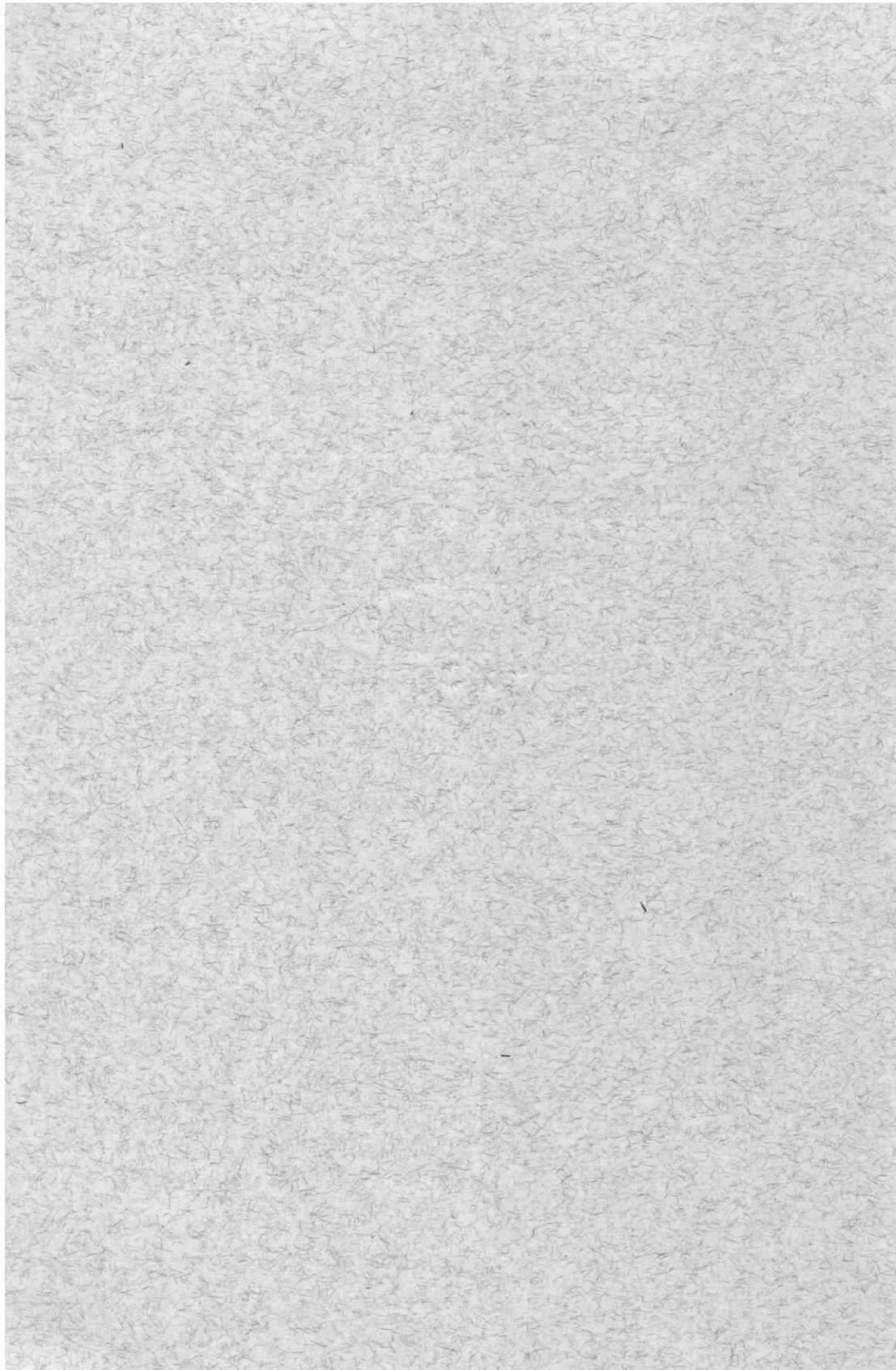


Year Book

Dutchess County Historical Society

Volume 42

1957



Year Book

Dutchess County Historical Society

Volume 42

1957

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by the Dutchess County Historical Society

DUTCHESS 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 7

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.

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Robert W. Doughty	City of Beacon
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Mrs. Edward B. Stringham	Town of East Fishkill
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Benjamin H. Haviland	Town of Hyde Park
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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 1958

Mrs. Stuart R. Anderson
Harris N. Cookingham

Edgar B. Nixon
John R. Schwartz

CLASS OF 1959

Mrs. Harry H. Hill
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

CLASS OF 1961

Mrs. John H. Darrow
Raymond G. Guernsey

Miss Ruth A. Halstead
Mrs. Hardy Steeholm

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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

April 25, 1957

A meeting of the Board of trustees of the Dutchess County Historical Society was held on Thursday afternoon, April 25, 1957, at the Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie.

Present: President Van Wyck, Mr. Buck, Mrs. Daniels, Dr. Davison, Mr. Emsley, Dr. MacCracken, Dr. Nixon, Judge Schwartz, the curator, the treasurer and the secretary.

The minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees, held October 26, 1956, were read and approved.

The treasurer reported that a bill had been received from The Junior League of Poughkeepsie, Inc., in the sum of \$95.02, which represented one-half of the cost of maintaining the Glebe House for the year ended March 31, 1957. It was moved and seconded that this bill be paid.

Mr. Van Wyck spoke of the loss to the society in the death of Mr. Briggs. The secretary was instructed to write Mrs. Briggs, expressing the sympathy of the Board of Trustees.

The matter of the Caroline

Thorn Wells estate was discussed and the secretary was requested to write Mr. Hill, asking if he could make some report of the present status of the estate.

Plans for the annual meeting were discussed and it was decided to hold the meeting on Friday, May 24, at which time Judge Schwartz would tell something about the punishments inflicted on those persons convicted of crime in the eighteenth century.

The president reported that he had talked with officers of the local chapter of the D.A.R. when informed that the Regents of the State of New York had decided to drop the Clinton House, Poughkeepsie, from the number of historic sites maintained by the state. After conferring with a number of trustees of the Dutchess County Historical Society, he had assured the D.A.R. of the support of this society in an effort to persuade the Board of Regents to re-consider its decision. This informal action of the board was approved and its support of the D.A.R. in this worthy endeavor was confirmed.

Dr. MacCracken spoke of the

quantity of valuable notes of historical interest which Mr. Briggs had gathered and which would be made available to the society. He asked that a committee be appointed to examine the material and report back to the trustees. The president appointed Dr. MacCracken and Mrs. Ver Nooy to serve as such a committee.

There was some discussion with reference to plans for a 1957 pilgrimage and Dr. MacCracken was appointed chairman of a com-

mittee to make arrangements for the trip to be held in the town of Northeast.

Dr. Nixon spoke of the desirability of printing a brochure which would describe the society and its work. Judge Schwartz moved, and it was seconded, that a committee be appointed to prepare such a pamphlet.

On motion, the meeting adjourned.

Amy Ver Nooy
Secretary

ANNUAL MEETING

May 24, 1957

The annual meeting of the Dutchess County Historical Society was held on Friday, May 24, 1957, at the Nelson House, Poughkeepsie. The business meeting was held at 11:30 a.m. and Mr. Van Wyck presided.

The minutes of the semi-annual meeting, held October 26, 1956, and meetings of the Board of Trustees, held October 26, 1956, and April 25, 1957, were read and approved.

The secretary reported that a number of copies of back issues of the year book had been given to the society by members who had duplicates. Many of these issues had been given to fill out files at

the public library at Pawling, the library at Rutgers University and the library of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

The secretary also reported that the society had lost one member by resignation and the following members by death: Mr. Brent W. Blythe, Mr. Harry T. Briggs, Mr. Walter L. Gilbert, Dr. Ralph A. Hayt and Mrs. Harry A. Roake.

The treasurer gave a brief report of the state of the treasury, which was accepted as read.

The curator had left a report which stated that she was engaged in making a finding list of the pos-

sessions in her care and noted recent gifts made by Miss Edith Van Wyck.

There was no report on the Caroline Thorn Wells estate.

The pilgrimage committee reported that plans were being considered for a trip into the town of Northeast and into Connecticut.

It was noted that the terms of office of some of the officers had expired. Dr. Nixon made some nominations and the chairman asked for further nominations from the meeting. There were no other candidates suggested and it was moved that one ballot be cast for those who had been nominated. This was accomplished and the following were declared elected: president, Mr. Van Wyck; vice-president, Mr. Mylod; treasurer, Miss Traver; curator, Mrs. Buchanan; secretary, Mrs. Ver Nooy; trustee to fill the unexpired term of Mr. Briggs, Mrs. Harry H. Hill; four trustees, comprising the class of 1961, Mrs. John H. Darrow, Mr. Raymond G. Guernsey, Miss Ruth A. Halstead and Mrs. Hardy Steeholm; and two vice-presidents, Mr. Thomas J. Boyce and Mr. Jacob H. Strong, Sr., representing the townships of Dover and Rhinebeck, respectively.

