

# THE CIVIL WAR AND DUTCHESS COUNTY, NEW YORK

Part II

Dutchess County Historical Society  
2016 Yearbook • Volume 95

Candace J. Lewis, *Editor*



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Dutchess County Historical Society

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

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

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*In loving memory of*

Mildred Strain (1908-1986),  
a devoted supporter  
of the Dutchess County  
Historical Society.



# *Quaker Lane Farms*

Ruskey Lane, Hyde Park



*In loving memory of*

Jim Smith (1946-2016),  
former Trustee and treasurer of the  
Dutchess County Historical Society.  
Lover of local history.

We will miss him.



*Shirley M. Handel*



*LTC Gilbert A. Krom*



In memory of a beloved brother  
and fine soldier.

*David Dengel*  
*Dennis Dengel*



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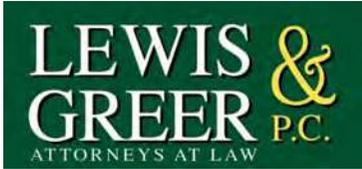


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# Introduction



While the Civil War looms the largest of all the conflicts in our national memory, one might well ask why the topic merits two consecutive years of treatment in the *Dutchess County Historical Society Yearbook*. A brief look at this volume's table of contents will easily answer that question: the conflict loomed so large in county life that it supplies a nearly inexhaustible source of material. The following pages offer insights that remind us how political disagreements and battles that took place far away from Dutchess nevertheless had a direct impact on the residents who never left the county. Arlene Iuliano's article provides a close look at local war industry, while Melody Moore's explores the complicated family ties between local residents and South Carolina. The remaining articles in the core Forum section treat more conventional aspects of the conflict with a Dutchess County spin, examining topics from the pre-war debate over slavery to Dutchess soldiers' experiences below the Mason-Dixon Line. Notably, this volume diverges from Volume 1 through detailed treatment of the Lincoln trains, both inaugural and funeral, bringing coverage of the Civil War full circle. In addition, this volume offers two general history articles exploring county judicial history and agricultural practices, providing a nice touch of additional diversity. As with the installments that have preceded it, the 2016 yearbook is a testimony to the strength and dedication of both the county history community and the staff of the Dutchess County Historical Society who make this publication possible.

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

## Letter from the Editor



Now in 2016, the American Civil War is the main focus of our yearbook for a second year. In the contemporary United States, the subject of the Civil War continues to dominate books on history and animate large numbers of living history enthusiasts.

Although no major battles of this war were fought in Dutchess County, New York, there was not a local family that was not touched by the war. These are the stories we have set out to tell, whether it be through letters from a soldier writing home, through the eyes of a county resident reading newspapers for information about the highly charged Dred Scott case, or through a business shaped by the new demands of the army for access to a supply of milk—to mention just a few. As in the past, the yearbook is divided into two sections; the first, the Forum section, is devoted to the topic of the Civil War, while the second, the Articles section, contains essays on topics of general history of the county. In the latter section, we have an essay on Judge Jane Bolin, the first African-American female judge appointed to the bench in America, and an essay on a family ledger begun in the 1790s.

Why would a war fought over 150 years ago have such a hold on our interest today? Two reasons leap to our attention: 1) it was a war fought on both sides—the Union and the Confederacy—entirely by Americans (with tremendous loss of life); and 2) some of the problems of racial and geographical strife characteristic of the 1860s are still with us today. In this volume, the writers address some of these issues, but the over-riding effort is to examine and present local narratives to better understand this most important period in our national history.

— *Candace J. Lewis, Ph.D., editor*

FORUM





# Maintaining the Link The Letters of Platt C. Curtiss 150th Regiment, New York Volunteers “The Dutchess Regiment”

*by Eileen Mylod Hayden*

*In this issue, as in the 2015 issue devoted to the Civil War and Dutchess County, we begin with letters from the front. In the previous volume, a father wrote home with sad news about the illness and death of his young soldier son soon after the battle of Gettysburg, the first engagement of the 150th Regiment in the war. In this issue, we hear from a soldier himself in letters that covered the entire war. ....C. Lewis, editor*

In every military conflict, probably from the earliest wars fought to the present, there have been letters from the front to the folks back home. Whatever the format, whether cuneiform etched in clay, missives written in ink on tissue-thin V-Mail or current video messaging from the battlefield, such communications reveal the daily life, the thrills and boredom of a soldier trying to maintain a link with family and friends. They are also an important resource for historians. The Civil War was no exception.

In 1862, twenty-six year old Platt C. Curtiss, a young Dutchess County farmer from the Town of Stanford, stirred by the patriotic fervor of recruiters forming a regiment, signed the enlistment papers and was mustered into the 150th New York Volunteers as a private in Company I. With his comrades, he boarded the steamer *Oregon*<sup>1</sup>, leaving Poughkeepsie for New York City, entrained from New York to Baltimore, Maryland and settled into duty in that city. His surviving letters home begin with a dateline of Camp Belger, Baltimore, February 10, 1863. In this early letter, he replies to a recent letter from his brother:

Dear Brother,

I received your letter dated February 1st. I am well and so are the rest of the boys. The weather is very nice here now. Today has been like a spring day. A person would be comfortable with his coat off. I am glad to hear you are all well and have received the box I sent to you.

Waddall said he did not know if the box would go through safe or not on account of the peculiar shape. We have had some right sharp cold weather here. Two days and nights were the coldest we have had here in years. I was on guard one of those nights in one of the halls of the hospital and did not feel the cold much there. There was a good carpet on the floor and a gas light burning all night. We are having good times. I don't know where my axe is. The last I used it was in chopping down the old apple tree back of the house. I heard that Martina fell out of the wagon. I tell you to prevent such accidents. Form a semicircle with the left arm. That is the way I used to do when I rode out with the girls. I had some sleigh shoes sawed last winter but I guess they were all used up. I got a letter from Sarah to say she saw William Sutton in town today with Ben Smart's daughter. What is Charley Ingraham going to name his boy? I guess the ox chain belongs to Andrew Sleight. I had none of my own. I am going to send another box by express to Pokeepsie. I will write when I start it. How is Bert getting along? I have not heard from him in six months. Have you used that rifle any. I think it would carry shot very well. Give my regards to all the neighbors. We are going to stay here a good while I guess from appearances. The Colonel says so.

Yours truly,

Platt C. Curtiss

There is no mention of the war, even though he was not very far from the battlefield.

For the next three years, a series of letters to his brother or his mother covered his travels from Poughkeepsie to Baltimore, Gettysburg, Tullahoma, Tennessee; Atlanta, the Carolinas, and Virginia. A short stay in a hospital in Indiana for a head wound<sup>2</sup> was about the only time Curtiss spent apart from his regiment and in that time his regiment advanced only twenty miles. The contents of his letters covered a farmer's view of the soil they marched on, the vegetation, the lack of food or the foraged excess, weather (always the weather), harsh living conditions in the field that included rats, sleeping in the rain, mud and malaria.

One of his last letters home was dated May 22, 1865 from Alexandria, Virginia and commented on an upcoming review of the victorious troops:

Dear Brother,

Sherman's army is here waiting to be mustered out of service, which event will probably take place within two weeks. We arrived here three days ago and the rain has been falling steadily all of the time so that our camps are like unto a vast brickyard. Wood is very

scarce. We are obliged to grub out stumps to get enough to cook our rations. Grant's army lies between here and Washington. We are to have a grand review of both armies next Wednesday. It is estimated that 250,000 troops will be present. It will be a big thing. As soon as the review is ended the mustering out commences and will be hurried forward as rapidly as possible...

Indeed, there was a grand review in Washington, so large that it was scheduled for two days. It was President Johnson's decision to honor the troops for their sacrifice and their valor with a military parade and perhaps change the mood of the still mournful citizens following the death of Lincoln. So it happened that Union Army units marched the streets of Washington on May 23 and 24. Four reviewing stands had been constructed in front of the White House. President Johnson, his cabinet, government officials, governors, diplomats, foreign dignitaries, and General Ulysses S. Grant were on hand to witness the event. Meade's Army of the Potomac, 145,000 men, who fought under Grant at Spottsylvania, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg, were first to march on that clear and sunny day. They marched seven across, in perfect step, weapons gleaming. They marched under arches, past bunting, banners, regimental flags, and floral embellishments. One banner read: THE ONLY NATIONAL DEBT WE CAN NOT REPAY IS TO OUR VICTORIOUS SOLDIERS.<sup>3</sup>

General William T. Sherman's units numbering 65,000 strong, the now-Sergeant Curtiss among them in Company I of the 150th, followed the next morning, also a beautiful spring day. Prior to the march, General Sherman, not to be outshone by Meade's men, had kept his force, somewhat ragged following their recent march north from Georgia and the Carolinas, as well-drilled and disciplined as possible.<sup>4</sup> What they lacked in polish, they made up for with crowd pleasing bravado.

The army set out down Pennsylvania Avenue at 9 o'clock with General Sherman on horseback in the lead. In his memoirs, Sherman recalls "When I reached the Treasury Building, I looked back and the sight was simply magnificent."<sup>5</sup> It took six hours for the soldiers to march past the reviewing stand where they saluted the president and his guests. Charles Benton wrote:

Column after column passed the reviewing stand...with the far reaching stride which carried the men through and over the Confederacy, from the Mississippi to the Atlantic and north to Washington. The cavalry, with horses' manes clipped rode stirrup to stirrup, aligned as perfect as the infantry.<sup>6</sup>

All along the route, crowds, purported to number over 100,000, cheered, waved banners and sang patriotic songs as they viewed the men who were trailed by an entourage of equipment, ambulances, medical workers, laborers, families of freed slaves, “bummers” who scavenged what they could and a herd of cattle and livestock “removed” from Carolina farms along the way. It was surely a thrilling scene! For Sherman, the grand review was “...a splendid success and was a fitting conclusion to the campaign and the war.”<sup>7</sup>

The final letter from Curtiss to his brother William is dated May 29, 1865, Washington, D.C.:

Dear Brother,

I am well and hardy. We are not yet discharged...

Now the official report is that we will be on the way for home within ten days.

I was in the city yesterday and went all through the Capitol, Patent Office & c., and saw more sights than I can tell you about in two weeks. I expect you will be in town (Poughkeepsie) when we arrive, won't you? Be sure and come and “see the soldiers”.

Discharge for the 150th was June 8, 1865, just as Curtiss had anticipated. The regiment arrived in New York City on June 9th and immediately boarded the steamer *Mary Benton*<sup>8</sup> for Poughkeepsie. The boat arrived in Poughkeepsie, close to midnight on June 10.<sup>9</sup> A crowd of over a thousand were at the wharf to greet them but the official welcome was set for Monday, June 12. The procession of firemen, military units and dignitaries marched through the principal streets of the city, past school children who sang and presented each soldier with a flower, past wildly waving handkerchiefs; past homes decorated with banners and flowers and finally ending at Mansion Square. The event at Mansion Square included speeches by Judge James Emott, commander of the regiment, A.B Smith and General John H. Ketcham, followed by “a splendid dinner” for the troops.<sup>10</sup> The festivities ended by evening with a full dress parade. The 150th New York Volunteers were finally home.

The regiment had an overall enrollment of 1,300 men and played an important role at Culps Hill, Gettysburg; Kennesaw Mountain; Tullahoma, Tennessee and the siege of Atlanta. All but 132 men returned to Dutchess County. Fifty-one of those were killed in battle; eighty-one died of disease and other causes.<sup>11</sup>

Platt Curtiss left a comprehensive diary<sup>12</sup> and a series of letters home as an invaluable record of the service of his regiment. He married and moved to New York City where he was engaged in the trucking business. He and his wife Josephine raised a family of four. Curtiss, who died at seventy-nine in 1915,<sup>13</sup> loved the annual reunion of his comrades but realized sadly as the years went by, that the reunions would ultimately end and the last survivor would be “mustered out.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Edward O. Bartlett. *The Dutchess County Regiment*, Edited by S. G. Cook and Charles Benton ( Danbury, Connecticut: Danbury Medical Printing Company, Inc. 1907), p.14.

<sup>2</sup> Platt C. Curtiss. *Letters*, Collection of Dutchess County Historical Society.

<sup>3</sup> “The Grand Review: The Union Army Victory Parade,” *Literary Digest Magazine* (May 17, 1919), p.68.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Benton. *As Seen from the Ranks: A Boy in the Civil War* ( New York: G.P.Putnam, 1902 ), p.285.

<sup>5</sup> William T. Sherman. *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman*, Vol.11 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1886), p.377.

<sup>6</sup> Benton, *As Seen from the Ranks*, p.286.

<sup>7</sup> Sherman, p.378.

<sup>8</sup> Benton, *As Seen from the Ranks*, p.290.

<sup>9</sup> Edmund Platt. *History of Poughkeepsie: From the Earliest Settlements, 1683–1905* (Poughkeepsie: Heart of the Lakes Publishing 1987), p.197.

<sup>10</sup> Edmund P. Platt, *Diaries*, Vol.1-29, 1856–1886, p.369.

<sup>11</sup> Bartlett, p.164.

<sup>12</sup> The diary kept by Curtiss provided a comprehensive, accurate and reliable account of the regiment for the Bartlett history, but can no longer be located.

<sup>13</sup> Bartlett, p.334.

<sup>14</sup> Bartlett, p.334.



# The Case and Times of Dred Scott

by John Barry

A very unusual obituary appeared in the *New York Daily Tribune* on September 22, 1858. Never before had a major American newspaper carried such an announcement of the death of a black man who spent almost all his life a slave:

Some men are born great; others achieve greatness; others have greatness thrust upon them. To this latter class we must assign Dred Scott, whose death has been announced by telegraph, and whose name, for two years past, has resounded from one end of the Union to the other...the name of Dred Scott became a household word in our politics, and so it will remain as long as the contest between Slaveholding and Free Labor shall continue...In fact, it will be mainly by associating their names with that of this humble negro, and by having attempted through him to strike a blow at Free Labor, that the Judges who pronounced his decision will find a place in history..."<sup>1</sup>

So wrote the editors of the largest newspaper in the United States, two days after the death from tuberculosis of the most famous black man in the nation. So famous, in fact, that in the weeks before and after his death, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas, two towering political figures of the time, used his name over fifty times in their seven great debates about slavery and freedom, as part of their contest for the United States Senate in that year.

This essay seeks 1) to explain how and why Dred Scott (c.1795-1858), an otherwise unknown and illiterate black man, who spent practically his entire life a slave, came to be eulogized so extravagantly in one of the most important American newspapers of the time. In addition, in this essay, 2) I will employ the conceit that this information—all of it—could have been obtained by a well-educated, well-motivated resident of Dutchess County reading contemporary newspapers. This essay could have been written in early 1860. All the information here was drawn from newspapers published concurrent with the events discussed, or from materials commonly then available in libraries.

The major newspapers of Dred Scott's time were impressively thorough, if usually highly partisan. For the particularly interested small town New Yorker living in the Dred Scott years, a detailed picture of events could

have been gained for about \$25 per year, in 1850 dollars, for mail-delivered subscriptions of a few daily or weekly newspapers.<sup>2</sup> They were (in order of approximate circulation) the *New York Tribune* (200,000), the *Chicago Daily Tribune* (75,000), the *New York Daily Times* (50,000), *The Daily Dispatch* of Richmond, Virginia (about 20,000), and *The Poughkeepsie Eagle* (4,000). An interested Dutchess County resident of those times, intent upon following the growing sectional troubles over slavery and other matters, could have read the important national news contained in these papers in about an hour a day on average. I have written this essay as if I were a serious student of the growing national crisis, living in Pawling or Poughkeepsie, and writing this account in late March 1860—unaware, obviously, of all the events after that date. The idea being to shed light on what curious small town New Yorkers could have known about events as they made up their minds about the impending crisis of the Union.

We will begin with a discussion of how a relative handful of southern slave owners gained control of all three branches of the federal government, for the purpose of protecting and extending their wealth and political power. Then we will follow Dred Scott in his travels as a slave, as he moved to and from slave and free States and Territories—an unusual life's journey that formed the basis of his decade-long law case. Next we will see how the United States Supreme Court, then controlled by southern slave owners, decided Dred's appeal. Finally, we will survey the explosive (in the North) and militant (in the South) aftermath, during which the last lights of sectional goodwill and compromise began to go out.

### *The Slave Power*

The invention of the cotton gin in the 1790s upset the original consensus about slavery. Before, cotton was just one of several crops, slavery was incidental to the southern labor system, and southerners as well as northerners generally agreed to laws limiting slavery's extension into the western federal territories. Afterwards, what used to be an incidental moral blight became a vastly enriching necessity, the key to great wealth and political control, for a very few, and thus to them a divine constitutional right.

From about 1830, when the southern supply and world demand for cotton began to grow rapidly, until 1860, slightly less than one percent of the United States population, in the form of southern slaveholders, controlled about 88% of the entire nation's financial wealth produced the nation's largest export commodity and came to dominate the federal government in Washington, by its control of the Democratic Party and the majority of its northern members.<sup>3</sup>

330. *Published in Rochester, N.Y. June 23, 1857.*

# FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 1857. [PAGE 6 CONT.]

**TO TOURISTS AND TRAVELLERS.**  
We shall be happy to receive personal narratives, of land or sea, including adventures and incidents, from every person who passes to our country with our paper.

We take this opportunity of reminding our friends in our numerous artistic establishments throughout the country, for the many articles we are constantly receiving from them of the most of the day. We trust they will leave no stone to be thrown at the disadvantage of our art as they may come. We would also remind them that it is necessary to send all sketches, if possible, by the direct route.



have it taken. The gentleman present explained to Dred that if it was proper he should leave his likeness in the great illustrated paper of the country; overruled his many objections, which seemed to grow out of a superstitious feeling, and he remained to be at the gallery the next day. This appointment Dred did not keep. Determined not to be killed, we sought an interview with Mr. Curtis, Dred's lawyer, who promptly gave us a letter of introduction, explaining to Dred that it was to his advantage to have his picture taken to be engraved for our paper, and also directions where we could find the domicile. We found the place with difficulty, the streets in Dred's neighborhood being more clearly defined in the plan of the city than on the other side; we finally reached a wooden house, however, protected by a balcony that answered the description. Approaching the door, we saw a stout, ugly-looking negro, perhaps thirty years of age, who, with two female attendants, was busy ironing. To our question, "Is this where Dred Scott lives?" we received, rather hesitatingly, the answer, "Yes." Upon our asking if he was lame, she said,

"What white man ever did nigger see?—why don't white men 'tend to his work?"—why don't white men 'tend to his work?" Some of these days dey'll send dat nigger—dat are a fact."

**VISIT TO DRED SCOTT—HIS FAMILY—INCIDENTS OF HIS LIFE—DECISION OF THE SUPREME COURT.**

While standing in the Fair grounds at St. Louis, and engaged in conversation with a prominent citizen of that interesting city, he suddenly asked us if we would not like to be introduced to Dred Scott. Upon expressing a desire to be thus honored, the gentleman called to us old negro who was standing near by, and our wish was gratified. Dred made a rude salutation to our recognition, and seemed to enjoy the notice we regarded upon him. We found him on examination to be a person—blackish skin, perhaps fifty years of age, with a shrewd, intelligent, good-featured face, of rather light frame, being not more than five feet six inches high. After some general remarks, through correspondence, and talked, and even business, and let the nigger (see?) Some of these days dey'll send dat nigger—dat are a fact."



ELIZA AND LIZZIE, CHILDREN OF DRED SCOTT.



DRED SCOTT. PHOTOGRAPHED BY HEDDERSON, OF ST. LOUIS.



HIS WIFE, HARRIET. PHOTOGRAPHED BY HEDDERSON, OF ST. LOUIS.

**Figure 1.** "Visit to Dred Scott, his family, incidents of his life, decision of the Supreme Court" in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper (1857 June 27), front page. Three illustrations: 1. Eliza and Lizzie, children of Dred Scott, 2. Dred Scott, 3. his wife, Harriet. wood engraving. LC-USZ62-79305. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. 20540 U.S.A.

In those years the asset value of the crops and slaves owned by southern slaveholders was the largest financial asset in the United States. By the late 1850s, the four million slaves they owned were worth about \$3 billion, which was over seven times the combined value of all twenty-five largest American railroads and fifty-four largest banks. Cotton exports were sixty percent of all United States exports. During Dred Scott's lifetime, the number of slaves owned by a relative handful of southern plantation owners quadrupled, from one million to four million, and the aggregate asset value of those slaves increased by a factor of thirteen, from about \$230 million to about \$3 billion. In sum, by the time the United States Supreme Court ruled on Dred Scott's appeal for freedom, the one percent of the United States population that owned slaves controlled nearly ninety percent of the total wealth of the United States. In August 1856, as Dred Scott's case was being docketed at the Supreme Court, Abraham Lincoln estimated that if slavery were allowed to extend into the federal territories, the aggregate value of the slaveholders' human property would increase fifty percent.<sup>4</sup>

Southern society and economics were blighted by a condition uniquely associated with slavery—a primitive approach to agriculture and the disdain with which slave owning aristocrats held direct personal labor. From early 1853 to early 1854, the *New-York Daily Times* published a remarkable forty-eight installment report that detailed the problem: Since in the South 'gentlemen' did not work with their hands, or even break a sweat if they could help it, the aristocratic slave owners usually turned the management of their plantations over to overseers, some of whom were slave trustees. These men were compensated by a share of the crop, because cash was scarce. Any intrusion by the plantation owner, particularly if planned to implement new progressive agricultural methods, that tended in the short run to reduce production, and thus to reduce overseers' income, was extremely unpopular with the overseers and trustees. Thus, the cotton crops tended to exhaust the soil of the original slave states, making for a strong incentive to keep moving farming operations into the new territories of the new western acquisitions. This, of course, put great political pressure to resist any northern attempt to limit the extension of slavery into the territories.<sup>5</sup>

At about this time, in 1856, Abraham Lincoln, in a speech in Kalamazoo, Michigan, reported by the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, estimated that if slavery were allowed to extend into the federal territories or into the free states, thus making slavery a national rather than a peculiarly southern institution. By his calculation, the value of the human property held in bondage by southern slave owners could increase by as much as fifty percent.<sup>6</sup>

With this overwhelming economic power naturally came a powerful, aggressive and vigorously protective political agenda, capable of rationalizing the moral question posed by using law to make men and women into items of property. Slaveholders naturally controlled southern politics completely, and their federal political strategy was to control the Presidency and the United States Senate. This would give them control of federal legislation, control of how the new federal territories were organized, and thus control of the terms under which new states were admitted to the Union. Their idea was to change slavery from a peculiar local southern institution to a generally accepted national institution, and to preserve the free state-slave state equilibrium in the Senate as well as control of appointments to the federal judiciary.

During Dred Scott's life, two-thirds of the presidents of the United States were southerners, slave owners, or were northerners who were politically sympathetic to southern interests. The majority of the Speakers of the House of Representatives and presidents pro tempore of the Senate were southerners, or were openly supportive of slavery, as were the majority of the members of the Supreme Court. Moreover, the federal capital was situated between two slave states—Maryland and Virginia—and slaves were bought and sold in “slave livery stables” within blocks of the Capitol Building.

Whereas the majority of the Framers of the Constitution of 1787 voted to contain slavery in its original geographical habitat, beginning in 1800 or so the economic and political power of slave owners gradually succeeded in bending the national government to serve their interests.<sup>7</sup>

When we combine the economic and political strength the slave interests acquired in the Dred Scott era, we can see what northerners meant in those years when they referred to the “Slave Power.”<sup>8</sup>

### *Dred Scott's Travels*

Dred Scott was born in Virginia.<sup>9</sup> His birth date is uncertain, but is usually given as 1795 or 1799. Until 1834, Scott was owned by Peter Blow, and traveled with Blow from Virginia to Alabama and finally Missouri—all slave States. In 1834, in St. Louis, Missouri, Blow sold Dred to Dr. John Emerson, a United States Army surgeon then stationed at Jefferson Barracks, in St. Louis, Missouri. Later in 1834, Dr. Emerson was transferred to an Army post at Rock Island, in the State of Illinois—a free State.<sup>10</sup> Emerson and his slave, Scott, remained in Illinois for two years. In 1836, Dr. Emerson moved, with Scott, north to Fort Snelling, an Army post on the

west bank of the Mississippi River, in a territory known as Upper Louisiana, a territory acquired from France, in which slavery was prohibited by act of Congress.<sup>11</sup> Dr. Emerson and Scott remained at Fort Snelling until 1838, when Emerson returned to St. Louis but he left Scott behind, rented out to other Army officers at Fort Snelling. Soon Emerson was transferred to Fort Jessup in Louisiana, met and married Irene Sanford, and sent word to Scott to join him there. In 1840, the Emersons and Scott returned to St. Louis, where Scott worked variously as a domestic slave for the Emersons or was rented out to others in the St. Louis area. In all, Scott spent about four years enslaved in United States jurisdictions in which slavery was against the law, but in which there was no enforcement of anti-slavery law.

Dr. Emerson died in 1843 and his wife Irene inherited his property, including Scott, on whom she continued to collect rent. In 1846, Scott attempted to buy his freedom, but Irene Emerson refused to sell, preferring to continue to receive his rents. With the aid of abolitionists in St. Louis, Scott filed a lawsuit for his freedom, and the case became *Scott v. Emerson*. Scott's argument was a common one and his sponsors expected to prevail easily: it was the custom of Missouri courts to grant freedom to slaves who had been taken by their owners into free jurisdictions for extended periods of time.

In 1852, after six years of litigation, the Missouri Supreme Court overturned two decades of precedent and denied Scott's appeal. Between 1846, when Scott originally filed his suit, and the Missouri Supreme Court's denial, relations between the southern and northern States over the slavery issue had soured so much that southern states stopped accommodating the anti-slavery laws—state or federal. The fast-rising ill will between the free and slave states had been aggravated to the point of hostility by the heated slavery-extension disputes caused by the admission of Texas in 1845, the war with Mexico in 1846-48, the angry arguments over the fugitive slave laws in 1850, and later the fierce disagreements over the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, and the bloody fighting between armed gangs of pro-slavery and anti-slavery men in Kansas. The nation was coming apart.

So Dred Scott, with the help of abolitionist friends, appealed his case to the United States Supreme Court. In the meantime, Irene Emerson had moved to Massachusetts and had transferred ownership of Scott to her brother, John Sanford. Thus the federal case was *Dred Scott v. John F. A. Sandford*,<sup>12</sup> in which Scott's argument was that Emerson's taking him into the free State of Illinois and free Territory of Upper Louisiana for all those years had made him a free man.

## *The Supreme Court's Decision*

Chief Justice Taney read the majority opinion to a hushed courtroom on March 6, 1857. Six other justices later published generally concurring opinions, and two justices filed strong dissenting opinions. The opinions are long and complex, rendered by a divided Court, by a bare majority of Judges, none of them agreeing entirely with any of the other judges. Taking that into account, the Court's majority opinion can be roughly summarized as follows:<sup>13</sup>

Dred Scott has always been and remains a slave. This is because no African—whether free or slave—has ever been or can ever be a citizen of the United States.

But while we are on the subject of slavery and the federal Territories, we declare that the Constitution of the United States forbids Congress to deprive a man of his property, without due process of law; the right of property in slaves is distinctly and expressly affirmed in that Constitution; therefore, if Congress shall undertake to say that a man's slave is no longer his slave when he crosses a certain line into a territory, that is depriving him of his property without due process of law, and is unconstitutional. Thus, the Compromise of 1820 and the Ordinance of 1789 were unconstitutional insofar as their prohibitions as to taking and holding slave property in the territories were concerned.

## *The Aftermath*

The public reaction all over the Northern States was as explosively negative as the southern reaction was gleeful and militant. Hudson Valley newspapers in the spring of 1857 expressed outrage. "Slavery, and not Freedom is National—Colored Men Are Not Citizens—Congress can't exclude Slavery from the Territories!—The People in the Territories Can't Keep Out Slavery!" headlined *The Poughkeepsie Eagle* on Saturday, March 21, 1857, over a three-column detailed report of the Court's decision, and concluded editorially that the decision was "absurd and dishonest."<sup>14</sup>

*The New York Daily Tribune* of Monday, March 16, 1857 says, "...the highest tribunal has—through extra judicially and without authority—pronounced Slavery a National, not a sectional institution, making it a concern of the nominally Free as well as the Slave States...when this doctrine comes to be positively established...it will be settled that Slavery must pervade and control the whole Union or be expelled from every part of it..."<sup>15</sup> (Emphasis added.)

The New York Legislature passed a resolution in April 1857:

That this State will not allow Slavery within her borders... That the Supreme Court of the United States, by reason of a majority of the Judges thereof having identified it with a sectional and aggressive party, has lost the confidence and respect of the people of this State... Neither descent... nor color of skin shall disqualify any person from being a citizen of this State... Every slave who shall come, or be brought, or be in, this State... shall be free... Every person who shall hold, or attempt to hold, a slave in this State, upon conviction, shall be confined in the State prison at hard labor for a term of not less than two not more than ten years...

Ohio and other Northern states passed similar resolutions.<sup>16</sup>

Two months after the decision, on May 14, 1857 in New York City, Frederick Douglass, the second most famous black man of the times, gave a speech about the Dred Scott decision:

...Loud and exultingly have we been told that the slavery question is settled, and settled forever. You remember it was settled thirty-seven years ago, when Missouri was admitted into the Union with a slaveholding constitution, and slavery prohibited in all territory north of thirty-six degrees of north latitude.<sup>17</sup>

Just fifteen years afterwards, it was settled again by voting down the right of petition, and gagging down free discussion in Congress.<sup>18</sup>

Ten years after this it was settled again by the annexation of Texas, and with it the war with Mexico. In 1850 it was again settled. This was called a final settlement. By it slavery was virtually declared to be the equal of Liberty, and should come into the Union on the same terms. By it the right and the power to hunt down men, women, and children, in every part of this country, was conceded to our southern brethren, in order to keep them in the Union.<sup>19</sup>

Four years after this settlement, the whole question was once more settled, and settled by a settlement which unsettled all the former settlements.<sup>20</sup>

The fact is, the more the question has been settled, the more it has needed settling. The space between the different settlements has been strikingly on the decrease. The first stood longer than any of its successors. There is a lesson in these decreasing spaces. The first stood fifteen years — the second, ten years — the third, five years — the fourth stood four years — and the fifth has stood the brief space of two years. This last settlement must be called the Taney settlement. We are now

told, in tones of lofty exultation, that the day is lost — all lost — and that we might as well give up the struggle. The highest authority has spoken. The voice of the Supreme Court has gone out over the troubled waves of the National Conscience, saying peace, be still.

This infamous decision of the Slaveholding wing of the Supreme Court maintains that slaves are, within the contemplation of the Constitution of the United States, property; that slaves are property in the same sense that horses, sheep, and swine are property; that the old doctrine that slavery is a creature of local law is false; that the right of the slaveholder to his slave does not depend upon the local law, but is secured wherever the Constitution of the United States extends; that Congress has no right to prohibit slavery anywhere; that slavery may go in safety anywhere under the star-spangled banner; that colored persons of African descent have no rights that white men are bound to respect; that colored men of African descent are not and cannot be citizens of the United States.

You will readily ask me how I am affected by this devilish decision — this judicial incarnation of wolfishness? My answer is, and no thanks to the slaveholding wing of the Supreme Court, my hopes were never brighter than now. I have no fear that the National Conscience will be put to sleep by such an open, glaring, and scandalous tissue of lies as that decision is, and has been, over and over, shown to be. The Supreme Court of the United States is not the only power in this world...

...The Constitution imposes no such mean and satanic limitations upon its own beneficent operation. And, if the Constitution makes none, I beg to know what right has anybody, outside of the Constitution, for the special accommodation of slaveholding villainy, to impose such a construction upon the Constitution?

The Constitution knows all the human inhabitants of this country as “the people.”

It makes, as I have said before, no discrimination in favor of, or against, any class of the people, but is fitted to protect and preserve the rights of all, without reference to color, size, or any physical peculiarities. Besides, it has been shown...that in eleven out of the old thirteen States, colored men were legal voters at the time of the adoption of the Constitution.

In conclusion, let me say, all I ask of the American people is, that they live up to the Constitution, adopt its principles, imbibe its spirit, and enforce its provisions.

When this is done, the wounds of my bleeding people will be healed, the chain will no longer rust on their ankles, their backs will no longer be torn by the bloody lash, and liberty, the glorious birthright of our

common humanity, will become the inheritance of all the inhabitants of this highly favored country.<sup>21</sup>

So said a man who was perhaps Dred's most knowledgeable and eloquent contemporary.

A year later, in the summer of 1858, Abraham Lincoln, a former member of the House of Representatives who was running for the United States Senate from Illinois, gave a speech in Springfield, Illinois:

...In my opinion, it (the Slavery agitation) *will* not cease until a *crisis* shall have been reached, and passed. 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this government cannot endure permanently half *slave* and half *free*. I do not expect the Union to be *dissolved*—I do not expect the house to *fall*—but I *do* expect it will cease to be divided. It will become *all* one thing, or *all* the other...<sup>22</sup>

A powerful notion of a "Slave Power Conspiracy" arose. Northerners noted that the Court, once it decided that Dred Scott had no standing to sue in federal court, did not need to go on to decide the question of the right of Congress to control as to slavery in the federal territories—but the southern majority of the judges did so anyway.

It became impossible for northerners to think about the logic of the Dred Scott decision, coming after a decade of constantly increasing agitation, all tending to extend slavery into free territories, and not conclude that the southern slave interests that had controlled the Washington government were determined to make slavery a national institution. One prominent politician, noting the recent combination of political activities of southern and pro-slavery Democratic Party men like Senator Stephen A. Douglas, President Franklin Pierce, Chief Justice Roger Taney, and President James Buchanan, expressed the growing northern conspiracy theory as follows:

...the logical conclusion (to be drawn from the Court's decision is) that what Dred Scott's master might lawfully do with Dred Scott, in the free State of Illinois, every other master may lawfully do with any other *one*, or one *thousand* slaves, in Illinois, or in any other free State... We can not absolutely know that all these exact adaptations are the result of preconcert. But when we see a lot of framed timbers, different portions of which we know have been gotten out at different times and places and by different workmen—Stephen, Franklin, Roger and James, for instance—and when we see these timbers joined together, and see they exactly make the frame of a house... we find it impossible not to *believe* that Stephen and Franklin and Roger and James all understood each other from the beginning... (*Emphasis in the original.*)<sup>23</sup>

Many northerners loathed slavery on moral grounds, or for political expediency. But most of the cause for alarm and outrage in the northern citizenry over the Dred Scott case and its threat of nationalizing slavery had to do with its foreseeably adverse effect on the northern economy and culture. The real key to understanding this fear and dread lay in the common practice in slave states of using slaves as ‘rental property.’ Recall that Dred Scott spent much of his later years as a ‘rented out’ slave, with his owner collecting the rent money. If slavery became national, wealthy men and women in formerly free States (maybe transplanted southerners) could buy or bring trained slaves and use them for rents in competition with free white laborers.

Slavery was not entirely about growing cotton—often slaves were tradesmen, such as harness makers, blacksmiths, coopers, and stonemasons. In the slave markets, such specialized slaves could be purchased in the 1850s for about \$1,200. If slavery were made legal in the Territories or in the Northern States, perhaps as a result of another decision like the Dred Scott case, enterprising white business persons would buy such a slave and rent him out to the public, as often happened in the Slave States. If so, what would happen to the free white harness maker? Multiply this example hundreds of thousands of times, and consider the consequences for free labor everywhere.<sup>24</sup>

Then came the climatic event of the 1850s—the 1858 senatorial election debates in Illinois between the leading advocate for the extension of slavery, Senator Stephen A. Douglas, and the leading advocate for the containment of slavery to its original places, Abraham Lincoln. Seven three-hour debates—a total of twenty-one intense hours of outdoor argumentation on the subject—took place between August and October 1858. Crowds of between twelve and fifteen thousand persons attended these seven debates, held in seven rural Illinois towns averaging a population of about five thousand. After the debates, Senator Douglas’s and Mr. Lincoln’s remarks were printed verbatim in the *Chicago Daily Press* and *Tribune*, available by mail *Chicago Tribune*’s subscription to readers in Poughkeepsie for \$7 per year. The pro-Lincoln *Chicago Tribune*’s report of the first debate, held in Ottawa, headlined “Dred Scott Champion Pulverized.”

The critical question Lincoln asked Douglas was, “Can the people of a United States Territory, in any lawful way, against the wishes of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits...?” to which Douglas answered, fatally in the view of many of the North and South: “Yes, by refusing to pass local laws to secure slaveholders’ rights.” So according

to Senator Douglas, local legislatures can defy the United States Supreme Court's ruling that the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution prohibited even Congress from prohibiting slavery in federal jurisdictions.

### *Conclusion*

An announcement appeared in *The New York Times* in late February 1860:<sup>25</sup>

Hon. Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois  
will speak at the  
Cooper Institute  
On Monday Evening, Feb. 27,  
to the  
Republicans of New-York

Mr. Lincoln was introduced that evening by William Cullen Bryant. In the first part of his 90-minute speech, Lincoln provided thorough historical proof, by their voting records in the Philadelphia Convention and later in Congress, of the Constitution's authors' intent to limit the institution of slavery to the states in which it existed when the United States was organized. In the second part of his remarks Lincoln addressed the people of the South, saying that they, not the people of the North, were causing the slavery agitation by departing from the peace-keeping and slavery-limiting intentions of the Founders. As to the Dred Scott case, he held that it was not fairly considered settled law, because the decision was correct as to certain critical facts—particularly the citizenship status of free blacks in several of the original thirteen states—and because it was made by a deeply divided Court, a sectional and partisan Court, and that it was reasonable for the sovereign people to work to overturn it. Finally, in his closing remarks, Mr. Lincoln addressed the people of the North, saying first that northerners and Republicans should do everything reasonably possible to be at peace with the South. Then he asked, with regard to the southerners:

...What will satisfy them? Simply this: We must not only let them alone, but we must, somehow, convince them that we do leave them alone. This, we know by experience, is no easy task...what will convince them? This and this only: cease to call slavery *wrong*, and join them in calling it *right*. And this must be done thoroughly—done in acts as well as in words. Silence will not be tolerated—we must place ourselves avowedly with them...If slavery is right, all words, acts, laws, and constitutions against it, are themselves wrong, and should be silenced and swept away; if it is wrong, they cannot justly insist on

its extension—its enlargement. All they ask, we could readily grant, if we thought slavery right; all we ask, they could as readily grant, if they thought it wrong. Their thinking it right, and our thinking it wrong, is the precise fact upon which depends the whole controversy...Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the Government nor of dungeons to ourselves. LET US HAVE FAITH THAT RIGHT MAKES MIGHT, AND IN THE FAITH THAT RIGHT MAKES MIGHT, AND IN THAT FAITH, LET US, TO THE END, DARE TO DO OUR DUTY AS WE UNDERSTAND IT.” (Emphasis in the original.)<sup>26</sup>

Thus, as Lincoln was framing the argument in the Cooper Union speech, it was not about only “freeing the slaves” or even simply “keeping slavery out of the federal Territories,” so much as it was about keeping the United States hospitable to free labor, coast to coast, Canada to Mexico, black as well as white. And preserving liberal democratic institutions as against the spread of illiberal oligarchy.

