

# OUR OUTDOOR HERITAGE

DUTCHESS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
2011 YEARBOOK



# OUR OUTDOOR HERITAGE

DUTCHESS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
2011 YEARBOOK • VOLUME 90

ROGER DONWAY, EDITOR



Dutchess County Historical Society

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Cover: Owl Rock (at right, H. approx. 4 ½ ft.) and Dragon Rock (at left) overlooking the lake at Innisfree. Photograph by Candace J. Lewis

Back Cover: (Top to Bottom): FDR in riding clothers at age 11;  
golfer Ray Billows; Morgan Wing at Sandanona.



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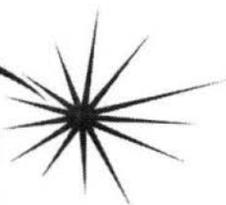
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*"Study the past if you would define the future"*  
*Confucius*

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

When I was asked to assume the editorship of the Dutchess County Historical Society's yearbook, my thoughts turned first to the famous scouting report on Fred Astaire: "Can't sing. Can't act. Can dance a little." My own scouting report might have read: "Doesn't know Dutchess County history. Doesn't know magazine layout. Can write a little."

It is quite true. I came to Dutchess County only in 1997, and my work since then has precluded me from taking any deep interest in its history. I also have no skill in magazine design.

Yet here I am.

For how long, I cannot say. But while I am here, I hope to produce the very best yearbook that I can—guided by your advice, which I welcome, but ultimately by my own lights.

## **The 2011 Yearbook**

Holly Wahlberg, my predecessor as editor, set down as the theme for this 2011 issue "Our Outdoor Heritage," and I felt obliged to follow through with that pronouncement. But I did not interpret the theme as encompassing only beautiful landscapes. It occurred to me that hunting game, for example, is an important part of our outdoor heritage, and a far older part of our heritage than the "genteel spectator" approach to nature exemplified by the Romantic Poets. Therefore, I commissioned an article on fox-hunting and an article on bird-hunting. So, too, I thought that certain sports are a part of our outdoor heritage, and therefore I commissioned an article on golf.

But I also decided that the yearbook should not be dominated by a single theme, as it has been in recent years. Thus, in this issue, the theme of "Our Outdoor Heritage" occupies only about half of the pages. The other half has nothing to do with the theme.

And that is a pattern I hope to continue: Each yearbook will have a forum of five or six articles on a single topic, but the rest of the yearbook will be open to articles on any and all topics. Authors with a superb idea

or essay need not wait until the DCHS yearbook gets around to their subject.

In this issue, for example, you will find an article on William Woodworth. He is a man whom historians of technology have named as the originator of a major social revolution. But apparently he has not been previously discussed by the Dutchess County Historical Society. The reason, I suppose, is that his revolution was in the technology of industrial carpentry, which lies outside our expertise. In the future, I shall try to give special attention to the history of science, technology, and engineering.

You will also see in this issue an article about Isaac Mitchell, a Poughkeepsie journalist who was one of the leading proto-novelists in American literature. His novella, "Alonzo and Melissa," went through scores of editions in the nineteenth century, and was popular even into the twentieth century. Mark Twain found it omnipresent in the libraries of the South. But Isaac Mitchell has likewise never been discussed in the yearbooks of the Dutchess County Historical Society. The reason, I suppose, is that his achievements were known primarily to those who deal with the history of ideas. In the future, I shall be focusing very much on the history of ideas.

Indeed, I have started doing so even with this issue: I have written an article on Samuel Morse's Christian philosophy of slavery. Obviously, that philosophy is not now politically correct. But I could not care less. I propose to devote considerable space in each yearbook to the intellectual arguments that the people of Dutchess County have had with each other over the years. And I shall insist that my authors eschew—totally—remarks that connote presentism: the perspective that judges arguments to be better or truer by the degree that they conform to current beliefs.

### **Looking Ahead**

In that regard, I have already set a theme for the Forum of the next yearbook. I call it: "The Religious Wars of Dutchess County: Sects, Schisms, and Dissent." As the article on Samuel Morse in this issue makes clear, it was not long ago that people took their religion very seriously. In consequence, they also took their religious disagreements very seriously. And these disagreements had social consequences. That is what I wish to explore.

But I have laid it down as a general rule, regarding all the contents of the DCHS yearbook, that I do not want articles dealing with issues of

the last 50 years. We simply do not have sufficient perspective on those issues to treat them as history. And in the matter of religious disagreements, I intend to enforce that ban rigorously.

Those of you who are interested in writing for the yearbook of the Dutchess County Historical Society, on its Forum topic or any other topic, should consult page 231 of this issue. There, you will find some of my requirements and directions, as well as an invitation to consult with me. I do hope very much that you will consider writing for the yearbook. But I hope even more that you will enjoy reading it.

Roger Donway

FORUM:  
OUR OUTDOOR  
HERITAGE



# INNISFREE GARDEN

Innisfree Garden and the Astonishing Connection between  
Two Twentieth-Century American Lumber Heirs and an  
Eighth-Century Chinese Painter-Poet

*by Candace J. Lewis*

In 1930, after a trip to England to research English garden design, Walter Beck, painter, and his second wife, Marion, heiress to a mining and lumber fortune, returned to Millbrook, New York, with a new passion for the Chinese painter-poet Wang Wei (699–c.759), at that time virtually unknown in the United States.<sup>1</sup> They scrapped their plans to build an English-style garden that would complement their English-style manor house. Now they planned to re-create the grounds of Wang Wei's country estate, the Wang Chuan Villa (Wheel Rim River Villa),<sup>2</sup> which the painter had reputedly depicted in a colorful handscroll. On this trip, in all probability, the Becks had become entranced by viewing a copy after Wang's original painting, which they would have found in the British Museum (see Figure 1).

This choice by the Becks was truly improbable. Choosing to create a Chinese-style garden would have been unusual enough, but the couple was opting to re-create the garden and grounds not of one of the best-known Chinese painters, but of Wang Wei, one of the earliest and least-known painters in the Chinese pantheon, a man who lived in the eighth century during the Tang dynasty (618–906). No original painting of Wang's existed. His art work was known only through copies of his paintings, made many centuries later (see Figures 1 and 2) and through his considerable fame as a poet.

## **The Theme of Eremitism**

There is a strong unifying theme, however, between the country

estate in Millbrook, New York, belonging to the Becks in early twentieth-century America, and the Wang Chuan Villa, home of Wang Wei, 30 miles south of the Tang dynasty capital, Changan (modern day Xi'an), in eighth century China. This is an impulse towards eremitism, the quiet life of the hermit. Why is it that men of affairs so often turn away from the busy world that has made them rich and powerful in order to escape the very sources of their wealth and power? No more luxury; no more kowtowing on the part of their subordinates. Do they adopt the life of a hermit simply to find solace in nature and solitude—even if it is intermittent and they must return to the life of affairs from time to time?

As early as the mid-1920s, Walter and Marion Beck withdrew into a life devoted to nature in the countryside of rural New York. Theirs seems to have been a genuine retreat, for they lived on the property full-time, staying in a small house until the large manor house was built and until their trip to England and back in 1930. And thus, during the difficult years of the Depression, primarily from 1930 to 1935, the Becks mapped the layout of their new and highly esoteric Chinese garden.

Walter Beck used several names for his garden, all of them reflecting his enchantment with the theme of eremitism. Among them were “Garden of the Seven Gates” and “Way to the Clouds”—obviously inspired by the Chinese sources for the garden. The name that Beck used most often—“Innisfree”—was taken, not from Chinese ideas or poetry, but from the Irish poet William Butler Yeats (1865–1939).<sup>3</sup> The theme, however, was consistent with the Becks’ interest in eremitism. It was also the dominating theme in the poetry of Wang Wei.

In this 1890 poem by Yeats, inspired by Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden*, there are three stanzas in which the poet speaks of his desire to retreat to the uninhabited island of Innisfree, in County Sligo, to live simply and freely, without artifice, close to nature:

### ***The Lake Isle of Innisfree***

*I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:  
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.*

*And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes  
dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the  
cricket sings;  
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.*

*I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.<sup>4</sup>*

In addition to the theme of eremitism, simplicity of expression, brevity, richness of description, a wish to live as simply as possible, and a desire to live close to nature are manifested in this poem. All are characteristics of the poetry of Wang Wei as we shall see shortly, as well as of this poem by Yeats and, no doubt, were factors in Beck's choice of the Chinese painter-poet as his muse.

### **Walter Beck and His Wife Marion Burt Stone**

When Walter Beck and Marion Burt Stone married in 1922, they decided to build their home on a Dutchess County site owned by the new bride: 950 acres, including a 40-acre lake. Marion was a wealthy 46-year-old divorcée, the ex-wife (since 1919) of George Chickering Stone, who was born the scion of a prosperous Saginaw, Michigan, family but now lived in Pawling, New York. Walter was a poor 58-year-old artist and widower (since 1921). Yet Walter and Marion's union was long and happy, and central to their life together was their common purpose of creating and re-creating Innisfree.

Marion was also the daughter of Wellington R. Burt (1831–1919), a Saginaw lumber baron and politician. Not only did Burt have a timber business, he was heavily invested in railroads; he financed and built the Cincinnati, Saginaw, and Mackinaw Railroad, later selling it to the Grand Trunk Railroad system. At one time, he was practically the sole owner of the Ann Arbor Railroad. Wellington Burt was also involved in politics, having been elected mayor of East Saginaw in 1867 after only ten years in

the community. In 1888, he ran for the governorship of the State of Michigan but was defeated.<sup>5</sup>

In 1876, fire destroyed the sawmill town of Melbourne, Michigan, home base of Burt's business, and it was expected that his empire would collapse. But Burt still had extensive timber rights in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and his Minnesota forest holdings proved to be a delightful surprise: They sat atop the fabulous Mesabi Iron Range, and Burt was able to sell the land to the United States Steel Corporation for a second fortune, becoming one of the eight wealthiest men in America.<sup>6</sup>

But when it came to his fortune and family, Burt was eccentric, and he drew up a will dictating that his fortune not be distributed until 21 years after the death of the last grandchild alive in his lifetime.<sup>7</sup> This unusual provision of the millionaire's will appears to have resulted from the old man's anger with his children. Nevertheless, in 1920, four children and four grandchildren succeeded in prying loose from the Burt estate about \$6 million (somewhere between \$60 million and \$250 million, in 2009 dollars<sup>8</sup>), because a Minnesota law forbade such long-term trusts.<sup>9</sup> But other assaults on the will were essentially unsuccessful, and the distribution of the estate was not carried out until May 2011. (Marion Beck had no descendants among the beneficiaries.) In any event, Marion Burt Stone came to her second marriage in 1922 a very wealthy woman, sufficiently wealthy that her new husband, Walter Beck, never again had to work for a living.

Otto Walter Beck was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio, the son of a caretaker at a veterans' home. He trained as an artist at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, Germany. By the late 1890s, he and his first wife, Caroline Peabody Perkins, moved to New York City so that he could teach at the Pratt Institute. Beck's first wife died in 1921, and he married Marion Burt Stone in 1922. The couple moved to the Millbrook property that Marion owned and lived in a small house for five years while they planned the construction of the large house and gardens.<sup>10</sup> By all accounts, in the design of the garden, Beck was the driving force. His was the artistic vision newly unleashed by access to a supportive younger wife and her wealth. Marion, however, was anything but passive. She fully participated in the design discussions, the trip to England, and was the dominant personality in selecting and maintaining plant materials.

## The Encounter with Wang Wei

By 1927, the couple had designed and built a grand home on the property in Millbrook—patterned after the principal building at the Royal Horticultural Society’s Wisley Garden in Surrey.<sup>11</sup> The Beck’s new home was a grand, rambling affair with Tudor elements: exposed timbers, tall chimneys, and an enormous roof, all intended to recall the comforting elegance of late medieval English life. The Becks’ plan was to surround the new mansion with English-style gardens and, to that end, they set off to England in 1930 to gather information that would help them design their new grounds in Millbrook. They intended to study the traditional English gardens of William Kent, Lancelot (“Capability”) Brown, and Humphrey Repton<sup>12</sup>—great properties with long, straight entryways, lofty trees and rolling hills surrounding the manor house, and lavishly abundant flower beds close to the house itself.

Somewhere on the trip in England, however, the Becks (probably Walter Beck with the support of his wife) abandoned the original plan and substituted the plan that they ultimately carried out—the effort to re-create Wang Wei’s garden at the Wang Chuan Villa.<sup>13</sup> Beck’s subsequent actions—focusing on the multifold aspects of a natural garden on the banks of a body of water and creating what he would call “cup gardens”—both strongly suggest that he encountered the handscroll in the British Museum depicting the Wang Chuan Villa and its environs (see Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1. *Wang Chuan Villa, handscroll, Section 3, copy after Wang Wei (699-c. 759). Ink and colors on silk. British Museum, London, England. 1889,111,0.1 AN 166910.*



Figure 2. Wang Chuan Villa, handscroll, Section 3 (detail), copy after Wang Wei (699-c. 759). Ink and colors on silk. British Museum, London, England. 1889,111,0.1 AN 166910.



Figure 3. Portrait of Fu Sheng. Section of handscroll attributed to Wang Wei. Eighth century, China. Ink and colors on silk. Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan. In the public domain.

This is one of several paintings of Wang Wei's estate based upon a stone engraving as well as on the twenty-poem suite "Wang Chuan," written by the painter-poet. No original paintings by the scholar-official turned semi-hermit exist. His work is known to us only faintly through later copies and descriptions. In Figure 1, we see the use of the blue-and-green style typical of the Tang period. The long handscroll unrolls from right to left to reveal brightly painted stations or sections along the Wang River where Wang Wei built his country home. Each portion of the riverbank was given a name by the painter-poet to match its most important or poetic natural feature: names that have been translated as "Deer Park," "Magnolia Enclosure," "White Pebble Shoal," and "South Hill." Later commentators have frequently taken the position that Wang Wei did not try to provide exact naturalistic depictions of spots in his country garden in either his painting or his poem suite but, rather, allowed his imagination to soar with his description and language and also with his flights into the spiritual realm.<sup>14</sup>

As for Innisfree's "cup gardens," so named by Walter Beck, they seem to correspond to the small sections of the painting in which mountains appear to curl protectively around a building, a group of trees, or a group of people. Today, in art history, we refer to this framing device as a "space cell." A detail of the scroll in the British Museum shows three space cells: from right to left, as the handscroll would have been viewed, we see a small pavilion inside a fenced enclosure; then another fenced-in area just before a tumbling waterfall; and, finally, a larger pavilion encircled by small jutting vertical hills (see Figure 2).

Another feature of early Chinese painting style was the tendency of the artist to tip up the ground surface and deliver a bird's-eye view. All these devices were used to produce clarity in picture design in the Tang dynasty and earlier, when mountains and buildings and people were often depicted as the same size. In later centuries in Chinese art, these devices were abandoned for other modes of representation.

Why can we say that Beck saw this painting at the British Museum? A layout determined by natural features close to water would be characteristic of the Innisfree Garden that Beck would design. It was remarkably similar to the design of the painting, although, in the case of Innisfree, the water feature would be a lake, not a river. If Beck had used either later paintings or the poems as his inspiration, the garden at Innisfree would not have been as closely matched in type and style to this painting as it

appears to be. Furthermore, there is the very specific artistic device that Beck adopted. Beck adapted the “space cell” or “cup garden” into a concept that he applied to his new garden in Millbrook, designing self-contained bowl-like units, both large and small, throughout the landscape. He was very fond of this device and appears to have attributed to it almost religious powers. Each scene was a microcosm, a reflection of the macrocosm. It would later be said that: “Walter Beck was a mystical man, no doubt about it.”<sup>15</sup> Beck’s mystical connection with Wang Wei was neither lightly achieved nor superficial. It seems that the modern American was truly able to find a resonance with the great old master of Chinese painting and poetry.

### **The Mystique of the Wang Chuan Villa**

To unravel the mystique of the Wang Chuan Villa, we must start with the man who built it. Wang Wei (699–c.759) was a scholar-official who lived in Changan, the capital of the Tang dynasty. He comes down to us in history chiefly for his fame as a poet, but he is also mentioned in histories of painters and his official career is quite well recorded. He is so famous a figure as a poet that he appears in China’s greatest novel. In the Chinese classic novel of the eighteenth century, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, when girls from the poetry club instruct a new member in the art of verse composition, the first assignment is to imitate the style of Wang Wei.<sup>16</sup>

Wang Wei was born into a family of middle-level officials with important social credentials on both his mother’s and father’s sides. By 719, he had earned a first place in the provincial examinations and become well known for his expertise at musical performance. In 723, he was dismissed from court for a minor indiscretion: He was accused of having allowed a dancer to perform a dance that was taboo, but perhaps, in the custom of the time, this was a pretext for his banishment.<sup>17</sup> Wang was sent to Shandong Province as administrator of granaries, a stiff punishment that he suffered bitterly. In 730, Wang’s wife died and he never remarried, preferring instead to study Buddhism with a Chan master. Chan—or Meditation—Buddhism (in Japanese: Zen) was just beginning to gain popularity in China in the eighth century.

By 733, Wang Wei returned to the capital and court and was soon appointed to high office, eventually becoming palace censor. During his career he held a series of other high offices at court, although he would periodically retreat from the capital, once to mourn the death of his mother

(for the prescribed three years), at other times to take appointments to distant posts (when he fell out of favor with the emperor).

He appears to have acquired his estate at Wang Chuan around 740 when sent south as supervisor of provincial examinations. The Wang Chuan estate was built in a mountainous region along the Wang River (Wheel Rim River), 30 miles south of Chang'an (modern day Xi'an), the capital of the Tang empire. There, Wang Wei found his true home and his true voice. At court, he wrote poetry in the style of the period—eight-line court poems composed on the spot at official and unofficial gatherings, sometimes as part of a friendly competition with each poet composing a couplet on a theme selected by the host until the eight-line poem was completed, sometimes as a command performance by the emperor or princely host with the poet composing an entire poem on a subject of the patron's choosing. These poems followed a strict set of rules for the structure of the four couplets as well as for the use of flattery and classical references. At his country retreat, however, Wang Wei was free to compose simple poems on the subject of nature and Buddhist thought with special reference to his devotion to Chan Buddhism.

In 756, Wang was captured by the An Lu-shan rebels and forced to serve the rebel government. When the imperial government was reinstated under the Emperor Suzong, Wang was pardoned and given high office again. He died at his Wang Chuan Villa. Unfortunately, although this biographical outline mentions the poetic output for which Wang was most famous during and after his lifetime, information about his painting is lacking. We know that he saw himself more as a poet than a painter, but history records his accomplishments in both endeavors. His couplet is often quoted:

*I erred in this life, becoming a poet.*

*In some life before I'm sure I was a painter.<sup>18</sup>*

There is one painting that is often cited as evidence of the work and appearance of Wang Wei. It is the Portrait of Fu Sheng, from a handscroll that has been carefully preserved in Japan (Figure 3). The scroll in ink and colors on silk is tentatively dated to the eighth century and traditionally attributed to the hand of Wang Wei. In this painting of a single figure, we see a gentleman—a friend of Wang's—seated on the floor with a table before him and a handscroll and writing implements.<sup>19</sup> The gentleman is lightly attired with his shoulders bare—a traditional symbol of ease and retirement from official duties, while the accessories of the scholar clearly

indicate the high achievement in learning of the individual. Although this is a portrait of Fu Sheng, it could equally well be a self-portrait by Wang Wei—at least as to type. It represents the highly educated scholar-official in his off-duty hours, entertaining himself with writing poems and/or painting pictures.

It is interesting to note that Wang Wei is credited with beginning the Southern School of Landscape Painting. According to tradition, he painted in the blue-and-green style typical of the Tang period, in which brilliant mineral colors (particularly azurite blue and malachite green) were used to create colorful landscape scenes. This is the style of the Wang Chuan Villa handscroll which survives in several versions, including the one in the British Museum (see Figures 1 and 2) and another at the Seattle Museum.<sup>20</sup>

There is another painting style for which Wang Wei is also famous. It is called “po mo” or broken ink painting, in which the artist uses a largely monochrome palette of black ink on a silk ground, with touches of white for highlights. This style is believed to have been invented by Wang Wei. It can be seen in a very early painting called “Snow Landscape,” attributed to the artist by the Song Emperor Hui Zong (whose highly distinctive thin “spun gold” calligraphy appears on the scroll).<sup>21</sup> Support for the early date is found in the primitive character of the architecture of three simple buildings represented on the river in a winter landscape. The work is clearly very early: the date, if not of the eighth century, is probably no later than the tenth. Is it actually by the hand of Wang Wei? No one knows. The painting has disappeared, apparently a casualty of the Second World War.

Wang’s poetry, however, does survive. He is considered one of the finest of the High Tang poets, that is, one of the finest of the fine. The painters who tried to re-create Wang Wei’s famous painting of the Wang Chuan Villa, and Walter Beck who tried to re-create the gardens of the country estate, probably would never have attempted to do so without the inspiration of Wang Wei’s poetry. Wang wrote a suite of twenty poems, each a single quatrain, devoted to a description of his treasured retreat in the countryside.<sup>22</sup> Two of these quatrains are given below, each rendered into English by a different translator. The quatrains are composed of four five-character lines—the simplest of poems—only twenty words. Each is constructed of a layering of descriptions of the natural world; the presence of the narrator is implied, not explicit. The lavish use of visual descriptions was unique to Wang Wei. No other contemporary poet wrote poems like his.

In addition, the haunting quality of these poems is unusual for the period. They are appreciated for opening like a firecracker and closing like the lingering sound of a bell.<sup>23</sup> They stay in our memory, because we don't quite know what the poet is trying to communicate. Is it the beauty of nature? Is it the emptiness of existence? In my view, there is in the poems of Wang Wei a tantalizing contrast—between the beginnings of the poems, which are constructed out of a wealth of images layering one upon another in an apparent visual offering to the reader of the richness and abundance of life, and the conclusions of the poems, which are self-denying and ascetic. Always, there is implied the transience of life recognized by Buddhism.

Here is the first line of “Deer Park,” a location within the Wang Chuan Villa garden (so named by the poet). It is perhaps Wang's most famous poem, and in classical Chinese it has a lapidary quality. The first line reads: “kong shan bu kan ren” or “empty mountain not see people.”

空 山 不 見 人

empty mountain not see people

In the poem as translated, it becomes “No one seen. Among empty mountains. . .” The poem begins with the larger image of the mountains, empty of people; narrows to the woods, where a shaft of sunlight pierces the gloom like a moment of sudden enlightenment . . . as if nature were imitating Chan Buddhism. Here is the complete poem.

***Deer Park***

*No one seen. Among empty mountains,  
hints of drifting voice, faint, no more.*

*Entering these deep woods, late sunlight  
flares on green moss again, and rises.<sup>24</sup>*

In the second poem, called “Magnolia Slope” (another location at Wang Wei’s Wang Chuan Villa), the poet introduces the reader to the magnolia blossoms, so rich and lovely in their cuplike shapes that they resemble lotus blossoms. There is, of course, a reference here to the beauty and purity of Buddhism.<sup>25</sup>

### ***Magnolia Slope***

*At the tips of the branches, lotuslike flowers,*

*In the mountains, putting forth red calyxes;*

*The hut in the gorge is quiet, without people:*

*In profusion, they bloom and then fall.*<sup>26</sup>

The lotus to which the poet is comparing the magnolia blossoms is the symbol of Buddhism—a flower rising pure and clean from the muddy pool of life. But the poet is also presenting the glorious abundance of life—gorgeous, visually enticing—only to withdraw this image of visual delight in the concluding couplet, where he introduces emptiness, solitude, death, and decay: all part of the cycle of life, but a sharp disappointment within the context of the poem. We are thrust back upon the inner strength of our religious feeling. We should remember, however, that although Wang was a Chan Buddhist and his poetry is constantly informed by Buddhist thought, first and foremost he was a poet and artist.

These poems with their descriptive nature imagery, their simplicity, and their mystical content could hardly have failed to intrigue a man of Walter Beck’s sensibility once he was introduced to them. That introduction may have occurred on the trip to Great Britain in 1930 at the same time as he probably viewed the painting of the Wang Chuan Villa (Figures 1 and 2) or upon his return to the States. We can only speculate.

### **The Garden at Innisfree—the Original Creation**

The garden at Innisfree as it was originally conceived by Walter Beck, and perhaps by Marion as well, was shaped from the natural landscape around a 40-acre lake on the couple’s original 950-acre property in Millbrook (today the property is 180 acres). Even though the inspiration for the design came from Wang Wei’s painting of his garden at the Wang Chuan Villa—a series of stopping points along the river at his country estate south of the Chinese capital—the Becks decided to make an adap-

tation for their garden and use only rocks and plant materials native to or commonly used in Dutchess County, New York. At Innisfree, the garden was laid out around a lake surrounded with low hills rather than along a river shore, but the motivation was the same: to provide a series of stopping points for the visitor, each one defined by natural elements—a single rock, a terrace, walkways, groupings of natural rocks, waterfalls, and planned vistas. Especially typical of a Chinese garden is the area Beck constructed at the edge of the lake with an ensemble of three local rocks that resembled Chinese rocks. The vertical rock he named “Owl Rock”; the low horizontal rock he called “Dragon Rock” (both visible in Figure 4); and the rounded rock he dubbed “Turtle Rock” (Figure 5).



*Figure 4. Owl Rock (at right, height approximately 4.5 feet) and Dragon Rock (at left), overlooking the lake at Innisfree. Photograph by Candace J. Lewis.*



*Figure 5. Turtle Rock (height approximately 3 feet, at the left of a grouping with Owl Rock and Dragon Rock) overlooking the lake at Innisfree. Photograph by Candace J. Lewis.*



*Figure 6. Cup Garden in a single rock (height approximately 2.5 feet), with mosses, lichens, sedums, and climbing ferns. Innisfree Garden. Photograph by Candace J. Lewis.*



*Figure 7. Cup garden in the form of a Chinese garden arch (height approximately 9 feet), built of stones covered with wisteria vine. Photograph by Candace J. Lewis.*

The most unusual and pronounced characteristic of Innisfree was Beck's use of the "cup garden" and the interlocking series of "cup gardens" progressing around the built landscape. "Cup garden" was a term that Beck invented to describe gardens both large and small that functioned as enclosed units within the larger landscape. It is my contention that Beck developed the concept of his "cup garden" from the framing device he observed in early Chinese paintings—most particularly in the painting of the Wang Chuan Villa attributed to Wang Wei. In Beck's usage, the "cup garden" was both a macrocosm and a microcosm. At the macro-level, the lake itself functioned as a garden along with the framing hills around it—representing the cosmos. At a micro-level, a single rock could function as a "cup garden" with small plants growing from a hollowed indentation—the whole feature representing the beauty and unity of the cosmos. See, for example, the small cup garden in the form of a single rock with hollowed out depressions for lichens and mosses (Figure 6). This was a little garden worthy of quiet contemplation. Or, consider another cup garden created out of a Chinese-style garden arch formed out of piled rocks and surmounted by a robust wisteria vine (Figure 7).

### **The Evolution of Innisfree Garden**

After 1938, Walter Beck would have a collaborator in the design of

the garden: Lester Collins, at that time a young man studying as a graduate student in landscape design at Harvard University. Collins would go on to have a distinguished career in landscape design, eventually becoming the head of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. In 1939 and 1940, Collins went to China to study. Later he would spend time in Japan as well, giving him more direct knowledge of East Asian garden design than Beck had. Beck, however, would remain the driving force at Innisfree until his death in 1954. (Marion would die shortly thereafter, in 1959.) Throughout their years together, Beck and Collins had a close friendship in their design partnership.

After Walter Beck's death, Marion Beck asked Collins to help her plan for the future. Together, they tried to simplify the design of the garden to accommodate the needs of the time, with a more limited budget.<sup>27</sup> At the time of Marion's death in 1959, twenty gardeners were employed at Innisfree. Later, the staff was reduced to five. Innisfree became financially secure in 1972 when the foundation sold 750 acres of the original 950 to Rockefeller University as a field center for ecology.<sup>28</sup> The house built by Marion and Walter Beck was razed in 1979, a difficult decision by the Innisfree Foundation, but one taken to save money and resources for the garden.

There were a number of changes to the garden itself. The moss garden was eliminated, because it required two full-time gardeners to keep it in good condition. During Collins's tenure, he and the Becks added some elements of Japanese design that were inspiring to Collins from his knowledge of Japanese gardens. The zig-zag bridge and the stepping-down bridge are two examples of Japanese inspired design. Since 1993, when Collins died, his widow, Petronella Collins, has been the curator of the garden. Looking back, she says: "Mr. Beck was forever coming up with new philosophies. I just figure out the best way to get things done."<sup>29</sup>

## **Conclusion**

These facts from the more recent history of the garden are somewhat ancillary to the story of its inception: the story of Walter and Marion Beck, a twentieth-century American painter and his lumber-and-mining-heiress wife, who went to England and became entranced with the figure of Wang Wei, painter-poet of eighth-century China. Remarkably, in later years, while Lester Collins, Walter Beck's friend and the head of the Landscape Architecture School at Harvard, was adding authentic Far Eastern Chinese and Japanese elements to the garden—things that he had actually

witnessed on his trips to China and Japan, he was departing somewhat from the original vision of the Becks—which was to recreate the garden of Wang Wei.

Originally, the Becks, probably led by the more philosophical Walter, fell in love with the legend of the Wang Chuan Villa and garden, Wang Wei's famous but only faintly known country estate and tried to re-create an adaptation of this ancient garden in the countryside of Millbrook. Supremely visual, the artist Walter Beck seems to have responded across cultures and centuries to the painting and the poetry of Wang Wei—still very little known in the West in the early twentieth century. It happened at a particular time in history—when the shadow of Depression hung over America and Europe. The years 1930 to 1935, during which the Becks were first returning from their exploratory trip to England and were designing Innisfree Garden, were a difficult time in the United States. It is not hard to understand why this couple found solace in their country retreat and an absorbing intellectual and physical endeavor.

In fact, the Becks caught the leading edge of the wave of serious Chinese studies in England and America through their contact with scholars at the British Museum and at Harvard University (where Lester Collins was studying). In a sense, they stumbled into two of the most important centers for Chinese studies. In England, this was the British Museum, with the new discoveries brought back by Sir Aurel Stein from his expeditions into western China beginning just before World War I and continuing thereafter. In America, Chinese studies centered on Harvard University, with the new discoveries brought back by Langdon Warner in the 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>30</sup> This may not have been a matter of luck, for the Becks were extremely wealthy people with considerable access. It is a central thesis of this paper that the Becks encountered the figure of Wang Wei, his painting and poetry during their visit to England in 1930. Very probably they saw and found inspiration from the Wang Chuan Villa scroll in the British Museum (Figures 1 and 2). This contention is supported by Walter Beck's interest in "cup gardens" (identified and named by him), which are so fundamental to his garden design at Innisfree in Millbrook. He took them from an artistic device, today called "space cells," in Tang dynasty scrolls such as the Wang Chuan Villa scroll.

Thus, Walter Beck, and Marion also, worked tirelessly to create an eremitic retreat based upon the principles and philosophy expressed by

Wang Wei in his painting and poetry and, by all accounts, they succeeded in their quest.

### To Visit

Innisfree Garden  
Tyrrel Road  
RR2 Box 38A  
Millbrook, NY 12545-9608  
Tel. 845-677-8000

**Note:** Watch for the small blue metal sign on Route 44; the turn onto Tyrrel Road is just west of the Dutchess County Cooperative Extension.

**From Taconic Parkway,** take the Millbrook Exit, proceeding east on Route 44 just 1.7 miles to Tyrrel Road, make a right turn (south) and continue 1 mile.

**Season:** May 1 through October 20

**Open:** Weekends and legal holidays, 11:00 am–5:00 pm  
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, 10:00 am–4:00 pm  
Closed: Mon-Tues, except legal holidays

**Admission:** Wed, Thurs, Fri (\$3/person 6 years & older)  
Weekends & legal holidays (\$4/person 6 years & older)

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## End Notes

1 I am indebted to Roger Donway, editor of the yearbook, who suggested that I research this topic and directed me to several sources.

2 The name "Wang Chuan Villa," which was taken from the small river running through Wang Wei's country property, translates into English as "Wheel Rim River Villa," an awkward phrase in our language. The name comes from the eddies and whirlpools that looked like wheels and from the mouth of the river where the current flowed around an island like a wheel. Marsha L. Wagner, *Wang Wei*, in Twayne's World Authors Series: A Survey of the World's Literature: China, ed. William Schultz (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, A Division of G.K. Hall & Co., 1981), p. 88.

3 Lester Collins, *Innisfree, An American Garden* (Sagaponack, NY: Sagapress/A Ngaere Macray Book; distributed by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994), p. ix.

4 William Butler Yeats, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," in *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*, rev. 2d ed., edited by Richard J. Finneran (NY: Scribner Paperback Poetry, 1996), p. 39.

5 Douglas Orwig, "Wellington R. Burt: Remarkable Eccentric," in *Mid-Michigan Remembers Stories about Us: A project of Delta College students and staff*, [http://www3.delta.edu/michiganremembers/stories/w\\_r\\_burt.htm](http://www3.delta.edu/michiganremembers/stories/w_r_burt.htm)

6 *Ibid.*, p. 1.

7 Justin L. Engel, mlive.com, *The Saginaw News*, "Wellington's Millions," [http://blog.mlive.com/saginawnews\\_impact/print.html?entry=/2011/05/wellingtons\\_millions\\_92\\_years.html](http://blog.mlive.com/saginawnews_impact/print.html?entry=/2011/05/wellingtons_millions_92_years.html)

8 <http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare/>

9 Engle, "Wellington's Millions."

10 Arthur L. Scinta, "About Otto Walter Beck: One of America's Most Original Artists and Landscape Designers," *Pelham Life*, <http://www.pelhamlife.com/id37.html>.

11 Collins, *Innisfree*, p. 1.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 5. Lester Collins suggests that Beck had decided against an English-style garden before the trip to England in 1930 and that the trip was designed for research into new approaches to garden design. This explanation, probably offered many years later by the Becks, does not seem entirely logical on its face as one would not go looking for non-English-style gardens in England. It seems more probable that a visit to the British Museum and a new acquaintance with the concepts of Chinese painting and garden design through the curators at that institution might have inspired the traveling couple.

14 See Tony Barnstone; Willis Barnstone; and Xu Haixin, trans., *Laughing Lost in the Mountains: Poems of Wang Wei*, with a critical introduction by Willis Barnstone and Tony Barnstone (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1991), introduction. Wagner quotes Wang Wei writing about visiting certain locations with his servants and writing poems as he progressed as an example of the poet finding direct inspiration from his grounds. This memory, however, does not necessarily negate

the possibility of poetic license. Wagner, *Wang Wei*, p. 90.

15 Neil Soderstrom, *About Town*, "Innisfree Garden," <http://www.abouttownguide.com/dutchess/articles/summer03/innis.shtml>, p. 3. The quote is from Petronella Collins. Petronella would take care of the garden after the death of her husband, Lester Collins, in 1993. From 1938 until Walter Beck's death in 1954, Beck and Collins worked together at Innisfree—Beck as owner and original designer, Collins as professional landscape designer. Marion Beck, too, as owner, designer, and lover of plants, was integral to the creation of Innisfree.

16 Wagner, *Wang Wei*, preface.

17 Stephen Owen, *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry: The High T'ang* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 30.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

19 In Tang dynasty China, tables and chairs were not yet in common use; people sat on the floor as is seen in this image.

20 *Wangchuan Villa*. 15th or 16th century (?) copy after Wang Wei (699–c.759). Handscroll, ink and color on silk. H. 11 ¾ in. L. 15 ft. 9 in. China. Ming dynasty. Seattle Art Museum.

21 See *Snow Landscape*, by Wang Wei (699–c.759). Album leaf; ink and white pigment on silk; H. approx. 18 in. China. Tang dynasty. Formerly Manchu Household Collection. From Sherman E. Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art*, 5th ed., edited by Naomi Noble Richard (Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994), fig. 389.

22 The titles of some of the twenty poems in the Wang Chuan suite are 1) Elder-Cliff Cove, 2) Master-Flourish Ridge, 3) Apricot-Grain Cottage, 4) Bamboo-Clarity Mountains, 5) Deer Park, 6) Magnolia Park, 7) Dogwood Bank, 8) Scholartree Path, 10) South Point, 11) Vagary Lake, 13) Golden-rain Rapids, 15) White-Rock Shallows, 16) North Point, 17) Bamboo-Midst Cottage, 18) Magnolia Slope. See David Hinton, trans., *The Selected Poems of Wang Wei* (New York: A New Directions Book, 2006), pp. 36–50.

23 Wagner, *Wang Wei*, p. 114.

24 Hinton, *Selected Poems of Wang Wei*, p. 40.

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 113–14; see Marsha Wagner's analysis of this poem.

26 Wagner, *Wang Wei*, p. 113.

27 Collins, *Innisfree*, p. 33.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

29 Ellen Maguire, "Day Trip; In the Garden of Yin, Yang and Yeats," *The New York Times*, July 1, 2005, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A07EFD91531F932A35754C0A9639C8B>

30 For an interesting account of explorations in China from 1900 through the early 1930s, see Peter Hopkirk, *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road: The Search for the Lost Cities and Treasures of Chinese Central Asia* (London: John Murray Publishers, 1980). There are chapters on Sir Aurel Stein and Langdon Warner.

# THE EARLY HISTORY OF GOLF IN DUTCHESS COUNTY

*by Russell La Valle*

Hard by, in the fields called the Links, the citizens of Edinburgh divert themselves at a game called golf, in which they use a curious kind of bats tipt with horn, and small elastic balls of leather, stuffed with feathers, rather less than tennis balls, but of a much harder consistence. This they strike with such force and dexterity from one hole to another, that they will fly to an incredible distance. Of this diversion the Scots are so fond, that, when the weather will permit, you may see a multitude of all ranks, from the senator of justice to the lowest tradesmen, mingled together, in their shirts, and following the balls with the utmost eagerness. . . . Such uninterrupted exercise, co-operating with the keen air from the sea, must, without all doubt, keep the appetite always on edge, and steel the constitution against all the common attacks of distemper.<sup>1</sup>

*A Description of the Leith Links, Edinburgh, Scotland,  
by Tobias Smollett, 1771*

In 1681, as the Lord High Commissioner of Scotland, the Duke of York—brother of King Charles II and the future King James II of England/King James VII of Scotland—got into a discussion with two English noblemen who claimed that golf was an English game. The Duke took exception and proposed to settle the matter by challenging them to a

golf match at the Leith Links near his Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh. The Duke and his partner—a common cobbler but a champion golfer—won, and the contest has been hailed as the first “international” golf match in history.

As fate would have it, two years later the Province of New York, a British crown territory, established its first twelve counties, one of which, Dutchess County, was named for the Dutchess of York, that is, James’s wife: Mary of Modena (Maria Beatrice Anna Margherita Isabella d’Este), an Italian princess who had married James in 1671. With such noble lineage, it is no wonder that the early history of golf in “Dutchess” County is the story of wealth, privilege, and high society—an amenity for the illustrious families and their guests who likened themselves to European aristocracy and whose palatial mansions lined the eastern shore of the Hudson River like so many riverside estates on the Thames—often in the same opulent architectural motifs as their continental brethren.

### **The Gilded Age**

One such early golf course was the Staatsburg Golf Club, which today is called the Dinsmore Golf Course and is part of the Odgen Mills and Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park and the conjoined Margaret Lewis Norrie State Park—together comprising 1,094 acres. Originally a 9-hole private course, built in 1893 (and thus with claims to be the “third oldest golf course in the country”<sup>2</sup>), it served as a pleasurable diversion to many of the Hudson Valley’s “aristocratic” families: the Roosevelts, Astors, Livingstons, Vanderbilts, Hoyts, Mills, Beekmans, Rogers, and others. The original modest farmland had been acquired in 1854 by William Brown Dinsmore, a powerful rail and shipping magnate, but was enlarged quickly and dramatically (a process continued by his son William B. Dinsmore, Jr.) until it spread over 2,000 acres, with more than 90 separate structures, huge greenhouses, vast gardens, prize-winning flowers and livestock, and mansions that hosted the likes of Ulysses S. Grant and Chester A. Arthur. Later on, Dinsmore Jr.’s granddaughter Helen Huntington Hull (the former Helen Dinsmore Huntington, Helen Huntington Astor, and Mrs. Lytle Hull), a New York society grande dame and famed musical benefactor in New York and the Hudson Valley, perpetuated the Dinsmore family tradition and held court there with such icons as Leonard Bernstein, Elsa Maxwell, and Cole Porter.

In 1952, Mrs. Hull conveyed 50 acres of the estate (including the original 9-hole golf course) to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation with the intention of constructing an additional nine holes—under the stipulation that the course henceforth be called “Dinsmore Golf Course” in honor of her grandfather. She continued bequeathing small parcels to the property until in 1961 a total of 123.36 acres was amassed for the new 18-hole course. The final configuration of both the old nine holes as well as the new nine was designed by golf architect Hal Purdy—with considerable help from legendary professional golfer Gene Sarazen<sup>3</sup>—and completed in 1962. On May 20, 1968, Mrs. Hull herself formally opened the newly completed clubhouse and was the “Guest of Honor at a luncheon in the Dinsmore Overlook Restaurant.”<sup>4</sup> The present 18-hole layout, whose southern nine holes maintain the “shadow” of the original 1893 course, is open to golfers of all stripes who can delight in playing in the footsteps of presidents, socialites, captains of industry, and entertainment luminaries of the Gilded Age and beyond.

Not long after the formation of the Staatsburg Golf Club came “Golf’s Lady of the Hudson,”<sup>5</sup> the Dutchess Golf and Country Club, organized in 1897 in the city of Poughkeepsie. At that time, Poughkeepsie was a vibrant urban center where industry flourished—with shipping, papermills, breweries, and hatteries—and where could be found the oldest continuing entertainment facility in New York State, the 1869 Bardavon Opera House. But what Poughkeepsie didn’t have was a golf course. A number of the city’s grandees sought to remedy the situation.

As described in his heartfelt and comprehensive history of the first 100 years of the DGCC, *Golf’s Lady of the Hudson: A Centennial History of Dutchess Golf and Country Club*, club historian and present general manager Tom Buggy recounts how on April 10, 1897, “eighteen men of influence from the city met in the offices of lawyer Silas Wodell to organize what was to become Dutchess Golf and Country Club. These men had a common interest in golf and a desire to form a club of high standards.”<sup>6</sup> Among its first Board of Governors were John and William Adriance of the successful Adriance and Platt Company, a manufacturer of farm equipment; George Collingwood, owner of Poughkeepsie’s largest coal company; William Young, a leading New York attorney and owner of the Poughkeepsie Horse Car Company, the Poughkeepsie Gas Company, and later Locust Grove, the estate of Samuel F. B. Morse;

Edward S. Atwater, the Yale-educated president of the Farmers & Manufacturers National Bank; J. Leverett Moore, a professor of Latin at Vassar; as well as other men of wealth and social standing.



*Figure 1. The present 17th hole at the Dutchess Golf and Country Club, whose green remains from the original 9-hole golf course of a hundred years ago.*



Figure 2. An aerial view of the layout of the Casperkill Country Club golf course, formerly the IBM Country Club golf course. Author Steve Sailer has written: "Golf course architecture is one of the world's most expansive but least recognized arts. Yet this curiously obscure profession can help shed light on mainstream art, sociology, and even human nature itself, since the golf designer, more than any other artist, tries to reproduce the primeval human vision of an earthly paradise."<sup>7</sup>

After its founding according to the club rules of the St. Andrew's Golf Club of Yonkers and the rules of the newly formed United States Golf Association—starting with 50 members each paying a \$10 initiation fee and \$15 annual dues—the Dutchess Golf and Country Club was heralded by the *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle News*: "Poughkeepsie is now in line with recent civilization. We have a golf club, and with a good sized farm to range over, and a real Scotsman in command."<sup>8</sup> The Scotsman in question was John Forman, a professional golfer, greenskeeper, golf instructor, and club and ball maker—who had been the greenskeeper at none other than Leith Links in Scotland. Another illustrious Scot was Mungo Park II, the designer of the original 9-hole course (expanded to 18 holes in 1925). Named for his uncle, a famous explorer, he was the son of the famous Old Willie Park and brother of Willie Park Jr., both British Open golf champions and pioneers in professional golf. As the *Poughkeepsie Eagle News* reported, "The scenery is all one could wish, the green roll-

ing hills and meadows of old Dutchess all around, the blue Catskills and Fishkills visible from many points, and the long line of river hills of Ulster, which resemble the hills of East Lothian in Scotland, as Forman says.” At last, the City of Poughkeepsie had her golf course.<sup>9</sup>

2	ACCOUNT No.	NAME						
4	SHEET No.	ADDRESS	DATE	DATE	ITEMS	PAGE	CREDITS	
	House	Abn. Franklin D. Roosevelt						
		Hyde Park NY						
6	JAN - 1 1935	D	25	Jan 19/35			27.50	
		T	2.50					
8	JAN 1 1936	D	25	Jan 8/36			27.50	
		T	2.50					
10	JAN 1 1937	D	25					
12	JAN 1 - 1938	T	25.00	Meal			27.50	
		D	25					
14	JAN 1 - 1939	T	25.00	Jan 11/38			27.50	
16	JAN 1 - 1939		27.50	Feb 8/39			27.50	
18	JAN 1 1940		27.50	Feb 13/40			27.50	
20	JAN 1 - 1941		27.75	Jan 11/41			27.75	
22	JAN 1 - 1942		27.75	Jan 21/42			27.75	
24	JAN 1 - 1943		27.75	Feb 13/43			27.75	
26	JAN 1 - 1944		27.75	Feb 7-44			27.75	
28	JAN 1 1945	DT	30-	Jan 20/45			30-	
30								

Figure 3. FDR's record of his dues for the Dutchess County Golf and Country Club. According to FDR biographer H. W. Brands: "He loved playing golf more than just about anything else. I believe that his [subsequent] inability to play made the game even more important to him."<sup>10</sup>

No history of golf in Dutchess County is complete without mention of its greatest champion, Ray Billows—the “Cinderella Kid”<sup>11</sup>—who played out of the Dutchess Golf and Country Club (with fourteen club champion-



ships) and was an elite player in American amateur golf in the 1930s and into the 1950s. Of his many accomplishments, a number are noteworthy: seven New York State Amateur titles (most ever); New York State Senior Champion (1974); three-time runner-up finishes in the USGA Amateur; participated on two Walker Cup teams and in the U.S. and British Opens; as well

Figure 4. Ray Billows: the greatest golfer to yet emerge from Dutchess County.

as playing in three Masters Tournaments, recording a hole-in-one on Augusta National's famed 16<sup>th</sup> hole. He even played, and beat, the legendary Bobby Jones for \$1 and asked for a check rather than cash, so he could have the great golfer's signature. Today, the check is still on display in the Dutchess Golf and Country Club's trophy case.