The names of the following new members were proposed and they were elected: Mr. Sinclair T. Allen, Mrs. Carl E. Cummings, Mrs. Hugh R. Davies, Miss Evaretta Killmer, Mrs. Robert Silkworth, Mr. William F. Spragg, Mrs. Seth Talcott, Mr. Peter Van Kleeck and the library of Rutgers University.

There was no further business brought before the meeting. There was considerable discussion of the value of setting down those facts and stories which come down by word of mouth and do not appear in print.

It was reported that the register of the Reformed Dutch Church of Poughkeepsie, shows the baptism, April 14, 1799, of Sally, born February 16, 1799, daughter of Peter Myers and Hepsibeth Everit. Mr. Bisbee had transmitted the information to his friends in England who were pleased to have the names of the parents of their great-great-grandmother.

On motion, the meeting adjourned to the dining room where an enjoyable luncheon was served.

After luncheon, Judge Schwartz was presented and he gave an interesting and informative account of the punishments

inflicted on those persons convicted of wrong-doing in the early days of this country.

The meeting closed with an

enthusiastic vote of thanks to the speaker.

Amy Ver Nooy,
Secretary

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

September 26, 1957

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Dutchess County Historical Society was held on Thursday afternoon, September 26, 1957, at the Adriance Memorial Library, Poughkeepsie.

Present: President Van Wyck, Mr. Buck, Mr. Cookingham, Mrs. Daniels, Dr. Davison, Mr. Guernsey, Miss Halstead, Dr. MacCracken, the curator, the treasurer and the secretary.

Calling the meeting to order, Mr. Van Wyck welcomed the new members of the board, Mr. Guernsey and Miss Halstead.

The minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees, held April 25, 1957, were read and approved.

The treasurer reported that a few of the members, only 54, had not yet paid dues for 1957 and that bills were being mailed to those in arrears.

The gift of an early local imprint, Poughkeepsie, 1840, was reported by the curator.

Dr. MacCracken spoke of the quantity of historical information

which Mr. Briggs had gathered, especially with reference to ice boating, horse racing and the history of the town of Hyde Park. He said that he would make a further report at a later meeting.

The secretary reported that she had attended the presentation of the Freedom Shrine to the Poughkeepsie High School by the local Exchange Club, earlier in the afternoon.

Dr. MacCracken reported that Mrs. Richard Aldrich had written an autobiography, which contains, in addition to her own personal experiences, many interesting accounts and anecdotes having to do with the "river families" in the county over a period of fifty years. Those members present approved the suggestion that Mrs. Aldrich be asked to publish her book under the auspices of the Dutchess County Historical Society and as one of the "Collections" of the society.

Completed plans for the annual pilgrimage, to be held Sep-

tember 28, were reported and were enthusiastically received.

Dr. MacCracken also reported that he had attended the Governor's Conference on the Hudson-Champlain Celebration, held at Albany, September 24. He stated that he and Assemblyman R. Watson Pomeroy had been appointed chairmen, representing Dutchess County. He moved that a committee be appointed to convene a meeting of representatives of various organizations in the county for the purpose of develop-

ing a program as part of the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the voyages of Henry Hudson and Samuel de Champlain. Dr. Davison was appointed chairman of such a committee and Mr. Cookingham and Mrs. Daniels were asked to serve on the committee and represent their respective neighborhoods.

On motion, the meeting adjourned.

Amy Ver Nooy,
Secretary

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

October 25, 1957

The semi-annual meeting of the Dutchess County Historical Society was held on Friday, October 25, 1957, at the Nelson House, Poughkeepsie. The president called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

The minutes of the annual meeting, held May 24, 1957, and of a meeting of the Board of Trustees, held September 26, 1957, were read and approved.

The treasurer gave the semi-annual report, January - June, and a brief statement of the present state of the treasury. These reports were approved as read.

The curator described the

work which she was doing in arranging and cataloging the manuscripts belonging to the society and in her care.

The secretary reported that the society had lost the following members by death: Mr. Benjamin H. Haviland, Mr. Earle Hawley, Miss Esther van H. Mulford, Mrs. John R. Schwartz, Dr. Scott Lord Smith, Mrs. Edward Barnes Stringham, Mr. Morgan Wing and Mrs. J. T. Yeomans.

Dr. MacCracken, of the pilgrimage committee, reported on the recent trip into Connecticut and recommended that a joint pilgrimage with some of the neigh-

boring counties be taken more frequently.

Dr. MacCracken also told of the autobiographical manuscript in preparation by Mrs. Richard Aldrich and reported that Mrs. Aldrich was willing that it be published under the auspices of this society. This suggestion was approved and it was moved and seconded that the society agree to meet the expenses of distribution.

Mention was made of the request that "historical markers" be placed at several locations in the county and the president said that an effort would be made to discover whether the State Department of Education would place suitable markers.

It was moved and seconded that the secretary send letters expressing the thanks of the society to the several persons who contributed to the success of the recent pilgrimage.

The following new members were proposed and elected: Mr. Peter Van Kleeck, life member; Mr. Warren Olsen, Professor Madelene Pierce and Mr. Arthur Suckley as annual members.

The secretary reported that inquiries had been received concerning the families of Thomas Carl, Reed Ferris, Ebenezer Olmstead and the Tripp and Sweet families. She said that she would be glad

to pass on any information which the members might supply.

Mr. Cookingham presented to the society a Bible which had belonged to the Lamberts family. This was given into the keeping of the curator.

Mr. Van Wyck urged those present to set down the stories about their own localities. He told of the map which he was preparing which would show the locations of old landmarks, taverns, churches, graveyards, etc., etc.

Mrs. Hobart Hunt told of the conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation which she had attended. She told that it was similar to the National Trust of England in its aims and accomplishments and rejoiced that such an organization had been formed in this country.

There was no further business to be discussed, so the meeting adjourned to the dining room, where an excellent lunch was enjoyed.

Following the luncheon, the Honorable R. Watson Pomeroy introduced Miss Mary E. Cunningham, Deputy Publicity Director for the State Department of Commerce. Miss Cunningham told of the plans which had been discussed for the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the voyages made by Christopher Columbus and Samuel de Champlain.

She urged the society to organize the local committees for its part in the observance, emphasizing that the time for preparation was short.

The meeting closed with a rising vote of thanks to the speaker.

Amy Ver Nooy,
Secretary



DUTCHESS

THIS County adjoins to West-Chester, which bounds it on the South, the Connecticut Line on the East, Hudson's River on the West, and the County of Albany on the North. (In describing the Limits of the several Counties, I regard their Bounds according to the Jurisdiction as now exercised in each, rather than the laws relating to them, which are very imperfect, especially the general Act in 1691. The greatest Part of Hudson's River is not included in any of our Counties.) The South Part of this County is mountainous and fit only for Iron Works, but the rest contains a great Quantity of good Upland well watered. The only Villages in it are Poghkeepsing and the Fish-Kill, though they scarce deserve the Name. The Inhabitants on the Banks of the River are Dutch, but those more Easterly Englishmen, and, for the most Part, Emigrants from Connecticut and Long Island. There is no Episcopal Church in it. The Growth of this County has been very sudden, and commenced but a few Years ago. Within the Memory of Persons now living, it did not contain above twelve Families; and according to the late Returns of the Militia, it will furnish at present above 2500 fighting Men.

The History of the Province of New-York From the First Discovery to the Year MDCCXXXII, to which is annexed a Description of the Country, by William Smith, A.M. London, 1757

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

January 1, 1957 - June 30, 1957

PERMANENT ACCOUNT—Poughkeepsie Savings Bank

Balance on hand, January 1, 1957	\$8,094.07
Interest	121.87
Balance on hand, June 30, 1957	\$8,215.94

CHECKING ACCOUNT—Dutchess Bank and Trust Company

Receipts

Balance on hand, January 1, 1957	\$ 90.58
Received from dues	999.00
Received from sale of books	10.50
	\$1,100.08

Disbursements

Stamped envelopes for bills	\$ 18.20
Curator	50.00
Secretary	50.00
Treasurer	50.00
New York State Historical Association, membership	5.00
Lansing-Broas Printing Co., Inc., bills	12.50
Lansing-Broas Printing Co., Inc., letterheads	12.10
Junior League of Poughkeepsie, Inc., Glebe House ..	95.02
Lansing-Broas Printing Co., Inc., printing cards	11.35
Hyde Park Historical Association, membership	1.00
Nelson House, guest luncheon	2.00
Postage, office supplies	20.93
	328.10

Balance on hand, June 30, 1957	\$ 771.98
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THE HELEN WILKINSON REYNOLDS MEMORIAL FUND

Poughkeepsie Savings Bank

Balance on hand, January 1, 1957	\$2,569.43
Gift	10.00
Interest	38.81
Balance on hand, June 30, 1957	\$2,618.24