Dred Scott died of tuberculosis in St. Louis, Missouri on September 14, 1858, a month after the second of the seven Lincoln-Douglas debates held in Freeport, Illinois—debates in which the case of one obscure negro’s appeal for freedom helped to shape the terms of the great debate about the nation’s conflict over slavery and freedom. As his obituary said,

...the name of Dred Scott became a household word in our politics, and so it will remain as long as the contest between Slaveholding and Free Labor shall continue...In fact, it will be mainly by associating their names with that of this humble negro, and by having attempted through him to strike a blow at Free Labor, that the Judges who pronounced his decision will find a place in history.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *New York Tribune*, (September 22, 1858) p. 4:2.

<sup>2</sup> For this article, I have subscribed to Newspapers.com to access all the newspaper accounts cited here.

<sup>3</sup> Northerners with southern sympathies, particularly pro-slavery sympathies, were called “doughfaces” by anti-slavery northerners. For example, see references to “doughfaces” in “Revival of the Slave Trade, *The Poughkeepsie Eagle*, (January 3, 1857) p.2:7.

<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of this essay, the aggregate money value of southern slaves at the time of the Dred Scott decision is estimated at \$2.5 billion (in 1857 dollars). This \$2.5 billion

approximation comes from multiplying 3.9 million slaves by an average value of \$650, which, by contemporary accounts would take into account the ages and genders of the slave population. See the *New York Tribune* report of March 9, 1859, further below in this note. Thus, the approximate relative value of the three major United States asset classes at the time—before considering the present value of the value of the annual cotton crop—would have been in the late 1850s:

3.9 million slaves	2,535,000,000	84%
25 railroads	271,377,000	9%
54 banks	194,182,732	6%
Total	<u>\$3,000,559,732</u>	<u>100%</u>

In the above table, the value of the 25 railroads and 54 banks was taken from the *New-York Daily Times* of January 1, 1856, p8:4. The value of the southerners' stock of slaves is estimated from the lengthy six-column report in the *New York Tribune* of March 9, 1859, headed "American Civilization Illustrated—A Great Slave Auction—400 Men, Women and Children Sold At Savannah, Georgia," and other sources such as Abraham Lincoln's August 27, 1856 speech in Kalamazoo, Michigan (reported in the *Detroit Daily Advertiser* of 29 August 1856) in which he conservatively estimated the value of southern slaves in 1856 at \$1 billion, and further estimated that that value would increase fifty percent IF slavery were allowed to expand into the new western territories. Lincoln's estimates were probably out of date, and likely did not reflect the latest information from slave auctions showing the rapidly rising price of slaves at sales events in the southern auctions. (For the aggregate slave valuations Lincoln gave in the Kalamazoo speech, see also *Abraham Lincoln, Speeches and Writings 1832-1858*, The Library of America 1989, p. 381; and the eight-volume Roy Basler, ed. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, volume II, p. 365.)

The extent to which this 84% of national wealth was concentrated in the hands of a small and regional elite is critical to understanding why slavery was not only fanatically defended but also aggressively expanded.

	1857		
U.S. population	31,183,582	100%	
Southern population	9,103,332	29%	100%
Slave population	3,950,528	13%	43%
Slaveowners	315,180	1%	3%

The *New-York Tribune* in the 1850s carried long detailed reports about slave auctions in places like Savannah, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina. The purpose of the Tribune's accounts was to shock northerners with the stores of the barbaric treatment of the men, women and children being treated as human chattel, but the Tribune reports provided sufficient specifics as to sales prices to have given Hudson Valley New Yorkers a fair idea of the aggregate economic value to southern slave owners and slave traders of the their roughly 3.9 million slaves.

For the sake of arriving at a magnitude of value, to compare to other financial assets of the time, like the value of banks and railroads, we will assume here that the sales prices of slaves at auction, in the aggregate, reflect both their value as speculatively traded

commodities to slave traders, as well as their value to plantation owners as income producing assets. Bear in mind in this connection that the value of United States cotton exports from about 1825 to 1860 equaled or exceeded the value of all other United States exports combined.

The *New-York Tribune* report of March 9, 1859 mentioned above (headed “American Civilization Illustrated—A Great Slave Auction—400 Men, Women and Children Sold...”) reported in great detail things like, “...a man without a trade, who would be valued at \$900, would readily bring \$1,600 or \$1,700 if he was a passable blacksmith or cooper...When the negro man was sold, there was no extra charge for the negro man’s clothes; they went with the man, and were not charged in the bill...clothing and other valuables (might be valued) to the extent of four or five dollars; had these been taken strictly into account, the sum total of the sale would have been increased, probably to a thousand dollars...The first family brought out were announced in the catalog as

	Name	Age	Remarks	Price
1	George	27	Prime cotton planter	\$1,200
2	Sue	26	Prime rice planter	\$900
3	George	6	Boy child	\$200
4	Henry	2	Boy child	\$100
				<hr/> \$2,400 <hr/>

“Owing to some misapprehension on the part of the buyer as to the manner of bidding...the family was sold again the next day, they brought \$620 each, or \$2,480 for the whole (family)...” And in another case, “...Amity, Prince, and two 1-year old boys, for \$670 apiece, or \$2,680 for the four...Jeffrey, chattel No. 319, marked as ‘prime cotton hand,’ aged 23...sold for \$1,310.

- <sup>5</sup> “Letters on the Productions, Industry and Resources of the Southern States;” *New-York Daily Times*. Forty-eight installments between 16 February 1853 and 13 February 1854, usually on page 2:1, colorfully describing southern life and agriculture, the effects of slavery and the aristocratic society, leading to the political pressure to not only move slavery ever westward and northward, but also to defend slavery as a positive good rather than a necessary evil, as it was formerly before the cotton gin was invented, by a recent Yale graduate, in 1793.
- <sup>6</sup> *Detroit Daily Advertiser*, August 29, 1856, speech of Abraham Lincoln in Kalamazoo, Michigan of August 27, 1856.
- <sup>7</sup> The southern slave interests succeeded in redirecting federal policy away from the Framers’ intention to limit slavery’s extension. The best explanation of the slavery-limiting intentions of the thirty-nine Framers as to containing slavery, and to keep slavery a local rather than a national institution was Abraham Lincoln’s discussion of the subject in his address at Cooper Institute on February 27, 1860. The full text of the speech was printed the following day in the *New York Times* (28 February 1860, p. 1:1-5). Lincoln summarized a lengthy analysis of federal slavery-related legislation on which the thirty-nine Framers voted as members of Congress from 1787 to 1820, to conclude that twenty-one of the thirty-nine men, southern as well as northern, “...clearly a majority of the whole,” favored keeping slavery out of the new territories and states.

<sup>8</sup> *New York Daily Tribune*, January 10, 1854, p. 7:1, which was repeated in full in *The Poughkeepsie Eagle* of January 14, 1854: From the *Tribune's* DC correspondent dated January 7, 1854, regarding the Kansas-Nebraska Bill: "...Has not the Slave power at present complete control of Congress? The North is disheartened and demoralized...and while all shades of pro-Slavery forces are united on the main object, the opponents of Slavery extension are scattered into a multitude of factions..."

The *New York Daily Times*, January 24, 1854, p. 2:4...Slavery is being extended "...by the influence of a Federal Government, controlled by the Slave Power, to extinguish Freedom and establish Slavery in the States and Territories of the Pacific, and thus to permanently subjugate the whole country to the yoke of a Slaveholding despotism..."

Commonly available information in 1857: As to the Presidents: Of the first eighteen presidents of the United States (from Washington until Lincoln), only two—John Adams and John Quincy Adams—never owned slaves, although two of them (Martin Van Buren and William Henry Harrison) did not own slaves while serving as president. James Buchanan, Lincoln's immediate predecessor, may have purchased two slaves before becoming president but immediately manumitted them into servants. As to the Congressional leadership: Even though the South represented only about thirty percent of the United States population in those years, sixty-one percent (twenty-two of thirty-six) Speakers of the House of Representatives from 1789 to 1861 and sixty-one percent (thirty-three of fifty-four) of the presidents pro tempore of the United States Senate were Southern slaveholders or pro-slavery Northerners. As to the United States Supreme Court: Sixty percent (twenty-one of thirty-five) of the justices of the United States Supreme Court appointed before 1861 were Southern slaveholders or pro-slavery Northerners.

So, from a pro-slavery v. anti-slavery perspective during the Dred Scott years, the ratio of relative political power in Washington was in opposite proportions to the relative North-South population, with the South holding two-thirds of the political power while the North had about three-quarters of the population. In fact, the political leadership and power in Washington, even in the House of Representatives, much more closely resembled the relative North-South distribution of wealth than the relative distribution of population. This gave rise to the belief in the North of a "Slave Power" conspiracy toward the nationalization of slavery, of which the Dred Scott decision in 1857 was considered by Northerners to be the confirmation.

<sup>9</sup> This Dred Scott chronology is drawn from the facts stipulated to by the litigants at the start of Dred Scott's ten-year lawsuit for freedom, as reported in "Slavery Before The Supreme Court," *The New York Daily Tribune* (February 20, 1856) p. 4:6.

<sup>10</sup> Slavery was nominally prohibited in Illinois by the terms of the Northwest Ordinance of 1789, which prohibited slavery in United States jurisdictions north of the Ohio River. This was part of the original intent of the Constitution to limit the institution of slavery to the places in which it existed at the time the Constitution was adopted.

<sup>11</sup> Fort Snelling is in the present State of Minnesota. The area was called "Upper Louisiana" in the 1830s because it was part of the Louisiana Purchase from France. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 prohibited slavery in all United States territories north of the latitude 36°30'. As with case of Illinois under the terms of the Northwest Ordinance of 1789, there was obviously no enforcement mechanism for the anti-slavery law in "Upper Louisiana."

<sup>12</sup> 60 U.S. 393; 19 Howard 393. Irene Sanford had moved to Massachusetts to marry a man who was an abolitionist, and later a Member of Congress. Thus her owning a slave was inconvenient, and, besides, her new husband was wealthy and she no longer needed the rent money. So she transferred ownership of Scott to her brother, John F. A. Sanford, who was a citizen of New York. Thus federal courts had jurisdiction under the “diversity of citizenship” provision of Article III, Section 2 of the Constitution. Note the typographical error in the spelling of the defendant’s name. The spelling should have been ‘Sanford’ but a clerk at the Court misspelled it and it was never corrected.

<sup>13</sup> This summary of the Dred Scott majority opinion is taken from two contemporary newspaper sources: First, the *Chicago Daily Press and Tribune’s* September 19, 1859 (p. 2:2) verbatim report of Abraham Lincoln’s September 16, 1859 speech in Columbus, Ohio, and, second, *The New-York Times* verbatim report on February 28, 1860 (p.1:1) of Lincoln’s speech at Cooper Institute on February 27, 1860. Lincoln’s Cooper Institute speech was also printed in full in the *New-York Daily Tribune* of the same date (p.6:1).

The majority opinion was based on the 5th Amendment’s provision that provides, in relevant part, ““No person shall be...deprived of...property, without due process of law...”

The misstatement of fact alluded to by Lincoln, were 1) that the right to slave property was ‘*distinctly and expressly* affirmed in that Constitution,’ where no such affirmation exists in the Constitution, and 2) that ‘no African—whether free or slave—has ever been or can be a citizen of the United States.’ Lincoln’s rebuttal appears in his Cooper Union speech, as reported above. Justice Curtis’s dissent as to African citizenship appears in the *New-York Daily Tribune* report of March 9, 1857 (p.4:5, “The Dred Scott Case”), in which he finds that several of the original States in 1789 considered free Africans to be citizens with property and voting rights.

<sup>14</sup> *The Poughkeepsie Eagle*, March 21, 1857. The detailed report on the decision appears at p.1:8, and the editorial calling the decision “absurd and dishonest” appears on P. 2:5.

<sup>15</sup> *New-York Daily Tribune*, March 16, 1857; p. 4:2 “Well, what do you propose to *do* about it?” The *Tribune* concluded: “I. We do *not* propose to resist the Federal authorities not break up the Union...II. We do mean to make plain to all our countrymen who can read, the iniquity and enormity of the Dred Scott decision...III. We mean to show that a decision of the Supreme Court, though formidable, is not irreversible...IV. We mean to urge and effect a readjustment of the basis on which the justices on the Supreme Court are apportioned...V. We mean to create and arouse an enlightened Public Sentiment which shall ultimately place the Federal Government...in the hands of men who love the Constitution and the Union...If there be treason in this (decision) let the Federal District-Attorney hurry up his documents.”

<sup>16</sup> *The New-York Daily Times* of Saturday, April 11, 1857, p. 11:1

<sup>17</sup> This is a reference to the Compromise of 1820, in which slavery was prohibited north of the 36° 30’ line of latitude in the large tract of land purchased from France—the Louisiana Territory. Sometimes this was later referred to in the newspapers as part of “the sacred pledge.”

<sup>18</sup> Douglass is referring to a series of “gag rules” proposed in Congress by pro-slavery members of the House and Senate 1830s and 1840s, as they gathered greater power in Congress, for the purpose of prohibiting any consideration or acknowledgement of attempts by anti-slavery groups, such as the Quakers, to “petition the Government for

the redress of grievances” about slavery under the First Amendment to the Constitution. *Poughkeepsie Eagle* issues of a) (March 2, 1844) p.2:2 – “News from Washington”; b) (March 9, 1844) p.2:4 – “Gag-Rule Restored”; c) (May 18, 1844) p.2:3 – “Whig Legislative Meeting”; (*New York Daily Tribune*, (December 5, 1844) p.2:1 – “The Gag-Rule Abolished.”

- <sup>19</sup> This refers to the “Compromise of 1850,” passed by Congress in September 1850, which provided: a) Texas would surrender its claim to New Mexico, as well as its claims north of the Missouri Compromise Line; b) Texas retained the Texas Panhandle and the federal government took over the state’s public debt; c) California was admitted as a free state with its current boundaries; d) The South prevented adoption of the Wilmot Proviso, which had been proposed by anti-slavery Congressmen during the Mexican War and afterwards, that would have outlawed slavery in new territories acquired from Mexico; e) the new Utah Territory and New Mexico Territory were allowed, under the principle of popular sovereignty (local residents could vote to allow or disallow slavery); f) the slave trade (but not slavery altogether) was banned in the District of Columbia; g) a far more stringent and pro-slate state fugitive slave law was enacted, placing federal marshals in charge of adjudicating runaway slave cases.
- <sup>20</sup> Douglass is referring to the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which was intended to organize the Kansas and Nebraska Territories for the purpose of building a transcontinental railroad. Instead, it re-opened the slavery controversy because it repealed the 1820 Missouri Compromise prohibition of slavery north of the 36° 30’ line.
- <sup>21</sup> Speech in New York at the meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, reported in the *New York Daily Tribune*, (Friday, May 15, 1857) p. 6.
- <sup>22</sup> *New York Daily Tribune*, (Thursday, June 24, 1858) p. 3:5 “Speech of Hon. Abraham Lincoln of Illinois.” Also the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, (June 19, 1858) p.2:4-6.
- <sup>23</sup> *New York Daily Tribune*, ( June 24, 1858) p.3:5, “Republican Principles—Speech of Hon. Abraham Lincoln of Illinois—At the Republican State Convention, June 16, 1858.”
- <sup>24</sup> For the economics of slave renting, see 1) the Richmond *Daily Dispatch* of February 4, 1857 p. 2:6 “Wanted—Negro Labor” 2) the *Daily Dispatch*,( January 5, 1857) p. 1:3 “Negro Hires in Fairfax” reporting hire rates for slaves reaching “extravagant figures” for “smiths and other mechanics” of \$200 to \$230 (per year),” and reported that “demand was largely in advance of supply.” 3) The Richmond *Daily Dispatch* ran regular sections headed “Hiring and Selling of Slaves” that provide information on rates of sale and rental; see for example the issue of (January 3, 1857) p. 3:3. Note that Dred Scott was rented out intermittently at good profit from about 1846 until his manumission in 1857.
- <sup>25</sup> *The New York Times*, (February 24, 1860) p. 5:5.
- <sup>26</sup> *The New York Times*, (February 28, 1860) p.1:1-5.
- <sup>27</sup> *New York Tribune*, (September 22, 1858) p.4:2 .

# A Tale of Two Sisters

by *Melodye K. Moore*

## *Introduction*

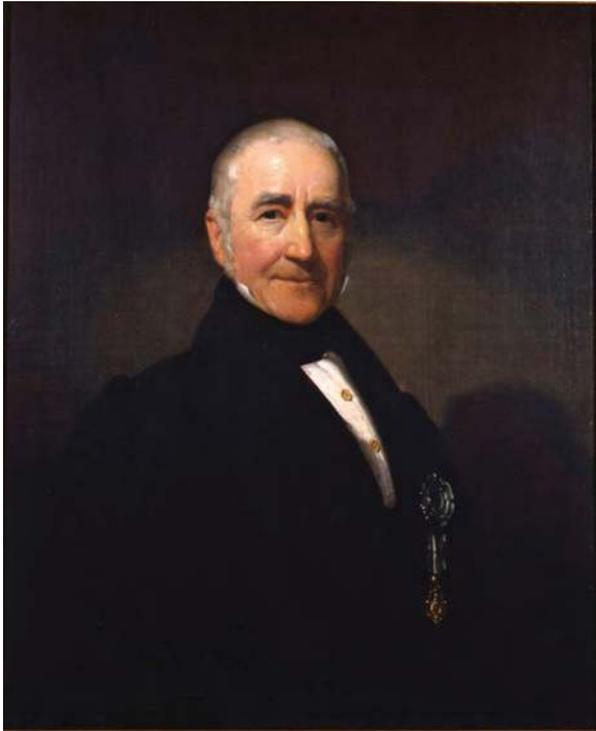
On October 24, 1826 Gertrude (known as Gitty) Laura Livingston married Rawlins Lowndes of South Carolina at the Staatsburgh home of her grandfather, Morgan Lewis. Seven years later, on October 30, 1833, Gitty's younger sister, Susan Mary (known as Mary), wed William Price Lowndes, the younger brother of Rawlins Lowndes. The completely unfathomable removal to the South of two of her daughters began a decades-long quest on the part of the fiercely possessive Margaret Lewis Livingston to effectuate their return to the North and to her. Further examination of the intertwined stories of these two families—one from the North and one from the South—reveals that despite their distinctly different geographic origins, they were more alike than could be imagined and not even the Civil War would disrupt their shared sense of privilege and noblesse oblige.

## *The Lewis-Livingston Family of Staatsburgh and New York City*

Morgan Lewis, grandfather of Gitty and Mary, was born in New York City on October 16, 1754 to Francis and Elizabeth Annesley Lewis. Francis Lewis is best remembered for having been a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Morgan Lewis graduated from the College of New Jersey (Princeton) in 1773 and commenced the study of law in the office of John Jay. At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War he joined the Patriot cause and began a distinguished military career that included serving as the Quartermaster General of the Northern Army. On May 11, 1779, Lewis married Gertrude Livingston, the sister of Robert R. Livingston, a member of the Committee of Five that drafted the Declaration of Independence. His marriage united him with one of the most influential landowning families of the Hudson Valley and further solidified his place in New York society. Indeed, he was by this time so embedded in the “inner circle” that he served as the grand marshal of the formal procession during George Washington's first inauguration on April 30, 1789 at Federal Hall in New York City where his brother-in-law Robert administered the oath of office.

Lewis (Figure 1) first entered politics in that same year when he was elected to the New York State Assembly. He went on to serve as Attorney General and Supreme Court Justice of the state. In 1804 he defeated Aaron

Burr to become Governor of New York and following his term as Governor he returned to the New York State Legislature as a member of the Senate. In 1812, President James Madison, with whom Lewis had begun a lifelong friendship while both were students at Princeton, offered Lewis the cabinet position of Secretary of War. Declining that, he accepted again the position of quartermaster-general and served until 1815 when he left the United States military with the rank of major general.



**Figure 1.** *Morgan Lewis, c. 1835—1840. Oil on canvas by Henry Inman. Collection of Staatsburgh State Historic Site, Staatsburg, New York, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.*

Prior to Morgan Lewis's entry into politics, his primary residence had been in New York City. With his attention now focused on Albany he and his wife decided to establish themselves in the Hudson Valley, closer to family and the lands originally owned by Colonel Henry Beekman that had been conveyed to Gertrude by her mother, the daughter of the Colonel. This decision was realized in 1791 with the purchase of the land in

Staatsburgh that would become the country seat of the extended family. Sometime before 1797, the Lewises completed the construction of the first house on the property and the couple moved there with their only child Margaret. The Lewises continued to maintain a New York City residence. While it is known that in later years they lived at 72 Leonard Street, it is not certain that this was their first or only New York City address.

Over the next eighteen years, Morgan Lewis remained active in both his military and political lives causing him to divide his time between Albany, New York City, and Staatsburgh. By the end of his military career in 1815, Lewis was sixty-one years old and ready to retire to his Hudson Valley property. By this time his daughter Margaret had married Maturin Livingston, eight of their twelve children had already been born, and the Livingstons had been convinced by Gertrude Lewis to move permanently into the Staatsburgh house that would be the summer residence of all three generations for decades to come.

Despite Morgan Lewis's purported "retirement" from public life in 1815 he continued to remain influential and actively engaged in the politics of the day. Gitty's husband Rawlins Lowndes wrote to his friend Edward George Washington Butler on August 30, 1828 to describe the General's attendance at the Philadelphia convention that nominated Andrew Jackson to be President.

Gen'l Lewis went to Philadelphia as the representative of the Jackson Party in the City and made a speech at dinner. Morgan Lewis is a man of large fortune, unconcerned with public life and undesirous of being so, with the experience that fits for an advisor and without a motive other than his country's good. Such a man's opinion must carry great weight particularly when opposed to the opinions of those who have been all their lives known for interest intrigues and political partisans and whose present pursuits and motives are but in keeping with their well- earned and well established character. <sup>1</sup>

Four years later, Lewis achieved national prominence when he was called upon to deliver an oration chronicling the major events in the career of George Washington at the Centennial Celebration in honor of the President's birth.

At the time of Morgan Lewis's death on April 7, 1844 at the age of ninety he was still a powerful and highly esteemed member of New York society. In 1893 an anonymous author looked back and recollected Lewis's New York City funeral procession:

For forty years or more the Governor occupied a spacious double mansion at the corner of Church and Leonard streets, where he dispensed a patriarchal hospitality. From this house he was buried on April 11, 1844. I recall the occasion. As Governor Lewis was President-general of the Society of the Cincinnati and Grand Master of Masons, there was to be a great display, and every school-boy in town—of whom I was one—was anxious to see it, and I think we were all there. The military, the veterans of the Cincinnati, the martial musk (sic), and the paraphernalia of the Freemasons made an imposing and stately procession. The streets were thronged with people on the whole Line of march, from the house on Leonard Street to St. Paul's Church, where the funeral services were held—Trinity Church being the in the process of rebuilding.<sup>2</sup>

The revered patriarch of the family was buried in the churchyard of St. James' Episcopal Church in Hyde Park, a few short miles from his beloved home in Staatsburgh.

Gertrude Laura and Susan Mary were the fourth and sixth children born to Margaret Lewis and her distant cousin Maturin Livingston in the period between 1799 and 1822; Gitty having been born in 1805 and Mary in 1809. As children of members of New York's high society they undoubtedly enjoyed a life of great privilege and opportunity with exposure to the finest cultural offerings available. While little is known about the details of their formal education, it is known that the family saw education as a high priority. Indeed, Morgan Lewis felt so strongly about the value of education that while governor he established a permanent fund for common schools. It can therefore be presumed that all twelve of his grandchildren received the finest education. In the early nineteenth century, it was common for young men to be sent away to school and for young women to be tutored at home. At least three of the Livingston brothers received advanced academic training: Morgan at West Point, Mortimer at Columbia and Robert at Yale. Some information can be gleaned about the education of the younger Livingston siblings that remained at home from letters written to Gitty by her mother Margaret between 1826 and 1838<sup>3</sup>. In a January 29, 1827 letter, after sharing the news that the winter had been dismal and the children had all been ill, Margaret says "My greatest trouble now is to know what to do with the boys.<sup>4</sup> I cannot send them to school, and they are losing their time at home." Several years later on May 10, 1834, Margaret writes "We have engaged a young Frenchman to go to the country with us this summer to teach French and drawing. Maturin (now 18) will go home with us. He is very anxious to perfect himself in French, and he can also read Latin with this man.<sup>5</sup> The variety of educational opportunities afforded particularly

to the girls is further revealed in a January 26, 1837 letter written when daughter Angelica was sixteen.

She is taking lessons in German and drawing. As I cannot get Cherru-  
aud I am to go tomorrow to enquire for Madame Ferrara to give them  
dancing lessons and we have engaged a young divinity student to teach  
Algebra, Mathematics, &c.<sup>6</sup>

Presumably Gitty and Mary had been educated in much the same way. Overseeing all of the activities of the children was the full time occupation of their mother, Margaret Livingston (Figure 2). Her daughter Julia recalled her as a strong woman who was the hub of the family:

...The only child of Gen. Lewis, she was as much like him as a woman  
can be like one of the other sex...<sup>7</sup>

...Every detail of the management of the estate, as well as of the  
household, passed through her hands—not from any love of control  
on her part, or because the heads of the family were unwilling to take  
their share of the burden, but because she was the center round which  
everything revolved, and no member of her family was content until  
her approbation and co-operation had been secured.



**Figure 2.** *Margaret Lewis Livingston. Date and artist unknown. Image courtesy of Staatsburgh State Historic Site, Staatsburgh, New York, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.*

In her book *An American Aristocracy, The Livingstons*, Clare Brandt portrays Margaret in a less flattering light:

Mrs. Maturin Livingston—who came to be known in the family as Grandma Grundy—assumed the mantle of hostess and arbiter of her children’s social lives. She assiduously reviewed every aspect of their activities; and when they were old enough to marry, predictably none of their choices satisfied. One son’s wife she deemed too cold, another too long- suffering. Her daughter Julia’s groom, Major Joseph Delafield, she condemned as lazy and prone to stare. The Lowndes brothers from North Carolina<sup>9</sup>, who successfully courted her two daughters Gertrude and Mary, had the effrontery to remove their brides from under her wing and take them south to live in Lowndes territory.<sup>10</sup>

While Margaret’s letters to Gitty do indeed include the opinions referred to above, they also reveal a mother who dearly loved her children, who worried constantly about their health and well-being, and who sought every opportunity to keep them close to her. Gitty and Mary were undoubtedly intelligent and polished young women—“finished” in every way possible. Margaret must have been distraught to see them leave.

### *The Lowndes Family*

Lowndes territory was South Carolina, and had been since 1730 when Charles Lowndes arrived in Charleston, South Carolina with his wife and three sons—William, Charles and Rawlins. Born in Cheshire, England he had emigrated in his early life to St. Kitts, British West Indies, where he soon after married Ruth, the daughter of Henry Rawlins, a third generation planter on the island. The Lowndes family genealogy reports that the move to Charleston was necessitated by the fact that Lowndes had squandered his wife’s estate and a fresh start was needed. According to the same account, the family’s negroes and movable property arrived shortly after the family.<sup>11</sup> Lowndes died in March of 1736 and his wife returned immediately to St. Kitts where she lived another twenty-seven years. Third son Rawlins was only fourteen when his father died and with the departure of his mother, Provost Marshal Robert Hall became his guardian. Rawlins Lowndes himself was later appointed as the Provost Marshal of South Carolina at the age of twenty-one and served in that position for ten years from 1742—1752. By 1766, he had completed his legal studies and was appointed associate judge by the crown. On May 13, 1766, he delivered the first judicial opinion rendered in America on the Stamp Act, declaring it against common rights and the Constitution, and refusing to enforce it in his court.<sup>12</sup> Rising quickly through South Carolina’s political ranks, he

was elected a member of the Council of Safety in 1775 and a member of the committee that drafted the constitution for the province in 1776. He became a member of the legislative council that was created by the constitution and, on March 6, 1778, he succeeded to the Presidency of South Carolina, a position he held until January 9, 1779. In 1787, he was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives where he served until 1790. From 1788—1789 he served concurrently as the Mayor of Charleston. During his tenure in the House of Representatives, he opposed the motion to accept the federal Constitution “objecting to the restrictions on slavery”<sup>13</sup> that he “declared to be the great source of the strength and prosperity of the south.”<sup>14</sup> Lowndes died on August 24, 1800 in Charleston. A closing sentence of one of his speeches harkened back to his opposition to the Constitution: “I wish for no other epitaph than this: Here lies one who opposed the Federal Constitution, holding it to be fatal to the liberties of his country.”<sup>15</sup> In addition to leaving behind a legacy as one of South Carolina’s foremost eighteenth century leaders, he left his family large estates on the Ashley, Combahee and Santee Rivers, presumably the same ones that were later owned by his children and grandchildren.

Rawlins Lowndes married three times. He and his first wife, Amaranthia Elliott were married on August 15, 1748 but less than two years later, on January 14, 1750, she was dead. On December 23, 1751, he married Mary Cartwright, who was at the time a mere fifteen years old. Over the next nineteen years she bore seven children, dying after the birth of James on December 16, 1770. The inscription on her gravestone in Saint Phillips Episcopal Church Cemetery in Charleston reads in part:

In all her relative duties and offices of social and domestic life it pleased God after making her the faithful instrument of numerous offspring seven of whom survive her. She should at last in giving life to another lose her own on Sunday the sixteenth of December 1770, in the 34th year of her age, gratitude and every other motive which sense of the highest obligation can inspire during the course of 19 happy years union demand this tribute justly due to the memory of the most excellent endearing wife from an infinitely obliged husband “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints.”<sup>16</sup>

Once again he was a widower but he later married sixteen-year old Sarah Jones of Georgia who, in 1782, bore his last child William.

Thomas Lowndes, the father of Rawlins and William Price Lowndes, was born to Rawlins and Mary Lowndes on January 22, 1766. He, like his father before him, became a lawyer and a statesman, serving in the

South Carolina state legislature from 1792 -1799. From March 4, 1801—March 3, 1805, he represented the state’s first congressional district in the United States Congress. Failing to be re-elected he retired from public life. He “spent the remainder of his life educating his family and caring for his large estates, especially Oakland on the Combahee. He passed a portion of the year in Charleston.”<sup>17</sup> Later in life he was reported to take “an occasional journey to the north where two of his children had married enabling him to continue friendships which he had formed when in public service.”<sup>18</sup>

Rawlins and William Price Lowndes were two of the eleven children born to Thomas Lowndes and his wife Sarah Bond I’On. Rawlins was born six months after his father’s election to the United States Congress on September 1, 1801, in New Haven, Connecticut, where his parents were summering.<sup>19</sup> The third child of the couple, he was the first son to survive infancy. Two years later his younger brother Thomas was also born in New Haven. By the time William Price was born on September 9, 1806, the family was apparently was no longer summering in New Haven. While the family genealogy lists his birthplace as Philadelphia, his Hyde Park gravestone identifies Charleston as his place of birth. The same family genealogy records that the following year Thomas and his family “passed the summer in the neighborhood of Philadelphia<sup>20</sup> thus increasing the likelihood of that location as his birthplace. These annual summer excursions became a necessity in the nineteenth century when agricultural practices changed and the older, abandoned fields became breeding grounds for mosquitoes. It was not uncommon for planters and their families to leave their plantations in either May or June and to remain away until October or November. Some respites were close by at the shore or in the mountains while wealthier families traveled to Newport or Saratoga. After their marriages, the Lowndes brothers would summer in New York City and Staatsburgh, close to their Livingston in-laws.<sup>21</sup>

Little is known about the brothers’ early life, but it can be assumed that they lived a life of comfort and privilege, dividing their formative years between a town house in Charleston and the plantation holdings of their father and grandfather. Typically the children of planters were educated by tutors in the home, or at schools in Charleston. Both young men furthered their education by attending prestigious academic institutions. William Price was educated first at New Haven and later at the College of South Carolina, frequently called the College at Columbia, not to be confused with Columbia College, New York. This school had admitted its first class

in 1805 and was considered “more important than any other in molding the minds of South Carolina’s planting class.”<sup>22</sup>

Rawlins entered the United States Military Academy at West Point on August 31, 1816 at the age of fifteen years and two months. The West Point that greeted him on his arrival was not the disciplined, military academy that it is today. Established as an engineering school in 1802, its first students were accepted largely because of political connections and by the time of Lowndes’ enrollment the school was in “poor shape, its curriculum had unraveled, examinations were unknown, and discipline was non-existent.”<sup>23</sup> President James Monroe was infuriated by the situation and, in July of 1817, replaced acting superintendent Captain Alden Partridge with Sylvanus Thayer who set about transforming the Academy. Unfortunately the cadets preferred Captain Partridge’s style of leadership and a series of incidents resulted in a difficult transition that culminated in the 1818 Mutiny At West Point. Enraged by the abusive conduct of Commandant of Cadets Captain John Bliss, five cadets, led by Thomas Ragland, and claiming to represent more than 150 men, demanded the Captain’s removal. Thayer responded by ordering the cadets off the post and eventually they were court martialed. While Rawlins was not one of the five cadets, he must have been involved to some degree as he was called to testify at the court martial. “Cadet Lowndes was asked about the “assemblies” of ten or twelve cadets in Ragland’s room and said that none were concerted, but all were merely “accidental.”<sup>24</sup> Lowndes went on to reveal that Ragland has dissuaded him from submitting his resignation. He graduated sixteenth in his class of thirty on July 1, 1820 and began a military career that would last for ten years.

Rawlins and William, like their future wives, were well-born: Gitty and Mary from the cream of New York Society and the men from the “planter elite” that were the highest class of southern society in the early to mid-1800s. Their marriages, rather than unions of very culturally different men and women were, in reality, a solidification of class and status that knew no geographical boundaries. For them, their futures were secure, their opportunities boundless and their way of life eternal.

### *Courtship and Marriage*

Rawlins Lowndes and Morgan Lewis Livingston, brother of Gitty and Mary were students together at West Point and appear to have formed a friendship. And why not, given the striking similarities in their backgrounds?



**Figure 3.** *Staatsburgh built in 1832, was the second residence to be built on the Lewis-Livingston property. Multiple generations of the family used this as their country house and appear in this c. 1857 photograph. Image courtesy of Staatsburgh State Historic Site, Staatsburg, New York, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.*

Well educated sons of affluent families, descendants of military leaders and eminent politicians, they would have had a lot in common. With the Staatsburgh and New York City homes of the Lewis-Livingston family barely 60 miles in either direction from West Point, it can be assumed that friends of Morgan would have been frequent visitors. Not only would young men far away from their own families welcome these diversions, they must also have been eager to be in the presence of the great General Morgan Lewis. Rawlins Lowndes and Edward George Washington Butler also became friends at West Point and through their correspondence following their graduation from West Point the close and enduring associations with the family are revealed. A letter sent to Butler, care of Morgan Lewis, Staatsburgh, on June 25, 1823, by his brother Anthony gives a good sense of the significance of Staatsburgh to the Lowndes and Butler families:

Remember me in terms of the warmest friendship to the inmates of  
The good old brick mansion which I do not fail to visit every evening  
Either by the soft light of memory or the glowing rays of imagination.<sup>25</sup>

Butler's friendship with Morgan Lewis Livingston led to his introduction to Morgan's sister Julia and he was smitten. In late 1822, Butler wrote to his brother Anthony extolling her virtues: "you will find her a modest, but at the same time the best informed woman of her age in America. Two qualities which seldom go together."<sup>26</sup> Marriage between the two was expected, but the following year Butler was having second thoughts. Having

been introduced by Julia to her friend, Frances Parke Lewis, he was again smitten, but this time to a different woman. The courtship with Frances, a grand-niece of George Washington, blossomed and Butler ultimately chose her over Julia to be his wife. They were married on April 4, 1826. Julia, the eldest of the Livingston girls, born in 1801, would not marry until December of 1833 at the ripe old age of thirty-two.

Rawlins Lowndes infatuation with the Livingston women was less complicated. In a letter from him dated Charleston, February 7, 1824 to Butler, who was then in New York City, the first suggestion of a budding romance with one of the Livingston girls is made: "Remember me to Morgan and give my love to any of the fairer sex who may be so kind as to make mention of me."<sup>27</sup>

Finally, over two years later on March 12, 1826 Lowndes writes to Butler with good news.

My Dear Ned,

You will bear no loss to grip the attraction that drew me over the mountains and I have no doubt that you will derive pleasure from hearing of the success of your friend's months of misery have been fully atoned for by the happenings I at present enjoy, assured of Gertrude's affection for me, and possession of her promise to be mine.<sup>28</sup>

Happily the engagement was shorter than the courtship (Figures 4 and 5). In a letter to Butler written from Long Branch, New Jersey on August 30, 1827, Rawlins writes that the:

...wedding will be sometime between the 20<sup>th</sup> and the last of October. Father and Mother have come to the north purposely to attend the ceremony and are now at the springs. I have been here for a week past for the benefit of sea bathing.<sup>29</sup>

He left the next day for Staatsburgh and the marriage took place on October 24. On December 31, 1826, Margaret Livingston wrote to Gitty who was by then presumably well settled in South Carolina:

I bless God for having cast your lot in a family capable of appreciating your worth and with hearts disposed to cherish my child and render her happy.<sup>30</sup>

Presumably William Price Lowndes and Mary Livingston were in attendance at the wedding. Had they met before? Was it love at first sight? Did Gitty and Rawlins encourage the relationship? Did the Lowndes and

Livingston families nurture another suitable marriage between their two families? While little documentation exists to answer those questions, it is known that when Mary returned on November 10, 1831 from seventeen months in Europe for health reasons. William is on the same ship.<sup>31</sup> Two years later on October 30, 1833, Mary followed in her sister's footsteps and, like Gitty, became the wife of a southern rice planter and moved to South Carolina.

The early years of the marriage between Gitty and Rawlins were marked by long separations due to his military service as Aide-de-Camp to Brevet Major-General Gaines. Lowndes' letters to his friend Butler suggest a strong dislike for the military and in the months before his marriage he writes that he is thinking of resigning his commission. He does not, however, and over the next four years he is alternately with his family in South Carolina or following Gaines around as the head of the United States' Eastern and Western Departments. Due to a gap in the letters sent to Gitty between 1827 and 1834 it is not certain where she resided during the years that Rawlins was serving in the Army after their marriage, but letters sent to her in South Carolina in the first year of her marriage indicate that, at that time at least, she was residing with her husband's family. Those letters are full of entreaties to return home. It wasn't until December 31, 1830 that he finally left the military, prompted perhaps by two recent occurrences—the birth of his first child, daughter Julia, in June, and severe problems on his lands at Santee. And so, four years after his marriage he returned home to South Carolina and to Gitty and they took up plantation life together.