During the same period, a Dutchess County magnate, John Bowdish ("J.B.") Dutcher—a former state assemblyman and senator (1861–65), director of the New York and Harlem Railroad Company, president of the Union Stock Yard and Market Company, among numerous other distinctions—built Dutcher House in Pawling, New York, in 1884, "one of the finest structures in the County."<sup>12</sup> Certainly civic-minded, he gave his hotel a library and reading room, a Town Hall for public uses, and a lecture room—in addition to fifty-six rooms, parlors, dining and reception rooms. But Dutcher also had another use in mind: a comfortable destination for his wealthy friends and guests from New York City, who made the trip north by train to play at his new, private 3-hole golf course a half-mile from the Dutcher House.



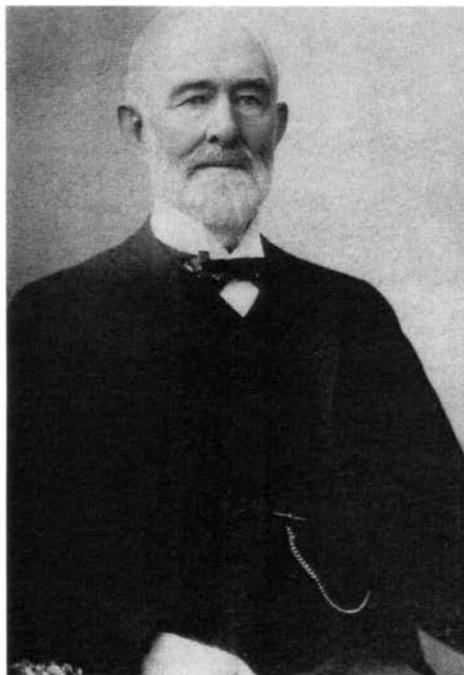
Figure 5. Dutcher House, built in Pawling in 1884, served both the community and the visiting friends of John B. Dutcher.

Built on pastureland in 1885, Dutcher House Golf Course was undoubtedly inspired by a two-year grand tour Dutcher had made in 1872, which included a visit to Scotland's Royal and Ancient Golf Club at St. Andrews and a meeting with the illustrious Old Tom Morris—four-time winner of the British Open Championship and R.A.G.C. greenskeeper—

and his son, Young Tom. The three became fast friends and Dutcher's fascination with golf was cemented.

In 1890, Dutcher House Golf Course was opened to the residents of Pawling and renamed the Pawling Golf Links Course. It was during this period that the course was reconfigured to a 9-hole layout whose footprint remains on the present day course and is acknowledged to be "the oldest municipal golf course in the United States."<sup>13</sup>

In 1950, John Dutcher's daughter-in-law Helen Willets Dutcher gifted the 42-acre golf course site to the Town of Pawling with the stipulation that it would "always and forever . . . be a golf course."<sup>14</sup> Helen Dutcher's wishes have been honored and today the "Dutcher Golf Course" (the current name) carries on with an estimated 17,000 rounds of golf played twelve months a year.



*Figure 6. In 1885, John B. Dutcher built the golf course now acknowledged to be the oldest municipal golf course in the United States.*

## **The Secret Course**

According to *The American Annual Golf Guide 1916*<sup>15</sup> in the United States Golf Association's archives, "John Reid, Sr., of Yonkers, New York, a Scotsman by birth, introduced golf to this country twenty-eight years ago."<sup>16</sup> At that meeting on November 14, 1888, with the formation of the six-hole St. Andrews Golf Club in Yonkers, "The Father of American Golf"<sup>17</sup> was anointed. Apparently unknown to Reid, the new club's charter members, and the soon-to-be-formed United States Golf Association was the existence of a golf and tennis club in northern Dutchess County,

formally established in July 1884, four years earlier—and kept mostly a secret to this day!

Since its inception (letters suggest the Club was loosely formed even prior to 1883), the “Northern Dutchess Golf & Tennis Club” (a pseudonym, used at the request of the club) was a “family” club—for the exclusive use of its select members to pursue sport and conviviality with a few (but not too many) agreeable and like-minded friends, relatives, and neighbors. And while its members were closely “related” ladies and gentleman of the Gilded Age, it was deemed prudent to establish written rules for the club’s use and governance—addressing everything from the use of padlocks, hiring of tennis balls, indebtedness of members (not to exceed ten dollars), exclusion of horses near the tennis courts, fines for “erratic behavior” (sometimes 10 percent of the annual dues), even the spilling of beer, shandygaff, ginger ale, or anything else that would attract ants in the clubhouse (\$1 for each offense). At that July 1884 meeting, in addition to a constitution and by-laws, a formal name was assigned to the club, club colors were selected (dark blue and white), a club flag was provided, and a list of the “County families” was appended as an addendum—many of the names echoing those of the Staatsburg Golf Club: Livingston, Clarkson, Freeborn, Hall, Roosevelt, Redmond, Schieffelin, de Peyster, Burnett, Hopson, Huntington, Merritt, and Delano.

Largely successful in keeping its existence hidden, today the “Northern Dutchess Golf & Tennis Club” property is much the same as it has been for the past 127 years: The unpaved entrance road remains unmarked and no sign announces the club. The original clubhouse still stands—with a few small structural additions, a telephone (1909) and electricity (1926)—overlooking the tennis courts. The nine-hole golf course (evolved from a 5-hole to a 3-hole and finally to a 9-hole course) preserves the same rustic character it had when it was created and maintained by horse-driven machinery. There are no motorized golf carts, no manicured teeing areas with elaborate schematics of each hole, no fountains spraying up from water hazards, no loud golfers with coolers of beer and inappropriate attire. To this day, one hole still has the box that once contained damp sand to build a “tee”—before wooden tees came into existence in 1920. In fact, if some of the club’s early presidents—General H. L. Burnett, Colonel Johnston L. de Peyster, Eugene Schieffelin, and Edward Livingston Ludlow—were to visit the club today, they would take pride that it remains a place where members yet revel in spring bird-watching, fall

mushroom gathering, and winter sledding and skiing. And as in times long gone by, they could still gather on the porch and enjoy a leisurely chat over tea—after a round of golf, a set of tennis, or a game of croquet—remarking that *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*.

### **The Burgeoning Game**

According to Tom Buggy, in 1896 there were some 135 golf clubs in America, and by 1900 there were almost 1,000. As reported in 1897, Vassar College's *Miscellany Monthly*:

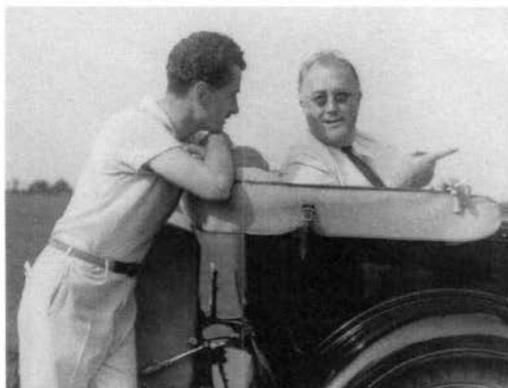
The startlingly quick growth of golf during the last few years is somewhat a wonder to us all. The game is so popular that most of us want to know at least something about it; even the scoffers among us are beginning to realize that it is intensely interesting and that those who have not played cannot judge how much fun and enjoyment there is in it.<sup>18</sup>

With this in mind and perhaps to round out the education of its ladies, Vassar College in 1897 laid out a golf course on campus (believed to be three holes). It came with the proviso that golf was still “an experiment,” and “if this is not used and no interest is shown in the game, it is to be feared that next year we cannot keep it; but, on the other hand, if enthusiasm is shown in this line of athletics, in the future we may be able to have a course that is really fine.”<sup>19</sup> That enthusiasm and future course became a reality on June 12, 1929, when the present 9-hole Vassar Golf Course on the campus's Sunset Hill officially opened—a gift of students, faculty, alumnae, and friends. Today it is the home of the Vassar Women's Golf Team.

Echoing the boom of golf in England at the turn of the century, the sport's popularity in Dutchess County continued apace. The private Millbrook Golf and Tennis Club established in 1900 featured challenging hillside topography as well as very small greens (typical of older courses), all of which remain today. Shortly after, another 9-hole course, Southern Dutchess in Beacon, was incorporated in 1902 and remains a private, member-owned golf and country club. With strategically bunkered undulating greens amid course elevation changes, each hole has dual tees—enabling golfers to play a complete 18-hole round. Founded in 1931, the semi-private Red Hook Golf Club began as a 9-hole tract and quickly attracted the likes of “The Squire,” Gene Sarazen, who lived in nearby Germantown. Expanded to 18 holes in 1996, it has hosted qualifiers for the Dutchess County and New York State Amateur tournaments. In 1933,

the City of Poughkeepsie added College Hill Golf Course, a public, 9-hole course designed by golf architect William F. Mitchell, who garnered coincidental fame when the 1980 movie *Caddyshack* was filmed at the Grand Oaks Golf Club he designed in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

With the popularity and demand for golf came the need for proven golf course designers. One such iconic golf architect was Robert Trent Jones Sr. (1904–2000), who designed (or remodeled) over 500 golf courses around the world and about whom it has been said, “The sun never sets on a Robert Trent Jones golf course.”<sup>20</sup> Several courses in Dutchess County can lay claim to Jones’s authorship.



*Figure 7. Lowell Thomas, shown here talking to FDR, acquired 2,000 acres in Pawling and had his friend, the legendary course designer Robert Trent Jones, help him lay out a 9-hole golf course for the private Quaker Hill Country Club.*



*Figure 8. Quaker Hill Country Club, 4th green: (right to left) Lowell Thomas, Jr.; Pat Hogan; Gene Sarazen; Rev. Ralph Lankler; Lowell Thomas (putting); Patsy Hogan (Hogan’s daughter)*

In 1926 the legendary radio and television commentator, author, sportsman, and world traveler Lowell Thomas came to Pawling, New York, became a lifelong resident, and it was from there that most of his famed nightly broadcasts were beamed out to the world. In the mid-1930s, Thomas (with the financial assistance of his sponsor Sun Oil Company)

acquired 2,000 acres of land at the north end of Quaker Hill—near the Dutcher Golf Course that Thomas often played. According to Thomas’s biographer, the Rev. Dr. Ralph Conover Lankler, “It all happened when he acquired the French property. While surveying it on horseback he came to a hilltop where one could look forty miles in every direction. He said, ‘What a spot for a golf course.’ And that is what he decided to do.”<sup>21</sup> Engaging the help of his friend Robert Trent Jones, a 9-hole course was laid out with dual tees, and the private Quaker Hill Country Club opened in 1940, with Thomas himself driving the first ball.<sup>22</sup> In 2010, *GolfWorld Magazine* ranked Quaker Hill as one of “The 25 Best Nine-Hole Golf Courses in America.”<sup>23</sup>



Figure 9. An aerial view of the IBM country club in 1953.

In 1942, the International Business Machines Corporation purchased a 123-acre parcel of land on the east side of U.S. Route 9 in the Hudson River highlands one mile southeast of IBM’s Plant 2 in Poughkeepsie. The purchase was for the construction of a country club for IBM’s employees—to include a golf course, tennis courts, Field House, Junior Room, Children’s Club, Rifle and Pistol Range, Nursery, picnic area, and playgrounds for a wide variety of other sports. The company hired Robert Trent Jones to design a 9-hole golf course, which opened on July 15, 1944. It was at Lowell Thomas’s nearby estate, Hammersley Hill, that Jones often stayed during the construction of what was to become the Casperkill Country Club and Golf Course. At that opening Thomas J. Watson, president of the Company—along with Mrs. Watson and other IBM executives—took part in the inauguration. At the time, Jones

described the course as “the last word in modern golf architecture”<sup>24</sup> and remarked, “One could travel throughout the whole East without finding a more thrilling, beautiful, and interesting nine-hole course.”<sup>25</sup>



*Figure 10. A view of the Spring opening of the IBM Country Club's golf course in 1948 shows Thomas Watson Sr. trying his hand at the game.*



*Figure 11. At the 1950 Spring opening of the golf course, Dause L. Bibby took the lead. Bibby was a vice president at the company from 1949 to 1956.*

In June, 1947 an additional nine holes were added, and the completed course has been selected as a “Top Pick” in the Northeast Powers Golf Guide and is included in *Golf Digest*’s “Places to Play.”<sup>26</sup> Over the years, Casperkill has hosted many local and state golf events: state amateur qualifiers, the Hudson Valley’s premiere “Dutchess County Amateur,” as well as many college sectional and high school competitions. In 1948, most likely staying with his old friend Lowell Thomas, Jones also designed the James Baird State Park Golf Course in Pleasant Valley.



*Figure 12. Casperkill Golf Course, Hole #7.*



*Figure 13. Casperkill Golf Course, Hole #3.*

The Harlem Valley Golf Club was another golf course that was built for company employees—in this case the Harlem Valley State Hospital in Wingdale, which operated from 1924–1994. While many of the early records regarding the course have not survived, it is generally believed (and is reported on several websites) that the 9-hole course opened in 1928 and was designed by seminal golf architect Donald Ross. Ross came to America in 1899 after serving an apprenticeship with Old Tom Morris at St. Andrews and is considered to be the dean of early twentieth-century designers in both the quality and quantity of the courses he designed. The Ross connection is problematic, however, as the Donald Ross Society does not list Harlem Valley Golf Club as one of his creations. Some locals say that Ross disavowed his involvement in the course because it was affiliated with a psychiatric hospital and even used patients as caddies, which was found to be beneficial to their care (as was also the case at Whispering Pines, the 9-hole course at the Hudson River State Hospital near Poughkeepsie). It is interesting to note that the distinction between the public and private perception of the hospital was recognized by the golf club itself. At its inaugural meeting to form the Club, minutes dated April 11, 1938, recorded: “The name of this club shall be known as

the Harlem Valley Golf Club, but for banking purposes, the name shall be the Hospital Golf Club.” Whatever its pedigree, this semi-private course in the foothills of the Berkshires remains a challenging test of golf—with two sets of tees, small greens, and strategic bunkers—that plays harder than its ratings.

In court records from a New Netherlands village in the 1650s (that later became Albany, New York), it was reported that after a game of “colf,” a few players got into a brawl over who was going to pay for the brandy. Similarly, customs records from 1743 in Charleston, South Carolina, list a shipment from Leith, Scotland, as containing: “8 dozen Golf Clubs, 3 Groce Golf Balls.”<sup>27</sup> Wherever one looks, one sees the game of golf in the early history of America, and Dutchess County can certainly take pride in its important place in that history.

As with many things Scottish, it seems that golfers are prone to verse and song about the game—perhaps after a wee pint following an enjoyable match. As Henry Callender, the Secretary and Captain of the Royal Blackheath Golf Club in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, said of a fellow member who had paid his back dues:

*May your balls, as they fly  
and whiz through the air,  
Knock down the blue devils,  
dull sorrow and care.  
May your health be  
preserved, with strength  
active and bold  
And may you long traverse  
the green, and forget to  
grow old.*<sup>28</sup>

## Endnotes

1 Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, edited by O. M. Brack, Jr. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1990), pp.217–18.

2 New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Ogden Mills & Ruth Livingston Mills State Park webpage: <http://nysparks.state.ny.us/golf-courses/21/details.aspx>.

3 Taconic State Park Commission Minutes: Abbreviated References to Ogden Mills & Ruth Livingston Mills Memorial State Park, 1937–1974, p. 13, transcribed to electronic form by Ken Lutters between 2003–2008 from the originals at Staatsburgh Historic Site.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

5 Tom Buggy, *Golf's Lady of the Hudson: A Centennial History of Dutchess Golf and Country Club* (Basking Ridge, NJ: Treewolf Productions).

6 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

7 <http://isteve.blogspot.com/2005/03/sailer-on-golf-courses-as-art.html>

8 Buggy, p. 30.

9 In a footnote, Tom Buggy reported, “At the same time Dutchess was being formed, Mr. E.N. Howell was building a course in the city of Poughkeepsie in the area that is now Whitehouse and Adriance Avenues. It was called Whitehouse Knolls and was designed by Willie Dunn, Jr., a famous and colorful Scottish player, clubmaker, teacher, and architect.... Play on the course began on June 14, 1897, but the project was apparently short-lived. There is little mention of the course until an April 30, 1901, newspaper article that reported the start of foreclosure sales of the property. There is no evidence a club was ever formed at the course.

10 [http://www.golf.com/golf/tours\\_news/article/0,28136,1904568,00.html](http://www.golf.com/golf/tours_news/article/0,28136,1904568,00.html)

11 *Syracuse Herald*, July 21, 1935.

12 James H. Smith, *History of Dutchess County, New York, 1882*: <http://www.usgennet.org/usa/ny/county/dutchess/dutch/Hist/pawlvill.htm>.

13 Drew A. Nicholson, Pawling Village Historian: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqZkMWfpv5E>.

14 Ibid.

15 *The American Annual Golf Guide*, USGA Museum webpage: <http://photoarchive.usga.org/mbwtemp/The%20American%20Annual%20Golf%20Guide%201916.pdf>.

16 Ibid., p. 14.

17 Ibid., p. 15.

18 *Vassar Miscellany Monthly*, Vol. XXVI, no. 8, May 1897, p. 442.

19 Ibid.

20 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Trent\\_Jones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Trent_Jones).

21 <http://www.quakerhillcc.com/Static/Early2.htm>. From the pamphlet *Lowell Thomas of Quaker Hill (Quaker Hill (local history) Series)*. The Historical Society of Quaker Hill and Pawling, Inc., 1990.

22 In 1944 Jones also configured six holes at Thomas's private estate at Hammersley Hill, less than a mile from the Quaker Hill club. With Thomas's unique input, one hole measured 870 yards with a par 7.5; another extended to 640 yards, and other holes were pars of 3.5 and 4.5. According to Thomas, a ball within a club length of the hole was a "gimme" for a half stroke. Who could argue? Thomas owned the course and made the rules.

23 <http://www.quakerhillcc.com/Articles/golfworld.pdf>. Ron Whitten, February 8, 2010. GolfWorld.com.

24 <http://www.ginnyflies.com/ibmopensesnewgoldcourse.html>.

25 IBM Corporate Archives (Casperkill\_Country Club\_Golf\_Yardage Guide.pdf, p.2)

26 Ibid.

27 Wayne Barrett, *Colonial Williamsburg, The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation*, Autumn 1987, p.32.

28 Ibid.

# BLITHEWOOD: A BIOGRAPHY

*By Nan Fogel*

One of the most beautiful outdoor spaces in Dutchess County, in my estimation, is Blithewood, a former private estate and garden that is now a part of the Bard College campus in the hamlet of Annandale-on-Hudson, in the town of Red Hook.

Blithewood's long and interesting genealogy begins in the late seventeenth century when well-to-do Dutch and English speculators rushed to purchase the remaining land along the Hudson River. Pieter Schuyler (1657–1724), a prominent merchant and the first mayor of Albany, was one such investor. He negotiated with the Indians and was granted a patent by Governor Dongan in 1688 on behalf of the English King, James II, for land that would become today's entire town of Red Hook. Schuyler, who never lived on the property, divided it into "Great Lots," and by 1725 it had all been sold to other investors: Barent VanBenthuyzen, Barent Staats, Harmense Gansevoort, and Henry Beekman Jr.<sup>1</sup>

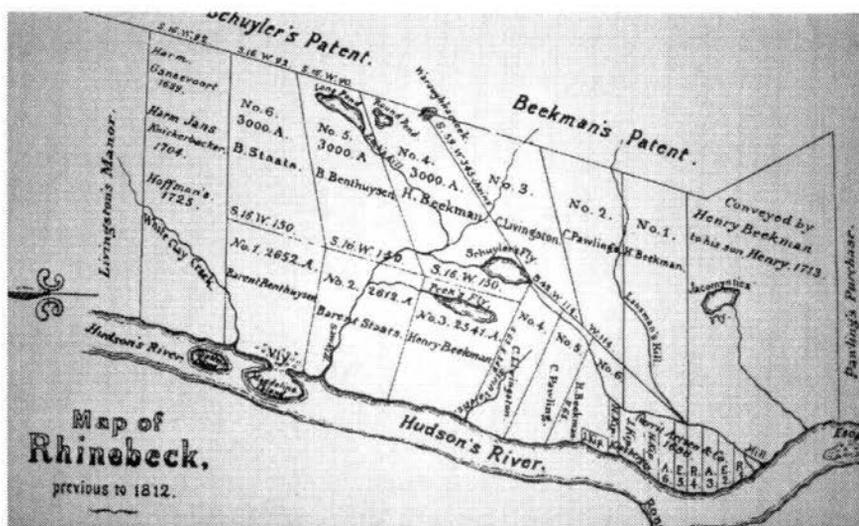


Figure 1. The Schuyler Patent. Photograph courtesy of the Egbert Benson Historical Society of Red Hook Archives.

VanBenthuyesen built a large house on the road leading to present-day Cruger Island, formerly Magdalen Island. At his death, the property of several thousand acres was divided among his sons and heirs: Pieter, Jacob, and Abraham. Portions of the estate were sold throughout the eighteenth century. A farm inherited by a VanBenthuyesen grandson who died intestate, leaving minor children, was divided into four parts. One part—400 acres—was sold to John Armstrong for 1,059 English pounds in 1790, and the remaining three lots leased to him until the VanBenthuyesen children came of age.<sup>2</sup>

This property, known as “the meadows” was in the area where the Fisher Center for the Performing Arts and Ward Manor are now located on the Bard College campus.

### **John Armstrong Jr.**

John Armstrong (1758–1843) was born in Pennsylvania, the younger son of General John Armstrong Sr. He studied briefly at the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University), then, in 1775, enlisted for the Revolutionary War. He first served as aide-de-camp to General Hugh Mercer and later in the same capacity to General Horatio Gates. While serving in a Southern campaign, he became ill with fever and had to resign. He returned to Pennsylvania, but later rejoined Gates’s staff with the rank of major. Armstrong is acknowledged to be the anonymous author of the “Newburgh Letters,” written in 1783, which urged officers to address Congress with their grievances about back pay and other matters and to threaten to leave the army and fight elsewhere if their demands were not met. The first letter wrongly implied that it was written with George Washington’s permission. That was an embarrassment to General Washington, but he was able to smooth it over, and Armstrong was not punished. He then served as Pennsylvania’s Secretary of the Commonwealth, and was sent as a delegate from that state to the last Congress held under the Articles of Confederation (1787–1788)<sup>3</sup>

In 1789, Armstrong married Alida Livingston, the youngest daughter of Judge Robert R. Livingston and Margaret Beekman Livingston of Clermont. Her inheritance from her mother was 8000 acres of land in the present town of Red Hook and 20,000 acres across the river in the Catskill Mountains.<sup>4</sup> The following year (1790), Armstrong purchased the 400-acre property mentioned earlier. He and Alida took the local name for the property, naming their estate The Meadows. Five years later, in 1795, the

Armstrongs purchased land just to the south, "in a manner not recorded," between Cruger Island and the Sawkill Creek, close to the mills that were owned by Alida's mother, Margaret Livingston. Title to The Meadows was given to Armstrong's brother-in-law, Judge Livingston, who sold it to Andrew DeVeaux, and bought the other three lots from Armstrong.<sup>5</sup>

On their new property, the Armstrongs built a Federal-style brick house, named it Mill Hill, and moved there in 1797. It stood on a bluff above the Hudson River facing the Catskill Mountains, close to the site of Blithewood today.<sup>6</sup> Mill Hill was sold in 1801 when Armstrong was elected to the United States Senate (1801–1804). But Armstrong did not serve his full term in office, resigning his seat when Thomas Jefferson appointed him the United States Minister to France, following the resignation of his brother-in-law Robert R. Livingston. Armstrong served in that post until 1810, then returned to Dutchess County with his six children and built a new farming estate. The estate was named La Bergerie (the sheep farm), reflecting the gift of merino sheep that he had received from the Emperor Napoleon when leaving France. The estate would keep that name until the Armstrong's only daughter, Margaret, who married William Backhouse Astor (the son of John Jacob Astor), renamed it Rokeby after Sir Walter Scott's 1813 poem of that name.<sup>7</sup>

With the War of 1812, John Armstrong was recalled to the military and given the rank of brigadier general. President James Madison appointed him Secretary of War in 1813. Unfortunately, Armstrong did not believe that Washington, D.C., would be attacked and did not respond to Madison's directive to fortify the city. On August 24, 1814, the British entered Washington and set fire to the city. It was the first, and last, time the city was captured and occupied by a foreign power. The occupation lasted for 26 hours and was thought to be retaliation for the burning and looting of York (Toronto, Canada) by American troops. The White House, the interiors of the buildings housing the Senate and House of Representatives, the U.S. Treasury, and many other public buildings were burned. Reconstruction took four years. Armstrong, blamed for the destruction and forced to resign, returned to his estate in Dutchess County.<sup>8</sup>

### **The Allens, Johnstones, and Bards**

After Armstrong was elected to the Senate in 1800, he sold the Mill Hill property to John Allen and his wife, Mary Johnston, and they were the owners until 1810. Allen came from a wealthy Pennsylvania family;

indeed, his father was a founder of Allentown, Pennsylvania. His brother, William Allen, married Maria Cornelia Verplanck and built an estate at de Peyster Point in 1814, the present-day Denning's Point. It is said that they entertained so lavishly they had to sell a few years later.<sup>9</sup> John Allen's wife, Mary, came from a distinguished family in the Annandale Valley of Scotland. One of her ancestors there had been named Earl of Hartfell by King Charles I in 1643 and later the Earl of Annandale. In honor of this family history, Mary gave Mill Hill the name of Annandale.

Meanwhile, in 1792, Mary's brother, John Johnston (Judge of the Dutchess County Court, 1809–17) had married Susannah Bard, daughter of Dr. Samuel Bard. Three years later, they purchased 175 acres of land for their estate, Bellefield, a property that lies within the Great Nine Partners Patent of 1697. In fact, John Johnston was the grandson of David Jamison, one of the original nine partners whose purchase of 145,000 acres from the Indians included the last unclaimed land along the Hudson River. The riverfront land was divided into nine water lots, each about half a mile wide, running four miles east, giving river access to each of the patentees. John Johnston's Bellefield was within Water Lot 6; his father, David Johnston, held Water Lot 7. Bellefield today is the home of the National Park Service, located next to the Franklin D. Roosevelt historic site in Hyde Park.<sup>10</sup>

### **John Cox Stevens and John Church Cruger**

The John Allens sold their estate of Annandale in 1810 to John Cox Stevens (1785–1857) and his wife, who kept the name Annandale. Stevens was the oldest son of a prominent New Jersey family. His grandfather was a member of Congress; his father a colonel in the Revolutionary War and an inventor. Indeed his father and Robert R. Livingston had been partners in a steamship project before the Livingston/Fulton venture was successful.<sup>11</sup> The senior Stevens's sister Mary was Livingston's wife.

Young John Stevens was an amateur sportsman: a lover of horses and boats. Two of his yachts, the *Black Maria* and *Trouble*, were built in South Bay, a cove on the Hudson River below his house. Often, his boats were moored and refitted there.<sup>12</sup> Stevens was a founder of the New York Yacht Club and served as its first Commodore. In 1851, he and his brother Edwin built the yacht *America* and sailed it to England. They competed in and won the Cowes Regatta, sailing around the Isle of Wight,

thus establishing the first *America Cup Race*.<sup>13</sup> In 1833, Stevens sold Annandale to his friend John Church Cruger.

Cruger was descended from two old Dutch families—the Van Rensselaers and the Schuylers.<sup>14</sup> He was already familiar with the area from visits spent at Dr. Masten’s house on Cruger Island.<sup>15</sup> Masten sold the island to Cruger in 1835, and a few years later Cruger built a large house and several out buildings on it. As a sponsor of John Lloyd Stephens, a friend and archeologist/explorer, Cruger received Mayan sculptures from Stephens’s first expedition to the Yucatan.<sup>16</sup> Cruger had niches built on the island to display the sculptures, which are now at the American Museum of Natural History. The niches and other structures are still there, referred to as “false ruins” or “follies.” An Internet site suggests the ruins were made to appear like those in Thomas Cole’s romantic paintings.<sup>17</sup> That is certainly possible, as Cruger and Cole were friends. As for the Annandale property: Cruger held it for just two years, selling it in 1835 to Robert Donaldson, a Southerner from North Carolina.

### **The Donaldsons**

On a moonlit night in 1818, the young Robert Donaldson (1800–72), just graduated from college, sailed down the Hudson River, past elegant villas on both banks. In his diary he noted that to live in such a place would be “Earthly Bliss.”<sup>18</sup>

Donaldson’s father had emigrated from Scotland in the late 1700s for better opportunities in America. Together with other family members, they developed trading partnerships with England and Scotland from their bases in Virginia and the Carolinas. Young Robert, his brother James, and four sisters lived comfortably with their parents in a home in Fayetteville, North Carolina. His father died suddenly in 1808 when Robert, the oldest son, was eight years old; his mother’s death followed three months later. In the years before the War of 1812, merchants suffered many losses, and the complicated partnerships among family members took years to unravel. The Donaldson house and furnishings had to be sold and the children went to live with relatives.

But Fortune smiled on Robert Donaldson in the form of an inheritance from his Uncle Samuel Donaldson, a successful London merchant who died in 1813 with no heirs. Robert was able to go to college from 1814 to 1818, graduating from the University of North Carolina in a class of twelve. His main interests were in the arts and architecture. He went to



*Figure 2. Portrait of Robert Donaldson (1800–1872). By Charles Robert Leslie (1794–1859). Oil on canvas, 1821. Collection of Richard Hampton Jenrette. Courtesy of Richard H. Jenrette and Classical American Homes Preservation Trust.*



*Figure 3. Portrait of Mrs. Robert Donaldson (Susan Jane Gaston) (1808–1866). By George Cooke (American, 1793-1849). Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 3/16 in. (127 x 102 cm). Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Mrs. Henry M. Post (Mary R. Haskell), 43.210.*

England in 1820 to collect his inheritance, taking time to visit Scotland and France. He returned with a legacy of what would amount to between two and four million dollars in today's money.<sup>19</sup>

Robert bought back the family home they had lost in Fayetteville and resettled his brother and sisters there, furnishing it with portraits and Duncan Phyfe furniture. He continued to trade with Great Britain and invested in property in Fayetteville. But by 1825 New York City had become the commercial capital of the world and Donaldson decided to move there so that he could take advantage of new business opportunities. He purchased a large house in a fashionable area and settled in.

As a man of wealth and a patron of the arts, he made many friends among people of the same interests and social class: David Hosack, a professor of botany at Columbia College and owner of the former Bard estate, Hyde Park; Asher Durand was another friend, as were some of the other Hudson River School painters. Through Luman Reed, Thomas Cole's patron, he met Alexander Jackson Davis, a young architect of unusual ability who would be important to him in his future endeavors.<sup>20</sup> At the time, Donaldson hired Davis to design a new doorway for his New York City house and sent commissions his way for projects in New York City and North Carolina.

In the spring of 1827, Donaldson began to court Susan Gaston of New Bern, North Carolina, and they married the following year. She was the carefully educated, oldest daughter of William Gaston, a lawyer who had served as a state Senator and two-term U.S. Representative and would be elected to the North Carolina Supreme Court in 1833. Once married, the Donaldsons spent part of the year at their New York City home and part in North Carolina.<sup>21</sup>

By 1832, Donaldson was looking for property in the Hudson Valley in order to build a country home. At his request, A. J. Davis designed a villa for the land Donaldson bought at Fishkill Landing (Beacon), but in 1835 he chose to purchase the 95-acre estate Annandale from John Cruger for \$19,000.<sup>22</sup> Susan Donaldson named it Blithewood.



*Figure 4. Alexander J. Davis Gatehouse.*



*Figure 5. Blithewood Today (front view).*

## **Landscape Architecture**

To his other interests, Donaldson had added landscape gardening and scientific farming and he intended to practice them at his new home. Landscape gardening was a new art form that had evolved in England during the eighteenth-century. English gardens had begun to change from formal geometric designs to more casual constructions where houses and

gardens were integrated into a whole. A century-long dialogue—about formal versus natural settings—had gone on among landscape designers in the eighteenth century: William Kent (1685–1768); Lancelot “Capability” Brown (1716–83) and Humphrey Repton (1752–1810), who was the first to call himself a landscape gardener. In Scotland, Lord Kames was a gardener of note. While studying medicine at the University of Edinburgh in 1763, Samuel Bard wrote to his father recommending he read Kames’s book and experiment with his ideas at Hyde Park. During England’s Romantic period, two styles dominated garden design: the “Beautiful” and the “Picturesque.” The former favored a more formal construction, a polished appearance in the sense of human intervention, while the latter was more natural, less formal or obviously manipulated. Guidance for landscape design was to follow “the spirit” of a place.<sup>23</sup>

The subject of landscape gardening traveled across the Atlantic in the early 1820s and was at its peak in the years between 1830 and 1860. Samuel F.B. Morse was an early advocate and taught its principles in New York City. Most Americans had neither the means nor the acreage to copy British gardens, but landscape gardening found its own expression here. It was the Picturesque style that most often found expression in America. The Picturesque style suited the wild beauty of the American landscape and the new nation’s sense of freedom and innovation. Americans were looking for cultural forms of their own. Overcoming foreign powers in two wars, pride in our democratic ideals, the importance of religion in America, and the beauty and scale of our wilderness—these were catalysts for cultural expressions of our own. The arts flourished in the form of paintings by Hudson River School artists, and the literature of Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, and Edgar Allan Poe. The landscape artistry of A. J. Downing and A. J. Davis would become another example.<sup>24</sup>

### **Downing and Davis**

With the purchase of 550 acres of the Bard estate, Hyde Park, Dr. David Hosack succeeded in his attempts at landscape gardening. Hosack was a medical doctor in New York City, a colleague of Samuel Bard, and a professor of botany at Columbia College. In 1801 he developed the earliest botanical garden in New York City, the Elgin Garden, which included many medicinal plants. The New York Horticultural Society was founded in 1822 and Hosack became its President the following year. In 1828, he retired from medical work to develop his estate. Landscape design in America was at its

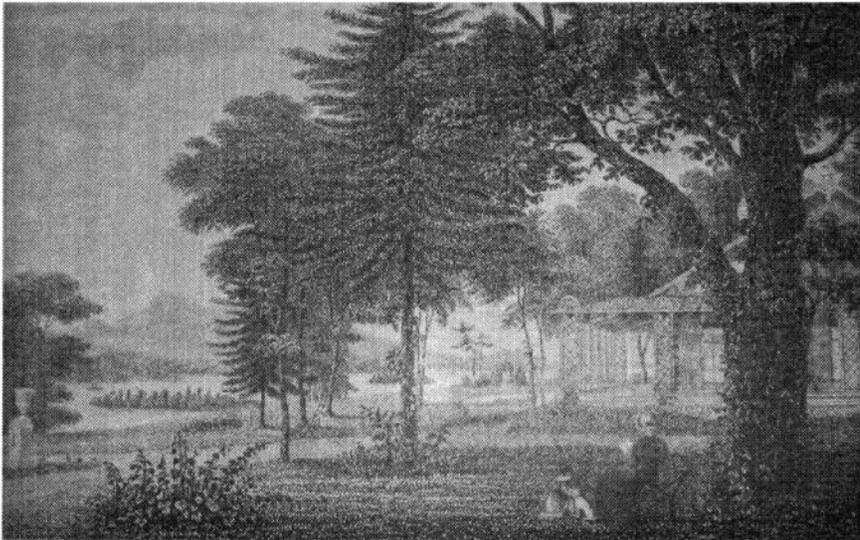
beginning in 1820, and there were few models. The first man in America to call himself a landscape gardener by profession was Andre Parmentier, a Belgian who immigrated to the United States in 1824 at the age of forty and lived only another six years. Nevertheless, he was known to Hosack, who worked with him to develop plans for his estate. Parmentier followed four principles: 1) Display the natural beauties and hide the natural defects; 2) Give the appearance of expansion; 3) Conceal every artful element to make the whole look natural; 4) If any object of convenience or comfort cannot be made ornamental, it should be removed or concealed.<sup>25</sup>

Robert Toole has called Andrew Jackson Downing “America’s pre-eminent landscape gardener in the mid-nineteenth century.”<sup>26</sup> Downing described landscape gardening as “the combined beauty of a building and its setting.” He began his career working in his father’s nursery in Newburgh, New York. His early interest in landscape gardening led him to study the books of English designers and read about the gardens he would one day visit. John Claudius Loudon (1783–1843), England’s most prominent garden authority during Downing’s lifetime, was a strong influence on him. Downing’s great contribution was to introduce and popularize landscape gardening in books and in lectures to an American audience eager to learn about design and taste. His books went through several editions. From 1846 until his untimely death in 1852, he also edited *The Horticulturist*, a publication that strongly influenced public taste. Downing collaborated with A.J. Davis, whose architectural drawings illustrated Downing’s books, thereby educating Americans on house styles, preparation of the soil, choices of botanical plants and trees, layout of the garden, design of outbuildings—all that went into making beautiful spaces. Robert Donaldson was living at his first property in Fishkill Landing, and Downing’s home was just across the river. He surely would have heard of Downing, perhaps through Hosack or some member of the Verplanck family at Mount Gulian.

Alexander J. Davis was an innovative architect who combined components of various architectural styles in new ways. His drawings for Downing’s books were variations of three house types: villas, farmhouses, and cottages. Both Davis and Downing wanted to create homes that would be affordable to a growing middle class—houses with the same design elements as more expensive homes but of a size and material that lowered costs. Robert Toole believes A. J. Davis should be recognized as America’s most important Romantic period architect.<sup>27</sup>

## Donaldson, Downing, and Davis

Robert Donaldson introduced Downing to Davis and thus catalyzed their creative partnership. Davis was already acquainted with Donaldson from projects he had commissioned; now he was asked to be part of a team, which included Downing, to transform Blithewood. The collaboration of Donaldson, Davis and Downing took place over a period of ten years (1835–45). While Downing consulted with Donaldson on the overall layout of the estate, the grounds, lawns, pathways, trees, water projects and myriad other components, Davis designed renovations to the existing house and plans for several outbuildings.<sup>28</sup> To the old Mill Hill/Annandale house, he added a wide veranda on three sides, extending the roof to a broad gable and added ornamental brackets, the origin of the “Hudson River Bracketed” style. The design for the gardener’s cottage (1836) was the first building in the United States to use board-and-batten siding. A hexagonal gatehouse (1841) is still in use, housing a Bard College program. Over the years, Davis went on to design a barn, greenhouse, reservoir, pavilion, rustic arbor, bathhouse, ornamental bridge, and even an Egyptian Revival toolhouse.<sup>29</sup>



*Figure 6. The first Blithewood. From Landscape Gardening, by Andrew Jackson Downing, 10th Edition, revised by Frank A. Waugh. John Wiley & Sons. 1921.*

While all this activity was going on Susan Donaldson was having babies: three sons and a daughter before 1845 and two daughters after.

The Donaldsons had sold their New York City house in 1842 and lived at Blithewood year round.

### **Edgewater**

Then, in 1852, Donaldson sold Blithewood to John and Margaret Bard for \$63,000, making a tidy profit from his original \$19,000 investment.<sup>30</sup> He then purchased another Livingston estate, Sylvania, a few miles to the south. The house had been built by John R. Livingston for his daughter Margaretta (Mrs. Lowndes Brown) in 1825. Now, she had become unhappy with it, because the new Hudson River Railroad had laid its tracks fifty feet from her back door in 1851. Eager to leave her 250 acres, she sold the estate to Donaldson for \$22,000.

The house stands on a small peninsula between the river and the railroad, and Susan Donaldson renamed the estate *Edgewater*. An Internet site suggests the house seems more suited to a Southern climate. Lowndes Brown had been a South Carolinian, and the house may have been designed by Robert Mills, a well-known Charleston architect, whose homes in that city were similar to Edgewater.<sup>31</sup> Donaldson originally intended to sell off building sites from his large acreage, but that was not done. He did write to his old friend Alexander Jackson Davis to ask him to design a library and greenhouse for Edgewater.

Susan Donaldson died in 1866, but Robert continued to live at Edgewater until his death in 1872. He had realized the “Earthly Bliss” of living in two Hudson River “palaces,” like the ones he had admired and noted in his diary on his trip down the Hudson in 1818.

### **The Bards**

John Bard (1819–99) was a member of the prominent family who owned the estate called Hyde Park (now generally known as the Vanderbilt estate). His ancestor, Pierre, was the first of the Bards to come to this country. Pierre’s third son, John (1716–99), practiced medicine for sixty years in New York City. He was the first President of the Medical Society of the State of New York, the first health officer in New York and surgeon to the British Navy in New York City. He and one other doctor were the first to perform a systematic dissection in 1750 to instruct medical students. Through his wife, Susanne Valleau, he acquired a 3600-acre farm which became the estate Hyde Park. John’s son Samuel Bard (1742–1821) was also a doctor. He had studied at the University of Edinburgh, and with five other doctors he organized a medical school at King’s

College, which became the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University. He was a professor, dean, trustee, and president of the medical school for forty years. George Washington had been one of his patients. At his upstate home, Samuel founded the Episcopal Church in the town of Hyde Park and was the first president of the Dutchess County Medical Society. His son William (1778–1853) was president of the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company and father to the John Bard who purchased the Donaldson home, Blithewood.<sup>32</sup>

In 1852, John Bard married Margaret Taylor Johnston, a cousin and a member of the Johnston family previously mentioned as having purchased Mill Hill from the Armstrongs. (The marriage of cousins was accepted practice at the time.) She was from a wealthy family; her father, John Taylor Johnston, was president of the Central Railroad of New Jersey and one of the founders of New York University. In honor of her Scottish ancestors, Margaret returned the name of the estate to Annandale.<sup>33</sup>

John and Margaret Bard were religious people and believed in education as a means of human improvement. They built Bard Hall in 1854 as a chapel for the neighborhood and a parish school for children. They also built a church and school in nearby Tivoli. In 1856, in gratitude for the birth of their only son, William, a cornerstone was laid the following year for The Church of the Holy Innocents. Owing to a fire just prior to its completion a second church of the same name was built and the first service held in 1860. It still is used today for Bard College events. That same year Episcopal Bishop Horatio Potter and Rev. John McVickar, rector of St. James Episcopal Church in Hyde Park and an uncle by marriage, urged John Bard to donate land and money to found a college for young men who wanted to enter the Episcopal ministry. The numbers of such men had decreased owing to the association between the Church of England and the Episcopal Church and the Loyalist sympathies of some church members during and after the American Revolution.<sup>34</sup> John Bard donated eighteen acres of his estate and an annual sum of \$1000 to found St. Stephen's College. It opened in 1860 with six students.

After 12-year-old Willie Bard died of fever in 1868, John and Margaret and their daughters moved to England. Margaret would die in Rome in 1875. John would return to Annandale rarely and only for short visits until his death in 1899. Over the years, their property deteriorated and went into foreclosure in 1897. The college, however, continued to attract students, accommodating an average of 40 to 50 students in the 1880s. It

would be known as St. Stephen's College until 1934 when it was re-named Bard College. Today, the college population numbers 1900 students.

