who lived on a farm near Bridgeport, Connecticut. I decided very quickly that farm life was not for me. They had an outhouse and no modern facilities the first time we visited. By the second visit, they had installed an indoor bathroom and a pump in the kitchen sink so things were looking up. I did not like being hugged and kissed by my uncle who had a big wet mustache, and I hated the pig pen and gathering eggs. The dogs nipped at me and chased me all over. I was a city girl!



**Figure 1.** Home of the Muller family, Hyde Park, New York, 1941. Photograph. Collection of Doris Muller Wheeler.

My sister Marilyn was born in May of 1941. Now I knew why the pressure was on for us to live together as a family, but I was not sure I was happy about this new addition. After all, I had been an only child for almost nine years, doted on by my grandparents, and was still adjusting to my new life. We would move twice more before settling into a wonderful old house in Hyde Park in the fall of 1941 (Figure 1). The house belonged to the Vanderbilt estate and we bought it from the retired estate manager, Mr. Sherrow, who lived in a gorgeous brick home next door. Our house had a big wood stove in the kitchen, a wood and coal furnace in the cellar and cold bedrooms upstairs. We would awaken, grab our clothes and run downstairs to the kitchen to dress by the stove.

### *But Major Change Looms*

I remember, oh so clearly, December 7, 1941. We were visiting my grandparents in Jersey City for an early Christmas with them and had just settled down in the living room after Sunday dinner. The radio, which had been a low buzz in the background, suddenly came to life with an emergency announcement. Pearl Harbor had been bombed; our country was under attack by Japan. No one knew where Pearl Harbor was and it was some time before they told us, but the tension in that living room was something to behold. We drove home, almost silently. Of course I did not understand the implications, but I knew it was a very worrisome event. Indeed, life was about to change---again.

I had just begun another new school and was adjusting to it when suddenly, everything and everyone was in wartime mode. We had all kinds of patriotic activities at school. We faced rationing and scrap drives; we learned to do without. There would be no more car trips. We had blackout curtains at the windows, lights out early, bombing drills in school and church, soldiers everywhere (this was, after all, the home of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt). Newsreels became more important and more memorable than the movies we saw. We had wardens pacing the streets in every neighborhood, checking for infractions that could attract the enemy. There were stories of infiltration by submarine, of Japanese and German immigrants being rounded up and interned for the duration.

Every young man or boy who was physically able was off to war, many giving up good jobs or dreams of college. Factories converted production to wartime essentials. IBM's business machines and fledgling computers were laid aside as the company geared up to make munitions; auto parts were replaced with airplane and tank parts; men's and women's garment production became military uniforms. Even food was packaged and made available for military uses before domestic. Every family had a "victory garden" if at all possible; apartment dwellers grew food in flower pots; local communities made unused public spaces available for food growing. It wasn't long before my parents joined the growing numbers of families that set aside rooms in their home for soldiers and their wives. Hyde Park was a veritable fortress with sentries along the main road and constant monitoring.

Everyone joined the war effort. We saved string, tin cans, foil from cigarette packages, we used and reused clothing, making it over from long dresses to short dresses, skirts and blouses, finally turning it into children's

and baby clothes. Shoes were cared for, gluing and regluing soles, padding them with cotton and paper, stretching them when we could, trading them for others when we couldn't. There was a constant round of bond drives, clothing drives, canned food drives. We rolled the tinfoil from cigarette packs and candy bars into balls for aluminum drives. Plastic hadn't been invented yet, but we certainly did recycle everything.

Schools were a flurry of activity, always helping to support the war effort. Movies were accompanied by newsreels, a major source of wartime news, even though it was weeks and months old by the time it got to us. The radio waves and newspapers were full of casualty lists and mostly dire news, but music was also an important part of our lives in that era. Dances were held in the local Grange Hall, and buses ran between Poughkeepsie and West Point so the older girls and young women could attend dances there. It was part of the USO activity.<sup>1</sup>

### *The War Ends*

Finally the war was over. The change was palpable. No more blackouts, no more sentries, no more rationing. The couples who had come to be part of our lives as they lived in our homes all left to return to theirs. But still the change was somewhat tentative. We weren't sure just how much freedom we dared enjoy. As the hordes of soldiers returned home, we were



**Figure 2.** *The Welcome Center at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Historic Site (formerly The Vanderbilt Inn), Hyde Park, New York, 2007. Photograph. Collection of Doris Muller Wheeler.*

overwhelmed. All through the war, we had lived at such a frenetic pace and now all those activities went away. Life was returning to normal, but what was normal? The Cold War had begun and fear of nuclear attacks was almost as serious as World War II had been.

For me, life continued to be full. Now I watched for enemy aircraft from the local church bell tower and learned about bomb shelters and radiation sickness. I also took up a stream of high school activities—newspaper, debate club, acting in plays, singing in the chorus, holding offices, even organizing a United Nations club. I always worked, too, at the local coffee shop and the Vanderbilt Inn especially (Figure 2).



**Figure 3.** *My grandparents (my father's father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Muller, and my mother's father, Granpa Coons), 1950. Photograph. Collection of Doris Muller Wheeler.*

Meanwhile, my grandparents from New Jersey moved in with us and my other grandfather (Mother's dad) arrived soon after. Again, we had a full house. Grandpa and Grandma Muller stayed pretty much in the tiny apartment we had added to the house by converting a sun porch. Grandpa Coons was a huge presence. A handsome man with ruddy complexion, a gorgeous head of white hair, a warm and loving heart... and a wooden leg, he kept busy. Most of all, he helped Mother who had always worked every day wherever she could find a job. Grandpa was baby sitter, cook, gardener and handyman. He did enjoy his beer, and quart bottles were always on the grocery list (Figure 3).

### ***Working for Mrs. Roosevelt***

When high school was over, I answered ads in the New York City papers and landed a job as a comptometer operator with GMAC. We processed in-



**Figure 4.** Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt with her secretary, Miss Doris Muller [Miss Muller is shown at the left, although incorrectly labeled as being on the right]. Mrs. Roosevelt and Miss Muller were preparing to leave the county after Mrs. Roosevelt had spoken in Dover the evening before. *The Daily Times, New Philadelphia, Ohio, Wednesday, April 7, 1954. Newspaper clipping. Collection of Doris Muller Wheeler.*

coming checks as car and other loan payments. At night, I took classes at Columbia University. A car accident on a weekend visit home ended that, and I found a job near home. One day, as I got off the bus after work, my mother and sisters were waiting for me. Mother explained I'd had a phone call from Mrs. Roosevelt's secretary who wanted me to come for an interview that evening. I must have been really cheeky to accept that job offer! I was just 18, had no secretarial skills (because I always planned to go to college) and not even one semester of college, and I was to be a secretary to the most extraordinary woman on the planet.

Malvina Thompson, Mrs. Roosevelt's long-time secretary, was ill and needed help. She died a few months later, but I will never forget her. She taught me so much and prepared me to handle her duties so that I was reasonably efficient and made fewer blunders than I would have without her guidance. The correspondence was voluminous. A giant mailbag was

delivered by the post office every day, most addressed to her Hyde Park home. There was another secretary, too. Maureen Corr was a professional and held down the New York City office while I worked primarily in Hyde Park. Mrs. Roosevelt had a home in both places, and Maureen and I often exchanged places.

We also took turns traveling with Mrs. Roosevelt on her many lecture tours and trips abroad (Figure 4). Since Mrs. R. was then the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, she led a very busy life and we were very much a part of it. She entertained a great deal, in addition to writing books and her daily column, "My Day," traveling, attending meetings, and working on matters of great international import, and Maureen and I often assisted. It was not uncommon for us to meet with heads of state, ambassadors, senators and others. We worked very hard on Adlai Stevenson's campaign for president.



**Figure 5.** Val-Kill, Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, Hyde Park, New York, 2004. Photograph by D. Wheeler. Collection of Doris Muller Wheeler.