### *Charleston and Georgetown, South Carolina*

The Lowndes family in America originated in Charleston and moved out from there to establish their plantations on the North Santee River. Charleston was chartered in 1663, but it wasn't until 1670 that the first English colonists arrived from Bermuda. By the mid-eighteenth century the city was the center of trade for the southern colonies. On the eve of the Revolution it was the fourth largest seaport in the colonies, surpassed only by Boston, New York and Philadelphia. Great fortunes were made on the backs of the enslaved Africans in the mass cultivation of cotton, rice, and indigo and later rendered South Carolina one of the wealthiest states in the union. As fortunes grew, so did the sophistication of the city and the cultural and social opportunities that were available, especially for the city's elite, were enormous. The relocation of the state capital to Columbia in 1792 did little to diminish Charleston's position and power

and the city became even more prosperous in the post-Revolutionary period that was dominated by a plantation economy. It was into this world that the Livingston girls married. Skilled in all the social graces honed in New York City they must have felt right at home in the drawing rooms of the Charleston mansions. Antebellum city directories for Charleston do not list Rawlins so it is not known where he resided while in the city. The 1829 Charleston City Directory does list Thomas Lowndes, planter, as residing at 112 Broad Street. Living with him in the household were his sons Charles Tidyman, Edward Tidyman and William Price.<sup>32</sup> The loss of many of Charleston's antebellum records makes it difficult to be certain, but it is likely that Thomas' home was the city residence of the extended family. The historic residences that remain on that street today are of a size and quality befitting the family.

But the drawing rooms of Charleston were not the only homes of the Lowndes family. There was also the low country surrounding Georgetown, approximately 60 miles northeast of Charleston. Four rivers, the Waccamaw, the Peedee, the Black, and the Sampit cross the county and converge at the town of Georgetown to form Winyah Bay. A few miles to the south lies the great delta of the Santee Rivers. The earliest money crop in the area was the blue dye indigo but when India and the East Indies saturated the market in the late eighteenth century, rice, which had established itself as the second most important crop in the area, took over completely. By the end of the century, 40,000 acres had been cleared, 78 miles of canals had been dug by slaves and the Georgetown area had become the most productive rice culture of the south Atlantic coast.<sup>33</sup> In 1840, the Georgetown district produced 36,360,000 of the total United States crop of 80,841,422 pounds of rice. That number was very close to being one-half of the total rice crop production of the United States.<sup>34</sup>

Thomas Lowndes, father of Rawlins and William, had acquired a tract of land in this area that later became the Cat Island plantation. Eventually a second plantation, Belle Isle, was acquired by the family, and in 1844 both passed to Thomas' youngest son Richard Henry. By 1850, the two plantations were producing 360,000 pounds of rice with 147 slaves. By 1860, the combined production of the two plantations was 800,000 pounds of rice with 105 slaves.<sup>35</sup> Two other siblings, Charles Tidyman, and Harriet Lowndes Aiken also enhanced the Lowndes family reputation by establishing themselves as major plantation owners in the area. Charles Tidyman (1808 - 1884), at times in partnership with brothers Rawlins and Thomas was the owner of Oakland plantation in nearby Colleton County. Other names

associated with Oakland were Cedar Bluff, Buncome, and Laurel Springs and the 1860 slave census for his property enumerates 370 slaves, 182 of whom were male. In 1833, sister Harriet (1806—1887) married William Aiken who became one of South Carolina's wealthiest citizens, served as the state's governor between 1844 and 1846, and was the owner of Jehosee Island, the state's largest rice plantation.<sup>36</sup> With 1,500 acres being worked by 700 slaves, by 1860 this plantation was producing 1.5 million pounds of rice.<sup>37</sup> Their Charleston mansion, currently known as the Aiken-Rhett Home, still stands and is considered to be one of the most impressive residences in Charleston. The combined power and wealth of the Lowndes family members should not be understated. In 1850, in addition to the rice production and number of slaves already given for Thomas Lowndes, Rawlins Lowndes rice production at Wicklow Hall was 540,000 pounds of rice and he owned 190 slaves. An additional 195 slaves and 300,000 pounds of rice production was reported in for their father's estate. Together these three plantations were producing 1,200,000 pounds of rice with 532 slaves.<sup>38</sup>

In 1831, Rawlins Lowndes and three of his brothers acquired Wicklow Plantation. By 1843, he had acquired the other interests in the property and became the sole owner. By 1850, his rice plantation at Wicklow was valued at \$40,000. Accounts regarding the number of slaves recorded in his name vary from 100, to 131 to 190 but by any account he was a very successful planter capable of lavishly supporting his family.

Little is known about the land holdings of William Price although it is known that he too owned a plantation. In her letters to Gitty, Margaret frequently expresses her concerns about William's capabilities and character. These shortcomings would ultimately contribute to a less happy and secure life for Mary than the one led by her sister.

### *A Planter's Wife*

The crisis that most likely convinced Rawlins to resign from the Army was weather related. In a November 11, 1830 letter to Butler, he shared that

the lands at Santee, in which I am interested, had on them, all most up to the period of harvest, a most bountiful crop—a gale in one night rendered the larger portion of them not worth the harvesting and destroyed for my father and myself a full 1500 barrels, and as if purposely to leave a poor devil without even an (unreadable) to console himself with, the price of rice this year is already good and likely to be still better. I am thank God, not yet in debt, though without a ducat.<sup>39</sup>

Obviously Lowndes achieved a full recovery as attested to by the size of his 1850 holdings. Gitty's life as the wife of a successful planter alternated seasonally between Wicklow Hall, also known as "The Strip," their home on the North Santee River, and the family residence in Charleston. Charleston's social season generally began in January and planter families usually began returning to their country residences in March where they remained until the onset of the summer heat brought the threat of malaria. Often their New York City homes, as well as the Staatsburgh country house became the summer refuge of the sisters and their families.

Gitty's life in the South for the next thirty years appears, from her mother's letters, to have been typical of the life of a planter's wife and revolved around the orderly management of her home and family. In her Doctoral dissertation entitled "*Conspicuous Display and Social Mobility: A Comparison of 1850s Boston and Charleston Elites*" Sara Melissa Pullum-Pinson notes that "while planter families were in residence in the country, there were few opportunities for women to meet with each other and generate mutual support for new personal roles."<sup>40</sup> Margaret's comments in a January 6, 1834 letter confirm that this was true for Gitty: "You complain of the sameness of the plantation life which affords you nothing to say in your letters."<sup>41</sup> Later in the year she asks Gitty how she occupies her mind. Gitty's first daughter, Julia, was born in 1829 and was followed at two year intervals by the births of four other daughters, Mary, Gertrude, Anne and Harriet. She was heartbroken when Gertrude died on October 26, 1834 and her grief extended for some time. The warm thoughts regarding the extended Lowndes family that Margaret had expressed in her first letter to Gitty after her move to South Carolina had apparently dissipated over the years and she was furious that the family seemed oblivious to Gitty's loss.

You ask too much of me, dear love, when you expect me to believe in the sympathy of people who fill their house with noise and gaiety without regard to the grief which, if they did not feel, they ought to have respected. Why could they not have postponed their parties and dinners until you were out of hearing of them? If they have no hearts they might at least have a sense of decency.<sup>42</sup>

Rarely does Margaret write to her daughter without imploring her to return north—if not permanently, then just for the summer. On more than one occasion it appears that years pass without her doing so and Margaret continues her psychological campaign to lure her back to New York and Staatsburgh where she will not be susceptible to heat or illness. Early in 1838 Gitty and Margaret apparently came to an agreement to send Julia,

the eldest of the girls, north to be educated under her grandmother's guidance. Margaret was elated and at the same time fretful that she would not be able to meet the challenge, having not been in this role for some time. Her joy turned into disappointment when Rawlins expressed his desire that his children not be separated from each other and from their parents. Without Gitty's letters to her mother, it can never be known how she handled the pressure or explained her reasons for staying in the South, but she seems to settled into a plantation life that satisfied her.



**Figure 4.** *Rawlins Lowndes, probably painted in 1826 on the occasion of their wedding. Attributed to Henry Inman (American, 1801–1846); watercolor on ivory; 2 ½ x 2 inches. Collection of the Gibbes Museum of Art/Carolina Art Association (1931.001.0001).*



**Figure 5.** *Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes (Gertrude Livingston), painted at the same time as her husband and also attributed to Henry Inman. 2 ½ x 2 1/8 inches. Collection of the Gibbes Museum of Art/Carolina Art Association (1931.001.0002).*

The other major tragedy to befall the Rawlins Lowndes family during their years in and around Charleston was the destruction by fire of their plantation home. Margaret first comments on it in a January 9, 1838 letter and on January 18 she writes “The picture of desolation you present—you and the Major seated on straw, taking your dinner by the light of your blazing rafters—made a complete fool of me.”<sup>43</sup> In subsequent letters Margaret wonders about what they will do—will they rebuild in the same location, will they relocate to the Cat Island property of Rawlins’ father, would they consider abandoning the South to return to the North. With news later in

1838 that Gitty is fitting out a new house at Santee, Margaret once again has to let go of her dream to pull Gitty and her family back to her.

They chose to rebuild in the same location and the second house is extant today and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Figures 6 and 7). In her book *Within The Plantation Household; Black and White Women of the Old South*, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese describes the typical plantation house as not being impressive. Usually it stood atop posts to allow for air circulation and was built low to withstand and forestall heavy gales.<sup>44</sup> The narrative and photographs included in the National Register forms confirm that Wicklow Hall fell within these norms. A simple two-story clapboard structure, the house was set upon a low brick foundation with Greek Revival features on the interior and exterior. The first floor featured two parlors located at the front of the house, with a central hall flanked by a dining room and a library located behind the parlors. The kitchen was located to the rear. The second story contained a bedroom on each side of a central hall. Fox-Genovese describes the typical plantation as including, in addition to the plantation house, outbuildings, fields, gardens, and slave quarters along with separate buildings for a kitchen, storehouse, corn house, stable, hen-coop, hounds kennel and a shed for corn mill.<sup>45</sup> At the time of the National Register Nomination many of the original Wicklow Hall dependencies were still extant and included a kitchen, corn crib, carriage house, slave quarters, stable, privy and schoolhouse. Most were believed to be contemporary with the house.<sup>46</sup>



**Figure 6.** *Wicklow Hall Plantation house, Georgetown, South Carolina. Image courtesy of the National Register of Historic Places Program, South Carolina Department of Archives and History. [Http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/georgetown/S10817722014/index.htm](http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/georgetown/S10817722014/index.htm).*

Although Margaret's letters to Gitty end on December 16, 1842, the likelihood is that Rawlins and Gitty continued to live for the next decade and a half in much the same way that was revealed in the correspondence until the storm clouds that preceded the Civil War changed everything.



**Figure 7.** *Wicklow Hall Plantation slave cabin. Georgetown, South Carolina. Image courtesy of the National Register of Historic Places Program, South Carolina Department of Archives and History. [Http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/georgetown/S10817722014/index.htm](http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/georgetown/S10817722014/index.htm).*

### *Poor Mary*

Alas, sister Mary's life in the South seems doomed almost from the outset. Very little is known about William Price Lowndes but the picture that emerges through the letters, however biased it might be, paints him as a distant and undemonstrative man. Margaret shares with Gitty that "Mary says she cannot by any exertion divert his thoughts for five minutes from himself."<sup>47</sup> Southern chronicler Mary Chesnut in describing planter elite seems to be talking about William when she says:

This race have brains enough, but they are not active-minded. Those old revolutionary characters—Middletons, Lowndes, Rutledges, Marions, Sumters—they came direct from active-minded forefathers, or they would not have been here. But two or three generations of gentlemen planters—how changed the blood became! Our planters are nice people but slow to move. No—impulsive but hard to keep moving. They are wonderful for a spurt—put out all their strength and then like to rest.<sup>48</sup>

Less than a year into her marriage, Mary had shared with her mother that she expected to “live the following winter, and perhaps all her life, alone on a sand hill in the midst of a rice swamp”.<sup>49</sup> While Margaret thinks Mary may bear it without complaining, she “fears she will sink under it for she has nothing to support her courage, neither tenderness, gratitude or even the appearance of affection.”<sup>50</sup> By the three year anniversary of Mary’s marriage to William, Margaret writes of wanting to “help find work for Price”<sup>51</sup> and expressing her concern that he “keeps so many slaves.”<sup>52</sup> William’s failures as a planter continue to mount and on April 13, 1837 Gertrude bemoans:

Poor Mary. I must not write to her any more about business. Things must now take their course. But is it not very unkind, very unjust, to refuse her a statement of affairs in which she is so deeply interested? The anxiety, the disappointment, the privations she has her full share of. Why is she kept ignorant of the details? Why is she not allowed to know the worst at once? From the last communication made to her it is evident that whilst William keeps a depreciating property which brings in nothing, he has debts drawing interest, more sufficient to absorb all that we hoped would be saved from the wreck of his property. It appears to me that he either willfully shuts his eyes or that he cannot understand the state of his own affairs. The plantation will probably be saved but even that now appears doubtful. Everything else will go, and when all is gone she will, I trust, come back to her mother, and her home; they will remain to her.<sup>53</sup>

On May 9, 1837, Margaret laments the difficulties and embarrassments being suffered by Mary and asks, “And what is to become of Mary?” In the same letter Margaret reports that “Your Papa has just been in to tell me that there is a run upon all the banks and I must go and pay away all the bills I have in the house.”<sup>54</sup> The next day New York City banks suspended specie payments and the Panic of 1837 was unleashed. It would take well established entrepreneurs and financial houses years to recover but the Panic must have eliminated virtually any chance that William might have had to stabilize his declining fortunes.

Shortly after her daughter’s marriage, Margaret described her as “not well fitted for the situation in which she has placed herself”<sup>55</sup> and while it cannot be known exactly what she is referring to, in a letter later that year she relates that Mary has seen a doctor who has determined that she has an inflammation of the coats of the liver and that she will always be at risk of recurrence of it whenever she was exposed to extreme heat or damp. Over the next four years, there is hardly a letter written by Margaret that does

not refer to some illness or pain suffered by Mary. Often she returns north to be ministered to by her mother; sometimes with William and sometimes without him. When she has her first child early in 1835, William is not present. It can never be known the true nature of Mary's illness and frailties—real or imagined—but in either case they could certainly be exacerbated by their financial situation and the stress and anxieties inherent in their lives. By August, 1838, Mary's physical condition had deteriorated to the point that her mother describes her as "as thin as is possible to be: her bosoms are entirely gone, her cheeks hollow, her cough is constant, as is the pain in her breast and between her shoulders, and she has daily slight chills followed by fever."<sup>56</sup> Barely a month later Mary's doctor advises her to go abroad seeking a climate more conducive to recovery. Her family rallies, enlists the support of younger sister Angelica to accompany her, and commits to providing \$4000 a year to support her time abroad. The decision for her to go abroad was so sudden that there was not sufficient time to acquire passports in a normal fashion and, on September 10, Maturin writes to John Forsyth, Secretary of State, to implore him to transmit the necessary paperwork directly to him in New York. In his letter he describes his daughter as an invalid.<sup>57</sup> Mary, Angelica and William sail on September 19, 1838. Daughter Margaret and son Francis are left behind in the care of Margaret. Over the next ten years Mary moves around Europe spending time in Rome, Pau, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Naples and Paris, always seeking the cure. Angelica returns after the first year, brother Maturin travels to Europe to be with Mary, and William seems to fade in and out of the picture, sometimes showing up stateside in Margaret's letters. From time to time it appears that Mary herself returns home for brief reunions.

Two more children are born to Mary during this decade. In an April 4, 1840 letter, Margaret says that Mary hopes to come home in July. In the same letter she relates that the "baby is well."<sup>58</sup>

There is a baptismal record on file at the British Embassy in Paris that lists the October 27, 1839 baptism of a Mary Livingstone (sic) Lowndes, born August 21, 1839. Why the British Embassy? Perhaps because there were no Episcopalian churches in Paris. The father is given as William; the mother as Mary; the abode as Paris; and the father's profession as Esq.<sup>59</sup> Family genealogies indicate that Mary and William lost a baby girl in infancy and it is probable that it was this baby since she does not show up in later U. S. census records. Proof of the fourth child, Guillaume, born August 1, 1843, first appears on a manifest for the French steamship *New York* which departed Cherbourg and arrived in the port of New York on

September 6, 1847. While there are inaccuracies in the ages of the members of the senior members of the family there is no question about their identity: M. Lowndes, Madame Lowndes, Francois, age 11; Marguerite, age 12 and Guillaume, age 4. William's profession is listed as "rentier"—a person who lives on income from property or securities.<sup>60</sup> Corroboration of this fourth child is found in the 1850 census where he is listed as William with France as his place of birth. At this time the family was living in New York City and their household included three domestic servants, two born in France and one from Ireland. William's occupation is listed as: none.<sup>61</sup>

As hard as it was for William to successfully supervise his plantation while in the United States, it must have been nearly impossible for him to do so while traveling back and forth between Europe and the States. There is little information to indicate who was managing his assets while he was abroad, but in early 1841 William's brothers made him an offer of \$13,000 for the plantation that had cost him \$26,000. There is no further mention of what transpired but it is not likely that Mary and William ever achieved the same level of comfort, well-being and financial security that blessed Gitty and Rawlins.

### *The Civil War Years*

Rawlins and William Lowndes grew up surrounded by hundreds of slaves—for them it was the only life they had ever known. In 1840, the total population of South Carolina was 594,398 and 327,038 (53.9 percent) of these individuals were slaves.<sup>62</sup> In the Georgetown District where the Lowndes family plantations were located, the total 1840 population was 18,274 and 88 percent were slaves.<sup>63</sup> The success of the rice plantation was wholly dependent on this workforce. But a number of turbulent economic, political and philosophical forces were converging and many southerners were realizing that their livelihoods and their lifestyles were at risk. Years later a conversation between J. Motte Alston and J. L. Petigru (Col. Robert Francis Withers Allston's Unionist brother-in-law), summed up what many were feeling: "Alston, don't you know that the whole world is against slavery? So, if the South is to fight for that, rest assured it is lost, never mind which side wins."<sup>64</sup>

The conflicting feelings and emotions surrounding slavery are poignantly present in the lifelong friendship between Rawlins Lowndes and E.G.W. Butler. A staunch opponent of abolition, Butler reached out to his old friend to solicit his views on the subject and Lowndes' April 17, 1849 letter gives his views on the subject.

The feeling hostile in the abstract to slavery of any kind, has long been steadily on the increase, and not a commotion occurs in Europe between the governors and the governed, but additional zeal is imparted on this subject to the great mass of mankind and it is in vain to expect, that a sentiment so active and so universal, should make an exception in favor of our peculiar institution...domestic servitude as it exists in this Country, is the only rule by which the African can ever become civilized and fitted for a freer form of government. Such however is not the spirit of the age; but what is the spirit of the age, it is obvious, sooner or later, must lead to the emancipation of slaves in this country; unless indeed, the many evils a too hasty and inconsiderate zeal may engender, should give birth to a reaction. I however (torn) the hope, that in this country where the people are so much more enlightened, and accustomed to participate in governments, that the day is indefinitely (sic) distant when a direct attack can be made on our rights of property. That in all questions between the two sections of our country admitting of argument, such as that which now agitates the country, we must expect to find the masses of the North adverse to us, it is as well to admit; but, it could I think be a fatal error to argue, and to act upon the arguments, that it is better to make a final issue upon such a question, rather than wait a more direct aggression...I am as little disposed to submit to robbery as you can be, but in this case, where so much is at stake—I would resort to the last appeal only when the intention to rob was admitted—could no longer be questioned. I did hope that the present administration will be able to settle the present difficulty—the chance of this is derived from the President being a Southern man, and not a sectional Chief Magistrate. I do not yet despair of the Missouri line, but I must fear a coalition of Northern Democrats to defeat it—such is undoubtedly the game of the Free Soil Party of New York.<sup>65</sup>

Lowndes pragmatic assessment of the situation ultimately proved to be correct and he and his family survived. Butler remained firmly committed to his unrealistic beliefs and that choice would ultimately lead to his financial ruin.

Margaret's letters to Gitty are silent on the question of slavery or the impact it may have had on her daughters' lives. Margaret herself, of course, had been born into a slave-holding family. 1790 census records show eight slaves in the Staatsburgh household of Morgan Lewis.<sup>66</sup> This number grew to seventeen in 1800 and then steadily declined over the next thirty years until the 1840 census documents that the Lewis household in Staatsburgh included two free colored males between the ages of 10 and 23 and three colored females between the ages of 36 and 54.<sup>67</sup> When Lewis was buried in St. James Cemetery in 1844, an "eye witness stated that the General's

body was born by his colored servants in full livery; two were Caesar and Pompey; the names of the others she could not recall.”<sup>68</sup> Unlike many other northerners who had grown up unfamiliar with negroes as slaves or servants, Gitty and Mary, who had lived in the Lewis household from their early childhood, were not unaccustomed to such situations and that may have eased their transition into plantation life and a mentality accepting of slavery.

But both families essentially lived in two worlds. From the early years of their marriages, New York City was their escape from the tiresome nature of plantation life and the mosquito-infested rice fields that surrounded them. It is not known exactly when each of the families acquired their own New York City residences, entirely independent of the Leonard Street home of Morgan Lewis, but it is known that in 1858 Rawlins and Gertrude were listed in a New York City Directory as living at 84, West 11<sup>th</sup> Street, between 5th and 6th Avenues.<sup>69</sup> Four blocks north of Washington Square Park the neighborhood had become one of the most desirable residential areas in the city during the 1830s. Census records for William and Mary place them at 145 14<sup>th</sup> Street, a few blocks north of their in-laws as early as 1850 and as late as 1870.<sup>70</sup>

Nearly one year before her death on September 28, 1860, Margaret Livingston finally got the wish she had repeatedly expressed in her letters to Gitty—that she would return home and be with her family. Apparently sensing what was coming, on November 29, 1859, Rawlins purchased sixty-five acres in Staatsburgh located barely a mile from his mother-in-law.<sup>71</sup> In October, Rawlins and Gitty met with Calvert Vaux and Alfred Bloor to discuss building a home on their recently purchased property.<sup>72</sup> Four years earlier, Vaux had designed a house in Staatsburgh for Gitty’s youngest sister Geraldine and her husband Lydig Hoyt. During the time between his commission for the Hoyts and that of Rawlins and Gitty, Vaux, in collaboration with Frederick Law Olmsted, won the design competition for Central Park. The Lowndes house that was eventually built was spacious and fitting for river gentry. The first floor of the house included a reception room, a study, a library, a drawing room, a butler’s pantry and a dining room, all arranged around a center hall. The second floor contained four bedrooms and three dressing rooms. In the attic were located a trunk room, a bedroom with a dressing room and six servants’ bedrooms. The basement included the servants’ hall, the kitchen and various cellars and pantries. Perhaps in reference to happy times in South Carolina the couple named their new residence “Hopeland” (Figure 8), the name of one of their southern plantations. The house was lavishly furnished as

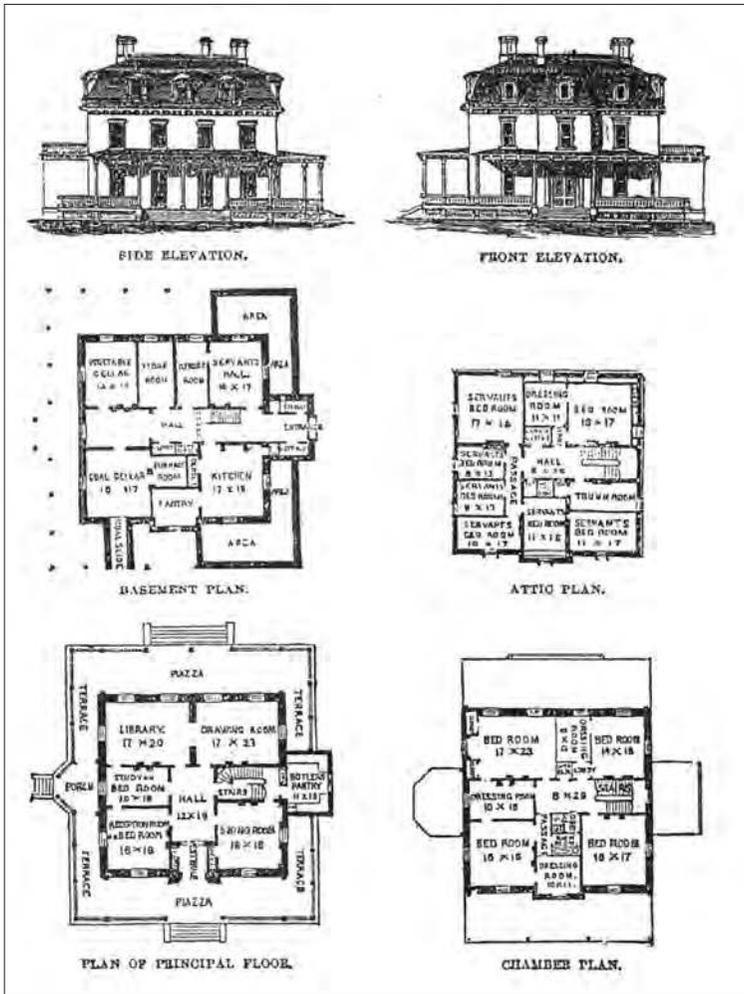
detailed in the inventory of the house undertaken in January of 1883 shortly before Gitty's death.<sup>73</sup>

On Tuesday, November 6, 1860 Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States. Quickly thereafter the South Carolina State Legislature called for a state convention to be held on December 17. Eight years earlier, on April 26, 1852 South Carolinians had met in an earlier convention and declared that:

the frequent violations of the Constitution of the United States, by the Federal Government, and its encroachments upon the reserved rights of the States, fully justified this State from withdrawing from the Federal Union; but in deference to the opinions and wishes of the other slaveholding States, she forbore at that time to exercise their right.<sup>74</sup>

The decision to temper their views was influenced by a group of men called cooperationists who did not want separate secession but instead cooperation with other southern states. Serving among the Vice Presidents of the cooperationists was Charles Tidyman Lowndes, Rawlins' brother. The state's forbearance was gradually eroded and, on December 20, 1860, South Carolina became the first state to adopt an ordinance to dissolve the union between itself and the other states with which it was united under the Constitution. Mary Chesnut spent Christmas that year at Combahee; most likely she was staying at Oakland, the home of Rawlins' brother Charles Tidyman Lowndes and his wife Sabina. On February 8, 1861, Mary records that "Mrs. Charles Lowndes was with us when the secession ordinance came. We sat staring in each others' faces. She spoke first. "As our days, so shall our strength be." I am truly glad I have seen these lovely C'bahee places—they are so exposed, they will doubtless suffer from invasion."<sup>75</sup>

Meanwhile the fears of Charlestonians were rapidly escalating. On January 9, 1861, the first shots of the Civil War were fired by Citadel cadets on the Union ship *Star of the West* as it attempted to enter Charleston harbor. Three months later on April 12, 1861, Confederate soldiers opened fire on Ft. Sumter and the Civil War began. As Mary Chesnut had predicted, the Lowndes family genealogy recounts that Rawlins was "forced to abandon his Carolina estate to swift destruction from neglect and the plunder of marauders when the sea coast of the state became the scene of active war."<sup>76</sup> It was undoubtedly a combination of factors that caused Rawlins and Gitty to abandon the South. Certainly the destruction of his property was compelling enough but they were also extraordinarily fortunate to have available to them a very attractive alternative residence in New York



**Figure 8.** Illustration of the house in Staatsburgh designed for Rawlins and Gitty Lowndes by Calvert Vaux. Calvert Vaux, *Villas and Cottages: The Great Architectural Style-Book of the Hudson River School*, revised edition., p. 296.

City and more than sufficient family financial resources on both sides to continue to support their northern lifestyle. Additionally, by this time their four daughters were or were about to be married and all of them would relocate to the North. Perhaps their decision to move north was also motivated in part by the fear that the Lowndes’ sisters northern roots would expose them to the risk of physical danger. James McPherson, in his book *Battle Cry of Freedom*, suggests that southern dislike and mistrust of northerners living in the South created an atmosphere of fear that could have been a

consideration.<sup>77</sup> An additional possibility was raised by Chalmers Gaston Davidson in his book, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Planters of 1860; A Sociological Study*.

The rich and fashionable Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes of “Wicklow,” North Santee, and New York did the outstanding job of converting (or holding) her husband to Union views. He was one of the very few planters of South Carolina who stayed in the North during the entire war and remained there (naturally) thereafter.<sup>78</sup>



**Figure 9.** *Portrait of Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes (nee Gertrude Laura Livingston) (1805–1883), c. 1832. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of Classical American Homes Preservation Trust and The Richard Hampton Jenrette Foundation.*

### *A House Divided Nonetheless*

While on the surface it would seem that the differences between the North and the South had little impact on the family, that was not entirely the case. Gitty and Mary’s older sister Julia, married to Major Joseph Delafield, was a prolific recorder of her life and her journals from September 1863—December 1869 survive. She expresses a passionate interest in the news of the war and frequently comments on troop movements and battles. Her loyalties are made clear in a June 17, 1863 entry.

Dr. Delafield was one of the gentlemen sent by the sanitary commissioners to examine into the state of the prisoners returned by the rebels. He told me that nothing can surpass the state of wretchedness to which they are reduced—that it is impossible to resist the conviction that they were exposed to the inclemency of the weather & starved that they might die—and that these atrocities were committed under the eyes of Jeff Davis & of the Confederate government—the Dr has become a thorough abolitionist—he says nothing but slavery can account for the demonical character of the south—that is the influence of slaving considering that they are nominally christians & of the same race with ourselves.<sup>79</sup>

The following year Julia's November 8 entry celebrates Lincoln's victory and a Republican Congress. Periodically she notes visiting and dining with Mrs. R. Lowndes and there is no suggestion that tension exists among the three sisters. On April 9, Lee surrendered and Julia wrote:

It is four years this month since the war began, In our darkest hour when the rebel victories made me most unhappy, I never questioned the result for the country, but I was prepared for the ruin of my family.<sup>80</sup>

Saturday April 15 Lincoln assassinated—no words can explain our horror<sup>81</sup>

On April 25, Julia writes that she went to her brother Robert's house to see the procession that bore Lincoln's coffin to the train. The end of the war and the shocking assassination of the President ripped open the carefully constructed cocoon in which the sisters co-existed. Their deliberately ignored differences could no longer be concealed. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of April Julia visited Gitty and was "astonished to hear her say that for every southern outrage she could match one at the North. I believe that it is true that Carolina has been dreadfully punished—Charles and Richard Lowndes are said to be totally ruined."<sup>82</sup>

Still Julia tried to maintain a cordial relationship with her southern sisters. On June 5, she writes that she went to the house of Mary to see Gov. Aiken who was staying with her. The visit quickly deteriorated when Mary spoke of "the suffering of the negroes & of the cruelty with which they were treated by the government." An argument ensued and Julia pronounced that she "had never been an abolitionist (I mean in the sense of advocating immediate & unconditional abolition) that I had felt for & sympathized with the planter." Mary responded by accusing her sister of being extremely liberal and declared that "this war is entirely the fault of the north entirely." As Julia prepared to take her leave she angrily shared her views with her sister.

I consider the negro an inferior race but still human & capable of improvement had it depended upon me I would not have had the nerve to have brought on this war for the sake of any future good nor would I have emancipated the negro at once<sup>83</sup>

Alluding to a change of perspective on Mary's part Julia continues by saying "Mary you have forgotten what you said in old times about slavery. I formed my opinion of the Institution very much from what I heard from you & Gertrude."<sup>84</sup> The following day she went to Mary's daughter's wedding and the open discord between them was cordially suppressed for the day.

Mary and Julia met again a few weeks later and attempted to reconcile. Mary shared more information about the dire situation facing her Lowndes relatives and Julia attempted to convince her that she was "sincerely sorry for them." Eventually Mary expressed that "she wished with all her heart that the south had succeeded." It was too much for Julia who ended the conversation by telling her sister that "we had been united by a strong tie" but that Mary had broken it.<sup>85</sup>

The opinions of the other nine siblings are unknown and Margaret, of course, had died in 1860 so her thoughts are lost as well. It is hard to imagine, however, that others were not equally distanced from one another because of the war. Surely brother Morgan, who had first introduced his friend Rawlins to his sister Gitty, must have been conflicted about his feelings. Two of his sons, Mortimer and Manning served in the Union Army. Mortimer survived but his youngest son Manning was killed-in-action on July 2, 1863 at the battle of Gettysburg.

### *The End of Life in the South*

While Rawlins and Gitty, and presumably William and Mary, sat out the war in New York, the rest of the Lowndes family tried their best to protect and preserve their plantations. On December 11, 1861, a devastating fire erupted in Charleston and before it was extinguished it had destroyed 540 acres, 575 homes, many businesses and five churches. The full extent of what was happening to the Lowndes family in the low country of Georgetown is not known but *The History of Georgetown County* reports that many slaves escaped to the federal fleet and that others were taken by their owners to interior plantations that were not so vulnerable. The planters continued to try to work their land with the slaves that remained and Georgetown crops were said to have fed the Confederacy.<sup>86</sup> On March 5 and 6 1865, marines from naval vessels in Georgetown were sent to the rice plantations to inform the negroes that they were free. Purportedly

pillaging by the negroes followed.<sup>87</sup> Earlier in the war President Lincoln in his Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, issued on December 8, 1863, created a pathway by which southerners could take oaths of allegiance and retain all property excepting slaves. Since there was no hope of re-establishing themselves without their land many planters proceeded to take oaths and to make contracts with their former slaves that ensured subsistence until the next crop was gathered and at that time the freedmen would be entitled to one-half of the crop. By this time Rawlins Lowndes had returned to Georgetown and on either May 24 or June 1 he signed a contract.<sup>88</sup>

If this was essentially the end of his life as a member of the planter elite, he was not alone. In her journal entry of October 15, 1873 Julia Delafield recounts a meeting with Rawlins' sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Aiken, who shared that "at the commencement of the Civil War his fortune was worth \$1,000,000, that his fortune was now reduced to \$200,000, that the improvements on his plantation were destroyed." The same was true for many other planters who also could not recover and by the end of the century there was little left of the rice industry in Georgetown. But the land itself was still desirable and beginning in the 1890s and continuing to the 1930s wealthy Yankees began returning to the area and purchasing the abandoned plantations. Thomas Lowndes' Cat Island and Belle Isle were sold in 1927 to Mrs. William Gouverneur Ramsay of Wilmington, Delaware<sup>89</sup>. Wicklow Plantation, including both the house and the rice fields, remained in the Lowndes family until 1899 when it was sold to a rice-planting firm. In 1912, the property was conveyed to the recently formed Kinloch Gun Club, a group of wealthy men from Delaware that was acquiring vast lands in the area for a duck hunting and a social club.<sup>90</sup> In 1930, a portion of these lands, including the house and outbuildings, was bought by Eugene DuPont. The Georgetown area was the perfect place for this type of club since the abandoned rice fields had transformed themselves into a fertile bird habitat. Today Wicklow Hall and the associated outbuildings are still in the ownership of DuPont heirs. Since 1978 when the property was placed on the National Register, the plantation house has been renovated and the slave quarters have been renovated for other purposes.<sup>91</sup>

### *Back Home Where It All Began*

Up north things were better and life was, by comparison, more secure and stable. The Lowndeses were living comfortably in their New York City and Staatsburgh homes and the post Civil War years appear to have alleviated

some of the earlier family tensions and disagreements. By the end of the war, Gitty and Mary were 60 and 56 respectively. Julia's journals periodically mention her sisters. But time marches on and one by one family losses occur. Julia learns on November 3, 1868 that her brother Morgan had died earlier that morning; he having been predeceased by brothers Alfred, Mortimer and Henry. On November 25, 1873 Rawlins and Gitty's son-in-law John Pyne March was found dead in his bed. Lengthy journal entries by Julia describe in detail his estrangement from his wife Mary which was apparently due to his associations with "fast men," his lack of morals and his mismanagement of an inherited fortune. Mary March was by this time living with her parents along with her children. 1875 brought indescribable heartache to the family which began on January 26 when Rawlins and Gitty's oldest daughter, Julia Livingston Lowndes James, died suddenly. Less than a month later on February 9 Julia writes that her sister Mary is ill and will probably not survive the night. She adds "Mrs Rawlins Loundes (sic) came to town as soon as she heard of Mary's danger I knew that she would."<sup>92</sup> Mary died the next day. The following day Major Delafield, Julia's husband fell ill and passed away the next day, to be followed by Dr. Edward Delafield on the 13<sup>th</sup> and Henry Delafield on the 14<sup>th</sup>. According to *New York Times* articles following their deaths, all three died of acute pneumonia probably contracted during a period of severe weather.<sup>93</sup> On Wednesday the 17<sup>th</sup> Julia writes "The three brothers were carried to their graves to-gether yesterday. I do not grieve yet perhaps I am stupefied."<sup>94</sup>



**Figure 10.** Mr. and Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, c. 1866. Two portraits, oil on canvas. Collection of the Columbia County Historical Society Museum and Library, New York.

The 1886 New York City Directory lists William Price Lowndes as still living at 146 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street<sup>95</sup> but his death on February 2, 1886 is recorded as being in Morristown, New Jersey, the home of his eldest daughter Margaret and her husband Edward Coster. Sadly his daughter had predeceased him August 8, 1884. Gitty and Rawlins are listed on the 1875 New York State Census in Hyde Park, presumably by this time their primary home. Living with them at the time are widowed daughter Mary March, grandson Clement, and five domestic servants and a coachman.<sup>96</sup> Rawlins died on August 10, 1877 and Gitty on February 7, 1883 and daughter Mary continued living in the house until her death in 1893 after which the house was leased and eventually sold. The childhood home of the Livingston children, just a mile down the road, was occupied by brother Maturin, his wife Ruth and their twin daughters. Within a decade of Gitty's death, the old country seat of the family would be beginning a transformation that would result in the construction of Staatsburgh, one of the grandest Gilded Age estates in the Hudson Valley.

When Gitty and Mary left to take up the lives of planter elite wives in the deep South, their mother worried that they would never return to her, that their lives would be irreparably harmed by the rigors of plantation life and that they could never be happy. She may have been right about Mary. And while it might have been expected that the passions aroused by the Civil War would have torn the family apart that does not seem to be the case. Gitty and Mary were exposed to the culture of the South and to some extent became sympathetic to its culture and lifestyle. Likewise, Rawlins and William Price seemed able to readily adapt to a northern way of life and values very different from their upbringing. Was it pragmatism? Or was it simply accommodations that allowed them to ignore what was happening around them in order to maintain their class and status in a dramatically changing world. Northern and southern lives alike were destroyed by the war, yet despite their relative losses and hardships, the Lowndeses lived out their lives in the comfort of knowing they were still the elite, be it northern or southern.

St. James Episcopal Church in Hyde Park is perhaps best known as the church of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The serene churchyard behind is the final resting place of many locally prominent people, including Morgan Lewis and his wife Gertrude. Here too are the remains of Margaret Lewis Livingston, reunited for all eternity with daughters Gitty and Mary along with their husbands Rawlins and William Price. A long journey, but at last, safely home.

