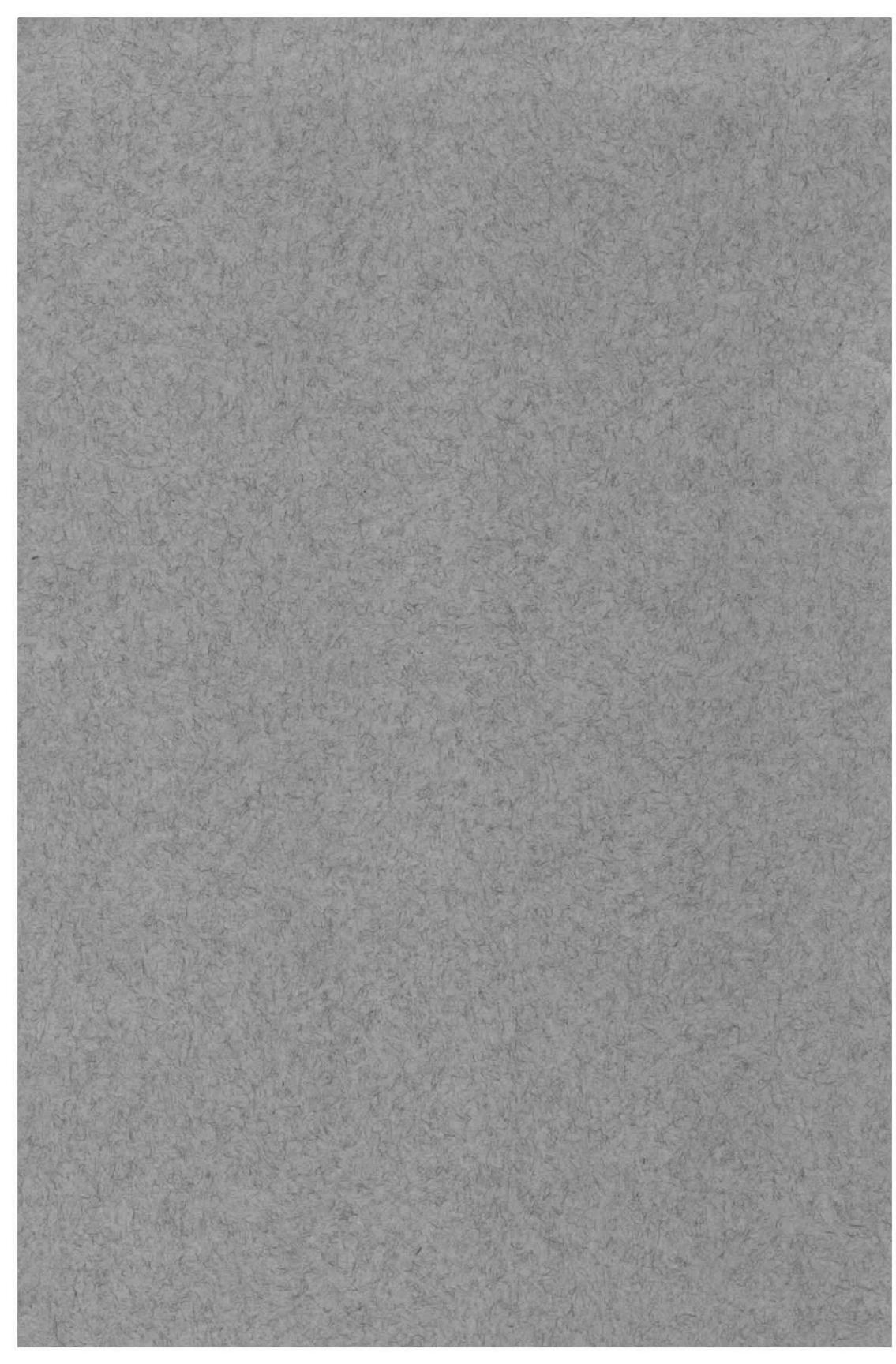


Year Book

Dutchess County Historical Society

Volume 41

1956



Year Book

Dutchess County Historical Society

Volume 41

1956

Copyright, 1958
by the Dutchess County Historical Society

DUTCHESSE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Incorporated under the laws of the
State of New York
December 21, 1918
Certificate of Incorporation filed in the office of the
Clerk of Dutchess County
Book 10 of Corporations page 153

DUTCHESS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEETINGS — MEMBERSHIP — DUES

ANNUAL MEETING, THIRD FRIDAY IN MAY

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING, THIRD FRIDAY IN OCTOBER

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Dutchess County Historical Society may be had by the election of the applicant at the May or October meeting or at a meeting of the Board of Trustees and the payment of the dues.

Annual dues	\$3.00
Joint membership (two members of one family).....	\$5.00
Life membership	\$25.00

Annual dues are payable on January 1 of each year.

These payments carry with them the right to hold office, to vote and to take part in the proceedings of the society.

Payment of three dollars at date of election entitles a new member to a copy of the year book for that current year. Next payment falls due the succeeding January and covers a copy of the year book issued in the year ensuing.

Copies of the year book are mailed only to those members whose dues are paid to date. Only one copy of the year book is mailed to a joint membership.

FORM OF BEQUEST

I give and bequeath to the

DUTCHESS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

.....Dollars

OFFICERS

1 9 5 6

President: EDMUND VAN WYCK, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

Vice President at Large: FRANK V. MYLOD, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

Secretary: MRS. AMY PEARCE VER NOOY, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

Treasurer: MISS ALBERTINA T. B. TRAVER, Rhinebeck, N. Y.

Curator: MRS. AIMEE BUCHANAN, Hyde Park, N. Y.

VICE-PRESIDENTS FOR TOWNS

Mrs. J. E. Spingarn	Town of Amenia
Robert W. Doughty	City of Beacon
Mrs. F. Philip Hoag	Town of Beekman
James Budd Rymph	Town of Clinton
	Town of Dover
Mrs. Edward V. Stringham	Town of East Fishkill
Miss Edith Van Wyck	Town of Fishkill
Benjamin H. Haviland	Town of Hyde Park
Mrs. F. Jay Skidmore	Town of LaGrange
Henry R. Billings	Town of Milan
	Town of North East
Egbert Green	Town of Pawling
George E. Schryver	Town of Pine Plains
Clifford M. Buck	Town of Pleasant Valley
Miss Annette Young	Town of Poughkeepsie
Leland H. Shaw	City of Poughkeepsie
Mrs. Donald E. Norton	Town of Red Hook
Mrs. Harry H. Hill	Town of Rhinebeck
Mrs. Harrie D. Knickerbocker	Town of Stanford
Mrs. Theodore Coe	Town of Union Vale
Miss Mary Goring	Town of Wappingers
John O. Tyldsley	Town of Washington

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The President, ex-officio

The Vice-President at Large, ex-officio

The Secretary, ex-officio

The Treasurer, ex-officio

The Curator, ex-officio

CLASS OF 1957

Joseph W. Emsley
J. Hunting Otis

Miss Margaret L. Suckley
George E. Whalen

CLASS OF 1958

Mrs. Stuart R. Anderson
Harris N. Cookingham

Edgar B. Nixon
John R. Schwartz

CLASS OF 1959

Harry T. Briggs
Clifford M. Buck

Mrs. Fred C. Daniels
Henry Noble MacCracken

CLASS OF 1960

Chester O. Davison, M.D.
General John Ross Delafield

Newton D. Deuel
Olin Dows

CONTENTS

	Page
Secretary's Minutes	9
Treasurer's Report	16-17
Our President Says	18
<i>Edmund Van Wyck</i>	
The Annual Pilgrimage	20
The Whaling Industry in Poughkeepsie (1830-1845).....	22
<i>Sandra Truxton Smith</i>	
To the Curious; or, The Animals Came to Town.....	41
<i>Amy Ver Nooy</i>	
Books	71

Edited by AMY PEARCE VER NOOY

The Year Book is published in December. Copies of the Year Book are mailed to those members whose dues are paid for the current year. Single issues are sold for \$3.00 each and may be obtained through the secretary or the treasurer. Address: The Dutchess County Historical Society, Poughkeepsie, New York.

OCCASIONAL PUBLICATIONS
OF THE
DUTCHESS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

- 1916—PAMPHLET, *Troutbeck, A Dutchess County Homestead*; by Charles E. Benton. Out of print.
- 1924—COLLECTIONS, VOL. I; *Poughkeepsie, The Origin and Meaning of the Word*; by Helen Wilkinson Reynolds.
- 1924—COLLECTIONS, VOL. II; *Old Gravestones of Dutchess County, New York*; collected and edited by J. Wilson Poucher, M. D., and Helen Wilkinson Reynolds.
- 1928—COLLECTIONS, VOL. III; *Records of the Town of Hyde Park, Dutchess County, New York*; edited by Franklin D. Roosevelt. Edition exhausted.
- 1930—COLLECTIONS, VOL. IV; *Notices of Marriages and Deaths in Newspapers printed at Poughkeepsie, N. Y., 1778-1825*; compiled and edited by Helen Wilkinson Reynolds.
- 1932—COLLECTIONS, VOL. V; *Records of the Reformed Dutch Church of New Hackensack, Dutchess County, New York*; edited by Maria Bockée Carpenter Tower.
- 1938—COLLECTIONS, VOL VI; *Eighteenth Century Records of the portion of Dutchess County, New York that was included in Rombout Precinct and the original Town of Fishkill*. Collected by William Willis Reese. Edited by Helen Wilkinson Reynolds.
- 1940—COLLECTIONS, VOL. VII; *Records of Crum Elbow Precinct, Dutchess County*. Edited by Franklin D. Roosevelt.

For information in regard to any of the above publications address: Mrs. Amy Ver Nooy, Secretary, Dutchess County Historical Society, Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

SECRETARY'S MINUTES

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FEBRUARY 21, 1956

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Dutchess County Historical Society was held on Tuesday afternoon, February 21, 1956, at the Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie.

Present: President Van Wyck, Mr. Briggs, Mr. Buck, Mrs. Daniels, Mr. Emsley, Mr. Guernsey, Mr. Halstead, Dr. MacCracken, Mr. Mylod, Dr. Nixon, the curator, the treasurer and the secretary.

The president called the meeting to order and Mrs. Buchanan, the new curator, was introduced and welcomed.

The secretary explained that, in November, a circular letter had been sent by the Poughkeepsie chapter of the Junior League to a selected list of persons, which included the members of the Dutchess County Historical Society, soliciting gifts of furniture and furnishings which might be appropriate for use in the Glebe House. The Dutchess County Historical Society had been asked to pay one-half of the cost of this appeal. On motion, it was voted that the treasurer send a check

for \$11.00 to the chairman of the committee which sent out the letter.

It was reported that a gift of \$200 had been received from Mrs. Flagler Harris as a contribution to the furnishing fund of the Glebe House. The secretary was asked to write Mrs. Harris, expressing the appreciation of the Board of Trustees of the Dutchess County Historical Society.

It was explained that at a previous meeting the board had decided that money from the Helen Wilkinson Reynolds memorial fund be used to furnish one room at the Glebe House in memory of Miss Reynolds. It was decided that this room be furnished, in so far as possible, with articles which had been owned and used in Dutchess County and that an effort be made to have the room represent Miss Reynolds.

It was voted that Mr. Briggs, Mrs. Daniels and Dr. MacCracken, in addition to Miss Halstead and Mr. Hill, represent the historical society to work with a similar committee representing the Junior League in selecting

furnishings for the Glebe House. And, it was also voted that any expenditures from the Helen Wilkinson Reynolds memorial fund be approved by the trustees of the society, who would pass on each purchase.

The secretary said that members had asked if the dues of the society were deductible for income tax purposes. She was assured that the society was included among those organizations approved by both federal and state income tax regulations.

A letter, inviting this society to become a member of the Hudson River Conservation Society,

was read. No action was taken and the letter was placed on file.

Dr. MacCracken and Mrs. Daniels told of the seminars on local history conducted in Putnam County by Mr. Hillery. They recommended that something along similar lines might be started in Dutchess County.

The president said he would appoint a committee to arrange for a spring meeting and another committee to make plans for the annual pilgrimage.

On motion of Mr. Mylod, the meeting adjourned.

Amy Ver Nooy,
Secretary

ANNUAL MEETING

MAY 18, 1956

The annual meeting of the Dutchess County Historical Society was held on Friday, May 18, 1956, at the Nelson House, Poughkeepsie. The business meeting was called to order at 11:30 a. m. by the president.

The minutes of the semi-annual meeting, held October 21, 1955, and of a meeting of the Board of Trustees, held February 21, 1956, were read and approved.

The semi-annual report of the treasurer was read and Miss Traver also gave a report on the cur-

rent state of the treasury. These were accepted as read.

The secretary reported that the society had received a few resignations and had lost the following members by death: Mr. Willets DeGarmo, Mr. Lamont Dominick, Mrs. Vivian F. Downing, Mrs. W. J. Godding, Mr. Adolphus Hoch, Mrs. Levi S. Hover, Mr. Philip A. Mylod and Mrs. George B. Waterman.

Miss Halstead, of the Glebe House Committee, reported that a sideboard had been offered to

the society and she hoped it would be found suitable for use in the Glebe House. Inquiry was made if the furnishings for the house must be of the period before 1790, or if furniture of a later period would be acceptable. It was the opinion of those present that furnishings of the period in which the building was used as the Glebe House might be appropriate. This would be determined by the committee in charge of furnishing the house.

The curator had sent word that she would be unable to attend the meeting and there was no report.

And, there was no report of any move toward a settlement of the Caroline Thorn Wells estate.

It was reported that the treasurer had received a bill from the local chapter of the Junior League in the amount of \$120.00. It was explained that for more than twenty years the historical society had made an annual contribution of \$120.00 to the Junior League to help pay the insurance on the Glebe House. The last contribution was made in 1952 and during 1953 the society had expended \$2,719.12 in the rehabilitation of the house and had exhausted the Glebe House fund. (The Junior League had contrib-

uted \$850.00, making a total of \$3,569.12, expended in that year.) At this time the funds were so depleted that the publication of the year book was postponed and no contribution was made to the Junior League.

It was the consensus of opinion, after discussion, that this society did not wish to evade any responsibility in this matter, but should long ago have learned the amount necessary to maintain the Glebe House for a year and should assume a definite share of this expense. It was moved and seconded that the society make an effort to learn the annual cost of insurance and other expenses of running the Glebe House.

The secretary reported that Mr. Benjamin W. Frazier, president of the Putnam County Historical Society and president of Boscobel Restoration, Inc., had asked the Dutchess County Historical Society for endorsement of its project in an effort to preserve and restore the Staats Morris Dyckman home, called Boscobel. This mansion had been built in 1800, on a point of land overlooking the Hudson, at Crugers, New York, until the site was selected for the Franklin D. Roosevelt Veterans Hospital. The building had been sold to a house wrecker when the

Boscobel Restoration, Inc., was organized. The house was purchased and dismantled and is stored and ready to be re-assembled on a new site, a very pleasing location which has been purchased, on Route 9-D, about five miles north of the Bear Mountain Bridge. The new setting for Boscobel is very similar to its former site, on a high bluff, with sweeping views of the Hudson river to the south and will have in addition a wonderful view of West Point and Constitution Island to the west. The establishment of an educational museum in the building is planned.

Mr. Van Wyck reported that the trustees of the Dutchess County Historical Society had been pleased to endorse this very worthwhile project and asked the meeting for approval of this action. It was moved and seconded that the society confirm the action of the board of trustees in this endorsement.

The president stated that each year the terms of four trustees expire and asked for nominations for a group to serve the ensuing four years. Mr. Briggs nominated Dr. Chester O. Davison, General John Ross Delafield, Mr. Newton D. Deuel and Mr. Olin

Dows. The president called for any other nominations and, hearing none, requested the secretary to cast one ballot for the election of those proposed by Mr. Briggs.

The following new members were proposed and elected: Miss M. E. Gertrude Brasch, Mr. George L. Chindahl, Mr. G. Martin Coffyn, Mr. and Mrs. Everett N. Crosby, Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Dailey, Mrs. Lamont Dominick, Mrs. Robert Halsey Jackson, Mr. Stanley F. Kaminski, Mr. and Mrs. A. Robert Mitchell and Mrs. Earl Wright.