I remember one day teaching the children of all the workers at Val-Kill, Mrs. Roosevelt's home in Hyde Park, to curtsy and bow because the Queen Mother of England was coming for a visit (Figure 5). But I didn't hear her entourage arrive and, when Mrs. Roosevelt brought this lovely lady into my office to meet me, I extended my hand, never thinking it was the lady

herself. This was just one of several embarrassing moments which I will not relate here. It's taken me many years to forget them.

When Stevenson lost to President Eisenhower, Mrs. Roosevelt was replaced as Ambassador to the UN. This did not slow her down. She simply replaced some of that work with more research and travel resulting in more books and an even busier lecture schedule. And the correspondence continued. Everyone looked to her as a kind of savior, one who could understand their problems and perhaps even help solve them. I was so proud to play a role in that effort.

## The End of an Era

After almost four years working with Mrs. R., it was time for me to move on to something else. I had tried to take some courses at Bard College while I worked for Mrs. R. but there was simply too much travel and too much work to allow it. After leaving Mrs. R., I then had a series of jobs, starting with assistant editor at the Inter-American News Bureau and Business Journal, office manager for the ILGWU, and secretary to the college president at New Paltz State. I took an editorial job that was advertised and turned out to be with the IBM Journal of Research and Development, which was just launching its first issue. The job moved to company headquarters, but I was about to be married and could not move, so I left IBM and became a travel agent.

## The Love of My Life

His middle name was Andrews, but it could have been Adversity. Bill Wheeler's father died when he was three months old, and he did not even appear in his father's obituary. He was sent with his 4-year-old sister to a children's home in Urbana, Illinois while the three oldest children remained with their mother. His earliest memories were of being locked in a closet for many hours, of having the only teddy bear he ever owned taken from him, of constant beatings and never enough food. He first ran away

at the age of eight, but was found and returned to a different institution in Utica, New York. Stronger and wiser at age twelve, he ran away again and this time evaded being caught. He rode the freight trains, lived with prostitutes, followed the crops, worked as a gandy dancer, a cook, a shill in Las Vegas, a parking lot attendant in New York City (where he learned to drive!). For a time he followed the horses across country and knew the finer things of life, but he also had his shoes stolen while wearing a tuxedo and sleeping on a park bench in New York City.



**Figure 6.** William Wheeler, recruit, December 1941 (front row, left). Newspaper clipping. Collection of Doris Muller Wheeler.

He reunited with his family when he was about eighteen years old and settled down in Poughkeepsie, New York, working as an attendant in the Hudson River State Hospital, a mental institution. His brother Dale and sister Jessie were both registered nurses, and he bonded with them. Other members of the family remained aloof, although his mother lived with Jessie for a time. He joined the Masons with his brother and reached 32nd Degree and Scottish Rite.



**Figure 7.** *William Wheeler, soldier in the 101st Airborne Division, World War II, c. 1941-42. Photograph. Collection of Doris Muller Wheeler.*

The day after Pearl Harbor, he was at the recruiting station. Strong and fit (he was in training to become a professional boxer), he was quickly accepted and shipped off for basic training. His first assignment was as a radio operator, but this was entirely too tame for him. He pleaded with the Army to reassign him and faked ear problems until a doctor finally recognized his real problem and had him transferred to the 101st Parachute Division.

Bill survived D-Day, but barely. For three days after being dropped into France, he was alone (all the men in his unit had been killed immediately) and fought off Germans, even succeeding in taking out at least one machine gun nest before being hit with a potato masher grenade. When medics

found him and transported him back to England, he was nearly dead. One man aboard ship comforted him. Bill would remember that medic until his own death many years later. He had cauliflower ears and a nose that had been broken many times in barroom brawls, but he was the gentlest and kindest soul Bill had ever met. He was finally discharged in August 1945 after spending fourteen months in a full body cast in various hospitals. He was told he would never walk again, but he persevered and he danced at our wedding in 1958.

- <sup>1</sup> The United Service Organization was chartered by Congress in February 1941 to serve the military, yet it was a non-profit organization largely supported by private donations. It was an important part of the war effort in World War II, providing gathering places for servicemen to go, packages from home, and many other ways of lifting men's spirits.

# A Traver Family Saga

by Nancy V. Kelly

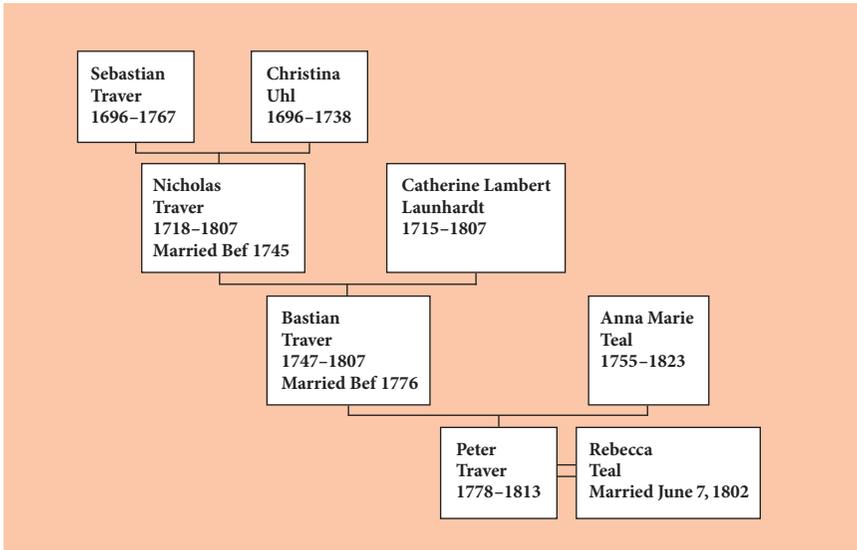
The Traver family came to Rhinebeck with the early eighteenth century Palatine emigration. These Germans from the Palatinate were encouraged to emigrate through England after they had endured countless hardships from war, crop failure, and excessive taxation. The progenitor of the Traver family, Nicholas Traver, died en route to America in 1710, leaving a wife and two sons. His widow, Anna Maria Traver, married Joseph Reichert/Rikert.<sup>1</sup> The couple, with the Traver sons, were one of the early Palatine families to settle in Rhinebeck and descendants of the family remained in the county into the twentieth century (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** *Small stone house, home of Bastian Traver, Sr., originally built c. 1730. Now known as the Traver House, 55 Wynkoop Lane, Rhinebeck, NY. Photograph by Tom Daley. Collection of Nancy Kelly.*

One of the sons, Peter Traver, settled in Clinton, but the eldest son, Sebastian (Bastian—born in Wollstein, Germany, in 1696<sup>2</sup>) married in about the year 1718 and lived on property which is now on Wynkoop Lane, Rhinebeck, in the stone house known as the Traver House. He and his wife, Christina Uhl raised their children in this little house. Bastian Trevor /Travor is found on the Rhinebeck tax lists, 1718–1745. After this time, his son Frederick resided in the family home on Wynkoop Lane.<sup>3</sup> The Traver family is remarkable for the number of males born in each generation. This pattern has been observed through the many branches of the family.