Respectfully submitted

Albertina T. B. Traver, *Treasurer*

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

JULY 1, 1957 - DECEMBER 31, 1957

PERMANENT ACCOUNT—Poughkeepsie Savings Bank

Balance on hand, July 1, 1957	\$8,215.94
Life membership	25.00
Interest	134.30
Balance on hand, December 31, 1957	\$8,375.24

CHECKING ACCOUNT—Dutchess Bank and Trust Company

Receipts

Balance on hand, July 1, 1957	\$ 771.98
Received from dues	106.00
Received from sale of books	13.00
	\$ 890.98

Disbursements

Curator	\$ 50.00
Secretary	50.00
Treasurer	50.00
Reply cards, postage, mimeograph paper	29.54
Lansing-Broas, printing reply cards	13.10
Corsage for speaker	3.00
Nelson House, luncheon guests	4.50
	\$ 200.14
Balance on hand, December 31, 1957	\$ 690.84

THE HELEN WILKINSON REYNOLDS MEMORIAL FUND

Poughkeepsie Savings Bank

Balance on hand, July 1 1957	\$2,618.24
Interest	42.71
Balance on hand, December 31, 1957	\$2,660.95

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

OUR PRESIDENT SAYS:

For our spring meeting we were fortunate to have Judge John R. Schwartz tell us about the punishments meted out to those who transgressed the rules in the early days, particularly in this county. Judge Schwartz is one of the trustees of our society and very generously gives of his time to help direct the affairs of the organization.

* * *

One of the most enjoyable trips that our society has made was the visit to the town of Northeast and the excursion into Connecticut on September 28. On a sharp, clear fall day, a goodly number of cars carried the eager pilgrims on a delightful trip arranged by Dr. MacCracken. The carefully chosen itinerary, the interesting and able speakers and a wonderful display of fall color, combined to give us a day of great pleasure.

* * *

On October 25, Miss Mary E. Cunningham, Deputy Publicity Director for the State Department of Commerce, spoke at our fall meeting. She told about some of the plans that were being considered for the celebration of the 350th anniversary of the voyages of discovery made by Henry Hudson and Samuel de Champlain. She urged that the society lose no time in formulating plans for its part in the program and emphasized that the time was much shorter than we realized.

* * *

On the week-end of September 6, 7 and 8, Dr. MacCracken, Miss Traver and Mrs. Ver Nooy attended the workshop in local history, arranged by the New York State Historical Association and held at Hamilton College, Clinton, New York. Dr. MacCracken was one of the speakers.

* * *

Several of our members and officers attended the Governor's Conference, held September 24, in the assembly room at the State Capitol. Governor Harriman and others spoke of the plans for the coming 1959 Hudson-Champlain celebration. Dr. MacCracken, one of our trustees, and Mr. Pomeroy, assemblyman representing this district, were appointed co-chairmen to arrange for Dutchess County's participation.

A number of our members attended the meeting held on November 21, at 47 Cannon Street, when representatives of schools, colleges, industries, service clubs, veterans' groups and fraternal orders, as well as many other organizations, discussed possible plans for the 1959 celebration. Mr. Pomeroy and Dr. MacCracken conducted the meeting and Miss Mary E. Cunningham was present and answered many questions.

* * *

In the death of Mr. Harry T. Briggs, the society has suffered a severe loss. Mr. Briggs was always interested in the history of the county and was an authority on his native township of Hyde Park. He was particularly interested in sports, such as ice boating, rowing and horse racing. He contributed several interesting articles to our year books. We shall miss Mr. Briggs.

Edmund Van Wyck



THE ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE

The day chosen for the 1957 pilgrimage, September 28, was sunny and the air was crisp and sharp.

The program for the day, planned by the chairman, Dr. MacCracken, provided a most enjoyable trip into an area where the society had not previously visited.

Shortly after 9:30 cars began to arrive at the parking space behind the Methodist Church at Millerton and the pilgrims assembled in the church. They were welcomed to the town of Northeast by the mayor of the village, Mr. Walter W. Davis, who told something of the history of the area. He introduced Mr. Chester F. Eisenhuth who gave a graphic account of the famous prize fight between Yankee Sullivan and Jack Morrissey, held in 1853 in the section which was for many years a "no-man's land," a wooded, mountainous tract where the boundary line between New York and Massachusetts had never been definitely settled.

After this auspicious start, the pilgrims left Millerton, followed the Salisbury Turnpike to Salisbury, Connecticut, and assembled in the old (1744) Congregational Church. Here, Mrs. Thomas R. Wagner and Dr. Arnold Whitridge told the history of their township.

Leaving Salisbury the cavalcade followed the leader through Lime Rock and the Hollenbeck valley, passing the monument to General Sedgwick and the North Cornwall Church (in process of repair), through the stand of "Cathedral Pines" and then over to West Cornwall. At West Cornwall, those who had brought a picnic lunch ate out of doors and others enjoyed the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. George Denny, Jr., at the Covered Bridge Inn.

After lunch, the group gathered in the sunshine before the old Church, while Mr. Mason Trowbridge gave an historical account of the area, particularly the ownership of the farms and the early deeds to them.

After Mr. Trowbridge's talk and when the women had completed their visits to the gift and antique shops, the pilgrims re-embarked and moved on to Sharon. Some went by the newer road, through Cornwall Bridge and Route 4, and others climbed over the mountain, on the older road, noting the beaver dam, scurrying rabbits and a deer or two on the way.

Arriving at Sharon, the group assembled in the Sharon Con-

gregational Church (1824) where they were welcomed to the village by Dr. Roger W. Moore, president of the Sharon Historical Society, and where they were told the story of the church and the history of the village. Some went first to the home, at the north end of the green, of Admiral and Mrs. Thomas Hart, completed in 1799. The pilgrims were permitted to go through the main floor and much enjoyed the wonderful view to the north, the mountain side where spots of bright color showed that fall was approaching, and the garden in the foreground with its beautiful marigolds still untouched by frost. Others went first to the house built by Ebenezer Gay in 1775, now most fortunately in the possession of the Sharon Historical Society. The visitors admired the exhibits while they envied the society its attractive home.

A number of the pilgrims who came back to their homes by Route US-44 stopped at Bogardus Hall, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Huber and were interested to see what had been done and to hear of the plans for restoring the house to its old-time hospitable appearance.

Late in the afternoon, as the pilgrims turned homeward, it was the consensus of opinion that, through the arrangements made by Dr. MacCracken, the Dutchess County Historical Society had added one more highly successful trip to a long list of delightful and informative historical pilgrimages.

THE VAN WYCK PAPERS

The Van Wyck papers are the gift to the Dutchess County Historical Society of Mrs. Minott A. Osborn of Fairfield, Connecticut, and Mrs. Frederick W. Memmott, Jr., of Hartsdale, New York, and were transmitted to the society by one of its members, Miss Edith A. Van Wyck of Fishkill. The papers had been the property of Mr. James R. Van Wyck who inherited them from his father, James Van Wyck.

During the reading, sorting and arranging of the papers, it became evident that the major and most important part of the collection is centered in and connected with the activities of General Abraham Van Wyck of Fishkill, the father of James Van Wyck, and the great grandfather of James R. Van Wyck and Miss Edith Van Wyck.

Abraham Van Wyck was born in 1774 and died in 1864. He appears to have lived all his life in Fishkill, with the exception of the time he was with the army in the War of 1812. In the Presbyterian churchyard at Brinckerhoff, Abraham Van Wyck's birth date on his gravestone, July 8, is the same as the date on his mother's gravestone of her death. His mother was Aeltje Brinckerhoff Van Wyck, the wife of Dr. Theodorus Van Wyck. Abraham inherited part of the original tract of land in Fishkill bought by his grandfather, Theodorus Van Wyck, in 1736 from Madam Brett. In 1797, Abraham married Susan Haight. She died in 1825. In 1836, he married Martha Van Wyck, who died in 1875,

I had not even these few facts when I began to work on the papers. But, as I handled them, noting General Van Wyck's strong, clear handwriting, observing his careful accounting of the various businesses he undertook, examining the hundreds of receipts he accumulated (and saved) for expenditures of even small amounts, I began to form a very definite concept of the character of the man. His life covers an important period of the history of the county, extending as it does from the American Revolution almost to the end of the Civil War; and it was a life busy with the practical and necessary work of farming,—farming a new land, with the simplest of equipment, making it produce richly so that it helped feed the community, with produce left over for shipping down the river to New York. From these commonplace receipts, legal papers, everyday jottings and memoranda, the life and affairs of the community of Fishkill emerge. Reading the papers,

one sees Van Wyck farming his land, raising corn and rye and barley, shipping it down the river so convenient to his land. He raised sheep and sold the wool to neighboring mills, in one of which he had an interest. He sold sides of beef, veal and pork to his neighbors. He collected rent for the pasturing of horses and cows on his land. He bought and sold farms. In addition, he was the executor of the estates of a number of his neighbors and was the guardian of several minor children, attending to the details of their board, clothing and tuition, as well as to the final accounting of their estates.