The president announced that the society had been invited to join with the Putnam County Historical Society in a pilgrimage to be held in that county in September and had appointed Mrs. Daniels to confer with the president of the Putnam County society in plans for such a trip.

Following a motion to adjourn, the members assembled in the dining room, where an excellent luncheon was served to more than a hundred persons.

After the luncheon, the president introduced a long-time member, Mr. Ralph T. Waterman, who showed a collection of delightful, colored slides and told about the native birds of this county.

On the conclusion of his talk, to come again.
Mr. Waterman was given a rising
vote of thanks and an invitation

Amy Ver Nooy,
Secretary

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

OCTOBER 26, 1956

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Dutchess County Historical Society was held on Friday morning, October 26, 1956, at the Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie.

Present: President Van Wyck, Mr. Buck, Mr. Cokkingham, Mrs. Daniels, Dr. Davison, Mr. Deuel, Miss Halstead, Dr. MacCracken and the treasurer and the secretary and Mrs. Charles H. Smith, representing the Junior League.

The president welcomed the new members of the board and called the meeting to order. It was voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes and the report of the treasurer, inasmuch as both would be given at the semi-annual business meeting to be held at 11:30 a. m.

The treasurer reported that the balance in the checking account would not pay the bills for the year book which was in the hands of the printer and should be dis-

tributed in November. After discussion, it was decided to pay those bills from the funds in the permanent account.

There was some discussion with reference to the bill in the amount of \$120 which had been received from the Junior League. Mrs. Smith explained the expenses connected with maintaining the Glebe House and it was decided that in 1957 this society would be able to contribute to this expense.

Mrs. Daniels reported that an old Dutch wardrobe was available and could be purchased for \$250. She recommended that it be obtained to help furnish the combination kitchen and living room which would be a memorial to Miss Reynolds. It was moved and seconded that this sum be expended from the Helen Wilkinson Reynolds memorial fund.

On motion, the meeting adjourned.

Amy Ver Nooy,
Secretary

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

OCTOBER 26, 1956

The semi-annual meeting of the Dutchess County Historical Society was held on Friday, October 26, at the Nelson House, Poughkeepsie.

The meeting was called to order at 11:30 a.m., and the minutes of the annual meeting, held May 18, 1956, were read and approved.

The treasurer gave the semi-annual report and stated that at the present date only \$211.28 remained in the checking account. Her report was accepted as read.

The secretary reported that the society had had four resignations and had lost the following members by death: Mr. Joseph Acker, Miss Elizabeth P. Bockee, Mr. Osborne V. Burlingame, Miss Mary Corliss, Mrs. Henry B. Nichols and Mrs. William C. Sproul.

The curator reported on the possessions of the society and listed several acquisitions. She suggested that an effort be made to obtain photographs of buildings, etc., in the county for the permanent collections of the society.

Mrs. Daniels reported on the pilgrimage and stated that many persons had told her that it was

the most enjoyable trip that had been made by the society in recent years. It was voted that the secretary write Mr. Frazier, telling him of the pleasure given this society and expressing the appreciation of its members.

Mention was made of the two books which have been published by officers of the society. Mrs. Hackett told something of *Membership in the Kingdom of God*, written by Mr. Leland H. Shaw and recommended it highly. Mr. Van Wyck stated that it had been some years since a history of the county had been written and congratulated Dr. MacCracken on his work and its happy title, *Old Dutchess Forever*. He urged the members of the society to read both books. Mention was made of a forthcoming book, *Bridges*, by Henry Billings and it was suggested as a possible Christmas gift for boys.

Dr. MacCracken spoke of the interest that young people have displayed in the history of the county and urged that plans be made for the formation of a junior historical society. He spoke of the work done by the groups of Yorkers under the guidance of

the New York State Historical Association. Dr. MacCracken and Mrs. Hackett were asked to serve as chairmen of a committee to work on such a project.

The names of the following new members were proposed and they were elected: Mrs. Ernest A. Acker, Mrs. Jonas Borak, Mrs. William Bronson, Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Bleeker Brown, Mr. Jesse Effron, Mr. and Mrs. Charles D. Eggert, Mr. Fred W. Haida, Mr. Richard Hillman, Professor Clair Leonard, Mr. Louis Mayer, Miss Emma Mewkill, Mr. Francis S. Peterson and Mrs. A. Leslie Ross.

Mr. Bisbee told of having met, in London in the 1920's, a member of the de Ferranti family who was interested in Mr. Bisbee's home city because his great-grandmother had been born in Poughkeepsie. Mr. Bisbee stated that he had renewed his acquaintance with members of the family dur-

ing the past summer and that they would be interested to discover the names of the parents of Sarah Myers, born February 16; 1799, in Poughkeepsie. Mr. Bisbee said he would be glad to transmit the information to his friends in England if any member of the society could supply the names of Sarah's parents.

On motion, the meeting adjourned to the dining room. After Mr. Hillery had asked the blessing, the members enjoyed an excellent luncheon.

Following the luncheon, the president introduced Mr. Godfrey Olsen, who gave a most interesting talk on the Schaghticoke Indians and showed slides illustrating his archeological work and some of the friends he had made among the Indians.

The meeting closed with a rising vote of thanks to Mr. Olsen.

Amy Ver Nooy,
Secretary

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

January 1, 1956 - June 30, 1956

PERMANENT ACCOUNT—Poughkeepsie Savings Bank

Balance on hand, January 1, 1956.....	\$ 8,545.53
Interest	123.28
Balance on hand June 30, 1956.....	\$ 8,668.81
CHECKING ACCOUNT—Poughkeepsie Trust Company	

Receipts

Balance on hand, January 1, 1956.....	\$ 303.33
Received from dues	954.00
Received from sale of books	15.00

\$ 1,272.33

Disbursements

Stamped envelopes for bills	\$ 17.63
Secretary	50.00
Treasurer	50.00
New York State Historical Association, membership	5.00
Contribution for letters sent for Glebe House	11.00
Lansing-Broas Printing Co., printing reply cards	10.45
Reply cards and postage	17.39
Rhinebeck Gazette, printing year book	525.00
Editing year book	200.00
Luncheon speaker	15.00
Nelson House, luncheon guest	2.00
Hyde Park Historical Association, membership	1.00
Postage on year book	25.00
Lansing-Broas Printing Co., binding year book	28.70
Copyright, year book	4.10
Mailing year book	15.00

\$ 977.27

Balance on hand, June 30, 1956 \$ 295.06

THE HELEN WILKINSON REYNOLDS MEMORIAL FUND

Poughkeepsie Savings Bank

Balance on hand, January 1, 1956	\$ 2,670.95
Gift	15.00
Gift	10.00
Interest	38.78

Balance on hand, June 30, 1956 \$ 2,734.73

Respectfully submitted,

Albertina T. B. Traver, *Treasurer*

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

JULY 1, 1956 - DECEMBER 31, 1956

PERMANENT ACCOUNT—Poughkeepsie Savings Bank

Balance on hand, July 1, 1956	\$ 8,668.81
Interest	125.26
	\$ 8,794.07
Transferred to checking account	700.00
	\$ 8,094.07

Balance on hand, December 31, 1956

CHECKING ACCOUNT—Poughkeepsie Trust Company

Receipts

Balance on hand, July 1, 1956	\$ 295.06
Received from dues	190.00
Transferred from Permanent Account	700.00
	\$ 1,185.06

Disbursements

Curator	\$ 50.00
Secretary	50.00
Treasurer	50.00
Lansing-Broas Printing Co., envelopes	12.10
Lansing-Broas Printing Co., printing reply cards	13.85
Mimeograph paper, postage, reply cards	27.83
Nelson House, luncheon guest	2.00
Luncheon speaker	15.00
Editing year book	200.00
Postage on year book	25.00
Envelopes for year book	36.00
Rhinebeck Gazette, printing year book	560.00
Copyright, year book	4.10
Lansing-Broas Printing Co., binding year book	33.60
Mailing year book	15.00
	\$ 1,094.48

Balance on hand, December 31, 1956

THE HELEN WILKINSON REYNOLDS MEMORIAL FUND

Poughkeepsie Savings Bank

Balance on hand, July 1, 1956	\$ 2,734.73
Gift	15.00
Gift	10.00
Gift	5.00
Gift	15.00
Interest	39.70
	\$ 2,819.43

Marjorie T. Plunkett, chest for Glebe House

250.00

Balance on hand, December 31, 1956

\$ 2,569.43

Respectfully submitted, Albertina T. B. Traver, *Treasurer*

OUR PRESIDENT SAYS:

When the time comes for me to address the membership of our society through the year book, I am always glad to go over those pleasant things which have happened to us as residents, in fact or in spirit, of "The Dutchess's County." Often as I ride over its roads, stopping now and again to enjoy some particularly beautiful sight—a tree in new leaf or in the splendor of fall coloring, a tiny stream with a fringe of ice on its sides, an orchard in full bloom or heavy with fruit, a field of grain rippling in the summer breeze, or the same field with a fresh blanket of snow, dazzling in the winter sunshine—I recall Miss Helen W. Reynolds' fervent expression, "It's a *good* land!"

* * *

We were pleased to have as speakers at our spring and fall meetings two young men who have done considerable work and who are authorities in their own separate fields. Mr. Ralph T. Waterman, at a meeting held in May, told of our native birds and showed slides which pictured many of them in color. At the meeting held in October, Mr. Godfrey Olsen told of the archaeological work he had done and showed many slides illustrating the search for artifacts and told much about the Indians of this area, especially the Schaghticokes. The talks were interesting and informative and were much appreciated by all who attended these meetings.

* * *

Those members who had the good fortune to take part in the joint pilgrimage in Putnam County, arranged by Mr Frazier, had a most enjoyable treat. Only those persons who have arranged such a tour can appreciate the tremendous amount of work done by our neighbor. The trip was planned to help raise funds for the restoration of Boscobel. Since that time we have read of a single gift of \$50,000 toward this objective. We sincerely congratulate Mr. Frazier on a well-arranged tour and on the recent contribution to his restoration fund.

We were pleased to endorse the request that the Clinton House in Poughkeepsie be continued as one of the historic houses maintained by the state of New York. This house is in good repair, its background has been authenticated and it is the only state-supported museum on the east side of the Hudson between Yonkers and Albany. In the care of the D. A. R. for more than fifty years, it has survived and it is the hope of the Dutchess County Historical Society that it will continue for many years longer.

* * *

We were pleased to be able to find in the register of the Reformed Dutch Church of Poughkeepsie that Sally, the daughter of Peter Myers and Hepsibeth Everit, was born February 16, 1799, and was baptized April 14, 1799. Her descendants in England were happy to learn the names of her parents.

* * *

We are glad to note that our affectionately esteemed "Uncle Ben" Haviland has been honored in that the new junior high school of Hyde Park has been named the Haviland School. Mr. Haviland is a vice-president of this society, representing his township, and is well deserving the honor bestowed upon him

* * *

I am reminded again to entreat you to set down those old sayings that you've heard all your life and have never seen in print. And, write out the versions you have heard of those stories of your neighborhood which have developed into real folk tales. They would be an invaluable addition to Dutchess County folklore and should be preserved.

Edmund Van Wyck

THE ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE

One of the most delightful pilgrimages held in recent years was held on September 22, 1956. In celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Putnam County Historical Society, Mr. Benjamin W. Frazier, president of that organization, arranged a tour in Putnam County to which the members of neighboring historical societies were invited.

The plan, as outlined by Mr. Frazier, proposed that the pilgrims gather at the Bird & Bottle Inn between 10:30 a.m. and noon. This allowed for a staggering of groups and prevented a serious congestion of cars at any one stopping place. His program included visits to the following historic and scenic spots:

BIRD & BOTTLE INN: Famous pre-Revolutionary inn, restored by Charles and Constance Stearns in 1940 and again conducted as an inn. Fine old building in a delightful, brookside setting.

SAUNDERS HOUSE: From the Inn south on the Old Albany Post Road—the first road put through from New York to Albany during the French and Indian Wars, this section still remaining as unspoiled as when first opened. House of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Saunders a small pre-Revolutionary tavern or ordinary at which stage-coaches changed horses. Attractively situated by a beaver dam in the midst of rolling fields.

"SOLDIER'S FORTUNE": Home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Forster occupying the site of the Revolutionary camp of the New Hampshire militia, the area even then known as "Soldier's Fortune." An attractive old farm house, added to and enlarged on several occasions, beautifully furnished and landscaped.

PATTERSON HOUSE: On Route 9-D, just south of Cold-Spring-on-Hudson. Fine house of Greek Revival period with a superb view of West Point and the Hudson, built by painter of the Hudson River School, Thomas Rossiter. This property adjoins Boscobel's new site and has a similar view.

LUNCH: On the Patterson lawns or porches. Please bring your own box lunch. The Historical Society will provide tea, coffee, etc.

CONSTITUTION ISLAND: Proceed to Garrison dock from the Patterson house where a launch leaves for Constitution Island every half hour. Interesting ride on the River past West Point to Constitution Island, the parent of West Point since it was the first place fortified during the Revolution. The Warner house, "Wood Crag," on the Island was in part a Revolutionary barracks where Benedict Arnold had his office. The home for many years of the Warner sisters and a literary shrine, very attractively furnished with the Warners' original possessions—a fascinating, away-from-the-busy-world setting with lawns down to the River's edge. The house is maintained by the Constitution Island Association and is the only house in Putnam County regularly opened to the public.

"CASTLE ROCK": Last launch will leave the Island at 4:30 P. M. On returning to Garrison dock proceed to "Castle Rock" where Mr. and Mrs. A.

Perry Osborn, Jr. have kindly invited everyone for refreshments. "Castle Rock," an extraordinary "Rhine castle" on a mountain top, has fine furnishings and the view from it is probably the most spectacularly beautiful in eastern North America.

It was a day long to be remembered. The plans worked out to perfection, the weather was ideal and the foliage still lovely in its fall colors. In the late afternoon, after a day which surpassed anticipation, the pilgrims left for their homes.



CONCERT AND EXHIBITION,

At the Village Hall, Monday and Tuesday, June 11th and 12th, Mr. Coleman will give a Concert and Exhibition of his celebrated Automaton Lady Minstrel. The lady will perform several of the most popular airs and accompaniments alone, and accompanied by Mr. Coleman. Mr. C. will also introduce several other attractions; such as the singing Canary Bird, Serpent, Dog, and Coach and Horses,—for descriptions of which see small bills. Mr. Coleman will perform Overtures and Airs on his newly improved Chromatic Accordion, in which he will give imitations of the Trumpet, Bugle, Aeolian Harp, etc.

Doors open at half past 7 o'clock—performance commencing at 8. Tickets 25 cents, to be had at G. Nagell's Book and Music Store, and at the door.

Poughkeepsie Eagle, June 9, 1838.

THE WHALING INDUSTRY IN POUGHKEEPSIE (1830-1845)

'Tis advertised in Boston, New York and Buffalo,
Five hundred brave Americans, a-whaling for to go,
Singing, Blow, ye winds in the morning,
And, blow, ye winds, high-o!
Clear away your running gear,
And blow, ye winds, high-o! ¹

In 1830, songs like this were sung from Portland, Maine, to Wilmington, Delaware. For this was the era when nearly every town on America's eastern coast contributed a few boats to the fleet; this was the Golden Age of Whaling. Whaling, an active business in the eighteenth century, had come almost to a standstill during the War of 1812. But now, with peace restored and an increasing demand in Europe and the United States for whale oil, the industry revived and spread. In 1815, the United States had exported 3,944 barrels of spermaceti oil (a particularly valuable type of whale oil); by 1831, exports increased to 110,000 barrels.² As the Portland *Advertiser* said in 1833 (and quoted in the *Poughkeepsie Telegraph* November 6, of that year), "The whole country is arming itself against the poor whales."

Nor was the industry restricted merely to coastal towns. Up the Hudson River, enterprising businessmen watched huge profits coming into New Bedford, Sag Harbor, etc., and decided that whaling was a venture worth investing in. First to try was Hudson, New York. Founded by refuge-seeking Nantucketers during the Revolution, she had engaged in whaling for a few years and then, like other ports, gradually turned to other activities. Now, with whaling a steadily growing industry, she was quick to pick it up again.