### **The Zabriskies**

Andrew Christian Zabriskie (1853–1916), a member of one of New York City's largest real estate families, purchased the Annandale property in 1899. His wife, Frances Hunter, renamed the estate Blithewood. The Donaldson/Bard house was torn down and a classical Georgian mansion built a few yards from the original site. The 30-room house was designed by Francis Hoppin, an architect who had apprenticed with the firm of McKim, Mead and White. Hoppin also designed a classical Italian walled garden on terraced land to the west of the house. The estate grounds were formal and carefully maintained. Zabriskie enlarged the estate to 825 acres and added barns and a pool at the Sawkill Creek. Zabriskie was an antiquarian, a member of the American Numismatic Society, a breeder of Ayrshire cattle and a member of the New York National Guard (1873–1897), rising to the rank of captain, a title he used. He organized the Blithewood Light Infantry, a group of Red Hook and Rhinebeck men who met in the carriage barn that doubled as a drill hall on Blithewood's grounds. He was the Democratic candidate for Congress from the 21<sup>st</sup> New York District in 1908 and a member of the Democratic State Executive Committee. In 1912–13 he was the Dutchess County Supervisor. Zabriskie was the author of numerous articles on antiquaria, numismatic and historical subjects.<sup>35</sup>

After Zabriskie's death in 1916, the estate continued to be used and maintained by his wife, whose interest in horticulture led her to spend many hours in the garden until her death in 1951. A few months later her son, Christian, transferred ownership of the whole estate to Bard College.<sup>36</sup>

### **Bard College and the Garden**

Blithewood had more lives to lead. It was renovated to become a women's dormitory for almost thirty years (1956–86). During that time the garden was minimally maintained. The Class of 1973 raised \$50,000 for an endowment fund to insure the garden remained. In 1987, the mansion became home to the Jerome Levy Economics Institute, an apolitical think tank where conferences are held throughout the year. Leon Levy (1925–2003), Jerome's son, was an innovator of mutual funds and hedge

funds, as well as a trustee of Bard College, to which he contributed more than \$100 million dollars. Of that, \$2.5 million dollars went to renovate the mansion and restore the garden.<sup>37</sup>



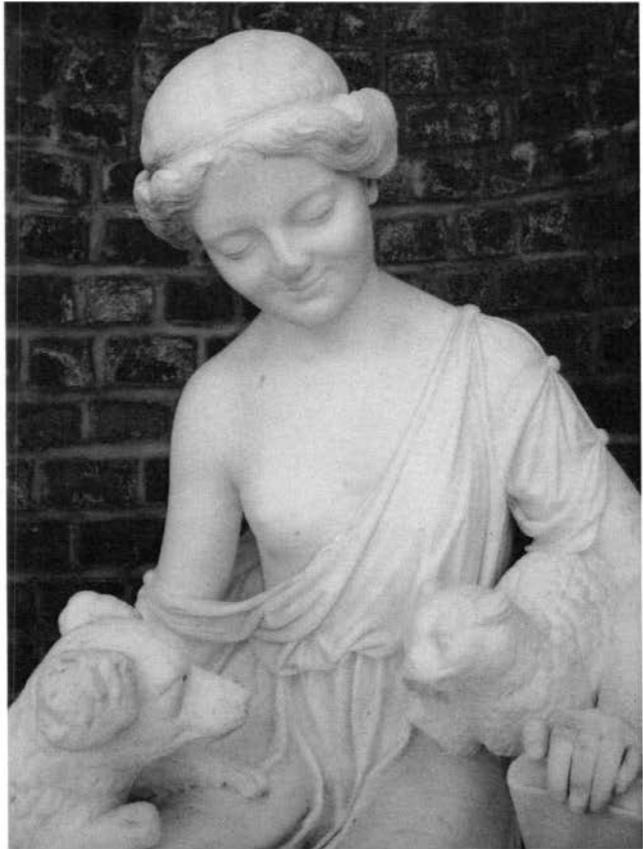
*Figure 7. Blithewood Summerhouse*



*Figure 8. Blithewood Garden (looking toward the house).*



*Figure 9. Blithewood Garden*



*Figure 10.  
Statue in  
Blithewood  
Garden*

A brick path from Blithewood's west portico leads down a series of marble steps and landings to the garden itself. Its design is symmetrical but plantings on either side hold different varieties of perennials and shrubs. In late May there are alliums, delphinium, spiderwort, purple salvia, roses, and lilacs just past bloom. Boxwood and lavender are planted in geometric forms. Purple and pink flowers dominate in May, but it is different with each visit, for the garden is designed to bloom from early spring until late fall. At the center of the garden there is a reflecting pool and fountain. Along the ten-foot-high brick walls that surround the garden, there are niches that offer places to rest; one holds a white marble statue of a girl and her pets. Farther along the pebble path, there are pergolas—columns topped by wood trellises that hold masses of wisteria vines. Directly ahead, at the back of the garden, is what the Zabriskies named the “summerhouse.” A step above the garden path, there is a place to sit, open on all sides but covered by a roof supported by pillars. Beyond are South Bay and the Hudson River. To the north, the Catskills dominate the view. Depending on the weather and time of day, they may be barely seen through a haze or they may be of such an intense blue that they are almost purple. On sunny days passing clouds make moving shadows across the mountains. The garden is a feast for the senses.

Bessina Harrar is a graduate of Bard College and has worked in Blithewood's garden off and on for nineteen years. Her book, *Blithewood, A History of Place*, was published in 2009. She is on the horticulture staff and works in the garden about eight months of the year. She supervises students who work there during the academic year as she did herself when she was a student. Harrar feels there are many reasons that Blithewood is special—the landscape itself, for one, with its rolling land forms that include a bluff, Sawkill Creek, the Hudson River, two islands, and the Catskill Mountains in the distance. Blithewood is unique also as an early example of Romantic Picturesque landscape architecture in America, developed by Donaldson, Downing and Davis.<sup>38</sup> Its history as an Indian site and host to Henry Hudson and his crew also make it notable. And, of course, Blithewood is special because of John and Margaret Bard's gift of eighteen acres to found St. Stephen's College, the predecessor of Bard College. It is included in the Sixteen-Mile Hudson River National Historic Landmark District, the largest district of that type in the country.

Bard College established a Landscape and Arboretum Program in 2007 that includes the entire campus. “Its mission: To preserve and

enhance the natural and landscaped resources of the Bard College campus. To promote knowledge and appreciation of ornamental horticulture and conservation. To provide a campus environment rich in horticultural diversity and beauty that can be readily enjoyed by the College and surrounding community."<sup>39</sup>

Amy Parrella is the Arboretum Director and Horticulture Supervisor. She spoke to me a few months ago about Blithewood, pointing out two 300-year-old black locust trees on the lawn in front of the mansion—and an even older tree, a former New York Champion red maple, on the back lawn. Several eastern white pine trees, planted during the Armstrong and Zabriskie years, line the road leading to the mansion. Blithewood's walled garden is structurally the same as it was originally designed, with tiers of marble steps, openings in the brick walls leading in and out of the garden, a reflecting pool, and a "summerhouse."

"The hardscape is the same," Parrella said, "but the garden is more elaborate today. During the Zabriskie years, plantings were formal with shrubs lining the walks and edgings carefully maintained. Iris, peonies, wisteria, and roses grew there, as they do now, but plantings are more varied and extensive today."<sup>40</sup>

The panorama at Blithewood inspired Washington Irving, a visitor and contemporary of some of the early owners, to describe it in the opening passage of *Rip Van Winkle*:

*Whoever has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of weather, indeed, every hour of the day, produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains, and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple and print their bold outlines on the clear evening sky; but, sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapors about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.<sup>41</sup>*

**Author's Note:** I am interested in history and the arts and have been writing articles for the historical society for several years. I especially like learning about local history. What surprised me while doing research for this article were all the inter-connections among the people who lived at Mill Hill/Annandale/Blithewood. It was like a large family where I was continually meeting new members. The characters kept leaving and popping up again. Isn't it amazing to see how much history takes place in a relatively small area or even in one house?

I would like to acknowledge and thank several people who shared their knowledge with me: Helene Tieger of the Bard College Archives, Amy Parrella and Bessina Harrar, previously mentioned, Wint Aldrich for his intimate knowledge of old families in the area, and Roger Donway, our editor, for his helpful suggestions.

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# THE HISTORY OF FOX HUNTING IN DUTCHESS COUNTY

By Lewis R. Sterler © 2011

While fox hunting in North America dates back at least to 1650, the oldest hunt in continuous existence on the continent is the Montreal Hunt, founded in 1826 as a virtual extension of Quebec Province's military garrison. The oldest hunt continuously operated in the United States is the Piedmont Fox Hounds in Upperville, Virginia, founded in 1840.

Isolated references can be found, as far back as colonial times, to long-disappeared hunts in what is now New York City, including hunts in Brooklyn, Queens County, and in the Bronx. But the oldest hunt still operating in New York State dates to 1876, when Major W. Austin Wadsworth founded the Genesee Valley Hunt (known during its first six years as Livingston County Hunt), just west of the Finger Lakes. Establishing his hunt as distinctly American, the patriotic major adopted dark blue for the hunting coats of his staff rather than the scarlet worn by most hunts following British military traditions. The major's son, William P. Wadsworth, authored the 50-page booklet *Riding to Hounds in America*, which is still considered required reading for all new fox hunters in this country.

Figure 1. A late nineteenth-century "Fixture Card," so called because it fixes the times and places that hounds will meet.

The Genesee Valley Hunt Club  
will meet during  
NOVEMBER, 1881,  
— ON —

TUESDAY, 1st.	
JAS. W. WADSWORTH'S . . . . .	2 P. M.
SATURDAY, 4th.	
F. REDFIELD'S . . . . .	2 P. M.
MONDAY, 10th.	
BLEAK HOUSE . . . . .	2 P. M.
WEDNESDAY, 9th.	
THE HOMESTEAD . . . . .	9 A. M.
SATURDAY, 12th.	
BARBER'S HILL . . . . .	10 A. M.
WEDNESDAY, 16th.	
NATHAN WHEELER'S . . . . .	9 A. M.
SATURDAY, 19th.	
THE HERMITAGE . . . . .	10 A. M.
WEDNESDAY, 23rd.	
CHAS. ARMSTRONG'S . . . . .	9 A. M.
SATURDAY, 26th.	
D. HARRATT'S . . . . .	9 A. M.
WEDNESDAY, 30th.	
HOME FARM . . . . .	9 A. M.

In 1907, Major Wadsworth became the first president of the Masters of Fox Hounds Association (MFHA.) Like its U.K. counterpart, the MFHA was founded to settle disputes between hunts over such things as territory. The association's activities have since grown to include maintenance of hound-breeding records, promoting the welfare of all animals involved in the sport (including the quarry), preservation of wild-life habitat, development of high standards of training and practice, and the promotion and preservation of the sport in general.

Also founded in 1907 was the Millbrook Hunt whose pack is kenneled in Dutchess County. Thus, the Millbrook Hunt can rightly claim to be the second-oldest New York hunt still operating. But there was certainly hunting in Dutchess County before that year. Informal hunting has probably existed in Dutchess since colonial times, and formal fox hunting started here in 1889 when railroad magnate Colonel Archibald Rogers of Hyde Park, Master of his own private pack, named it the Dutchess County Hunt and began hunting from the lawn of the Millbrook Inn. Contemporary newspaper accounts from the *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle* and *Poughkeepsie Sunday Courier* reported that the club had as many as 65 subscribers by its second meet. These included members of such famous Hudson Valley families as the Astors and the Roosevelts, as well as the then-serving vice president of the United States, Levi P. Morton, who was later governor of New York. The vice president may have hunted on horseback at some point, but newspaper accounts have him following the day's sport from the roads, driving his own carriage drawn by a pair of splendid bay horses.

Morton was not alone in following the hunt by carriage. As many as two hundred carriages, carrying many times the number of people riding to hounds, were seen out with the Dutchess County Hunt. At least some of the Roosevelts, however, were known to hunt mounted. On October 23, 1890, the *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle* reported that "Mr. Roosevelt's horse fell with him, but he escaped serious injury." That apparently referred to James, the father of president-to-be Franklin Delano Roosevelt. FDR himself likely hunted with the Dutchess County Hunt as well. A photo of him at age 11 shows him in the jodhpurs, paddock shoes and half-chaps worn by a child of that age out hunting on his own pony with his parents. Note that he carries a traditional staghorn-handled hunt crop. (Presidential son FDR Jr. would serve in the 1970s as Joint Master, with Elizabeth Putnam Davis, of Dutchess County's most recently established hunt, Rombout.)

In 1889, Long Island's famous Meadow Brook Hunt gave Col. Rogers several hounds—Runsack, Rustic, and Roman—and loaned him a bitch (Frantic), to which he bred a Virginia dog (Blucher), to produce Roseberry and Rumager. Rogers also obtained hounds from well-established U.K. packs, including the Pembrokeshire, Brocklesby, and Portman.



*Figure 2. FDR at age 11 (1893)*



*Figure 3. The Dutchess County Hunt's pack with Col. Rogers's kennelman, Frank Cleary.*

Col. Rogers hunted both live fox and an aniseed drag from the Millbrook Inn, and entertained much of Dutchess County society there, until he disbanded the Hunt around 1894. This may have been due to his increasing activities in the West, including bear hunting in the Rocky Mountains and operating a ranch in Wyoming. Rogers's 8 ½ couple

English hounds went to Major Wadsworth at the Genesee Valley Hunt. (Hounds are always counted in couples, even when there is an odd number of them.)

### The Millbrook Hunt

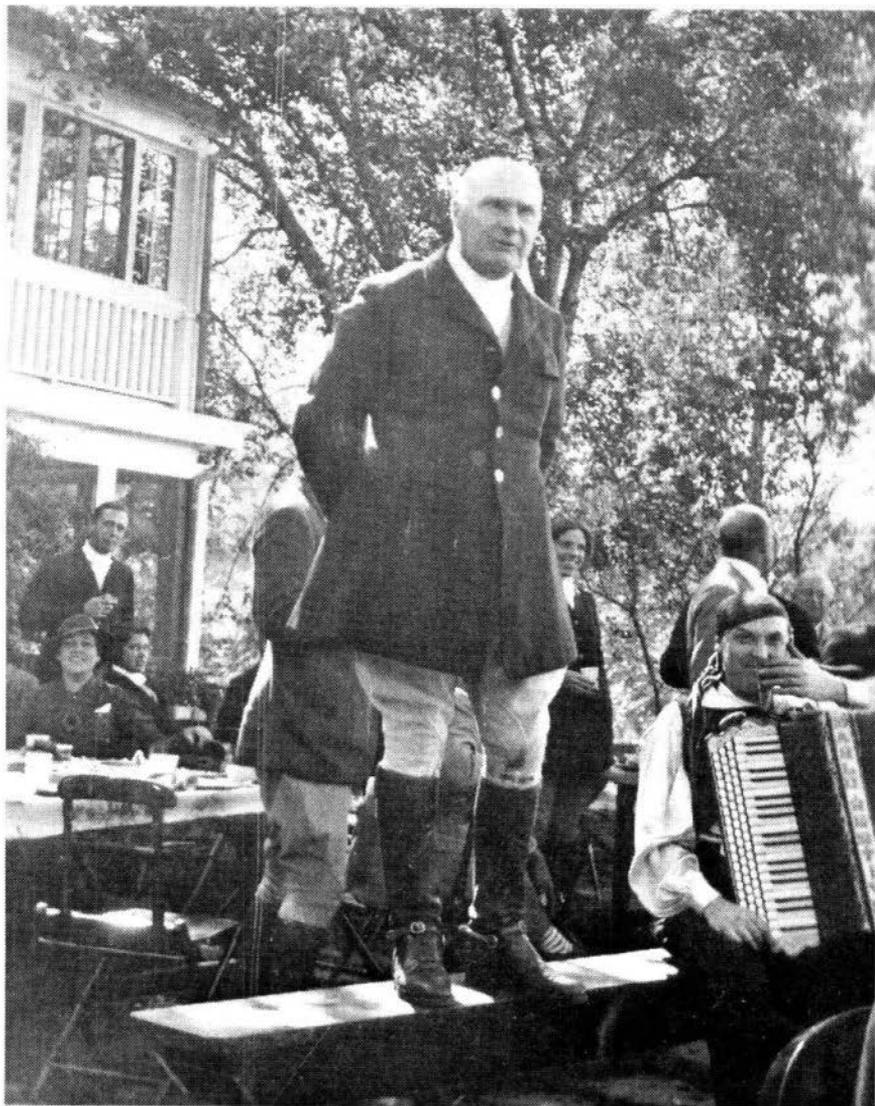
#### Founders: Davison, Marshall and Knott

In 1896, missing the fun that the Dutchess County Hunt had provided, G. Howard Davison of Altamont Stock Farm scratched together a pack, including several family dogs and two couple fox hounds from the Westchester County Hunt, and tried hunting whatever quarry they could find for several seasons. Davison's neighbor, Charles C. Marshall, formerly of Plainfield, New Jersey, had hunted there with the Watchung Hunt, founded by a veterinarian from Ireland, Dr. Middleton O'Malley Knott. Invited to visit Millbrook, Knott preached to all of Marshall's equestrian friends who would listen the virtues of hunting with a properly bred pack. So impressed was Knott with how eagerly the Dutchess County locals absorbed his gospel that he moved to Millbrook himself in 1907 and helped Marshall found the Millbrook Hunt with six couple of English fox hounds and seven couple of Kerry Beagles presented by Charles D. Freeman, then MFH of the Watchung Hunt.



*Figure 4. The early Millbrook Hunt meets in front of the Millbrook Inn, circa 1907. Note the woman riding sidesaddle at the far left.*

Knott served as Huntsman for the first two years. Marshall's son Carl (Charles R.) and daughter Hetty (Mrs. Roswell F. Barratt) serving as Whippers-In. They generally pursued European brown hare rather than fox.



*Figure 5. Dr. Middleton O'Malley Knott addresses Millbrook Hunt subscribers and friends at a hunt breakfast—one of many held at the residence of Frederic H. Bontecou both before and after he became Joint Master of Fox Hounds.*

During these years, according to the memoirs of Chesebrough Davison (G. Howard Davison's wife), recorded in 1953 by Hetty Barrat, "The country hunted was as far south as below Verbank and to the north and west towards Clinton Corners where an enthusiastic follower, a widow, gave memorable hunt breakfasts." Davison recounted how Millbrook conducted a very popular "Farmer's Day" with events—such as equestrian exhibitions, competitions and similar entertainments—that brought subscribers together with the farmers over whose land they hunted. These festivities were conducted at Washington Hollow Race Course, which later became a turkey farm.

### **The Mastership of Oakleigh Thorne**

After Millbrook's recognition by the MFHA in 1909, founder Charles C. Marshall gave up hunting, and in 1910 the Mastership passed to Oakleigh Thorne, a neighbor who had originally thought the Millbrook area was not good hunting country.

Thorne set about turning the Millbrook into a first-class hunting pack by acquiring 15 ½ couple hounds from Castlereagh, Ireland; professional Huntsman Frank Huckvale from the South and West Wilts Hunt—one of the oldest in England; and professional Whipper-In Tom Waller from England's North Warwickshire Hunt.

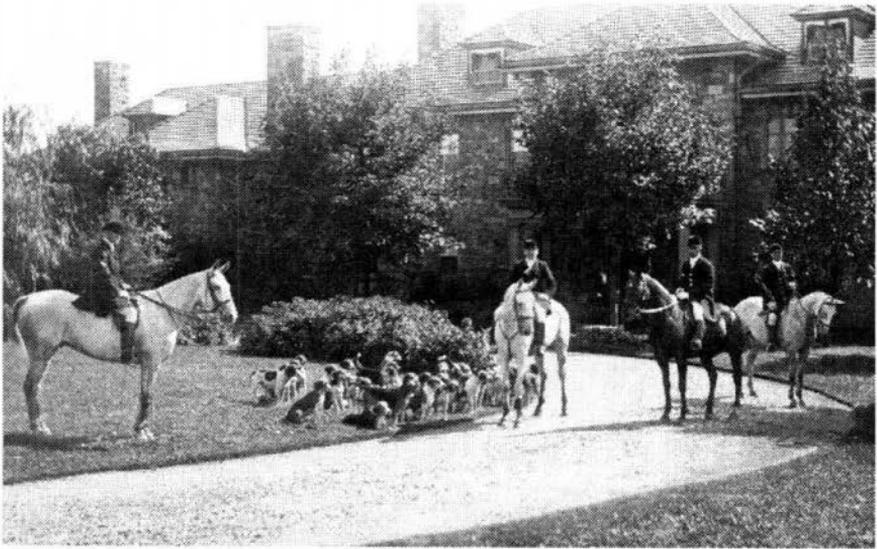
To new kennels on South Road, Thorne brought, in 1911, 30 couple hounds from the Belvoir and the Pytchley, two of the English Midlands, most famous Hunts.

(The Pytchley dates its origin to 1635 at Althorp, the estate of the Spencers, the family of Diana, Princess of Wales. The Duke of Rutland's Hounds are known as the Belvoir Hunt after the Duke's Belvoir Castle, which overlooks the vale of that name. The Belvoir is regarded as a foundation pack for some of the world's finest Old English hounds, and a friendship between the families of Rutland and Fairfax may be the reason that Thomas Lord Fairfax used the name "Belvoir" for his estate near Mount Vernon, where he hunted with George Washington.)

Oakleigh Thorne, not yet finished building his pack, acquired 16 couple of Henry Hawkins Harriers and hired Harry Nott (no "K") from England's Epping Forrest Harriers to replace Huckvale as Huntsman. The purchase of harriers, which are specifically bred to hunt hare, probably reflected the fact that hare were more plentiful than foxes in the Millbrook area.

## Henry Higginson and the Switch to Foxes

For Millbrook, the real switch to fox hunting came in 1913, when Thorne invited A. Henry Higginson to bring the pack of his Middlesex Hunt to the Millbrook territory. The Middlesex had hunted since 1899 around Lincoln, Massachusetts.



*Figure 6. A. Henry Higginson (center) at a Millbrook meet at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Austin Flint with the pack of his Middlesex Hunt. Master Oakleigh Thorne is on the dark horse. The others are Higginson's professional whippers-in.*

At this time, Millbrook was essentially a harrier pack hunting hare three days a week, with the guest Middlesex pack hunting fox three days. When Eugene Reynal began bringing his pack of beagles up from Westchester County to hunt the Millbrook territory on foot after Sunday church services, Dutchess likely became the only county in America where hunting took place seven days a week. In 1911, having had good sport in Millbrook, Reynal relocated his beagles to the Germond Farm there.

In 1924, Reynal acquired a harrier pack in England, and hunted them in part of the Millbrook territory with the permission of MFH Thorne.

Higginson continued visiting Millbrook until the 1916 hunt season, when he remained in Massachusetts, possibly to make sure his original hunt country remained open to him. During this season, Oakleigh Thorne divided the Millbrook's 45 couple hounds into what he called "The Big

Lot,” with which he hunted fox, and “The Little Lot,” with which he hunted hare on alternate days.

Although the Middlesex pack returned to the Millbrook country for the 1917 season, American entry into the Great War sharply curtailed hunting in Dutchess County as it did throughout the nation. With Higginson serving in the U.S. Army Remount Service, Millbrook carried on. First Whipper-In William Johnson took over as Huntsman, but with many men and horses absorbed by the war effort, financial support for Millbrook’s large pack dwindled, and 20 couple were sadly put down.

In 1919, Higginson disbanded the Middlesex Hunt, and became honorary Huntsman to the Millbrook, hunting with both fox hounds and harriers, including many he had transferred from his own disbanded Hunt. Higginson was more successful with the fox hounds, and professional Kennel Huntsman Harry Andrews regularly carried the horn on days the harriers hunted.

Although new kennels were built at Thornedale in 1920, lackluster sport and waning enthusiasm in the postwar period combined with family problems to cause Thorne to dispose of the pack at the end of 1922. Higginson, leaving Millbrook in that year, went on to author several important books on fox hunting and to serve as MFH of Hunts in Maryland and in England, as well as president of the Masters of Fox Hounds Association (1915–30).

### **The Joseph B. Thomas Era at Millbrook**

Oakleigh Thorne, meanwhile, persuaded Joseph Brown Thomas to bring his private pack of hounds from Virginia to continue hunting in the Millbrook territory from 1923 to 1927.

Thomas, a successful architect and financier from Boston, had moved to Virginia where he founded the American Foxhound Club in 1912 and conducted an extensive program to improve the breed. Author of *Hounds and Hunting through the Ages*, Thomas served from 1915 to 1919 as MFH for the Piedmont Fox Hounds, the oldest hunt continuously operated in the United States.

Mr. Thomas’s Hounds, as the all-American fox hound pack was called, proved the success of his breeding program. Lighter and faster than the English and harrier packs hunted by Knott and Higginson, and with noses better suited for following quarry even in dry conditions, these

hounds provided sport that restored the enthusiasm of Millbrook subscribers after the postwar doldrums.

With professional Huntsmen Charlie Carver hunting the hounds the first two seasons, and J.W.E. Adamthwaite the last three, Thomas himself is likely to have ridden as Field Master. And therein lies the rub. The exacting and autocratic personality that contributed in kennels to the successful breeding program was less successful in managing riders in the mounted field. In spite of excellent hunting, the frequency with which Thomas sent riders home for minor violations of hunting etiquette took its toll on the Millbrook subscribers, and he moved on to hunt in other territories in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia.

### **The Chadwell Era and Three Generations of Collins Mastership**

In 1927, the Millbrook Hunt was legally incorporated and member Gordon Grand was entrusted with the search for a new pack and a new huntsman.

Grand, a successful businessman who had hunted in the United States, England and Ireland, was to author no fewer than nine books of fox hunting stories. He brought back to Dutchess County from Virginia Elias Chadwell and 15 couple American fox hounds, a pack that would soon grow with gifts of hounds from other Hunts. Chadwell, descended from a family involved with hunting since the eighteenth century, agreed to try hunting the Millbrook territory "for a year or two." He remained as Huntsman for 22 years, until succeeded by his son Earl in 1950. Elias and Earl both hunted hounds using a traditional cow horn rather than the short metal horn commonly employed today.

During the Chadwell era, Millbrook engaged in several construction projects, with assorted kennels, staff-horse stabling and hunt-staff housing built between 1924 and 1930. In 1934 the kennels currently in use were built, with the property incorporating housing for a full complement of staff.

#### **The Bontecou Mastership**

In 1931 a Joint Mastership was taken by Frederic H. Bontecou, a member of the U.S. Equestrian Team for the 1924 Olympics. A political powerhouse in Dutchess County, he served as Republican Party county chairman, state senator, and Thomas E. Dewey's running mate for lieutenant governor in 1938. Known for entertaining members and landowners, Bontecou's 28-year Mastership was exceeded only by that of recently retired Master Farnham F. Collins.



*Figure 7. A meet of the Millbrook Hunt at Smithfield Church in 1938. Elias Chadwell, mounted on left. Hugh Collins, whipper-in and future MFH, center. At right is Elias's nephew Aubrey Chadwell.*

Earl Chadwell beat his father's long tenure by five years, serving for a total of 27. Retiring at the end of the 1977–78 season, Earl followed hounds by car almost until his death in 2005. Commenting on Earl's quality as Huntsman, Hugh G. Collins MFH said: "Earl is so good he sometimes doesn't know how good he is."



*Figure 8. Hunt breakfast at the home of Frederic Bontecou, possibly during the WWII era. Note uniformed soldier seated in foreground and another standing with hand on elbow to the left of the tree. Bontecou is probably the man in hunt attire, holding a glass and a bottle, to the left of the standing soldier.*



*Figure 9. Earl Chadwell with hound, circa 1952. Note the traditional cow horn carried on thong across his chest.*

## Millbrook's First Lady of Fox Hunting

Earl Chadwell's successor was the first woman to hunt a pack of fox hounds in Dutchess County, and possibly the first female professional Huntsman anywhere. But she was no stranger to the horn when she took over in 1978. Betsy Park had hunted her own foot pack, the Flint Hill Bassets, in the Millbrook territory and whipped-in to the Sandanona Beagles, the foot pack then Mastered and hunted by Oakleigh B. Thorne, grandson of Millbrook's second MFH. She had also hunted the Sandanona Beagles when Thorne himself was unable to.

Park shared several things with Earl Chadwell. First was the 1977–78 season, when she shared duties hunting the hounds with Earl; second was her enthusiasm and skill for the sport; third was her talent for breeding hounds; fourth was her tenure in the job.

“Betsy bred a first-class pack of hounds and showed good sport for 27 years,” said Millbrook MFH Farnham F. Collins upon her retirement in 2004. “Betsy exemplified dedication and tireless commitment to the sport.”

Early in her tenure, Park saw the Millbrook hounds account for their first coyote. Hunts in the western United States have always hunted coyote as their primary quarry, but that species has in recent years ranged so far east that every North American fox hunt must be prepared to chase it. In the Millbrook territory, a 1980 outbreak of distemper sharply reduced the formerly large population of red-sided gray foxes, leaving the pack to hunt mostly coyote and the occasional red fox.

Park continues to hunt the Sandanona Hare Hounds basset and beagle packs, which she serves as Joint Master with her husband. Their daughter Eleanor Hartwell, was employed as whipper-in to the Millbrook for ten years before becoming professional Huntsman to the Oak Ridge Hunt in Virginia, whose Master is best-selling fiction author Dr. Rita Mae Brown. Hartwell is currently professional Huntsman to the Bridlespur Hunt in Missouri.

Park was succeeded at Millbrook by professional Donald Philhower, who came from Golden's Bridge Hounds in neighboring Westchester after serving there for 27 years. He plies his trade under the current Senior Master, Nancy I. Stahl, whose distinguished Joint Masters include the very historic name of the current Mrs. Oakleigh Thorne.

## **The Rombout Hunt**

Beginning in 1925, Poughkeepsie gentleman Homer B. Gray acquired a few foxhounds, probably gifts from the large pack of Joseph B. Thomas who was then hunting the Millbrook territory north and east of the city. Called the Cedar Ridge Hounds and kenneled at Gray's Greenvale Farms, they were hunted by Gray, Everett Blake, Dwight R. Sedgewick, and some of their friends over their own farms.

### **Homer B. Gray as Master and Huntsman**

Considerable interest in the sport led to a meeting on October 29, 1929, at the Amrita Club in Poughkeepsie, at which Gray was formally elected Master and Huntsman and the name Rombout Riding and Hunt Club taken. Under elected officers M. Glenn Folger, president; Elias Vail, vice president; Helen Kenyon, secretary; and Donald Haggert, treasurer, the club was incorporated with a nine member board of governors.

Forty-two members paid the \$15.00 annual subscription for senior membership, and it is noteworthy that Charter Members William E. Schermerhorn and Richard F. Meyer were still actively hunting in 1978 when the club prepared for its 50th anniversary.

In addition to hunting, trail riding, and caring for the country over which they rode, Rombout developed a full range of supporting activities including an annual horse show (first held in May 1930), a clambake in August to entertain owners of land over which it hunted, and a hunt ball in November.

Starting with six couple, Rombout received additional hounds in 1930 from the Moore County Hounds, North Carolina, with more following from hunts in Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. When the hunt was formally recognized by the Masters of Fox Hounds Association in 1931, Rombout had 14 couple that had started hunting and three couple puppy hounds. Hounds received were both American and Crossbred, and the Master used English stallion hounds to increase the proportion of Crossbreds. He also divided hounds into two packs; one to hunt a drag scent and another to hunt live fox.

The first kennels were in the hayloft above the heads of Homer Gray's horses, and desperately needed new kennels were started in 1931. This was done with a total budget of \$2,600, up from just \$1,000 the prior year. The amount may seem laughable in today's dollars, but this was well

into the Great Depression and money was not easy to come by, even in the relatively wealthy Hudson Valley. Still, mounted Fields of as many as 40 riders were able to come out hunting.

By 1936, the capping fee had been raised from \$2 to \$3; more than 500 people were entertained at the annual party for landowners; the kennels held 30 couple hounds; and eight committees were involved running hunt activities and raising money for them. Homer Gray was recognized well beyond the Rombout territory as showing excellent sport in the field, discontinuing the drag and hunting only live native fox.



*Figure 10. Homer B. Gray, Founding Master, Rombout Hunt. Note Hunt buttons with "R.H." on his sleeve and metal hunting horn between his coat buttons.*

During 1938 and 1939, additional effort and money went to open the Pleasant Valley area for hunting, replacing territory lost to the extension of the Taconic State Parkway. It is best to give such a road a wide berth when hunting, because hounds are unlikely to abandon the scent of a fox that crosses it. Therefore, Rombout gave up hunting any territory east of the Parkway.

In 1940, the party for landowners entertained 700 guests in two seatings at the Grange Hall on Manchester Road, and hunts from neighboring counties were hosted for a full week's hunting. Rombout hounds were winning ribbons at the annual hound shows; Rombout bitches were being bred with the best stallion hounds from the Essex and Millbrook Hunts; and the pack increased to more than 50 couple.

When the full impact of WWII struck, the MFHA called upon all member Hunts to "carry on in every way possible during the present crisis," to preserve the infrastructure of the sport for postwar generations. Rombout did its duty. With so many hunting men called to arms, Rombout's membership was cut by half; the pack reduced to 15 ½ couple; part-time volunteers replaced paid staff wherever possible; and hounds went out less often. Hunting continued, however, and Rombout survived the war years as it had the Depression.

In 1946, its name officially shortened to Rombout Hunt, the club was rebuilding its membership and reopening country not hunted during the War. By 1951, Homer Gray reported the quality of the sport was better than ever—but it was the last year of hunting three days a week. Increased prices of feed forced the pack to be limited to a maximum of 25 couple and staff horses to be reduced to a number that would not support more than twice-weekly hunting. The following year would see a more painful reduction.

Homer B. Gray, MFH, died on November 28, 1952. His obituary, in a resolution of the Masters of Fox Hounds Association, read in part "Hunting has lost one of its most beloved and colorful members. . . . To meet Homer was to trust him completely; to know him for a few days was to love him forever. . . . He was an outstanding judge of horses, a brilliant huntsman, a houndsman and a gentleman."

### **Meyer and Grahame Take Over**

Fortunately, Rombout continued under Gray's Joint Master Richmond F. Meyer, with Joint Master Malcolm Grahame hunting the hounds.

The decision by the Gray family to sell Greenvale Farms in May 1954, along with the post-war boom in housing and commercial development south of Poughkeepsie, caused the Hunt to move to the town of Clinton, where Meyer, William H. Kay, and Stirling Tompkins had formed a holding company to buy the 167-acre Epstein Farm on Hollow Road, leasing it to Rombout. Volunteer labor from the members converted the dairy barn to kennels and refurbished other buildings to house horses and staff. By August, hounds were moved to their new home.

### **Joint Master William Kay Hunts Rombout's Hounds**

Over the next ten years, with Joint Master William Kay hunting the hounds, the pack was brought back to its prewar quality and again began winning hound show ribbons. Additional fundraising was inaugurated; hunting consolidated in the more easily managed northern part of its territory; and territory to the west of the Taconic that had been informally loaned to Rombout by the Millbrook Hunt for fifteen years was officially transferred.

A drought that began in 1961 ended the spectacular sport that Rombout had enjoyed up to the previous season. Severely dry conditions make it difficult for even the best hounds to find and follow scent, and hunting had to be abandoned entirely on occasions for official closings of territories due to fire hazard. But hounds kept trying, and occasional damp spells would enable them to show some sport.

### **Changes at Rombout**

In 1964, Bill Kay hung up the horn, and Rombout hired its first professional Huntsman, Harry Price, who served until 1968 with his wife as whipper-in.

Price was succeeded by professional Herbert Morris; new Joint Master Elizabeth Putnam Davis joined the Rombout administration; and a new era of development of hounds and hunt territory ensued.

The all-American pack was augmented by several Penn-Marydels, with stallion hounds borrowed from the Essex, Millbrook, and Rolling Rock Hunts. Hounds bred under Morris proved their worth in the hunting field and in the show ring. Rombout Dixie was judged Grand Champion in 1973 at the prestigious Virginia Hound Show and won two other Championships over the next three years, as well as winning ribbons in many shows' bitch classes. Rombout Winner was Champion Dog in 1976, and Rombout Venture in 1978, with Rombout Trophy and Rombout Star

duplicating those performances by being named Champion Bitch in the same respective years.

In 1973, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Jr., who had served as Congressman in Dutchess County, became Joint Master at Rombout, a post he held until 1978. When asked if he brought more than his famous name to Rombout during his tenure, Elizabeth Putnam Davis, Ex-MFH, replied, "He hunted often, though not every day hounds went out. . . He was a big man on a big horse, and he hunted right up with me at the front of the Field."

Putnam Davis, truly a grande dame of the sport who hunted into her 80s, recently reminisced about a day in the late 1960s: "We had a terrible blank day; hounds couldn't find a scent no matter how hard they tried. Then, just as we were getting ready to load them up to go home, a fox appeared along the edge of the field where we had met. Hounds were cast on his line, and we were off. The run lasted four solid hours and took us right up to the streets of Poughkeepsie."

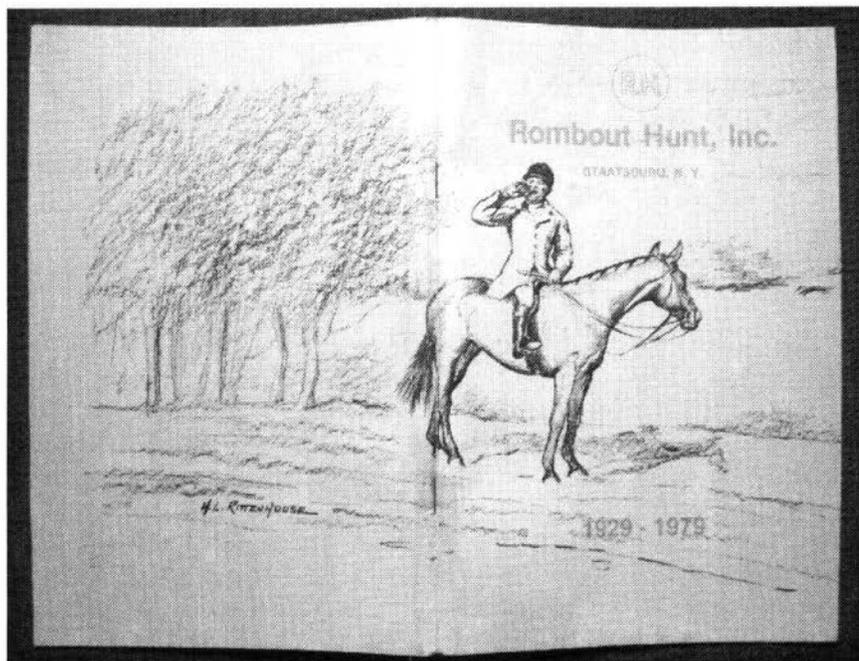


Figure 11. *Rombout Hunt, Inc. 1929–79, Fiftieth anniversary commemorative publication.* Note cover illustration by H. L. Rittenhouse of whipper-in alerting huntsman to the position of the fox, while his horse keeps a keen eye on the quarry. Photo, taken by the author, is of the open book to show entire illustration. (The copy photographed was provided by Elizabeth Putnam Davis, Ex-MFH.)

In 1975 a new modern kennel was built that attracted many compliments and was enshrined in an MFHA book on kennel design. The kennel held as many as 35 couple hounds; weather and the native fox population improved; and the Rombout pack was again showing excellent sport.

In 1977, Richmond F. Meyer, MFH, celebrated his 50th consecutive opening meet—two years with Cedar Ridge and 48 with Rombout. In appreciation for his tireless efforts to keep the Hunt operating, he was elected “Honorary Master for Life,” a distinction given no other Rombout MFH.

In 1979, Huntsman Herbert Morris returned to Virginia, and Vincent Tartaglia arrived. Despite his Italian-sounding name, Vincent was very Scottish, beginning hunt service at 16 in the Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire Hunt kennels near Glasgow. He moved on, as Kennel Huntsman, first to the Eggesford Foxhounds in Devon, England, then to the Andrews Bridge Foxhounds in Pennsylvania, before settling in to hunt Rombout’s hounds.

And settle in he did. Tartaglia stayed 25 years, retiring only in 2007 at age 67, and only after transitioning the hounds to a new kennel of his own design.

Beyond his long successful employment as Rombout Huntsman, Tartaglia served as a volunteer EMT on the West Clinton Fire Dept. rescue squad, as a Humane Law Enforcement Officer investigating allegations of cruelty to animals for the Dutchess County SPCA, and as president of the Dutchess County Professional Horseman’s Association.

Tartaglia managed to squeeze such extracurricular activities into the busy life of a professional huntsman because of the active support of his volunteer staff, including the current Master. “One of the best whippers-in I ever had in my career is MFH Suzie Cannavino,” he said upon his retirement. Her reply to the compliment was; “Vincent taught me everything that I know.”

It’s good that he taught her well. Suzanne Cannavino, currently sole Master of the Rombout Hunt, now hunts the hounds herself in the tradition of Founding Master Homer B. Gray.

## Acknowledgements

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Many of the photographs used are from the Roosevelt Library and Museum and are in the public domain. Some are from the collections of the National Sporting Library, where they reside courtesy of Peter Winants and were provided for this work by Peter Devers. The Genesee Valley Hunt fixture card is courtesy of Linda Gibbs, GVH Historian.



*Figure 1. Morgan Wing (1886–1957), heir to a chemical manufacturing fortune, established the Sandanona Pheasantry on his family's grounds in Millbrook.*

## ORVIS SANDANONA SHOOTING GROUNDS

*by Russell La Valle*

When Morgan Wing died on September 15, 1957, readers of his obituary in the *New York Times* may have wondered why his death merited any notice at all from the paper of record. After all, the headline of the *Times* obituary said: "Morgan Wing, 70, Raised Pheasants."<sup>1</sup> No one could have guessed from those five words how much history Morgan Wing's life embodied.

## The Wings

Morgan Wing traced his ancestry back to Elizabethan England and to the minister John Wing (c.1584–c.1630), who married Deborah Bachiler, daughter of the Reverend Stephen Bachiler. Although Wing had intended to emigrate to Massachusetts, he died before doing so; nevertheless, his widow emigrated with their children and her father. Once arrived, the Reverend Bachiler proved to be quite a thorn in the side of the Puritans. With his ideas of religious freedom, he was the only minister to vote against the expulsion of Roger Williams from the Bay Colony. Nor did religious contrariness end with Deborah Bachiler's father: Her son Stephen Wing (1621–1710), converted to Quakerism.

It was one of Stephen Wing's great-grandsons, Daniel Wing (1734–c. 1795), who brought his Quaker family to the farmlands of eastern Dutchess County in the late 1700s. And it would be Daniel's grandson, John Daniel Wing (1834–1910), who would make the family's fortune.<sup>2</sup>

As a young man, John Daniel Wing heeded the call of the California gold rush and moved to San Francisco, where he set up the firm of John D. Wing and served as a lieutenant on the businessman's Vigilance Committee, which tried to maintain law and order in that wide-open city.<sup>3</sup> But in 1858, Wing returned to New York, and in 1859 he launched one of the city's first chemical merchant companies, Wing & Evans.<sup>4</sup> Partner John H. Evans (c. 1831–1889)<sup>5</sup> was the company treasurer (and the second mayor of Plainfield, New Jersey), but upon his death the treasurer's post was taken by Wing's son, John Morgan Wing, and the Evanses seem not to have been involved in the company thereafter.<sup>6</sup>

But the firm of Wing & Evans prospered, and John Daniel Wing soon joined the mercantile elite of Manhattan: His 133-foot yacht *Coronet*, one of the largest schooner yachts in the world, is the last surviving example of the great Gilded Age yachts and can be seen today at the Museum of Yachting in Newport, Rhode Island.<sup>7</sup> He also became a gentleman farmer in Millbrook, specializing in Jersey cows, founding the American Jersey Cattle Club, and assuming the presidency of the New York State Agricultural Society.<sup>8</sup> To build his Millbrook mansion, John Daniel Wing purchased the abandoned building of Quaker-run Nine Partners Boarding School (where he had been a student),<sup>9</sup> and used its timbers in the construction of a home he called "Maple Shade." But

when he moved his house and enlarged it, his daughter Marion gave it the name “Sandanona,” an American Indian word for “sunshine and light.”<sup>10</sup>



Figure 2. The Wings' Sandanona mansion and its rose garden are shown here in a postcard. The mansion, which was in town and separate from the hunting grounds, was torn down in the early 1970s.

John Daniel Wing died in 1910 on New Year's Day, “on the stroke of midnight” (as legend has it),<sup>11</sup> leaving a widow and two sons: John Morgan Wing (1860–1930) and L. Stuart Wing (1864–1916), who were both employed by Wing & Evans, by then the principal sales agent for the Solvay Process Company, which manufactured soda ash.

Like his father, L. Stuart Wing was also involved with stock-raising in Millbrook, but he died at the relatively young age of 52, leaving a fortune valued at \$1.1 million, which in current dollars would be between \$25 million and \$85 million, depending on which inflation index one chooses.<sup>12</sup> A son of L. Stuart Wing, S. Bryce Wing (c. 1890–1975), would go on to become a leading figure in Maryland hunt and thoroughbred circles: chairman of the Maryland National Hunt from 1962 to 1972, and president of the National Steeplechase Association from 1948 to 1964.<sup>13</sup>

Stuart Wing's older brother, John Morgan Wing (who married the granddaughter of George Jones, founder of the *New York Times*),<sup>14</sup> was president of Wing & Evans, until the company was dissolved when the Solvay Process Company was absorbed in the 1921 creation of the

Allied Chemical and Dye Co. He died in 1930 at the age of 71, while staying at what the *Times* called “his summer home,” Sandanona.<sup>15</sup>

Like his father, John Morgan Wing had two sons: Morgan Wing (1886–1957) and John D. Wing Jr. (1889–1964), both associated with Wing & Evans until the creation of Allied Chemical. Following the demise of the family firm, John D. Jr., became a stockbroker at Farr & Company, and then married the widow of banker August Belmont III, whose grandfather had founded the Belmont Park race track. Morgan Wing, of course, “raised pheasants,” which he “sold to gun clubs and to the New York State Conservation Department.”<sup>16</sup> He also had two sons: Morgan Wing Jr. (c. 1911–1974), who would become Master of the Hunt of the Sandanona Beagles and a president of National Beagle Club, and Henry (1913–1983), who would take over Sandanona following Morgan Wing’s death.

In 1937, Henry wooed and wed the beautiful Beatrice Barclay Elphinstone, an active member of Manhattan’s younger social set since her debutante season of 1933–34. In 1935, her image appeared nationwide as part of a cigarette-advertising campaign that portrayed “aristocratic” American women (such as Dutchess County’s own Mrs. Hamilton Fish Jr.) announcing their preference for Camels. Enscathed on East Seventy-Third Street, the Henry Wings had two daughters, Elizabeth Elphinstone Wing and Victoria Van Duzer Wing; Morgan Wing, just three months before his death, used Sandanona to host a Millbrook coming-out party for his granddaughter Elizabeth.



“NATURALLY I LIKE CAMELS BEST...”

MISS BEATRICE BARCLAY ELPHINSTONE

“I like to smoke mild and have an excellent taste in things,” says the distinguished soprano of New York. “I am particularly appreciative with all because they make you feel like you are smoking a Camel every day.”

“I like to smoke mild and have an excellent taste in things,” says the distinguished soprano of New York. “I am particularly appreciative with all because they make you feel like you are smoking a Camel every day.”