There are no personal letters in this collection, no fascinating memoirs or accounts of events, historical or otherwise, no philosophical reflections on life. There are only the bare bones of a man's and a community's material existence, the eternal detail of earning and spending money and the building of an inheritance for one's descendants. These receipts and bills for groceries, cloth, shoes, thread, receipts from the doctor, the sawmill that produced the lumber for his house (which still stands in Fishkill), the packet on the river that carried the grain to New York, the blacksmith, the apothecary, the veterinary, these deeds of land, indentures for many kinds of business transactions, wills, lists of the earthly possessions of the newly dead, memoranda of notes and bonds and mortgages—these are the raw materials of the early economic and social history of Fishkill.

The first group of Abraham Van Wyck's papers is one concerned with his own interests and activities, a bundle of his personal, household and business receipts, orders to pay, and other memoranda, much of it necessarily containing the names of other residents of Fishkill and the immediate neighborhood. There are 234 pieces in this group, ranging in date from 1796, when Van Wyck was twenty-two years old, to 1864, the year of his death. Following is a small sampling of some of the items, together with the dates:

- 1800, 33 gallons brandy — 8 pounds, 16 shillings;
to a visit [from the doctor] and sundries, 16 s.
- 1801, Paid 37 pounds, 10 shillings for 30,000 shingles
To Solly Senk, receipt for \$100 for grinding on barrels
- 1804, Receipt of the surveyor:
"2 days surveying and dividing your land, — 4 pounds to Mr.
Purdy for carrying the chain
to Mrs. Purdy for vitteling, lodging and horskeeping — 75 shillings.
to making map — 1 pound, 25 shillings"
- Receipt of Rodolphus Hasbrook, dated "Fish Town, March 23,
1804," — \$1.04 for one year's postage

- Bill, Abraham Halsey to Abraham Van Wyck for "spirits, medicine & attendance," — 81 pounds, 19 shillings
- 1808, Receipt for repairing a wagon — 18 shillings
 Receipt for 160 bushels of "wite corn" of Abraham Van Wyck for Pudney and Besbey at Fishkill Landing
 Statement of Pudney & Besbey for goods bought by A. Van Wyck:
 "12 yd callico, 1½ yd blue muslin, 3 yd flannel, 3 yds ribbon, 2 doz moles (moulds?), 1 sugar dish, 1 shall, ½ yd spriged muslin, 1½ yd plain muslin, 1½ yd coating, silk & twist, 1 doz buttons, 1 doz moles, ¾ yd velvet — 8 pounds, 7 shillings, 4 pence"
 Paid John Phillips \$9.50 for work done at "the passonage house"
 Bought (Dec. 24), of Thomas T. White, 131 Pearl street, New York, 5 oz nutmegs, 8 lbs raisins — \$6.75
- 1809, Paid \$45 for cattle
- 1810, Bought of Haight & Brown, Peekskill, "2 shawls, 2 bandannas, pins & needles, 6 spools of cotton, 1 earthen pitcher, 1 stone pitcher, 1 sugar dish, ½ doz cups and sossers," — 3 pounds, 1 sh, 11 pence.
- 1812, Sold 12 hoop cheeses for \$28.06
- 1815, Receipt to Colonel Abraham Van Wyck, \$1.87 for "half-measuring 500 bushel of corn"
 Receipt for 500 bushels of corn delivered to Holmes & Onderdonk
 Two receipts for measuring on Board Captain Bogardus' sloop, 300 bushels and 200 bushels of corn
 Sold 36 sheep for \$90 to Wiltse & Brett
 "To boarding your daughter 2 days, 1 bottle peppermint, castor oil — \$4.13"
 Bought 10 bals. coarse salt — \$10
 Sold 317 bushels of corn for \$336.81
- 1819, Order to Joseph Parly to pay to Cornelius Dubois \$100 and charge the account of Colonel Abraham Van Wyck, signed Mrs. Susan Van Wyck
- 1820, Receipt for 164 bushels corn, 11 bushels oats, sold to Wiltse & Brett — \$128.82
 Receipt from Bartow White for medicine and attendance "on your wife" during the winter of 1818-1819 — \$23; for a "bull bought at Mr. Scofield's vendue — \$13
 Receipt of Daniel Duboise for \$300 in payment for 153 bushels of wheat on the ground and "my third part of the wheat on the ground and for two sithes and two snaiths"
- 1821, Bill for rails and stacks — 8 pounds, 13 shillings
 Receipt for \$2.37 for shoes and for "footing boots"
 Receipt for payment for 1 doz silver teaspoons and 2 silver salts — 5 pounds, 3 shillings; part paid by old silver
- 1822, Receipt for \$401, part payment on the purchase of the farm of Zebulon Van Voorhis
 Receipt for grinding 8 tons plaster, for sawing lumber, etc.
 Receipt for payment to D. Robinson for making a set of harness, collars, buckles, lines, head stalls, bits, etc. — 5 pounds, 11 shillings
- 1823, Receipt from J. T. Halsey for tuition in astronomy, seminary tuition and 2 sheets drawing paper — \$12.12½
- 1824, Receipt of Peter Adriance and Wallis Patrick at Fishkill for the service of the horse "young Messinger"
 Receipt from "Mistress Pierce, tuition, school expenses & history" — \$7.65
 Bought white lead, prussian blue, oil, paint brush, 80 clear and split boards, 6 planks, etc.

- "Received in mill for General Abraham Van Wyck, 50 bushels, one peck of rye. Robert H. Brinckerhoff"
- 1825, Van Wyck's note for \$1,200 for a piece of land (receipted)
 Bought "30 yds carpett, 10 yds binding, 1 dressing glass, 1 comb, 8 yds cloth, 3½ yds bombazett"
 Receipt for 951 pounds wool and 603 pounds pulled wool at the Marlboro factory
 Bill for James Van Wyck at Nathan Burton's school, winter 1824-25, board, tuition, books — \$38.39
- 1826, Receipt for taxes — \$93.88
- 1830, Subscribed to the *New York Spectator* for 2 years
- 1844, Bill of General Van Wyck with Robert Calhoun for stocking yarn, white wash brush, floor brushes, lampblack, carpet, carpet binding, starch, 1 paper garden seed, ground rice, 1 paper tobacco, nails, panes of glass, 1 yd linen, 1 box hooks and eyes, 5 skeins worsted. (Bill entirely in pounds, shillings and pence and partly paid for in butter and eggs.)
- 1844, Paid Uriah Ridgeway \$72.00 for 8 months labor
- 1845, Bill for cotton, thread and ginger. (Note attached from Mrs. Van Wyck: "I have not all the things that I paid for I have nothing but the ginger in my bundle send up the cotton and thred and 6 spools of thred")
 Bill from the Fishkill postoffice for postage for "the *Christian Intelligencer, Spectator, Cultivator, Home Missionary, Sailors Magazine*, and Sundry newspapers — \$1.32"
 Bill to "Aberham Vanwyke," from William Corbin: "To seting 1 shoe, to legs on a pot, to fixin tin oven, to hoopin tekittle, to 2 staples, to mending spaid, to tin oven crank, to making bench, to 2 duzen screws, smoothin iron handle — 2 pounds, 3 shillings, 2 pence" (receipted: "thiss bill resiv ien full")
- 1846, 1 ton coal — \$6
- 185(?), Bill for the Barge *Independence* ("leaves Fishkill Landing every Monday at 8 p.m. and New York, ft Warren st., every Friday 5 p.m.") for freight on carpeting, 1 large bedstead, 1 settle, 1 frame for bed, 3 bundles bedding
- 1854, Receipt for payment for 2 doz wicks, 6 yds druggat
- 1856, Tax receipt for Abraham Van Wyck, paid by James Van Wyck — \$203.94
- 1864, Receipt for \$1. for 1 year of the *New York Evangelist*

A smaller group of Van Wyck's papers relates to the Pine Grove Woollen Manufacturing Company of Pleasant Valley. The names of Abraham Van Wyck, John B. Van Wyck, Cornelius C. Van Wyck, the William Buckley family, W. Besley and D. Strang occur here. There are receipts for "wool" sold to the company in 1819, \$42.00; in 1822, for 57 lbs of unwashed "wool" delivered in 1815. The receipt shows that \$26.85 was paid for the wool and \$11.25 for interest. An indenture, signed in February 1915, by Walter Dubois, aged 17 years, and his father, John Dubois, shows that Walter was bound as an apprentice for one year to learn "the art, trade, mistry and occupation of a spinner and slubber of wool." Walter bound himself not to embezzle, nor waste, nor play at cards or dice, or any unlawful

game, nor frequent taverns or ale houses, nor commit fornication, nor contract matrimony.