Hudson's success caught the eye of other towns along the river and, in 1832, Poughkeepsie, too, became a whaling port. On April 20, the state legislature passed a law stating that a group of Poughkeepsie men "for the purpose of engaging in the whale fishery in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and for the manufacture of oil and spermaceti candles, are hereby constituted a body corporate, by name the Poughkeepsie Whaling Company."³

The new company was joyfully received by Poughkeepsie's newspapers and the editors vied with each other in the warmth and enthu-

siasm of their approval. The *Telegraph* of June 13, 1832, commented:

We have never known a better spirit and feeling to prevail. All interests were united and together form one of the most respectable and substantial companies we have ever known. We feel that this effort on the part of our citizens augurs well for the advancing prosperity of the village and county.

The *Dutchess Intelligencer and Republican*, usually a bitter opponent of the *Telegraph*, in its issue of May 15, 1833, reinforced its rival's remarks, concluding with the ringing announcement, "There is no place in the United States possessing greater advantages for fitting out ships and carrying on the whale fishery than Poughkeepsie."

When the company's stock went on sale, June 7, 1832, Poughkeepsie businessmen showed an equal enthusiasm. Although only \$50,000 was needed in order to begin operations, \$200,000 was promptly subscribed and the list of stockholders (as published in the *Telegraph* of June 13) contained the names of nearly every prominent citizen in the village.

What explanation is there for Poughkeepsie's strong approval of such an unlikely project as a whaling port seventy-five miles from the ocean? The village had no tradition of whaling, like Hudson, to encourage her; nor was it necessary for her, like Nantucket, to go to this expense and effort in order to survive. Her ancestors had made their money from agriculture and with this, plus an increasing amount of manufacturing, she was not at a loss for sources of income. Why venture into an industry for which she had no training, no equipment and no geographical excuse?

For one thing, the objections which are commonly raised against whaling from a river port are not all valid. The fact that Poughkeepsie was not near the ocean was considered a handicap but, as Walter Earle of the Cold Spring Harbor Whaling Museum says, "Time meant little to a whaler. A voyage ended only when a full cargo was obtained or when interrupted by a cause not foreseeable at the start."⁴ Since almost all the ships sailed to the Pacific and were gone for three or four years, the additional distance of seventy-five miles up the river made little difference.

The fact that Poughkeepsie was not near a place where the whale oil could be processed and that the river was frozen for part of every winter were more serious problems, but even these were not insurmount-

able. The Whaling Company planned to do the processing itself by manufacturing the oil in Poughkeepsie, then shipping it down the Hudson to New York to be sold. This plan required the building of a factory but the profits resulting from it would justify the expense. As for the navigation problem, the river was never frozen for more than three months, usually less, and if necessary the whaler could sell its crude oil in New York and wait till spring to return to Poughkeepsie.

These facts explain why whaling from Poughkeepsie was not an impossibility, but they do not account for the extreme enthusiasm which greeted the venture. To understand this, we must first consider the really enormous profits whaling was bringing to the other towns which had taken it up. *The North American Review*, in the early 1830's commenting on this rapidly expanding industry, was quoted in the *Poughkeepsie Journal* of January 22, 1834: "If the voyages prove successful, and if prices remain as high, the annual income for the four coming years will be more than six millions of dollars." Whaling, in other words, was not merely a dreamers' project, but a booming industry, an investment which promised huge returns.

In addition, one cannot leave out completely the element of romance. Not just the profits appealed to these Poughkeepsie businessmen, but also the adventure and excitement of sending a fleet of ships across the ocean to such places as Tombez, Payta, Fayal and the Galapagos Islands. This poem, from the *Poughkeepsie Casket*, expresses the glamour which must have touched the investors, whether or not they ever set foot on one of the company's boats:

The ocean's child! when thunders mock
The broad, upheaving giant sea,
His hardy strength outlives the blast
And guides the helm right manfully;
His arm the tattered canvass furls
While o'er his head the lightning curls!
Wave-worn and toss'd upon the surge,
Fainting with toil and wan with care,
He braves the wintry tempests' strife;
And makes his dwelling everywhere.
Nor midnight gales nor clouds restrain
His onward course across the main! ⁵

For the Poughkeepsie businessman, then, the prospect of making large profits in an unusual and exciting industry was an attractive one. What Carl Carmer calls "the dreamland of Hyorky and the vision of

big profits marching quick-time”⁶ combined to make whaling an extremely popular venture.

Yet, even with these inducements, an impetus was needed. There had to be a few men who first conceived the idea, who would explain its advantages to others and who would not lose interest after the first set-back. The men who backed the Poughkeepsie Whaling Company were an outstandingly enterprising and vigorous group, and it is because of them that the company gained real status in Poughkeepsie. In the first place, they were almost all active and prosperous citizens, already identified with success and insight in business. Among the directors of the company, James Hooker was a highly respected lawyer and participant in local politics; Thomas L. Davies was one of the leading members and supporters of Christ Church; Matthew Vassar was a wealthy businessman and Walter Cunningham was the most extensive real estate dealer in Poughkeepsie.⁷ Considerable stock was held by the notary public, the warden of Christ Church, the vice-president of the Poughkeepsie Savings Bank, the cashier of the Bank of Poughkeepsie, the publisher of the weekly *Poughkeepsie Journal*, the treasurer of Dutchess County, the postmaster of Poughkeepsie and State Senator Tallmadge, who was later a United States Senator.

Even more important than the individual influence of these men, however, was the fact that most of them were active members of the Improvement Party, a group which for a decade or more after 1830 was the moving force in Poughkeepsie's economic, social and political life. Originally the term, “Improvement Party,” had been used by the newspapers to denote the group of men who were strongly interested in expanding Poughkeepsie's streets and public buildings. But, as the party's aims increased, it came to have a wider significance. What had started as an interest in municipal beautification became a steady drive towards achieving political and commercial importance for Poughkeepsie. And, because its members held prominent positions in nearly all the important banks, industries, public offices and publications of the village, the Improvement Party had enormous influence and was able to implement its policies at every level.

One must not assume, however, that the people of Poughkeepsie resisted the aims of the Improvement Party. In spite of increased taxes,

they were generally in favor of the new program and it is not surprising that this was so. During the years from 1830 to 1840 the party surveyed, laid out, mapped and named forty new streets, and built a reservoir, a new brewery, a thousand-foot dock and bulkhead, a silk factory, a new market and village hall, one Baptist, one Catholic, one Presbyterian and two Episcopal churches, a large coach factory, a young ladies' seminary, a collegiate school for boys, two banks and a new postoffice.⁸ That the citizens of Poughkeepsie approved these measures can be seen from the municipal elections records. The village was run by an annually-elected board of four trustees and a president and, in every year from 1831 to 1838, the president and two out of four trustees were members of the Improvement Party.⁹ As one more project of these men, the whaling company profited from the success of the other ventures and from the steadily increasing importance of the directors.

In order to sustain the enthusiasm the new company had aroused, however, it was necessary to begin operations rapidly. According to the laws of its charter, the capital stock of \$200,000 was divided into shares of \$50 each, of which only \$5.00 had to be paid at the time of subscription.¹⁰ The directors could call for the remaining \$45.00 whenever they wished and, on September 12, 1832, six months after the original sale of stock, they announced that \$7.50 more must be paid on each share by the end of October.

The reason for this second assessment was made clear when it was announced in the *Journal*, September 19, 1832, that the *Vermont*, "a good and substantial vessel," had just been bought and was to be fitted for a voyage to the South Pacific in search of sperm whale. On October 24, 1832, Captain Barnard of New Bedford, who had been hired as the company's agent, announced that on the following Saturday citizens of Poughkeepsie could see the boats of the *Vermont*, "completely fitted out as they are, and prepared to pursue a whale, with Harpoons, Lines, &c., &c." The *Vermont* sailed the following week and the *Journal* described her departure in its next issue:

The *Vermont*, the first whale ship fitted out by the Poughkeepsie Whaling Company, took her departure yesterday morning, under a National Salute fired from a field piece placed on an adjacent eminence, accompanied by the cheers and good wishes of a number of our citizens, who had assembled for the occasion.

Scarcely more than a month after the sailing of the *Vermont*, a second ship, the *Siroc*, was bought by the Whaling Company and it was announced that she would be fitted out during the winter, to sail "at the opening of spring."

During the winter the company as such did nothing to attract public notice but, through the four weekly newspapers, the village was constantly reminded of the advantages to be gained from whaling. There was not material for this sort of information in Poughkeepsie as yet, so the editors searched elsewhere. News of successful voyages from Hudson, Newburgh, Norwich and New Bedford, items about whaling from other newspapers and magazines, even jokes about whales were used to keep the industry in the public eye. The fact that the newspaper which dwelt most frequently on whaling was the *Journal*—published by Paraclete Potter, one of the charter members of the whaling company (and an active member of the Improvement Party)—reminds one again of what wide resources were available to the company's directors and what extensive use they made of them.

By April of 1833, there was news about whaling in Poughkeepsie again. On the tenth of that month, the *Telegraph* recounted the sailing of the *Siroc*:

..... The wind was from the north and she spread her canvass to it, and went off finely. We wish to the officers and crew sound health and a prosperous voyage and if these should be their fortune, the company of course will come in for a share of the profits.

Perhaps to ensure these profits, the same issue carried a request from Alexander Forbus, treasurer of the company, that a further \$6.25 be paid on each share of stock.

The end of the month brought even more noteworthy news, for on April 30, the State legislature passed a law incorporating another whaling company in Poughkeepsie, this one called the Dutchess Whaling Company.¹¹ The press greeted the new corporation warmly, though not as effusively as its predecessor. The *Telegraph*, of October 9, concluded its felicitations to the new company with the words:

..... We are glad that some of the largest stockholders are equally interested in [both companies] and that whilst a healthy emulation will thus be created between the two, they will, at the same time, be of essential service to each other.

Whether this was strictly correct is difficult to ascertain. It is true that of the eleven charter members of the Dutchess Whaling Company, seven had been stockholders in the Poughkeepsie company, but whether they continued to be active members of both groups is not certain. There are no specific records to settle this question but the list of directors of the Poughkeepsie company, as published in the *Eagle* of January 14, 1835, and incidental references to its presidents and treasurers, 1835-1837, show that not one member of the Dutchess company was taking an active part in the business of the Poughkeepsie company. Some may have continued to hold stock in both, but their main interests were probably concentrated in only one company.

During the summer, however, the Poughkeepsie company was the more noticeably active group. Early in June, it was announced that the company had bought a third boat, the *Elbe*, and through most of July it could be seen at the company's dock at the foot of Main street, being fitted out for an August sailing. A New Bedford ship, returning home, reported encountering the *Vermont* off Cape Horn. The *Telegraph*, of July 31, 1833, commented that "it must have been early in the season," which probably meant that as yet she had no cargo. A later report, in the *Intelligencer* of September 18, 1833, that the ship's Captain Norton was in Payta, a favorite whalers' port in Peru, indicated that he had successfully rounded the Horn and sailed up the coast of South America as far as necessary before turning due west for the whaling grounds.

On August 14, 1833, the *Elbe* sailed, under Captain Whippey and, although no cannons were fired this time, the four Poughkeepsie newspapers announced the ship's departure and wished her well.

In the fall of 1833, the Dutchess Whaling Company came into evidence again. Her new officers were announced and they were an impressive group. The president was Nathaniel P. Tallmadge, newly elected United States senator, as well as a vestryman and active supporter of Christ Church. Later Tallmadge was also a candidate for vice-president of the United States and a director of the Bank of Poughkeepsie. Vice-president was George P. Oakley, one of Christ Church's staunchest members, cashier of the Bank of Poughkeepsie and a director of the Poughkeepsie Silk Company. Jacob Van Benthuyzen, the treasurer, was postmaster of Poughkeepsie, Examiner in Chancery,

a village trustee for several years and a director of the silk company. Needless to say, all three were members of the Improvement Party. The agent, David S. Sherman (sometimes spelled Shareman and Shearman), had come from New Bedford and where whaling was concerned that was recommendation enough.

On behalf of the Dutchess Whaling Company, Tallmadge bought ten acres of land along the Hudson for \$6,000¹² and the construction of a dock was planned for the following spring. Apparently the Poughkeepsie company was not satisfied with its location because, soon after the Dutchess company's dock was planned, the Poughkeepsie company arranged to lease half of it. This was undoubtedly more convenient, since the two companies could use the same equipment, and although the move may indicate that the Poughkeepsie company could not afford to keep its own dock, it probably does not. A little later in the spring, in the *Journal* of April 9, 1834, the Dutchess company advertised the southern half of the dock to let, so presumably the two companies had agreed to share the northern half.

Meanwhile, things were not going ideally for the Poughkeepsie company. No news had been heard from the *Vermont* or the *Elbe* since the previous fall, and it was probably about this time that word reached Poughkeepsie about the wrecking of the *Siroc*. No newspaper published an account of this catastrophe and authorities differ about the location, extent and date of the wreck, but it probably occurred near the Cape of Good Hope in the fall of 1833. The boat was sold at Simonstown on the Cape of Good Hope, according to most accounts, and if, as Platt, holds, it was wrecked and rebuilt in Valparaiso, Chile, it is highly unlikely that it would have had to sail to South Africa to be sold. Also, since the wreck probably occurred seven or eight months after the *Siroc* sailed from Poughkeepsie, it would be surprising if she had proceeded no farther than Chile in that length of time. The *Journal* of August 10, 1836, and October 14, 1840, cites instances of ships returning from or going to the whaling grounds in about one hundred days. This rate was apparently not considered exceptional. The *Siroc* had been gone from Poughkeepsie well over two hundred days.

As the Poughkeepsie company suffered various set-backs, the Dutchess company grew increasingly busy and successful. Its ascending status

could be seen in the heightened interest shown by the newspapers toward it in the spring of 1834. Paraclete Potter had become a director of the company and, although he had sold the *Journal* the previous fall, that paper continued to be the most unflagging admirer of the new company's activities. The tone of the following article, from the issue of April 9, 1834, indicates that the spirit of civic improvement was what impressed, not only the *Journal* but also the other newspapers of the village, and that the Dutchess company seemed particularly imbued with this spirit. Apropos of the new whaling dock, the *Journal* said:

. . . . We are pleased to learn that the contractors who have agreed to construct the new Whaling Company's dock, have about sixty hands actively engaged in prosecuting that important work. They impart quite a bustling and animating appearance to that section of town. Indeed, it is gratifying to perceive that the spirit of improvement is vigorously prosecuting its onward march in almost every section of the village.

A few months later, on June 4, 1834, when the Dutchess' first ship, the *New England*, arrived from New Bedford to be fitted and provisioned, the *Journal* said:

. . . . The company are prosecuting their operations generally with praiseworthy energy and justify the expectation that they will succeed in building up an important branch of business at this place which will prove profitably to those immediately interested and greatly beneficial to the community.

The *New England* sailed in July, this time for the South Atlantic, and by October she sent word from the Azores that she had already gotten two whales and that "the crew were all in good health and fine spirits."

Early in 1835, the Poughkeepsie company's *Vermont* returned from her voyage, bringing with her \$16,000 worth of oil.¹³ More exciting than the cargo, however, was the fact that the first Poughkeepsie whaler had made a successful voyage around the world. This seemed to be an endorsement of all the hopes and promises of the whaling companies.

Over even this triumph of the Poughkeepsie company there hung a shadow—the death of the *Vermont*'s Captain Norton. Little information was given out and the official log-book merely said that he died in 1835.¹⁴ Platt, in his history of Poughkeepsie, disagrees and says that the crew mutinied and killed the captain. According to Carl Carmer, and also a writer in the magazine, *Adventure*,¹⁵ Norton was stabbed by

a malcontent sailor, not a mutinous crew. Although the latter authorities sound less reliable (and one may have been copied from the other), their story seems most likely, while the log-book's version could be a glossing over of the actual facts and Platt's an exaggeration.

No mention of the disaster was made in the newspapers, but it is reasonable to assume that whatever rumors there were did nothing to help the Poughkeepsie company's standing.

Except for this shadow, however, 1835 was a high point in Poughkeepsie's prosperity. In addition to the constant editorials in the *Telegraph* and the *Journal*, praising the industry of the village, its imagination and spirit, there began to appear reprints from other cities' newspapers commenting on Poughkeepsie's progress. The *Western Banner*, published at Auburn, New York, and quoted in the *Journal* of February 10, 1835, said:

We believe no other village in the State possesses a greater share of enterprise, or is more generally prosperous, than Poughkeepsie. Its inhabitants are intelligent, industrious and exceedingly courteous. Its location (beautiful and healthy) is admirably calculated to secure an extensive trade and its business character is such as to command the confidence of all.