A series of documents recently acquired by the Museum of Rhinebeck History reveals the saga of generations of the family of Nicholas Traver (1718-1807), through land records, estate papers and court proceedings. Prior to the discovery of this cache in a bureau drawer in the estate of an antiques collector, the provenance of this remarkable collection is shrouded in mystery. The land deeds and other documents may have been acquired by the collector when he purchased the chest of drawers.<sup>4</sup> The documents include verifiable signatures and begin with a 1747 document, continuing through 1850. Additional information is provided by a document purchased by Mr. and Mrs. George E. Banta, owners of the Beekman Arms in Rhinebeck. It is a legal deed for property sold by William Traphagen to Nicholas Traver, and is now displayed on the stairway near the front desk at the Beekman Arms.<sup>5</sup>

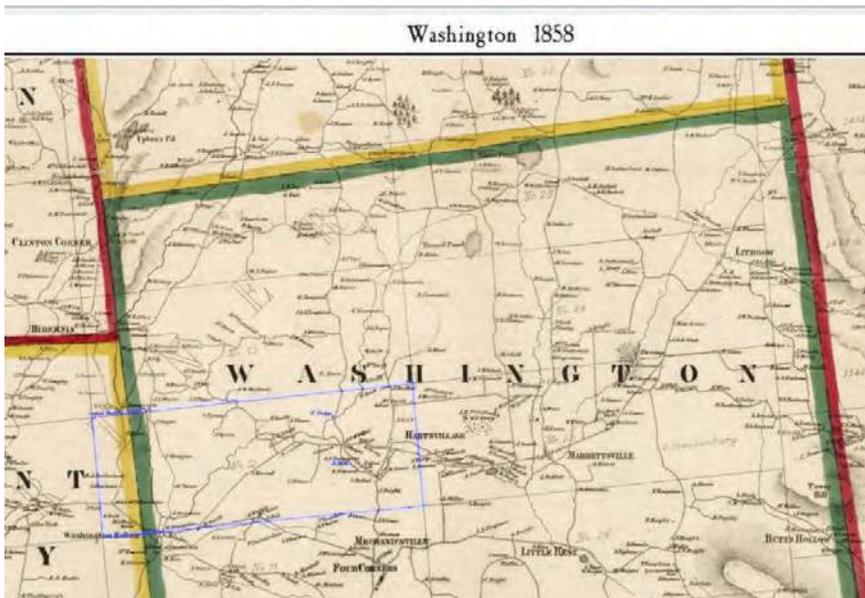


**Figure 2.** *Diagram of four generations of the Traver family who lived on lands in Dutchess County. Prepared by Nancy Kelly.*

Scanning of the documents including the Bantas' Traphagen document was completed by the Consortium of Rhinebeck History. The scans allow careful study of the documents without wear and tear of the fragile originals. The documents follow the line of Nicholas (1718-1807) who fathered ten children by two wives, Nicholas's son, Bastian (1747-1807), who had thirteen children with wife, Anna Maria Teal, and Peter, Bastian's son, who had seven children before he died in 1813, only eleven years after his marriage (see Figure 2).

### *Nicholas Traver (1718-1807)*

The son of Bastian, Sr., Nicholas, grew up in the Wynkoop Lane house. He married Catherine Launhardt<sup>6</sup> about 1744. The earliest document of the collection can be dated to the same year as the baptism of his child, Bastian Traver, at the Lutheran Church in Wurtemberg in northern Dutchess County, New York. It is a 1747 deed from John and Peter Van Campen to Nicholas Traver for a Lot of 137A in Crum Elbow/Nine Partners. The land was probably south of Hartsvillage in the present Town of Washington on the East Branch of the Wappinger's Creek. This property included right of grist mill thirds for £415. Nicholas was a miller and probably lived in Clinton for a time. As revealed in this collection, Nicholas was an entrepreneur who eventually deserted his family.

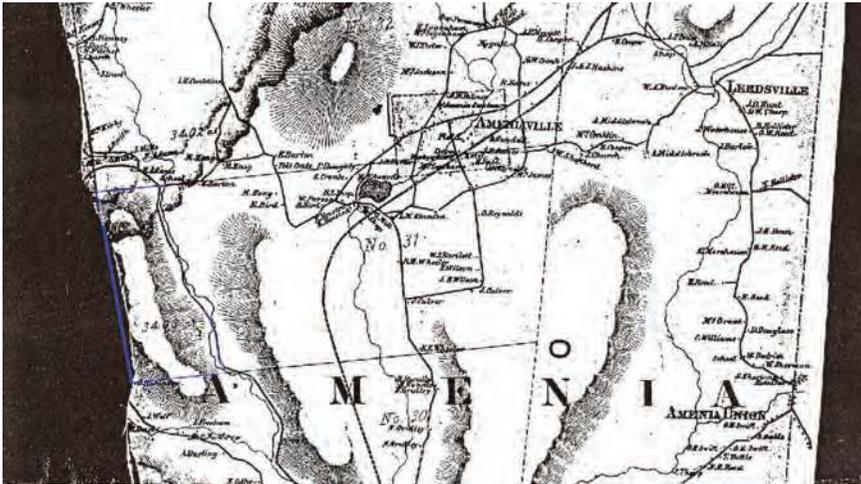


**Figure 3.** *Map of Washington, Dutchess County, NY, 1858, showing Lot 12 and Grist Mill. Map of Dutchess County (from wall map published by John E. Gillette, 1858).*

In 1750, Nicholas also purchased four lots from John and Peter Van Campen in Nine Partners Patent in Dutchess County<sup>7</sup> and 42 acres in Crum Elbow from an adjoining land owner, David Sotherlon.<sup>8</sup> These 1750 documents describe him as a resident of Crum Elbow. He is listed on Tax Lists for Crum Elbow (1753-1768)<sup>9</sup>, but probably was only a resident there for a short time although his Crum Elbow/Nine Partners purchases, reflected in the collection, cover the period 1750-1761.

The basis for much of the collection, is the document purchased by the Bantas, recognizing that William Traphagen also was associated with the Beekman Arms. However, the 1750 deed of land from William Traphagen in Rhinebeck to Nicholas Traver was actually located east of the village. This was the property that was destined to remain in the family for generations. Perhaps it included the south side of the mill pond which served the Schuyler's sawmill in later years.

By April 8, 1751, a deed for land purchased in Crum Elbow/ Nine Partners describes Nicholas as a resident of Rhinebeck. The deed mentions Great Brook and prevents the grantor, Samuel Smith from building a mill or dam but, according to the document, Traver (Trewer) could build on the east side as needful. This property was 668 acres.<sup>10</sup> The land appears to have been on the Wassaic Creek.

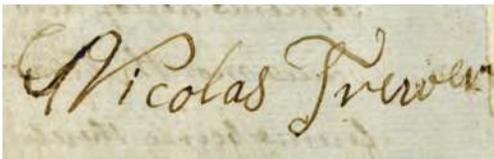


**Figure 4.** Map of Amenia showing Lot 31 and Great Brook. Map of Dutchess County (from wall map published by John E. Gillette, 1858).

A record kept by Henry Denker, Beekman's miller in Rhinebeck, records the purchase of a millstone by Nicholas Traver, in 1753.<sup>11</sup> But on February 10, 1758, Nicholas was listed as a miller of Nine Partners (south of Rhinebeck) when he took a mortgage from "Philip Launhardt, yeoman of Rinebeck (sic) for 70 acres of Land in Lott 12."<sup>12</sup> (See Figure 3) The description mentions a river or pond and also mentions a second parcel of 140 acres on the South side of Lantsman's Kill.<sup>13</sup> This refers to the property purchased from William Traphagen. The

Rhinebeck parcel is described in the 1750 deed from William Traphagen to Nicholas Traver. It seems that Philip took the mortgage to assist his son-in-law. On December 6, 1758, Nicholas Traver, “yeoman of Rinebeck, took another mortgage for £101 from Mathew Sleght, merchant of NYC” for 545 acres, property in Lott 31 (Figure 3). The original mortgage had been increased by £100 in 1759.<sup>14</sup> Nicholas was still buying land in 1761 when he purchased four acres from Richard Trip in Crum Elbow for £34. This land probably also adjoined his Town of Washington land. Nicholas soon became over-extended. Documents in the collection,<sup>15</sup> recorded mortgages, and an action recorded in Dutchess County Ancient Documents shows that he was borrowing large amounts of money while purchasing ever more property. By the end of that year we find that Nicholas had deserted his wife.