As early as 1821, Van Wyck had completed the handling of the estate of one Thomas Burroughs and was the guardian for William Burroughs and "Hellenah," or "Hellenor" Burroughs. This is a very small bundle of papers, only 12 pieces, from 1815 to 1821. In 1818, there is a bill for 10 pounds, 9 shillings, for cloth, lining, silk & teviot, buttons, molds and cloth for padding, for William Burroughs. In 1820, a bill was paid again for William for "1 pr corse shews—16 shillings, 1 fine hat—2 pounds, 12 shillings." In 1818, there is a memorandum of \$37.00 which Van Wyck received for "Hellenner" Burroughs for "wheat flower" belonging to Hellenner.

The guardianship and executorship which seemingly involved a tremendous amount of work and attention and which went on for many years and certainly ran into a lot of paper, was the settling of the estate of one Benjamin Hutchins. There are 281 items in this group. One large bundle of papers, dating from 1781 to 1841, comprises, evidently, the receipts, bills, drafts, notes and other legal papers acquired by Hutchins prior to Van Wyck's handling of the estate. One of these is Hutchins' will, dated 1837. From internal evidence in these and later papers, it would appear that Hutchins was found to be mentally incompetent around 1840 or 1841. From 1840, or 1841, to 1845 a "Committee of the estate of Benjamin Hutchings" handled his affairs. Documents at this period are mainly receipts for moneys paid out for the estate or memoranda of collections made for it by Abraham Van Wyck or James B. Montross, members of the committee. There are two account books also, one kept from June 2, 1840, to July 16, 1842, by Van Wyck, relating to the estate of Hutchins and containing an inventory of personal and household effects, real estate, notes and other accounts. The other, called the "Committee Book," kept by Van Wyck and Montross from February 18, 1842, to May 16, 1860, contains another inventory of the real and personal estate, leases, etc. There are also accounts of moneys paid to an heir of Hutchins, Elisabeth Emans, his daughter.

Another bundle of papers (46 pieces) is devoted to payments made from the estate of Benjamin Hutchins in behalf of Elisabeth Emans and her husband, James Emans, and this group includes papers relating to Elisabeth Emans' estate, beginning in 1835 and going on until 1861. These documents relate to Elisabeth Emans'

children—John C. Emans, Sarah Emans, Martha Monfort, James A. Emans, Ann E. Emans, Adelia Gordon. One paper from Adelia Gordon was signed before a notary in London by Adelia Gordon and her husband, who gave their address as London.

All in all, Van Wyck was concerned with the handling of the estate of Benjamin Hutchins and his heirs from 1840 to 1861, more than twenty years.

Van Wyck was also the guardian of Joseph Snouck, a minor, and handled the estate of James Snouck. These papers date from 1822 to 1828 and there are 23 pieces. In 1825, Van Wyck paid a bill for Joseph, as follows:

To arithmetic	.43
To quire paper	.25
To a slate	.18
To 1½ year schooling	3.50

In 1827, the following was paid to Cornelius D. Westbrook for Joseph Snouck:

1 quarter schooling	\$5.00
1 writing book	.12½
1 English reader	.37
1 dictionary	1.00
1 Brown's grammar	.75
paper & 2 quills	.41
inkstand & ink	.12½
divider	.12½

Also, in 1827, Van Wyck bought of Sherwood & Calhoun, Fish-kill, "1 Rorum hat"—1 pound, 2 shillings; and, again in the same year, paid for cloth, buttons, skeins of silk, muslin, vest pattern, shirt, buttons and suspenders,—9 shillings, 8 pence. In June of that year, Joseph was outfitted with "1 pr. linen stockings and 1 pr. shoes;" in November, he had "1 fur hat—1 pound, 8 shillings." In May of 1828, there is a bill for Joseph's "bord" for three months. In April 1827, Mary Snouck wrote to Van Wyck to pay James Snouck the sum of \$100, "being my dower right."

Van Wyck was also the guardian of one, Charles E. Bowne. There are two papers only relating to this, dated 1827 and 1828.

Two interesting pieces, relating to Van Wyck's own personal accounts, are two ragged little memorandum books with mottled paper covers and sturdy linen leaves. The smaller of these booklets has some personal memoranda in it, such as the following:

One mahogany plank, 12 feet in length, 20 inches broad, three inches thick
 12 Coffee Cups an sators
 ½ lb of salt peter

Cash paid for a planck, \$10.00
Cash paid for Cups and sasors, 1-2-5
or this:

A Memorandum for me, December 2nd, 1809
½ Dozen Chears
A Carven knife and Fork
5 gallons of wine
2 lbs Hyson Tea
2 lb H(?)do
12 lbs of Coffee
½ lb of Chocolate
2 lb Raisin and 4 lb Curns (currants?)
2 oz of Nutmegs
½ bushel of Crambery
2 bushels of Onions
a (?) iron
1 Dozen Teaspoons
1 peace Corse Calico
a hat for Henry
Dimothy for Curtins for a bed
a bedsted
Bombaset for a Gown, black

The notation on the inside of the cover, however, seems to indicate the purpose for which the book was intended. This reads: "the presitarin Soicitey To Abraham Van Wyck Dr. June 2th, 1808" and this is followed by a list of payments for building supplies, such as brick, nails, lime, lath, and mason work and labor.

The larger memorandum book, dating from January 22, 1790, to May 20, 1811, is filled from cover to cover with entries about the sale of wheat and corn to neighbors, as well as cider, vinegar, butter, pork, flaxseed, lamb, veal, beef, with the amounts of money taken in carefully noted. Other items are notes of cows, horses and oxen pastured on his land, the number of months or weeks, and the amounts paid. Other entries are for the purchase of oxen, farm implements, leather, and a record of the persons who worked for Van Wyck, the length of time, days lost and payments. In July of 1800, he recorded a list of men and days of work done in the harvest.

Following are some of the records from this book:

February 18, 1796, Ruben washbourn began To work for wone year for £20
Thomas Way Drove his Cowes to parster here, Juene 2, 1796
Balance Due from Thomas Way 12 Shillings and Ten pence
Nat Lendue Brought 4 Cattle here To parster april 27 at Nune 1797 Brought
his oxen June 10 at Nune
Oliver Crawfoot began to work for Seven Months April 11th 1797 for £ 23-0-0
Solamon Tailor Brought His Horse December 1797 to winter
Solamon Tailor Fetched his mare away June 21, 1798
August 27, 1798, Derrick Brinckerhoff to 1 month 18 days paster for horse at 9/
per month — 14/4

April 17th, 1799, Lent John B. Van Wyck Tow hundred & fifty Dollars
 December 6, 1799, To Bill paid in New York for cradle £3,
 paid for pare of candlesticks £1
 April 23, 1800, Benjamin Picket Dr To 2 bushels of corn at 14/
 May 13, 1800, Shim Gold Dr To House Rent £3-4-0
 May 16, 1800, Sally & Susan Van Wyck, Dr To Sundreyes bought in New York
 — £7-15-9
 August 28, 1800, bought a yoak of oxen of Tunis Hausbrook price — £21-0-0,
 for which I am to pay the four part of December next
 Janury 31, 1801, bought an ox of Abrm Horton — price 20 dollars payble the
 first of May next
 August 16, 1802, Sold Southes 11 Calves at 4 dollars a pease cash re-
 ceived for them — 41 dollars
 September 4, 1802 Derick Brinckerhuff To four Quarter of Lamb — Weight 6 lb
 September 4, 1802 Adam Montross Dr To hind Quarter Lamb — Weight 5
 1/3 lb
 September 13th, 1802 To Cash paid Isaac Young for harvest work — six dol-
 lars & 25 cents
 December 23, 1802 William Van Wyck Dr To 80 lb of beef
 March 20, 1803 Mrs. Asque for 1 lb of wull 1 pound flax — the hole 4/
 March 20, one bushel & ½ of corn — 7/1
 March 31, to 9 lb of pork — 5/3
 March 20, 1803 Mrs. Asque Cr by 18 lb of flax spun at 1/6 a pound — £ 1-7-0
 do 3 lb of Flax £ 0-9-0
 August 22, 1803 Elizabeth Ketchem was Taken Sick
 July 1, 1803 Mrs. Bush Dr To Cash 3 dollars do August 31 to Cash 2 dollars
 which is in full for weving 40 yards of Linen Cloat
 Tin pound of wool 12¾ lb Fillen for Wolin check 17½ lb of Fillen for Lincey
 woolsy spon by Mrs. John Purdy September 26, 1803
 September 29, 1803 David Moore Dr To 15¼ lb of Veal at 4 pence a pound
 — 5/1
 September 23, 1803 Timathy Ketchim Cr by 35½ lb of beef at 4½ a pound
 December 7th, 1803 Adam Montross Cr by 14 hogs waying 3984 lb
 December 7th, 1803 Adam Montross Dr To Cash one hundred dollars

One of the last pages of the book is given to "Accompt of My Butter" running from April 26, 1803, to November 5. The total received for butter adds up to something like 63 pounds and some odd shillings.