Tooker and Hait, a firm of ship-builders which had been established on the newly-constructed whale dock, were busy laying the keel of a new boat and rebuilding the recently-purchased *Newark* for the Dutchess company. In June, the Poughkeepsie's *Vermont* sailed again, this time for the South Atlantic, and in the fall the Dutchess company's *Newark* sailed for the Pacific. The Dutchess' *New England* sent word from Peru that she had 1,100 barrels of oil and expected a full cargo soon.

Through 1836, too, the situation remained stable. In New York the price of whale oil climbed steadily, until in late summer it surpassed all previous records. The papers in Poughkeepsie ran every word of news from the whalers and continued to intersperse with it any other available items about whaling, such as import statistics, sailors' memoirs and even one illuminating article on the parental affection of the whale.

The *Elbe* and the *Vermont* bolstered the prospects of the Poughkeepsie company by sending reports of growing cargoes and hopeful conditions at sea. Newspapers attributed the improved state of things

to Captain Sherman who had become agent for the Poughkeepsie as well as the Dutchess company, but he had been appointed in 1834 and the company's strokes of bad luck had not abated till late 1836. Moreover, as one considers the mishaps which befell the company—loss of ships, a captain dying under dubious circumstances, unexpected competition within the village—it seems that very little of the misfortune could have been averted by a different agent.

If the Poughkeepsie company were again moving toward success, the Dutchess company was galloping toward it. The *New England* returned in August, 1836, with a cargo valued at \$50,000, the next week the *Newark* sent word that she would soon have a full cargo and the *Nathaniel P. Tallmadge* (named for Senator Tallmadge, the company's president) was launched for the Pacific a few days later. The *New England* set out again in December and it seemed as if there could be nothing in the future but even greater prosperity.

The same growth and optimism were evident in all phases of Poughkeepsie life. A population report showed that Poughkeepsie was the only village in Dutchess County which had had a steady gain in population every year from 1810 to 1835. According to the *Journal* of December 21, 1836, other towns had increased, then decreased, but Poughkeepsie had grown constantly, so that in 1835 she had 8,529 people—almost double her population in 1810. Every project thrived and the *Journal's* editorial, entitled "Growth of Poughkeepsie," expresses what must have been felt by most of the people of the village. Concluding a resume of all the businesses in Poughkeepsie, the article (March 9, 1836) says:

. . . . It is these operations, together with the whaling business and the prosperous condition of the country generally, which have given a new impulse to the town, and caused it to be so deservedly noted for its enterprize and public spirit, and for its rapid growth and substantial prosperity. And it should be borne in mind that with all our extended business operations, there has not occurred in the village a single failure of any importance in the last three years. Our businessmen, sustained by our well-managed banks and by mutual support extend their enterprizes and prosecute their plans with unwavering confidence and uniform success.

This editorial, so full of confidence and optimism, could perhaps be considered the swansong of Poughkeepsie's first industrial prosperity, for in 1837, came a nation-wide financial panic. Banks closed, com-

panies failed, markets plunged. This depression did no fundamental and lasting damage to Poughkeepsie's economy, but it was a cloud in a sky which until then had had nothing but sun. Never again was there the boundless optimism, the resilient self-confidence which existed in the first decade of Poughkeepsie's industrial development.

The change in outlook did not come overnight; indeed, the people in whom it occurred were probably not even conscious of it. To them it seemed that the country as a whole was having a bad time financially and that they were coming out of it in better condition than other places. But the very concept of economic depression and business failure was one which had not been extant since Poughkeepsie began its industrialization. Again the papers are a good mirror of public opinion. In 1837, they began to run jokes about the hard times, reprinted from other periodicals. The editorials changed from praising Poughkeepsie's prosperity to urging fortitude. The weekly financial news from the New York markets, carried by all the village papers, constantly reiterated the dreary state of things, particularly during the spring of 1837, when the plunge was worst: May 3, "The market is as dull as it can possibly be;" May 24, ". . . . dull as before. . . . ;" June 14, "But very little doing. . . . "

It was inevitable that this general trend should touch the whale oil market and for a time it did. In the spring of 1837, the price of right whale oil per gallon went from fifty cents to twenty-eight cents. This decline was not long-lived however, and even before the rest of the market had recovered, the price of oil started a steady climb again. That demand was still small even when the price went up again can be seen from an item which the *Telegraph* reprinted December 27, 1837, from the *Geneva Gazette*:

The business men of Poughkeepsie have resolved to close their shops at 8 o'clock p.m. This is a good move. A portion of time will thus be set apart for mental improvement, and the merchant will have more time to attend to his domestic concerns. Besides this, there would be in these dull times, a saving of oil, for there is scarcely enough sold in an evening to pay for this single item.

Although many whaling companies, the Dutchess company among them, weathered the storm, however, the panic was the final blow for the Poughkeepsie company. It now had only two ships and both these—the *Elbe* and the *Vermont*—returned home in the spring of 1837. Each

had a cargo which would have brought in a good profit six months earlier or later. But with both ships arriving at the moment when whale oil was going for about half of its usual price, the company lost a considerable sum of money.

A few days after the return of the second ship, the *Elbe*, the newspapers carried an announcement that there would be a meeting of all the stockholders of the Poughkeepsie company "on business of importance to the company." No records of that meeting are available but the results of it can be seen in the notice which ran in the *Telegraph* of May 31, 1837:

Vessels at Auction—The Poughkeepsie Whaling Company will sell at Auction at their wharf in Poughkeepsie, on the tenth day of June next at 2:00 p.m. the Ship *Elbe*, burthen about 341 Tons, with her tackle, furniture and whaling apparatus as she lies discharged for a whaling voyage to the Pacific.

Also the Barque *Vermont*, burthen about 292 Tons, with her tackle, furniture and whaling apparatus as she lies discharged for a whaling voyage.

Both vessels are copper fastened. The *Vermont* was new sheathed and coppered about two years since, it is now in good order and can be sent on a right whale voyage at small expense.

With this auction, the Poughkeepsie Whaling Company died. Elections for officers of the company were held that December as usual and it was not until September of 1838 that Alexander Forbus, its treasurer, was appointed receiver of the company, but a whaling company with few stockholders, little credit and no ships is too crippled to mend its fortunes and from May 1837, the way led straight down.

The Poughkeepsie company's *Elbe* and *Vermont* were bought by the Dutchess company and the *Vermont* was launched almost immediately. The *New England*, the *Newark* and the *Nathaniel P. Tallmadge*, the Dutchess company's other ships, meanwhile sent cheerful messages from the Pacific, reporting constantly growing cargoes.

In June, 1838, the *Elbe* sailed and then for the rest of the summer there was no whaling news. Poughkeepsie's attitude toward its whaling company had changed, and the fact that between June and October 1838, for the first time the village papers made no mention of whaling is an example of the new attitude. The village was still full of praise for each successful voyage, but between voyages it forgot about whaling. In the early 1830's every message from the ships gave rise

to newspaper editorials full of admiration for the enterprise and industry of the crew, the company and Poughkeepsie itself. Every barrel of oil brought back from the Pacific seemed further proof that Poughkeepsie was a unique community, composed of indefatigable men and destined for unlimited success. With the panic of 1837 and the failure of many companies, including the Poughkeepsie Whaling Company, the general village attitude became more cautious, more skeptical and less optimistic. A good cargo of whale oil meant something in dollars and cents but it wasn't necessarily a promise of boundless good luck in the future. This view caused the Dutchess company to receive less publicity when ships returned, and to be almost unheard of while all the ships were at sea.

Once again, however, Providence showed a miraculous sense of timing in the affairs of the Dutchess company. Just when public interest seemed totally on the wane, "Jack Cade," of the New York Evening Post, wrote an editorial (quoted in the *Journal* of October 10, 1838), blasting Senator Nathaniel P. Tallmadge's economic policy and saying it was dictated by the Senator's own vested interests in a number of speculations such as the Dutchess Whaling Company and others backed by Tallmadge's colleagues in the Improvement Party. These speculations, said Cade, would be the ruin of the nation's financial stability. Immediately a whirlwind of objections arose from Whig newspapers all over New York State, and, in a Whig community like Poughkeepsie, the Dutchess company profited merely by being attacked so vigorously by a member of the other party. That was not the end of the company's good luck, however, for only three days later the *Vermont* returned to New York with a full and valuable cargo. At any other time this arrival would have rated only a paragraph in one or two of the Poughkeepsie papers, but now it became a rallying-cry for Tallmadge's political supporters. Whig newspapers throughout the state defended Tallmadge and his party's projects, particularly the whaling company. The *Hudson River Chronicle* wrote:

Mr. Tallmadge's Speculations—One of Senator Tallmadge's speculations complained of by the Loco Focos, was the chartering of a whale company in Poughkeepsie. The ship, *Vermont*, belonging to one of the Poughkeepsie companies has just come in with \$30,000 worth of oil. Three more are on the way home, belonging to Poughkeepsie. These arrivals will materially reduce the price of the necessary article.

Oh! the rascally speculators! Only think! \$30,000 worth of oil taken by speculators from the Loco Focos of Davy Jones' Locker! It's too bad! Tallmadge ought to be banished and we should not wonder if the People of Poughkeepsie were to lynch him for bringing these awful speculations upon them. It is a monopoly in which the whales find all the stock and are prohibited from a participation in the benefits of the dividend.

This was quoted in the *Journal* of October 31 and a few weeks later, as quoted in the *Journal* of November 7, the *New York Times* reprinted a Poughkeepsie account of the *Vermont*'s joyous return, prefacing it with the description: "Further developments of the disastrous consequences to the country from the speculations and monopolies of Senator Tallmadge." The *Journal* had also quoted, October 10, 1838, a comment from the *Evening Journal of New York*:

The *Vermont*, one of the Poughkeepsie whale ships, has returned from a fourteen-month voyage with a full cargo of oil, valued at \$30,000. This is one of the Evils of Speculation. \$30,000 fished up from out of the deep, deep sea! Will the People tolerate such things?

Reinvigorated by the strong endorsement it had received, the Dutchess Company sent out the *Vermont* again almost as soon as she was unloaded. But then once more there was nothing to do but sit and wait for the ships to come home. In the spring of 1839, the *New England* returned, followed shortly by the *Newark*, and as usual they came at a good time. A few weeks later the price of oil went down sharply but in May it was still higher than it had been since 1837. The *New England*, loaded chiefly with bone, brought about \$20,000, while the *Newark* had a cargo valued at \$63,000. The "Financial News" of the *Journal*, May 22, 1839, commented: "She arrived at a most auspicious time and as oil is now so high will make rich returns to her owners and crew." Thus encouraged, the Dutchess company bought another ship, this one called the *Factor*, from Boston, and in June she set sail for New Zealand, followed a little later by the *New England* and the *Newark*.

But times had changed. The village's attitude, altered by the panic of 1837, was becoming less and less favorable to investment. On October of 1839, the following editorial appeared in the *Poughkeepsie Casket*, a literary magazine:

Improvements.—Now that the madness of late speculations has ceased, and the turbulent waters of society become somewhat calm and pellucid, we may look and wonder at the insanity which created such a commotion, and thank Heaven that the gale has at last abated.

..... During these exciting times a wag gave the following capital hit:

How well it is the sun and moon
Are placed so very high,
That no presuming ass can reach
To pluck them from the sky.
If 'twere not so, I do believe
That some reforming ass
Would soon attempt to take them down
And light the world with gas.

This article could not have been written in 1834. In that year, when the Improvement Party and the whaling companies were on the ascendant, ingenuity and enterprise were of main importance. A man who tried to light the world with gas (the fact that gas and not whale oil is mentioned for lighting purposes is another indication of the troubles the Dutchess company was having during this period) would have been looked on as slightly insane but admirable for his initiative and noble for his participation in the great effort to extend man's power and influence. Now, in 1839, a cooler, perhaps more adult attitude had replaced the earlier one and if the Dutchess company were to retain its stockholders it must do so by bringing as big profits as any factory in Poughkeepsie—its glamour and originality were no longer major assets, but merely pleasurable extra features.

For a few years the Dutchess company continued on the new basis with some success. The *Nathaniel P. Tallmadge*, the *Elbe*, the *Factor* and the *Vermont* all returned home with good cargoes and sailed again within six months of their return, while good news continued to come from the *New England* and the *Newark*. The price of whale oil remained around thirty cents, which was not spectacular but adequate, and the price of whalebone climbed. In the autumn of 1840, with six ships at sea and all doing well, the company declared a dividend in spite of the fact that whale oil had just had a dip in price. This was the company's second dividend, the first having been declared in October of 1837, probably to reassure worried stockholders. The market went up again almost immediately and when the *Newark* returned the following spring with a full cargo, just as whale oil reached thirty-one cents, higher than before the slight dip, it seemed that all was well.

Yet that was the last time of real prosperity that the Dutchess company knew. In January of 1842, one lot of the company's land was auctioned off at a mortgage sale to meet the increasing debts. The com-

pany had sold land frequently in the past ten years but previously it had been for extra income, not to keep out of bankruptcy. Having all their cash tied up in the ships, it was difficult for the directors to pay off debts in any other way and so, little by little, the land had to be sold. The ships, too, were convertible into cash and the *Newark*, the only one not at sea, was accordingly sold to Stonington, Connecticut,¹⁶ presumably to pay off more debts. In June, 1842, came the news that the *Elbe* had been wrecked in Cook's Straits, New Zealand, the previous December and, although all hands were saved, the ship was damaged beyond repair. The cargo and vessel were insured for \$25,000, but this did not even cover the cost of the ship and its fittings, not to mention the further profits that might have been earned had the ship not been wrecked. On October 12, 1842, the newspapers carried an advertisement offering Dutchess Whaling Company stock for sale. The only other time this sort of offer had been advertised was in the *Eagle*, May 18, 1836, a year before the Poughkeepsie Whaling Company failed, when someone offered that company's stock for sale in the same manner. The similarity between the two offers was not a happy omen for the success of the Dutchess Company.

As in the case of its predecessor, the Dutchess company did not fail overnight but, from 1842 on, its chief business was eking out enough money to pay its constantly mounting debts. The *Nathaniel P. Tallmadge* returned in 1843 and was sold to Cold Spring Harbor, New York, according to Starbuck's *History of the Whale Fishery*. The same source reports that the *New England* came a month or so later and was bought by a firm in New London; Mystic, Connecticut, took the *Vermont* when she returned in July and, a year later, the *Factor* went to New Bedford. Still the debts were not paid off and the final action of the Dutchess Whaling Company was a piece by piece sale of every acre it owned. The financial loss on this land must have been heart-breaking, particularly to men like Tallmadge and Cunningham who had made thousands of dollars from the real estate boom of the past decade and now had to sell the land of their pet project for about half of its purchase price and probably a quarter of its 1835 value. Tallmadge had originally paid \$6,000 for the ten acres; when almost every lot had been sold, the company received only \$3,013.01.¹⁷ Most of the sales

took place in 1845, but it was not until 1848 that the company officially went into receivership. Nevertheless, long before 1848 the Dutchess Whaling Company was finished. No one day could be marked as its death day but, from 1842 on, the problem turned from one of expansion to one of salvage and, though four of her ships were still at sea then, Poughkeepsie's whaling days were over.

The *Factor's* return marked the complete end, for after she was sold no more whaling ships were seen at the Dutchess company's dock.

The conclusion of the whaling industry in Hudson was described in a manner that would make an appropriate epitaph to Poughkeepsie's enterprise, if the name of Poughkeepsie were substituted for that of Hudson:

. . . . In the dusk of a summer night in 1845 a crowd gathered on the Mall to watch a crew of weather-beaten sailors snub fast a low-riding ship to its home berth. The crowd was the result of custom only and not of any realization of the significance of the action they watched. And yet, before they turned away, to walk slowly up the main street, the first important cycle in Hudson's history had turned to the full. The last whaling ship was home.