CAMELS ARE MILDER! MILD FROM PINK, MILD INTENSITY! TASTE OVER-TASTE! AND DOMESTIC! LEAD ANY OTHER CIGARETTE BRAND!

Figure 3. In 1937, the society beauty Beatrice Barclay Elphinstone married Henry Wing, who would later succeed his father as manager of the Sandanona wingshooting grounds. In 1935, Beatrice had been featured in a tobacco advertising campaign that portrayed “aristocratic” American ladies announcing their preference for expensive Camels cigarettes.

## **The Sandanona Pheasantry**

It had been exactly fifty years earlier, in 1907, that Morgan Wing formally turned his family's 300-acre Millbrook property to be (ironically or aptly, given the family name) a wingshooting grounds: the Sandanona Pheasantry. In that year, it became the first licensed gamebird preserve in the United States, and soon afterward Wing founded the New York State Breeders Association.

For thirty years, Wing invited friends to enjoy all the fellowship and traditions associated with wingshooting. Then, in 1937, the preserve was opened to paying customers, at \$7 a bird, and attracted notables such as the Roosevelts and the Buckleys.

When Wing died in 1957, his son Henry Van Duzer Wing, a stockbroker by trade, assumed control of Sandanona and continued operating it for another two decades, hosting writers and editors from major outdoor magazines, and even luminaries such as Adlai Stevenson. But when Henry's wife became ill, the challenge of care-giving while managing Sandanona became too much, and Henry faced the prospect of shutting down his family's beloved hunting grounds.

Fortunately, Sandanona had a champion in George Bednar (1942–2007), a big man who had played football for Notre Dame in his youth and even went on to play professional football for two years. In 1966, Bednar moved from football to business, becoming sales and marketing director for McKesson Imports Company. In this role, he is credited with having developed the marketing program that created a craze for Harvey Wallbangers, thereby quadrupling his firm's sales of Galliano Liqueur. In 1976, Bednar started his own consulting firm for liquor marketing, International Marketing Group. In the 1980s, he launched Promotions Systems, Inc., to advise more diverse companies. In the meantime, Bednar had become a close friend of Henry Wing, and in 1981 he bought Sandanona, maintaining the preserve for an additional dozen years, before selling it to the Orvis Company in 1994.<sup>17</sup>

To learn more about Sandanona, Orvis, and the sport of wingshooting, the Dutchess County Historical Society asked Russell La Valle to interview Brian Long, Orvis's senior manager for sporting traditions at the Orvis Company, Inc. They met in the original lodge room at the Orvis Sandanona Hunting Grounds in Millbrook, New York.

## The Sport of Wingshooting

RLV: Can you explain for the uninitiated what wingshooting is?

BL: Sure, the facility here is geared towards the upland hunter, which for this area has always meant pheasants, quail, chukars [a type of partridge—RLV], and now Hungarian partridge. So wingshooting is a term used for hunting behind a guide and a dog—either a pointing dog or a flushing dog—who finds the game. The flushing dog will push the bird out for the sportsman to have a shot at. The pointing dog and guide will come in and drive the bird up and get him flying. A bird in flight is what you're always after. On preserves, you release those birds regularly, so that you always have birds out in the field for a good sporting day.

RLV: When you say “upland,” what do you mean?

BL: “Upland” is a term used for gamebirds. By contrast, mallard ducks would be a water fowl. So, the hunting of upland gamebirds is hunting in brush with dogs—the whole concept of hunting with dogs to find gamebirds.

RLV: A dog points when he's found a bird? He simply stops and points?

BL: Correct. Generally their tails are held high. Depending on how they smell that bird, they'll lock up on their body configuration, whatever it is—could be a paw up in the air, could be kind of turned sideways, whatever.

RLV: Are these dogs trained?

BL: You better hope so. They have a natural instinct to point. They have a natural instinct to flush. Just like horses have a natural instinct to run. But you need to harness that instinct and train it so that it works well for you. So, even though a dog has a natural instinct to point, that doesn't mean that he'll smell a bird and hold on point—staying until the hunters are able to get up to that area where the dog is and drive the bird out. If you don't harness and train that instinct to work for you, the dog could run out to a hundred yards in front of you, whereas you're hunting, usually, thirty yards in front. You want to cover ground properly, so you're not missing areas where birds may be hidden. With a dog, you're walking with them, and they're hunting the brush and all the stuff in front of you to see if there are birds there. You try to walk to different covers where you think birds may be. If the dog isn't trained, he can run randomly wherever

he likes. Then he's not hunting areas where birds are most likely to be found. Or if he smells a bird, and he has not been trained to hold his point, he's going to go in and bust that bird and the bird's going to fly away, and you don't have any shots.

RLV: So you're saying he works in a thirty yard arc.

BL: Yeah, about that, out in front of the guns, hunting that cover. As you meander, you direct him to where you pretty much want him to hunt for you—to where you feel game is going to be. They start to get an ability to know when they're in the field to go hunting. A lot of them are house pets, whether they sit by the fire or on your lap. But when they go afield, the gears change in their heads. They're no longer a lap dog. Now they're hunting, looking for game, and they're working with you. You're a partnership.

RLV: So, you're only as good as the dog who flushes the game out?

BL: You know, there's an old rule of thumb—always trust the dog. The dog knows. There're times when the dog's on point or whatever, and you'd swear there's nothing there. But as soon as you stop believing in the dog, you're done for.

RLV: What kinds of dogs are used?

BL: There's English Setters, English Pointers, Brittanys [Brittany spaniels—RLV], German shorthairs, German wirehairs. There's quite a broad range of quality hunting dogs under the pointing breeds. You also have spaniels. You have Labradors. You have Golden Retrievers. On the flushing categories, there's another potpourri of dogs. Then there's show lines versus hunting lines. The show lines have been bred for conformation [that is, how well they conform to the breed's appearance standard—RLV], and that's all they're judged on. So, a lot of their hunting DNA has been bred out through non-use over the years. A good quality hunting dog generally comes from a lineage of good, solid, proven hunting dogs, with awards in hunting tests—coming from facilities where the dogs are used regularly for hunting. So, there's really two different things under the same breed of dogs—there's show lines and there's hunting lines. And if you're an upland bird hunter, you want to steer towards a hunting-line dog. You have the best chance of training that dog to perform for its intended purpose.

RLV: Do you train dogs here?

BL: The guys who work here pretty much train their own dogs. We

do offer some clinics at different times of the year for training sessions, but we don't have that as a daily service. We don't have a kennel here to train dogs, but people can come here to learn how to train a dog. The biggest part about training a dog is training the owner—to understand how the dog works, understand the commands, understand how to work the dog. A lot of people send a dog to a trainer, and the dog is perfect with the trainer. It knows the game, hunts hard, understands, listens. But they go back to the owner, and the owner has no control because they don't understand what the dog is doing. They don't know how to read their dog. They don't understand what all the different whistle signals are or the voice commands. They don't understand what the dog is doing some times.

RLV: So there are nuances to this.

BL: Oh, yes. It's a real sport. And it's a passion. Wingshooting is a passion for people, and therefore it can become an expensive sport. It doesn't have to be, but the time you invest in a dog, the time you invest in your gun, the time you invest in your hunting clothes, the money you pay to join a club or hunt a property. And then you have to have a vehicle to haul your animals. So it has costs—all sports have their cost. But the wingshooting guy is really passionate for the sport—and they're true conservationists. The hunting sportsman is the strongest conservationist we have out there. They provide more dollars to conservation than any other sport.

RLV: That's a good point, because a sport like this might antagonize some conservationist types. But you're saying wingshooters contribute to conservation?

BL: Absolutely. First of all, they get hunting licenses. Secondly, there's a saying by the owner of Orvis, "If we are to benefit from the use of our natural resources, we must be willing to act to protect them." That's what Perk Perkins, the owner of Orvis, has said; it's the company's mantra, and they live and breathe that. In support of the dedication to excellence and sporting lifestyle begun 104 years ago by Morgan Wing, "The Orvis Commitment" pledges 5 percent of pre-tax profits to protecting nature, supporting communities, and advancing canine health and well-being.

### **Morgan Wing, Henry Wing, and George Bednar**

RLV: What can you tell us about Morgan Wing?

BL: What I know comes from the previous owner, George Bednar, who I worked with quite a few years before he passed away, and what George knew came from Henry Wing, Morgan's son. Morgan was a financier in New York and this was a place for him to bring clients to shoot birds. It's as simple as that. It was not on a scale it is now. In fact, it was very small—pretty much this room here, bird pens out front. But it functioned well for him—to go out and shoot some birds with his friends and clients. That's how it all started.

RLV: That was in 1907.

BL: It was licensed in 1907 as a preserve in New York State, and I believe that's when licensing became required. I don't know how long Morgan Wing operated before that. Our claim that it's the oldest licensed preserve in the United States is based on the 1907 date.

<p><b>SANDANONA PHEASANTRY</b> <b>MILLBROOK</b> <b>Dutchess Co.</b> <b>New York</b> Ringneck Pheasants for Fall Delivery. Write for Prices and Information. Member of The Game Guild Member of American Game Breeders Society P. O. Box 101.</p>
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Figure 4. Advertisement for Sandanona pheasants in *The Game Breeder of the Game Conservation Society*, 1917.

RLV: Did Morgan Wing also breed birds, or did that come later?

BL: There was breeding here. They had some brooders in the basement here in the old building. And the rumor is that it caused a fire in here: One of the brooders was near some propane, started on fire, and burned some of the building; it was rebuilt in the 1930s. One of the outbuildings also had some brooders in it. So at one time they did rear their own birds, but that hasn't happened in thirty years. For many years now, the facility has purchased birds from breeders.

RLV: So, following the genealogy, Henry Morgan, Morgan Wing's son, took over from his father. How long did he actually run Sandanona?

BL: It was quite a long time—from the '60s to the '80s—and obviously he was here before that. George Bednar bought the property from Henry. George used to come up and use the facility. George was in the wine and spirits business. He got to know Henry pretty well and became friendly with Henry. As Henry was ready to retire, it was a commercial operation at that time—it was a smaller operation than it is now, but still you had to be there every day. It was like having a farm.

RLV: Was it a one-man operation?

BL: Pretty much, with some helpers—a manager and some other people, but still it was a real job. I think Henry was ready to pass the torch. But George told me that the only reason Henry had sold the place to him was that George guaranteed it would stay as it was. George gave him his word that he would honor that.

George was huge bird hunter; he had a huge passion for the outdoors. He loved this facility. That's why he bought it, and owned it for quite a few years before Orvis took over.

RLV: Did you know George at all?

BL: I knew George very well. He was a good friend of mine, and I worked for him for a lot of years.

RLV: He's no longer alive?

BL: No, George passed away two or three years ago.

RLV: How did he feel about passing Sandanona on to Orvis?

BL: He was very happy that it landed in their lap—so that it would continue on with its traditions. Orvis is very strong in sport traditions and the outdoors, whether it's fly fishing or wingshooting. Their roots are in those two sports, and they're very strong to their brand and traditions. So, he knew that it would move forward in good hands.

RLV: Was there ever a point when he wasn't sure it could continue?

BL: Yes. George had to sell the facility due to some financial struggles. One of the board members knew that the facility was looking for an owner, and told the owner of Orvis that they should pick this property up. They were hesitant at first; they had never been in this business. They weren't sure this was a business they wanted to be in. The board member said, "Listen, if you're not going to buy it, I'm going to buy it," and they said, "Well, if he's willing to buy it, it's probably a good reason why we should."

The board member was a very savvy businessman, loved his shooting sports, knew the whole deal. He was a member here for years, knew the facility well, knew its nuances, knew what it had to offer—with its rich heritage. So, that's how Orvis came to buy it.

RLV: So, there's a membership here now. Have there always been memberships?

BL: The way the facility transpired over the years: It was private when Morgan had it for himself and used it for his entertainment. Henry came in, and it became open to the public: You could call up, come, do day trips, and use the property. It was all bird hunting at that time. When George purchased the property, he made it a membership club. Only members and guests could use the property.



*Figure 5. Shooting Sporting Clays at Sandanona*



*Figure 6. Hunter in the Woods at Sandanona*



*Figure 7. Sandanona Club House*

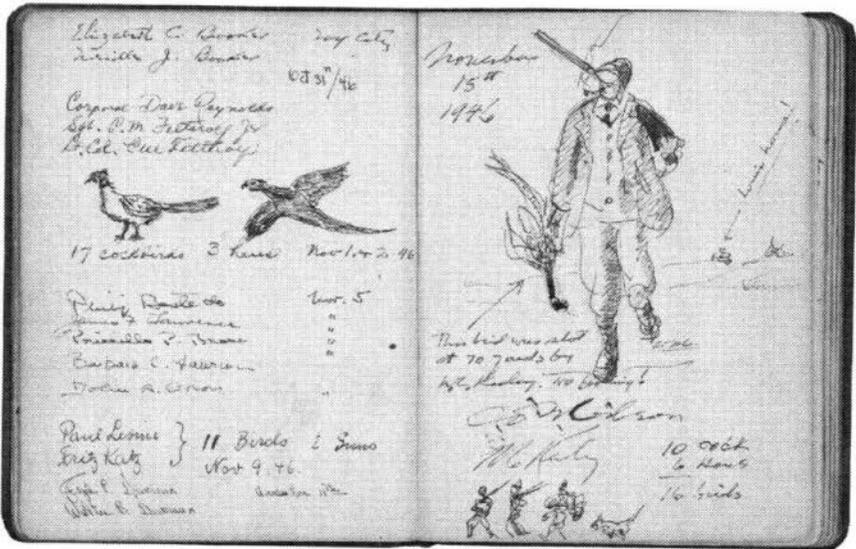


Figure 8. Entry from the Sandanona Pheasantry registry.

RLV: That generated some income.

BL: Yeah, and that's pretty much what you had to do, if you were going to make it. George was a business guy, and his dream was to have this be his retirement business. Unfortunately, that didn't pan out for him. But under George, it was a private club and primarily a bird hunting club. About twenty years ago, sporting clays started to become popular. George hopped onto that, and we built a sporting clays course and also some private structures. We started having shooting lessons available here, and with that we were able to bring the public in to use the facility. Then eventually non-members could shoot sporting clays here. So, that's how Sandanona ended under George. When Orvis picked it up, we continued with the bird hunting membership—that continues to support the properties that are for the bird hunting portion of the business to keep it strong. As for sporting clays—which is a clay-target game out in the woods that simulates practice for bird hunting—we also have a membership for that and members can shoot at a discount rate, but you can come as a public person and shoot at a non-member rate. We have wingshooting schools, which are open to the public. During certain times of the year, we have fly fishing schools available to the public. So, there's plenty of stuff for the public to come and enjoy. We do everything with a reservation, so we can make sure everything is manned, and everybody has an Orvis employee with them when they're out, so we can take care of them properly.

## **Orvis's Sandanona**

RLV: It seems like there's a gentlemanly quality about all this—with the history of Morgan Wing and the sport of wingshooting.

BL: I would definitely agree that it has a gentleman's feel to it. The wingshooter has a passion for the environment, a passion for animals, a passion for his fellow sportsmen, and generally wants to help a new person to get into this sport. So I would say it's a very gentlemanlike sport. There's a lot of nostalgia about the whole program.

RLV: When people come here, do they bring their own animals generally?

BL: At this facility, we pretty much have guides and dogs available. There are quite a few people who are members who do have their own animals. But we're pretty close to the city, so a lot of our members live and work in that environment, and this is kind of a getaway for them, just to come and enjoy. So we have the ability to provide that service, and a lot of them take advantage of that. Because it is a commitment to be able to take care of an animal properly, train him properly. And with the limited amount of time you have to come and enjoy the sport, you don't want it not to work well by having a dog who is out of control. A lot of people understand that they don't have the lifestyle to take care of an animal properly, so they rely on us to have that component for them.

RLV: Are there many women who are wingshooters?

BL: It's a small portion of the business, for sure, but the ones that get involved, love it.

RLV: How many members do you have now?

BL: I would say we're about 400 members between the sporting clays and the upland hunting.

RLV: Do you have a set of bylaws and governing rules or anything? A president?

BL: No. We're corporate owned so we don't fall under those umbrellas. We're not owned by the membership. We do have our policies: how we hunt afield, how things are treated, how things are done. It's all based on safety. And we always have a staff member with you. We're there to do whatever we can to make the day pleasant so the person will want to enjoy the sport and come back. We clean their guns for them at

the end of the day. We have coffee and Danish always out for them and a soda bar. We do have lunch available upon request: we have a caterer who comes in and takes care of that. We have a full-line pro shop for people who do like to do a little shopping.

RLV: Have there been any famous people who have come here who are wingshooters?

BL: There're quite a few people who are famous, probably more in financial circles. There're also entertainment guys that are into this sport. The problem is, I think, the shooting sports are one of the sport world's best kept secrets. It's not hush-hush by any means, but there's just a lack of awareness more than anything else. Once somebody comes up and uses the place, it changes their whole mindset. We have very light-gauge ammo, light-gauge guns, eye protection, ear protection, pads—all the stuff to make it a very pleasing first-time experience. Basically, it's just an hand-eye sport. The difficulty is to break down that mental barrier some people have about guns.

RLV: What are your plans for the future?

BL: The goal of the company is to showcase the Orvis lifestyle, and that continues to be the focus—to invite as many people into the lifestyle as possible and provide them with a facility that gets them to understand to appreciate the lifestyle to the fullest.

*For more information on activities, directions, and fees, call 845-677-9701; email [sandanona@orvis.com](mailto:sandanona@orvis.com); or visit the Web site <http://www.orvis.com/intro.aspx?subject=3050>*

## Endnotes

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# PEACH HILL: A PUBLIC PARK ON POUGHKEEPSIE'S SUMMIT

*By Molly B. Jones*

Standing atop Peach Hill, the highest elevation in Poughkeepsie, a visitor discovers that, by slowly turning in a circle, every direction brings into view lovely vistas. These vistas are visible through five “view chutes”—corridors carefully cut through rows and rows of fruit trees. (See Figure 8.) To the southwest are the Hudson Highlands; turning more directly to the west, one sees Shawangunk Ridge, the distinctive Schunnemunk Mountain, and the Catskills; turning further brings into view the Berkshires and the Taconic Hills. Although miles and miles away, across the Hudson River or beyond the eastern boundaries of Dutchess County, these mountain landscapes show occasional signs of human activity. But the overwhelming feeling is one of undeveloped open space, quietly passive and peaceful—even though the visitor is located less than fifteen minutes from the residential and commercial density of downtown Poughkeepsie, the county’s largest metropolis.

Peach Hill Park is categorized as a “passive” park, a place for walking, running, birdwatching, picnicking, photographing and painting, and, in winter, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing through the orchard landscape. No ballfields and swimming pools here. There are no structures of any kind, just a small parking lot, trails with discreet signage, picnic areas, and benches (See Figure 6). And, in accordance with the development plan adopted by the Poughkeepsie Town Board, the park will remain a place of minimum disruption.

In a surprise of history, there are no peach trees on Peach Hill—not any more. “In the mid-1940s, the Van Keuren family grew peaches and sold them from the front porch of their house on Peach Road,” remembers John Conklin, who grew up on nearby Van Wagner Road. “That’s why they called it Peach Road and Peach Hill.” Charles Beck purchased the land in 1948 and grew peaches, pears, and apples. His son, also named Charles, bought the property from his father and continued to cultivate fruit trees. In 1968, William Paladino Sr. and his son became partners in the ownership of the orchard but eventually grew only apples and pears. Active farming ended in 1998.



*Figure 1. Looking east from Peach Hill, circa 1954. Photo courtesy of Tom Beck.*



*Figure 2. Looking toward the Catskills, in 1950, with young peach trees. Photo courtesy of Tom Beck.*



*Figure 3. Charles Beck Jr. harvesting apples in 1956. Photo courtesy of Tom Beck.*

*Figure 4. Frankie, a migrant worker, harvesting apples. Photo courtesy of Tom Beck.*



*Figure 5. Blossoming apple trees are an attraction of Peach Hill Park today. Photo courtesy of Derrick Eidam.*



*Figure 6. Peach Hill park has no structures, apart from some split-rail fences and simple benches with tables. Photo courtesy of Derrick Eidam.*



*Figure 7. The Friends of Peach Hill hope that activities may eventually extend to interpretive programs describing the park's flora and fauna, such as this chestnut-sided warbler. Photo courtesy of Derrick Eidam.*



*Figure 8. An Eagle Scout's project involved cutting "view chutes" to open up the vistas of Peach Hill Park. Photo courtesy of Derrick Eidam.*

“My grandfather wrote a handwritten history of his young immigrant life and early Poughkeepsie history,” says Terry Beck Knapp, who has “very very happy memories” of her childhood in Poughkeepsie in the late 1950s and ’60s before the family moved to Texas. Early pickers in the Beck orchards were family members from Germany, she says. She also remembers playing with children of seasonal migrant workers—African-American families from Florida—who lived in a camp on Peach Hill. Later, Jamaican and Mexican workers picked fruit.

The Beck family lived where their fruit stand was, on Route 55, formerly Manchester Road. Grandfather Beck also owned an orchard on Spy Hill, which he subdivided into lots and sold for residential development.

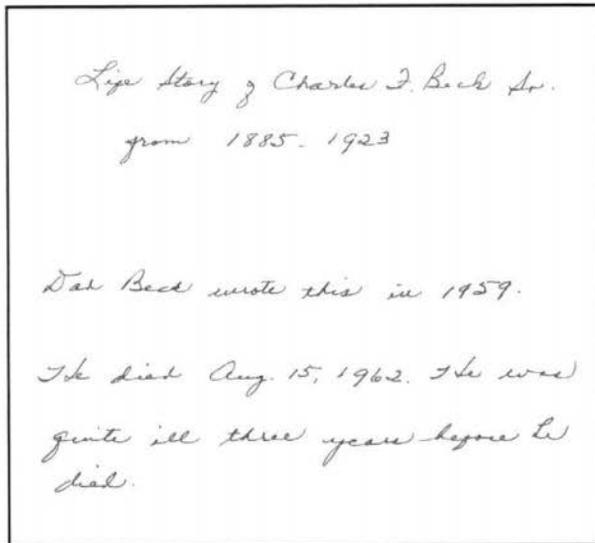


Figure 9. Charles Beck Sr. wrote a memoir of his life, from his early days in Germany, to his emigration to America, to his farm in Poughkeepsie. The Dutchess County Historical Society will publish an annotated version of Beck's memoir in a forthcoming issue of the yearbook.

Orchards generally do well on hillsides, because warm air rises, protecting the trees from the cold air that settles in valleys. The difference of a few degrees in temperature can keep frost from forming on the trees. Peach Hill is “a perfect site for an orchard,” says William Paladino Jr. “The air drainage is good. It was an excellent site for fruit growing.” The

farm was very productive, he says, producing between 80,000 and 90,000 bushels of fruit a year.



*Figure 10. Working Peach Hill farm, circa 1952.*

The decision to sell the property was a difficult one for him. “I hated to get out of the farming business,” he says. “It’s like a new birth every spring.” The primary reason to sell was foreign competition. “The economics of apples didn’t work anymore,” he says. “Prices were low, costs were high, and the regulations were a headache.” Many other fruit farmers experienced the same difficulties from the global economic change. “When I started in the farming business in the early ’60s,” he says, “there were approximately 350 fruit growers from Albany to New York City. Today there are less than 40.”

About 10,000 apple trees remain on Peach Hill, a unique environment not available in any other park in the county. (See Figure 5.) The expressive shapes of the branches provide an unusual sight as one climbs to the top of the hill. The trees, similar in size but each individual in configuration, stripe the hillside in regular straight rows. From the parking lot, a trail accessible to those in wheelchairs leads to picnic tables with a view of the Catskills. In spring, one can enjoy the blossoms. In fall, one can pick the apples. There are five or six different types, including Red Delicious and Yellow Delicious.

## From Farm to Park

Peach Hill was transformed from a privately owned fruit orchard into a public park by means of a time-consuming and complex process. Efforts to save the 159-acre parcel from development began when neighbors learned that the land was for sale. In 2001, then-Gov. George Pataki came to Poughkeepsie to announce the \$900,000 plan that would eventually make it possible for the Town of Poughkeepsie to acquire the property. “We’re delighted that this property now will be forever saved,” Dutchess County Executive William Steinhaus said at the ceremony. “This could have been 150 homes.”

The successful collaboration included not only a federally funded state grant of \$321,000 but also \$252,000 from Dutchess County, \$12,000 from the Town of Poughkeepsie (provided as in-kind services), and \$315,000 from the non-profit environmental organization Scenic Hudson, the proceeds of an anonymous donation earmarked for this purpose. Scenic Hudson had the property appraised, negotiated the purchase price with the owner, and then went to the three levels of government to put the

deal together. Final negotiations took several years. “A lot of things had to be sorted through,” says Seth McKee, Land Conservation Director for Scenic Hudson. “It was very rewarding to see it all come together.”



*Figure 11. In the 1950s, the use of pesticides was common in orchards like Peach Hill.*

After the Town of Poughkeepsie assumed ownership

of the property in 2003, more than two more years passed before the park opened. The fact that the park had been a working orchard turned out to be one of the problems, as elevated pesticide levels were found in the soil in some areas. With this information in mind, the four trails—totaling over three miles—were developed to keep visitors away from the contaminated areas, even though one would have to ingest the pesticide to cause harm.

As part of the negotiated agreement, the State of New York holds a conservation easement on the park property and Scenic Hudson has a third-party right to enforce it. The easement is basically a permanent restriction on what can be done on the property, insuring that the Town of Poughkeepsie cannot in the future develop the park with ballfields and similar kinds of “active” recreation or sell the property to developers. In addition, the Town has an agreement with another non-profit organization, The Friends of Peach Hill, to help manage the park. “The Friends of Peach Hill play a very active role,” says Thomas R. Meyering, Parks Director for the Town of Poughkeepsie. “They do everything from mowing trails to helping with public events.”

The Friends of Peach Hill was organized principally by Mary Lunt, who lives near the hill and has watched the area develop steadily in the 35 years that she has been a neighbor. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, the population in Dutchess County increased from 280,150 in 2000 to 297,488 in 2010. More telling still, farmland acreage in Dutchess County has decreased nearly 10 percent from 1997 to 2007, the last year for which numbers are available. The preservation of rural landscapes as development pressures continue has long been of interest and concern to her.

Mary Lunt is quick to give credit to the efforts of others, including her husband, for the formation of The Friends of Peach Hill, but it is clear that she is the sparkplug who provided the initial energy and continues to promote the park. “Mary kept working and working and didn’t give up,” says Annon Adams, a board member of The Friends. “She convinced people that the property had merit and that it should be saved. It’s now hard to believe, it’s so obvious. There’s really nothing like it. It’s close, it’s not as challenging as a lot of climbs in the area, and the view from the hilltop is spectacular.” In 2009, the Lunts were honored by the Dutchess County Historical Society for their volunteer work in the community, including the preservation of Peach Hill as a public park.

The Friends pay for mowing the trails, most of which are 10-foot-wide, grassy former farm roads, and for most of the other maintenance, at a cost of about \$7,000 a year. “Our biggest issue is to raise enough money to maintain the park,” Annon Adams says. Recent work provided by three Eagle Scout candidates has made a big difference in enhancing the park’s usage. One scout cut down 17 trees to create the “view chutes,” a term that the Lunts adopted (See Figure 8); another installed benches throughout the

property; and a third project focused on the entrance, providing signage, tables, and a split-rail fence. Additionally, a group of neighbors who are members of The Friends have taken on the responsibility of opening the park gates each morning and closing them each night.

While the park is primarily an old orchard, there are also woodlands, streams, three small ponds, and wetlands. So one goal is to build a boardwalk providing access to the wetlands, an environment distinctly different from the old orchard. Suggestions have also been put forward for using a large, open, terraced hill called the amphitheater. Mary Lunt and her husband, Bill, who first discovered Peach Hill when they walked down an abandoned rail bed near their home, hope that eventually the park may be linked to a trail along the former railroad track.

A number of special events have been organized by The Friends and the Town of Poughkeepsie's Parks Department. There has been an apple-picking and cider-pressing day, and several nighttime hikes have attracted visitors to watch the full moon rise. The Friends also believe the park should teach visitors about how the land is used by birds, animals, and plants (See Figure 7). "There needs to be an interpretive program once we understand what's there," says Annon Adams. "This would be a useful addition to the education curriculum." Also, she says, the board hopes to obtain oral history interviews from residents near the park and to research the deeds to document ownership of the hill back to the original settlers.

The most difficult question facing those involved in the management of Peach Hill Park is what will happen as the orchard declines and dies, as it inevitably will. "We need a management plan and we need money," says Mary Lunt. "We hope to replant in certain areas, but some of the land will have to go back to nature."

## **Visiting**

Peach Hill Park is located off of the Salt Point Turnpike (New York State Route 115) in the northwest corner of the Town of Poughkeepsie with access from 32 Edgewood Drive. It is open every day from dawn to dusk. Visit <http://peachhill.org> to learn more.

This article was based on interviews conducted in May, June, and July 2011 with Annon Adams, Tom Beck, Nancy Brinkerhoff, John Conklin, Derrick Eidam, Terry Beck Knapp, Anna Kossmann, Mary Lunt, Seth McKee, Thomas R. Meyering, William Paladino, Jr., and on articles in the *Poughkeepsie Journal*.

# ARTICLES



# THE STRANGE CASE OF ISAAC MITCHELL

*By Joseph Fichtelberg*

When Charles Brockden Brown, one of early America's boldest writers, began a novel intended to shake up his readers, he knew what he didn't want. "Gothic castles and chimeras, are the materials usually employed" to unsettle an audience, Brown wrote, but his fiction would work by "calling forth the passions and engaging the sympathy of the reader." Brown had died and his notoriety was already fading when another author's novel appeared that made a Gothic castle the center of its appeal. Poughkeepsie journalist Isaac Mitchell's *The Asylum* has the attributes of both the Gothic and the sympathetic fiction Brown imagined. It was a romance and an adventure story, a captivity narrative and a social critique, a tale of international intrigue and of a search for home. *The Asylum* had all the trappings of a best seller.

But like an Edgar Allan Poe story in which the soul of an angry lover usurps the body of a rival, it was not Mitchell who became the best-selling author. Shortly after the novel appeared in 1811, a Plattsburgh, New York, school teacher, Daniel Jackson, published a pirated version under his own name—an edition that would soon take on a life of its own. When Mitchell died of typhus fever in 1812, it was Jackson who reaped the benefits. The Jackson version, *Alonzo and Melissa; or the Unfeeling Father*, had a long afterlife: it was still in print in 1876, and no less an author than Mark Twain observed "Jackson's" novel in every proper household in the South.

How was it that this wild, romantic, yet artless tale of young love should have acquired such far-ranging cultural power? The strange dispossession of the author may well be a metaphor for the secret source of its appeal.

*The Asylum*, which was initially serialized in Mitchell's Poughkeepsie newspaper, *Political Barometer*, is the last of three fictions produced by this ambitious author, and although the tales lack polish, they offer a fascinating window into the mind and mentality of a young nation. Mitchell was too decorous a writer to explore the raw passions exposed by novelists like Brown. Yet his conventional tales hinted at darker impulses.

### **Albert and Eliza**

The first of these stories, "Albert and Eliza," which was serialized in Mitchell's newspaper in 1802, shortly after he took it over, is a story of lovers caught up in passions far beyond their control. When Albert disappears during a voyage to England and fails to return for his wedding day, Eliza assumes the worst. Later, hearing that he has married an English woman of fortune, Eliza is devastated. Enter the rakish Blake, whose sexual interest in Eliza soon turns tender when he saves her from an assault and kills her assailant in a duel. After much soul-searching, the still melancholy Eliza consents to marry Blake, and they are performing the vows when an emaciated young man bursts into the chapel and reveals himself as the lost lover, who had been captured and imprisoned by pirates. Not he, but a relative had married and settled in England. Could Eliza still find happiness? Here Mitchell's sober conventionality takes a wicked turn. Although the vows had indeed been exchanged, the marriage was invalid. Blake, it turns out, had unwittingly married his half-sister, fled to America to cover the disgrace, and killed his half-brother in the duel to defend Eliza's honor. His apparent commitment to purity made a mockery of the word, and although Albert and Eliza do indeed wed, their celebration is haunted by the ghost of this Oedipal fury. The marriage may be happy, but the institution of marriage seems fatally compromised.

### **Melville and Phalez**

Much the same mixture of purity and savagery may be seen in Mitchell's next serialized tale. "Melville and Phalez" (serialized in 1803) is the story of a young English merchant whose benevolence puts him in jeopardy. When Melville encounters a beautiful young woman about to be executed in Constantinople, he ransoms her by borrowing heavily. Taking the freed

Phalez back home to England, he must soon undertake a second voyage, this time to Persia, at the behest of his creditor. There he is entertained by the Prince, who recognizes as his daughter's creation a vest that Phalez had given Melville and so dispatches Melville back to England to bring his (the Prince's) daughter back to Persia, promising to bestow her on whoever delivers her. That promise proves too tempting for the Prince's attendant Aphello, who throws Melville overboard in an attempt to claim the prize. As in his earlier story, Mitchell exposes the villain on the verge of marriage, and it turns out that Aphello (like Blake in "Albert and Eliza") is a moral monster, guilty of murdering his father, his wife, and numerous victims of his piracy in order to feed his lust for power. In a curious coda, Melville, like Abraham, is tested. Forced to promise his child to a stranger who rescues him at sea, he is horrified when the stranger returns to redeem the debt. Nothing can save Melville—not his power as the regent of Persia, nor his happiness with Phalez, nor the offer of great wealth to the creditor, whose benevolence alone cancels the debt.

### **Promise Keepers**

Why this fixation on promise keeping? In these two apprentice studies for his longest work, Mitchell weaves his marriage plots with stories depicting the violation of trust. Albert's abrupt disappearance seems a betrayal, as does Blake's concealment of bigamy. Phalez's father must abide by his word, even if his daughter marries a villain, and Melville faces the stern test of honoring a similar vow. These plot devices may well reflect a related challenge facing Jeffersonians like Mitchell in the early nineteenth century. As an ardent supporter of the new administration, Mitchell's editorial choices in the *Political Barometer* often reflected the tensions faced by Republicans who advocated both small-scale agrarianism and aggressive international expansion. Jefferson was famous for calling yeoman farmers "nature's noblemen," yet he also engineered the largest land deal in American history, and toward the end of his administration became increasingly involved in conflicts over international trade that would erupt in the War of 1812. At the emotional center of these tensions, argues historian Thomas Haskell, is the code of promise keeping—the indispensable condition not only of commerce, but also of the sympathies that tie travelers together. While traders such as Albert and Melville ventured far from home, they also bound the world in a network of intimate contacts. The tensions, in Mitchell's stories, between love and promises reflected the wider problems of an agrarian republic struggling to come to terms with the pressures of international trade.

## Mitchell's Masterwork

These tensions receive their fullest expression in *The Asylum*. Jackson's pirated edition, *Alonzo and Melissa*, based on the serialized novel that appeared in the *Political Barometer* in 1804, does not include the first volume of the complete novel, which might be titled "Bergher and Selina."

Near Melissa Bloomfield's estate live that expatriate couple, natives of England and Austria, whose story occupies an extended inset in Volume I of *The Asylum*. Once again, the subject is forced marriage. Selina Du Ruyter lived a privileged life until her mother died and an avaricious step-mother took her place. To recoup the fortune that the woman squandered in "deep play," Selina is forced to entertain an odious suitor in defiance of her true wishes to marry the virtuous Col. Bergher. When Bergher rescues her from a kidnapping by the suitor Hubert, a chase

across Europe ensues, as the couple dodges agents willing to stop at nothing to bend the secretly married couple to Du Ruyter's will. Only in America do they learn that the warrant for their arrest has been lifted and the lady's father reconciled.

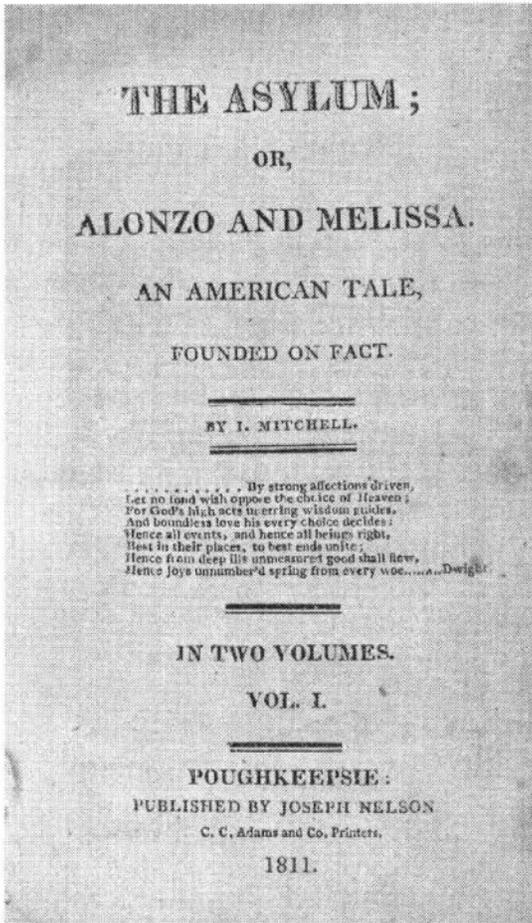


Figure 1 Title page to *The Asylum or Alonzo and Melissa*

The circumstance of the irate father is repeated in the tale of Alonzo and Melissa, which comprises the second volume of Mitchell's novel. Melissa's father, Colonel Bloomfield, is a reserved, vigorous, grasping patriarch, driving his tenants as he drives his children, with an eye toward gain. When Alonzo Haventon, a merchant's son, rescues Melissa from a carriage accident, he disrupts Bloomfield's plans to wed Melissa to a well-heeled suitor. Yet the Colonel is tolerant enough to allow Melissa to choose, and after considerable soul-searching, she chooses Alonzo. But international rivalries intervene. Some vessels owned by Haventon's father are seized by the British and he is ruined. Colonel Bloomfield reacts quickly to this reversal, demanding that the pair dissolve their engagement, and, when they refuse, sequestering Melissa in her Gothic castle.

Out of place as such a structure seems in the Revolutionary era in which the novel is set, the castle—complete with moat, drawbridge, and battlements—is not without significance. Like the domestic tyranny Melissa faces, the castle is a symbol of a dying order opposed by virtuous republicans like Alonzo. Still more unsettling are the series of frightening visitations Melissa endures—thunderous noises, bloody apparitions, hands seizing her in the night. Miraculously, Alonzo discovers her, but on the eve of being rescued, Melissa once more disappears, not to surface until the very end of the novel.

Up to this point *The Asylum* is a conventional, if far-fetched tale, filled with belletristic touches but certainly not compelling enough to command attention for the next sixty years. The emotional core of the novel, its magnetic center, has yet to come. The frontispiece of Mitchell's first edition depicts a mournful Alonzo, standing by a

*Figure 2. "He took her miniature from his bosom, he held it up, and earnestly viewed it by the moon's pale ray." So reads the caption under the frontispiece of Isaac Mitchell's novel The Asylum.*



gravestone he takes to be Melissa's—and it is that luxurious male suffering that defines the novel.

So prostrate is Alonzo by his failure to rescue Melissa that he falls ill. When he finally recovers and makes a voyage to England to restore his fortunes, he is captured by a British warship and sent to prison, where he once again languishes. Escaping to Paris, he discovers Melissa's miniature portrait in the street and is reunited with her brother, Edgar, allowing for another long season of despondency over his lost love. No less a figure than America's minister to France, Benjamin Franklin, tries to rouse Alonzo from his despair. "Permit me to tell you," the minister oracularly intones, "that in all my observations on life, I have always found that those connexions which were formed from inordinate passion, or what you would call pure affection, have ever been the most unhappy." Franklin does what he can to ease Alonzo's woes. He advances a loan and settles with his father's creditors, thereby restoring his fortune.

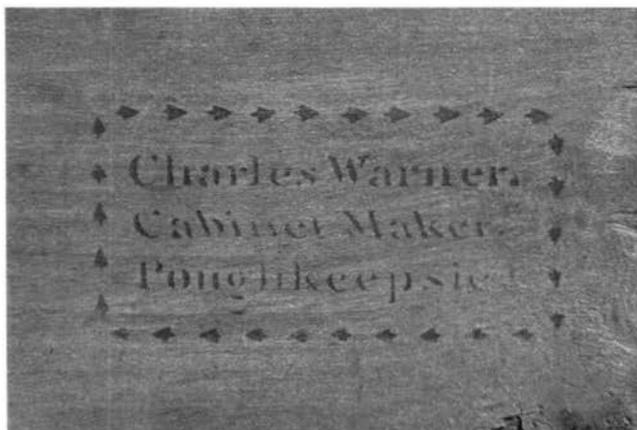
Yet Alonzo's troubles are not over. On the return voyage he is shipwrecked off the coast of Georgia and, after recovering, chances on an obituary announcing the death of Melissa Bloomfield. This appears to be the final blow, to which even the Job-like Alonzo is not equal. If ever a character endured a test of faith, that character is Alonzo Haventon. Like Job or Abraham, however, Alonzo passes the test. The obituary was in error; Melissa resides in the city; and the pair weds at the home of the chastened Colonel Bloomfield, to enjoy the well-deserved haven they will create on the estate they call *The Asylum*.

But that hard-won ease, with its background of Gothic terror and warm sympathy, suggests another dimension of the novel that might well have been the source of its appeal. Just as Mitchell's plot involves a succession of exacting promises and financial reverses bathed in an aura of anxiety and tears, so the nation, over the life of Daniel Jackson's pirated edition, would face a series of rude shocks as it struggled to adjust the attitudes of an older, agrarian, producer economy to the heartless rule of capital. The male sufferers in Mitchell's novel suggest the mournful legacy of that task—men suspended between a dream of unimpeded action and the need to submit to a series of ruthless displacements culminating in civil war. If Mitchell's novel celebrates the triumph of sympathy over terror, it also recognizes the terrifying cost of that victory.

# CHARLES WARNER: A NEWLY DISCOVERED CABINETMAKER FROM POUGHKEEPSIE

*By Tad Fallon*

“Charles Warner, Cabinetmaker, Poughkeepsie.” So said the stenciled label inside the drawer bottom of a mahogany Pembroke table that I had located in Dutchess County (See Figure 1). But my initial investigations revealed no published documentation of this early nineteenth-century cabinetmaker.



*Figure 1. Charles Warner's stenciled label, circa 1830, located inside the drawer bottom of a mahogany Pembroke table. Private Collection.*

The first published link that I found came through David Hewett, an editor for *The Maine Antiques Digest*, who has compiled a large database of American cabinetmakers. Warner was named in this database as having worked as a cabinetmaker in Poughkeepsie about 1820. I found a second reference to Warner in the index of the Museum of Early Southern

*Charles Warner, Poughkeepsie Cabinet Maker*

Decorative Arts (MESDA): It had been generated by a fire in the shop of cabinetmaker Charles Warner, which had then been mentioned in the *Washington Gazette* of September 25, 1820.

But not only was I able to find little about Warner personally, I learned that, overall, there is a distinct lack of scholarship in the history of furniture from this time and region. John Scherer's book, *New York Furniture at the New York State Museum*, published in 1979, contains labeled examples of upstate New York furniture, but only as isolated pieces, not as insights into any given craftsman's life and work.

Of course, there were many celebrated and well-documented early-nineteenth-century cabinetmakers in New York City. There was Charles-Honoré Lannuier (1779–1819), a French *ébéniste* (the French term for cabinetmaker) who came to New York City in 1803 and whose furniture reflected the taste of contemporary French design. The elegant work he produced progressed through France's delicate Directory style (1795–1799), the more robust French Consulate (1799–1804), and finally the Empire (1804–1815) style.

Duncan Phyfe (1768-1854) emigrated from Scotland in 1784, living in Albany before relocating to New York City in the year 1791. By 1800, he had established himself as a cabinetmaker in the city, offering furniture that blended the English Neoclassical and Regency styles. His design influences can be found in publications such as Thomas Sheraton's *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing-Book* (1793) and Thomas Hope's *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration* (1807). His work lasted into the 1840s, progressing through the Greek Revival, Rococo, and Gothic-revival styles.

But Lannuier and Phyfe were making high-style furniture in an urban environment. One can hardly assume that the same sort of furniture would have been made in the village of Poughkeepsie.

### **Poughkeepsie**

Whatever date one may choose for the earliest settlers in Poughkeepsie, the first Dutch church seems to have been finished in 1723 and the first English church in 1774. By the time the Village of Poughkeepsie was officially incorporated in 1799, Dutchess County was a major grain-growing region, and Poughkeepsie was a major point for the transfer of goods. Located halfway between Albany and New York City, it offered ready access by water to a regional market extending 80 miles both north and south.

During the early part of the nineteenth century, the freighting industry thus became well established in Poughkeepsie. In 1814 the village became a steamboat terminal, the first town between New York and Albany to have that distinction. In 1824, Horatio Gates Spafford wrote in the *Gazetteer of the State of New York* that Poughkeepsie was an “opulent post town,”<sup>1</sup> with a population of 5,726.

Spafford went on to state there were two small rivers—Fall Creek along the north part of the village and Wappingers Creek along the eastern border—which “afford a great profusion of sites for water-works, and render Poughkeepsie an eligible site for manufactures, of various kinds, which also require the mixed population of a populous town.”<sup>2</sup> There were five landings with wharves and storehouses, and trade was extensive, with “ten large sloops or packets sailing weekly to New York.”<sup>3</sup>

In that same year (1824), the Village of Poughkeepsie had about 600 houses, stores, and shops. There were also county buildings, five churches, meetinghouses, a bank, an academy, a “Lancaster school,”<sup>4</sup> three cotton factories, three sawmills, two extensive breweries, and a distillery.<sup>5</sup> Spafford also writes that in 1820, Poughkeepsie had 553 mechanics, 366 farmers, 110 persons employed in commerce and trade, 93 non-naturalized foreigners, 301 free blacks, and 47 slaves.