- <sup>1</sup> Rawlins Lowndes to Edward George Washington Butler, August 30, 1828, Butler Family Papers, Historic New Orleans Collection, (hereafter cited as BFP), New Orleans (New Orleans, Louisiana).
- <sup>2</sup> *In An Old Tavern*, originally published 1893, [www.oldandsold.com/articles11/new-york-history-21.shrml](http://www.oldandsold.com/articles11/new-york-history-21.shrml).
- <sup>3</sup> Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, January 29, 1827, photocopy of transcriptions at Staatsburgh State Historic Site, original Letters from Mrs. Livingston to Mrs. Lowndes, Livingston Lowndes Letters, (hereafter cited as LLL), Special Collections, Vassar College Library, Vassar College (Poughkeepsie, New York) .
- <sup>4</sup> At the time the letter was written Henry Beekman was 9, Maturin was 11, Lewis was 12 and Robert was 16.
- <sup>5</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, May 10, 1834.
- <sup>6</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, January 26, 1837.
- <sup>7</sup> Julia Delafield, *Biographies of Francis Lewis and Morgan Lewis*, Vol. II (New York, Anson D.F. Randolph & Co., 1877), 171 -172.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 65.
- <sup>9</sup> Brandt incorrectly states that the Lowndes brothers were from North Carolina rather than South Carolina.
- <sup>10</sup> Clare Brandt, *An American Aristocracy, The Livingstons*, (Garden City, New York, Double and Company Inc., 1986), 182.
- <sup>11</sup> George B. Chase, *Lowndes of South Carolina: An Historical and Genealogical Memoir*, (Boston, A. Williams and Co., 1876) 12.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 14.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 17.
- <sup>14</sup> <http://www.famousamericans.net/rawlinslowndes/>.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>16</sup> <http://www.findagrave.com>, Mary Cartwright Lowndes.
- <sup>17</sup> Chase, *Lowndes of South Carolina*, 22.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> Chalmers Gaston Davidson, *The Last Foray, The South Carolina Planters of 1860: A Sociological Study*, Columbia, South Carolina, University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 10.
- <sup>20</sup> Chase, *Lowndes of South Carolina*, 22

- <sup>21</sup> George C. Rogers, Jr., *The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina*, (The Reprint Company, Spartanburg, South Carolina, 2002), 312.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 310.
- <sup>23</sup> R. Ernest Dupuy, “Mutiny at West Point,” <http://www.americanheritage.com>, 1.
- <sup>24</sup> John Hester Ward, *The West Point Mutiny of 1818 and Its Aftermath*, (John Hester Ward, 2009), 216.
- <sup>25</sup> BFP, Anthony Butler to Edward George Washington Butler, June 25, 1823.
- <sup>26</sup> David D. Plater, *The Butlers of Iberville Parish, Louisiana, Dunboyne Plantation in the 1800s* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 2015) 16.
- <sup>27</sup> BFP, Rawlins Lowndes to Edward George Washington Butler, February 7, 1824.
- <sup>28</sup> BFP, Rawlins Lowndes to Edward George Washington Butler, March 12, 1826.
- <sup>29</sup> BFP, Rawlins Lowndes to Edward George Washington Butler, August 30, 1826.
- <sup>30</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes December 31, 1826.
- <sup>31</sup> Ancestry.com, New York Passenger and Immigration Lists, 1820—1850, Passenger Lists, November 10, 1831.
- <sup>32</sup> Charleston City Directory, 1829, 125 - 157
- <sup>33</sup> [www.georgetowncountysc.org](http://www.georgetowncountysc.org).
- <sup>34</sup> Rogers, *The History of Georgetown County*, 324.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.
- <sup>36</sup> [Haygenealogy.com/hay/patriots/civilwar/plantationbios.html](http://Haygenealogy.com/hay/patriots/civilwar/plantationbios.html).
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> Rogers, *The History of Georgetown County*, 292 and 294.
- <sup>39</sup> BFP, Rawlins Lowdes to Edward George Washington Butler, November 11, 1830.
- <sup>40</sup> Sara Melissa Pullum-Pinon, *Conspicuous Display and Social Mobility: A Comparison of 1850s Boston and Charleston Elites*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Graduate School of University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 2002, 28.
- <sup>41</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, January 6, 1834.
- <sup>42</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, November 28, 1834.
- <sup>43</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, January 18, 1838.
- <sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 105 -106.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* 102.

- <sup>46</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form for Wicklow Hall Plantation, August 29, 1978.
- <sup>47</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, February 20, 1840.
- <sup>48</sup> Mary Chesnut's Civil War, edited by Vann Woodward, Yale University Press, 1981, 366.
- <sup>49</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, May 5, 1834.
- <sup>50</sup> LLLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, January 17, 1834.
- <sup>51</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, January 17, 1837.
- <sup>52</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, February 20, 1837.
- <sup>53</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, April 13, 1837.
- <sup>54</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, May 9, 1837.
- <sup>55</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, January 17, 1834.
- <sup>56</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, August 9, 1838.
- <sup>57</sup> Ancestry.com, U.S. Passport Applications, 1795 -1925, September 10, 1838 for Mr. and Mrs. William P. Lowndes and Miss Angelica Livingston.
- <sup>58</sup> LLL, Mrs. Maturin Livingston to Mrs. Rawlins Lowndes, April 4, 1840.
- <sup>59</sup> Ancestry.com, Birth, Baptism and Christening Records, UK Foreign and Overseas Registers of British Subjects, 1628—1969, Mary Livingstone Lowndes, October 27, 1839.
- <sup>60</sup> Ancestry.com, Passenger Lists, 1820—1957, M. Lowndes, September 6, 1847.
- <sup>61</sup> United States Bureau of the Census, (hereafter cited as USBC), Population Schedules of the 1850 Census of the United States, 17<sup>th</sup> Ward, County of New York, July 24, 1850.
- <sup>62</sup> Chicora Historical Society, *Slavery on South Carolina Rice Plantations: The Migration of People and Knowledge in Early Colonial America*, <http://www.sciway.net/hist/chicora/slavery28-2.html>.
- <sup>63</sup> George C. Rogers, Jr., *The History of Georgetown County, South Carolina*, (Spartanburg, South Carolina, The Reprint Company, 2002), 343.
- <sup>64</sup> George C. Rogers Jr. *History of Georgetown County*, 396.
- <sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 369 - 370.
- <sup>66</sup> USBC, Rhinebeck, New York, 1790.
- <sup>67</sup> USBC, Clinton, New York, 1810 and 1820, and Hyde Park, New York 1830.
- <sup>68</sup> Dutchess County Historical Society Yearbook, Henry T. Hackett, *The Hyde Park Patent*, (Poughkeepsie, New York, Dutchess County Historical Society, 1939), 87.
- <sup>69</sup> Trow's New York City Directory, 1858/1859, 488.
- <sup>70</sup> USBS, Ward 16, District 18, County of New York, 1870.

- <sup>71</sup> Dutchess County Clerk's Records, Liber 115, p. 25, William H. Radcliff to Rawlins Lowndes.
- <sup>72</sup> Manuscript Diary of Alfred Janson Bloor, New-York Historical Society, New York, October 31, November 10, November 14, and November 22, 1860.
- <sup>73</sup> Inventory and Appraisement of the Personal Estate of Rawlins Lowndes January 1883, Dutchess County Surrogates Office.
- <sup>74</sup> Avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\_century/csa\_scarsec.asp.
- <sup>75</sup> Op cit., Mary Chesnut's Civil War, 5.
- <sup>76</sup> Chase, Lowndes Family Genealogy 40.
- <sup>77</sup> James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1988) 228.
- <sup>78</sup> Chalmers Gaston Davidson, *The Last Foray*. 14.
- <sup>79</sup> Julia Delafield Journals, (hereafter cited as JDD), September 1863—December 1869, privately owned, June 17, 1863.
- <sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, April 9, 1865.
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, April 15, 1865.
- <sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, April 27, 1865.
- <sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, June 5, 1865.
- <sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, July 10, 1875.
- <sup>86</sup> George C. Rogers Jr., *The History of Georgetown County*, 416.
- <sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 419.
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 424.
- <sup>89</sup> Alberta Morel Lachicotte, *Georgetown Rice Plantations*, (The State Printing Company, Columbia, South Carolina, 1955)163.
- <sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*s, 178.
- <sup>91</sup> Conversation with DuPont heir who wishes to remain anonymous.
- <sup>92</sup> JDD, February 9, 1875.
- <sup>93</sup> "Obituary—Joseph Delafield," *The New York Times*, February 14, 1875, and "A Tribute To Noble Lives: A Sermon By Rev. Dr. Watson—The Services And Character Of The Delafield Brothers," *The New York Times*, February 22, 1875.
- <sup>94</sup> JDD February 17, 1875.
- <sup>95</sup> New York City Directory, 1886.
- <sup>96</sup> New York State Census, 1875, 1<sup>st</sup> Election District, Hyde Park, New York.



# Colonel John H. Ketcham: The Cincinnatus of Dutchess County

*by Caroline Rogers Reichenberg*

John Henry Ketcham, a Dover Plains farmer, originally mustered as the colonel of the 150th New York State Infantry, and who would become a Civil War general, embodied one of the most beloved symbols of young America: the symbol of Cincinnatus, an ancient Roman who left his plow to take up arms in defense of his country. It was a legend treasured in the early years of the United States, because it expressed a faith to which the rural and republican nation was necessarily committed: that yeomen and shopkeepers could, when needed, become effective military and political leaders. John Henry Ketcham fulfilled that expectation fully.

## *Early Life*

Ketcham was born on December 21, 1832, the second son of John and Eliza Ketcham. His early life was similar to that other country boys growing up in rural parts of the ante-bellum North. He performed chores around the farm and attended a local grammar school. He did, however, manage to acquire a bit of secondary education by attending the nearby Amenia Seminary for some time; the Suffield Academy in Connecticut for one winter; and Worcester Academy in Massachusetts for a year.

John Henry and his older brother William established a farm in Dover and then developed a marble quarry that later became one of the area's leading industries. Perhaps because his family had been leaders in Dover for generations, John Henry's neighbors perceived leadership qualities in him also.<sup>1</sup> He was elected town supervisor of Dover in 1853 even before he had turned 21, and was then re-elected the next year. This position made him, *eo ipso*, a member of the Dutchess County Board of Supervisors, the principal governing authority of the county. In 1855 and 1856, Ketcham was elected to one-year terms in the New York State Assembly (serving in 1856 and 1857), and then to a two-year term in the state Senate in 1859 (serving in 1860 and 1861). Between these stints of public service, Ketcham did find time to court and wed. On February 4, 1858, at the age of 25,



**Figure 1.** Colonel John Henry Ketcham, 150th New York State Volunteer Infantry. Photograph. Collection of the Dutchess County Historical Society.

he married Augusta A. Belden, a 19-year-old girl from a prominent Amenia clan into which Ketcham's grandfather had also married.

### *The Dutchess County Regiment*

On April 16, 1861, the New York state legislature finished up its business for the year, bringing to a conclusion John Henry Ketcham's two years of senatorial service. On April 12, 1861, southern forces fired on Fort Sumter in South Carolina, beginning the American Civil War. At the time, Ketcham probably did not consider enlisting in the army. After all, he had married relatively recently and now had an infant daughter, Augusta Ann; he would probably have more children soon. Besides, the first year of the war had gone fairly well for the North, after the initial set-back at Bull Run. In April 1862, the Union began closing its recruiting offices, anticipating an early peace. In May, General George McClellan was besieging the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, and Confederate officials began packing up their records in advance of an evacuation.

Then the tide turned. Robert E. Lee repulsed McClellan's siege during the Seven Days' Battle (June 25–July 1, 1862), albeit with staggering casualties. The Union side alone counted 16,000 dead, wounded, captured, or missing. On July 2, Lincoln called for 300,000 more volunteers—to enlist for three years. New York was expected to raise a fifth of the total, and Governor Edward D. Morgan divided the state into military districts, each with its own quota.<sup>2</sup> Columbia and Dutchess Counties were to raise 1,010 soldiers, with 585 coming from Dutchess. These would form the 128th volunteer infantry regiment, mustered into service at Hudson, New York, on September 4.

On August 4, a second call went out for an equal number of men. But this time, Dutchess wanted to raise an entire regiment by itself, the 150th. The governor granted the county's request, and the Dutchess County War Committee selected John Henry Ketcham to be the regiment's colonel. To offset his lack of military education or experience, the regiment's lieutenant colonel was to be Captain Charles G. Bartlett of the 12th Regular Infantry, who had already seen action in Virginia.<sup>3</sup> Alfred B. Smith, a graduate of Union College and a mathematics instructor at the College Hill school, was given the post of major.

The regiment was to have ten companies of 100 soldiers, each led by a captain. To become a captain, one merely had to raise 80 followers. This opportunity to exercise military leadership apparently inspired several

prominent young men to begin recruiting others, dangling before them the financial inducement of national, state, and county enrollment bonuses—plus, after July 23rd, the threat of being drafted.

Even as these recruits were signing up, Camp Dutchess (at the present site of King Street Park) was being built to receive them.<sup>4</sup> According to one historian, Colonel Ketcham established a 14-hour day for transforming his farm boys into passable soldiers,<sup>5</sup> but Captain Henry A. Gildersleeve remembered that “there was little opportunity for drill and discipline.”<sup>6</sup> In any event, Ketcham did not spare himself. Once he was chosen colonel, wrote his son, “He was devoted unceasingly to perfecting himself in military tactics, and night after night busied himself in study.”<sup>7</sup> Finally, on the afternoon of October 11, the regiment broke camp and marched down Main Street to board the steamer *Oregon*, headed south toward Baltimore.

### *Gettysburg*

In Maryland, the Dutchess troops spent the autumn of 1862 and the winter of 1862/63, learning further elements of regimental drill and military maneuvers. There, too, they guarded bridges, hospitals, and stores, from the less than fully friendly inhabitants of the border-state city. In mid-November, Mrs. Ketcham arrived “and endured the privations and discomforts of camp life, thus giving companionship to her husband.”<sup>8</sup> Sadly, while the couple was in Maryland, their daughter died.

During this time, however, Colonel Ketcham won a reputation as a leader deeply concerned with the plight and needs of his neighbor-soldiers. In his 1889 oration for the dedication of the 150th regiment’s monument at Gettysburg, Henry Gildersleeve duly remarked on his colonel’s “coolness in times of danger” and “thorough knowledge of his duty.” But then he went on to praise what is often more important to soldiers: “His energy, perseverance, and tact secured for his men at all times their full share of supplies. If there were only enough shoes for a portion of the command to which we were attached, the One hundred and fiftieth was not the organization to go bare-footed.”<sup>9</sup>

On June 15, 1863, Confederate troops crossed the Potomac en masse, and the Union’s Army of the Potomac began to pursue them. On June 25, 1863, that pursuit was joined by the former farm boys and store clerks of Dutchess County, as they marched out of Baltimore under the command of Colonel Ketcham. But the 150th had suffered many desertions even before its first battle, and its ranks were down by some 300 men.<sup>10</sup>

On June 29, the 150th was joined with two Maryland regiments to form a brigade under the command of Brigadier General Henry H. Lockwood, in the First Division of the XII Corps. On July 1, along with all of the XII Corps, they moved to a hamlet five miles from Gettysburg, and by the booming of cannon, learned that a battle had begun. The rumor was that “the Rebels are beaten.”<sup>11</sup> But on their march toward Gettysburg they learned the truth: “Lee’s army had forced our line back with heavy losses.”<sup>12</sup> What the 150th probably did not hear was that Union forces had managed to retreat to the high ground near Gettysburg—from Little Round Top in the south, along Cemetery Ridge, to Cemetery Hill and Culp’s Hill in the north—and there had been brought into reasonable defensive order. The question was: Could they hold that high ground, or would the Confederates take it?

On the morning of July 2, Lockwood’s brigade was roused early and arrived at the battlefield about dawn. The brigade was placed near Culp’s Hill, and, for most of the day, listened to fierce fighting at the other end of the line, down by Little Round Top. Finally, the Federal troops in that spot “had about reached the limit of soldier-endurance and fresh forces were needed. They were obtained by withdrawing regiments from the right [including the 150th] and sending them across the field, a mile or more, to the point of danger.”<sup>13</sup> Upon reaching their destination, the regiment turned toward the enemy and advanced across the fields for about half a mile. Fortunately, for the New Yorkers, “we neither saw [the enemy] again nor discharged a musket.”<sup>14</sup> Soon after 9:00 p.m., they were recalled.

On the fateful day of July 3, the 150th regiment took an active part in battle three times. Their duty in each case was to relieve forces at Culp’s Hill. The first action began at 6:00 am, when the 150th and its brigade returned to Culp’s Hill. On the previous day, when troops there had been withdrawn to aid at Little Round Top, the Confederates at Culp’s Hill had taken the opportunity to seize part of the Union-built breastworks in that area. Now, Union troops had taken back parts of the breastworks, but the fighting over them was fierce.

At 7:40 a.m., General Lockwood ordered his men forward to relieve a regiment at the breastworks.

We swung into battalion front, and when the colonel’s command, ‘Forward, 150th!’ was given, we advanced at double-quick, with a rush and a cheer. ... Our course of forty rods [600 feet] led up over a ridge and then down a slope where we found a long line of hastily built breast-

works filled with soldiers who were pouring incessant fire into the valley below. We then learned that our duty was to relieve a regiment which had been on this firing line two hours. ... In about two hours we were relieved and fell back of the woods, giving place to another regiment. Later we again rallied on the same rifle pits and poured our leaded hail on "whom it might concern." ... A little before noon we again fell back from the trench, being relieved by other troops and took our place in the reserve in the rear.<sup>15</sup>

Eight men of the 150th regiment died that day at the breastworks, and 23 were wounded.

### *Marching through Dixie.*

Following the Battle of Gettysburg, the 150th joined in General George Meade's pursuit of Robert E. Lee's defeated Confederates. But Lee, by a ruse, convinced Meade to hold off his attack until the Confederate army had escaped across the Potomac at Williamsport, Maryland, on July 13th, much to Lincoln's anguish.

Union armies crossed the Potomac a few days later, then made camp 75 miles south, on the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford. In early August, nearly all of the Dutchess County regiment's officers fell ill with malaria from a bad water supply, and the regiment was excused from duty until mid-September. At that time, the regiment crossed the Rappahannock and took up picket duty 20 miles west by Raccoon Ford, on the Rapidan River in Virginia. In late September, the XII Corps was sent south, and in early October, the 150th was assigned to rebuild and then guard a railroad bridge across the Duck River in Tennessee.

Here, there occurred an incident that was small in the scope of the war but striking in the life of Colonel Ketcham. In February 1864, three Michigan soldiers were killed by local guerrillas. Ketcham was ordered to take a detachment of his soldiers and collect goods worth approximately \$30,000 from citizens living within ten miles of the incident; these would be sold in Nashville and the proceeds distributed to the families of the three men. During this punitive expedition, two of Ketcham's own soldiers were also killed by guerrillas, and Ketcham arranged for an excess \$5000 of his seized goods to be divided between their families. The 150th regiment, together with some of its fellows, then rounded up 100 guerrillas and shot 60 of them.

On April 29, 1864, the 150th regiment (now part of a XX Corps, commanded by General Hooker) was ordered to join Sherman's Army as it

marched on Atlanta. Between mid-May and the end of July, they were engaged in at least half a dozen major battles, with significant losses to military wounds and disease.<sup>16</sup> Finally, on the night of September 1, Atlanta was evacuated, and the effect on the North was electric.

At some point in August, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Bartlett had taken the opportunity to move up in rank by becoming colonel and commander of the 119th U.S. Colored Infantry. Thus, when Colonel Ketcham received orders to head up a court-martial, and then returned home to be elected to Congress in October and November, it was Major Smith who became acting leader of the regiment.

On November 15th, Sherman began his famous “march to the sea,” which meant, to Savannah, and the 150th regiment was with him; they reached Savannah on December 10. On December 16, the 150th, along with part of its brigade, moved to Argyle Island at the mouth of the Savannah River and then into South Carolina to prevent Confederate general William Hardee from escaping Savannah.

Colonel Ketcham rejoined his regiment the following day, December 17, and three days later received an order to return to Argyll Island, Hardee having escaped while Sherman was away. On December 21st, his 32nd birthday, Ketcham was struck by a bullet in the right thigh, within six inches of his trunk.<sup>17</sup> The attending surgeon wanted to amputate Ketcham’s leg to save his life, but Ketcham refused. He was in the hospital six weeks, before being removed to New York. He never did recover fully from the effects of this wound, and he never again joined his troops in active service. Instead, he began to prepare for his career in politics.

### *Congressman Ketcham*

After resigning from the military, as a brigadier general, Ketcham took his seat in the 39th Congress on March 4, 1865, just six weeks before Abraham Lincoln’s assassination.<sup>18</sup> Ketcham was sent back to Congress by the elections of 1866, 1868, and 1870. “Early in his Congressional life,” wrote Ketcham’s son, “he became deeply interested in the postal service, and for many years was a member of the committee of postal officers and post routes in the National House.”<sup>19</sup> It may seem an odd preoccupation until one recalls that his grandfather James Ketcham was postmaster of Dover for 34 years.<sup>20</sup>

During the bizarre presidential race of 1872 (when the national Democratic Party joined in nominating the candidate of a dissident Liberal Re-

publican Party), Dutchess County Democrats put up John Whitehouse of Poughkeepsie, and he was elected, then re-elected in 1874. But Ketcham was not left without public service. When the District of Columbia's governmental structure was changed in 1874, President Grant appointed Ketcham to a four-year term as a Commissioner of the capital city, and the general "was quick to see the possibilities of material development of the Nation's capital, and to the task of beautifying and remodeling the city."<sup>21</sup>

The elections of 1876 sent Ketcham back to the House for the 45th Congress, and he resigned his position as D.C. commissioner in June 1877. Ketcham was then re-elected congressman for his district in 1878, 1880, 1882, 1884, 1886, 1888, and 1890. Owing to ill health, Ketcham declined a unanimous nomination to run for Congress, both in 1892 and in 1894. But by 1896, he felt well enough to resume his congressional career, and he was elected not only in that year but also in 1898, 1900, 1902, and 1904. In his later years, Ketcham was quite deaf and began attending sessions of the House less regularly. But just as he had attended assiduously to the material needs his soldiers, so too did he now attend to the needs his constituents. Amusing stories are told of the ways in which he used his deafness not to hear protests from officials who insisted that they could do no more for him.<sup>22</sup>

In 1903, Ketcham suffered a stroke that left him largely paralyzed, but Dutchess voters seem not to have cared. As House Majority Leader Sereno Payne of New York told the story after Ketcham's death: "I met some of his constituents at Saratoga in October last [that is, 1906], who told me that the 'old General' was confined to his bed and would probably die; but they said the convention would meet in his district the following week and, if there was a breath of life in his body, they would renominate him."<sup>23</sup> And that is just what they did.

### *Death and Legacy*

In October 1906, when Ketcham entered St. Elizabeth's Hospital in New York City, his family anticipated that he would not leave alive, and so it proved. Yet even then Ketcham's New York Republican Party could not bring itself to strip the dying man of his re-nomination to Congress. As ill-luck would have it, Ketcham died on November 4, just two days before the election.

The Republicans' Committee on Vacancies was notified immediately, met hurriedly, and chose a replacement—Samuel McMillan—filing papers with New York's Secretary of State in the wee hours of November 5.

McMillan was a wealthy man who was prominent in the politics of New York City, but he did own a farm in Putnam County that made him eligible to run for Ketcham's seat. Some members of the committee that nominated McMillan complained they had never heard of him. Yet such was the hold of Ketcham's memory on his constituents that McMillan, using hastily printed stickers, managed to squeak out a win with 50.8 percent of the vote. Ketcham's previous total had been over 90 percent, but that was because only the Socialists and Prohibitionists had bothered to put up candidates.

At 74 years, John Henry Ketcham's life-span exceeded by little the Biblical "three score and ten." But what a span of history it had been. When Ketcham fought at Culp's Hill, he served alongside General George Greene, second cousin to George Washington's best general, Nathanael Greene. When Ketcham sat in the New York delegation of the Fifty-Ninth Congress, he served alongside William Randolph Hearst, the yellow-journalist who was the model for *Citizen Kane*.

The part that John Henry Ketcham played in this sweeping panorama was not the most prominent, to be sure. But the closing words of a eulogy by his Congressional colleague Joseph Keifer of Ohio, himself a civilian turned Civil War general, best captures the contemporary understanding of Ketcham's life: "He was a typical citizen of this Republic: an heroic volunteer soldier in war, a distinguished statesman in his State and national legislatures."<sup>24</sup> Keifer's choice of the word "typical" is key. By means of that term, he evokes again the legend of Cincinnatus, and rightly so. John Henry Ketcham was, truly, the Cincinnatus of Dutchess County.

<sup>1</sup> Ketcham's grandfather, James Ketcham, was twice clerk of Dover, twice supervisor, and a member of the state assembly in 1819. Ketcham's father, John M. Ketcham, was town supervisor seven times, and a member of the state assembly three times (1841-43). Arthur T. Benson, "Glimpses of Dover History," *Dutchess County Historical Society, 1921 Yearbook*, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> William S. Benson, Jr., "Dutchess County's Role in the Civil War: Enrollments, Enlistments, Bounties, and the Draft," *Dutchess County Historical Society, 1981 Yearbook*, p. 66.

<sup>3</sup> William F. Tuceling wrote that Charles G. Bartlett was "a West Point graduate." ("Dutchess Countians Go to War," *Dutchess County Historical Society, 1981 Yearbook*, p. 149). But the Academy's records list no one of that name having been admitted. *List of Cadets Admitted to the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, from Its Origins Till September 1, 1901*. Available at [https://books.google.com/books?id=1dM0\\_Sd75RIC&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.com/books?id=1dM0_Sd75RIC&source=gbs_navlinks_s). The confusion may have arisen because Bartlett was "from West Point," his father having been a professor at the academy.

- <sup>4</sup> David Topps, “The Dutchess County Regiment,” *The Gettysburg Magazine*, no. 12 (January 1, 1995), p. 42.
- <sup>5</sup> Tuceling, “p. 152.
- <sup>6</sup> Henry A. Gildersleeve, “Chapter II: Organization and Stay in Baltimore,” in *The “Dutchess County Regiment” (The 150th Regiment of New York State Volunteer Infantry) in the Civil War*, edited by S. G. Cook and Charles E. Benton (Danbury, CT: The Danbury Medical Printing, Co. 1907), p.
- <sup>7</sup> Henry B. Ketcham, “Chapter XX: Personal Sketches: John Henry Ketcham: 1832-1906,” in Cook and Benton, p.
- <sup>8</sup> Henry B. Ketcham, p. 220
- <sup>9</sup> See Henry A. Gildersleeve, “Oration at Gettysburg,” *Dutchess County Historical Society, Yearbook 2015*, p. 76.
- <sup>10</sup> Topps, p. 46.
- <sup>11</sup> Topps, p. 47.
- <sup>12</sup> Joseph H. Cogswell, “Chapter IV: Battle of Gettysburg,” in Cook and Benton, p. 30.
- <sup>13</sup> Cogswell, p. 31)
- <sup>14</sup> Cogswell, p. 31.
- <sup>15</sup> Cogswell, pp. 34-36
- <sup>16</sup> Benson, p. 88.
- <sup>17</sup> See the official December 24 report of Major Alfred B. Smith, who would become lieutenant colonel of the regiment on January 1, 1865. *The War of the Rebellion*, Series 1, Volume XLIV (Washington, DC: GPO, 1894), p. 247. Available at [https://books.google.com/books?id=0TU2AQAAlAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=Ketcham&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=0TU2AQAAlAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=Ketcham&f=false)
- <sup>18</sup> Ketcham was elevated to brevet major general of U.S. volunteers on March 13, 1865.
- <sup>19</sup> Henry B. Ketcham, “Chapter XX: Personal Sketches: John Henry Ketcham: 1832-1906” in Cook and Benton, p.221
- <sup>20</sup> Frank Hasbrouck, *The History of Dutchess County, New York* (Poughkeepsie, NY: S. A. Matthieu, 1909), p. 281
- <sup>21</sup> Ketcham, p. 221.
- <sup>22</sup> Louis Albert Banks, *Capital Stories about Famous Americans* (New York: The Christian Herald, 1905), pp. 189-91.
- <sup>23</sup> Sereno Payne, “Address of Mr, Payne, of New York,” *John Henry Ketcham, Memorial Addresses* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1907), p. 15.
- <sup>24</sup> J. Warren Keifer, “Address of Mr. Kiefer, of Ohio,” *John Henry Ketcham, Memorial Addresses* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1907), p. 26.

# Weapons used by the Rank and File of the 150th NY Volunteer Infantry

by Michael Peets

The weapons the 150th NY used were the most common weapons used by both the North and the South during the American Civil War. You will notice that two of the weapons were imported from other countries. That is because the war was a logistical challenge. Between 1800 to 1860 the Army of the United States was less than 10,000 men for most of that time; however by the end of the war over 2.5 million would serve on the Union side alone.<sup>1</sup> Equipping an Army of that size in four years was quite the challenge.

I am going to limit this article to the four primary weapons used by non-commissioned officers and privates, i.e. (Sergeants, Corporals and Privates). They were the .54 caliber Austrian Lorenz, the .577 caliber model 1858 English Enfield, the .58 caliber model 1861 American Springfield, and the .58 caliber model 1863 American Springfield. All four were single shot rifled muskets with a percussion cap ignition to which one could attach a bayonet and each weighed about nine pounds.

One thing to note is that rifles were not issued to individuals. During a battle the sergeant stood behind the ranks and when a musket did not fire, he would hand his loaded weapon into the ranks. He would then receive the one with a problem and would go to work making it functional once again. Therefore a soldier could easily end up with a different weapon at the end of a battle than the one he had started with and unlike in the Army today, a man was not issued a specific weapon.

All four weapons were muzzle loading rifles that shot *minié* balls. This meant that there were spiral grooves in the barrel and the powder and bullet were inserted at the end of the barrel and pushed to the bottom of the barrel with a ram rod. The rifling (spiral grooves in the barrel) greatly increased the range and accuracy of the weapon. Smooth bore weapons (no rifling) had an effective range of 50 to 75 yards where a rifled musket had an effective range of 250 to 300 yards (an average soldier can hit a man-sized target at that distance). The *minié* ball is neither mini nor a ball but a conical shaped bullet named after Claude-Etienne Minié a French army officer who invented it.<sup>2</sup> His invention allowed the bullet to be quickly loaded down the barrel of a rifle with a loose fit but, when the powder exploded,

the hollow base would expand and interface with the rifling grooves thus allowing rifles to be used by the military.

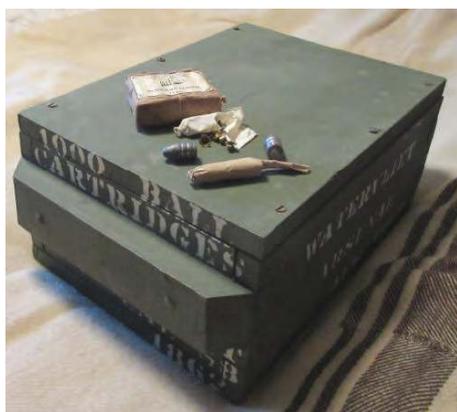
Rifles existed prior to this time but were very slow to load causing them to have limited military use. The calibers mentioned earlier refer to the diameter of the bullet, .58 caliber means the bullet is 0.58 inches in diameter so all four weapons shot a projectile that was more than half an inch in diameter and roughly an ounce of soft lead. Being soft lead, on impact it would deform causing the bullet to become effectively larger with a tendency to tumble causing even greater damage to the target, and if it hit bone it would tend to shatter it or take chunks away. This was one of the causes of the many amputations during the American Civil War.

The percussion cap ignition was another advancement in rifle technology. In the days of the American Revolution the muskets had been flint locks, meaning their ignition system was black powder placed in a pan on the side of the musket. When the trigger was pulled, a piece of flint would hit steel causing a spark igniting the powder in the pan. A small hole in the barrel allowed sparks into the barrel igniting the powder at the bottom of the barrel making the ball fly out the end of the barrel. The percussion cap is a small cylinder of copper or brass with one closed end. Inside the closed end is a small amount of a fulminate of mercury. The percussion cap is placed over a hollow metal cone sometimes called a “nipple” at the rear end of the gun barrel. Pulling the trigger releases a hammer that strikes the percussion cap and ignites the fulminate of mercury and like the flint lock, the sparks travel down a small hole igniting the powder at the bottom of the barrel. The percussion cap was invented circa 1820 and had long been on both military and civilian weapons. The major advantage of the percussion cap was that it allowed the weapons to fire much more reliably in wet or damp weather.<sup>3</sup>

Ammunition for all four weapons came pre-packaged from arsenals. Paper tubes were rolled and tied at the bottom. The first tube had a bullet (*minié* ball) inserted into it, a second tube was inserted into the first on top of the bullet, then filled with a specific amount of black powder typically 65 grains (a little less than a teaspoon). Finally the paper tubes were folded creating a tail. This was called a cartridge. Then 10 cartridges and a paper tube with 12 percussion caps were wrapped with paper labeled and loaded into wooden boxes.<sup>4</sup> The arsenals typically employed young girls 9 to 13 years old to produce this ammunition. During the war at the Confederate arsenal in Richmond Virginia an explosion at the arsenal killed several young girls.

Now that I have given a general overview we can get into specifics.

The 150th New York was issued their first weapons when they arrived in Baltimore in October of 1862.<sup>5</sup> It was the Austrian Lorenz and there were a couple of issues with this weapon.<sup>6</sup> First it was .54 caliber when the Union Army was trying to standardize to .58 caliber. This was a problem because it required different ammunition making it more difficult to supply troops. The quartermaster corps would have to keep track of where troops were that required special ammunition and send that ammunition to them and keep it separate from ammunition required by the remainder of the troops.



**Figure 1.** Cartridge Box with a package of 10 cartridges, an open tube of percussion caps, two Minie Balls and a single wrapped cartridge. Photograph collection of Mike Peets



**Figure 2.** The 54 caliber Austrian Lorenz and bayonet. Photograph collection of Mike Peets

Second, the Lorenz had a reputation for fouling (getting dirty in the barrel making it difficult to load or not fire reliably). This may have been caused because the Army was using the Lorenz with black powder like the Springfield and Enfield while the Lorenz was designed to use a special cartridge that had a *minié* ball with a stick protruding out the back wrapped in a cloth infused with a smokeless explosive chemical.<sup>7</sup> I speculate that the Army did not use this special ammunition because of the special manufacturing or because of cost to produce it. I have seen two different types of

sights on the Lorenz. A fixed sight for 100 yards only and one with a fixed sight for 100 yards and a flip sight graduated from 400 yards to 900 yards. The Lorenz also had a unique feature to its bayonet, it had a spiral groove allowing the bayonet to twirl into place before being locked.

The English Enfield was the second weapon the 150th New York was issued. In 1862, soldier Peter Funk stated in his diary that on “The 8<sup>th</sup> of June we were marched to camp to get our new guns. They were Enfield rifles and the best rifles in the field.”<sup>8</sup> This was a month before they would march to Gettysburg. I also have a copy of a photograph of Pvt. Benjamin J. Buckley, Co. A of the 150<sup>th</sup> New York, a soldier holding an Enfield at parade rest. And there are multiple references to Enfield rifles in the diary of Captain Richard Titus, Company I, 150<sup>th</sup> New York.<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that being .577 caliber the difference between it and the .58 caliber Springfield is that the Enfield is only 3 thousandths of an inch smaller so the bullets could be used interchangeably. The Enfield has a fixed sight for 100 yards and a flip up graduated sight going up to 900 yards.



**Figure 3.** *The .54 caliber Austrian Lorenz graduated site flipped up. Photograph collection of Mike Peets*



**Figure 4.** *The .577 caliber model 1858 English Enfield and bayonet. Photograph collection of Mike Peets*



**Figure 5.** *The .577 caliber model 1858 English Enfield graduated sight flipped up. Photograph collection of Mike Peets*



**Figure 6.** *The .58 caliber model 1861 American Springfield Photograph collection of Mike Peets*



**Figure 7.** *The .58 caliber model 1863 American Springfield and bayonet. Photograph collection of Mike Peets*

There are no records specifically issuing Springfields to the 150th but letters and diaries mention them. I have a copy of a photograph of Pvt. Jacob Rapp, Co. K of the 150<sup>th</sup> New York holding one. I would also speculate that some soldiers opted to replace imported weapons with the American made Springfield. The model 1861 and model 1863 Springfield are nearly identical. The major difference being that in the model 1861, the path connecting the cone that the percussion cap sat on was in two segments: a vertical hole and a horizontal hole covered by a screw. The model 1863 like the Enfield and Lorenz had a hole drilled at a compound angle. The advantage of the single hole was the spark from the percussion cap traveled in a straight line from the percussion cap to the black powder at the bottom of the barrel. Both models of the Springfield had a fixed sight for 100 yards and two leaves: one for 300 yards and one for 500 yards.



**Figure 8.** *The .58 caliber model 1863 American Springfield sight flipped up. Photograph collection of Mike Peets*

I hope this article has given you a better appreciation for the weapons that the 150th New York State Volunteer Infantry carried during the Civil War. They were the most important piece of equipment that the soldiers carried during the conflict.

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- <sup>1</sup> Edward M. Coffman, *The Old Army* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc. 1986), p. 42. See also S. G. Cook, M. D. and Charles E. Benton, *The "Dutchess County Regiment"* (Danbury, CT: Danbury Medical Printing Co., Inc. 1907), last page.
  - <sup>2</sup> The Editors of Time-Life Books, *Echoes of Glory, Arms and Equipment of the Union* (New York: Time-Life Books 1991), p. 22.
  - <sup>3</sup> Sam Fadala, *The Complete Blackpowder Handbook* (Iola, Wisconsin: Gun Digest Books), pp. 159-161.
  - <sup>4</sup> United States Army, *The Ordnance Manual for The Use of The Officers of the United States Army* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1862), pp. 266-270.
  - <sup>5</sup> "The Diary of Peter W. Funk Co. F, 150<sup>th</sup> NY Vol.," *Red Hook Advertiser* (Thursday, May 26, 1932).
  - <sup>6</sup> "Report of the Commissary General, 1863" (New York State Archives), p. 80.
  - <sup>7</sup> Dean S. Thomas, "Round Ball to Rim Fire Part 1" (Thomas Publications 1997), p. 130.
  - <sup>8</sup> "The Diary of Peter W. Funk Co. F, 150<sup>th</sup> NY Vol.," *Red Hook Advertiser* (Thursday, June 9, 1932)
  - <sup>9</sup> Richard Titus, *Diary of Richard Titus* (Dutchess County Historical Society collection item #5.1)

# Songs of the 128th

by Dean Thomas

In *The Civil War and Dutchess County, New York: Part I (2015)*, this author, Dean Thomas, introduced us to the letters of Private Evert Traver of the 128th Regiment. In this year's book, he takes up the theme of the 128th again with a narrative based on the songs men were singing during the campaigning. The regiment was formed in the summer of 1862 with six companies from Dutchess County and four from Columbia County. They fought until the end of the war in the spring of 1865. ....C. Lewis, editor

It was once well stated that “America at the time of the Civil War was a land where songs were sung. Songs of bravado and songs of comradeship; songs of longing and songs of hope....”<sup>1</sup> These themes run through the music of that bygone era. During the Civil War singing was one of the soldiers' favorite ways to pass the time. Dozens of songs were composed during the war and sung throughout by the armies as well as the folks back home. Many were inspirational marching tunes meant to keep soldiers' morale high, while others were sentimental songs that were sung when thinking of home or loved ones.