Sandra Truxton Smith

REFERENCES

- 1 Colcord, Joanna C., ed. *Songs of American Sailormen*. New York, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., [c1938].
- 2 The *Poughkeepsie Telegraph*, February 27, 1833. (The quotations from the local newspapers are from those on file in the Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie.)
- 3 *Laws of the New York State Legislature*, 55th Session, April 20, 1832.
- 4 Earle, Walter K. *Whaling Museum Society, Inc., at Cold Spring Harbor, New York*. Cold Spring Harbor, 1946.
- 5 Field, J. T. "The Children of the Sea," published in the *Poughkeepsie Basket*, v.2, [March 2, 1839].
- 6 Carmer, Carl. *The Hudson*. New York, Farrar & Rinehart, 1939.
- 7 Reynolds, Helen W., ed. *The Records of Christ Church, Poughkeepsie, New York*, v.1. Poughkeepsie, Frank B. Howard, 1911.
- 8 Smith, James H. *History of Dutchess County, N. Y.*, . . . Syracuse, D. Mason & Co., 1882.
- 9 Platt, Edmund. *The Eagle's History of Poughkeepsie*, Poughkeepsie, Platt & Platt, 1905.
- 10 *Laws of the New York State Legislature*, 55th Session, April 20, 1832.
- 11 *Laws of the New York State Legislature*, 56th Session, April 30, 1833.
- 12 Records of deeds in the office of the Clerk of Dutchess County, Court House, Poughkeepsie.
- 13 Starbuck, Alexander. "History of the American Whale Fishery from its Earliest Inception to the Year 1876;" published in *The Report of the Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries for 1875-1876*.
- 14 Federal Writers' Project; *Whaling Masters*. New Bedford, Old Dartmouth

Historical Society, 1938.

15 O'Brien, Brian. "Whale Hunters of the Hudson River," an article published in *Adventure*, CVII, 1942.

16 Starbuck, Alexander. *op. cit.*

17 The figure \$3,013.01 does not include Lot 52, on which the company had built a dock, blacksmith's shop, ship carpenter's shop, a lumberhouse, a storehouse and a cooper's shop. This lot brought \$5,235, much more than was paid for it, but probably less than was spent on it.



A Romantic Wedding.—The Fishkill *Standard* of Saturday contains the following,—What might be considered quite a romantic wedding took place at the Methodist parsonage in this village last Saturday, when the "Circassian" lady was married to the "sword-swaller" by Rev. J. N. Ramsey. Somewhat of the romance is taken off however, by the fact that the "Circassian" lady is a native of Hudson in this State. *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle*, July 9, 1885.

TO THE CURIOUS;
or, The Animals Came to Town

In the summer of 1788, in the little hamlet of Poughkeepsie, history was being made. The county court house, a small two-storied stone building with a cupola, was the scene of the Constitutional Convention of the State of New York. That sounds impressive and the decision, reached by sixty-five delegates after lengthy debate lasting nearly six weeks, to ratify the federal constitution was a momentous one. It is one of the mileposts in American history impressed on the minds of children in the schools of the state, but it is doubtful if the children of that day were at all impressed; something of far greater interest to them was in the town!

The court house was located on the west side of the post road which led from New York to Albany, the same site which it occupies today. The Filkintown road led from the court house out easterly and later formed the route of the Sharon turnpike from Poughkeepsie. There were landings on the river, with storehouses where country produce could be stored for shipment by sloop, and lanes meandered down to those wharves. There were two churches, the English and the Dutch, and a little cluster of houses, shops and taverns in the centre of the settlement. The home of the merchant was usually a part of his shop and other dwellings were few and scattered.

It was to this small community, the temporary capital of the state, that the outstanding statesmen of the day had come as delegates to discuss the new federal Constitution and to make the important decision to join the union. They had come by sloop or coach or on horseback. The important meeting had attracted many other prominent citizens of the state who did not come as delegates but who were deeply interested in the proceedings. Some had brought their wives. Never before had there been such an assemblage of brilliant statesmen in the community. During the weeks of discussion and argument there came men from the rural neighborhoods who had business at the county seat and took the occasion of the convention's assembly to come to town. It offered an opportunity to see and hear the men to whom the affairs of state had been entrusted. And among those present were those people who wanted

to be a part of the crowd, no matter what the major attraction might be. Yes, the village was filled with visitors for weeks, all sorts of people with all sorts of reasons for gathering there, and one wonders how and where they were housed and if the thrifty housewives hung out "Tourists" signs !

The *Country Journal*, the weekly newspaper, reported on June 17, "This day the Convention of this state meet at the Court-House in this place, for the purpose of adopting or rejecting the New Constitution." While the delegates wrestled with their problem in the court house, a showman from the city had provided a distraction for those who could not squeeze into the building or who had spare time to kill between sessions. It may have been John Arden who saw an opportunity to make a bit of money and offered in the same issue of the newspaper an unusual educational opportunity :

To the Curious
To be seen at Mr. Snedeker's, in Poughkeepsie till the end of this week

TWO CAMELS

Male and Female, lately imported from Arabia.

These stupendous animals are most deserving the attention of the curious, being the greatest natural curiosities ever exhibited to the public on this continent. They are 18 hands high, have necks three feet eight inches long, a large bunch upon their back and another under their breast, in the form of a pedestal, on which they support themselves when lying down; they have four joints in their hind legs, and they will travel twelve or fourteen days without drinking, and carry a burthen of fifteen hundred weight; they are remarkable harmless and docile, and will lie down and rise at command.

Price of admittance, one shilling for gentlemen and ladies, and six pence for children.

This may have been the first pair of camels to come to Dutchess County. A camel is an infrequent visitor and even in the present day would attract attention; two of them were a sensation in the eighteenth century. The contours of a camel are strange and disturbing and one is reminded that more than a hundred years later a clever cartoonist used a sentence which has since become a by-word, when he depicted the scorn and utter disbelief of a rural visitor who gazed at a camel in a zoo and said, "There ain't no such animal!"

During the 1700's enterprising sailors had brought back to the home ports an occasional wild beast. These were exhibited in the coast towns of New England and in New York and Philadelphia. As early

as 1728, a "lyon" had been shown in New York, a "cammel" in 1739 and, in 1768, a leopard and other animals. Some of the animals must have been brought up the river before the Revolution and before there was a newspaper in Dutchess County. Certainly there was a lull during the years of the war. Congress had passed a resolution recommending to the several states that laws be enacted for "the suppression of theatrical entertainments, horse-racing, gaming and other such diversions." In 1781, a group of animals had been assembled and was advertised in New York as an "Exhibition of birds, reptiles, snakes and quadrupeds." From these small beginnings and from exhibitions in the dime museums of the early 1800's grew the menageries which flourished a little later.

When business was dull, the owner of a collection of animals would rent a specimen from his stock to a venturesome individual for a period of time and it was his to exhibit when and where he chose. A clever showman would take his animal where he would be sure to find a crowd. Before he set out he would have provided himself with a quantity of handbills which would bring his choice item to the attention of the curious public. If there were a local newspaper it would offer an additional advertising medium but it would not tell the whole story and invariably an advertisement would carry a note advising the reader to refer "to the handbills distributed on the occasion." So, the main appeal was through the handbill, a few of which have found their way into museums or are preserved in private collections. It is doubtful if any of those specifying an exhibit before the 1830's in Dutchess County could be found today and the only records of those visits would be in an old diary or in the advertising columns of the newspaper.

The camels shown in Poughkeepsie in 1788 were undoubtedly the same which were shown in New York in 1787 and offered for inspection "To the Curious" in Boston and Salem in 1789, and described as "two camels, male and female, lately imported from Arabia."

Ten years later and again at a time when the hamlet would be crowded with visitors, during court week in January of 1798, the opportunity to look at one camel was offered:

To the Curious
[cut]
A MALE CAMEL
From the Deserts of Arabia;

To be seen during Court Week at the store lately occupied by John P. Vemont in Poughkeepsie.

This surprising animal is most deserving the attention of the curious, being the greatest natural curiosity ever exhibited to the public on this continent. He is 21 hands high, his neck 4 feet long, has four joints in his hind legs, will travel 12 or 13 days without drinking, and carry 1500 weight—is 13 feet long, remarkable harmless & docile, will lie down and rise at command. Weight 1700 lbs.

The advertisement described the animal in practically the same words which had been used previously. This time the announcement was illustrated with a small woodcut showing a tired and mournful dromedary. In the decade the beast had increased a bit in size, but he still had four joints in his hind legs and he was still "remarkable harmless & docile." There was no explanation for the absence of the second camel and certainly one would serve the same purpose as two in Poughkeepsie! (A pair of camels was shown in New York in 1806, so she may have been exhibiting her charms in some other town while her mate was visiting in Poughkeepsie.)

For three weeks in the summer of 1800, another opportunity was offered those interested in natural history. This time it was the king of beasts on show at Mr. Baldwin's hotel. The *Poughkeepsie Journal* of July 29 and August 5, 1800, made the announcement:

[cut]
TO THE CURIOUS
a beautiful African
L I O N ,

To be seen every Day (Sundays excepted) at Mr. Baldwin's HOTEL; where the proprietor has provided a convenient situation for those ladies and gentlemen, who may please to favor him with their presence.

This noble animal is between three and four feet high, measures eight feet from nostrils to tail, and a beautiful dun color; nine years old and weighs near 500 wt. Its legs and tail are as thick as those of a common size ox. He was caught in the woods of Goree, in Africa, when a whelp, and brought from thence to New-York.

Great attention has been paid in providing a strong and substantial cage, and to have the lion under very good command. The person who has the care of him, can comb his mane, make him lie down and get up, at any time; and it is said by those who have seen Lions in the Tower of London, and many parts, that he is really worth the contemplation of the curious.

Admittance for Ladies and Gentlemen, one quarter of a dollar—
Children half price.

As this Animal will positively leave town in three weeks, the curious admirers of nature may lose a sight of him, without they call within that space.

The lion was undoubtedly taken further up the valley and ex-

hibited in the several towns and villages during the next few weeks. He was back again in Poughkeepsie in time for the racing events in October. Embellished with the same cut and with slight changes in the advertisement, it was announced that he could "be seen on the Race Ground during the continuance of the Races; where the proprietor has provided a convenient situation for those ladies and gentlemen, who may please to favor him with their presence." When the races were over, the noble animal was scheduled to greet his friends at Baldwin's hotel, where he had made a three-week visit during the summer.

A live elephant visited Dutchess County in 1805. The *Political Barometer* of Tuesday, April 16, announced that the animal would be exhibited at the hotel in Rhinebeck on Wednesday and Thursday, April 17 and 18, and on Friday and Saturday at the house of Stephen Hendrickson in Poughkeepsie. On Monday of the following week, it was scheduled to be seen at Wood's tavern, "near Wapping's creek landing; on Tuesday at Fishkill landing and Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at the town of Newburgh." The price of admission was the popular twenty-five cents, children at half price.

This must have been the elephant mentioned in *Greenleaf's New York Journal and Patriotic Register* of April 19, 1796:

The *America* has brought home an ELEPHANT, from Bengal, in perfect health. It is the first ever seen in America, and a very great curiosity. It is a female, two years old, and of the species that grow to an enormous size. This animal sold for Ten Thousand Dollars, being supposed to be the greatest price ever paid for an animal in Europe or America.

One of the most exciting exhibitions offered was that advertised in the two local newspapers in September of 1806. John Arden announced that he would exhibit an African lion at Stephen Hendrickson's inn, in the village of Poughkeepsie. He used the same cut and practically the same description of the animal as that used in the advertisement in 1800. (The *Barometer* stated that the lion was fifteen years old and "when he stands on his tail he is nine feet high.")

However, in 1806, Mr. Arden offered, in addition to a view of the beast, a further attraction:

TAKE NOTICE
ON the Fourteenth day of October next, weather permitting, a
G R A N D B A I T
will take place between this LION and six BEARS and twelve BULL

DOGS, in Capt. Hendrickson's large field, where ample accomodations will be prepared for spectators.

Admittance on that day for grown persons, ONE DOLLAR,— children 25 cents.

In the course of a few days this beautiful Lyon will be exhibited on the said field, loose and at liberty, where all those who have previously seen him, and paid for the sight, shall be admitted free of any additional expence.

N.B. The subscriber will give a generous price for six Bears delivered to him in Poughkeepsie.

JOHN ARDEN

At the end of the foregoing notice, the *Barometer* carried a note requesting that the Albany *Gazette*, the Hudson *Balance*, Kingston *Plebian*, Newburgh *Index*, and *Orange County Republican* publish the above advertisement three weeks and transmit their accounts to John Arden in Poughkeepsie for payment.

The Grand Bait did not appeal to all of the residents of the village and, in the issue of the *Journal* for October 21, a communication, signed *Atticus*, was printed in protest:

On Tuesday last the ladies and gentlemen of this village, and its vicinity, were entertained with an exhibition, which, on account of its novelty, deserves to be noticed. Amusements and public spectacles have an influence on our manners and character. . . . If their immediate tendency is to disgrace our national character, to extirpate all the amiable qualities of the human mind, and carry us back to a state of original barbarism, they ought, if not to be checked by the strong arm of government, at least to be disconcerted by the virtuous and reflecting part of the community. The practice of baiting animals for our diversion, of which we had a specimen last week, is equally opposed to the dictates of humanity and the precepts of religion. . . .

Whether Mr. Arden had planned only one Grand Bait, or if he had thought to stage further exhibitions and was deterred by public opinion, is not known. Apparently, this was the first time such an entertainment was offered through the newspapers to the inhabitants of the Poughkeepsie neighborhood. Similar attractions may have been offered in the village on later occasions as were, perhaps, cockfighting and bear-baiting but they were not advertised again in the newspapers.

On this occasion there is nothing on record to show if some enterprising persons had really brought six bears to the Grand Bait. (Of course, John Arden had twelve bulldogs!) The advertisements, through the month of October, continued to invite the public to view the beautiful African lion, "every day, except Sundays," at the inn and used the

same woodcut, showing the lion with a benign expression, his mane neatly combed and his whole appearance suggesting a nice old lady.

John Arden was not a native of Dutchess County. In 1790, he was living in New York and, in 1791, a Jacob Arden was exhibiting a lion in that city. John probably came to Poughkeepsie with some such exhibit (perhaps the camels in 1788) and later decided to remove to the village. In 1795, he advertised that he had opened "on the road leading to Union Store in Poughkeepsie a Public Inn, where travellers and Teamsters may be entertained on reasonable terms." Two years later he offered for sale "at his shop in Poughkeepsie, 150 excellent Runnet Bags." The map of Poughkeepsie, made in 1799, shows his location on the south side of Union Street, just east of the present Jefferson Street. In the 1800 census he was listed as a resident of the village, with a wife, one son and two daughters. In 1805, a newspaper item announced the marriage of Miss Polly Arden and John Everett and, in 1811, the newspaper reported the death of Mrs. Mary Everitt, "consort of Mr. John Everitt and daughter of Mr. John Arden, in her 26th year." And, the *Journal* of November 8, 1816, reported the death, in this village, of Mr. John Arden.

In 1812, announcement was made that "Now or Never" was the opportunity to see A FEMALE ELEPHANT. It was stated that the present generation might never again have such an opportunity as "this is the only one in America, and this perhaps its last visit to this place." She was described as twelve years of age, "upwards of eight feet high and weighs rising 4,700 pounds." She was to be shown at Pleasant Valley on August 18 and in Poughkeepsie on August 19 and 21. She could have been touring the neighborhood during the next two weeks, for she was back in Poughkeepsie on September 5 and was scheduled to be shown at the house of William Smith at Hyde Park on Monday, September 7.

The advertisement was illustrated with a cut of the animal, but it did not state if this were Old Bet. It could have been either Old Bet or the elephant which arrived in 1796. Both were advertised as the only elephant in America and, although the 1796 elephant would have been eighteen years of age, the showman could have based his advertisement on an old handbill, a stock of which may have been provided with

the animal. And, after all, an additional six years in her age would make little difference in the attractions of an elephant!

Much has been written of Old Bet and the date of her arrival has been set down by most of the more recent writers as 1815. (If this date is correct, she covered a tremendous amount of ground in eighteen months!) However, there is in existence, and in recent years owned by William Bailey of Somers, an agreement between Hachaliah Bailey and Andrew Brown and Benjamin Lent, whereby Brown and Lent agree to pay \$1,200 each "for the equal two-thirds of the use of the Elephant for one year from the first day of this month." This is dated August 13, 1808, and Bailey agreed to furnish one third of the expenses and Brown and Lent the other two thirds.