In Vermont, desirable terms were being offered in the western part of the province. Many residents of the Oblong in Dutchess County and Amenia purchased land there. In any case, we know from the 1768 will of Catherine’s father, Philip Launhardt, that Nicholas Traver had left Rhinebeck and his wife and family behind.<sup>16</sup> A document dated 1769 shows that Philip Lounhart’s will bequeathed 140 acres of land to his daughter, Catherine. This document shows that the land, which was originally described in the Traphagen deed, was acquired by Philip Lounhart. It seems that Phillip had taken it over to help relieve his son-in-law’s debts and settlement in 1772. Genealogists have found Nicholas in Vergennes, Vermont with a new wife and children. He is said to have died in Tyre, New York, in 1807, however documents in Dutchess County seem to be referring to his property as an “estate” after 1768.



**Figure 5.** *Signature of Nicolas Traver. Collection of the Museum of Rhinebeck History, Eising/Rowell Collection, Item 05b.*

### ***Bastian Traver (1747-1807)***

In the next generation, Bastian N. Traver, son of Nicholas and Catherine was born in 1747.<sup>20</sup> He married Anna Maria Teal, the daughter of Henry Teal<sup>21</sup> before 1776.<sup>22</sup> He is found with his brother, Peter on the

1775 List of Associators for the American Revolution.<sup>23</sup> In 1777, we find a document showing that Bastian Traver paid £17 for a man, Adword Connor, to take his place in the Westfall Company of the New York Militia. By 1780, Revolutionary War difficulties are indicated. A promissory note to pay David Van Ness at Court Martial for \$140 is signed “Bastian and Philip Traver.”

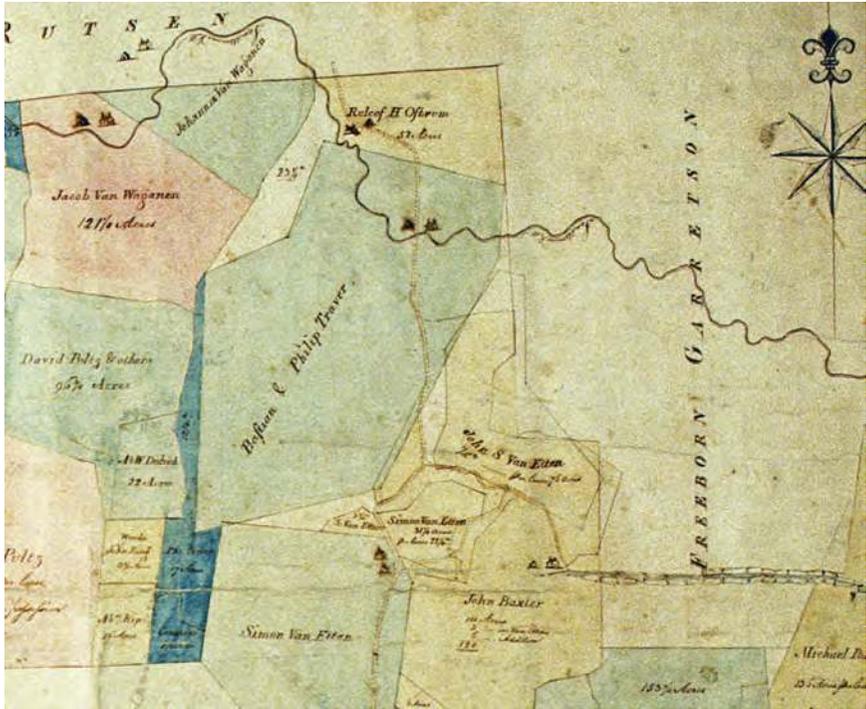


**Figure 6.** *Map of a Lot of Land, property purchased by Bastian Traver from Captain Jacob Hagadorn in 1793, surveyed by Alexander Thompson. Collection of the Museum of Rhinebeck History, Eising/Rowell Collection, Item TE. 023.*

The Rhinebeck Precinct Account book, kept by William Radcliffe shows Bastian N. Traver with debits in April and September 1784 and October 1788 and credits in September and again in February 1789.<sup>24</sup> The entries indicate agricultural commerce on the Hudson. Also after the Revolution, Rhinebeck Road Records show that Bastian Traver served as Path Master in 1792 and 1799 for the road from the Flatts Church east to Benjamin Welch who was located at Schooterhoek on Patten Road, Rhinebeck. In 1793, he acquired fifteen acres of land from Captain Jacob Hagadorn. The property is shown with a nice map from the collection at the Museum of Rhinebeck History (Figure 6). Additional land was acquired in 1795 from Francis and Elizabeth Hagadorn

probably after the death of Captain Jacob. A five acre parcel of land was also purchased by Bastian Traver from surveyor Alexander Thompson in 1800. It is described as adjoining the farm of Bastian Traver.

A larger parcel which he either purchased or inherited is shown as the land of Bastian and Philip Traver on the 1804 map copied by John Cox for Janet Livingston Montgomery (Figure 7). It shows the property, along White School House Road, including the area now owned by Steven Lobotsky where the Landsman Kill passes under the road. Two houses are shown on the map in the area where the Lobotskys now live.



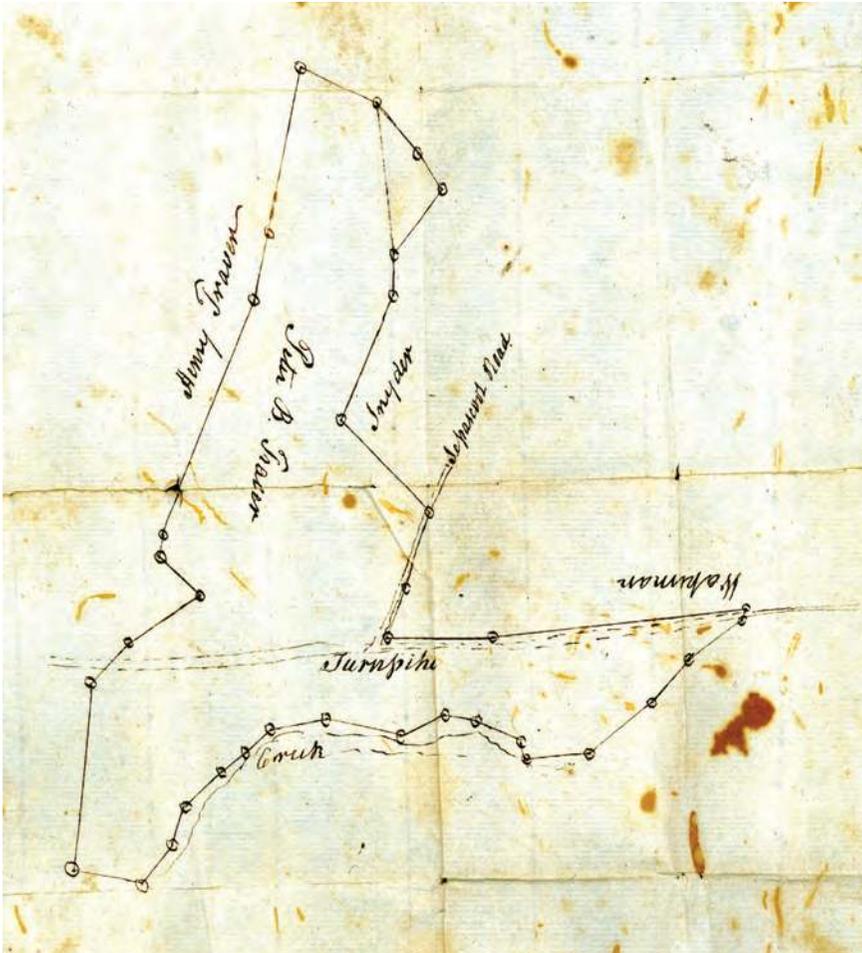
**Figure 7.** Map for Janet Livingston Montgomery]: Edward Livingston Papers (C0280); 1683-1877 (mostly 1764-1836), Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

Parcels colored green on this map indicate that they had been sold and were no longer property of Henry Beekman's descendant, Janet Montgomery. Philip, the eldest son of Nicholas, may have paid the taxes as he is listed for June 1768 until 1778 when the account ends.<sup>25</sup> There is no Bastian Traver in the tax records for Rhinebeck in this period.