These descriptions paint a picture of a place bustling with trade and commerce, and during the first and second quarter of the nineteenth century, Poughkeepsie grew rapidly. By 1840, the population of Poughkeepsie had reached 8,000.<sup>6</sup> The rise of a newly prosperous middle class naturally created a desire to own the sorts of commercial and fashionable goods available in the closest urban center of influence, New York City. Local cabinetmakers therefore began producing such goods for the middle class, and the Pembroke table made by Warner is clear evidence of that type of work.

### **The Manhattan Influence**

In order to better understand the state of cabinetmaking in early nineteenth-century Poughkeepsie, we must look to New York City for the origins of taste and style. During this time, New York began to take the lead from Philadelphia in the production of high-style furniture. The city became a shopping capital that rivaled London and Paris. Indeed, it was called the “Great Emporium.” In 1805, the first cabinetmakers’ directory

was published as part of the *New York City Directory*. In the introduction, the editor remarks about the state of cabinetmaking in New York:

*This curious and useful mechanical art is brought to a very great perfection in this city. The furniture daily offered for sale equals, in point and elegance, any ever imported from Europe, and is scarcely equaled in any other city in America.*<sup>7</sup>

In 1824, Spafford wrote that the seaport of New York “stands unrivaled in these states” in the vast commerce carried out there, with “its thousands of ships, brigs, schooners, and sloops” that are traveling to and from “all parts of the world.” These new modes of transportation were rapidly increasing the market available to cabinetmakers, and this market was soon to expand even further.

After eight years of construction, the Erie Canal was completed in 1825, linking the waters of New York Harbor and the Hudson River in the east with Lake Erie in the west. This development cemented the port of New York City as the geographical and financial center of a web of national and international commerce. The Erie Canal facilitated the development of cities along its route, such as Poughkeepsie, Albany, Troy, Utica, Rochester, and Buffalo. It also provided the means to transport furniture from New York City to the interior of the state. Because Poughkeepsie was along that trade route, the New York City trends in cabinetmaking logically influenced local cabinetmakers, although they lent their own interpretations to the more formal styles popularized by New York makers.

### **Warner’s Pembroke Table**

So much one can infer generally about what was going on in the world of early nineteenth-century Poughkeepsie furniture making. But what do we know of Charles Warner’s cabinetmaking? The first physical artifact that I found to document the work of Charles Warner was a mahogany Pembroke table, probably dating to 1820–30 (See Figure 2). A Pembroke table is a light drop-leaf table with one or two drawers, and probably derives its name from Henry Herbert, the 9<sup>th</sup> earl of Pembroke (1693–1751), a noted connoisseur and amateur architect.

Warner’s Pembroke table is in a private collection in Poughkeepsie. The table is made of high-quality figured mahogany on the top, with rule-jointed D-shaped drop leaves and book-matched mahogany veneers on the drawer fronts (See Figure 3). The table has one drawer and a corresponding “false” drawer front. The secondary woods are poplar

and eastern white pine (See Figure 4). In the treatment of the spiral-turned, classical carved legs, with bulbous ring turnings ending in brass cup castors (See Figure 5), the table exhibits both the Empire influence and the influence of Thomas Sheraton (1751–1806), an English furniture designer whose neoclassical style became popular in America's Federalist period after the publication of *The Cabinetmaker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book* in 1790. The stamped brass drawer knobs and brass cup castors appear to be later replacements (See Figure 6).

*Figures 2 & 3.  
Mahogany Pembroke  
table, c. 1830, bearing  
the stenciled label of  
Charles Warner.  
Private collection.*





*Figure 4. Drawer detail, mahogany Pembroke table, c. 1830, bearing the stenciled label of Charles Warner. Private collection.*



*Figure 5. Classical carving detail. Mahogany Pembroke table, c. 1830, bearing the stenciled label of Charles Warner. Private collection.*



Figure 6. Detail, hardware. Mahogany Pembroke table, c. 1830, bearing the stenciled label of Charles Warner. Private collection.

The Warner table exhibits some residual similarities to an earlier Pembroke table made by George Woodruff in New York City in 1808–10, now in the collection of the Winterthur Museum in Delaware. Woodruff's Pembroke table has the earlier turned and reeded legs so often seen on New York furniture of the period, ending in gracefully bulbous ring turn-

ings with cup castors, as opposed to the heavier, spiral-turned, classical carved legs seen on the Warner table. The trend toward classical acanthus or waterleaf carvings can be seen on a wide range of New York furniture of the period.

### Who Was Charles Warner?

Because I initially had only one piece of physical evidence documenting Charles Warner's life and work, I began to piece together research from a variety of other sources.

In order to get a more complete picture of Warner, I examined a variety of primary sources. At the Dutchess County Courthouse, I looked for Charles Warner's estate inventory. In newspapers of the period, including the *Independence*, the *Poughkeepsie Eagle*, the *Poughkeepsie Journal*, and the *Poughkeepsie Telegraph*, I searched for advertisements or announcements regarding Warner. I also researched the birth, marriage, and death certificates, as well as mortgages and deeds for the Warner family, at both the County Clerk's office in Poughkeepsie and the Dutchess County Historical Society. The federal censuses (which began

in 1790 and were taken every ten years) and the New York State censuses (which were conducted five years apart from the federal records) provided further information, as did city and county directories. I was successful in finding many important documents pertaining to Warner and have been able to assemble facts that cast a light on some of the details of his life, business dealings, and family.

As a *terminus ad quem*, I discovered that he is listed in the records of the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery as having died on September 25, 1834, at the age of 44. In that era, it was common for cabinetmakers to undertake a lengthy and often unpaid apprenticeship before becoming a journeyman at the age of 21. Therefore, the most likely records of Warner's life and work would be found in the time period beginning in 1810 and ending with his death in 1834.

My research also revealed that the father of Charles Warner was most likely Thomas Warner, and records show that Thomas Warner was married to Alida Warner. In 1785, Thomas Warner purchased a lot in Poughkeepsie "beginning at the northeast corner of Myndert Van Kleek's garden fence along the new street."<sup>8</sup> Obituary records show that on August 16, 1815, Thomas Warner died in Poughkeepsie at age 57. Rebecca Warner, "Daughter of Thomas Warner," made the announcement in the *Poughkeepsie Telegraph*.

Thirty-five years later, on April 13, 1851, some 17 years after Charles's death, Alida Warner died in Poughkeepsie, leaving a will disposing of "her interest in the Poughkeepsie Whaling Company, as left by her son Charles Warner, and her interest in the Dutchess County Bank." She was listed as a pew holder in the Dutch Reformed Church.

A major finding regarding the Warner family came from the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery, where family members are buried in a large plot, listed as Deed 77 in the cemetery records. Jonathan Rowland Warner of Utica, New York, purchased the plot on December 6, 1856. Cemetery records reveal the members of the Warner family who were interred there, along with the date they died and the date they were interred. Charles Warner is listed in this record as having died in 1834, and as having been interred there in 1856 (more on this below).

The records of the First and Second Reformed Dutch Church 1716–1912 show many entries concerning the Warner family. The mentions come from the Baptismal Register, 1757–1906, and the Marriage Register, 1765–

1906. Although these records document the Warner family quite well, no records of Charles Warner were found there.

Some of my most fruitful research came from the Dutchess County Surrogate's Court, where I was very fortunate to find Charles Warner's estate inventory file. This file provided key information about his life, including financial statements, identities of family members, a detailed inventory of his shop and home, his stock shares, and a mention of his business partnership: Warner and Nelson. His younger brother, James H. Warner from the Town of Washington, and Charles Swift from Poughkeepsie were appointed administrators of his estate.

According to the Surrogate's Court documents, Charles Warner died of cholera without a last will and testament on September 25, 1834, in Utica, New York, while still a resident Dutchess County. He died at the home of another younger brother Jonathan Rowland Warner, who had made a fortune in the fur-trading business. Charles Warner left his mother (Alida Warner), his sisters (Rebecca and Fanny), and his brothers (James H. Warner and Jonathan Rowland Warner), the sum of \$7,000. The Estate of Charles Warner paid \$14,000 to the State of New York. Warner also owned a considerable number of stock shares, including stock in the Poughkeepsie Whaling Company, the Farmers and Manufacturers Bank, the Eastern Market, the Poughkeepsie Steam Boat Company, and the Dutchess Whaling Company. These financial records would indicate that Charles Warner was a successful cabinetmaker and businessman, with considerable financial resources for the period.

In my research, I found another mention of Warner in business dealings in Poughkeepsie. The following petition was presented to the Poughkeepsie board of trustees in 1833 and includes the name and signature petitioner Charles Warner:

*To The Trustees of the Village of Poughkeepsie:*

*The Undersigned deeply impressed with the importance of a communication by means of a railroad or canal, from the village of Poughkeepsie to Pine Plains, from thence through a part of Columbia County to the line of Massachusetts, do request the trustees will take immediate measures to have said route examined by a competent and experienced engineer. As this is a subject of such vital importance to the prosperity of this village the undersigned do not entertain a*

*doubt by [but?] that the expenditure of any reasonable amount, by the trustees to accomplish the object above, will be sanctioned and approved of by the citizens at large.*

This petition illustrates that Charles Warner was a businessman, with ties to the community and concerns for the economic prosperity of the village.

### **Estate Inventory**

Warner's estate inventory was quite detailed and well documented. It listed many pieces of furniture, and listed the house and shop inventory separately. One hundred and eighteen pieces of furniture were listed in the inventory of the shop, a substantial holding. Pieces were listed as being made of mahogany, maple, curled maple, birch, and pine. The shop inventory included: dining tables; sideboards; French beauros [sic]; high-post, low-post, and field bedsteads; a bedstead with carved posts; dressing tables; wash stands; clock cases; tea tables; pier tables; a secretary; foot stools; bookcases; benches; and cradles. It is interesting to note that a particular piece was described as "one maple bedstead, not marked." This may indicate a distinction of not being labeled, which suggests that the other pieces were labeled. Although it can be only a guess, this statement gives one hope that there are other, *labeled* Warner pieces in existence. The only tools listed in the estate inventory were one bench and tools valued at twenty-five dollars. The only finishing supplies listed were one lot of beeswax valued at five dollars. Also included were three pieces of baize, the thin cloth often used to cover writing surfaces on desks during the period.

While Warner's house inventory also lists furniture, it includes many personal effects, including one pig, appraised at eight dollars; and a gold watch valued at eighty dollars. The inventory also lists molasses, shad, potatoes, and butter. These food stocks, and the pig that needed tending—when considered in conjunction with Warner's dying in Utica, some 170 miles away—suggest that his death was unexpected.

Further evidence indicates that Warner had a business partner at the time of his death: The Surrogate's Court documents noted the "supposed interest in the Firm of Warner and Nelson, \$1,270" in the estate inventory. This business was presumably a cabinetmaking shop. Warner also had \$500 of notes owed to him dated July 2, 1834, by his business partner, Richard Nelson, and a note for \$720 owed to him by P&R Nelson. It is

unclear who P&R Nelson are, but most likely this is a business interest involving Richard Nelson. Subsequent research has indicated that Nelson may have carried on the business of cabinetmaking into the second half of the nineteenth century.

## Two Fires

Two documented fires engulfed Warner's business: the first occurred during his lifetime, the other after his death. The first fire, which was mentioned above, occurred sometime in September 1820. According to an article in the *Washington Gazette* of September 25, 1820:

*From the Poughkeepsie Journal: Fire. Our citizens were alarmed about 10 o'clock yesterday morning by the cry of fire through our streets. The fire proved to be in Mr. Charles Warner's Cabinetmaker's shop, in the rear of the buildings on the south side of Main Street. It is supposed the fire originated from a stove in the shop.*

The second fire occurred on May 12, 1836, 20 months after Warner's death. On that date, "Poughkeepsie was visited by the most extensive fire that has ever been known in this place," according to Edmund Platt's history of Poughkeepsie.<sup>9</sup> The fire began in the shop of Gorman and Nelson, cabinetmakers, and burned all the buildings on the south side of Main Street. Damages reached fifty thousand dollars, and the Estate of Charles Warner was listed among the building owners. The shop of Gorman and Nelson may represent Warner's prior business partner, Richard Nelson, continuing on with a new partnership.

An interesting cross-reference to this fire appeared in "A Workingman's Recollections of America" printed in *Knight's Penny Magazine*. An English cabinetmaker who had been living and working in New York City decided to seek new opportunity by heading north:

*I therefore resolved on removing to Poughkeepsie, a town on the banks of the Hudson, about eighty miles above the city, where a large fire having just before burnt down two cabinet-making establishments, where it was reasonable to hope that work would be readily obtained.<sup>10</sup>*

## Conclusions

In the early nineteenth century, the city and port of New York rose to a nationally dominant socio-economic position. As new modes and routes

of water transportation developed, including the advent of steamships and the Erie Canal, upstate regions that were once geographically isolated became viable places for economic expansion. This growth carried with it the development of a new middle class and an expanded skilled working class. Poughkeepsie began to shift from what had been primarily an agricultural economy to a rapidly urbanizing and industrializing economy. This development was substantial enough to support the trade of fine cabinetmaking, and allowed the village's emerging middle class the opportunity to emulate the styles and tastes being developed in more urban settings.

As for Charles Warner himself, one of the most puzzling aspects of this study is the lack of birth records for him, and the fact that he is not listed in any of the baptismal records with the other children of Thomas and Alida Warner. He died at the Utica home of Jonathan Rowland Warner, is buried in the Warner family plot in the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery, and is mentioned in the will of Alida Warner. Yet his early origins remain unclear. This may indicate that he was adopted or came to the Warner family through a distant relative.

This paper raises a number of questions that need further study, and I hope that it will pave the way for further research on several subjects related to cabinetmaking in upstate New York during the early nineteenth century. For example, research on the names of the other cabinetmakers mentioned in the Warner business dealings could further clarify his dealings with other craftsman. More research could also be done on the cabinetmaker Richard Nelson and the later firm of J. P. Nelson, mentioned in the cabinetmaking chapter of the book *Natives and Newcomers* by Clyde and Sally Griffen.<sup>11</sup>

In an exciting and interesting postscript to this story, a private collector has put together a substantial group of labeled Charles Warner furniture, which has been now been conserved in the Author's studio. I hope to present the findings from this new study in the future.

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Research Assistant—all at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, for their research tips and insight into the period. I am truly grateful to Ralph Leed for initially suggesting the project and especially to Jim Nelson and Vince Giuseffi for their generous support.

### Endnotes

1 Horatio Gates Spafford, *A Gazetteer of the State of New York*. (c. 1824; repr. Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1981), p. 425.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 In a Lancaster School, older students taught younger ones, allowing for more personal instruction and fewer masters; it contrasted with schools that employed more masters and had them lecture to large classes.

5 Spafford, p. 425.

6 Clyde and Sally Griffen, *Natives and Newcomers* (Cambridge, MA; Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 2.

7 New York City Directory (New York, 1805).

8 Edmund Platt, *The Eagle's History of Poughkeepsie from the Earliest Settlements, 1683 to 1905* (Poughkeepsie, NY: Platt & Platt, 1905), p. 67.

9 Platt, p. 126

10 Charles Knight, "A Workingman's Recollections of America," *Knight's Penny Magazine* (London), Vol. 1 (1846), pp. 97–112. Note: This is a bound edition of a weekly magazine of popular literature edited by Charles Knight. Both volumes date to 1846. There is no author.

11 Clyde and Sally Griffen, *Natives and Newcomers: The Ordering of Opportunity in Mid-Nineteenth Century Poughkeepsie* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 150

# WHO IS DUTCHESS COUNTY'S SECOND-GREATEST INVENTOR?

By Roger Donway

No one is likely to dispute Samuel F. B. Morse's claim to be the greatest inventor in the history of Dutchess County.<sup>1</sup> Although he was merely one of several people who helped to develop the telegraph, his contribution was unquestionably the greatest. In *Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences, 800 B.C. to 1950*, Charles Murray measured the importance that historians worldwide have attached to the achievements of numerous people working in many different fields. In the ranking for "Technology," Morse came in twentieth—not bad for a minor portrait painter whose contribution to the single technology of telegraphy was being ranked against the multiple claims of Thomas Edison, Leonardo da Vinci, and Archimedes.<sup>2</sup>

Nor is any future contender likely to displace Morse as Dutchess County's greatest inventor. In an attempt to convey to modern readers how thoroughly telegraphy affected the mid-nineteenth century, author Tom Standage described the telegraph as "the Victorian Internet."<sup>3</sup> But that sobriquet radically understates the importance of telegraphy. However much the Internet may have affected contemporary life, the coming of telegraphy was a far more profound change. Ever since the genus *Homo* appeared on Earth four million years ago, direct communication between men had been limited to the range of sight and the range of sound. More distant communication had involved transportation: The messages had to be physically conveyed. Telegraphy broke that barrier, and, by doing so, it made possible nearly instantaneous worldwide communication. That was a revolution in human interaction that is unlikely ever to be equaled, unless men someday invent the science-fiction marvel called

teleportation: the transportation of human beings themselves at the speed of light.

But even if we could imagine a new invention in human technology equal in fundamentality to the telegraph, it would not likely arise in Dutchess County. Yes, so long as IBM has a presence here, the possibility exists that some Information Age miracle may happen locally. But during Morse's lifetime, the Connecticut River Valley was America's "Silicon Valley."<sup>4</sup> Today, the center of innovation has moved west.

In short, Morse is our Number One inventor and shall likely always be our Number One inventor. But who is Number Two? Logically, one might imagine, Dutchess County's second-ranked inventor would have been, like Morse, dabbling in the newly emerging technology of electricity. Surprisingly, though, there is an excellent case to be made for a man whose art was woodworking. His name (aptly enough) is William Woodworth, and the importance of his invention—which was a planing machine—has been brought to light largely through the work of Carolyn Cooper, a historian of technology and a research affiliate at Yale University.<sup>5</sup> Necessarily, then, what follows is simply a report wholly dependent on Cooper's findings, but written with her permission.<sup>6</sup> Next year, I hope, we will be able to present a far more detailed article on the life and work of William Woodworth.

### **Biographical Information**

Much of what we know or suspect about William Woodworth has come down to us through various court documents, for his invention created one of the great patent fights of the nineteenth century. From such documents, we learn that he was probably born in Massachusetts and in 1780. By the 1820s, though, he had certainly moved to New York and to the mid-Hudson region specifically. His profession is variously given as "carpenter" or "carriage maker." In either case, he evidently had considerable experience working wood.

Sometime about 1824 or 1825, Woodworth visited Thomas Blanchard at the armory in Springfield, Massachusetts, as "an agent of Mr. Van Rensselaer."<sup>7</sup> Now, if the Connecticut River Valley was early-nineteenth-century America's Silicon Valley, Blanchard might be called the Valley's Bill Gates: He was brilliant, nerdy, and a businessman to boot.<sup>8</sup> His greatest invention was a lathe capable of producing irregular shapes, and it was to obtain a license for such a machine that Woodworth visited him.

Logically, therefore, the next that we hear of Woodworth is that he has become the superintendent at a mill that made ships' blocks (obviously an irregular shape). This mill was located near the mouth of Roeliff Jansen's Kill, and it was "the last of various waterpowered mills at its site."<sup>9</sup> According to a history of Columbia County, this particular mill operated "for an indefinite period 'about 1820 and thereafter'"<sup>10</sup> (Today, the mill's approximate location is marked by Block-Factory Road.) Blanchard visited the mill (and thus Woodworth) in 1826 and even spent some months there setting up the machinery. Among the machines on the premises, we know for sure (again, through a legal document) was a scoring machine, for it is attested that Woodworth injured himself with it.<sup>11</sup>

Sometime in the late 1820s, perhaps stimulated by his association with the inventive Blanchard, Woodworth evidently had the idea for an invention of his own: a radically improved board planer.

### **The Problem and the Technology**

Before explaining Woodworth's idea, though, it may be useful to compare the creative approaches of Morse and Woodworth by noting that there are two very different types of inventors. The first says: "Here is a principle. How can it be used?" The second says: "Here is a problem. How can it be solved?" Morse proceeded, albeit very quickly, by the first route; Woodworth proceeded by the second.

In October 1832, when Morse was returning from France aboard the *Sully*, the conversation during one meal turned to electricity and to the experiments of André Ampère in electromagnetism. A member of the party asked if the flow of electricity was at all slowed by the length of the wire. A doctor from Boston who had studied electricity replied that it seemed not to be. Morse said that, if that were so, then he saw no reason why information might not be "instantaneously transmitted by electricity to any distance."<sup>12</sup> The principle had found an application.

For Woodworth, the matter was far simpler. Carpenters had a problem: The floorboards of a house had to be planed to a reasonably uniform thickness if they were to lay flat on the joists. For a good tight fit, they also had to be given "tongues" on one side and "grooves" on the other. These operations were carried out by hand, using the sorts of wood planes that are still familiar to do-it-yourselfers. The result? "With hand planes, a really energetic journeyman carpenter working flat out was estimated in 1833 to be able to plane, tongue, and groove twenty-five boards a day,

each, say, 12 1/2 feet long and 9 inches wide. At that rate, to prepare the floorboards for a small, one-and-a-half-story house, only one room deep, would take him seven days at ten hours a day constant and vigorous labor.”<sup>13</sup>

Of course, it would be nonsense to say that it was Woodworth and his machine that solved this problem. In technology as in art, it is pointless to seek either a beginning or an end. There were certainly planing machines before Woodworth came along and there were developments in planing machines after he came along. In Britain, the great machine-tool developer Joseph Bramah had patented a planing machine in 1802. In 1827, Malcolm Muir of Glasgow had patented a planing machine specifically for floorboards. In America, by Carolyn Cooper’s count, there were no fewer than fourteen patents for planing machines that predated Woodworth’s patent.

Nevertheless, Woodworth’s machine was different enough to make a difference. Understanding just *how* it differed is not essential here. Some descriptions and some illustrations must suffice. With the Bramah planing machine (see Figure 1), timbers moved past a rotating wheel that sat horizontal to the ground. By contrast, the first Woodworth planing machine (see Figure 2), had “mounted knives around a rotating hollow cylinder and used pressure rollers to hold a vertical board firmly as it passed the planing cylinder, to prevent its being drawn back into the knives and chewed up. Small rotary ‘duck-billed’ cutters on the sides simultaneously cut tongues and grooves into the edges.”<sup>14</sup>

FIGURE 7. Bramah’s Horizontal-Disk Planing Machine, ca. 1819. From Abraham Rees, *The Cyclopaedia . . .* (London, 1819), XXVII, s.d. “Planing Machines.” Patented in England in 1802, Joseph Bramah’s planer moved a timber past cutters on a horizontally rotating iron wheel, shown from above at Fig. 1, from the side at Fig. 2, and in detail at Fig. 3. As the timber passes, it is cut first by gouges (7), then by small planes (4 and 5, shown in further detail in Figs. 4, 5, and 7).

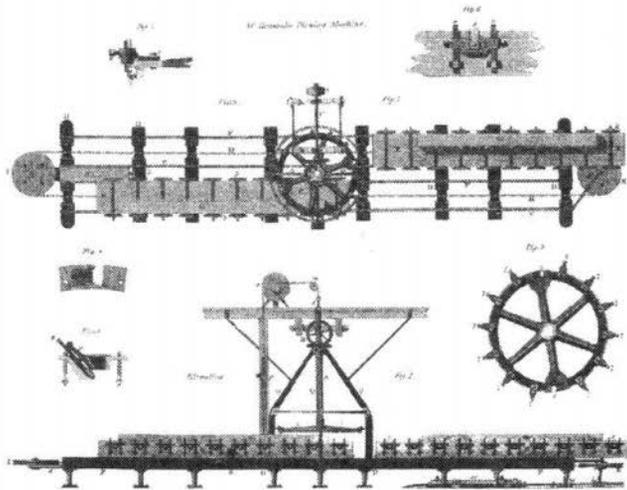


Figure 1. The Bramah planing machine

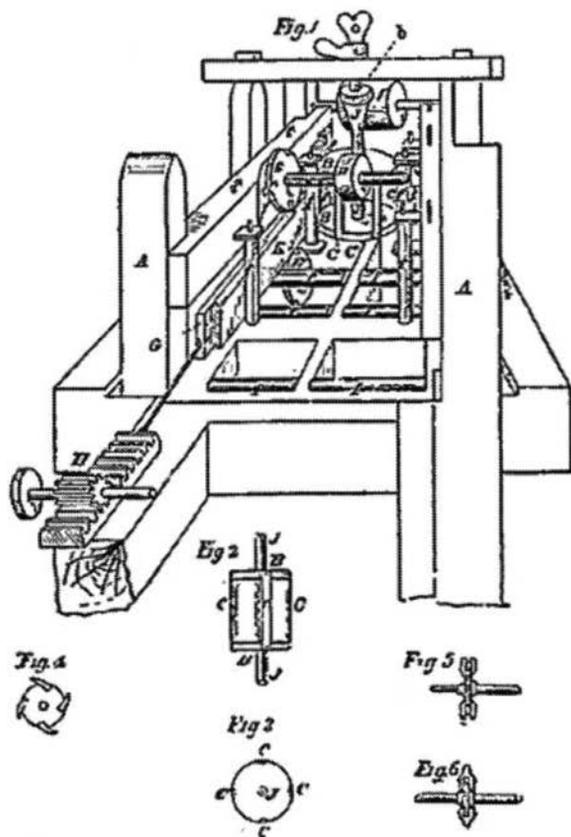


Figure 2. The first Woodworth planing machine.

More important than understanding how these design elements worked is appreciating what they meant to contemporaries. In early 1829, the author of an article in the *Journal of the Franklin Institute* said of the Woodworth planer: "We have seen a piece of cross grained white pine plank, which had been planed, tongued, and grooved, by it, with a finish which it would have been difficult to have given with the ordinary fore and match planes. It differs essentially from all the planing machines which we have heretofore known."<sup>15</sup>

And then there was the economic effect: Remember that a 70-hour work week was required to prepare the floorboards for a small house? "Two men running a Woodworth planing machine would be able to do that job in 1 ¾ hours."<sup>16</sup> What the Woodworth planer made possible was nothing less than a revolution in home building.

Still, as Samuel Morse would learn only a few years later: It is one thing to conceive an invention that is valuable to all mankind; it is quite another thing to make that invention valuable to oneself.

## From Idea to Patent

We cannot know, without further investigation, how much William Woodworth was making as the supervisor of the Livingstons' block-pulley mill. But however much it was, it was clearly not enough. In order to get a patent, Woodworth needed to build a model of his planer and have it tested. The cost of that would be in the range of \$1500, though the patent fee itself cost a mere \$30. In order to raise the needed sum, Woodworth evidently approached a man who was both his neighbor in Hudson and also his U.S. Congressman: James Strong. Strong, apparently impressed with Woodworth's idea, agreed to put up the requisite money in exchange for one-half of the rights in the patent.

With Strong's money, Woodworth arranged to have a Hudson machinist named David Dunbar build the contraption. Then Woodworth and Strong took it big time: to New York City. At the Dry Dock, on the East River, they exhibited the planer and, in light of its performance, made some significant changes. "The board was reoriented from a vertical to a horizontal position, and the cutters rearranged accordingly."<sup>17</sup> (See Figure 3). Further experiments and trial runs cost another \$8,000. Further models and exhibits cost thousands more. Finally, Woodworth obtained his patent on December 28, 1828.

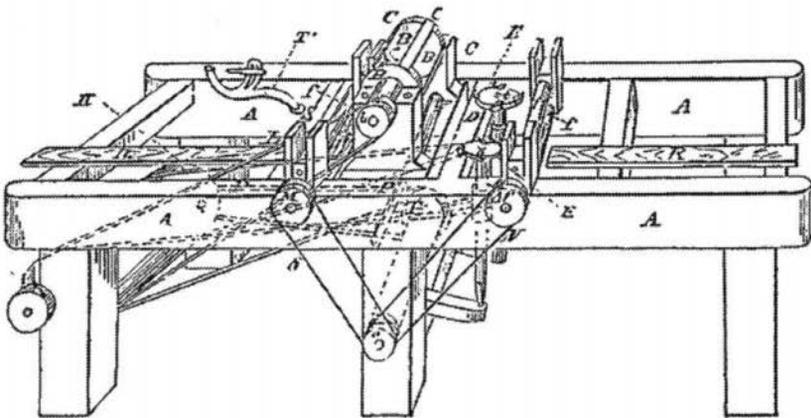


Figure 3. This was Woodworth's second version of his planer.

Within months, other inventors were claiming that they had already invented essentially the same machine, and they were receiving money to back their claims from investors who did not want to pay Woodworth license fees. His travails were only beginning.

## Conclusion

William Woodworth died in early February 1839, and his claims to his 1828 patent were taken over by his son, William W. Woodworth of Hyde Park, a U.S. Congressman from 1845 to 1847. Inasmuch as the normal term of a patent was then fourteen years, the expected terminus for Woodworth's claims was 1842. Fortunately for Woodworth's son, the Patent Act allowed for a seven-year extension of a patent if the patentee could show that he had failed to secure "a reasonable remuneration for the time, ingenuity, and expense bestowed upon [his invention], and the introduction thereof into use."<sup>18</sup> Woodworth's son thereby "obtained an extension in 1842, a reissue in 1845, and a second extension by a special act of Congress in 1845."<sup>19</sup> But when Woodworth's son petitioned Congress for an extension that would last until 1870, national protests broke out. Among the leaders of the anti-Woodworth faction was the magazine *Scientific American*, which had been founded in 1845 and which devoted much of its attention to the Patent Office. Ultimately, the patent expired on December 28, 1856, after twice the normal patent period.

Still, the avarice of the son need not reflect on the genius of the father. The patent extensions were granted to William Woodworth's invention in large measure because of the evident contribution it had made to American prosperity. In 1850, the Woodworth planer was hailed in Congress as "next to Whitney's cotton gin . . . the greatest labor-saving invention which has been produced in this country."<sup>20</sup>

But then there is the final question. No doubt the invention of William Woodworth was a great invention, at least in its economic impact. No doubt William Woodworth worked in the region of the Mid-Hudson River Valley. But has Dutchess County any right to claim him? I believe so. Nathan Rosenberg, one of this country's greatest economic historians, definitely describes William Woodworth as being "of Poughkeepsie, New York."<sup>21</sup> More telling still is a history of the planing mill from 1889, a record much closer in time to the Woodworth controversy, which purports to offer more detailed information about his life. It says: "William

Woodworth, an old carpenter residing in Poughkeepsie, New York, and who was familiarly known among the carpenters as 'Uncle Billy,' was experimenting upon the same thing in an old saw-mill situated in the lower part of town, near the river, and not far from where the old Whaling-dock was afterwards located. The old mill and Whaling-dock have long since disappeared, but their location will no doubt be still remembered by some of the older residents of that beautiful city upon the Hudson."<sup>22</sup>

In sum, granting that the greatest inventor of Dutchess County is "the American Leonardo," the second greatest may well be "Uncle Billy."

## Endnotes

1 More disputable is Dutchess County's claim to Morse, for it was not until his work with the telegraph was finished that Morse bought a 100-acre estate in Poughkeepsie, which he named Locust Grove. In 1895, the Young family of Poughkeepsie bought Locust Grove from Morse's heirs, and in 1975, Annette Innis Young established a foundation to preserve the site for public enjoyment. Today, it is known as Locust Grove: The Samuel Morse Historic site, and it is one of the most beautiful locales in Dutchess County. See its Web site, <http://www.lgny.org/>

2 Charles Murray, *Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences, 800 B.C. to 1950* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), p. 129.

3 Tom Standage, *The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's On-line Pioneers* (New York: Walker and Company, 1998), title.

4 Charles Morris, *The Tycoons: How Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, Jay Gould, and J. P. Morgan Invented the American Supereconomy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), p. 38.

5 Carolyn Cooper, "A Patent Transformation: Woodworking Mechnization in Philadelphia, 1830–1856," in *Early American Technology: Making and Doing Things from the Colonial Era to 1850*, edited by Judith A. McGaw (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1994/ published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History), pp. 278–327.

6 Because so much of the information in this article is drawn from Cooper's article "A Patent Transformation," I have provided notes only for the information in that article that may be of special interest to the reader.

7 Carolyn C. Cooper, *Shaping Invention: Thomas Blanchard's Machinery and Patent Management in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 140.

8 Morris, pp. 33–38.

9 Cooper, *Shaping Invention*, p. 140.

10 Cited by Cooper, *ibid.*

11 Cooper, *ibid.* A scoring machine scores a groove on a pulley block for a strap. See Cooper, *Shaping Invention*, pp. 160–61.

12 Carleton Mabee, *The American Leonardo: A Life of Samuel F. B. Morse*, 2d. ed. (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 2000), p. 149.

13 Cooper, p. 293. In arriving at these figures, Cooper cites Gregory Clancey, “The Cylinder Planing Machine and the Mechanization of Carpentry in New England, 1828–1856,” (master’s thesis, Boston University, 1987), p. 209.

14 Cooper, “A Patent Transformation,” p. 296.

15 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 300.

16 *Ibid.* p. 293.

17 *Ibid.*, pp. 296–300.

18 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 312.

19 *Ibid.*

20 Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 294–95.

21 Nathan Rosenberg, *Perspectives on Technology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 41.

22 C. R. Tompkins, *A History of the Planing-Mill, with Practical Suggestions for the Construction, Care, and Management of Wood-Working Machinery* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1889), pp. 7–8.

# GOOD HISTORY SOMETIMES COMES IN MYSTERIOUS PACKAGES

*by Nancy V. Kelly*

A mysterious package, containing nearly one hundred eighteenth- and nineteenth-century papers of landed families in Rhinebeck's Great Lot 2, arrived last year at the Museum of Rhinebeck History. These papers came into the collection of the Museum of Rhinebeck History with no explanation of their provenance during the intervening centuries. Nevertheless, they are authentic and provide an interesting look into the lives and landholding patterns of Henry Beekman's heirs who inherited land in his Rhinebeck Great Lot 2.

Great Lot 2, part of an original patent, was designated in the division of patentee Henry Beekman's land. Henry died in 1716 but it was not until 1737 that his land was divided into great lots which were allotted to his three children, Henry, Cornelia, and Catherine. The mysterious collection of papers centers on Great Lot 2, which became the property of Catherine Beekman, who had married John Rutsen.<sup>1</sup> The land lay mainly north of the Landsman Kill and south of Wey and Pilgrim's Progress Roads. The Rutsens probably lived in Kingston until about 1744, when they moved to Rhinebeck.

In general, the papers depict a genteel lifestyle, employing household help and allowing for the enjoyment of many social activities. While some of the descendants spent most of their time in Rhinebeck, others (such as the Bowne Family) seem to have had a full-time residence in the New

York City area (specifically, Flushing, Long Island) and to have used their Rhinebeck house as a leisure residence.

Among the Beekman family heirs, much of the land in Rhinebeck was retained in a lease-hold system. Thus transfers of ownership were not recorded in county land records. This system continued until the 1840s, when state laws encouraged the sale of the properties. Our interest in the development of landholding patterns, therefore, must center on the holdings of the heirs. Henry Beekman's Rhinebeck leases required tenants to bring their grain for grinding to his mill, where toll of the annual rent—a certain number of bushels per acre—could be extracted. Rents provided income for the heirs, whose estates were maintained for many generations.

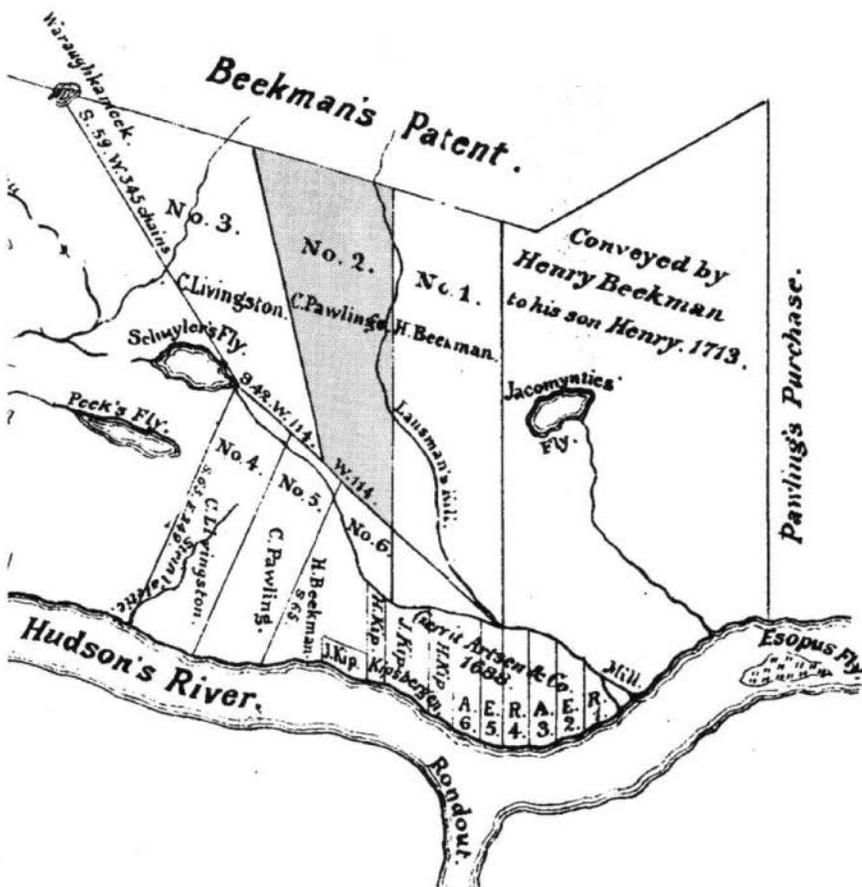


Figure 1. Division of Henry Beekman's patent among his children. Great Lot 2, the property of Catherine Rutsen Pawling, is shown in grey.

## Road Records

As background, we should consult road records in Rhinebeck, which begin in 1722 with path masters listed for the roads, which were described in various ways. (A path master was a person selected at the annual town meeting from among landowners whose property adjoined a given route [path] and whose job it became to organize all of the adjoining landowners for the purpose of maintaining the route.) Official Rhinebeck Precinct records first describe the road through Great Lot 2 in 1722 as “a road from Sepasco<sup>2</sup> where Simon Westfall and Company now live, thence westerly as it is now used to the house of Pieter Van Etten to the south side thereof and so forward to a plain now in occupation of said Henry Beekman (Rhinebeck Flatts).” Later, it was listed as “to Sepescoat” (1762) and “from widow Wasfall’s to the Flatts” (1771). By 1795, the road was being described from west to east as “from Flatts church (Rhinebeck Reformed) to Jerome Burger.” This road closely followed the present Route 308.

The main Rhinebeck settlement,<sup>3</sup> which was on the King’s Highway at present-day Wey Road, required a road “to Rutsen’s mill” (1754) and “from Mrs. Rutsen’s mills to Rhinebeck” (1768). This road was described in 1780 as “from Sand’s Mill to Rhinebeck” and in 1790 as “from Jacob Moul to John Ring.”<sup>4</sup> The road is now Wey’s Crossing and Pilgrim’s Progress Road.

The Salisbury Turnpike was established by a state law, passed in 1802. The route was laid out by a survey of James Cockburn. It followed the Sepasco Trail, which led from the river at Long Dock, east through the village. The Turnpike required East Market Street to be cut through the village land and varied from the Sepasco Trail in the area of the Schuyler-Sands properties. A detail of the map shows the original trail as a dotted line with the Turnpike Route clearly outlined. The residences of George Ring, Philip Schuyler, and Robert Sands are all shown on the map. East of this location, where present Route 308 and the Turnpike road diverged, the Salisbury Turnpike still retains its original name.

Near Schuyler House, the Great Lot line ran close to Route 308. The house identified as John Traver on the turnpike map was a stone house, remembered by some, which stood on the south side of the road. It was taken down after the Knickerbocker house, 565 Route 308, was built.

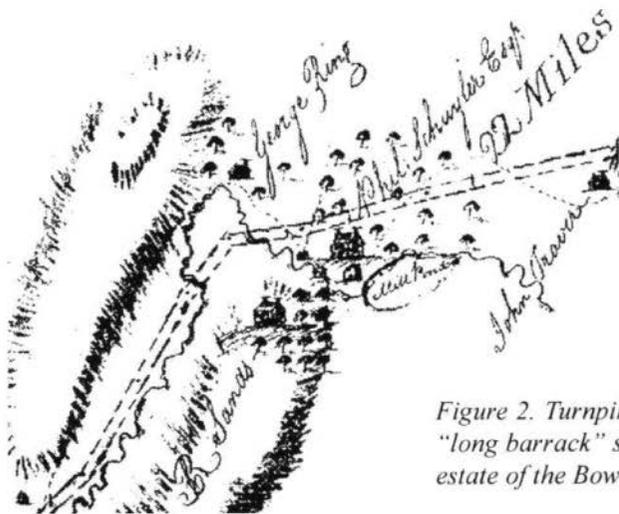


Figure 2. Turnpike Map showing the "long barrack" site of the Hill Top estate of the Bowne family.

Land south of the Schuyler's ponds was part of Great Lot 1 and descended to Henry Jr.'s granddaughter, Catherine Livingston and her husband Freeborn Garrettson. About 1799, they arranged for an exchange of land with the Van Wagenen family, allowing the Garrettsons to settle near Catherine's sister Margaret Livingston Tillotson, on South Mill Road, overlooking the river. As described by E. M. Smith in his *Documentary History of Rhinebeck*, the Van Wagenens lived in a farmhouse on the property near Schuyler's and later occupied the main house.<sup>5</sup> The farmhouse appears to be that identified as John Traver on the Turnpike map. The main house, originally used by the Garrettsons was probably back, closer to the Landsman Kill, at the end of what is now Bollenbecker Road, and does not appear on the survey map.

No mention of the Turnpike has been discovered in family papers, nor any record of the granting of its right of way. The right of way must have been assumed through use. The Turnpike did not become a long-term solution and soon reverted to a public road.

In 1938, the WPA enabled the construction of Route 308 in place of the road to Rock City. This state road further straightened the route through the Schuylers' land. It moved the right of way north, cutting more directly up the hill close to the area of the Schuyler barns. In an arrangement to provide cows with access from the pasture to the barns, the state constructed a tunnel for the cows under the State road. It would have been a dangerous spot for a cattle crossing, so the engineers must have felt the new route warranted the expense of the tunnel.

## Great-Lot-2 Estates

### The Grove

The Landsman Kill, which flows through Great Lot 2, was a reliable source of water power. The earliest mill site in Rhinebeck (1710) was on the Hudson at the mouth of the Landsman Kill. In 1715, Henry Beekman built a mill at Rhinebeck Flatts, near the Post Road.

Sometime after the 1716 death of Catherine Beekman's father and the settlement of his will, she and her husband, John Rutsen, settled on land at the location now known as "The Schuyler House" (2 miles east of Rhinebeck, south of Route 308). For most of its history, it was called "The Grove." John Rutsen built a mill on the Landsman Kill about 1744, providing tenants in the area with a convenient site for their grain to be ground.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Descendants of John Rutsen & Catherine Beekman*

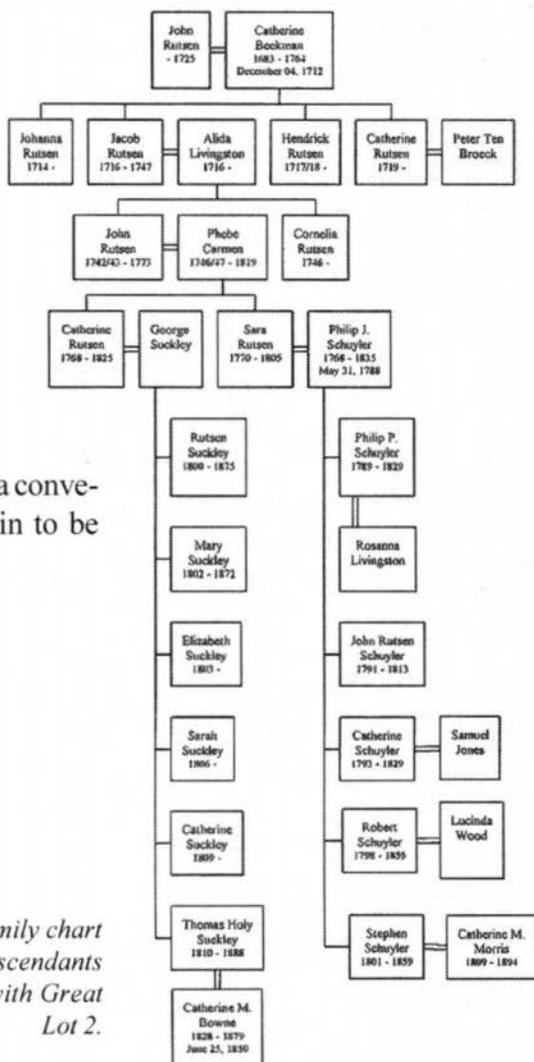


Figure 3. A family chart showing descendants associated with Great Lot 2.

The mill was on the falls to the south of the present Schuyler House driveway. Catherine and John Rutsen built a stone house, not far from the mill and lived there. Their marriage resulted in two children, Jacobus (who married Alida Livingston<sup>7</sup>) and Catherine (who married Peter Ten Broeck). Through the latter's will, we learn that Catherine and Peter Ten Broeck had no children. Thus, it is the descendants of Jacob and Alida Rutsen who figure prominently in the land ownership of Great Lot 2.

The two children of Jacob and Alida were Cornelia and John. Cornelia married General Robert Van Rensselaer and did not live locally. In 1779, Jacob Rutsen's widow, Alida, married Henry Van Rensselaer. She had no children by her second marriage.

John (son of Jacob Rutsen and grandson of the first John Rutsen) was born in 1745 and continued the family operation of the mill. Phebe Carman became his wife. Two children, both girls, Sarah and Catherine, were the offspring of John Rutsen and Phebe.