The Van Wyck papers number around 640 items, of which 600 relate to Abraham Van Wyck. Reading them all, one cannot help but form an opinion of the character of the man whose interests they represent. By the evidence of the papers, he was patient, careful, industrious, just and willing and able to take his share of community responsibility. It was a pleasure, then, to find the evidence of the papers borne out by a statement in the Van Wyck genealogy: "General Abraham Van Wyck was a man of great influence, exceptional ability and sterling integrity, and his advice was often sought and referred to, and no one's opinion in the community on any subject of business activity carried greater weight than his."

Aimee Buchanan, Curator

PUNISHMENT IN OTHER DAYS

A year ago I accepted the invitation of my friend Colonel Callan of Chatham, with whom I had the pleasure of serving in World War I, to speak at the 124th annual luncheon and meeting of the Schodak, Stuyvesant, Kinderhook and Chatham Society for the Detection of Horse Thieves. Since, as many of my friends are aware, I am afraid of horses and know nothing about them. I was in very much of a quandary as to a subject for my talk and, in searching for one, I came across the story of two men who met at the races and got to discussing their experiences with horses.

"I remember once a horse ran away with me," said one, "and I wasn't around for five weeks." "That's nothing," declared the other, "I once ran away with a horse and I wasn't out and around for five years," and so I come to the topic of my remarks made then and once more to you this afternoon. The subject is punishment and, in particular, the kinds or types administered when this country was in its infancy, that is, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and, even, to a minimum degree today.

Since the American practices like our laws are based upon those of England and also because time would not permit me to speak of practices elsewhere throughout the world, I shall limit my remarks to references to punishment administered in England and thereafter in the colonies and finally the states.

First, therefore, a brief statement as to punishment in its oldest form, for which we must turn back to the twelfth century. Before that time the only redress for injuries suffered was personal vengeance. In one sense it, of course, was illegal because not regulated or formally sanctioned by the state; in another sense it was not, for there was in those early days no law against it. Moreover, whatever public opinion may then have existed regarded it with toleration, if not actual approval.

The first restriction came with the feeling that indiscriminate vengeance is intolerable; there must be some attempt to identify the aggressor or wrong doer. The man wounded by a chance arrow must not shoot at sight the first man he happens to meet. If an ox be stolen, there must be some attempt to track it; the loser may not make good

*A transcript of an address made on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Dutchess County Historical Society, May 24, 1957, by the Honorable John R. Schwartz, County Judge of Dutchess County.

his loss at the expense of his peaceful neighbor. As a consequence the feud was soon further restricted by the requirement that the aggrieved party should accept a blood fine in lieu of personal vengeance as well as give opportunity for the accused to prove his innocence. This was frequently accomplished by the accused and his "oath helpers," as they were called, making sworn denial or the severe test of the ordeal.

The ordeal was a primitive means used to determine guilt or innocence by submitting the accused to dangerous or painful tests, supposed to be under divine or superhuman control, escape from injury being ordinarily taken as an indication of innocence. Ordeals were a part of the judicial process as late as the thirteenth century and sporadically much later. The chief forms were the ordeal by battle, the ordeal by fire, the ordeal by water (used specifically where witchcraft was charged), and the ordeal by lots.

At this early period, the local community seems to have exercised no executive power and the action of the central government, as such, was virtually non-existent. However, the claims of the king soon intervened and gradually this was the beginning of true criminal law.

Criminal law was originally very barbarous since, in theory, it recognized but one punishment for all serious offenses; viz., death, with confiscation of property. Even after the law of crime had separated itself from the old procedure of revenge, the ordeal and the like, it still clung to the original idea that a criminal prosecution did not really begin until the accused had been found suspect and there was very little likelihood of his innocence. While the petty jury, or jury of trial in criminal cases, was established as an ordinary institution shortly after the close of the thirteenth century, this jury was in reality and sometimes called a "Jury of Inquest" and was merely designed to fill the gap left by the abolishment of the ordeal and the presumption of guilt was heavily against the accused. Public opinion, even then, however, would not permit a man of good character to be condemned off-hand even on the accusation of a jury so that a second jury soon came into existence and actually became the petty or trial jury, the former becoming what has since developed into the Grand Jury.

Years passed, however, before the punishment imposed in England for what we today consider trivial offenses was modified in any real degree and death, as well as the infliction of cruel and inhuman punishment, to say nothing of the pauperizing and banishment of the offenders, was the rule rather than the exception. And the forms used in

England and elsewhere on the Continent were those used for the most part in the colonies and thereafter in the states by our forebears during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and, even to some extent, in the nineteenth.

Time does not permit me to do more than mention the scarlet letter which was hung around the neck or was sewed to the clothing in plain sight. For example, a "B" marked one who used blasphemous words and a "D," a drunkard. The custom of compelling convicted persons, such as thieves and forgers, to wear on their outer garments the letters denoting their crimes continued until 1850, when a convict's jacket, which he was obliged to wear from three to six months after his release from jail, was substituted.

With the whipping post, the stocks, the pillory and the ducking stool, most of us from our school days have some familiarity but of the bilboes, branks and gags, branding and maiming, I feel certain, none of us have heard or know much about.

Let us consider some of these "engines of punishment," as they have been called, what they are, for what crimes the particular type, or combination of them, was used and a few of the people who were punished.

The stocks and the pillory were among the earliest institutions erected in every New England community; as one writer says, "The first public building was a meeting house, but often before any House of God was built, the devil got his restraining engine." Those of you who have visited Williamsburg, Virginia, have, of course, seen both. The stocks were the customary punishment of the drunk and the petty thief, for those who breached the Sabbath, for idleness and petty offenses generally. It is amusing to note that the first person to sit in the Boston stocks was the carpenter who made them. For charging too much for building them, Edward Palmer was fined four times what he charged and ordered to sit an hour in the stocks. In Virginia, for slandering his minister, one, Henry Charlton, was ordered "to make a pair of Stocks and sit in them several Sabbath Days after Divine Service."

The Dutch, however, favored the pillory and the whipping post, although a few had stocks. In the southern and central colonies the stocks were in constant use. The pillory, or stretch neck, was used most extensively throughout the colonies and people were sentenced thereto for all kinds of offenses. In Massachusetts, a man was pilloried

for ploughing on Thanksgiving Day; in Maine one for voting several times for himself as an officer at Town Meeting, and a second time for putting large sums into the contribution box and then surreptitiously taking back his gift; brokers in the south were frequently so treated and, in New York, dishonest brokers and thieves were so punished. As if standing in the pillory were not in itself cruel punishment, often the defendant's ears were nailed to the wood on either side of the head hole.

In 1789, a Negro convicted of felonious assault was sentenced to stand in the pillory four hours "with both ears nailed to the pillory" and, "before he be taken down from the same he shall have both his ears cut off close to his head." The pillory was used in Delaware until February 11, 1905, when it was finally abolished by legislative enactment, but the whipping post, as late as 1950, at least, was still used as punishment in cases of larceny, wife beating and some other specified crimes. Moreover, at least one pillory, that at Newport, rotated its base so as to face in the directions of the compass, remaining at each point for a quarter of an hour. It was quite the custom for the helpless victims to be pelted with rotten eggs and such garbage as could be collected. Both men and women were pilloried.

In our own county, the minutes of the Board of Supervisors disclose that, in February 1754, Isaac Brinckerhoff was paid for repairing the jail and making a pillory, and that in February of 1762, Joseph Green was paid for building a stocks, and John Bailey, Jun., for the iron work in connection therewith. As late as 1774, the pillory was still in use, as the records of the Court of General Sessions of Dutchess County, under date of October 14, ordered a defendant to stand in the pillory for a half hour as punishment.

The ducking stool was specially assigned to scolding women, although slanderers, brawlers, paupers and others of low social standing were ducked. On occasion, quarrelsome married couples were ducked, tied back to back. Although the ducking stool was considered by some historians of this country a Puritan punishment, its use is not found in the records of any Puritan community, but rather in Quaker Pennsylvania and in the southern colonies of Virginia and the Carolinas. As late as 1824, a Philadelphia scold was sentenced to be ducked.

In England, in addition to the ducking stool, the brank, or scold's bridle, was used extensively to curb the uncontrollable tongue. It was a distressing and shocking instrument, consisting of an iron cage cover-

ing the entire head, with a spiked plate or flat tongue of iron placed in the mouth over the tongue. When the offender spoke she was cruelly hurt. This device, in its English form, was not used here but a simpler substitute was found. A cleft stick, pinched on the tongue, was found to be in every wise satisfactory and could speedily be put in use.

The whipping post was prevalent abroad and, in this country, its use was continued until the Civil War banished slavery, when it was outlawed from every state except Maryland and Delaware. In the latter state, its use on infrequent occasions still continues and it is my recollection that I read in the daily press, sometime within the past ten years, of a defendant being subjected to a whipping.