### **Peter B. Traver (1778-1813)**

Peter B. Traver, son of Bastian was born on March 10, 1778.<sup>26</sup> He married Rebecca Teal, the daughter of Henry Teal, in 1802. They had seven children.

The collection includes a deed dated June 29, 1807, from Henry B. Traver, Bastian B. Traver and Zacharias B. Traver transferring a ninth part of Bastian Traver's farm to their brother, Peter B. Traver for \$1,125. No acreage is specified.<sup>27</sup> A deed from Philip J. Schuyler and Mary Ann Schuyler, a Beekman heir, to Peter B. Traver, dated October 27, 1809, for 117 acres for \$2,931.25 was recorded by Dutchess County, June 21, 1814 in Book Y page 129. It shows Peter B.'s mark, indicating that he could not sign



**Figure 8.** Map showing the property now at the intersection of Route 308 and the Salisbury Turnpike. Collection of the Museum of Rhinebeck History.

his name. Adjoining land owners, David Wakeman and Zachariah Snyder signed as witnesses.<sup>28</sup>

A rough map of the property in the collection shows 116 acres and one rod, located at the intersection of the Salisbury Turnpike and the Sepasco road (to Rock City)(Figure 8). It probably included the property at 14 Salisbury Turnpike, known as the Eighmy House, and the present Performing Arts property. The residence of Peter B. Traver may have been the old stone house which was located between Flack Road and Route 308 and was taken down after Route 308 was built.<sup>29</sup>

A mortgage from John Turner, Jr. to Peter B. Traver describes property bounded on the west by Jacob Hendricks, Jr.; on the south by Mud Creek; on the east by the property of Zachariah B. Traver; and on the north by the Turnpike. It is described as 2 rods, 21 perches, mortgaged for \$250 plus interest. Written on June 16, 1812, the notation refers to a bond dated 1808 and was to be paid by May 1, 1813.<sup>30</sup> The date was only one month before Peter's untimely death. Peter died on June 6, 1813, when he was only thirty-three. The church book records that he died of "prevailing fever."<sup>31</sup> Many documents in the Eising collection at the Museum of Rhinebeck History pertain to the settlement of Peter's will.

The Will of Peter B. Traver with executors Bastian B. Traver and Henry J. Teal in the collection is recorded in *Dutchess County Wills*, D:359. It is dated June 1, 1813, and was probated June 22, 1813. It mentions his wife, Rebecca, son William and daughters Elizabeth, Louisa, and Catherine.<sup>32</sup> In October of 1813, four months after Peter's death, an agreement was signed by his executor, Henry Teal, to transfer the right of the estate of Peter B. Traver for a portion of the farm of the deceased Bastian Traver to Henry B. Traver for the amount of \$3,500.

### **Conclusion**

This collection provides an unusual opportunity to follow a family through the generations. The documents provide opportunities to study original manuscripts which do not appear in official records. For example, the patronymic middle initials help us to identify the sons of Bastian Traver, grandsons of Nicholas. Henry B., Bastian B., and Zachariah B. were listed in the 1813 document. We also find that a 1812 receipt from Townsend Wek of the Sloop *Patriot* of Bridgeport was given for the transportation of 75 bushels of corn for Bastian Traver.<sup>33</sup> Henry, as shown in the October 1813 document, became the major land owner of the original homestead. His sons, Edwin and Wesley, continued to farm the land into the twentieth century. Wesley Traver, a descendant of Nicholas, died in 1914 and his property was sold in 1916. Edwin Traver,<sup>34</sup> his brother, died on November 19, 1919.<sup>35</sup> As is the case with many other branches of the family, a surprising number of family members continued to inhabit areas of their original settlement.

- <sup>1</sup> Arthur C.M. Kelly, *Marriage Record of the Lutheran Churches of Athens and West Camp*, New York, 1705-1899 (Rhinebeck NY: Kinship, 1976), #1032 .
- <sup>2</sup> Henry Z. Jones, Jr., *The Palatine Families of New York, A Study of German Immigrants Who Arrived in Colonial New York in 1710* (Universal City, CA, 1985).
- <sup>3</sup> Richard Van Vliet, *Dutchess County Historical Society Yearbook*, Vol. 26 (1941), 47.
- <sup>4</sup> The collection has been donated to the Museum by Steven Mann in memory of his mother, Sheila Rowell.
- <sup>5</sup> 1750 document shows the purchase of 140 acres of land in Rhinebeck south of the Landsman Kill and 4 miles east of the Hudson. Property was probably south of Bollenbecker Road.
- <sup>6</sup> Catherine's surname was spelled variously as Lambert, Lounhardt, etc.
- <sup>7</sup> Item TE.018, Eising/Rowell Collection, Museum of Rhinebeck History, John & Peter Van Campen Crum Elbow Precinct to Nicholas Traver of same place 25 pounds for 4 lots.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Item TE.029.
- <sup>9</sup> Clifford Buck, *Dutchess County NY Tax Lists, 1718-1787* (published 1990), 107.
- <sup>10</sup> Dutchess County Deeds 3:442 Apr 8, 1751 Bounds Lot 32; So. Lot 30; No. Samuel Jones; W. Lot 23; E.- Samuel Smith.
- <sup>11</sup> See miller Dutchess County, NY - Nicholas Trever in *Henry Denker, Ledger 1735-1772*, (New York Historical Society Manuscript Collection, 170 Central Park West, NY, NY), 105.
- <sup>12</sup> Philip Launhardt was the father-in-law of Nicholas Traver.
- <sup>13</sup> Dutchess County Mortgages 1:151 in Clifford Buck and William McDermott, *Eighteenth Century Documents of the Nine Partners Patent*, Dutchess County, NY (New York: Gateway Press, 1979) 339.
- <sup>14</sup> Dutchess County Mortgages 1:111 May 5, 1759 extending the mortgage to Matthew Sleight by £100.
- <sup>15</sup> Item TE.045, Eising/Rowell Collection, Museum of Rhinebeck History.
- <sup>16</sup> Fernow Wills #1044 -Will of Philip Lounhart, mentions daughter Catherine, wife of Nicholas Traver (1718-1787) who deserted her.
- <sup>17</sup> Item TE.014, Eising/Rowell Collection, Museum of Rhinebeck History.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, Item TE.020.
- <sup>19</sup> Otter Creek Falls, Vergennes VT-Construction began on the first sawmill at the site in 1764 by Isaac Peck, Jeremiah Griswold, and Daniel BarDescnes. MacDonough Ship Yards were located here in the pool beneath the falls to evade the attention of the British ships patrolling the lake in 1814, Addison County, VT. The City of Vergennes was made up of portions of three towns: New Haven, Pantton, and Ferrisburg.