But this second John Rutsen died just prior to the American Revolution, when his daughter Sarah was only three years old. His widow, Phebe, married Robert Sands, and occupied the original stone house of John and Catherine Rutsen near the mill until about 1796.

Sarah Rutsen married Philip J. Schuyler, the son of the Revolutionary War general Philip Schuyler, on May 31, 1788. After their marriage, Sarah and Philip settled on the Rutsen property with her mother and Robert Sands and maintained the grist mill there. In 1795, Philip Schuyler built the mansion—a two-story, brick structure—at The Grove.<sup>8</sup> They had five children. The Sands established the property currently known as the Sands House and traditionally called The Homestead. The original stone residence of the family close to the mill was torn down.

Sarah's older sister, Catherine Rutsen, married George Suckley and gave birth to seven Suckley children. An 1837 document found in this newly acquired collection shows that a tenant, David Peter Traver, was cutting wood over the Bowne's line. (RM.2009.260.426) (The Bowne family, later descendants, will be described in the section titled "Hill Top.") There are also notes on the Peter Traver property from 1835. (RM.2009.400) Peter's property was probably situated on the north-south road now called Pilgrim's Progress Road. He may have been the son of the John Traver, whose property is shown on the 1802 Turnpike map. (RM numbers represent Rhinebeck Museum of History accession numbers that reference the new documents).

Eventually, there were a number of mills on the properties of Great Lot 2. One was established upstream of the Rutsen mill on the Landsman kill. Its mill pond was known as the Saw Mill Pond, establishing that mill as a saw mill.

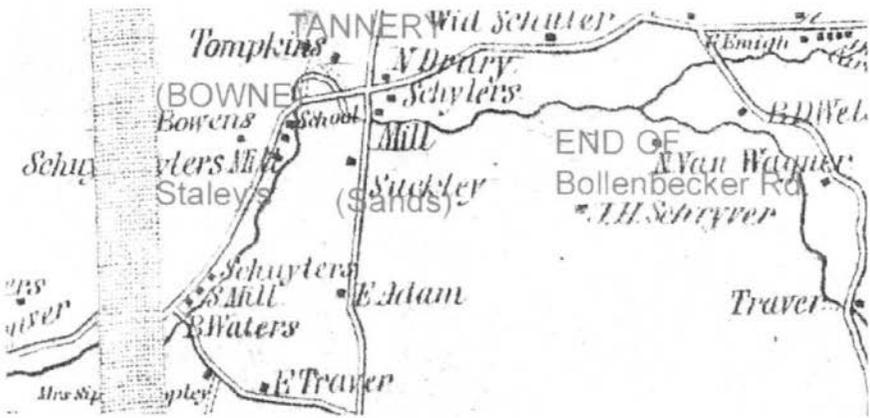


Figure 4. Annotated section from 1850 map of Rhinebeck, by J. C. Sidney

A parcel of land on the north side of the Landsman Kill was used as a site for a woolen mill and later became known as The Tannery. There is also evidence of a grist mill at the present site of the Staley Real Estate office. There is a notation on a map of the location of a woolen mill east of Violet Hill Road.

Further west, on the Landsman Kill, on Janet Livingston's property, part of Great Lot 1, we find the site of Isaac Davis's mill near Brookmeade, now the Baptist Home property.



Figure 5. An 1838 map showing parcel lines. (mp0363-schuyler-ring, Wilderstein Preservation collection).

Northeast of the Schuyler House, beyond the boundaries shown on the Figure 5 map, lay the Sepascoot Lands, occupying most of the northeastern area of Great Lot 2. Leases granted by Henry Beekman in 1719 and 1721 brought settlers with two families to this more remote portion of the patent. An 1861 sale of land from the Snyder family to Robert Proper recites a 1797 lease pertaining to 144 acres of this land. "The said lands are arranged subject to annual rent in perpetuity reserved in an indenture from Philip J. Schuyler & wife & Catherine Rutsen (who married Peter Ten Broeck) to Isaac Morris on which there is now due and payable an annual rent of 23 ½ bushels of winter wheat due to representatives of Robert Schuyler." This provision must have allowed Schuyler descendants to continue to collect the rent even though Robert himself died in 1855, six years before the 1861 document. Tradition among the families who lived on the Sepascoot Lands<sup>9</sup> said that the rent was paid to a "Lady Sepascot," whose identity is uncertain.

The youngest child of Sarah and Philip Schuyler, Stephen Schuyler, married Catherine Morris, who died 1894—the last survivor of that generation, the fifth in descent from patentee Henry Beekman. A document from agent Henry Frost discusses insurance payments for Catherine Schuyler in 1873. (RM.2009.381.1&.2)

Mary Regina Schuyler, an orphaned niece of Philip J. Schuyler, had lived with him at The Grove as she was growing up. She loved the house and eventually her husband, William Starr Miller, purchased the property for her. After his death she lived there. In 1869, Mrs. Miller built the Starr Institute on Montgomery Street in Rhinebeck and gave the building and library to Rhinebeck in memory of her husband. It was a cultural center for the village of Rhinebeck; its name and legacy are still perpetuated with the Starr Library in its present location on West Market Street.

After the death of Mary Regina, The Grove descended to a nephew of her husband, Dr. George N. Miller, who maintained it for many years. Until his untimely death in an automobile accident in 1935, Dr. Miller served the community in various capacities on the board of trustees of several organizations including bank, hospital, and library.

In 1962, the family finally arranged for the Schuyler property to be given to Bard College. It was used as an off-campus dormitory for a time. Later, the mansion was sold and divided into apartments, in which form it is currently maintained.

## The Tannery

A mill on property that was part of the Schuyler land was owned by George Ring. It was eventually known as the Tannery, after the leather tanning that was conducted there. A map of a survey for George Ring, done in 1795, is in the DAR collection. A map in Wilderstein's collection from the Sands property shows George Ring's property in 1838. Later, the Tannery was owned by Henry Hill, and then, in 1839, by John Tompkins. In 1899, Dr. George N. Miller purchased the Tannery property and restored it to adjoin the Grove. It is unclear at what point the mill had become a tannery.

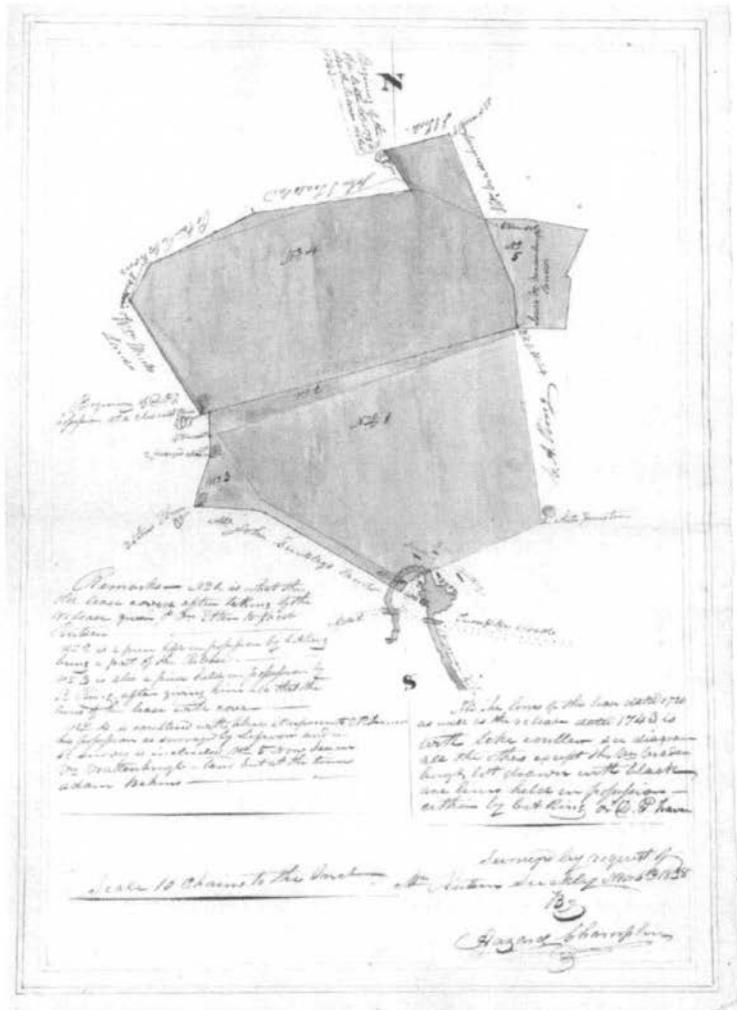


Figure 6. An 1838 map of the Tannery property. (Wilderstein collection mp0364-ring)

## District School No.11, the Miller School

In a deed dated January 19, 1863, a small parcel west of the Tannery was transferred to the trustees of District School No. 11 and remained in use for a school until the Rhinebeck schools were centralized in the 1950s, at which time the property reverted to the Suckley family as surviving heirs.<sup>10</sup>

## The Homestead

On Feb 24, 1794, the Grove property was divided into two parcels, with Phebe and Robert Sands obtaining the land on the southeast side of the Landsman Kill.<sup>11</sup> (The Homestead, a federal style house, was built there about 1796.) Deeds on file at the Dutchess County Records office show that Robert Sands also bought land in 1799 from the adjoining Great Lot 1, then owned by Janet Livingston Montgomery. Janet had inherited a large portion of Lot 1 from her grandfather, Henry Beekman Jr. She was the eldest grandchild and his favorite. The map of her holdings was drawn for Janet in 1802 and shows the Sands parcel coded to show sale (in fee simple) to the Sands, as contrasted with the many other parcels that were simply leased.



Figure 7. Detail of a map drawn for Janet Montgomery by John Cox Jr. Edward Livingston Papers, Princeton University.

In 1797, there was a letter from Phebe Sands to her husband Robert in Albany (RM.2009.439). He was a New York state senator from 1796 to 1800.

As mentioned earlier, Phebe's eldest daughter, Catherine Rutsen, married George Suckley on September 22, 1799, at the Homestead. The couple lived in Baltimore and later in New York City but visited often in Rhinebeck. Their first child, Rutsen Suckley, was born in Rhinebeck, in June 1800. It was their son Thomas Holy Suckley (b. 1810), who obtained land along the river from the Garrettsons and established the estate known as Wilderstein.

Robert Sands and Phebe also had children who figure in the inheritance of the Homestead property. Their daughter Christina Sands, born 1780, married late in life to John Suckley, George's brother (who was also the husband of her half-sister Catherine Rutsen). They had no children.<sup>12</sup> John Suckley died in 1807. A copy of a deed, dated December 1833, conveyed one-half part of the property inherited from Robert Sands to Rutsen Suckley with the resulting rents and profits, showing that the rent system was still in effect at that time (RM.20009.403).

June 1, 1798, Catherine Rutsen wrote to her half-sister Eliza Sands in New York, sending advice and describing garments to be made for Eliza. She also included a handkerchief for Eliza to work and cotton for stockings, while her mother (Phebe Sands) sent money for music as a special treat. The letter was sent by sloop (RM.2009.438).

On July 31, 1798, Robert Sands wrote from Rhinebeck to his daughter, Eliza saying, "nothing from you since you have been in town leads me to think that the Gay Scenes thereof had so taken up your time." He sends advice and explains that he cannot come down as he cannot leave the carpenters at work (on his new house) and then must attend a meeting of the legislature in Albany (RM.2009.424).

John R. Sands (1783–1849), the second son of Robert Sands, exchanged correspondence with his sister Eliza (RM.2009.438, 419).

A letter from Eliza Sands to Christina in January of 1802 mentions Comfort Sands, brother of Robert, who was one of the first directors of the Bank of New York (RM.2009.418).

Tragically, Eliza died in 1802. A sympathy letter written by George Suckley to his in-laws, offering a tribute to her is dated August 1802 (RM.2009.391, 437).

Her mother, Phebe Rutsen Sands, died in 1819. Mrs. Freeborn Garrettson sent a touching sympathy letter to the grieving Robert Sands (425) on November 23. Robert died in 1825. The Museum of Rhinebeck History papers include a very interesting inventory list (RM.2009.394) for his estate, as appraised by Freeborn Garrettson Jr. and Livingston, and signed by Christina. A listing of notes and mortgages that Sands held are also given (RM.2009.408). The inventory/appraisal gives insight into the lifestyle of the local landed families at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The dining room with its curly maple table and 10 chairs indicate the level of entertaining that occurred. There was also a side board with knife

boxes. The Rhinebeck Historical Society was invited to the Sands House about 1976. As a member of the Society, this author remembers the pride with which the descendant, Margaret Montgomery, displayed the knife boxes and their contents. Each was a sort of standing knife rack, encased in a beautifully made box.

Mahogany furniture is described throughout the house, along with an abundance of chairs. Room number 2 contained a mahogany sofa and ten horsehair upholstered chairs. Tea tables and a tea caddy are also mentioned. Candlestick holders and framed prints completed the décor.

The pantry contained a large china service, including 34 blue plates, along with a set of silverware.

In the barn, were two horses and a colt, along with various cows and nine hogs. Among the farm implements, one double wagon, one small wagon, and a one horse wagon are mentioned. There was also a yoke of oxen and an ox cart. Items such as a carriage or sled and silver serving pieces are conspicuously missing—perhaps because they were specifically granted to individuals.

As previously stated, Christina Sands (widow of John Suckley) lived at the Homestead after her husband died.

Walter Bowne wrote to Christina in 1804, regarding a transfer of securities (**RM.2009.384**). George Suckley's letter to Christina, June 12, 1829, describes a visit to Rhinebeck (**RM.2009.435**).

Robert Sands's son, Joshua C. Sands, died in 1809 (obit **RM.2009.432**). Papers relating to his estate are (**RM.2009.390, 407**), but see also (**RM.2009.431**) (1885) and (**RM.2009.394**) (January 1812 Estate settlement).

Phebe Bowne Hunt's daughter, Grace, married Henry Montgomery (wedding, **RM.2009.412**). The Homestead property came into their possession and remained through succeeding generations, as their daughter Margaret married Robert Anderson and their son Montgomery Anderson became the heir, giving much of the original Homestead furnishings and family papers to Wilderstein Preservation, Inc.

In 1999, after the Homestead passed out of family ownership, the house burned to the ground while undergoing restoration—a National Historic Landmark, a Federal style house, lost.

## Descendants of Robert Sands & Phebe Carmen



Figure 8. Family chart for Robert Sands and Phebe Carmen, including the Bowne family.

When Grace Sands, daughter of Phebe and Robert Sands, married John Rodman Bowne (wedding news clipping: **RM.2009.412**), they were given land on the north side of the former Turnpike Road. It was a hill top known as the “long barrack.” There, they built a house, after the design of Alexander Jackson Davis, similar to the Delamater House on Montgomery Street in Rhinebeck. (Photograph from Wilderstein collection. See also **RM.2009.32**).



Figure 9. A photograph of Hill Top shows a Carpenter Gothic-style house with the distinctive sharply pitched, peaked roofs that were characteristic of the style, as well as the board-and-batten siding. It would have been very stylish at the time.

Rodman Bowne died June 5, 1845 (*New York Herald*) **RM.2009.386**, and the Bowne Estate settlement is referenced in documents **RM.2009.396**, **RM.2009.407** from July 1869. Bowne daughters included Phebe Rutsen Bowne (who married the Rev. Andrew J. Hunt), and Katherine Murray Bowne, who married Thomas Holy Suckley and established Wilderstein. Grace Sands Bowne continued to reside at Hilltop after her husband's death and until her own death in 1870.

In 1871, Eliza and Joshua Bowne, along with Catherine Bowne Suckley and Phebe Bowne Hunt, signed a quit claim to their sister, Caroline G. Bowne for 150A, described as the residence of the late Grace Sands Bowne. When Edward M. Smith wrote his *Documentary History of Rhinebeck* in 1881, Joshua C. Bowne was president of the Rhinebeck Savings Bank. He died May 27, 1882. (Taxes for Bowne Estate: **RM.2009.431**).

Land records show that Hill Top was conveyed from Caroline G. Bowne to Virgil Welch in 1899.<sup>13</sup> The property then went through several

owners before being purchased by E. Chase Crowley and his wife. They established Crow Hill School, greatly altering the house to accommodate the boarding school. The building retains some of the original windows but the distinctive peaks of the roofline succumbed to a colonial revival style popular in the 1930s, removing the board-and-batten siding to replace it with clapboards. The Dutch colonial style with gambrel roof, chosen for the remodeling, created a three-story house with plenty of room for student housing.

A study of the private papers in the Museum archives, information available in public records, and in various other archive sources highlight the influence that heirs of the patentee have exerted over the development of Rhinebeck through the centuries.

The legacy of the great patentee, Henry Beekman, was handed down to his heirs for more than 125 years, providing them with income from their leases and the mills. On Great Lot 2, the “manor” houses remained in the family well into the twentieth century, with the original Rutsen home having spawned the three properties of the Schuyler, Sands, and Bowne families. Today only the Schuyler House remains recognizable as a testament to the great families who helped to shape Rhinebeck.

Where these family papers have been in the intervening centuries and how they traveled to Idaho will probably always remain a mystery.

**Addendum:** Material for this article was suggested to me by Steven Mann, curator for the Museum of Rhinebeck History. One day, he received an email through the Museum website. A woman wanted to know if the curator was interested in personally receiving a box of papers related to the Bowne and Sands families of Rhinebeck and determining where they should be donated. Of course the answer was yes. And of course the place they would be deposited would be the Museum of Rhinebeck History. The donor indicated that she had gotten them as a box lot at a local auction near where she lived in Idaho. She had no interest in having anything further to do with them and did not want any compensation. Definitely the Museum’s dream type of donor! So the papers arrived safely in a cardboard box via UPS a week later and immediately were properly archived in acid-free folders and envelopes. Steven’s assistance in studying and interpreting the materials has been invaluable.

## Endnotes

1 Philip L. White, *The Beekmans of New York in Politics and Commerce 1647-1877* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1956).

Catherine, daughter of Henry Beekman, the patentee married (1) Cornelius Exveen; (2) John Rutsen; and (3) Albert Pawling. There were no children of the Exveen or Pawling marriages.

2 In early records, "Sepascot" referred to land at the east end of Great Lot 2 that had been leased to Simon Westfall and company in 1719, along with another large parcel to William Vredenburg in 1721. These were near Lake Sepasco and in an area formerly inhabited by Indians. Beekman originally called his total patent in Rhinebeck "Sepascot" but later references to "Sepascot" seem to point to the tracts at the east end of Great Lot 2.

3 In an effort to settle the Beekman patent in Rhinebeck, Henry Beekman attracted 35 German Palatine families to his land and focused their settlement in an area which became known as Rhinebeck. The present village was first known as The Flatts, but after 1800 the name migrated south and Rhinebeck Flatts became known simply as Rhinebeck.

4 Arthur Kelly, *Rhinebeck Road Records, Dutchess County, NY, 1722-1857*, Kinship, Rhinebeck, 2001. Transcribed from original town record books, the entries were cryptic and the spelling erratic. The present-day village of Rhinebeck was known as "The Flatts" during the eighteenth century. Rhinebeck was originally located at the intersection of Route 9 and Weys Crossing Road.

5 E. M. Smith, *Documentary History of Rhinebeck*, 1881.

6 Smith, p. 223.

7 Alida Livingston was the daughter of Cornelia Beekman (who inherited Great Lot 3) and Gilbert Livingston.

8 Nancy V. Kelly, *Rhinebeck's Historic Architecture* (Charlestown, NC: The History Press, 2009). p. 62. Date is from the Schuyler correspondence.

9 Map by Henry Livingston, Nov. 22, 1786 showing Sepascot, including Sepascot Lake and giving dates of the leases from Henry Beekman. New York State Library Manuscript 2017.

10 Frank Teal Papers, Rhinebeck surveyor, papers housed at Egbert Benson Historical Society, Red Hook, with maps in Rhinebeck Historical Society Collection, Rhinebeck. Miller file, Mapped 1951.

11 Dutchess County Deeds Liber 260:11.

12 Christina Sands married John Suckley, younger brother of George, February 13, 1830, Rhinebeck.

13 Dutchess County Deeds 241:318

Additional References: E. Livingston Papers, Princeton University; Philip Schuyler Papers, New York Public Library; Schuyler Papers, Historic Hudson Valley, Sleepy Hollow

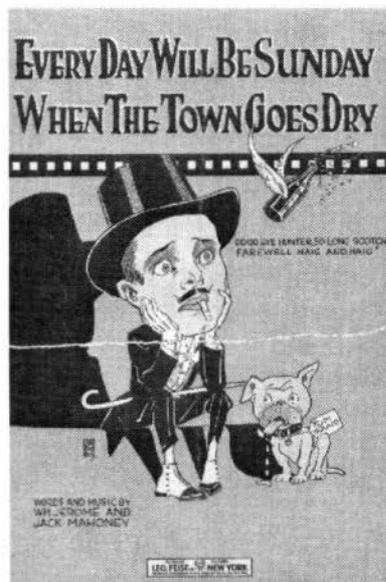
# EVERY DAY WILL BE SUNDAY WHEN THE TOWN GOES DRY: PROHIBITION IN THE HUDSON VALLEY

*By Eleanor Rubin Charwat*

Until I wrote a book about my father's 59-year law career in Dutchess County,<sup>1</sup> I never knew that moonshiners, bootleggers, and speakeasies inhabited the Hudson Valley during Prohibition. Nor did I know that this area was called the Bootleg Trail, because big-time New York City gangsters such as Dutch Schultz and Legs Diamond came through here transporting illegal liquor from Canada to Manhattan. I had always pictured moonshiners as being in West Virginia or Kentucky, and bootleggers and speakeasies in New York or Chicago.

## **The Hudson Valley under Prohibition**

In 1919, when the American people ratified the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution (prohibiting the manufacture, sale, transport, import, and export of intoxicating drinks), many people rejoiced, thinking that now sin would decrease, drunkenness end, and families stay together. On the other hand, Prohibition opponents (or "wets") sang "Every Day will be Sunday when the Town Goes Dry" and lamented the end of fun and cheer.



*Figure 1. Cover Photo of sheet music for "Every Day Will Be Sunday"*

But sin was not eliminated. In fact, Prohibition spawned a whole new industry to bypass the law by manufacturing, distributing, and selling illegal liquor. One observer noted that “it seemed as if the whole country had suddenly become involved in larceny.”<sup>2</sup>

The Hudson Valley was no exception, as I found out while reading articles in the *Poughkeepsie Eagle News* of the 1920s and 1930s.

### **Moonshine and Bootleggers**

Thousands of formerly law-abiding people began making their own liquor from grains such as corn, rye, or barley, or from fruits such as apples or grapes. The resulting alcoholic beverage was referred to as “moonshine,” since it was made at night by the shine of the moon to avoid detection. Popular songs during Prohibition included “The Moon Shines on the Moonshine,” “Sugar Foot Stomp,” “Bootlegger Blues,” and “Minnie the Moocher.”

Stills to make illegal alcohol operated in farms, restaurants, and homes all over the Hudson Valley, supplying local residents as well as a chain of consumers that extended from New York City to the Canadian border. The Bootleg Trail was marked with splotches of yellow paint and rumrunners were paid a premium of \$3 a case of liquor for using the route. One winter, a car laden with liquor broke through the ice of Lake Champlain and sank in 40 feet of water. Imagine the party the fish had that day!

The term “bootlegger” apparently originated in 1733 when Georgia Governor Oglethorpe banned alcohol in his state, and lawbreakers hid their bottles in their boots. Broadway impresario Billy Rose defined a bootlegger as a guy all dressed up who needs “a place to glow.”

Raids in Dutchess County by local, state, and federal officials were common and were often based on tips from the New York Civic League, headed by Poughkeepsie Rev. Harry Fisher and his volunteers. In Poughkeepsie two major raids included a large rum plant over a restaurant at 65 South Clover Street in March 1926. Police found a 500-gallon still in full operation in what was called “one of the largest businesses of its kind in the local history of Prohibition.”

On October 25, 1927, police found a five-gallon jug of whiskey under the floor of Charles Chuba’s chicken coop and a 10-gallon keg of bootleg liquor under the woodshed at 174 North Water St. They also discovered a still made from a copper wash boiler and a quantity of rye, barley, and other supplies.





## Disposal

But what was law enforcement to do with all of this confiscated booze?

On June 11, 1921, the *Poughkeepsie Eagle News* reported that “the multitude gazes wistfully” as confiscated Scotch is taken to the courthouse in Poughkeepsie. In the crowd of 200 were deputy sheriffs, three newspaper editors, a state senator, lawyers, police, troopers, an assistant district attorney and others.

In January 1922, City of Poughkeepsie First Ward residents objected to 700 bottles of bootleggers’ whiskey being destroyed at “their” dump on Delafield Street.

Alderman Case complained that “if there is something good to give away, the 7<sup>th</sup> Ward gets it and when there is something no one wants, we get it.”

Dutchess County sheriff’s deputies spilled 1100 gallons of confiscated bootleg applejack and wine into the sewer in front of the courthouse in October 1926 to the accompaniment of dirges sung while they worked. One deputy commented “If the liquor tasted anything like it smelled, it was fit only for the sewer.”

At another disposal of 1000 gallons of apple jack in the courthouse basement in 1930, prisoners in the county jail on the top floor of the courthouse “tilted their noses as the liquor fumes drifted up and called out their orders” to the deputy sheriffs down below!

## Distribution

Illegal beverages were distributed by bootleggers in every kind of conveyance you could imagine—in the false bottoms of fishing boats, in the washrooms of trains, underneath straw in horse wagons, in so-called tanker cars whose backseats and trunks were converted to single tanks which could hold as much as 250 gallons of moonshine, and even in mail trucks. When some mail carriers saw the flags on the mailboxes were up, they knew the owner wanted another batch of liquor and the money was inside the box! When one carrier was stopped by a U.S. Marshal, he sputtered “You can’t stop the U.S. mail.”<sup>4</sup>

People spoke of “my bootlegger” the way they spoke of “my doctor” or “my barber.”<sup>5</sup>

Some of the early stock car racers in the South gained their skills as moonshine transporters, driving like daredevils on mountain roads to avoid the government agents. In upstate New York, young men who were out of the Army and without jobs found a quick way to get rich by driving boot-leg liquor in their own cars or in cars stolen in a ring centered in Albany.<sup>6</sup>

During the first year of Prohibition, 1921, \$10 million in liquor, 800 autos and 13,000 stills were seized in New England and New York alone. Over 10,000 people were arrested. Law enforcement was overwhelmed, undermanned, and ill-equipped to deal with so many lawbreakers.<sup>7</sup>

## Sales

The selling of the illegal liquor was done through speakeasies (where one had to speak a password to enter), or in private clubs, or individually. "Prohibition didn't hurt Poughkeepsie much," said Dennis Cooper, former owner of River Station. "There were reportedly 37 speakeasies operating in the city, including one where River Station now stands, called the Myers Clam Tavern. The saloon was downstairs, a bordello upstairs. Dayliner passengers came up from New York to have fun in Poughkeepsie," he added.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 4. Dutch Schultz ran the Black Swan speakeasy in Rifton.

Other speakeasies were Zepf's in Hyde Park (now Gaffney's Pub), the Village Inn in Verbank, and the Black Swan in Rifton, which was controlled by New York gangster Dutch Schultz. Newspapers in the 1920s were filled with accounts of raids on speakeasies. One of the biggest was on March 24, 1926, on 13 locations, most on Main Street in the city of Poughkeepsie. Federal padlock proceedings were on the April calendar of Federal court.

The only permitted beverages were those for religious or medicinal purposes. The Brotherhood Winery in Washingtonville—America's largest, continuously operating winery—stayed in business during Prohibition by producing government sanctioned altar and medicinal wines. Drug stores did record businesses catering to the many "sick" people who were

prescribed “medicine.” Soda fountains, like Schrauth’s on Market Street, did a very big business, as men started to drink sodas instead of beer. The proprietors of other Poughkeepsie soda fountains agreed: Bevier and Yoakum, Liggetts, Smith Brothers, the South Side Drug Store, and the Wood Drug company. If you were a good customer, you might get a little additional “medicine” in the back of some of these drug stores.

## Repeal

During the late 1920s, many people saw that Prohibition was not working and called for its repeal. Dr. Frank Crane, minister of the First Baptist Church, warned that if the Eighteenth Amendment were repealed, it would be “after we renounced the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and asked Great Britain to take us back as a colony.”

Ending Prohibition became a major political issue in the presidential election of 1932. Democratic candidate Franklin Roosevelt waffled on the issue until fellow Democrat and New York political power Al Smith threatened to walk out of the national convention unless FDR supported the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. At the last minute, FDR came out against Prohibition and made its repeal a major campaign promise.<sup>9</sup> After he was elected, one of his first actions was to allow the sale of wine and beer, while the constitutional amendment repealing Prohibition made its rounds of the states for ratification.



Figure 5. A cartoon asks whether Repeal can bring an end to the lawlessness of Prohibition.

On December 5, 1933, Utah became the 36<sup>th</sup> and deciding state to ratify the Twenty-First Amendment, ending Prohibition ten days later. The day before ratification, Poughkeepsie police chief Leadbitter warned prospective repeal revelers that he “would pursue a course of relentless prosecution of drunkards who abuse their regained privilege of legalized drinking.”

Despite his warning, revelers began “slaking their 13 year thirst for legal beverages” after the first shipment of domestic liquor was rushed into Poughkeepsie by David Clarkson, a Newburgh wholesaler. The truck first stopped at Fritz Sanger’s Inn on South Road, then went to the Elks Club, the Moose Club, and the Hotel Campbell on Cannon St. Retail liquor stores which were granted the first new state licenses were Thomann’s at 49 Market Street and James Miller’s at 22 Academy Street.

No sooner had the legal liquor tickled the tongues of Poughkeepsians than they started to complain about the taste and high cost! People didn’t like the blended or cut whiskey as well as the “old throat tingling kind” they had gotten from bootleggers. Legal gin jumped from 50 cents a bottle to \$2.50 to their dismay.

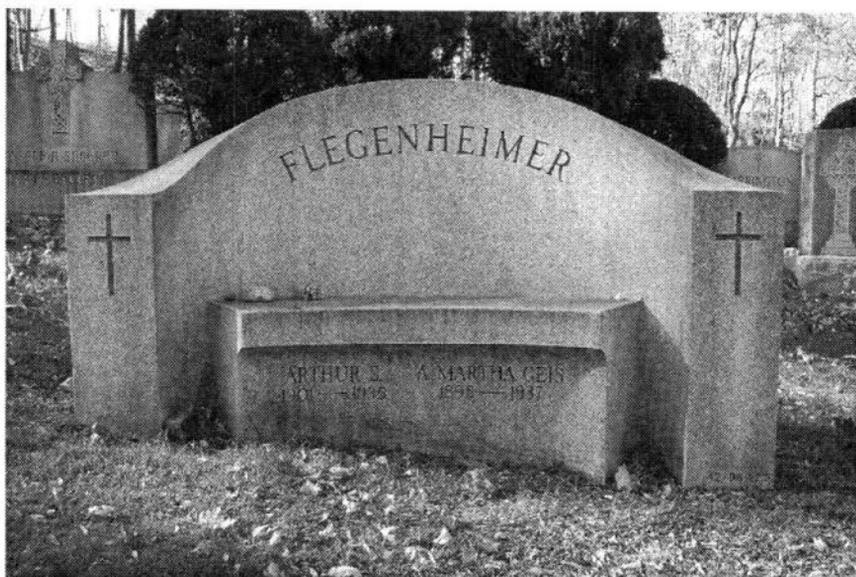
### **Assessment**

So what were the effects of Prohibition?

Prohibition actually increased the demand for liquor. People who had never had the slightest interest in drinking liquor, never mind making it, now sought recipes from friends, neighbors, and the public library.<sup>10</sup> Women, who had seldom frequented bars or taverns before, enjoyed the shiver of excitement at being admitted to speakeasies and private clubs. Young people in Dutchess County frequented “dance halls” where they engaged in excessive drinking of each other’s brand of hooch, according to the newspaper. Sheriff Rockefeller set up a campaign against these “whoopie makers” to stop the accidents caused by young people driving while intoxicated. The hip flask became a status symbol for boys hardly old enough to shave. Some students paid their way through college making and selling intoxicants to their classmates.

Corruption increased. Many politicians, police, lawyers, and judges were on the take from organized crime racketeers involved in the illegal trade of liquor.

The federal government lost millions of dollars in tax revenue from liquor. The principal charge in the Mittleman gang case was conspiracy to defraud the government of \$2.5 million in liquor taxes. Other taxes had to be raised to make up for the lost revenue.



*Figure 6. Dutch Schulz survived his career in Dutchess County's Prohibition era, but not by much, for enmities generated during Prohibition continued. Schultz was murdered in 1935, thus returning both to dust and to his true name: Arthur S. Flegenheimer.*

Crime increased, as rival gangs vied for the lucrative liquor business. Shootings, hijacking, street murders, gang wars, and the formation of organized crime networks all resulted from Prohibition. In New York, these evolved along ethnic lines—Irish, Italian, and Jewish. On December 18, 1931, Legs Diamond was killed in an execution-type murder in Albany. No one was sure who was responsible—Dutch Schulz, Albany thugs, or the Albany police department. Dutch Schultz himself was killed in Newark in a contract put out by Lucky Luciano. But he had spent time in the Catskills and is rumored to have buried anywhere from 7 to 50 million dollars in a tin trunk somewhere near Phoenicia. Or maybe on the Ryan Farm in Pine Plains. Treasure hunters have been unsuccessful in finding the money so far, so there's still a chance!

It seemed that Dutchess County reflected the rest of the country in its defiance of Prohibition.

But if the era of Prohibition is gone, it is not entirely forgotten. HBO ran a hit show about Prohibition called "Boardwalk Empire" in 2010. Al Capone's boat, used to smuggle bootleg liquor from Canada to the United States via the Great Lakes, is still in use as a ferry on the Panama Canal. Dutch Schultz's old farm in Pine Plains is about to become Dutch Spirits, an operation that will make legal gin, rye, bourbon, moonshine, and rum. And Dutchess County residents still run across rusty stills and other moonshine apparatus in woods or barns or basements.

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- 2 Esther Kellner, *Moonshine: Its History and Folklore* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1972), p 107.
- 3 *Pine Plains Register Herald*, February 6, 1975.
- 4 Kellner, p. 139.
- 5 Kellner, p. 104.
- 6 Allan S. Everest, *Rum across the Border: The Prohibition Era in Northern New York* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press. 1978), p. 40.
- 7 Everest, p. 10ff.
- 8 *Poughkeepsie Journal*, March 25, 1999.
- 9 Lerner, p. 245ff.
- 10 Kellner, p. 104.

# SAMUEL MORSE'S PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN SLAVERY

*By Roger Donway*

Religious Republicans drove Samuel Morse up the wall. He did not begrudge them their partisan viewpoint, although he disagreed with it, having been a Democrat all of his adult life. And certainly he did not begrudge them their religiosity; on the contrary, the son of the Reverend Jedidiah Morse found their creeds to be very weak tea. The problem, so he thought, was that religious Republicans were forever confusing theological issues with political issues. They would take one side of a political controversy and then demand that their churches excommunicate anyone who took the opposite side. Or they would declare some action or other to be a sin and then demand that the government pass a law making it a crime. Morse believed that punishing political opponents through excommunication was religious fanaticism and that using the government to criminalize sin was a violation of the First Amendment.

The issue that prompted Samuel Morse to publish these reflections was slavery.<sup>1</sup>

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation. On February 6, 1863, Samuel Morse met at Delmonico's restaurant in Manhattan with a group of journalists and wealthy financiers to start an organization that would promote anti-abolitionist

arguments: The organization was to be called The Society for the Diffusion of Political Knowledge (SDPK).<sup>2</sup>

William Cullen Bryant, editor of the Republican *Evening Post*, had managed to get a reporter inside the group's first meeting (perhaps by Morse's invitation), and the next day his newspaper described the society's object and the society itself in these terms: It aims at "the circulation of political ignorance, as of treasonable newspapers and speeches. The rich men of New York are to supply the money, and the reactionist editors . . . the brains."<sup>3</sup> Among the "rich men of New York" was August Belmont, formerly the Rothschilds' agent in New York, whom the *Evening Post* described as "a Hebrew from Germany."<sup>4</sup> Indeed, it is probable that Belmont himself called the meeting. Among "the brains," though not an editor, was Samuel Morse.

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August,                      **No. 12**                      1863.

PAPERS FROM THE SOCIETY

FOR THE

Diffusion of Political Knowledge.

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AN ARGUMENT

ON THE

ETHICAL POSITION

OF

**SLAVERY**

IN THE

SOCIAL SYSTEM,

AND ITS

RELATION TO THE POLITICS OF THE DAY.

BY

SAMUEL F. B. MORSE,

"That to the height of this great argument,  
I may assert Eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men."—Milton

"That erroneous political notions (they having become general and a part of the popular mind) have practical consequences, and those, of course, of a most fearful nature, is a truth as certain as blindest orthodoxy can make it  
"If there be any means, of not preventing yet of palliating the disease, they are to be found only in an intelligible and thorough exposure of the error, and through the discovery of the source, from which it derives its epidemics and power of influence on the human mind."—Coleridge

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PRESIDENT, PROF. S. F. B. MORSE, SECRETARY, WM. McMURRAY, TREASURER, LORING ANDREWS.	OFFICE OF THE SOCIETY, No. 13 PARK ROW, NEW-YORK. C. MASON, COB. SMO'Y, To whom all communications may be addressed
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**READ—DISCUSS—DIFFUSE.**

**Resolved,** That it be recommended to all citizens in the various cities, counties, and villages of this and other States, who approve of the objects expressed in this Constitution, that they organize auxiliary societies, and open communication with the New-York Society, for the purpose of procuring and circulating our papers.

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Figure 1. Morse's monograph was issued by the Society for the Diffusion of Political Knowledge.

In August 1863, the SDPK published a pamphlet by Morse: No. 12 in its series. It was entitled: "An Argument on the Ethical Position of Slavery in the Social System, and its Relation to the Politics of the Day." Two questions about the pamphlet are worthy of consideration, given Morse's prominence in the history of Dutchess County: (1) What was the argument that he made? (2) Why might such an argument have seemed convincing to him?

### I. The Argument

For Samuel Morse, the contest between slavery and abolitionism was grounded in metaphysics, and specifically in the nature of Man. "We can have no just notions of a political or civil system adapted to man" he wrote, "without acquainting ourselves with the nature of the being for whom the system is constructed." In writing those words, Morse was saying nothing original: Man's nature had been taken as the foundation of political theory ever since Plato's *Politeia* (*Republic*).

Also common since Plato's time was the analogy that Morse drew between those who prescribe for the state and those who prescribe for the body: "When a physician is called to a case of disease, how does he proceed to accomplish a cure? . . . A knowledge of the nature of the human constitution in a state of health, and the general regimen necessary to keep it in that state, must lie at the at the foundation of all right practice."

Nor was there any greater originality in Morse's next step, which took him into the realm of epistemology, the theory of knowledge: For Christians, the nature of man—in both his spiritually healthy and spiritually diseased state—is known through reason and revelation. Reason gives us the obvious and outward aspects of human nature; revelation gives us the more abstruse and inward aspects.

That much, Morse laid down as the postulates of his argument. To those who rejected his postulates, Morse frankly declared that he had nothing to say. "If any reject [the Bible's] authority, they need go no further with this argument. It is not addressed to them." But to the religious Republicans who agreed with him that social philosophy must be based on the nature of man as taught in the Christian Bible, Morse was willing to make his case.

## The Creation and Fall of Man

Like the wise physician, Morse began his argument by inquiring into the deep nature of man, healthy and sick, as revealed by Scripture. In Genesis, he wrote, “we learn that man at his creation was the loftiest creature of the universe; of no other intelligent creature is it declared that he was created in the ‘image of God.’” But that was the condition of man at the time of his creation. What is man’s condition today? “From the same high source we receive the sad answer that man has lost that nature,” which is to say: the nature bearing God’s image. And the reason is soon told. God put man to a test of obedience, and man failed his test. In the Biblical narrative, this is the story of Adam: Adam was instructed that he must not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But he did. “He listens to the Tempter, and thus Disobedience was grafted into man’s nature; and so man lost the image in which he was created.”

Yet mankind was not left without assistance. “In the Councils of Heaven, Redemption, or the restoration of man to his lost position, becomes the great absorbing enterprise.” The basis of that redemption, of course, is the Incarnation. So much, obviously, Morse was bound to say. But what was the significance of the Incarnation? How did it actually operate as a remedy for the disease of Disobedience? Here Morse begins to strike out on an original path.

“Reason at once suggests that as Disobedience is the disease, so Obedience, in some manner, was to be the remedy.” One way in which this remedy operated was through the words and deeds of Jesus Christ. “The Saviour, previous to his death, was to illustrate and enforce by his own example perfect submission or Obedience to the Will of God.” For example, Jesus said: “Who is my mother or my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of God is my brother, and my sister, and my mother.” But the ultimate lesson in obedience was given through the Crucifixion—“the most astounding example of obedience, of subjection to the will of God.”

After piling on more instances of instruction and example, from both Jesus and from his apostles, Morse sums up his argument: “I am confident Christians recognize the great truths which I have here feebly [sketched]. . . . They need not be told that Disobedience, or opposition to the will of God, was the sin that cast man down from his original and exalted position, and they as fully accept the truth that the great object of the mission of the Saviour of the world was to recover man from the sin of Disobedience.”

## Example or Institutions

So, this becomes the question: Is the mere display and preaching of Christ's example of obedience the sole remedy that God has deployed to counter Man's lust for disobedience? For Morse, the answer is clear: No, it is not. "Man from his very nature dislikes restraint; he would have his own way, at all hazards; and hence it is that no appeal takes deeper hold of all his passions and instincts than an appeal to his love for freedom. . . . The very word Freedom carries a thrill of ecstasy. . . . How shall such a nature set on fire by a word that kindles at once all its fierceness be curbed and repressed within the bounds of reason?" Mere example and exhortation are not enough. As a horse needs a bit and rein to fulfill its potential, so man needs "a system of restraints, and God has wisely and benevolently ordained a Social System for him, perfectly adapted to that nature." This social system, although it assists man in following Christ's example of obedience, goes beyond mere example in its force.

The social system that is ordained in the Bible comprises four, parallel, interdependent social institutions that separately and jointly operate to curb man's innate rebelliousness against restraint and so nudge him toward a rational obedience to God's will. These institutions are: government, patriarchy, parenthood, and slavery. In each relationship, there is a person who governs and a person who is governed, a superior and a subordinate, and thus there is in each what Morse terms "the slavery element," although it is only in the last of the four relationships, "the servile relationship," that we customarily speak of "slavery."

The "slavery element" in government, in the relationship between ruler and ruled, Morse avers, is very clearly prescribed by Scripture. Among the passages that he quotes is one in which St. Paul writes (Romans 13:1): "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." Morse also quotes St. Peter as saying (1 Peter 2:13): "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King, as Supreme, (or the Supreme power,) or unto Governors, as to them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers."

Likewise was the patriarchal relationship prescribed to govern the relative status of a husband and a wife, and it too includes a "slavery element." Morse quotes a passage supposedly written by St. Paul (Ephesians 5:22): "Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto

the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church.” He also quotes St. Peter (1 Peter 3:1): “Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands.”

When it comes to the parental relationship, Morse has fewer sources to draw upon, perhaps because fewer people had ever questioned the “slavery element” that is implicit in the relationship of dependency between parent and child. But Morse does quote Colossians 3:18 (supposedly written by St. Paul): “Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.” And of course he cites the commandment: “Honor thy father and mother.”

And then he comes to the nub of the matter, the fourth relationship of obedience, the “servile relationship” between master and slave.

### **The Servile Relationship**

Central to Morse’s argument regarding slavery is a linguistic issue. What is the meaning of the Greek word *doulos*? If one checks the King James Bible, one will find it translated as “servant.” But Morse maintained, with some plausibility, that that translation was unhistorical. It suggested that a *doulos* was something like a Victorian house maid. In fact, contemporary historians have estimated that, at the time the New Testament was written, 30 to 50 percent of all the inhabitants of the Roman Empire were slaves. There were degrees of bondage, to be sure. But when the New Testament speaks of a *doulos*, Morse alleged, it was speaking of a person that we would recognize as a slave, and not merely as hired help.

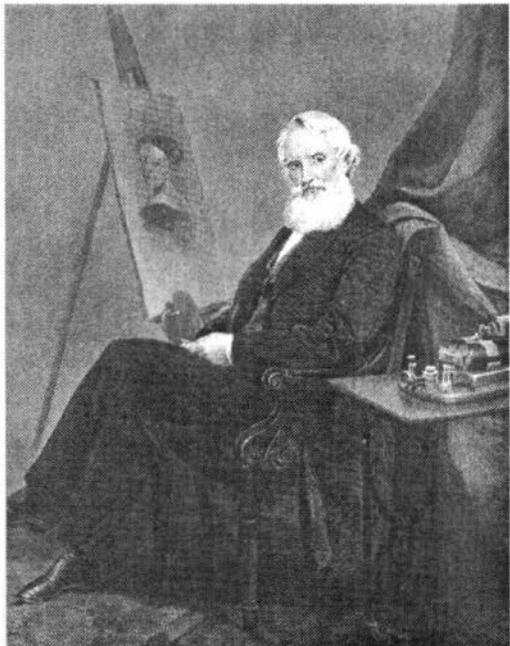
And what did the New Testament say about slaves? Morse quotes St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians (6:5): “Slaves, be obedient to them that are your masters.” He also quotes St. Paul’s first epistle to Timothy (6:1): “Let as many slaves as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor.” He quotes St. Paul’s letter to the Colossians (3:18): “Slaves, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God, and whatever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord.” And lastly he quotes the letter of St. Paul to Titus (2:9): “Exhort slaves to be obedient unto their own masters and to please them in all things, not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity.”