By another agreement, Benjamin Lent came into possession of Nero, the Royal Tiger, with which he, in turn, made a deal with Hachaliah:

Know all men by these presents that we Cyrus A. Cady & John E. Russell for and in consideration of one thousand dollars to us in hand paid by Benjamin Lent have sold Nero the Royal Tiger & Cage to him the said Benjamin Lent
New York December 9th 1809

New York December 9th 1869 Cyrus A. Cady John E. Russell
and,

I hereby certify that I have this day Hired to Benjamin Lent the one fourth part of the use or Earnings of a certain Beast or Animal called an Elephant, for and during the term of Eleven Months commencing the fifteenth day of August last—for the use and hire of which I acknowledge to have received full satisfaction, by the purchase of one half of an animal called the Royal Tiger (of said Lent) & in case said Elephant should die within said term, I agree to allow said Lent at the rate of five hundred Dollars a Year for whatever part of said Eleven Months may remain unexpired—Witness my hand & Seal—
13 Dec. 1809. Hachaliah Bailey

15 Dec. 1869.
Witness present
John Arvin
Bailey Brown

These documents would indicate that Old Bet was brought to this country before August of 1808. In other respects, the printed accounts agree in most details. She was purchased at auction in London, for \$20.00, by a sea captain who sold the huge beast to his brother, Hachaliah Bailey, for \$1,000. She was brought by sloop to the Sing Sing landing and traveled on foot across the county of Westchester to the village of Somers, where Hachaliah Bailey made his home. He gave her the name of "Old Bet." Impressed with the great interest in his

acquisition shown by the farm lads of the neighborhood and with the fact that she consumed immense quantities of potatoes and corn, Bailey (the first of numerous Baileys to be identified with the circus) decided that his strange pet could support herself and him too. And he became a showman, and he started something in his neighborhood! It is agreed by students of circus history in America that the rolling shows, which developed later into the greatest shows on earth, had their beginnings in that small area, twenty square miles, which includes the towns of Somers in Westchester County and Southeast in Putnam County.

Old Bet was led by her owner along the roads in New York State and nearby Connecticut and shown in barns and sheds to the curious, who were eager to pay. His receipts were so amazingly generous that Bailey contracted with other ship captains and was soon in the possession of a number of assorted animals, including some monkeys. It is told that he wintered his collection the first year in barns and cellars in Somers. Later he discovered that he could rent his animals to the museums in New York, where they were exhibited indoors in cold weather.

In 1816, Hachaliah leased his elephant to a showman who took her on a tour through New England, which eventually led to the state of Maine, and here she was shot to death. Some accounts tell that the showman neglected to warn the farmers to hold their horses and the irate farmers retaliated by shooting the elephant. Other reports have it that Old Bet was too popular (this was long before the elephant had been selected as a symbol for a political party) and the thrifty farmers were reluctant to see so much money, which should have been spent at home, taken from their neighborhood. Still another account explains that the Yankees were convinced that the animal was the "Behemoth of Holy Writ" and, as such, should be destroyed.

The Poughkeepsie *Journal*, of August 7, 1816, reported that "The Elephant which has been for so many years exhibited in various parts of the United States, was wantonly shot a few days since by some unknown wretch in the District of Maine." With a business acumen worthy of P. T. Barnum, Hachaliah sold her hide to one museum and her bones to another. Early in 1817, in New York, the curious were urged to see the skeleton "of that unfortunate elephant shot last July 26th in the District of Maine."

Hachaliah erected a monument to the memory of Old Bet. In 1823, at Somers, he built the red brick Elephant Hotel, now the town hall, and a few years later, in a triangular spot at the junction of two roads opposite the hotel, he set a wooden effigy of the animal on a metal support atop a stone pedestal. Today, more than a century later, the elephant still stands as a monument to one of the first of her species in the United States.

A "Great Natural Curiosity" was presented for the gaze of the curious in April of 1815. Walter Thomas advertised that he had a living bird, which he believed to be the only one of the kind ever known in this or any other country. It was described as about the size of a domestic duck and appeared to be a species between the crane and the duck. "His plumage is fine, on the head and back it is green, the rest of the plumage is of the colour of the dove. He has also three white feathers which extend from the neck almost to the tail, these he extends when provoked and contracts when in a good humour. He also attempts to imitate the human voice. He was taken in the Hudson river by a boy . . ." It was shown at Captain Smith's tavern, corner of Market and Cannon streets. The usual sum was charged for admission. There was no mention of the bird in the subsequent newspapers.

In the meantime, other attractions in the way of entertainment found their way to the villages in the Hudson Valley. In the early days, the owners of the menageries, the equestrian artists and the slack rope and tight rope performers staged their shows independently as separate amusements.

One of the most fascinating advertisements, and the first of its kind in the local papers, was that of Don Peter Clores. His announcement, in the *Journal* of March 6, 1793, was probably a reproduction of his entire handbill. It was unusually long for an advertisement of that period and described his offerings in such detail that it is reproduced in full:

A Genteel Entertainment of Activity
D O N P E T E R C L O R E S

who has performed in most of the capital cities in Europe and all the capitals of the United States, most respectfully informs the Ladies and Gentlemen of Poughkeepsie, that on Wednesday 6th, Friday 8th, and Monday 11th of March in Captain Kelsey's new Ball Room, he will perform several

FEATS OF ACTIVITY
on the
WIRE

and extraordinary Balancing, &c.

Throws up three Apples, and catches them on the points of three Forks, passes through a Hoop, balances three swords on his nose; a sword on the edge of a Dollar, and that on the edge of a Wine Glass, held by his mouth, spinning at the same time; displays the United Flags, goes through the Manuel Exercise

Musical Instruments on the WIRE,

The CLOWN, who for many years has exhibited in LONDON, will with Wit and Humor mimick all the different Instruments—Likewise plays a CONCERTO on the VIOLIN.

TUMBLING FEATS,

with a variety of very curious and surprizing attitudes, by

Don Peter and the Clown.

Don Peter will balance his body on his arm.

Don Peter stands with his head on the nob of a chair, and dances a hornpipe with his feet upwards—They spring backwards and forwards with great agility.

Lay hold of each others leg and roll round like a wheel.

They jump over each others heads backwards and forwards.

Don P. goes through a double hoop.

They stand on a chair on the top of a table, and spring backwards and forwards quick as lightning.

Don P. walks on his hands with his feet upwards.

Jump like a live fish in the water.

Jump over a table with a chair on it.

Puts a tumbler full of wine into a hoop, dance a jig, turn the hoop round several times without spilling a drop of the wine.

Balance a peacock's feather, and dance a jig around the room at the same time.

Don Peter with the assistance of the Clown will exhibit a number of New Feats, lately invented by the Posture Master, London, &c.

Between the acts, A SONG

Don Peter will perform a variety of new and uncommon Attitudes on the

R O P E ,

Turn backwards and forwards, and forms himself into various shapes, he stands on his head on the Rope, and dances a hornpipe with his feet upwards; hangs by his toes in full swing, he stands on the Rope and turns one hundred times in a minute, and does several uncommon and seeming impossibilities.

The whole to conclude with a

HORNPIPE OVER THIRTEEN EGGS

B L I N D F O L D

Performances to begin at half past six o'clock.—Tickets to be had at the place of performance—First seats 3s; back seats 2s; children half price.

N. B. The performance will vary each evening.

This spectacle, presented in March, was held indoors. Captain Kelsey lived and maintained an inn on the east side of Market Street, between Cannon and Church Streets. His ballroom was undoubtedly

crowded to capacity on the three evenings. Don Peter did not state what he might be doing on the alternate dates; perhaps he played to other audiences in the neighborhood, or he could have given private performances. It is to be noted that even in 1793, the "stooge" was an important adjunct to the act.

In December of 1803, at Mr. Baldwin's hotel Mr. Duff offered an "Exhibition which has excited the admiration of the most enlightened minds in the capitals of Europe and America, a performance never exhibited by any performer in this country, except Mr. Rannie, the celebrated Ventriloquist." His presentation was called "The Scotch Landlord, Disturbed in the Night by a Traveller," and, for good measure, he did "Slack Wire Dancing, &c, which may be seen by referring to the handbills distributed on the occasion."

There is much about the early show business in this neighborhood which must be left to speculation. For advertising, the showman depended almost entirely on his handbills, tacked up on the trees, under the roofs of porches and in the barrooms. His efforts were supplemented by an occasional advertisement in a local newspaper which, at best, had a limited circulation. It cannot be ascertained how often he came up the post road. It was not a super highway, but was in constant use by the mail and passenger coaches, and the settlements were not too widely spaced. The Yankee peddler or the merchant from New York carried his goods on his back to the scattered dwellings, delivered messages and brought the news. Shortly after 1800 the Dutchess Turnpike was constructed. Other roads, described as "good," radiated from Poughkeepsie in all directions.

The lion, in his stout cage, would have had to be hauled in some conveyance, probably an ox-cart. An elephant or the camels could travel under their own power and undoubtedly did so. It would be after dark, because an exhibitor could not jeopardize his receipts by exposing his stock in trade to the gaze of the curious "for free," (nor could he afford to frighten horses on the highway). And, even at that, the animal probably wore some sort of a duster. An elephant might travel at the rate of four miles per hour, though the camel should make better speed. On a moonlight night, or one not so brilliant, the spectacle of either a camel or an elephant plodding the rutted country roads

of Dutchess could provide a shock to honest country folk on their way home from some innocent entertainment. And the effect on the returning reveler could be imagined. In the morning, the tracks in the mud or dust of the road could startle the early riser and would help to advertise the attraction. It would be too much to expect that the showman might ride his camel or elephant or that the "Leviathan Turtle," shown in New York in 1812, traveled the roads of Dutchess!

There must have been many shows, including the numerous puppet and peep shows which traipsed about the countryside, which did not advertise in the newspapers. Earl Chapin May tells that, in 1787, Ricketts troupes with his circus from Albany to Baltimore. It could not be that he by-passed Rhinebeck, Poughkeepsie and Fishkill! Philip Smith, in his history of Dutchess County, tells that a showman exhibited "a recently imported animal from Africa, heretofore unknown to natural history, called a Dodo," at the tavern kept by Peter Rickey in the neighborhood of Shenandoah. The exhibit drew a large crowd, but the Dodo proved to be a fraud and the showman was badly handled. This must have been in the late 1700's, for Rickey was living in the town of Fishkill in 1787 and was listed in the 1790 census, but not in that of 1800. In 1806, opportunity was given to the curious in New York, and also in Salem, Massachusetts, to see the "Nyl Ghau from the Cape of Good Hope." Certainly, Dutchess County people would have flocked to see an animal "of a middle nature between a cow and a deer, with one horn growing over the left eye and projecting downward."

Dozens of other exhibits, equestrian shows, acrobatic performances, menageries and even the freaks, were advertised in the New York newspapers to be seen in that city. When patronage dropped off at the museums and the exhibits were taken on tour, many of them came up the river, but they left little record in the Poughkeepsie papers. In August of 1818, mention was made in a diary, given to the Dutchess County Historical Society by Mr. Hunting Winans of Pine Plains, that a farm hand had taken a day off "to see the elephant." At Peale's Museum in New York, according to the *Annals of the New York Stage*, there were shown "two extraordinarily fat children from Dutchess County, Deborah and Susan Tripp," five and three years old and

weighing 205 and 124 pounds, respectively. (The compiler further stated that "these monsters were declared to be in good health and spirits and very active.") It is hardly likely that the "Tiger Nero" could have been housed at Somers without making a few side trips up the Harlem valley and down the Hudson.

There is no record in the newspapers that the residents of Dutchess County had ever had an opportunity to see the tremendously large elephant Horatio. However, the *Journal* of October 4, 1820, reported a "Shocking Accident," resulting in the death of that elephant (which had recently been purchased for \$10,000), in the collapse of a bridge in New Hampshire. And, a report from a Providence newspaper of May 27, 1826, stated that another elephant had been shot by some evil-minded persons in Rhode Island. These accounts did not state that either elephant had visited the mid-Hudson valley but the items implied that both of the animals had been shown everywhere and assumed a local interest.

When they were shown in this area, these educational and entertaining exhibits were undoubtedly well advertised by the handbills of the day. It must be admitted that much evidence of what was locally offered in the way of entertainment has quite literally gone with the wind.

In the early days there were no tents for the shows. Sometimes a fence, the sides covered with canvas, was set up. It had no roof. As John Arden said in his advertisement, "weather permitting," the show would go on. And, because neither torches nor candles were practical, the outdoor show was held in the daylight. The solitary showman, with one or two animals, jolted over the rough roads from one town to another. He showed his exhibit in a field or a barn or shed that might be attached to a tavern or, on occasion, on the village green. Chairs from the tavern were usually provided for the ladies. An admission fee was not always charged; sometimes the proprietor passed the hat.

In Poughkeepsie, the showman usually advertised that his exhibit could be seen at Captain Stephen Hendrickson's inn, at Isaac I. Balding's tavern or at Mr. Van Kleeck's hotel. Hendrickson's stood on the site of the present Nelson House. The rather flat piece of ground

at the rear (and in that day the building was small) was referred to as "Hendrickson's large field." Later, after John Forbus bought the inn and ten acres at the rear in 1807, it was known as "Forbus Hill." It was here that the crowds gathered for any sort of outdoor entertainment, be it a political rally, agricultural society's exhibition, military review, a show or a hanging. Balding owned a considerable property in the neighborhood and conducted the Northern Hotel on the corner of Mill and Washington streets. And, for some years, Leonard B. Van Kleeck operated the Poughkeepsie Hotel which stood until late in the nineteenth century on the north side of Main Street, at the head of Market Street.

It was in 1821 that the word Circus appeared first in an advertisement in a Poughkeepsie newspaper. Mr. West informed the ladies and gentlemen of the village that his CIRCUS would be opened on Tuesday, April 24, in the evening at half-past three, with "all those beautiful Horses, a variety of feats of Horsemanship, Slack Wire Dancing, flying Vaulting, still Vaulting, Tumbling, &c, the Metamorphosis of the Sack and to conclude with the HUNTED TAY-LOR." Mr. West had been showing in New York during the winter and, although he had added the pantomimes to his equestrian show, the circus still lacked the menagerie and the side show.

The *Dutchess Observer* of April 17, 1822, announced an "Exhibition of Living ANIMALS at the Poughkeepsie Hotel, for two days only." The showman did not presume to call it a menagerie; he offered a full grown Asiatic Lion, "secured in an iron cage, where no person need have no apprehension of any danger from him." And, he also presented "the Lama of Peru, the only one ever exhibited in the U. States, an ICHNEUMON and a variety of minor animals." There would be good music on different instruments.

There was a dearth of advertisements of menageries or equestrian shows in the 1820's. In the middle of June, in 1825, a company of equestrians from Boston and on their way to Albany, Utica, Buffalo and Pittsburgh, performed five nights. (This would be when the days were longest and it could be light enough for such a performance in the evening.) Mention was made of the riders, Mr. Burton and Mr. West, and of the manager, Mr. S. M'Cracken.

The *Republican Telegraph* of March 29, 1826, announced an exhibit of animals, to be shown at L. B. Van Kleeck's hotel in the village on April 7 and 8, and mentioned especially the ZEBRA, "imported from one of the southern provinces of Africa to London, from thence re-shipped to New York." Good music was offered during the time of performance.

In August of the same year the Albany Circus Company, under the management of Mr. M'Cracken, played in the village for a week. And, in 1828, the Albany Company, under the management of Mr. Wemple (with Mr. Burton; Mr. Bancker, the clown; Mr. Hunter; Mr. Stickney; Master Calahan, the flying horseman; and Mr. Dixon), was in Poughkeepsie for a week in June. The performances of this company in 1825 and 1826 were not advertised in the newspapers but a local circus "fan" on each occasion had written to the paper a letter, signed "Citizen," in which he commended the show and urged the public to patronize it. He mentioned some of the performers and seemed to be personally acquainted with them. When the company arrived in June of 1828, advertisements appeared in two of the three local newspapers and "Citizen" wrote, in the *Telegraph* of June 11, that he had had "the pleasure of witnessing the wonderful and dexterous performances of the present company in Albany and have ever been highly pleased with both the company and their performances." In the same issue, the newspaper published another communication which noted that a celebrated company from Albany had arrived in the village and implored the authorities "to put a stop to such disgraceful scenes as were perpetrated around the circus which had performed during the previous week by worthless characters of the village who lounge around all public places of amusement." This would indicate that two different companies played in the village in June of 1828, but the name of the first one was not disclosed.