- <sup>20</sup> Arthur C.M. Kelly, *Baptism Records of St. Peter's Lutheran Church* (Stone Church) 1733-1899 (Rhinebeck, N.Y.: Kinship, 1968),#200 baptised May 31, 1747 sponsors Bastian Traver & w. Christina.
- <sup>21</sup> Arthur C.M. Kelly, *Marriage Records of 3 Lutheran Churches of Rhinebeck, NY, 1746-1899* (Rhinebeck, N.Y.: Kinship, 1969), (Stone Church), #364.
- <sup>22</sup> Arthur C.M. Kelly, *Baptism Records of St. Peter's Lutheran Church* (Stone Church) 1733-1899, Rhinebeck,NY, 1968. #1188, spon Carl Teal & Rebecca.
- <sup>23</sup> Frank Hasbrouck, *The History of Dutchess County* (Poughkeepsie, NY: S. A. Matthieu, 1909), 72.
- <sup>24</sup> Arthur C.M. Kelly, *Rhinebeck Precinct Account Book 1783-1788* (Rhinebeck, NY: Kinship, 1999), 167 in original manuscript.
- <sup>25</sup> Clifford Buck, *Dutchess County Tax Lists, 1781-1787*, Rhinebeck Precinct to 1778, 31.
- <sup>26</sup> Sponsors Jacob Hagedorn and wife, Maria Near in Arthur C.M. Kelly, *Baptism Records of Rhinebeck Reformed Church 1731-1899* (Rhinebeck, N.Y.: Kinship, 1970),#1425.
- <sup>27</sup> Item TE.038., Eising/Rowell Collection, Museum of Rhinebeck History.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., Item TE.026.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., Item TE.043.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., Item TE.053 a,b,c,d. This original document was also recorded in Dutchess County Mortgage Book R, 628.
- <sup>31</sup> Arthur C.M. Kelly, *Rhinebeck New York Death Records of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Rhinebeck, N.Y.: Kinship, 1992), 90.
- <sup>32</sup> Item TE.011 Museum of Rhinebeck History, Eising/Rowell collection..
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid., Item TE.018.
- <sup>34</sup> J.H. Beers, J. H., *Commemorative Biographical Record of Dutchess County* (Chicago: 1897), 700.
- <sup>35</sup> Arthur C.M. Kelly, *Rhinebeck Town Cemeteries, St. Peter's Lutheran Cemetery* (Rhinebeck, N.Y.: Kinship, 2009)), 389.



# ADDENDA





# Contributors

**Keith Altavilla.** A native of Dutchess County, Keith Altavilla received his Ph.D. in History from Texas Christian University in 2013. He recently held the position of Rowan Postdoctoral Fellow in Military History at the United States Military Academy, working as an Associate Editor on *The West Point History of Warfare* project. His editorial work there includes *The West Point History of the Civil War* and the forthcoming *The West Point History of World War II* (both print and Enhanced eBook editions).

**John Barry** has had a twenty-five-year career as an accountant with a major accounting firm and several years of service in secondary education. Mr. Barry served in the U.S. Marines from 1968 to 1972. After the Vietnam War, he taught at Culver Academy in Indiana. He then shifted his focus to the business world, achieving a Masters in Business Administration from Notre Dame (1977). He worked as a Certified Public Accountant and partner at Coopers & Lybrand in Orlando, Florida from 1977 through 2001. From 2001 through 2014, he returned to education, serving as the CFO of an independent school, a teacher, a coach, and a head of school.

**Pete Bedrossian** has been a Civil War living historian and reenactor since 1991. He is currently the military commander of the 150<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry. If you are a sharp eyed watcher of Civil War themed television and film, you can spot him in the film Gettysburg as well as on the military Channel, History Channel and the Smithsonian Channel. His connection to history extends to his professional life and he has been involved with historical interpretation and education for the past fourteen years. He is currently the Program Director at the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor.

**Henry A. Gildersleeve** (1840-1923) was born and raised in Clinton Corners, in Dutchess County, New York. In 1862, when the 150th Regiment was formed, he gathered together the men for Company C and served as its captain. He performed bravely in the Civil War attaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel before mustering out in 1865 and returning to civilian life. In the 1870s, he served in the National Guard and became one of the founding members of the National Rifle Association. His main occupation was the law, where he served in New York City as a judge.

**Eileen Mylod Hayden** was trained as an educator and spent the early part of her working life teaching school children. By the late 1970s, she was giving a significant portion of her time to her interest in the historical society. She has devoted most of her career to the society, serving as the first

female president of the board (1984-1989) and then as executive director (1991-2007). She is the granddaughter of a founder, John J. Mylod, and daughter of an early member, Frank V. Mylod, of the Dutchess County Historical Society. Her brother-in-law, attorney John Wolf, served as president of the society (before his untimely death). Now her niece, Elizabeth Wolf, is serving as a member of the Board of Trustees.

**Nancy V. Kelly.** A graduate of Cornell University, Nancy has served as Rhinebeck Town Historian since 1997. She is the author of the books, *A Brief History of Rhinebeck*, and *Rhinebeck's Historic Architecture*. Chairman of the Consortium of Rhinebeck History, she is a member of various historical and genealogical societies. She and her husband, Arthur C.M. Kelly founded Kinship in 1968, writing and publishing NYS source records. They were recipients of the Helen W. Reynolds Award from the Dutchess County Historical Society in 2007.

**Diane Lapis** serves as a trustee for the Beacon Historical Society where she researches and presents programs on the history of Beacon. She is a founding member of the Taconic Postcard Club and a member of the Ephemera Society of America. Diane is currently writing two books: a biography of a White House news photographer with Beacon roots, and a history of cocktails through the lens of vintage postcards. Diane is an elementary school educator and holds a B.A. in Art History, M.S. in Reading, and a Certificate in School Administration. She lives in Dutchess Junction with her husband Peter.

**Carla R. Lesh** is a historian and archivist with a Ph.D. in history from the University at Albany, SUNY. She specializes in women's use of modes of transportation, particularly automobiles in the early twentieth century. She is currently working as archivist at the Dutchess County Historical Society.

**Candace J. Lewis** is an art historian with a Ph.D. in the field of early Chinese art and a secondary area of specialty in nineteenth-century art in America and Europe. She has taught at Vassar College and Marist College. She is a long-time member of the Dutchess County Historical Society. She became a trustee in 2008, president of the board in 2010, and is now serving as editor of the yearbook. She has lived in Poughkeepsie with her husband, attorney Lou Lewis, since 1969.

**F. Kennon Moody** is an independent history researcher, specializing in the documents and photographs of the archives of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library – providing research services for a variety of clients both in the

USA and globally. Ken Moody holds a B.A. from Centenary College of Louisiana, a Master of Divinity from Yale University, and a Ph.D. in American History from the State University of New York. He is also the author of a recent book *F.D.R. and His Hudson Valley Neighbors*, a study of the relationship between Franklin D. Roosevelt and the residents of Dutchess County.

**Mike Peets** began his living history and reenacting career in 1991. He currently serves as the First Sergeant for the 150th New York Volunteer Infantry. His interest in the Civil War era goes beyond the basics of the Civil War soldier. Mike has recreated the tarring formula for coating cloth as well as recreating “dессicated vegetables”, an early, and unappetizing precursor to dehydrated foods. When he is not wearing wool, Mike is a mechanical engineer at IBM.

**Newton Reed** (c.1805-post 1875), the son of Eliakim Reed of Amenia, New York, was a farmer and a member of the long-lined Reed family of eastern Dutchess County. He was born and brought up in the Reed homestead, now the oldest building in the Town of Amenia (between Amenia Union and Wassaic). Newton’s son, Albert, enlisted in the 150th Regiment to fight in the Civil War and was felled by typhoid fever shortly after the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863. Newton’s great-grandson, Logan Reed, has given us permission to publish the letter that his ancestor wrote to the family shortly after young Albert’s death. Newton Reed was the author of *The Early History of Amenia* (Amenia, N.Y.: DeLacey & Wiley Printers, 1875).

**Helen Wilkinson Reynolds.** Miss Reynolds (1875-1943) was a writer, genealogist, preservationist, and charter member of the Dutchess County Historical Society. She is still recognized as a historian whose careful research over a 30-year period provided the solid basis for the development of the society. She contributed more than 60 articles to the yearbook series and served as its editor. *The Records of Christ Church, Poughkeepsie* (Volume I and II), *Old Dutch Houses of the Hudson Valley Before 1776, Poughkeepsie: The Origin and Meaning of the Word*, and *Notices of Marriages and Deaths: 1778-1825* are among her most well known works which are still used today.