## The Argument from Intricacy

Morse was evidently much impressed by the sheer ingenuity and intricacy of the social structures he had uncovered, and that is an attitude that people today may not experience. We have a tendency to look upon society in terms of a few plain principles: There are personal rights, which government protects; there is one-man/one-vote democracy, by which government is controlled. And anything deviating from those norms is seen as arbitrary: Witness the current attempt to circumvent the Electoral College by having states pledge to follow the national majority vote.

But Americans who lived in the generations immediately following the Founding looked at matters quite differently. They looked upon intricate architecture in social and political structures as a manifestation of high intelligence. Thus, “the miracle at Philadelphia” was considered a miracle in no small part because of the enormously complex governing structure it had produced: Dual sovereignty between the states and the federal government. A federal government with three branches and limited powers. A legislative branch with two houses. A lower house with representation proportioned to population and directly elected every two years. An upper house with equal representation for the states, and with one-third of its members indirectly elected every two years by state legislatures. A chief executive indirectly elected via an electoral college in which each state had a number of electors equal to the sum of its representatives and senators. A supreme court nominated by the president but confirmed by the senate.

*Figure 2. Like many early Americans, Samuel Morse was in awe of the United States and the political genius that produced it. His arguments for slavery did not incline him to wish for a Southern victory so much as to abhor the destruction of the Union.*



Morse was similarly impressed by the parallel and interlocking relationships of obedience, which corresponded to four fundamental human correlates: powerful versus weak; male versus female; adult versus child; civilized versus barbarous. "Can this unity of purpose, this arrangement of correlatives, be accidental? Each and all enforcing one and the same idea, and that the one great central idea in Man's Redemption, to wit, Obedience, the natural antidote to Disobedience?" Clearly, these structures were not accidental but planned. How, then, can we dare to tamper with it? "We think it dangerous for a novice to tamper with the arrangements of a machine contrived by a skillful inventor to accomplish a definite purpose. . . . How much more dangerous to tamper with the plans of God, and to arraign his wisdom in so deep and mysterious a design as the restoration of man's nature."

This was not to say that the four relationships could have one and only one manifestation. They had been established for discipline (curbing disobedience) and education (inculcating habits of obedience). The more effective they were in the latter function, the less strict they could be in former function. "If in Civil Government the Ruler governs with justice, and is swayed by that love toward those over whom he rules which God has enjoined, it is readily perceived that his rule can not be oppressive or tyrannical, and the disposition to cheerful obedience on the part of the ruled is encouraged and strengthened. The Slavery [that is, the coerciveness], therefore, of this relation is in effect abrogated so soon and so far as it has accomplished its object in subduing the natural disobedience of the human heart, and tempered the character of a people with obedience to law."

So, too, in the servile relationship called slavery. When "obedience is cheerfully rendered by the Slave, and the Master exercises his power of command and direction in the temper required, are there any of those revolting appendages observable with which fanaticism delights to clothe it? On the contrary, are there not in this relation, when faithfully carried out according to the Divine directions, some of the most beautiful examples of domestic happiness and contentment that this fallen world knows? Protection and judicious guidance and careful provision on the one part; cheerful obedience, affection, and confidence on the other."

## From Sin to Crime

So much for what Morse's title had called "An Argument on the Ethical Position of Slavery in the Society System." The coda to his pamphlet concerned itself with the other part of his title: Slavery's "Relation to the Politics of the Day."

Morse believed that slavery was a divinely ordained institution; the abolitionists believed that slavery was sin. Clearly, he wrote, the very terms of our disagreement proclaim that this is a religious disagreement. "What is the tenet declaring Slavery to be a sin, preached for over thirty years in abolitionist pulpits, but a setting forth of a religious belief? And what is the opposite tenet declaring Slavery to be an ordinance of God but the declaration of a religious belief?"

The abolitionist churches themselves had insisted on giving theological status to their beliefs. Morse quoted from a report on a church in Steubenville, Ohio, that had debated the question: "Whether it was consistent with the principles of the United Presbyterian Church to vote for C. L. Vallindigham," the Democratic candidate for Ohio's governorship in 1963. In the event, the church voted unanimously that it was inconsistent with Presbyterianism to vote for Vallindigham.

Going further still into the politicization of religion, Morse quoted a Methodist preacher in Indiana who had refused to give communion to opponents of abolitionism. Referring to the anti-abolitionists as "Butternuts" (after the color of the Confederate uniform), the preacher declared: "I administered the Supper last Sabbath, and cut off every Butternut in the congregation from the communion of the Church. . . . If they will not withdraw peaceably they should be cut off." Wrote Morse: "True Christians in another age will look back upon the fanaticism of our days, as those of the present age now do upon the witchcraft delusions."

But what churches did about their creeds was a matter for those churches, so far as Morse was concerned. It was not a political matter. Because of the Founders' wisdom, the Constitution of the United States provided at least two means by which people of different religious visions could live together in one political nation.

Above all, they had given us the First Amendment to the Constitution, which declared: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Now in Morse's day "Congress shall make no law..." meant (curiously enough) that

“Congress shall make no law . . .” It did not bind every branch of government at every level, such as states, cities, and school districts. Therefore, Morse held, the religious dispute between advocates of abolition and advocates of slavery such as Morse should be governed at the federal level by the First Amendment’s “hands off” policy. “When, therefore, religious tenets are obtruded into the political arena, virtually demanding a settlement of conscientious differences of opinion by a political action which adopts the views of one of the parties, thus in effect ‘prohibiting the free exercise’ of the opposite opinions to the other party, is not that action a palpable infraction of the Supreme Law [that is, of the U.S. Constitution]?”

But if the federal government took a “hands off” policy, would that mean the advocates of slavery had won? Not at all. The Constitution provides a second means by which people of different religious visions may coexist in the United States. “Politically, as a Federal question, we certainly have nothing to do with it [the religious dispute over slavery]. . . . [But] when the question, as a political one, is mooted, whether Slavery shall be established in the State of New-York, we, in New-York, can settle it for ourselves, without the aid or advice of the Federal Government or of any of our sister States. Whatever our conscience or policy dictates in regard to our own State, is no rule or precedent for other States. . . . If the action on this subject by any State is wrong, theirs is the responsibility; it is not ours.”

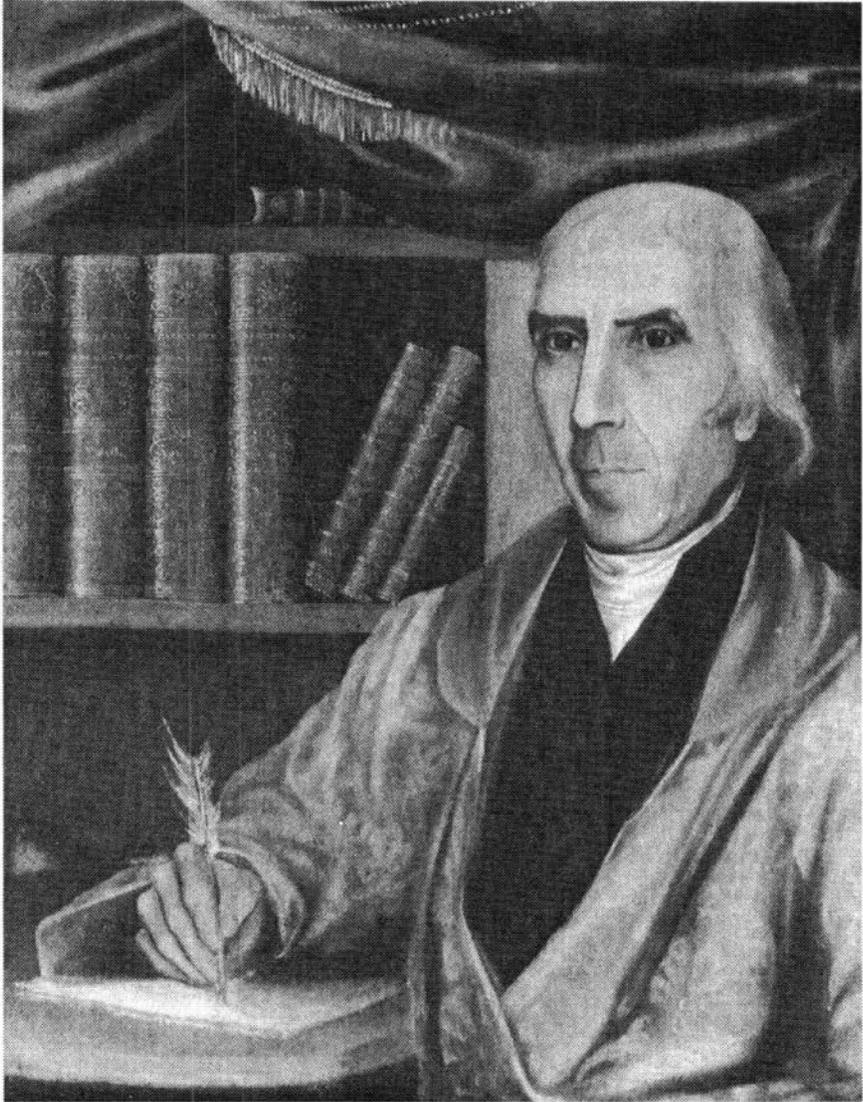
That religious Republicans could not accept these two constitutional methods of living together with religious disagreements is what drove Samuel Morse up the wall.

## **II. Explaining Why**

Few people today would find Morse’s arguments even remotely plausible, much less convincing. In fact, it seems that few of Morse’s contemporaries found his arguments convincing, although they probably found them a bit more plausible than we do. So why did Morse find them convincing? Engaging in psycho-biography is always dangerous, but surely we can say that four elements in Morse’s biography may have played a part.

## The Calvinist Background

Samuel Morse was the son of the Reverend Jedidiah Morse (1761–1826), one of the last defenders of orthodox Calvinism in America. As a result, Samuel Morse believed in orthodox Christianity with a vigor that was not widely shared in his time and that hardly exists today. Such an outlook made plausible to him those arguments that rested on little more than a straight-forward reading of Biblical text.



*Figure 3. Reverend Jedidiah Morse. c. 1810. Oil on millboard. 28<sup>3/8</sup> x 22<sup>7/8</sup>, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut. Gift of Miss Helen E. Carpenter of West Woodstock, Connecticut, in 1898.*

Which is not to say that Samuel Morse was a Biblical literalist. Although he spoke of “man’s disobedience,” that does not mean he believed in a literal “Adam and Eve.”

His father certainly did. Though Jedidiah Morse was for many decades the leading American geographer, he had no trouble asserting in his 1812 work *The American Universal Geography*: “The sacred scriptures give us the only authentic account of the manner in which the earth was originally peopled. From them we learn that the whole family of man is descended from a single pair, who God created out of the dust of the ground.”<sup>5</sup>

In 1863, however, when his son Samuel wrote, such literalism was not required for orthodoxy.<sup>6</sup> Many nineteenth-century Calvinists had no problem with the emerging scientific consensus concerning the great age of the earth, and one Calvinist who is mentioned admiringly in Morse’s pamphlet on slavery, James McCosh (1811–94), would later become America’s leading reconciler of Christian orthodoxy and biological evolution.

But even if Morse was not a Biblical literalist, he did believe in a Scripture that was a divinely inspired. And he learned from the Bible that slavery was an institution—like government—that Jesus Christ and his apostles had considered a necessary element of this fallen world. With a sense of vindication and disgust, Morse quoted an abolitionist-minded Massachusetts congressman who had said: “We must have an anti-Slavery Bible and an anti-Slavery God.” The notion that politically correct causes could somehow alter divine revelation—not to mention altering Divine Nature itself—must struck Morse as the last word in absurdity.

### **A Southern Sojourn.**

As a young man, Samuel Morse had spent four winter seasons (1818–1821) in Charleston, South Carolina, where his mother’s uncle Dr. James Finley lived. Morse’s first season, though it started slowly, turned into a time of prosperity that allowed him to marry. The second season was equally successful, but the last two were not so happy, especially because Dr. Finley died late in 1819, just prior to Samuel’s third season in Charleston. Privately, Samuel Morse passed many negative moral judgments on the inhabitants of Charleston, and the South generally, often contrasting its residents unfavorably to New Englanders. But the Charlestonians’ treatment of their slaves evidently did not excite his condemnation.

Thus, when Morse defends slavery in his pamphlet, he clearly believes that abolitionists and their followers have a mistaken impression of how slavery operates in fact and in reality, and he presumably based that belief on his four years of personal experience, even though they were forty years out of date. That slavery can be cruel, he does not dispute. So can each of the four subordinating relationships, he says. But that the servile relationship called slavery is typically cruel, or especially cruel, Morse evidently does not believe. "How can we account for this monomania in regard to Slavery, which has seized upon so many otherwise sane minds? It must be that most, if not all, of those so fierce in denouncing Slavery are deceived by an imaginary monster, dressed up by their imagination with every attribute that is hideous and revolting, and which can excite disgust and horror; to them, slavery, tyranny, and oppression are synonymous, and in their speeches, sermons, and prayers, they are convertible terms, and are thus indiscriminately used."

### **Allies**

People who know Samuel Morse as the inventor of the telegraph and as a minor American artist are often surprised to learn that he was also a fierce defender slavery. I suppose that is because one tends to think of creative people as forming the avant-garde of social reform rather than the rearguard defenders of the status quo. But such was far from being the case with abolitionism in the nineteenth century. Many of the greatest figures in nineteenth-century artistic and literary circles were pro-slavery, principally because they opposed capitalism's free market in labor.

For example, Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) was one of the most honored of British essayists during the nineteenth century. And here is what he said about slavery: "Liberty? The true liberty of a man, you would say, consisted in his finding out, or being forced to find out the right path, and walk thereon. To learn, or to be taught, what work he actually was able for; and then, by permission, persuasion, and even compulsion, to set about doing of the same! . . . If thou do know better than I what is good and right, I conjure thee in the name of God, force me to do it; were it by never such brass collars, whips and handcuffs, leave me not to walk over precipices!"<sup>77</sup>

Then there was John Ruskin (1819–1900), a leading art and architecture critic of the nineteenth century who championed the pre-Raphaelites in painting and the Gothic Revival in architecture. Calling Carlyle his

master, Ruskin had this to say about slavery: "I have not, however, been able to ascertain in definite terms, from the declaimers against slavery, what they understand by it. If they mean only the imprisonment or compulsion of one person by another, such imprisonment or compulsion being in many cases highly expedient, slavery, so defined, would be no evil in itself, but only in its abuse. The essential thing for all creatures is to be made to do right; how they are made to do it—by pleasant promises or hard necessities, pathetic oratory, or the whip—is comparatively immaterial."<sup>8</sup>

This is not to suggest that Carlyle or Ruskin directly persuaded Morse to his thinking about slavery. Morse's Christian perspective is quite different from theirs. But Carlyle and Ruskin did have a major influence on attitudes throughout the English-speaking world, and Ruskin had a major influence on Alexander Jackson Davis, the architect who was a friend of Samuel Morse and who redesigned Locust Grove for him. Thus, when Morse was reading widely in the abolitionist debates, as he was, he might well have been heartened and sustained by the views of Davis's mentor, Ruskin, and of Ruskin's mentor, Carlyle.

## **Enemies**

"They love him most for the enemies he has made." So said General Edward Stuyvesant Bragg of Grover Cleveland when seconding his nominating at the 1884 Democratic Convention. It is a truth of human nature that we are often persuaded to adopt a position by observing who opposes that position. And surely one factor that persuaded Samuel Morse to defend slavery was the identity of those who said slavery was wrong.

In the course of his pamphlet, it seems, he cannot go for more than a few paragraphs without launching an attack against slavery's opponents. When, above, I presented Morse's positive case for slavery, I excised all such digressions because they are logically irrelevant to his argument. Emotionally, however, it is clear that those digressions were important to Morse.

Early on in his essay, for example, Morse sets down the postulates on which he will rest his argument, including the postulate that the Bible is divinely revealed. To those who believe otherwise, he admits frankly, he has nothing to say. But he does not stop there. He goes on to name those who do believe otherwise. For although he cannot reason with them, he does have a few negative points that he wishes to make against them. For

example, he writes: If anyone needs evidence that the Christian revelation is indispensable to erecting a proper society, he need look only to the fatuous schemes of France's utopian socialists, such as Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825) and Charles Fourier (1772–1837).

Now, in 1863, Morse's readers would have understood the force of his allusion to the crack-pottery of those two utopian socialists, because in the 1840s several groups of prominent Americans had actually attempted to establish utopian communities on the basis of such theories. Most of the communities had quickly collapsed, as Morse implies. Tellingly for Morse's argument, however, one of the country's leading advocates of utopian socialism had become one of the country's leading abolitionists. This was the prominent newspaper editor Horace Greeley. Formerly, he had used the pages of his *New York Tribune* to preach the glories of Fourierism, and he had even helped to establish a community based on Fourier's philosophy in Monmouth County, New Jersey. After the failure of his ideal community, Greeley turned to abolitionism. To Morse, the implication was clear: Abandon Christian social philosophy and you end up in cloud-cuckooland, like Horace Greeley, whether your cause is Fourierism or abolitionism.

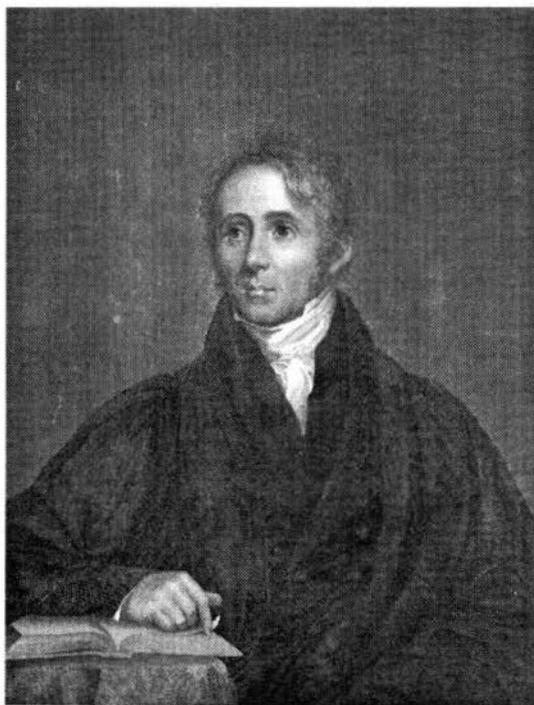
Later in his argument, Morse digresses to identify another group of opponents. This digression comes after he has described the fall of man, the sin of disobedience, and its necessary remedy in social institutions enforcing obedience. He writes: "I am fully aware that these views will not be acceptable to those who deny the degeneracy of man, who look upon 'human nature with unmingled feelings of pride and satisfaction, and represent all who speak of *mankind as degenerate* as being the greatest enemies of the race'" Morse's allusion is to a passage from James McCosh (1811–94), who was at the time of the Civil War a prominent philosophy professor at Queen's College, in Belfast, and who was afterwards the president of Princeton University from 1868 to 1888.

To put McCosh's quotation in its full context, it reads:

*It would be vain to deny that man is allowed a large share of liberty. He feels he enjoys it, he uses it, and he abuses it. He is endowed with godlike powers[:] . . . a fancy which can flutter among pictures richer than any realities, an imagination which stretches away into the infinite, and a heart of such large desires that the whole world cannot satisfy them.— Then he is placed in a position affording room for the*

*exercise of his faculties, and he has a field wider than he can occupy, and the means of exerting the mightiest influence. There are persons who, when they contemplate these facts, delight to speak of man's nature and position. He is a God, they conclude, and is so honored by the supreme God, and should be so honored by us. Dr. Channing is the most eloquent representative of this class of writers, who would have us to look on human nature with unmingled feelings of pride and satisfaction, and represent all who would speak of mankind as degenerate as the greatest enemies of the race.<sup>9</sup>*

By "Dr. Channing," of course, McCosh was referring to William Ellery Channing (1780–1842), and a footnote in McCosh's book reads: "See Sermon on 'Honor all Men.'" This refers to Channing's April 1830 sermon "Honor Due to All Men," which takes its text "Honor all men" from 1 Peter 2:17.



*Engraved by W. H. R. England from a picture painted by Charles Peckham*

**WILLIAM E. CHANNING, D.D.**

*Figure 4. The role of William Ellery Channing in persuading New Englanders to oppose slavery must have been a strong motive for Samuel Morse to suspect that heresy underlay the abolitionists' arguments.*

No argument could have persuaded Morse he was right more than the anti-slavery argument taken by preacher William Ellery Channing. In 1815, Morse's father, Jedidiah Morse, had singled out Channing as the most dangerous of those preachers who were leading New Englanders away from Christian Trinitarian orthodoxy and towards Unitarian heresy. By 1863, when Morse wrote his pamphlet, Channing had been dead for a generation, but he had left behind a legacy that even Channing himself had worried about. Despite his own moderate views on social reform (for example, he wanted to end slavery by compensating slave-owners), Channing had feared for those "often fiery young men of the Unitarians' second generation of ministers, who—following Emerson—would discard wholesale their own churches' liberal Christian tradition. In its place they embraced an 'absolute' religion whose moral demands they intuitively perceived to 'transcend' all history. These younger ministers and other 'Transcendentalists' called for the radical restructuring of society, and also publicly subjected Unitarians any less passionately committed to social reform than themselves to withering criticism."<sup>10</sup>

In Morse's view, Channing had been right to fear that he had sown the breeze and that America would reap the whirlwind—just as Morse's father had predicted. "It is the boast of some eminent disciples of Channing, that to those who teach their gospel is the honor due of this anti-slavery war. . . . If they find a satisfaction in this result of their zeal, it is a satisfaction which I confess I do not covet. The ruin of the noblest country of the world, the hecatomb of corpses of fathers and brothers, murdered by fathers and brothers, the fearful chorus of widows' and orphans' cries wafted on every breeze from thousands of desolate homes, fields wasted, States depopulated—these, and such as these, are the boasted trophies of humanitarian philosophies. And all for what? Oh! To enthrone human Freedom! Great is the Goddess Freedom!"

### **Conclusion**

Samuel Morse believed that Holy Scripture clearly ordained four interlocking social relationships as a means to tame man's innate proclivity to disobey divine commandments: civil government, patriarchy, parenthood, and slavery. Morse acknowledged that atheists born of the French Enlightenment's materialism did not believe in Scripture and so had no reason to accept his argument. But more surprising to Morse were those American Christians who claimed to believe in Scripture but nonetheless wished to abolish one these relationships, namely, Slavery. More

surprising still were Christians who proclaimed Slavery as a definite sin, despite its clear Scriptural sanction.

But, Morse said, let us disagree about the message of Scripture. That disagreement between slavery advocates and slavery abolitionists is obviously a religious one, and the Constitution provides two methods for avoiding the religious civil war that now exists in 1863: the First Amendment and the sovereignty of the states. Because of the First Amendment, the Federal government must not intervene in the religious dispute between slavery advocates and slavery opponents. Because of the sovereignty of the states, each state may vote for slavery or abolitionism without morally implicating the citizens of any other state.

Morse seems to have been predisposed to accept the validity of these arguments by four factors in his personal biography. First, he had been raised, and had remained, a fairly strict Calvinist Christian, who believed in the divine inspiration of the Bible. Secondly, having spent four winter seasons in the South, observing and morally judging Southerners, he evidently had not found their treatment of slaves so consistently abusive as to make him question the Biblical sanction of slavery. Thirdly, defenses of slavery were relatively common among those leading humanists and artists of his day whom he would have admired—men such as Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, and Charles Dickens. Lastly, the abolitionist movement in America had unquestionably drawn significant intellectual support from individuals—notably William Ellery Channing and his ilk—who had been among his father's greatest enemies.

Such was Morse's argument for slavery and such, perhaps, were his motives for accepting that argument.

## Endnotes

1 Samuel Finley Breese Morse, *An Argument on the Ethical Position of Slavery in the Social System, and Its Relation to the Politics of the Day*. Papers from the Society for the Diffusion of Political Knowledge, No. 12, August 1863. (NY: SDPK, 1863). All quotations not otherwise documented are from this monograph.

2 Presumably, the organization modeled its name on that of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, a British organization (with a Boston branch) that had been founded by Henry Bougham, an abolitionist.

3 Kenneth Silverman, *Lightning Man: The Accursed Life of Samuel F. B. Morse* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), p. 397

4 Ibid.

5 Jedidiah Morse, *The American Universal Geography* (1812), p. 89.

6 In fact, it was *never* required; Augustine had rejected a literalist interpretation in A.D. 415.

7 Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (1844), Book 3, Chapter 13, pp. 211–12.

8 John Ruskin, *Munera Pulveris*, p. 199. “Munera Pulveris” means “Gifts of Dust” and comes from an ode by Horace. First published in *Fraser’s Magazine* as “Essays on Political Economy in 1862–63 and then in book form as *Munera Pulveris* in 1872.

<sup>9</sup> James McCosh, *The Method of Divine Government, Physical and Moral* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1852), pp. 72–73.

10 <http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/williamellerychanning.html>

# FRANKLIN AND ELEANOR: AN EXTRAORDINARY MARRIAGE

By Hazel Rowley.

New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010

*Reviewed by Eleanor Charwat*

What can anyone add to the plethora of books about Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt's relationship? These range from Joseph Lash's seminal book *Eleanor and Franklin* (1971), to Doris Kearns Goodwin's *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II* (1994), to scandalous "exposés" of Eleanor's friendships and Franklin's relationships.

What British biographer Hazel Rowley brings is an objective point of view and a very readable style that makes this well-worn subject riveting and moving, for we see FDR and ER as human beings, not historical figures. The author makes us feel a sadness that two such extraordinary political leaders, who led the United States through the Depression and World War II, were unable to fill each other's emotional needs. Their marriage is extraordinary mostly in what they were able to hide from the world.

The author had access to Daisy Suckley's letters, which Joe Lash did not. She also relied on the three volumes of FDR's personal letters, Eleanor's letters, newspaper columns, and three autobiographies, as well as accounts written by family members, friends, and colleagues. In the

first sentence of her preface, Rowley writes that “the best museum I’ve ever visited, anywhere in the world, is the Franklin D. Roosevelt Museum and Library in Hyde Park.”

Without trying to play psychologist, Rowley describes the different upbringings of Franklin and Eleanor within the upper crust of New York society: Franklin—a spoiled only child, headstrong, and used to getting his own way through the charm and force of his personality; Eleanor—the ugly duckling orphan who idolized her uncle Theodore, resented her domineering mother-in-law Sara, and who only came to respect herself following her English boarding-school experience and her volunteer activities in New York. The betrayal she felt when she discovered Lucy Mercer’s love letters to Franklin destroyed whatever emotional bonds had existed in their marriage.

Rowley focuses a great deal on FDR’s tremendous self-discipline and physical courage through the unbearable pain of his crippling polio and other health problems. For example, she describes the ordeal of a 46-hour plane trip that Franklin took in 1942, with all of its bumps and jolts, to meet Winston Churchill in Casablanca. And all that he wrote to his wife was: “I’m a bit tired – too much plane.”

Rowley sees Franklin’s flirtations with his secretary Missy LeHand, his cousin Daisy Suckley, and Norwegian Princess Martha as escape valves for his physical limitations and the tensions of his office. But she also brings new insights into Eleanor’s friendships with journalist Lorena Hickok, state trooper Earl Miller, student activist Joseph Lash, and her physician Dr. David Gurewitsch.

This is definitely a book for someone who wants a good introduction to the private lives of two of the most prominent public figures of the twentieth century.

# DOCUMENTATION



# ISAAC MITCHELL'S THREE NOVELLAS: A SAMPLER

*(I am deeply indebted to Hugh MacDougall, secretary of the James Fenimore Cooper Society, for permission to use the following biographical material concerning Isaac Mitchell, as well as for his patient and careful transcriptions of Mitchell's novellas. All three of Mitchell's novellas can be found online at the Cooper Web site. <http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/introduction/mitchell/mitchell.html>. As a sampler, I offer below the first two chapters of each.)*

## **Life and Work**

**I**saac Mitchell (1759-1812) was a Republican (Jeffersonian) newspaperman. But he is known today primarily as the author of a work of fiction, *Alonzo and Melissa* which, in turn, is best known for having been successfully pirated by one Daniel Jackson, Jr., under whose name it was read by countless readers through most of the 19th century.

Mitchell was born near Albany about 1759. From 1798 until his death of typhus on November 26, 1812, he was a journalist (publisher, editor, writer), mostly in Poughkeepsie, New York, but for a time in Albany. His politics was strongly Jeffersonian Republican. The details of his career remain to be worked out, but he was involved with the following newspapers.

*American Farmer and Dutchess County Advertiser*, Poughkeepsie, New York. Weekly, published June 8, 1798 – July 22, 1800. Scattered issues have survived. According to *American Authors*, Mitchell founded this publication in January 1799, and was its editor, but it was first published six months before.

**The Guardian**, Poughkeepsie, New York. Weekly, published 1801-1802. No issues seem to have survived. According to *American Authors*, Mitchell joined this paper about 1801, and the following year purchased an interest and in June 1802 re-named it the *Political Barometer*.

**Political Barometer**, Poughkeepsie, New York. Weekly, published June 8, 1802 - Aug. 21, 1811. A complete file has survived, and is available on microfilm from the New York State Library (cost in 2002, \$15.00). Mitchell was publisher and editor (at first with Jesse Buel, 1778-1839). Buel's name was dropped from the masthead at the end of May 1805, and Mitchell remained in charge until the end of August 1806, when he sold the paper to Thomas Nelson and Son. It was in this newspaper, the *Political Barometer* that his three long stories were published. After 1811 the paper was continued as the *Republican Herald* [see below].

**Republican Crisis**. Albany, New York. Semi-weekly, published Nov. 11, 1806 - Dec. 27, 1808. A complete file has survived, and is available on microfilm. Mitchell was its editor. This paper was a continuation of *The Albany centinel* (1797-1806) and was continued in turn by *The Balance*, and *New-York State journal* (Jan. 4, 1809 - Dec. 29, 1810) and *Balance, and State Journal* (Jan. 1 - Dec. 24, 1811). It was also related to *The Balance, and Columbian Repository* of Hudson, New York (May 21, 1801 - Dec. 29, 1807).

**Republican Herald**, Poughkeepsie, New York. Weekly, published August 28, 1811-1823. Called *Northern Politician* from Sept. 16 - Dec. 9, 1812. Isaac Mitchell's name appears on some issues for 1812. A complete file has survived, and is available on microfilm. Mitchell was editor from 1808-1811.

**Plebean**, Kingston, New York. Weekly, published June 30, 1803 - July 25, 1815. Published by Buel and Mitchell. Scattered issues, 1803-1805 have survived. Editor from August 5, 1805 - January 19, 1813 was Jesse Buel, who had been co-owner of the *Political Barometer* with Isaac Mitchell from 1802-1805. It is not clear whether Mitchell was involved in this paper, described as "anti-Federalist," during the period. Jesse Buel seems to have moved to Albany in 1813, and was State Printer there in 1818-1819.

**Publishing and printing:** The firm of Mitchell and Buel (Poughkeepsie) and Buel and Mitchell (Kingston) published a number of

books, almanacs, etc. between 1802-1805. In 1806 Isaac Mitchell of Albany printed a book published by Bacchus and Whiting.

Mitchell is best known as presumed author of three long stories, first published in the *Political Barometer*, and which we have transcribed from their original newspaper publication (typographical errors, etc., included):

**Albert and Eliza.** *Political Barometer*, June 8, 1802 - July 13, 1802.

**Melville and Phalez.** *Political Barometer*, June 7, 1803 - July 26, 1803.

**Alonzo and Melissa.** *Political Barometer*, June 8, 1804 - October 30, 1804.

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## POLITICAL BAROMETER.

“PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY MORNING BY MITCHELL & BUEL, TWO DOORS WEST OF THE HOTEL”

NUMB. 1.} *POUGHKEEPSIE*, TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 1802 {VOL. I.

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[No. 1; June 8, 1802, p. 4]

### ALBERT AND ELIZA.—A TALE.

*The public are assured that the principal incidents in the following story are literally true. They were transacted more than one hundred years ago, and have never before appeared in print.*

First Episode: *The Political Barometer*; Volume I, No. 1; June 8, 1802, p. 4]

IN the early settlement of North-America, the only son of a gentleman of Long-Island devoted his addresses to a young lady of the neighborhood, and as no impropitious impediments opposed their union, the marriage day was appointed under the most flattering auspices. Previous, however, to the consummation of that event, the father of the young man received advice from England, his native place, that by the death of one of his predecessors he became the rightful heir to a considerable inheritance, and that he himself, or some immediate branch of this family, should appear to substantiate the claim. As the old gentleman was considerably advanced in age, and his health in decay, it was concluded to send his son, whose name was Albert, and that his marriage should be suspended until his return. This was a heavy stroke to the young lovers, but as the circumstance was indispensable, they submitted to the decision, and Albert immediately prepared for his voyage, expecting to return in about one year. The parting scene was of the most tender nature; but with the greatest confidence in each other's fidelity, they looked forward to the time when they should, happily, again meet, and all past sorrows be lost in days of uninterrupted felicity.

Albert took his departure for England, and Eliza (the name of the lady) from Montauk-Point, pursued the ship with her eyes, until it mingled with the blue glimmer of distance, and, lessening, gradually receded, first the hulk, then the sails, till at last the whole was totally lost beneath the convexity of the billowy main. She stood a long time anxiously gazing at the place where the ship disappeared, and at length pensively returned to her father's house.

Eliza was a girl whose feelings were alive to all the refinements of sensibility [sic]. In her present situation, therefore, melancholy superceded her high-wrought expectations of happiness, which manifested itself in gloomy manners and rigid seclusion. She would frequently wander along the shores of Montauk, and from its extremest point would rivet her eyes to that distant part of the ocean where the ship which bore her Albert away was lost to her view. Here fancy presented innumerable barriers to the completion of her hopes. Perhaps the ship in which Albert sailed was already buried in the waves. Perhaps the fatigues of the sea, or some deleterious fever had forever closed the eyes of him she loved. Or, perhaps, absence and the charms of some trans-atlantic beauty might dis sever his attachment from the maid of his vows, and bind them to more advantageous prospects. These reflections tended to sink her still deeper in dejection. Her health became impaired, and her friends, after vainly attempting to arouse her attention to visible and cheerful objects, resolved to send her to reside awhile at the city of New-York, with her father's brother, hoping that change of situation might produce a change of ideas, and she again be induced to realize the blessings of society. To this arrangement she consented, more out of complaisance to the solicitation of her friends, than from her own choice.

At New-York, objects widely different from any which Eliza had before experienced, presented themselves, which, in some measure, awoke her from the stupor of thought. She had never, before, seen the gay and busy world. So sudden a removal from scenes of rural simplicity, to the theatre of active and brilliant life, could not fail to illuminate the dark mists of sadness, which, by degrees, gave place to more lucid ideas.

There were no stage-representations in New-York, at this early period; but there were fashionable amusements, and polite company. To these was Eliza frequently introduced, and every effort was made, by her new acquaintance, to render her situation pleasing and interesting. Her uncle was one of the settlers who came over from England with a splendid fortune, and classed [sic] with the first characters in the city; consequently the best company resorted to his house. He had a daughter of about the same age with Eliza, and a son something older. Nothing was wanting, on their part, to promote the happiness of their friend, and by all the visitors she was held in the highest consideration. Her bosom felt the pleasing powers of social reciprocity, and the discordant thrill of anguish more feebly vibrated the chords of affection. While she wandered along the margin of the shore, and beheld the distant approaching sails, as they

dimly appeared to rise out of the farthest verge of the ocean, she breathed a sigh to the remembrance of former joys, fondly anticipated a speedy return of those happy hours which would, effectually, obliterate every vestige of former cares and anxiety, and became tranquil.

(*To be continued.*)

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Second Episode, *The Political Barometer*, Volume I, No. 2; June 15, 1802, p. 4

AMONG those who visited at the house of Eliza's uncle, was a young gentleman of the name of Blake, who was nephew to the Governor of the province. Pleased with the manners and appearance of Eliza, he frequently attended her in public, and sometimes in company, only, of her cousins. He experienced, or fancied he experienced, greater happiness when in her presence, than he could any where else enjoy, and he became a more constant visitor to the family.

Blake was considerably older than Eliza. He had seen some gay days in England, which place he had left soon after the death of his father, by whose will he became possessed of an ample fortune, and came over to America with his kinsman on his appointment to the supreme magistracy of the colony. He was a youth of fashionable taste, of easy address, engaging manners, and of an agreeable appearance. He was one of those characters who are distinguished by the appellation of a Lady's man. He had no idea of forming any serious connection with Eliza; but he esteemed her innocent gaiety, admired her beauty, and was charmed with those indescribable graces which are ever the attendants of symmetry [sic] of form, sincerity of mind, and a vivacious, uncontaminated simplicity of manners. Eliza received his addresses as he designed them. She suffered him to attend her because she was willing to be attended by some person of distinction whenever she appeared in public; and to visit her on account of the respect with which he was treated, both in her uncle's family, and by all with whom he was acquainted. Balls were the principal amusements, and at these he was, with few exceptions, her partner. Her being ushered into notice by so conspicuous a character as Blake, gave her general eclat among the gentlemen, and caused her to become an object of envy to some of the ladies. It would be vanity to say that such flattering attention did not, in some degree, elate the heart of Eliza, for what bosom is there which is totally unsusceptible to the fascinating powers of adulation!

Blake had been particular to a Miss Smith, a lady of distinction in the city, who now became neglected, and consequently piqued, by his attendance upon Eliza. She considered her as a rival, and of course became her enemy. Of this, however, both her pride and her interest prevented her from making an avowal. She put on the appearance of the sincerest friendship to Eliza, and assiduously participated in her most retired intimacies.

The fame of Eliza had also raised up a serious rival to Blake. A Mr. Palmer, a man of gallantry, obsequiously bowed to her charms, and arduously strove to ingratiate himself into her favor. Blake and he seldom met, unless in public, but Palmer sought every opportunity, in the absence of his competitor, to engage her attention, and, if possible, diminish the preference and esteem which he supposed she entertained for Blake; this stimulated the latter to a more vigilant perseverance [sic]; his visits to Eliza became more frequent, and his attention more sedulous.

He waited on her one evening to offer himself as her partner at an approaching ball, and found, to his extreme vexation, that her hand had been previously engaged to Palmer. He did not [sic] remonstrate; this would have been improper; besides, he could claim no privilege so to do. He soon took leave and withdrew, in chagrin and disappointment.

At the assembly Blake danced with Miss Smith, but his spirits were sunk, and his natural vivacity depressed. On this he was rallied, and he complained of indisposition. Miss Smith and Palmer well knew what antidote would have removed the malady.

The next day he seriously consulted his situation. He found himself under the controul of an unconquerable passion; a passion which, like the electric fluid, finds no restraint but in the object of its attraction, or in its own dissolution. What was to be done? Was not she who had raised this tempest in his bosom worthy of honorable proposals? Was it not probable she would accept them if made in an honorable way?—Blake knew nothing of Albert, or of her being under any prior engagements. But were there no other barriers to a union with Eliza? There were, and serious ones too.—Barriers which none except himself and one other person were acquainted with, on this side the Atlantic. Were these impediments insurmountable? Could they not be removed? No plan which had hitherto presented itself, appeared of sufficient validity to enable him to surmount the obstacle.

Under the pressure of these reflections, he wandered, when evening came, along the banks of the Hudson, above the city, where the elms and

the willows, on the verge of the river, cast a dun, umbrageous shade. The sun was retiring behind the blue western hills, while the brazen summits of the steeped fanes, alone, held the last gleam of his reluctant ray. "The breeze's rustling wing, was in the tree," and the faintly murmuring wave dashed in melancholy cadence upon the pebbly shore. Twilight gathered around, when he heard voices and footsteps approaching. They came on—it was Eliza and her cousins, who were returning from participating the beauties of nature in an evening walk. He joined them, and the gloom which hovered about his mind was, in some measure, dissipated.

As the moved slowly on towards home, the company walked on, and Eliza and Blake were left together. She observed that an unusual pensiveness hung about him, and gaily enquired the occasion. This presented a fair opportunity for an *éclaircissement* [sic]. The beforementioned [sic] obstacles rushed across his mind, but Eliza was present, and the consequences vanished. He, therefore, freely disclosed his situation, as it respected her; told her that in attending to her from complaisance, his happiness had become seriously interested. That on her determination all his future prospects rested; and that if her feelings did not forbid a reciprocal return of affection, he stood ready to proffer her his hand and his heart.

Had a peal of thunder burst, in sheeted flame, from the heavens, it would not have shocked Eliza more than did this solemn declaration. She had never considered any attention which she had received from the gentlemen, other than the officious, refined politeness, which is common to the superior walks of life. She had esteemed Blake as her friend, but never thought of him as a suitor; and although she was pleased with him as an obsequious gallant, yet when set in comparison with Albert, whose likeness still glowed upon her heart in as lively colours as ever, he sunk into deformity. She wished not to realize the idea that any person except Albert should entertain, for her, a more exalted sentiment than that of friendship and esteem. To the professions of Blake, therefore, she could make no answer, which, had she attempted, her sensations would have choked her utterance [sic]. She hastily withdrew her hand, which he made but a feeble effort to detain, quickened her step and soon overtook the company. Blake attended her to her uncle's door; as he withdrew he whispered her, "am I to receive no answer?" She hesitated, and then with vehemence replied, "Sir, it is impossible," and immediately retired to her chamber.

## POLITICAL BAROMETER.

"PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY MORNING BY MITCHELL &  
BUEL, FIVE DOORS SOUTH OF THE COURTHOUSE"

NO 1, VOL II.} *POUGHKEEPSIE*, TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 1803  
{NUMB. 53.

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[No.53; June 7, 1803, p. 4]

### MELVILLE AND PHALEZ.—A TALE.

*The following story is compiled from an ancient document, now in the hands of the writer; it has never before appeared in print.*

MANY years ago, there lived in England a gentleman whose name was Melville, who had been bred up to the mercantile business, and for several years was an eminent merchant in London, but by repeated losses and disappointments, he at length became so reduced as to be obliged to relinquish business, and to engage as a clerk to a principal house in that city; his integrity and accuracy in business, so far gained the confidence and the esteem of his employers, that they, in conjunction with several other merchants, appointed him their agent and supercargo to foreign countries. He performed many successful voyages, to the satisfaction of his owners, and to his own advantage, till finally his affairs became completely unembarrassed.

He was once sent on a trading voyage to Turkey, and as he was one day walking the streets of Constantinople, he discovered, by the way side, the dead body of a man, lying naked on the ground. He enquired of the natives why the body was suffered to lie unburied, and was told that the man, when living, was a Chr[i]stian, and that dying considerably in debt, his creditor had, by their laws, a right to prevent his interment, unless some person appeared to satisfy the demand; he asked to what sum the debt amounted, the answer was five hundred sequins (nearly niue [sic] hundred dollars;) he desired the creditor to be called, to whom he immediately paid the demand, and had the satisfaction to see the body of the poor Christian decently interred.

A few days after this he was informed that a female slave was to be executed in the public square, near the market place. Sympathy more than curiosity led him to the spot, where he found an immense concourse of people gathered. In the centre of the square was a large vase, filled with water, in which the unfortunate victim was to be strangled. Already were

the cords fastened around her neck, her hands were bound, and she stood tremblingly awaiting the signal which was to seal her doom. Melville approached the place where she stood, and found her to be a fair and very beautiful maiden, to appearance about eighteen years of age; of what nation she was, he could not learn; he asked for what crime she was to suffer, and was told it was for striking her mistress, a Turkish lady belonging to one of the Bashaws. He approached the chief executioner and demanded her ransom; it was ten thousand sequins! (seventeen thousand five hu[n]dred dollars.) What could he do? This sum could not speedily be obtained, and the execution could not be long postponed; he desired, however, that it might be suspended; they gave him thirty minutes, the most extended limits which could be granted. He hastened to the house of an English merchant, the only person in that country of whom he could obtain credit—he was not at home! What course could he pursue? He ran to the public place, where merchants from various nations commonly resort at certain hours in the day to transact business; he was not there; he hastened to the divan, which foreigners sometimes attend; there he was not—he ran back to the place of execution, supposing he might possibly be among the crowd; just as he arrived there, the fatal time had elapsed; he heard the awful sentence given, and the *criminal* was plunged into the water! He flew to the vase, wrested the cords from the hands of the mutes, clasped the strangling female in his arms and extricated her from immediate death. The people stared; the executioner commanded him to be seized, and bound, which was instantly done. At that moment his friend, the merchant, whom he had been seeking, came up, and finding how matters stood, immediately advanced the ransom; This softened the austerity of the Turkish officers, and Melville and the lady were both set free.

The lady was conveyed to the merchant's house in a state little superior to that of inanimation. Every attention was paid to her situation, but it was some days before she recovered so far as to arrange her intellectual powers for regular conversation. When correct reason resumed its empire, she expressed her gratitude to her deliverer in the most noble and exalted terms. She conversed fluently in French, and partially in English. Melville found that her mental and personal accomplishments were, in all respects, equal to that of the first English ladies; her artificial acquirements were otherwise; her manners were dissimilar, though he considered them not less engaging. This circumstance, however, was sufficient to convince him that her taste and refinements had not been dictated by the courtly belles of Europe.

Mellville [sic] was about twenty-eight years of age; not inferior in manly graces; of an amiable disposition, and eminently possessed of those qualities which embellish the character of civilized man. He had seen little of the world, except what is exhibited in the counting-house, on the seas, and in foreign ports. His sensibilities frequently drew upon his purse, beyond what his means could supply, as in the present case; the sum he had advanced for the ransom of the fair captive, was far beyond his income; but he trusted that when he arrived in England, a subscription might be raised for the amount; or, if this failed, he had a small personal estate near London, where resided his aged mother, and from the sale of this, with what fragments remained of his former fortune, the sum might be obtained [sic]. At any rate he resolved that his friend, who loaned him the money, should be repaid.