The newspapers of October 21, 1833, announced the opportunity of viewing a wonderful exhibit of wild animals at Balding's Hotel, on October 26, for one day only. In the advertisement the collection is referred to as that of Tufts, Waring & Co. and also as the Boston and New York Menagerie. It was stated that "Mr. Flint, the keeper, will enter the cage of the Lion in presence of the audience at 4 P.M., to

show to the public the perfect subjection to which this animal of superior strength is brought." (Was there a Mr. Flint, or was this an assumed name indicating the adamant qualities of the performer?) In addition to the aggregation of animals, the public was informed that "Grand Music accompanies the Caravan" and that a large collection of wax figures would be exhibited on the same day. This time the admission price of 25 cents, half price for children, applied only to the animal exhibit and a view of the wax works would require an expenditure of an additional 12½ cents. The caravan was coming into town from the north east and would be shown at Amenia on Wednesday, October 23, at Crane's Hotel; on Thursday at Velie's Hotel, Washington, and on Friday at Flagler's Hotel, Pleasant Valley.

The year of 1834 was a big year for show business in Dutchess County, or for the advertising department of the newspapers. The first in the field was June, Titus, Angevine & Company who advertised an exhibit of living specimens of natural history near Isaac I. Balding's Hotel on Mill Street, to be shown April 14 and 15. This was by far the largest advertisement of its kind which had appeared in the local press. It was two columns in width and the full length of the page, with many cuts of the various animals, the fourteen bandsmen, and the keeper embracing "The Royal Bengal Tigers."

Mention was made of the band wagon, an "omnibus, for the sole purpose of carrying the Band, whose talents are not surpassed by any other band in this country, and attached to it Four beautiful bay horses at an expense of \$2,000." It was stated that the menagerie occupied twenty-nine "Spacious Carriages, Waggons, &c, drawn by sixty-four Horses, besides two Elephants, male and female, that travel on foot." The business employed the services of fifty men and carried sixty living animals in the collection, which would be exhibited under a new pavilion 170 feet long, 85 feet wide and 30 feet high. This was the largest tent that had been used up to this time and, with the chariot for the band and the other wagons, was probably the output of the specialists in the neighborhood of Brewster. The advertisement stated that the animals were, of course, "the most beautiful of their kind and were valued, including the carriages, waggons, &c., at the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars." The keeper, who was nameless, would enter the cage

with the tiger and tigress, "a feat never before attempted by any other man in the world."

This show was evidently starting out in April from its headquarters in that land of magic in the neighborhood of Somers. In Dutchess County, it was to be seen at Stormville on Friday, April 11, at Hughsonville on Saturday, at Poughkeepsie the following Monday and Tuesday and then at Hyde Park, Rhinebeck and Red Hook on April 16, 17 and 18, successively. It was a wonderful exhibit, and this was not all. There was a side show. For an additional 12½ cents, and children at half price, there was a large collection of wax figures under a new pavilion near the menagerie.

Truly this was the largest show which the citizens of Dutchess had had the good fortune to view and, in spite of the diverse specimens of type and array of cuts in the extravagant advertisement, the reader was advised "for particulars and a description of each animal to see the descriptive sheet and note the large bill posted up in the hotels." The exhibition earned a short commendatory news note in the *Intelligencer and Republican* of April 16, which stated that "the Managery is now making the grand fashionable tour to Niagara and stopping to gratify all the lovers of the grand, curious and peculiar on their route."

Within two weeks an equestrian show was staged at the house of I. I. Balding. The Baltimore Gymnastic Arena Company and Circus, under the management of Messrs. Buckley & Co., announced that it would stop at Poughkeepsie on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 6 and 7, and would exhibit for the gratification of the citizens a variety of extraordinary performances and feats of skill never before attempted in this part of the country. The company was composed of upwards of thirty persons and an equal number of horses and brought "an extensive band of music." An evening performance would be given at 7 p.m. on Tuesday (and no mention was made of special lighting) and an afternoon show at three o'clock on Wednesday. The admission fee was not given in the advertisement.

The *Journal* of October 22, 1834, in a handsomely illustrated, two-column advertisement, announced the impending visit of J. R. and W Howe & Co., proprietors of the New-York Menagerie. The exhibit would be shown in Poughkeepsie two days only, Monday and Tuesday,

November 3 and 4, near and adjacent to I. I. Balding's hotel. Special mention was made of the "Gnoo, or horned horse":

. . . . So extraordinary is the structure of this animal, that some persons have doubted the reality of its existence, and have supposed it to be a creature merely of the artist's imagination. Nature, though regular and systematic in all her works, often puzzles and perplexes human systems, of which this animal affords an instance. . . . It is fierce and vicious and apparently untameable.

It was also noted that the keeper would enter the cages of the LIONS and LEOPARDS, but did not name this intrepid individual.

The year 1834 brought the largest shows which Dutchess County had ever seen. Each year the equestrian shows and the animal exhibits had multiplied their attractions, though they were still separate and distinct offerings. The menageries had their headquarters in that before-mentioned area which included the towns in the northeastern part of Westchester, southeastern Putnam and the adjoining neighborhood in Connecticut. Costly expeditions were sent to all corners of the globe for rare and unusual specimens of the animal kingdom. The owners realized that it would be to their advantage to pool their resources and keep the monopoly. In the archives of the Westchester County Historical Society is filed a document which comprised the articles of association of the Zoological Institute. This agreement, signed at Somers, by 128 men on January 14, 1835, formed "one joint stock company for the purpose of exhibiting wild animals belonging to them in company or copartnership for profit." The men who signed the papers represented seven companies: June, Titus, Angevine & Co.; Raymond & Ogden; Lewis Bailey & Co.; Purdy, Welch & Co.; J. Rand and M. Howe, Junior, & Co.; Kelley, Berry and Waring; Ganong & Strang & Co. Assets were valued at \$329,325.00, a goodly sum in that day.

The neighborhood of Somers, in Westchester County, and Brewster, in Putnam County, has been referred to as the "cradle of the American circus." It was Hachaliah Bailey's great success with his animals that incited his friends and neighbors to engage in the same sort of business. And these neighbors started the rolling shows that grew and grew! By this time the circus tent had evolved but in the early 1830's there was no adequate lighting for evening performances. The animals were on the road in warm weather and exhibited at 37 Bowery in the winter.

Southeast was the official home of Seth B. Howes' show and of the menagerie of Aron Turner and his sons. The Turner family rented animals from the Zoological Institute and went on the road with four wagons, nine horses, some performers and a band. Aron Turner's daughter married George F. Bailey, the nephew of Hachallah. There were many families of the neighborhood connected with the menageries and they changed partners so often that the various combinations are most confusing. The older men made their money and retired to this area which was the center of circus activity for years. They built large homes which are still the show places of the vicinity. Earl Chapin May says that the village of Brewster was "circus crazy," with many tent makers, seat builders, wagon painters, ring barns and wild animals in its neighborhood. The industry provided employment for many workers; the wagons and other equipment were repaired and repainted in the winter in preparation for the exodus in the spring; many of the animals were wintered there and required care. Small wonder that the youths of the surrounding country were lured to that fascinating region!

Young Isaac Van Amburgh, a lad from the town of Fishkill, was one of those attracted by the menageries. He became the greatest animal trainer of his day. He had a way with the wild animals and spent the rest of his life with them. He started with one of the larger menageries of his day and within a few years had a show of his own with which he toured this country and Europe. He appeared before Queen Victoria, who was so fascinated with his performances that she went on the stage to see the animals fed and then issued orders for a command performance at Drury Lane on January 29, 1839, with full court regalia.

Isaac Van Amburgh was born in the town of Fishkill May 26, 1808, the son of Abraham Van Amburgh and Nellie (or Elenor) Knapp. His father died when Isaac was a child and the mother married Benjamin Hutchins, a widower and well-to-do farmer of the township. Isaac was brought up in the Fishkill neighborhood.

Henry DuBois Bailey, in his *Local Tales and Historical Sketches*, devotes one chapter to his friend and schoolmate, Isaac Van Amburgh, and tells that they attended the small schoolhouse at Johnsburg, built

in 1794. He states that Van Amburgh left home when he was nineteen and had engaged in several business ventures before he became connected with the menagerie of Raymond & Company, the largest menagerie which had been collected up to that time. Bailey says:

After performing feats which no man had heretofore attempted with wild animals, it was announced through the press that Van Amburgh would enter the den of lions like Daniel of old. . . . Strong appeals were made to the manager from the pulpit and the press, imploring him to desist from such an undertaking. . . . In the fall of 1833, at the Richmond Hill theatre, Van Amburgh performed a feat with the lions and tigers that, with the exception of the prophet Daniel, had baffled the skill and sagacity of man in all former ages. . . . He volunteered to drive through Broadway in a chariot drawn by lions and tigers but the authorities interfered."

Bailey further tells that Van Amburgh's fame rapidly spread throughout the United States; that many of his old schoolmates, including Bailey, went to New York to see Isaac Van Amburgh enter the den of lions and tigers. The spectacle was described as "sublime and fearful." Bailey's last visit with Van Amburgh was in 1848, when he traveled through Fishkill with his menagerie and nearly all of the residents of the towns of Fishkill and East Fishkill were present to see him. Bailey states that it was said that

. . . this would be his last visit to his native place except as a private citizen. The writer saw him enter the cages of the lions and tigers for the last time, and with what thrilling interest did the large audience witness the wonderful control he had over those ferocious beasts of the forests. In conversation with him my mind reverted to the scenes of our childhood, when we went to school together. All those ties that united us together in by-gone days came up before me in vivid recollections. I saw at a glance that he had not deviated from the path of virtue, and had shunned the intoxication bowl. His appearance was noble; his height rather more than six feet. Age had made no impression on that powerful frame. I felt myself in the presence of more than an ordinary man. . . .

Van Amburgh's mother had died September 2, 1844, and she was buried in St. George's Cemetery at Newburgh, and when Isaac Van Amburgh died November 29, 1865, in Philadelphia, his remains were brought to Newburgh and interred beside his mother.

Many persons may have been familiar with a song, which was popular years ago, called "The Menagerie," without realizing that it referred to Isaac Van Amburgh who was a native of the town of Fishkill. One verse runs as follows:

Van Amburgh is the man who goes to all the shows,
He goes into the lion's den, and tells you all he knows;—

He sticks his head into the lion's mouth, and keeps it there a-while,
And when he takes it out again, he greets you with a smile.

In the 1830's certain bills, three or four feet square, were posted on the barns and fences. Some few of these are in collections. There were smaller handbills which were distributed to the public. A handsome example of this sort is on display in the museum attached to the Akin Memorial Library at Quaker Hill. It is about a yard long and perhaps eight inches in width and announces an exhibit of the Zoological Institute, No. 37 Bowery. One of the illustrations pictures a lithe young man, Mr. Van Amburgh, the "unrivalled Conqueror and Manager of the Whole Brute Creation." Its date has been approximated as 1837.

There were other local young men who were attracted to the circus, many of whom left no record of their connection with the shows. However, Hyatt Frost, born in the town of Southeast, March 4, 1827, the son of James and Sophia (Kelley) Frost, grew up in the charmed neighborhood of circus activity and in 1846 was working for Van Amburgh. Josephine Frost, in her *Frost Genealogy*, published in 1912, says, "Hyatt was born and brought up in the neighborhood where originated the idea of exhibiting wild animals, and this generation cannot realize the fervor with which it grasped all the young people in the vicinity, farmers being unable to get help or even to keep their boys at home." So, the problem of keeping the boys on the farm bothered the fathers in that day!

Frost's obituary states that he was employed "by the great Van Amburgh as a canvasman" and in an emergency, while the company was performing in New Jersey, took the place of the lion tamer. He entered the cage with the beasts, performed all the tricks and came out of the den without injury." After the death of Van Amburgh, in 1865, Frost obtained control of the show and his subsequent success is well known. He purchased a home at Amenia and wintered his animals at the fair grounds there. In 1873, space was given in the Poughkeepsie newspaper to note that "the old lioness connected with Van Amburgh & Co.'s Menagerie which is in winter quarters at Amenia has four young ones, which are quite vigorous and growing nicely."

During his later years, Frost could not bring himself to retire. He closed out and reassembled his Van Amburgh menagerie several times. The local newspapers carried advertisements and reports of auctions of his birds, wild beasts and horses which were attended by representatives of other shows. Frost died at Amenia September 4, 1895. His obituary tells that while in winter quarters there "the large African umbrella elephant died and its skeleton was presented by Mr. Frost to Vassar Institute, Poughkeepsie, where it now is."

Dutchess County men who have been connected with the circus or animal shows could be the subject for a separate article. The list, of course, would start with Van Amburgh and Frost. In the Commemorative Biographical Record of Dutchess County mention is made in several of the family sketches that the young men had taken up with the circus and had spent their lives in various capacities with the numerous shows. Hyatt Frost, each spring, took out with him several youths from Amenia. The *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle* of June 14, 1881, told of a visit with A. C. Hedges, a Dutchess County native, who had been in the circus business twelve years at that time and was spending two days with eleven workmen in posting 3,000 bills in the county. Mr. Hedges was quoted as saying: "There are a large number of Dutchess County people connected with the Great London Circus. Many of them are sons of staid old Dutchess County farmers who took it into their heads to engage in the business. All of them are well pleased with their vocation." Unfortunately, the editor neglected to give the names of those other sons of Dutchess.

During the 1880's and 1890's, when Hyatt Frost had his winter quarters at Amenia, many of Barnum's animals were boarded out during the winter among the farmers in and around Pine Plains and Amenia. So, the sight of a cage of beasts or an ambulating camel or elephant was less of a sensation than it might have been fifty years sooner or later. In 1885, according to the Pine Plains *Register* of August 21, Mr. Lewis Hedges of the Barnum show was in the village making arrangements for the keeping of show stock for the coming winter. Contracts were made with I. P. Carman to keep 25 camels, 30 ponies, 4 racing bulls, a Burmese cow, a zebra and a water buffalo. John Duxbury took 40 horses, A. H. Barton 25, Adam Strever 20,

the Sackett brothers 25, Frank A. Strever 20, and a hundred horses were wintered at Hillsdale. Five dollars a month was paid for each animal. A regular circus employe was with each group of animals and he was boarded by the farmer for \$10.00 per month. Hay was the ration until March 1 and thereafter each animal was fed four quarts of grain each day.

Henry and Lewis Hedges of Pine Plains were connected with the Barnum and Bailey show for years. Henry Morgan of the same neighborhood was one of the best known elephant trainers of his day. About the time of the first World War, the Hanneford family were living at Wappingers Falls. They were all accomplished equestrians and it is said that "Poodles" Hanneford is still delighting circus goers with his clever performances as an equestrian clown. In more recent years "Bill" Snyder retired to his home in Pine Plains after spending years with Barnum and Bailey and, later, as superintendent of the zoo at Central Park in New York City.

As the shows grew larger and larger, the advertising grew in proportion. In the 1830's certain posters were three or four feet square and those few preserved in collections are works of art. The advertisers were proud of their large proclamations and in the newspaper announcements advised the reader to "See Bill," or "See large Bills at Hotels." The advertisements in the newspapers reached out to four and six columns in width and the use of cuts increased. Although he has always been given credit for extravagant and inflated descriptions, the show business did not wait for Barnum to coin intriguing phrases; his predecessors gave him a very good start. The adjectives were elongated, the claim for the exhibits were preposterous and the wordy temptations more enticing. Particularly irresistible would be "the black-maned Lions of Numidia; patient Camels of the desert; Spotted and Untamable Hyenas; Elegant Quaggas, of Caffra-land, remarkable for their symmetry and beautiful proportions," . . . "mighty hunting-Elephants from the Ganges; the Jackall, or Lion's caterer; the beautiful Eland, whose speed outstrips the wind; the Hindostan Poonar, the only one that ever reached the United States alive; fretful Porcupines of Singapore." The very mention of those

foreign lands—Africa, Burmah, Buenos Ayres, Madagascar, Ceylon—compelled attendance.