**Figure 1.** Colonel David S. Cowles. Enrolled at 45 years old to serve three years with the 128th Regiment on July 22, 1862 at Hudson, New York. Mustered in as Colonel, on September 4, 1862. Killed in action leading the regiment on the first assault of Port Hudson, Louisiana.

This article puts forth a selection of some of these songs ordered in such a way as to help tell the story of one group of Civil War soldiers and their loved ones—those of the 128th New York State Volunteer Infantry.<sup>2</sup> The lyrics and tempo of the songs help to lay out the ebb and flow of the war, its impact on the men of the 128th and their friends and families back home.

The 128th was formed in the late summer of 1862 in the town of Hudson, New York, after President Lincoln's call for an additional 300,000 troops to support the Union's cause. Men came from the towns of Hudson and Poughkeepsie as well as many surrounding villages and hamlets—Germantown, Fishkill, Amenia, Rhinebeck, Beacon, Red Hook, Wappingers Falls, just to name a few. After practicing marching and drilling for a short time, at Camp Kelly, they were given their uniforms and told to bid adieu to their friends and loved ones. On September 5, 1862, they marched from the Hudson fairgrounds down Warren Street to the Hudson River to embark on a journey most had never before dreamed of. The town's streets and alleyways, windows and rooftops were full of folks waving flags and cheering the boys on. The regiment's beloved Colonel David Cowles (Figure 1) was in the lead atop his gallant black steed, no doubt flanked by second and third in command, Lt. Colonel James Smith (Figure 2) and Major James Foster (Figure 3) respectively. The regiment may have been



**Figure 2.** *Lt. Colonel James Smith. Mustered in as Lieutenant Colonel of the 128th Regiment, on September 4, 1862. Promoted and commissioned Colonel after David Cowles was killed in action leading the regiment on the first assault of Port Hudson, Louisiana. Before joining the 128th, Smith served as a Captain of Company "A" Eightieth US Infantry.*

singing “We are Coming Father Abraham” or marching in as orderly fashion as possible to the beat of “Welcome Here Again” being played by the 128th’s regimental band. The songs were upbeat and the men had a spark in their step.



**Figure 3.** Major James P. Foster. Mustered in as major in the 128th Regiment, on August 29, 1862. Promoted and commissioned Lt. Colonel after David Cowles was killed in action leading the regiment on the first assault of Port Hudson, Louisiana, taking the place of James Smith who was also promoted at this time. Before joining the 128th, Foster had served as a Captain in the Fifth US Cavalry.

### We are Coming Father Abraham

*By James Sloan Gibbons*

We are coming, Father Abraham, 300,000 more,  
 From Mississippi’s winding stream and from New England’s shore.  
 We leave our plows and workshops, our wives and children dear,  
 With hearts too full for utterance, with but a silent tear.  
 We dare not look behind us but steadfastly before.  
 We are coming, Father Abraham, 300,000 more!

#### CHORUS:

We are coming, we are coming, our Union to restore,  
 We are coming, Father Abraham, 300,000 more!  
 If you look across the hilltops that meet the northern sky,  
 Long moving lines of rising dust your vision may descry;  
 And now the wind, an instant, tears the cloudy veil aside,  
 And floats aloft our spangled flag in glory and in pride;  
 And bayonets in the sunlight gleam, and bands brave music pour,  
 We are coming, father Abr’am, three hundred thousand more!

CHORUS

If you look up all our valleys where the growing harvests shine,  
You may see our sturdy farmer boys fast forming into line;  
And children from their mother's knees are pulling at the weeds,  
And learning how to reap and sow against their country's needs;  
And a farewell group stands weeping at every cottage door,  
We are coming, Father Abr'am, three hundred thousand more!

CHORUS

At Hudson's wharf, the Steamship Oregon waited to take them off to the seat of war. Of the roughly one-thousand soldiers approximately one-fifth would never return.

Their route took them downriver to New York where they disembarked to take trains to head further south to Baltimore where troops were massing with a goal to protect the Capitol. After arrival in Baltimore, the 128th band kept playing songs like "Yankee Doodle" and "Battle Hymn of the Republic" to keep the soldiers spirits up. Soon after establishing their first formal camp, Camp Millington, the soldiers received their guns and continued practicing their march and drill.

The remainder of the year was uneventful, other than a brief jaunt to Gettysburg to chase the Rebs out. On this occasion there would be no fighting in the famed town; that would come later in the war. As the weather turned, the regiment again boarded a steamer, this time the notorious *Arago* to head still further into the heart of Dixie. As the generals made their plans on shore, the regiment was kept aboard the ship in tight quarters for a month before sailing. Illness spread like wildfire and many of the men took ill. When the ship did finally leave, scores of men were left behind, too sick for the journey. Some would be buried at sea along with horses and mules too sick to continue on.

In early 1863, the 128th regiment joined up with many others in Louisiana, part of an effort to take control of the Mississippi River by the Union Army's 19th Corp. For the first time men saw oranges and alligators and every soldier wrote home about these new novelties. There was also a much larger population of Negroes then they had ever witnessed before. The recently freed slaves were jubilant and festive and sang songs like "Kingdom Coming" whenever given the opportunity.

**Kingdom Coming (“The Year of Jubilo”)***By Henry Clay Work*

Say, darkies, have you seen the master,  
 With the mustache on his face,  
 Gone down the road sometime this morning,  
 Like he was going to leave the place?  
 He seen smoke way up the river where the Lincoln gunboats lay;  
 He took his hat, and left very sudden, and I spec’ he’s run away!

**CHORUS**

The master runs, ha, ha! The darkey stays, ho, ho!  
 It must be now the kingdom coming in the year of Jubilo!  
 He’s six foot one way, two foot the other,  
 And he weighs 300 pounds,  
 His coat so big, he couldn’t pay the tailor,  
 And it won’t go half around.  
 He drill so much they call him Captain, and he got so dreadful tanned,  
 I spec’ he’d try an’ fool the Yankees, for to think he’s contraband.

**CHORUS**

The darkeys feel so lonesome living in the log house on the lawn  
 They move their things to master’s parlor for to keep it while he’s gone.  
 There’s wine and cider in the kitchen, and the darkeys they’ll have some

I suppose they’ll all be confiscated when de Lincoln soldiers come.

**CHORUS**

It wouldn’t be long before the 128th faced the enemy. In May of ’63, they surrounded a small town named Port Hudson on the banks of the river just north of Baton Rouge. On May 26, they were given word that in the morning they would assault the Rebel works.

The assault on Port Hudson included regiments of black soldiers. They of course performed in the same valiant manner as their white brothers in arms. The song “Give Us a Flag” paints the picture of their heartfelt devotion to the cause.

**Give Us a Flag**

*Author Unknown*

Oh, Fremont told them when the war it first begun,  
How to save the Union, and the way it should be won;  
But Old Kentucky swore so hard, and old Abe he had his fears,  
Till every hope was lost, but the Colored volunteers.

CHORUS

Oh, give us a flag,  
All free without a slave,  
We'll fight to defend it as our Fathers did so brave,  
The gallant Company "A",  
Will make the Rebels dance,  
And we'll stand by the Union if we only have a chance.  
McClellan went to Richmond with two hundred thousand brave,  
He said "keep back the niggers," and the Union I will save;  
Little Mac he had his way, still the Union is in tears,  
Now they call for the help of the Colored volunteers.

CHORUS

Old Jeff says he'll hang us if we dare to meet him armed,  
A very big thing, but we are not at all alarmed;  
For he first has got to catch us before the way is clear,  
And "that's what's the matter" with the colored volunteer.

CHORUS

So rally, boys, rally, let us never mind the past,  
We had a hard road to travel, but our day has come at last,  
For God is for the right, and we have no need to fear,  
The Union will be saved by the Colored volunteer.

The Union Army and the 128th would be decimated crossing open fields in their front to reach the Confederate bastion. Many wounded were forced to lie in the baking sun until evening when they could be rescued. When word trickled slowly back home about the battle, those left behind now greatly missed their loved ones and wondered if they'd been hurt or survived.

After the Red River fiasco, the 128th regiment had several months of downtime, and then was finally sent back north in order to stop Confederate General Jubal Early and his army from marching on Washington, D.C. Songs like “Battle Hymn of the Republic” and “Frog in the Well”, another marching tune, welcomed them back to the North Country. All the while at home citizens remained patriotic, holding get-togethers and fairs of all sort, singing songs like “Lincoln and Liberty Too” to raise money for the cause.

### Lincoln and Liberty Too

*By Jesse Hutchinson*

Hurrah for the choice of the nation  
 Our chieftain so brave and so true,  
 We'll go for the great reformation  
 For Lincoln and Liberty, too!  
 We'll go for the son of Kentucky  
 The hero of Hoosierdom through.  
 The pride of the Suckers, so lucky  
 For Lincoln and liberty, too!  
 They'll find what by felling and mauling  
 Our rail-maker statesman can do  
 For the people are everywhere calling  
 For Lincoln and liberty, too!  
 Then up with the banner so glorious  
 The star-spangled red, white and blue  
 We'll fight 'til our banners victorious  
 For Lincoln and liberty, too!  
 Come all ye true friends of the nation,  
 Attend to humanity's call;  
 Come aid in the slaves liberation,  
 And roll on the Liberty Ball.  
 And roll on the Liberty Ball  
 And roll on the Liberty Ball;  
 Come aid in the slaves liberation,  
 And roll on the Liberty Ball!

After fighting in the Battle of Third Winchester in northern Virginia the men would march from the north end of the Shenandoah Valley all the way to its southern end, and then back again. This was when the great burning of the Valley took place. As they chased the enemy over this long distance, the 128th no doubt sang songs like “John Brown’s Body.

**John Brown’s Body**

*By William W. Patton*

John Brown’s body lies a-mouldering in the grave,  
John Brown’s body lies a-mouldering in the grave,  
But his soul goes marching on.

CHORUS

Glory, glory, hallelujah,  
Glory, glory, hallelujah,  
Glory, glory, hallelujah,  
His soul is marching on!

He’s gone to be a soldier in the Army of the Lord,  
He’s gone to be a soldier in the Army of the Lord,  
His soul goes marching on.

CHORUS

John Brown’s knapsack is strapped upon his back,  
John Brown’s knapsack is strapped upon his back,  
His soul goes marching on.

CHORUS

The Union army and the 128th chased the fleeing Confederates south to the top of the valley and then turned and marched northward burning crops, barns and anything else that might support the enemy. Once reaching the bottom of the valley, the men camped alongside of Cedar Creek, near the spot where it joins the Shenandoah River. That evening, the men still with the regiment may have sung “Tenting Tonight on the Old Campground” as they wished for an end to the war. Unfortunately it was not to be, at least not for several more months. For it was here in the dawn hours of October 19, 1864 that the Southerners valiantly attempted to turn the tide of the ’64 Valley Campaign, which up until then had strongly gone against them.



**Figure 4.** *Captain Francis S. Keese. Mustered in as Captain of Company “C” of the 128th Regiment, on August 21, 1862. Promoted and commissioned Major on September 15, 1863 and Lt Colonel on November 29, 1864. Before joining the 128th, Keese had served as a Sergeant in the First New Jersey Volunteers.*



**Figure 5.** *Captain Robert Frederick Wilkinson. Enrolled at 21 years old to serve three years with the 128th Regiment at Poughkeepsie, New York. Mustered in as Captain Company “I”, on August 26, 1862. Wounded in action during the Battle of Cedar Creek, Virginia on October 19, 1864. Promoted and*

In the morning fight, the Union Army was whipped and chased from their camps. It would take the better part of the day before they could regroup and take back the ground they’d lost. Many men of the 128th were captured and taken prisoner, and still many more wounded and killed.

The Union Army, having already faced four years of fighting, settled in for a long cold winter. The 128th camped in northern Virginia performing routine guard and picket duty. The men passed the time singing nostalgic songs like “Do They Miss Me at Home” while those at home sang their own like “Weeping Sad and Lonely”

**Weeping Sad and Lonely**

*By Charles C. Sawyer*

Dearest love do you remember,  
When we last did meet,  
How you told me that you loved me,  
Kneeling at my feet?  
Oh! How proud you stood before me,  
In your suit of blue,  
When you vowed to me and country,  
Ever to be true

**CHORUS**

Weeping, sad and lonely,  
Hopes and fears, how vain,  
When this cruel war is over,  
Praying! That we meet again.  
When the summer breeze is sighing,  
Mournfully along  
Or when autumn leaves are falling,  
Sadly breathes the song.  
Oft in dreams I see thee lying,  
Oh the battle plain,  
Lonely, wounded, even dying,  
Calling but in vain.

**CHORUS**

If amid the din of battle,  
Nobly you should fall,  
Far away from those who love you,  
None to hear your call.  
Who would whisper words of comfort,  
Who would soothe your pain?  
Ah! The many cruel fancies,  
Ever in my brain.

**CHORUS**

When spring arrived, the regiment was shipped back south to Savannah, Georgia, to support General William T. Sherman and his army after their famous March to the Sea. The men had to keep up their morale as the war dragged on. Songs like “When Johnny Comes Marching Home” and “Home Sweet Home” no doubt were a part of their daily routines, whether marching, working, drilling or relaxing.

It indeed took the men of the 128th some time before they could look back on the war fondly. The regiment started having reunions in the late 1880’s some twenty five years after the war had ended. In newspaper stories that tell of the get-togethers, they often mention that songs like “Dixie” and “Marching through Georgia” were two of the old soldier’s favorites.

### Marching through Georgia

*By Henry Clay Work*

Bring the good old bugle, boys, we’ll sing another song;  
Sing it with a spirit that will start the world along,  
Sing it as we used to sing it, fifty thousand strong,  
While we were marching through Georgia.

#### CHORUS

Hurrah! Hurrah! We bring the jubilee!  
Hurrah! Hurrah! The flag that makes you free!  
So we sang the chorus from Atlanta to the sea,  
While we were marching through Georgia.  
How the darkies shouted when they heard the joyful sound!  
How the turkeys gobbled which our commissary found!  
How the sweet potatoes even started from the ground  
While we were marching through Georgia.

#### CHORUS

Yes, and there were Union men who wept with joyful tears,  
When they saw the honored flag they had not seen for years;  
Hardly could they be restrained from breaking forth in cheers,  
While we were marching through Georgia.

#### CHORUS

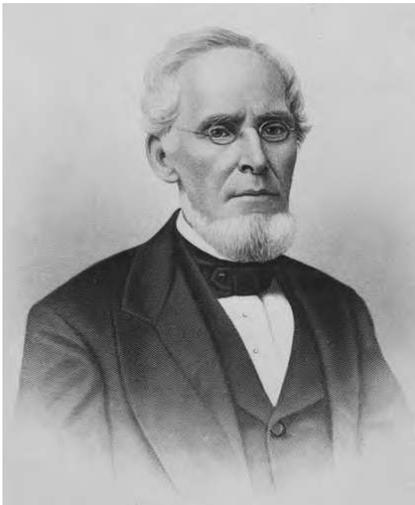
- <sup>1</sup> Ken Burns, compiled by Molly Mason, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Matt Glaser, and Jacqueline Schwab, PBS Original Soundtrack Recording for The Civil War (television series), 1989.
- <sup>2</sup> The songs cited in this essay were found in a variety of locations: CDs of Civil War collections, bands at Civil War reenactments are examples.

# The Union Troops Get Milk— from Wassaic, New York

*by Arlene Iuliano*

The train was heading from Connecticut to New York. Two men sitting next to each other in one of the coaches made history during their ride, all as a matter of chance. It was the year 1858. There was a noticeable difference in their ages and life experiences, once they found out “who they were,”<sup>1</sup> The older man was Gail Borden and the younger Jeremiah Milbank. This chance meeting brought together the developer of condensed milk—Borden—and a railroad magnate, banker and financier—Milbank. The young banker was so impressed by the enthusiasm and confidence of Borden in his condensed milk that the two became 50-50 partners. Although Borden’s business had been soundly hit by the Panic of 1857, young Milbank was sufficiently confident in the older businessman/inventor that he invested \$100,000 into Borden’s new enterprise. They named it The New York Condensed Milk Company.

Sales began to improve. Then in 1861 with the outbreak of the Civil War, “a large demand for condensed milk from the Union Army” was created “as officers purchased several hundred pounds of milk for their soldiers”.<sup>2</sup> In June of that year, with Milbank’s aid, Borden opened a milk factory in Wassaic, New York on the Harlem Railroad.<sup>3</sup>



**Figure 1.** *Gail Borden, founder, New York Condensed Milk Company. Photograph. Collection of the Amenia Historical Society.*

### *Who was Gail Borden?*

Reading biographical material would lead one to think Gail Borden was a Texan, considering all the places named for him in that state, but he was a native New Yorker having been born in 1801 in Norwich (Chenango County) N.Y.<sup>4</sup> The oldest of seven children, Gail, in childhood, began helping his father out on the family farm.<sup>5</sup> Then in 1814, the family moved to Ohio and, in 1816, on to New London, Indiana where he lived until age 21. During his youth, Gail was able to obtain about one-and-a-half years of formal education. He was not very healthy as a young boy and young man, having had a persistent cough that the doctors despaired of curing. But he was determined to get better and moved into Mississippi's "piney woods" where "combining outdoor life with careful and temperate living he regained his health."<sup>6</sup>

He was not idle. While living in Mississippi, he taught school and worked as a land surveyor. In 1826, he was the official Amite County Surveyor there and a deputy federal surveyor.<sup>7</sup> At all times he was civic minded, ever alert, and sympathetic to the needs of his fellowman.<sup>8</sup> As an example, at age twenty while in Indiana, he was thought to have been captain of the local militia; the next year "he was the principal figure in rescuing a freedman from rustlers." In 1849, in Texas as the gold rushers in their "prairie schooners" traveled through the state, the safety of their food became a major concern to him. He produced a meat biscuit "the merits of which were immediately recognized as safe," but that ultimately lost him much money due to business competition.<sup>9</sup> By this time, he and his wife had been in Texas since 1829, the year of their marriage. And over those years, Borden had compiled the first topographical map of the Colonies; published the only newspaper issued there during the Mexican War; had been appointed Revenue Collector of Galveston by President Sam Houston when the Republic of Texas was established; and, from 1839-51 was an agent of the Galveston City Company, a corporation holding several thousand acres on which the city—which Borden had surveyed in 1837—was built,<sup>10</sup> to name a few of his accomplishments before he would turn to "milk", a business in Wassaic, N.Y., and the Union Army.

### *The "New" Country in the 1800s*

In the years after the Revolutionary War, won in 1783, the United States was undergoing expansion. The leaders had been organizing the government, and were now, in the early part of the 1800s, dealing with the land expansion taking place, especially to the west and south: that included

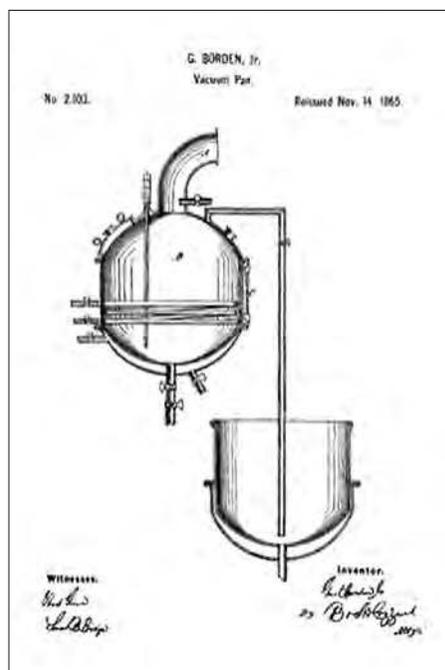


**Figure 2.** *New York Condensed Milk Company, Wassaic, New York. c.1870-1886. Engraving. Collection of the Amenia Historical Society.*

the Louisiana Purchase—1803, the Florida Purchase—1819, Annexation of Texas—1845, and a year later Oregon.<sup>11</sup> Those born in the first decade of the 1800s had many options for where to live and work. It was the age of Industrialization and Gail Borden was one of the most enterprising of his generation. As a young man he fit in with the era and the energy of the people eager to get ahead. Moving west was a sign of the times and he had been an example.<sup>12</sup> What had also become important in this new country was sanitation, especially during extensive times of travel like “going west” and war times. As a farm boy, he had the experiences of—literally—“hands on work” and in the matter of milk, he had observed how the baby calf’s life-sustaining supply was apparently a clean transmission from its mother.<sup>13</sup> At the time, he did not know how that happened, or how important it would become to him and the country years later. But if things could be better for his countrymen, he wanted to be a part of it.<sup>14</sup>

By the early 1850s, Borden had returned to New England following his financial losses with the meat biscuit. He was hoping to start a new business, possibly canning milk.<sup>15</sup> In 1847, a can-making machine had been invented.<sup>16</sup> In 1853, Borden applied for his first condensed milk patent. It was refused.<sup>17</sup> Not one to give up, he continued his experiments, despite his scientific friends’ advice to do just that—give up. In 1856, he, again, applied for a patent, and received it, having: (a) finally proved that his

method of producing “condensed milk” from whole milk was the superior method; and, (b) having provided “statements in the form of affidavits from several noted scientific men” that backed him up.<sup>18</sup> Of the many companies organized at different times under Borden patents, the most successful was the Gail Borden Eagle Brand. The very cornerstone of his final process was that of maintaining absolute cleanliness from the time the milk “was drawn from the cow until the completion of the process”.<sup>19</sup> Borden incorporated into his new work his hard-won knowledge of the importance of strict sanitation to the nursing calf and to infants and children. At the same time as he was creating a new enterprise, he remained committed to a desire to help others.



**Figure 3.** Patent RE2103 for Improvements in condensing milk submitted by Gail Borden.

*n.d.* Diagram. Collection of the Amenia Historical Society.

When Gail Borden returned east, to Torrington, Connecticut, to live and produce his condensed milk, a slow march towards profitability did not please his partners. Then there was the Panic of 1857.<sup>20</sup> He persevered in Connecticut, until his fortuitous meeting with Jeremiah Milbank which resulted in his ultimate move to “over the border” Wassaic, N.Y. in 1858.



**Figure 4.** *Workers in the Borden's plant canning milk. 1890s. Photograph. Collection of the Amenia Historical Society.*

While money was of the greatest importance to his planned venture, there were also other advantages to the new location: 1) the acres and acres of lush farmland of the surrounding area, good grazing land for dairy cows owned by local farmers, 2) the direct availability of clear stream water-power, and 3) the Harlem Valley Railroad Station in the heart of the hamlet with its direct connection to New York City.

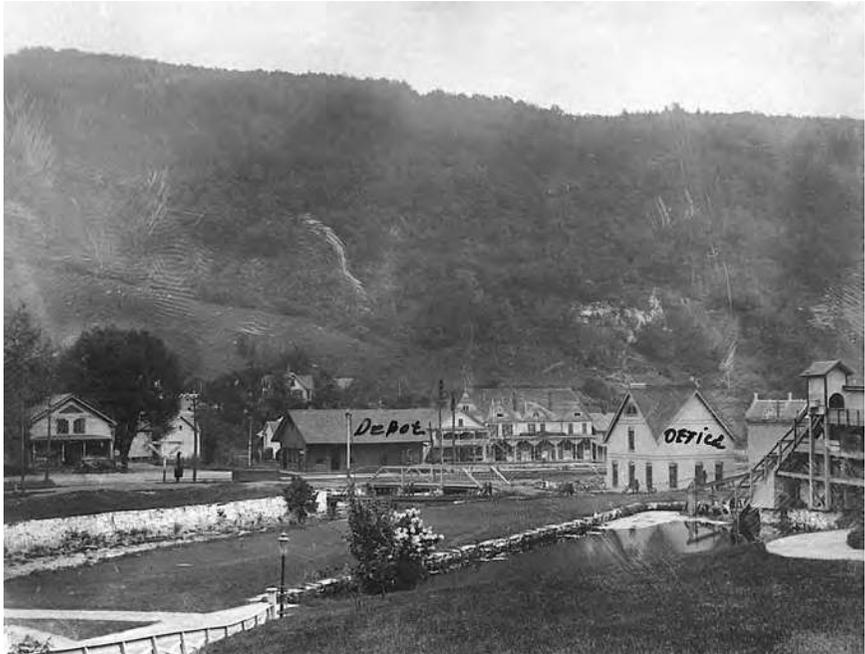
Noah Gridley, of iron ore fame and a resident there, leased Borden a site. He built a factory right by the railroad and went into business again.<sup>21</sup> And so did area farmers who changed their family farms into large scale dairy operations. Henry Noble MacCracken said in his account, *Blithe Dutchess*, “the Valley was waiting for Borden”.<sup>22</sup> By 1860, Milbank had paid off his and Borden’s debts to Gridley; and settled patent claims. MacCracken added that: “Borden had turned the corner; when the war began, the army bought all he could produce”.<sup>23</sup>

### *Borden's Condensed Milk and the Union Troops in the Civil War*

The concerns about sanitation had really grown in the 1800s in developed countries. While Louis Pasteur was working on “the germ theory”



**Figure 5.** *View of Wassaic with the New York Condensed Milk Company at the center. Photograph. Collection of the Amenia Historical Society.*



**Figure 6.** *View of the New York Condensed Milk Company with office and depot indicated. n.d. Wassaic, NY. Photograph. Collection of the Amenia Historical Society.*

in France, Borden had already reasoned that milk production methods needed to be perfectly clean, just like from the cow. At the same time, the American people were beginning to demand greater cleanliness in their food, especially in times of sickness and war.<sup>24</sup> The government was slower to act despite gradual changes in public attitudes. By the Civil War, in June 1861, the United States Sanitary Commission was formally organized. The newly formed organization had the support of the U.S. Acting Surgeon General who foresaw the need of a likely soon-to-be overwhelmed Medical Bureau.<sup>25</sup> The Commission, the largest and most successful volunteer activity in the North, had as its goal to “bring modern methods of sanitation to the treatment of sick and wounded soldiers.”<sup>26</sup> And it did. When the New York Condensed Milk Company was founded that same year, the Federal Army, which had found it impossible to supply fresh milk to its troops, sent a buyer who ordered 500 pounds of condensed milk, and kept on ordering.<sup>27</sup> The contracts came through the Sanitary Commission. The soldiers and officers, when asked, said “it was of the most highly commendable character.”<sup>28</sup> By 1863, the Wassaic plant was taking the entire milk output from the farmers within a fifteen mile radius and turning out fourteen thousand quarts a day.<sup>29</sup> MacCracken, writing about the Civil War, said that many a Union soldier “blessed Gail Borden for the milk he could drink by any brook made from the powder in his knapsack.”<sup>30</sup>

The 150th Regiment New York Infantry was the “Dutchess County Regiment.” On October 10, 1862, it left for Baltimore, Maryland. On June 8, 1865, it was mustered out having lost three officers and 78 enlisted men from disease out of their total casualties of 290.<sup>31</sup> James H. Smith in his *History of Dutchess County New York 1683–1882* (no t) established a list of men from official documents and private sources who entered from Amenia.<sup>32</sup>

Today’s sources of information about the Civil War are many, and even include some quotes about condensed milk and the Borden’s factory in Wassaic from members of the 150th at the time. Here are two: (a) “A War to Petrify The Heart” is a collection of letters from Richard T. Van Wyck of East Fishkill, NY to his family. He was a farm lad. Many times he included comments about the food, especially the quality. In a letter to his parents from Camp Belger, Baltimore dated December 12, 1862, he specifically wrote about a box received from New York by a fellow comrade. The contents were a part of supper “that I did justice to”, he said. Included were Preserves, Cake, Butter and Concentrated milk.<sup>33</sup> The word



**Figure 7.** *Members of Company A, 150th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment: Seated, left to right: 1st Lt. James P. Mabbett, 1st Lt. Henry Gridley (son of Noah Gridley), 1st Lt. William Wattles; Standing, left to right: Sgt. William H. Bartlett (later 1st Lt.), Sgt. John G. Borden (later 2nd Lt., Co. D. 47th N.Y., son of Gail Borden), Sgt. William Reed, 1st Sgt. J. Curtis Smither (later 2nd Lt., Co. C), Pvt. Miles K. Lewis.*

“concentrated” was often used when referring to the early days of condensed milk production. (b) Then there was John G. Borden, Gail’s son who joined the 150th when it was formed in 1862. “John’s comrades in arms received all the canned milk they could drink, shipped from Wassaic”, wrote Rev. Edward O. Bartlett, the chaplain of the 150th Regiment, in his book about the Regiment.<sup>34</sup>

MacCracken summarized the importance of Borden and his condensed milk best as follows: “Apart from the soldiers’ service, our greatest contribution to the Civil War was this condensed milk from Wassaic. Its freedom from bacteria, which Borden had noticed but could not explain—nor could anyone else before Pasteur—must have saved many lives.”<sup>35</sup> In later years, Borden made his home in White Plains, New York, but he returned to Texas to spend winters after the Civil War, a rich man—for the times. He died there in 1874, in a town named for him.<sup>36</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> Gail Borden, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gail-Borden>. Our gratitude to Betsy Strauss of the Amenia Historical Society for providing the images in this essay.
- <sup>2</sup> Joseph B Frantz, *Gail Borden, Dairyman to a Nation* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1st Edition, 1951), +-pp. 22-23.
- <sup>3</sup> Joseph B. Frantz, *Gail Borden, Dairyman to a Nation*. See also Louise Tompkins, “Out of the Past in Old Dutchess”, *Millbrook Roundtable*, May 17, 1962-Sept 10, 1964, PDF Fulton History 0371. note: no page numbers but section title that mentions Chenango is titled New Business.
- <sup>4</sup> Louise Tompkins, “Out of the Past in Old Dutchess”, *Millbrook Roundtable*, May 17, 1962-Sept 10, 1964, PDF Fulton History 0371. (under: New Business). See also O.E. Reed, “Gail Borden,” “O.E. Reed is chief of the Bureau of Dairying of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. Previous to this he served as head of the Dairy Departments in the Agricultural Colleges of Kansas, Indiana, and Michigan, and before that was a member of the Dairy Department of the Missouri College of Agriculture. He is past president of the American Dairy Science Association, was a delegate to the world’s dairy congress in London in 1938, and has made other trips to Europe to study dairying there. He is in ideal position to summarize the effects of the invention of the condensed milk process and the life of Gail Borden upon the dairy industry”. This statement is at the end of the article on p. 4 of 4. The article, titled *Gail Borden* by O.E. Reed was copied for me by the Amenia Historical Society’s Genealogist Betsy Strauss when I went there to do research.
- <sup>5</sup> “Gail Borden and condensed milk,” *American Civil War Forums*, <http://civilwartalk.com/threads/gail-borden-and-condensed-milk>, p. 2 .
- <sup>6</sup> O.E. Reed, p. 1.
- <sup>7</sup> “Gail Borden and condensed milk,” *American Civil War Forums*, p. 2.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>9</sup> O.E. Reed, p. 1.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 1.
- <sup>11</sup> James Allison and Samuel Steinberg, *Unit Outlines in American History* (New York, NY: College Entry Book Company, Revised 1944), p. 39.
- <sup>12</sup> O. E. Reed, p. 1.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 2.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> John Chamberlain, *The Enterprising Americans* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 112.
- <sup>17</sup> O.E. Reed, p. 2.

- <sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 3.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid,, p. 2.
- <sup>20</sup> Gail Borden, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gail-Borden> Ibid., p. 7.
- <sup>21</sup> See sections “New Business” and “Huge Success” in Louise Tompkins, “Out of the Past in Old Dutchess”, Ibid.,
- <sup>22</sup> Henry Noble MacCracken, *Blithe Dutchess* (New York, NY: Scranton, Pa: Hastings House, NY, 1st printing, 1958), pp.143-145.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 144.
- <sup>24</sup> O. E. Reed, p. 2.
- <sup>25</sup> Douglas Bukowski, *American History, A Concise Documents Collection, Volume 1: To 1877* (Boston, New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 1999), pp. 247-249.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid, p 247.
- <sup>27</sup> *Civil War Forums*, Ibid., p.1.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> *Newton Reed, Early History of Amenia with Impressions of Amenia* by Dewey Barry (Reprint 1985, *Harlem Valley Times*, Amenia, NY, 1875), p.189.
- <sup>30</sup> MacCracken, p. 144.
- <sup>31</sup> 150th Regiment, New York Infantry, [www.angelfire.com](http://www.angelfire.com), p. 12 of 16.
- <sup>32</sup> James H. Smith, Assisted By Hume H. Cale and William E. Roscoe, *1683 History of Dutchess County, New York 1882, Some Of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers* (Syracuse, N.Y.; D. Mason & Co.) pp. 355-.
- <sup>33</sup> Richard T. Van Wyck. *A War to Petrify The Heart, The Civil War Letters of A Dutchess County*, NY Volunteer (Hensonville, NY: Black Dome Press, 1997), p. 47.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>35</sup> Rev. Edward. O. Bartlett, DD. *The Dutchess County Regiment in the Civil War* (Danbury, Conn: Danbury Printing, 1902).
- <sup>36</sup> Gail Borden, Wikipedia, p. 8 of 14.

# Dutchess County, New York and Beaufort County, North Carolina during the Civil War

*by Peter S. Bedrossian*

The 2015 Yearbook article, “Living History: History taken out of the Book and into the World,” discussed the processes that one uses to evolve from a reenactor into a “living historian.” One of the activities discussed was the use of primary sources to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the historical period being portrayed. This article is a continuation of that discussion: sharing information that was collected from the 1860 Federal Census. The information that I present here is comparative information for Dutchess County, New York and Beaufort County, North Carolina. State-wide data for New York and North Carolina are also presented to provide a wider view.

The selection of these counties was not arbitrary. In my research as a Civil War Living Historian, I portray soldiers from two regiments: The 150th New York (The Dutchess County Regiment), Company I, and the 3rd North Carolina State Troops, Company I. All 880 men who joined the 150th New York in 1862 were from Dutchess County. Many of the men in the 3rd North Carolina, Company I, were from Beaufort County. Thus the comparison has allowed not only me to better understand the home regions of these regiments, but has also allowed for better information for educating the public.

The demographic data collected for this review includes general population characteristics as well as a focus on those individuals potentially eligible for military service. Following this, agricultural and manufacturing data were collected to provide an economic comparison for the two areas under review.

## *Population*

At the most basic level, New York, and Dutchess County show a clear advantage over North Carolina and Beaufort County in terms of their overall populations:

GENERAL POPULATION: <sup>1</sup>

	North Carolina	New York	Beaufort County	Dutchess County
Total Population	992,622	3,880,735	14,766	64,941
Total Free Black Population	30,463 (3%)	49,005 (1.3%)	728 (4.9%)	2051 (3.2%)
Total Free Population	661,563 (67%)	3,880,735	8,888 (60%)	64,941

The percentages in parentheses indicate the percentage of the total population represented by these figures.

The inclusion of African-Americans in this population demonstrates another disadvantage faced by the South, namely that a significant portion of their population was not available for military service. While there were African Americans who did serve as Confederate soldiers, the numbers doing so were on a far smaller scale than those who served in the United States Colored Troops.

The disparity in population is further demonstrated by a serendipitous discovery made during the collection of the data. As the data for the Federal census was organized by county within each state, perusing the county list for New York State led to this discovery. I observed that two downstate counties in New York had a combined population which exceeds the total population of North Carolina. New York and Kings County were these two counties.

New York County: <sup>2</sup>	805,658	North Carolina
Kings County:	266,661	
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>1,072,319</b>	<b>992,622</b>

At the county level it was observed that Dutchess held a 7:1 advantage over Beaufort in terms of total free population. Further, in breaking this down to population centers, Dutchess had the prominent City of Poughkeepsie, whose population in 1860 was 14,726.<sup>3</sup> In other terms, the City of Poughkeepsie was effectively as populous as the entire Beaufort County. Where these numbers take on additional meaning is in the context of any war where there is the need to provide men for military service. The following table provides the comparison of the ability of these regions to support the war. It should be borne in mind that the eligibility pool reflects not only initial recruitment, but also the potential pool from which replacements might be obtained to cover losses due to battle, illness, desertion, etc.

POPULATION POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE  
FOR MILITARY SERVICE:<sup>4</sup>

	North Carolina	New York	Beaufort County	Dutchess County
White Males 15-19*	33,976	186,647	404	3,220
White Males 20-29	53,078	336,905	670	5,341
White Males 30-39	35,276	279,870	544	4,160
White Males 40-49	24,532	193,037	357	3,316
TOTAL Eligible for Military Service	146,862 (23.3%)	996,459 (26%)	1975 (24.2%)	16,037 (25.5%)

\*The age range for Civil War service was 18-45. However, the census data do not differentiate by year, and the 15-19 cohort represents the available data.

The overall population disparity is continued in terms of those eligible for military service. In these comparisons it is clear that Dutchess County had a greater capacity to recruit, and ultimately to replace losses sustained. In point of fact, Dutchess County was credited with providing men to a total of 38 different regiments during the course of the war, including the entire 150th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment and six companies of the 128th New York Volunteer Infantry.<sup>5</sup> As can be seen by comparing general population to the potential pool for military service, Dutchess County's potential pool (16,037) exceeds the entire population of Beaufort County (14,766.)

Although there is a great disparity in population size, it is noteworthy that the relative proportion of the population eligible for military service is similar for all areas reviewed. This suggests that population health and stability was similar both North and South.

The significance of these data for the living historian is that that they show how difficult a position the South was in during the war. Southerners could not sustain a lengthy war as they could not replace losses as readily as could the North. When conscription of soldiers is considered, the North had a wider margin to tolerate non-compliance than did the South.

These basic population data provide one way to examine the war from a local perspective. They tell the story from the military human capital point of view. The differences between North and South are also reflected in economic terms. The economic factors presented here include agriculture and manufacturing. Although beyond the scope of this paper, the census

data also provide information on the range of occupations and the number of individuals engaged in them.

### *Agriculture*

Agriculture was a major factor in the economies of both the North and the South. However, the practice and distribution of agricultural resources was considerably different for these regions.

#### AGRICULTURAL CENSUS DATA<sup>6</sup>

	<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>Beaufort County</b>	<b>Dutchess County</b>
Number of Farms	67,022	195,459	722	3,356
Value of Livestock	\$31,130,805	\$103,856,296	\$23,007	\$3,137,733
Value of animals slaughtered	\$ 10,414,546	\$15,841,404	\$93,399	\$ 620,418
Value of Orchard Products	\$643,688	\$3,726,380	\$327	\$ 92,189
Value of Orchard Products & Machinery	\$5,873,942	\$29,166,695	\$35,230	\$ 945,810
Farm Acreage				
3-9 Acres	2,050	5,232	126	54
10-19 Acres	4,878	12,310	179	142
20-49 Acres	20,882	54,502	233	390
50-99 Acres	18,496	73,037	99	892
100-499 Acres	19,220	51,132	79	1,857
500-999 Acres	1,184	225	5	19
>1000 Acres	311	21	1	2
TOTAL Improved Acreage	6,517,284	14,358,403	32,026	392,664
TOTAL Unimproved Acreage	17,245,685	6,616,555	226,721	79,609

Agriculturally, Dutchess County was a powerful region. When comparing the value of livestock, Dutchess County alone had a cash value representing 10% of the livestock value of the entire State of North Carolina.