These determinations he mentioned to the merchant, who replied in these words—"We must share equally in the act of relieving this unfortunate lady; the one half of the money I will charge to your account, but give yourself no anxiety about the payment; wait until I write you, which I shall do soon after you return to England, I will then inform you when it is necessary for you to make the remittance." Melville expressed his gratitude in the overflowings of a feeling heart.

The time now had nearly arrived when Melville must return to England. He desired, yet feared to know something more concerning the situation of the beautiful stranger; her country, her connections, her wishes; how she came in captivity, and where she would wish to be conveyed. But where could he convey her? There was an indescribable *something* within his bosom which whispered him, that to part with her would be the severest stroke he could experience. His affections, he found, were riveted, but upon an object which probably could not reciprocate them. Or if otherwise, he had nothing but affection to render that object happy; his poverty was therefore an unsurmountable bar to such a union. But perhaps—the thought thrilled his frame—perhaps he was now holding her in a captivity worse than that from which she had escaped. This must be the height of cruelty.—Had she not brothers—sisters—parents—and, alas!—(intrusive and excruciating suggestion)—perhaps a lover—dear to her soul as the vital current which feeds the rose upon her cheek and the lily upon her bosom. "Away, then (said he) with all selfish views; her happiness shall be consulted, her choice shall be fulfilled; be the consequence to me as it may, she shall be restored to her country, her friends and her acquaintance."

With this resolution, he went to the lady's apartment.—"I am come, madam (said he) to inform you that business requires my immediate return to England, my native country; if, before I depart, I can render you any particular services, you will please to name them; perhaps you would choose to return to your own country; perhaps your choice is to remain here;—whatever your wishes may be, you have only to name them, and, if within my power, they shall be complied with." "Your magnanimity (returned the lady) has been such as to place it beyond a doubt that your generosity and benevolence would be extended to all the various situations in which distressed humanity can be placed; the obligation which I feel myself under to you, renders it improper for me to make a choice unwarranted by your approbation; if I may be permitted, however, to suggest my wishes, I should choose to leave this place as speedily as possible. You mentioned, Sir, that you were about to return to your own country; if you will convey me there, some opportunity may then possibly offer (she sighed deeply) by which I may once more see my friends, (a tear trembled in her eye) who live in distant—far distant parts."

"I beg, Madam, (replied Melville) that you will not distress me (she glanced a scrutinizing look upon him) by a recurrence to my past services; they were no more than honor and duty require to every fellow creature in distress. (Her eyes fell, and a spontaneous flush of crimson suffused her cheek.) With pleasure will I convey you to England; from whence there can be little doubt but that you will soon regain your friends and family."

"Is it a long voyage to England?" enquired she. "Considerably so, (replied Melville) tho' perhaps nearer to your own country than you are at present." "I understand you, Sir, (she said) but cannot tell you whether it be so or not. As I was going by sea to visit a family connection, we were driven a great way out of our course by a storm, where we were taken in the night by a Turkish pirate; all the men in our vessel were massacred because they made some resistance. An old lady and myself were the only women on board; she received a wound in the affray, of which she died before we arrived in port; I was sold as a slave, and have been in bondage about eighteen months; the woman with whom I lived treated me very harshly, which I bore with patience, knowing there was no remedy; but one day she most cruelly beat a female domestic for no other reason but because she was ill and unable to labor. In attempting to appease her anger, she struck me a severe blow in my face, which so exasperated me, that before I had time to reflect, I returned the blow, which unhappily took such an effect as to cause a copious flow of blood from her nose; and for

this I was condemned to the violent death from which your bounty released me. As to my labor, I had not great reason to complain; needlework, of which I have some understanding, was the daily task which was assigned me. Further information at present, you may esteem unnecessary, and even this you may consider officious, but I apprehended that you wished some sketch of my history, and I have accordingly given it.—My name is PHALEZ.”

Melville found that although Phalez had given him an account of some local circumstances of her life, yet she had studiously avoided the most material points, which he was anxious to know. Her family, and the place of her nativity were kept entirely out of view. He forbore, however, to press her further upon this subject, supposing she had sufficient reasons for the concealment. One great object, & to him the most important one, was obtained—she would accompany him to England. This was a circumstance which he had no reason to expect; for the *present*, therefore, he was content, trusting to subsequent events for the *future*.

They soon left Constantinople, and in due time arrived in London. Phalez chose to reside with Melville's mother, which being a retired situation, suited her disposition far better than the noise and bustle of the city.

(To be continued.)

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[No. 54; June 14, 1803]

MELLVILLE [sic], though he had several offers, could never think of undertaking new voyages, until the destiny of Phalez was decided. She had desired him to inform her of the different ports to which ships were daily sailing, which request he punctually obeyed; he found that she attended to this information with an anxiety consequent upon anticipated disappointment. The oft repeated sigh, and the not unfrequent tear, witnessed the effects which this disappointment produced upon her mind.

Melville endeavored to divert her melancholy by every means in his power. Her story became known among his friends in London, to whom he introduced her, but neither could his solicitude, nor their attention, induce her to the participation of amusements, or to mingle with the fashionable gaieties of life. Her situation was the constant theme of Melville's contemplations; he wished to *relieve* her, but dreaded to apply the *antidote*. She must be restored to her friends, and of course she would be lost

to him. He would willingly protract her stay, were he not sure it would render her unhappy. But why protract it? what would he gain thereby? The happiness of her conversation; the pleasure of a conversant intimacy with those perfections which he could never cease to admire. Any thing farther than this, if he had hopes, he had no assurances of obtaining.

Another circumstance called for his attention and exertion. The money which he had borrowed of the Turkish merchant must be raised; his benefactor must be repaid; to do this, he knew of no method but to sell his patrimonial estate, and in consequence, his means would be so far reduced as to render him incapable of providing even for his own exigencies [sic], much more for that of another; he saw, therefore, no remedy for himself but misery and unhappiness.

While he was one day revolving these things in his mind, he received a letter from the above mentioned merchant, including an invitation, with advantageous offers, to undertake a voyage to Persia, in his employ. On the margin of this letter was the following postscript.

“I have concluded to discharge to you the trifling sum you borrowed of me, and you shall receive my receipt, accordingly, when you arrive in Constantinople.”

So much generosity and philanthropy rendered powerless every resolution Melville had taken against future voyages; he considered that not only gratitude but necessity demanded that he should comply with the offer: his finances were nearly exhausted; some plan must be fallen upon to replenish them, and none more likely than this; the Persian trade, though a difficult one, was yet very rich; his prospects, his duty and his obligations, therefore, stimulated him to accept the proposal.

But what was to be the fate of Phalez? In his absence she might return to her own country, and he might lose her for ever. But should an opportunity offer for her return, would his stay have any influence upon her determination?—Ought not her choice to be his own? Could his wishes run counter to her's? And was it not unjust to attempt an influence over her destinies? But why these reasonings? One principle he had laid down, and from this he would never depart—her happiness only should be his object, as far as he had, in her concerns, any kind of agency.

It was necessary that he should inform Phalez of his intended voyage; he therefore sought an opportunity to converse with her upon the subject; he had attended her one afternoon to the house of a friend; after returning

home he addressed her in the following manner:—"I have perceived, madam, that your mind appears frequently oppressed with a weight of melancholy; if any thing more than I apprehend should be the cause, and if I could be useful in removing it, you have only to command and be obeyed." "Of this I can entertain no doubt (she replied.) There is nothing upon my mind but what you have a right to be informed of—I wish I could be more cheerful—but—I am a stranger in a strange land, and know not—when—my parents——(she burst into tears)—excuse me, sir, at present, on so tender a subject." "Can I not, madam, (said Melville) send intelligence to your parents, or convey you to them?" "Perhaps that time may come, (she said) at present I know of no method." "Ships to all parts of the earth (said he) sail from these ports, nothing in my power shall be spared to render you happy."

*Phalez.* (her countenance brightened) Still, sir, are you conferring increasing obligations upon me, which I can never sufficiently acknowledge.

*Melville* [sic]. You cannot be contented in England, madam?

*Phalez.* I have, sir, an indulgent father—a tender mother——

*Melville.* After you shall have been restored to them——

*Phalez.* To you and your honorable mother I am bound by the strongest ties; I have no aversion to England, especially—but—(she hesitated.)

*Melville.* (with ardor) Dear Phalez, I will be explicit; could you, after being restored to your parents, consent to bless the unhappy Melville; would you be willing to be his for life?

As play the *aurora borealis* on the fleecy clouds of the north, thus alternately glowed the cheek of the confused Phalez. She trembled, and with hesitance thus replied. "You, sir, have redeemed me from slavery; I am therefore your servant. I depend—I exist—daily exist upon your bounty. Poor—unsupported by friends—a beggar! You, sir, have reputable connections; are honored, esteemed, and respected. To unite yourself to a person of my pretensions, and situation in life, might be of serious injury to you, as it respects all these; this, therefore, *if there was no other objection*, is of sufficient force to prevent our union. (Melville was about to interrupt her—she begged to proceed.) You have generously permitted me to make my own determinations: I know you will still grant me that privilege. You have never denied me a single request, I know you will

never deny me; let me then, sir, entreat you—suffer me to solicit you, by ever tender consideration, never to mention this subject again.”

Melville was thunder-struck; he could make no reply. He traversed the room with hasty and unequal steps, and at length, with a tremulous voice, thus answered: “You shall be obeyed, madam; but allow me, in my turn, to make also one request: I am about to set out for Constantinople, from whence I am to make a mercantile voyage to the distant parts of Persia; I shall, likewise, be charged with a negociation to the prince of that country, which may detain me a considerable time. Whatever may be my fate or thine, so long as I live I shall feel a peculiar interest in your favor. Will you consent to tarry with my aged mother until my return; I ask no more.” A beam of unusual joy lighted up the aspect of Phalez, she readily acquiesced in his proposal, and he immediately set about preparing for his voyage.

On his departure, Phalez presented him with a silk vest, richly embroidered with gold and silver, by her own hands. The embroiderings and decorations were such as he had never before seen, highly finished and of exquisite beauty. “Take these (said she, with a smile of plaintive expression) and whenever you visit a foreign court, wear it, and remember Phalez.” “I needed not that injunction (said Melville, accepting the present) my remembrance of Phalez can only cease with life.”

He soon after sailed for Constantinople, where he met his benefactor, the merchant, who presented him with a full discharge of the debt he owed him, shortly after which he took his departure for Persia.

The trade to that country from Europe was, at that time, carried on altogether through the medium of Turkey. Hence in England little was known of the Persian commerce. It was difficult, as part of the journey must be performed over land, but it was profitable; their rich silks, cloths of gold and silver, tapestry, &c. were first imported by the Turkish merchants, and thence exported to various parts of the world. This, indeed, is much the case at the present day; there is not a mercantile Persian company in any part of Europe; all their valuable manufactures are received through other hands; and, in fact, much less is known to Europeans of this ancient, rich, fertile, and extensive country, than of India beyond the Ganges.

When Melville arrived at his port of destination, he had still a considerable journey to prosecute, as the residence of the prince was considerably inland. The merchants who traded to that country, sent large presents

to the prince, which were delivered to him by their agents, and they then received, from him, permission to trade in his dominions. On this journey Melville set out in company with a number of others. As he proceeded along, he was charmed with the appearance of the country; its luxurious fertility; the salubrious fragrance of the air, odored with the numerous sweets of flowers which were scattered in wild profusion along the field, the lapse [sic] of falling waters, as they descended the sloping acclivities, the mingling music of strange birds, which resounded thro' the adjacent groves, all conspire[d] to excite pleasing sensations in his bosom: his contemplations reverted back to London; the "thoughts of home" arrested the powers of his mind; he wafted a sigh to Phalez, and pleasingly pensive passed along.

Spacious ruins frequently attracted his notice, which had outlived the remembrance of man. Their structure was dissimilar to any thing of modern or Gothic architecture; but they spoke the sublimity and magic powers of this art, in the earliest ages of the world. Agriculture was criminally neglected, owing to the indolence of the peasantry, and the spontaneous production of the soil. But the manufactures, he every where found were in a flourishing state. He perceived that the debased state of society in that country, was not so much owing to the oppression of its rulers, as to the slothful disposition of its inhabitants.

On the third evening of their journey, they arrived within a few miles of the prince's palace.

*(To be continued)*

## POLITICAL BAROMETER.

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No. 105; June 5, 1804, p. 4

### ALONZO AND MELISSA — A TALE.

IN the time of the late American Revolution, two young gentlemen of Connecticut, who had formed an indissoluble friendship, Graduated at Yale College in New Haven; their names were EDGAR and ALONZO; Edgar was the son of a respectable farmer, Alonzo's father was an eminent merchant; Edgar was designed for the desk, Alonzo for the bar; but as they were allowed some vacant time after their graduation before they entered upon their professional studies, they improved this interim in mutual friendly visits, mingling with select parties in the amusements of the day, and in travelling through some parts of the United States.

Edgar had a sister who, for some time had resided with her cousin at New London. She was now about to return, and it was designed that Edgar should go and attend her home; previous to the day on which he was to set out, he was unfortunately thrown from his horse, which so much injured him as to prevent his prosecuting his intended journey; he therefore invited Alonzo to supply his place, which invitation he readily accepted, and at the day appointed set out for New-London, where he arrived, delivered his introductory letters to Edgar's cousin, and was received with the most friendly politeness.

MELISSA, the sister of Edgar, was about sixteen years of age. She was not what is esteemed a *striking beauty*, but her appearance was pleasingly interesting. Her figure was elegant; her aspect was attempted [sic] with a pensive mildness, which in her cheerful moments would light up into sprightliness and vivacity. Though on first impressions her countenance was marked by a sweet and thoughtful serenity, yet she eminently possessed the power to

*“Call round her laughing eyes, in playful turns,  
The glance that lightens, and the smile that burns.”*

Her mind was adorned with those delicate graces, which are the first ornaments of female excellence. Her manners were graceful without af-

fectionation, and her taste had been properly directed by a suitable education.

Alonzo was about twenty one years old; he had been esteemed an excellent student. His appearance was manly, open and free, his eye indicated a nobleness of soul; though his aspect was tinged with melancholy, yet he was naturally cheerful. His disposition was of the romantic cast:

*“For far beyond the pride and pomp of power,  
He lov'd the realms of nature to explore;  
With lingering gaze Edinian spring survey'd;  
Morn's fairy splendours; night's gay curtain'd shade,  
The high hoar cliff, the grove's benighting gloom,  
The wild rose, widow'd o'er the mouldering tomb;  
The heaven embosom'd sun; the rainbow's die,  
Where lucid forms disport to fancy's eye;—  
The vernal flower, mild autumn's purpling glow  
The Summer's thunder, and the Winter's snow.”*

It was evening when Alonzo arrived at the house of Edgar's cousin. Melissa was at a ball which had been given on a matrimonial occasion, in the town. Her cousin waited on Alonzo to the ball, and introduced him to Melissa, who received him with politeness. She was dressed in white, embroidered and spangled with rich silver lace; a silk girdle, enwrought and tasseled with gold, surrounded her waist; her hair, was unadorned except by a wreath of artificial flowers, studded by a single diamond.

After the ball closed they returned to the house of Edgar's cousin. Melissa's partner at the ball was the son of a gentleman of independent fortune in New London. He was a gay young man, aged about twenty-five. His address was easy, his manners rather voluptuous than refined; confident but not ungraceful. He led the ton in fashionable circles; gave taste its *zest*, and was quite a favorite with the ladies—*generally*. His name was *Beauman*.

Edgar's cousin proposed to detain Alonzo and Melissa a few days, during which time they passed in visiting select friends, and in social parties. Beauman was an assiduous attendant upon Melissa; he came one afternoon to invite her to ride out; she was indisposed and excused herself; at evening she proposed walking out with her cousin and his lady, but they were prevented from attending her, by unexpected company. Alonzo offered to accompany her. It was one of those beautiful evenings in the

month of June, when Nature, in those parts of America, is arrayed in her richest dress. They left the town, and walked through fields adjoining the harbour. The moon shone in full lustre, her white beams trembling upon the glassy main, where skiffs and sails of various descriptions were passing and repassing. The shores of Long Island, and the other islands in the harbour, appeared dimly to float among the waves. The air was adorned with the fragrance of surrounding flowers; the sound of various instrumental music wafted from the town, rendered sweeter by distance, while the whipperwill's sprightly song echoed along the adjacent groves. Far in the eastern horizon, hung a pile of brazen clouds, which had passed from the north, over which, the crinkling red lightning [sic] momentarily darted, and, at times, long peals of thunder were faintly heard. They walked to a point of the beach where stood a large rock, whose base was washed by every tide. On this rock they seated themselves, and enjoyed awhile the splendours of the scene—the drapery of nature. “To this place (said Melissa) have I taken many a solitary walk, on such an evening as this, and seated on this rock, have I experienced more pleasing sensations than I ever received in the most splendid ball-room.” The idea impressed the mind of Alonzo; it was congenial with the feelings of his soul.

They returned at a late hour, and the next day set out for home. Beauman handed Melissa into the carriage, and he, with Edgar's cousin and his lady, attended them on their first day's journey. They put up at night at the house of an acquaintance in Branford. The next morning they parted; Melissa's cousin, his lady, and Beauman, returned to New-London; Alonzo and Melissa pursued their journey, and at evening arrived at her father's house, which was in the westerly part of the state.

*(To be continued)*

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[No. 106; June 12, 1804, p. 4]

MELISSA was received with joyful tenderness by her friends. Edgar soon recovered from his fall, and cheerfulness again assumed its most pleasing aspect in the family. Edgar's father was a plain Connecticut farmer. He was rich, and his riches had been acquired by his diligent attention to business. He had loaned money, and taken mortgages on lands and houses for security, and as payment frequently failed, he often had opportunities of purchasing the involved premises at his own price. He well knew the worth of a shilling, & how to apply it to its *best use*; and in casting interest,

he was sure never to loose [sic] a farthing. He had no other children except Edgar and Melissa, on whom he doated. Destitute of literature himself, he had provided the means of obtaining it for his son, and as he was a rigid presbyterian, he considered that Edgar could no where figure so well, or gain more eminence, than in the sacred desk.

The time now arrived when Edgar and Alonzo were to part. The former repaired to New-York, where he was to enter upon his professional studies. The latter entered in the office of an eminent attorney, in his native town, which was about twenty miles distant from the village in which lived the family of Edgar and Melissa. Alonzo was the frequent guest of this family; for although Edgar was absent, their [sic] was still a charm which attracted him hither. If he had admired the manly virtues of the brother, could he fail to adore the sublimer graces of the sister? If all the sympathies of the most ardent friendship had been drawn forth towards the former, must not the most tender passions of the soul be attracted by the milder and more refined excellencies of the other?

Beauman had become the suitor of Melissa; but the distance of his residence rendered it inconvenient to visit her often. He came regularly about once in two or three months; of course Alonzo and he sometimes met. Beauman had made no serious pretentions, but his particularity indicated something more than fashionable politeness. His manners, his independent situation, his family, entitled him to respect. It was not probable, therefore, that he would be objectionable to Melissa's friends—*Nor to Melissa herself*—said Alonzo, with an involuntary sigh.

But as Beauman's visits to Melissa became more frequent, an increasing anxiety took place in Alonzo's bosom. He wished her to remain single; the idea of losing her by marriage gave him inexpressible regret. What substitute could supply the happy hours he had passed in her company? what charm could wing the lingering moments when she was gone? In the recess of his studies, he could, in a few hours, be at the seat of her father; there his cares were dissipated, and the troubles of life, real or imaginary, on light pinions fled away. How different would be the scene when debarred from the unreserved friendship and conversation of Melissa! And unreserved it could not be, were she not exclusively mistress of herself. But was there not *something* of a more refined texture than *friendship* in his predilection for the company of Melissa? If so, why not avow it? His prospects, his family, and of course his pretensions might not be inferior to those of Beauman. But perhaps Beauman was preferred. His

opportunities had been greater. He had formed an acqu[ai]ntance with her. Distance proved no barrier to his addresses. His visits became more and more frequent. Was it not then highly probable that he had secured her affections? Thus reasoned Alonzo, but the reasoning tended not to allay the tempest which was gathering in his bosom. He ordered his horse, and was in a short time at the seat of Melissa's father.

It was summer, and towards evening when he arrived. Melissa was sitting by the window when he entered the hall. She arose and received him with a smile. "I have just been thinking of an evening's walk, (said she,) but had no one to attend me, and you have come just in time to perform that office. I will order tea immediately, while you rest from the fatigues of your journey."—When tea was served up, a servant entered the room with a letter which he had found in the yard. Melissa received it—"Tis a letter (said she) which I sent by Beauman to a lady in New-London, and the careless man has lost it." Turning to Alonzo, "I forgot to tell you that your friend Beauman has been with us a few days; he left us this morning." "My friend!" replied Alonzo, hastily. "Is he not your friend?" enquired Melissa. "I beg pardon madam (answered he) my mind was absent." "He requested us to present his respects to his friend Alonzo," said she. Alonzo bowed, and turned the conversation.

They walked out and took a winding path which led along pleasant fields by a gliding stream, through a little grove, and up a slopeing [sic] eminence, which commanded an extensive prospect of the surrounding country, Long Island, the sound between that and the main-land; and the opening thereof to the distant ocean.—A soft and silent shower had descended; a thousand transitory gems trembled upon the foliage, glittering to the western ray. A bright rainbow sat upon a southern cloud. The light gales whispered among the branches, agitated the young harvest to billowy motion, or waved the tops of the distant, deep green forest, with majestic grandeur. Flocks, herds and cot[t]ages, were scattered over the variegated landscape. Hills piled upon hills, receding, faded from the pursuing eye, mingling with the blue mist which hovered around the extremest verge of the horizon.—"This is a most beautiful scene," said Melissa.

It is indeed, (replied Alonzo.) Can New-London boast so charming a prospect?"

*Melissa.*—No—yes—Indeed I can hardly say. You know Alonzo, how I am charmed with the rock at the point of the beach.

*Alonzo.*—You told me of the happy hours you had passed at that place. Perhaps the company which attended you there, gave the scenery its highest embellishment.

*Mel.* I know not how it happened; but you are the only person who ever attended me there.

*Al.* That is a little surprising.

*Mel.* Why surprising?

*Al.* Where was Beauman?

*Mel.* Perhaps he was not fond of solitude. Besides, he was not always my *beau-man*.

*Al.* Sometimes.

*Mel.* Yes, sometimes.

*Al.* And now, *always*.

*Mel.* Not *this evening*.

*Al.* He formally addresses you.

*Mel.* Well.

*Al.* And will soon claim the exclusive privilege so to do.

*Mel.* That does not follow of course.

*Al.* Of course, if his intentions are sincere, and the wishes of another should accord therewith.

*Mel.* Who am I to understand by *another*?

*Al.* Melissa. (*A pause ensued.*)

*Mel.* See that ship, Alonzo, coming up the sound; how she plows through the white foam, while the breezes flutter among the sails, varying with the beams of the sun.

*Al.* Yes, it is almost down.

*Mel.* What is almost down?

*Al.* The sun. Was not you speaking of the sun, madam?

*Mel.* Your mind is absent, Alonzo; I was speaking of yonder ship.

*Al.* I beg pardon, Madam.—O yes—the ship—It—it bounds with rapid motion over the waves.

A pause ensued. They walked leisurely around the hill, and moved towards home. The sun sunk behind the western hills. Twilight arose in the east, and floated along the air. Darkness began to hover around the woodlands and vallies [sic]. The beauties of the landscape slowly receded. "This reminds me of our walk at New-London," said Melissa. "Do you remember it?["] enquired Alonzo; "certainly I do, (she replied) I shall never forget the sweet pensive scenery of my favorite rock"——"Nor I neither," said Alonzo, with a deep-drawn sigh.

The next day Alonzo returned to his studies; but different from his former visits to Melissa, instead of exhilarating his spirits, this had tended to depress them. He doubted whether Melissa was not already engaged to Beauman. His hopes would persuade [sic] him that this was not the case; but his fears declared otherways [sic].

*(To be continued)*

# A POUGHKEEPSIE LAWYER CHALLENGES SAMUEL MORSE ON SLAVERY

*Edited by Roger Donway*

My article in this issue of the yearbook, "Samuel Morse's Christian Philosophy of Slavery," mentions Morse's participation in the February 4, 1863, meeting at Delmonico's restaurant that founded the anti-abolitionist Society for the Diffusion of Political Knowledge as a response to the Emancipation Proclamation, issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863. Apparently, Morse invited to that meeting the esteemed American literary figure William Cullen Bryant, who was then senior editor of the New York *Evening Post*. Thus, a reporter sent by Bryant to cover the meeting was admitted, although other journalists were not. The result was a scathing article in the next day's *Post*, and, several weeks later, a reproachful letter to Morse written by Republican Edward N. Crosby, a Poughkeepsie lawyer.<sup>1</sup> Morse took the opportunity of Crosby's letter to write a reply and turn it into the Society's fourth pamphlet. Here, however, I present only Crosby's letter, for although Morse's reply contains many interesting reflections on the politics of the day, it is theology not politics that ultimately drove Morse's view. Five months later, therefore, he took up the suggestion noted in this monograph that the whole issue of slavery had to be considered in terms of "fundamental theological principles." That idea produced his monograph "An Argument on the Ethical Position of Slavery," which my article in this issue analyzes at length.

No. 4.

PAPERS FROM THE SOCIETY

FOR THE

Diffusion of Political Knowledge.

THE LETTER OF A REPUBLICAN,

EDWARD N. CROSBY, Esq.,

OF POUGHKEEPSIE,

To Prof. S. F. B. MORSE, Feb. 25, 1863,

AND

Prof. MORSE'S REPLY,

March 2d, 1863.

“Law — her seat is the bosom of God, her voice is the harmony of the world: all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the *very least* as feeling her *care*, the *greatest* as not exempted from her *power*.”  
— Richard Hooker.

“What constitutes a State?  
Men who their *duties* know,  
But know their *rights*, and knowing dare maintain.  
And SOVEREIGN LAW, *that State's collected will*,  
Sits empress, crowning good, repressing ill.”  
— Sir William Jones.

## LETTER FROM EDWARD N. CROSBY, Esq.

Troy, Feb. 25th, 1863.

Prof. S. F. B. Morse:

My Dear and Respected Sir: I have read with deep interest the letter in the N. Y. Evening *Post* of the 19th inst., addressed to you by Mr. D. D. Field.<sup>2</sup> Its general tenor harmonizes with views which I have long coveted the privilege of expressing to you, but which have been repressed by a constitutional feeling of respect for eminence and seniority, and a fear of even seeming officiously to intrude. But, as Mr. Field suggests, your fame has become a national inheritance, and this alike is a motive and an apology for a jealous care on the part of your fellow-citizens as to aught that may impair its lustre. It is the omissions, however, rather than the contents of Mr. Field's sensible and temperate letter that prompt me to speak. While appealing to you on many high grounds, still he fails to reach the highest from which the subject is to be viewed. And I trust it is not assuming too much for one who is not only an admiring fellow-countryman and a near neighbor, but also a Christian friend, to discuss this matter with you from the Christian's stand-point. And what, may I ask, appears to you the sufficient reason for a Christian citizen to ally himself with others, for the extreme and radical purpose of undermining or paralyzing the power of the Government at a crisis when unanimity of support is so plainly essential, not only to the welfare but to the very life of the nation?

There are many, alas! who from ignorance or passion, persistently confound all the immense party, which came into being and into power only on the grand purpose of resisting Southern aggression, with the extremest radicalism and infidelity of the Garrison stamp.<sup>3</sup> They would thus justify themselves in an indiscriminate and reckless hostility to the policy of the Government. I can, of course, find in this fact no explanation of the deliberate action of one of your principles and intelligence. Some may say that "the war on our part is unrighteous and, therefore, unworthy of support." But the rebels began it. To this it may be said: "The provocations offered them were such as greatly to diminish if not remove their criminality in thus beginning it." These assertions, though easily refuted, might require a discussion both long and foreign somewhat to my purpose. But it may be said that "the war though righteous is waged by unrighteous methods, such as confiscation and more particularly emancipation." If, however, it is a legitimate function of our Government to destroy the fabric of the Southern Confederacy, *a fortiori*, is it not

justified in removing that which their own highest authorities pronounce to be the *corner-stone* of that fabric?<sup>4</sup> Moreover, though this position is as palpably untenable as the two previously stated, yet supposing it to be a sincere Christian conviction, inasmuch as these methods must be objected to rather as inexpedient than as morally and legally unjustifiable, should not another Christian conviction, that of duty to the “powers that are ordained of God,” prevent any disposition to resist or thwart the Government? But I would fain suppose that rather than either of the above, the grounds of your political views and action have been an earnest desire for peace, and an abomination of war, and its attendant horrors. In both of these feelings I claim the fullest sympathy with you, and yet I can not possibly construct upon them a fulcrum for unfriendly action against our Government.

I have seen in the progress of events much to criticise and regret in the Administration, but I feel assured that as far at least as our President is concerned, the errors have been those of the judgment, and are compatible with a pure integrity and a high-toned patriotism. Horrible too as war is, we are to remember that it may yet be a worthy means to a worthy end. God has certainly in his word more directly and repeatedly given his sanction to it, than he has to slavery. But what is the legitimate, the inevitable tendency of such unfriendly demonstrations as those to which you were persuaded to give countenance at Delmonico’s, and which have had a fuller but natural development in Connecticut and elsewhere?<sup>5</sup> We are not left to theories for a reply. Facts show that while the rebel leaders insultingly spurn all pusillanimous overtures of conciliation, they also exult over them as evidences of divided counsels and increasing feebleness at the North. They are thereby emboldened to declare themselves utterly implacable, except by success in their own ruinous plans. What then should be our necessary logic, our irresistible inference? Certainly patriotism and a wise appreciation of the worthy end and the abundant means committed to us would decide at once. Let us by united and courageous effort show the rebels that their success is perfectly hopeless. May I venture to speak a word also as to the “*personnel*” in these matters? Mr. Field says that he knows personally nearly all of those who were associated with you at Delmonico’s, and implies very plainly that they borrowed from your presence a respectability for which they could make no becoming return. It was on a previous public occasion, that I saw, with no slight regret, your good name published, as appearing on the same platform with the characterless —, the infamous —, and the pitiable —. Can it be that the

purest and most patriotic measures draw to their advocacy such persons, while they fail to attract the innumerable host who dissent, and whose patriotism and probity you can not but heartily commend? The high estimate I have formed of your Christian character, confirmed and increased by my intercourse with ——, has encouraged me to speak with the more freedom, and with the hope that it will be received in the same kindly spirit which has prompted it.

Yours most sincerely and respectfully,  
Edward N. Crosby.

## Endnotes

1 The Crosbys are an extensive clan in New York. Edward Nicoll Crosby (1821–1865), Morse's 1863 correspondent, had married Elizabeth Mary Van Schoonhoven of Troy in 1847, and by her he had eight children. The Crosbys lived at Wood Cliff, a thirty-acre estate just outside the limits of Poughkeepsie. (In 1867, the estate was purchased by John Flack Winslow, the man who personally built and owned the Civil War ironclad *Monitor*; because the Navy had refused to fund it. Later, the land was turned into an amusement park; later still it was bought by Marist College.) Crosby's son, Frederic Van Schoonhoven Crosby (treasurer of the Union Pacific Railroad) married Julia Delafield (part of the vast Livingston and Van Rensselaer clan); and their son Floyd Crosby worked as the cinematographer for Gary Cooper's classic Western *High Noon*. His son (Edward Nicoll Crosby's great-grandson) is David Crosby, the Hall of Fame rock singer who was a member of The Byrds and the band Crosby, Stills, and Nash.

2 David Dudley Field II (1805–94), the son of a Congregational minister in Connecticut, was a lawyer who made major contributions to the codification of American law. Prior to 1856, he had been a Democrat like Morse, although a strongly anti-slavery Democrat. In 1860, however, he attended the Republican convention in Chicago and worked for the nomination of Abraham Lincoln rather than William Seward. According to James A. Briggs of New York, who went to the convention as a delegate to work for the nomination of Chase, "I have always thought that Mr. Lincoln was more indebted to Mr. David Dudley Field for his nomination for the Presidency at Chicago in 1860, than to any other one man." Frederick Clifton Pierce, *Field Genealogy: Being the Record of all the Field family in America* (Chicago, IL: W. B. Conkey Co., 1901), p. 617 n.

3 William Lloyd Garrison (1805–79) was the abolitionist founder and editor of an anti-slavery newspaper called *The Liberator*. In its first issue (January 1, 1831), he declared: "I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation." <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p1561.html>

4 Alexander H. Stephens became vice president of the Confederacy on February 11, 1861. On March 21, 1861, in Savannah, Georgia, he delivered an extemporaneous talk that has become known as “The Cornerstone Speech,” because of its reference to racial inequality as the corner-stone of the Confederate Government.

5 This probably refers to the antiwar movement in Connecticut, which was just then threatening to elect as governor Thomas Seymour, a former governor who was now a Peace Democrat. Republicans were terrified that this election, in April 1863, would be read abroad as a Northern referendum on the war. Indeed, Stephen F. Knott of the U.S. Naval War College has argued that Lincoln may have called in Thurlow Weed, the political boss and master dirty-trickster of New York, to raise \$15,000 for the purpose of ensuring that the election would go against Seymour. See Stephen F. Knott, “Necessity Knows No Law,” *The Claremont Review of Books*, January 19, 2010. [http://www.claremont.org/publications/crb/id.1672/article\\_detail.asp](http://www.claremont.org/publications/crb/id.1672/article_detail.asp)[http://www.claremont.org/repository/doclib/20100126\\_EmailBlast1Knott.pdf](http://www.claremont.org/repository/doclib/20100126_EmailBlast1Knott.pdf)

# ADDENDA



# CONTRIBUTORS

Eleanor Charwat, a native of Poughkeepsie, has been involved in a number of community organizations, including the Dutchess County Historical Society. She is a former administrator at Marist College and Councilman in the town of Poughkeepsie. She is the author of "Small Town Lawyer: Highlights of Nathaniel Rubin's Career," the research for which led her to the study of bootlegging in Dutchess County.

Roger Donway is a freelance editor and writer, living in Poughkeepsie.

Tad Fallon has 18 years of experience in the restoration and conservation of furniture and wooden artifacts. In 1993, he received a BFA from the Fashion Institute of Technology's Restoration of Applied Arts Program. He completed the Smithsonian Institution's Furniture Conservation Training Program in 2000 and held an Internship at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Sherman Fairchild Center for Objects Conservation, where he assisted in the conservation of nineteenth-century New York furniture for the *Art and the Empire City* exhibition. He holds an MA degree in Conservation from Antioch University in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Fallon is currently a furniture conservator in private practice with the firm Fallon & Wilkinson, LLC, 32 Bushnell Hollow Road, Baltic, CT, 06330.

Joseph Fichtelberg is a professor of English at Hofstra University, where he has taught since in 1990. A specialist in early American literature, he has published two books—*The Complex Image: Faith and Method in American Autobiography* (1989), and *Critical Fictions: Sentiment and the American Market, 1780–1870* (2003)—and has recently completed a third, *Risk Culture: Performance and Danger in Early America*. He is now at work on a book titled *Beauty and Terror: The Aesthetics of American Violence*. Professor Fichtelberg teaches courses on American literature from the Colonial period to the Civil War. He is on the editorial board of the scholarly journal *Early American Literature*.

Nan Fogel, a former editor of the Dutchess County Historical Society, oversaw the publication of *FDR at Home*, the story of Franklin Roosevelt's active involvement in the life of Dutchess County, and the *Hollow Oak Chronicles*, which traced the 300-year history of the Van Vliet family. A graduate of Vassar College, she is interested in history and the arts. She lives in Hyde Park.

Molly B. Jones has worked as a reporter-researcher for *Time* magazine and as a general assignment reporter and, later, arts editor for the *Anchorage Daily News*. Most recently she has served as a free-lance editor for the American Bible Society. She lives in Poughkeepsie.

Nancy V. Kelly, a graduate of Cornell University with a major in education, has served as Rhinebeck Town Historian since 1997. She is the author of *A Brief History of Rhinebeck* and *Rhinebeck's Historic Architecture*. A charter member of the Rhinebeck Historical Society, and president of the society during the Bicentennial, Kelly is currently chairman of the Consortium of Rhinebeck History, which involves all historical organizations in town. It seeks to combine their holdings into one on-line database, as well to manage the Local History Room at the Starr Library in Rhinebeck.

Russell La Valle is a freelance writer and screenwriter and a longtime New Paltz resident. His work has appeared in the *Washington Post*, *Village Voice*, *New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *Newsday*, *Sheet Music Magazine*, *Poughkeepsie Journal*, *Observer*, and many other publications. He has also scripted feature films that have appeared on HBO, Showtime, Cinemax, and The Movie Channel. In addition, he was a contributing editor to *The New Individualist*, the flagship publication of a Washington D.C.-based philosophical think tank, where he wrote a very popular two-part golf article on the nationally publicized controversy between NCWO's (National Council of Women's Organizations) Martha Burk and William "Hootie" Johnson, chairman of the Augusta National Golf Club, during the 2003 Masters Golf Tournament. La Valle's work has been picked up nationally, internationally, and anthologized.

Candace J. Lewis is an art historian with a PhD in the field of early Chinese art and a secondary area of specialty in nineteenth-century art in America and Europe. Within the field of Chinese art, Lewis specializes in ceramics and archeology, writing about the works of the Han through the Tang dynasties. She has lived in Poughkeepsie with her husband, attorney Lou Lewis, since 1970.

Lewis R. Sterler has hunted with more than forty packs of hounds in America, England, and Ireland, including both packs currently kenneled in Dutchess County. He has whipped-in to more than a dozen professional and amateur huntsmen, and served as amateur huntsman himself. During that time, he was privileged to hunt Gremlin, a dog whelped in the Rombout kennels and given to his own Master by MFH Elizabeth Putnam Davis. He is currently doing research for a much longer work on a particular aspect of fox hunting history.

# CALL FOR ARTICLES: 2012 YEARBOOK

“No one but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money.” So said Samuel Johnson. It is not literally true, of course. But having been a freelance author for the last forty years, I believe that it expresses a healthy sentiment.

Therefore, as the publications director of Dutchess County Historical Society, I am offering an all-too-modest honorarium of \$250 to authors of full-length (3000+-word) articles that are accepted for publication in DCHS’s yearbook. Authors of shorter articles and book reviews will receive proportionately smaller honoraria, with amounts calculated by article length and authorial effort.

## **What I Am Seeking**

Accepted articles will focus on some significant person, event, or aspect of Dutchess County history but will not focus on information generally familiar to citizens of Dutchess County. Authors should especially avoid material that focuses largely on the last half-century, for I doubt that we can have a sufficient perspective on that period to understand it as history.

Accepted articles will be enjoyable, engaging, entrancing, or intriguing, and to that end authors should remember the journalistic adage that “people are interested in people.” Articles should be written at a level that is accessible to the generally educated reader, but should nevertheless be thoroughly documented. Preference will be given to essays that make effective use of primary-source material, and authors who identify effective graphic material for their essays will enjoy an edge over those who do not.

## **Looking Ahead**

The 2012 yearbook (like the 2011 yearbook) will be divided into two parts. Approximately one half of the book will be devoted to a Forum of articles. The topic will be: “The Religious Wars of Dutchess County: Sects, Schisms, and Dissents.” Articles for this forum must especially avoid

any discussion of issues from the last half-century. They must also avoid any taint of presentism: the suggestion that certain past beliefs are truer or better because they are more like the beliefs of today.

Another half of the 2012 yearbook will be reserved for essays on any and every topic that can make a good claim on the attention of our readers.

The final deadline for the submission of articles is May 31, 2012. Manuscripts submitted after that date will be cheerfully considered for the 2013 yearbook.

For a style sheet and further instructions, write to Roger Donway at [dchseditor@hotmail.com](mailto:dchseditor@hotmail.com).

# Dutchess County Historical Society

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## **The Year 2011**

We have received a NY State grant to renovate interior spaces of the Clinton House for \$55,000 and we are planning to complete the work by the end of 2011. According to the terms of the grant, the Empire State Corporation will pay us after the work is completed. Therefore, as we need to have moneys available to pay contractors during the job, we have obtained an interest-free loan from a very kind anonymous lender.

We received a grant from the Lillian Cumming Streetscape Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation for \$10,000 (\$5,000 for a curator and/or curatorial services and \$5,000 for the general fund).

We have just received a grant from the Denise M. Lawlor Fund at the Community Foundation of Dutchess County for \$8,100.

We received a grant of \$5,000 from the Dyson Foundation.

We received a grant of \$4,300 from Anonymous at the Community Foundation of Dutchess County for the general fund.

Two grants from Anonymous at the Community Foundation have been spent on a new computer and software for Collections (\$2,250) and the services of a curator (\$2,500).

Over the last year to year and a half, we have increased membership by 50 percent.

Our By-Laws Committee undertook a total revision of the by-laws. The new by-laws were passed at the Annual Meeting in the spring.

In the spring, we ran a series for school children in the Glebe House, reinstating a history education program that had lapsed in recent years. It was very successful. We also began a new adult luncheon lecture series at the Glebe House which was very popular. Both of these programs will be run again this year and expanded.

We ran a terrific Silver Ribbon House Tour this June with Wappingers Falls and New Hamburg as the featured locations. We look forward to another great event next year with even more guests.

This fall, on Sunday, September 25, we visited a private collection of sleighs and carriages, a special opportunity. We also held the annual Fall Foliage and Fun Road Rallye in Millbrook on Saturday, October 15.

The Black History Committee organized several events: attendance at a talk by Anita Jones on the history of quilting at the Heritage Center on Main Street, Poughkeepsie; a trip to the Thomas Cole Homestead in Catskill, New York to see an exhibit of the African-American artist Duncasson; and a trip to NYC to the African-American cemetery.

This year's Gala Dinner is planned for Thursday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>. We will be honoring Barbara Van Itallie for the Dutchess Award, McCabe & Mack for the Business of Historical Distinction Award, and Dr. Alison Mountz for the Helen Wilkinson Reynolds Award.

We plan to cooperate with the Middle Main group of Hudson River Housing again in December to produce a tree lighting event at the Clinton House.

We are planning our annual Glebe House Holiday Party for Sunday, December 11. This is a free membership event with holiday food and drink. We can celebrate the original occupant of the house, the Reverend John Beardsley, who moved in with his family in 1767.

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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 members 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 toward one hundred incredible years.

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# CONNECTIONS

## *The Editor*

Start with any person or achievement in Dutchess County history, and you can pursue connections endlessly in two directions. You can pursue them downward to the micro-level of individuals—ancestors, spouses, and descendants. Or you can pursue them outward, from the person or achievement to the region and age, and beyond.

Take only the contents of this yearbook, and begin with Nan Fogel's article on Blithewood. The site's first home was owned by General John Allen, who married Alida Livingston, daughter of Judge Robert R. Livingston. In 1810, Allen's manor came into the possession of John Cox Stevens, whose father was an inventor who had collaborated on a steamboat venture with General Allen's father-in-law—Judge Robert R. Livingston—probably because Judge Livingston had married the elder Stevens's sister, Mary. Such is the micro-level.

But the connections also move outward. The younger Stevens, John Cox Stevens, was more interested in sailing as a sportsman. Indeed, he was the first commodore of the New York Yacht Club. In 1850, he assembled a syndicate to show off America's rising industrial stature by building a schooner-yacht capable of beating Britain's best. In 1851, their yacht *America* won a challenge race against the Royal Yacht Squadron, thereby establishing the America Cup Race.

Here, the historical connections widen. The race *America* won was staged in conjunction with the "Great Crystal Palace Exhibition" of 1851, which had been meant to demonstrate British industrial supremacy. But

what the exhibition actually demonstrated was the rising supremacy of America. The victory of John Cox Stevens's *America* became a symbol of that supremacy.

And that returns us to our region: The source of America's rising supremacy lay in the precision-tool machine shops of the Connecticut River Valley, which has been termed America's first Silicon Valley. The Bill Gates of that Silicon Valley was a man named Thomas Blanchard, whose greatest invention was a lathe to make irregular shapes.

Which returns us to the Hudson River Valley: In 1826, Blanchard traveled to a Livingston mill on the Hudson that made ships' blocks (an irregular shape), in order to help superintendent William Woodworth install the Blanchard machines. But Woodworth proved no mere student. Inspired by Blanchard's inventiveness, he came up with an invention of his own—a wood-planing machine—later hailed by the U.S. Congress as “next to Whitney's cotton gin . . . the greatest labor-saving invention which has been produced in this country.” (See my article in this issue.)

And the connections come full circle: Profits from Woodworth's invention raised the son of this simple carpenter to a position of leadership in Hyde Park society, even to being its U.S. Congressman. Thus elevated, he surely rubbed elbows with the town's great family, the Bards—who purchased the estate at Blithewood.

# OUR OUTDOOR HERITAGE

DUTCHESS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
2011 YEARBOOK

## Forum: Our Outdoor Heritage

The outdoor heritage of Dutchess County encompasses both a passive and an active attitude toward nature. It includes such beautiful vistas as Innisfree Garden (represented on the front cover); the Blithewood estate; and Peach Hill Park. But it also includes the sports of foxhunting, golfing, and shooting (represented here on the back cover by an 11-year-old FDR; Dutchess County's greatest golfer, Ray Billows; and Morgan Wing, founder of the Sandanona Pheasantry). Articles on each of these aspects of our outdoor heritage can be found in this issue of the Dutchess County Historical Society's yearbook.

## Articles: Men Whom History Forgot

But the DCHS's 2011 yearbook also features other articles, and several of those introduce a few of Dutchess County's most important and yet overlooked people: William Woodworth, who is quite possibly Dutchess County's second-greatest inventor, after Samuel Morse; Isaac Mitchell, a Poughkeepsie journalist who was one of early America's leading novelists; and Charles Warner, a newly discovered Poughkeepsie furniture-maker from the post-Federalist Era.

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