**Dean Thomas** is a married, father of three, living just outside of Rochester in upstate New York. He works as a Business System Analyst in the Information Technology field for a local manufacturing company. Dean has been interested in learning about and researching the 128th Regiment

New York State Volunteer Infantry and the Civil War ever since learning his great-great-grandfather fought with the regiment.

**William P. Tatum III** has held the office of Dutchess County Historian since October 2012. He earned his B.A. in History and Anthropology from the College of William & Mary in Virginia in 2003, his M.A. in History from Brown University in 2004, and is completing his Ph.D. at Brown University. His main area of research is Colonial North America under English rule. In addition to his scholarship, Tatum has been involved in historic site and museum programs throughout the east coast and England.

**Doris Muller Wheeler** spent her earliest years in Jersey City, New Jersey, before coming, at the age of eight, to live in Hyde Park, Dutchess County. Her family lived on the property of the Vanderbilt Mansion, near the home of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt. Shortly after World War II, when Doris was just eighteen years old and Mrs. Roosevelt was Ambassador to the United Nations, Doris was invited to work as secretary for the former first lady, a position she held for four years. She later held a series of jobs, including an editorial position with the IBM Journal of Research and Development. Later, she became a travel agent, and, eventually would take another position with IBM. She, her husband, and daughter moved, in 1974, to Atlanta where she still resides.

# Call for Articles: Yearbook 2016

In 2016, the central topic of discussion will be the American Civil War and its effects upon Dutchess County. We have experienced such an outpouring of interest this year that we have decided to continue with the subject for a second year.

In 2016, as for the last several years, the yearbook will be divided into sections:

- (1) The Forum section, which will have as many good articles as we have to present, will focus on the Civil War—for the second year—and issues pertaining to the conflict in Dutchess County. It may include topics from the more abstract such as discussions of Abolition, political philosophy, and religion to quite concrete matters such as the number and disposition of individual soldiers in the regiments from Dutchess County
- (2) The Articles section will be devoted to essays on any worthwhile research regarding Dutchess County history.

Please submit your article to me in digital form as a Microsoft Word document. Articles for the Forum and Articles sections should be 2,000 to 5,000 words long. If possible, please submit at least one or two images with captions with each essay. Send the images separately as jpegs (300 dpi or larger). Images may be black-and-white or color. Please send them with the draft, the figure captions indicated in the text (images are not an afterthought). Copyright resides with the Dutchess County Historical Society. For endnotes, please use *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Examples:

Franklin D. Roosevelt, 508<sup>th</sup> Press Conference, December 10, 1938, *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1938 Volume: The Continuing Struggle for Liberalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), 632.

Nancy V. Kelly, "Rhinebeck: Transition in 1799" in *The Hudson Valley Regional Review* Vol. 6, No. 2 (March 1989), 94.

If you have an idea for an article that you are considering, but are doubtful about, just write to me at [clewis1880@aol.com](mailto:clewis1880@aol.com) and I will

be happy to discuss it. I am hoping for first drafts of articles in hand by April 1, 2016. Please note that this is an earlier deadline than last year. I look forward with delight to reading your essays.

— Candace Lewis, *Editor*

# Dutchess County Historical Society

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Carol Doran

# Review of the Year 2015

**Centennial Celebration 1914-2014.** One hundred years of continuous operation of the Dutchess County Historical Society were celebrated all during the centennial year in a variety of ways. In April, we held our Annual Meeting at the First Presbyterian Church in Pleasant Valley, on the same property where the organization was founded. In June, we co-hosted a large community breakfast with the Dutchess County Chamber of Commerce. In the fall, as is our usual custom, but in grander fashion, we produced an Awards Dinner at the Henry A. Wallace Center, at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum in Hyde Park, NY. Our yearbook was devoted to honoring the centennial with many articles on the Society and many on families and businesses that have been in the county for one hundred years or more.



**Programs.** A variety of programs rounded out 2015, including a Saturday visit to the Lincoln Depot Museum in Peekskill, “How to Research Your Family Tree” on site at the Clinton House, and the presentation of the Benjamin Hall Family Kansas Flag to the Dutchess County Legislature. The longtime favorite Fall Road Rallye was back on the calendar for a scenic route in Lagrange and Pleasant Valley.



**Annual Meeting.** The Annual Meeting was held April 29, 2015, at the Henry A. Wallace Visitor and Education Center at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum. Denise Doring VanBuren was elected President of the Board. Dutchess County native Keith Altavilla, Ph.D., a recent Rowan Postdoctoral Fellow in Military History at the United States Military Academy at West Point, was the keynote speaker with a presentation on *The Second Surrender: Sherman’s 1865 Campaign in the Carolinas and the End of the Civil War*.



**Facilities.** During 2015, the Clinton House was challenged with significant HVAC repairs and a faulty ceiling in the downstairs collections room. Given major concerns regarding adequate space and a safe environment, the Board of Trustees is searching for a new home. Top considerations for a new site include climate controlled storage space for numerous collections, rooms for permanent and changing exhibits, a suitable area for hosting community events, and adequate parking.

**Yearbook, Centennial Celebration.** To mark both 100 years in operation as a not-for-profit historical society and 100 years of continuous publication, the Society produced a yearbook entitled *Thinking Historically: Dutchess County Historical Society Centennial Celebration, 1914-2014*. The Forum section was devoted to essays discussing approaches to history; a Centennial Celebration section presented stories of families and businesses that have been in the county for 100 years or more; and the Articles section presented essays on general history of the county. Yearbook 2015 will be *The Civil War and Dutchess County, New York (Part 1)*. The yearbook is a perquisite of membership and is sent to everyone each year.



**Development.** In addition to the significant support from DCHS members and friends, we once again received a grant from the Lillian Cumming Streetscape Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation for \$10,000, and the Denise M. Lawlor Fund for more than \$9,000.



**Collections.** Continued accessioning and cataloguing of incoming and existing items keeps the staff and volunteers very busy. A new installment is to be added to the Hart-Hubbard Collection, which chronicles a local family's involvement with the history of the New York Apple Institute, and a new collection featuring prolific and popular historian Benson J. Lossing is in development.

by Patty Moore, Executive Director

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*September 2014 through September 2015*

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The Society encourages the use of memorial donations to remember a loved one, or the gift of a special donation in honor of one's birthday, anniversary, or special occasion. Please be assured that all such remembrances will be appropriately acknowledged with a special letter from the Society expressing our sincerest thanks.

It has been the policy of the Dutchess County Historical Society to print only the categories seen above due to space limitations. We certainly value all of our member and donors, including Lifetime, Individual, Family, and Organization. We appreciate each and every one of you. Thank you for your continued support as we move forward into our second one hundred years.