More telling than the livestock data are the data concerning farm size. Based on acreage, a significant number of Dutchess County's farms can be interpreted as provider, rather than as subsistence farms. Whereas Beaufort County peaked with a cohort of 233 farms representing 20-49 acres, Dutchess' peak cohort is 1,857 farms of 100-499 acres. Farms of this size had more diversity and could provide more for market than could

the smaller farms seen in the Beaufort County data. Dutchess also showed greater land under cultivation than its Southern competitor. The trend held for both the state and county data, suggesting that while the potential in the South was great, its use of land was less than ideal.

The living historian can use this data to develop a profile of his community, and if he chooses farming as his occupation, he can tailor “his farm” to the statistical data presented here.

### *Manufacturing*

The other major area of data within the census material concerns manufacturing. While it is often stated that the North had more industry and manufacturing than did the South, the data clearly validate this statement.

#### MANUFACTURING DATA<sup>7</sup>

	<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>Beaufort County</b>	<b>Dutchess County</b>
Number of Manufacturing Establishments	3,689	22,624	129	321
Annual Value of Products in Manufacturing	\$16,678,698	\$378,870,939	\$199,411	\$61,004,123

The data show the incredible disparity in economic power between both these states and the respective counties being reviewed. Dutchess County can be seen as an agriculturally powerful county but also as a strong economic engine by virtue of the value of its manufacturing products. The cash value for Dutchess County’s manufactured products was 3.66 times greater than the total manufacturing output of North Carolina (the entire state).

### *Conclusion*

As limited as these data are, they provide a “jumping off” point for further study. More detailed review of the census can reveal male-female ratios in the labor market, and the breadth of occupations available. They are more of a beginning than an end to be certain. While the data presented here does not tell much of the culture and society of the era, they can be used as a framework within which that information can be interpreted through letters, diaries, newspapers etc.

The comparison of basic population and economic data presented here had as its goal a window into the process of developing a “living history”

profile. The purpose was not deep analysis, but rather an introduction to the process of examining local history. It is hoped that this snapshot of history will serve to inspire further examination of Dutchess County in the Civil War.

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<sup>1</sup> 1860 United States Census: New York Data: <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1860a-10.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> 1860 Federal Census p.328.

<sup>3</sup> 1860 Federal Census p. 332.

<sup>4</sup> 1860 Federal Census pp. 322-325; 348-357.

<sup>5</sup> Phisterer, Frederick (1912) *New York in the War of the Rebellion, 3rd Edition*, Albany, J.R. Lyon Company Volume 1, p. 73; Volume 3 p. 3521; Volume V p. 3745.

<sup>6</sup> <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/> This resource offers multiple search features and queries, and allows users to more precisely select data. (Hereafter cited as Mapserver).

<sup>7</sup> Mapserver.

# Hope: The Inaugural Train Ride of Abraham Lincoln and the Hudson River Valley

by Anthony J. Czarnecki

In February, 1861, President-elect Abraham Lincoln made an historic whistle-stop tour of the Hudson River Valley in New York State during a twelve-day train journey from his home in Springfield, Illinois to his Inauguration in Washington, D.C. The trip included brief speaking stops in Albany, Troy, Hudson, Poughkeepsie, Fishkill, and Peekskill while traveling in a luxurious rail car provided by the Hudson River Railroad line that once connected Albany to New York City. The story of that train journey serves to connect the Hudson River Valley to the person whom many historians regard as America's greatest President.



**Figure 1.** *The Winning Ticket in 1860: Lincoln and Hamlin.* Abraham Lincoln of Illinois and Hannibal Hamlin of Maine appeared in a popular campaign poster. W.H. Rease, Philadelphia, 1860, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abraham Lincoln was the unexpected nominee of the new Republican Party in 1860 and the unexpected choice for U.S. President in a four-way electoral contest that earned him a plurality of only 39% of the popular vote (Figure 1). Analyzed geographically, the result gave Lincoln a decisive 54 percent in the North and West, but only 2 percent in the South—the most lopsided vote in American history.”<sup>1</sup> The train trip would take him through the relatively safe northern states, also the most direct route to Washington.

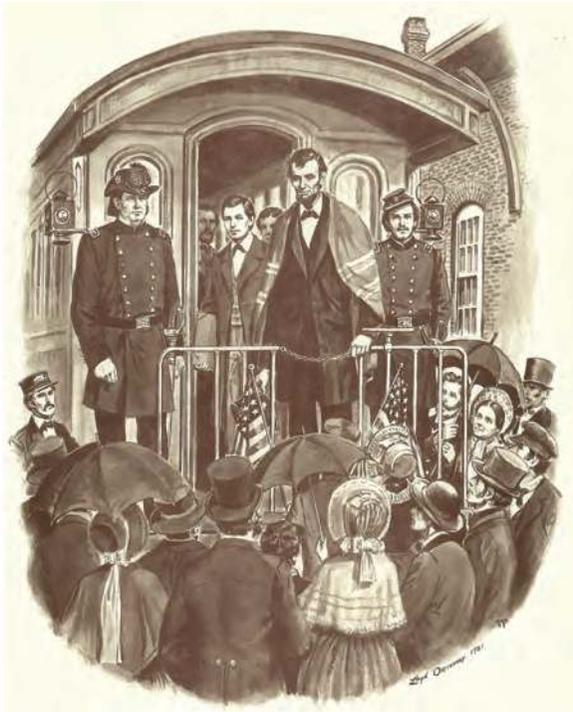
During the transition period, newly elected President Lincoln tried to avoid any public commentary or controversy until his Inauguration. But with his formal swearing-in ceremony approaching, Lincoln and his political associates decided to dramatically break with the traditions of the time and transform his train trip from Springfield, Illinois to Washington DC from a private journey to a public event. This was done for several reasons: (1) to re-introduce Lincoln to the nation in a post-election environment, (2) to firm up patriotic support for the Union, (3) to consult with prominent political leaders and public officials along the way, (4) to test some themes in his draft Inaugural Address, and (5) to create a personal connection between the people and their new president. As a result, it was announced in January 1861 that Lincoln would embark on a high-profile twelve-day train journey to Washington, D.C., departing his hometown of Springfield, Illinois on February 11, 1861.

The political genius of the new President-elect was beginning to be revealed: “Lincoln understood that those who elected him were eager to see what he looked like, and he was willing to satisfy their curiosity.”<sup>2</sup> This notion was confirmed by Lincoln’s private secretary, John G. Nicolay, who accompanied the President-elect along with a large travelling group that included Lincoln’s family, close personal friends, political advisors, his African-American valet, and several newspaper reporters. Nicolay reported that “The people wanted not only to look upon their President-elect, but to hear his voice.”<sup>3</sup>

The challenge for Lincoln’s associates was to coordinate travel arrangements on eighteen separate railroad lines (through Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland to Washington D.C.) with overnight accommodations and appropriate speaking stops along the way. A route would need to be chosen that offered Lincoln ample time for full exposure in the major cities without delaying his arrival in Washington. That route put New York State at the center of the travel arrangements.

### *Eastward to New York State*

The launch of the Lincoln train trip caused a media sensation (Figure 2). The first leg of the journey took the President-elect and his party through the Midwest states of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio over five days. In Indiana, he observed his 52nd birthday. In Ohio, Lincoln was informed by telegram that the Electoral College had met in Washington, D.C. and officially certified his election as the nation's sixteenth president, winning 180 out of 303 electoral votes. Along the train route, the crowds were enormous.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 2.** *Lincoln's Farewell at Springfield, Illinois. The President-elect bids an emotional farewell to his friends and neighbors gathered at the Great Western Railroad Depot in Springfield on February 11, 1861. Illustration by Lloyd Ostendorf.*

### *Into New York State*

The second leg of the train journey took Mr. Lincoln through western New York State, the Capitol District, and towards the Hudson River Valley over four days.<sup>5</sup> Lincoln's first speaking stop in New York State was memorable,

because it became the backdrop to an entertaining human interest story, in contrast to the serious business of the “secession winter.” It occurred in the tiny village of Westfield, Chautauqua County, where the President-elect took the time to meet with twelve-year-old Grace Bedell, who had written to Lincoln three months earlier and urged him to grow a beard. He did so (Figures 3 and 4). At Westfield, the crowd pushed Grace forward and Lincoln gave her “several hearty kisses” before his train departed. The newspapers loved it.



**Figure 3.** *Lincoln with his new beard. Photo by Christopher S. German, 1861. Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.*



**Figure 4.** *Grace Bedell of Westfield, N. Y. who wrote to candidate Lincoln in October 1860. Abraham Lincoln Research Site.*

### *On to the Hudson Valley: a Journey of Hope*

On the path to Albany, the Lincoln party was welcomed by huge crowds at speaking stops in Buffalo, Batavia, Rochester, Clyde, Syracuse, Utica, Little Falls, Amsterdam, and Schenectady. The public reaction to Lincoln’s Inaugural train journey was tremendous: According to Lincoln scholar David Herbert Donald: “The procession combined all the elements of a travelling circus, a political campaign, and a national holiday.” In the hearts and minds of the Northerners as they turned out to cheer this new President-elect was the foreboding of armed conflict with the South. Who was this man, the first chief executive of the United States to have been born west of the Appalachians, who would lead the nation in a time of crisis?<sup>6</sup> In many ways, the 1861 train trip was a journey of hope with a message of re-assurance to a troubled nation.

**Albany:** The Lincoln Inaugural train arrived in Albany on the afternoon of February 18, 1861 and he was met by Albany's Democratic Mayor, George Thatcher, who delivered a formal welcome to the first Republican President-elect "...as a tribute of respect...without distinction of party."<sup>7</sup>

Lincoln responded with a brief acknowledgement to Mayor Thatcher and the assembled crowd:

I can hardly appropriate to myself the flattering terms in which you communicate the tender of this reception, as personal to myself. I most gratefully accept the hospitalities tendered to me, and will not detain you or the audience with any extended remarks at this time...I will therefore only repeat to you my thanks for this kind reception.<sup>8</sup>

A procession of horse-drawn carriages then escorted the Presidential party down Broadway and up State Street to the entrance of the Capitol. "The route was densely crowded. The windows of the houses were filled with people, while carriages crowded both sides of the streets. Many residences displayed flags in profusion. Across Broadway was hung a strip of canvass, bearing the inscriptions: 'WELCOME TO THE CAPITAL OF THE EMPIRE STATE' and 'NO MORE COMPROMISES'. A building on State Street displayed a banner with the words 'WE WILL PRAY FOR YOU, THE DEFENDER OF THE CONSTITUTION AS IT IS'."<sup>9</sup>



**Figure 5.** Albany Mayor George Thatcher. Albany Institute of History & Art & Photographs Collection.



**Figure 6.** New York State Governor Edwin Morgan. The Democratic Mayor and the Republican Governor both welcomed Lincoln to the State Capital in 1861. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Lincoln then graciously responded to the welcoming remarks of Governor Morgan, with emphasis on the non-partisan nature of his reception:

Governor Morgan: I was pleased to receive an invitation to visit the capital of the great Empire State of this nation while on my way to the Federal capital. I now thank you, Mr. Governor, and you, the people of the capital of the State of New York, for this most hearty and magnificent welcome. If I am not at fault, the great Empire State at this time contains a larger population than did the whole of the United States of America at the time they achieved their national independence... The reception you have extended me to-day is not given to me personally—it should not be so—but as the representative, for the time being, of the majority of the nation. If the election had fallen to any of the more distinguished citizens who received the support of the people, this same honor should have greeted him that greets me this day, in testimony to the universal, unanimous devotion of the whole people to the Constitution, the Union, and to the perpetual liberties of succeeding generations in this country. I have neither the voice nor the strength to address you at any greater length. I beg you will therefore accept my most grateful thanks for this manifest devotion—not to me—but the institutions of this great and glorious country.<sup>10</sup>

Honoring an earlier invitation, Lincoln was then escorted to the Assembly Chamber—inside the Old State House (Figure 7)—for a formal address to a joint session of the N.Y. State Legislature.

Lincoln then delivered his prepared remarks to members of the N.Y. State Legislature, avoiding policy issues while urging dispassionate restraint.

### *Detour to Troy, New York*

On the morning of February 19, 1861 the presidential party left the Delavan House in Albany at 7:30 A.M. and was transported to the nearby Albany & Northern Railroad depot. Because the Hudson River was flooded and ice-jammed, a detour led them north for eighteen miles along the west side of the Hudson, crossing the Mohawk River at Cohoes along a 1,600-foot railroad bridge that got them to the east side of the Hudson. The train then switched to the track operated by the Rensselaer & Saratoga Railroad for the trip south to the new spacious train depot at Troy, Rensselaer County (Figure 8). “It was estimated approximately fifteen thousand people were congregated... As the train approached, a deafening roar of cheers and shouts went up.”<sup>11</sup> This was a remarkable scene for an unplanned stop with barely a 24-hour notice. At the train depot, Democratic Mayor Isaac McConihe of Troy delivered a brief welcome, stressing his respect for “... the chosen Chief Magistrate of thirty million people.”<sup>12</sup>



**Figure 7.** *Old State House, Albany, N. Y. (1812-1879). Lincoln spoke here to a large outdoor crowd and a joint meeting of the NY State Legislature in 1861. The State Government for 1879 by Charles G. Shanks (1879).*



**Figure 8.** *Troy Union Depot. President-elect Lincoln was welcomed here by a huge crowd on the way to his 1861 Inauguration. Collection of the Rensselaer County Historical Society. Photograph by Charles Himes c. 1858.*

Mr. Lincoln gave a brief reply.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Move to Hudson River Railroad luxury train car for continued trip through the Hudson Valley***

At Troy, the Lincoln party switched trains and boarded a new luxurious passenger car supplied by the Hudson River Railroad that would take the President-elect, his family, and companions through the Hudson River Valley southbound from Troy to New York City. The change in accommodations was dramatic. According to Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer:

For days, each successive railroad company that transported the president-elect had tried to outdo the others in speed and comfort. Now, for the journey to New York City, the Lincolns enjoyed the most opulent accommodations of the entire trip.<sup>14</sup>

Their new passenger car was decorated with flags and streamers, warmed by modern heaters, lighted by elegant wax-candle burners under cut-glass globes, decorated with a bright tapestry carpet, and furnished with four cozy reading chairs around a large walnut and ebony wood table .

Two new locomotives had been recently delivered to the Hudson River Railroad Company. According to railroad historian Scott Trostel:

Many locomotives of this day were identified by names as opposed to their numbers. They were christened respectively the *Constitution*, Numbered 57 and the *Union*, Numbered 56 and had been reserved for this occasion. The *Union* was assigned to run from Albany to Poughkeepsie, and the *Constitution*, from Poughkeepsie to New York City. Both locomotives had been built at the Schenectady Locomotive Works in January 1861.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Brief train stops along the Hudson River***

After the unscheduled stop in Troy, the presidential special proceeded southbound on a whistle-stop tour of the Hudson River Valley in New York State. Along the way, there were three pre-scheduled speaking stops in Hudson, Poughkeepsie, and Peekskill. There were also two brief appearances in Rhinebeck and Fishkill. The *New York Illustrated News* reported that: “Mr. Lincoln’s progress from Albany to New York was a continued ovation.” All the citizens appeared to “do honor to the brave Old Rail Splitter.”<sup>16</sup>

**Hudson:** The Lincoln party reached Hudson in Columbia County at 10:50 A.M. and encountered a festive reception: “An enthusiastic congregation

of about 5,000 people greeted him at the depot. Thirty-four guns were fired from Promenade Hill. He addressed the crowd in substantially the same words as at other stations.<sup>17</sup>

**Rhinebeck:** At Rhinebeck, a spirited demonstration greeted the Lincoln train. According to railroad historian Scott Trostel: “Mr. Lincoln appeared on the platform, but excused himself from making any remarks, bowing to the welcome of the people.”<sup>18</sup>

### *Greetings and Hijinks at Poughkeepsie*

The next pre-scheduled speaking stop for President-elect Lincoln was Poughkeepsie in Dutchess County. There, “...he delivered the longest address of the day to a crowd so vast it spread to the surrounding hills.”<sup>19</sup>

The scene at the Poughkeepsie station as the train stopped was unsurpassed in effect by any stop on the road. A platform had been erected on the side of the track, and around this there were crowds gathered, while the hills on the east side of the road were crowded with people, mainly ladies. Every height that could command a sight of the train, and every road winding up the hills, bore crowds of citizens. A large basket of flowers, that would be rare and choice at any season of the year, were brought on board and presented to Mrs. Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln appeared on the rear platform of the train.<sup>20</sup>

While the locomotive Union was being replaced by the Constitution, Charles W. Swift (Figure 9), the Democratic Mayor of Poughkeepsie, extended a brief greeting to the President-elect, hoping that “...God in his goodness will give you the wisdom to...administer this Government.”<sup>21</sup>



**Figure 9.** *Poughkeepsie Mayor Charles W. Swift. Greeted President-elect Lincoln in Dutchess County in 1861. Archives & Special Collections, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY.*

The President-elect then delivered his thoughts to the large assemblage in Poughkeepsie:

I cannot expect to make myself heard by any considerable number of you, my friends, but I appear here rather for the purpose of seeing you and being seen by you. I do not believe that you will extend this welcome—one of the finest I have ever received to the individual man who now addressed you but rather to the person who represents for the time being the majesty of the constitution and the government. I suppose that here, as everywhere, you meet me without distinction of party, but as the people. It is with your aid, as the people, that I think we shall be able to preserve—not the country, for the country will preserve itself, but the institutions of the country—those institutions which have made us free, intelligent and happy—the most free, the most intelligent and the happiest people on the globe. I see that some, at least, of you are of those who believe that an election being decided against them is no reason why they should sink the ship. I believe with you, I believe in sticking to it, and carrying it through; and, if defeated at one election, I believe in taking the chances next time. I do not think that they have chosen the best man to conduct our affairs, now—but acting honestly and sincerely, and with your aid, I think we shall be able to get through the storm. In addition to what I have said, I have only to bid you farewell.<sup>22</sup>

The stop in Poughkeepsie was also notable because young Tad Lincoln refused a call for a public appearance. According to Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer: “At Poughkeepsie, the imp finally succumbed to the stubborn streak for which he was infamous back home. There, Mary [Lincoln] raised the window to wave at well-wishers, and to shouts of ‘Where are the children?’ first produced Robert (Figure 10), whose appearance earned ‘a hearty cheer’. ‘Have you any more on board?’ someone in the crowd shouted. ‘Yes’, Mary answered back, ‘here’s another’,” but was not able to persuade the mischievous eight-year old Tad (Figure 11) to reveal himself to the Poughkeepsie crowd.<sup>23</sup>

### *Brief Appearance in Fishkill*

The Lincoln train stop in Fishkill, Dutchess County, was extremely brief. “On arriving at Fishkill, the people were at trackside en masse, a cannon salute, band of music and shouting gave voice to their enthusiasm.”<sup>24</sup>

Here, Lincoln delivered a brief greeting of four sentences (revealing his characteristic humor) before moving on to a pre-scheduled speaking and re-fueling stop in Peekskill:

I appear before you not to make a speech. I have no sufficient time, if I had the strength, to repeat speeches at every station where the people kindly gather to welcome me as we go along. If I had the strength, and should take the time, I should not get to Washington until after inauguration, which you must be aware would not fit exactly. That such an untoward event might not transpire. I know you will readily forego any further remarks; and I close by bidding you farewell.<sup>25</sup>



**Figure 10.** Robert Todd Lincoln. The oldest Lincoln son greeted the crowd gathered at the railroad depot in Poughkeepsie, NY, but the youngest Lincoln son refused to follow his brother's lead. Prints & Photographs Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



**Figure 11.** Thomas "Tad" Lincoln. Youngest son of Abraham Lincoln. Prints & Photographs Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

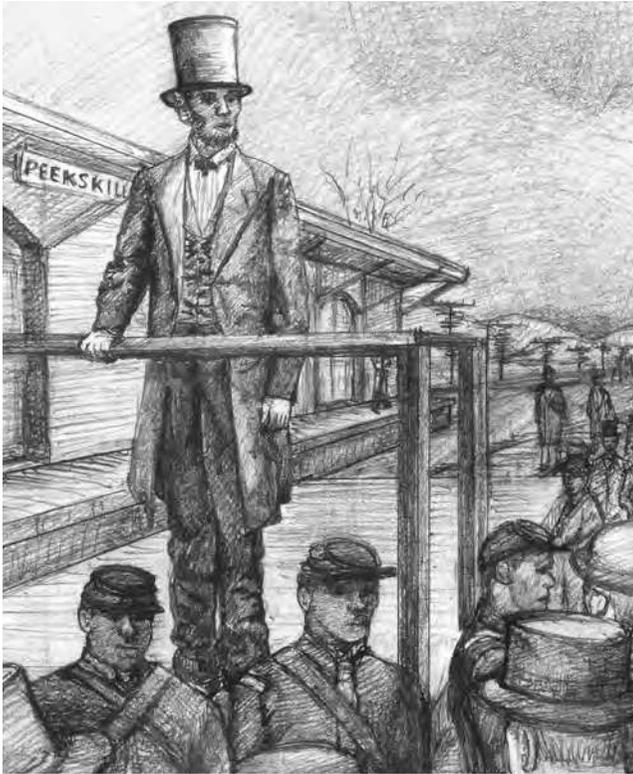
### Onward to Peekskill

The visit of Lincoln at Peekskill, Westchester County, on February 19, 1861 was originally planned as just a re-fueling stop. Prior to the departure of the Inaugural train from Springfield, William Nelson, the former Westchester District Attorney who had served with Lincoln in the 30th Congress (1847–1849), sent a formal letter of invitation to his former colleague on behalf of the officials and citizens in Peekskill.<sup>26</sup>

Nelson's invitation was accepted and Peekskill became the only speaking stop in Westchester County. Both Lincoln and Nelson had been affiliated

with the Whig Party in the 1840's and shared views opposing the extension of slavery.

When Nelson finished his welcome, Mr. Lincoln greeted his former Congressional colleague and shook hands with him. The local newspaper observed that Lincoln looked “jaded, fatigued and as if just aroused from a nap, but, when he commenced speaking, his whole countenance lighted up.”<sup>27</sup>



**Figure 12.** *Lincoln Speaks in Peekskill, New York.* President-elect Lincoln appealed to “the patriotic people of the whole country” when he appeared in Peekskill on February 19, 1861. “Sustaining Hands: Abraham Lincoln in Peekskill” by Civil War subject artist Paul R. Martin III, 2005 © Silent Sentinel Studio by special permission of the artist.

### **Racing to New York City**

As the Presidential train raced onward to New York City, the reporter for *The New York Herald* noted that several demonstrations of respect occurred

in four other communities in Westchester County as it passed through Ossining, Tarrytown, Dobbs Ferry, and Yonkers. The Lincoln party received a huge welcome upon arrival in New York City. It was estimated that 250,000 people watched the eleven-carriage procession from the railroad station at 30th Street to the Astor House, where they stayed overnight. While in New York, Lincoln met with Mayor Fernando Wood at New York City Hall, dined with Vice President-elect Hannibal Hamlin of Maine, and attended an evening performance of Verdi's new opera, "Un Ballo in Maschera", at the Academy of Music.<sup>28</sup>

### *New York City to Washington, D.C.*

The third and final leg of the twelve-day train journey took the Lincoln party from New York City through the states of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland to the nation's capital over a three-day period. Arriving in Philadelphia on George Washington's birthday, Lincoln raised a new U.S. flag with 34 stars (that now included Kansas) in front of Independence Hall. While in Philadelphia, Lincoln learned of an assassination plot that was planned while his train passed through Baltimore. Alternate travel arrangements were made and Lincoln was separated from the larger Presidential party. The President-elect, railroad detective Allan Pinkerton, and Illinois attorney Ward Hill Lamon (Lincoln's self-appointed bodyguard) secretly boarded a late evening train on the outskirts of Philadelphia that arrived in Washington, D.C. on the morning of February 23, 1861 at 6:00 A.M. Mrs. Lincoln, their sons, and the remainder of the Presidential party arrived safely in Washington, D.C. later that same afternoon.

### *Impact of Inaugural Train Journey*

The impact of Lincoln's high-profile train trip was far-reaching and profound. According to Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer: "For endurance alone, the journey was a resounding triumph of absolutely unprecedented proportions...Lincoln had traversed more than 1,900 miles on eighteen different railroad lines through seven states and uncountable towns and villages. In total, he had delivered no fewer than 101 known speeches —orating from the back of trains, at rail depots, hotels, state houses, municipal buildings, and historic sites..."<sup>29</sup>

In large cities—like Indianapolis, Columbus, Cleveland, Buffalo, Albany, New York and Philadelphia —and in small communities —like Troy, Hudson, Poughkeepsie, Fishkill and Peekskill —Lincoln had skillfully used his long train journey to invite local demonstrations of public support for the

Union. This was done in the midst of a dangerous “secession crisis” that he and the nation would soon need to confront. The long-term impact of the train journey was significant.

Lincoln’s memorable whistle-stop tour through the Hudson River Valley area of New York State was especially unique for three reasons: (1) the non-partisan nature of the welcoming ceremonies, (2) the tremendous turnout of the populace in small communities eager to see and hear their newly-elected President, and (3) the spirited public demonstrations of patriotism in defiance of the southern secessionists who boldly threatened the Union.

The “fiery trial” of the Civil War was still to come. But during the 39-day interval between Lincoln’s Inauguration and the outbreak of war, Americans in the large and small communities along the Inaugural train route—including several in the Hudson River Valley area of New York State—experienced a unique opportunity to size up their sixteenth President first-hand as they prepared themselves for the ordeal that would forever change their country.

<sup>1</sup> Harold Holzer, *Lincoln: President Elect* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), pp. 41–42.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln: A Life*, Volume I (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008). See also William C. Harris, *Lincoln’s Rise to the Presidency* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007); *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1832-1858*, Volume I (New York: The Library of America, 1989); Victor Seidler, *Lincoln’s Journey to Greatness: A Factual Account of the Twelve-Day Inaugural Trip* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1960).

<sup>3</sup> John G. Nicolay, “Some Incidents in Lincoln’s Journey from Springfield to Washington”, in Michael Burlingame, ed., *An Oral History of Abraham Lincoln: John G. Nicolay’s Interviews and Essays* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), p. 113.

<sup>4</sup> Ida M. Tarbell, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900), pp. 411-412.

<sup>5</sup> *Lincoln’s Journalist: John Hay’s Anonymous Writings for the Press, 1860-1864*, ed. by Michael Burlingame (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2006), p. 35.

<sup>6</sup> David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), p. 274.

<sup>7</sup> Scott D. Trostel, *The Lincoln Inaugural Train: The 1861 Journey of President-elect Abraham Lincoln to Washington, D.C.* (Fletcher, OH: Cam-Tech Publishing, 2011), p. 108.

<sup>8</sup> Trostel, pp. 108-109.

- <sup>9</sup> Trostel, p. 109.
- <sup>10</sup> Trostel, p. 110.
- <sup>11</sup> Trostel, pp. 115-116.
- <sup>12</sup> Trostel, p. 116.
- <sup>13</sup> Trostel, p. 116.
- <sup>14</sup> Holzer, p. 351.
- <sup>15</sup> Trostel, p. 116.
- <sup>16</sup> *New York Illustrated News* (February 1861).
- <sup>17</sup> Trostel, p. 118.
- <sup>18</sup> Trostel, p. 118.
- <sup>19</sup> Holzer, p. 352.
- <sup>20</sup> Trostel, p. 119.
- <sup>21</sup> Trostel, p. 119.
- <sup>22</sup> Trostel, p. 119.
- <sup>23</sup> Holzer, p. 353.
- <sup>24</sup> Trostel, p. 120.
- <sup>25</sup> Roy P. Basler, (ed.), *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Volume IV, *New York Tribune* (February 20, 1861), p. 229.
- <sup>26</sup> Scofield, Carlton B., "When the Immortal Lincoln Came to Peekskill in 1861", *Peekskill Evening Star*, (May 7, 1948), p. 11.
- <sup>27</sup> *The Highland Democrat* (February 23, 1861), p. 1.
- <sup>28</sup> *New York Herald* (February 20, 1861), p. 1.
- <sup>29</sup> Holzer, pp. 389-390.



# Lincoln and the Magnolia Tree

*by Virginia Hancock*

As you stroll or drive down Lower Main Street towards the river, you will pass a magnificent magnolia tree (Figure 1) on the corner of Main and Vassar Streets in the City of Poughkeepsie. In 1865, Matthew Vassar was living in the “Homestead” where the tree was part of the landscape.



**Figure 1.** *The Magnolia Tree on Lower Main Street, Poughkeepsie, New York, the Cunnene-Hackett Art Center. Boughs from the blooming tree were placed on the funeral byre of President Abraham Lincoln by brewer Matthew Vassar when the funeral train stopped in Poughkeepsie in April 1865. This tree is believed to be a descendant of the original tree. Photograph by Nancy Miller.*

On Good Friday, April 14, 1865, President Lincoln was assassinated. His body, along with that of his son Willie, who had died at the age of eleven three years earlier, were in a funeral car which was part of a nine-car funeral train. The train was on its way to Springfield, Illinois, taking thirteen days and traveling 1,600 miles. The train stopped in Poughkeepsie for dinner. Matthew Vassar was among the ten thousand citizens who had come to say farewell. According to Matthew's diary, he cut blossoms from the magnolia tree on his property and was allowed to place them on Lincoln's casket. The band from Eastman Business College played a dirge. (The band had preceded Lincoln's carriage down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. for his second inauguration.)

The "Homestead" was built by Matthew's parents when they moved here from England. They also built a brewery across Vassar Street where they brewed ale. Eventually, Matthew became owner of the business and established a brewery closer to the river. Ale and porter, his products, became known throughout the nation. Matthew died in 1868 and his nephews John Guy Vassar and Matthew Vassar Jr. had the "Homestead" demolished. In 1881, working with architect J. A. Wood, they built the Vassar Brothers Home for Aged Men at 9 Vassar Street and the Vassar Brothers Institute at 12 Vassar Street. Today, these buildings house offices, art galleries, a dance studio, and the VBI Theater. The two buildings comprise the Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center. Funds from the Charlotte Cunneen-Hackett Charitable Trust assist in refurbishing the two buildings.

In April, when blossoms are on the Magnolia tree, a special event is held to remember Matthew Vassar, Lincoln, and the magnificent magnolia tree.

# Grief: The Funeral Train of Abraham Lincoln and the Hudson Valley

*by Candace J. Lewis*

## *Introduction: The Assassination*

In April, 1865, it was Easter weekend, the four-year anniversary of the attack on Fort Sumter that started the Civil War, and, apparently, also the end of the war with the surrender of General Lee to General Grant and Union forces. Edmund Platt, a young City of Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County resident, storekeeper, occasional newspaperman, and soldier (returned from war in 1863), wrote the following in his personal diary:<sup>1</sup>

15th Saturday. Awful news. President Lincoln is dead, he was murdered last night. Last evening the President and wife went to a theatre in Washington to see a new play, and at half past nine a man stepped into Lincoln's box and shot him through the head, he then jumped to the stage and made his escape from the back of the building. The President was carried out to a house but was unconscious from the time he was shot till he expired which was at 7.22 this morning. About the same time a man entered Mr. Seward's house and stabbed him cutting his throat, his son Fred Seward was also stabbed and received a blow on the head fracturing his skull (sic). Notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Seward was almost dead from injuries received by being thrown from his carriage a few days before, he is still alive and there is a chance that he may recover. Andrew Johnson is now president, he took the oath of office at eleven o'clock this morning. Oh! what an awful calamity, Lincoln dead, we can hardly realize it but still it is true, and that Great, wise and good man now lies cold in death, oh it is awfully sad. The store was draped with mourning, bells were tolled and everybody mourned. A few people were rebels enough to say they were glad and the people were so indignant that they had to be put in jail to keep them from being used as they should have been by the loyal people.

16th Sunday. A very pleasant day, and one long to be remembered. I suppose every loyal minister in the land preached sermons appropriate to the solemn occasion, all in Po'keepsie did at any rate. Mr. Wheeler never did better, he preached from these words "Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen. I will be exalted in the

earth.” Psalms XLVI, 10, he preached a very solemn and impressive sermon. Mr. Mandeville preached in the afternoon. The church was draped with black and white and looked well.<sup>2</sup>

Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth president of the United States, the leader who had brought the nation through the Civil War, had been assassinated. The nation—at least a large part of it—was now in mourning. Preparations would begin for the funeral and burial of the departed leader. In Washington, remaining leaders would soon decide that burial would take place back home in Springfield, Illinois and, as a part of this decision, the coffin would be transported through the country via rail using a route similar to the one traced by the newly elected Abraham Lincoln on his Inaugural Train in February 1861. This time, however, crowds of Americans would be turning out to witness the coffin and grieve over the death of Lincoln. The journey of the funeral train would cover 1,600 miles and take 13 days.<sup>3</sup> Only a small part of the journey will be the subject of this article. This essay will examine the funeral train as it made its way on part of its journey—through New York State in the Hudson River Valley, a portion of three days and only a few hundred miles from New York City to Albany.

On the evening of Friday, April 14 (Good Friday) President Lincoln, his wife, and two young friends, Clara Harris and Major Henry Rathbone, had gone to Ford’s Theatre in Washington, D.C. to see a new play. They were seated in a specially designated box above and to the right of the stage. The assassin, John Wilkes Booth, entered the box and shot the president in the head with a small pistol (Figure 1), then jumped from the box onto the stage and made his exit through the back of the theater.<sup>4</sup> At the same time and as part of the same plot, another assassin invaded the home of William Seward (who was home in bed recuperating from an accident a few days prior). The assassin viciously attacked Seward’s son Frederick , leaving him unconscious on the floor and went on to the second floor to attack Secretary Seward.<sup>5</sup>

President Lincoln did not regain consciousness. He was removed to a house across the street from the theater and laid on a bed where a doctor could attend him. He died at 7:22 the next morning. It is interesting to note that Edmund Platt’s account from his diary (cited above) is surprisingly accurate, especially considering how close to the events he recorded his thoughts in his diary. On the morning of Saturday, April 15, 1865, *The Poughkeepsie Eagle* ran a story on page 2 announcing “Awful News,” “President Assassinated”, but at that point Lincoln was still believed to be alive.<sup>6</sup> How Platt discovered during that day that the president had died is



**Figure 1.** *The Martyr of Liberty*, n.d. Print. Photos, Prints, and Drawings. Library of Congress. This print illustrates the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth on Friday, April 14, 1865 at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. The others in the box with Lincoln were his wife, Mary, and friends Clara Harris and her fiancé, Major Henry Rathbone. Booth shot the president in the back of the head, then accosted Major Rathbone with a knife before jumping from the box onto the stage and escaping out the back of the theater.

not known—perhaps the news arrived by telegraph. Certainly the country would have been riveted on the news.

Edmund Platt recorded events daily:

17th Monday. The stores were all dressed in mourning, and newspapers too, everybody feels sad.. We were busy in the store. Wm. H. Seward is getting better and his son Frederick has revived so it is thought he may get well. Called in the evening on Emma; was at W.C. Sterling's, a few minutes at the U.S.G.

18th Tuesday. Surat the man who tried to kill W.H. Seward, was caught today in Washington. Booth the murder (sic) of Lincoln is still at large, a reward of 40,000 dollars is offered for his arrest. Mobile has been captured, and negotiations (sic) are going on for the surrender of Johnson's army, the confederacy is about done. Went to meeting.<sup>7</sup>

### *Planning the Funeral and the Funeral Train*

Immediately after the new president, Andrew Johnson, was sworn in, Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, was tasked with arranging for the funeral and burial of Abraham Lincoln. As he was also in charge of the war which was not yet thoroughly ended, he sought help from others, most notably Ohio Governor John Brough and Baltimore & Ohio Railroad president John Garrett who would head the committee to plan the route of the funeral train. Quite quickly, the group arranged that Lincoln would be buried neither in Washington nor in Chicago, but in his hometown of Springfield, Illinois. There would first be a state funeral at the capital in Washington followed by a funeral train trip similar to the Inaugural Train Trip of 1861 to return President Lincoln home to rest.

### *The Funeral*

Funeral services for President Lincoln were held in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, April 19.

Edmund Platt would continue to report from his vantage point in Poughkeepsie:

19th Wednesday. President Lincoln's funeral services were held today, at Washington, and appropriate services were held all over the country at the same hour (twelve o'clock), business being suspended everywhere. Nearly every house in Poughkeepsie was dressed in mourning, every store was closed and services were held in nearly all the churches. Mr. Wheeler being out of town, I went to Mr. Brackett's church

and heard an excellent discourse. This afternoon they had a procession composed of citizens, military, firemen, students, Free Masons, Sons of Temperance, Odd Fellows and other societies, they made a very long procession, and after marching through the principal streets, an address was delivered by Allard Anthony. Went to the Y.M.C.A. in the evening.

20th Thursday. Today was appointed by the Governor a day of Thanksgiving for our recent victories, but on hearing of the death of the President, he changed it into a day of fasting and prayer, but it was not observed here, business being carried on as usual, but in other places it was kept strictly. Sam Bowne came up, returning in the evening. Attended preparatory (sic) lecture in the evening. I received a letter from Uncle Harvey a few days ago he is not well yet but walks about some.

21st Friday. Rainy. Wm H. Seward and son are improving, and their recovery is considered positive. The man who tried to kill them has been caught and is now in Washington, his name is Surat or Paine. One hundred thousand dollars are now offered for J. Wilkes Booth the murderer of Lincoln. It seems that there was a regular conspiracy to murder several more but for some reason it was not carried out. Another of the gang was caught yesterday his name is Atzerot.

22d Saturday. Rainy. Pretty busy in the store. No very important news.

23d Sunday. Mr. Wheeler preached his last sermon today before leaving for California. His farewell sermon in the morning was very good, —it was communion in the afternoon, two ladies joined the church. John's little Edmund was baptized.

24th Monday. Cold. Gen. Sherman has been negotiating with Gen. Johnson for the surrender of the latter but his terms were disapproved by President Jonson and Gen. Grant has gone on to North Carolina to set things right. Wrote to Uncle Harvey.<sup>8</sup>

### *The Funeral Train*

In Washington, right after the funeral on April 19, preparations for the Funeral Train proceeded. The presidential railroad car, *United States*, was transformed from a residential car to a car with a pared down interior into which the president's coffin could be placed (Figure 2).<sup>9</sup> Also in the car was placed the coffin of Willie Lincoln who had died in 1862 at the age of 12 and would now be reburied with his father in Springfield. The special car that had been fitted out for the use of the president but not yet used, was now converted for use as a funeral car with space for coffins. The

windows were covered in black curtains. Other decor included silver drapery, white and black rosettes, and black drapery, all symbols of mourning. Two large and impressive catafalques were constructed and included in the items carried on the train. These two carriages with glass sides, a padded bed on which to lay the body of the deceased Lincoln, were meant to be pulled through the streets by matched horses. Each carriage was adorned with black and silver bunting and black and white feathers. As the level of the viewing platform was at five feet, it would be possible for many people to see the deceased president.