Years before, when nearly all entertainments were considered sinful and evil, the producers had learned to stress the educational value of their exhibits and it is pleasing to note that the New England Zoological Exhibition advertised that the principal design of the members of that institution was "to establish a Zoological Society in New England, that shall become a powerful auxiliary in the advancement of general knowledge; especially to promote the study of natural history, elevating it to that rank among other intellectual pursuits to which it is so justly entitled."

In 1835, the New England Zoological Exhibition from Boston, in the most elaborate display advertisement to date, offered, in the *Poughkeepsie Eagle* of June 17 and 24, 1835, "an assemblage of living natural curiosities, collected at enormous expense from all parts of the globe, amidst fatigues and perils" The highest mountains had been scaled, the thickest forests penetrated, deepest rivers crossed, hunger and thirst endured, the treachery of a cruel and blood-thirsty race guarded against, thousands of miles from civilization. The exhibit was to be held near Mr. Balding's hotel on Thursday and Friday, June 25 and 26, and the hours of admission on Thursday from 1 until 5 p.m. and from 7 until 10 p.m., at the usual price of 25 cents, children under ten, half price. On Friday, the hours would be from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. and the show would probably travel nearly all night to open at Clermont on Saturday, June 27. (It had shown at Cold Spring on June 23 and at Fishkill the next day.)

This show was to be given under 120,000 square feet of canvas with a spacious gallery with seats arranged expressly for the accommodation of ladies. The Tremont Military Band would be drawn in a splendid music carriage and would announce the entrance of the Grand Cavalcade at each town or village by playing popular airs. The keeper of the tigers would enter the cages of the lions, hyenas, etc., at 2 and at 3 p.m. A scientific gentleman had been engaged to raise a large Air Balloon during the exhibition. All this and Heaven too! for, "Ladies so disposed, will be invited, and can ride on the Elephant, with perfect safety."

The *Poughkeepsie Journal* of August 20, 1835, announced that the Siamese Twins, "The United Twin Brothers, Chang-Eng," respectfully made known to the ladies and gentlemen of Poughkeepsie and its neighborhood that they would be at Mr. Hatch's hotel on Monday and Tuesday, August 31 and September 1, prepared to receive the interested public from 10 to 12 in the forenoon and from 7 to 9 in the evening. It was further stated that "Pamphlets containing an historical account, and also an engraved Portrait of the Twins, can be had at their room ONLY. Price Twelve and a Half Cents. No re-admittance to the room without pay." The same newspaper, in its issue of September 2, 1829, had noted that the Siamese Boys were in Boston and commented, "Perhaps they are intended to be hawked about the country for a show, like wild beasts; for the honor of human nature we hope not."

Two weeks later, the *Poughkeepsie Eagle* advertised that the Beasts and Birds of the New-York Zoological Institute, "as exhibited at that fashionable resort during last winter," would be on exhibit near Mr. Balding's hotel on Saturday, September 19, from 1 to 6 p. m. The statement was made that "although they have had the misfortune to lose two Rhinoceroses since they left New-York in the spring," the proprietors had procured another, a fine specimen. A list of interesting and exciting animals, including "a small male ELEPHANT, 3 years old and only *four and a half feet high*," was offered for inspection. There were portable seats for the accommodation of 1,000 persons, "Ladies and Children always having the preference."

However, the most exciting part of the advertisement stated that:

The keeper, Mr. Van Amburg, will Enter the CAGES to the following Animals, at 3 o'clock P.M. viz: To the Royal Tigers; to the black maimed Lion, Lioness and Royal Tiger in the same cage; to the Lion, Panther and Leopard in the same cage; to the Persian Lion, Lioness, and a pair of African Leopards all confined in the same cage and living in a state of harmony together.

This is the first advertised visit of the New York Zoological Institute to Dutchess County. (In the advertisement the typesetter referred to it as the "New York Geological Institute," but a short news item used the word "Zoological.") And this is the first mention of Isaac Van Amburgh as a performer. A careful search of the issues

of the Poughkeepsie newspapers of the time does not reveal any mention of the fact that the county was entertaining a native son. The advertisement stated that the exhibit would be shown at Southeast on the 16th, at Patterson on the 17th and at Simpson's Hotel, Beekmanville, Westchester County, on Friday, the 18th.

The Boston Lion Circus came to Poughkeepsie, Thursday, September 8, 1836, for one day only. The cut of a handsome, disdainful lion at the top of the advertisement showed its connection with the Lion Amphitheatre of Boston and did not mean that it carried a menagerie. The advertisement stressed the horsemanship and athletic skill of its Equestrian Corps, the noble and splendid stud of Arab and Hanoverian horses and "the full and effective BAND." "Conducted on a new and much improved plan, entirely above the old style of Circuses, and avoiding everything offensive to good morals or repulsive to the most refined taste," this was evidently a more elegant equestrian establishment than anything which had appeared in the village heretofore. Fifty cents admission was charged to the "airy tier of boxes, neatly carpeted, outside the first, around the whole circumference," and twenty-five cents to the pit. Children, under ten years of age and accompanied by their parents, were admitted to the boxes at half price, but there was no half price to the pit.

In 1837, Master William Young, fourteen years of age and commonly called and known as the "Young Magician," performed a few nights at the North American Hotel (formerly Forbus House) in Poughkeepsie, commencing Tuesday, July 18. He also proposed to visit Hyde Park for one or two nights. He was described as the pupil of Adrien of New York and was said to equal his tutor in almost every performance of highly interesting and very amusing feats of balancing, Legerdemain and Natural Magic. The exhibition room at the hotel had been fitted up in a style to please the most fastidious. The six front seats were covered and reserved for ladies or families at fifty cents each. The other seats were offered at "the usual rate (25 cents)."

In September of the same year, the New York Circus or National Gymnasium, T. Tufts, manager and director, came to Poughkeepsie for two days, Monday and Tuesday, September 18 and 19.

The advertisement offered "a splendid stud of high trained HORSES and a fine BAND of MUSIC," and the price was the popular fifty cents for box seats and 25 cents in the pit. A performance would also be given at Pleasant Valley, near Flagler's Hotel, on Wednesday, September 20. The cut used in the advertisement showed an acrobatic rider and a clown on the same horse. The reader was advised to see also the large bills and bills of each performance.

The Mammoth Arena and Circus Company by Messrs. Bucklee, Rockwell, Hopkins & Co., offered for Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, May 1 and 2, 1838, "one of the most varied, animated and interesting Equestrian Establishments ever presented to an American public!" The accompanying cut showed an agile acrobat standing on one foot, on a galloping horse.

The *Poughkeepsie Telegraph* of August 22, 1838, announced an "Unprecedented Attraction—The Gigantic GIRAFFE, or Camelopard; the GENSBOK, or Ibex of the Egyptians; the BONTIBOK, or Euchon Gazelle, and the SYRIAN GOAT from Mount Lebanon." The giraffe was said to be the only one which had been brought to this country; others were rarely seen in any part of the civilized world. The animals were to be on exhibit at Fishkill on Tuesday, August 28; near Baldwin's Hotel in Poughkeepsie on Wednesday from 10 until 4 o'clock; and at Rhinebeck on Thursday. The price of admission would be 25 cents, children under 10 years half price.

And, the *Poughkeepsie Eagle* of Saturday, September 8, 1838, offered another "Great Novelty and Unprecedented Attraction," at Hatch's Hotel, Wednesday and Thursday, September 12 and 13, from 10 a. m. until 6 p. m. The advertisement said: "Just arrived from England the Celebrated ALBINO LADY and the IRISH GIANT, whose singular appearance had excited the wonder of all who have seen them; also Mr. DAVIDSON, from London, A FANCY GLASS WORKER. The price of admission was not given.

A "CIRCUS—From the N. Y. Bowery Amphitheatre, under the management of Mr. H. Rockwell," was advertised to show In Poughkeepsie on May 10, 11 and 13, 1839. A performance was to be given each evening at 7 p. m., with an additional afternoon show on Saturday, May 11, "for the accomodation of those patrons whose residence

being in the country, prevents their attending the evening performance." Among the particular attractions offered were: Elegant equitation by Master W. Howes; the song "Jim-Along-Josey" by Mr. John Smith; Corpuscular Manoeuvres by the whole company, Messrs. Rockwell, S. B. Howes, W. Howes, Shindle, Miller, Mestayer, Huntington, Needham, Bownie, Gossin, Franklin, Reynolds, Russel, Burnal and Master James Howes; Clown, Mr. J. Gossin; Amazonian Maid by Mrs. Gullen, and a Polish Entree by six male and six female Equestrians. The admission price was 50 cents to the boxes, pit 25 cents. Children would be admitted to boxes at half price. In this advertisement, appeared the first mention in the local newspapers of the song "Jim-Along-Josey," which had long been a favorite with the performers in New York.

"A COMBINATION EXTRAORDINARY, Grand Equestrian Circus and National Olympic Arena Company, united with the novel and interesting exhibition of the Giraffe or Camelopard and other animals and both exhibited for one price of admission," was offered at Poughkeepsie on Monday and Tuesday, September 23 and 24, 1839, as per the *Poughkeepsie Eagle*.

Welch, Bartlett & Co. were the proprietors of the two exhibitions. This was the first announcement of a combined equestrian show and a menagerie and set the pattern for what Dutchess County people came to expect when a circus was announced. The advertisement for this particular exhibit was illustrated with a cut showing two giraffes, one standing, although there was nothing in the reading matter to indicate there were two of these animals in the collection. Perhaps this was not to mislead the reader, but to demonstrate that the animal could fold up. The price of admission, which included both exhibitions, was fifty cents in the boxes and 25 cents in the pit. And, children under 12 years of age would be admitted to the boxes at half price. The exhibition was scheduled to be shown at Fishkill on Wednesday, September 25.

Since the appeal to the curious in 1787, over a span of fifty years, the advertisements in the local newspapers show the growth and development of this most popular form of entertainment as offered to the residents of an up-river county. If the shows increased

in number and in size, so did everything else in proportion. In the 1830's an Improvement Party did much for the growth and expansion of business in the village of Poughkeepsie and, in spite of a national panic, the projects instituted by the group flourished. Over the years there had been many varieties of entertainment offered, instrumental and vocal concerts, theatre plays, demonstrations of magic and ventriloquism, exhibits of paintings, wax works, freaks and acrobats, but nothing, not even the equestrian show, appealed to so large a part of the public as did the menagerie. And, when in the late 1830's, the equestrian show and menagerie combined in one exhibit, there was little more to be asked for. This did not mean that there were no longer any separate shows or that the solitary showman had disappeared. For many years the larger shows were interspersed with the dog and pony shows and, as late as 1915, a performing bear was led along the streets of Rhinebeck.

Amy Ver Nooy

REFERENCES

- In addition to the files of newspapers in the Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie, the following works of reference have been consulted:
- Bailey, Henry DuBois. *Local Tales and Historical Sketches*. Fishkill Landing, John W. Spaight, 1874.
- Greenwood, Isaac J. *The Circus, its Origin and Growth prior to 1835*. Dunlap Society, New Series, No. 5, New York, 1898.
- Hansen, Harry. *North of Manhattan; Persons and Places of Old Westchester*. New York, Hastings House, 1950.
- May, Earl Chapin. *The Circus from Rome to Ringling*. New York, Duffield and Green, [c1932].
- Murray, Marian. *Circus! From Rome to Ringling*. New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc. [c1956].
- Odell, George C. D. *Annals of the New York Stage*; v.1, v.2. New York, Columbia University Press, 1927.
- Spaeth, Sigmund. *Read 'Em and Weep*. New York, Arco Publishing Company, [c1945].
- Vail, R.W.G. ". . . The Beginnings of the American Circus," published in *The Colophon*, 1934, Part 18.
- Wright, Richardson. *Hawkers & Walkers in Early America*. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Company, 1927.
- Records in the office of the County Clerk, Court House, Poughkeepsie.
- Copies of agreements made at Somers, New York, furnished by Mr. George L. Chindahl, National Historian of the Circus Fan Association of America.

BOOKS

Three books of particular interest to Hudson valley people and to members of the Dutchess County Historical Society were published in 1956, all written by officers of the society. The year book is publishing short reviews of each,—just enough to urge one to get his own copy and read it over and over.

Membership in the Kingdom of God, by Leland H. Shaw. New York, Pageant Press. [c1956]

Leland H. Shaw, in his recent book, *Membership in the Kingdom of God*, has given us an interesting, stimulative and different approach to the outstanding Biblical passages touching upon membership with God in His Kingdom.

Mr. Shaw feels personally and expresses in vivid words his belief that we may be members in this kingdom, not only in the world to come but also right now in this busy world of today, if we but serve our God, walk closely with Him and obey His teachings as set forth in the Bible. Truly a great opportunity for each and every one of us.

Mr. Shaw's interpretations are inspirational and well worth reading. I commend the book to your attention.

C. C. H.

Old Dutchess Forever, by Henry Noble MacCracken. New York, Hastings House. [c1956]

With pleasure and our own congratulations to him, we welcome the opportunity to call attention to Dr. Henry Noble MacCracken's *Old Dutchess Forever*, his lively and scholarly history of Dutchess County, from its beginnings to 1812.

To many of our readers who admired particularly the local history contributions of our former standbys, Helen Wilkinson Reynolds and Dr. J. Wilson Poucher, it is encouraging to have Dr. MacCracken carrying on where, in a sense, they left off. Indeed, we are happy and proud that he finds time to serve as a trustee of the society and we welcome his active interest.

As President Emeritus of Vassar College, Dr. MacCracken looks back with a refreshing examination of "Old Dutchess," born of a fine appreciation that he obtained through a long and rich career at the college. Moreover, he has become one of us off-campus, too, and

his enjoyment of local history naturally makes his contribution to the history of the county all the more valuable.

In a former and more comprehensive review, we believe we wrote aptly in calling Dr. MacCracken's history a captivating one and "a robust and at times rollicking account of the early days of the county." He has written for the first time a history about a county with a full-scope review of events comparable to that of a state or nation, but benefiting by a more penetrating analysis of things in a smaller sphere.

This history adds much about the lives of individual leaders who come to life again in his chronicle, particularly in the case of Cathryna Brett, the "First Lady of Dutchess."

We are indebted to Dr. MacCracken for his painstaking search of the records at the Court House, showing that the Scots and the Irish were here too (not just the Dutch) in the very beginnings. And, "there never was a time," as Dr. MacCracken puts it, "when the Dutchess people might not have derived from any of at least ten national stocks."

Much of the story of the Dutchess County's part in the Revolution has been brought close to us through earlier historians, but Dr. MacCracken adds probably a more revealing appraisal of the importance of the Dutchess contribution to the Revolutionary War effort than we have had before.

We should also call attention to the zestful way in which Dr. MacCracken has opened up a new broad-scale appreciation of the part of "The Oblong" in the history of the county. He has made us more fully aware of the part this eastern section played as the threshold for the "insweep of the Yankees into Dutchess" from New England.

Joseph W. Emsley

Bridges, written and illustrated by Henry Billings. New York, Viking. 1956.

Mr. Billings has added another to his list of books that appeal especially to the technically-minded boy of high school age. This book traces the development of bridge building in this country from the

time when the first fixed roadway began to link village to village and town to town and necessitated a means of crossing a river, ravine or marsh.

He describes in detail and illustrates with sketches and diagrams the processes of construction of the many types of bridges that have been built and used over the years, from the early covered bridges to the present day structures built to cope with current traffic and the millions of speedy motor vehicles. He gives some understandable reasons for the designs of the newer bridges and tells who designed them, and when and how, and one realizes how a utilitarian project can become a thing of beauty and grace.

Of particular interest, of course, is the chapter of the book which deals with the bridges of our own neighborhood. With the completion of the Kingston-Rhinecliff span, five modern bridges across the Hudson will have been constructed since 1931, when the Mid-Hudson Bridge at Poughkeepsie was opened. The author tells that the "destination lines," which for many years ran north and south, no longer run just up and down the length of the Hudson, but also across it. The river has long since ceased to be a barrier.

Mr. Billings speculates on the bridge of the future and estimates that in order to maintain freedom of movement on our three million miles of roads at least three hundred thousand bridges, large and small, are in constant use. He has made a book, which may sound technical, but which gives a clear and understandable demonstration of his subject.

The Editor



CIRCUS.— Ever since the circus has left the city the juveniles are walking on their hands, standing on their heads, and cutting up all sorts of didos. *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle*, October 2, 1863