# City & Town Historians and Historical Societies of Dutchess County

## DUTCHESS COUNTY HISTORIAN

**William P. Tatum III**

22 Market Street, Poughkeepsie, New York 12601

(845) 486-2381 fax (845) 486-2138

wtatum@dutchessny.gov

## DUTCHESS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Post Office Box 88, Poughkeepsie, New York 12602

dchistorical@verizon.net

Patty Moore

(845) 471-1630

## CITY HISTORIANS / HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

### Beacon

Post Office Box 89

Beacon, New York 12508

Historical Society: Robert Murphy

info@beaconhistoricalsociety.org

(845) 831-0514

### Poughkeepsie

62 Civic Center Plaza,

Poughkeepsie, New York 12601

Historian: George Lukacs

saltglazed@aol.com

(845) 471-5066

## TOWN & VILLAGE

### HISTORIANS / HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

**Amenia** Post Office Box 22, Amenia, New York 12501-5343

Historian: Arlene Iuliano arlenei@optonline.net (845) 373-9088

Historical Society: Norman Moore mmoore1776@aol.com

(845) 373-9338

**Beekman** 4 Main Street, Poughquag, New York 125700

Historian: Honora Knox hknox@townofbeekman.com

Tel: (845) 724-5300

**Clinton** 820 Fiddlers Bridge Road, Rhinebeck, New York 12572

Historian: Craig Marshall craigmarshall266@aol.com

(845) 242-5879

Historical Society: Mary Jo Nickerson nickersonmaryjo@gmail.com

(845) 266-3066

Post Office Box 122, Clinton Corners, New York 12514

**Dover** 126 East Duncan Hill Road, Dover Plains, New York 12522

Historian: Valerie Larobardier

historianlarobardier@townofdovernny.us

(845) 849-6025

Historian: Caroline Reichenberg

historianreichenberg@townofdovernny.us

**East Fishkill** Post Office Box 245, Hopewell Junction, New York 12533

Historian: David Koehler healthyharvestcsa@gmail.com

(845) 226-8877

Historical Society: Malcolm Mills bluhilmf@frontiernet.net

(845) 227-5374

**Fishkill (Town)** Post Office Box 133, Fishkill, New York 12524

Historian: Willa Skinner wskinner30@juno.com (845) 896-9888

**Fishkill (Village)** 40 Broad Street, Fishkill, New York 12524

Historian: Karen Hitt crotchet@gmail.com (845) 896-8022

**Fishkill** Post Office Box 133, Fishkill, New York 12524

Historical Society: Steve Lynch asklynch@yahoo.com

(914) 525-7667

**Hyde Park** Post Office Box 182, Hyde Park, New York 12538

Historian: Carol Kohan hptownhistorian@aol.com

4383 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park, NY 12538

Historical Society: Patsy Costello patsyc97@aol.com

(845) 229-2559

**LaGrange** Post Office Box 112, LaGrangeville, New York 12540

Historian: Georgia Trott-Herring herringtrott@aol.com

(845) 452-2911

Historical Society: Bob D'Amato

lagrangehistoricalsociety@gmail.com (845) 489-5183

**Milan** 20 Wilcox Circle, Milan, New York 12571

Historian: June Gosnell jdgosnell@frontiernet.net (845) 876-8363

Historian: Patrick Higgins higginspj@optimum.net (845) 834-2599

**Millbrook (Village) Washington (Town)**

3248 Sharon Turnpike, Millbrook, New York 12545

Historian: David Greenwood ngreenwd@aol.com (845) 677-5767

Historical Society: Laurie Duncan hsinfo@optonline.net

(845) 677-0323

Post Office Box 135, Millbrook, New York 12545

**Millerton / Northeast** Post Office Box 727, Millerton, New York 12546

Historian: Mike Williams willywmike@optonline.net

(518) 398-6531

7604 Route 82, Pine Plains, New York 12567

Historical Society: Ed Downey eddowney@millertonlawyer.com

(518) 789-4442

**Pawling** Post Office Box 99, Pawling, New York 12564

Historical Society of Quaker Hill and Pawling

Historian (Town): Robert Reilly rpreilly@verizon.net

(845) 855-5040

160 Charles Colman Blvd, Pawling, New York 12564

Historian (Village): Drew Nicholson dan.ddn@comcast.net

(845) 855-3387

18 Valley Drive, Pawling, New York 12564

Historical Society: John Brockway johnbetsyb@comcast.net

(845) 855-5395

**Pine Plains** Post Office Box 243, Pine Plains, New York 12567

Historian: Ann Simmons

Historical Society: Ann Simmons cas@fairpoint.net

(518) 398-5344

**Pleasant Valley** 1201 Netherwood Road, Salt Point, NY 12578

Historian: Fred Schaeffer fredinhv@aol.com (845) 454-1190

1544 Main Street (Route 44), Pleasant Valley, New York 12569

Historical Society: Marilyn Bradford Momof5NY@Yahoo.Com

(845) 518-0998

**Poughkeepsie (Town)**

1 Overrocker Road, Poughkeepsie, New York 12603

Town Office (845) 485-3646

Historian: John Pinna ajpinna@aol.com

**Red Hook** Post Office Box 397, Red Hook, New York 12571-0397

Historical Red Hook

Historian: J. Winthrop Aldrich wint42@gmail.com (845) 758-5895

Historical Society: Claudine Klose claudineklose@gmail.com

(845) 758-1920

**Rhinebeck (Town)** Post Office Box 291, Rhinebeck, New York 12572

Historian: Nancy Kelly kinship@hvc.rr.com (845) 876-4592

**Rhinebeck (Village)** Post Office Box 291, Rhinebeck, New York 12572

Historian: Michael Frazier [michaelfrazier@earthlink.net](mailto:michaelfrazier@earthlink.net)

(845) 876-7462

Historical Society: David Miller [dhmny@aol.com](mailto:dhmny@aol.com)

(845) 750-4486

**Stanford** Post Office Box 552, Bangall, New York 12506

Historian: Dorothy Burdick No E-Mail Town Office (845) 868-1366

Historical Society: Kathy Spiers [lakeendinn@aol.com](mailto:lakeendinn@aol.com)

(845) 868-7320

**Tivoli** Post Office Box 311, Tivoli, New York 12583

Historian: Bernie Tieger [villagebooks@frontiernet.net](mailto:villagebooks@frontiernet.net)

(845) 757-5481

**Unionvale** 249 Duncan Road, Lagrangeville, New York 12540

Town Office (845) 724-5600

Historian: Fran Wallin [franw821@hotmail.com](mailto:franw821@hotmail.com)

Historical Society: Henry Kading (845) 677-8174

303 Verbank Road, Millbrook, New York 12545

**Wappinger, Town and Wappingers Falls, Village**

20 Middlebush Rd. Wappinger Falls, NY 12590

Town and Village Historian: Brenda Von Berg

Town Office (845) 297-4158

Co-Town Historian: Joe Cavaccini Town Office: (845) 298-1150

Co-Village Historian: Mary Schmalz Town Office (845) 430-9520

Historical Society:

Sandra Vacchio [info@wappingershistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@wappingershistoricalsociety.org)

(845) 430-9520

Post Office Box 174, Wappinger Falls, New York 12590

**Washington** Post Office Box 135, Millbrook, New York 12545

Historian: David Greenwood [ngreenwd@aol.com](mailto:ngreenwd@aol.com)

(845) 677-5767

3248 Sharon Turnpike, Millbrook, New York 12545

Historical Society: Laurie Duncan [duncan006@optonline.net](mailto:duncan006@optonline.net)

Tel: (845) 677-0323

Dutchess County Historical Society  
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Email: [dchistorical@verizon.net](mailto:dchistorical@verizon.net)  
[www.dutchesscountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.dutchesscountyhistoricalsociety.org)

## JOIN AS A MEMBER

Throughout the year, the Dutchess County Historical Society sponsors historical trips, lectures, seminars, and workshops about a broad array of topics.

Help support the work of the Society.

## MISSION STATEMENT AND GOALS

The Society is a not-for-profit educational organization that collects, preserves, and interprets the history of Dutchess County, New York, from the period of the arrival of the first Native Americans until the present day.

Furthermore, The Society aims:

- To collect, catalogue, and preserve artifacts that make visual and tangible connections to the history of Dutchess County.
- To create permanent and temporary exhibitions, programs, and publications to stimulate interest in the history of Dutchess County.
- To develop program partnerships with other historical, educational, and governmental groups to promote community involvement with the history of Dutchess County.
- To administer Clinton House and Glebe House so as to meet The Society's educational and interpretive goals as well as to preserve the structures and landscape thereof.
- To serve the needs of researchers, educators, students, DCHS members, and members of the general public who wish to study and use the collection.



*Glebe House*



*John Beardsley, first occupant of the Glebe House in 1767 (played by Steve Wing, 2010).*

## LEVELS OF MEMBERSHIP

Millennial Circle.....\$1,000

*All benefits listed below plus two tickets to the Gala Awards Dinner*

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## JOIN DCHS TODAY!

Millennial Circle.....\$1,000

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Dutchess County Historical Society

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