**Figure 2.** *President Abraham Lincoln's railroad funeral car, S.M. Fassett, photographer, Chicago. digital file from original print. Photos, Prints, Drawings. Library of Congress.*

The specially fitted out funeral car had a stove for heat and space for the armed Honor Guard. It was the last car in the nine-car train except for the caboose. In front of it rode cars used for guests.<sup>10</sup> Although the B&O Railroad was still meeting demands of the war effort for rolling stock, they were able to offer two new locomotives, six passenger cars and a baggage car to be used as part of the Funeral Train.<sup>11</sup> Planning and executing the trip was something of a nightmare as the nine-car train held about 300 passengers at any given time. Passengers would disembark after each segment to make room for replacements. President Lincoln's family did not travel with the train, but stayed in Washington. Mary Lincoln was too distraught to attend the funeral in Washington and declined the invitation to ride the funeral train or be present at the burial in Springfield. Her two sons stayed in Washington as well.<sup>12</sup>



**Figure 3.** Engine “Nashville” of the Lincoln funeral train, 1865, photographic print. Photo shows a Cleveland, Columbus & Cincinnati Railroad engine, with a portrait of Abraham Lincoln mounted on the front. The engine was one of several used to carry Lincoln’s body from Washington, D.C., to Springfield, Ill. Photos, Prints, Drawings, Library of Congress.

On board, warmth came from woodstoves, and lanterns provided light, but the train had to stop frequently for water for the boilers and for the passengers and for wood to fuel the stoves.<sup>13</sup>

The train moved rather slowly through the landscape, never traveling faster than 20 miles per hour, but most of the time it was moving at 3 or 5 miles per hour because of the huge crowds of people who were lining the tracks and assembling at even the smallest railroad stations along the way. The locomotive (one of several used during the long trip—Figure 3) was preceded in its journey by a pilot locomotive that rode a little distance ahead to be certain that the track was clear. The entire enterprise had been put under the control of the military for the duration of the journey, as great care was taken to be certain that no regularly scheduled train might crash into the special train carrying the remains of President Lincoln. Thus, all other train traffic was diverted to side tracks as the Lincoln Funeral Train moved through the countryside.<sup>14</sup>

### *The Train Journey*

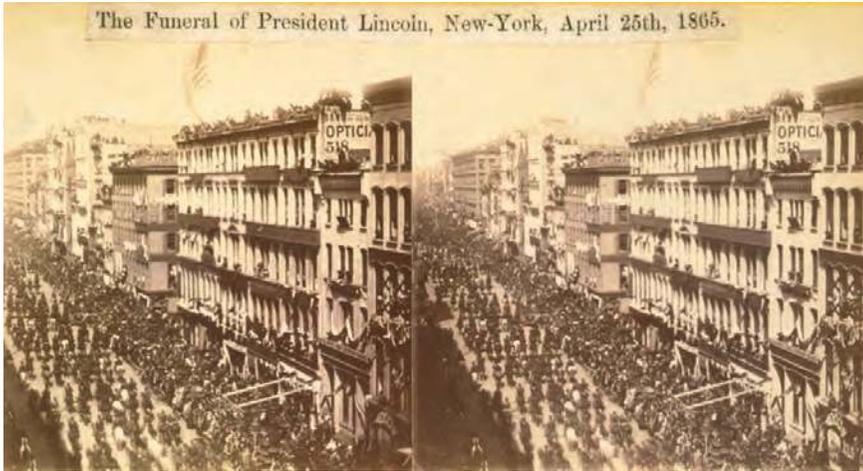
In fact, only about 50% of the actual journey was a duplicate of the 1861 Inaugural Train Trip, but this second trip would take the train through similar territory—Baltimore, MD; Harrisburg, PA; Lancaster, Philadelphia, then Trenton, NJ; New Brunswick, Elizabeth, Newark, and Jersey City. Then the train would be transported by boat across the Hudson River to New York City for travel up the Hudson Valley and stops at numerous locations including Peekskill, Poughkeepsie, and Albany. The train would be transported again from the east side of the Hudson River to the west side for a continuation of the journey west through New York State to Buffalo, thence to Cleveland and Columbus, OH; Indianapolis, IN; Chicago, IL; and finally to Springfield, IL for burial.

### *New York City*

After the train left Washington, it passed through Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. In Philadelphia, the body of the president was placed in a catafalque and pulled through the streets of the city so that crowds of mourners could have a last look at the visage of Lincoln. That last look, after all, was really the point of the Funeral Train according to Secretary of War Stanton. He wanted as many people as possible to be able to see and say goodbye to President Lincoln. To that end, an embalmer was sent with the train to work on the body as necessary. When the train reached New York on the morning of Monday, April 24, it was transported, one car at a time, across the Hudson River and unloaded at Desbrosses Street in New York City. The coffin of Abraham Lincoln was installed in a catafalque and sixteen white horses were hitched to the front to pull the hearse through the streets—Canal and then Broadway to City Hall (Figure 4).

The procession was accompanied by the Seventh Regiment of the New York National Guard. All the buildings had been draped in mourning. The public was a dense crowd of people clothed in black, eighteen bands playing dirges, bells ringing from various churches, and guns being fired at will. At City Hall, the body of the president was removed from the coffin and laid in state in the Rotunda for mourners to pass quickly by for a viewing.<sup>15</sup>

George Templeton Strong, an active lawyer in New York City, served as the treasurer of the U.S Sanitary Commission, a civilian organization that took care of wounded and ill Union soldiers. He was also a dedicated diarist. He recorded his actions and impressions in the days immediately following the assassination.



**Figure 4.** “*The Funeral of President Lincoln, New York, April 25, 1865,*” stereoscopic photographic views of funeral procession in Manhattan. Photos, Prints, and Drawings. Library of Congress.

I have been expecting this. I predicted an attempt would be made on Lincoln’s life when he went into Richmond; but just now, after his generous dealings with Lee, I should have said the danger was past....

All over the city, people have been at work all day, draping street fronts, so that hardly a building on Wall Street, Broadway, Chambers Street, Bowery, Fourth Avenue is without its symbol of the profound public sorrow. What a place this man, whom his friends have been patronizing for four years as a well-meaning, sagacious, kind-hearted, ignorant, old codger, had won for himself in the hearts of the people! What a place he will fill in history! I foresaw most clearly that he would be ranked high as the Great Emancipator twenty years hence, but I did not suppose his death would instantly reveal—even to Copperhead newspaper editors—the nobleness and the glory of his part in this great contest.... Death has suddenly opened the eyes of the people (and I think of the world) to the fact that a hero has been holding high place among them for four years, closely watched and studied, but despised and rejected by a third of this community, and only tolerated by the other two-thirds.<sup>16</sup>

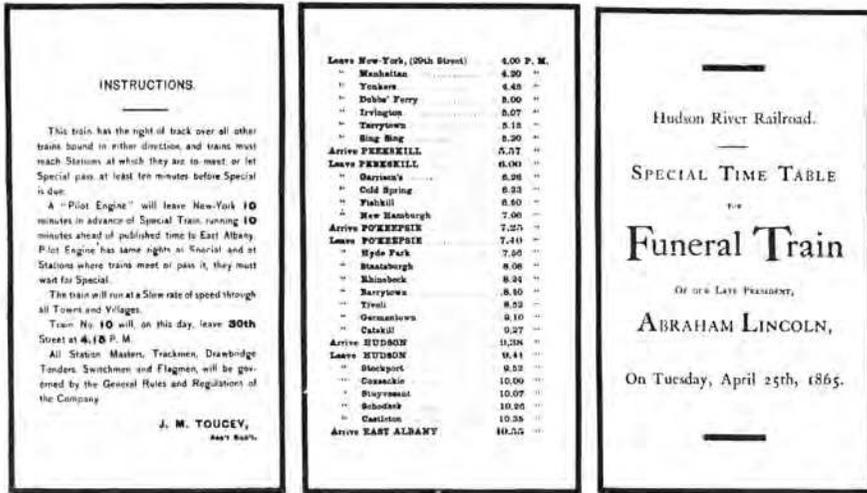


Figure 5. Hudson River Railroad, Special Time Table for the Funeral Train of our Late President Abraham Lincoln. Booklet. Photos, Prints, Drawings, Library of Congress.

## Traveling North through the Hudson Valley

On Tuesday, April 25, the coffin was reinstalled in the Funeral Train and the train began its journey north along the east side of the Hudson River moving slowly from stop to stop (see box for the names of the Hudson Valley locations). At every village and town, mourners lined the tracks and filled the stations, come to pay their last respects. Regiments lined up as did local societies. The train was on a schedule, but it crept through the country in order to give mourners time to witness the funeral train and funeral car of the departed president. At the scheduled stops, ladies of the town brought flowers to place upon the coffin.

At Peekskill, the train stopped for a few minutes. The townspeople had placed a large picture of Lincoln near the depot.<sup>18</sup> The train proceeded very slowly through the river towns as the local people assembled to see it pass. At Garrison's Landing, across the river from West Point Military Academy, cadets, numbering about 1,000, were ferried to the depot where they stood in present-arms formation with their rifles. Then the cadets all marched through the funeral car and saluted the coffin of their commander in chief.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, guns fired salutes from West Point across the river.

At Cold Spring, in Putnam County, the next stop, the local people had constructed a large arch under which a woman fully costumed as the Goddess of Liberty kneeled. At her sides were boys, one dressed as a sailor and one

**Schedule for New York: Passage of the Lincoln Funeral Train  
through the Hudson River Valley**

**Monday, April 24, 1865<sup>17</sup>**

New York City arrive 10:50 am

**Tuesday, April 25**

New York City depart 4:15 pm

Fort Washington

Yorkville

Mount St. Vincent

Manhattanville

Harlem

Spuyten Duyvel Creek

Yonkers

Hastings

Dobbs Ferry

Irvington

Tarrytown

Sing Sing (Ossining)

Oscawana Crugers

Peekskill

Garrison's Landing arrive 6:20 pm

Cold Spring (Duchess Junction)

Fishkill-on-the-Hudson arrive 6:55 pm

North Hamburg

Poughkeepsie arrive 7:10 pm

Hyde Park

Staatsburg

Rhinebeck arrive 8:35 pm

Barrytown

Tivoli

Germantown

Catskill

Hudson arrive 9:45 pm

Stockport

Stuyvesant

Schodack

Castleton

Greenbrush / East Albany arrive 10:55 pm

Rail Factory

Troy

Cohoes

West Troy

Albany

**Wednesday, April 26**

Albany depart 4 pm

**Monday, April 24, 1865<sup>17</sup>**

New York City arrive 10:50 am

**Tuesday, April 25**

New York City depart 4:15 pm

Fort Washington

Yorkville

Mount St. Vincent

Manhattanville

Harlem

Spuyten Duyvel Creek

Yonkers

Hastings

Dobbs Ferry

Irvington

Tarrytown

Sing Sing (Ossining)

Oscawana Crugers

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Germantown

Catskill

Hudson arrive 9:45 pm

Stockport

Stuyvesant

Schodack

Castleton

Greenbrush / East Albany arrive 10:55 pm

Rail Factory

Troy

Cohoes

West Troy

Albany

**Wednesday, April 26**

Albany depart 4 pm

as a soldier. They too kneeled when the train appeared.<sup>20</sup> At Fishkill, in southern Dutchess County, large numbers of mourners arrived to see the train pass slowly by. The depot had been decked out in mourning drapery and a sign provided: "In God We Trust."<sup>21</sup>

Although it crept through all of the towns, the train did not stop, nor was the coffin unloaded. Only at Poughkeepsie was there a brief stop, but the coffin remained on board. Poughkeepsie was the planned dinner locale and a large meal had been prepared for everyone on board. Matthew Vassar, owner of the local brewery, arranged to have boughs cut from the magnolia tree in front of his house and placed upon the Lincoln coffin.<sup>22</sup> A group of women from town, including the wife of the mayor, placed a wreath of fresh flowers upon the coffin.<sup>23</sup> The Eastman Band played a dirge and shortly the train started off again.

Edmund Platt continued to report in his diary:

25th Tuesday. A little more than four years ago Abraham Lincoln passed through this city on his way to Washington, there to assume the duties of President of the United States. The largest crowd I have ever seen in Poughkeepsie was at the depot on that day to see him and cheer him on his way. Today his dead body passed through here on its way to Springfield, Illinois, there was a immense crowd at the depot, although nothing could be seen but the outside of the train which was a special one consisting of nine cars containing the guard of honor, invited guests, Eastman's band, friends, &c. the car which contained the corpse was nearly covered with black, it looked sad but handsome, the sides of the car were draped with black looped up with silver fringe. The car was one which had been built expressly for the President's use, in travelling Washington. A committee of ladies went into the car and deposited wreaths of flowers on the coffin. Minute guns were fired and bells were tolled while the train was here. It was a sad, sad sight, —but we must put not our trust in Princes, but rather in Him who doeth all things well. The coffin was opened in New York and everybody who could was allowed to look at the remains of our beloved President. I acted as a guard at the Depot with Co. A.

26th Wednesday. Jim went to Albany and obtained a look at the face of our dead President. I would have gone but we were so busy I could not get away from the store.<sup>24</sup>

After the dinner stop of almost an hour, the train continued on its journey northward. There were more towns before the late evening arrival in Albany. In the dark, the train passed through Rhinebeck at 8:35 p.m. A torch-

light parade allowed the local mourners a brief view of the funeral train as it passed slowly by. By 9:45, reports were coming from Hudson, New York that thousands of people were gathering to see the train as it passed by. Later in the evening, the train arrived in East Albany where the entire train was taken by ferry boat from the east side of the river to the west side for a continuation of the journey. There followed a midnight procession of the remains of President Lincoln in a hearse to the State Capitol.<sup>25</sup>

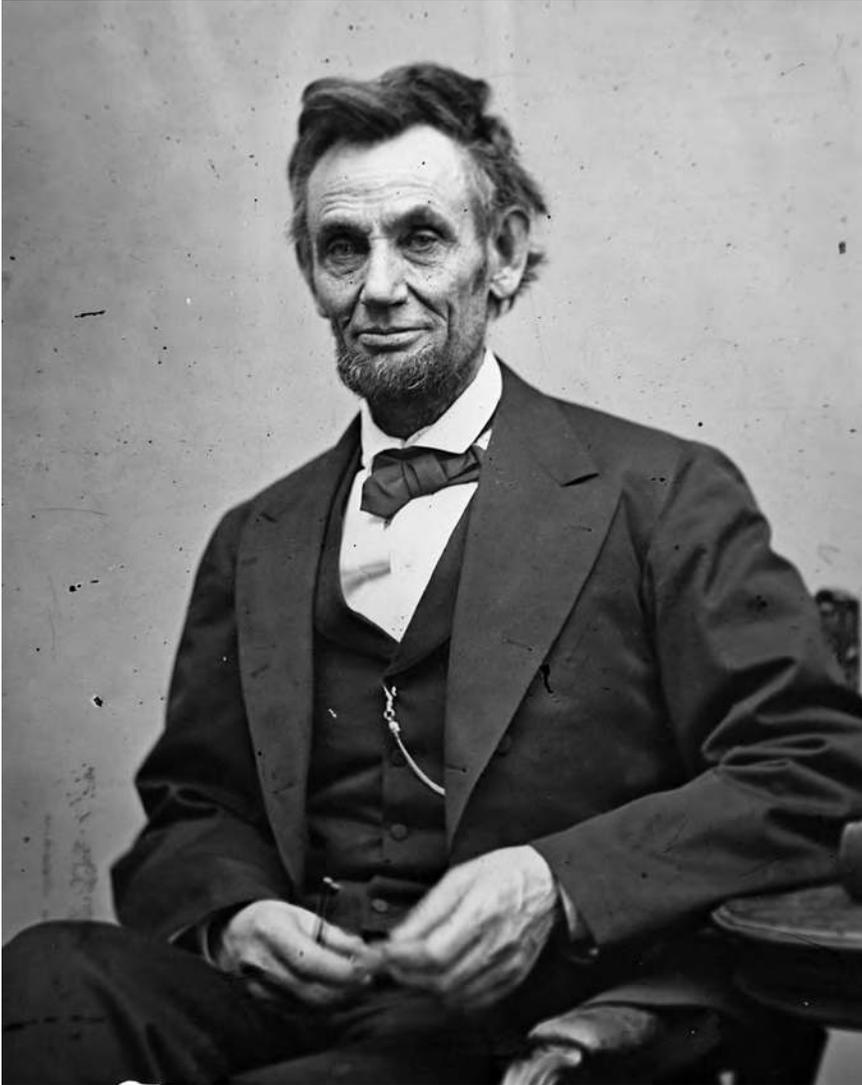
### *Albany*

Albany was one of the eleven locations on the long journey from Washington, D.C. to Springfield, Illinois where the remains of Abraham Lincoln were removed from the funeral car for a procession in a major city and viewing by the populace.<sup>26</sup> According to the accounts, the capital city of New York State was not going to be bested when it came to honoring and mourning the recently departed president. The city had been draped in black and silver fabric. Thousands of mourners arrived in the streets to view the procession the following morning, Wednesday, April 26. The entire day would be devoted to ceremonies and viewing of the body, as the train would not depart until 4 p.m. The president's body was installed in the Assembly Chamber and mourners could walk slowly past. Musical societies and bands performed dirges. Thousands were standing in line, many of them had come from 100 or more miles away.<sup>27</sup> It would be the last city or stop in the Hudson River Valley before the funeral train continued on westward towards Buffalo, Chicago, and Springfield.

### *Conclusion*

In the spring of 1865, northerners and even most southerners would experience the unusual sensation of being caught up in the larger events of their time. The diary of Edmund Platt, presented here from April 15 through 25, is a reminder of this phenomenon. In it he writes of the momentous events of the day—the assassination of President Lincoln (Figure 6)—right alongside simple quotidian matters such as working in the store. Everyone who had supported the Union was especially impacted by the importance and velocity of recent events: the fall of Richmond, Lee's surrender, the assassination of the president, the funeral in Washington, D.C., the funeral train, and the capture and killing of the assassins. Above all, the funeral train incorporated a huge swath of the public into the unfolding of history. They could participate by coming to the train—even in the dark of night as the locomotive slowly pulled the eight cars by. They came by the thousands, tens of thousands. No one in 1865 was unacquainted with death. It touched

every family. Now they came to mourn the loss of the man who had led the Union through the war, issued the Emancipation Proclamation, and whom they had expected to continue to lead them in the aftermath. They came to express their grief.



**Figure 6.** *Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, February 5, 1865 (printed later). By photographer Alexander Gardner. Photograph. Prints and Photographs Division. Library of Congress. This is believed to be the last photograph that Lincoln sat for before his untimely death in April, 1865. In this image, the president looks significantly more worn than four years earlier when he took office. The Civil War had been long and hard; the very uncertain future promised to be difficult as well.*

- <sup>1</sup> Edmund P. Platt was the son of Isaac Platt, publisher of the *Poughkeepsie Eagle*. He was also part of the family-owned business that would become Lucky, Platt & Co, selling a variety of goods to the citizens of the county. In 1863, when Edmund was twenty years old, he was called up for service in the 21st Regiment. He left Poughkeepsie on June 26 heading for Baltimore, later Frederick and Fort McHenry. He and his fellow soldiers did not see action over the next two months. The time was eventful for the Union armies, however, with a win at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, both noted by Platt in his diary. Unfortunately, the young man became ill. He was sent home in August 1863. *Edmund P. Platt Diaries, 1856-1880* (Vol. 13-16, Jan. 1, 1863-Aug. 7, 1865, pp. 256-376), pp. 270-274.
- <sup>2</sup> *Edmund P. Platt Diaries, 1856-1880*, Ibid., p. 363. Thank you to Eileen Mylod Hayden and Adam Rasnick for assistance with this research.
- <sup>3</sup> John Ferro, "Lincoln's Last Stop in Poughkeepsie", *Poughkeepsie Journal* (Monday, April 13, 2015), p. 2A
- <sup>4</sup> Major Rathbone, who was seated furthest from the door that Booth entered, jumped to defend the president. Of course, it was too late. The fatal shot had already been fired. Booth pulled a large knife and sliced Rathbone from elbow to shoulder before exiting the box. At the time, Major Rathbone and Clara Harris were not only step brother and step sister, but affianced to be married. In the event, they did marry, but their end was tragic. According to accounts, Rathbone was plagued by guilt over his role in the assassination. Almost twenty years later, in 1883, when he and his wife were living in Germany, Rathbone had a psychotic break, killed Clara, and spent his remaining years in an asylum. Martha Hodes *Mourning Lincoln* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), Loc 835. See also Harold Holzer, compiled and introduced, *President Lincoln Assassinated: The Firsthand Story of the Murder, Manhunt, Trial, and Mourning* (New York: A Special Publication of the Library of America, 2014), Loc. 1663.
- <sup>5</sup> Scott Trostel, *The Lincoln Funeral Train: the Final Journey and National Funeral for Abraham Lincoln* (Fletcher, Ohio: Cam-Tech Publishing, 2002), pp. 13-15.
- <sup>6</sup> *The Poughkeepsie Eagle* (Saturday, April 15, 1865), p. 2. I accessed this newspaper through newspapers.com.
- <sup>7</sup> *Edmund P. Platt Diaries*, p. 363.
- <sup>8</sup> *Edmund P. Platt Diaries*, p. 363.
- <sup>9</sup> Trostel, p. 20.
- <sup>10</sup> Robert M. Reed, *Lincoln's Funeral Train: The Epic Journey from Washington to Springfield* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, Ltd., 2014), pp. 24-29.
- <sup>11</sup> Trostel, p. 20.
- <sup>12</sup> Hodes Loc 3591.
- <sup>13</sup> Hodes, Loc 2611.
- <sup>14</sup> Trostel, pp. 20-22. Locomotives were changed often during the journey as were the

passenger cars. Each car had to be handled by a brakeman individually. Stops had to be made frequently for water for the boiler as well as for food for the occupants. There was no dining car.

<sup>15</sup> Reed, pp. 51-55.

<sup>16</sup> Holzer, Loc. 3241.

<sup>17</sup> This schedule for the Hudson Valley portion of the trip is taken from Robert M. Reed, *Lincoln's Funeral Train: The Epic Journey from Washington to Springfield*, p. 69.

<sup>18</sup> Reed, p. 60.

<sup>19</sup> Reed, p. 60.

<sup>20</sup> Reed, p. 60.

<sup>21</sup> Reed, p. 60.

<sup>22</sup> Ferro, pp. 1 and 2.

<sup>23</sup> Ferro, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Edmund P. Platt Diaries, p. 363.

<sup>25</sup> Reed, p. 61.

<sup>26</sup> Among the other locations were Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York.

<sup>27</sup> Reed, p. 62.

# ARTICLES





# Judge Jane Bolin

by David L. Goodwin

*Dear Jane,*

*You're one of the reasons the courts for children are a greater hope than some people say. You're one of the dedicated ones.<sup>1</sup>*

Born and raised in Poughkeepsie, but with a career in the five boroughs of New York City, Jane Matilda Bolin (1908–2007) is best known for a particular “first” of groundbreaking magnitude. She holds the honor of being the first African-American female judge in the entire United States, joining the bench of New York City’s Domestic Relations Court in 1939. Her appointment by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, which came as some surprise to Bolin herself—summoned with her husband to an audience with the mayor at the 1939 World’s Fair, she was not informed of the mayor’s intentions in advance—made “news around the world.”<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 1.** Judge Jane Bolin, c. 1942 (?). Photograph. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. 20540 U.S.A.

About that news: in announcing this historical judgeship, some outlets hedged the call, if ever so slightly. *The Chicago Defender*, which “chronicled and catalyzed [the African-American] community’s greatest accomplishments for nearly a century,”<sup>73</sup> proudly announced that La Guardia had “smashed a precedent for the entire United States” because Bolin was “*thought* to be the first Race woman judge to be appointed in this country.”<sup>74</sup> About two months later, the *Defender* had eliminated the qualifier, describing Judge Bolin as the “first Race woman to serve as a judge in the history of America.”<sup>75</sup> And despite the shifting nature of historical inquiry, her title has held firm; on the sad occasion of her obituary, she was still, resolutely, “the first black woman in the United States to become a judge.”<sup>76</sup>

Judge Bolin served with distinction, reappointed to the bench by three different mayors—O’Dwyer in 1949 (although not without some politicking), Wagner in 1959, and Lindsay in 1969<sup>77</sup>—while weathering the reorganization of the Domestic Relations Court into the Family Court in 1962.<sup>78</sup> She retired in 1979, but only reluctantly; in an interview conducted when Judge Bolin was in her early 80s, she made clear that, were it up to her, she would *still be* serving on the Family Court.<sup>79</sup>

Judgeship was not Jane Bolin’s only first, or even her *first* first of comparable magnitude. Among her tally, she was the first black woman to graduate from Yale Law School, to join the New York City Bar, and to work in the office of the City’s Corporation Counsel.<sup>80</sup> She followed in the footsteps of other notable trailblazers, such as Charlotte E. Ray, who became the first African-American woman lawyer in 1872<sup>81</sup>; Edwin Archer Randolph, the first African American to graduate from Yale Law School (and also the first admitted to the Connecticut bar)<sup>82</sup>; and Florence Allen, the first woman named to a United States Court of Appeals.<sup>83</sup> In turn, Judge Bolin paved the way for still other firsts. As Justice L. Priscilla Hall would observe in 1996, upon the retirement of the first African-American woman appointed to the Appellate Term of the New York State Supreme Court:

The connection between black women judges in New York City, New York State and indeed these United States is immediate, current and direct. . . . It is so recent that Jane Matilda Bolin, the first African-American woman judge in the United States, appointed in 1939, still lives. It is so immediate that Constance Baker Motley, the first African-American woman named to the federal judiciary, still sits, senior status, on the bench. It is so current the first black woman to be appointed a judge on the United States Court of Appeals, Amalya L. Kearse, presides daily.<sup>84</sup>

### *Formative Years: Roots in Poughkeepsie, Branches Beyond*

Judge Bolin's family had deep roots in Poughkeepsie and broader Dutchess County, a history stretching back to the earliest African-American presence in the region, which dates from the seventeenth century.<sup>15</sup> Her grandfather was born in Dover Plains<sup>16</sup>; her father, Gaius Bolin, remained in Dutchess County and was himself a path-breaking figure. Gaius was the first African-American graduate of Williams College<sup>17</sup>—an achievement honored by a Fellowship program founded on the centennial of his admission.<sup>18</sup> He practiced law in Dutchess County for over 50 years, becoming the first African-American president of the Dutchess County Bar Association at 80 years old.<sup>19</sup> Jane Bolin's mother, Matilda, was a Protestant immigrant from Northern Island,<sup>20</sup> but while interracial marriage was not necessarily unusual in the Poughkeepsie of the time, Jane nevertheless became aware early in her childhood that she was "different."<sup>21</sup>

Bolin's early years in Poughkeepsie, a "comfortable"<sup>22</sup> upbringing, were marked by that push and pull. She received high marks in school,<sup>23</sup> and formed a close bond with her Poughkeepsie high-school English teacher, Lucy Jackson, who was Bolin's able guide to the world of literature.<sup>24</sup> But Poughkeepsie, while not segregated under law, was no "racial utopia."<sup>25</sup> She would also remember the stares of her neighbors,<sup>26</sup> and being refused service as a beauty salon.<sup>27</sup>

After Bolin graduated from high school in 1924,<sup>28</sup> Vassar might have seemed an obvious choice for higher education. It was nearby, after all, a few blocks from the family home; and father Gaius, who had "very definite ideas about how young men and women should conduct themselves,"<sup>29</sup> could reasonably be expected to prefer that his youngest child, a daughter, stay close to home. But even if Vassar would have been appealing to Bolin—its proximity to home, undoubtedly a plus factor for her father, was not quite as appealing to her<sup>30</sup>—it was not a realistic option. Under its "unofficial policies" of the time, Vassar did not accept African-American students.<sup>31</sup> Thus, in 1924, at age 16, Bolin became one of two African-American freshmen at Wellesley college—almost a world away in Massachusetts.

### *Jane Bolin at College; Reflections on Wellesley; Yale Law School*

But college at Wellesley turned out to be trying. While the school had graduated its first African-American woman almost forty years before Bolin enrolled,<sup>32</sup> its racial politics proved only a half-measure improvement

on Vassar's. Bolin would find Wellesley to be profoundly alienating, both explicitly and implicitly—especially for someone who had grown up in the reasonably open climate of Poughkeepsie.<sup>33</sup> For instance, she was asked to play Aunt Jemima in a school skit,<sup>34</sup> and was functionally excluded from campus social activities.<sup>35</sup> She graduated among the top 20 students in the class, but despite her academic achievements was discouraged by her guidance counselor from applying to law school.<sup>36</sup>

Throughout her life, Bolin's relationship with her alma mater remained complex. While the school initially failed to acknowledge her historical appointment to the bench, changing times and changing attitudes transformed Wellesley. Its belated embrace of Bolin can be viewed almost as atonement.<sup>37</sup> Bolin was included in the school's 1974 centennial, and in 1981 she was consulted by the school's then-dean, Maud Chaplin, about increasing the number of African American faculty members.<sup>38</sup>

Bolin accepted this change of heart on her own terms, and with a characteristic objectivity. In a 1974 essay for *Wellesley After Images*, Bolin wrote that she was "saddened and maddened even nearly half a century later to recall many of my Wellesley experiences," but credited this adversity as being "partly responsible for my lifelong interest in the social problems, poverty and racial discrimination rampant in our country."<sup>39</sup> It was a public airing of the institution's unfortunate recent past, in the hope that honest acknowledgment would demonstrate the "benighted pattern to which determinedly [the school] will never return and, also, as a measure of its progress."<sup>40</sup>

Back to that "recent past": after graduating college, Bolin defied the warnings of her guidance counselor and enrolled in Yale Law School. After an experience that echoed the isolation of Wellesley, she became its first female African-American graduate in 1931.<sup>41</sup>

### *Jane Bolin, The Lawyer, Embraces New York City*

It might have been expected that Jane Bolin, the new lawyer, would return to the family homestead in Poughkeepsie. For that path, her older brother, Gaius Jr., provided the clear template. He had earlier attended law school in New York City, graduating in 1927 and returning to Dutchess County to practice with his father's firm.<sup>42</sup> He became a well-respected attorney in his own right, and he wore the family name proudly. Justice Joseph Hawkins, a native of Poughkeepsie who served as a Supreme Court Justice for the Ninth Judicial District and later on the Appellate Division, would fondly

recall both Gaius the elder and the younger in a 1978 letter to Judge Bolin, written on the occasion of their mutual retirement from the bench (hers compelled by law, his compelled by results at the polls). Gaius Jr. followed, Justice Hawkins observed, “in his father’s footsteps.”<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, Jane Bolin’s sister Ivy was active in the Dutchess County branch of the NAACP, which she helped to found with her father.<sup>44</sup>

And Bolin did return home for a time, practicing briefly with her father after being admitted to the Second Department in 1932.<sup>45</sup> But she had met the man who would become her first husband, New York City lawyer Ralph Mizelle, during her first year at Yale.<sup>46</sup> She perhaps sensed also that, with Gaius Jr. having joined her father’s practice, she would have difficulty shaping her own identity in Dutchess County.<sup>47</sup> Thus, in 1932, Bolin left Poughkeepsie for New York City, practicing with Mizelle for five years before their careers diverged. He found a job at the Post Office Solicitor General’s office in Washington, D.C. (beginning a period of “commuter marriage”<sup>48</sup>) and she landed in the New York City Corporation Counsel’s office following an unsuccessful 1936 run for State Assembly on the Republican ticket.<sup>49</sup> As Assistant Corporation Counsel, Bolin appeared before the City’s Domestic Relations Court, presaging her appointment to the bench a few years later.<sup>50</sup>

Once she became a judge, there was no looking back. Dutchess County’s Jane M. Bolin was now firmly of New York City.

### *Judicial Career: Judging Across the Decades*

In public and semipublic statements, Judge Bolin tended to eschew sentimentality when discussing her own achievements and her background in Dutchess County. Returning to Poughkeepsie in 1944, she decried the persistent segregation in city government and local services, which she called “fascist.”<sup>51</sup> But her departure was also cast in utilitarian terms. Staying in Poughkeepsie would not have brought “to fruition the aspirations and ambitions and dreams I have had from my childhood.”<sup>52</sup> Or, as she would later put it in a 1990 interview, Poughkeepsie was “too small”; “even to this day,” Bolin added, “I’m essentially a large city person.”<sup>53</sup>

Bolin was evidently content to categorize her time in Poughkeepsie as part of an origin story: foundational, perhaps, but altogether distant. This sometimes led her to downplay her connections with Dutchess County. In the late 1970s, she was contacted by a professor at Williams College for a project on her father. She readily replied, but cautioned, “[P]lease remember

that I left Poughkeepsie when I was sixteen and thereafter was home only during vacations. Consequently I was not really a part of that community.”<sup>54</sup> In this retelling, her brief period of practice with her father vanished altogether.

Her “firsts” often received a similar matter-of-fact treatment. She pushed back against the idea that her path was “courageous.” Pursuing law was “just...something that [she] wanted to do.”<sup>55</sup> On being the first African-American woman judge? Outside of being “embarrassed” by the lag between her appointment and that of the *second* African American woman judge, she “never thought of it. I had a job to do and that was—I never thought of it in terms of being the first or anything.”<sup>56</sup> On being the first African-American woman admitted to the New York City Bar, which required her sponsors to modify “he”s to “she”s and “him”s to “her”s on the application form?<sup>57</sup> She found “no special excitement” in it; rather, she explained, she was simply interested in using the City Bar’s extensive library, which compared favorably to the “small and inadequate” library in her courthouse.<sup>58</sup>

And, to a certain degree, Judge Bolin actively resisted the continued pursuit of credentials and prestige—an uncommon quality in the legal profession. She loved her work, after all, and could not see herself in any other position.<sup>59</sup>

One story, from around her 1949 troubled first reappointment to the bench, emphasizes this quality. Judge Bolin began to hear whispers of a possible appointment to the federal bench. This would have been a big change for Bolin, and would have yielded yet another “first.” African Americans were “virtually absent from the federal judiciary until the late 1970s”; the first African-American Article III federal judge was William Hastie, who was appointed to the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in 1949, but otherwise appointments were few and far between until the Carter administration.<sup>60</sup> An appointment in 1949 would have made her the first African-American woman to obtain an Article III federal judgeship, and it would also have provided a way out of city politics, at least in the long run. But in a letter to one such supporter, Judge Theodor Spaulding of Pennsylvania—who, somewhat later, would become the first African-American Pennsylvania appellate judge—she gently, but firmly, rejected such a move:

You were certainly kind and gracious to write me offering your assistance in the matter of a Federal judgeship. I deeply appreciate your offer and your thoughts. I do not know how my name ever got to be

mentioned so frequently in connection with a Federal judgeship for I really am not interested in that position. I find the interest of my friends very flattering and heart-warming but I still am of the opinion that the greatest service I can render fellow human beings in a courtroom can be rendered in my present position.<sup>61</sup>

Judge Bolin's modesty extended to those credentials already acquired. Upon stepping down from the bench, she eschewed the traditional self-celebratory retirement party, instead holding a symposium at NYU Law entitled "The Rights of Children—The Rights of Minorities." Speaking at the event were Judge A. Leon Higginbotham of the Third Circuit and Yale's Professor Thomas Emerson. In retirement proper, Bolin took a similar approach, remaining active and engaged—but very low profile—in a variety of positions that echoed her four-decade commitment to juvenile welfare and civic engagement.

### *Accolades and Honors from the Bench, Bar, and Community*

Of course, neither Bolin's first home nor her profession was obligated to mirror the judge's air of professional detachment. Jane and Gaius Bolin Sr. are prominently featured in a Dutchess County Courthouse mural, a project brought to fruition by retired Court of Appeals Judge Albert Rosenblatt.<sup>62</sup> That the Poughkeepsie City School District Administration building has been renamed the Jane Bolin Administration building<sup>63</sup> might seem too modest at first glance, but the honor is, in fact, very well suited to its namesake's sense of determination, reserve, and efficiency.

Bolin's spiritual successors and peers on the bench saw no need to downplay her accomplishments. Judge Higginbotham of the Third Circuit once called her "Yale's most illustrious graduate"<sup>64</sup>; Judge Constance Baker Motley, the first African-American woman appointed to the federal bench, called her "a role model . . . at a time when there were very few, if any, black women in the law."<sup>65</sup> And in a letter written on the occasion of Judge Bolin's 85th birthday, the then-new Chief Judge of New York State wrote:

When I was sworn in as Chief Judge of the State of New York exactly two weeks ago today, I spoke of the difficulties I had encountered finding a job as a woman lawyer back in 1963. I can only imagine the barriers that confronted you, which you so ably surmounted. . . . I'd like to borrow your birthday to express my gratitude to you for hurdling the barriers and easing the way for all women lawyers and judges.<sup>66</sup>

Judge Judith Kaye had it exactly right. Jane Bolin may have been an unconventional first, content to do meaningful work quietly, competently,

and with a minimum of fuss. But through the sheer fact of her example—no flair, no larger-than-life ambition, but good work done expertly by a dedicated public servant—Judge Bolin showed the strength of the subtle. Countless others followed in her stead. So while she herself may not have wanted a high profile, it is nonetheless nigh time for broader recognition of the many firsts, done well, that are indisputably hers and hers alone.

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- <sup>1</sup> Mark A. McCloskey (chairman of the State of New York Youth Commission) to Jane M. Bolin, letter, March 16, 1955. Box 3, Jane M. Bolin Papers, 1943–1993, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.
- <sup>2</sup> David Margolick, “In retrospect, father didn’t know best in the case of a daughter with a habit of making history,” *At the Bar*, *New York Times*, May 14, 1993, p. B8.
- <sup>3</sup> Ethan Michaeli, *The Defender: How the Legendary Black Newspaper Changed America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016), p. ix.
- <sup>4</sup> “Jane Bolin Begins Job as New York Justice,” *The Chicago Defender*, August 5, 1939, p. 2 (emphasis added).
- <sup>5</sup> “A Typical Day in Court with Judge Jane Bolin,” *The Chicago Defender*, September 30, 1939, p. 16.
- <sup>6</sup> Douglas Martin, “Jane Bolin, the Country’s First Black Woman to Become a Judge, Is Dead at 98,” *New York Times*, January 10, 2007.
- <sup>7</sup> Jacqueline McLeod, “Jane Matilda Bolin: A Pioneer for Justice” (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 2002), pp. 100–104; see also “Judge Jane Bolin Sworn In,” *New York Times*, July 19, 1969, p. 23.
- <sup>8</sup> See *People v. Johnson*, 20 N.Y.2d 220, 222 (1967) (briefly discussing the manner by which the court-system was organized in 1962).
- <sup>9</sup> Jane M. Bolin, interview by Jean Rudd, together with Lionel Bolin (her nephew), June 4, 1990, p. 13, transcript, Box 1, Bolin Papers.
- <sup>10</sup> Bolin interview, 1990; see also Jacqueline A. McLeod, *Daughter of the Empire State: The Life of Judge Jane Bolin* (University of Illinois Press 2011), p. 26; “Justice Bolin in Bar Unit,” *New York Times*, April 14, 1943, p. 23; “Jane Bolin Second Week as Prosecutor: In High Office,” *New York Amsterdam News*, April 17, 1937, p. 1.
- <sup>11</sup> McLeod, *Daughter of the Empire State*, p. 28; see also J. Clay Smith, Jr., “Black Women Lawyers: 125 Years at the Bar; 100 Years in the Legal Academy,” *Howard Law Journal* 40 (1997), pp. 366–72.
- <sup>12</sup> Judith Ann Schiff, “Pioneers,” *Yale Alumni Magazine*, January/February, 2006, available at [http://archives.yalealumnimagazine.com/issues/2006\\_01/old\\_yale.html](http://archives.yalealumnimagazine.com/issues/2006_01/old_yale.html).