An instance in which such punishment was administered in Dutchess County is reported in *The Country Journal* of January 16, 1788. The Poughkeepsie newspaper reported that a defendant was sentenced to pay a fine of £10, to receive thirty-five stripes and was also ordered to ride the wooden horse. Part of his sentence was executed immediately, the residue to be administered the first Mondays in February and March. (Incidentally, the wooden horse was a form of punishment used extensively in the army. It has been described as a narrow-edged board, mounted on four legs and bearing a rudely shaped head and tail. A soldier was tied astride and often with weights attached to his feet.)

The bilboes, which derived its name from Bilbao (tradition having it that they were manufactured there and placed on the Spanish Armada to shackle the English prisoners so confidently expected to be captured), were a simple and effective restraint, consisting of a long, heavy bar of iron, having two sliding shackles, like handcuffs, and a lock. In these shackles were thrust the legs of the criminal who was then locked in with a padlock. Some times a chain at one end of the bilboes fastened both bilboes and prisoner to the floor or a wall. Since iron, for their construction, was scarce in the colonies and wood was plentiful, they were soon replaced by the stocks and the pillory.

I now come to what was the most inhuman and degrading punishment ever practiced in this country,—branding and maiming. In this enlightened world of today, it is hard for us to conceive how those who founded this country could so treat their fellow men, particularly when we think of the hardships and cruelties they themselves had endured. It was not until the nineteenth century that this custom was finally outlawed by all civilized nations. However, our ancestors merely

followed the customs and copied the laws of the fatherland. They most certainly were not squeamish. Accustomed to gathering around the whipping post and the gallows, they were apparently no more affected by the sight of a man losing his ears or receiving a brand or gash in his forehead and the early records are replete with cases of both men and women who were whipped, branded and had their ears cut off or their tongues bored with a hot iron. Fining usually accompanied such of these punishments as were administered.

As you know, in the early days of this country, those who opposed the established religion, particularly in New England and Virginia, were most severely dealt with and these colonies, together with New York, were most intolerant and cruel to Quakers, calling them "blasphemous hereticks." They were not only whipped and pilloried but were branded and maimed. Their ears were cut off and their tongues pierced.

Similar punishment was accorded for the crimes of forgery, stealing, burglary, counterfeiting, to list some of them, and the lettering of the brands was specifically defined in the statute, as well as the part of the body to be marked. For example, "R" was for a rogue; "F," on the cheek, for a forger; "T," on the left hand, for a thief; "B," on the right hand, for a burglar. And, for a further offense, the mark was placed on the forehead. (It is readily understandable how useful long hair and wigs were during this era; lace collars and velvet doublets covered many a scar.)

In examining such old records of the very early period as I succeeded in locating (and I read all the literature on this subject that I could find in the Adriance Memorial Library, the libraries of Vassar College and of the New York State College for Teachers at New Paltz, as well as the local Supreme Court Library), I found only one conviction for horse stealing in the eastern colonies and that was in the year in 1684, in the colony of Maryland. This record states that the defendant was sentenced to death, but a private and secret pardon was thereafter issued by the Assembly. The culprit was given no knowledge of this pardon until he had been conveyed to the place of execution. He was then given the respite on condition that he perform the part of common hangman for life, which he did. As this incident indicates, it was frequently most difficult to obtain a hangman and he was usually some prisoner whose sentence to death had been commuted.

Of course, there were many convictions for horse stealing in the

eastern colonies and states during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There is a case on record (*New York Packet*, published at Fishkill, February 4, 1779) of the execution of a man in Orange County convicted of horse stealing, in which the newspaper reported that the man had "confessed his crime and owned the justice of his punishment." Another conviction for the same offense was reported in the *Poughkeepsie Journal* of October 17, 1792, and in this case, the prisoner received "39 stripes on his naked back for three successive Fridays."

The horse, as it remained for the better part of another century, was the principal means of transportation and it was at this time that the many associations for the detection and apprehension of horse thieves in the eastern counties were organized. There was one in nearly every township in Dutchess County.

Owing to the value of the horse on the frontier and the ease with which horse thieves could escape on the borders of new settlements, public sentiment demanded the speedy extinction of these criminals. It is needless to say that the punishment was death and this crime was regarded as a more serious offense than ordinary murder. While under certain circumstances the code of the frontier countenanced the taking of another's life, such was not the case with the horse thief. He was the criminal most hated and despised and consequently his punishment was summary and swift. He was always presumed to be guilty until his innocence could be clearly established and occasionally, I am afraid, in the early years, innocent men hanged. However, in all probability the majority of those executed were guilty. It is to be remembered that jails were scarce and such as they were afforded excellent opportunities for escape. The cost of guarding prisoners was expensive and, moreover, jailors and other officials were easily bribed. In the West, in particular, horse thieves were usually tried by "lynch law" because of the helplessly useless forms of government and the corrupt courts. And, since the horse was the most essential and valuable property, not only of the cowman but indeed of any man who faced the great distances of the plains, it is not to be wondered at that "lynch law" was the rule rather than the exception.

As time went on, and when the white-topped emigrant wagons were constantly moving toward the setting sun, thieves formed gangs who hid out along the overland trails and swooped down on the luckless travelers. In response to this condition, the settlers organized and, in

1858, an association, similar to those which had been in existence in this county many years before, for the apprehension of horse thieves was formed in Nemaha, Nebraska. The corruption in and the lack of effective local government, which has been mentioned, and the organizing of groups of criminals readily led to the vigilante days. While many of the vigilante bands functioned with a due sense of responsibility, unfortunately, they did not always so act, with the result that the hanging or executing of criminals for horse stealing led to the infliction of the same penalties for petty crimes and misdemeanors. With the years, government became more stable, the frontiers disappeared, public officials became more reliable and efficient modes of transportation and communication vastly improved, so horse stealing became less prevalent and now throughout America has largely disappeared.

The records in the office of the District Attorney in Dutchess County, so far as this crime is concerned, close with two thefts in the year 1911. On September 23, two men stole a horse and wagon and some chickens in the town of Poughkeepsie. They received a sentence of eleven months and twenty-five days in jail. On November 13, of the same year, two others broke into the barn of John Dickson in the town of Unionvale and stole a horse and wagon. These two defendants were sentenced to only two and a half months in jail. Although the two sets of thieves were sentenced by the same judge, the records are so meager that they shed no light as to the vast discrepancy in the jail terms imposed. However, during my many years as a District Attorney, it was a most heinous crime to steal chickens and I query whether the taking of the chickens doesn't furnish the reason for the longer sentence in the September prosecution.

While, as I have said, the foregoing cases seem to close the records of horse stealing in Dutchess County, such is not true of cattle stealing, for several of John Mack's black angus steers were stolen from his fields in the year 1946.

Of course, with the principal exception of the whipping post, virtually all of the forms of punishment described by me disappeared late in the seventeenth century. The first ten amendments of the United States Constitution which constitute our Bill of Rights, as you know, were proposed to the state legislatures by the first Congress in 1789. We are here concerned with the fifth, which prohibited not only the imposition of excessive fines, but the infliction of "cruel and inhuman punishment." This amendment had its origin in an Act of Parliament

in 1688, which contains substantially the same language. Although after the enactment of this amendment it was held that this provision was not intended to apply to the state governments and was addressed only to the United States courts exercising criminal jurisdiction, nearly every state adopted a similar provision. New York's enactment was passed in 1846. While there has been some dispute throughout the years as to just what constitutes cruel and inhuman punishment, all courts now agree that the words of the Constitution signify such punishment as would amount to torture or which is so cruel as to shock the conscience and reason of men. And, some of our courts have even gone so far as to interpret the language as including any punishment not only that which inflicts bodily pain or mutilation but that which is coercively cruel.

It has been consistently held by our Federal, as well as our state courts, however, that the infliction of the death penalty does not constitute cruel punishment.

As you know, of course, today there is a feeling on the part of many that even the imprisonment of man for the most serious crime does not in the final analysis assist materially in bettering the conditions of mankind and make for better future citizens. Be that as it may, to attempt to analyze that problem this afternoon is not my function and I can only conclude by saying that, despite the shortcomings in this respect of present day civilization, we shall probably have to continue punishing the serious offender as we do until the intellect of man has devised a better solution.

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THE GHOST AT FIDDLER'S BRIDGE

And Other Spooks

There's a road in the town of Clinton in Dutchess County called "Fiddler's Bridge Road." We know where the road is and we know where the bridge is, but we've never heard the fiddler and we do not even know his name.

Many years ago we heard the story of Fiddler's Bridge. We were told that there lived in the neighborhood an old man (he could have been forty, maybe thirty years old), who played the fiddle and was always willing to play for dancing at any of the frolics and festivities in the area. He worked for the farmers in the daytime and sawed away on his fiddle for hours in the evening. And he was supposed to have a bit of money.