- <sup>13</sup> See Mary L. Clark, "One Man's Token is Another Woman's Breakthrough? The Appointment of the First Women Federal Judges," *Villanova Law Review* 49 (2004), p. 487.
- <sup>14</sup> L. Priscilla Hall, "On the Occasion of the Retirement of Justice Edith Miller," *New York State Bar Journal*, July/August, 1996. At the time of writing, Judge Kearse still serves on the Second Circuit Court of Appeals; Judge Motley died in 2005. Bolin was honored alongside both of them in 1984 at a luncheon of the National Conference of Black Lawyers. See the program of that luncheon, *Pioneers In Justice: Honorable Jane Matilda Bolin, Chief Judge Constance Baker Motley, Honorable Amayla L. Kearse* (New York: National Conference of Black Lawyers, Dec. 2, 1984).
- <sup>15</sup> Lawrence H. Mamiya and Lorraine K. Roberts, "Invisible People, Untold Stories: A Historical Overview of the Black Community in Poughkeepsie," *The Dutchess County Historical Society Yearbook* 72 (1987), pp. 76–77.
- <sup>16</sup> McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, p. 2.
- <sup>17</sup> See Dennis Dickerson, "Success Story with a Difference," *Williams Alumni Review* 72, no. 1 (Fall 1979).
- <sup>18</sup> Williams College, *Gaius Charles Bolin Dissertation and Post-MFA Fellowships*, available at <http://faculty.williams.edu/graduate-fellowships-2/graduate-fellowships/> (last visited Mar. 13, 2016).
- <sup>19</sup> McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, p. 8.
- <sup>20</sup> McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, p. 10.
- <sup>21</sup> See McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, p. 9.
- <sup>22</sup> McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, pp. 10, 12.
- <sup>23</sup> Bolin interview, 1990, p. 4.
- <sup>24</sup> Bolin interview, 1990, p. 33.
- <sup>25</sup> McLeod, *Daughter of the Empire State*, p. 9.
- <sup>26</sup> Bolin Interview, 1990, p. 2.
- <sup>27</sup> McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, p. 9.
- <sup>28</sup> McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, p. 14.
- <sup>29</sup> McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, pp. 11–12.
- <sup>30</sup> McLeod, "Jane Matilda Bolin," p. 33.
- <sup>31</sup> McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, pp. 3–4, 14, 16.
- <sup>32</sup> Linda M. Perkins, "The African American Female Elite: The Early History of African American Women in the Seven Sister Colleges, 1880–1960," *Harvard Educational Review* 67, no. 4 (Winter 1997), p. 723.
- <sup>33</sup> See Perkins, "The African American Female Elite," pp. 723–24.
- <sup>34</sup> McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, p. 18.

- <sup>35</sup> McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, p. 18.
- <sup>36</sup> McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, pp. 19–20; see also Jasmin K. Williams, “Jane Matilda Bolin—A Woman of Firsts,” *New York Post*, February 9, 2007, p. 8.
- <sup>37</sup> McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, pp. 21–22.
- <sup>38</sup> See Maud Chaplin to Jane M. Bolin, letter, December 7, 1981, Box 1, Bolin Papers.
- <sup>39</sup> Jane M. Bolin, “Wellesley in My Life,” *Wellesley After-Images: Reflections on Their College Years by Forty-Five Alumnae*, ed. Barbara Warne Newell (Los Angeles: Wellesley College Club, 1974), quoted in “Wellesley Person of the Week,” July 10, 2000, available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20000915183612/http://www.wellesley.edu/Anniversary/bolin.html>
- <sup>40</sup> Bolin, “Wellesley in My Life,” quoted in “Wellesley Person of the Week,” July 10, 2000.
- <sup>41</sup> McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, pp. 23–25.
- <sup>42</sup> McLeod, “Jane Matilda Bolin,” pp. 60–61; see also “Gaius C. Bolin, Negro Lawyer, Tells of His Rise,” *New York Herald Tribune*, February 20, 1945, p. 18.
- <sup>43</sup> Joseph F. Hawkins to Jane M. Bolin, letter, December 8, 1978, Box 3, Bolin Papers. Gaius Jr.’s son Lionel split the difference. Like his grandfather, he attended Williams; like his father, he attended law school in New York City; but like Judge Bolin, he practiced in the City itself, before settling down in Chicago. See Williams College Black Student Union, “Black Williams: A Written History,” (unpublished manuscript, accessed 2016), pp. 35–36, available at <http://davis-center.williams.edu/files/2015/10/Black-Williams-A-Written-History-complete-edited-document.pdf>.
- <sup>44</sup> McLeod, “Jane Matilda Bolin,” p. 162; see also Jane M. Bolin to Professor Dennis Dickerson, letter, Feb. 2, 1979, transcript, Box 3, Bolin Papers.
- <sup>45</sup> McLeod, “Jane Matilda Bolin,” p. 60; see also Martin, “Jane Bolin,” *New York Times*, January 10, 2007.
- <sup>46</sup> McLeod, Daughter of the *Empire State*, pp. 24–25.
- <sup>47</sup> McLeod “Jane Matilda Bolin,” pp. 73–74 & n.190.
- <sup>48</sup> McLeod “Jane Matilda Bolin,” p. 76 n.199.
- <sup>49</sup> McLeod “Jane Matilda Bolin,” pp. 74–81.
- <sup>50</sup> See McLeod “Jane Matilda Bolin,” pp. 81–84.
- <sup>51</sup> “Judge Bolin Declares Brotherhood Pointless Unless Poughkeepsie Ends Its Intolerance,” *Poughkeepsie New Yorker*, February 23, 1944, Box 1, Bolin Papers.
- <sup>52</sup> Bolin interview, 1990,
- <sup>53</sup> Bolin interview, 1990, p. 27.
- <sup>54</sup> Jane M. Bolin to Professor Dennis Dickerson, letter, February 2, 1979, Box 3, Bolin Papers.
- <sup>55</sup> Bolin interview, 1990, p. 73.

- <sup>56</sup> Bolin interview, 1990, p. 74.
- <sup>57</sup> Application Forms, Committee on Admissions for the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Box 1, Bolin Papers.
- <sup>58</sup> “Judge Bolin’s Interest Is Association’s Library,” *The Afro-American* (Baltimore), April 24, 1943, p. 13.
- <sup>59</sup> See Bolin interview, 1990, p. 19.
- <sup>60</sup> Patrice M. Pitts and Linda Vinson, “Breaking Down Barriers to the Federal Bench: Reshaping the Judicial Selection Process,” *Howard Law Journal* 28 (1985), p. 753 n.39; see also “The Higher Education of the Nation’s Black Women Judges,” *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 16 (1997), p. 108.
- <sup>61</sup> Jane M. Bolin to Theodore Spaulding, letter, August 23, 1949, Box 3, Bolin Papers.
- <sup>62</sup> Donna Liquori, “Dutchess Legal Giants Get a Courthouse Mural,” *New York Times*, May 20, 2005.
- <sup>63</sup> Poughkeepsie City School District, “Administration Building Dedication,” press release, September 18, 2008, Available at <http://www.poughkeepsieschools.org/2008/09/18/administration-building-dedication/>
- <sup>64</sup> A. Leon Higginbotham to Jane M. Bolin, letter, March 25, 1982, Box 1, Bolin Papers.
- <sup>65</sup> Constance Baker Motley to Jane M. Bolin, letter, January 26, 1979, Box 3, Bolin Papers.
- <sup>66</sup> Judith Kaye to Jane M. Bolin, letter, April 6, 1993, Box 3, Bolin Papers.

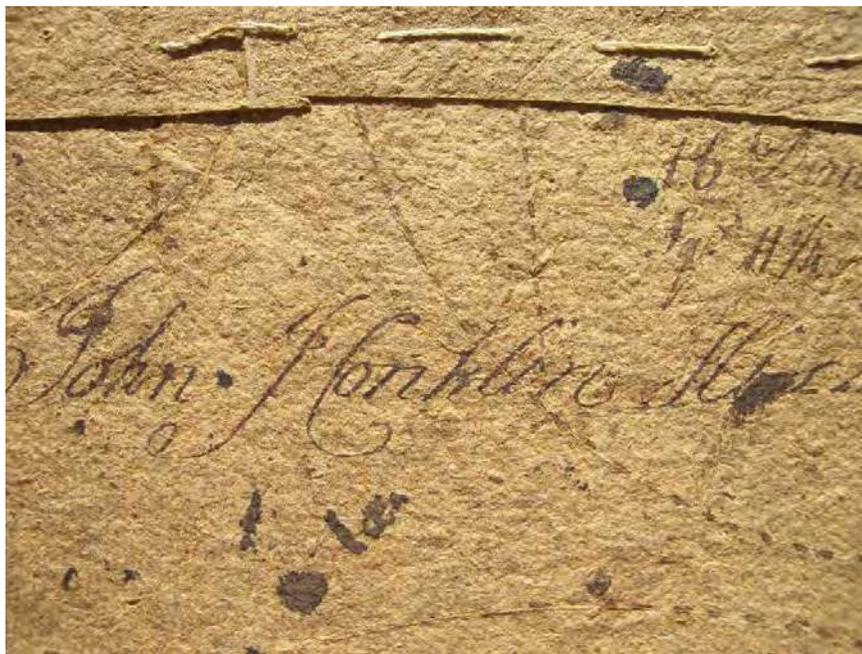


# A 1791 Hyde Park Farm Account Book

*by Jack Conklin*

Since Jack Conklin submitted this essay, he has published the Conklin family ledger as *John J. Conklin's Account Book 1791* (Rhinebeck, NY: Epigraph Books, 2013). —*C. Lewis, editor*

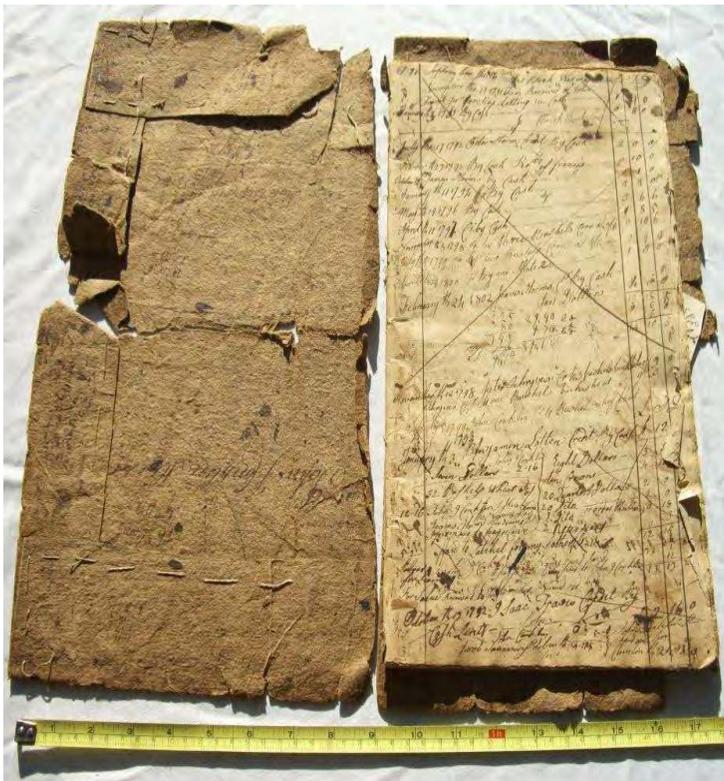
An account book was discovered by my grandfather, John B. Conklin about 1920, when he renovated part of the old “homestead.” The account book, in ledger style, details the transactions of the Conklin homestead located on the eastern border of the Town of Hyde Park. The property was purchased in 1751 and was officially recorded as 1/3rd of 1/4 of Water Lot 1 of the Nine Partners Patent. The property’s eastern boundary forms the Town Line between Pleasant Valley and Hyde Park. It was located near the north end of present day Van Wagner Road. The book was found in the walls of the “lean-to” structure, an addition on the back of the main house.



**Figure 1.** Conklin family ledger showing name on cover, 1791–1853. Photograph. Collection of Jack Conklin, Rhinecliff, New York. (007.jpg)

In 2012, the contents were digitally photo copied and transcribed. This essay is a first attempt to publish some information about the contents of the journal.

The homestead was settled by “Uncle Johnnie” Conklin, the eldest son of Captain John Conklin, who first settled on 770 acres south of Poughkeepsie in 1725.<sup>1</sup> The name, “Uncle Johnnie”, comes from an article published in the August 7, 1886 edition of the Poughkeepsie News Telegraph by a neighbor, Edgar Thorn. He refers to this John Conklin by that name and genealogists have used it ever since. The article describes his numerous “progeny.” “Uncle Johnnie” and his wife Maria had 13 children: nine daughters and four sons. His eldest son, John J. Conklin began this ledger in 1791, and when he died in 1803, the youngest son, Abraham I. Conklin took over the account book and kept it until his death in 1853. The account book, therefore, was the work of two men—two brothers—John J. Conklin and Abraham I. Conklin, writing from 1791 to 1853.



**Figure 2.** Conklin family ledger showing dimensions of the ledger, 1791–1853. Photograph. Collection of Jack Conklin, Rhinecliff, New York.

## *The Conklin Family Account Book*

This journal contains 62 years of financial transactions. The account book is loosely organized by activities, (not chronologically by date), and includes entries for a tailoring business, farm product sales, the details of a two-year building project, payments to the schoolmasters for a son's education, and employment records of both farm workers and domestic help. The account book contains hundreds of names of customers and workers, prices of farm products and wages paid.

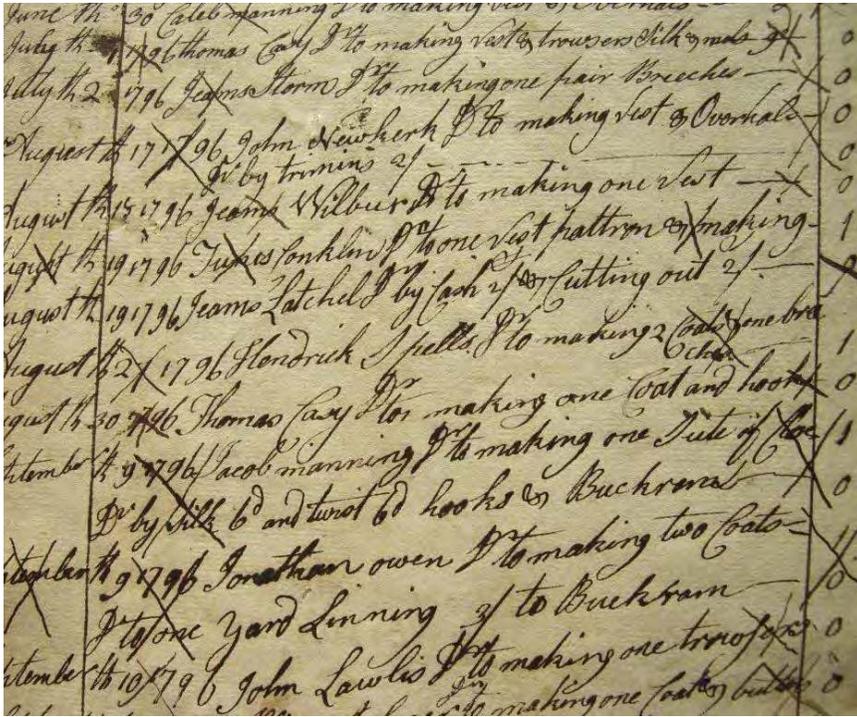
The book measures 8 1/2 inches by 13 inches and has three lined columns for recording the English pounds, shillings and pence. It contains 42 pages, however ten have been previously removed. The entries are in ink, some very faded and almost illegible. The largest section shows the activity of the tailoring business (18 pages covering 11 years of data), with hundreds of customer names. The hand writing is typical of the 1790's with the confused "s" and abbreviations and spellings common to this period. The ledger uses Pounds/Shilling/Pence up until the 1820's, even though the "dollar" was in common usage much earlier. Apparently the "Continental" dollar of Revolutionary War fame was not welcome!



### *The Tailoring Business*

In 1791 John J. Conklin, age 29, took over the management of the farm from his 66-year old father. At that time, there were six women at the "homestead"—four unmarried daughters of "Uncle Johnnie," his wife Maria, and John J's wife Susan. The daughters were Sarah, age 27, Catharine, age 24, Hester, age 22 and Mary, age 18. It is assumed that some of these females handled the sewing business.

**Figure 3.** *Conklin family homestead, Hyde Park, New York. View of the back of house with "lean-to" addition (1934 lean-too). Photograph. Collection of Jack Conklin, Rhinecliff, New York.*



**Figure 4.** Conklin family ledger showing typical page in the tailoring section, 1791–1853. Photograph. Collection of Jack Conklin, Rhinecliff, New York.

Each line item in the account book shows a date, customer name, and product to be made e.g. “sute of clothes”, or vests, breeches, “overhals”, great coat, trousers, and stick twists. (I can’t find the definition of a “stick twist” but assume it is associated with buttons). They charged extra for “buckram” and “hook and eyes.” When the customer paid, the line was crossed out. Prices varied from customer to customer (because of size?), but typical prices were 6 to 7 shillings for a pair of overalls, 4 to 6 shillings for a vest, 8 to 10 shillings for a coat and 8 shillings for breeches. The exchange rate appears to have been \$2.50 to the Pound. (12 Pence equals one Shilling, 20 Shillings equals one Pound). So the cost of a coat would have been \$1.25. This business stopped after 11 years, in 1802.

### The Building Project

John J. Conklin created a separate section in the account book to track labor and materials that went into a two-year building project. The first entry was August 19, 1797, and the work that year continued for five months

until December 16. There was no activity during the winter months. The work started again on April 21, 1798, and was finished by July. It is believed to have been the “summer kitchen” addition to the main house.

Joseph Mead of Pleasant Valley was the lead carpenter with seven other workers named. The daily rate was between 5 and 8 shillings. Three masons were listed an 8 shillings per day. Pitch pine plank and shingles were purchased for 12 Pounds, 12 Shillings and 6 Pence. Bricks were 5 Pounds, 10 Shillings. Glass, nails, paint, hinges, thum latches (his spelling), sash, and lath were also listed.

### *Farm workers*

John J began to hire farm help in 1794. Typical wages were one pound, two shillings per month. As an aside, John J docked one of his workers for a half day’s pay on October 15, 1796, because the worker took off and went to a horse race. Where was this event? Perhaps the County Fair? There are a total of fourteen names of employees over 60 years, both domestic help and farm laborers.

### *Farm Products Sales*

The first recorded sale, by John J. Conklin in 1793, was for wool and buckwheat. Buckwheat is a fast growing plant cultivated for its grain like seeds. Originally called “beech wheat” named after the triangular seeds which



**Figure 5.** *Conklin family homestead, Hyde Park, New York. Building project, summer kitchen on right with fireplace and dutch oven. Photograph. Collection of Jack Conklin, Rhinecliff, New York.*

resemble the larger seeds of the beech tree, buckwheat was a common product on colonial farms, but its use steadily declined in favor of corn and rye grains.

In March of 1793 John J. sold seven gallons of cider (sider his spelling) for one shilling per gallon. This suggests the apple orchard was planted around 1790. The orchard was still producing in the 1940s when I was a boy on the farm. The apples were Baldwins and Greenings, hard long lasting storage apples.

Other products listed included hay, wheat, rye, corn, and flax, as well as beef and pork. Pork was 9 pence a pound and beef was 4 pence a pound. By 1801, corn has dropped to 6 shillings per bushel from 8 shillings in 1795. By 1828, the products included “spirits” and “brandy!” The harvest of wood was active for several years starting in 1832. A total of 60 loads were recorded at \$183.30.

In summary, this historical document offers a valuable perspective on the farm economy in Dutchess County in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. The amount of income generated by the “tailoring” activities was a surprise and probably not typical of all farms. It means the women of this household were very active and productive. That activity produced more income than the sales of farm products! The “building project” offers a unique look at labor rates and material costs in 1790s. The employee data shows typical wages for farm workers over a period of 60 years. Finally, genealogists will be interested in the hundreds of names of individuals who were living in the vicinity of the farm from 1791 to 1853. The Account Book is a valuable find!

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<sup>1</sup> There are three generations in the first paragraph. The first Conklin in Dutchess County is Captain John. He settled south of Poughkeepsie, now the rural cemetery and stayed there until his death. His eldest son, “Uncle Johnnie” settled the “homestead”. His son John J authored the account book along with his younger brother, Abraham.

# ADDENDA





# Contributors

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

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

**Jack Conklin** grew up on the family farm where the account book that is the subject of his article was discovered. The property was in the Conklin family for seven generations and 220 years. Located in the easternmost part of the town of Hyde Park, the original farm boundaries formed the lines of the Towns of Pleasant Valley, Poughkeepsie, and Hyde Park.

Jack is a graduate of West Point, Class of 1956, and a retired businessman, the president of several local businesses. He has authored articles for the historical societies of Dutchess County and Rhinebeck, as well as writing a history column for a local newspaper.

**Anthony J. Czarnecki** is a past president of the Lincoln Society in Peekskill, NY and currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Westchester County Historical Society. In 2012, he was admitted to membership in the Society of Civil War Historians. Mr. Czarnecki is a graduate of Iona College and earned a master's degree in criminal justice at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and an M.P.A. at Pace University. He is a past president of the N.Y. State Probation Officers Association and the Middle Atlantic States Correctional Association (MASCA). Mr. Czarnecki recently retired as Chief of Staff at the Westchester County Department of

Correction. He is now president of The Chartwell Group USA, a criminal justice consulting firm.

**David Goodwin** is the 2014-2016 Warren Sinsheimer Fellow at Partnership for Children's Rights and the co-chair of the Young Lawyers Committee of the Historical Society of the New York Courts. He is a 2010 graduate of NYU School of Law. During law school, he spent a semester in the Children's Rights Clinic, where he worked on behalf of LGBT homeless youth for the Peter Cicchino Youth Project of the Urban Justice Center. He also served on the board of the NYU chapter of the Unemployment Action Center and was a teaching assistant in the Lawyering Program. After graduating, he joined the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit as a Staff Attorney and clerked for a United States District Judge in the District of New Jersey. David received a Bachelor of Arts in history and religious studies from the University of Chicago; between college and law school, he tutored middle- and high-school students and served as a congressional intern.

**Eileen Mylod Hayden** was trained as an educator and spent the early part of her working life teaching school children. By the late 1970s, she was giving a significant portion of her time to her interest in the historical society. She has devoted most of her career to the society, serving as the first female president of the board (1984-1989) and then as executive director (1991-2007). She is the granddaughter of a founder, John J. Mylod, and daughter of an early member, Frank V. Mylod, of the Dutchess County Historical Society. Her brother-in-law, attorney John Wolf, served as president of the society (before his untimely death). Now her niece, Elizabeth Wolf, is serving as a member of the Board of Trustees.

**Virginia Hancock** has lived in Poughkeepsie for forty-three years and has been involved in the community since she first arrived. Her areas of interest include history, the Arts, trees, children, and the City of Poughkeepsie. Current and past organizational involvement include the City of Poughkeepsie Shade Tree Commission, Springside Landscape Restoration, Poughkeepsie City School Board, Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center, Dutchess County Historical Society, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Arts Mid-Hudson.

**Arlene Iuliano** writes that as a long term resident and graduate of the old Amenia High School, a mother of five children who all graduated from Webutuck Central School in the 1970s, she enjoys writing about her life and memories. Passing them on has brought her many good words from community members, as has the search of local history up to today.

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

**Melody Moore** is head of the Collections Committee of the Dutchess County Historical Society and serves as a Trustee on the Board. She is a past recipient of the Helen Wilkinson Reynolds Award from the society. From 1979 to 1986, Moore served as director of DCHS, before taking on the job of managing all site operations at the Staatsburgh State Historic Site (Mills Mansion). Since her retirement from directing the Mills Mansion, she has returned to DCHS as a trustee in 2011.

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

**Caroline Rogers Reichenberg** is a lifetime resident of the Town of Dover, Dutchess County, New York and has always had a keen interest in history and preservation. She is a charter member of the Town of Dover Historical Society which was organized in 1974; and served as its president for 30 years. She also served as a School Board Member for the Dover Union Free School District. For many years she owned and operated a company which specialized in general excavating and the manufacturing of precast concrete.

Caroline was elected as Dover Town Clerk. During that time she was very involved with both the Dutchess County Town Clerks Association and the New York State Town Clerks Association. She held many state level offices which included District Director, Grants Chairman, Clerk of the Year Chair and Membership Chair. During her tenure as town clerk, Caroline is grateful for having had the opportunity to fulfill the very important task of obtaining and successfully returning to the town, the record book documenting the 1807 organization of the Town of Dover.

Now retired after 20 years as town clerk, Caroline serves as the Dover Town Historian Co-Chair and enjoys participating in the Town of Dover Historical Society's effort to preserve and share their heritage. Also for school children to visit the historic Tabor-Wing House, a National Register of Historic Sites and Places for them to learn about the architecture of the building and to explore the displays of items once used in homes before 1900. Her other very important passion is being involved, along with her certified therapy dog, Wrigley, in a volunteer program known as *Children Reading to Dogs* which originates from Therapy Dogs International.

**Dean Thomas** is a married, father of three, living just outside of Rochester in upstate New York. He works as a Business System Analyst in the Information Technology field for a local manufacturing company. Dean has been interested in learning about and researching the 128th Regiment New York State Volunteer Infantry and the Civil War ever since learning his great-great-grandfather fought with the regiment.

**William P. Tatum III** has held the office of Dutchess County Historian since October 2012. He earned his B.A. in History and Anthropology from the College of William & Mary in Virginia in 2003, his M.A. in History from Brown University in 2004, and his Ph.D., also from Brown University, in 2016. His main area of research is Colonial North America under English rule. In addition to his scholarship, Tatum has been involved in historic site and museum programs throughout the east coast and England..

# Call for Articles: Yearbook 2017

## *Prohibition, the Progressive Movement, and Dutchess County, New York*

In 2017, the central topic of discussion will be Prohibition and the Progressive Movement in Dutchess County, NY.

As for the last several years, the yearbook will be divided into sections:

- (1) The Forum section, which will have as many good articles as we have to present, will focus on social change: Prohibition and the Progressive Movement as it affected Dutchess County. Articles may include topics from the more abstract such as discussions of Prohibition as a theory, political philosophy, and religion to quite concrete matters such as the individual stories of residents of the county.
- (2) The Articles section will be devoted to essays on any worthwhile research regarding Dutchess County history.

Please submit your article to me in digital form as a Microsoft Word document. Articles for the Forum and Articles sections should be 2,000 to 4,000 words long. If possible, please submit at least one or two images with captions with each essay. Send the images separately as jpegs (300 dpi or larger). Images may be black-and-white or color. Please send them with the draft, the figure captions indicated in the text (images are not an afterthought). Copyright will be shared between the Dutchess County Historical Society and the author. The author may re-issue the article in the year after it is published in the DCHS yearbook.

For endnotes, please use *Chicago Manual of Style*. Examples of endnotes:

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

*Continued*

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

If you have an idea for an article that you are considering, but are doubtful about, just write to me at [clewis1880@aol.com](mailto:clewis1880@aol.com) and I will be happy to discuss it. I am hoping for first drafts of articles in hand by April 1, 2017. Please note that this is an earlier deadline than last year. I look forward with delight to reading your essays.

— Candace Lewis, *Editor*

# Dutchess County Historical Society

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[www.dutchesscountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.dutchesscountyhistoricalsociety.org)

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# Review of the Year 2016

**Programs.** This year marked the unveiling of a new program series entitled “Decoding the Past: Treasures from the Dutchess County Historical Society”, which was held this past spring at Locust Grove in Poughkeepsie. Guest experts offered their insights to uncovering the secret history hidden within iconic artifacts from Dutchess County’s past, to include the Civil War, Local Businesses, Advertising Art, Portraiture, and Patriotic Memorabilia. Topics presented later in the year at various sites include Hudson River Valley Art and History, War Relics, and Gifts and Presents. Additionally, the ever popular Fun Foliage and Fall Road Rallye took place in Central Dutchess in October.



**Annual Meeting.** The Annual Meeting was held April 20, 2016, at the Henry A. Wallace Visitor and Education Center at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum. Outgoing President Denise Doring VanBuren introduced Michael Gordon as the new leader of the Society. Robert Murphy, longtime newsletter editor and president of the Beacon Historical Society, gave a rousing presentation on the Beacon Incline Railway.



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



**Yearbook.** Yearbook 2015 was *The Civil War and Dutchess County, New York (Part I)* with the Forum section devoted to essays discussing aspects of the Civil War and Dutchess County and the Articles section devoted to general history of the county. The yearbook is a perquisite of membership and is sent to every member each year. This year, with Yearbook 2016, we are continuing the popular theme of the great American War; the book will be entitled *The Civil War and Dutchess County, New York (Part II)*. It will be sent to members, donors, sponsors, authors, historians, elected officials, and some selected friends. It will also be available for sale.

**Development.** DCHS depends upon the generosity of its members and friends. In addition to ongoing support throughout the year, in 2016 we received a grant from the Lillian Cumming Streetscape Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation for \$10,000, and the Denise M. Lawlor Fund for more than \$10,000. One of our biggest efforts each fall—and proudest—is our Awards Dinner usually held in late October or early November. This year the date will be November 17 at the Grand Hotel in downtown Poughkeepsie. We will be honoring Eileen Mylod Hayden, Bradford H. Kendall, the Poughkeepsie Rural Cemetery and Joey Cavaccini. We encourage all to come.



**Collections.** Work in Collections continues, with more donations and continuing accessing and cataloguing of incoming and existing items. Contract staff has made significant progress on both the Guinea Dig Project and phase two of the Hart-Hubbard Collection.



**Volunteers.** The time and talents of dedicated volunteers throughout the year are paramount to our success! Please consider sharing yours with us.

by Patty Moore, *Executive Director*

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*September 2015 through September 2016*

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

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

# City & Town Historians and Historical Societies of Dutchess County

Updated October 3, 2016

To update this directory, contact County Historian Will Tatum below.

## DUTCHESS COUNTY HISTORIAN

**William P. Tatum III**

22 Market Street, Poughkeepsie, New York 12601  
(845) 486-2381 fax (845) 486-2138  
wtatum@dutchessny.gov

## DUTCHESS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Patty Moore**, *Executive Director*

Post Office Box 88, Poughkeepsie, New York 12602  
dchistorical@verizon.net  
(845) 471-1630

## CITY HISTORIANS / HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

### **Beacon**

Post Office Box 89  
Beacon, New York 12508  
Historical Society: Robert Murphy  
info@beaconhistoricalsociety.org  
(845) 831-0514

### **Poughkeepsie**

62 Civic Center Plaza,  
Poughkeepsie, New York 12601  
Historian: George Lukacs  
saltglazed@aol.com  
(845) 471-5066

## TOWN & VILLAGE

### HISTORIANS / HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

**Amenia** Amenia Town Hall, 4988 Route 22, Amenia, New York 12501

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

Historical Society: Betsy Strauss strausshouse72@gmail.com

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

Historian: Honora Knox hknox@townofbeekman.com

Tel: (845) 724-5300

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

Historian: Craig Marshall craigmarshall266@aol.com

(845) 242-5879

Historical Society: Cynthia Koch [cynthiakoch@optonline.net](mailto:cynthiakoch@optonline.net)  
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Post Office Box 122, Clinton Corners, New York 12514

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(845) 849-6025  
Historian: Caroline Reichenberg  
[historianreichenberg@townofdoverny.us](mailto:historianreichenberg@townofdoverny.us)

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

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Historical Society: Malcolm Mills [bluhilfm@frontiernet.net](mailto:bluhilfm@frontiernet.net)  
(845) 227-5374

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

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Historical Society: Steve Lynch [asklynch@yahoo.com](mailto:asklynch@yahoo.com)  
(914) 525-7667

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

Historian: Allan Way [allanway2@aol.com](mailto:allanway2@aol.com)

**Hyde Park**

Historian: Barbara Hobens [historian@hydeparkny.us](mailto:historian@hydeparkny.us)  
6 Main Street, Hyde Park, New York 12538  
Historical Society: Patsy Costello [patsyc97@aol.com](mailto:patsyc97@aol.com) (845) 229-2559  
Post Office Box 182, Hyde Park, New York 12538

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

Historian: Georgia Trott-Herring [herringtrott@aol.com](mailto:herringtrott@aol.com)  
(845) 452-2911  
Historical Society: Bob D'Amato  
[lagraangehistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:lagraangehistoricalsociety@gmail.com) (845) 489-5183

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

Historian: Johanna Bard [johanna.bard@gmail.com](mailto:johanna.bard@gmail.com)

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

Historian: David Greenwood [ngreenwd@aol.com](mailto:ngreenwd@aol.com) (845) 677-5767  
3248 Sharon Turnpike, Millbrook, New York 12545  
Historical Society: Dianne McNeill [damcneil816@msn.com](mailto:damcneil816@msn.com)  
Post Office Box 135, Millbrook, New York 12545

**Millerton / Northeast**

Historian: Mike Williams willywmike@optonline.net  
 (518) 398-6531  
 7604 Route 82, Pine Plains, New York 12567  
 Historical Society: Ed Downey eddowney@millertonlawyer.com  
 (518) 789-4442  
 Post Office Box 727, Millerton, New York 12546

**Pawling (Historical Society of Quaker Hill and Pawling)**

Historian (Town): Robert Reilly rpreilly@verizon.net  
 160 Charles Colman Blvd, Pawling, New York 12564  
 Historian (Village): Drew Nicholson dan.ddn@comcast.net  
 (845) 855-3387  
 18 Valley Drive, Pawling, New York 12564  
 Historical Society: John Brockway johnbetsyb@comcast.net  
 (845) 855-5395  
 Post Office Box 99, Pawling, New York 12564

**Pine Plains**

Historian: *Vacant*  
 Historical Society: Ann Simmons cas@fairpoint.net (518) 398-5344  
 Post Office Box 243, Pine Plains, New York 12567

**Pleasant Valley**

Historian: Fred Schaeffer fredinhv@aol.com (845) 454-1190  
 1544 Main Street (Route 44), Pleasant Valley, New York 12569  
 Historical Society: Marilyn Bradford Momof5NY@Yahoo.Com  
 (845) 518-0998

**Poughkeepsie (Town)**

Historian: John R. Pinna townhistorian@townofpoughkeepsie-ny.gov  
 (845) 485-3646  
 1 Overrocker Road, Poughkeepsie, New York 12603

**Red Hook**

Historian: J. Winthrop Aldrich wint42@gmail.com (917) 825-9175  
 Post Office Box 338, Red Hook, New York 12571-0397  
 Historical Society: Claudine Klose claudineklose@gmail.com  
 (845) 758-1920  
 Post Office Box 397, Red Hook, New York 12571

**Rhinebeck (Town)**

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

### **Rhinebeck (Village)**

Historian: Michael Frazier [michaelfrazier@earthlink.net](mailto:michaelfrazier@earthlink.net)  
(845) 876-7462

Historical Society: David Miller [dhmny@aol.com](mailto:dhmny@aol.com) (845) 750-4486

Post Office Box 291, Rhinebeck, New York 12572

### **Stanford**

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

Historical Society: Kathy Spiers [lakeendinn@aol.com](mailto:lakeendinn@aol.com) (845) 868-7320

Post Office Box 552, Bangall, New York 12506

### **Tivoli**

Historian: Gregory B. Moynahan, Ph.D. [moynahan@bard.edu](mailto:moynahan@bard.edu)

Post Office Box 5000, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York 12504-5000

### **Unionvale**

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

Town Office (845) 724-5600

249 Duncan Road, Lagrangeville, New York 12540

Historical Society: Peter Gay (Vice President) [chargaysgy@gmail.com](mailto:chargaysgy@gmail.com)  
(845)-677-4837

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

Town Historian: Cliff Foley [cgfoley@optonline.net](mailto:cgfoley@optonline.net)

Town Office (845) 297-4158

Co-Town Historian: Joey Cavacinni

[townofwappingerhistorian@gmail.com](mailto:townofwappingerhistorian@gmail.com), Town Office: (845) 298-1150

20 Middle Bush Road, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

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

Village Historian: Mary Schmalz [mary.schmalz@outlook.com](mailto:mary.schmalz@outlook.com)  
(845) 464-0022

Historical Society:

Beth Devine [info@wappingershistorialsociety.org](mailto:info@wappingershistorialsociety.org) (845) 430-9520

Post Office Box 174, Wappinger Falls, New York 12590

Dutchess County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 88  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12602  
845-471-1630  
Email: [dchistorical@verizon.net](mailto:dchistorical@verizon.net)  
[www.dutchesscountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.dutchesscountyhistoricalsociety.org)

## JOIN AS A MEMBER

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

Help support the work of the Society.

## MISSION STATEMENT AND GOALS

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

Furthermore, The Society aims:

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



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

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Dutchess County Historical Society

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# THE CIVIL WAR AND DUTCHESS COUNTY, NEW YORK Part II

## Dutchess County Historical Society 2016 Yearbook

Since the inception of the Dutchess County Historical Society in 1914, 102 years ago, the organization has been continuously publishing a yearbook with articles and information for its readers. This issue, edited by Candace J. Lewis, contains a collection of original, entertaining essays by local historians and some distinguished non-local historians.

This volume, like that of 2015, *The Civil War and Dutchess County, New York, Part I*, focuses on the American Civil War and its impact on the soldiers, families, and businesses of Dutchess County. Eleven essays examine aspects of the war such as the story of two Dutchess County Livingston sisters who married two brothers from a wealthy South Carolina family; a comparison of data from Dutchess County with that from a county in North Carolina; a story of the 128th Regiment told through songs; the tale of the Lincoln Inaugural and Funeral Trains of 1861 and 1865; and many more.

The second section of the book, the Articles section, focuses on the general history of the county. In this issue are essays on the first African-American female judge, Jane Bolin, and a local ledger book from the 1790s.



Dutchess County Historical Society

Dutchess County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 88, Poughkeepsie, NY 12602  
[www.dutchesscountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.dutchesscountyhistoricalsociety.org)

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