One night, when the moon was full, he played for a group of young people and, at a late hour, trudged along the narrow highway, which leads from Pleasant Plains to Schultsville, towards the farm where he was currently employed. He never arrived at the farm and early the following morning his body was found near a small bridge on a particularly lonely part of the road in the deep woods. At this spot a swampy area on the one side sends a little stream, probably a tributary of the west branch of the Wappinger, across the road and the bridge over the brooklet has since been called Fiddler's Bridge. And, the fiddler comes back and has been heard playing his airs on moonlight nights at the spot where he was robbed and killed.

There are several versions of the story. Some folks do not believe in ghosts. They say that the bridge was given its name because local residents, in passing, had heard the fiddle played by a farmhand whose employer had sent him out into the wood to practice when his fiddling got on the nerves of the farmer and his family. Another account tells that a tipsy fiddler was returning from a dancing party and, when he reached the little bridge, his wagon overturned and he was thrown out and killed.

Whatever may be of truth in the tale, we like to believe the first version. And our belief was shared by many of the residents in that region fifty years ago. They figured that the murder was committed on a moonlight night, September 7, 1808, and a large number of the curious gathered at the spot on the one-hundredth anniversary, in 1908. Very fortunately, this was a bright, moonlight night and the group,

which included a former supervisor of the township, Mr. Charles W. Carpenter, Mr. Lane, Mr. and Mrs. J. Z. Frost and many others, left the neighborhood of Frost's Mills at about ten o'clock, arriving at the bridge well before midnight. (The music was always heard between ten and twelve o'clock at night).

The account of the excursion, as published in the *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle* of September 10, stated that the reporter had interviewed Mr. Lane, Mrs. Frost and several others. All of them maintained that, although it was hard to believe in ghosts, "at nearly midnight the fiddle was heard at the bridge and, while some of the party nearly fainted, there were some who had courage to approach the spot and they say then it would be heard a little distance away." The reporter further stated that for forty years previously he had met good, reliable persons who say they had seen a ghost at this spot and had heard the music. He said he had no reason to disbelieve the people who visited the bridge on September 7, 1908. And, we like to agree with him.

* * *

SPOOK BRIDGE

There's a tale which has to do with a ghost which haunts the spot about a small culvert, or bridge, in the town of Rhinebeck. The story is vouched for by lifetime residents of the neighborhood who have a reputation for veracity.

It happened on one of those nights when the moon shines brightly for a short time, only to be overshadowed on occasions, leaving the world very dark. A farmer was driving home along the Mt. Rutsen road when a ghost appeared in the highway. The farmer urged his horse forward and the ghost leaped high in the air and knocked off the farmer's hat. Then the farmer snatched his whip from the socket and switched viciously at the ghost. The ghost siezed the end of the lash and pulled the whip from the farmer's hand. The horse galloped madly on and neither man nor beast recovered his breath until he reached home, where the terrified farmer told his story.

There are folks who might say that the following morning the hat was still hanging, caught by its ragged band, on a low-hanging branch of a tree and the whip, with the end of its lash curled around a small sapling, hung beside the road. And, they might say that a flowering dogwood, moving in the wind, could have supplied a ghostly figure in the fitful moonlight. But, the spot is still called "Spook Bridge!"

THE SPOOK HOLE AT BARNEGAT

On a map of the township of Poughkeepsie, in the Beers, Ellis & Soule atlas published in 1867, is a spot marked "Spook o Hole." It is near Clinton Point and is on land now owned by the New York Trap Rock Corporation.

In September of 1870, an otherwise unidentified young man named "David" visited the hole or cave and wrote a description of the place for the local newspaper, *The Poughkeepsie Telegraph*. He spoke of it as a "remarkable cavity in a rocky hill on the property of J. and I. Frost called the Spook Hole, since the first settlement of the county."

David wrote of the stories he had heard concerning the spook hole and, of course, one of them included Captain Kidd. He had been told that Captain Kidd had hidden some of his treasures in the recess and, on his last visit in the flesh, had stopped at the entrance and slain the man who accompanied him, in order that his ghost appearing there would keep off all would-be intruders. The ghost had often been seen by persons passing after nightfall. And, some persons said that Kidd and his crew still kept up their orgies, that, when they passed at night, they had heard the sound of voices and music of a fiddle issuing from the hole.

Some folks had told David that the cave was occupied at one time by an old man of foreign aspect, with long white hair and beard, with his negro wife and son. The lad would offer gold to passers-by for a black cat, a white hen and a dove, which the old man needed for his incantations. Fear deterred anyone from accepting the offer. However, the old man was seen many times, sitting at the entrance, with a white dove perched on each shoulder. He was said to converse with them in a foreign tongue and the only word which could be clearly heard was "Colombo" or "Colomba."

Other persons had told David that the cave had been used at one time as a hiding place by a murderer who was later hung for his crime. While he occupied the hole unearthly sounds had been heard and spectral shadows and lights had been seen around it.

After hearing so many tales, David and a friend, armed with a rope, a pocket pistol, matches, etc., visited the cave on a bright, warm, summer morning. They climbed the hill and found the entrance, a round opening about seven feet in diameter. He described the interior

as shaped like a huge teakettle, with the bottom about eighteen feet below the entrance. They descended a narrow, perpendicular ridge on the west side, full of crevices and roots, by aid of which they reached the bottom. Near the floor, on the southeast side, was an aperture which opened into a passage extending southward. David had been told that only one person had been any distance in this passage, which "was miles long and which emerged on the banks of the Wappingers Creek." So, he made a brisk fire "to rarify the air so that a current being formed might carry off and purify it," as he had been informed that it was so foul and damp as to extinguish the lights of those entering a few feet.

After the fire died down, they crawled through the opening and entered a passage which soon enlarged so they might walk upright and it led into a rocky chamber large enough for a dozen persons to dine in. The top, bottom and sides were composed of rock upon which were numerous initials and dates.

David and his friend did not go further on this occasion, but retraced their steps to examine a niche on the north side of the original chamber. Here they found that a large, round stone had been rolled over the opening to a lower level, which had evidently been reached by a ladder, parts of which were strewn about the floor.

Nowhere did they find anything which would prove or disprove any of the stories they had heard, but they resolved to come again and clear the debris from the mouth of the ladder hole and explore it.

In 1879, a report on this same Spook Hole was made to the Poughkeepsie Society of Natural Science. It stated that the place was visited in March of 1878 by J. H. Booth, A. P. Jeanarett and Henry Booth, who made the report. It was very brief: "This cave, if so insignificant a fissure may be dignified by such a title, is situated in Poughkeepsie township, and lies near Barnegat, about 60 rods east from the Hudson river. It is in the Barnegat limestone, contains no stalactites, is very damp, and will repay no one the trouble of a visit."

James H. Smith, in his history of the county published in 1882, mentions the Spook Hole as "a small cave in limestone about a half mile southeast of Clinton Point and fifty to seventy rods from the Hudson," but does not give any reason for its name.

* * *

THE SPOOK FIELD

In 1892, William E. Ver Planck compiled a *History of Abraham Isaacs Ver Planck and his male descendants in America*. In this

family genealogy, he makes mention of "The Spook Field," a part of the original Rombout patent, purchased from the Indians in 1683 and confirmed by King James II, October 17, 1685. For many years this particular piece of the estate was called The Spook Field and was referred to as such in the various deeds covering it.

Mr. Ver Planck tells that The Spook Field was so called from a tradition that the ghost of a murdered Hessian soldier who was buried there was often seen wandering at nightfall.

The same property was mentioned in a news article in the *Poughkeepsie Daily Eagle*, February 14, 1913. The newspaper reported condemnation proceedings brought by the New York Central Railroad to condemn a portion of The Spook Field and stated that the "Hearing Took on Historical Aspect; Dull Hearing Before Commission Brightened by Bits of History of Verplanck Property." It proceeded to tell that "there is a tradition that when Hendrick Hudson sailed up the noble river he made a landing here. An Indian was caught stealing from the Hudson party and was killed. As the story goes, the body of the Indian was not buried and his ghost was supposed to walk stealthily about in the field."

It is hardly likely that Henry Hudson ever heard of this Spook Field and the mere addition of a hundred years or so to the age of a story makes it no more interesting. It is an undisputed fact that for many, many years this property in the town of Fishkill has been referred to as The Spook Field.

There is another Spook Field, in the town of Wappinger, and a road which had been called Spook Road, Spook Hill Road or Spook Lane. However newer residents have changed the name of the road to Park Lane and removed one colorful name from that area. Two members of the historical society still retain the name of "Spook Hill Farm" as their address in the town of Wappinger.

These ghosts were all outdoor spooks and they have all left their names on the land. The fact that these names got into everyday use and became a part of their neighborhoods is a pleasing commentary on the imagination and happy outlook of the people who live in Dutchess.

Amy Ver Nooy

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S. HORSFORD
Poughkeepsie Telegraph, September 6, 1837

